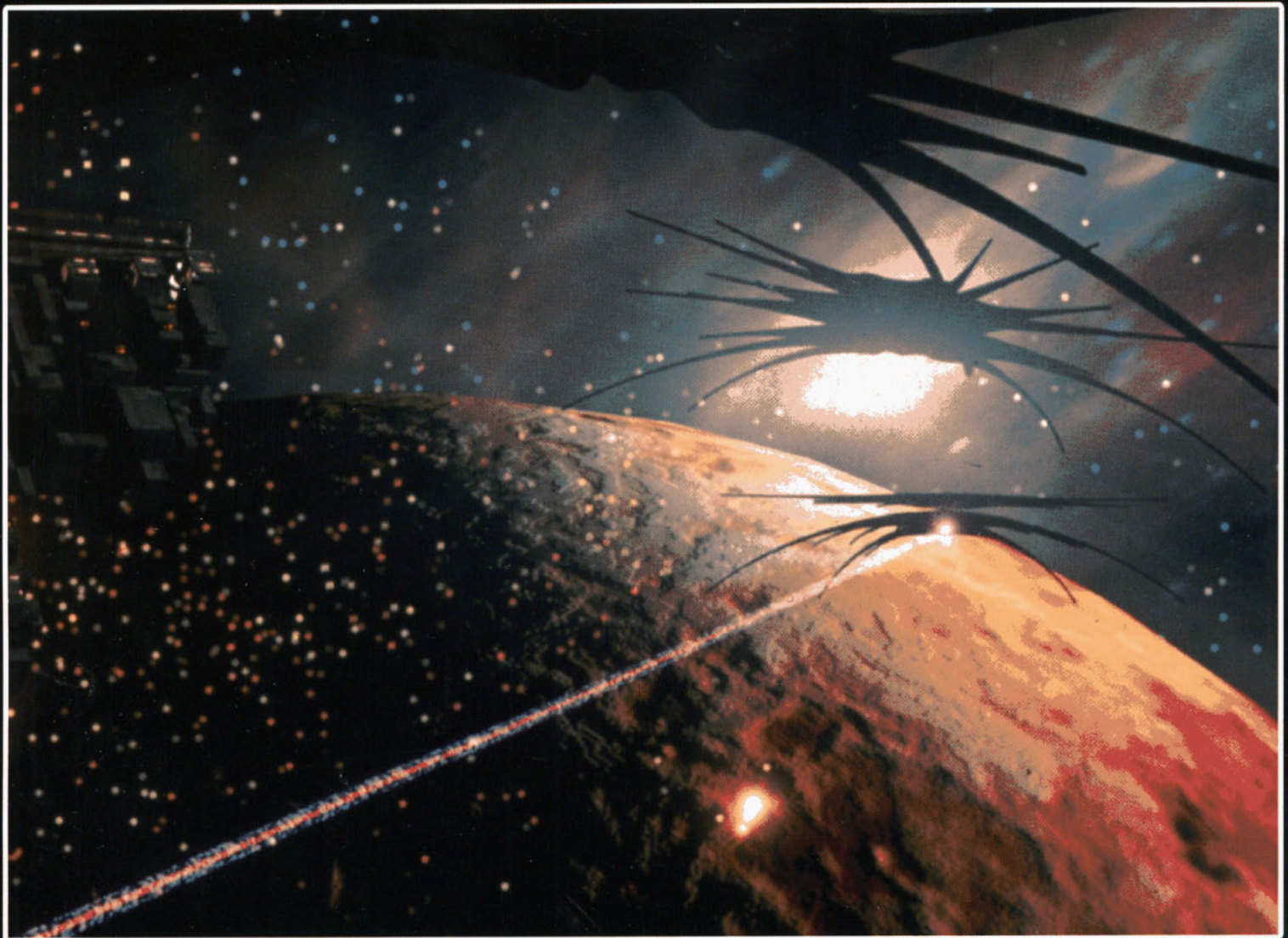


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The Coming of Shadows



Written By
August Hahn

Babylon 5 Created by J. Michael Straczynski

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

- W. B. Yeats, *The Second Coming*

The Coming of Shadows

By
Matthew Sprange and August Hahn

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Printed in Canada



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Introduction

The galaxy is changing. Races that have held sway over dozens of worlds are in decline, mighty empires are crumbling and a dark and terrible force has moved its agents into position to launch untold devastation. Not all is lost, however, as the Third Age of Mankind is only just beginning and heroes stand ready to put themselves in harm's way to defend what they believe is right. The scene is set for confrontations of galactic proportions but it is only now that the true nature of the enemy is being revealed.

The Earth year 2258 was set to be one of new beginnings but instead became a time of exceptional discord. The disputes between the Narn and Centauri have steadily escalated as these age-old enemies vie for territory and influence, even as the Minbari subtly manipulate the younger races for their own nebulous ends. The Vorlons have, for the first time, appeared to other races on board the Babylon 5 diplomatic station but their motives seem convoluted and beyond the concerns of others. Even the Earth Alliance has suffered, with the seemingly accidental death of its president and a growing feeling among many that its government has become fragmented, with shadowy groups becoming increasingly self-serving, pursuing secret agendas with worrying consequences. Terrorist groups have grown increasingly daring in their activities, trying to secure freedom for worlds within the Earth Alliance or keep alien influence as far from humanity as possible. Times are growing dark for the weak and helpless, but it is also fertile ground for opportunists and heroes to leave a permanent mark on the galaxy.

Babylon 5 Season Guides

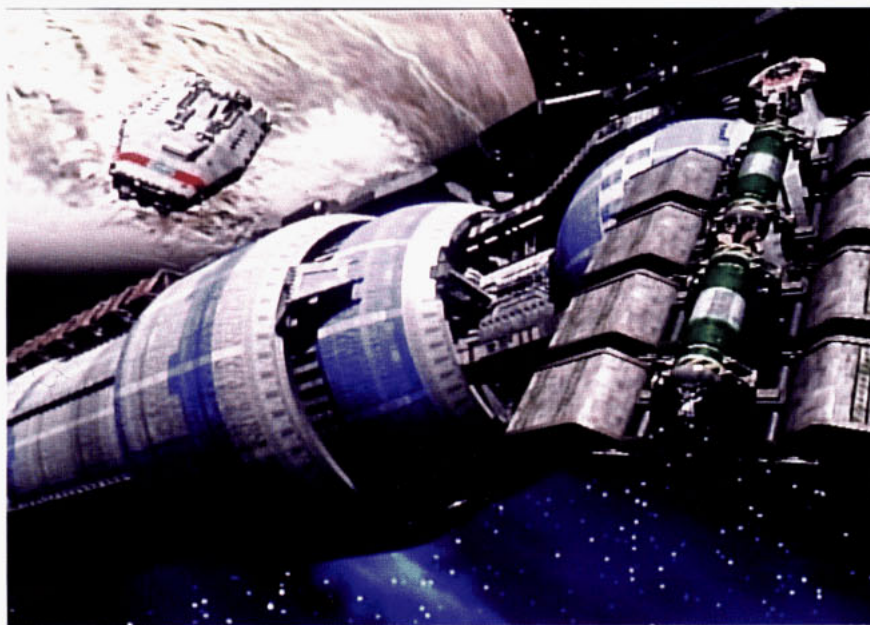
The *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game Season Guides* are intended to introduce players and Games Masters to the ongoing Babylon 5 main story arc as told in the Babylon 5 Television show. Featuring a detailed synopsis of each episode, including new characters, technology and material the Season Guides show Gamesmasters how to integrate the events of the television show into their own campaigns. Furthermore, new equipment, ships and prestige classes will be introduced in each Season Guide, such as the introduction of the Techno-Mage in *The Coming of Shadows*.

The Coming of Shadows

The Coming of Shadows is a sourcebook for the Babylon 5 roleplaying game, exploring in detail the personalities and events of 2259. Used in conjunction with Chapter Eight of the main rulebook, Signs and Portents, Games Masters can now accurately extend their campaigns and story arcs beyond 2258 to include the dramatic galaxy-shaking events detailed here.

Every episode of the second season of the Babylon 5 television show is fully covered in *The Coming of Shadows*, along with numerous scenario and campaign hooks that will make it easy to integrate them with ongoing story arcs already unfolding in current games. As described in Chapter Nine of the main rulebook, Campaigns on Babylon 5, players can witness or even become directly involved in these events, engaging in story arcs of their own that may put them at the centre of the galaxy alongside the heroes of the television show. This sourcebook also includes the main personalities found on board Babylon 5, updated from those that appeared in the main rulebook in 2258, as well as featuring a few new faces. New rules additions, equipment and vehicles are also featured, expanding the Babylon 5 roleplaying game no matter where or when the Games Master chooses to set his story arcs and campaigns.

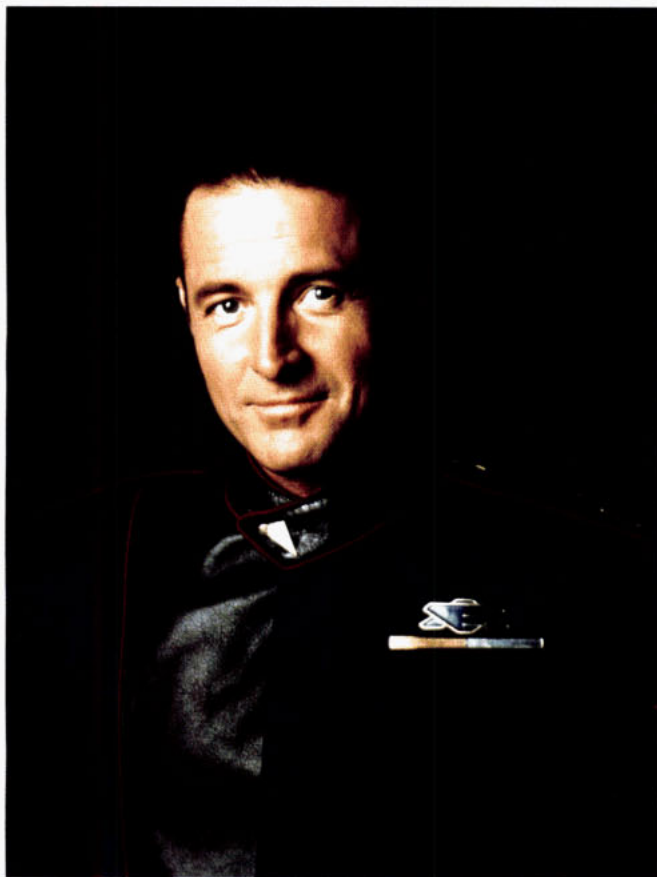
The year 2258 set the scene for players new to the Babylon 5 roleplaying game. *The Coming of Shadows* will elevate games to new levels of passion and excitement as players begin to discover just who the real powers in the galaxy are. . .



Personalities

of 2259

This chapter updates and revises the characters found in Chapter Six of the main rulebook, as well as including some new faces that begin to have an effect on the galaxy in the Earth year 2259. Games Masters may use these personalities in their own scenarios, utilising the characteristics and personality notes for each individual detailed below. It should be noted that the characteristics and abilities listed in this chapter describe the personalities at the beginning of 2259. Future sourcebooks will update these personalities and introduce new ones throughout the entire five year saga of the Babylon 5 television show.



Captain John Sheridan

'The universe doesn't give you any points for doing things that are easy.'

12th Level Human Officer (fleet)

Hit Points: 31

Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 18 (+8 Reflex)

Attacks: +13/+8/+3 melee or +14/+9/+4 ranged

Special Qualities: Branch Elite, Branch Specialisation (fleet), Rallying Call (2), Way of Command

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +9

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 17

Skills: Bluff +7, Computer Use +9, Concentration +11, Diplomacy +14, Drive +3, Intimidate +8, Jump +6, Listen +8, Medical +4, Pilot +15, Sense Motive +11, Spot +6, Technical (space travel) +16

Feats: Alertness, Data Access, First Contact Protocol, Lightning Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Spacecraft Proficiency, Weapon Focus (uni-pulse cannon), Weapon Proficiency (spacecraft weapons)

Standard Equipment: Earthforce wrist link, EF-7 PPG.

The son of a diplomatic envoy, John Sheridan is strong-willed and will never back down when he believes he is in the right. Maintaining a keen interest in all faiths, beliefs and alien races, he had a brief obsession with the Dalai Lama, whom he met in Tibet at the age of 21. A dedicated patriot, Sheridan joined EarthForce before the draft in the hope of being able to serve something greater than he was, to make a difference somewhere while doing important and necessary work.

His EarthForce career began under the command of then Commander Jack Maynard on the Moon-Mars patrol but his attention to detail and strong leadership qualities guaranteed a swift rise through the ranks. When he was promoted to Commander, he was briefly posted to the transfer point off Io before being assigned as executive officer to the *EAS Lexington*, under Captain Sterns. It was here he gained his Earth Alliance-wide fame, providing the only real victory Mankind achieved during the Earth/Minbari War. Separated from the main battle group during a Minbari ambush, Commander Sheridan took command of the *Lexington* upon the death of Captain Sterns, luring the attacking warcruiser into the asteroid field between Mars and Jupiter. There he seeded several asteroids with thermonuclear warheads, detonating them as the warcruiser closed range to finish the *Lexington* off. The warcruiser was the *Dark Star*, one of the flagships of the Minbari fleet and its loss was a grievous blow to all Minbari, many of whom have sworn revenge against Sheridan for his actions. Even now, twelve years after the end of the war, Sheridan is still known to the Minbari as 'Star Killer'.

The destruction of the *Dark Star* and subsequent morale boost across the entire Earth Alliance guaranteed Sheridan's promotion to Captain. After the war's conclusion, Sheridan was assigned to one of the new Omega-class destroyers, the *EAS Agamemnon*, a great warship built specifically to protect the Earth Alliance from more advanced alien races.

Tragedy struck Sheridan's life in 2257 with the loss of his wife, Anna, a scientist on board an exploratory ship, the *Icarus*. The *Icarus* mysteriously exploded during a mission to a world far out on the Rim while collecting data on suspected ancient civilisations. Sheridan is still coming to terms with his loss and has rededicated his life to EarthForce, despite the best efforts of his sister, Elizabeth, to reconcile their grief.



Lieutenant Commander Susan Ivanova

'I can only conclude that I'm paying off karma at a vastly accelerated rate.'

8th Level Human Officer (fleet)

Hit Points: 22

Initiative: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 14 (+4 Reflex)

Attacks: +8/+3 melee or +10/+5 ranged

Special Qualities: Branch Specialisation (fleet), Rallying Call, Way of Command

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +7

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 16

Skills: Bluff +12, Computer Use +10, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +8, Drive +3, Intimidate +7, Medical +4, Pilot +12, Sense Motive +9, Technical (space travel) +9

Feats: Data Access, Improved Initiative, Latent Telepath, Spacecraft Proficiency, Weapon Focus (uni-pulse cannon), Weapon Proficiency (spacecraft weapons)

Standard Equipment: Earthforce wrist link.

Lieutenant Commander Susan Ivanova's first year on board Babylon 5 has been one of danger, strife and personal loss. However, she has excelled in her duties, despite attacks on the station, seeing one of her old flames join Home Guard and losing her father, the last member of her family. The reassignment of Commander Sinclair has placed additional burdens upon Ivanova, as she now has to contend with resolving the disputes among ambassadors, the station's budget and staff management, as well as her usual operational duties. The death of Earth President Santiago shook Ivanova's faith in her own ability to resolve any problem but she has remained strong for the rest of the crew of Babylon 5, demonstrating extraordinary qualities of leadership.

Security Chief Michael Alfredo Garibaldi

'I guess I keep hoping that someday, somewhere I'll make a difference, that at the end of the day everything we've gone through here for the past few years will mean something.'

4th Level Human Officer (fleet) / 6th Level Soldier

Hit Points: 33

Initiative: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 15 (+5 Reflex)

Attacks: +13/+8/+3 melee or +12/+7 ranged

Special Qualities: Branch Specialisation (fleet), Covering Fire, Rallying Call

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +7

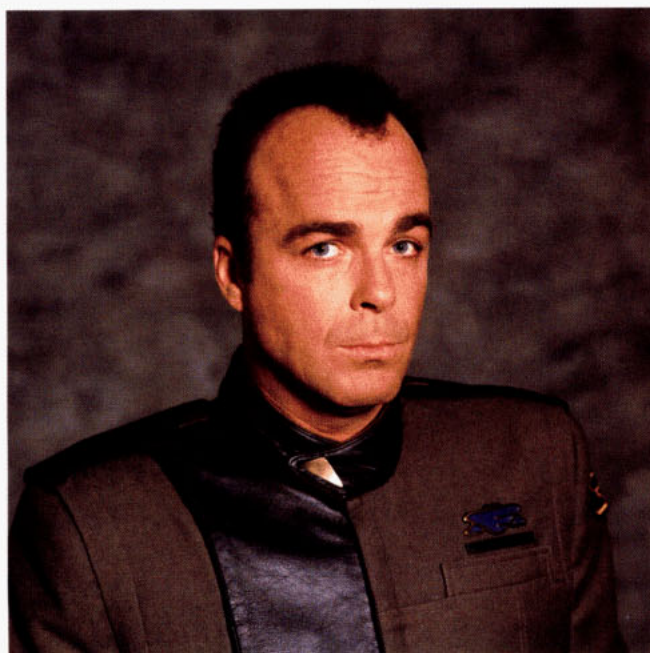
Abilities: Str 16, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12

Skills: Balance +5, Bluff +6, Climb +4, Computer Use +7, Concentration +6, Diplomacy +4, Intimidate +9, Listen +5, Jump +5, Pilot +8, Sense Motive +9, Spot +9, Survival +4, Technical (space travel) +5

Feats: Alertness, Data Access, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Aim, Spacecraft Proficiency, Weapon Focus (PPG), Weapon Specialisation (PPG), Weapon Proficiency (spacecraft weapons)

Standard Equipment: Earthforce wrist link, EF-7 PPG.

Michael Garibaldi's colourful career in the past has led some to speculate that his assignment to Babylon 5, under the insistence of Jeffrey Sinclair, may be his last chance to make good before he is forced to leave EarthForce altogether. He has coped admirably with personal issues of the past to become a highly effective Chief of Security and, as Sinclair once said, the station could not be run



without him. Criminal elements on board Babylon 5 have learnt to respect Garibaldi's intuition and expertise, for no one knows the station as well as he does.

At the end of 2258, Garibaldi was shot in the back while uncovering the plot to assassinate President Santiago. He remains in critical condition under the ministrations of Dr Franklin, who has, as yet, been unable to rouse him from his coma.

Doctor Stephen Franklin

'The human body is an amazing thing. It can cure itself, or it can simply decide one day that the world is too painful to deal with and won't cooperate no matter how hard you try to heal it.'

6th Level Human Scientist

Hit Points: 11

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 13 (+3 Reflex)

Attacks: +3 melee or +4 ranged

Special Qualities: Peripheral Studies (biotechnology, xenobiology), Primary Area of Study (medical), Use Alien Artefact.

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +8

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 14

Skills: Appraise +5, Bluff +7, Computer Use +11, Concentration +6, Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +6, Knowledge (alien language) +12, Knowledge (alien life) +12, Knowledge

(biotechnology) +5, Knowledge (xenobiology) +16, Medical +14, Profession (ship's doctor) +7, Sense Motive +5, Spot +8, Technical (electronics) +10.

Feats: Alien Anatomy, Iron Will, Skill Focus (knowledge – xenobiology), Skill Focus (medical).

Note: Doctor Franklin has the Xenobiology specialty as listed in the Rules Additions chapter.

Standard Equipment: Earthforce wrist link, first aid kit, hand computer.

Possessing solid organisational skills and a deep understand of xenobiology, Stephen Franklin has proved to be a worthy successor to Dr Kyle as Chief of Medical Staff on board Babylon 5. His strong moral convictions and unwillingness to accept defeat have ensured that he has received his fair share of trouble in 2258 but these experiences have also marked him among the rest of the Command Staff as someone who can be trusted utterly. Since the arrival of an old friend, Dr Vance, Franklin's interest in the area of biotechnology has expanded, though while confined to the station he has had little opportunity to continue his research.

Lieutenant David Corwin

'Minbari fighters, coming right at us.'

1st Level Human Officer (fleet)

Hit Points: 6

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 10 (+0 Reflex)

Attacks: +0 melee or +1 ranged

Special Qualities: Branch Specialisation (fleet)

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +3

Abilities: Str 9, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 11

Skills: Computer Use +5, Concentration +2, Diplomacy +2, Listen +7, Medical +3, Sense Motive +3, Spot +7, Technical (space travel) +7

Feats: Alertness, Data Access, Skill Focus (technical – space travel), Spacecraft Proficiency

Standard Equipment: Earthforce wrist link.

Young and idealistic, Second Lieutenant David Corwin is still trying to come to terms with his assignment to Command & Control on Babylon 5. Having demonstrated a remarkable ability to assimilate data and monitor all aspects of station operation throughout 2258, Corwin was the natural choice to man the jumpgate console in C&C, a position of great responsibility. Reporting directly to Lieutenant Commander Ivanova, Corwin tracks all incoming vessels in hyperspace, alerting the crew to unscheduled visitors. He is also responsible for tracking and directing all traffic in the vicinity of the station, a crucial role if Babylon 5 ever comes under attack as it is he who would direct the Starfury squadrons to engage targets.

Lieutenant Warren Keffer

'Come on Babylon Control, give us a break here. If we are not allowed to shoot. . . we're dead.'





5th Level Human Officer (pilot)

Hit Points: 16

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 14 (+4 Reflex)

Attacks: +6 melee or +8 ranged

Special Qualities: Branch Specialisation (pilot), Rallying Call.

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +5

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 17, Con 9, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 10

Skills: Computer Use +7, Concentration +6, Listen +5, Pilot +11, Sense Motive +4, Spot +8, Technical (space travel) +8

Feats: Dogfighter, Evasive Action, Spacecraft Proficiency, Vehicle Combat, Weapon Proficiency (spacecraft weapons)

Standard Equipment: Earthforce wrist link.

Part of Zeta Squadron, Lieutenant Keffer strikes many who meet him as a typical 'hotshot' Starfury pilot. Dedicated to EarthForce, Keffer's true love is his Starfury and he readily accepts any excuse to feel space beneath him, even during the most routine of missions. He has an insatiable curiosity and once focussed upon an objective, there is little that will dissuade him from seeing it to conclusion – an admirable trait for a fighter pilot but one that has led him to irritate commanding officers in the past.

Talia Winters

'That's one cabinet that will never threaten us again.'

4th Level Human Telepath (P5)

Hit Points: 14

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 12 (+2 Reflex)

Attacks: +3 melee or +4 ranged

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +7

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 12, Con 9, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 15

Skills: Computer Use +7, Concentration +5, Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +3, Jump +3, Knowledge (telepathy) +8, Listen +7, Sense Motive +8, Spot +6, Telepathy +9

Feats: Adaptive Mind, Defensive Block, Iron Will, Meditation

Standard Equipment: Psi Corps insignia and gloves.

The official commercial telepath of Babylon 5, Talia has had her own fair share of problems throughout 2258, including witnessing the death of her former lover, Jason Ironheart, who had been subjected to Psi Corps experimentation, as well attracting the leery attention of Ambassador Kosh. However, her relations with Susan Ivanova, once characterised by the Lieutenant Commander's open hostility to Psi Corps, have begun to soften and the two have struck up a friendship of sorts.



Before he died, Jason Ironheart left Talia with a psychic gift she has only recently begun to explore. Though officially still rated as a P5 commercial telepath, Talia has noted that other abilities have begun to manifest themselves, including very limited telekinesis. This new strength frightens her somewhat, for she has never fully understood exactly what Ironheart did to her, and her experimentation has been both slow and haphazard, not least because she fears what the Psi Corps may do to her if they ever discover what happened.

Lyta Alexander

'I think I'm in just about every kind of trouble there is.'

1st Level Human Lurker/6th Level Telepath (P5)

Hit Points: 20

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 16 (+6 Reflex)

Attacks: +4 melee or +6 ranged

Special Qualities: Lurker's Knowledge, Maintain Concentration

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +7

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 16

Skills: Climb +6, Computer Use +6, Concentration +9, Diplomacy +3, Hide +5, Intimidate +7, Jump +3, Knowledge (telepathy) +10,

Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Sense Motive +9, Spot +4, Telepathy +11

Feats: Ability Focus (deep scan), Adaptive Mind, Combat Telepath, Defensive Block, Far Telepathy, Lightning Reflexes

Note: Lyta knows how to create a Memory Vault and has done so. Its defensive value is 31 and it holds her memory of Kosh's appearance and thoughts gained during her scan of him in 2257.

Standard Equipment: Psi Corps insignia and gloves.

Recalled to Earth by the Psi Corps after scanning Ambassador Kosh in 2257, Lyta escaped the investigations and experiments her superiors forced her to endure in order to discover just what close contact to a Vorlon would reveal about the mysterious aliens. Fleeing the Corps, Lyta disappeared from view and it is suspected she may be working with various resistance groups in the Mars underground, trading her services as telepath in exchange for food, shelter and protection. Her current whereabouts and motives are unknown, despite several Psi Cops being sent to pursue her, but Lyta's fiery temperament and uncompromising independence will surely guarantee she turns up once more.

Ambassador Delenn, of the family Mir

'We are all slaves to our histories. If there is to be a bright future, we must learn to break those chains.'

11th Level Human-Minbari Hybrid (religious) Diplomat

Hit Points: 17

Initiative: +4 (+2 Dex, +2 Minbari)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 17 (+7 Reflex)

Attacks: +5 melee or +7 ranged

Special Qualities: Contact x6, Government Resources, Improved Diplomacy *

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +10

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 17

Skills: Appraise +11, Bluff +13, Computer Use +12, Diplomacy +21*, Gather Information +13, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (alien life) +13*, Knowledge (human society & culture) +13*, Knowledge (Minbari history) +15*, Knowledge (star systems) +12*, Listen +12, Sense Motive +17

Feats: Endurance, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes, Resist Scan, Silent Tread

Delenn has been a figure of some mystery throughout 2258, and those who have had dealings with her always get the feeling that she knows far more than she reveals. Though it is not common knowledge, some have discovered that she is Satai, a member of the Grey Council, though what a personage as this is doing playing ambassador on an Earth Alliance outpost has yet to be discovered. It has also become apparent that she is playing some role in the ongoing disputes between the Minbari warrior and religious castes, with even members of the Star Riders clan bowing to her wishes.

Conversely, Delenn has also been seen as a force of ultimate good by some on the station, for she is always willing to help those most in need and has presided over many disagreements between governments, particularly among the League of Non-Aligned Worlds. However, she has added to the mystery and controversy that surround the Minbari race as a whole, for she sealed herself in





her quarters at the end of the Earth year 2258, and rumours abound as to what is happening within. Some even speculate that she has entered into a cocoon or chrysalis, to emerge later as an entirely different and alien being.

Ambassador G'Kar

'There may be some dangers that threaten both our peoples, not to mention the Minbari, the Earthers, the League and everyone else around here. Except possibly the Vorlons, I don't know what could threaten them, really.'

4th Level Narn Diplomat / 3rd Level Officer (ground forces) / 4th Level Soldier

Hit Points: 27

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 13 (+3 Reflex)

Attacks: +13/+8 melee or +10/+5 ranged

Special Qualities: Branch Specialisation (ground forces), Contact x1, Covering Fire, Improved Diplomacy, Low-Light Vision, Rallying Call

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +10

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 14

Skills: Climb +8, Computer Use +8, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +9, Gather Information +5, Intimidate +12, Listen +8, Pilot +7, Sense Motive +7, Spot +6, Survival +7

Feats: Blood Oath, Blood Rage, Point Blank Shot, Spacecraft Proficiency, Weapon Focus (PPG rifle), Weapon Proficiency (heavy weapons)

Representative of the Narn Regime, it may not be unfair to say that Ambassador G'Kar has caused more controversy and turmoil on Babylon 5 than any other individual, and has had to hide behind his diplomatic immunity several times. The Narn Regime as a whole is on the rise, and G'Kar is not alone in wanting to crush the Centauri Republic utterly, in revenge for everything they have done to his people. Diplomatically, he gives Ambassador Mollari little room to manoeuvre whenever a dispute arises and has successfully forced the Republic to cede territory on several occasions, which has gained him respect from many on his homeworld.

The loss of the Narn colony in Quadrant 37 has given G'Kar a moment of pause, for he quickly deduced that none of the races present on Babylon 5 could have engineered such a complete victory. Returning to the Narn homeworld, G'Kar used his reputation and influence to lead an exploratory mission to the Rim where he believes he will find the clues necessary to determine who attacked Quadrant 37.

Ambassador Kosh Naraneek

'You have always been here.'



No human had any official contact with Vorlons until Ambassador Kosh arrived on Babylon 5 but his presence has done little to unveil the mysteries behind this reclusive race. Kosh does not even pretend to hide behind diplomatic immunity when interfering with the younger races on board the station, secure in the knowledge that he is to all intents and purposes invulnerable to any assault upon his person or objectives. The high technology and sheer strength of the Vorlon Empire is known and feared to all races and none are prepared to move openly against them, even when provoked. During his first year on board Babylon 5, Kosh has consistently ignored meetings of the Babylon 5 Advisory Council, ended any chance the human race had for immortality when he organised the slaying of Deathwalker, violated Talia Winters and confronted Mr Morden. Some have begun to suspect that Kosh has an agenda with the Minbari government, and Ambassador Delenn in particular, though both are so far keeping their secrets.

The full rules for using Ambassador Kosh will be detailed in the forthcoming *Vorlons and Shadows* sourcebook. For now, Games Masters may use the rules for Kosh detailed on p140 of the main rulebook.

Ambassador Londo Mollari

'Money and power always matter.'

8th Level Centauri Diplomat / 1st Level Officer (fleet)

Hit Points: 18

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 12 (+2 Reflex)

Attacks: +5 melee or +6 ranged

Special Qualities: Branch Specialisation (fleet), Contacts x4, Government Resources, Improved Diplomacy *

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +8

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 16

Skills: Appraise +11, Bluff +10, Computer Use +8, Diplomacy +16*, Gather Information +13, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (noble houses) +5, Pilot +6, Sense Motive +9, Technical (electronics) +2

Feats: Data Access, Great Fortitude, Nerves of Steel, Spacecraft Proficiency, Toughness, Weapon Focus (Coutari)

After many long years, Londo Mollari's star is once again rising within the Centauri Republic. His assignment as ambassador to Babylon 5 was at first seen as being little more than a joke, as it was not viewed as a safe place for any high ranking noble to be. Once despondent at both his own poor fate and that of his dwindling Republic, he has gained a new passion for life as wealth and power in the service of his people now seem to be within grasp. Though he knows little about Mr Morden or the man's associates, their aid in both recovering the Eye of the Republic from raiders and the destruction of the Narn colony in Quadrant 37 has gained



him a strong standing within the Royal Court on Centauri Prime. Though having some misgivings about the alien nature and sheer destructive power of Mr Morden's associates, Mollari is well aware of the opportunities that are beckoning as he begins to fulfil his rightful destiny.

Diplomatic Attaché Na'Toth

'You will need someone to watch your back. If not me, then who would you prefer?'

4th Level Narn Soldier

Hit Points: 19

Initiative: +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 15 (+5 Reflex)

Attacks: +6 melee or +6 ranged

Special Qualities: Covering Fire, Low-Light Vision

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills: Climb +3, Intimidate +6, Jump +3, Survival +2

Feats: Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (PPG)

A soldier to her heart, Na'Toth has learnt little of diplomacy during her first year on board Babylon 5, though this is of little concern to her superior, G'Kar. She has proven herself to be fearless, loyal and utterly reliable, not always the most obvious trait in a diplomatic attaché. Instrumental in thwarting a Thenta Makur assassin in an attempt on G'Kar's life, she has managed to adapt to the different demands of her role on the station, despite the very obvious differences from her previous life in the Narn military. Ambassador G'Kar had no hesitation in leaving her to speak for their people when he left to pursue investigations into Quadrant 37.



Lennier, of the Third Fain of Chudomo

'Ambassador Delenn is indisposed at the moment. Perhaps you would come back later. Much later.'

5th Level Minbari (religious)
Diplomat

Hit Points: 11

Initiative: +9 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative, +2 Minbari)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 14 (+4 Reflex)

Attacks: +4 melee or +5 ranged

Special Qualities: Contact x3, Improved Diplomacy

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +5

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills: Bluff +2, Computer Use +6, Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +6, Intimidate +3, Knowledge

(probability) +7, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (human society & culture) +8, Medical +4, Listen +6, Sense Motive +7
Feats: Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Toughness

The transition from a simple novitiate to working with one of the Grey Council was a large step for Lennier to take but his diligence and passion for learning have served him well. Delenn has come to rely more and more upon both his services and company, though he still remains a little unnerved when confronted with new and unexpected situations, as evidenced when Ambassador Mollari took Lennier under his wing for a day to visit the less wholesome retreats on Babylon 5. His greatest concern remains the condition and physical well being of Ambassador Delenn, and he spends his days watching and praying over her chrysalis, awaiting to see what she will transform into.

Vir Cotto

'I believe there are currents in the Universe. Eddies and tides that pull us one way or the other. Some we have to fight, some we have to embrace. Unfortunately, the currents that we have to fight look exactly like the currents we have to embrace. . .'

3rd Level Centauri Diplomat

Hit Points: 8

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 13 (+3 Reflex)

Attacks: -1 melee or +0 ranged

Special Qualities: Contact (House Cotto)

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +6

Abilities: Str 9, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12

Skills: Bluff +4, Computer Use +7, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +6, Knowledge (Centauri noble houses) +7,





Knowledge (political etiquette) +9, Listen +6, Sense Motive +7, Spot +2

Feats: Iron Will, Skill Focus (knowledge – political etiquette)

Vir has few ambitions and is happy to bide his time serving under Ambassador Mollari on Babylon 5 until his family is able to arrange a convenient marriage and small title for him back on Centauri Prime. Liasing with the countless races and governments on the diplomatic station has done much to improve his self-confidence though he still often appears permanently apologetic, leading many to discount his presence. Of late, he has become concerned with Mollari's continued dealings with the mysterious Mr Morden though he has yet to voice his worries to the ambassador.

Alfred Bester

'There is no need for you to be afraid. Come back with me to the Corp. You will not be harmed.'

7th Level Human Psi Cop/9th level Telepath (P12)

Hit Points: 43

Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 20 (+10 Reflex)

Attacks: +13/+8/+3 melee or +15/+10/+5 ranged

Special Qualities: Black Omega Squadron, Contact x2, Extend Defences, Maintain Concentration, Quick Scan, Superior Defensive Block, The Corps is Mother

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +10, Will +14

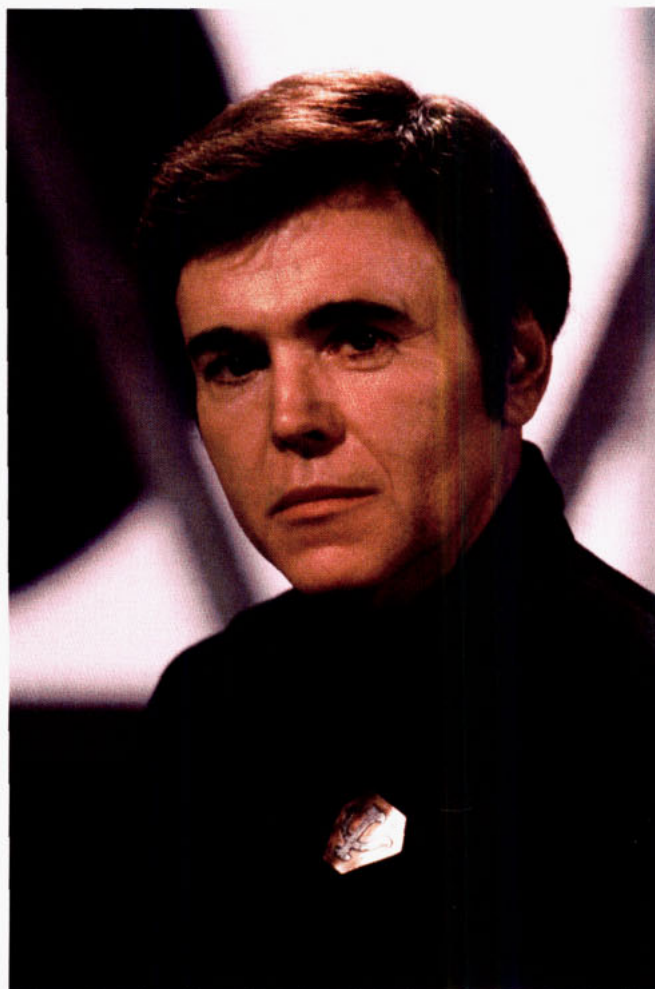
Abilities: Str 10, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 18

Skills: Bluff +8, Computer Use +6, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (telepathy) +17, Listen +8, Pilot +10, Sense Motive +12, Spot +9, Telepathy +23, Technical (space travel) +5

Feats: Ability Focus (danger sense), Ability Focus (deep scan), Ability Focus (surface scan), Alertness, Combat Telepath, Defensive Block, Far Telepathy, Iron Will, Mental Fortress, Point Blank Shot, Spacecraft Proficiency, Weapon Focus (PPG), Weapon Proficiency (spacecraft weapons)

Standard Equipment: EF-7 PPG, Psi Corps insignia and gloves.

A high-ranking Psi Cop, Alfred Bester has only visited Babylon 5 once, during the Ironheart incident. However, Commander Sinclair's willingness to disregard Psi Corps rules has earned Babylon 5 the enmity of Bester. He tried to place Sinclair under suspicion during a routine investigation with the help of a friend, Colonel Ari Ben Zayn, though while this ploy caused the Commander no end of trouble, it ultimately failed. However, Babylon 5 is rapidly becoming a galactic hub and is a natural place for rogue telepaths to make for when trying to escape the Earth Alliance and Psi Corps – it can only be a matter of time before Bester shows up on the station once again on official business.





Mr Morden

'One thing at a time, Ambassador. One thing at a time.'

3rd Level Human Scientist/6th Level Shadow Agent

Hit Points: 31

Initiative: +0 (+0 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 11 (+1 Reflex)

Attacks: +3 melee or +4 ranged

Special Qualities: Primary Area of Study (xenoarchaeology), Use Alien Artefact, Shadow-Speak, Telepathic Resistance, A Friend to Everyone x2, Sense Vorlon Presence, Never Alone x2, Regenerative Recovery,

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +11

Abilities: Str 9, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 18

Skills: Computer Use +10, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +10, Knowledge (alien life) +13, Knowledge (xenoarchaeology) +8, Listen +5, Medical +6, Sense Motive +12, Spot +8, Technical (electronics) +8

Feats: Alertness, Endurance, Nerves of Steel, Iron Will, Great Fortitude

Despite having approached each of the major ambassadors during 2258, little is known about Mr Morden. Only Ambassador Mollari has had any prolonged contact with the man, benefiting from Morden's help in recovering the Eye of the Republic and the destruction of the Narn colony in Quadrant 37. Morden has made many references to his 'associates' but even Mollari has no idea who or what they are.

Shadow-Speak: Mr Morden has the ability to understand the strange language of his masters automatically. This ability does not allow him to speak in the Shadow language, which is impossible without Shadow physiology. However, Shadows are perfectly capable of understanding the language of any other race.

Telepathic Resistance: Close contact with the Shadows has granted Mr Morden with a foreboding presence that clouds the

minds of telepaths, thwarting any effort to scan or otherwise make mental contact. Mr Morden gains a +5 circumstance bonus to any Will saving throw made to resist a telepathic ability. A telepath failing to use an ability against Mr Morden will be subjected to a fundamental sense of darkness and foreboding, penetrating into his mind and shaking his grip on reality. The telepath will suffer 2d6 points of subdual damage, ignoring any Damage Reduction.

A Friend to Everyone: Mr Morden's Charisma score includes a +4 inherent bonus gained through service to his mysterious masters.

Sense Vorlon Presence: Mr Morden is able to sense when anything influenced by the Vorlons is close by. Whenever a Vorlon, Vorlon agent or item of Vorlon technology comes within 30 ft. of him, he may make a Wisdom check (DC 15). Success will result in him feeling distinctly uneasy, signifying that a Vorlon presence is close. He gains no

other information such as location or identity.

Never Alone: Mr Morden is never alone. Two Shadows, mysterious creatures with abilities that make engaging them in combat a ludicrous concept for any mortal being, are present at all times to advise him and protect their collective interests. The Shadow companions remain invisible but are under no control – if anything, it will require Mr Morden to perform tasks. Under no circumstances will these terrible creatures reveal themselves before 2260; there is too much at stake.

Regenerative Recovery: Mr Morden has several small modules of Shadow technology implanted within his body, greatly boosting his own immune system and allowing him to recovery from terrible injuries very quickly. Mr Morden always stabilizes automatically if taken below 0 hit points, assuming he is not slain outright. Also, his natural healing rate for both hit point and ability damage is doubled.

Zack Allen

'You got it, chief. Anything else?'

4th Level Human Soldier

Hit Points: 18

Initiative: +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 15 (+5 Reflex)

Attacks: +5 melee or +6 ranged

Special Qualities: Covering Fire, Low-Light Vision

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 12

Skills: Balance +2, Bluff +4, Climb +4, Computer Use +4, Concentration +2, Diplomacy +2, Intimidate +6, Listen +3, Jump +5, Sense Motive +8, Spot +6, Survival +2

Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Aim, Weapon Focus (PPG), Skill Focus (Sense Motive)

Standard Equipment: Earthforce wrist link, EF-7 PPG.



An important member of Garibaldi's security force, Zack Allen is the person he leans on to make sure things get done correctly around the station. Zack thrives under pressure, though he is not afraid to let his superiors know when he thinks things are getting out of hand. Zack is aware of his surroundings and has a good sense of danger, though just like his mentor Garibaldi he does not always watch his back as well as he should.

Sample Characters

This section includes many sample characters that can be used by the Games Master in conjunction with those presented on p144 of the main rulebook in order to quickly flesh out scenarios and story arcs. They may be used as a guide to creating new personalities or as a quick and handy reference when characteristics of a new character are required during a scenario.

Starfury Pilot

3rd Level Human Officer (pilot); hp 12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; DV 13; +4 melee, +5 ranged; SQ Rallying Call; Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 10

Skills and Feats: Computer Use +7, Concentration +6, Listen +3, Medical +4, Pilot +11, Spot +3, Technical (engineering) +4, Technical (space travel) +7; Dogfighter, Skill Focus (pilot), Spacecraft Proficiency, Vehicle Dodge, Weapon Proficiency (spacecraft weapons)

Warrior Caste Crewman

4th Level Minbari (warrior caste) Officer (fleet); hp 12; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; DV 15; +6 melee, +5 ranged; SQ Rallying Call; Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 9

Skills and Feats: Computer Use +6, Concentration +4, Listen +7, Medical +3, Pilot +4, Spot +6, Technical (space travel) +6;

Data Access, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes, Spacecraft Proficiency, Way of the Warrior

ISN Reporter

5th Level Human Worker (white collar); hp 16; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; DV 12; +2 melee, +3 ranged; SQ None; Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 15

Skills and Feats: Bluff +4, Computer Use +6, Concentration +5, Gather Information +5, Listen +5, Profession (journalist) +10, Spot +5, Technical (communications) +4; Iron Will, Skill Focus (profession - journalist), Skill Focus (gather information)

Markab Priest

2nd Level Markab Diplomat; hp 9; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; DV 11; +1 melee, +2 ranged; SQ Contact (government official); Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 14

Skills and Feats: Concentration +5, Diplomacy +3, Gather Information +4, Knowledge (Markab religion) +7, Profession (priest) +4; Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Skill Focus (knowledge - religion)

Centauri Noble (antagonist)

1st Level Soldier/3rd Level Centauri Agent; hp 17; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; DV 15; +4 melee, +5 ranged; SQ Weapons Training, Security Systems, Sneak Attack +1d6; Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 12

Skills and Feats: Bluff +4, Computer Use +4, Concentration +4, Diplomacy +2, Gather Information +6, Hide +5, Intimidate +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Profession (court noble) +4, Spot +4, Sense Motive +5; Weapon Focus (coutari), Great Fortitude, Noble Birth

Narn Citizen

1st Level Worker (blue collar)/1st Level Narn Soldier; hp 11; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; DV 11; +4 melee, +2 ranged; SQ Weapons Training; Fort +8, Ref +1, Will +; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Computer Use +2, Listen +5, Profession (civil engineer) +5, Spot +4, Technical (industrial machinery) +4; Great Fortitude, Blood Rage, Weapon Focus (knife)

Drazi Smuggler

4th Level Drazi Lurker; hp 13; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; DV 14; +5 melee, +3 ranged; SQ DR 1, Smuggler's Luck, Multi-Skilled (pilot); Fort +4, Ref +4, Wis +1; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 11

Skills and Feats: Appraise +5, Bluff +5, Computer Use +4, Gather Information +6, Listen +5, Pilot +5, Profession (smuggler) +6, Search +5, Spot +5, Technical (concealment and security devices) +4; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Improved Unarmed Strike, Spacecraft Proficiency

Brakiri Poisonmonger

1st Level Diplomat/2nd Level Brakiri Scientist; hp 12; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; DV 12; +1 melee, +2 ranged; SQ Primary Area of Study (knowledge - chemistry), Medical Specialty (toxicology); Fort +4, Ref +2, Wis +4; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 15

Skills and Feats: Appraise +4, Bluff +4, Computer Use +5, Concentration +4, Gather Information +5, Listen +5, Medical +5, Knowledge (chemistry) +5 (+6), Profession (merchant) +6, Sense Motive +4, Spot +4, Technical (chemical engineering) +4; Skill Focus (profession - merchant), Skill Focus (knowledge - chemistry)

The Galaxy of 2259

This chapter features a complete episode guide to the second season of the Babylon 5 television show, covering the Earth year 2259. Games Masters utilising the Signs and Portents chapter of the main rulebook to define their own campaigns can readily extend the same story arcs beyond 2258, allowing his players activities to mirror those of Captain Sheridan and the rest of the crew on board the Babylon 5 diplomatic station. Those exploring other regions or timelines of the galaxy will also find much of use in this chapter, either a background material to events of the past or future, or to give an insight into specific locations and characters that will feature in the campaign. Chapter 9 of the main rulebook gives all the advice a Games Master will need to bring the events detailed here to his own scenarios in a meaningful way that will lend a greater impact to the campaign he is portraying for his players.

The theme of the year 2258 (Signs and Portents) was very much to set the scene to the story of Babylon 5, allowing players to come to grips with the galaxy and the races that inhabit it, as well as give the feeling that great changes were coming. In *The Coming of Shadows*, set in 2259, those changes begin to swing into action, shaking the lives of billions – it is an interesting time to live, to be sure. By the end of the year, the players will believe they know exactly what is happening in the galaxy and what they need to do to fulfil their own ambitions and goals. Games Masters should strive to give their players the feeling that there is a great deal of work ahead of them, but that the end may well be in sight. This will turn out to be far from the truth, however, as the entire galaxy will all be turned upside down in the forthcoming *Point of No Return* sourcebook, detailing the year 2260. The epic saga of Babylon 5 continues...

Each episode of the television show's second season is arranged chronologically in this chapter by the date within 2259 that it occurred, allowing Games Masters to structure their campaigns around these great events. Each episode begins with a detailed synopsis that provides everything necessary to base scenarios around it, followed by any necessary game or background

information unique to the episode and not provided for in other chapters.

Point of Departure (January 8th 2259)

'I told them, Delenn, as I was ordered. I only wish I could've told them the rest. About the great enemy that is returning. About the prophecy that the two sides of our spirit must unite against the darkness or be destroyed. They say it will take both of our races to stop the darkness.'

Lennier

Captain John Sheridan of the EAS *Agamemnon* received a Gold Channel signal in the early hours of January 8th from General Hague, of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, soon after dealing with hijackers in the Tau Ceti system. A Minbari warcruiser had been sighted in Earth space, just two jumps from the Babylon 5 diplomatic station. Though the Earth/Minbari War had been over for twelve years, it was presumed that this warcruiser was the *Trigati*, a renegade from the Battle of the Line with possible hostile intent. The Minbari government had already dispatched another warcruiser to intercept the *Trigati* and Hague ordered Sheridan to travel to Babylon 5 and make personal contact with the renegade. Though Sheridan was concerned about the reaction his reputation and action in the Earth/Minbari War might bring, Hague was keen to see him take on this duty as he had already proved that even Minbari warcruisers could be defeated. However, Sheridan's new orders were to prove more complicated, as there was another job Hague wanted him to fulfil, and this one came straight from President Clark.

Five days prior to this, Commander Sinclair had been recalled back to Earth, leaving Lieutenant Commander Ivanova to cope with the running of Babylon 5. The death of Earth Alliance President Santiago had shaken many of the crew and with the added burden of trying to run the station, Security Chief Garibaldi still in critical condition in Medlab and Ambassador Delenn refusing to

leave her quarters, it was a testament to Ivanova's leadership qualities that things had run smoothly during this time. After contacting Sheridan, General Hague called Ivanova on Babylon 5's Gold Channel to inform her that Commander Sinclair was being reassigned – permanently. He was to act as the first Earth ambassador to Minbar. The reasons for Sinclair's transfer were classified but Hague admitted that the Minbari had specifically asked for him. In Sinclair's place, Captain Sheridan would be assigned as commanding officer and military governor of Babylon 5. Ivanova had once served with Sheridan at the transfer point off Io and respected his abilities but knew he would be a controversial choice.

Watching and praying over the chrysalis that contained Delenn as she slowly



transformed, Lennier received a visit from Satai Hedronn, a member of the Grey Council. He was angry at the actions Delenn had taken upon herself after the Grey Council had told her to wait – after all, prophecy would always attend to itself. Hedronn informed Lennier that the *Trigati* had been sighted in the vicinity of Babylon 5 and that if it should appear, he was to go to the humans and tell them what the Grey Council had told him. It was time the truth was revealed.

Sheridan's arrival on Babylon 5 caused Ivanova no little amount of panic, as a miscommunication between the station and his transport resulted in him coming to the station several hours earlier than expected. Ivanova's plan for a full honour guard to greet him evaporated but she dutifully surrendered command of the station to him as he made his way through customs. Sheridan immediately asked for a status report and was told that Security Chief Michael Garibaldi was still struggling for life after having been shot in the back while uncovering an alleged assassination conspiracy against President Santiago, Ambassador G'Kar had mysteriously vanished, after a full year still no one knew what Ambassador Kosh really looked like under his encounter suit and Ambassador Delenn was inside a cocoon. Overall, Babylon 5 was an interesting place. . .

Ivanova showed Sheridan to his new quarters which over-awed him somewhat. They were far larger than those he was used to on the *Agamemnon* and came with the most luxurious of items in space – a running water shower. Ivanova was curious as to why he had been chosen to lead Babylon 5, as she had figured that they would have been lumbered with an admiral or some other high level bureaucrat. Sheridan explained that he had been the late president's first choice to replace Sinclair if anything untoward had happened and, serving on the *Agamemnon*, he had gained a great deal of experience in negotiating with other races, even the Minbari. It was this that concerned Ivanova, for she knew they still called him Star Killer and neither of them really believed that the Minbari would simply let his new appointment rest, even after twelve years since the war. However, she was very relieved to see him take his new command.

Elsewhere on the station, Hedronn spotted Kalain, the captain of the *Trigati* in the Zocalo. He tried to follow Kalain through the crowds but was grabbed and pulled into the shadows when they entered quieter corridors in Brown Sector. Kalain accused the Grey Council of betraying all Minbari – the *Trigati* had intercepted a message from the Earth Alliance to Minbar. He knew that Sinclair was now on their homeworld and did not believe that he was there to act purely as an ambassador, despite Hedronn's assurances. He also knew that Sheridan Star Killer had been posted to command Babylon 5, which he regarded as an obscenity. Hedronn tried to explain that the Grey Council had protested Sheridan's appointment but had been ignored by the Earth Alliance. Kalain shocked him by asking if Delenn had also ignored them, revealing that the *Trigati*'s crew had supporters even on the Council. He knew that the Grey Council never told anyone the whole truth and warned Hedronn to leave Babylon 5 if he valued his life.

Before meeting Sheridan in Command & Control to introduce him to the rest of the crew, Ivanova visited Medlab to see Dr Franklin and check on Garibaldi's condition, as she had done so everyday since his attack. The Security Chief was still deep in a coma, despite Medlab's best efforts, and Franklin was unable to say when he could be roused – it could be days, weeks, months or even years.

On the deck in Command & Control, Sheridan met the crew of Babylon 5 and proceeded to give his 'good luck speech', a tradition he always followed within twenty-four hours of taking on a new assignment. However, he was interrupted by a call from Security. A Minbari was demanding to see him on a matter concerning the security of the station. He had refused to say what the matter was about, only that it was absolutely urgent. Breaking off from his speech, Sheridan prepared to receive the Minbari in his office.

Kalain, meanwhile, had managed to get past the security stations guarding Green Sector but was intercepted by an officer as he made his way to Delenn's quarters. At first he pretended to be lost but when the security officer demanded to see his identicard, Kalain attacked and knocked the man unconscious.

Hedronn met with Sinclair and Ivanova, informing them that Kalain was a renegade, the second in command on board a warcruiser who had not been seen since the Earth/Minbari War, and they should make all efforts to apprehend him. This done, Hedronn would make arrangements to have him transported back to the Minbari homeworld. Sheridan was immediately suspicious and asked if Kalain had served on board the *Trigati*. This questioning confused Ivanova, who had never heard of the *Trigati*, and annoyed Hedronn who was extremely reluctant to talk about the subject. He finally explained that, during the war, a warcruiser captain known as Sineval refused to heed the Grey Council's order to surrender during the Battle of the Line and instead took his own life to retain honour. Kalain assumed command of the *Trigati* and the warcruiser disappeared into self-imposed exile. They believed they had been betrayed by both the Minbari government and Earth but Kalain's new appearance could indicate that they meant to come out of retirement. However, Sheridan pushed for more information. Hedronn had introduced himself as being part of the Minbari Ministry of Culture. If that were true, how could someone in the religious caste's Ministry of Culture know a warcruiser captain well enough to recognise him twelve years later? Hedronn refused to answer, stating that he did not recognise Sheridan's authority – unlike Sinclair, the Minbari had not been consulted on his appointment. Brushing aside Sheridan's flat statement that the president believed the Minbari had too much influence over an Earth outpost, Hedronn reminded both EarthForce officers that the Minbari had lost many of the finest warriors because of him during the war, and they did not soon forget such things. The only doom on the station was the one that Sheridan had brought himself.

After this heated debate, Hedronn left Sheridan's office, leaving the captain convinced that he had just met one of the Grey Council, the only members of the religious caste that would have had contact with a high-ranking individual of the warrior caste. Ivanova saw she had been proved right about the Minbari's reaction to Sheridan's new position and took the opportunity to ask him about the *Dark Star*. He explained that there was not much style and finesse involved in the action. The *Dark Star* was a huge warcruiser that took full advantage of the Minbari's stealth technology, meaning no EarthForce ship could lock its weapons on to it. However, Sheridan hit upon the idea of mining the asteroid field between Jupiter and Mars with fusion bombs – after all, they did not need to lock on to anything to work. Before the Minbari fleet could escape, the *Dark Star* and two other support ships had been destroyed by Sheridan's ingenuity. This was the only real victory humanity had during the whole war, and Sheridan refused to apologise for it.

Giving more thought to what Hedronn had said about Kalain, he posed Ivanova a question – if Kalain believed that he had

been betrayed by his own world, would his first target not be the representative of that world? Quickly gathering a security team, Sheridan made his way with all haste to Delenn's quarters, to find Kalain holding Lenneir at gunpoint. Moving in, the security officers apprehended Kalain and disarmed him, before taking the Minbari to a holding station. Sheridan briefly introduced himself to Lenneir, who was very defensive and anxious to get the EarthForce officer out of the quarters as quickly as possible. Blocking Sheridan's view of Delenn's chrysalis, he explained that the ambassador was currently indisposed and suggested the captain may want to come back much later.

In the holding station, Sheridan tried to interrogate Kalain in order to get some answers, but the Minbari was reluctant to say anything. Sheridan knew that Kalain could have killed both Lenneir and Delenn within minutes but instead he was found practically waiting for the security team. Kalain kept silent for much of the time, suggesting only that if there was a problem on the station, it was likely down to Sheridan's presence.

When it became clear that Kalain was not going to answer any of his questions, Sheridan left the holding station with Ivanova, only to be met by Lenneir who apologised for his behaviour in Delenn's quarters, and asked to speak to them both on a most important matter. He wished to discuss the reason Sheridan had been sent to Babylon 5, why Sinclair was now on Minbar and, most surprising to the EarthForce officer, why the Minbari had chosen to surrender during the Battle of the Line...

Returning once again to Sheridan's officer, they listened to Lenneir as he began to explain what no human had ever been told. During the holy war that began with the death of Dukhat at the hands of a human exploratory division, the Minbari had driven their enemy all the way back to Earth. The few ships mustered to defend Earth against the approaching Minbari fleet in the Battle of the Line were

not considered to be any kind of obstacle and the Grey Council had arrived to oversee final victory. They wished to know Earth's defences before the final assault began and so resolved to capture a human for interrogation – in this case, they picked Sinclair as he attempted to ram their warcruiser in a Starfury. This was the first time any member of the Grey Council would have direct contact with a human and during his interrogation, torture and scanning, they discovered something terrible. It is the Minbari belief that souls are reborn into the next generation of Minbari upon the death of their original bodies, forming a greater collective whole. Thus, if those souls are removed, the entire race is diminished. However, over the past two thousand years, the Minbari have noticed that fewer and fewer Minbari are being born into each generation and that those who are do not seem the equal to those who came before. It seemed as if Minbari souls were somehow disappearing.

During the Battle of the Line, the Grey Council finally discovered where these lost souls were going – Minbari souls were being reborn, in part or in full, within human bodies. The Grey Council ordered the surrender at the Battle of the Line to avoid harming any more of their own souls. However, they also knew that neither humans nor their own people were ready for this information, as it could unravel both societies. They instead chose to keep the secret which Lenneir had now passed on to Sheridan and Ivanova, warning that it was a secret that had to be kept. He had only be ordered to come forward to them now as great changes were coming in the galaxy. Sinclair was the first to be discovered with a Minbari soul – there would be more.

Lenneir's revealing discussion was then interrupted by a station-wide alert. A Minbari Sharlin warcruiser identifying itself as the *Trigati* has just jumped into Babylon 5 space on an attack vector, with targeting systems active and gunports open. Rushing to Command & Control, Sheridan announced a red alert to all quarters before scrambling fighters and activating the station's



defence grid. He received a communication from the second in command of the *Trigati*, a female of the warrior caste announcing herself as Alyt Deeron. She demanded the release of her captain and ordered Sheridan to turn him over. Even as Sheridan began to negotiate, she launched the *Trigati*'s full complement of Nial fighters which immediately began to close in on Babylon 5. In response, Sheridan ordered the launch of Zeta Wing but pleaded with Deeron to recall her own fighters as any attack on the station could only be considered an act of war. In return, she simply declared that the war had already begun and that all remained was honour and death.

This response mystified Sheridan, as no one had yet died and the *Trigati* had not attacked any of the ships that had sighted it before now. So far, there was no reason for the confrontation to escalate. Suddenly, he guessed just why the *Trigati* may have entered Babylon 5 space at this time. Contacting Security, he was dismayed to hear that Kalain was indeed dead, presumably from self-administered poison. This had been arranged by Kalain and his crew prior to the *Trigati*'s arrival in an attempt to make it look as if humans were provoking them and, given Sheridan's history with the Minbari, he was the perfect target for this action. Because the Grey Council had decided not to inform anyone else of the reasons behind the surrender at the Battle of the Line, the *Trigati*'s crew had no idea that they were not supposed to attack. However, with Minbari fighters fast approaching with weapons hot, they had no choice but to defend themselves. Knowing the consequences that were bound to occur later, Sheridan gave Zeta Wing orders to intercept and engage the Minbari.

Moving over to the tracking station in Command & Control, Sheridan realised they were able to monitor the approaching Minbari perfectly, even though Babylon 5 was using the same sensor packages that EarthForce had during the Earth/Minbari War. With the stealth systems available to all Minbari craft, they should not be able to track them at all. Playing on a hunch, Sheridan ordered Zeta Wing to hold position. Leading the wing, Lieutenant Keffer protested the order until it was confirmed by Ivanova who, in truth, was just as confused by Sheridan's order as the pilots of Zeta Wing.

Working fast, Sheridan prepared a data crystal and ordered Ivanova to use Babylon 5's laser delivery system to send the message contained within to the jumpgate without it being intercepted by the *Trigati*. Doing as she was told, Ivanova pointed out that if it were a distress call it would do no good, as there were no EarthForce ships close enough to lend assistance. Keffer contacted Command & Control again, begging to be allowed to advance and fire. His entire wing was merely holding station as the Minbari fighters approached, providing sitting targets. As the Nial fighters closed within weapons range, they simply flew past the Starfuries of Zeta Wing without engaging, before looping back towards the *Trigati*.

A second Minbari Sharlin warcruiser came through the jumpgate, prompting Ivanova to believe the *Trigati* had just been waiting for reinforcements before beginning its assault but Sheridan dismissed her fears – the second warcruiser had arrived because he had called for them. He had known that the Minbari Federation had dispatched a warcruiser to locate the *Trigati* themselves but because no other ships had sighted it, he guessed it had been waiting in hyperspace until it received a report of the *Trigati*'s presence. He explained to Ivanova that the *Trigati*'s crew had been in exile for twelve years. Unable to go home or surrender without dishonour, they had instead chosen to die by human hands and so

become martyrs, starting another war. The proof was in Babylon 5's ability to track them – they had disabled their stealth systems because they wanted to be destroyed.

The second warcruiser ordered the *Trigati* to stand down and prepare to be boarded but it instead opened a jump point and prepared to leave. A single directed blast from the warcruiser's neutron laser disabled the *Trigati*'s engines, leaving it dead in space without harming any of its crew. In response, the *Trigati* recalled its fighters before overloading its fusion reactors and detonating in a huge explosion.

Sheridan contacted the remaining Minbari warcruiser to thank them for their support but was immediately rebuffed. The crew of the *Trigati* were considered as heroes by many Minbari and the day's events were a great sorrow – their deaths would be mourned and Sheridan's name would, once again, be remembered.

Later in the day, Ivanova visited Sheridan in his quarters as he unpacked his belongings and began to settle in. He was a little disenchanted by the encounter with the Minbari, having at first thought that his assignment to Babylon 5 was a great opportunity. Now he believed his acceptance of command could have been irresponsible. If Sinclair had been in command, the *Trigati* may not have attacked, for it was his actions during the war that drew them to the station. He told Ivanova that he had spoken with President Clark about the day's events. Clark did not believe in the idea of Minbari souls being reborn into human bodies and neither did Sheridan but, the Minbari clearly believed it, which is why Sinclair had been chosen to serve on their world. They trusted him. Ivanova dismissed Sheridan's fears, telling him there was enough guilt in the universe without him having to grab for more. However, if he ever wanted to talk about this more, he could always come to her in confidence.

In Delenn's quarters, Lenneir tended to his ambassador's chrysalis before retiring for the night. Not knowing whether she could hear him or not, Lenneir told Delenn what had happened but regretted that he had not been permitted to tell the humans more. The Great Enemy was coming and the two halves of their spirits must be united if it were to be defeated. However, he had faith that the humans would learn all of this on their own soon enough. Wrapped in his own concerns, he did not notice the slight crack that had appeared in the chrysalis.

Lieutenant Keffer joined the Command Staff in Earhart's in the evening, still griping about being ordered to hold position while being engaged by Minbari fighters. The rest all discussed the arrival of their new captain, agreeing that he seemed to be a good replacement for Sinclair. Ivanova had arranged for him to meet them all at Earhart's but Franklin informed her that he had met Sheridan on the way, to be told that the captain would be a little late as he was due to give a good luck speech in Command & Control. Ivanova groaned, knowing that, at this time of night, Sheridan would be giving his speech to an offline deck that would be completely empty of personnel.

Jeffrey Sinclair

While it has been made known that Jeffrey Sinclair is now the first Earth ambassador permitted permanent residence on Minbar, his mandate is just a little broader. However, only Sinclair and a few Minbari are aware of his true purpose at this time. Any human players lucky enough to be able to travel to Minbar may call upon Sinclair to aid them in any diplomatic entanglements they find themselves. They will find that his reassignment has not affected



his personality since the year before, and he remains a reasoned and thoughtful man, always ready to advise caution and patience over rash action. However, he will also be very secretive and will not look too kindly on those who seek to pry into his private life on the Minbari homeworld.

While working on Minbari, visitors will note that he always seems to have a member of the religious caste working as his aide and assistant, a Minbari called Rathenn. This may seem a little unusual to those who come to see Sinclair on official business but any questions will simply be deflected by the explanation that the Minbari would not permit more than one permanent human resident on their homeworld and so his diplomatic staff had to be someone of their race. He will assure any human visitor that Rathenn is an honourable man who can be trusted with any matter of import.

The Trigati

For the past eleven years since the Battle of the Line, the *Trigati* has remained in self-imposed exile, keeping far from any possible contact from either humans or Minbari. The crew have, however, received limited help from sympathisers within the Minbari government itself who are in agreement with their actions and so have kept the *Trigati* in full working order over this time, providing maintenance facilities and, in a few cases, even replacement crew. It is not recommended that the *Trigati* play any part in scenarios created by the Games Master as they will have no interest in the actions of the players and will wish to remain as far from the influence of other races as much as possible. However, the Games Master can foreshadow the events of 2259 by having the players sight a Minbari warcruiser in a completely inappropriate place, within the Earth Alliance, for example, or in the League of Non-Aligned Worlds. It will try to do everything possible to avoid contact and certainly will not respond to any communications. It might be possible for players to witness it taking on supplies or engaging in some other suspicious activity; just enough to get them asking questions which may then be answered in this episode.

The *Trigati* is a standard Sharlin warcruiser in full working order, thanks to the support received by certain members of the Minbari government. It is considered to have an elite crew, as detailed on p99 of the main rulebook.

Scenarios and Campaign Hooks

5 In terms of pacing, the year 2259 should begin with a real bang for the players – a great deal of action to motivate them once more after the fear, mistrust and paranoia of the end of 2258. Whether

it is a battle in space, the largest firefight the players have ever experienced or their headquarters destroyed in a huge explosion, come up with something cinematic. Think big budget. Babylon 5 was attacked by a Minbari warcruiser – what can you come up with that will grab your players' attention?

5 You can make the lives of any players with Minbari warrior caste characters very difficult by using the *Trigati* as a hook.

Revelations (January 17th 2259)

'There you see - one deserts his post without any explanation, the other one picks the most breathtakingly inconvenient moment possible to explore new career options, like becoming a butterfly!'

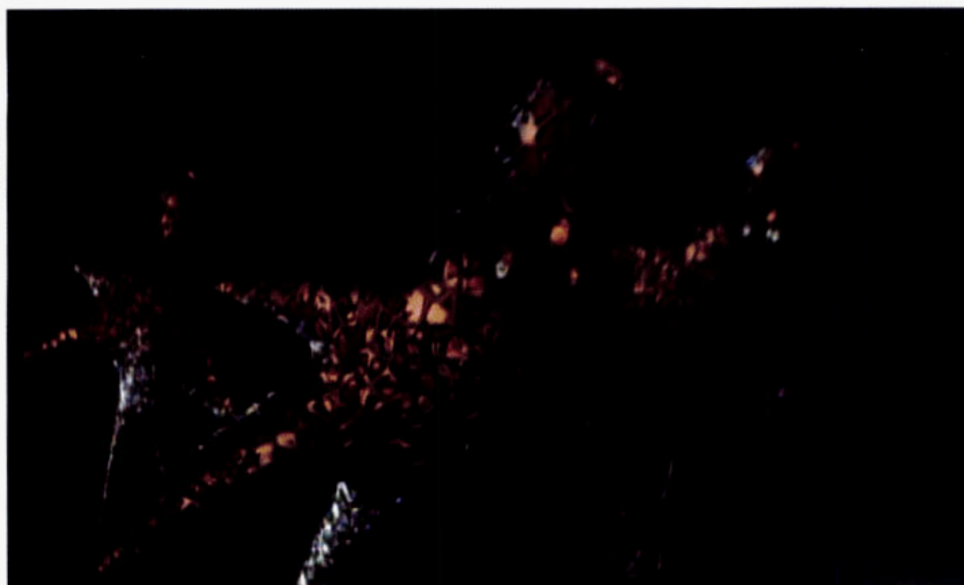
Londo Mollari

The daily meeting of the Babylon 5 Advisory Council was stymied in the morning due to a lack of members present, much to the annoyance of Centauri Ambassador Londo Mollari, who had hoped to push through new station trade policies beneficial to his government. Ambassador G'Kar was still absent, pursuing his investigation of the destruction of the Narn colony in Quadrant 37. Delenn was still sequestered within her quarters, bound within a cocoon, to what purpose none had been able to determine. The places of the missing ambassadors were taken in the Council by their respective aides, Na'Toth and Lenneir, who had been granted little real authority in the absence of their employers. Realising that little would be accomplished until G'Kar and Delenn could return, Captain Sheridan adjourned the meeting until the next day.

Light years away, at the edge of known space, G'Kar and three wingmen were being pursued by alien fighters, having travelled too close to territory now claimed by a powerful but unknown race. As the Narn Frazi fighters raced for the jumpgate, it was clear that the alien craft clearly had the advantage in speed and firepower. Sacrificing themselves, G'Kar's wingmen reversed direction and succeeded in destroying one of their pursuers by ramming the craft, giving the ambassador time to reach the jumpgate and set course for Babylon 5.

Early in the evening, Dr Franklin located Sheridan in Earharts, who was waiting to meet his sister, due to arrive on the station. Franklin wanted to talk about Security Chief Garibaldi's critical condition as, over the past two weeks, he had exercised his vast experience to rouse Garibaldi from the coma but nothing had worked. With some desperation, he had turned his attention to his recently acquired alien healing device (see Quality of Mercy on p252 of the main rulebook) but knew of the risks inherent in its use. Having tried and failed to reach Garibaldi's next of kin, he turned to his Captain for permission to try this unauthorised procedure. Knowing that he had little choice, Sheridan agreed to this extreme measure.

While Franklin met with Sheridan, Mollari had arranged a rendezvous with Mr Morden within a secluded part of the Garden in Green Sector. The ambassador was concerned that the attack on Quadrant 37 arranged by Mr Morden and his associates was beginning to gain too much attention, and wanted assurances that no evidence linked him to the incident. Mr Morden was quick to assure him that no such link existed and, more over, the attention



that Mollari was worrying about was successfully creating a stir among the Centauri government. For once they had noticed Mollari and it was likely that further opportunities would be placed before him in the future. Mollari pointed out that it was all too possible that he would be asked to perform other such acts but Mr Morden quickly brushed this concern away, promising to provide all the support required. All Mollari had to do was pick a target, an outpost or a colony perhaps. Mollari, in jest, suggested that perhaps Mr Morden and his associates could destroy the Narn homeworld while they were at it but his humour quickly ran cold when the agent merely responded that they should take things one step at a time. Before parting, Mr Morden requested a small favour of Mollari, in return for the good efforts of his associates. Knowing that Mollari was in a position to hear many things, he asked that the ambassador pass on any information regarding activities out on the Rim, no matter how insignificant they might appear.

After deciding Garibaldi's fate in Medlab, Sheridan travelled to the Customs area of the station to meet his sister, Lizzie. This was the first time he had seen her for over a year and they had much to catch up on. Sending Lizzie's luggage to her quarters, Sheridan escorted her to the Fresh Air Restaurant so they could talk over dinner. Lizzie became quickly concerned that her brother's conversation concentrated purely on work. Though he was obviously passionate about his new post and the opportunities it presented, she knew him too well not to see he was avoiding the issue that both were painfully aware of. She tried to talk to Sheridan about the death of his wife, Anna, who had also been a friend of Lizzie's. Sheridan flatly denied wanting the conversation to take this turn, though he acknowledged that seeing his sister again brought his memories of Anna back to the surface. He persuaded Lizzie to leave the subject be for now, giving them time to just talk and catch up with each other's lives.

Having escorted his sister back to her quarters, Sheridan's thoughts turned towards ideas of life and death, and he made his way to Medlab where Franklin was beginning to hook Garibaldi into the alien healing device. Sheridan announced that he would be the one to donate life energy to the Security Chief, provoking immediate argument from Franklin who saw that as his duty. Finally, they compromised, taking it in turns to use the alien device to heal Garibaldi. Over the course of the night, Garibaldi's condition stabilised and began to show remarkable signs of improvement.

Though he remained unconscious, Franklin was confident that he would begin the slow process of recovery, thanks to the alien technology.

Five days later, Na'Toth returned to G'Kar's quarters to finalise a minor diplomatic matter and was startled to find the ambassador within, waiting for her. He warned her to weep for the future, for he had discovered something disturbing during his investigation into the attack on Quadrant 37. He had known that it would have taken a major power to destroy the colony based there but none of the governments represented on board Babylon 5 could have done it. That could only mean that there was a new race or an old race – a very old race. He knew that the Book of G'Quan spoke of an ancient war so terrible it nearly blotted out

the stars, waged against an enemy who dwelled on the Rim of known space. G'Kar had spent nearly a month travelling between dark and deserted worlds only to find that there was indeed an alien force slowly moving, gathering its forces while hoping to go unnoticed. He knew they had to warn the other governments of the impending threat, for after a thousand years the darkness was to finally come again.

In Medlab, Garibaldi awoke to the attentions of Franklin, who quickly notified Ivanova and Sheridan. Garibaldi's first impulse was to warn them about the threat to President Santiago. He was dismayed to hear that not only had the president been killed but that his friend, Commander Sinclair, had been reassigned away from Babylon 5 while he had lain in a coma. Garibaldi rejected the suggestion that the president's death had been an accident but when asked about his own brush with death, he was less sure – he could remember nothing about the attack that had left him for dead.

Lenneir returned to Deleenn's quarters to find her cocoon open and the ambassador shrouded in robes. She was clearly in a great deal of pain and when she reached for her aide, Lenneir saw her hand was covered in thick scales. Distressed but following Deleenn's instructions, he called for Franklin immediately, urgently pulling the doctor away from Garibaldi's care. However, he also insisted that anything the doctor was to learn from Deleenn's condition be kept strictly confidential. Franklin was surprised that a Minbari physician had not been called but Deleenn insisted that what she suffered was for his care only. Beginning to examine Deleenn, Franklin quickly determined that the scales seeming to cover her entire body broke and peeled away under his touch but neither he nor the Minbari knew whether they were supposed to.

While off-duty, Sheridan took the opportunity to see his sister again, this time in his quarters. He told Lizzie that, despite the huge workload that running Babylon 5 had forced upon him, he still missed Anna. He blamed himself for his wife's death, telling his sister that he was directly responsible for Anna taking the science officer's post on board the *Icarus*, shortly before its fateful journey to the Rim where it inexplicably exploded while in orbit above a deserted world. They had arranged to take a vacation during their forthcoming anniversary on Centauri Prime but Sheridan found he had to cancel as he was buried under work, having just taken

command of the *Agamemnon*. He had always meant to make it up to her but he had driven Anna away, causing her to take the position on the *Icarus* for what should have just been a two week survey run. If only he had not cancelled their vacation, he lamented, his wife would still be with him right now.

On the morning of the 23rd, G'Kar confronted the Babylon 5 Advisory Council with his report of alien activity on the Rim, warning of the great danger that now faced all races. Chairing the meeting, Sheridan suggested that G'Kar may have just monitored common raider or pirate activity but the Narn was adamant – the configuration of the ships that had attacked him were too similar to those described in the Book of G'Quan to be mere coincidence. Mollari astutely pointed out that if a great enemy was poised to attack, why had no mention of it been made by the Narn government, forcing G'Kar to concede that certain members of the Kha'ri had reservations. However, he was prepared to provide hard evidence and had arranged for a cruiser to be dispatched to a world he believed to be the heart of the enemy's strength. Upon reaching this desolate planet known as Z'ha'dum, with orders to perform a preliminary scan for life signs and then return quickly to hyperspace. The Council meeting was adjourned for twelve hours, by which time the cruiser's report was expected to reach Babylon 5.

Soon after the Council adjourned, Mollari met with Mr Morden, informing him of the Narn's intentions. Mr Morden thanked him but said nothing more, though Mollari was quick to spot that the mention of Z'ha'dum had provoked a reaction from his ally.

From his bed in Medlab, Garibaldi sent for Talia Winters to help him remember the circumstances under which he had been shot. She was concerned that anything she discovered would not be admissible in court but Garibaldi assured the telepath that he only wanted her to jog his memory so that he could pursue the matter on his own. In his condition, Talia was forced to perform a deep scan, an uncomfortable experience for both of them. Together they relived the attack (see *Chrysalis* on p255 of the main rulebook), seeing the meeting with Devereaux and, to Garibaldi's horror, the image of second his in command, Jack standing behind him with a PPG reflected in a polished bulkhead. Jack was quickly arrested, though one officer, Lou Welch, proved to be a little enthusiastic for Sheridan's liking in apprehending the criminal. Jack was placed under maximum security by Sheridan's orders, with checks made every fifteen minutes.



Upon hearing of the arrest, Garibaldi roused himself to begin Jack's interrogation despite Franklin's objections concerning his health and ability to move, let alone question someone. Above all else, Garibaldi wanted to know why Jack had gone as far as to shoot him in the back, after all the time they had served together. Jack refused to answer many questions but he did warn Garibaldi that there was a new order coming on Earth and that he had placed himself on the side that was going to win. Garibaldi wrongly guessed that Jack belonged to Home Guard but in an effort to get him to talk reminded his old colleague that shooting a superior officer was considered treason and mutiny, acts punishable by spacing. With his questions leading no where, Jack gave Garibaldi a strange salute as he left, one he had only seen the Psi Cop Bester perform before, as if the man was taunting him with something he knew could never be proved.

Soon after, President Clark contacted Sheridan by Gold Channel communications after having read the report of Jack's arrest. He took the possibility of a conspiracy involving the death of his predecessor very seriously and ordered Sheridan to place Jack on the first prison shuttle to Earth, along with any evidence collated as he wanted to monitor the investigation personally. Sheridan was reluctant to do so but, faced with the wishes of his president, had little choice in the matter.

Far from Babylon 5 in the unexplored system of Z'ha'dum, a Narn G'Quan class heavy cruiser left hyperspace to begin its survey of the main planet. Within seconds it had been destroyed, literally torn apart by the incredible weaponry of a single dark sentry vessel that had lain in wait for the intruder.

In the Council Chambers on board Babylon 5, all the main ambassadors had assembled to hear the report of the Narn ship first hand. However, the meeting began with Na'Toth informing G'Kar that the ship had been destroyed as it left hyperspace. The Kha'ri believed an accident had occurred in the ship's jump engines but that they could not afford to send another in the near future. G'Kar did not believe a word of it. He suggested to the Council that as a ship leaving hyperspace always drops its communications for a few vital seconds due to the tremendous energies being expended, and that it was possible the cruiser could have been attacked then. However, he admitted that the attacker would have had to have known exactly when the Narn ship was due to arrive. He suddenly realised just who might have had the motive and opportunity to do so, and his eyes fixed on Mollari. Sheridan saw what G'Kar was

thinking but the Narn refused to make any accusation, believing that he was too late to stop the events that had been set in motion.

At this point, Lennier entered, asking to introduce Ambassador Delenn to the Council. Sheridan eagerly agreed and Delenn entered, cloaked in white robes. Removing her hood, she was revealed to have long flowing hair and a distinctly more human-like appearance. She explained that just as Sinclair had been permitted to live on Minbar, so too had she undergone this change with the blessing of her government, in order to create a bridge of understanding between human and Minbari. Never again should the two races face each other in war.

During her last day on Babylon 5, Lizzie arranged to see her brother once more.



The Icarus

On January 1st 2257, the scientific vessel *Icarus* was destroyed while in orbit around a deserted world in a system on the Rim. All crew were reported lost. Among the dead was Captain John Sheridan's wife, Anna, who was a skilled scientist and a natural choice for the exploratory team. The expedition had been led by Dr Chang, a xenoarchaeologist who believed he had found evidence of an ancient alien civilisation that possessed technology far in advance of any race in the galaxy. The Earth-based corporation IPX funded the expedition and supplied the *Icarus* for Dr Chang's use, who quickly recruited a skilled and experienced crew to investigate what he believed would be millennia old ruins on the surface of a world known as Z'ha'dum.

The story of what happened on Z'ha'dum is covered in more detail in *The Coming of Shadows* on p46 and the full story is revealed in the forthcoming sourcebook *Point of No Return*.

Sheridan was understandably excited, having seen Garibaldi recovering, the president calling and Delenn's new appearance (even though the ambassador was clearly not keen to discuss her transformation in detail), all in one day. As it turned out, Lizzie had one more surprise for him. She gave him a data crystal which contained an excerpt of a message she had received from Anna just before leaving for the *Icarus*. She had been wondering whether to give it to her brother or not, but Sheridan's belief that he was the cause of his wife's death had made up her mind. Viewing the message, Sheridan saw his wife explain to Lizzie that she had already taken the post on board the *Icarus* before he had called to cancel their vacation. The message went on to explain that her project leader had found the ruins to an ancient alien civilisation and that she just had to be there for the discovery. Anna plainly felt guilty that she had left it to her husband to make the apology for cancelling their anniversary celebrations but vowed to make it up to him when she returned.

In Medlab, Garibaldi spoke quietly with Franklin and Ivanova, detailing a possible conspiracy involving the death of President Santiago. He had been thinking of the salute that Jack had given him, and remembered that a scandal had erupted the year before when the Psi Corps had endorsed Clark as a politician to its members, something forbidden by its charter. He suggested that the Corps itself may have been behind the assassination, aiming to get someone into power that was sympathetic to their ambitions. After all, Clark had left EarthForce One on Mars, just before it left for the Transfer Point off Io, claiming a viral infection – fairly convenient timing, given the accident that soon befell the president's ship.

After seeing his sister to her ship and bidding farewell as she left Babylon 5, Sheridan was contacted by Ivanova who had been doing a little background checking for Garibaldi's conspiracy theory. She had double-checked the progress of the prison ship taking Jack back to Earth, only to find that he had been transferred to another ship en route. It seemed that the second ship had possessed all the appropriate clearances but when she back-tracked its registration, she found that it was not on any EarthForce record and had subsequently disappeared, taking Jack and all the evidence with him. Sheridan suggested she contact President Clark over this development only to find that she had already tried. EarthDome had told her that the president was not receiving any calls...

The Book of G'Quan

Among his writings, the Narn spiritual leader G'Quan recorded the events of a great war that took place over one thousand years ago. The Narn were a relatively primitive people at that time and the forces that clashed throughout the galaxy paid them little heed, with one of them settling on the homeworld's southern continent, using it as a small staging post. However, G'Quan was dutiful in his observations and his book contains many sketches of the vessels the aliens used, hideous creations reminiscent of black spiders of Earth, seeming more alive than machine. G'Quan also noted that the only time that this race took any interest in the Narn was when its forces swept north to slaughter all Narn telepaths and their families. Some historians point to this as the time when the Narn lost the gene responsible for the awakening of telepathic talent but few take the writings of G'Quan seriously, citing the unreliability of sources over a thousand years old.

Scenarios and Campaign Hooks

5 G'Kar's mission to the Rim holds some exciting (not to say dangerous) possibilities for the players if they are away from Babylon 5. While it is not suggested that players actually accompany G'Kar to Z'ha'dum (only he returned, after all), he may be able to use their assistance while travelling through less civilised areas of space to Babylon 5. During this time, the agents of the great enemy he has been investigating may take another opportunity to end the ambassador's life before he can warn the other races on Babylon 5. The players could quickly find themselves in the cross-fire between the Narn and an enemy they cannot even begin to understand yet.

5 Games Masters may be tempted to begin basing scenarios on Z'ha'dum at this stage of their campaigns. Our advice is don't. There is a lot of mileage in keeping the planet as a dark and shadowy secret, only mentioned in passing by characters who claim to have been there but have no wish to return. Build up the reputation for the place, as this could become very important to your campaign later on when your players finally do make the hazardous voyage.

5 If the players had any dealings with Jack or one of his cronies (see the main rulebook), they may become very concerned when they hear of his arrest and interrogation by Garibaldi. In fact, they may well believe the entire security force on the station is

about to come down on whatever operations they have managed to set up. As it turns out, Jack reveals nothing to Garibaldi or the other officers, but this should not stop Games Masters letting their players come up with all sorts of plans to either relocate their operations or perhaps actually attempt to assassinate Jack while he is in custody.

⑤ While few Minbari were aware of the transformation that Delenn underwent until she actually revealed herself, those that had some inkling had a tendency not to agree with her unilateral decision, especially if they belonged to the warrior caste. Any player with strong links to more militant members of the warrior caste could get dragged into a plot to ruin, disgrace or even kill Delenn in order to avert what they consider to be an affront to the purity of their race. Of course, Minbari being what they are, the players may well not know who their target is or even that what they have been asked or ordered to do is in anyway dishonourable.

Geometry of Shadows (January 25th 2259)

'There is a storm coming up, a black and terrible storm.'

Elric

Having begun to recover from his near fatal attack, Garibaldi was declared fit for duty by Dr Franklin. However, the doctor noticed a certain reticence from Garibaldi when they discussed taking back the running of security. He was concerned about the new captain of the station, not sure whether his skills were still wanted, and even if he could still trust himself – after all, his own second in command had turned out to be a traitor to Babylon 5 and had been the one who had put him in a coma. At the end of the day, Garibaldi had to confront one important question; what qualified him to take back the job? At this time, he was not sure he had a good answer.

Centaury Ambassador Mollari had created a real stir in the Royal Court and this manifested itself in the form of a visit from Lord Refa, head of a prominent noble house. Though he and other members of the Centarum had thought Mollari quite mad when he announced at the end of 2258 that he was going to deal with the Narn base in Quadrant 37 himself, doubt changed to quiet amazement when the spy probes revealed that the outpost had been completely wiped out. Refa was extremely curious to know how

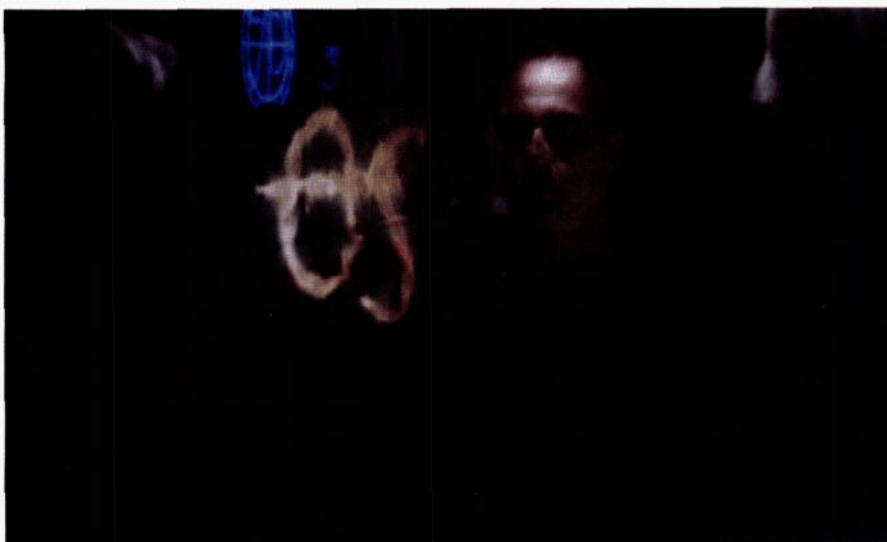
Mollari had managed to do this, as it required nothing less than a very powerful and aggressive strike force, but the ambassador was not willing to reveal his secret associations. Despite being a little irritated, Refa did not let this throw him as he had a far wider ranging agenda to discuss with someone he saw as a potential ally. Centauri Emperor Turhan had not been seen in public for over a year, becoming old, sick and frightened. The recent death of his son had left no clear path of succession to the throne of the Republic and many factions were moving their political forces into play, all waiting for the death of the Emperor to complete their coup. Refa was part of one such force and he saw in Mollari a real potential – the ambassador had already saved the Republic from yet another embarrassing surrender over Quadrant 37 and he could well be a useful tool in allowing the Centauri to reclaim their proper place in the galaxy. Though knowing he was running the risk of treason by even discussing such matters, Mollari agreed to aid Refa wherever possible. This was clearly an alliance that would bring many opportunities to him and their objectives for the Republic were so very closely matched to his own.

Lord Refa left Babylon 5 soon after, accompanied to customs by both Mollari and Vir, with a promise that he would do his best to convince other like-minded Centauri on their homeworld that the ambassador was the sign they were all waiting for to lead them back to greatness. Just arriving were three dark shrouded figures whom Mollari soon recognised as techno-mages. Vir was ignorant of what techno-mages were and so Mollari explained that they were powerful individuals, people who used science to achieve the effects of magic – they had once been common on Centauri Prime. To see a techno-mage was considered a portent of ill fortune. Three arriving on the station all at once was a bad omen indeed.

In the EarthForce Office, Lieutenant Commander Ivanova and Captain Sheridan were watching a growing problem for the station on a BabCom relay. Fights between groups of Drazi were breaking out all over the station as their homeworld's leadership contest spread throughout the galaxy. While non-Drazi were never targeted in these attacks, they were still clearly a disruption to the operation of the station, not to mention the criminal damage caused that was beginning to spiral out of control. Sheridan decided that this was the perfect mission for Ivanova to resolve, especially as he had just pushed through the paperwork to get her promoted to full commander. With the new responsibilities of her rank, she was now to learn the fine art of diplomacy, taking minor issues away from Sheridan in order for him to concentrate on more important concerns. Her first task would be to find a peaceful resolution to end the Drazi problem on Babylon 5.

Meanwhile, Mollari had been musing over the opportunities Lord Refa had offered, as well as the appearance of the techno-mages on board Babylon 5. At the formation of the Centauri Republic, many centuries ago, the first emperor was given a blessing by three techno-mages before taking the throne. This had remained a very powerful image for the Centauri and Mollari realised it would certainly do him no harm to be associated with techno-mages. Indeed, it could grant him considerable influence if, as Refa had said, there were many on Centauri Prime who were looking for a sign that would announce their return to greatness as the Lion of the Galaxy. With this idea firmly in mind he dispatched Vir,





who was less than happy with the assignment, to contact the techno-mages and arrange an audience.

After having been released from Medlab, Garibaldi had not contacted Sheridan about returning to his old duties, which surprised the captain somewhat. Deciding to bring matters to a head, Sheridan visited Garibaldi in his quarters and was a little startled to see the former security chief toying with his PPG. Deciding to brush over this, he asked Garibaldi out right whether he wanted to return as Chief of Security. Garibaldi was unable to give a straight answer and even suggested that it may be easier on everyone if he simply resigned and moved on. Though Sheridan agreed this was probably the case, given Garibaldi's colourful service record, it was obvious that he knew Babylon 5 better than anyone else on the station and that it would be extremely foolish to squander such a valuable resource. Sheridan informed Garibaldi that the position would be kept open for as long as possible but that he should not take too much time in making a decision.

In the Council Chambers, the now Commander Ivanova had managed to stop the Drazi on the station feuding long enough to get them together and begin finding a peaceful end to the ongoing conflict. However, it did not take her long to realise that there was no core political differences between the fighting Drazi. The battle for leadership of the entire race had randomly separated them into two sides – green and purple, as denoted by the sashes they wore. Stunned at the arbitrary method of the leadership contest, Ivanova decided to try an experiment, taking a sash off one Drazi and placing around the neck of another. This immediately caused the Drazi to riot against one another and she was caught in the middle, crushed by a pack of brawlers and breaking her foot in the process.

Following Mollari's orders, Vir approached the area of Downbelow the techno-mages had designated as their stronghold while on Babylon 5, a dark place they had already cast many spells of light and sound upon to dissuade intruders. It was thus with a great deal of trepidation that Vir called for their attention, announcing Mollari's desire for an audience. As he spoke, a huge bellowing ogre of a creature approached down the corridor, filling it with its threatening physique. Petrified at this apparition, Vir stood rooted to the spot, endlessly repeating his request for an audience. As it towered above him ready to strike, a techno-mage appeared and, with a word, the beast disappeared. Vir repeated his request once more but the techno-mage, who identified himself as Elric,

denied it even as Vir tried to offer substantial payment. Elric and his brothers were preparing to undertake a great voyage and where they were going, money would have no meaning. He dismissed Vir, warning him not to try the patience of a wizard.

Mollari was hardly satisfied when Vir returned with Elric's response and found it difficult to believe that there existed someone who could not be swayed by money or power. However, their blessing was too powerful a symbol for his plan to be dismissed out of hand and, despite Vir's warnings about placing himself in between the techno-mages and where they were headed, he set about approaching someone they perhaps could not ignore.

In Medlab Ivanova was suffering somewhat as Franklin fused the break in her foot. He was quickly able to heal much of the damage but warned that she would need a cast. As he prepared further treatment, Sheridan visited to see whether his commander was ready to try once more to resolve the Drazi problem. Ivanova refused to give up but admitted she had failed to resolve the differences between the green and purple Drazi as they did not actually *have* any differences. She suspected she might be able to structure the conflicts in a non-violent way but this could take a great deal of work, a responsibility Sheridan was happy to let her run with.

An hour later, Sheridan received Mollari in the EarthForce Office. Admitting that he had never met a techno-mage before and, indeed, had doubted they even existed, Sheridan listened to the ambassador's warnings that they could prove to be a great source of trouble, something the Centauri had experienced in their past. Mollari offered to assist any discussion between the techno-mages and Sheridan, and the captain accepted as he had already received a request from EarthGov to find out more information about this mysterious order. Over one hundred were now on the station and there were many in EarthDome who wanted to know just where they were heading in such large numbers.

The conflict between the Drazi on Babylon 5 was about to take a turn for the worst as Ivanova received an urgent alert from Command and Control. A message had been received from the Drazi homeworld stating that the greens had now upped the ante and were now actually killing purples in order to get ahead in their bizarre contest. Having no idea whether the Drazi on the station had heard this or not, she immediately mobilised security. She was, however, too late. By the time she and a security team arrived at the Council Chambers for another round of discussions, all she found were dead Drazi wearing purple sashes.

An hour later, Elric confronted Sheridan's demands for information in the EarthForce Office. He insisted that neither he nor the rest of the techno-mage's represented any kind of threat to the station and, furthermore, they had an absolute right to do what they wished, where they wished, with as many as they wished. For his part, Sheridan was not looking for trouble, just answers. It was at this point that Mollari entered the office, ready to offer his services. However, he also surreptitiously laid a micro-bug, ready to record the forthcoming meeting. Elric was angered at this arrival and he told Sheridan that Mollari had already begged to see

the techno-mages. Denying this emphatically, Mollari was then embarrassingly confronted by a holographic recording of Vir on Elric's palm, asking for the audience. Calling the secret recording of Vir a very low thing to do, Mollari nevertheless made the grand gesture of offering the traditional Centauri hands of friendship, which Elric graciously accepted. However, after Mollari agreed that this gesture would not be misrepresented as some form of blessing or endorsement, Elric suddenly grew angry and the micro-bug the ambassador had planted exploded in a shower of sparks. The techno-mage warned Mollari that it was a risky thing to condemn his recording of Vir while attempting to make one of his own – he further warned that from now on, the ambassador would be made to learn manners and respect. Sheridan was also fairly outraged. He suggested that Mollari leave immediately or have his attempt to bug the EarthForce Office be reported before being placed upon the slowest ship Sheridan could find travelling to Centauri Prime. Now thoroughly embarrassed, Mollari retreated.

Choosing to continue their conversation elsewhere on Babylon 5, Sheridan apologised for Mollari's behaviour as he and the techno-mage strolled through the Zocalo. However, he still wanted answers. Elric briefly explained the teachings and ethos of the techno-mage order, along with their self-declared mission to preserve all knowledge from destruction. He warned Sheridan that there was a black and terrible storm coming and the techno-mages refused to have their collected knowledge lost or misused. This was the reason for their departure. From Babylon 5, they would head out to the stars, perhaps never to return during the current generation. He could not reveal where they were going, and so asked only that Sheridan trust them.

The green Drazi base of operations on Babylon 5 had been set up in Brown 2 and it was here that Ivanova hobbled to try to find once again a peaceful resolution to the ongoing fights, a task more critical now that murder was being committed. The Drazi were keen to point out that she had not treated them with as much respect as they felt they deserved, but as she had been injured by Drazi in the Council Chambers, they were prepared to receive her. Meeting the green leader, however, proved fruitless. He launched into an impassioned tirade whereby he suggested that she tell the purple Drazi to meet them in Brown 29 where they could conduct peace talks without being disturbed. However, he then suggested that once all purple Drazi had gathered there, Ivanova should open the nearby airlock and flush all atmosphere into space, killing all the purples and thus leaving the greens victorious and the station quiet.

When Ivanova refused any part in the murderous plan, the green Drazi quickly took her hostage at knifepoint. They had already sent a message to the purple Drazi and security stations, forging her access codes, to arrange this meeting and set up the lethal trap, so could not afford to release her until the plan had been completed.

As luck would have it, Garibaldi was wandering through the corridors of Blue Sector when he ran into Officer Lou Welch leading a security team on the Drazi's false orders to clear out Brown 29. Asking what they were up to, Garibaldi's suspicions were quickly raised when he heard that Ivanova had made a data uplink to arrange this and had since reported going offline for the next few hours while she conducted negotiations. Playing on a hunch, Garibaldi quickly made his way to Brown 2 where he knew the green Drazi were based. Posing as a wandering salesman, he made his introductions loud enough for the trapped Ivanova inside to hear him. Taking the opportunity to strike the guard holding her hostage, she cried for help and Garibaldi stormed inside to free her. Moving quickly, the two EarthForce officers intercepted the main force of green Drazi as they approached Brown 29. Garibaldi had already done a little research into the leadership contest and announced that he was going to seal the gathered purple Drazi in Brown 29 for a few days, long enough to wait for the end of the fighting. However, the Drazi quickly pointed out an error in calculations between human and Drazi timescales – what Garibaldi had assumed was a contest that would last just a week turned out to be one that would go on for more than a year. Ivanova was incensed at the Drazi's cavalier attitude to murder and the arbitrary nature of the opposing sides. To reinforce her point, she ripped off the green leader's sash in order to demonstrate that it was, after all, just a piece of cloth but became aware that the whole demeanour of the Drazi before her had changed. It quickly became apparent that as she possessed the leader's sash, she was now their leader, even though she was human. Hitting upon an idea that would resolve all the fights on board Babylon 5 immediately, she commanded all the green Drazi to follow her to the Quartermaster's Office where she would requisition enough purple dye to end the contest once and for all.

Mollari was having a far worse time of things. When Vir returned to his ambassador's quarters after running several errands, he found that Elric was having his revenge for Mollari's impertinence. Power to the quarters constantly flickered while Narn opera played continually at a volume that made it hard for the Centauri even to think. Mollari sat glumly at his BabCom unit, watching as a holodemon possessed his records and fractured his finances. He was already now a proud owner of two hundred thousand shares in a Spoo ranch. Lamenting the techno-mage's unusually perverse sense of humour, he was indignant when Vir suggested that he could perhaps apologise for his actions. It was only when the BabCom unit announced that his finances had purchased five hundred thousand shares in Fireflies Incorporated before all power failed in his quarters that he finally relented.

Approaching the techno-mage's stronghold, Mollari finally apologised, in full, for his hasty actions in seeking an audience. However, he could not resist leaving the situation and suggested that if the techno-mages ever came back, they could perhaps still do business. On hearing no reply from



the hidden techno-mages, he stormed off, not noticing the small holo-demons clinging to his back.

At the end of the day, the Command Staff gathered in Earharts to officially welcome Garibaldi, who was now back in uniform. The events with Ivanova and the Drazzi had convinced him that his position as Chief of Security was the right place for him to be, for two principle reasons. First off, as Sheridan had pointed out earlier, he knew Babylon 5 better than anyone else. In the two years Garibaldi had known her, he had noticed that Ivanova had never been more than two inches from her link. Knowing that piece of information had possibly saved her life when she had been taken hostage. Second, he did not trust anyone. If someone received a message from Ivanova, he would not believe it until he heard it from her himself. Both of these qualities answered his question as to why he was suited to taking back his old duties.

The techno-mages prepared to leave Babylon 5 to head out among the stars and a rather irritated Mollari managed to track down Elric in Customs before he departed. He thanked the techno-mage for the 'amusing gift' of the holo-demons, pointing out that it had taken him two hours to repair the damage to his quarters. He begged to know whether this torment would end with Elric's departure or if he would continue to suffer for the rest of his life for one little mistake. Squaring up to the ambassador, Elric told the Centauri that he would go on paying for his mistakes for the rest of his life, not this particular one, of course, as he had already withdrawn the spell. However, he went on to say that he had seen Mollari was touched by darkness, a blemish that could only grow with time. He had considered warning the ambassador before but knew he would not be heard. He could kill Mollari but someone else would only take his place. Instead, all that was left for him to do was leave. Before he departed though, he gave Mollari one more insight, despite knowing the Centauri would never profit from it. He confirmed that Mollari indeed had a great destiny before him. As he looked at the ambassador he saw a great hand, reaching out for the stars – Mollari's own hand. Elric could also hear billions of people crying out his name. Excited, Mollari could not help but ask if these were the voices of his followers. 'Your victims,' was the techno-mage's only reply before he left Babylon 5.

Drazzi Leadership Contest

Every five years, the Drazzi government undergoes a thorough change in leadership, whom are decided by a system of fights between every able-bodied member of the race. Wherever Drazzi gather, an equal number of purple and green sashes are mixed together which are then drawn blindly and randomly by each Drazzi, thus dividing the entire race into two factions. These two factions then fight for an entire Drazzi year (equal to 1.2 human years) with the winning side being that which subdues (knocks unconscious) the most members of the losers.

Within each city on the Drazzi homeworld and upon each colony or outpost where Drazzi have a major presence, each group of sashes will have one with a special toggle that denotes the leader of the green or purple faction present there. It is the role of the leader to co-ordinate his forces and account for the number of enemy Drazzi they manage to subdue. It should be noted that a Drazzi may be knocked unconscious many times, with each occurrence counting towards the grand total – as soon as any Drazzi wins a fight, he is expected to report his victory to his immediate leader who then makes a suitable record of it, adding it to the grand total which he will report to the homeworld at the end of the year. It is a matter of some surprise to many observers from other races that very little subterfuge and falsification occurs when these totals are reported.

For the Drazzi, might makes right and few would even consider lying about their victories, as if the wrong individuals make their way into the leadership of the Drazzi people, it could have serious ramifications for the entire race. The actual government of the Drazzi will be principally formed from those on the winning side who drew the toggled sashes, with those members selecting others to fulfil important ministerial, military and ambassadorial positions as required.

The Techno-mages

'We are dreamers, shapers, singers, and makers. We study the mysteries of laser and circuit, crystal and scanner, holographic demons and invocations of equations. These are the tools we employ and we know many things.'

Elric

The order of techno-mages is an ancient and secretive organisation dedicated to the study, acquisition and preservation of all knowledge, particularly that relating to science. They use science and high technology to achieve the effect of magic in ways that even major governments have not been able to successfully replicate. As the level of technology in any society increases, it becomes almost indistinguishable to magic from the point of view of any lesser being and it is this ambiguity between magic and science that the creed of the techno-mages lies. As a group they study laser and circuit, crystal and scanner, with holographic demons and invocations of equations as their principle tools. Over the centuries, the order has learnt much of what they call the important things of life. Stories have been told of the techno-mages knowing fourteen words to make someone fall in love, and seven to make them go without pain. They claim to know how to say goodbye to a friend who is dying, how to be poor, how to be rich, and how to rediscover dreams when the world has stolen them. It is in these things that mysticism, magic and science blend and become one. To a techno-mage, there is little difference between all three.

The Centauri have had experience with the techno-mages in their history and, indeed, the order is said to have given its blessing to the first emperor to take the throne of the Republic. This association aside, governments tend to treat techno-mages with great suspicion. It is rare to see a techno-mage travelling openly in the galaxy and they are said to spend much of their time in their so called places of power, the locations of which are perhaps the closest guarded secret of the order. As to what their ultimate aims are beyond the acquisition and preservation of knowledge, if any such aims actually exist, no one knows.

Scenarios and Campaign Hooks

5 Drazzi players are going to love this episode! This is the time when the Drazzi decide a new government and it becomes the solemn duty of all to divide into two sides and fight for the next fourteen months. Every Drazzi is expected to do this wherever the race congregates throughout the galaxy and players will be no exception (if there are more than one Drazzi players, we suggest the Games Master allow them to fight on the same side, for obvious reasons). The greens upping the ante on the Drazzi homeworld by actually killing purples will make this contest a lot more dangerous

than any that have happened before. Not all colonies of Drazi, however, will be prepared to go this far so players can usually expect to face a good beating rather than a knife in the dark. Inserting such encounters into scenarios is simplicity itself – Drazi players will already have drawn a sash (either green or purple) and will attack or be attacked by any other Drazi wearing the opposing coloured sash. Simply run a melee combat until enough subdual damage has been dealt to render someone unconscious. There are few real tacticians involved in most of these fights but players will no doubt be anxious to get even with anyone who has beaten them to a pulp in the past. Also keep in mind that during this contest, Drazi have no compunctions about ganging up on individuals to ensure victory. For those with an interest in tracking these developments, the greens will be declared the winning side in March 2260. It will, however, have little effect on the way the Drazi government conducts its political business.

5 Another race about to undergo a period of political upheaval are the Centauri, though only those in the higher echelons of the Centarum and noble houses may realise it at this time. However, this is something that any player with links to a noble house may become all too easily dragged into. There are many factions currently manoeuvring, ready to launch a coup just as soon as the Emperor's poor health finally fails him. This can provide many employment opportunities for Centauri players. Mere pawns will be instructed to accomplish various tasks, from gaining valuable blackmail material on certain nobles, couriering such material to other planets or even assassinating troublesome individuals without any evidence being tracked back to the instigating faction. It is very unlikely that the players will learn of the consequences of their actions until much later when the coup has been enacted and any rivals quashed by the winning faction. More ambitious players may well have already learnt of the coming political strife and could have the chance to become the centre of attention for one of more factions – very powerful players may even attempt to lead their own group to victory for the throne. In any case, such players will have the opportunity to sell their services to the highest bidder (and the pockets of some noble houses are truly immense) or play two or more factions against one another. For a Games Master looking to inject a heavy dose of cut throat politics into a story arc, feuding Centauri have few equals, especially when the stakes are as high as becoming Emperor of the entire Republic.

5 One obvious hook for almost any player will be the chance to join the ranks of the techno-mages, especially when they begin eyeing up the prestige class found on p131. However, Elric is deadly serious about his order leaving known space in order to preserve their knowledge – techno-mages have always been rare but they

are about to come practically non-existent over the next few years. That said, there have certainly been renegade techno-mages in the past and the Games Master can easily bring such a character into his campaign, giving a player the opportunity to become inducted into the order on at least a lesser level. This should be treated as an incident of great magnitude, as the techno-mages are a secretive people and are loath to share any of their precious information. It may take a year or more for a player to fully gain the trust of even a renegade techno-mage, performing countless missions and duties as he gauges their response to situations and moral dilemmas. No matter what you put the player through to achieve this goal, the power he gains when able to finally take the prestige class will make almost anything worthwhile.

A Distant Star (January 31st 2259)

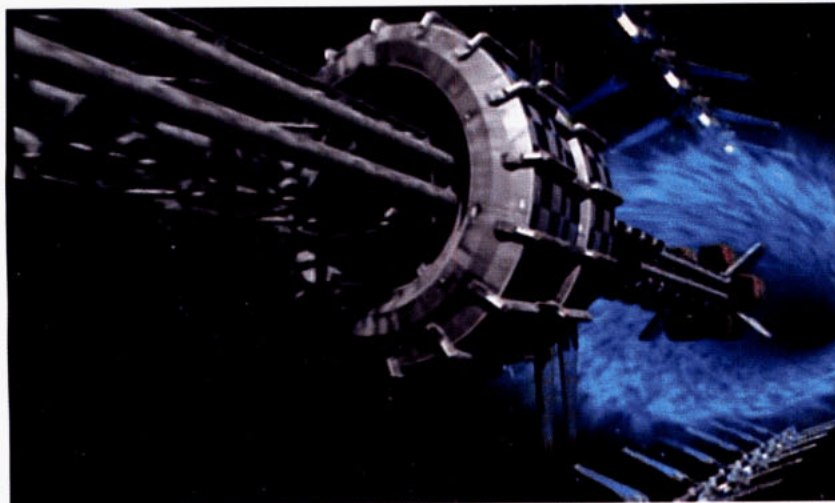
'God be between you and harm in all the empty places where you must walk.'

John Sheridan

Captain Sheridan received a message from Captain Maynard of the Explorer ship *Cortez* as he arrived for duty in Command and Control. The *Cortez* had been on a continuous mission of exploration and jumpgate repair for five years and was voyaging to Babylon 5 in order to take on new supplies – given the length of its mission, these were considerable. Commander Ivanova pointed out that the message from Maynard was a little rude but Sheridan would not have expected anything else, as he and the Captain had served together long ago and were firm friends. Ivanova had never seen an Explorer ship before, and Sheridan promised everyone in Command and Control that they were in for a real treat.

The *Cortez* caused a stir to everyone one in Command and Control and orbiting ships as it came through the jumpgate outside of Babylon 5. As it slowly manoeuvred into a holding pattern, many witnesses swore it was almost as large as the station itself. Everyone was mesmerised at the spectacle of the largest vessel in the Earth Alliance – as Sheridan pointed out, if they were lucky, they might see two ships like it in their lifetime.

Sheridan was ready to meet his old friend Maynard as soon as the Explorer captain disembarked from his shuttle and the two easily reacquainted themselves once more. The *Cortez* had recently finished mapping Sector 900 out on the Rim and a necessary repair on the Euphrates jumpgate had placed the vessel in the vicinity of Babylon 5 for resupply – and how could Maynard not drop by and see his old friend? A brief tour of the station left Maynard very impressed with Sheridan's new command, though he would never have guessed that his old friend would have ever ended up in a post like it. Over drinks in Sheridan's quarters, Maynard mused that he always thought they would meet up again somewhere out on the Rim, as he knew Sheridan had always wanted an Explorer ship of his own. He also wondered why Earth's president would pick someone to run Babylon 5 that the Minbari were known to hate. However, commanding the station was not exactly what Sheridan had trained for, as a desk was no place for a die-hard spacer. Sheridan tried to laugh



the concerns of his friend off but he began to think hard on Maynard's words.

Within Medlab, Garibaldi was growing increasingly irritated with the attention he was receiving from Dr Franklin as he began to fully recover from his injuries. The doctor had decided that Garibaldi's current diet was hindering his recovery and so proscribed a diet – or food plan, as he insisted on calling it. The source of Garibaldi's annoyance was that one of his favourite meals, *Bagna Cauda*, had been ruled out. Not satisfied with this, Franklin decided it was probably time to give all ranking personnel on Babylon 5 an anthrogenic profile and supply food plans for all of them. As he warned Garibaldi, he would be monitoring everyone. . .

Lieutenant Keffer and Zeta Wing Leader Galus were invited to join Sheridan's table with Ivanova and Maynard in Earharts later in the day. The two captains provided the other officers with no little amusement as they began to swap embarrassing stories of their past together but having been with the same crew for five years, Maynard was more anxious to hear what had been happening in Earth space. He was due to depart with the *Cortez* back to the Rim in the evening, as the Earth Alliance was already behind schedule in jumpgate construction and he had already been assigned to build two more in order to allow surveyor ships to follow up behind him. The conversation took a more controversial tone when Maynard was asked if he could verify the rumours that something was living in hyperspace. Smiling, Maynard simply replied that strange things could happen far from explored space.

After drinks at Earharts, Sheridan had the chance to ask Maynard if he were serious about seeing things out on the Rim. Maynard related a story of something he had experienced, not in hyperspace, but light years away in Sector 857. He had been on a preliminary scouting mission on board one of the *Cortez's* shuttles when he saw something about a thousand miles away from his position, black against space. He could only tell it was there at all because he saw it blot out the stars as it moved. He had no idea what it could have been – only that it was big. Maynard clearly believed there was indeed something beyond ordinary human experience to be discovered in the depths of space.

During this time, Ambassador Delenn received a visit she had been dreading ever since her transformation. A leading Minbari of the religious caste on Babylon 5, named Teronn, had chosen this time to visit her with the concerns of every Minbari on the station, for they had begun to wonder whether she was still truly Minbari since her change. Diplomatically, she appreciated his concern and promised to reveal what she could at a later date. However, Teronn insisted that he and the other Minbari needed to understand what was happening now. Normally understanding would not be required to one of their own kind, only obedience but, for them, this was the fundamental question. Was she any longer one of their own kind? Unwilling to explain her actions to Teronn, she was forced to allow him to petition the Grey Council for the answers he and the others sought.

The *Cortez*, now fully laden with new supplies, left Babylon 5 on schedule, again gaining a lot of attention as it fired up its massive engines. Just an hour later, Ivanova approached Sheridan in the EarthForce Office with a diplomatic problem involving the quarters of the Takati ambassador and their proximity to the Pak'ma'ra, but she quickly noticed her captain was not his usual efficient self and had not been since the *Cortez* had arrived. Sheridan complained that he was used to commanding ships, not cities in space – on Babylon 5, he was constantly sand-bagged by trivia and petty

complaints. EarthForce had beached him with this assignment, turning him into a bureaucrat and politician, the two things he detested most. Ivanova pointed out that he had been given the command of Babylon 5 because the president believed he could handle it but also, as his executive officer, demanded to know – was the president wrong?

It was not just EarthForce officers being monitored by Franklin. Delenn had been asked to visit Medlab, as Franklin was anxious to keep track of her recent physiological changes and the effects they had on her health. Aside from a few headaches and occasional nausea, she appeared physically fit but Franklin could tell something more was wrong. He asked how other Minbari were responding to her transformation but Delenn quickly brushed off his concerns.

Two hours into its journey through hyperspace, an explosion rocked the bridge of the *Cortez*. Though the cause of the accident was unknown, it rapidly became clear that the tracking signal from the jumpgate had been lost, leaving the Explorer ship completely blind and unable to navigate. Damage control teams quickly restored full power but the navigation systems required nearly two days repair to bring back to operation, during which time the *Cortez* would have been swept hopelessly off course to regain a lock on to a jumpgate. Knowing he had no other choice, Maynard ordered a mayday be sent to Babylon 5.

Though distorted as the *Cortez* moved further off the hyperspace beacon network, the distress call was received and understood by Babylon 5 and within minutes Sheridan was present in Command and Control. He sent a response to the *Cortez* advising them help was on the way and ordered Zeta Wing to stand by. He did not need to be told by Ivanova that, to date, no ship lost in hyperspace had ever been recovered.

Sheridan personally briefed the pilots of Zeta Wing before they embarked on their mission to locate the *Cortez*, warning them that it was an extremely risky attempt and that some or all of the rescue ships may not return. His idea, never before tested in hyperspace, was to create a lifeline of Starfuries in an attempt to find the *Cortez* and bring it back to Babylon 5. Zeta Wing would enter hyperspace but leave one of its fighters just inside the jumpgate. The next fighter would travel a thousand kilometres in before stopping and so on, single Starfuries stretching in a line to form a chain that would scan for the *Cortez*. He acknowledged it was a long shot and there was a great risk to the fighter taking point, as it would be effectively dangling alone, reliant on the craft behind to maintain sensor locks upon one another. Before they launched, Sheridan gave Zeta Wing an old Egyptian blessing that Maynard had once told him many years before.

As the *Cortez* slid further down the gravitational incline trapping it in hyperspace, Command and Control lost communications with it but were able to re-establish contact by using the much closer Starfuries of Zeta Wing to relay information between them. Sheridan ordered Maynard to continue broadcasting the mayday, as he was sending a sheepdog to lead them back home. As the Starfury chain extended through hyperspace, Commander Galus and Lieutenant Keffer took point but it was the later who managed to find and maintain a lock on the *Cortez's* position. Galus held his position and ordered Keffer to continue to the Explorer ship but a massive black vessel, faintly reminiscent of an Earth spider that shrieked as it flew past, suddenly materialised in hyperspace and smashed into the commander's Starfury, breaking the vital chain. Keffer's own craft was hit by the shockwave and sustained heavy

damage. The crew of the *Cortez* scanned the area but the alien craft had already disappeared. They managed to locate Keffer's Starfury but puzzled as it slowly span in hyperspace, continually firing in one direction. Maynard quickly deduced that Keffer was firing in the direction he wanted the *Cortez* to travel and when communications were finally established to the Starfury, he offered to take Keffer back to Babylon 5. However, the shockwave had knocked out Keffer's engines and he realised that if the *Cortez* stopped to pick him up, both craft would be lost. With a heavy heart, Maynard thanked Keffer and set course back to the jumpgate.

The atmosphere was tense in Command and Control as two hours passed before the jumpgate sprang into life, bringing the *Cortez* and the escorting Zeta Wing back into normal space. Sheridan immediately noticed two of his fighters were missing.

After the *Cortez* was safely alongside Babylon 5 once more, Sheridan went to the Garden alone to spare a thought for the two pilots he had lost in saving Maynard's ship. Delenn joined him and gave her condolences for his loss. It was the hardest part of command, he said, sending young people out to die. The Minbari ambassador pointed out that though the two pilots had given their lives, they were able to save others – they had been at the right place at the right time. She told Sheridan that the Minbari believed the universe puts people in places where they can learn. They are never easy places but wherever a person ends up is the right place for him. She pointed out that both Sheridan and herself were currently going under transitions of a sort but the universe knew what it was doing with them. Sheridan marvelled at her faith but could not find it within himself to share it and said as much. Delenn then let him in on what she considered the to be greatest secret of all – the molecules in his body, she said, and those of Babylon 5 itself, were the same as those that burn brightly in the heart of the stars. Every sentient being was made of starstuff and together they were the universe made manifest, trying to figure itself out. Sometimes, as both she and Sheridan had recently discovered, the universe requires a change in perspective . . .

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Keffer had finally managed to bring his thrusters back online as he drifted through hyperspace but he was still unable to gain any lock on to a jumpgate's signal. His Starfury's atmosphere was rapidly depleting and he remained as lost as the *Cortez* had been when he had managed to save it. For a brief moment, the dark ship that had smashed into Commander Galus appeared in his front view screen once more before fading out of hyperspace, seeming to follow its own lock on signal on a tangent Keffer could only guess at. However, he managed to get his on board computer to plot its course and match it against that of its first sighting. Through this, he believed he could determine a route back to Babylon 5's jumpgate and so struck out in the direction he guessed was correct.

During Command and Control's regular maintenance period, Sheridan stood alone with his thoughts, staring out into space. He was startled by the station's main computer alerting him to a craft approaching through hyperspace and was ecstatic to see Keffer's Starfury come through the jumpgate and request permission to dock. Elated to see his lost pilot return, Sheridan welcomed Keffer home.

Later in Earharts, all off duty ranking officers of the station gathered to attend a wake in Commander Galus' memory, led by Keffer. Ivanova and Maynard were keen to hear exactly what Keffer had seen in hyperspace but he could give few answers. He had no idea what the strange ship he had sighted was, only that

he could remember the feeling that something dark and dangerous had just flown by. However, he was determined to find out more. Though acknowledging that a wake could never be a good time to broach the subject, Ivanova promoted Keffer to lead Zeta Wing in all future missions.

Sheridan was conspicuous by his absence from Earharts and, at Maynard's behest, Ivanova tracked him down to the EarthForce Office, where she found him hard at work catching up on reports and bureaucracy. She noted that, for whatever reason, her captain was back to his old self. She left Sheridan tackling the mountain of paperwork after getting him to promise to meet all the officers in Earharts within the hour.

Scenarios and Campaign

Hooks

Getting lost in hyperspace is the doom of any spacecraft but, players being the heroes of your story arcs, this tragedy can turn into an exciting scenario – or even a jump off point to a whole new story arc. Once a ship becomes lost in hyperspace (for whatever reason, be it malfunction, the destruction of a jumpgate or an attack) it cannot simply dive back into normal space, even if it retains jump capability. Randomly returning to normal space will result in a spacecraft being dumped almost anywhere in the galaxy – and there is an awful lot of empty space between the stars. Though players may feel a lot safer in normal space, they will still be lost and months or years away from any planet (which may well not even be populated). On top of that, returning to normal space to get a 'fix' on star positions will only plot a spacecraft's position to within half a light year or so – in effect, the players will still be lost, having only a vague idea of the region of space they are in. However, you can have a lot of fun with hyperspace itself – the players could encounter unexpected allies to rescue them, perform feats of technical wizardry to get their vessel back online, or perhaps encounter a lost Vorlon relic as they spiral helplessly down a gravitational incline that provides a means of salvation. A fairly standard plot device which could be spiced up to make it 'Babylon 5' in feel would be to have the players ejected into normal space, in orbit around a system far on the Rim that no intelligent being has yet voyaged to. Who knows what dark secrets the players may uncover that could result in dire consequences for entire races when they finally manage to return to Babylon 5 . . .

A complete campaign could be built around players with EarthForce characters who first achieve notoriety in selected missions, and then gain the chance to command an Explorer class ship of their own. Heading out to the Rim, forging new jump routes and building gates to new star systems, the players will truly be on the frontier, discovering new planets, races and technologies – or very old ones. With missions lasting up to five years, the players may find the galaxy to be a very different place when they return. However, they will have their own tails to tell as well. Not all missions comprise of routine cataloguing and exploration. The players may find themselves drawn into an ongoing conflict between two previously unknown races, or perhaps stumble across major Shadow or Vorlon forces that, if they reach the rest of the galaxy unhindered, could have major implications to the fate of all governments. Cut off from civilised space and exploring the Rim, the players may well become aware of the truth behind the Vorlons and Shadows long before it is revealed to Sheridan and the rest of the crew on board Babylon 5.

Any Minbari players may begin to feel themselves questioned or manipulated with regards to Delenn and her new status as a Minbari-human hybrid. In general, Minbari are not given to political power plays or machinations but the effect of Delenn's

transformation has sent huge shockwaves among their people. For those in the religious caste, the primary question will be whether she can any longer be trusted or treated as any other Minbari and, in particular, whether she is to be afforded the same courtesies and respect. Any Minbari of the warrior caste may be asked to keep a closer eye on the ambassador or even seek to embarrass her, all with the aim of fracturing the religious caste further and weakening their position in Minbari society. As always, any member of the worker caste is likely to be ignored in this struggle. The point of this will be to polarise the players one way or another. Big changes are coming for Minbari society as a whole and the players will soon be forced to choose which side they will take – that of the religious or warrior castes, or Delenn's own hidden destiny.

The Long Dark (February 22nd 2259)

'It's gonna take a lot more than a hundred years to evolve a better human.'

Stephen Franklin

Of the seventy-four ships that visited Babylon 5 on February 22nd, one was a very special arrival from Earth's past. Broadcasting a repeating message of peace, the sub-light exploratory craft *USS Copernicus* spiralled towards Babylon 5 from deep space, causing intense interest from Command and Control. It was not until a maintenance bot was dispatched for a closer look that the crew of the station were able to identify the ancient craft which had been used in the Earth Alliance's deep range exploration missions over one hundred years before. There was no clue as to why the *Copernicus* had appeared in Babylon 5 space but scans revealed that at least one of the crew were still alive and so the decision was made to tow the craft into the station for further examination.

Elsewhere in the station, the arrival of the *Copernicus* also had a profound effect. A lurker called Amis felt the arrival of the ship as something alien and terrible reached into his mind. Driven close to madness he ran to the Zocalo, the largest gathering of people he could find, in an effort to warn them of impending danger. Preaching the arrival of an army of darkness and soldiers of the devil, he was intercepted by Garibaldi when he attempted to harangue G'Kar and then Londo Mollari. Clearly not possessing a Class C Missionary Licence, Amis was arrested and detained until he calmed down.

The entire Command Staff was present in the docking bay when the *Copernicus* was brought on board Babylon 5. Commander Ivanova's best guess was that the ship had missed a thruster firing and thus had been thrown off its original course to end up at the station. As they boarded the craft, the cryogenic freezer units used to sustain the two crewmembers were found and it was quickly ascertained that while one had perished during the voyage the other, a female was still alive. However, Franklin detected an immediate change in her life signs as they began to drop. Believing they had triggered something upon entering the *Copernicus*, the Command Staff retrieved her from the freezer unit to be passed to a waiting medical team. Headed by Franklin, the team rushed her to Medlab but were delayed during a

freak power disruption in the transport tube between decks. The patient went into cardiac arrest but Franklin managed to resuscitate her before it was too late.

Garibaldi visited Amis who was still being held in detention, kept under close watch. The lurker was asleep but was clearly troubled by a terrifying nightmare as he continually cried out about something coming through walls to get him. The security officer assigned to keep watch had already had his nerves fried by this time and was cursing all lurkers by the time Garibaldi arrived. Taking the officer to one side, Garibaldi explained that Amis had been in the Earth/Minbari War – he knew, because he had had the same dream himself on occasion. . .

When Amis woke, he found Garibaldi waiting next to his bunk. He claimed not to know what he had done or why he had been arrested and refused to open up even when Garibaldi tried to establish common ground by revealing he too served during the war as a ground-pounder. When asked about his nightmares, Amis claimed he never dreamt and avoided any more questions, leaving Garibaldi with no choice but to release him.

Meanwhile, Ivanova had been running her own investigation of the *Copernicus* in an attempt to find out just why it had found its way to Babylon 5. Her conclusions were disturbing and she made an immediate report to Captain Sheridan – the cryogenic freezer unit of the second crewman had not malfunctioned as they had previously assumed so, by all accounts, he should still be alive. Her only conclusion was that someone or something on board the *Copernicus* had murdered him and there were precious few suspects.

Franklin's autopsy of the crewman raised more questions than it answered. The body weighed 90 lb. but according to the doctor's calculations based on age and height, it should have been nearer to 180 lb. The cause of death was officially classed as organ failure but what had actually instigated this was a mystery as all the major organs were missing. A thorough scan of the *Copernicus* had revealed no trace of them and, as Franklin pointed out to Sheridan and Garibaldi, if so much as a single cell had remained, they would have found it. The surviving female crew member had recently awakened from her long sleep and had been identified as Mariah Cirrus. Given the circumstances of the crewman's death, Garibaldi decided to speak with her but Franklin advised this could be detrimental to her health so early. Instead, he decided to speak to her himself, and learned that Mariah had been part of a research



group who had volunteered to be cryogenically suspended for deep space missions – the other crewman had actually been her husband. The *Copernicus* had been programmed to home in on any signal of intelligent origin and automatically wake them up but she had never dreamed that such a signal could be from other humans. Mariah's first question for Franklin, naturally, was how long she had been asleep for. Despite his reluctance, Franklin found himself telling her that she had not only been frozen for over a century but also that her husband had died during the voyage, leaving Mariah distraught, confused and very scared.

When Mariah had recovered a little, both physically and emotionally, Franklin took her on a short tour of the station to introduce her to all the advances that had been made since leaving Earth – including the discovery of intelligent aliens. She was shocked at the immense variety of life present just on Babylon 5, and had never imagined anything as strange and wonderful as the sights around her. Stopping at one of the cafes in the Zocalo, Franklin also did his best to fill Mariah in on everything that had happened over the past century, including the arrival of the Centauri, use of jumpgates, the Dilgar War and the Earth/Minbari War. She soon began to feel that her long voyage had been for nothing, as if she had just waited for a few years, she could have been among the stars a great deal sooner. It was left to Franklin to point out that her efforts had taken both vision and courage, and nothing could take that away from her.

During their conversation, G'Kar introduced himself to Mariah but gave her little more than a bleak warning to return to the past – the future, as he said, was not what it used to be. However, something in G'Kar's demeanour triggered a distant memory in Mariah, a flashback to something that had happened before. She passed out under this new emotional stress and Franklin rushed her to his own quarters, which were somewhat closer than Medlab. There she managed to recover and Franklin began to question her about the dreams and flashbacks she was experiencing. Mariah claimed that she remembered nothing but demanded to know why Franklin was interested, forcing him to reveal that her husband had probably been murdered – and by something that had been present on the *Copernicus*. She quickly realised that there could logically be only one suspect and broke down, confronted by what she only saw as an insanity. Franklin comforted her, making sure she knew she was not alone on Babylon 5, though he struggled to maintain a professional distance to a woman he had begun to feel attracted to.

Drawn to the *Copernicus*, Amis managed to gain access to the docking bay but was chased off by a security patrol before he could get close. However, his close encounter convinced him that something very familiar to him had arrived on Babylon 5 on board the *Copernicus*. Certain in his knowledge, he returned to the Zocalo to once again begin warning people, only to be intercepted once more by Garibaldi who was taking opportunity of a brief lull in his duties to grab a snack. However, this time Amis seemed a great deal more lucid and warned Garibaldi that he knew something dangerous was on the station – something he had seen once before during the war.

Sheridan and Garibaldi were called to Medlab where Franklin was performing another autopsy. A lurker had been found murdered in Downbelow but the cause of death was intriguing, as it was identical to that of Mariah's husband. All major organs had been removed and yet there was no sign of any entry or exit wound. Garibaldi revealed what Amis had told him, of how he had been stationed at a deep range listening post during the war. Forty-

seven men landed on a moon outpost but only Amis had survived – he was no ordinary lurker and had been highly decorated for his actions. To add further weight to these claims, Garibaldi had already back-tracked the course of the *Copernicus* and found that it had passed within the gravitational pull of the moon he had been stationed upon. Franklin denied that anything else could have been on board the *Copernicus* as his medical scanners would have picked it up but only, as Garibaldi pointed out, if it were something they had come across before. It was entirely possible that Mariah was not all she seemed, something Franklin refuted as she had been in his quarters when the lurker was killed. Sheridan demanded answers from both of them and that Mariah be watched closely for any unusual behaviour. For his part, he had to attend a meeting in the Council Chambers instigated by the League of Non-Aligned Worlds who wished to discuss the *Copernicus*.

During the meeting, the Markab ambassador of Babylon 5 insisted that Mariah be removed from the station as the League agreed that she had brought something dark and dangerous with her from the past. Mollari was also present at the meeting and scoffed at the fairy tales the other governments believed in but G'Kar wanted to know more. The Markab ambassador explained that the forces of darkness do not move openly and had scattered after they were defeated long ago, according to the legends of his own race. Now, the great enemy was beginning to gather its forces from their long sleep – despite her innocent appearance, Mariah could be one of these soldiers of darkness. Sheridan did not find himself convinced with Markab legend but he could plainly see that something unusual was happening, causing Mollari to leave the meeting with no little derision. As far as he was concerned, if there was something on the station, all they had to do was find it and kill it – it really was that simple.

During that night, Garibaldi found himself troubled by his own dreams of the past. Waking up, he decided to visit Amis who was, once again, being held by security for his own safety. He gave Amis a chance to prove his story by leading Garibaldi to whatever force was now on the station.

Exploring Downbelow together, Garibaldi and Amis found nothing more than lurkers going about their business. However, Garibaldi still found himself believing Amis' story, which the lurker elaborated on. He had been assigned to an intelligence unit during the Earth/Minbari War, setting up a listening post on a moon of a system in which the Minbari had established a Command & Control centre. The EarthForce unit had presumed the moon was a dead world and set up their equipment within a site of ancient ruins. The soldier of darkness, as Amis called it, came for them in the night, during a storm. The first man to die stood right next to Amis but never had a chance to scream. He caught sight of the creature as they all began to run and Amis described it standing within a ball of lightning, looking like it came straight from hell. Everyone else in the listening post was killed but the creature kept Amis alive, slowly feeding upon him to survive. When EarthForce units finally came to the moon, he weighed just 85 lb. What it took from Amis he could never get back and part of him was still inside the creature – he could feel the creature's presence and, he believed, could possibly lead Garibaldi to it.

At the start of their shifts in Command and Control early in the morning, Sheridan and Ivanova received reports from security of weapons fire in Brown 90. When contact could not be established with Garibaldi, they quickly concluded that the creature had been found. Sheridan ordered a security detail to break out heavy

weapons and clear the area of civilians, before taking Ivanova down to Brown 90 in order to lead them.

Upon arriving on the scene, Sheridan and Ivanova found Franklin tending to two wounded security officers. Garibaldi had pulled both of them out of the combat zone before returning to the fight. In Brown 90 itself, Garibaldi had become separated from his own security officers but drawn by cries, he managed to locate Amis. The lurker was suspended in mid-air by some invisible assailant and Garibaldi fired blindly. He did not know whether he managed to hit anything but Amis was dropped to the ground and everything became still. They met up with Sheridan's security team and Garibaldi reported that his PPG shots only seemed to sting the creature. The captain's idea was to create a point blank kill zone with the security officers all firing simultaneously but Amis was doubtful it could ever work. He feverishly explained that the creature was too smart to be trapped and was incredibly patient – to tempt it out you had to give it what it wanted. Recklessly he leapt into the open, challenging the creature to come for him. He was suddenly picked and held high in the air, and the security team opened up with their PPGs and rifles. Amid all the energy flashes, the creature became almost visible, high-lighted by a nimbus of blue lightning. Standing over twelve feet tall, Amis had not been wrong when he said it looked as if it had come straight from hell, for the soldier of darkness clearly had a large muzzle, vicious claws and huge horns. Blast after blast from PPG thudded into the creature. After several salvos under which it recoiled noticeably, the creature seemed to dissipate into the air with a mournful cry.

Medlab was the scene of two farewells. Recovering from his last encounter with the soldier of darkness, Amis could, at last, say goodbye to the nightmares that had plagued him since the war. Mariah had decided to leave Babylon 5 and travel back to Earth as she had over one hundred years to catch up on. Before departing, she thanked Franklin for his kindness and promised to visit the station in the future, if he was interested. . .

In Command and Control Ivanova had finished her analysis of the *Copernicus*' database and her findings were disturbing to say the least. She noted that the ship had lost 10% of its atmosphere when it passed by the moon Amis had been stationed. However,

it had also had its course changed at that point too, only coming to Babylon 5 because the ship had been programmed to home in on signals of an intelligent origin. She had plotted the course change and discovered that the *Copernicus* had been heading towards the Rim, to the world that G'Kar had warned the Council about earlier in the year – Z'ha'dum. Sheridan might have thought this was mere coincidence before but now he was convinced something was going on in the Rim.

G'Kar had sequestered himself in his quarters to study the Book of G'Quan after hearing the testimony of the Markab ambassador. He had not seen the soldier of darkness in Brown 90 but through descriptions heard from security officers, he had managed to track it down in the old text which included an almost perfect illustration of the creature.

Missionary Licences

Babylon 5 is intended as a cultural melting pot for all races and so has had to incorporate the many different religious beliefs and faiths of the galaxy. While the Babylon 5 Senate Oversight Committee has no wish to stop the exchange of ideas and views between the races that travel to the station, steps also had to be taken to ensure visitors are protected from the more zealous proponents of these religions. Thus, missionary licences are required in order to openly preach on the station (a notable exception to this can be found in Parliament of Dreams on pXX of the main rulebook, where amnesty was given to all races to display their dominant faiths). Three licences are available upon application, allowing varying degrees of access to other inhabitants of the station. The Class A licence is temporary in nature, with durations usually lasting no longer than a month. The applicant is permitted to advertise religious meetings to other races in a selected and pre-approved manner, which are to be held strictly in private quarters. The Class B licence is similar but is permanent and often honoured on many outposts and colonies of the Earth Alliance. It is usually granted only after several successful approvals of a Class A licence. Rarely granted at all is the Class C licence, which allows the applicant to conduct pre-arranged audiences in designated public places, such as the Zocalo or Garden. All licences must be paid for with a 200 credit administrative fee, which is non-refundable if the application is denied. The application process for missionary licences is notoriously long-winded, and it can be a matter of months before anything is heard.

Soldier of Darkness

The soldiers of darkness, as Amis dubbed them, are but one of many servants to the mysterious aliens that have been making a growing appearance in the galaxy over the past year. All, in one way or another, are making their way to the Rim, to a desolate world known as Z'ha'dum. Soldiers of darkness are wholly



insubstantial, beings of pure energy, yet with an insatiable appetite for sentient beings from whom they derive nourishment through the devouring of internal organs. They become visible only when caught within intense energy fields (such as multiple PPG blasts), taking the appearance of twelve foot demonic monstrosities, with dog-like faces, huge horns and lethal slashing claws. They hunt by ambush, using their superior stealth to approach victims unaware, before striking with devastating force. Few can withstand their assault for more than a few seconds. However, soldiers of darkness are also highly intelligent and can prove highly problematic to hunt down once their presence has been established.

Large-size Alien Creature

Character Level: 15 (89 hp)

Initiative: -1 (-1 Dex)

Speed: 40 ft.

DV: 13 (-1 size, +4 Reflex)

Attacks: Claws+23/+18/+13

Damage: Claws 2d6+8

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction 4, Incorporeal, Organ Extraction

Saves: Fort +14, Ref +4, Will +8

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 9, Con 21, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 11

Skills: Climb +11, Hide +14, Jump +11, Listen +11, Move Silently +14, Spot +11

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative

Incorporeal: The soldier of darkness does not have a true physical form as it is normally understood. To all intents and purposes, it is invisible, being granted total concealment (50% miss chance to any attacks aimed at it, plus any attacker must guess its location). In addition, it may only be harmed by energy weapons, being completely immune to all other forms of attack. The soldier of darkness can manifest itself at will, generating a sphere of blue lightning in front of which it will be silhouetted, though it usually only does this to panic weak prey before moving in for the kill. However, this will also occur whenever the creature takes damage from an energy weapon – in this case, the effect will only last for a single round, during which time it will normally do its best to retreat and hide.

Organ Extraction: The soldier of darkness is perfectly capable of rending any foe limb from limb in seconds with its vicious claws but this is not its preferred method of attack. Instead, it favours reaching into a victim and literally ripping out its internal organs, which it then consumes for its sustenance. Whenever making a successful attack roll, instead of dealing normal damage with its claws, the soldier of darkness may instead cause 1d3 points of permanent Constitution damage to its victim. It must feed in this way at least once a month or perish from starvation as its own energy reserves ebb and dwindle.

Scenarios and Campaign Hooks

⑤ The *Copernicus* was by no means the only deep space craft launched by the Earth Alliance a century ago and not all have yet been accounted for. This gives the Games Master the opportunity to introduce similar blasts from the past into their scenarios by having the players come across such craft, either in deep space or having crash landed on some world or moon. However, none have yet had the chance to go beyond Earth Alliance space, unless an outside



factor affects their movement. Alternatively, a player interested in the roleplaying opportunities may opt to play a character who has recently been awoken from such a ship. This character will have a century to catch up to and while they will not exactly be primitive, they will possess a great sense of wonder when confronted with anything alien or of high technology. Another factor to consider is that their old life has been irrevocably erased by the passage of years – they will have to find a new niche for themselves in this 'modern' and starfaring galaxy.

⑤ The soldiers of darkness are not numerous but can provide the Games Master with the opportunity to introduce some hair-raising scenarios. These can be approached in one of two ways. First off, the creature is perfect for classic scenarios whereby the players are trapped alone on some lone outpost or derelict spacecraft, being picked off one by one as they try to draw together enough resources to defeat it. However, the soldier of darkness can also be used as a precursor to later events, with the players learning of a great enemy that is about to bring war to the entire galaxy. This kind of foreboding can work extremely well, especially if the Games Master can get his players wondering about the strength of the enemy they will later face – if the soldier of darkness is just a servant, how tough are its masters?

Spider in the Web (March 6th 2259)

'For the past six years there've been rumours about a rogue agency operating deep inside EarthGov. A dirty-trick-squad, dealing in black projects, and star-chamber justice. It took me three years just to get a name: Bureau 13. And the man who gave me that name died soon after. I'm convinced they exist and they are behind this incident.'

John Sheridan

Captain John Sheridan had an interest in collecting secrets – conspiracies, covert organisations, things the ordinary man was never meant to know. This had begun as a childhood fascination

in world events but grew as Sheridan matured. No one knew of his interest but it was to prove extremely useful in the events about to unfold on Babylon 5.

Hired by Future Corps, Talia Winters spent the morning monitoring a business meeting with an old friend of hers, Taro Isogi. Isogi was the CEO of Future Corps and he had a new proposal for the future of Mars to set before Amanda Carter, a representative of the colony's Business Affairs Committee. His idea centred on using the resources of Mars needed by alien governments to provide a powerful economic base that could give independence to the provisional ruling body. Isogi had chosen Babylon 5 for the meeting as all the alien races that might be possible partners had representatives of their own on the station. If this plan worked, it could mean true independence for Mars Colony, without any bloodshed. Despite Carter thinking this proposal was either insane or very brave, a reminder of her heroic grandfather, the first man to pilot a colony ship to Mars, was sufficient to begin persuading her that the bold venture might just be worth the political risks.

After receiving a private message from Senator Elise Voudreau, Sheridan's concerns about Mars were altogether less wholesome. He was informed of the meeting between Isogi and Carter, the latter of whom was portrayed as an outspoken advocate of Mars's independence. EarthGov believed she was conspiring with Isogi to finance another rebellion on the colony, an ideal situation for Future Corps who was reportedly desperate to get a foothold into space but was foiled by the existing Mars conglomerate. However, if the present commercial interests on Mars were scared away by continued rioting, the path would be clear for Future Corps to take over. This was, of course, a threat to Earth Alliance security and so Sheridan was asked to keep an unofficial eye on the negotiations, a task he chafed at for he did not believe it was his duty to spy on civilians.

Isogi was excited after his meeting with Carter for while they had failed to come to a quick resolution, he believed he had answered many of her greatest concerns. Even Talia, who had her own doubts, was beginning to believe in her old friend's self-appointed mission. He walked with Talia back to his quarters, arranging dinner with her later that evening. In a deserted corridor, a man stepped up to Isogi and, saying only 'Free Mars', grabbed him by the neck. With a flash of energy, Isogi lay dead. Talia screamed as she saw her friend slump to the ground and the man turned to silence her. She was hit by a short telepathic flashback, a quick haze of light, which also stunned the attacker momentarily. Trying to clear his head, he retreated, leaving Talia to vainly attempt to revive Isogi.

Recovering in Medlab, Talia was quizzed by Sheridan about her attack. Though she recalled her brief telepathic contact, it made no sense – her very first assignment had been to Mars Colony, where she had scanned many Free Mars terrorists. However, where they had all been violent and fanatical, her attacker had no thought of cause at all. Sheridan wanted to know the details of the meeting Isogi had with Miss Carter and told Talia of his possible involvement with rebellion, something she disputed immediately, citing Isogi's wish to improve the lives of everyone on Mars through peaceful means. Someone in EarthGov, she said, had been lying to Sheridan about Isogi's intentions. With the security of the Earth Alliance at stake, Sheridan gave orders to hold all outgoing ships while they attempted to track Isogi's murderer, before seeing Miss Carter. She refused to tell Sheridan any details of her private meeting with Isogi until informed of his death. Adamant that Free Mars had nothing to gain in killing Isogi, she too disputed

Sheridan's theory that rebellion had been his aim. Instead, she suggested he try examining the motives of Earth's own senate or the Mars conglomerate, both of whom had their own motives in keeping the colony within the jurisdiction of EarthGov. They certainly had the most to gain. Carter resolved to aid Sheridan in any way she could to track down Isogi's killer, as whoever had done it had also destroyed the best hope for the future of Mars.

Garibaldi gave his report to Sheridan, covering the evidence security had managed to find surrounding Isogi's murder. Future Corps' CEO had been hit by a massive electrical charge which had left hand marks on his throat, but this was from something far more powerful than an ordinary slaver's glove. Garibaldi's guess was that this was from a device of extremely high technology, possible some sort of prosthetic weaponry. However, this raised its own problem – an energy source capable of this kind of output would be easily detected by Babylon 5's internal scanners. Sheridan had his own suspicions about the murder but refused to say more until he had more information. Instead, he ordered that a constant watch be kept on Talia in case the killer made another attempt on her life.

The killer struck again, this time while Talia was being escorted to her quarters after being checked out at Medlab. With another pulse of energy, he killed the security officer accompanying her immediately but once again stopped short after grabbing Talia. Both received a mental jolt as images from his mind flooded into her consciousness and this time, she saw an EarthForce destroyer firing before everything went black. Breaking free of the man's grasp, Talia fled but he did not attempt to follow.

Speaking to Sheridan of her second brush with death, Talia elaborated on the images she saw in the man's mind – he had been piloting a spacecraft when the EarthForce destroyer attacked and, as crazy as it sounded, it hit him and he died. During her struggle, she had managed to pull hair out of the man's head and Garibaldi was able to analyse the specimen to identify the attacker as Abel Horn, one of the leaders of Free Mars. There was, however, a problem. Abel Horn had died during the rebellion of 2258, over Outpost 20 on Phobos in orbit around Mars. The destruction of his spacecraft had been attributed to the EarthForce destroyer *Pournelle*. Faced with conflicting information, Sheridan took no chances, especially as he had lost some close friends to one of Horn's terrorist attacks on Mars Colony. He ordered a station-wide fugitive alert be placed on the supposedly dead man.

Returning to her quarters, resolving to do what she could to continue Isogi's dream for Mars, Carter found Abel Horn waiting for her. She too thought he was dead but he denied both this and his killing spree on the station, saying instead that he had been badly injured by the EarthForce attack but a snakehead doctor had patched him up. He had been in hiding ever since. Horn had come to see her as she was the only person who could get him back to Mars. However, she refused, as she believed she was finally in a position to help her homeworld and no one could learn of her prior connections to Horn and Free Mars. Angered, Horn moved to attack her but was gripped by a vicious seizure that all but incapacitated him. In a great deal of pain, he begged Carter to bring Talia to him, believing the telepath was the only one who could truly help him.

Complaints from ship captains began to bombard Command and Control as they waited permission to leave the station and, finally, Sheridan relented, allowing any ship to leave so long as it submitted to a thorough search. He believed that Horn was not trying to leave Babylon 5 and had his own reasons for staying.

Sheridan then called Garibaldi to his quarters for a quiet meeting away from any official eyes. He explained a theory to his Chief of Security that he thought might go some way to suggesting why Horn was on the station. Project Lazarus was one of the secret projects he enjoyed studying when he could find new information and he told Garibaldi of EarthForce's cyber experiments, melding machine and man together. The project was doomed to failure as it turned out that humans just could not work with a machine in their brain so Project Lazarus began using subjects near death, until it was finally shut down. The subjects would have their brains hardwired with a computer intelligence that fixated their subconscious mind on the moment of their death, forcing them to relive it over and over again, allowing the computer itself full control of their body and higher functions. While this profile seemed to fit what they knew of Abel Horn, there were still too many unanswered questions, not least what had Talia touched in the man that had forced him to abandon an attempt to kill her twice? On the other hand, if all this were true, it might just provide a method of tracking Horn on the station.

Believing that she was helping Horn, Carter arranged a meeting with Talia, ostensibly to continue discussions of Isogi's plans for Mars as a memorial to his vision. This was duly routed through Garibaldi and he escorted her to Carter's quarters, along with a small security detail. Leaving the security force outside, Talia entered, only to find Carter's prone body. Before she could call for help, Horn grabbed her, demanding to know what had happened to him. Though terrified, Talia began to scan his mind and this time, clearly saw the moment of his death. She witnessed Horn in a small craft above Phobos, being fired upon by an EarthForce destroyer. Near death, he had then been taken to an advanced Medlab facility where, under the auspices of a Psi Cop, he had been rebuilt.

Meanwhile, Sheridan had been pursuing his theory of tracking Horn. He knew that the computer crystals used in Project Lazarus emitted a benign radiation whose signature was unique. If Babylon 5's internal scanners could be configured to filter out all extraneous emissions, Horn could perhaps be located. However, Sheridan's information was some years old and the element used was out of date. Tracking down equivalent signatures, after some work, he was finally able to find the radiation emission he had been searching for but was alarmed to locate Horn in Carter's quarters. Warning Garibaldi that the killer was inside, he hurried to Red Sector to join them.

As Garibaldi and the security officers burst into the quarters, Horn grabbed Talia and held a PPG to her head, ordering them to lay their own weapons down. At an impasse, Garibaldi complied but warned Horn that if he harmed Talia, he would make sure the terrorist would take ten days to die. Sheridan arrived and tried to defuse the situation, offering to help Horn uncover those who had used him to betray his own world. Realising he was at the end of the road, Horn released Talia but aimed a wild shot at the security officers, only to be gunned down by an alert Sheridan. Slumping to the ground, Horn thanked Sheridan for ending his pain but was suddenly overcome by another seizure. Monitoring this, one of the security guards warned that Horn had started emitting a dangerous build-up of energy, and Sheridan quickly rushed everyone out of the quarters. Within seconds, Horn exploded, sending shockwaves throughout Red Sector and leaving no trace or evidence of his true nature.

Amanda Carter was taken to Medlab to recover from her attack and apologised to Talia, for she had only thought she was helping Horn.

Wanting to know how someone on the Mars Business Affairs committee would know so much about Abel Horn, Garibaldi quizzed her about Free Mars and she admitted she had once been a member when it was not the radical organisation it had become in recent years. She knew this admission would be enough to ruin her career but Sheridan had other plans. If Isogi's plan was indeed Mars' last, best hope then so long as she continued to negotiate with Future Corps, nothing more would be said of her involvement with Abel Horn. Garibaldi strongly disagreed with this course of action but Talia spoke up, pointing out that Horn had not been trying to kill her, just find out what had been done to him. She explained what she had seen in his head, including the operation to rebuild him but left out any mention of the Psi Cop.

A little later, Garibaldi arranged a quiet meeting with Sheridan, wanting to know just how his captain had known so much about Project Lazarus. Though reluctant at first, Sheridan acknowledged that his Chief of Security might have valid reasons for knowing what he had discovered. Six years before, he had heard rumours of a rogue agency operating within EarthGov, far from the public eye. He had managed to find out that this agency had at least once gone under the name of Bureau 13 though the man he had learned this from died soon after. However, if Bureau 13 did indeed exist and was behind a continued Project Lazarus programme, not to mention an attempt to destabilise any action that might grant Mars independence, it placed the entire Earth Alliance in jeopardy. Sheridan had already promised that he would find out more on such rogue agencies and, if possible, root them out.

At the same time, Talia was doing her own searching. She had managed to access Psi Corps records and found the records of the Psi Cop she had seen in Horn's memory. However, the records only announced that the Psi Cop had been killed some time ago. . .

Future Corps

Headquartered in Japan but with offices spread throughout Earth nations, Future Corps is a medium-sized corporation which began with successful ventures in media and entertainment industries. It was one of the pioneers behind ISN though was soon forced out by aggressive competition and now retains only a minority interest. Future Corps is now dedicated to spreading its business throughout the Earth Alliance and beyond but is finding itself constantly blocked by competitors who jealously guard their foothold into space. Under the leadership of CEO Taro Isogi, Future Corps had gained a reputation for fair business dealings, which critics always regarded as its one weakness when attempting to venture into markets dominated by larger corporations. With the death of Isogi on Babylon 5, the next choice of CEO is not clear but it is known that there are many on the board of Future Corps who wish to see a return to a more aggressive and, some would say, underhand style of business.

Bureau 13

Captain Sheridan is not wrong about the presence of rogue agencies within EarthGov – they have, after all, been there for centuries, in one form or another. Despite the alleged unity of the Earth Alliance, it is in fact a bound collection of competing and differing interests, all pulling at the strands that hold humanity together in order to further their own goals. Psi Corps is one such organisation that operates many such rogue elements, all dedicated to furthering the concerns of telepaths but there are also those with less wholesome goals. There is a great deal of money to be made in both off-world business and military endeavours and this provides a driving force of greed to men of power. Other agencies may have

noble goals, such as retaining the unity of the Earth Alliance, but be prepared to engage in less than honourable actions in order to secure these aims.

Bureau 13 is one such rogue agency but, in common with many of its ilk, it is unlikely to ever make another appearance in the Babylon 5 story. Covert agencies have a habit of disappearing, being renamed or sometimes being rooted out and forced to abandon their operations. Those being Bureau 13 will continue their work after the discovery of Abel Horn but will do so elsewhere in the Earth Alliance, most notably Psi Corps. The Corps has several secret training facilities on Mars and has no wish for a battle of independence to destabilise the planet. In addition, there are many in positions of power on Earth who are all too aware of the influence Psi Corps wields but rather than attempt to take the telepath organisation on, they conspire alongside it, meeting with high ranking Psi Cops in order to work schemes of mutual benefit.

Project Lazarus

The original Project Lazarus was abandoned under loud public outcries when it was realised just how the scientists on this team were using subjects near the point of death. However, the technology was of great interest to many parties. While officially the data was sold to a few members of the League of Non-Aligned Worlds, in secret several agencies within EarthGov continued the development and refining of the processes behind Lazarus. The goal was to create an agent of unquestioning loyalty with superior power and reflexes and, despite a few flaws still in existence, this has been achieved.

The template below may be applied to any character (human or alien) who has been taken to a properly equipped and staffed Medlab while near death (-8 to -10 hit points). The procedure takes six months to complete and is estimated to cost well in excess of three million credits.

Hit Points: +3

Special Abilities: A character with the Project Lazarus template retains all the special abilities it had previously but also gains the following.

Prosthetic Weaponry: The character has one of its hands removed, to be replaced by an enhanced version of the slaver's glove which it can use make lethal attacks and yet otherwise appear unarmed. This weapon is used as a standard melee attack which does not generate an attack of opportunity. If successful, it will deal 3d6 points of damage. With the unique crystal power plant used in Project Lazarus, this weapon can be used indefinitely without requiring recharging.

Telepathic Susceptibility: Telepathic scanning is an intrinsic part of the process required to create Project Lazarus and they remain susceptible to further scans. Any telepath who scans the character (even accidentally) must also make a further Telepathy check (DC 25). If successful, the telepath will trigger the memory of the character's death, effectively reliving it. This will stun the character for one round, causing him to take no actions, lose any Dexterity bonus to DV and grant a +2 bonus to any attack rolls made against him. If the telepath fails in this check, they will be unable to detect any thoughts at all in the character's conscious – his mind will appear to be completely blank. However, a successful deep scan will always penetrate to the character's subconscious, revealing the memory of death, though this will not stun the character unless the second Telepathy check is also made.

Total Loyalty: The character is totally loyal to the team who created him. Orders may be given either in person or via any StellarCom (or similar) communications device. Via StellarCom,

the character can not only receive orders but also data required to carry out his mission. He is assumed to have an equivalent capacity of a data crystal, with this information being instantly accessible in the same way.

Abilities: The character gains a +2 bonus to Strength, Dexterity and Constitution but a -2 penalty to Wisdom and Charisma.

Feats: The character gains the Alertness and Lightning Reflexes feats.

Scenarios and Campaign

Hooks

Any characters coming into high-level conflict or negotiations with EarthGov or Earth-based large corporations will likely find their efforts continually thwarted by rogue agencies, though it may be some time before they recognise the signs of such organisations at work. In many ways, these agencies are far more insidious and dangerous than Free Mars or any Pro-Earth group, who are just brutal and bloody-minded in their work. Sheridan was not wrong when he said that the existence of even just Bureau 13 represented a threat to the entire Earth Alliance, for rogue agencies within a government working on their own agendas are the antithesis of democracy, taking power away from the general population and squandering it. This can serve as a central theme to any Babylon 5 story arc, and is very much in the spirit of the television show. Such plots can take many different forms as wherever Earth has any interests (even on far-flung alien worlds of the League), you can be sure that there are also people in positions of power willing to abuse their authority and influence in order to achieve their goals. If these goals are at odds with those of the players, a hidden conflict of epic proportions may begin. A Games Master who introduces a story arc of this nature fairly early will find it much easier to portray just how far EarthGov has fallen later on.

Project Lazarus may also rear its head in the activities of the players from time to time. While the events on Babylon 5 with Abel Horn will send its own shockwaves through EarthGov, causing many agencies to delay or abandon their Lazarus schemes, the technology has since passed to several alien governments, particularly in the League of Non-Aligned Worlds. When players begin entering the darker side of alien politics, they may find themselves battling one of these cyber-zombie agents, who will stop at nothing to achieve the goals of its masters.

A Race Through Dark Places (March 14th 2259)

'We believe that no race can be truly intelligent without laughter.'

Delenn

The Psi Corps had been long aware of a concerted effort to smuggle rogue telepaths beyond their reach to far-flung outposts or alien space, and had placed one of their finest operatives on the investigation to close down the so called underground railroad. Psi Cop Alfred Bester had already managed to apprehend one vital link in this chain within Mars Colony and was now interrogating him deep inside the Psi Corps facility in Syria Planum. Unable to persuade the rogue of the duty every telepath had to the Corps, Bester was forced to drag the location of the central clearing house used by the underground railroad, through a punishing deep scan.



The rogue suffered a fatal seizure during this scan but not before Bester managed to wrest the location from his dying thoughts – the underground railroad ran straight through Babylon 5.

A steady increase in military traffic over the first quarter of 2259 had a knock on effect to station revenues, as some commercial flights had to be re-routed to other colonies and outposts in the Earth Alliance. EarthGov had given assurances that this was a temporary situation but not all station operations would be entirely unaffected. It was left to Commander Susan Ivanova to inform her captain on March 16th that someone in Earth Central had judged their quarters to be too large, delivering a stark choice – move to smaller quarters or begin paying rent, to the tune of thirty credits per week. Sheridan was incensed at this additional bureaucracy and quickly made the decision, on principle, not to take either option and protest the action.

After venting his frustration of bureaucracy to a faintly amused Dr Franklin in Earharts, Sheridan was intercepted in Red Sector by Ambassador Delenn wanting his help. Despite her recent transformation, she still felt there was a bridge of understanding to cross between human and Minbari, and she wanted to learn what it meant to actually be human. Surprising Sheridan, she suggested they both have dinner later in the evening, during which, she stressed, they should talk about anything except business or politics.

Arriving on Babylon 5 at 14:30 EST, Bester immediately requested a meeting with the full Command Staff of the station, as well as Talia Winters. He informed them of the presence of the underground railroad and his suspicions that it led straight to Babylon 5. Sheridan quickly found that he was not alone in his unease in dealing with Psi Corps – in fact, he was in good company with Garibaldi and Ivanova. However, Garibaldi pointed out that they were not only required by law to assist Bester but that if an underground railroad was running on Babylon 5, it represented a threat to station security and so had to be taken seriously. Sheridan instructed them to provide Bester with whatever he requested but to also keep an eye on him and how he went about the investigation. As a parting word, Ivanova advised Sheridan to review all records of the Ironheart incident (see Mind War on pXX of the main rulebook) to get a good idea of exactly who he was dealing with.

Journeying through the Zocalo with Talia, Bester was confident that the Command Staff would do as he asked, and denied scanning them during the meeting. As they talked, Bester's senses were suddenly alerted by a single clear thought aimed in his direction. One word made itself heard above the mental noise of hundreds of traders and visitors in the Zocalo – 'Murderer'. Though he was

not able to locate the mind, he knew he was right. The rogue telepaths were indeed on Babylon 5. Now all he had to do was find them.

For their part, the rogue telepaths had retreated to their Downbelow homes to debate what to do now Bester had arrived on the station. It was clear they had little choice other than fleeing Babylon 5. However, they all knew Bester would try to stop them, leaving them with no option but to attempt to kill him. They had managed to locate a small number of PPGs on the black market and set about reinforcing their telepathic blocking techniques, desperate to ensure that if any were caught by Psi Corps, they would have a fighting chance of resisting a deep scan that could reveal the location of others within the railroad.

Rising to the occasion of taking Delenn out for an evening meal, Sheridan had reserved a table at the Fresh Air Restaurant. He was pleasantly surprised to see Delenn arrive in an evening dress, an attempt to become more human, though it caused a few male hearts to flutter around the surrounding tables. As their dinner progressed, they found they could have far more in common than either first thought and they began swapping stories of their homeworlds, Sheridan surprised to hear that all Minbari of the religious caste were required to spend an entire year in temple learning how to appreciate humour. Sheridan covers his surprise well, offering in kind the existence of the Laughing Buddha and the Zen mysticism of the Sufi, though he does not name them as such, who seek enlightenment through the tenets of laughter. Delenn, in a moment of deep foreshadowing, mentions idly that perhaps the Minbari and humanity are not as different as they think.

Meanwhile, Garibaldi tracked down Ivanova in Earharts, sure that he knew where to start looking for the underground railroad but he made the mistake of announcing he was on official business, something that cost him a round of drinks for the entire bar. Finally managing to talk to Ivanova privately, he asked her outright for a contact within the railroad. Unfortunately, his suspicions were flat wrong and, this time, Ivanova had nothing to do with helping others evade Psi Corps. He was frustrated at this and had been sure Ivanova was the right mark, for he believed the railroad had to have support from someone on the station. There was, however, another problem he had to inform Ivanova of...

Back at Sheridan's dinner with Delenn, they both revealed some simple, but revealing, pieces of their own pasts and cultures. Sheridan talked of his friend Mac, a destructive cat, and his joking around about bringing them both up on charges. Delenn countered by telling her dining companion that on Minbari, they have something similar. As she put it delicately, animals like cats exist in her opinion to ensure that the universe learns a healthy level of humility.

In a reasonably good mood after dinner with Delenn, Sheridan's demeanour turned foul once more as he tried to return to his quarters. He arrived to find them locked and barred, Ivanova waiting to inform him that security had been received orders from EarthGov to restrict their access because no rent had been paid. She had already tried to force her way in to her own quarters, to no avail. Refusing to bow down to this sort of petty tactic, Sheridan suggested they spend the night within the EarthForce Office, a solution Ivanova was not altogether pleased to hear. Things became infinitely worse for her when Sheridan began telling jokes as she tried to sleep.

Explaining that he wanted to make up for any friction between them after the Ironheart incident, Bester called Talia very late in the night to arrange breakfast in the following morning. More irritated at the late hour than in Bester's authoritative tone, she agreed. However, the short conversation began her thinking about her old friend who had died, partly as a result of Bester's actions, and the gift he had bestowed upon her. It was then she realised that Bester had been in her mind

– actually scanned her – twice already that day. For some reason, he had not seen anything of her altered powers. Was that another part of the gift, she wondered?



In another part of the station, as Sheridan and Ivanova bedded down for a long night, the rogue telepaths were preparing for a long one of their own. As they assembled handguns out of parts packed in smuggling crates with the cold detachment of people convinced that the situation had become kill or be killed, they continuously chanted the mind blocking nursery rhyme under the guidance of their leader. As they did, their looks grew even colder. They had already decided to kill Bester, as it was their only hope of freedom, but now they had reinforced their minds to the task. As a telepath, he would sense them approach and evade their attempt. That is, he would, if he could sense them at all.

The next morning, at breakfast, Bester and Talia ate a mostly quiet breakfast with only Bester's voice punctuating the silence to ask about recent events and the death of the President. According to him, people back on Earth had taken the loss very hard and that things are still not back to normal. He then pointedly asked if the command crew of the station have ever discussed the matter. Talia seemed to sense that he has more than a passing interest in the subject. She acceded that they sometimes did, but then inquired as to why he would be curious about such a thing.

Before he could respond, both of them were caught in a psychic echo. Two of the telepaths were coordinating their movements telepathically as they came in closer to Bester. Talia and Bester heard the faintest echo of their conversation. This prompted the Psi Cop to start looking around the bar, sweeping the surface thoughts of all those around him in an attempt to find the source of the echoes. When he looked in the direction of the two rogues at the bar, they panicked and their own thoughts betrayed them. They reached for weapons, but Bester was faster and got Talia and himself behind cover before they could fire.

The restaurant emptied quickly as the firefight began. Bester showed himself to be an excellent marksman, taking down the threat before they could even get a clear shot on him. The confusion of the battle separated him from Talia and as she fled the combat, she was caught by the rogue telepaths and secreted away even as Bester was finishing off the last of his attackers. He looked up from his position to try to find her, but the rogues had slipped her behind a hull plate in the nearby passage and effectively disappeared.

Back in Sheridan's office, Bester briefed the Command Staff on his battle and lamented his missed opportunity to track the remaining telepaths back to their lair. Garibaldi inquired about Talia, obviously worried, and a nonchalant Bester admitted to not knowing where she is. He expressed his assurance that she must have made it out of the area intact, but this was not enough for the irate chief of security. Never needing much of a reason to rail on Bester, Garibaldi yelled at

him and told him that his 'assurance' was not good enough and that he has been too busy saving his own skin to bother taking care of the woman. Bester, in his typically unflappable fashion, got up, suggested that Garibaldi redouble his efforts if he was so concerned, and walked out without being dismissed.

Talia awakened in another part of the station as this one sided argument concluded. The mental sounds of several telepaths thinking around her drew her out of her slumber and she opened her eyes to see them standing in a circle, each staring both at her face and in her mind. She was drawn to their leader, a lurker dwarf sitting on a nearby stack of crates. She tried to implore them all as they crowded in around her that the Corp was there to help them, but it fell on deaf ears. The rogue's leader, the only one that spoke to her directly, told her that they do not believe that and neither did she. She protested, but it was a feeble attempt at best. Both she and the rogues sensed the truth behind her words.

The rogues contacted Dr. Franklin and informed him that they had Talia and that they meant her no harm. She was in their custody because they wanted to show her the truth of their lives and the lies of Psi Corp. Franklin went and explained this to Sinclair, who did not seem too pleased to have a hostage situation on his station, even if it was a peaceful one. Franklin disagreed, trying to convince him that it was not a hostage situation but just a group of people in a situation that had gotten drastically out of hand. In a theme that would carry on for the entire history of the incredible events of the Babylon 5 station and those whose lives it touched, Sheridan asked if he could trust the telepaths. Trust, as the Vorlons have said, is a three edged sword; this was something the war veteran was about to discover firsthand.

Talia, alone with the rogues, was subjected to stories of the harsh mistreatment the rogues have undergone even before they fled the Corp. One man told of the tragic story surrounding him and his dead brother, killed by the Corp through a lethal Sleepers injection after he refused to stop speaking out against them. Talia did not want to believe this, but she would not enter the man's thoughts to see it for herself. The rogue's leader confronted her with this fear and tried to convince her of everything the Psi Corp took from her freedom and basic human rights.

Another shared her heartbreaking tale of forced breeding at the hands of the Corp seeking to create a P12 or greater child through her extraordinary P11 gift and another of equal ability. This story, and the woman's grief at never even knowing her child after it was taken at birth, hit Talia very close to home. The love affair between

her and Jason Ironheart was still very near and dear to her, and this woman's pain struck her deeply. The rogue's leader asked her to help them and from the look in her eyes, it was obvious that she could not bring herself to refuse them. Still, she was connected to the Corp through her innate sense of loyalty and conviction, and there was some question as to which would prove stronger in her psyche.

To push her over the edge and convince her to help them, the rogue leader told her something very personal and very dangerous. He admitted to having been Ironheart's friend as well. He and Jason were both in the experiment that gave Ironheart his extraordinary abilities. The process pushed the dwarf's powers into the P12-13 range, but that is as far as it took him. When Ironheart escaped, he went with him and came to Babylon 5. While Ironheart attracted all of the Psi Corp's attention, he stayed out of sight down below and set up the Underground railroad. He implored Talia, leaving unspoken the suggestion that everything around her was Ironheart's legacy and that betraying the rogue telepaths would have been betraying the memory of Jason himself.

Back in station security, Bester talked with Garibaldi and inquired as to his progress on the investigation. Garibaldi was plainly offended at having to help the Psi Cop, but showed his ruthless efficiency and dedication to duty by handing over information about the residences on file for the two rogues Bester shot earlier. Bester, in his own inscrutable way, tried to convince Garibaldi of his softer side by relating the fact that he was happily married with a child and telling an anecdote about Sunday picnics on Mars. Garibaldi nodded and let Bester know that with a few more stories like that, he might begin to think of Bester as being an actual human being. The meeting ended as they always do between these two, with Bester smiling and Garibaldi contemplating justifiable homicide.

Sheridan appeared for a private meeting with the station's contact. This contact proved to be none other than Dr. Franklin himself. Sheridan felt the triple edge of Truth as he confronted the good doctor with what he considered a breach of trust between them. Along with the rogue telepaths and Talia, all of whom emerged from the shadows to meet with the station's commander, Franklin explained himself and his need to help the Railroad as an extension of his physician's oath to preserve life and his sense of moral obligation. At first furious, Sheridan understood in the end and lamented that he only had the choices of turning the Doctor in, which would lead to a massive diplomatic and legal incident, or staying silent and becoming an unwilling accomplice.

Their meeting was cut short as the rogue's leader sensed the approach of Bester. Talia offered Sheridan a third option, but it was one that required his trust and his cooperation by simply getting out of the area and being ready to back up whatever the rogues have in mind. He was obviously uncomfortable with this, but for the time being agreed. He and Franklin left as the telepaths prepared to meet Bester on his own terms. Their minds ready for whatever transpired, they rallied and steeled themselves for the battle yet to come.

This was somewhat belied when Bester arrived to find a room full of rogues standing side by side and facing him. Instead of initiating hostilities, he tried to convince them to return with him, telling them that they had nothing to be afraid of. He painted a momentarily gentle picture of the Psi Corp, but Talia knew better and when she appeared to confront him with the truth, that they will all be killed as an example to others who would choose to run, his

words rang hollow. She emerged into the rogue group and shows that her hands were ungloved. Bester's eyes widened, as if he knew what was about to come.

The rogues all joined hands and began to force Bester to telepathically submit. He was obviously discomfited by their power and could not bring his weapon up to fire. He staggered for a moment, but that was the extent of their effect on him. The attempt was not working and the rogue's leader knew it. He searched for the member of his group resisting the attempt and found it in Talia. He shouted out a warning to the other rogues and was shot by Bester before he could do anything else. Scooping to pick up his fallen gun, Talia helped Bester kill the rogue telepaths as they ran around the chamber in a blind panic. After a few moments, they were both standing in a room of corpses.

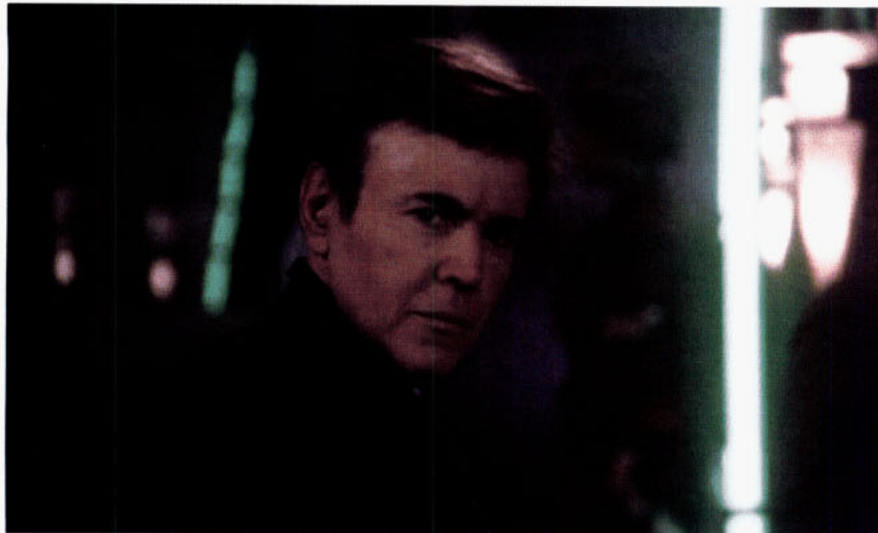
Bester expressed some surprise at Talia's compliance and let her know that, for a moment, he actually believed the venom in her words against the Corp. She espoused the party line of 'The Corp is Mother, the Corp is Father' and assured him she was loyal. He looked around, sighed, and admitted that he had wanted to capture a few alive. He shrugged it off, agreeing that an example was probably better, and suggested that Talia take a different route out of the kill zone. Rubbing his hands as if to clear them of imaginary blood, Bester took his leave, content in a job well done.

Moments later, this was all revealed to be another lie. Franklin and Sheridan stepped out of a nearby corridor into the room, still full of very much living rogues. Sheridan, confused and curious, asked what happened. As far as he could tell, Bester came into the room, stood quietly for a minute, smiled, and then left. Talia explained that what Bester saw and went through was merely a telepathic projection made possible through the combined strength of her and the rogues acting in concert to get past his defences.

This situation was now effectively resolved, which pleased Sheridan greatly. Bester thought the Railroad was defunct and its leadership killed, the rogues had to move on because Babylon 5 was too well known now for them to be safe, and all the illegal telepath activity on the station would be over as soon as they leave. Franklin assured him that his part was done, and the rogue's leader agreed to depart as soon as possible. With Bester unlikely to pursue the incident further, things could return to normal. Everyone went their separate ways, with Sheridan and Franklin heading out in the same lift tube in search of much needed drinks.

In the shadows of downbelow, Talia was approached by the rogue leader, telling her that she could no longer go back. She rebutted sadly, saying that she did not think she could ever leave the Corp. He did not mean that, however; he was worried that her thoughts would betray all that they had done should Bester scan her. Obviously attempting to scan her mind himself, he saw that her thoughts were hidden from even his enhanced abilities. She revealed this as another one of Ironheart's gifts, which the leader agreed to, his eyes wide with awe. Talia asked him what she had become, and he disappeared back into the depths of the shadows, saying only that she had become the future.

Back in Sheridan's office, Ivanova came in with two points to raise. One, she did not think the protest against Earth Central over the rent situation was going to work. This one was countered with Sheridan telling her that he had resolved the situation by reallocating part of the station's operational budget to paying the requested rent hike as part of 'combat readiness'. Ivanova, pleased by this turn of events, noted the delightful symmetry of Earth Central paying rent to itself



on their behalf. As she turned to go, Sheridan asked about the second point and was promptly informed that he snores.

Bester, as expected, departed the station as quickly as he could. Walking with Talia towards his loading bay, he told her that he was informed that Sheridan would be more sympathetic to the Corp and that he was disappointed with the attitude of the Command Staff upon his arrival and during the course of his investigation. He made certain that Talia would not have a problem watching them for him and she politely assured him that she will not. As he left, he subtly tried to scan her and was bewildered to find nothing in her mind she did not want him to see. Suspicious, but with nothing to base an accusation on, Bester left as baffled as when he arrived.

Later, just as Ivanova was bedding down for some much needed sleep, the door to her quarters chimed. Frustrated, she opened it to reveal Talia. The telepath stepped in, wine bottle and glasses in hand, and all but begged her to let her stay. She needed someone to talk with, she needed to admit that she was wrong about the Corp, and she was in obvious need of a friend. She offered to leave if she offended Ivanova, but the tired Russian officer shook her head. Indicating that the only thing about Talia that offended her was her Psi Corp pin, she invited her to stay.

The Underground Railroad

Finding the underground railroad is never going to be easy, especially for rogue telepaths on the run – after all, the railroad has not stayed free for this long by being stupid and, despite all the precautions taken, Psi Corps is still very much aware of its existence. There are, however, brave individuals who believe enough in the cause of freedom to help telepaths on the run whenever they can. Some are mundanes, such as doctors, who do what they can to keep rogues away from the Corps and funnel them to other worlds, though most are telepaths who have been freed by the railroad in the past and subsequently volunteered to help others like them. The entire organisation is highly unofficial and individual cells on various Earth Alliance outposts and colonies are small and rarely communicate with each other, if at all. Regardless, they remain the last, best hope a telepath on the run has for escaping the Psi Corps.

Rogues who manage to escape from a Psi Corps facility will be desperate and have little idea of where to even look for a contact who can lead them to the railroad. By its very nature, the railroad

remains hidden, as the Corps has sent plants in the past posing as rogues in an effort to locate and hunt down various cells – this in itself breeds a very special and intense kind of paranoia among the operatives of the railroad. Simply put, if a rogue telepath has not been located previously (such as by doctors who have been hiding medical records or workers familiar with the transport systems used by the Psi Corps to their training facilities), he will have to be very lucky in order to locate the railroad – and they will find him, never the other way around. Members of cells make it their duty to find those on the run, though their success is often more by luck than skill as they are unable to monitor an entire outpost for rogues who are attempting to keep hidden themselves, let alone a whole colony.

Once located, a rogue telepath will be thoroughly scanned by members of the railroad cell – this is not considered an invasion of privacy as it is believed there should be no secrets between free telepaths and, in any event, it is an essential security measure to guard against Psi Corps plants. Once their true nature has been established, a rogue will find a new kind of freedom. No longer will they be bound by Psi Corps rules, inhibiting their own powers and wearing the dreaded gloves. However, they will also be fugitives of the highest order and while the Corps attempts to recapture rogues, it is not averse to killing those who refuse to surrender and making a painful example of those who do. It is the priority of the railroad to move the rogues away from the more heavily travelled areas of the Earth Alliance, smuggling them onto cargo ships or manufacturing new identities for them. Most head out to outposts and colonies on the borders of Earth space, where the Corps has less influence though the only true safe place for any rogue is in alien space, so many try to find passage to the League of Non-Aligned Worlds.

Toxic Sleepers

The Psi Corp has a special formulation of sleeper drug that can induce death in a telepath injected with them. This formulation acts exactly as the normal dose of sleepers, but 1d4 hours after injection, they begin to drain 1d4 points of Wisdom each hour from the drugged subject; a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC: 18) reduces this loss to 1d2 points. If the first saving throw fails, the victim does not wake up until he successfully makes another save. When a telepath injected with toxic sleepers reaches 0 wisdom or stays asleep for six continuous hours, he dies from what appears to be natural causes related to his telepathic talent.

The Corp has an antidote that can be given at any point before the victim reaches 1 Wisdom. As careful as the Corp is about not wishing to waste good resources and the risk of a telepath injected with toxic sleepers falling into medical hands that might discover the reason for the victim's coma, an antidote is always kept on the same Psi Corp operative that administers the injection. This agent then remains near the victim as inconspicuously as possible until the poison has run its course to ensure that nothing of the sort occurs. The antidote is a separate injection also formulated to appear as a sleeper drugs to normal scans and is administered the same way.

Talia Winters

The 'gift' from Jason Ironheart (see *Mind War*, on p191 of the main rulebook) has touched Talia Winters in the most fundamental of ways but she is only beginning to learn of her potential. Without revealing her newfound powers to the Psi Corps, it is left to her to struggle to come to grips with them and, lacking the Corps' extensive facilities, Talia has no idea of the limits of the gift. In game terms, Talia is now capable of the following, though such powers will inevitably increase over time.

Boosted Powers – Talia has, at this time, a +2 inherent bonus to all Telepathy checks. She is also now effectively a P13 telepath.

Limited Telekinesis – requires Telepathy check (DC 15), may move a single object of less than 1 lb. in weight a distance of 30 ft. per round. This requires concentration and the object must remain within line of sight at all times.

Concealed Thoughts – while not immune to any kind of scan per se, Talia is able to hide her most secret thoughts far beyond the reach of even an accomplished Psi Cop. In effect, this means that she can effectively choose what to answer and what to keep silent about during a scan. Doing so will cause a scanning telepath to believe that she simply does not know anything about the question asked though this may make them suspicious. In addition, she can mask the psychic traces of any telepath she has let into her mind from another using the sense telepathy ability.

Scenarios and Campaign Hooks

5 The underground railroad presents an obvious direction to take a story arc, whether the players are rogue telepaths or just sympathetic to their plight, much as Dr Franklin was. Rogue telepaths may be brought through Franklin's railroad into Babylon 5 before being shipped to a far flung colony of the Earth Alliance or into alien space. Alternatively, they may wish to stay around the station in order to aid their fellow rogues in every way possible. However, the railroad will keep a great distance from any rogue who comes to the station under his own arrangements and then starts to raise all sorts of hell – such an individual will be refused any contact or aid, even if in dire need, as those running the railroad will wish to avoid the inevitable and unwanted attention that follows this character. Alternatively, the players may take a more active role in running the railroad themselves, especially after this episode when Franklin relinquishes his position. Babylon 5 will be under too much scrutiny to attempt to set up the railroad there again but there are plenty of other outposts in the Earth Alliance where players can funnel rogue telepaths. This will be a highly demanding endeavour, as players will have to discover ways of transporting what may be a large number of people safely, while avoiding the attention of Earth Alliance officials and, of course, the Psi Corps. Despite Sheridan's ability to keep Bester at bay, the players may not find it quite so easy to foil the abilities of a Psi Cop.

5 Underground railroad story arcs may be portrayed from the other side of the coin, of course, with the players using their full investigative talents to actually track down rogue telepaths and shut down any route of escape they may have from the Psi Corps. In such a role, players may either be EarthForce officers and personnel charged with such missions as part of their normal duties or actual Psi Cops, which can make for a very highly charged campaign. This does not mean, however, that the players are automatically 'evil' in nature, no matter how such characters are portrayed in the television show. EarthForce personnel may well find themselves wrestling with moral dilemmas, much as Sheridan had to in this

episode. Psi Cops, on the other hand, will genuinely believe that what they are doing is for the greater good of all telepaths – they will not look to hunt rogues down ruthlessly but will instead be more interested in taking as many alive as possible, so they can be shipped back to the Corps for 'readjustment'.

Soul Mates (May 4th 2259)

'Certification of my participation in an authorized archaeological dig. List of contents are there. You'll find this little item among them. It's all quite legitimate, officer. I can help you with the big words, if you're having trouble.'

Matt Stoner

It was a momentous day for Vir. Well, semi-momentous, perhaps. Actually, it was the same kind of nervous, out of sorts, social occasion he was not well prepared for kind of day. He was standing in the receiving lounge outside Babylon 5's docking bays, as ready as his addled wits could be to receive Ambassador Mollari's three wives. That was where Garibaldi found him and learned of the three's arrival, an event he found most alluring from a 'harem' point of view.

That is, until he actually met one of them. The first of the trio, Timov, arrived, introduced herself as the daughter of Alghul as if somehow her lineage was responsible for the sheer weight of circumstances that had forced her to be here, in this spot, married to a man like Mollari. Both Vir and Garibaldi could plainly see that this did not come from her as a pleasure, but rather as the pronouncement of a great chore she must endure. She demanded to be taken to her husband, berated Vir for his reticence at leaving without the other two, and forced him to depart with her immediately.

All of this left a greatly amused Garibaldi watching after them. This amusement, as with so many in Garibaldi's life, faded quickly as he overheard an incident between a Station guard and a passenger departing from the same liner as Timov. As he watched, ready to act if need be, the guard confronted the unidentified, unremarkable looking man about some unnamed infraction. Then, just as quickly, the guard relented, forgetting what he was upset about and walked away with a confused look on his face. The man smiled to himself enigmatically, gathered his luggage, and walked away.

Back in Sheridan's office, Garibaldi had given him a full report. As Sheridan thought, his chief of security paced around the room. Sheridan obviously could sense his discomfort, and asked what the problem was. With an irritated look, Garibaldi answered him in a way that revealed a great deal about his character. He was a creature of instinct, taking his cues from hundreds of subtle clues in his environment. His devotion to security came from a series of instinctual urges to stay on guard whenever trouble was around, even if he did not know immediately what that trouble was.

That, as he told his commander, was why he hated not knowing what set him off about this individual, someone he had identified as a freelance trader and independent explorer named Matthew Stoner. Completely free of any criminal misdealing and sporting a clean, normal record, the man had nothing about him that was out



of the ordinary. Therefore, of course, Garibaldi was paranoid of him to a level that almost seemed irrational. A legitimate reason for him to dislike Stoner came walking into Sheridan's office shortly thereafter. Talia Winters stepped in, greeted and complimented Sheridan on his settling in to his command of the station, and asked to speak with him. Sheridan dismissed Garibaldi, mentioning that they would take up discussion of Stoner at a later time. Talia's eyes immediately showed them both that she recognized the name and after a moment's questions, revealed that she indeed knew the man all too well. With distaste obvious in her tone and on her face, she revealed that at one time Matthew Stoner was her husband.

While Londo told jokes with an entire bar full of patrons, all laughing uproariously and enjoying the free drinks at his expense, Timov railed against Vir back in the ambassador's quarters about her husband's absence. Vir tried to explain this away by claiming him to be at a meeting or some other important function, but the woman knew Londo's behaviour better than anyone else. Vir, his usual pensive self, was told by Timov that she did not bite, but he had heard something to the contrary from Londo.

A moment later, Daggair, the second of Londo's wives walked into the room, chuckling softly and barbing Timov with a witty insult. In the words that were exchanged between them, it became obvious that Timov and Daggair had a deeply adversarial relationship. It also became obvious why Londo insisted that his wives remain unarmed. The newcomer also seemed to be under some sort of falsely imposed good behaviour, as if she had to remain pleasant no matter what she really thought or truly wished to say.

There was a chamber in the Zocalo where artefacts of old Earth were kept as a sort of hands-on museum to the twenty first century without glass cases or cages to keep the exhibits away from those who come to see them. In this room, items like a desktop computer, a compact disk player, and an electric guitar were considered curiosities of history. It was here that Sheridan found Talia lost in her own thoughts. After letting her know of his concern for her over the reaction she had at hearing Stoner's name, he offered to listen as one friend to another if she needed to talk.

Talia went for a long walk around the hallways nearby with Sheridan, telling him something of the way Psi Corp operates. As they passed back into the exhibit, she explained that in a Psi Corp trainee's first year, they learned to do difficult things as part of their education and indoctrination. The Corp's policy was to assign an advanced telepath to act as a sort of mentor for new

students and that Matthew Stoner had been the one selected for her. At first, he was charming and charismatic, enough so that when Psi Corp determined that he was a genetic match for her and pushed for them to marry, she did not refuse. The union did not last long. About the point that she realized that it was a mistake to have married Stoner, her husband managed to somehow leave the Corp. Talia believed he accomplished this through some kind of connection he might have had with the upper echelons of the Corp, but she did not know for sure.

Regardless, in contradiction to the general opinion that the only way to leave Psi Corp was to die, Stoner managed to do so and no one in the organization wished to discuss the matter at the time. Sheridan could see by Talia's expression that Stoner's feat disturbed her, but the lady did not speak about her reservations.

An incident of another sort required the attention of a different member of the Command Staff. Summoned to the Minbari ambassador's quarters for undisclosed reasons, Ivanova was invited in to see Delenn in a horrible state. Her hair bedraggled and brittle, she was almost in tears over her ragamuffin appearance. She confided in Ivanova that she had taken on human characteristics in an effort to bring the two sides of her people's soul, human and Minbari, together symbolically. Her hair had, it seemed, refused to cooperate with that desire.

The Minbari, she explained, bathed by means of applying a chemical solvent that dissolved the outer layer of their skin and any residue along with it. This acid, something she had been using her entire life, had been applied regularly to her hair, resulting in its terrible appearance. In a moment of surrender, she asked for Ivanova's help. She did not understand how humans cared for their bodies, did not want to appear as an invalid in front of others, and she trusted Susan enough to come to her for help. Sensing the ambassador's honest need and embarrassment, Ivanova bemusedly agreed and cancelled all of her daily appointments in anticipation of a very, very long day.

After his meeting, Sheridan headed to the marketplace, presumably to put in appearances and to make contacts among those who make the station run smoothly on the civilian side of affairs. There, he met with G'Kar who politely asked him how he was settling in. Sheridan, having just been asked that by Talia, gave into frustration and rhetorically inquired if he should not be getting too comfortable on Babylon 5. G'Kar sardonically replied that he was being foolish and that no one anticipated him vanishing in the middle of the night to some distant Minbari planet, a direct reference to what happened to Sinclair earlier that year.

As they talked, Londo came up behind G'Kar and greeted them enthusiastically. Just as G'Kar was telling Sheridan that when mysterious or trying things happen on the station, he got a throbbing in his temples, Londo's warm welcome made him cringe and fall silent. After a short conversation about the nature of nights and days on Babylon 5 being very much a point of view, Londo practically skipped with delight as he departed for his quarters. G'Kar took his leave of Sheridan a moment later, his hands pressed tightly to his temples and a look of agony on his face.



Londo, still giddy, arrived at his chambers to find Timov and Daggair arguing over the latter's oddly accepting behaviour. The moment he appeared, Daggair doted on him and acted positively demure. This was more than Timov can accept, as Daggair's actions until this date had been quite different. In fact, while Timov was snide and more than a little vicious, Daggair had been quite violent to Londo in the past, going far beyond a little biting. Londo, on the other hand, did not seem surprised at all and on Timov's insistence explained why. He had wanted to wait until all three were present, but Timov would not be denied.

It was the custom among the circles of the Centauri royal court to celebrate the Ascension Day of an imperial scion with gifts and congratulations. As the Emperor could not be imposed upon to shop for a physical gift, this year he had offered Londo Mollari any wish within his ability to grant. As it was said in the courts, Londo's star was rising, a reference to the fact that his status with the higher circles of Centauri politics was increasing due to his growing power and ability to handle difficult situations.

As Daggair and Timov paid rapt attention, the grinning ambassador informed them that his wish was for a legal and immediate divorce. As he laughed maniacally, Londo let them know that the terms of this wish was that one of them would stay on as his official wife for state functions and other events, but the other two would be cut off from his funds and his household, no longer entitled to any of their former privileges. The look of shock on their faces was all the reward his bitter old heart desires.

Garibaldi had meanwhile been doing some checking up on Stoner and found him discussing items of interest with a dealer in the Zocalo. The trader did not seem at all interested in anything he had to offer until Stoner took an ancient looking Centauri statuette out of his jacket. This piqued the dealer's curiosity, but he did not have long to look at it before Garibaldi appeared and implies that the item might be stolen. Stoner, wise cracking and pedantic, took a proof of legal ownership and archaeological origin permit from the Centauri government out of the same jacket and presented it smugly. Garibaldi took it and Stoner away from the booth for a private chat back at Security Central.

There, he confronted Stoner with his long list of recent visits and operations. Ever the one to see patterns of illicit activity, Garibaldi suggested that perhaps Stoner was running from something or engaged in some kind of shady affairs as part of a hidden agenda. Through all of this talk, Stoner remained completely unconcerned. He suggested to Garibaldi that this all seemed a little personal. Once Garibaldi mentions Talia, the man's suspicions were confirmed and he began taunting the security chief with allusions to his marriage

to the telepath and the intimate things he knew about her. This got him ejected from the office quickly, presumably before Garibaldi had him arrested or, more likely, shot him out of sheer frustration and spite.

From there, Stoner headed down to where Talia was reading a periodical and mulling over the events of the day. He surprised her with a pet name and then caught her hand as she tried to leave in disgust. After a moment's verbal baiting, he caught her attention by mentioning his escape from Psi Corps. Intrigued despite herself, Talia stayed and listened to what he had to say. He explained that it was not difficult to leave the Corp; it just required that a telepath lose their powers. He claimed to have done it, and before she could break free of his grip and his gaze, he told her that she could too. A minute later, lost in thought, she was stopped by Garibaldi as she boarded a lift. He told her that he spoke with Stoner and warned him off her. Talia, furious that the security chief tried to interfere in her affairs, told him to mind his own business and stormed away. She regretted the harsh words a moment later, but the die is cast and she would have to live with what came of it.

That did not mean she could not at least try to make it up to Garibaldi. She met with him later in his quarters and apologized for being so rude earlier. His fondness for the beautiful telepath was evident as he accepted graciously and invited her in. When she revealed that her desire to make things right between them stemmed from her imminent departure from the station, his warning flags went up again. That was when she revealed the rest of the conversation she had with Stoner. Matthew Stoner, once a telepath, had his gifts scrambled by a Psi Corp experiment and he thought he could replicate the process for her. Desperate to leave an organization that terrified her and eager to live a life without walls between her and normals, Talia had agreed and would soon be leaving Babylon 5 with her former husband.

Back in the Zocalo, the last of Mollari's three wives approached Sheridan and charmingly asked for directions. Mariel had already been on the station for some time, but she had not yet met up with Londo or his other wives. Obviously taken by the looks and demeanour of the lovely Centauri woman, Sheridan was lifting her hand to his lips as any gentleman would when Mollari stepped in and took him aside. As one man to another, he explained to Sheridan that Mariel was a social predator attracted to men of authority and just as vicious with them once she had them in her claws. From the conversation the three wives had while this was going on, they obviously shared the same opinion.

This view of Mariel notwithstanding, she at least thought enough of Mollari to purchase him an Ascension Day gift for the upcoming celebration, which coincidentally was occurring on the same day as the Markab's religious ceremony of High Fasting. Shopping in the Zocalo, she visited the same dealer Stoner was selling artefacts to and bought the Centauri statuette without a word. Her look declared it to be exactly what she wished to give her beloved Mollari.

The party began with all the participants inexplicably barefoot. Many of the station's important personnel were present, with Londo as the elated centre of attention. He was in such a grand mood, he did not even take offence when G'Kar arrived at his party wearing boots. The wearing of shoes at an Ascension Day celebration was a sign of great disrespect; G'Kar's boots should have been extremely offensive to Londo. Instead, Mollari called him his dear associate, a comment that drove the Narn away, once



again clutching his temples in distress. Mollari was pleased to see this; he had obviously done it all on purpose.

During this time of celebration, Garibaldi did not seem to be enjoying himself. A conversation with Delenn revealed the drama unfolding between him, Stoner, and Talia, a woman he told the Minbari ambassador that he knew was important to him the first time he saw her. This did not surprise Delenn at all, and she explained that in her culture, they believed that certain souls were linked together to repeat relationships, good and bad, throughout time. This did not necessarily please Garibaldi to hear, but it did not visibly strike him as being entirely unbelievable either.

Nearby, Mollari opened his gifts. The first, a deck of cards from Lenneir, had been marked exactly as Mollari asked him too. Unfortunately, the Minbari aide announced this fact in front of most of the people he would have used them on in the first place. Mollari, caught in the moment of festivity, let that pass. What he did not so easily endure is the gift that Mariel purchased and that Daggair claimed, in a way, was from all of his wives. He took it out of the box, looked at it for a moment, and then the statue's eyes flashed red. It fired two poisoned darts into the ambassador's forehead. Mollari was rushed to MedLab amidst a room full of shocked and disbelieving faces.

Under Franklin's care and surrounded by his wives, Londo's condition quickly degraded. Afflicted by an unknown toxin that was accelerating his metabolism to the point of neural collapse under extreme body heat conditions, Mollari would certainly die unless something was done soon. Unable to concoct a wide spectrum anti-toxin fast enough to stop the Centauri's death and lacking the medical technology to synthesize his blood type to try a transfusion, Franklin had very few options available to him. Nearby, the wives discussed Londo's fate. As Mariel left in tears of regret, Daggair commented to Timov that if Londo died before he declared his divorce, it would not be legal binding and their fortunes would be spared.

Perhaps just to spite Daggair, or possibly because at some level, she cared about Londo's life, Timov returned shortly thereafter to MedLab and informed Franklin that despite all of the differences, there was one thing she shared with her husband- the same blood type. She agreed to participate in a transfusion to save the ambassador's life, but he had to agree to never tell Londo of her part in doing so. Accepting the conditions eagerly, he led her to a medical bed beside the stricken Centauri and began immediately.

Londo woke up later surrounded by his wives again and compared the experience to very possibly being in Hell. After Daggair and Mariel expressed their deepest concerns for his safety and their joy at his recovery, he became sarcastically convinced that this must indeed be Hell after all. Timov excused herself without a word to Londo and after all of his wives left, he called her the worst of a nightmarish lot. Knowing that Timov was the only reason Londo was still alive, Franklin had no patience for the Centauri's insults.

In another room, Garibaldi seemed unlikely to spare Stoner, the man he was interrogating. He learned that the statuette was found in Sector 127, an abandoned Centauri outpost. Sheridan interjected that the colony there was abandoned because the Centauri were driven out by the Narn. The figurine was a booby trap, one of the acts of terror the Narn used against their ancient oppressors. The only regret Stoner expressed at this news was his dismay over not charging nearly enough for the artefact. Outside in the hall, Sheridan and Garibaldi discussed how unconcerned Stoner seemed over being arrested in light of Mollari's poisoning. Vowing to find out why, Garibaldi got to work while Sinclair returned to check on the rapidly fading ambassador.

Unfortunately, there was no luck turning up anything to corroborate a claim of negligence in Stoner's testimony. Everything he claimed checked out flawlessly, prompting Garibaldi to have to let the man go free if he could find anything else to hold him on. This is when he learned of Stoner getting lunch an hour early, which made him wonder how the man seemed to be able to get people to do as he requested quite so easily. His suspicious mind working overtime, Garibaldi began an entirely different line of investigation.

This investigation involved setting Stoner up to finally reveal his hidden talents. After he managed to somehow convince Talia to come with him despite her fervent objections to the contrary, he then made a guard comply with his desires to have a transport ready for immediate departure. Confident that everything was going his way, Stoner left with Talia and the guard to rendezvous with his shuttle. That was when Garibaldi, waiting hidden in the hall, took Stoner out with punch to the jaw and dropped him to the ground unconscious. Whatever hold he had on Talia and the guard seemed to fade immediately.

When Stoner woke up, he was facing a room full of guards, Garibaldi, Talia, and Sheridan. Sheridan laid out for the incredulous looking Stoner everything he suspected had been occurring. When he informed Earth Central of Stoner's incarceration and escape attempt, Psi Corp demanded his immediate transport back to Earth on the first available shuttle. Thus, he did not think Stoner ever really left the Corp at all. Instead of losing his powers, Sheridan believed the Corp's experiments transformed his gifts from telepathy to something else, something empathic.

Stoner attempted to use this power on the people in the room to secure his release, but before he got the chance, Garibaldi suggested that he refrain from doing so. As a precaution, he left several other guards outside watching the room on video. In the event of his suddenly cooperating with Stoner, they had been given orders to come in shooting. Whether this was a bluff or not, Stoner believed it and relented. He tried one last appeal for Talia to look in his mind for the cure to her telepathic condition, but she finally got the chance to do what she had been tempted to do since he

confronted her in the Zocalo. She turned and walked away from him in disgust.

In G'Kar's quarters, Mariel was turning away as well, though the parting between her and the Narn ambassador was much more congenial. He told her of his theory that when one tried to murder someone, it was a most unique approach to proclaim to everyone that it was her gift that did it. That neatly shifted the blame and covered the killer's tracks nicely. Mariel, slightly concerned, asked who he might mention this theory to, but G'Kar had no intention of doing anything of the kind. She told him it was always a pleasure to see him, suggesting that they had been in each other's company many times before, and slipped away to meet with her husband.

Mollari and his wives did make it to the docking bay, though they seemed as disappointed as Stoner did for not doing so. He had made up his mind and, though he was moved to give them at least a small stipend for the remainder of their lives, Daggair and Mariel were officially divorced from him now and he no longer had to tolerate their presence. Free to be as she truly was, Daggair left as catty as Timov arrived, but it could not break his good mood at seeing them off forever. The two left the station as divorcees, a shameful position their political aspirations might never recover from.

Timov remained for a moment, chosen by Londo as the wife he kept. She of course wanted to know why, as she had never made any pretext to being even fond of him. Londo, in a rare moment of character insight, explained that with her, he would always know where he stood both emotionally and morally. She would never hide her opinion or lie to him, and he was both well aware of it and grateful for the honesty. Seeing her off, he left to return to his duties as she departed on the Centauri liner *Valorian* for hers.

As she headed up to Command and Control, Ivanova was approached by Delenn who thanked her for her well-timed and urgently needed help earlier. Almost as if she knew that she would regret saying so, Susan graciously offered to be of aid whenever the ambassador's new humanity posed any troubles for her. Delenn, hearing this, did have one last question for her. As the lift doors closed, she asked Ivanova to please explain why she had been having these strangely painful cramps...

The Centauri Rite of Ascension

As part of their court custom, individuals of note among the nobility of Centauri are sometimes recognized as citizens of great import by the Emperor and his advisors. Called the Rite of Ascension, it happens fairly frequently and is considered both a great sign of favour and a purely political affair with little significance elsewhere, depending on one's point of view. For those with a mind to be politically astute, watching those who have 'ascended' is all part of the game on Centauri Prime.

The day a Centauri noble is chosen for ascension is recorded in the roles of the court and considered an important day in that noble's life from then on. On the anniversary of it, especially every ten years, the noble is expected to celebrate the great honour bestowed upon him but the Emperor and by the gods themselves. This is yet one more excuse for a grand party and while the bill for such a gala is usually the responsibility of the noble himself, he does at least reap many gifts from the attendees and a great deal of return on his investment with other nobles who are pleased with the affair.

Tricks of the Narn Resistance

The Narn have done virtually everything in the efforts to overthrow the Centauri from their places of power in and around Narn space. In the past, these efforts have included outright hostility and more subtle means of persuasion. Among the latter are items like booby-trapped toys and trinkets keyed to the metabolism of their hated Centauri oppressors. Some of these explode, others secrete a variety of toxins, and still others have more insidious effects.

One of these is an overt little item, a statuette with a pair of dart launchers hidden in its eyes. The statue is covered with an imperceptible sensory field that detects the contact of a life form picking it up and checks their genetic structure. If the person handling the statue is of Centauri origin, it fires its darts as soon as it faces them directly. This device can deliver any number of poisons, some of which stay virulent for centuries. As with most Narn poisons, these tend to be directly fatal and painful venoms, causing slow but inexorable Constitution damage until the victim dies in agony.

Na'tak'cha, a poison typically used by the Narn affects only Centauri physiology, has a Fortitude saving throw DC of 19, and inflicts unconsciousness and 1d6 Constitution damage initially. The secondary damage from a typical Narn poison is 3d4 Constitution, but if this second Fortitude save is failed, the victim loses consciousness and remains comatose while this damage is applied one point every hour until death occurs or the poison runs its course.

Treat an attack by a trapped Centauri Idol as a Reflex save (DC 16) to avoid being hit. This attack will only be triggered by a Centauri handling it and if it has a clear shot from its eyes to the victim. The poison invokes two saving throws because of the dual attack and if one is failed, they both take effect. Medical attention dealing with a victim of this trap only has to deal with the toxin once, even if both saves fail. Once the doses are in the victim's bloodstream, they are considered a single, if extremely deadly, condition inflicting twice the damage a single dose would.

Scenarios and Campaign Hooks

❸ Mollari's two jilted wives are not likely to take this defeat lightly. While there is little to gain by causing him further grief, Centauri politics and the ire of those scorned are seldom logical. The players could get embroiled in any number of ways into Daggair or Mariel's revenge attempts. While the latter might be more pleasant to deal with on a personal level, neither of them can be taken lightly and no matter how things turn out, it is not likely to end well for their pawns.

❸ Ascension Day ceremonies are fraught with diplomatic and personal peril. Because it is a high profile event directly tied to a Centauri noble's court reputation, they make the perfect opportunity for his rivals to strike at him in some way. Bombs, assassinations, and embarrassments both harmless and lethal are all par for the course at an Ascension Day celebration, which makes for a ready made adventure. Noble characters of Centauri origin will have a great deal to do during Ascension Day parties, especially their own if they qualify for one, and should throw one every campaign year without fail or lose a great deal of face with the Imperial Court. Political manoeuvring to keep nobles from ascending, dragging them down from Ascension once it had been achieved, or plotting attacks on nobles during their celebrations

should all be character hooks for players of Centauri noble birth. The politics of the Centauri are complex and consuming; no one wishing to reap their benefits is immune to their drawbacks.

5 If the process that made Stoner an empath can indeed be replicated, it is possible that Psi Corp knows how or that it is available from private concerns who would appreciate an eminently likable agent with the ability to operate in any kind of diplomatic or envoy capacity with flawless success rates. Telepath players might wish to get this treatment for themselves for numerous reasons. Getting this process done would involve contacting Stoner, having the right contacts in Psi Corp to find out about the experiment in the first place, or any other hook the Games Master wishes to set. Any telepath who undergoes the treatment stands a 25% chance of simply losing their telepathic powers from it and *not* becoming an empath, but that it the risk they take for trying something this experimental.

5 A telepath might appear on the station as a failed attempt of the experiment with empathic abilities gone wildly out of control. Station security and Psi Corp players might get involved in this event, as would any other player with a reason to keep things safe on the station or would want to take advantage of an uncontrolled empath and the chaos he wreaks all around him. If nothing else, lurkers and criminal types will appreciate so much of the station's security force being occupied with something other than themselves.

The Coming of Shadows (June 15th 2259)

'For a hundred years the Centauri occupied our world, devastating it. We swore we would never let that happen again. This attack on our largest civilian colony has inflicted terrible damage and loss of life. They've crossed the line we can not allow them to cross. As a result two hours ago my government officially declared war against the Centauri Republic. Our hope for peace is over. We are now at war. We are now at war.'

G'Kar

On Centauri Prime in the Royal Palace, Emperor Turhan pronounced his intention to visit Babylon 5. His friend and trusted aid Malachi, the Centauri Prime Minister, objected stringently, citing his poor health. On the contrary, Turhan's failing health was precisely the reason he has decided to journey now before he was no longer strong enough to do so. Despite Malachi's insistence to come with him, Turhan asked that he stay behind to deal with any crisis that might come up in his absence. Accompanied by his telepathic female agents, a group of trained woman clad in white veils and gowns to signify their Imperial status, he departed for his trip.

In Sheridan's office, G'Kar implored the station's commander to refuse Turhan admittance to Babylon 5 on the grounds of his family's war crimes against the Narn. Sheridan argued that the current Turhan had been more than accommodating towards the Narn and that all of the crimes he was complaining about were in past Turhan generations, but none of this could cool

the furious ambassador's hostilities. G'Kar dismissed Sheridan's recommendation that he use this chance to discuss peace with the Centauri emperor and left. As he did, he intimated that things were in motion that would ensure that this trip became a tragedy before long.

The docking bay at the front of the station was in for a busy day. The first visitor of import was a quiet one, a human male of nondescript appearance and strange, somewhat robe-like attire. He had been on the station twice before in the last month. He looked around as if seeking something important and commented to the clearance guard that he did a lot of business on Babylon 5. When the guard asked him if he needed any help finding his way, the man saw Garibaldi nearby, shook his head, and seemed to have found what he was looking for.

The other important arrival was not nearly as circumspect. Out of the jumpgate near Babylon 5, an entire fleet of escort ships and fighters flew a tribute pattern around a massive Centauri Primus Battlecruiser. Aboard the battlecruiser rested Turhan, weary and drained from his long journey but ready to set foot on the station that has come to mean peace and hope in the civilized galaxy. They proceeded on an approach vector and docked without incident, despite what must be the hopes of all those races the Centauri have subjugated over their long, expansionistic history.

None of this hostility was in evidence as the Emperor's shuttle docked fully and he disembarked with full guard escort to greet the station's Command Staff. All decked out in full dress uniforms, Sheridan, Ivanova, Garibaldi, and Dr. Franklin were introduced to Turhan and greeted warmly in return. He expressed his gratitude that they would willingly place themselves in the path of harm to ensure the safety of others. After the staff broke to return to their duties, Emperor Turhan approached Franklin and asks if he knew anything about the Vorlons.

As with many of the civilized races with star travel technology, the Centauri had sent missions into Vorlon space in the interests of speaking with them and perhaps opening diplomatic relations. Also like the other races in the galaxy, their missions never returned and nothing was heard of them since. The Vorlons, secretive and mysteriously clad in their obfuscative encounter suits, had never extended any interest in meeting with other races until Kosh's assignment to Babylon 5. Turhan's visit here was as much to possibly meet this Vorlon as for any other reason.

Conversations between those who could care less about Turhan's motives were simultaneously taking place in both Londo's and





G'Kar's quarters. With Londo was Lord Refa, who wished him to read a speech specially prepared to stir up support of their side in the politics back home and undermine the position of the Emperor with the people. While he obviously had reservations about doing so, Mollari did not directly decline and Refa left the room believing that the ambassador would do as he asked. Vir did not approve of any of what transpired, which for once made him and Londo in complete agreement.

G'Kar's meeting was over video communication with Kha'Mak, an agent of the Ka'Rhi, Narn's central government stationed back on the Narn homeworld. Through their conversation, it became apparent that while the Centauri a few rooms away simply wished to undermine the Emperor's political situation, G'Kar intended to assassinate the man himself. He was strangely at peace with himself, prepared to make the attempt at the Emperor's reception that night and completely convinced of the rightness of his action. He was fully endorsed, though certainly not openly, by the Ka'Rhi and through their approval and his own convictions, G'Kar had all the motivation he required to perform what he believed would be his last act in this life.

Elsewhere, someone else was pondering the end of his life. Emperor Turhan gazed out among the stars in one of the station's Observation Rotundas. He was shortly interrupted in his musings by Sheridan, whom he sent for earlier. Once Sheridan arrived, Turhan asked him a simple question; he wanted to know why the Captain was here on Babylon 5, serving as a member of EarthForce. The question vexed Sheridan, but not for long. He admitted that he was here in the uniform he wore because he wished to make a



difference serving something more important than he considered himself.

Conversely, Turhan revealed that he had never been free to make his own choices and had always done what was expected of him because he never realized he could choose anything else. Now that he was near the end of his long life, he lamented the losses of his people's warlike past and the anguish that filled their present. Although he did not reveal how, he seemed to expect to somehow make a different choice, and perhaps a different future, for himself and for his people through his visit to the station.

Later, his reception took place. Many of the politically connected denizens of the station were in attendance, arriving before he did. Representatives from several different races had come to see Turhan and hear his speech, which

promised to be a momentous event and the first unilateral greeting given by a Centauri emperor in a venue where even Narn could attend freely. As the guests waited patiently for him to arrive, they talked among themselves and made political manoeuvres of their own.

Unfortunately, it was a speech that would never be given. As G'Kar waited pensively to kill Turhan before he spoke, the emperor made his approach through the well-patrolled station. A few corridors away from the audience chamber, he collapsed for reasons unknown and lost consciousness. His guards went on the defensive even as his telepaths clung to each other out of shock. Tragically, there was no assassin to be stopped and no threat that could have been warded off. Turhan's assailant was none other than his own failing health.

The news of his incapacitation did not take long to reach others. The telepaths linked by their talents at birth back on Centauri Prime relayed it to Malachi, who looked stricken by his friend's plight. G'Kar learned of it very quickly as well, and was infuriated at the old man's horrible timing at succumbing to his own frailties before G'Kar could kill him as he had planned. Franklin, summoned by his communication link moments after the accident, brought Turhan to MedLab and tried desperately to nurse him back to some semblance of health.

Once he got Turhan conscious, Franklin explained that if he had been informed of the Emperor's failing health before his collapse, there might have been something he could have done to help cure him. Now, as his tone implies, there was little that medical science can do to extend Turhan's fleeting life. Franklin grieved, but the Emperor did not seem concerned by the news. He has accepted his death, but before he faded, he had a message that must be delivered. Unable to trust any of his own people with the message for fear that it would not have been given to its intended recipient, Turhan implored Franklin to do it for him.

In Londo's quarters, Refa paced, concerned that his competitors back on Centauri Prime would already be moving into position to take advantage of the Emperor's death before he could. Mollari, considering the matter and caught in the grip of his own ambition, remembered the words of Mr Morden, the strange messenger that talked with him a few months beforehand. He suggested to Refa that if a memorable act was needed to move them above the others who sought ascendancy in court, he could provide it. Despite Vir's



objections, which he did not openly share this time, he instructed Refa to inform the court back home that he would personally take care of an embarrassment to their people.

The act he suggested would echo through the galaxy for generations to come. He would personally remove the Narn presence from a colony outpost in Quadrant 14. Decried by Refa as a listening post in disguise, used by the Narn to listen in on military and civilian communications in Centauri space, the outpost had been targeted for action by their people for some time but never moved against mostly because of political impotence but also from the cost of such an operation in money, lives, and equipment. Mollari's assurance that he would deal with it without any of that expense would certainly be a notable accomplishment, if he could pull it off. No one in the room could know that this one decision would swing the balance of power between the Narn and the Centauri forever, nor could they imagine the repercussions it would have for each of them and every other being on Babylon 5.

Back in his quarters, G'Kar was still railing against the universe to Kha'Mak about the Emperor and his inconveniently timed collapse when Franklin came to his door with Turhan's message. G'Kar tried to dismiss him, claiming he had no time for idle threats from a dying man, but he was dumbstruck to hear that all the man wanted to say was that he was sorry. As Franklin told it, the Emperor came across the galaxy and risked his very life just to be on Babylon 5 and apologize for his people's actions without anyone being able to stop him from doing so.

This news and the Centauri emperor's simple words had a profound effect of G'Kar. At first disbelieving, he suddenly realized that all of his people's aggression and hate had been based on grievances that were as long dead as the people who caused them so long ago. Willing for the first time to greet a Centauri in the interests of true friendship and able for put his own hostility aside, he seemed to be reborn. He even bought Londo, looking sullen and despondent because of his decision to strike at Quadrant 14, a drink in the Zocalo and toasted the Emperor's long life. He also drank a toast to Londo's life, a taste that would grow sour and foul in his mouth soon enough. He was open and vulnerable, not that he knew it, and his gregarious acceptance of Mollari would prove to be the chink in his armour through which a black knife of betrayal would pass soon enough.

Londo shared the feeling, having just had a dark dream that has unhinged him and shown him horrible things to come. He saw images of Centauri Prime, of his becoming emperor, and of a massive disembodied hand reaching out of the sun to engulf the future. He also relived his own vision of the death he would

someday receive at the hands of G'Kar. This made him realize that the entire dream was perhaps a psychic premonition. When G'Kar found him in the Zocalo, he was determinedly trying to drink it, and his guilt over the devastating attack he set into motion against the Narn in Quadrant 14, away. As G'Kar drank a toast to him and his Emperor, he realized suddenly the terrible thing he had done. A dark destiny had been set in motion, and Londo could do nothing but watch the bright future that might have been slip away into a shadowy chasm of his own making.

Unfortunately for him and any chance he might have had at a lasting reconciliation with G'Kar, the attack was already over. Like a wave of deadly darkness, spiny obsidian vessels materialized into orbit around the Narn colony and sliced apart the orbital defence station, the ships guarding the outpost, and the civilian building on the surface below with equal ease. They vanished as suddenly and as effortlessly as they appeared, leaving the entire area a silent, lifeless ruin.

As the Centauri forces Mollari requested Refa send to Quadrant 14 arrived to survey and look in wonder at the wreckage of the former colony, Narn vessels came into the planet's orbit through the system's jumpgate. They saw the Centauri ships, bore witness to the utter devastation of their outpost, and jumped to the logical conclusion that their hated enemies had committed this travesty. Howling for vengeance, they broke and attacked amid the floating legacy to their mutual aggression.

In another tragedy of violence and ambition, Prime Minister Malachi mourned his Emperor light years away in the Royal Palace. Left behind by Turhan to guide the Empire in case he fell whilst among the stars, he felt lost and alone without his dear friend of so many years. Four nobles entered the chamber, stalked him into a corner, and drove their knives into his chest. Turhan's hope for the future fell to the ground, a victim of Centauri treachery. This obstacle to Refa's ambition gone, there was now very little to stand between him and his side's eventual rise to power. Mollari's demonstration of his power and by default the ability of Refa's political connections had been assured, and now those who would speak against him were silenced.

By on Babylon 5, Garibaldi had problems of his own. Rather than constantly be interrupted by requests that a man he apprehended before the reception speak with him, he agreed to a meeting and had the prisoner brought to him. Arriving still dressed in his outlandish, somewhat Minbari looking garb, the detainee had come all the way from one of the Minbari worlds with a message. Against what seemed to be his better judgement, Garibaldi played the recording crystal the man give him and was stunned to see Jeffrey Sinclair appear on the monitor.

Sinclair explained that the man was a messenger sworn to bring his words to Garibaldi even upon the risk of his own life. As he told his old friend, Sinclair's allies on Minbar saw a great darkness coming to cover the universe and were preparing to deal with it secretly. Though he did not explain why, Sinclair mentioned that his activities in this regard were not known by the President of Earth and that for his own reasons, Earth should not learn of them yet. Garibaldi seemed puzzled by this, but he was willing to hear more.

Sinclair identified the bearer of the message as a Ranger, one of an elite group of Minbari and human soldiers trained in both combat and stealth arts sworn to serve him directly. He requested that Garibaldi give them every courtesy in the name of their



friendship and out of an unspoken need to deal with the 'darkness' he mentioned before. Sinclair expressed his desire to tell Garibaldi everything he knew, but others that he kept counsel with did not think it was time to do so yet. He entreated Garibaldi to stay close to the Vorlon and to beware of shadows, though he did not and could not say why.

This was not the only transmission being watched intently on the station. Back in his quarters once more, G'Kar heard from Kha'Mak the first news from the colony world in Quadrant 14. Londo's ruse had worked perfectly; the Ka'Rhi believed that the Centauri instigated the attack, that they destroyed everything there, and that they acted alone and without provocation. G'Kar did not take the news well. Indeed, he took it as a base and vile betrayal of his trust and of his people. Refusing to live his life in the grip of Centauri brutality again, he flew into a rage. It was a fit of fury that took several security guards and Sheridan's direct intervention to stop. Convinced, only barely, to turn aside and not kill Mollari with his bare hands, G'Kar swallowed his hatred for the sake of innocent Narn lives elsewhere and was returned to his chambers. There were prisoners of war in Quadrant 14 to consider, something that even a berserk G'Kar could not willingly betray once confronted with.

Back at his sick bed, soon to be his death bed, Turhan told Doctor Franklin that the one thing he still wished for was that he had been able to see a Vorlon. Franklin left and moments later, the indigent Centauri Emperor was covered by an oddly light shadow. He opened his eyes and looked up into the encounter helmet and iris eye of Kosh. He seemed amazed for a moment and asked how the current situations facing his people would end. The Vorlon pondered the question and answered in one of his least cryptic responses yet. He simply said that it would all end in fire. Sadly, Turhan seemed to both understand the words and accepted the terrible truth behind them.

Later, with his telepaths and guards in attendance, Turhan spent his last few moments alive. Refa took this opportunity to tell him of the Centauri victory on Quadrant 14 and the fact that it was achieved without any of his people being harmed while doing so. Turhan, barely able to move, instructed him to have Londo come closer. Mollari took his hand, leaned in and heard the dying words of his Emperor. After the man's life slipped away, Londo stepped back and looked stunned.

Refa asked him immediately, without seeming to be the least bit concerned over Turhan's death, what he said. Londo made a decision, one he regretted immediately and would have many reasons in the future to do so more deeply, and said that the

Emperor endorsed the War with Narn through his dying breath and the words, 'Take my people back to the stars.' Once outside MedLab, he was again confronted by Refa, who wished to know what was actually said. Still shaken, Mollari told him that Turhan's true pronunciation was that they were both now damned. Refa, still blithely unconcerned, called it a small price to pay for becoming immortalized in history.

Sheridan found G'Kar in his decimated quarters, a tiny echo of the ruins that the colony in Quadrant 14 had surely been reduced to. The ambassador was quietly sitting, his worn copy of the Book of G'Kwan clutched to his chest, staring off into nothingness. Sheridan told G'Kar that he had a way to help the people of the colony, but it would require him to come to a council meeting that had just been called. As he left, rebuffed by silence, G'Kar spoke. He agreed to attend and thanked him in a flat, emotionless voice that somehow carried sincerity despite its drained and tired tone for stopping him earlier.

By the time G'Kar made it to the Council Chambers, Londo had already denied a request by Sheridan to let the colonists go freely back to Narn. He claimed that the civilian population of the planet would be put to a productive use, which Delenn dismissed disgustedly as meaning they would be put in forced work camps. G'Kar entered the room and mutely walked within arm's reach of Mollari, his restraint evident in his controlled movements and neutral expression. Sheridan, desperate to save what lives he could, played a bluff using the information brought to him through Garibaldi's mysterious new contact. He mentioned the possibility of Earth advisors coming to Quadrant 14 for an investigation, one that would surely turn up the means by which Centauri forces were able to so quickly and easily take the colony through its defences. Londo relented and agreed to let the colonists return to Narn. He had no intention of letting his connection to the forces even he knew nothing about get discovered by anyone else.

All eyes turned to G'Kar, perhaps eager to see some relief come to him at this news, but he was burdened by far greater concerns. He announced to everyone in the chamber that as of the last communication with his government, the Narn Regime had chosen to impose the harshest penalty possible for the unprovoked attack on a peaceful settlement. Everyone present knew the truth; this conflict had been brewing for years, just waiting for a moment of weakness to boil over. Babylon 5's mission of peace had, for these two races, failed. Narn and Centauri were now at war.

Two very different people made their way off the station. Refa, after meeting with Londo to advise him of the death of Prime Minister Malachi, the neutralization of several competing families, and the appointment of a sympathetic imperial nephew to the throne, departed for Centauri Prime. The new Emperor saw things the same way Refa did, which made him the perfect pawn to sit on the throne until the ambitious noble could get himself into position for it himself. After Refa left, Vir expressed surprise that Londo did not use this opportunity to manoeuvre himself closer to the throne himself. Mollari, remembering his dream, had no true desire to be Emperor as that part of his vision coming true meant the rest of it would surely follow suit.

The other person leaving Babylon 5 was the Ranger in Garibaldi's custody. He agreed to keep the security chief informed of any news he or the others might receive on their rounds throughout the galaxy in exchange for Garibaldi's cooperation in maintaining their secrecy. This was a deal Garibaldi gladly made, though he was curious if anyone else on the station knew of the Rangers.



Elsewhere, Deleenn pressed a message crystal into her quarter's BabCom unit and was greeted by a voice from her past. 'Hello, old friend...'

Lord Refa, Centauri Nobleman

'Damnation is a small enough price to pay for immortality.'

13th Level Centauri Diplomat

Hit Points: 19

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 15 (+5 Reflex)

Attacks: +6/+1 melee or +7/+2 ranged

Special Qualities: Contacts x7, Government Resources, Improved Diplomacy *

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +10

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 16

Skills: Appraise +9, Bluff +12, Computer Use +5, Diplomacy +20*, Gather Information +12, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (noble houses) +15, Sense Motive +12

Feats: Nerves of Steel, Iron Will, Skill Focus (diplomacy), Skill Focus (gather information), Leadership (Centauri agent followers)

A person of some noble backing and excellent birth in one of the younger, more vibrant Houses of the Centauri Republic, Lord Refa's political aspirations would likely have come to little end and his life of little note had it not been for the intervention of Londo Mollari at the death of the President. More than willing to accept some of the credit for doing none of the work in the Quadrant 14 incident, he quickly moved into a position of authority in the power vacuum he helped assure through the timely assassination of Prime Minister Malachi and the placement of a puppet Emperor with the same ideas and goals as himself. Lord Refa is ruthless, cunning, and a deadly diplomatic threat to anyone who stands in the way of his ambitions.

Centauri Psycholinguistics

Long inured to the vagaries of politics and the effects of language on the perceptions of those who use it, the Centauri have turned this facet of psychology to their advantage by creating a science dedicated to the study of both. The result is a practice called

psycholinguistics, a long term for a very simple concept. This art seeks to use words as a sort of carrier for other, less apparent messages that can sway opinions and turn the attentions of an audience towards the speaker's point of view. While the effects of psycholinguistics are by no means as potent as true telepathic control, it has an undeniable importance in the courts of the Centauri.

By using a psycholinguistics modified speech, an orator can make a Diplomacy skill check (speaker's choice) against a DC of 20. Success sways the audience's emotional state in any way he wishes, from fervour and joy to fury and hatred. This skill can also get an audience to bend their support to the subject of the modified speech, but this has a variable DC based on the complexity of the speech's intent

and the effort required to carry out its mission. A psycholinguistic speech intended to convince a nation to go to war will likely have a huge DC, while a short oration urging voters to turn against an already disliked candidate would be fairly simple to achieve. The Games Master is the final arbiter on the DC for a given speech.

Using Psycholinguistics is not a quick process, taking one week of constant work and a Craft (psycholinguistics) check with a DC equal to the final value set for the speech's effect to accomplish. Each speech written with this skill must be set for a specific speaker. A different orator can use a psycholinguistic speech, but its DC is increased by 5 to reflect that it was not written with his voice, attitude, and social interaction style in mind.

Difficulty Classes for Craft (psycholinguistics) Checks

Craft DC	Intended Effect
10	Hold listeners' attention for a full hour
15	Create dislike or instil doubt over a unpopular noble or public official
20	Generate support for new governmental policy
25	Create dislike or instil doubt over a unknown individual with no criminal background
30	Inspire a nation to war against a known enemy
35	Create dislike or instil doubt over a popular noble or public official
40	Inspire a revolution against the current ruling government

The Emperor's Telepaths

Centauri Emperors are attended by four female telepaths raised together at birth and trained to remain in constant contact with each other at all times. They act alike, eat and sleep simultaneously, and do nothing alone for the entirety of their lives. In return for this unified existence, they can achieve telepathic contact with each other regardless of their distance apart. This power has a massive



Hypertext Captioned

Eye on History: The War of Retribution

While war historians point to the destruction of the Narn outpost in Quadrant 37 in the latter part of 2258 as the true starting event of the Narn/Centaury War, the action that provoked the official conflict and drew the Narn declaration of War on the Centaury was the eradication of their listening post and colony in Quadrant 14 on the border between the two races. This act, blamed on the Centaury but likely conducted by mysterious forces far more powerful than the Republic's military, occurred in June of 2259 and precipitated the entire war. In a matter of minutes, the Narn colony world in Quadrant 14 was crippled and its defensive forces completely annihilated. No witnesses to the battle survived to describe what had transpired, but Narn forces coming out of hyperspace found Centaury vessels amid the remains of their listening

station and destroyed vessels. Assuming the worst, a battle took place over the colony world, resulting in the Centaury overpowering the much smaller force and securing the planet for themselves.

Key Events: Destruction of Narn colony in Quadrant 14; Narn Declaration of War; War of Retribution begins June 22nd 2259.
Worlds/Systems Lost: Quadrant 14 (Victor: Centaury)

range, even allowing them to share thoughts across light years of separation. When the Emperor travels among the stars, he takes two of them with him and leaves a pair at court. This keeps him instantly informed of important events back on Centaury Prime and lets the court know of his every action and wish while abroad.

Emperor Turhan

An atypical member of his family, Emperor Turhan is a peaceful man from a long line of butchers and tyrants. His father was personally responsible for the execution of over a thousand Narns during his reign and ruled over dozens of occupied Narn worlds with an iron fist. During Turhan's long life, he has tried to make up for his family's travesties as much as he could while constrained by tradition and a court unwilling to make any concessions at all.

This has deeply hampered his ability to make amends with the Narn, a people he has always felt guilt towards for the way his people have treated them. This resistance has shaped him into the monarch that he is at the end of his life, a congenial but bitter man who eschews tradition whenever he can and questions other people's motives because he has seldom been able to define his own. He does not wear his wig of station as much because he needs to express his disdain of his own station as because the thing is terribly uncomfortable.

Sinclair's Rangers

The mysterious organization of Rangers serves Jeffrey Sinclair directly from his station on Minbar. Little is known of them except that they are skilled in espionage, information gathering, and they have the resources to move around the galaxy on their fact finding expeditions. They have an odd mode of dress, though they can wear other clothes when the need for subtlety demands it, and they can be used to deliver messages and smuggle important cargo in and out of sensitive places. They take their commitment to the Ranger organization very seriously and are willing to die in the pursuit of their mission. It is important to note that until Sinclair is introduced to the Rangers by Delenn, few individuals in the galaxy have any idea what their true motivations are.

Scenarios and Campaign Hooks

5 The most important event in this episode from a campaign standpoint has to be the advent of the Narn-Centaury War. Characters can get involved in any number of wars with this conflict, from Narn and Centaury players fighting in military actions or more covert activities to EarthForce and Babylon 5 station personnel trying to maintain what little remains of the shattered peace. From Quadrant 14, the Centaury will establish a foothold in Narn space and spread out from it like a cancer against the Narn. Most of the intense fighting in the first stages of the war will be in and around this sector of space. Bordering Quadrants will quickly become engulfed in the conflict, providing excellent opportunities for combat and military storylines.

5 A full campaign idea could be centred around the political and military ramifications of the Narn-Centaury War and the worlds that it envelopes. Several members of the League of Non-Aligned Worlds have territory bordering the contested areas of Narn space, making it uncomfortable to operate in those sectors and difficult to avoid some of the fighting that is tearing the affected Quadrants apart. Narn and Centaury characters will not be able to escape being affected in some way by this great conflict and if they had a direct part in fighting the war, they will have all the action and intrigue they can handle. Military raids, lightning strikes by the Narn against the larger, more powerful Centaury forces, and ground fighting in the streets of Narn colonies and in the corridors of defence stations will keep soldiers and officers busy, while diplomats and nobles can plot the course of the war from behind the scenes in their respective government camps.

5 A player could, from this point forth in the events of the show's storyline, become a member of the Ranger's network of information. While membership in the Rangers will not be an option yet due to the extreme caution the Minbari and Sinclair are taking in their recruitment policies, they still need informants and contacts. This could be the first step to becoming a Ranger or potentially betraying them, as the players desire. Rangers should be a minor plot element during this time unless their activities figure heavily in a given campaign. Even then, they should remain unknown and mysterious for as long as possible to preserve their profound impact on the campaign.

5 Independent characters can make a great deal of money and develop quite a network from the events surrounding the War. The Narn will be in need of mercenary support, weapon shipments, and

3 information on Centauri offensive capabilities. The Centauri will not require the first two, but they would gladly pay for any help against the Narn forces, especially in the first part of the War when they take heavy losses from their outraged foes.

5 Back on the station, the preoccupation of security forces with the mounting tensions between the Narn and Centauri populations there will make things a little easier for those who deal in illegal goods and services. Players who traffic in such things might come to realize that instigating larger problems for Security to deal with means that they can do their business in the shadows with fewer hassles. This kind of puppetry is just one more diplomatic web to weave on Babylon 5, something else for the players to do that can affect the greater scheme of things for their own purposes.

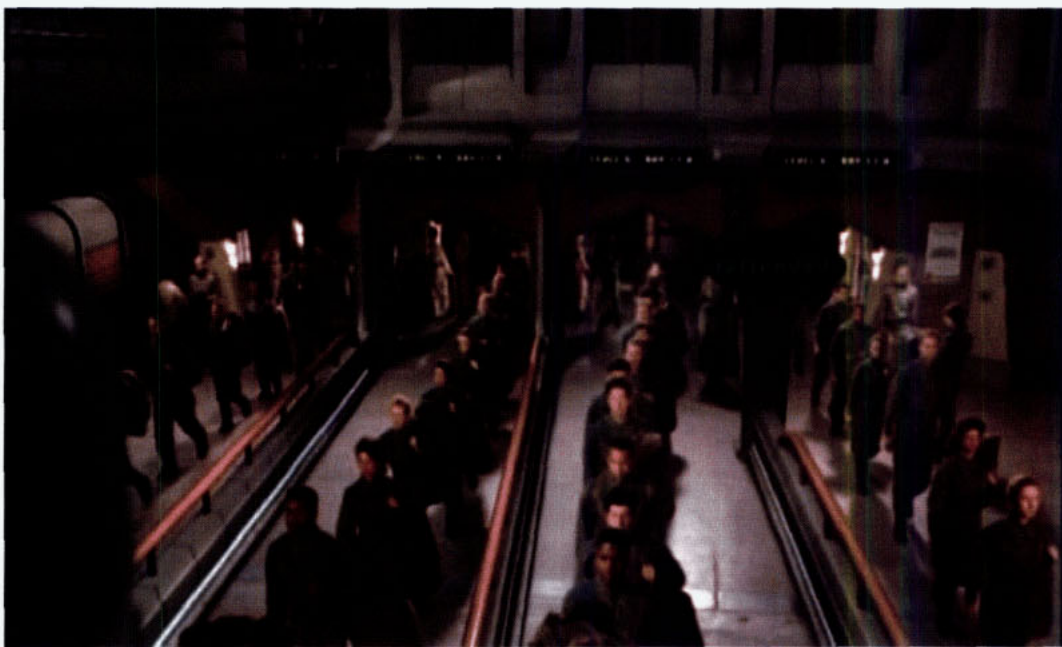
5 Emperor Turhan's visit has caused quite a stir on the station, one that players can use for their own gain. Regardless of race, anyone's agenda on Babylon 5 will be affected by the Imperial tour. From lurkers who have more freedom because Security is elsewhere to diplomats who can seize this opportunity to deal directly with the head of the Centauri government or other officials drawn in to hear his speech, the opportunities are endless. G'Kar might not be the only foreign national who might try to assassinate the Emperor at this time, and even those without plans to kill Turhan might wish to move against him in some way. Politics and intrigue on the station will be at an all-time high; this is the perfect environment for diplomatic and non-combat oriented characters to shine in, provided they take the initiative and forge their own advantages out of this golden opportunity.

Gropos (June 29th 2259)

'A man who won't stand up for his own principles is not really a man at all.'

General Richard Franklin

It was that rarest of things on Babylon 5, a quiet night up in Command and Control. Things were so calm, Ivanova actually had time to put her feet up on a console and comment about the lull in emergencies and activity. Unfortunately, it is usually a truism that when you call the universe's attention to something, it tends to turn its focus towards you. No sooner did Susan make this proclamation than the jumpgates activated nearby and six massive vessels emerged. Ivanova's lieutenant on shift mentioned as this was occurring that there is no night in space.



Be that as it may, it was likely to be a very long night indeed for the station. Coming in hot and requesting a Level 10 Ultraviolet permission to dock, the highest possible clearance for landing, the six ships turned out to be a Nova class warship and several Condor transports carrying EarthForce personnel and military assets on route to points distant in this part of the galaxy. Scrambling the Command Staff and the Dockers' Guild as quickly as possible, Ivanova made Babylon 5 as ready as it could be at this relatively late hour.

The highest ranking officer aboard the convoy introduced himself as General Franklin of the 356 Infantry Division to Sheridan as he hurriedly met him in the halls outside the main military docking bay. Surprised by the name, Sheridan welcomes him to the station and asked, as soon as he could do so conveniently, if the General was related to the station's chief physician, Doctor Steven Franklin. He replied that he is Franklin's father and he declined any offer to have his son informed of his arrival. He intended to do so himself once his people are settled.

Therein lay the real problem with this sudden visit. General Franklin was on his way to a major offensive and needed to bivouac 25,000 troops, most of them active duty GROPOS infantry soldiers on the station for a couple of days. This number represents a full tenth of the number of people the station can comfortably support. Taking on the General's men was a major problem for Babylon 5, but the General was pointedly convinced that Sheridan and his people could handle it.

Not willing to accept a refusal from the lower ranking officer, he insisted on the GROPOS team being given priority housing and moved on to say that he had no intention of taking his people into the field after their being stationed on transports the whole way. Sheridan, left with no real choice but to agree to make it possible regardless of the strain it might place on Babylon 5, was met with grudging approval by the all-business General Franklin. That detail satisfied, the two of them moved on to more important matters, such as the nature of the General's orders and the eventual destination of this extremely large ground force.

The briefing in this regard was set for 09:00 hours, but until then, there were just shy of thirty thousand troops and ship's personnel to contend with. Ivanova, as the officer on duty, began coordinating the boarding and registration process along with the GROPOS leadership personnel. The soldiers were broken up into combat squads by colour, identified mechanically by rank, full name, and division assignment, and sent through a disembarkation line to whatever hopefully temporary housing assignment the station could provide for them.

On their way to attend the briefing, Sheridan, Ivanova, Garibaldi, and Sheridan discussed the problems that the high traffic of soldiers was going to generate for the security details and recreational areas aboard the station. Garibaldi mentioned his opinion that someone in EarthForce had evidently lost his mind. This statement was overheard, though not appreciated, by General Franklin as they entered the room. This exchange also revealed that during the Dilgar War, the General had a soldier under him by the name of Alfredo Garibaldi. This turned out to be the chief of station security's father, though the General seemed as unimpressed with the fine officer's breeding as he did with the comment beforehand.

The briefing began and the Command Staff of Babylon 5 learned of the GROPOS' intended mission, a surgical strike against a rebel stronghold called Matok on the Sh'lassen world of Akdor. A formerly neutral world that had requested help from EarthForce and specifically the Babylon station before, the standing orders in the military had always been to deny those pleas. Now, the political climate has changed and EarthForce was secretly preparing to end their civil war with this one overwhelming military assault.

Sheridan had his reservations about this plan and was not afraid to raise them. He had some history with the fortress of Matok, having been inside it during his time as a soldier on the Karani Expedition. He called the place a death trap and urged General Franklin to reconsider the idea of going against it with a ground invasion. Unfortunately, his former experience was exactly what the General was counting on and he was asked to help plan the very invasion he wishes EarthForce to avoid. His mind obviously made up, General Franklin dismissed the command crew after announcing that he came bearing gifts.

These 'gifts' were a set of high-powered defence weapons with enough firepower to allow the station to engage a warship if need be. These items came straight from EarthForce Research and Development and were the latest in military technology. Sheridan disagreed with this decision as well, claiming that station's mission of peace would be jeopardized if others saw it arming itself so heavily. In another moment of heavy foreshadowing, General Franklin told everyone present that the universe is changing, becoming more hostile, and that EarthForce must change with it. Disturbed, but relenting to the General's orders, Sheridan and his crew departed the meeting room with more questions than they had before they arrived.

Lieutenant Keffer arrived at his quarters to find two GROPOS soldiers in it, their feet up on his furniture and their hands on his possessions. He did not take well to this and confronted them about the lame idea it was for them to stay in his room. The two soldiers, Yang and the self-proclaimed and well entitled to the nickname 'Large' were cordial at first, but the latter got

in the pilot's face very quickly. Instead of backing down, Keffer cracked a nervous joke and stood his ground. This impressed Large and got him drawn into the GROPOS marine's animated war tales, much against his will.

In Doctor Franklin's room, two generations of the family had a tense reunion. At first, things were cordial as they discussed Steven's mother and two sisters while sharing glasses of a Markab juice that appealed to the old soldier even though he much prefers orange juice to any other. The situation quickly devolved to what must be an tired argument between them. Steven's father implored him to accept a reassignment to Bethesda Dome, a research centre focusing on military application of medical experiments.

Steven knew the place all too well; he spent time doing just that kind of research during the Earth/Minbari War and he hated it. His dedication to all the many precious forms of life in the universe precludes his being able to do research on new ways to kill it all off. General Franklin revealed himself to be more than a little humanocentric, perhaps even a bigot against alien cultures. They clashed over his violent life over his son's peaceful one and in the end, the General left the room in a barely controlled fit of quiet rage at his son's 'poor choices'.

Later, at the Eclipse bar, a different side of Steven Franklin could be seen, the son who loves but cannot come to terms with his father. In conversation with Ivanova, he confided that his childhood was spent not as a child in a family but more like a soldier in a platoon. Military discipline was the order of the day, but even worse than this tyranny was the terrible wait while the General was off on missions to see if he would ever come home again.

Unable to bear the constant thought of losing his father, Franklin left for deep space as soon as he was old enough to do so. This drove another wedge between them, one that eased slightly when Franklin joined EarthForce during the Earth/Minbari War. He regrets the thought of never being able to tell his father how he really feels and honestly thinks that he may not ever find the words to do so. This struck Ivanova particularly hard given her own lost chance to reconcile with her father while he was alive, and she warned Steven to do it now while he had the chance. As he did not know the truth behind the Akdor mission, this confused and alarmed him greatly.

On the other side of Eclipse, Delenn walked with Garibaldi, inquiring as to when the Earth soldiers would be departing. She



hoped it was soon, as she did not wish to think of the station becoming a constant barracks and shifting the perception of peace that it stood for, exactly as Sheridan feared. She also mentioned that the peace talks the Minbari were trying to arrange for the Narn and the Centauri were coming to no avail, almost as if both sides had no interest in averting their war. Garibaldi was sceptical of her possible success but wished her luck all the same and left to break up a potential fight.

In doing so, he exposed Delenn to another one. Three GROPOS marines entered the same part of the bar as Delenn and immediately began to harass the ambassador, calling her a 'boney' and deriding her about her hair and her human appearance being an insult to the memory of humans killed by her kind. Kliet, the group's ringleader tried to assault Delenn, but a female soldier named Durman jumped in, buying time for the Minbari woman to run by starting a brawl herself. This escalated into a full fledged bar fight and while Delenn escaped unscathed, few others in Eclipse were so lucky.

Alerted by Delenn, Garibaldi intervened with the aid of the GROPOS sergeant in charge and while the marine wanted to haul them all off to the brig, Garibaldi convinced him to just clear the soldiers out and let them all sleep it off confined to quarters for the night. The woman that saved Delenn found Garibaldi on the way out and thanked him for keeping her out of hard confinement. Introducing herself as Dodger though her uniform said Durman, she very forwardly suggested that she will see him around the station. Garibaldi, unused to being hit on like this, was called away to break up yet another fight. Thus, he did not get to reply as she slipped away into the night, all the while admiring his butt.

In Sheridan's office, the General had been running tactical scenarios by him and asking for his opinion of their viability. The entire area around Matok was heavily mined and their main guns would prove to be a deterrent to any air strike that flew in without ground support. The place lived up to its name as a death trap and was far harder than the Sh'llassen made it out to be to EarthForce. Sheridan again tried to get General Franklin to call off the attack, but there were political concerns driving the invasion. Earth needed a base in that sector to watch the Narn and the Centauri, a base the Sh'llassen would only give them if the rebels were dealt with.

As they talked, Doctor Franklin entered the room and tried to draw his father into another conversation. His motives were pure, but the General would have none of it. He eventually went so far as to dismiss his own son like some common soldier. This infuriated Steven, who saluted and stormed out. The reason for the General's resentment came out as he talked afterward with Sheridan. The thing that hurt him most about his son's attitude towards him was that he was perceived as a murderer in his child's eyes. Sheridan understood, but tried to convince the stubborn soldier that as long as he could keep talking with Steven, there was always the hope of reconciliation.

The strain of the soldiers on Babylon 5 was being felt in every sector of the station. Security was pulling double and triple shifts trying to keep a lid on the rambunctious troops, but things were inevitably going to blow sky-high and Garibaldi knew it. Before he could worry about it any more, Dodger found him and convinced him to show her around. At her insistence, the tour ended with his quarters. Before anything could develop between them, his anxieties surged to the surface and he frightened her away with his intensity and insistence of relationships. He tried to stop her before she went, but she was caught up in her own worries over mortality

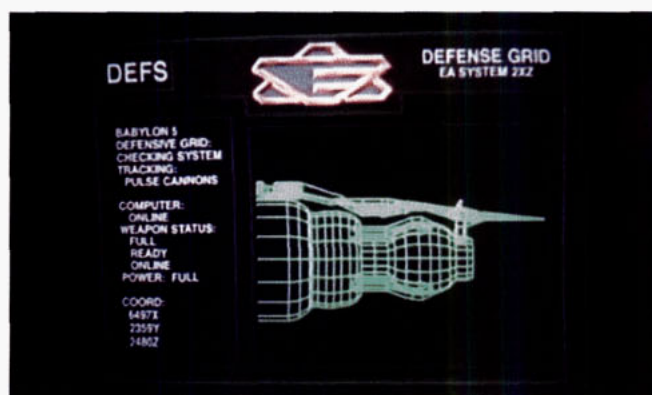
and not having much time left in her short, violent life. The date ended badly for both of them.

One relationship shattered before it could begin, while elsewhere on Babylon 5, another began to mend its broken pieces. In Steven Franklin's quarters, father and son had a long, painful conversation and came to the conclusion that despite the pain, harsh words, and misunderstandings that had kept them apart all of their lives, the simple truth of their existence as a family was as father and son, loving each other despite and because of the radically different paths they had taken. For the first time what was probably decades, the two Franklins shared an honest, caring embrace.

In Darkstar, a more low key bar on the station, several of the GROPOS had gathered for a drink before they called it a night. Keffer and his two bunkmates, 'Large' Turnbow and Yang, were sharing beer and more of Large's war stories starring his old platoon mate Buffer, a soldier who died in the Mars Riots. After Yang revealed that he had never seen combat and was scared of what might come, he was comforted by Keffer and Large both, who assured him that he would do fine and that fear was part of a soldier's life. The three toasted Buffer and themselves, a simple gesture between fast friends who might never meet again.

In that spirit, Garibaldi sought out Dodger in the same bar and, hat in hand so to speak, asked her to forgive him for essentially being an idiot. She did after giving him some well deserved hell over his behaviour and offering an apology of her own for being so forward. They talked for a while, but any plans they might have made were negated when Keffer accidentally spilled Kliet's drink and started another bar fight. The room exploded in violence that only ended when General Franklin and Sheridan showed up on the scene. The General announced that if it was a fight his men wanted, it was a fight they would get. The troops present were sent to get their gear and report on the ready line by 22:00. Friends old and new parted company, with Dodger amusing Garibaldi by telling him that fighting beside him was the next best thing to sex.

The GROPOS moved out at 22:00 hours, with touching farewells between the Franklins and Garibaldi and Dodger. Dodger actually broke ranks as her platoon marched into their Condor to give the security chief a kiss he would never forget, the kind of kiss someone who never knows if this will be her last chance at any kind of intimacy gives someone she cares about. Though her commanding officer screamed at Private Durman for stepping out of line, he obviously understood and let her back in without incident. Stunned, Garibaldi could only stand mutely by as the woman flew out of his life and on towards Akdor.



Gathered in the Zocalo, hundreds of people aboard Babylon 5 watched in rapt anticipation for any news from the Matok front. The first reports were hopeful, with General Franklin alive and optimistic about their chances of victory on the alien world. Then, after seeing a broadcast of the battle as it was initially joined four hours earlier, Garibaldi and Keffer got the first list of casualties. It was indeed as General Franklin said in the interview on Akdor, a victory bought at a very high price. Dodger, Large, Kliet, and Yang were all among the dead.

GROPOS

The Marine division of EarthForce has numerous operational chapters covering all aspects of warfare and military operation. The ground assault unit of the Marines, often called GROPOS as a nickname originating from the derogatory term 'ground pounder', is a group of soldiers specially trained to perform infantry attacks and defence manoeuvres using the latest hand to hand combat techniques with vehicular and aerospace support. The first division called in during complex military operations, GROPOS offers a tactical solution to battles that would otherwise have to be dealt with through overt force, creating a diplomatic or legislative incident.

Service in a GROPOS unit is not a prestigious assignment at its lowest levels, but as a soldier ascends the ranks of this Marine division, high profile positions can be attained. GROPOS is a rewarding career choice for soldiers without the inclination or educational advantages for officer service in another armed force. What GROPOS lacks in style, it makes up for in effectiveness and training. Soldiers in GROPOS are some of the most well trained, combat ready personnel in all of EarthForce, a fact the military

certainly does not forget when it comes time to assign troops to dangerous duty throughout the galaxy.

Bethesda Dome

Considered the height of medical research by most on Earth and nightmare house of chemical horrors by those few race given reason to learn of it, the truth behind the glass walls of Bethesda Dome lies somewhere in between. Part of Bethesda Dome, a research station located in the Sol systems and closely graded by EarthForce with constant surveillance and patrol flights, is dedicated to the developments of life-saving medical techniques and new equipment. Soldiers in EarthForce have Bethesda Dome to thank for the triage technology used in current engagements to save the lives of front line combatants injured in the field.

The other side of Bethesda Dome is only seen by those medical and technical staff invited into its white halls and hermetically sealed research chambers. Here, virulent biological weapons are cultured using samples of alien biology at test beds. These weapons provide an edge for Earth in dealing with the often more advanced races of the galaxy; these bioweapons are extremely deadly in theory and would be controversial if their existence ever became common knowledge. Bethesda Dome has yet to develop a superplague capable of working quickly enough to incapacitate a non-human population quickly enough to be of any use in the field, but rumours have been circulating among those in the know of breakthroughs involving the degeneration of neural transmitters through a short duration pathogen. If these are true, Bethesda Dome may finally become Earth's best and most terrible hope for victory against any race that threatens it.

Eye on History: The War of Retribution - Strong Beginnings

Following the declaration of war by the Narn, several contingents of the Centauri fleet moved to the border of Narn space. This fleet, a unified whole of the many scattered segments of the Republic's once mighty armada, was disjoined and has a shaky chain of command between its parts, but the single goal of war against the Narns provided it some unity. To combat this force, the Narns pulled together their four main fleets, Gold, Blue, Black, and Silver, and deployed elements from them against the area of space defined by the division between Narn and Centauri territories. The Narn also organized a new fifth fleet, Red, to bolster the line as their main attacking arm.

During the first days of the War, the Narn left a large portion of the Black Fleet along their border with the League of Non-Aligned Worlds, mostly as a precautionary measure against interference by the Drazi, the most aggressive of the League worlds. The rest of the Black Fleet became a reinforcement wave for the Red fleet on the Centauri border. The battle lines were drawn along the two main Narn task forces in Kotok and Quadrant 14. A number of other ships, mostly pulled from the Silver and Blue fleets, remained farther back in Narn territory, reach to surge forward or pull back as the events of the war dictated.

The first targets for the Narn were the colony worlds in Quadrant 1 and Quadrant 27. Both were defended by a single Centauri Noble House's private garrison only, and those forces were not Royal Navy trained. Politics in the Centauri being what they were, the lords of these Houses were not warned by Lord Refa and his allies based at the new garrison world of Ragesh in advance of the attacks. This resulted in both systems begin conquered quickly by the Narn during one day battles on June 29th 2259. Their warship squadrons swiftly cut through the surprised skeleton defence the Centauri House guards could provide. The power of Houses Ritan and Lotoru of the Centauri were broken but more importantly to the Narn, their first battles of the War of Retribution were successful.

Key Events: Narn Red Fleet is created; Narn garrisons on Kotok and Quadrant formed; Centauri Fleet begins to unify but begins as a fractious, ineffective whole; Centauri Houses Ritan and Lotoru are destroyed; Ragesh becomes the main staging ground for Centauri.

Worlds/Systems Lost: Quadrant 1 (Victor: Narn), Quadrant 27 (Victor: Narn)

Sh'lassens

One of the first offshoots from Earth's expansion into space, the Sh'lassens were an independent consortium of human who took to the stars in primitive craft and settled a group of worlds outside the bounds of any race's controlled territory. They have remained independent for the better part of a century, becoming acclimatized to the environments of their new planets and developing their own cultural heritage and strong sense of racial identity. It was only when Earth made contact with them again in 2248 that their homogenous civilization began to change.

The majority of the Sh'lassen people had no problem with the presence of representatives from their old homeworld, but a radical group emerged, opposed to what they perceived as Earth trying to reabsorb them and destroy the independence their ancestors had worked to create. Rather than parley with these first ambassadors, the Sh'lassen rebels captured the leader of the Earth diplomats, Alexander Karani, and executed him in their fortress on the Matok Plateau. The EarthForce guard assigned to the Karani Expedition attempted to invade the Matok fortress but were driven out of it by sheer force of numbers. Rather than go to war again soon after the conflict with Minbar, Earth withdrew from Sh'lassen space and did not venture there again until 2259.

Sh'lassens are human, though they are beginning to develop a dark complexion because of the stringer ultraviolet radiation given off by their system's sun. With the destruction of the Matok fortress by EarthForce in 2259, these worlds have signed a reunification treaty and are now considered a full Earth Alliance system. At the request of the Sh'lassen, Earth has not yet established a base in the system; instead, the Sh'lassen patrol their own space in refitted transports and cutters of old EarthForce design.

The Upgraded Defence Grid of Babylon 5

When General Franklin stationed his troops on Babylon 5 before their departure to Akdor, he brought with him a defence grid refit system designed to upgrade the weapons aboard the station to make them better able to cope with the rising threat of alien interference with its operation in neutral territory. The weapons involved are the latest developments from EarthForce Research and development, offering unprecedented firepower over a much greater range than what the station previous possessed.

The Upgraded Defence Grid on board Babylon 5 in 2258 has the following weapons in each facing.

- ⑤ Two Quad-linked Particle Beams; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 10+3d10; Critical 20; Range 4
- ⑤ Two Heavy Pulse Cannons; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 30+3d10; Critical 19-20; Range 4; Rapid Fire
- ⑤ One Energy Mine; See Equipment and Vehicles in this sourcebook for details; Range 5
- ⑤ Two Particle Beams; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 5+2d10; Critical 20; Range 5
- ⑤ Six Mk II Interceptors; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 20+2d10; Critical 19-20; Range 2; Rapid Fire

Scenarios and Campaign

Hooks

⑤ The concept of Bethesda Dome offers innumerable possibilities for plotline centred around chemical and biological warfare. This period of history sees a marked increase of research into new methods of combating aliens, including tailored poisons and single generation diseases that ignore human genotypes. Players can get involved in any aspect of this research, from creating the deadly weapons to having to deal with their effects once they find their way out of the Dome.

⑤ The tensions in the Narn-Centauri war are heating up and with it, the possibilities for side adventures and military actions along the borders of contested space. The deal between the Sh'lassen and EarthForce is by no means the only manoeuvring being done. Players might be called upon to broker, enforce, or break such deals as they made, thus affecting the face of the War as it unfolds.

⑤ The weapons of the Sh'lassen are obviously as good if not better than those of EarthForce, a fact that will not elude the military leadership for long. After their staggering losses at Matok, EarthForce will certainly be taking back what they capture from the rebel stronghold and likely petitioning the planetary government for more. In this atmosphere of acquisition, EarthForce players and 'recovery specialists' of any class or race might be called upon to ensure that such an exchange happens regardless of Sh'lassen wishes.

⑤ GROPOS is being kept busy in many different parts of the galaxy. The losses on Akdor, while substantial, are only a small part of the vast military organization that is the EarthForce Marine Corp. Numerous military campaigns can be set around this ear in galactic history, with Earth fighting in dozens of alien conflicts for the right to establish an uncontested presence in their systems or to pacify the region for further expansion (though this last intention would not be spoken of openly).

⑤ As this episode clearly shows, players can have family members in all walks of life. Even if they are not directly involved in campaign events, they may be drawn into them by these relationships. If nothing else, they will hear of important goings on through their family members, keeping them from being completely isolated from the universe at large, even if they do not deal with such things personally.

All Alone in the Night (July 4th 2259)

'A soldier's record tells a lot about a person. Not just what he's done, but how he's done it and why. And you have an uncommon failing for someone in your position, Captain. You are a patriot. You believe as I do that when we put on this uniform we took a solemn vow to protect Earth against threats from outside and from within.'

General Hague

It was a night of departures for the people of Babylon 5. In Delenn's quarters, she was waiting pensively as Lenneir arrived to answer her summons. She has been informed by the other members of the Grey Council that she was to come to their cruiser and meet with them immediately. Now that a new leader had been elected by their order, it was time for them to start putting their affairs in order.

One of those outstanding affairs, the matter of Delenn's refusal to lead them and her strange new appearance, had to be dealt with. From her behaviour around her trusted aide, Delenn did not believe that she would be allowed to return to Babylon 5.

For a woman who had always been very strong and self-possessed, Delenn seemed deeply worried. Lennier tried to assure her that her changed outer appearance had done nothing to mar her soul and that the wisdom of the Grey Council would surely see that. Having been on the council, she knew that they were merely mortals with all the emotions and foibles that come with being in power, isolated from the rest of their people for years. She admitted to feeling terribly alone, but Lennier took her hand, put it over his heart, and let her know that despite everything else, she was anything but that.

In Command and Control, Sheridan was also departing on a mission of his own. In Sector 92, an unknown disturbance had been disrupting stellar traffic. Characterized by a bright light, a painful flash that enveloped some vessels, and the complete disappearance of at least one transport, the disruption had been increasing of late. The Brakiri and other non-aligned worlds had lost ships, and something had to be done. Needing to get in some flight time and eager to see some action after so long on the station, Sheridan volunteered to go check it out despite Ivanova's orders.

His last words to her as he left for the Cobra Bays echoed with a warning of things to come. He doubted anything could possibly go wrong, but this was surely the thought of the Narn pilot who, even as Sheridan suited up to leave, was in Sector 92 hammered by strange energy beams and then enveloped by a bright, pulsating radiance. His hands raised as if in pain, the light built until his ship detonated around him. A bizarre alien vessel, the source of the attack, drifted past the wreckage.

In the docking bay, Delenn prepared herself mentally for her journey. Lennier came to her, informed her of her flyer's readiness, and then let her know that his was ready as well. The aide, while well connected within his religious order, did not have a flyer, but he had arranged to borrow one from the Minbari courier that brought Delenn her message in the first place. She expressed concern for his safety, but he dismissed her worries with the confidence of youth and his devotion to her service. Struck by the sudden realization that her aide is a deeply caring, special friend, she left arm in arm with him on a journey she feared might be her last.

Before Sheridan had the chance to leave, Ivanova contacted him to let him know that his escort would meet him in the docking bay and confronted him on another matter. A member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Haig, was arriving slightly ahead of schedule. This was not an issue, but the fact that she did not know of his impending arrival at all was one. He assured her that this was a private matter, not official business, and that she was not informed because the visit was purely personal. He promised to be back before the General arrived and left to board his Star Fury.

Once Ramirez arrived, he, his two wingmen, and the Captain departed Babylon 5 at full speed and proceeded to Sector 92 through the jumpgate. Unfortunately for their sense of adventure, there was very little to see. There was no sign of wreckage, not even the remains of the Narn vessel just destroyed, and a disgruntled, obviously disappointed Sheridan ordered his men to finish their sensors sweep and head back to the station. Just as they

all turned, a jump point opened almost on top of them. The alien ship emerged and sliced off half the Captain's Starfury's engines.

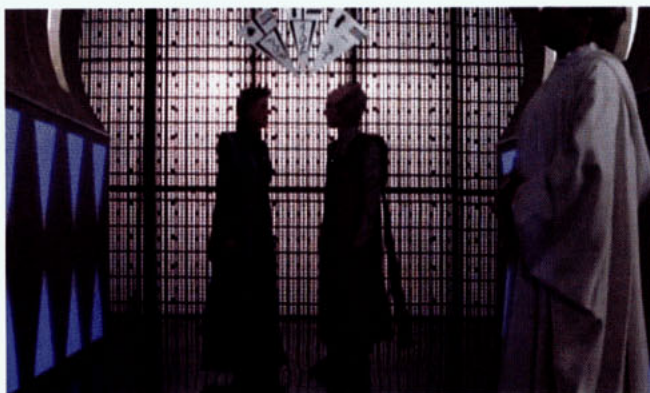
The other two engines overloaded and before they could detonate, Sheridan ejected. His three escort fighters turned to attack the ship. Two of them were destroyed swiftly and Ramirez' fighter was badly damaged. Powerless to do anything but watch as his Starfury regained functionality, Ramirez watched as the alien vessel brought in Sheridan's escape pod and jumped back into hyperspace. The search mission ended in fire and failure, with two men dead and Babylon 5's commanding officer the captive of an unknown race.

As the Starfury around Ramirez regained enough power for its computers to come online, it quickly became apparent that the mission had cost three lives. The damage to his fighter had cracked the fusion reactor behind his cockpit and lethal radiation had already flooded the pilot compartment. With no other choice if he wished to save the Captain, he set his fighter to redirect as much power from life support as possible into the engines and made his way to Babylon 5 as quickly as possible. He was a dead man and he knew it, but there was still a chance to tell the station what happened to Sheridan before he expired.

Death is on Sheridan's mind as well when he woke up in a strange chamber aboard the alien ship. Bound to a wide platform by heavy layers of some mucous covered membrane, he called out to his captors or anyone else who might hear him. For a while, there was no response, but then the organic looking ceiling split open in a round hole, a dark red light emerged, and a long pod with multiple fingers extended down towards him. As he watched in helpless horror, the fingers spread out, each one tipped in a brutal looking surgical tool. The torturous, oddly living device loomed towards him with obvious intent.

On the Grey Council's warcruiser, Delenn had arrived. Undeterred by her current circumstances, Lennier walked beside her the entire way to the chambers of the Council, offering words of support and prayers for her safe conduct. Steeling her confidence in front of her supportive friend and aide, she strode to meet her destiny. Her destiny, it would seem, was not yet ready to face her. Met only by one member of the Grey Council, the others had chosen not to appear before her. Not only was this an insult it indicated to her what was to come.

She was not wrong. The one member of the Council informed her that the others had voted to remove her from their presence and strip her of her titles. Though she should have been given a trial and the right to defend herself, this had been denied her and their decision made without her approval. The one right she had been afforded was the ability to speak before the Nine if she so chose.



She did and the one member disappeared into the deep shadows of the chambers to call them forth. Dismissed both physically and in spirit, Delenn looked defeated as the standing circles of light vanished, leaving only hers to light the darkness that consumed everything else.

Back on the alien ship, the torturous device receded from Sheridan, leaving him bloodied but alive. Ignoring his questions of why they would do this to him, the aliens instead chose to free him and provided a metal pole as a weapon nearby. The membranes over him split and tore, setting him loose just as a large Drazzi appeared beside him, similarly armed. He got the pole and managed to defend himself long enough to see that the Drazzi was not fighting of his own volition. Instead, there was some kind of living implant with glowing lights on the warrior's face.

Urging him to fight its control, Sheridan tried to merely defend himself from the Drazzi's attacks. At first, the Drazzi managed to cease his relentless assault, but the implant proved too powerful and the Drazzi charged him, all sense and awareness lost in a rage of combat. Sheridan dodged the blow, but the Drazzi impaled itself on his pole. As it fell dead to the ground, there was another flash of light and the body, along with Sheridan's weapon, vanished.

Sheridan's respite was very short lived. Even as he was catching his breath, there was the sound of a weapon cleaving air behind him. He turned to see a tall, noble looking Narn swinging a ka'toc, a well crafted curved sword, with obvious skill. He was also wearing an implant on his face, but unlike the Drazzi, he seemed to be in control of his faculties. At least, that was how it appeared at first. The Narn tried to fight the controlling device on his own, but pain took hold of him and he tried to get himself killed by attacking Sheridan. The Captain refused to kill him and after a pitched battle using the Drazzi's fallen pole managed to knock the skilled Narn soldier out. Collapsing in exhaustion, Sheridan shouted out defiantly against his captors.

At Babylon 5, a single Starfury emerged from hyperspace through the jumpgate. Barely functional and showing minimum life signs, the fighter's occupant was rushed to MedLab. Ramirez had survived his trip to the station, but he succumbed to his radiation burns despite Franklin's best efforts to save him. His death was not in vain, however, as his flight recorder let the Command Staff know what had become of their Captain. Unfortunately, the ship was of unknown configuration and without knowing who these aliens

were, there was no way to know where they had taken Sheridan. He was, it would seem, lost.

On the Sharlin cruiser, Delenn was given her audience by the now complete Grey Council, surrounding her in their dark chamber and fixing her with scrutinizing stares. She implored them that in the name of the long service she rendered to them and the friendships many of them shared she be allowed to remain as the Minbari ambassador to Babylon 5. The voice of her successor was the only one that greets her; the rest remain entirely silent while he derided her appearance, her motives, and her presumption that what she has become was in accordance with prophecy.

As he spoke, Delenn recognized him for who he was, Neroon, a member of the Warrior Caste and the Star Riders clan. His presence on the Council as her replacement caused a great imbalance, no longer maintaining the divisions of three imposed by Valen a thousand years earlier. She asked why this had been done and was told only that if a great war was coming, the Warrior Caste should be the ones to lead their people. Delenn and Neroon argued, but she was in no position to convince the Grey Council of anything. She was allowed to remain on Babylon 5, but as they disappeared without speaking to her further, it became clear that she had lost everything else.

That was, in their opinion she had lost all other titles and honours. Outside the chamber, as Delenn met with Lenneir in the hallway, she proved that she still has one thing; she had the loyalty and unshakable faith of her dear friend. She warned him that very soon, she would be going into some dangerous things that she might not survive. He accepted this, and told her that while he lived, he would never leave her side. It was a vow he was fated to break some day, but for now, it was sincere and it touched her deeply that he cared enough for her to make it.

On the alien transport, Sheridan and his new Narn companion both lived. Sheridan had removed the implant from the Narn's face and dismantled it to keep it from repairing itself. Together, they surmised that the aliens were probing various races for potential and likely targets for invasion. The examinations, torture, and forced combat all pointed to the aliens wishing to see if their captives could withstand great pain and adverse conditions. As prisoners, they had a duty to escape, though the Narn had lost hope of ever doing so. Hope was something Sheridan had in abundance, enough for the both of them.



What he did not have was consciousness. Lapsing into sleep, Sheridan had a strange dream. In it, he was himself, standing on the deck of Babylon 5. Behind him, Ivanova appeared in uniform with a raven on her shoulder. She raised a finger to her lips, hushed him, and then said enigmatically, 'Do you know who I am?' Before he could respond, things changed. In another direction, he saw himself looking down at him, also in uniform. The dream image of him was very stern, almost cruel looking. Nearby, also above him, Garibaldi looked at him, a dove on his shoulder. 'The man in between is looking for you,' the security chief said without explanation.

The dream changed again. Ivanova was there once more, but now she was dressed in black, like clothes of mourning. 'You are the hand,' she told him. Looming behind him now was Kosh, his

encounter suit lit in an eerie red glow. Sheridan, surprised, asked him why he was here. 'We were never away. For the first time, your mind was quiet enough to hear us.' Why he spoke in the plural was not explained. Desperate to get some kind of intelligible answer out of all this, he then asked why he was here. Kosh's only reply, a response that woke Sheridan from his deep sleep, was, 'You have always been here.'

Sheridan awoke back in the alien hold, rousing from one near nightmare to another. The Narn was still alive, but they both were starving and thirsty. If the alien's depredations did not kill them, deprivation would surely do it for them. His attention was drawn to one panel of the wall, where shadows at its base showed him for the first time that some kind of crew existed on the ship. It also showed him the location of a door out of the room. Using the Narn's sword, he began to lever the portal open. The Narn awakened and despite the intense agony of his wounds, came over to help.

Outside, Sheridan had help of another kind. As she returned to Babylon 5, Delenn learned of the Captain's distress and after



analyzing the data the station had of his captors, she deduced the identity of the alien assailants. Calling them the Streibs, she relayed her own race's history with them and her knowledge of the alien's homeworld. Offering to lead the station's forces, which include the Captain's old ship, the Omega class warship

Eye of History: The War of Retribution – Momentum and Mistakes

While the Narn Red Fleet was securing the worlds in Quadrants 1 and 27, the Blue Fleet was also making an advance into Centauri space. Led by War Leader Dor'Sol G'Tal, the areas selected by the military for his attacks were coreward systems at Quadrant 32, Irva, and Jux Prime. These had not been adequately explored by Narn reconnaissance and posed a greater threat than Quadrants 1 and 27. Despite this, Dor'Sol showed great promise and his fleet was considered more than adequate for the task assigned to him.

The Blue Fleet's first target, Irva, was an astounding victory won against the Royal Navy garrisoned in that area. Using small scout ships, G'Tal found a jump point between the shadow of Irva's main world and its moon and used the momentum of a dangerous jump between them to come in behind the Centauri Navy's ships. By the time they circled around to effectively return fire, half their number were destroyed and the remainder could not pose an effective defence. This battle marked the first defeat of a Centauri primus battlecruiser, the *Mirago*, at the hands of Narn forces. This battle took place on July 6th 2259 and proved the morale and impetus required for the Blue Fleet to continue their campaign into Quadrant 32 and Jux Prime.

The attack on Quadrant 32 was initiated before the Blue Fleet had collected enough reinforcements and this lack of firepower became its undoing when the Fleet was turned back against a stalwart defence provided by the Royal Navy and orbital fortresses they came up against. Although this battle gained the Narn a great deal of intelligence about the coreward defences of Quadrant 32 and the shortest possible path to Centauri Prime, it was a mistake in hindsight for G'Tal not to incorporate ships from the Silver Fleet into his own and press the attack in Quadrant 32. Holding this system would have been a major victory for the Narn and a beachhead for further attacks into Centauri space. Losing it cost the Narn their one chance at a garrison within striking distance of Centauri Prime itself.

Instead, G'Tal turned his attention to weaker systems nearby. Learning from his mistake with the Silver Fleet, the Blue and Black Fleets launched a combined offensive on Jux Prime. Though Jux Prime had once been an important systems, changes in politics and trade routes had left it with limited strategic value. What Jux Prime did have was a major fleet of its own, though most of the ships were inactive before the Narn advance. Though the fleet of Jux Prime outnumbered G'Tal's forces, they were unprepared for the ferocity of his attack and the experienced nature of his crew. After one week of intense battle, the defence fell and Jux Prime was taken by the Narn.

Pressing his offensive advantage, G'Tal showed his military capability as a strike commander by pushing his Fleet into the Polgrath system. This system was also well defended by no match in its current state of surprise and defensive restructuring to withstand a full Narn assault. The battleground shifted to Quadrant 17 on the 21st of July 2259, but a convenient and unexpected alliance with a race previously conquered by the Narn, the Corillani, left that system to them to fight for while G'Tal rode his momentum into the garrison stations around Quadrant 8. This battle was not a difficult one as many of the Centauri ships that could have defended that world had been pulled to combat their expected attack in Quadrant 17. Inadvertently misdirecting the Royal Navy, G'Tal took Quadrant 8 with very few shots fired. By the end of July 30th 2259, Narn held the largest part of Centauri territory coreward of Quadrant 32.

Key Events: Dar'Sol G'Tal appointed War Leader of the Red Fleet; Failed attack on Quadrant 32; Intervention of the Corillani, Coreward section of Centauri territory now dominated by Narn forces

Worlds/Systems Lost: Irva (Victor: Narn), Polgrath (Victor: Corillani/Narn), Jux Prime (Victor: Narn), Quadrant 8 (Victor: Narn)

Agamemnon, Delenn brought a rescue group to the Captain's aid even as he tried to mount his own escape.

The vessel was caught in the *Agamemnon*'s beam weapons as it emerged from hyperspace. Hit hard, it was unable to return fire and was quickly overrun by the assault group's attack. Overwhelmed, the Streibs decided to abort their mission and flushed all of their holding cells into space. Incensed by this senseless act of murder, Ivanova gave the order and the Streibs' ship was blown apart. Fortunately for the Captain, he and the Narn had made it into an escape pod and as it drifted away from the destroyed vessel, his SOS kept them from being shot down.

Brought back for medical care, Sheridan awakened in MedLab with a few facial scars and some bruises, but no critical injuries. The Narn was worse off, but he would also recover. Heartened by this news, the Captain asked about Ramirez and was saddened to hear that the pilot made it back but died from his radiation exposure. The Captain told the doctor that life did not seem fair, a sentiment that Franklin echoed by saying that death never was either. As Sheridan left MedLab, he saw Kosh in the hallway. The Vorlon, without provocation, told him, 'You have always been here.'

Returning to his quarters to convalesce with questions on his mind, he arrived to some answers in the form of General Haig. From their conversation, it was learned that Sheridan serves the greater interests of Earth beyond the command structure of his own government. As represented by Haig, there was a growing concern in the military and back home on Earth that President Santiago's death was an assassination by Clarke and his supporters with the consent and direction of Psi Corp. Without proof, nothing could be done, but the network was in place to gather what intelligence can be found to bring the conspirators up on charges and return EarthGov to honest rule.

Sheridan was a vital part of that network, bringing with him the political and military connections that Babylon 5 possesses. The only remaining piece of that link was the rest of the station's Command Staff, which Sheridan had been watching and evaluating secretly for the past six months. Convinced of their character and morality, he considered them good people and valuable assets if they wished to become a part of the organization. Haig cautioned him on the risks of their plans, then he left, content that Sheridan was loyal to Earth first.

Later that night, Sheridan brought Franklin, Garibaldi, and Ivanova together in his quarters for an unofficial meeting. Confronting them with the suspicions he shares with Haig, Sheridan asked them to make a decision on the spot; support his plans to determine the truth behind Santiago's death and Psi Corp's involvement in the new administration or leave now before they heard anything they would have to testify against later. Each of them agreed to stay and together, they began making plans for a conspiracy of their own.

The Streibs

The Streibs are a xenophobic humanoid race, hairless with grey skin and large oval eyes, driven by two main cultural imperatives, curiosity and conquest. Their technology is advanced and when their ships are not built with living technology, they are organic in nature and such a technological breakthrough may not more than a century or two away at their current rate of development. They

have knowledge of gravitics and jump point technology, possible taken from other races during the Streibs' major activity in known space- capture and examination.

It is known that they have performed examinations on most races in secret, using the stealth capabilities of their collector ships to evade detection by other civilizations while they analyze the advancements of their subject's vessels and weapon technology. They are also interested in the psychology and physiology of their captives, using organic hybrid devices to induce states of trauma and rage to provoke combat for the purpose of judging a given race's capacity for self-defence. They have no regard for the lives of others and are possibly gathering this information for the purpose of choosing a likely target for invasion.

Streibs Racial Traits

- 5 All Streibs are of medium size.
- 5 Streibs have a base speed of 30 feet.
- 5 Streibs are extremely intelligent but not very physically enduring. They gain a +2 racial bonus to Intelligence, but their suffer a -2 to both Strength and Constitution.
- 5 The Streibs have a near computer-like ability to store, analyze, and process data about any subject they can witness first hand or study through their race's long history of research. Streibs gain Data Access as a bonus feat.
- 5 The scientific reasoning of the Streibs results in an almost preternatural calm and an emotional detachment that allows them to make full use of their abilities even in the most chaotic of situation. Streibs always have Concentration as a class skill and receive the bonus feat Nerves of Steel.
- 5 Automatic languages: Streibs.
- 5 Favoured Class: Scientist. A multiclass Streibs' scientist class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing.

Scenarios and Campaign Hooks

- 5 The Streibs may have lost a ship, but they have many more. The race will lay low for a while, but their ways are part of their culture and eventually, they will be plying the space lanes again, capturing members of other races and performing their experiments once again. The players could play the part of captives or those sent to rescue others from the clutches of these depraved aliens. EarthForce, now that it has been informed of their activities through Sheridan's next report, will be patrolling the sectors of space the race has been known to travel. Their purpose is two-fold; they intend to convince the Streibs that Earth can defend itself against any plans they might have and the Streibs' apparent organic technological base is greatly desired for study. If EarthForce ships in these sectors of space can capture a Streibs vessel intact or collect wreckage from a destroyed one, they will have standing orders to do so by any means necessary.
- 5 The Grey Council is now dominated by the policies of the Warrior Caste. This leads to a time of change among the Minbari people, change that will have a profound impact on any Minbari or allied characters in the game. Rogue Warriors will be hunted down more efficiently, while loyal members of the caste will be called upon more often. Other castes, especially the religious, will suffer increased prejudice from the Warriors, culminating in a full fledged war between them next year. Minbari in scenarios

set around this major event of their people will find every aspect of the lives impacted by the new shift in power. A campaign could be based on Minbar with the echoes of a growing military mindset in the policies and attitudes of the Minbari Federation's ruling body. Worker Caste and Religious Caste characters will find their rights and privileges slowly giving ground to the rising power of the Military. Because of this, the first two Castes will be coming together in personal alliances and pacts of mutual benefit while both become more distant from the latter because of resentment and, in some cases, fear. The millennia-old moray against Minbari killing their own may even weaken because of these changes. The Grey Council has experienced its first significant change since its founding 1,000 years ago; Minbari in scenarios will now have their eyes opened to the concept of change, something their race is not known to easily embrace.

5 The conspiracy in EarthGov is rife with possibilities for adventures. players can come in any side of the conflict, from EarthForce officers loyal to Haig and his truth seekers to patriots in service to the President regardless of his policies. The time is also fast approaching when Psi Corp characters will have to decide where they stand; are they children of the Corp, or can they no longer tolerate the terror and murder the organization has come to represent?

Acts of Sacrifice (July 31st 2259)

'It is good to have friends, is it not, Mr. Garibaldi? Even if maybe... only for a little while.'

Londo Mollari

In the laser lit skies above a Narn colony world, a pitched battle was being fought and lost by its defenders against a superior Centauri force. Destroyers and fighters ripped through the armed but hopelessly outnumbered Narn military as they desperately tried to evacuate the planet's civilian population in unarmed transports. As the last of them tried to make it to a warship opened jump point, the Centauri closed in, determined to kill them all. The warship, in an act of supreme sacrifice, shielded the transport with itself. The transport made it out, but the G'Quan cruiser was blown apart in retaliation.

This entire battle, witnessed on a monitor in one of the meeting rooms on Babylon 5, was turned off in disgust by G'Kar. Acting as his people's ambassador, he begged the assembled station Command Staff to intervene on the Narn's behalf. These scenes, he claimed, were war atrocities against civilian targets by the Centauri. While it appeared that way, Londo had issued a statement to the contrary, claiming that the Narn were using the colony's population to shield military targets. Caught between the two sides but clearly favouring G'Kar's point of view, Sheridan promised to do what he can. It is enough for G'Kar, who left with a dim glow of hope in his tired eyes.

Sheridan was then called out of the meeting chamber by a report that a ship he

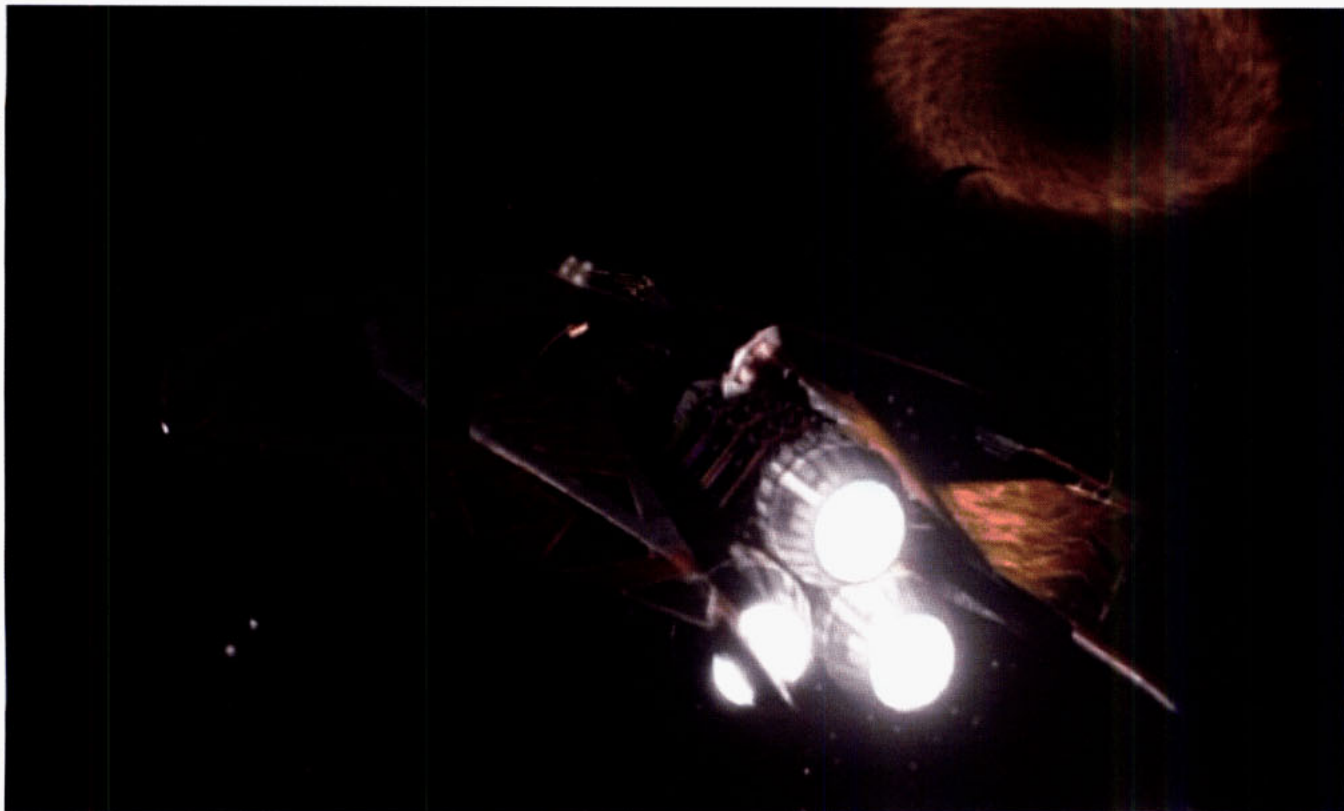
had been waiting for was docking with the station. Taking Ivanova to Command and Control, he informed her that not only was the ship carrying an envoy from the Lumati, a race initiating talks with EarthForce on the possibility of an alliance, but that because of his obligations elsewhere, the bulk of the diplomatic responsibility for greeting the representative would have to fall on her shoulders. To say the least, this made the normally acerbic Russian officer very uncomfortable.

In another room elsewhere on the station, G'Kar was making Delenn very uncomfortable as well. Showing Delenn the same video clip that the Command Staff saw, the pain in her eyes at the sight of the warship being gunned down while saving the civilian transport was plain for G'Kar to see. He asked her for the aid and intervention of the Minbari in the Narn's time of need. She regretfully declined, saying that his words in the past and his obvious hatred of the Centauri made it impossible for her to help him now on the grounds that in a few years, his people would simply become the aggressors and the Centauri would be asking for her aid instead. He did not deny this, but her words pained him in return. He expressed his rage at the Centauri for their subjugation of his people over countless years of oppression. He told her that hate was all that kept the Narn alive after the tyrants took everything else from them. Delenn, sorrow evident in her tone, replied that now, that hatred may be what kills them. He knew she was right, but while the truth was plain, it answered nothing for him now. He thanked her for her counsel, empty as it had been, and left more despondent than before.

Down in the Zocalo, tensions were heating up again. Four Centauri, drunk and rowdy, began hurling insults at a pair of nearby Narn, comparing them to field beasts back on the Centauri worlds and commenting that putting the entire lot of them down would be a kindness to the universe. Moved to violence, one of the Narns hurled the bottle he was drinking from at them and missed, likely on purpose showing what little restraint he possesses. Zak Allen stepped between the two groups of enemies before a fight could begin and pulled them apart. This crisis was averted, but there would be another. The bad blood between the Centauri and the Narn would just keep boiling until it got spilled, one way or another.

The Lumati representative Correlilmerzon and his interpreter Takh, a small humanoid with the apparent ability to anticipate his





master's communication needs, came aboard the station and greeted Ivanova indirectly. It seemed his people did not communicate on a personal level with what they interpreted as lower lifeforms until they proved themselves worthy of the honour. This did not make things start out on a good footing with Ivanova, but she swallowed her concerns and endured the insult in the interests of continued good will between Earth and the Lumati.

Londo was holding a council of his own in his quarters with a Centauri merchant. The trader, worried about the delays in shipping and the difficulties on his business because of the war wished Londo to make things easier for him with some of the people grafting him out of existence on Centauri Prime. His contacts now well known by his people, though no one knew of his allegiance with Mr Morden, he was now becoming very popular with anyone who wanted to accomplish things through less than official channels.

Londo agreed to make some discreet inquiries on the merchant's behalf, as much if not more for the sake of getting rid of him as for the promise of some smuggled goods as a bribe. He dismissed the man and rubbed his temples just as G'Kar had done in the past. He talked with Vir of his desire to be respected and the truth of his present, which is that of a man whom others only see as the means to an end. Weary and frustrated, he asked his aide to send away anyone else waiting to see him. He had no wish to talk with anyone right now.

His frustration was echoed in his people, a deep resentment that boiled over just as Allen feared it would. In the corridors deep in the station, Centauri and Narns battled it out with fists and clubs. The violence was just an indication of the tragedy unfolding between their races, but it was very personal between these people as they tried to kill each other for no reason greater than foolish hostility. Zak Allen and his security troops arrived on the scene

and tried to break up the fight, but one of the Centauri taunted a Narn into charging him. Zak had no choice but to fire, killing the Narn instantly.

In Sheridan's quarters, an outraged G'Kar demanded reparations for the loss, but the Captain stood his ground. Allen was perfectly in his right to shoot the Narn and though it was a regrettable loss of life, the incident was precipitated by them in the first place. Sheridan was sympathetic but firm, reminding G'Kar that if he could not control his people, Earth would have a much harder time justifying their support for them. This quieted G'Kar's objections, but it also called his abilities into question. The proud Narn ambassador left Sheridan's office in indignation.

In the station's medical centre, Doctor Franklin walked several of his new assistants through a tour of MedLab. The tour, which culminated in the main chamber with the isolab, showed that the facility could generate different atmospheres and pressure conditions for the treatment of multiple types of lifeforms. Wide spectrum light and radiation effects completed the life support equipment the isolab could emulate. Just as Doctor Franklin was finished with this part of the tour, Ivanova came in with Correllimerzon and Takh.

Franklin, familiar with the process of cultural symbiosis, was at first intrigued with his new visitor. When the alien started questioning the importance of saving inferior beings and conflicting with evolution, he became considerably less pleased. This led to a long debate about the need to serve evolution over the idea of simply preserving all life, a debate that neither side won. Before Correllimerzon could push Franklin into abandoning the idea of preserving his life at all, Ivanova wisely moved the alien delegate to another part of the station.

After rolling poorly at one of the gaming tables down in the Ocala's lounge, Londo ran over to catch Garibaldi as he made his rounds through the room. The Centauri noble drew him practically against his will and presented him with a small silk pouch of ducets, the legal coin of Centauri Prime. Obviously concerned with this 'gift', Garibaldi asked what it was. Amused at the thought that he might be trying to bribe the security chief, Londo assured him it was merely a return on all of the times Garibaldi bailed him out of bad fortune in the station's casinos.

Unfortunately, this did not put Garibaldi at ease. Now frustrated, Londo asked him why he was being so cautious, why everyone was being so cautious around him lately. Always one to be honest, Garibaldi told him. Since his association with Mr Morden, the envoy of mysterious powers, and his involvement in the Narn-Centauri War, no one knew what to think of him. Londo had been very dangerous to be near of late, and it was beginning to wear on his social circle. Dismayed, but not surprised by this news, Londo asked him to please stay and have a drink with him. The ambassador was obviously in dire need of a friend, and Garibaldi was the only person he could think of to reach out to. Moved by this, Garibaldi told him that while he could make no promises, he would be here after his shift if time permitted. It was more than enough for Londo, who promised to be there waiting for him.

Elsewhere, G'Kar's raised voice could be heard again. He talked with a group of Narn, entreating them to stop their program of violence on the station. The Narn of Babylon 5 did not hear his words. Instead, they preferred to perform acts of terror here, far away from the risks of actual war. The most vocal of their group went so far as to say that G'Kar had been among other races so long, he no longer sounded Narn. This did not go well, though to G'Kar's credit, he remained calm enough to just debate the speaker's cowardice and lack of true patriotism. He left them then, hoping his message would eventually be understood.

It did not happen quickly enough. Moments after the Narn ambassador was out of the room, the others circled around a struggling Centauri male. He was the same one that instigated the bar fight and the one that taunted the other Narn into charging Zack and getting shot. Obviously terrified, he was only afraid a few more seconds. Then, a punching dagger was shoved into his chest by the same Narn G'Kar pled with to stop the violence. Rather than stopping any violence, his words made the Narn's plan painfully clear. The dead Centauri would be strung up where he could be found, and very shortly everyone of his kind would be killed.

The Centauri was indeed found quickly. He turned up in MedLab, with Garibaldi and Sheridan watching as Franklin examined the body. He deduced exactly what had occurred to the man, a single thrust with a triangular weapon with death happening moments thereafter. Garibaldi pointedly asked if the Narns did this. It was a hypothesis that Franklin's medicine could support from physical evidence on the corpse but not directly prove.

It was enough for Garibaldi to want to go inform Londo, but not enough for Sheridan to let him. He implored Garibaldi to not tell the ambassador yet, but the security chief was hesitant to start withholding any information from the people who counted on him to be straight with them. Sheridan agreed, even sympathized, but he was concerned with the riot that would occur if Mollari was informed before they finished their investigation. Still resistant to the idea, Garibaldi agreed and the matter was left open for now.

Back in the Zocalo, Londo sat alone with his drink and full one in front of the empty seat beside him. The bartender, Cat, came over and sympathetically told him to head home. It was late, and the bar needed to close. With a heavy sigh, Londo admitted that he had been waiting for someone, but the hour was later than he had hoped for and he walked out, sullen, morose, and alone.

The Lumati arrived at Ivanova's quarters unannounced. While she had said for them to meet elsewhere, he wanted to both see her living space and confront her with what he expected to be true. As he told her, Correllmerzon was not certain she was showing him the real station, but only taking him to see the best parts of it in an understandable attempt to impress him. While Takh spoke for him and held Ivanova's attention, he searched through her things, eventually inquiring as to the origin and purpose of one of her negligees. Unamused, she escorted them out her quarters and offered to take them to any part of Babylon 5 Correllmerzon chose.

One place they would probably not be visiting was Downbelow, the unofficial inhabitation area below the stations bulkhead and superstructure. It was here that the militant Narns were purchasing multiple bladed weapons of straight and kris design from a human arms dealer. Na'Toth, G'Kar's aide, witnessed the sale and knowing that her employer would never approve of such a thing, left immediately to report it.

In his office, Sheridan took a video call from EarthForce that did not please him either. After a full review of the situation, the Earth Government could not sanction official aid of any kind for the Narn people. While Sheridan tried to get them to at least aid Narn civilians, the message was extremely clear; Earth would not offer aid of any kind, civilian or military, to Narn. They would have to fend for themselves, something they had become very used to over the years. Undeterred, the Captain turned to other means of support.

As quickly as she could, Na'Toth returned to G'Kar's quarters and let him know of the arms sale. Alarmed at the idea of a dozen of his people armed with Drazi long knives tipped in poison about to assault the Centauri population of Babylon 5, he grabbed his armoured vestment and hurried to stop them. Na'Toth suggested informing the station's personnel, but G'Kar knew that would only delay the inevitable. With no way to convince him to remain out of harm's way, his aide simply geared up herself and insisted on coming with him. Someone would need to watch his back, and the ambassador did not have anyone else he trusted to do so.

Back in Downbelow, Ivanova inadvertently made a diplomatic breakthrough. The Lumati delegate had chosen to explore this part of the station after all, despite her assumption that he would select somewhere more central like Command and Control. She explained to him that the people he was seeing here, mostly humans, were lurkers; these were people left without money or resources enough to permit them a life outside the desolation of Downbelow.

In the Lumati's eyes, Downbelow represented something altogether different. As Correllmerzon saw it, this place was an isolation tank where the human Command Staff of the station had placed the genetically and mentally inferior to limit their potential for breeding and insurrection. It was a step further than even his people had gone in their quest for superiority and it impressed him greatly. Finally ready to commit to an alliance, the Lumati spoke to Ivanova directly, instructing her on the nature of allies



and his decision to accept Earth's offer for his people and theirs to come together in some form of political arrangement. They left Downbelow to discuss the alliance's terms, with Ivanova bewildered to the point of cursing.

The Narn insurrection brewed to the point of boiling over nearby, with its leader distributing Drazi blades and hand guns to the others while telling them their target assignments. As Centauri were prone to be awake at late hours, that was when they would strike. G'Kar came in just before they could disperse and take up position.

Knowing that only violence would stop violence here, the Narn ambassador took up the unspoken challenge of the leader. As he had presumed to take his authority, an authority given to G'Kar directly by the Ka'Rhi, the leader of this rabble was threatening his power on the station and would have to be stopped. A duel began, one that came down to G'Kar's experience and determination against the leader's speed and youth. The first few blows were against G'Kar, but despite these and the attempted treachery of one of the Narn, G'Kar put down his opponent and forced the others to return to their quarters peacefully.

Na'Toth rushed to his side, supporting his weight as he slumped exhausted after his battle. They left the scene of the duel, but the defeated leader rose behind them and took a craven slash with his poisoned weapon across G'Kar's back. He was struck viciously unconscious after that, but his damage had been done. Instead of getting to medical aid, G'Kar asked for help back to his quarters only. If he had gone to MedLab, he would have to explain where the cut came from and his people would still have suffered. Rather than risk that and show his weakness, G'Kar just endured his wound.

In her chambers, Delenn and Sheridan discussed the Narn situation. His government had not agreed to render official aid, but he had something very unofficial in mind. Franklin had agreed to use his contacts developed while he was running the Telepath railroad, but Sheridan knew the plan needed more. That 'something more' was Delenn and the Minbari. By using their transports to carry excess station food to the Narn refugees and bring back as many of them as the vessels could hold. They would then leave the station through the Railroad to peaceful locations far away from the dangers of the Narn-Centauri war.

Delenn seemed disturbed, and when Sheridan asked her why, she shamefully admitted to no longer having the resources she once had. Still, it was a noble cause and she still had contacts in the fleets of her people. If there was anything she could do, she felt honour bound to try. Though it would be costly in the long run, she pledged her support to the cause.

At Security Central, Garibaldi and Sheridan met with Na'Toth. The aide had the rebel leader in tow, one of his arms in a painful looking cast. According to her, the man had learned the importance of being honourable and obedient. He had been the one to kill the Centauri and would admit as much when he came to trial. While this solved the case, it did not solve anything where the concerns of the Captain over peace on the station were concerned. Garibaldi was certain that when Londo learned of the Narn's attack and the Centauri's death, he would surely throw a fit over the whole affair.

Affairs seemed to abound that night on Babylon 5. The Lumati had his own terms to impose on the alliance before it began. To his people, treaties were symbolically linked with coming together as one people as shown through the act of ritual intercourse. Needless to say, this came as a surprise to Ivanova. Thinking quickly even as Correlilmerzon approached with obvious intent, she made her excuses and bought a little time to think.

Thinking meant drinking. As Earhart's, she spoke with Franklin about the difficulty. She was already committed to making this alliance work, but this was far more than she expected to have to do for the cause. The doctor offered to give her an injection to make her sick, citing the alien's ignorance of human physiology. While she did not take that offer, it did remind her of something else Correlilmerzon did not have a strong understanding of; he was ignorant of human culture and psychology as well. That gave her an idea and she left to provide the alien delegate of the Lumati with exactly what he wanted but not at all what he expected.

In his room, G'Kar went through the roughest part of the Drazi poison. His metabolism was strong and his will was stronger, but the poison was a virulent one. If the blade had caught him any deeper, the poison would have been too strong for him to resist. As it was, the battle would be a close one. It was no matter; he had a meeting to attend with Delenn and Sheridan. This was the chance he needed, the opportunity for their governments to enter the conflict on his side.

In the council chamber, this was not to be. Instead of the ships, guns, and fighters he wanted, he was only offered food and transports to get some of his people to safety. It was not the great news he wanted to hear, but it was something. He thanked them both graciously, pledging to honour their request to keep word of this aid secret with the knowledge that it had to stay secret or they would no longer be able to offer it at all. Out in the hallway afterwards, despair at ever being able to bring allies into the war drove him to tears.

Things got emotional, or at least confusing, in Ivanova's quarters between her and the Lumati. Determined to seal this alliance at all costs, Ivanova was still unprepared to go as far as having sex with the strange alien if she could avoid it. Instead, she pulled an elaborate ruse. Knowing that he did not know humans or their sexual practices, she performed a complicated dance and shouting routine that, while comical from a human point of view, was simply bewildering to Correlilmerzon. Heaping compliments on him about his prowess and skill, Ivanova played on the delegate's arrogance and convinced him somewhat that they had just had human style intercourse.

This did not fool Takh, who was obviously aware of the real way humans have sex, but he was so amused to see someone pull one over on his master, he did not correct the mistaken assumption. Instead, he just indicated his approval through a wry smile and left with the disgruntled Merzon and returned to their vessel. Later, as

The Lumati

An arrogant but not isolationist race, the Lumati are a humanoid race with a ridged brow and tapering lines around their eyes and mouths. Otherwise similar to humans, the Lumati consider themselves the pinnacle of their race's evolution and stratify themselves into complex social orders by means of genetic markers of purity that only their own culture completely understands. Holding evolution as the highest form of religion, the Lumati practice selective breeding, cultural segregation, and stratified education to ensure that only their highest classes have the potential for significant continued breeding.

Another concept of importance to the Lumati, especially as it impacts their dealings with other races significantly, is their insistence of symbolism. While these concepts are deeply ingrained in their civilization and deal with complicated issues of omens and even symbolic language precepts, it is their view of agreements and alliances as a way of 'coming together' symbolized by the act of sexual intercourse that should concern any race making diplomatic overture with the Lumati.

Lumati Racial Traits

- ⑤ All Lumati are of medium size.
- ⑤ Lumati have a base speed of 30 feet.
- ⑤ Lumati are capable of a process called cultural symbiosis. Any two Lumati can, through mutual agreement and careful training, develop a rapport that allows them to communicate telepathically at a range of 30 feet. This is communication only; neither can read the other's thoughts or perform a deep scan through this ability.
- ⑤ Automatic languages: Lumar and English.
- ⑤ Favoured Class: Diplomat. A multiclass Lumati's diplomat class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing.

Drazi Weapons

The melee weapons of the Drazi are a hot commodity on the black market, with its supply ensured through the direct efforts of the Drazi themselves. Openly selling their deadly venomous weapons to anyone willing to purchase them despite the ban most other races have on the toxin they carry, the Drazi make a great deal off the fact that because dealers can mark them up drastically, they can charge a very high initial price.

Voshnar-dra, the Drazi name for their blade poison, is virtually invisible; a molecular bonding of toxic particles applied to the tips of special weapons marked as poison carriers on their hilts. This poison cannot be detected visually and does run the risk of poisoning the user accidentally when used. Initial damage from Drazi blade poison is 1d3 points of both Constitution and Dexterity if a DC: 18 Fortitude save is not made. The secondary damage is a further 1d3 Dexterity and 1d6 Constitution. There are antitoxins for this venom, but they only suspend the secondary damage. Time is required to regain the points lost as detailed in the main rulebook under Poisons.

a message packed in with a bizarre gift, the delegate had a message for his 'exhausted' consort. Next time, the card told her, they would do it his way.

In the station's main meeting room, Sheridan and Garibaldi told Londo of the dead Centauri and the circumstances of the event that cost his life. Though they did their best to make him see the logic in not having an open trial immediately, it did not seem necessary. Unusually calm and reserved, Londo took a look at the Centauri's picture, noted that the man had no family to fight for his name back home, and seemed content to have the whole affair quietly dealt with outside the courts. He insisted on the Narn being deported and his assets liquidated as a donation to the Centauri war fund. Enough of an irony to suit him, that was all he needed to consider the matter closed and done.

Later, at one of the station's bars, the Captain met with Ivanova and congratulated her on a job well done with the Lumati. She was obviously pleased with having accomplished the alliance with her principles intact, though the agreement was a tenuous one. The Lumati, it seemed, were a difficult people who did not easily commit to any obligation. They would talk further of alliance, but they were not fully ready to forge one. Still, it was enough.

In another bar, at the same time, Garibaldi came to see Londo. Mollari sat alone, his drink almost gone, but as the security chief sat beside him, his mood brightened. They shared a few words,

Garibaldi thanking him for his understanding earlier and him nonchalantly stating that the Centauri in question truly was trouble. Soon, he told Garibaldi, the Narn would be in grave trouble, so a little easement of that difficulty was no great loss, especially if it made the security chief's life a little easier. It was good just to sit and be friend, he mused, if only for a short time. It was a sentiment Garibaldi not only agreed with, but could drink to.

Scenarios and Campaign Hooks

⑤ The Lumati are an arrogant people and while Correlilmerzon may have been fooled by Ivanova's display, he also left quite unsatisfied with humanity's worthiness as an ally race. While he tacitly gave his blessing to the alliance between their peoples, he will likely want to have another chance to evaluate the folk of Earth. This could lead to an amusing scenario where a player is targeted as the delegate for this diplomatic mission. How this is dealt with could determine the course of relations both personal and political between the Lumati and the Earth Alliance.

⑤ Centauri shipping lanes are being disrupted as a side effect of the war. Smugglers, trade captains, and independent escort pilots can clean up during this time of strife. players can get in on the wealth to be had working for the Narn, the Centauri, or private concerns interested in keeping things disrupted for a while.

Eye on History: The War of Retribution - First Defeats

The Red Fleet was not resting on its early victories. Its War Leader, a venerable military officer named G'Vren, was given orders to secure as much Centauri territory as he could in as short a time as possible. The Ka'Rhi on the Narn homeworld knew that their only real hope of winning was to pose a threat to their enemies as quickly as possible and strike against Centauri Prime before the Republic could react to their advance and counterstrike. The best way to do this in War Leader G'Vren's opinion was to take the tactically vital systems of Ragesh and Beta 3. To accomplish this, he split his fleet into two attack wings and sent them at their respective targets in a simultaneous assault on August 1st 2259.

Initially, this ploy was costly but successful. Rather than hold Ragesh against the fast striking forces of the Narn, Refa and his allies pulled their command centres a day before the battle began and retreated back to Immolan, the Centauri Republic's most important colony world and the second best defended planet in their territory. The Red Fleet's only failure and G'Vren's mistake in these battles was not the tactics used to fight them but in taking two full weeks to secure the planet's populations and prepare for their next offensives. During this delay, the Royal Navy had enough time to send reinforcements to Batain, Immolan, and Coutor; each of the systems were the only viable targets for the Red Fleet's next advance.

The delay had not been entirely in vain. While securing their conquests, the Red Fleet did receive ships from the Gold and Black Fleets as well as numerous vessels from the new construction efforts taking place back on homeworld. Among these new ships were G'Quan heavy cruisers, warships that would be instrumental in the Red Fleet's survival of their next attacks. Poor scouting and clever avoidance tactics on the part of the Centauri made the Narn believe the defences of the Coutor and Immolan were both weak. This intelligence, which would soon be revealed as false, was the deciding factor in G'Vren's splitting of the fleet again to go after both targets at once.

Coutor proved to be a much greater threat than the reports of the Red Fleet's scouts had led them to believe, with fierce fighting leading up to a long siege and numerous skirmishes with Centauri reinforcements coming in two waves. The battle was only ended after the Narn attack wing's decision to launch an all out attack against the world's defences directly. This was a move born of desperation and the Narn paid for it with the destruction half the wing's vessels. Even so, the forces defending Coutor were annihilated and the planet was won through a dear cost in blood.

Their offensive against Immolan was not as successful. This wing was under the direct command of War Leader G'Vren, but despite his excellent tactical abilities in the art of forward combat and space battles, the tide of battle was turned in this system by the intervention of the system's battle station and the arrival of the 1st Imperial Fleet. The 1st Imperial Fleet was the best maintained part of the Centauri armada and featured some of the Republic's finest officers. The fighting over Immolan was intense and the 1st Imperial Fleet suffered heavy losses, but G'Vren was never able to best them or penetrate their defence. With no choice but to pull back, the battle was conceded to the Centauri and the Red Fleet returned to Ragesh for repairs and reinforcements.

Fortification of Ragesh by G'Vren, a soldier from the old Narn school of digging in and fighting from a defensible position, occupied even more time and kept the largest remaining part of the Red Fleet stationary while Centauri forces scouted the system and bolstered its defences even more around Batain and Immolan. G'Vren's certainty that he could hold Ragesh against any assault by the Centauri prompted him to send most of his own reinforcements to Coutor under the command of that attack wing's new Dar'Sol, T'Narl. The additional forces were required for T'Narl's next strikes, the systems of Batain and Beta 2.

T'Narl's half of the Red Fleet left Coutor for Batain expecting it to be a relatively easy victory considering the size of their force and its limited value compared to their real target of priority, Beta 2. Unfortunately, Batain had just been the recipient of a full Sector fleet and, knowing that the Narn were unaware of this fact, used them as an ambush to catch T'Narl's ships as they came out of hyperspace. T'Narl reacted to the trap swiftly, but not before losing a sizable portion of his lighter warships and having to suffer the humiliation of Narn's first utter loss in the War of Retribution.

Key Events: Red Fleet splits to take Beta 3 and Ragesh; Red Fleet splits again to attack Coutor and Immolan from Ragesh; Red Fleet suffers major losses taking Coutor and are repulsed from Immolan. Centauri successfully defend Batain from Narn attack in first decisive victory for their side in the War

Worlds/Systems Lost: Beta 3 (Victor: Narn), Ragesh (Victor: Narn), Coutor (Victor: Narn)

5 Insurrections against G'Kar's power base, both by his people and by Pro-Centauri sympathizers, are a constant occurrence during this time period. Players could get involved in these actions, learning about them through contacts or being part of the action directly.

5 The war between the Narn and the Centauri is heating up. Londo is not exaggerating about their successes; the Centaurum

are driving the Narn from several worlds, sometimes at a dear cost, but inexorably all the same. For soldier characters, this could mean some intense combat. For others, the fallout of these battles can provide numerous possibilities for adventure. Sheridan and Delenn's secret offer of aid might involve the players in secret rescue attempts behind the battle lines.

Hunter, Prey (August 3rd 2258)

'Stephen. The last time you vouched for a doctor friend of yours we had three dead bodies, half the station was trashed and an Ikarran war machine was burning through decks and shooting at everything.'

Michael Garibaldi

Looking worried was a full time occupation for Michael Garibaldi. His chief worry this time had in Command and Control, where he looked for Sheridan or Ivanova. Whatever was bothering him must have been important, because he only paced when he was very concerned. The officer in charge of the bridge offered to have them paged, but he was concerned about having anything about this matter over an open channel. He departed to find them himself.

Garibaldi caught up with the pair in Bay 13, one of the lowest internal docking berths on the station. This was where the Vorlon ambassador kept his ship, a miracle of organic technology. Resembling a long mottled green and black tube with nodules and growth along its sides, one end of the vessel had a set of folded sails that, when unfurled, formed a wide crest. Ivanova and the Captain were standing there on its gantry, discussing the vessel. The last maintenance crew assigned to the bay refused to return to it after reporting that they was talking to them in their sleep.

The ship had other reasons to concern people, as Sheridan quickly found out. When he approached the vessel, a protrusion formed out of its side with a very violent looking pod on its end. Fixing him where he stood with a continuous white beam like a laser sight sizing him up for a killing shot, the ship stopped him in his tracks. As Ivanova recommended, he stepped back away from the vessel and the light stopped. The pod retracted and the ship seemed to calm down. This was the scene Garibaldi walked into.

He did not want to talk to them over a link or in front of the Vorlon organic vessel. After his recent experience with it, Sheridan was more than inclined to depart Bay 13. As they left, Kosh arrived from another direction. He communicated wordlessly with his ship, his chest plate glimmering in some kind of sympathy with his intentions. The ship responded by forming black letters of Vorlon script on its side plating. Then, the ambassador left as quietly as he had entered.



The three members of the Command Staff retired to the Captain's office, where Garibaldi filled them in on what he was so worried about. Earth Central Intelligence had contacted him with an ultra-high priority communication about a fugitive named Everett Jacobs, the President's chief physician. For reasons unknown, he had gone rogue and must be hunted down for the security of the Earth Alliance. For the first time that Sheridan could remember, the government had sanctioned extreme measures against a civilian target. Garibaldi's orders, straight from Earth, were to shoot to kill if Jacobs offered any resistance to his capture.

Derek Cranston, the liaison officer sent by Earth Central, arrived shortly thereafter. Obviously bent on capturing Jacobs, he had little of use to tell the Command Staff when they assembled to speak with him. He only said that the doctor had misused his privileges while serving the President to gather intelligence on a number of undisclosed black projects and covert operations. While the data was not specific, it would certainly be enough to sow discord in the government and break the agreements Earth had with several non-aligned worlds. His superiors were worried and he was intent on ensuring that Jacobs not make it off Babylon 5.

After he left with Ivanova, Sheridan and Garibaldi expressed much the same concern. They have little doubt that the agent was not telling them everything, but what they did know made them more than a bit suspicious of the entire scenario. Garibaldi, determined to find the doctor if he was here, had an idea of where to start looking.

That place was MedLab. Playing a hunch that one doctor might know another, he questioned Franklin about Everett Jacobs and got something of what he was looking for. Franklin did know Jacobs well, having studied under him back at Harvard medical school. He found it impossible to believe what was said about his instructor, remembering Jacobs as a moral man of good character who would never jeopardize the safety of Earth for any material gain. Garibaldi, suspicious of everyone, suggests on his way out that perhaps the man Franklin knew has changed over the years. From the look on the doctor's face when Garibaldi leaves, his words have caused some doubt.

Down in the Zocalo, the fugitive showed himself finally. After browsing at a vendor's booth for a moment, he asked if the seller was in the business of arranging for special needs. This question was very pointed, indicating that the man might be a fixer, a salesman with the ability to arrange for illegal or difficult to acquire goods. At first, the vendor was interested, but the desperation in Jacobs voice warned him off. Rebuffed, Jacobs had no choice but to leave the booth and try to find a fake identicard elsewhere. As he walked away, a massive dark figure emerged from the shadows near the booth. This human, Max, could smell a sweet deal a kilometre off, and Jacobs had the look of money to him. As the fugitive left the Zocalo, Max was hot on his heels.

As Sheridan approached a lift several levels away, he became aware of a presence behind him. He turned around just in time to see Kosh disappear down another hall. He thought for a moment, made the decision to make contact, and chased after him. Once he caught the Vorlon, he spoke with him, offering to open a dialogue for the purpose of better understanding between their races.

This was not sufficient to sway Kosh. Asking why, the Vorlon seemed to dismiss the idea. Sheridan was not prepared to let it go so easily. He confronted Kosh with the fact that in truth, it had been the Vorlon who had made the first move, entering his dreams

while Sheridan was captive on the Streibs' ship. Kosh cryptically explained that he merely listened to the song, whatever that meant, and that for a moment, Sheridan became that song. Unsure of Kosh's meaning, he asked if such a thing had ever happened before. Once, the Vorlon replied, and ended the conversation by leaving.

In Security, Agent Cranston handed out duty rotations. Obviously serious about capturing Jacobs, he set the personnel there on 10 hour shifts, combing the station level by level. He also revealed the main part of Earth Central's plan to find the errant doctor on a station the size of Babylon Five. Jacobs, like all other high ranking EarthForce or government officials, had been implanted with a locating crystal chip, one that resonated with a constant pulse Cranston's equipment could detect. It had a short range, but it could lead security directly to the man anywhere he chose to hide. Using these trackers, their quarry seemed as good as caught.

Walking away from the meeting, Garibaldi ran into the Captain. He told Sheridan that while these Earth Central Intelligence agents were certainly not subtle, they knew what they were doing. Sheridan agreed and as they walked towards Command and Control, he noticed a coloured ribbon tied to one of the columns nearby. Recognizing it as some kind of sign, he made his excuses and separated from Garibaldi. The security chief could see that something was up, but he respected his Captain's privacy and went on his way.

In a private corner of the deck, Sheridan met with a woman claiming to be from the same friends he had in General Haig's conspiracy. Jacobs, she told him, was not a traitor to Earth but rather the opposite. As Clark's personal physician, he knew the truth about the Vice President's supposed illness, the one that prompted him to get off at a remote jump point before EarthForce One made it to Io. His testimony in that respect would not be enough to convict Clark of murder and treason, but it was enough to have him killed in an accident.

Haig's people in the government heard about the attempt on Jacob's life and helped him escape the trap. He had been supposed to make contact with people on Io, but the meeting was cancelled because the President's agents were closing in on him. With no other choice, Jacobs got on a shuttle bound for Babylon 5 and escaped their clutches.

At least, that was the plan. The reality was that he was now trapped, with the transmitter in his body about to reveal his position to the hunters that even now were spreading out to find him. Sheridan

expressed his irritation at not having been tapped sooner in this affair. If he had known before the doctor's arrival, he could have used Franklin's contacts to smuggle Jacobs anywhere he needed to go, but it was too late for that now. The unnamed woman understood his dilemma, but she had no answers for him. Urging him to hurry, she disappeared and left Sheridan to plan.

In MedLab, Franklin was instructing new assistants on the optic layout of a Pak'ma'ra and the barometer cells in their eyes that grant them ultraviolet vision. The lesson was interrupted, first by security personnel sweeping the chamber with sensor equipment and then by a mysterious happy birthday message from Garibaldi. Confused because it was nowhere near his birthday, Franklin waited until after the guards left and then played back the message one frame at a time. Imbedded in the video was a pair of word balloons telling him to come to the chief's quarters as quickly and as discretely as possible. Knowing that Garibaldi never did anything like this idly, he did so immediately.

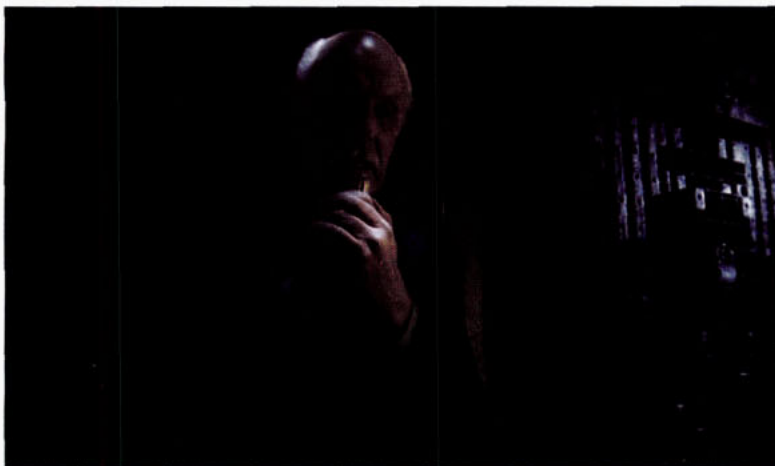
Wandering the darker places of Downbelow because of his unfamiliarity with the station, Doctor Jacobs was not having a good time of it. Hounded by security officers with tracking units homing in on his implant, he was fast running out of places to run. Using stims, a blend of endorphins and artificial adrenaline, to stay awake and keep running, he recorded a message on a personal data stick to his wife Mary telling her that felt desperately tired. Just as he began to break down into despair, Zack and another guard came into the area. He fled as quickly as he could, taking a lift to another section of the station before Zack could get a lock on his location.

In his quarters, Garibaldi had on plain clothes and was strapping on a second pistol when Franklin came in. Though he would not admit that he was wrong about Jacobs, he definitely wanted to catch the fugitive before EarthGov did, which is why he needed Franklin. Unconcerned with getting caught because of his lack of presence in Downbelow and his hat, the focus of his entire disguise, Garibaldi led a very worried looking Franklin with him on the hunt.

Jacobs meanwhile had taken a wrong turn. He ended up on the bottom level of Downbelow, chased there by his ever-closer pursuers. This place, barely lit and crowded with support pylons and crates, was the domain of Max, the man who had lost Jacobs earlier and was still very much interested in whatever the old man was worth. He captured Jacobs and took him off to search and question. The doctor's clothes marked him as an important man and Max never let anything important get away from him.

Once he finished searching Jacob's jacket, he came up with the data stick from earlier, a gold pocket watch, and a crystal hidden in a secret pocket. As soon as he found it, Jacobs became agitated. Telling the thug there was nothing of interest on the crystal, he even tried to rise despite the man holding him in his seat. Too weak and tired to free himself, there was nothing he could do as Max left to find out what was on the data crystal and what he personally was worth. Things looked very bleak for the good doctor, who was now in the hands of people that would turn him into the Earth agents as soon as they discovered who he really was.

In Sheridan's office, the Captain spoke with Cranston about his progress on the search. As the agent put it, they had searched the entirety of the station and were now focusing all of their agents in Downbelow. Sheridan knew that if the doctor was there, he would be caught





within the hour, he did some fast thinking and drew the agent's attention to a part of Babylon 5 he called Downtown. This section, in reality a sealed part of the station between the power centres and the waste reclamation plant, was a series of pipes, lead walls, and 47 welded pressure doors between two main heavy portals. Searching it would be the work of several ugly hours, but Sheridan's ruse worked. Calling all of his people to aid in the new hunt, Cranston left the office to conduct a through hunt in 'Downtown'.

In the Zocalo, Franklin and Garibaldi hunted for Jacobs and did not have much luck. Six hours had passed and they had not found even one sign of his passage other than a possible sighting of someone who might have matched the doctor's description. Sitting for a while to rest their feet and eat, Franklin and Garibaldi discussed the past and their time as younger, more optimistic people in a brighter galaxy.

As Franklin relayed it, he had known Jacobs during the time period just after the Dilgar War, when everyone on Earth had an enthusiasm for the future and the notion that things would just keep getting better. Then, like a child receiving a much desired toy on Christmas only to discover it was not as great as it had seemed, people became disheartened with themselves and with what the future had actually brought them. Garibaldi agreed with the sentiment, and they both sent a few moments lost in their own memories.

The moments did not last long. Nearby, the same dealer Jacobs had tried to buy an identicard from was selling the gold pocket watch Max took from the doctor in his lair Downbelow. Franklin recognized it immediately and began asking uncomfortable questions of the cringing fixer. When he proved resistant to answering them, Garibaldi got in on the act and through a masterful use of intimidation and suggesting that he use the man's eyes as a condiment, they got the name of the person that had sold him the watch.

Cranston, the EarthGov agent, had a call for him on a private channel. The caller was Max, claiming to have the man he was looking for in his custody. Max assured him that Jacobs would stay that way as long as he was given a finder's fee for turning him in. Cranston, interested in finding Jacobs at any cost, even the 10,000 credits the human thug was asking for, agreed on the spot. Pleased that they could do business, Max told Cranston he would call with details as soon as he was ready to make the trade.

In the alien residence section of the station, Sheridan took in a very special meeting. In two years, ambassador Kosh had never asked to speak with anyone, but now here he was, answering the Vorlon's summons. They exchanged comments, Sheridan's blunt

questions to Kosh's elliptical ones. Eventually, Kosh proclaimed him unready to understand that which he wanted to know and turned to leave. Frustrated, Sheridan asked Kosh what it was the Vorlon wanted. This agitated the ambassador, who turned and told him quite bluntly to never ask that question again. While he did not wish to make the Vorlon angry, this did have the effect of getting a response. In the end, Kosh agreed to teach him about himself until he was 'ready'. When Sheridan asked what he was supposed to be ready for, Kosh told him that he would have to be ready to fight legends. No explanation was forthcoming, which made this a typical Vorlon answer.

At Max's hideout, Franklin and Garibaldi tracked down the doctor, made quick work of Max's henchman, and untied him as quickly as they could. That was not enough for Jacobs who, while grateful for the rescue, needed the data crystal Max had stolen to prove that the President had not been ill when he transferred off EarthForce One. Without it, he could not prove anything, which made it worth more to him than his own life. Knowing that he stood the best chance of getting it back, even though he had been wounded in the arm, Garibaldi sent them out of the room and laid an ambush.

The plan worked perfectly, a rarity for Babylon 5. When Max came back into the room, he found his henchman tied up on a barrel. After coming in to find what was going on, he was beset by an irritated, cranky Garibaldi. A spread of particle projection gun fire around him convinced the big thug to turn over the data crystal before someone, namely him, got hurt very, very badly.

In the station's main meeting room, Cranston had found out that twice before in its history, Babylon 5's sensors had been recalibrated to detect a radiation source in its interior. The agent, understandably frustrated that this information had been withheld from him, overrode all of Sheridan's objections to the contrary and commanded him to do whatever it took to make this happen. Once the system came online, he would be able to pinpoint Jacobs' exact location within moments.

The Command Staff needed a plan and they needed one quickly. Hiding Jacobs was going to be all but impossible, especially from their own sensors. With no choice but to comply with the order from Earth Central, Sheridan approved the refit on the sensors. He had a trick up his sleeve, but he was not at all certain it would work. If it did not, everything they had done on the doctor's behalf would be for nothing. The sensors came online after a period of retooling and ran a deck by deck scan of the entire station. Nearby, Ivanova looked very nervous.

The scan concluded with a definitive negative. Doctor Everett Jacobs was not aboard Babylon 5. Cranston, incredulous and disbelieving, questioned the interface and tried to have the scan run again. He even demanded a full scan be made on the Vorlon vessel that just left Docking Bay 13, something Sheridan was all too happy to do. The scan detected a lifeform, but not a human one. Assuming it was Kosh and not wishing to cause a diplomatic incident that would get Jacobs' name and face plastered all over the news, Cranston let it depart into hyperspace. As he strode indignantly from Command and Control, it was clear that he was furious with how this search had gone. He had wasted three days of manpower and turned Babylon 5 upside down for nothing, not the kind of report he relished making to President Clark back home.

Down in Docking Bay 13, the Command Staff assembled to wait for the ship's arrival. It docked and took a moment to scan them with its own internal sensors. The ship had fooled Babylon 5's detection

equipment because the single lifeform detected was not Kosh; it was the ship itself. Organic technology and specialized stellar-class bioengineering had granted the Vorlons with something Earth had only dreamed of, living ships that could think, make decisions, and be self aware.

That awareness recognized them and extruded a set of tentacles with a glowing cocoon clutched safely between them. Laying it down on the dock, they retracted and disappeared seamlessly into the hull. The cocoon faded, leaving behind a deeply comatose Jacobs. Franklin neutralized the chemicals keeping him unconscious and he awoke in seconds. With wonder in his eyes, he told them that the ship had sung to him while he slept.

Back in the corridor where Sheridan had seen the ribbon message, the mysterious woman met with him to pick up the doctor's sworn testimony and recorded evidence. She congratulated him on a job well done and promised to take Jacobs somewhere safe. She raised more questions in Sheridan than she answered, but she told him to be happy, that he had won one for the good guys. As she left, he could not help but wonder who the 'good guys' really were in this case.

He knew he would see her again, that there would always be a next time. As she told him, that was a good thing. While there was a next time, there was still a chance for victory. He knew she was right. This was not a war that he could afford to lose. This war, a war of secrets, betrayal, and lies, would be fought and won in the shadows, it would seem, and they would need all the chances he could get.

The Conspiracy of Light

The conspiracy of light begins with a few EarthForce officers and governmental personal ranging from diplomatic officials to Senators in EarthDome. Each of these conspirators are dedicated to the idea that Earth's policies are changing under President Clark's administration into something that goes against the good of their homeworld, the freedoms many of them fought for during their time as politicians and soldiers, and the future of Earth as an

independent state dedicated to peace and cooperation in the galaxy. Key to their formation as a conspiracy against what they see as their own corrupt government is the belief they hold of Clark's complicity in the death of former President Louis Santiago.

While the conspiracy of light will get much bigger after its formation, eventually prompting its members to contemplate and do things on a much grander scale than they ever anticipated, it begins small, with no more than a few dozen people in disparate parts of the galaxy acting on their own and in close, guarded communication with each other. No one in the early stages of this group knows all of the others; John Sheridan for example only knows of General Haig and the mysterious woman who acts as his liaison to the conspiracy during the Doctor Jacobs incident.

Earth Central Intelligence

A branch of the executive office of the Earth President, Earth Central Intelligence is an information gathering and espionage unit normally assigned to deal with matters too delicate for normal channels to deal with effectively. Always an agency that bordered on black ops and dirty dealing, the agency darkened considerably under the leadership of President Clark and his Psi Corp ties. An understanding between the Intelligence Agency and Psi Corp have extended both other their powers and jurisdiction, much to the detriment of personal and civil rights in Earth controlled territories.

Scenarios and Campaign Hooks

⑤ The secret war taking place in EarthGov has a lot of potential for espionage and small military actions, regardless of the player's allegiances. Loyalists to the administration could be given the task of tracking down 'seditious' elements, while people more like-minded with Sheridan will have their hands full keeping one step ahead of the President's hunters.

⑤ This episode gives a better look at the way the connections between Downbelow and some vendors on the Zocalo operate.

Eye on History: The War of Retribution – Golden Opportunity

While the Red and Blue Fleets were securing victories for the Narn Regime in Centauri space, the Gold Fleet under the direction of War Leader G'Ven had the vital of thankless job of securing the defences of Narn worlds in their own territory. These planets, Tachunq, Quadrant 24, and Ardun, were all possible first strike targets of the Centauri fleet if the managed to defeat the Retribution fleets and continue their invasion. This was held as a high likelihood by some members of the Ka'Rhi, including G'Ven's father G'Teth. He secured the position of War Leader for his son with the assurance that his progeny's youthful hunger for glory would not compromise the safety of the Narn people.

At first, Dar'Sol G'Ven was satisfied with garrison and defensive duties, but as word of the Narn's victories against Quadrants 1 and 27 reached him, he began to dream much bigger dreams. This might never have reached fruition had it not been for the Centauri withdraw of its defensive forces around the Nefua systems, relocating them to Immolan. On August 2nd, half of each defensive fleet assigned to the three Narn worlds joined up in hyperspace at the Quadrant 24 beacon and struck out for Nefua. The path took them through Quadrant 37, but they moved through it so quickly, none of the ships present were able to get a clear identification of them.

The fleet reached Nefua and attacked with a wild abandon not seen in the Narn for decades. Most of the officers on G'Ven's ships were young and idealistic with far more enthusiasm than they had experience. Still, overwhelming numbers were enough and the token Centauri resistance fell before them easily. Leaving only as many of his ships and troops as the system would need to remain secured, G'Ven returned to Narn space and put his gathered fleet back along the defended worlds without raising any notice of his activities.

Key Events: G'Ven assembles the Gold Fleet for their first offensive of the War; Centauri redistribute most of their force at Nefua to Immolan; Nefua falls to 'unknown' Narn ships.

Planets/Systems Lost: Nefua (Victor: Narn)

Players inclined to get involved in illicit goods and services might have a front like this or deal with those who do. To cover the sale of drugs, false identicards, weapons, and other small goods, antiques, spices, and other portable items for ease in packaging and smuggling. The Zocalo is the perfect place to do this because of the high traffic and open nature of its thoroughfare; Security has a hard time maintaining surveillance amidst this level of distraction. Services like information, assassinations, and enforcement can usually be maintained as an illicit business without a store front, but players inclined to keep one up for pretences are best served but investing in items with limited value that can be abandoned without a financial loss. Larger controlled and outright illegal items are harder to keep in the Zocalo, but if this must be done, statuary and furniture can hold sizable objects and accommodate sensor-blocking materials without being obvious.

5 Max will not be happy to have lost 10,000 credits, especially to Garibaldi and Franklin. His henchman heard the doctor's name, which means Max might decide to go after both of them. Security players or lurkers in the right place at the right time might get involved in this revenge scheme.

And Now For a Word (August 6th 2258)

'According to figures released by the newly formed Office of Public Morale, President William Clark has risen to dramatic new levels of popularity because of his administration's emphasis on addressing the needs of earth.'

Cynthia Torqueman

The date was September 16th, 2259, and Interstellar News had a special report for its viewers in the many Earth territories and allied communities. The silver and light blue studio was very stark and simple with one tall pillar and correspondent's desk atop it, yet high tech and gleaming with enough detail to relate a sense of authority and officiousness to the broadcast. The reporter, Cynthia Torqueman, greeted her viewers with a wry smile and an allusion to the hundred years that humanity had been among the stars. She mentioned some of humanity's highlights, including the two dozen colonies and outposts of Earth in 14 different star systems.

In an alarmist move motivated by the party line in EarthGov, the broadcaster also mentioned the Mars colony and its Free Mars movement, decrying the group's acts of terror against an Earth

loyal majority on the planet. She drew a comparison here between the controversy surrounding Mars and the same turmoil involving Babylon 5. Placing the space station in context for her viewers in the Epsilon Eridani system, a star in neutral territory between several galactic powers, she mentioned all of its accolades, including its use as a platform for EarthForce Technologies' Research and Development division.

Some of the numbers she brought up for ISN viewers to see as graphs were not cast in a favourable light for the station. From March 2257 to September 2259, the disapproval rating among polled Earth citizens had grown from 30% to 41%. This dissatisfaction was, in the reporter's words, due to the amount of time, money, and attention the government was having to spend on the station over other domestic concerns.

The ISN special report was a series of first person camera views, direct commentary from Cynthia, and mixed interviews with key personnel and citizens aboard the station. Ms. Torqueman's first comment about the expecting the unexpected was reinforced with the first images shown from the reporter's Earth transport *Hyerdall* while it was still in flight in front of the station waiting for clearance to dock. Even before Ms. Torqueman and her crew could set foot aboard the station, a tragic event unfolded in front of them. A Narn transport/light freighter, the *N'Tan*, moved towards Babylon 5's front docking port. The command crew of the station, namely Ivanova in Command and Control, ordered it to slow down as the *Malleus*, a Centauri vessel closed on its position. Both were told to stand down even as they hurled insults at each other in their native languages. They ignored Ivanova's orders and with another shout of indignation, the *N'Tan* opened fire, destroying the *Malleus* and strewn wreckage all over the front of the station.

Ms. Torqueman promised that the destruction just shown was only one small part of some conspiracy involving the Captain of the station, alien ambassadors, and the many lies and deceptions surrounding them. She reported that all would be revealed during the 36 hours they spent aboard Babylon 5, a broadcast sponsored by Interplanetary Expeditions, a company that specialized in the exploration and resource reclamation of distant worlds for the benefit of Earth.

Thirty minutes after the attack, Ms. Torqueman stood in the station's main docking facility, with the dead and wounded of the Centauri vessel all around her. Members of Babylon 5's medical staff frantically helped those they could right where they were and transferred the critically injured to MedLab facilities around the station. They set up a triage unit in the bay for intermediate cases and as Ms. Torqueman walked through the scene of destruction, more wounded arrived every second. As she told it, the MedLabs aboard Babylon 5 were already working at maximum capacity, which left some doubt as to how much care the wounded would be getting and how many would simply die while waiting for medical attention.

A brief interview with Doctor Franklin, one that lasted mere moments while he quickly assessed the condition of three badly injured Centauri, revealed that a few of the wounded had talked enough to reveal that the *Malleus* had been ambushed, which bore out the video at the beginning of the broadcast. As Franklin excused himself from the reporter, Captain Sheridan came into view. Ms. Torqueman tired to get him to make a comment, but he declined, as he wanted to get all his facts straight before he said anything.



As to the matter of the Narn transport that had caused this tragedy, Sheridan only said that the station had dispatched an entire fighter wing to detain the ship until a full investigation could be performed. He moved as quickly as he could across the bay to take charge of the rescue operation, leaving the IWN crew with images of bloodshed and suffering all around them.

The broadcast moved immediately to an interview with the Centauri ambassador to Babylon 5, Londo Mollari. Ever the statesman, Londo made an official sounding statement about the foolishness and tragedy of the attack and its direct conflict with the peaceful purposes of Babylon 5. He spoke out against the Narns for carrying their grievances against his people to this place and expressed concern that it had also endangered the humans on and around the station as well. He mentioned the fact that the Centauri had encountered Earth almost a century ago and claimed that they had always felt very strongly for their human friends.

Ms. Torqueman asked if the attack by the *N'Tan* was an unprovoked one then, an act of pure aggression only. Londo confirmed this, simply stating that it was of course unprovoked. He had nothing further to say on the matter, but when the IWN crew took their next interview with G'Kar, the Narn Ambassador to the station, as he was walking to inquire about the safety of his people, these words were denounced as nothing more than lies.

Another interview, this one with Captain Sheridan began as a relaxed affair with him in his office, the wall behind him covered in commendations and personal decorations. As he spoke, telling a joke about not needing to be crazy to work on the station but how it really helped, the screen flashed interesting facts about him. The banner display mentioned his Silver Star award for bravery during the Earth/Minbari War. His comment about enjoying life on the new frontier got a response back from Ms. Torqueman that when the station came online in 2257, there were odds as high as 500 to 1 posted by Lloyd's of London that it would not last six months.

Sheridan replied that he was not one for gambling, preferring to make his own odds and not worry about what others thought of his chances. His command style had gotten him his command of the *Agamemnon*, one of the first omega class warships to come off the construction lines after the Minbari War. His mission assignment during that command was to patrol the non-aligned worlds and put in a strong Pro-Earth appearance, keeping the peace when necessary and fighting when such efforts failed.



The interview took a slightly more adversarial turn when Ms. Torqueman mentioned the changes in command aboard Babylon 5 itself. She asked if he thought those changes were the result of bad management or was, as she quoted former Senator Hidoshi, 'this horse too big for anyone to ride?' His response, still trying to remain diplomatic, was that change was part of a military officer's life. He noted that in his career, he had been stationed so many places, he could not remember them all. Some of those assignments he had not even known existed before he got there. With a smile and a laugh, he admitted that all of that aside, Babylon 5 really could be one hell of a big horse.

In a one-on-one piece of editorializing down in the Zocalo, Ms. Torqueman spoke about the much better safety in the station's airlocks. With dozens of people of human and alien origins mugging for the camera behind her, she mentioned the other hazards of life on Babylon 5, including the track record of six murders, three explosions and acts of sabotage including a bomb that blew out two levels, and a narrowly averted attack by the Vorlon empire. In a very biased statement, Ms. Torqueman recounted the 50 deaths by violence the station has seen in the last 3 years and asked the pointed question of whether or not Babylon 5 was worth its cost in money and lives or, and she put much greater impetus on this possibility, was it all falling apart at the seams?

In a sombre statement made in front of a group of Narn soldiers, G'Kar relayed a message from his government. The *Malleus*, the Centauri ship attacked by the *N'Tan* was not just a commercial transport; it was also carrying a number of weapons intended for the front lines in the war between his people and theirs. This act made Babylon 5 effectively a weapon supply post, something the Narn Regime could not tolerate. Even if it meant shutting down the entire station, his government would not allow the illegal trade of weapons to continue.

To find out how the Earth administration felt about the cost and viability of Babylon 5, ISN turned to Senator Ronald Quantrell, the Chairman of the Babylon 5 Senate Oversight Committee. As he first noted, the station was very much the dream of former President Santiago, something that he had felt very strongly about. In an interview that clearly defined the phrase 'damned by faint praise', he mentioned some of the benefits and most of the drawbacks to the station, never really giving his opinion about the station one way or the other. He mostly discussed the fact that Earth had rebuilt its military to a much higher level than it was at 14 years previously, when the first Earth/Minbari War was fought. Then, the station had a purpose in never allowing such a brutal conflict from occurring again. Now, he surmised, the Earth might have been able to hold its own against the Minbari, reducing or perhaps negating the need for the station altogether.

The reporter then went to the Observation Dome, otherwise known to the staff and crew of Babylon 5 as Command and Control. As she approached Ivanova and utterly massacred the pronunciation of her name, it became clear that the commander was trying to ignore her completely. Unfortunately for Ivanova, Ms. Torqueman wanted a direct word with her, so she had to spare some attention away from what she was doing to explain, as it turned out, what she was doing.

Command and Control was directing the station's Hazardous Materials personnel through a search of



the *Malleus*' wreckage to try and verify the Narn's claim that it had been carrying weapons in its hold. The crews searched the remains of the vessel, checking for the presence of any magnetic disturbances or trace elements that would lend veracity to the accusation. Ms. Torqueman learned of this, and it became part of her report during her interview with Ivanova.

From one member of the Command Staff to another, the crew then visited Security Central and spoke with Michael Garibaldi, the station's Chief of Security. There first question for him was both easy and hard; what did he wish for? His answer was very revealing about his character and his motivations. All he wished for was 24 hours with nothing to do. No crisis, no emergencies, no one hurting anyone else or stealing from anyone else, and nothing threatening the station. This was his wish, and to date aboard Babylon 5, he had never gotten it. He also expressed his desire to eventually make a difference and that everything the station had been through would mean something in the scheme of things. The interview concluded with Ivanova telling Garibaldi that the HazMat team had uncovered a problem in the ruins of the *Malleus*.

Ms. Torqueman went from Security Central to the Alien Sector. Her primary reason for going there was to get a glimpse of Kosh Naranek, the Vorlon ambassador to the station. She mentioned that the Vorlons were an elusive race and that three expeditions to their space had yielded no results as none of them ever returned from there. The Vorlon government simply said they had met with 'accidents' and suggested that no other ships be sent.

The next scene in the interview took place chronologically before that one but was saved out as an exclusive scene and Earth media's first look at a Vorlon in his encounter suit. It was brief, with Kosh simply moving backwards into a chamber and the opaque door closing in front of him, but it was presented with a great deal of excitement. Earth knows virtually nothing about the Vorlons aside from the fact that they cannot exist outside the Alien Sector without encounter suits carrying a special mixture of gasses and other life support equipment.

In a painful and abusive section of the program, Ms. Torqueman conducted an interview with ambassador Delenn of the Minbari Federation. The conversation started calmly enough, with Delenn telling the ISN crew about her homeworld and its wondrous crystal

cities. She talked of their languages, their castes, and gave a basic idea of their governmental structure. After a kind word in one of the Minbari languages, Delenn was caught off guard when Ms. Torqueman brought up the differences in her appearance from others of her race.

The reporter played on the Minbari woman's fears and guilt masterful. Through references to the War, to the many humans that were killed by her race, and to all of the losses that Earth suffered at the hands of the Minbari, Torqueman set her up for a stunning blow. The strike to her conscience and emotions was delivered when the reporter told her that the human watching would probably be offended by her appearance, that her presumption at appearing human would be an

offense to Earth sensibilities and invoke not understanding, but hatred and resentment. The psychological attack worked perfectly; Delenn was a woman greatly concerned with her mission to unite humans and Minbari. To have that jeopardized by her own actions was more than she could bear. In tears, she withdrew from the rest of the interview.

G'Kar strode across the floor of the Council Chamber in full diplomatic dress during the next segment of the programme. He told the delegates assembled there that the station had found conclusive proof that the *Malleus* had been carrying parts and equipment for fusion bombs, mass drivers, and heavy military-grade energy weapons. This was in direct conflict with the Centauri claim that the ship was merely a commercial transport with no war materials on board. This news prompted the command of Babylon 5 to lodge a protest with the Centauri government, citing the station's neutrality and the ban against using it as a staging ground for military actions or munitions depot.

Londo's claims that the ship was preparing to trade its cargo to longer range vessels outside the station, thus bypassing the laws against such activity in Babylon 5 itself, sounded flat to everyone involved, but it was his stance and he struck to it. He did not even yield when G'Kar, indignant and outraged, tried to get the assembly to see that the Centauri were just doing what they always did; they were masters of circumstances and technicality, using these elements to distract others from their atrocities.

G'Kar also had reason to believe that the seven other Centauri transports outside the station were also carrying weapons and, at the behest of his government, demanded that they be seized. Unwilling to budge one inch against the Narn, Londo vehemently refused to agree to the impounding of his ships, stating bluntly that any attempt to do so would be met by deadly and immediate force. Delenn suggested that the ships simply return to Centauri space, but G'Kar would not hear of it. He knew that if they left this sector, they would just deploy their deadly cargo elsewhere. Before anything could be done, there was a loud roar from somewhere away from the Council Chamber and a momentary interruption in the room's power.

The roar had been another explosion outside the ship, and it was not the last. There was a running battle outside the station, with Centauri fighters and Narn transports firing on each other. The report moved to a hallway some distance outside Command and Control, where civilians were racing towards shelters deeper inside Babylon 5. With this mayhem in the background, Ms. Torqueman gave an update on the situation, explained that the battle going on outside was mutual aggression between the Narn and the Centauri, and that the ISN team was plugging their equipment directly into the station's external cameras. With these, they would be able to observe the conflict directly.

In Command and Control, Sheridan got the latest damage report, but the situation was not hopeful. The damage had been minimal to begin with, but continued fighting would eventually rupture the hull and expose one or more deck of the station to vacuum. There had already been a small hull breach in Blue 70 and Sheridan was not prepared to let there be more. In spite of G'Kar and Londo both claiming that any attack on their ships would be considered an act of war, Sheridan gave his permission for the starfuries to open fire with the provision that if possible, they were to target engines and power systems only. With swift efficiency, the situation was brought under control.

By this point, the Narn-Centauri War had been raging for several months and threatened to spill over into a number of neutral and foreign territories as it was doing in Epsilon Eridani. In an attempt to better illuminate the history of conflict between the two races, Ms. Torqueman interviewed the Narn and Centauri ambassadors, asking them each to explain their mutual past dealings.

G'Kar was first. He told ISN that 150 Earth years ago, Narn was a green and fertile planet with a peaceful society and no interest of inclination towards warfare. The Centauri came to them from the stars and were greeted warmly. This welcome was rewarded with chains and slavery for a century, a horror his people were only able to overcome with bitter violence. When asked how he personally became part of the Resistance effort, G'Kar painfully relayed a part of his own tragic past. It was obviously difficult for him to speak of it, but he did so as calmly as he could.

His family had lived in G'Kamizad, one of the largest cities on Narn. His father was a house slave, serving a noble family of Centauri there. One day, his father accidentally slipped a cup of hot Jala, a tea like drink, on the mistress of the house and for this transgression was hung by his bound hands from a tree for three

days. On the last night, against his mother's orders, G'Kar went out and spoke with him, barely conscious as his father was.

His father's last message, that he was proud of his son and that he wanted G'Kar to go and be free, had affected him deeply. That same night, he ran away from the master's house and killed his first Centauri. Ever since that day, he has been a fighter against the yoke of Centauri oppression, a role his tone revealed that he never expected to be able to put aside.

Ms. Torqueman's question about why the Centauri invaded in the first place brought a thought provoking response from the Narn ambassador. The reason why any advanced and powerful society conquered a weaker one was because the land was tactically important or the lesser race had valuable resources. He noted that often, it was just because they could. He likened the experience of the Narn's domination by and then hard won freedom from an oppressor to some cultures on Earth, citing the phrase 'Never Again' as something had meaning for those humans and the Narn race alike.

The Centauri interview came next. In his claim, the Narn were a primitive people that his race found and nurtured through gifts of technology and civilized behaviour. In his words, the Centauri gave them laws and took them out among the stars only to be repaid with terror and death. He disputed the claim that his people were driven off the Narn homeworld. Instead, as he told it, it was just too expensive to stay where they obviously were not wanted. If the Narn wanted them gone, there was no point in pushing the issue and staying where they were decidedly unwelcome. The Narn had rewritten history enough, Mollari claimed; they was no sense in doing it further by believing G'Kar's lies.

Later, Ivanova brought the station to a ready status as a Centauri primus battlecruiser came out of the hyperspace portal. Its gun ports open, it moved immediately into position over Babylon 5. The BabCom terminal next to Ivanova flickered and Londo appeared, looking grave but serious. He expressed his apologies if the appearance of the battlecruiser had come as a shock, but he had warned the station that any attempt to unlawfully interfere with his nation's ships would be met with an immediate and hostile response. According to the ambassador, the battlecruiser was there to blockade Babylon 5 and would fire upon any ship entering or leaving the area until their ships were returned to them unharmed and unsearched. He promised the battlecruiser would use minimum force but warned that if provoked, it would not hesitate to unleash its full complement of weapons, even if that meant firing upon Babylon 5 itself.



The report stopped for a moment to show a commercial for Psi Corp. The advertisement showed a young, sallow looking boy name John lamenting to his mother the fact that all the other children in his neighbourhood hated him because he sometimes heard what they were thinking. Into this tragic scene appeared a Psi Cop, a member of the enforcement and most publicly visible arm of the Psi Corp. He informed John's mother that if John proved to be psychic when he visited the nearest testing centre the next day, his education and future employment would be taken care of for life. Some time later as the commercial noted it, the boy returned in a Psi Corp uniform, looking much happier and healthier. The commercial ended with the Psi Cop telling the audience that if they were telepathic or knew anyone that was, they should inform Psi Corp immediately to help them

get the help they needed. A momentary subliminal image reading, 'The Psi Corp is your friend. Trust the Corps' appeared just before the scene faded to black.

The report continued in its thirtieth hour with a look at the battlecruiser outside silently enforcing the blockade through its mere presence. As Ms. Torqueman told it, the blockade was being completely effective, stopping all traffic into or out of the station. The parties involved in the dispute that started this all were in the Council Chambers nearby, discussing the matter and trying to seek a peaceful resolution, though her tone had little hope of their success.

G'Kar came around the end of the hallway after the meeting. He had a brief statement for the press. This incident, he said, proved once and for all that the Centauri were a threat to all races, not just his own, and that his government would have to take steps to ensure that this threat was removed. He had nothing else to say and left before Ms. Torqueman could respond.

At Command and Control, a location the reporter had to negotiate to be let back into after the crisis earlier, Sheridan read his

government's reply back to the Centauri cruiser. He refused to release their ships under the threat of a terrorist action. The station's defensive grid of weapons had been armed and trained on the battlecruiser on his authority. They would defend any ship coming into or out of Babylon 5's jurisdiction by whatever means necessary.

To test this statement, Sheridan had a transport dispatched by remote from one of the station's bays. The ship was on remote and was flown past the battlecruiser to see if the Centauri would still attempt to blockade the area now that they knew Babylon 5 would shoot back. The test went well, with the station's jumpgate activating and the transport leaving safely through it. The test was a success; the threat by the battlecruiser to fire on any ship operating in the area was shown to be a bluff, and one that had been called at that.

The victory was short lived. Sheridan accepted a transmission from the battlecruiser, but before any talk of standing down or leaving the area peaceably could get started, another jump point formed. From this one, a Narn G'Kwan heavy cruiser emerged. Weapons active from the moment it emerged into normal space,

Eye on History: The War of Retribution - Ineffectual Commands

Many members of the Centaurum became concerned with these Narn victories, but although individual sections of the Royal Navy remained effective or laboured hard under the command of military officers clear sighted enough to see the Narn for the threat they could be, others were still convinced of the same lies the nobility of their race had told for decades; the Narn were weak, gutless, and would never hold together long enough to be a credible enemy. The defenders of several Quadrants, including 1, 27, and the defeated garrison of Beta 3 knew differently.

Elements of the Royal Navy, receiving conflicting commands from Centauri Prime, were wasting a great deal of their resources by moving to different systems trying to cover the assets of Houses worried about their personal holding, garrison planets with no real tactical value but historical significance to leaders who had not paid attention to galactic events in thirty years, or by acting on their own sometimes questionable recognizance. In many ways the Narn made it as far into Centauri space as they had by flying through the holes in a net of defence the Centauri seemed to divided and confused to effectively close.

During this period of time, the Narn fleets had free reign to choose targets and move on them without worrying a great deal about a unified resistance. The worlds of Sora, Eldiira, and Talo, minor trade planets with small but effective garrisons with a core of House guards eager to prove themselves to their Houses and small detachments of the Centauri Royal Navy ordered to their defence by powers in the Centaurum, posed major obstacles to the advance of the ships of the Black Fleet that did not bolster the Red Fleet in its coreward advance. The Black fleet bent the largest part of its military force in a methodical pattern of seek, overwhelm, secure, move on; this pattern had worked for the Centauri in its many military engagement and it proved to be just as effective now.

Of these three worlds, only Eldiira put up what could be called a close battle. The Royal Navy in that system, headed up by Fleet Captain Ryos, pulled the diverse elements under his command and those commanded by others in the area into an effective whole and posed a wall of defence when the Black Fleet entered the system. The Narn pushed through the wall after a brief battle, the Centauri ships breaking formation and scattering after a few losses. Assuming the rout was a reaction to their superior force, the Black Fleet pressed on and encountered a second line of resistance, one that also crumbled under pressure. It was only after the Black Fleet hit the third line of defence that its leaders saw the rap for what it was. Both of the previous scattered Centauri defensive formations had come back together as a single line blocking their escape.

The battle that followed ended in a very pyrrhic victory for the Narn. Ryos's fleet was decimated but the Black Fleet had only a few ships left to try and hold the world. If Eldiira had been given a little more support by an more coherent Royal Navy, it would likely have held off its attackers and provided the Centauri a valuable morale victory at a crucial point in the war.

Key Events: Centauri politics prove detrimental to war effort; Trade worlds of Sora, Eldiira, and Talo lost to Narn Black Fleet because of ineffective leadership on Centauri Prime, Narn continue to take advantage of fractured chains of command
Worlds/Systems Lost: Sora (Victor: Narn), Eldiira (Victor: Narn); Talo (Victor: Narn)

the cruiser ignored Sheridan's appeal for them to leave the situation under their control and opened fire on the Centauri ship. While Sheridan tried to get them to cease fire, the two massive warships exchanged deadly fire within range of the station. Lances and pulses of crimson light flooded the night sky as they scored hit after terrible hit upon each other.

The fighting was intense, with one shot from the Narn cruiser slicing off a piece of the Centauri vessel's bulkhead and sending it straight towards the Observation dome of the station. Only Ivanova's hurried order to close the view port's blast doors saved everyone in Command and Control from its impact. The Narn cruiser's weapons proved too much for the armour of the Centauri battle cruiser to take; it broke up under a massive onslaught. Turning to jump out of the area, the damaged Narn ship's hyperspace engines overloaded under the stress and it too was destroyed. The battle ended with both sides claimed by their own senseless violence.

The broadcast ended with a number of people aboard Babylon 5 being asked the question, 'At the end of the day, given the amount of struggle and loss that comes with running the station, it is all worth it?' The first answer is from Garibaldi. Of course, he said, because while it might be painful, Babylon 5 learned from each new crisis and could make a difference based on what those hard lessons taught them. 'It's what humans do,' he concluded.

Many people aboard the station gave their opinions, but it was the last answer from Captain Sheridan that was the most telling. He told Ms. Torqueman that he definitely thought so, but not for any reason she had probably heard. In his opinion, humanity had been stumbling for the last few years with the death of the President, the war, and other mistakes of the recent past. All of this stumbling had the people of Earth looking at the path below them and not to the horizon where their journey was taking them. Babylon 5 was a place of peace, an example of the destination that waited for everyone who could set aside their differences and live together in harmony for good of the future.

He likened the horizon to a long line of ancestors standing behind humanity with the message, 'Make my life have meaning' and a long of descendant in front of them saying, 'Create the world we will live in.' He finished by saying that the real purpose was Babylon 5 was not anything as mundane as business and day to day lives, but the task of creating a better future for those alive now and for their posterity. With that, the ISN special report concluded.

Cargo and Shipping

The docks of Babylon 5 are a constantly busy place, with ships coming in and out of the station at a rate of 100 or so each day. The Dockworker's Guild, a predominantly human organization formed during the initial phases of Babylon 5's construction, handles all of the cargo transport that goes on with these vessels. If it is not walking on and off a ship, it gets taken care of by an exclusive contract with the Guild. Security and foreign policy play a role in this as well, with privacy laws and station regulations governing the actual treatment of containers while they are in transit through this long and time-consuming process.

Once a vessel with cargo heavier than personal effects and baggage comes aboard Babylon 5, it is routed to a docking bay and assigned a cargo debarkation number. When this number comes up, a Guild crew assigned to that bay removes every container according to its labelled care instruction and places it in one of three rooms attached to the bay. One is intended for medical goods, live creatures, and other perishables that require quarantine, inspection,

and special permission to be allowed into the station. A second is general storage, the largest of the three, and is the room where the vast majority of trade goods are kept until they can be disbursed into Babylon 5 or moved to another transport.

The last is a security holding centre and is used only when the cargo is hazardous or for some reason has been flagged as a security violation. Once every 24 standard hours, the room is searched by a Security detail and items therein are either approved and moved into the appropriate other room or banned. Immediate threats to the station provoke an accordingly faster response, but otherwise, this cycle takes up to one day from time of arrival. Banned goods are disposed of through an appropriate manner, with ionization through waste disposal being the default.

ISN

Interstellar News is the main media source for Earth and its extended family of colonies. Based on Luna, Earth's moon, in a massive complex of long range transmitters and computer resource centres, ISN has grown from a forerunner in war coverage on the Earth itself to the primary source of information available to humans and interested aliens as far as Epsilon Eridani and colony worlds as the far rim of the galaxy. If an event impacts the lives of humans anywhere in its Earth territory coverage range or within the purview of the company's alien correspondents, it is reported in a concise, professional manner within hours.

ISN is divided in three major branches; Deep Space Reporting, EarthDome Oversight, and Co-ordination. The latter is the most central to the media giant, as it manages all of the data provided by the first two and puts it into viewable formats for broadcast using the company's owned and licensed transmission equipment through known space. Coordination is also the managing office where programming decisions are made, budgets are approved and managed, and subsidiary media like the ISN owned newspaper Universe Today are administered.

Correspondents for the other two branches have an ever-increasing amount of responsibility and authority in their respective fields of expertise. Although some alien governments have accused reporters for ISN of espionage work on behalf of EarthDome in their territories, none of these allegations have even been upheld in Earth courts and such agents continue to function as freely as they ever have before. This does not mean that some races have proven resistant to ISN observation in their areas of space; some ISN correspondent teams look more like small unit squads of soldiers than reports due to the need for protection from regimes unwilling to have their activities made public to the galaxy at large. Such groups are becoming popular among the network's viewers as icons of the intrepid spirit that Earth likes to present to other races.

Scenarios and Campaign Hooks

5 An Interstellar News team is an excellent concept for a group of players looking for a different kind of campaign. The news centre would send them on remote assignments to various parts of the galaxy, with each story having the potential to be its own scenario. There is both a certain freedom and a great limitation to living your life on the air, so to speak, and IWN player teams would have to always make certain that their actions both accomplished whatever goals were laid out for them, deal with any crisis that emerged, and played good for the folks back home. A team might be given their

own weekly broadcast as a sort of reality-based news show, though it might get cancelled during the Clark administration if it ever showed the President, the Psi Corps, or current policy in a bad light. This might create an interesting twist on the campaign, with the former media darlings having to struggle for their lives against forces sent into the field to silence them permanently. Character classes appropriate to this kind of campaign are diplomats (an effective way to portray a charismatic reporter), agents for gritty investigative reporting in hostile territories, workers and scientists for the team's labour and technical crew, and soldiers for bodyguard duty.

5 Any player involved in the station's superstructure or the operation of Babylon 5 during this time is going to be very busy, especially after the destruction of both war vessels outside the hull. The damage to the station has been severe, but the real mess will be the debris field outside and all of the hazardous materials that have to be handled. Radioactive weapon cores, dangerous shrapnel, and live energy mines left from the wreckage of the Narn cruiser will all need to be cleaned up before Babylon 5 can accept regular traffic again. Inside, the MedLabs are working to capacity, the docking bays are still overtaxed, and the station's Security staff will have a tough time keeping the Centauri and the Narn off each other's throats. Campaigns set in the station's timeline will not lack for activity until this mess is cleaned up, both without and within.

5 The 36 Hours special is indicative of policy changes and attitudes back on Earth, though the Ministry of Public Information is more an arm of Clark's political agenda than any real desire to educate Earth's populace. Political games or campaigns concerned with such things will have to deal with the rising sentiment among Clark and his cronies that Babylon 5 is not the useful staging ground they had hoped for, nor is Sheridan the puppet they wanted. This opinion will only get stringer in coming months until it boils over into outright hostility, but the delay might be the result of work done by sympathetic political players trying to keep Babylon 5 in operation. A campaign could easily take place in the shadows of the major plotline, with dramas and intrigue of its own occurring behind the scenes but integrally involved in helping them take shape.

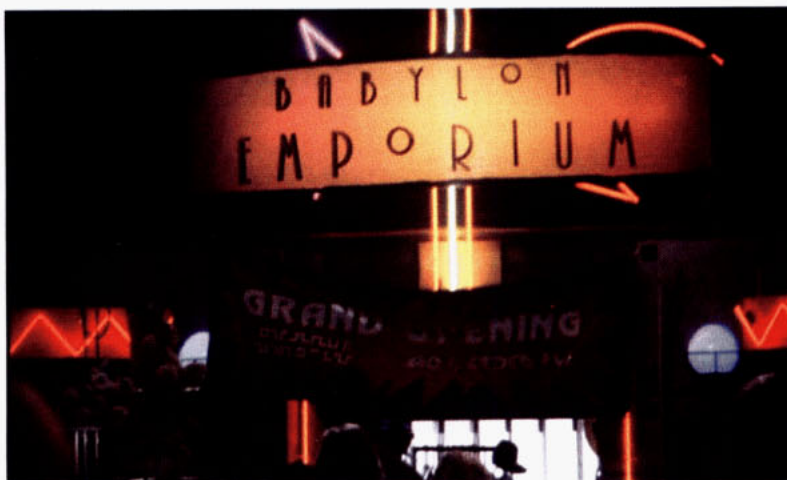
There All the Honour Lies (August 9th 2258)

'We are on the side of the truth. Is there another?'

Lennier

The outside of the station was a dance of activity with repairs and new construction being conducted in the twinkling darkness of space. Massive hoversleds with their single propulsion engine rocketed parts and technical crews all around the five mile length of Babylon 5, ensuring that its 250,000 sentient inhabitants never had to worry about breaches on the hull or a lack of power while they performed their own vital functions and lived their lives in neutral territory.

The station had fought off threats of all kinds, from massive war engines on the planet below to battlecruisers from every known race pointing their guns at it in hostility. Now, a new threat had



emerged, one that was directed not at the station's hull but at its integrity. In Sheridan's office, he and Ivanova were discussing the threat, with the Captain trying to put the best spin on it he could find. The Babylon 5 Senate Oversight Committee had recommended to EarthGov that the sale of merchandise related to the station across Earth's systems could generate over two million credits. This money would be going directly into the station's budget, a much needed increase with all of the recent activity and stresses from home and abroad.

This was not enough to convince Ivanova that the plan was anything but demeaning, a sentiment Sheridan agreed completely with. He was a more understanding person than she was under normal circumstances, and as such he had decided to place her fully in charge of administrating the project's first test run; there was a Babylon 5 tourist gift shop opening up in the Zocalo. Much against her will, Ivanova accepted the assignment, though she dearly wanted to refuse it.

Still chuckling to himself over the predicament he had placed his second in command in, Sheridan departed to take care of his daily routine. His day was going to be anything but routine, it would seem, as he was first bumped into by a passer by and then subsequently discovered that the man has stolen his link. Giving chase to the thief, the Captain ran up onto a gantry over the main station hall and collided with someone himself.

The person he ran into was a Warrior Caste Minbari in full battle dress. While Sheridan tried to excuse himself and apologise, the Minbari soldier had other ideas. He shoved Sheridan against a bulkhead, beat on him a few times, and then hurled him across the gantry to its far side. There, just within reach, was a PPG pistol. Driven by instinct, he grabbed it up and pointed it at his attacker. Shouting at the warrior to stop or he would fire, the Minbari shouted that he would die first and charged with obvious violent intent.

His words proved true as Sheridan fired the pistol in self defence. The blast struck the Minbari full in the chest and sent him hurtling down the steps behind him to collapse in a lifeless heap. Sheridan ran after the body, presumably to see if there was anything to be done for him, and saw another Minbari, this one dressed in Religious Caste garment, standing near the corpse of the soldier. Afraid for his life, the Minbari ran before Sheridan could call out to him, leaving him standing over the fallen body of a man he had just shot to death. The position surely looked very bad indeed for Sheridan, something he was becoming painfully aware of as the Minbari down the corridor toward the rest of the station.

This was made even clearer by the accusatory look on Delenn's face as she learned of the incident from his point of view in Garibaldi's security office. She had grown to deeply respect Sheridan for his wisdom and compassion; that made this all the more inconceivable. Unfortunately, the deceased was from a well respected and powerful family back on Minbar. The Grey Council had gotten involved, ordering Delenn to conduct her own investigation independently of Garibaldi's. She seemed to understand that it would be a waste of effort and complicate both searches, but she was bound to do as the council asked.

Once she left, Sheridan instructed Garibaldi to find the Religious Caste Minbari that had witnessed the last part of the attack. As Minbari do not lie, he was certain that the man would back up his story of being charged and having to protect himself. Garibaldi needed more of a description than the Captain could give him, but it would have to do. Bald, with a bone on his head, was all Sheridan could provide.

Later in the chief's office, he spoke with a Minbari that he had a strong feeling was the witness he needed. The Minbari denied being there, citing once again that Minbari do not lie. Garibaldi was getting more than a little tired of hearing that, but he had no choice but take the man at his word and let him go. Just as he was in the doorway of his office, Lenneir, the aide to ambassador Delenn, came up to him and asked if he could take over the investigation with this subject now that Garibaldi was finished with him. With no grounds to refuse, he let Lenneir leave with the Minbari.

In the main corridor later, Garibaldi and Sheridan were discussing the investigation that the nowhere that it was going. As Garibaldi related it to him, everywhere he turned on this case, Lenneir was either just getting there or just leaving. Garibaldi chalked it up to his being thorough, but Sheridan mused about Lenneir perhaps staging a cover up. Neither of them wanted to believe such a thing of the likable Lenneir, but the efficiency of his investigation was more than a little suspicious.

Meeting in MedLab with Franklin, they learned a little more about the victim. The wound on the body was consistent with the shot Sheridan fired, but there was no sign on the body of bruising to indicate the Minbari had been attacking the Captain. Because his death was instantaneous and so close after the combat began, there would have been no time for the bruises to form in any event. This meant that while the autopsy would not disprove the Captain's claim, it did not corroborate it in any way either. This left them back at square one.



Garibaldi smelled a setup, though he had no proof of it. The Warrior Caste Minbari would not have been carrying a PPG made by EarthForce, which made Sheridan's finding one on the ground where he was thrown very suspicious. There was no word back on the serial number of the weapon and the link the person who bumped into Sheridan stole had not turned up yet. Garibaldi surmised that the thief has stolen such a worthless item to purposefully get Sheridan to chase him and lure him into what was looking more and more like a staged scene. But why? The Minbari certainly could not have wanted to die, and with no witnesses on either side, the case was not a strong one in either direction.

In the Zocalo, just outside the new Babylon 5 merchandise shop, the telepath Talia Winters was bumped into by Vir, who accidentally spilled a drink on her and then embarrassed himself further by trying to wipe it off her chest with his hand. More concerned with the turmoil she can feel in his surface thoughts, Talia asked if he was all right. He replied that he could not stay, and then reacted as if that was some kind of joke. It likely harkened back to a transmission he had just received from Centauri Prime, something about him and ambassador Mollari.

In her chambers, Delenn was questioning another Minbari about what he knew of the attack. Lenneir, a member of the same sect of the Religious Caste, the third fane of Chudomo, was certain that from things he had heard, this was the witness they were looking for. The Minbari in question, Ashan, refused to speak to Delenn, treating her like a freak and even going so far as to call her one.

These words made Delenn dash out of the room before she could break down in tears, but Lenneir had an emotional reaction of a different kind. Offended that a member of his order would be so insulting to the woman he had come to idolize as an icon of Minbari honour and decency, he confronted Ashan about his poor behaviour. The Minbari was undeterred, claiming that Delenn's appearance and presence had been just as insulting to him. Still, as Lenneir was of his same fane, he would answer his questions, but he doubted Lenneir would like the answers.

In Sheridan's officer, the Captain certainly did not like the answers. According to Ashan's testimony, the Captain attacked Levell without cause and after the warrior offered to surrender, shot him in cold blood. Sheridan, incensed at this, called Ashan a liar, but for his sake, Delenn instructed her aide that neither of them heard that accusation. In Minbari culture, lying was a stain on their soul and honour, and being accused of lying required an immediate and lethal response. Sheridan retracted his statement, lessening it to say that he suspected Ashan was in error and asked to speak to the witness as soon as possible.

Garibaldi was not sure that was a good idea, but Sheridan's mind was made up. He was being accused falsely, was in danger of being brought up on murder charges, and could very likely lose his command of the station no matter how the investigation went. Things were looking bleak, but for now he was still in command. If there was anything he could do to get his name cleared, he was bound and determined to try.

In the Babylon 5 Emporium, Ivanova went through a trial of her own. The place seemed tasteful in its way, but the items were very derivative, all the way down to alien masks and Babylon 5 logo t-shirts. While she could not come up with a specific objection, the place was just

demeaning to her sense of dignity. When a Drazi asked her if she could gift wrap the latex human face he has just pulled off, her resolve broke. With sales pitched echoing in his ears from the shop's speakers, Ivanova fled as quickly as she could back to the sanctity and safety of her duties in Command and Control.

Sheridan talked with Ashan, but his story had not changed. He accused Sheridan of shooting Levell for no cause, calling the Captain Starkiller as some sort of heated insult. He was referring to an incident in the past, an incident from the Captain's war record that he was not about to apologize for. Before the conversation could go any farther, his lawyer from Earth arrived unannounced. The lawyer, a woman named Guinevere Corey, had been escorted to the room by Zack Allen after tell him that she was never expected, only dreaded. Insisting that this interview was over and essentially dismissing the Minbari from the room, she proceeded to explain the Captain's legal obligations and his extremely tenuous position back home.

After deliberating the matter, Earth Central decided to proceed with an indictment against Sheridan for the murder of Levell. If they swept it aside and tried to cover it up, they would open themselves in charges of complicity and possibly create a diplomatic nightmare. They did not expect Sheridan to plead guilty, but while Corey thought she could convince a jury that there was not enough evidence to convict beyond a reasonable doubt, Sheridan suspected there was more to all this.

He was right. His lawyer considered her response and then gave him the news he absolutely did not want to hear. If the case went to trial, win or lose, he would have to step down as the commanding officer aboard Babylon 5. This incident was spinning out of control and he could see where it was headed. More than ever, he was feeling powerless to avert the destruction of everything he had built here on the station.

After this dire news, he met with Ivanova in his quarters. There, he shared his concerns over the possibility that he did shoot an unarmed man trying to surrender. Ivanova asked him if he was worried whether he did it or whether she would lose her respect for him if that was what had occurred. He asked for the former, afraid to hear the later. She answered the latter one first then, sensing that he needed to know that she would always respect him, especially because he was worried she would not. As for the question of his guilt, she assured him that there were still questions to be asked and answers to be found. It was not a glowing endorsement, but he was willing to take anything he could get.

As if his mind could not become any more troubled, the door chimed just after Ivanova left. It was ambassador Kosh, ready to take him on his next lesson of understanding. Totally unprepared to deal with the Vorlon's riddles, he tried to duck out of the appointment, but Kosh would not take no for an answer. Instead, he told the Captain that this was precisely the right time for the lesson and bid him to follow. With no other objections and lacking the fortitude to try and refuse the enigmatic being, Sheridan followed him quietly onto the depths of the station.

In the darkest, dingiest part of Downbelow, Kosh bade the Captain enter a section of decking that led into the station's super structure. Curious why he would be here of all places, Sheridan asked what was in there he was supposed to see. Kosh told him it would be a moment of the most perfect beauty. Not much of an answer, but for the Vorlon, it was quite verbose.



Trusting to Kosh's wishes, he climbed into the small vent and emerges in a ruined section of the deck with panelling over the ceiling, dim light, and piles of rags all around. One of the piles proved to be a robed and cowed figure. Sitting down, he stated that he had been sent. There did not seem to be anything else he could say, so that would have to suffice. The figure extended its hand and pushed an empty offering bowl in front of Sheridan. Unfortunately, he did not carry real currency and had nothing else of worth on him. At a loss for what to offer, he finally removed a stat bar from his uniform and placed it in the bowl.

The figure retrieved the bowl and pulled it into his robes. For a moment, there was just silence. Then, before the Captain could be come restless, the most beautiful melodious chant began. The piles of cloth began to move as if they concealed the singers all around him. Red cloth and a rain of light from the station above the roof panels overwhelmed Sheridan in a flood of sensations and music. Out in the hallway, Kosh was also basking in the song, which had swept up the Captain and gently soothed away his worries.

In one of the Zocalo's bars, Vir was also easing his sorrows, or at least was trying to, by drinking copiously. That is where Londo found him and tried to get him to stop drinking and talk with him. Vir was surrounded by doubts and worry, with voices in his dreams that kept him up at night and made it hard for him to keep the ambassadors secrets, especially with how dark they had become of late. He tried not to go on about his problems, but life serving Londo had become too troublesome for him to keep quiet about.

There was more. A transmission earlier in the day had brought a message from Centauri Prime when he spilled his drink on Talia. The court had decided to send a replacement for Vir's position, a specially groomed attaché with the right skills to do his job better than he could. When Vir had arrived two years ago, his job had been a joke, a way for his family to get rid of him in an assignment that no one else wanted. Now, with Londo's new prominence, the role was too high-profile for him to keep. Even Mollari's assurance that he would talk with the people back home did little to cheer him up and he staggered out of the bar as depressed as when he had gotten there several hours earlier.

Londo tried to follow him out, but his attention was caught by a table of pretty human and Centauri women laughing at a table nearby. At first approaching with the intention of being friendly and charming, that all faded as he saw the object of their amusement. He reached down and took from them a small doll of a Centauri male in noble's garb. After a moment's examination, he realized that it was not only badly made, it was made as a replica of himself.

While Sheridan teased Ivanova in a nearby lift about his latest lesson being a gift of beauty in the darkness, a comment she said was just like something a Vorlon would say, Delenn and Lenneir were becoming similarly perplexed back in her quarters. The information he sent for to prepare Levell properly for transport back to Minbar based on his clan has come up with some very disturbing information. After reading the report on Levell's history and allegiances, Lenneir began to piece together what was actually occurring with the Captain and the warrior's murder.

On his way to a meeting with the non-aligned worlds, Sheridan was informed that it had been cancelled without explanation. As he feared, the mews of his impending trial was starting to disrupt the functioning of the station and undermine his authority as its commanding officer. He feared things would get much worse before it got better, but Ivanova advised him to take one crisis at a time.

That crisis came out of the lift behind them in the form of an irate Centauri ambassador holding a doll of himself and wearing a very irritated scowl. Privately, he confided in them that while he understood the need for the station to improve its budget by whatever means they could come up with, his objection to the doll was primarily because of its lack of sexual attributes, effectively casting aspersions on his masculinity. Sheridan sympathized as much as he could and assured Londo that they would look into it and do whatever they could. An idle comment about people lying on the station got Londo to reveal that if it helps another save face or honour, the Minbari could indeed lie. That got Sheridan to thinking and when he received a call from the Minbari embassy on Earth, he looked like a man with a mission as he took the call.

Lenneir was on a mission of his own, a far more important one that could impact the murder allegations the Captain was operating under and the growing questions in his own mind. He tracked down Ashan, finding him in a seedy part of the station. In order to speak with Ashan privately, he had to knock Allen out, as the security guard had also tracked the Minbari to this place. Lenneir found Ashan speaking with the same thief that stole the Captain's link and could not remain hidden any longer.

Confronting him at last, Lenneir all but called him an dishonourable traitor to their caste. He reacted even more poorly when Ashan decried Delenn as being nothing, at which point Lenneir questioned who or what the man before him believed in, if anything. This struck Ashan deeply whom, rather than fight Lenneir, fled deeper into the station. Lenneir did not pursue his fane brother, as he had much to consider with what he had already learned.

Sheridan and Delenn spoke in the station's rock garden after his message. According to a statement issued by the Grey Council, Ashan was to be transferred to the first shuttle leaving for Minbar. With the witness gone, there would be no trial, which would please Earth Central but would utterly shatter his credibility. That might have been the intention of some all among, and they both knew it. Delenn tried to explain these actions to Sheridan as people serving the greater good, but her words tasted hollow even to her. Imploring her that greater ideals could not rest on the breaking of smaller ones, Sheridan convinced her to share what she knew. Taking him from the garden, they went to find the truth together.

In Lenneir's quarters, Ashan arrived for parting instructions. He received them, and then was told that when he left, Lenneir would go to the Captain and admit his part in the attack by Levell. Ashan, shocked that Lenneir would do this and disgrace their clan,

objected strongly to the idea. Lenneir heard none of it, stating that he would be saving face by covering for him, but that he was correct; the third fane of Chudomo would never recover from the tragedy. Ashan told him everything he had learned from the human thief. He said that Levell had paid the thief to get Sheridan to follow him, had laid in wait for him, and martyred himself to remove the Starkiller.

Lenneir, who also lost family on the Black Star when Sheridan lured it into a trap, was disgusted more by his own people than by that act. He was also not acting alone and as he turned in disgust from Ashan, the far wall slid open and Sheridan, Garibaldi, Corey, and Delenn stepped out. The recording has been recorded. Ashan's words were going to be the evidence Sheridan needed to clear his name and regain his credibility.

Unfortunately, it was not that simple. The acts performed against him were disgraceful and the confession would, if it went public, destroy the honour of the third fane of Chudomo forever. Lenneir knew this, and so did Sheridan. Thinking quickly, he offered Delenn a trade. In exchange for a statement from Ashan corroborating his original claim of self defence, he would turn over the recording and no one would ever have to know. It was a small victory in the light of all this duplicity and death, but while it raised a few more mysteries to solve, it was enough for Sheridan. His lawyer did not like the idea, but that was hardly surprising.

In his quarters, Londo found Vir in the dregs of a nasty hangover. Delighting in tormenting his aide, Londo made sure to speak up nice and loud when he asked how quickly Vir could pack. Sullen and know expelled from Mollari's service, He got up to obey this last command. Londo, obviously enjoying the torture a bit more than he should, told him to start with the things here in the ambassadorial chamber. Vir, nor understanding, protested that these were Londo's possessions.

Deciding that he had gotten enough enjoyment out of the poor drunken sot, Londo relented and explained that if Vir had to go to Centauri Prime, so would he. He had said as much to the Emperor in the report he had made on the subject of Vir's excellent qualifications and fine performance record. , he had touted Vir's qualities well enough for even his family to be impressed. In an act that almost resembled an apology for the dark things he had done in the past, Londo asked Vir to please stay on as his aide and as his friend.

Vir cheerfully accepted. Londo, upon hearing this, decided that a little more fun could be had at Vir's expense and told him that his entire family was coming to visit. The trip would only last a month or so, but he was sure Vir would not mind. As soon as Londo was out of the room, Vir went back to drinking. He was happy to stay, but a month with his family here required more liquor.

Out in the hallway near the Captain's quarters, Ivanova waited to congratulate him on getting out from under the death sentence that had been looming over his career. She also wanted to show him something she found in the Babylon 5 Emporium. At first amused by the Bab-bear-lon 5 teddy bear, his amusement quickly turned to revulsion when she informed him the J.S. on its little baseball jersey stood for John Sheridan. Finally giving in to Ivanova's opinion of the store, he ordered it boxed up and shipped out within the day. Susan was only too happy to oblige.

Eye on History: The War of Retribution - The Lion Wakes

The normally internecine politics of the Centauri Republic changed, if only for a short time, following the very real possibility of the Narn striking at Centauri Prime and winning the War of Retribution. While the 1st Imperial Fleet had repulsed the invasion at its closest point to the Republic's homeworld, the losses from this endeavour had been great and continued in-fighting at this time would only lead to their downfall. Remarkably, the Great Houses of the Centauri came together, agreeing that the only people they should be acting against were the Narn.

This unity was immediately felt in the War, when Grand Admiral Dromo of the 1st Imperial Fleet received clear and unequivocal orders to drive the Narn from Centauri space. His first target was Ragesh, a world the Republic needed back as much for morale purposes as from any military value. He directed the remnants of the fleet, gained reinforcements from Centauri Prime, and merged the entire force with the fleet at Immolan. From there, he conducted raids in Ragesh space to weaken the area's defence and to occupy it while new ships were sent to Quadrant 32, Marigol, and Batain for further protection against Narn assault.

Tactically, the attack against Ragesh was nothing short of brilliant on Dromo's part. Instead of lashing out at the planet and wiping out the Red Fleet in a pitched battle that would have cost many lives on both sides, he held back his forces and instead struck surgically at G'Vren's part of the Red Fleet. This action allowed Dromo to bleed reinforcements out of the Narn Regime as new ships were sent to replace the few he destroyed at a time with little risk to his own. Once this tactic was no longer viable and the Regime began sending new ships elsewhere to stop losing them to attrition, Grand Admiral Dromo hunted down and removed the major threat in the region without taking on the entire Red Fleet. On August 28th 2258, Dromo's fleet engaged and destroyed the D'Korith, G'Vren's flagship during a morale raising patrol run around the edges of the system. This loss shattered the morale of the Narn in Ragesh and bought Dromo all the time he needed for the next stage in his plan.

G'Vren's replacement was T'Narl, who left his command of Coutor to build up a fleet of ships from Red Fleet holdings in Ragesh, Coutor, and Beta 3 for a full offensive against the Centauri attacking Ragesh. While he indeed assemble a sizable armada, this came at the expense of vital defenders for those systems and, if the counter-offensive against the Centauri aggressors of the 1st Imperial Fleet failed, it would leave all three worlds vulnerable. One September 3rd, T'Narl's united Red Fleet was attacked by what appeared to be another raid against the Ragesh system.

Instead, this was one prong of a two stage attack that culminated in the better part of the 1st Imperial Fleet dropping out of hyperspace on the other side of the Red Fleet. Caught between the two Centauri groups, T'Narl drew all remaining forces from Ragesh and abandoned the world in a fighting retreat. He also pulled the bulk of the Coutor garrison to join with him and left the remainder with orders to defend Coutor aggressively. With a much bigger fleet now, T'Narl was pursued to Quadrant 1 and fought a holding action of raids and counter engagement against Dromo for twenty three days. During this time, branches of the Red Fleet struck worlds as far into Centauri space as Gorash, Alon, and Cargon. None of these strike bore any victories for the Narn, but they kept those worlds from being able to send reinforcements to Dromo.

During this time, the Batain Sector Fleet had secured Coutor. From this recaptured world, the Fleet moved to Beta 3 and managed to defeat what remained for its forces in a swift battle. That system now lost as a means of escape or aid, T'Narl and the Red Fleet were caught between the Batain Sector Fleet and the 1st Imperial Fleet, an untenable position at best. After a bloody battle that involved severe losses on both sides, the Red Fleet was crushed. Its surviving ships, including T'Narl's flagship the *Droshal*, escaped into hyperspace, leaving Dromo to retake Quadrant 1 and complete the failure of the Red Fleet.

Key Events: Centauri politics stabilize in face of War; Dromo given full command of the 1st Imperial Fleet; G'Vren killed while defending Ragesh; Narn driven out of coreward parts of Centauri space; Centauri fleet moves from defensive to offensive strategy; T'Narl returns to Narn homeworld in defeat

Worlds/Systems Lost: Ragesh (Victor: Centauri), Coutor (Victor: Centauri); Beta 3 (Victor: Centauri); Quadrant 1 (Victor: Centauri)

Later, on a patrol run in his Starfury, Keffer encountered the unknown object that had been showing up on Command and Control's sensors. It smacked into his cockpit glass and stayed there long enough for him to make a full identification. The Captain had consigned the offensive bear to the cold depth of space. Keffer, unwilling to incur Sheridan's wrath further, left the object a mystery and returned the station without another word.

The Third Fane of Chudomo

Lenneir is one example of this clan's long line of famous and honourable members. A clan of Minbari with many of its number

in high positions in the Religious Caste, the third fane of Chudomo is also the line from which prominent members of the Warrior Caste hail, including a few Minbari of Shai Alyt rank in powerful military groups. The fane is well regarded and its members are treated with the respect that their long and honour-filled history demands.

Minbari and the Truth

As a deeply spiritual race, the Minbari are dedicated to the truth not as much for the same of honesty as the stain that a lie is perceived

to leave on the souls and honour of the Minbari telling it. This is usually seen by other races, and told as much by the Minbari themselves, as their people never lying. This is not exactly true; there are instances when lying is acceptable among the Minbari. Primarily, a lie is an acceptable thing to bear upon one's soul when the act saves another from dishonour. Lies are also told if the ideal for which the lie is supportive is more important than the teller's own station or honour. As long as a greater good comes of a lie, the Minbari consider lying to be necessary and even in the right circumstances honourable.

Clans of the Minbari

The Minbari are defined as much by their associations and their birth clan as they are by their Caste and these aspects of their lives are by no means exclusive. Any given clan may have representatives in two or even all three Castes, though historically the Worker Caste members are not as widely appreciated by their peers. This changes later in the history of Babylon 5, but for now, the Worker Caste is not afforded the same level of respect as clan members would receive for joining either the Warrior or the Religious Caste.

Despite this caste limitation, all Minbari take great pride in the clan and usually have its lineage as part of their formal name as they give it to others. Normally only done when greeting another member of their caste and our clan, the sharing of a Minbari's clan heritage is a mark of both respect for the listener and pride for the teller. Honouring the clan of a Minbari that has expressed his lineage in this way is an excellent way to gain favour with them. Dishonouring it is just as sure a way to make an life long enemy.

Scenarios and Campaign Hooks

③ The Minbari's hatred of Sheridan could easily expand to include anyone else with a history that paralleled his, especially anyone else serving on his ship during the Earth/Minbari War. Any players fitting this profile may have to deal with repercussions of this deep and abiding hatred or, if they are Minbari, might be called upon by their clan or caste to enact such revenge against others. The Minbari lead a life of service and expected duty, one of the drawbacks that balances their numerous advantages. Games Masters should be sure to impose limitations like this, as it stresses the society that has shaped the people of Minbar into what they are for good and for ill.

③ The Babylon 5 Emporium may have been shut down in this episode, but all that merchandise has to go somewhere. Player merchants or raiders might encounter these goods in any number of ways. Other stores on the station may be stuck with goods the administration will not allow them to sell, leading to rubber masks and t-shirts finding their way onto a very incredulous black market. Other crates may be smuggled off the station to venues in the galaxy that will allow their sale, which could lead to some very amusing scenes. The look on a player's face who goes through a vicious firefight and boards an EarthForce freighter only to discover that he has just managed to steal fifteen crates of dolls should be priceless.

③ The legal department of Earth Central could be an excellent place for a player to base their background. Playing a lawyer in deep space would certainly be a new angle on the diplomatic slant of some Babylon 5 games. Even more militant campaigns could have room for a soldier/lawyer assigned to the unit by their branch's military justice department. Such a character would be a fighting man's lawyer, able to fight along side his active duty

brethren and then defend them during military tribunals when the campaign dictates that they stand before one. In a civilian campaign, the need for a lawyer should be a common occurrence, even on an enclosed station like Babylon 5. From civil disputes to truly important and difficult cases like murder trails and infractions of interstellar law, a campaign based around a lawyer and his team of experts and investigators would certainly be a different look at the world of Babylon 5.

Knives (August 11th 2258)

'Knowledge is a basic tool of politics. Mine is considerable.'

Urza Jaddo

On one end of the Core Garden on Babylon 5, there was a baseball diamond complete with home run wall, chalk base lines, and a batting cage. Garibaldi, wearing a jersey and carrying a baseball, found Sheridan there practicing his swing. The Captain swung at every pitch, much harder than he had to. The machine counted out the result of each swing, either home run or foul ball. Garibaldi saw he was clearly tense and worked up about something.

He was. Sheridan did not pause in his swings, even though each hit was now coming up as a foul. The League of Non-Aligned Worlds were thinking of banning the Narn and the Centauri from the Corridor, the galaxy's main trade route through hyperspace and one of the longest contiguous lanes between jump gates. Without access to it, both races would have to work much harder at importing and exporting what they needed, but their recent war actions has spilled over into unrelated sectors and disrupted shipping for everyone. It was punitive, but it was the only way the other races could get them to see how much their war was affecting others.

Garibaldi knew this was bothering the Captain, but he was unimpressed. He had spent his day in the Triangle, a section of Grey sector that, ever since the station had been made operations two years sooner, had been filled with strange lights, sounds, and mysterious phenomena. Named by the crews that had built that part of the station the B5 Triangle, it was a kind of ghost story for Babylon 5, just one more mystery on a station full of mysteries.

Sheridan asked his chief of Security if there was anything to the stories. As Garibaldi hit his second foul ball, he told Sheridan that while he had never seen anything, the place was more than a little creepy. That intrigued the Captain, who decided to go check



out the area for himself. Garibaldi sensed a major security issue about to happen and asked why, to which he was told that as a kid, Sheridan had loved to explore haunted houses, Indian burial grounds, and other 'spooky' places. As a concession to his sense of safety, Garibaldi at least asked that the Captain not go into Grey sector alone.

Just as the third pitch for Garibaldi was coming up, Sheridan told him that going in alone would be half the fun. This gave the Security Chief a sour look and stopped him long enough for the pitch to go past as strike three. Now out, Garibaldi looked sourly at his Captain, who had obviously done that on purpose. With a resigned sigh, he gave up the plate and walked away.



Londo and Vir came out the lift at the end of their residence hall. Both in fine dress, they argued their favourite composers of Centauri opera and who was better. For Londo, there was no discussion; it was clearly Dorva, a fine composer and, in his words a giant of the art. Dorva's opening section of Strovalis Drokata, one of the ambassador's favourite operas, was a moving piece full of nuance and sombre, emotional energy. Even Vir had to concede that point, but it did not deter him from his opinion.

To him, there was no one better than Zentaro and no opera better than his Mi Creava Taro. Showing a surprisingly fine voice, he sang a bit of that work for Londo and before the end of the first line, had moved him enough that they continued toward the ambassador's chambers arm in arm, singing the words to a stirring opera in their home tongue. Their voices combined quite well and they resonated down the long hall as they walk.

The song it cut short as a cloaked figure moved up behind Londo and clutches him around the throat and shoulders in a killing grasp. The assailant notes how fitting it would be for Londo to die with a song on his lips. At first stunned into inaction, Londo quickly recognized the voice, especially when the cloaked man called him by the name Pasel Laiarti, as that of his old friend Urza Jaddo. Urza released him, the whole thing a ruse, and they embraced as comrades who had not seen each other in the years Mollari had been stationed to Babylon 5.

As with all Centauri would do when reunited, Londo offered to retire to the nearby apartment for gossip and drinks. He even offered to open a bottle of his finest Brevari, which only showed how deeply he felt for his old school companion and war compatriot. Unfortunately for their celebration, Urza had many things to do elsewhere first, though he swore to come back as quickly as his business could be settled and take Londo up on his fine hospitality and finer Brevari. Londo, visibly elated to see his good friend again, agreed instantly.

Down in the first level of Grey Sector, Sheridan was doing something that would have made Garibaldi weep in frustration; he was exploring the area alone. With no weapon but a flashlight, he walked through the shadows of the Sector undeterred by the dangers it might hold. In a section dominated by the dim glow of backlighting slowly pulsing from behind a massive deck fan, he heard a strange noise and turned to investigate. He approached the source of the sound, which had not repeated, cautiously and found the body of a Markab male bleeding and still against a collection of conduit pipes against the side wall of the hallway.

He checked the body, but there was no signs of life. It looked like the Markab's head had been caved in, perhaps by some assailant against the very pipe he was found on. Sheridan had wanted a bit of adventure, but this had gotten more serious that he had bargained for. With a death involved, he had to contact Garibaldi and get an real investigation going. He tried to do so, but his link began to act strangely, fading in and out, as a ripple of white light pooled around the features of the fallen Markab. Sheridan could not see this from his position, but the light intensified as he tried to get his link to respond. Then, the body suddenly lurched to life and grabbed him by the face.

Sheridan jumped back, but the Markab had already gone cold and lifeless once more. The place he had touched, Sheridan's face, flickered for a moment with the same odd light, but it disappeared even as Garibaldi's panicked voice came over the link. Sheridan called for help and a few minutes later, he and the body were in MedLab getting checked over by a worried looking Franklin. Aside from elevated adrenaline levels consistent with a sudden shock, he was perfectly healthy.

The same could not be said of the deceased Markab, Shi'osh'nei. A registered trader with a ship and cargo waiting for him to depart the next day, he had been living in the Markab sector of the station. With no other leads and still out of sorts at having been attacked by a dead man, Sheridan arranged with Garibaldi to check out Shi'osh'nei's apartment and see if they could find anything out of the ordinary. It seemed like a long shot to the Security Chief, but those were the Captain's orders and so he agreed to meet him after Sheridan got some rest. It was apparently just what he needed,

because even as he was getting up to leave, Sheridan's vision faded in and out and he felt dizzy.

In Mollari's quarters, the ambassador and his aide were preparing the room for an honoured guest. Vir inquired about Londo's past with Urza Jaddo as he polished a pair of fine silver goblets. Londo took a set of fine brevari bottles out of a temperature controlled drink safe in the wall and explained that though he had known Urza since they were children, their houses had been aligned since the first days of the Republic, a fact he seemed very proud of.

Vir also wanted to know the origin of the name Pasel Laiarti and learned that it was a duelling society nickname given to him by Urza and others Londo had fought with when he was young. It meant that he fought like a wild laiarti, a hunting beast on Centauri Prime. Urza's nickname from that time was Scaltura, a reference to his immense fighting prowess. In Londo's own admission, those were great times for him; the past seemed better and brighter in Mollari's memory than his present had been. He talked of the power of the old Republic, waning but still virile when he was a youth, and of the power the Centauri had that was rivalled only by the gods. His reminiscence was interrupted only by the entrance of his dear friend and with the toast, 'Valtu,' they drank to each other and to their history.

In Sheridan's quarters, he was sleeping soundly. The room was dark and his eyes were closed, but there was something amiss in the way he was lying down. His body was too tense, too rigid. When he opened his eyes, his pupils were covered with an image of jungle foliage moving past him quickly. Even as this faded and his sight cleared, a snarling sound echoes from somewhere in his room. He called for lights and looked around, carefully scanning his quarters for the source of the noise.

It was not hard to find. Growling and slaving as if eager for the kill, a strange flying predator with leathern wings and a pod like mouth full of sharp teeth flapped on the doorway to his bedroom. Sheridan dodged its attack once, threw himself to the ground to avoid its pass, and went for his PPG as it swooped in for a second strike. He avoided that one too and fired at point blank range. The shot hurtled across the room, passed harmlessly through the creature, and took its toll on a wall sculpture behind the beast. As the sparks from its impact winked out, so did the monster. It vanished without a trace, as if it had never been there at all.

When Garibaldi came in, drawn by the gunfire, there was nothing for him or the guard with him to find. Sheridan knew what it was, though he could not explain its disappearance. It was a Grylor, a creature native to the planet Janos 7. Stationed there as one of his first duties in EarthForce, Sheridan had first encountered one there. Now it had mysteriously shown up here, attacking him for no reason and vanishing with no trace. As confusing as that was, Garibaldi had another mystery for him. It turned out the Markab had committed suicide, bashing his own skull open on that pipe in Grey Sector. No cause had been determined, and the man had not been on any kind of drugs or suffering from any illness. Unhinged by this and by the phantom Grylor attack, Sheridan excused himself to Command and Control after asking Garibaldi to find out anything he could about Shi'osh'nei or the reason for these strange occurrences.

Two empty bottles later, Londo and Urza sat together and talks over the present, the past having long since exhausted its options for conversation. Urza was still married to his wife Marillia, an arrangement they found 'comfortable'. They spoke briefly of

Adiera, the dance Londo fell in love with a year ago, but he quickly changed the subject to something else. Another drink later, they were discussing Londo's star being in ascendance once more, a reference to his growing power in the courts of Centauri Prime, and the rising glory of their race.

Londo felt it was long since time for these things to occur, especially the latter. Too long had the Centauri bowed and scraped to the whims of the galaxy. Now, the galaxy would tremble once more at the might of the Republic. While Urza agreed with Londo in spirit, he reminded him that Turhan had never wanted another war and that the Narn, the 'thrice damned Narn' as Londo called them, did not start the current conflict.

According to Urza, the war was begun by a secret faction within the Centauri Royal Court, the same group that had Prime Minister Malachi stabbed to death the very night Turhan died and put an infantile puppet named Cartagia on the throne. Though drunk, Urza was very clear on the matter, even though Londo had been told and seemed to believe that Malachi had taken his own life after learning of Turhan's passing. This surprise covered Londo's reaction to the news of a 'secret faction' well, especially as in essence, he was that secret faction. He had not been involved in Malachi's assassination, but everything else about the war with the Narn had been his doing. From the very beginning of the conflict, it was his hand that had guided the entire tragedy, much like a classic Centauri opera.

Like one more aria in the twisted play that had become his life, Urza told him that House Jaddo was about to be declared traitors to the Republic. Even though nothing could be proven, politics back on Centauri Prime had degenerated to the point where even an accusation was enough to disgrace an household and that disgrace meant death for him and his family. Not wishing to turn away his friend, Londo offered to help, though even as Urza thanked him profusely for his aid, brevari, and friendship, his eyes revealed that he could see the web of treachery he was getting caught in. If his connections back in court were the same ones that assassinated Malachi and were trying to bring down House Jaddo, there would be nothing he could do.

In Command and Control, Sheridan was reporting to help out with watching over the traffic coming in and out of the station. Things were going well, which always worried Ivanova. As she put it, she never had time to worry when things were going badly. Another transport came in, but as Sheridan tried to read the dome's instrument panels, his vision began to fade and blur again. Looking up, he saw the Icarus, the Interplanetary Expeditions ship his wife had been on, materialize in front of the station and then explode.

It was all a hallucination, as there was no debris to scan and no one else in the Observation Dome had seen anything. Ivanova tried to help him, but Sheridan felt like he was losing his grip on his sanity. Excusing himself from Command and Control, he departed for MedLab before his condition deteriorated and he put anyone else in jeopardy.

There, Franklin assured him that there was nothing wrong with him physically but that he was not going crazy either, at least not in his medical opinion. It was possible the explanation for his strange visions was something as simple as stress. Sheridan had been pulled from his preferred duty of commanding a starship out on the rim of explored space to command a station with wars breakout out all the time, dozens of problems every time he turned around, and he was in a conspiracy against a conspiracy on Earth involving

the people that put him here in the first place. Franklin put him on bed rest and sedatives, neither of which Sheridan appreciated very much. Sheridan compared the doctor to his General father as he left, a comment Franklin took as a great compliment.

An empty conversation with Lord Refa over a BabCom link to Centauri Prime left Londo with the distinct impression that he needed to pay more attention to politics and current events back home. The noble told him that House Jaddo was crumbling, that the resolution to have Urza denounced as a traitor had already passed, and that anyone associated with him would also fall. Londo, undeterred, explained to Refa that he alone was the reason Refa had the power he did and that he fully expected that power to be used on Urza's behalf. Refa said he would do what he could, but Londo was unconvinced.

Sheridan was down in the Garden again, hitting foul after foul on the baseball field. The Garibaldi found them there once more and commented that most therapists would call three straight hours of battling practice would be called obsessive compulsive, a comment Sheridan probably also took as a great compliment. He appreciated the news Garibaldi for him even more. The Markab checked out as nothing more than a legitimate trader, but his ship passed through Sector 14 on his way to the station.

This conversation was when Sheridan finally learned of the incident a year in 2258 involving the sudden reappearance and subsequent loss of Babylon 4, the station's lost predecessor. All of the records involving that incident had been confiscated by EarthForce Central, but Garibaldi made a copy of the details, a copy he now gave to Sheridan. Advising him to keep his arm up if he wanted to bat better, the wily Chief left Sheridan alone with his thoughts. If the Markab had encountered something in Sector 14, it could explain why Sheridan was now seeing things.

The banquet through by Urza in honour of Londo's assistance at his greatest time of need was magnificent, with fine gold decorations and dozens of finely dressed Centauri guests. Noblewomen abounded, while dancing girls in skin tight outfits amused the guests in time to light, airy music. Dignitaries were also in attendance, each a fading star with sympathies to Urza and here in the hopes of catching on to Londo's coattails and riding them back up into ascendance. Even this sad fact could not keep Londo from being overjoyed at the thought of his friend doing all of this for him and the memory of their friendship.

At the dining table, Urza drank a toast to Londo and the union of their houses. They spoke of this union and the fact that all of these noble guests would ensure that word of their alliance would spread quickly through the courts on Centauri Prime and in all of their race's colony worlds. Londo told him it would not be necessary and that his friend Lord Refa would handle things quietly.

Then, the joy fell apart in Londo's world. Urza turned on him, hissing that Refa was an assassin and the man who brought the resolution to declare him a traitor in the first place. He would accept no help from Refa, nor had he ever dreamed that Londo would be a part of that detestable man's circle of 'friends'. They argued over the glory coming in the future for Centauri Prime and the old days of war that Londo dreamed of and Urza had nightmares over. Urza wanted no part of that new glory,

despising the thought of wars like the one they fought on Gorash happening again. Londo implored him to reconsider, to become a part of the destiny he had, a destiny too powerful of anyone to stand in the way of. Old friends or no, it was not meant to be.

Before Londo could excuse himself from what had become a bitter party, Urza bade him stay and accept a parting gift. A fine, bejewelled box was brought out and opened, revealing a masterfully crafted coutari, one of the short fighting blades used by Centauri soldiers in the days of old. It had been meant as a symbol of their unity as friends and comrades, but now it would have to mean something else. If Urza could not have his alliance with Londo, he would have to save the honour he would lose by its failure a different way. By the laws of the Koral Pridho, their duelling society, he challenged Londo to the Murago, a duel to the death. Londo did not want to accept, but the fervour of his friend's countenance and the social pressure of so many noble watching his reactions forced him to agree. The duel was set for two hours hence, and Londo was released to make peace with his gods and, privately, to mourn for the lost past.

In his quarters, Sheridan watched the disappearance of Babylon 4. The energy effects of the distortion that swallowed up the forlorn station were exactly like the fading lights of his vision when he became disoriented before. As he came to this realization, his eyes were covered with the image of those passing fields for dark green foliage. He asked as if to himself, 'What do you want?' Then, in his room, his parents appeared, arms outstretched in welcome. They disappeared quickly, but it was enough for Sheridan. He knew that the force inside him wanted, and he hurried out of his quarters to make it happen.

Vir desperately tried to convince Londo that fighting a duel to the death against his friend was madness, even if it was the code of the Koral Pridho, a name that meant Proud Knives in Centauri. There had been a time when Londo would have agreed that dishonour was better than death, but that time was gone. He had no choice but to do this, even if it cost him his life. Powerless to stop this, Vir settled for frantic pacing. That, at least, he could accomplish.

In the Cobra bay, Sheridan was giving Franklin, Garibaldi, and Ivanova fits. He had taken off his medical bracelet, device given to him by Franklin to monitor his condition and boarded *Delta 1*, one of the station's Starfury fighter. He was, as he told Ivanova in Command and Control, just going out for a little spin. He was fairly sure he would be fine and that he would probably be right



back. Overriding the locking controls on the bay, he opened the doors and launched out into space. Whatever was inside him was driving him onwards, taking him back to the place where it had first come from- Sector 14.

Not willing to let him face this place alone the way he had gone into Grey Sector, Garibaldi followed Sheridan out in another fighter. Sheridan did not mind the company and told his Security Chief that he had been right. Whatever was going on, the answer to the mystery was somewhere in Sector 14. Relaying this message back Ivanova, Garibaldi went straight from concerned to deeply worried.

That concern became well founded very quickly. Sheridan and Garibaldi entered Sector 14, an area where their scanner malfunctioned due to immense levels of tachyons in the area. As Sheridan's fighter drifted through some kind of glowing field almost like a web of light, a circular portal opened up in front of him. Before he could react, he screamed in pain and from his eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, a radiant creature made of motes and mists of pure energy came flooding out of him into the opening. The shock drove Sheridan unconscious and his Starfury tumbled slowly out of control towards the looming portal.

Acting quickly, Garibaldi activated his fighter's grapple and attempted to snare the Captain before he disappeared through the hole as well. It was close, but after having to go to manual because his targeting computer could not lock on in this disrupted area, he got a good hold on *Delta 1* and pulled her to safety. That accomplished, Garibaldi was all too happy to get the hell out of Sector 14 and away from the final resting place of Babylon 4.

Back on the station, the duel was underway. As told by the Marshall for their fight, Londo and Urza were to draw their blades with purpose and sheathe them with honour. The first was accomplished quickly enough and after a sweeping salute, they set into each other. Their fighting styles were identical, with quick controlled strokes close to the centre giving way rapidly to wide, arcing blows that brought their coutaris clashing along the edges in a cacophony of violence. First blood went to Urza, who drew his weapon across Londo's arm in a vicious riposte after a failed lunge by his opponent. Things did not look hopeful for Londo who, while an excellent fighter in his youth, had lost some of his skill and stamina in his role as a besotted ambassador.

He fought on, determined not to let his destiny end here on the blade of his best friend. The duel raged on, both combatants becoming exhausted from the long battle, but neither would yield. Vowing to end it at last, they closed and in the exchange of blows with both blade and fist, Londo went down, sprawled beneath Urza. The scion of House Jaddo raised his blade slowly and Londo took the opening to drive his coutari through his friend's stomach. It exited through Urza's back, a fatal wound. He collapses in Mollari's arms, calling it a fair stroke and charging Londo with the protection of his family now that he had met his end with honour. Londo pledged his support for Urza's survivors even as the man died in his arms.

In the Captain's quarters, Sheridan, now fully recovered, told Franklin, Ivanova, and Garibaldi of his experiences with the alien life form. He had figured out that the images of fear, loss, and of being welcomed home were somehow all things the alien light creature had felt and were sent into his conscious mind through some kind of empathic connection. Franklin was eager to study the

being more, but Sheridan was not ready to be more than just a little insane. Garibaldi raise his cup. He could certainly drink to that.

Alone in his room, Londo was also drinking. His friend could have killed him at any time during the duel, but that would not have saved his family. By the laws of the Murago, Mollari was now obligated to make Urza's family a part of his own. This protected them from the resolution that would have dishonoured him and kept them safe from Refa. Mollari knew that Urza had sacrificed himself for his loved ones. For the first time, Londo began to doubt his own choices, wondering if they were the right one. Though Vir tried to get him to see that he could make new choices and get off the dark path he walked, he was lost in a hell of his own design. It was, he felt, too late for him to change things.

Koral Pridho

A fighting society frequented by the idle youth of Centauri nobility, the Koral Pridho is a training ground for fighting styles, combat endurance, and an unofficial entry into the highest ranks of the Centauri military. The name Koral Pridho means 'Proud Knives', a fitting epithet to the pride and honour that most of the club's members feel for their camaraderie and noble fighting traditions passed down from one generation of the club to the next.

By the time of the Narn-Centauri war, the Koral Pridho has gone the way of most noble Centauri traditions, relegated to a few old houses with little connection to the ambitious younger families and their designs of ruling the Republic through war and political treachery. Most of the Houses associated with the Koral Pridho, with the exception of House Mollari, have fallen into disfavour and risk being branded as threats to the new leaders of the Centauri Royal Court, but this has only fired their blood and given them a new strength of purpose. Now standing for the ancient values of the Centauri and adhering to a code that was passed down by the first Emperor to the founder of the Order, the Proud Knives stand for the old values of honour and truth, two morals that have been sacrificed as politically inexpedient in these troubled times.

The Incident in Sector 14

What actually happened between Commander Sinclair and Michael Garibaldi after answering a mysterious distress call in Sector 14 has become a classified EarthForce matter with all records and physical evidence related to the affair confiscated and put under Ultraviolet security in Earth Dome. No one in the military is to speak of it openly and any further investigation of the incident by any member of the armed forces or EarthGov has been forbidden without specific clearance from EarthForce Command or the Office of the President.

Travel through Sector 14 is prohibited, though this ban is only truly effective on Earth ships, as the incident has not been publicized and therefore other alien races are unlikely to even know of the restriction. Those that do often ignore it, though this is to their peril. While no disappearances other than the loss of Babylon 4 have been reported, strange phenomena are known to occur there and instrumentation necessary for navigation through the sector can be disrupted, leaving ships stranded or off course. Most races leave the area alone, though commercial ships in a hurry sometimes brave the travel restriction and use the lane anyway.

Eye on History: The War of Retribution - The Pendulum

Swings

Grand Admiral Dromo's victories and his ability to bring the many elements of the Royal Navy together began to have a strong effect on the ability of Centauri forces to resist Narn advancements and repel them from territories they had already taken. In certain areas, citizen revolts inspired by stories of the 1st Imperial Fleet and their impending victory against the Narn were enough to drive out the occupying Narns, an ironic twist on similar rebellions held by the Narn on many of their own Centauri-held planets. Nefua was one of these worlds, able to overthrow the Narn garrison there because of its small size and lack of defense structure.

News of this drew the War Leader of the Gold Fleet to once again gather a large part of his force from each defended Narn system and strike out for Nefua. He had captured and pacified the world once; it would not likely be hard to do it a second time. When he arrived out of hyperspace in the Nefua system, he made the mistake of being predictable enough to come out in the same location he chosen for his assault the first time. A defensive force of ships assigned back to the system by Dromo was waiting for them and opened fire before the Narn vessels could even bring their weapons on line. The defeat was a resounding one. G'Ven's ship and many others, caught without power to their main guns or enough of a charge in their jump engines to escape, were blasted out of the stars. Only a handful of cruisers and smaller craft made it back to Narn space. This left the worlds the Gold Fleet had been assigned to guard woefully undefended.

The Black Fleet's heavy loss on Eldiira was also a telling blow that allowed for a world to be liberated. On the 18th of September, less than one month after the system was lost, the Narn forces there were driven out and caught in a vice between ground defenders firing the planet's ion gun emplacements at ships in orbit and a contingent of the 1st Imperial Navy sent to liberate any worlds it could. The trap was an effective one. The Battle of Eldiira provided the first complete victory for the Centauri in the War of Retribution; not one Narn ship escaped the engagement zone.

From this staging ground, the liberating Centauri force moves along the short hyperspace lanes to Sora and Talo. Both of these attack caught the Narns by surprise; no survivors from the Battle of Eldiira meant neither system had been warned. These were not nearly as decisive, but while Narn ships escaped back to Quadrant 1 with the news of their losses, both worlds were returned to Centauri control, marking the trend that would continue until the Narn were pushed completely from Republic space by the early days of November 2259.

Key Events: Centauri morale increases dramatically; citizen revolt frees Nefua from Narn control; G'Ven and the better half of the Gold Fleet are lost to the Centauri, Battle of Eldiira is the first complete victory of the Royal Navy.

Worlds/Systems Lost: Nefua (Victor: Centauri), Eldiira (Victor: Centauri), Sora (Victor: Centauri), Talo (Victor: Centauri)

Scenarios and Campaign

Hooks

5 After Urza's death, Londo Mollari will be a marked man in some circles of Centauri society. To some, he will become the symbol of the corruption that has eaten its way into the heart of the Republic. To others, he is a traitor to his friends and a killer with love only for the slaughter of innocents and the ongoing saga of war. In any case, he has made powerful enemies among the idealistic nobles of Centauri Prime and this could have a strong effect on any campaign with Centauri players. Those involved in politics will have to take a side now and either stand with Houses Refa and Mollari or throw in with the faction that seeks to return the Republic to the honour of the past. Either way, there is considerable risk, but the play roleplaying opportunities are immense. Players could get a message from homeworld to return and attend a secret meeting with Lord Refa to discuss the course of policy in the Republic or might be approached on Babylon 5 by another member of the Koral Pridho with orders to remove Londo Mollari from power by whatever means necessary.

5 The alien incident will have Sector 14 on the minds of the Babylon 5 Command Staff for some time, an occurrence that is sure to get back to EarthForce eventually. This might cause a renewed investigation in the area, something that might draw players of many different backgrounds together as a research team to try and analyze the energy patterns in the Sector. Between tachyons blocking more forms of scanning and power surges taking

out entire pieces of equipment aboard ships that drift too close to Babylon 4's previous location, the task will be a daunting one. Games Masters could centre an entire story arc on exploring Sector 14 and the temporal phenomena that occur there. The disruptions also echo into hyperspace, which makes travel very dangerous and could send player vessels wildly off course to rendezvous with any number of interesting scenarios.

5 A subtle and seemingly unimportant thread that runs through many of the events on Babylon 5 is the ever present matter of commerce. One of the lynchpins that keeps the station in operation, commerce is a vital part of Babylon 5's operating budget and a source of many adventures for players willing to take to the space lanes and try to build their fortunes. Shi'osh'nei, the Markab that could not cope with the images the alien flooded his mind with, left behind a ship full of cargo and no one to claim it. If this vessel were auctioned off, the players could pick it up and continue with his trade runs. The ship might even have some lingering oddities from its passage through Sector 14, something that would lend character to the vessel and perhaps form the basis for an entire scenario of its own in the future.

In the Shadow of Z'Ha'Dum (September 24th 2258)

'I'd like to live just long enough to be there when they cut off your head and stick it on a pike as a warning to the next ten generations that some favours come with too high a price. I'd look up at your lifeless eyes and wave like this. Can you and your associates arrange it for me, Mr. Morden?'

Vir Cotto

It was a long night for Babylon 5. With 200 Narn refugees from the battles in Sector 29, things looked bad for the proud race's chances. The 200 were just some of the many wounded and homeless the station had managed to smuggle out of the dozens of areas torn apart by the seemingly endless crisis. As much as people like Zack Allen wanted to help these indigents, the ship's MedLabs were full and there was just no more room to take them in. He pleaded with Garibaldi to convince the Captain to find some other way to render humanitarian aid to the Narn. Though he promised nothing, Garibaldi had to try.

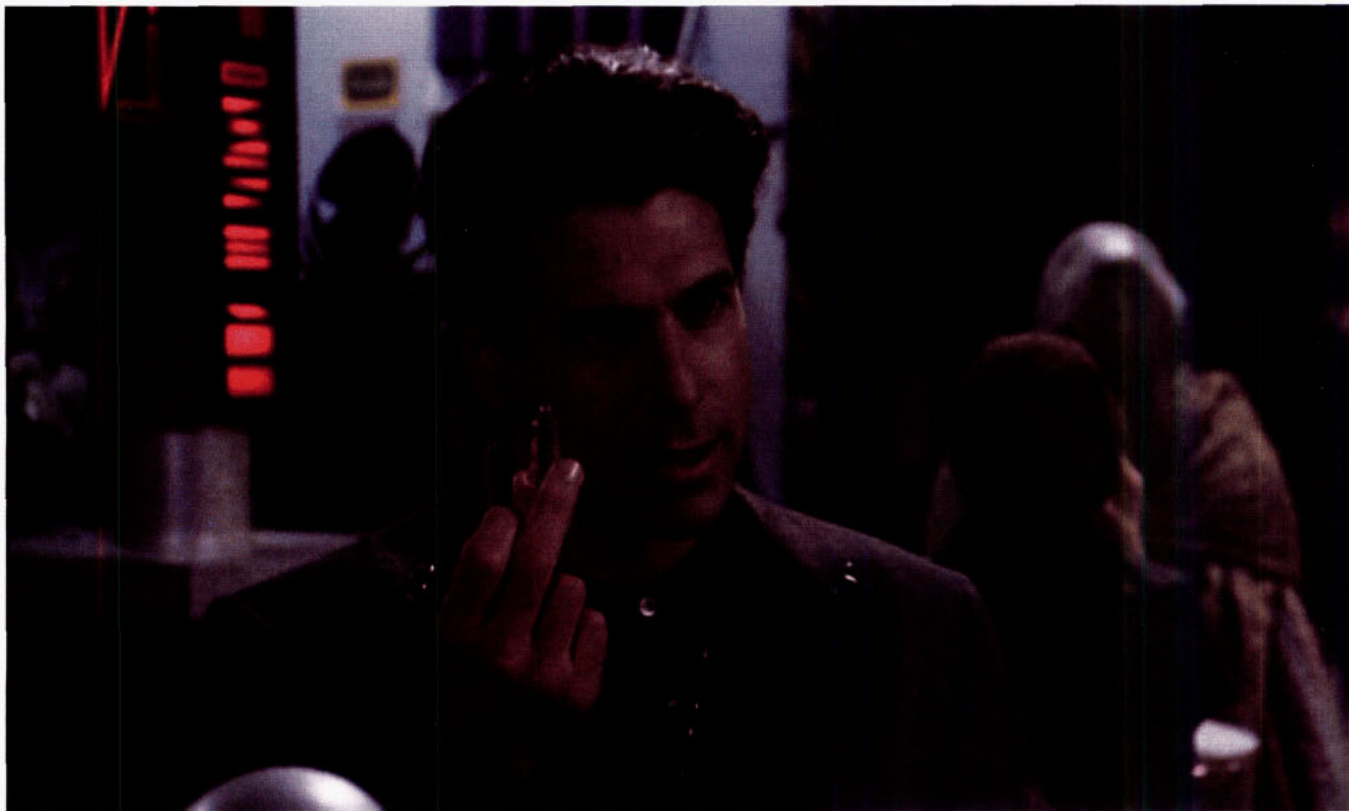
Though it displeased him to do so, Vir met with the enigmatic Mr Morden in a bustling part of the Zocalo. The stranger was reading a newspaper and sipping at an exotic drink when the nervous-looking aide arrived. Although Mr Morden had been expecting Londo, that

meeting could not take place as the ambassador had been recalled to Centauri Prime to discuss the war effort. Instead, he would have to conduct his business through Vir.

He tried to make polite conversation, but while Vir had to deal with him, he did not have to be pleasant about it. Small talk was evaded and Mr Morden's first offer of a chair went unaccepted. The offer became an order and rather than antagonize the man, Vir sat down to hear him out. Again, Mr Morden's attempted pleasantries fell on deaf ears, so he came right out and said that his business with Mollari could wait. As Vir was obviously not grateful for the help he and his associates had given the Centauri, Mr Morden asked him what it was he did want.

Vir's reply, one of the few times he had ever truly stood up for himself and said exactly what he felt, rang in Morden's ears long after the attaché left the table and returned to the rest of the station. 'I'd like to live just long enough to be there when they cut off your head and stick it on a pike, as a warning to the next ten generations that some favours come with too high a price. I would look up into your lifeless eyes and wave like this.' Vir took great delight in showing the stunned envoy his tiny little wave, barely more than a self-indulgent finger wiggle but all the satisfaction he required. 'Can you and your associates arrange that for me, Mr Morden?'

Garibaldi found Sheridan in his office and managed to convince his Captain to make a few concessions in the treatment of the refugees. Light injuries would get cycled off the station, but that was as far as he would go. Garibaldi understood and did not push the point. On the BabCom monitor on the wall, an image of a survey ship, the *Icarus* could be seen. He asked about it and learned that Sheridan had been going through the last of his late wife's effects. Among them had been a manifest of the *Icarus*, her crew, mission statement, and other details. As they talked, one of the images



came up. It was Mr Morden's face. Garibaldi recognized him, not that he had any details on the man.

Sheridan immediately went on the defensive. There had been no trace of the *Icarus* or any survivors since the loss of his wife and now, a member of her crew might be walking around his station, alive and well. According to the BabCentral records archive, he had come aboard two days prior to this meeting and was still here. Sheridan, in a rare use of his command privilege, ordered Garibaldi to find him and bring him in to be questioned, no matter what it took to accomplish.

Talia Winters was dressing for her day's work, pulling on her sheer black gloves with a thoughtful expression in her mirror, when the door to her quarters chimed. The person paying her a visit was a human by the name of Pierce MacAfee. He had an appointment, so she invited him in and they conversed about the business proposal he had in mind. He introduced himself as the Regional Director of the newly appointed Ministry of Peace, a department of EarthGov, and he wished to have her support for a number of new programs they would be sponsoring on the station. To educate her about them, he asked her to attend a series of meetings he would be holding.

Doctor Franklin, so exhausted from a long shift working with injured Narns that he had fallen asleep at his console in MedLab to the sound of his computer reading off the conditions of patients in their medical beds, was awoken by a concerned Ivanova. Worried about her friend's devotion to duty pushing him to work 36 hours without food or rest, she insisted that he get some sleep immediately. No match for the stubborn Russian officer in his weary state, he relented and left her alone in a room full of suffering. She did not linger long.

An hour after getting in line to board his transport off the station, Mr Morden was sitting in a dark room lit only by a single interrogation lamp over his head, sarcastically complimenting Sheridan's shoes. He had been caught by Zack and six armed Security guards after ignoring an order to step out of line. That move had landed him here, being questioned by the Captain of Babylon 5 about the *Icarus* and why he was still alive. He mentioned, to no avail, that he thought people being held had to be charged with something, but Sheridan's grim countenance did not budge or give any sign of agreement.

Confronted with a picture of Anna Sheridan and video footage of the *Icarus* leaving for its expedition to the rim, Morden finally appeared to understand the nature of the interrogation. He claimed that he had indeed been aboard the *Icarus* but that at the time of the explosion, he must have been outside working on the hull because a passing transport found him wounded and unconscious in an pressure suit. He claimed to have no memory of the incident or what happened to the ship.

None of this was enough for Sheridan, who asked more and more pointed questions until he was sure the man was lying. He intended to hold the man in front of him in this cell for as long as it took to discover what happened to the 139 people onboard his wife's ship. Morden was legally dead, which meant that technically, he had no rights. Though it was the dirtiest kind of legal trick and a very dangerous game with repercussions that could include the loss of his command, Sheridan had to know the truth. No cost was too great, no risk too severe.

In the Officer's Galley, Ivanova and Franklin shared a quiet breakfast together. The doctor looked much better and, as he told her, he had fallen asleep as soon as his head hit the pillow. His rest was only marred by dreams of all the patients he had ever lost. No



matter how long had passed since he had seen them, the lost were always waiting for him as soon as he closed his eyes.

After a brief commiseration about the number of dead and wounded as a result of the current war between the Narn and the Centauri, he asked Ivanova if she believed in God. She skirted the question a bit, but finally admitted that yes, she thought perhaps she did. She returned the question and learned that Franklin was a Foundationist, a new religion that had only been around a hundred years or so. He discussed their beliefs for a moment and likened the image of God as being something too massive to explain in mere words. Every time he lost a patient, he could see for an instant in their eyes that at the moment of death, they saw and understood their God. With regret in his tone, he told Ivanova that in the past few months, he had seen a lot of reflected Gods in MedLab. They were shaking his faith, making him wonder how people could keep believing in God when God had obviously stopped believing back.

In the holding cell, Sheridan had not let up. For hours, he badgered Mr Morden with questions about the transport he was found by and other elements of his story. Trying to wear him down, Sheridan worked himself into an exhausted state before Morden could crack. Frantic and desperate to find out what happened to his wife, Sheridan hit Morden with the same questions over and over again, trying to get at the truth. Despite his efforts, Morden refused to say anything he wanted to hear.

In one of the staff rooms in Blue Sector, Director MacAfee said a lot of things people wanted to hear. A skilled public speaker, he played on the sympathies and fears of his audience, mostly station crew and Security, to get them excited about the initiatives being put forth by the Ministry of Peace, or Mini-Pax as he diminutively called it. It was a rallying cry with very little real message behind it, as if the speech were really a precursor to something more meaningful.

What it did do was introduce the Nightwatch, a system of early detection of possible sedition and unpatriotic sentiment that functioned through the eyes and ears of its volunteer members. The concept was simple in its construction. Members of the Nightwatch simply wore a black armband with the logo of the organization on it and reported anything they saw that was out of the ordinary. That was all, but for this information, EarthDome was willing to pay Nightwatch members an extra 50 credits a week. This idea was more than a little unbelievable, but Mr MacAfee made it sound like a wonderful group to be a part of. His words seemed to pique Miss Winters' interest as much as it bewildered Zack Allen.

At Security Central, Sheridan and Garibaldi clashed over the Morden situation. Sheridan had held Morden for over 10 hours without charging him with a crime, something that went directly against the station's legal policies. Garibaldi sympathized with the Captain's position, but that did not give him the room to allow this kind of illegal behaviour to go on. He was known for being more than a little fast and loose out in the 'wilds' of Babylon 5, but he always playing things straight in his office because that was where the law counted most. Sheridan was flaunting regulations and Garibaldi could not be a party to it any longer. He offered his Captain a choice, let Morden go so he could have someone follow him and catch him doing something he could be charged with or his own resignation. Sheridan, so close to what he felt would be Morden's breaking point, could not let him out. Garibaldi, without a word, unclipped his gun, identicard, and security link. Laying them on the desk, he walked out, leaving Sheridan alone to his self-appointed mission of truth.

He was alone for very long. First, he called Zack Allen and put him in charge of the prisoner during what he called a 'short leave of absence' on Garibaldi's part. Zack expressed some concern over this, but he did not argue the point. Next, he instructed Zack that while he was taking in an apparently important meeting with Vir Cotto, he wanted Talia Winters brought to him as soon as possible.

During this important meeting in his office, Sheridan was shocked to learn of Mr Morden's connection to Londo and the Centauri government. He was more shocked to learn of the diplomatic immunity Morden was due because of his status as a guest of the Centauri Republic. Vir had done his research well and deduced that because Morden had not left the station but had missed a meeting to pick up materials for Londo, Security must be detaining him. Sheridan admitted to having him, but denied to the immunity attempt because Morden had not been charged with anything. He was being held, Sheridan said, in protected custody, but exactly what the envoy was being protected from was left very vague.

In his way back to Security Central, Ivanova caught up with him and also wanted to talk about Morden. She had been briefed by Garibaldi and while she understood Sheridan's concerns, she was going to have to report his irrational behaviour, something she did not want to do. Sheridan appealed to her that if she were in his shoes, would she be able to set loose a man who might know if the person she loved most in the entire universe was still alive? She could not say yes to that question, which left them in a silent stalemate. She silently gave him more time, but it was quickly running out.

Back in his office, Miss Winters respectfully declined what Sheridan wished her to do, which was to scan Morden. Doing so was a violation of Psi Corps regulation and the man's personal rights. Sheridan tried to convince her of the need to step past the law in this matter, but she refused. This was something he would have to do himself. He seemed to understand and asked her to wait out in the hall while he consulted with Allen.

What followed was one of the most underhanded things he had ever done, but Sheridan still had plans for the telepath. What he could not get through a request he would settle for getting through duplicity. He had Zack Allen move the prisoner from one detention block to another in an adjoining hallway. At the same time, he wanted him to escort Miss Winters back to her quarters via a corridor that would have her passing right next to Morden. He obviously hoped the proximity would reveal something. Zack was still having doubts, but he once again complied despite them.

The plan began as Sheridan had hoped, with Miss Winters and Mr Morden walking past each other in the hall. The light around Morden, to Talia's perceptions, began to dim and then failed altogether, casting him in the deepest of shadows. An alien sound overwhelmed her mind and she was caught in the grip of terrible mental shock and pain even as two strange spindly beings came into view on either side of the prisoner. She collapsed and Zack hurried Morden away and rushed the fallen telepath back to MedLab.

Sheridan knew he had played her foul, but he was desperate to get what he needed, he did not care who or what he expended to do it. In exchange for his dirty trick, he only got a slap in the face for his apology. She walked out of MedLab, leaving Sheridan stinging from the blow and from the voices of his conscience and Doctor Franklin, both telling him how much he had deserved it.

More determined than ever to see this through now that Miss Winters' reaction let him know how much more there was to Morden than he had imagined, the advice of his Chief Medical Officer began to dissuade him. He realized, through Franklin's words, that though he was in charge of so many responsibilities, he was not alone in them even without Anna by his side. He understood what Franklin meant and his resolve to force a confession out of Morden slipped. He walked out of MedLab considering the unthinkable, that he should let Morden go before things went any farther.

The final push in getting him to do so met him outside in the hallway. Delenn and Kosh had sought him out with something of dire import to relay. She first tried to simply convince Sheridan to let Morden go, but their interest in his prisoner got him riled up again. He refused to do so unless he finally got some answers about why this man was so important, why keeping him placed the lives of everyone on Babylon 5 in danger, and why a Minbari and a Vorlon would be so concerned about the fate of a human Trader who by all rights should have died years ago aboard the *Icarus* with his wife.

Delenn looked to Kosh for a sign and a nod of the alien's encounter suit headpiece indicated his willingness to let Sheridan have the answers he sought. She warned him that knowing what they knew would probably keep him from ever sleeping well again. That warning was a grave one, but it did not begin to relate the terrible truth of Mr Morden.

To explain the dark forces behind Morden, Delenn tells Sheridan a story. 'There are beings in the universe billions of years older than either of our races. Once, long ago, they walked among the stars like giants, vast and timeless. They taught the younger races, explored beyond the rim, and created great empires. But to all things there is an end. Slowly, over a million years, the First Ones went away. Some passed beyond the stars, never to return. Some simply disappeared. Not all of the First Ones have gone away. A few stayed behind, hidden or asleep, waiting for the day when they may be needed. They wait for the day when the Shadows come again.'

It was the first time Sheridan or anyone he knew had heard the word, but it would not be the last. Even the tone in which Delenn spoke the name filled him with dread. He asked what they were, but Delenn merely continued her tale. 'We have no other name for them. The Shadows were old when even the Ancients were young. They battled one another over and over across a million years. The last great war against the Shadows was ten thousand years ago. It was the last time the Ancients walked openly among us. The Shadows were only defeated, not destroyed. A thousand years ago, the Shadows returned to their places of power, rebuilt them, and began to stretch forth their hand. Before they could strike, they were defeated by an alliance of worlds, including the Minbari, and the few remaining First Ones who had not yet passed beyond the Veil. When they had finished, the First Ones went away. All, that is, but one.'

Surprised to hear this, Sheridan asked where the remaining First one was. To answer him, Delenn merely looked toward Kosh, who nodded in acknowledgement. Though it made his jaw drop, it made sense. This was why Kosh could not leave his encounter suit; he would be recognized by everyone just as he had said before. Utterly amazed by this news, Sheridan was taken off-guard again by Delenn who had more to tell him.

Her transformation had been brought on by the approach of the Shadows. At the end of 2258, she sent Kosh a message asking if the Shadows had returned to Z'Ha'Dum, their central planet of power. His answer, 'Yes', had prompted her action because their return meant that another conflict would soon have to be fought. She had to try to unite the Minbari and Earth before that conflict could begin.

Knowing that Sheridan needed to understand the gravity of this all and wishing to give him something more personal to consider in light of these wholly unbelievable events, Kosh caught Sheridan's attention and made a form of mental contact with him. In this way, Sheridan saw the *Icarus* touch down on a barren, alien planet with ancient ruins and a harsh, ruddy atmosphere. In a crevasse in one of the planet's mountains, a terrifying creature shaped much like the outline Miss Winters saw in the hallway stirred and its many baleful eyes began to glow.

He understood what he was seeing. His wife and the other crewmen aboard the *Icarus* had landed on Z'Ha'Dum and woken something up. They had roused a race of ageless evil from its millennia-long sleep and those who would not serve were killed. His wife must have died at the inhuman hands of these monsters Delenn and Kosh called the Shadows. The thought of it was enough to enrage and frighten him, both at once. Were these the 'legends' Kosh had spoke of when he had asked the Vorlon to teach him, and if so, was he really supposed to somehow fight them?

Delenn explained that if Morden was not released immediately, he would be killed. Then Sheridan would be killed and the Shadows would be forced to move against the galaxy before anyone is ready to stop them. Right now, she told him, the dark race was being careful, moving slowly to avoid the defeat they suffered a thousand years ago because they tried to attack too quickly. For the sake of the galaxy and every sentient race in it, Sheridan had to let Morden go before he talked and the Shadows were forced to act. It was perhaps the hardest thing he had ever had to do, but with everything he had been told, he knew the Minbari woman was right. She told him he would have to make the same choice he had confronted G'Kar with a few months earlier; would he choose revenge or the greater good of his entire race?

Sheridan was almost convinced, but he needed something else, one more piece of evidence that would make him believe that all of these things could be real. In Security Central, he watched Morden on the surveillance camera. He pondered the lessons of history. In World War II, the British had cracked Enigma, the German's military code. After doing so in secret, they intercepted



a message authorizing the bombing of a city called Coventry. If they evacuated it, the Germans would know the code was broken as switch to another. That would likely have cost the Allies the war, but if they maintained their secret and did not evacuate, hundreds of innocent civilians would die. Churchill, the leader of the British Armed Forces at the time, decided to stay silent and on November 14th, 1940, the Germans destroyed Coventry. It was a hard lesson and a harder question, 'How many lives is a secret worth?'

As he considered that question, asked in all innocence by Zack Allen after he relayed that story to him, the microphone in Morden's cell picked up a strange noise. Zack explained it away as interference caused by its recent replacement, but Sheridan had another idea. Adjusting the sensors in the room, he finally isolated a frequency of electromagnetic radiation that the two invisible creatures in the room with Morden could not elude. There they were, the proof of what DeLenn had told him. 'Morden is never alone.' In the cell, presumably having been there the whole time, were two of the things he had seen in his vision of Z'Ha'Dum. Shadows.

He had no choice now. He knew how many lives this secret was worth, and he was not prepared to pay them. He ordered Zak Allen to set Morden free and apologise for the misunderstanding. Zak was only too happy to obey, as it meant maybe getting the Chief back and putting this whole thing behind them all. He left Sheridan alone in Security Central with the face of Morden on the monitor, looking up into the camera with a knowing, ominous smile.

There was one more thing to take care of. Sheridan tracked Garibaldi down in the mess hall and presented him with his gun and identicard. He asked him to come back to work, an offer Garibaldi took a long while to accept. He promised there would not be a next time, but did not want to talk about why this time had happened at all. Garibaldi accepted that and let him go, concerned but understanding. Zak inquired about Sheridan as well, but Garibaldi was more interested in the black Nightwatch band around his arm. Zak shrugged, figuring that if Earth Dome wanted to pay him 50 extra credits a week just to do his job, who was he to argue?

In the Alien Sector, in a room just in front of Kosh Naranek's quarters, Sheridan stood in front of the Vorlon wearing a breathing mask and an expression of determination. He had let Morden go, but it did not come without a cost. In exchange, Sheridan wanted a change in lesson plan. He no longer wanted to understand the Vorlons; he wanted to know how to fight the Shadows.

As he told Kosh, he had to learn this, because sooner or later he intended on going to Z'Ha'Dum. Kosh answered this blunt statement with one of his own. 'If you go to Z'Ha'Dum, you will die.' Sheridan accepted that as a true possibility, but he did not intend to go down easily or alone. He would make them pay for killing his wife and he would stop their plans of conquest if he could. He asked again if Kosh would teach him to fight the Shadows. The Vorlon agreed, though there was touch of sad resignation in the Vorlon's voice. There was almost an echo of something he had said two years ago. 'And so it begins.'

The Shadows

One thousand years ago, the Shadows (one of the earliest sentient beings in the Milky Way) began a conquest of the galaxy. Their plan was thwarted through the cooperative efforts of a variety of species including the Narn, the Minbari and the Vorlons. Defeated, the Shadows, retreated their homeworld of Z'Ha'Dum until they were awakened in 2257 by the Interplanetary Expedition vessel, the *Icarus*. Biding their time and working through agents, they

began to re-emerge as a threat to the galaxy. 'The forces of darkness (The Shadows) do not move openly. They work through others. Use others. When the darkness was defeated long ago, they scattered, hid themselves away in secret places, and waited. Now, the dark hand is reaching out and recalling them from their sleep.'

Other races had knowledge of the Shadows, though some did not know what they knew. According to the Narn Ambassador to Earth, G'Kar, 'G'Quan spoke of a great war long ago against an enemy so terrible, it nearly overwhelmed the stars themselves. G'Quan said that before that enemy was thrown down, it dwelled in a system at the rim of known space. I searched for days, going from one system to another. Then, on dark deserted worlds, where there should be no life, where no living thing has walked in over a thousand years, something is moving, gathering its forces, quietly hoping to go unnoticed. We must warn the others. After a thousand years, the darkness has come again.'

The Shadows are masters of hyperspace, able to empower their ships to move in and out of that faster than light realm seemingly at will. The Shadows also have the ability to become invisible and quite possible incorporeal. This ability might be a form of physically entering hyperspace. They communicate in a high-frequency sonic wavelength, which sounds to those who hear it as an almost metallic trilling. They have the reputation for being immensely physically powerful and are treated by those races with knowledge of them as the deadliest threat to ever face the galaxy.

Of Shadow vessels, little more can be said than the words of Lt. Warren Keffer. 'It was jet black, a shade of black so deep your eyes just kind of slide off it. It shimmered when you looked at it. A spider, big as death and twice as ugly. And when it flies past, it's like you hear a scream in your mind.' Equipped with an energy beam capable of slicing through the hull of any known spaceship and nearly impossible to outrun, calling them death is as accurate as any other description could be.

Foundationism

A religion primarily practiced by humans, ironic in that it is a philosophy that attempts to break down cultural and racial boundaries to arrive at a single truth regarding all life, Foundationism began in Earth colonies in the year 2257 as a direct result of mankind's interaction with other forms of sentient beings. Central to Foundationism is the belief that God as a concept is far too big for one race, culture, or ideal to define and that instead, God has an infinite number of faces and personas as seen in the teachings of every civilized race.

Practitioners of Foundationism tend to see God as an abstract divinity with no true identity but rather myriad reflections with one no more or less important than any other. They also find something valuable and precious in all forms of life, many becoming doctors or explores to better learn about the many cultures and society that together create the overall being that could be called, if one felt the need to label it, God. While Foundationism is appealing to many different walks of life, it is a relatively small religion in the year 2259 with only a few thousand adherents scattered among the many explored worlds receptive to humans and their strange ideas of philosophy.

The Nightwatch

A branch of the Ministry of Peace, a new political office founded by President Clark on Earth, the Nightwatch is a ground level organization aimed at creating an information network out of the

Eye on History: The War of Retribution - The Long Fall Back

Before concentrating his force against the Red Fleet, Dromo distributed many Centauri ships and task forces to other areas of weakened defence without significantly impacting his own effectiveness. The main benefit of this policy is seen when the forces placed on the world of Marigol engaged the forward advance of the Blue Fleet. War Leader G'Tal, fresh and heavily motivated by his successes in Quadrants 37 and 8, swept into the Marigol system with designs on securing it swiftly and moving past it into a hyperspace lane that could take his forces all the way to Centauri Prime.

The Marigol system had two worlds, both of which were defended primarily by orbital platforms. The assaults against these platforms were difficult and cost for the Blue Fleet, but the superior forces of the Narn took the worlds in the end and commenced their attack runs of the planet's ground installations. It is worth noting that G'Tal did not use his fleet's fusion bombs, weapons of mass destruction banned by interstellar treaty, on the population centres of these worlds, even though doing so would have hastened the operation and cost far fewer Narn lives. Given the Centauri assault on the Narn homeworld at the end of the war, this choice seems both noble and somehow ironic.

Marigol would have been taken by the Narn had the system not received a reinforcement fleet of considerable size four days into the occupation. Still split with half his ships at each world, G'Tal could only fight a withdraw and a hasty one that that until the shattered remains of his fleet could regroup and escape into hyperspace back to the well-fortified safety of Quadrant 8. During this battle, an old tactic of the Narn during their days of terror against the Centauri returned to help buy the Blue Fleet time to escape – ramming. An entire flight of Frazi heavy fighters centred their approach vectors on the reinforcement fleet's main battlecruiser, the *Diro*, and took it out with coordinated suicide runs against its engine core and its command deck. This costly manoeuvre gave the Blue Fleet the breathing room it needed to escape the system.

G'Tal's retreat to Quadrant was read by the Centauri reinforcement fleet as a sign of weakness and the majority of those ships moved into hyperspace after them after spending only one day garrisoning the planet against any further advancements. The Centauri entered Quadrant 8 to find it all but abandoned to them. Assuming the Narn forces had taken a second jump to Quadrant 37, they began securing this system at their leisure. The leisure was short-lived and ill times as G'Tal re-entered the system with the Blue Fleet and a number of additional forces from Polgrath and Jux Prime. This massive armada came in on the far side of the system's most electromagnetically world, which hid their jumpgates and bought them ample flight time to engage and destroy the completely surprised Centauri.

This victory was also short lived, as Dromo of the 1st Imperial Fleet assessed the Narn's chances of striking at Centauri Prime at zero without a staging area in either Marigol or Immolan. This being the case, he ordered all available shifts to begin an en masse push using the Centauri military's numerical advantage. He organized the Centauri navy into smaller 'Victorious Fleets' and left most of the world in their territory with only orbital and automated defences. This move was a risky one, but Dromo gambled that the Narn did not have the ships to defend against these new fleets and make an effective attack against Centauri Prime.

Key Events: Narn attack against Marigol, their last major offensive in Centauri space, fails; Dromo organizes the Victorious Fleets of the Centauri Republic; Narn Blue Fleet relocates to Quadrant 8.

Worlds/Systems Lost: Marigol (Victor: Narn), Marigol (Victor: Centauri)

various other organizations and command structures that exist as any part of the Earth Alliance. Already active and thriving on Earth, the Nightwatch is extending its tendrils into the various starships and holdings of EarthForce, which includes the EarthForce Command Staff of Babylon 5 and consequently the entire station as well. Members of the Nightwatch secure a number of minor advantages for themselves, including preferential treatment for Earth government and military related jobs and a small financial stipend each pay cycle for those already employed (50 credits a week at the time of the Nightwatch's introduction to Babylon 5). Maintains by Directors who answer to the Ministry of Peace, the Nightwatch gathers intelligence for EarthDome through reports of suspicious activity, a concept that is purposefully ill-defined.

Due Process and Diplomatic Immunity

For Babylon 5 to do its job of keeping the peace effectively, it must be certain to treat all its visitors and residents fairly. Doing this for 250,000 people on a daily basis requires a very firm but flexible security standard that can be applied to everyone fairly without singling any one race or class out for special or prejudicial

treatment. The core of this daunting task is the Babylon 5 Unified Legal Code, a document that ensures justice on an even keel for the many aliens, cultures, and subcultures that it represents.

A joint work of the station's Advisory Council, the B5 ULC was taken from the works of law presented by the Ka'Rhi of Narn, the Grey Council of Minbar, EarthDome, and the Imperial Courts of Centauri Prime. Though the Vorlons are tacitly on the Council, they had only offered one idea during the entire process. That submission is both the entirety of the code and its guiding principle. When asked for their part of the Unified Legal Code, they occupied the entire first page with their response; page one of the B5ULC simply reads, 'Truth above all.' The rest of the text is considerably more complicated, with ideas of justice, investigative and judicial due process, and several policies for the dispensation of fair and equitable treatment during all phases of the legal system.

Surprisingly well accepted for a document intended to form the basis for legal treatment of every race encountered during the course of Babylon 5's security details, the Unified Legal Code incorporates a large number of Earth traditions, many of which are mirrored strongly in the engines of justice used by most of

the other civilized races in the known galaxy. Concepts such as the presumption of innocence, a single judge to organize and ensure fair trials, and representation by trained professionals are all common threads, making the document equally applicable in nearly every case seen before the station's judges, all of whom can rest assured that their cases have been handled in a fair and expedient manner.

A few concepts fall outside the realm of the Unified Legal Code. The most important of these exceptions is diplomatic immunity. Almost exclusively a human concept, some races have adopted it easily while others continue to refuse to acknowledge it even when faced with sanctions and further legal action. Cultures with a strong sense of singular responsibility, such as the Narn, do not see the logic behind diplomatic immunity, though they are usually intelligent enough to accept its usefulness in certain circumstances. Because an agreement could not be reached on the status of diplomatic immunity before the printing of the Babylon 5 Unified Legal Code, the commander on record for the station has the sole power of discretion over where and when it can be invoked, though even this officer must follow certain guidelines in the matter.

It should be noted that the Unified Legal Code of Babylon 5 only applies within its set jurisdictional rights, which include political personnel such as ambassadors, attachés, guests of state, and other diplomatic staff and their families. Certain individuals are held to other legal standards, such as military personnel, criminals with warrants or outstanding charges in other legal precincts, or other exceptions as defined by majority vote of the Advisory Council and the League of Non-Aligned Worlds.

Scenarios and Campaign Hooks

③ At this time, Sheridan, Delenn, and Kosh are the only key characters on Babylon 5 to know of the Shadows by name or appearance, but an entire campaign could be based on the players also somehow gaining this knowledge. If they do not have the contacts to shield them from discovery by the Shadows or the opportunity to conceal their discovery from the dark creatures, they would be instant targets and would have to flee for their lives. At this point in galactic history, the Shadows would only be able to strike at the characters directly (and almost certainly with fatal consequences) if they took refuge in remote systems where no one could witness their demise. This leaves the Shadows only able to attack players smart enough to stay in populated areas through agents and unwitting pawns. This game of Shadow Dancing could go on for some time, possibly even drawing Morden into the act as the Shadows' chief envoy to Babylon 5 and Earth. If the players survive long enough, their hard won knowledge of Shadow espionage tactics could prove very valuable in the Great War that lies ahead.

③ Players have a great opportunity to make a difference on Babylon 5 and elsewhere while the powers that be gear up for the many conflicts on the galactic stage. Weapons dealers and professional soldiers will not lack for work, peacemakers,

diplomats, and lawyers can try to avert to guide the inevitable, making things easier or harder for certain parties through their actions in the courtrooms and back alleys of a thousand political venues. Agents and officers will be getting orders from their employers and chains of command, some conflicting and all of them troubling. Hard decisions are being made and tough choices are being acted out everywhere in the galaxy as the forces of hundreds of inhabited worlds choose what side of the upcoming war they wish to be on. For most, things are not that obvious, but players with strong contacts in the government or military will hear things and gain some clues about the troubles that lie ahead. Psi Corps has allied itself firmly with EarthDome and President Clark, the Minbari are hesitant to commit themselves at all. The Centauri and the Narn are too busy killing each other to notice or care that things are falling apart all around them. The Non-Aligned worlds have their own concerns and are too fragmented to commit to any cause. No one can guess what the Vorlons will think or do at any given moment. Only the players have the power to make their own choices, and even that freedom might be hampered by loyalties and political agendas.

Confessions and Lamentations (November 1st 2258)

'What do you call two billion dead Markabs? Planetary redecorating.'

Bartender

Ivanova approached Sheridan as he signed off on one of the dozens of pieces of digital paperwork he had to manage on a daily basis. They were in Command and Control, the slow spiral of space playing out through the Observation Dome window behind them. She was concerned about a Markab transport now ten hours overdue. With his permission, she wanted to send out Zeta Wing, their best group of starfuries, to check it out as soon as Lieutenant Keffer returned from a personal matter.

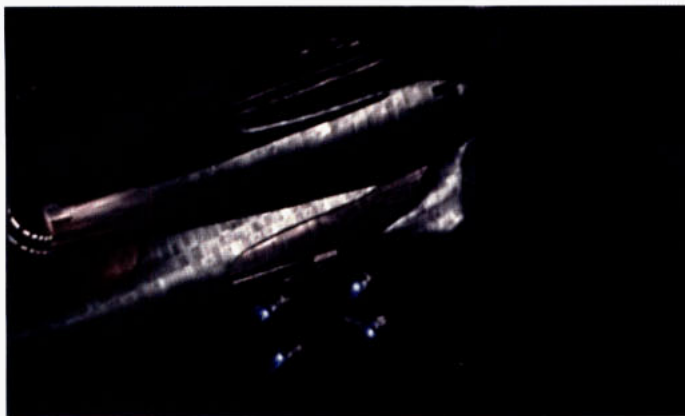
Sheridan was curious what would have a pilot out during his flight's break time. Ivanova told him of the hyperspace ship Keffer had reported seeing, the one of unknown configuration, and that he had been going out periodically to look for it. Sheridan had a dreadful suspicion that the ship was a Shadow vessel of some kind, Delenn and Kosh's warning still very fresh in his mind. He knew that it would spell disaster not just for Keffer but for the whole station if he discovered one, so he had Ivanova cancel all freelance flights and recall Keffer. She complied immediately.

In the Markab Sector of the station, Doctor Franklin was double checking an indignant Markab doctor's diagnosis over the cause of death of one of his own kind. It was station policy to verify all deaths, even those of natural causes, as the other physician's report had claimed. The chamber they were in was laid out in goldenrod tapestries and furnishing of bronze, a bedroom laid out much like a baroque tomb. The dead Markab's family was content with their own doctor's decree, but Stephen was not so easily placated.

He meant no disrespect to Lazarenn, and he acknowledges his peer's superior knowledge of Markab biology, but this had been the fourth death by natural causes among Babylon 5's Markab

population. Statistically, this was very unusual and warranted a medical investigation. Something about all of this simply rubbed Stephen's sense of mystery the wrong way and unlike his friend Garibaldi, he did not appreciate the feeling at all.

On the flight deck next to the Cobra bays, Ivanova briefed the pilots as to their situation. The room was ringed in pilots in various states of combat readiness. In full uniform from having just been recalled, the leader of Zeta Wing Warren Keffer asked questions while his group stood at attention in front of their open faced lockers filled with flight jackets and helmets. According to Ivanova, the *Cartiz* was a standard civilian transport carrying passengers and no cargo of any significance. She wished the Wing good hunting and dismissed them to take to their starfuries. Ivanova also relayed the Captain's moratorium on Keffer's private flights to him, news he did not take well but finally accepted.



In MedLab, Franklin completed his autopsy of the dead Markab he and Lazarenn had quarrelled about earlier. He ran his final sample through an analyzer and watched the results through its view port. What he saw made him immediately call for the other three bodies already processed to be recalled before they could be transported to their homeworld. He was getting a bad feeling of his own about what might be causing all of these unexplained deaths.

Sheridan meanwhile had fallen asleep at the dinner table. He tried to pass it off as meditating, but even Delenn and Lenneir's limited understanding of human ritual led them to believe that most did not snore while meditating. He denied ever snoring, but before the discussion could go further, he was called away by Command and Control to check out the Markab transport situation in Bay 14. After he left, in their own Religious caste language, Delenn and Lenneir commented on the meal. Lenneir told his mentor, 'I do not think he liked the Flamm,' referring to the main course. Delenn sighed and responded, 'What do you expect? He is after all human.'

Delenn's quarters were decorated finely with several crystalline wall hangings and delicate statues on many of the available surfaces in the room. Tiny candle lights twinkled in the chamber, lending a bright but ethereal presence to the fine dinner she had invited Sheridan to enjoy. It was a honoured occasion between Delenn and her guest, a way of repaying him for the meal he had invited her to earlier. To represent this hour, Lenneir had taken the last two days to prepare the repast, sanctifying the food during its fifteen stages of preparation. All of this was a little overwhelming for the Captain, who had really just expected a nice, if exotic, dinner.

He was certainly hungry enough, since he had been too busy to eat that day, but his hunger would have to wait. There were rituals for preparing the food, but there were also rituals for eating it; if these rituals were not followed, the sanctity of the meal would be lost and Lenneir would have to begin the two day process, which forbade him sleep or anything more than bread and water, all over again. The rituals seemed incessant, with bowls being exchanged and pieces of food set aside for the meal's cook and for Valen in an empty place at the table that had been laid for him alone. When it finally did come time to eat, Sheridan even had to use his off hand, his right hand, instead of his left. It was a lot of trouble to go to for a Minbari meal, especially since between bites, everyone dining had to meditate upon their food. Sheridan sighed and did as he was asked. He was in for a long night.

Zeta Wing rendezvoused with the *Cartiz* and did a routine sweep. There were no signs of black craters or scoring. The angular transport had not been attacked, but it was drifting powerlessly, unresponsive to Keffer's attempts at communication. He came in closer and scanned the vessel for anything he could find. There were two hundred and three Markab aboard, as the computer confirmed, but there were no detectable life signs. The *Cartiz* was a floating, inexplicable tomb in deep space. Keffer and Zeta Wing escorted the transport back to Babylon 5, requesting a full medical team be present when it was brought in. Keffer told Ivanova to alter the Captain as well. He was getting a very bad feeling about what they were going to find when they opened the *Cartiz*.

When Sheridan reached Bay 14, his men were standing by, unable to board the *Cartiz* because of Dr. Lazarenn's insistence that the vessel was Markab property and therefore protected by privacy laws. Sheridan did not have much time to argue the point before Franklin arrived and argued it for him. He had finished a careful analysis of what he had found in the first body and checked it against the other three. His findings were definitive; all four had been killed by an infectious disease brought aboard the station by other Markabs. When confronted with this, Lazarenn gave in, admitting that the disease was both 100% terminal and 100% contagious. It was, quite literally, a plague that had been unleashed on Babylon 5.

Outside the docking bay, where the floor was filling up rapidly with the dead from the *Cartiz*, Franklin confronted Lazarenn about the disease. He could not accept that his friend and colleague would keep something like this from him to the endangerment of his own race and possibly every other on the station. Lazarenn's reason for the lie was both tragic and deeply cultural. The disease had only appeared once before on the island of Draffa on the Markab homeworld. Draffa had been a place of few morals and many excesses, so his people considered the disease a sign of disfavour and retribution from their gods. The island was isolated and by the time others could arrive to investigate its silence, the disease had killed everyone there and no one was left to spread it.

Franklin knew as well as Lazarenn that a disease could not be killed that way. They could go dormant for centuries if need be and mutate into new forms during that time. The problem with Draffa was that it became a religious icon, a tool to frighten the unclean into moral behaviour, lest 'the dark angel bring them the curse of Draffa.' Since only the impure could be touched by it, or so they believed, only the impure would have anything to fear from it. Thus, the Markab never took steps to contain what they thought was a dead contagion.



This blindness had damned the Markab race. A new outbreak of Draffa occurred a year ago on their homeworld and the family contracting it was so scandalized, they lied about what was killing them. They went among the populace around them, sure that their morality would protect them. Each new case of Draffa was met with the same silence and the disease spread like wildfire across the planet. Thousands of Markab, seeing this as a judgement against homeworld for some transgression, left for every other colony the Markab possessed. By the time the *Cartiz* left Markab space, every Markab installation and outpost, even Babylon 5, had become infected.

Franklin asked why he had not been informed soon, but Lazarenn revealed that he had been ordered by his government to remain silent. Fear that other races would see the disease as a sign of their unworthiness and vote them out of the League of Non-Aligned Worlds for attacking the public good by allowing an infectious disease to mingle among other populations kept them silent. This silence also crippled the efforts of Markab doctors like Lazarenn who tried and failed to find a cure because of lack of funds and equipment. No one wanted to admit this disease even existed because doing so made them somehow spiritually dirty.

In the Zocalo, the spreading death has taken another life. A young Markab girl, searching the busy intersection of traffic and commerce on the station, found her father slumped against a structural support pillar. Admonishing him for being late for food and making her mother worry, she touched him and his body fell over towards her. Frightened, she fell back crying against the legs of a passer-by, Delenn. The Minbari woman sympathetically curled her into her skirts and stared with dismay at the body that everyone around her has just ignored and left to die alone.

In the main staff meeting room behind Command and Control, medical personnel and key station staff were assembled for a briefing by Doctor Franklin. His news was not hopeful. He had worked up a list of symptomology for Draffa but because it hit and killed within 24 of leaving dormancy, there had been no way to build a model of how it worked or what kind of contagion it used to spread itself. Sheridan had no choice, given that there was no way to know whether the disease could affect non-Markab, but to quarantine Babylon 5 and stop all traffic. It was extreme, and an extreme nightmare for Garibaldi and his security concerns, but there was simply no choice. The Markab's plague of immorality had ground the station to a halt, one that would not start moving again until Franklin to find some answers to Draffa's many questions.

As Garibaldi feared, the news of quarantine and the reason for it did not sit well with Babylon 5's general population. Thousands of people looked for a scapegoat, someone to take out their fears and resentment on, and they found it in the Markab. Garibaldi and his team had their hands full trying to protect the Markab from their inadvertent victims. If the disease did not kill them, the non-Markab population probably would.

In MedLab and throughout the Markab Sector, the bustle of activity with trying to catalogue the disease, test all of those who might be infected, and finding the bodies of those who had already succumbed to Draffa was not only disruptive, it was also not going without notice. The Drazi and other races quickly realized that a medical emergency of some kind was occurring. It was not one they would stand quietly by and get caught in. The tests and searches were an emergency of another kind for the Markab ambassador; it was a diplomatic outrage.

In the Council Chambers, wearing full robes of state, he approached Sheridan and demanded that the tests and disturbance to his people cease immediately. He even accused Earth of planting the disease in their drinking water to discredit and destroy the Markab. When Sheridan did not back down or lend any believability to these accusations, the ambassador's moral superiority forced him to decide that it was the immorality of Babylon 5 that had tainted his people. As they had decided, they would all retreat to an isolation zone on the station and pray for forgiveness. Sheridan's warning that this would only accelerate the contagion was completely ignored. The ambassador left, his ignorance and that of his people about to doom them all.

In Brown Sector, Franklin linked in with news no one wanted to hear. The tests had yielded their first results; the plague was airborne. Also, he located a dead Pak'ma'ra with no signs of violence or other cause of death. While this did not guarantee he died from the plague, it was a strong indication that the worst of their fears had occurred. Draffa might have spread into the general population of Babylon 5.

Back in MedLab, Doctor Franklin had another sort of fear to contend with. While most of the Markab population went into exile on their own, enduring the shouts of accusation from the Drazi and other races put at risk by their refusal to admit or accept the truth about their disease, Franklin's staff were afraid to examine the dead Pak'ma'ra because its disease might be a mutated form that could infect them as well. While Franklin was willing to go in by himself and have his fearful staff monitor the results, another solution presented itself. Lazarenn put himself forth as the examiner, offering to stay in the hermetically sealed isolab after the autopsy to limit the risk of spreading the disease himself. It was almost certainly a death sentence, but it was a chance for him to do some good with the time he had left. Reluctantly, Franklin agreed and the examination began.

In his quarters, ambassador Delenn has come to him with a request, citing the current situation with the Markab. At first assuming that the Minbari wanted to leave and escape the contamination, he was stunned to hear that she and Lenneir wished to enter the isolation zone and provide what comfort they could to the Markab before they passed. As she told him, if the disease was limited to the Markab, they would need compassion. If it was not, then they had a duty to give that caring because soon, they would need it themselves.

Sheridan did not want to authorize the entry, knowing that if he let her and Lenneir in, they could not be let out again. It became very clear in his eyes that he was thinking much more about Delenn's safety than that of her aide. She could tell as well, because even as he moved to grant her permission through his link to Garibaldi, she covered his hand and told him that all life was transitory and that one way or another, they would be together again. 'If I do not see you again in this life, I will see you in the place where no shadows fall.' She had touched his face during these words, an act of intimacy among her people, and the realization of this made her back up quickly. There was a connection growing between them, something that was too new to put into words, but real and powerful all the same.



Outside, far away from the isolation zone where he had been hiding to escape the coming Draffa, a Markab male was beaten severely by three humans angered by the quarantine and the impending threat of death. The only thing that stopped them from killing him was Garibaldi, who charged in, beat them off him, and then forced them to disperse at PPG point. The Markab, wounded and on the ground reached up to him for help. Garibaldi considered the implications of touching a Markab, but only for a moment. Then his own compassion kicked in and he carried the wounded man to safety.

Doctor Franklin's long hours of fruitless work were beginning to wear on him. As Lazarenn watched from the window of the isolab, he took his third stim of the night. Too much was unhealthy as it could lead to addition, but the Draffa made that rather irrelevant. They talked for a while about the similarities between the panic gripping the station and the same things happening in history on Earth with diseases like the Black Plague, AIDS, and Chalmer's Syndrome. Each time, Franklin explained, there were scapegoats, irrational fears, and people whose efforts only made the situation worse through their pious but misguided actions.

At the end of the discussion, Lazarenn fell, suddenly losing his equilibrium. This was the first symptom of Draffa, intense dizziness. Franklin tried to come help him, but the Markab doctor refused. This was the perfect opportunity to watch the disease through its manifestation period, and he did not want Franklin to waste either it or himself by letting him out of the isolab. Bringing in a full team to aid him, Franklin put every available member of his medical staff into the process. This was a chance to test every aspect of the disease, from yellow and T blood cell counts to neural pathway degradation. If there was an answer to the disease, watching Lazarenn suffer from it might their only hope of finding it in time to do any good.

While the team worked, Franklin and Lazarenn shared a personal moment discussing how they had first met. Franklin had been on the Markab homeworld, on layover between flights. He was a 'hitchhiker' back then, trading his medical services for passage on any ship he could find that would take him places in the galaxy he had never been. Everything then was a puzzle to be solved for him, but Lazarenn wondered if perhaps the real test sometimes was

not to solve a riddle but to learn from the fact that some have no solution. Before Franklin could respond, he was given yet more bad news. The test on the Pak'ma'ra was in. The plague had jumped species.

Once more, the fear that had crippled his staff before reared its ugly head. No one in MedLab wanted to carry out his order to dissect and work up a racial comparison on the Pak'ma'ra. If the plague could jump species, it meant the corpse would surely infect whoever performed those tests. Franklin, losing patience with all of them, assured his reticent staff that if they did not have that report for him in one hour, they would have something a hell of a lot worse than the plague to worry about. His tone and the implications behind it sent them all scrambling to comply.

In the isolation zone, now closed and locked by executive order of Babylon 5, Delenn and Lenneir distributed food and blankets to the sick and dying all around them. Things had not gotten too bad yet, but there were more people sitting or lying down than there had been before. This made it easier for Delenn to spot the little Markab girl she had met before in the Zocalo. She came to talk with the girl, who had lost her mother in the confusion. Delenn asked Lenneir to find the woman for her, telling him 'Faith Manages' when he asked how he was supposed to do that in a room with four thousand people. This was not made easier when the only name the girl could give for her mother was Momma. Still, Lenneir repeated, 'Faith Manages,' and set off on his hunt.

Fear was everywhere, especially there in the isolation vault with the Markab. Even the little girl was afraid that Lenneir would not find her mother. She apologized for feeling that way, but Delenn understood. When she had been a girl about the Markab child's age, she had become separated from her parents as well while shopping. It had been a terrible time for her, with scary streets and no sign of anything familiar for her to go to. She felt afraid and alone, just as the little girl did now, but it had passed when she was found again. Just then as her story ended, Lenneir came back with the child's mother. 'Faith manages,' he told her proudly. The joy in Delenn's heart at this touching sight was shattered when, while hugging her mother, the little girl, whose name was Jhenal, stumbled dizzily. She had contracted Draffa, and there would be nothing Delenn could do to stop it.

Eye on History: The War of Retribution – The Reversal of Fortunes

The 15th Victorious Fleet, one of the largest put together by Grand Admiral Dromo, moved into position on November 15th 2259 and struck a telling blow against the forces holding Quadrant 37 using Quadrant 32 as a staging ground for its offensive. The battle, which took nearly a full day to fight because of the strong garrison left there by War Leader G'Tal, ends in a narrow Centauri victory and the rout of Narn forces to the Narn world of T'llin. The morale victory of finally driving Narn back to their own territory is a powerful one and helps fuel the Centauri counter offensive.

For G'Tal, this loss left him in an unfortunate predicament. His entire fleet was not effectively trapped by the loss of Quadrant 37. His only choices for advancement or retreat were to go to Quadrant 8 or Jux Prime, two systems the Narn still barely held but were flanked by advancing elements of the Royal Navy. His other option was an unattractive one, but it was the only one that did not lead to his being caught between two Centauri fleets. He contacted the Corillani and offered them military assistance in exchange for their alliance with his forces thereafter. The offer was accepted and G'Tal moved his forces into hyperspace with Quadrant 17 as their heading.

This move saved his Fleet for the time being, but it spelled disaster for Jux Prime. The 15th Victorious Fleet returned from securing Quadrant 37 and crushed the Narn resistance at Jux Prime, returning it to Centauri control. If the Gold Fleet of the Narn had been at top form and not devastated because of its War Leader's folly, this move could have been a disastrous one for the Centauri, but with no forces to effectively come in and reclaim Quadrant 37, there was nothing the Narn Regime could do to prevent the Republic from taking and holding both systems.

This occurrence caused War Leader G'Tal to change his plans and try to get his Corillani allies to help him retake Jux Prime. The system was a vital one to the Narn offensive, as it was a beachhead that could, if reinforcements would ever come from the Narn homeworld, be used to take the war to Centauri Prime. Neither reinforcements nor Corillani aid came through in time to save G'Tal's fleet or his life from being ended by the massive 15th Victorious Fleet waiting for him at Jux Prime. He was forced to surrender of his fleet would be destroyed. He agreed, went aboard a Centauri warship as a prisoner, and his fleet was blasted to scrap anyway and he was executed.

The rest of G'Tal's fleet back at T'llin tried to rally in memory of their fallen leader, but their force was insufficient to take and hold Quadrant 37 without him or his additional ships. Again, reinforcements did not arrive from homeworld and while the fleet did a valiant job of defeating the minimal defence left at Quadrant 37 by the Centauri, there was simply no way to hold it when the Centauri returned with the 15th Victorious Fleet. This marked the end of any significant threat the Narn could pose in Centauri space and the true turning point in the War of Retribution.

Key Events: Quadrant 37 is retaken by the Centauri, closing the door on further Narn advancement; G'Tal's alliance with the Corillani fails at Jux Prime; Blue Fleet destroyed at Quadrant 37 and Jux Prime; All major Narn holdings in Centauri Space are lost.

Worlds/Systems Lost: Quadrant 8 (Victor: Centauri), Quadrant 37 (Victor: Centauri), Quadrant 37 (Victor: Narn), Quadrant 37 (Victor: Centauri), Jux Prime (Victor: Centauri)

In MedLab, Franklin was worked past the point of exhaustion. Nothing he had tried was working; there were no match reactions to anything between the Markab and the Pak'ma'ra. He kept trying, but nothing came up positive. Behinds him, near death, Lazarenn tried to relate an idea about the yellow cells in his race's biology, but the words would not come. Unable to stave off the disease any longer, he apologized to his old friend and died. Franklin watched in helpless fury as Draffa claimed Lazarenn. There was nothing he could do to stop it.

There was something he could do about the disease, however. His friend had died trying to give him a clue and he was not about to give up on it. An analysis of yellow cells and green cells found in the Pak'ma'ra came back with a positive result. There was a match in their basic type, a link that allowed the disease to spread. It was not much to go on, but it was enough.

In a report to Sheridan and Ivanova, he explained the process of how the disease worked. It did not attack the nerves controlling the autonomic processes of the body as he had originally surmised. Instead, it broke down the chemical between the relays, making it impossible for information to travel from the brain to the heart and lungs. It was only confined to races with specialized cells, yellow and green for the Markab and the Pak'ma'ra for example, currently, but it might mutate if given a chance. Inoculations and chemical

therapy might overcome it given time, but that was the best hope Franklin could offer. Sheridan could accept that, and ordered him to get to work immediately administering the vaccine.

They hurried to the quarantine area and had the vault unsealed. Hope died as the zone opened to reveal a morgue instead of a shelter. The Markab, all of them, were dead, including the little Jhenal still held in Delenn's arms. Lenneir helped her stand and together they walked among the corpses on their way out. Ivanova walked with Lenneir out of the chamber while Delenn, touching Sheridan's face again, gave in to crushing sorrow and collapsed into his arms. The horror of the Markab's final hours had taken their toll on the noble ambassador from Minbar.

In a private meeting in his quarters later, Sheridan told her that while they had dodged the bullet this time, any credit for doing so should go to Franklin and he feared what would happen the next time it occurred. Delenn told him that next time, they would honour those who had fallen and use the lessons of their passing to solve the epidemic and in so doing, give meaning to those lost lives.

In the Zocalo, nursing a drink with a distant look in his tired eyes, Franklin listened to an ISN report on the BabCom monitor above the bar. According to the correspondent, the entire Markab

homeworld and its colonies had been completely wiped out by the plague; the death toll was in the billions and fires were raging out of control with no one left alive to stop them. The bartender told a joke as the report concluded. 'What do you all two billion dead Markabs? Planetary Redecorating.' Too tired to do anything but walk away, Franklin lamented for the future. Nothing ever changed, it seemed.

Epidemics Aboard Babylon 5

The incident with the Markab showed clearly that Babylon 5 did not at that time have a standard procedure for dealing with infectious diseases and their spread through the station. While the Command Staff moved quickly and efficiently to deal with the situation, the lack of preparation beforehand could have been a costly mistake had Draffa been able to affect more than the Pak'ma'ra and the Markab. To keep this from ever happening again, the station had to make changes to its standard operating policies.

Following the Draffa situation, the station's air recycling plant underwent a major overhaul to install additional filters and biological decontaminants on top of the ones that were already there. That way, the circulation of breathable atmosphere would not have as great a chance of spreading any diseases among the entire population of Babylon 5. In addition to mechanical changes, the staff instituted policies regarding quarantine procedures, standard shipping, and non-invasive disease screening of all arrivals and departures from the station. This process made things a little more complicated and required extra man-hours from security and medical personnel, but the risk of spreading a deadly plague to all of the races doing business on Babylon 5 outweighed the risk.

Death of the Markab

The racial destruction of the Markab as a result of their own religious intolerance of each other's perceived 'immorality' is a tragic lesson in how ignorance and prejudice can be the downfall of any civilization. An old and powerful space faring race, struck down by a disease that could have been cured centuries earlier had it been seen for the purely biological threat that it was and not some abstract 'dark angel' distributing death sentences from the Gods, was a true loss to the galaxy and a monument to the value of places like Babylon 5.

Only because the plague struck on Babylon 5, where more rational minds could prevail against the intolerance of the Markab's religious and government leaders, was the link between the Pak'ma'ra and the Markab through their biology detected and the transmission form of the disease found. This allowed the medical staff of the station to work up a symptomology of Draffa and follow that through to a potential cure.

The real tragedy of the situation is that the cure came a few hours too late, with the death of the Markabs through their 'dark angel' already well accomplished. This does mean the destruction of the race was entirely in vain, as a similar disease could well have been ravaging the Pak'ma'ra or other races using specialized cells to create synaptic fluids. The cure developed for the Markab could theoretically be adjusted to work for these peoples as well, sparing them from a fatal and virulent disease before it can do to them what

it did to the proud, morally superior Markab. One civilization falls, but others may be spared their fate.

Markab characters in Babylon 5 campaigns with any connection to the station or any of their races colonies since the start of the year 2258 are, with virtually no exceptions, dead because of the outbreak of Draffa. Games Masters may wish to spare players with extremely appropriate reasons (deep space missions with no contact with others of their kind or something equally extreme), but otherwise, all Markabs, including players, die because of their 'plague of immorality'.

Scenarios and Campaign Hooks

5 The actions of Delenn and Lenneir are only uncommon in that the Minbari do not have much contact with races outside their own. As it is the duty of those in the Religious Caste to render aid and compassion to the ill and infirm, players of Religious Caste Minbari will be expected to act the same way whenever they can. Religious Caste Minbari are not necessarily intended to be healers, but comfort can take many forms, even if it is only holding a dying Drazi's hand so that he does not leave the world alone. This compassion can take as many forms as there are players, from trained physicians tending to illnesses to combat trained Minbari acting as bodyguards over these indigent forms of those who would be taken advantage of. In a campaign, Religious Caste Minbari should be given opportunities to carry out this duty with dignity and honour. After a combat, they may wish to render aid to both sides regardless of past disagreements. In times of war, they might be called upon to staff field hospitals or help tend to the funerary rites of the dead. This kind of service is holy to them and it should be supported by the Games Master whenever possible.

5 The Markab may be dead and their worlds burned, but that does not mean they have left nothing behind as a legacy. Their planets and orbital colonies are largely intact aside from the areas claimed by fire; these are ripe for the picking as soon as scavengers can reach them. While no government is likely to sanction such expeditions openly, most will give tacit approval through their silence to any tradesmen and exploration vessels wishing to enter Markab space for a treasure hunt. Of particular interest will be the military assets of the Markab. Ships and weapons will be the highest priority with such things getting divided up by any forces in the doomed system with the manpower to claim them. Valuables will not last long on the Markab colonies, which provides a number of hooks for a campaign in the form of looting runs into Markab space, defending the now effectively planetary mausoleums from tomb robbers doing the same, and the always present threat of Draffa mutating into something that can affect those who would rob from the dead.

5 A unique character opportunity brought about by the Draffa plague is a lone Markab or small group of Markabs. For them to have survived, they would have to have been in space for more than a year prior to the death of their Homeworld and have never come into contact with any others of their kind or any colonies in that time. These Markab would be free of the plague and effectively without galactic rights. Their seat on the League of Non-Aligned

Worlds has been dissolved and while most other civilizations would still afford them legal status, others might take advantage of the letter of galactic law and abuse them in any way they saw fit. Markab characters would be extremely rare, but if a Games Master wished to put the time and effort into allowing them into a campaign, including creating racial traits and ability modifications for them, the reward for the unique perspective on the universe as outsiders and the sole survivors of their race would be worth the work. Official statistics for characters of Markab descent will be forthcoming in the League of Non-Aligned Worlds sourcebook.

Divided Loyalties (November 24th 2258)

'Always the romantic. The program is complete. The Talia you knew no longer exists. There's just me. You don't know what it's like living only in the shadows of her mind, watching, laughing at all of you out here - foolish, petty, stupid. There I was, trapped inside, able to come out only at night when she was asleep. Her invisible sister. And you believed everything she said to you, all the things you wanted to hear, all the words I whispered in her thoughts while she lay sleeping, the words that would get her closer to you - and to what you knew. You should see the look on your face, my good and dear friend Susan.'

Talia Winters

Sheridan met Deleenn as they both arrived at the Universe Today recycling and printing station, a bright yellow and logo-festooned panel against one of the walls in Blue Sector. He was surprised to see her there, as he would never have assumed she ready the mostly human oriented periodical. Her recent experience with Ms. Cynthia Torqueman and Interstellar news had convinced her that she needed to be better prepared for Earth media and its tactics should they ever cross paths again.

She did express some distaste for the gossip mongering and invasions of privacy that the newspaper's many stories represented, as in her culture, it was considered the height of bad manners to pry into affairs that were not one's own. This protest fell somewhat



flat when her copy of the paper came up noting that the Eye on Minbar gossip column could not be included. Embarrassed but ever the noble soul, she simply explained that it was also in her culture to know what others thought before those opinions become a problem. As an ambassador, that was a responsibility she took seriously enough to break her culture's morays once in a while. The Minbari policy of telling each other what they need to know and no more could be very limiting at times.

On Syria Planum, one of the inhabited regions on Mars, a wounded man struggled through the sewer systems below the habitation dome. Clutching an ugly wound high on his chest, he managed to wade through the steaming waters to meet his friend and contact, a human named Derek. Derek, dressed in the same garb as the Ranger that visited Garibaldi on the night the Centauri Emperor Turhan died, could only hold his friend as he died from his injuries. Before the man passed away, he gave Derek a data crystal containing some kind of information. Urging the Ranger to get to Babylon 5 as quickly as possible, the dying man implored him to deliver a warning. 'Tell them it's not safe. Tell them there is danger from within.' Before he could get caught by the hunting party closing in, Derek clutched the crystal, spared a final look at his friend, and departed at once.

In one of the station's restrooms, laid out with specialized stalls for alien physiologies including one that could only be used by the Pak'ma'ra, Garibaldi and Sheridan discussed the absence of big trees on Babylon 5. There were fruit trees in the Garden's orchard, but Sheridan missed the really tall, massive ones like he had seen as a child, trees like oaks and pines. All of this conversation was just a cover for Garibaldi to scan the area for listening devices and set up a jammer. Once it was active, they got down to the real reason for the emergency meeting. Garibaldi had asked Sheridan earlier if he thought Talia Winters would be a good addition to their conspiracy against the President's increasingly ruthless regime on Earth. He had considered it and could see no reason not to let her in. Sheridan agreed and Garibaldi told him that he would set up a meeting with the entire group in a couple of days. They even remembered to walk their hands on the way out.

In the Zocalo, over breakfast, Talia and Ivanova talked about how it had been two years for them to get to the point of being friends. Each blamed the other, but it was obviously the banter between to people that had become very fond of each other. Ivanova was called away to Command and Control, but before she could go, Miss Winters mentioned that she needed to find a place to stay while her air recycler was being worked on. Ivanova, in what seemed to be a big step for them both, offered to let her stay in her quarters for the time being.

Outside the station, an unidentified ship had come through the jumpgate but was now not responding. Lieutenant Corwin scanned it and found one lifeform aboard, though the signs were fading. It was brought aboard and Franklin met Garibaldi in the bay as it was opened up. H mentioned that the ship had no identification that could be confirmed, meaning it was probably a stolen vessel. Security's sweep confirmed only one passenger on the ship and as Franklin admitted her past him to go to MedLab, Garibaldi stopped the stretcher. He knew the woman they had just taken off the ship. It was Lyta Alexander, the telepath first assigned to Babylon 5 on January 3rd, 2257.



In Sheridan's office, he told the captain what he knew of her. Lyta left the station six weeks after her appointment following the attempted assassination of Kosh and the frame job that almost cost Sinclair, Sheridan's predecessor aboard Babylon 5, his command and his career. Lyta erroneously blamed Sinclair for the poisoning attempt because the real killer had been using a changeling net to appear like the commander. The scandal following that and her exposure to Kosh during the operation that saved his life caused her to be recalled back to Earth. As the only human to ever survive making mental contact with a Vorlon, she had a lot the folks back home thought they could learn from her experience.

In MedLab, Franklin worked to stabilize and awaken the comatose Alexander. She awoke and as soon as she learned that she was 'safe' on Babylon 5, she panicked and fled to the far side of the room, putting an IV stand and then a medical hypo between her and the doctor. She demanded that he deliver a message for her and that until she could meet the entire Command Staff of the station at once, she did not want to be alone with any of them. The message was that one of the staff, someone in charge, was a traitor. More than that, she claimed she could prove it.

In Sheridan's office, Lyta met with him, Franklin, Garibaldi, and Ivanova. The information she had came at a terrible cost, two men's lives, but it was important enough for them to sacrifice themselves to get it and her here. Babylon 5 was an important place to a lot of people, more important than the Command Staff assembled in front of her could possibly imagine.

Lyta had been with the Psi Corps until six months ago. They wanted to know what she had seen in Kosh's mind, but the memory of his attack was all she had seen. That, she said, and a feeling. She could not explain the feeling, could not put it into words, but they would not accept that. She managed to escape them on a shuttle bound for Mars. Since she won her freedom, she had been trying to get into Vorlon space despite the risks. Ever since her contact with Kosh, a part of her had been drawn to that mysterious part of the galaxy and when she got there, she was sure the Vorlons would let her in.

During her time on Mars, Lyta hooked up with the resistance movement there. People could always use a good telepath and it was a way for her to pay her way while looking for a ship that would take her to Vorlon space. Seven days before she arrived on Babylon 5, one of the movement's best informants was shot and killed on his way back from Syria Planum. According to Garibaldi and confirmed by Lyta, that was the location of a 'secret' Psi Corps research centre. What he had learned he managed to pass on, and that was how Lyta came to know of the danger to the station.

In the centre on Mars, Psi Corps had a sleeper agent program where they brought in someone, conditioned them with drugs and telepathic scans, and created a secondary personality suited to

their particular needs. This personality, a perfect spy codenamed Control, remained dormant but aware in the person's mind, so submerged that it would not show up even on a deep psychic scan. It would rest there, gathering information, until a password was sent telepathically into the sleeper's mind. Then, it became the primary personality, destroying the person's original one and remaining in control from then on. The sleeper would remain completely unaware of the other personality until that time, at which point the person they were would cease to be.

Ivanova immediately protested, calling the idea a complete fabrication and questioning Lyta's honesty. Sheridan had to agree, noting that his people would rightfully object to having their loyalty questioned. Lyta argued that it was not a question of loyalty as the sleeper agent had no idea they were being controlled in this way. They would not even have to know they were being contacted and she would not be scanning their thoughts. She would just be sending the code and looking for a response. That was all.

It was still a lot to ask, more than Sheridan wanted to agree to without consulting his staff. He told Lyta it would take time to come to a decision, but she warned him that he would not have long to discuss it. The implanted personality would defend itself and deal with any threat, namely her, it perceived. She did not want to be alone with anyone, and admonished them to adopt the same attitude. Garibaldi was not convinced, but just to be sure, he sent Lyta to a holding cell with two guards instead of the usual one that normally ran escort. Once she was out, the first comment made was Ivanova saying 'no way in hell.' The sentiment seemed basically mutual.

Delenn, seeking some advice on food and relief supply shipments to Narn outposts, found Sheridan pacing in the Zen Garden below the station's monorail. It was a peaceful setting; he was anything but. At first, he did not wish to burden her with his troubles, but he finally relents, needing someone to talk to. He asked her why it was that every time things were finally going well, life decided to kick him in the butt. Delenn, surprised, asked 'but what?' It was a hole in her vocabulary; she did not understand the slang term. Her puzzling with the many perambulations of butt and the sound it made when it was spoken amused Sheridan if nothing else, which took some of the weight off his shoulders. Happy to have shown him that after just a little while, the wheel of life always turned, she found herself with her hand resting gently on his. Delenn had taken one more step towards becoming a very important part of his life.

Garibaldi had run a background check on Lyta, something subtle that would not raise any suspicions. Everything about her escape

from Earth via a Mars shuttle checked out, as did her connections with the resistance movement there. Sheridan was worried that she might be a plant, but Garibaldi somehow did not think so. His patented gut instinct told him she was on the level. Sheridan suggested a second option; he mentioned Garibaldi's Security Lieutenant, the one who shot him in the back over the assassination incident involving the president. Could perhaps he have been this Control? Lyta could not know that he was off the station, so it was a possibility worth considering.

The only thing Ivanova was considering back in her quarters was how hard to kick her cabinet out of frustration over the entire telepath affair. She was in her blue satin nightgown and thin over robe when Talia came in wearing a similar sleeping outfit in grey. Talia had obviously just had a shower and she wryly noted while towelling off her hair that the cabinet in question would never threaten them again. It was a much needed joke. Talia could tell that her friend was upset and asked why she was so edgy.

When Ivanova mentioned Lyta Alexander, the name meant something to Talia. The telepath had been a year behind her at the Psi Corps academy and they had spent six months together serving different parts of the organization as interns. Talia thought that she was a very sweet, kind person and in response to Ivanova's next question thought that Lyta was the sort of person that could be trusted. Lyta had interned with the Psi Cops but switched to the Commercial Teep branch with Talia shortly afterwards when she learned that she disliked the work. That was Ivanova's introduction to the Corps' psychic pet names- teep for telepath and teek for telekinetic.

Ivanova was concerned about who she could trust, fears brought up through Lyta's recent arrival. Talia took her by the hands, came in close, and told her that she had been having the same feeling lately. In the end, Talia said, the only person on all of Babylon 5 she thought she could trust was her. It was touching moment, though it did not make Ivanova feel much better. Her Russian worry instincts were working overtime. Later, Talia rolled over in her sleep and reached out for Ivanova, expecting her to be there. The absence woke her up and worry began to crease the telepath's previously content smile.

In Holding Bay 7, Lyta had almost fallen asleep. The sound of the door opening startled her awake as two guards stepped in to move her more comfortable surroundings as per Garibaldi's instructions. The male and female human security guards escorted her down the hallway, one flanking in front and behind. The position saved

Lyta's life as the lights went out and a PPG ripped through the chest of the woman just inches from her own. The other guard moved her behind a bulkhead corner and returned fire, but a second blast took him down as well. With no other choice, Lyta scooped up a fallen gun and made a break for safety in the dark.

In Sheridan's office, things were beginning to fall apart. One of Lyta's guards was dead, the other in critical condition with burns to the arm and chest. The survivor was certain that the shooter was after Lyta who, since the incident, was nowhere to be found. Sheridan did not know who the shooter was and despite Ivanova's claim that this proved nothing, was more convinced by the fact that aside from the Command Staff and some security personnel, no one had even known Lyta was here.

Garibaldi was also becoming a believer. Whoever had done this probably did not even know what they were doing, as the Control personality was programmed for self-defence and had likely acted completely on its own. In light of the attack, Sheridan had come to a decision that he was sure Ivanova would not like, but that he knew now had to be done. He was going to go along with Lyta's suggestion, assuming she could be found before Control got to her first.

From an hidden location on the ship, Lyta turned to the only friend she had left on the station. While Delenn was trying to delicately turn down a Lumati offer for negotiations on a trade route, probably because of what Ivanova had told her about the way the Lumati closed agreements through sex, her BabCom console flashed with a message. Telling Delenn that she was in just about every kind of trouble there was, Lyta asked her to meet in Brown 3 in an hour. Delenn had not known Lyta well, but she was a woman in need and the Minbari ambassador was not about to turn her away.

Talia found Ivanova just outside her quarters. Her own had finally been repaired and she could move back into them, but she needed a few things from inside. Once she stepped in, she become much more familiar with the troubled looking officer. Ivanova was concerned that her friends would turn against her once they learned some terrible secret that she had been hiding from them for a long time. Talia tried to comfort her, even suggesting that she had missed her greatly when she was not in bed when the telepath woke up. Ivanova apologised for that, but she had needed some time to think. Talia was sure that Ivanova was surrounded by people who loved her and that no matter how dark her secret, they would still care for her. She let her friend know that no matter what, she would be there if Ivanova needed someone to talk to.



Ivanova did need to talk, but it was to the person who would be most affected by it. The person she admired and trusted most was Sheridan, her former commander when they served together and her friend now. When Sheridan came in to his quarters after learning from Delenn that Lyta would come back but only if everyone was together when she did, he was not expecting to find Ivanova on his sofa waiting for him. As she told him, 'you should change your lock code more often.'

What she had to tell him was no laughing matter. It was time for her to tell the truth to her friend, no matter what he thought of her afterwards. Previously, he had learned from her that her mother had been telepathic and that she had been able to feel her mother make contact with her mind from a very young age. What Ivanova had not let him know was that she had learned over those years

Eye on History: The War of Retribution - Desperate Times

With only a single territory held in Centauri space and no avenue open to reinforce or abandon it, the Narn knew that victory in the War of Retribution was now impossible. All they could hope to do was survive it long enough to reach a peaceful solution to the war through diplomatic means or by making every inch of Narn space the Centauri take too expensive to keep up their offensive. The Narn were correct that the Centauri were going on the offensive, but their hope of making the War too costly to distasteful to fight could not have been more incorrect. The Centauri were out for blood and they were not about to stop now that they help the system they needed to take the war into Narn space.

The battles began at Quadrant 27, the sole remaining held system in Centauri territory. While the Narn defenders fought bravely, the twentieth week of the War of Retribution ended with the complete annihilation of their ships and the imprisonment of any surviving soldiers. The Centauri had completely erased the gains of the Narn and were poised to take their revenge against the one jump colonies of T'llin, Kotok, and Dra'Shu. The latter two were been abandoned quickly after the complete liberation of Quadrants 1 and 27, but T'llin was a terrible loss because of its civilian population and the tactical implications of its occupation by Centauri forces.

After these worlds were lost to the Centauri, the 1st Imperial Fleet and several Victorious Fleets, including the 15th, still riding high on the morale boost of its overwhelming victory at Jux Prime, fortified their positions along the line of Narn worlds and awaited the next development in the War. Grand Admiral Dromo had used stealth systems new to the Centauri navy to plant a hyperspace beacon in the Tachunq system. Using the 3rd Glorious Fleet, a special group of long-ranged of warships and transports assembled at Centauri Prime for this purpose, he ordered the attack on Tachunq, a world within the protected space of Maroth, Narn's most valuable colony world. Had the Gold Fleet's ships still been available, the 3rd Glorious fleet of the Centauri Republic might have been defended against, but without them, the deep strike was completely effective and alarming in its ability to bypass the normal hyperspace lanes. It was not until much later that the Narn learned of the hyperspace beacon and by then, the morale loss had already done its damage.

On the heels of this victory came several others for the Centauri Republic. Still hoping to buy time by concentrating their forces on defending Maroth and the Narn homeworld, the Regime stripped out all but a fraction of the ships defending their other worlds, leaving the systems of Sorith, Carridun, and Quadrant 7 to the depredations of the 3rd Glorious Fleet. While the 15th Victorious Fleet kept the Narn forces in a holding pattern providing a desperate but effective resistance around Maroth,

With Centauri forces massing in Quadrant 37 for a strike against their military assets in Quadrant 24, a move that would block their only escape from Maroth should it fall, a very hard decision had to be made by the commanders of the remaining Silver Fleet and scattered ships of the other four Fleets. Knowing that if Quadrant 24 fell, they would be cut off at Maroth and thus leave Quadrant 14, the largest centre of their refugee population, completely undefended. In desperation to save their people and wait for a diplomatic miracle, the Narn scuttled the bases and infrastructures of Maroth and Quadrant 24 and fell back in a massive wave to defend Quadrant 14 while they waited for the inevitable attack of the gathered Centauri fleets.

On November 19th 2259, the attack came in the form of the 15th Victorious Fleet, an undefeated military force. The Battle for Quadrant 14 was a desperate, determined affair and though the Narn forces there were badly damaged, the Silver Fleet held and the 15th Victorious Fleet suffered its first defeat in the War of Retribution. The Narn, seeing their chance to take revenge on the Centauri Admiral that had cost them so much bolstered their defensive line quickly and sent as many ships as they could spare to Quadrant 24 to catch the 15th Victorious Fleet before it could get repairs. Unfortunately, the 15th Victorious Fleet had jumped to Maroth instead. In Quadrant 24, the Narn encountered a much larger, fully capable fleet that had been brought in from Quadrant 37 to secure the planet. In the battle that ensued, the Narn were once again victorious though their victory was bought at the cost of ships they desperately needed.

The remaining Narn vessels, all that was left of the Silver Fleet, proved insufficient to defend Quadrant 14 a second time. Sensing that victory was within his grasp, Dromo chanced a mass assault on the system using both the surviving ships of the battle in Quadrant 24 and the 2nd Triumphant Fleet brought in after securing Quadrant 27. This combined armada was too much for the Narn defenders. In another hard decision, the Silver Fleet and all remaining forces in Quadrant 14 fell back to homeworld, reluctantly abandoning the Narn civilians in the system to the Centauri.

Key Events: Narn switch from offensive tactics to defensive; Grand Admiral Dromo pushes into Narn territory; Quadrant 12 is returned to Centauri control; Narn lose control of all major worlds in their space except homeworld

Worlds/Systems Lost: Quadrant 27 (Victor: Centauri), T'llin (Victor: Centauri), Kotok (Victor: Centauri), Dra'Shu (Victor: Centauri), Tachunq (Victor: Centauri), Sorith (Victor: Centauri), Carridun (Victor: Centauri), Quadrant 7 (Victor: Centauri), Maroth (Ruined), Quadrant 24 (Ruined), Quadrant 14 (Victor: Centauri)

to block her mother's scan when she wanted to and that once in a great while, the contact between them had been initiated by her. Sheridan's eyes widened as he grasped what she was trying to say. His second in command, his friend for many years, was a latent telepath.

Sheridan was shocked to learn this, but lately he had become used to being shocked so he recovered well. It had been very hard for Ivanova to tell him this, and he respected her for that. Her mother had drilled three words into her head her entire life, 'tell no one.' If a telepath scanned her, even casually, her secret would be out and the Psi Corps would have a legal hold on her. Sheridan did not think Lyta was with Psi Corp, mostly because Garibaldi believed in her and he did not believe in anybody. It was hard for Ivanova to hear, but it was important to find the sleeper among them.

She understood that at some level, but the stress of the past few months had really started to get to her. 'Sometimes, I don't know who I am anymore,' she told Sheridan sadly. The comment triggered a remembrance in him of the dream he had on the Streibis ship. 'Do you know who I am?' the dream-image of Ivanova had asked. Suddenly, he was not entirely certain he did.

At ambassador DeLenn's signal, the Command Staff met in Sheridan's office with Lyta. They were all present, just as she had asked, and her plan was ready to proceed. One by one, starting with Sheridan, they came up and were given the password to activate Control via telepathic scan. Sheridan was so clean, he did not even notice the word being sent. Then Franklin, still sceptical, approached the telepath and passed without a hitch. Garibaldi stepped forward, but as the password entered his mind, he cringed and fell back as if a great pain were raging in his mind.

And then he stopped and grinned. 'Gotcha,' he said with a laugh. The tension in the room released, though his joke earned more than a few dirty looks. It was Ivanova's turn at last, but Sheridan had other ideas. Control could be anyone close to the Command Staff as well, so he suggested that they run the telepathic sending by people one at a time as he called them to his office for an informal 'evaluation'. It was as good a way to cover the entire operational crew as any.

One by one they came in, and one by one they left. From Lieutenant Corwin all the way down to flight crews, MedLab assistants, and maintenance shift leaders came into the office, were probed, and left without so much as a telepathic hiccup. The process took hours, leaving everyone, especially Lyta, drained and frustrated. Tense words were exchanged between Lyta and Ivanova as she suggested that the farther they went from command level staff, the less likely they would be to find anyone. Ivanova obviously wanted nothing to do with this entire affair, but the pressure was all around her to submit. The pressure had the entire group yelling at each other, afraid and paranoid, just as Psi Corps must have wanted from the start. It was a classic divide and conquer tactic and it was working perfectly.

Just as Sheridan was about to snap at Garibaldi to suggesting that now would be a bad time for everyone to join hands and sing the Nigerian spiritual Kumbaya, Ivanova's resistance slipped enough for her to agree to the scan. She urged Lyta to hurry before she changed her mind. Lyta tried, but her first attempt was blocked. Startled, she tried again while Ivanova tried to calm her mind and admit the unwanted contact. This time it went through and, to more of everyone's surprise than they would liked to have admitted, she came through with no trace of any programming.

She was clean. They were all clean. There was no sleeper agent close to the Command Staff.

Then Talia Winters walked into the office and proved how wrong they were. Lyta, mostly out of the habit of several long hours, sent the telepathic command and it stuck. In an instant, the Talia everyone on the station had grown to respect and appreciate vanished without a trace, completely consumed by a furious Control. Feigning dizziness, the new Miss Winters fell against Garibaldi and lifted his gun. She snapped off a shot at Lyta, but Garibaldi moved faster than she did and pulled the weapons out of harm's reach. Howling 'The Corps is mother, the Corps is father,' as Garibaldi drug her out of the room to a cell, Miss Winters threatened the woman who had blown her perfect cover. 'We will find you,' she screamed. 'The Corps will find you!'

Later, once Lyta had been gotten to safety, disbelief and denial were in the thoughts of everyone on the Command Staff. Ivanova was out of the room, taking care of something personal, but Franklin, Sheridan, and Garibaldi discussed the damage a now traitor Talia could cause. She knew about the underground railroad and Franklin's part in that affair, but they knew about the sleeper program. It was a standoff, with neither side able to publicly reveal what they knew. Fortunately, they had not yet pulled Miss Winters into their splinter faction, which meant that secret was safe for the time being. They had lost a friend, but they had not lost their plans.

Ivanova had lost far more than a friend. She arrived at Talia's apartment to find the telepath packing. Her face was the same, but everything else, from her stance to her mode of speech, was completely changed. Ivanova appealed to the woman, trying to find some spark of the woman she had known and trusted before. In return, all she got was cold sarcasm and taunts about Control having been there the whole time she and Talia were together like some invisible sister, goading her into saying all the things Ivanova wanted to hear. It was all a lie, she said, and now Ivanova believed her. The friend she had, the woman she had been closer to than anyone else on the station, was truly dead. With regret, she turned and left Talia behind forever.

Another farewell took place in the Alien Sector. Lyta had very little time left before her transport left to spirit her away from the impending arrival of the Psi Cops, but she had to use what little Sheridan had bought her here with Kosh. She told him that in all the scans and all the interrogations she had undergone, she never told Psi Corps what she had seen that day in 2257. Only at night when she was alone would she touch the small corner of her mind where she hid the memory of him and let his voice sing her to sleep. Before she left, she just had to see him again. Without a word, Kosh's encounter suit opened and a brilliant light poured forth. Whatever emerged was for her alone to see, but as she gazed at him, the sound of something unfurling could be heard in the chamber. She stood rapt at the sight of him, a tear of joy coursing down her face.

The Psi Corp Sleeper Program

Instituted in 2250 before the election of President Louis Santiago, the Psi Corps sleeper agent project is based on Mars in the organization's huge research centre on Syria Planum. A complex, time consuming, and resource exhaustive process, the sleeper program has turned out no more than thirty subjects during its operational lifetime. The process takes more than a

month of constant examination and effort occupying at least two P12 or higher telepaths; these limitations alone explain the low turnout rate. The results of the program have been well worth the investment, as sleeper agents have been able to accomplish more for the Corps in nine years than its espionage division has since its inception.

The process relies on drugs and severely deep scans to force open the subconscious recesses of the target agent's mind. Once this level of thought has been reached, telepathic programming can get in and alter memories, skill sets, and the basic personality of the subject. In this way, psychic surgeons in the employ of the Corps can shape a new personality and leave it embedded in the core of the victim while maintaining the integrity of the true persona. The implanted personality is loyal to the Corps and possesses a number of skills vital to its intended task, generally a full suite of spying and espionage training. Once set, the new personality is always aware, though it can only act through the body physically while the victim is asleep. As this activity is not conducive to rest, the Corps persona has to be careful how often it acts in any given period of time.

At the time of President Clark's first year in office, sleeper agents were in place on three of the four main ships of the line in EarthForce, every major political office in EarthDome and its satellite offices on other colonies, and in key business interests and military organizations. The events of 'Divided Loyalties' shows that nowhere is safe, even targets with no apparent threat to Psi Corps or the regime of President Clark. Talia Winters, one of Psi Corps' most effective sleepers, was in place long before Santiago was assassinated or John Sheridan took over as its acting commander.

Scenarios and Campaign Hooks

5 With the revelation that Talia Winters was a sleeper agent, the staff of Babylon 5 are going to be a lot more paranoid of everything that goes on around the station, especially Security Chief Garibaldi. His feeling for the woman notwithstanding, he had been ready to bring her into the important work the Command Staff was doing behind the scenes. That kind of security breach occurring because of his misjudgement is going to have a marked effect on his ability to trust anything or anyone for some time. Players will have a tougher time getting away with anything illicit on the station or in any of its related venues while this continues, meaning that for the next few months, they will have to keep their heads down. This does open up a number of scenarios around the need to find alternate means of income for criminals now shut down by the higher levels of security and the opportunities that may open up in nearby sectors where traffic in stolen goods may be more time-consuming but easier. Campaigns set around illegal behaviour in Babylon 5 may have to relocate for a while, resulting in a change of scenery and some fresh locales for play to continue under slightly less watchful eyes.

5 Just as Talia Winters was a sleeper agent placed by Psi Corps to watch events unfold on Babylon 5, any of the players with a reason to be close to someone of power has the potential to be one as well. Campaigns with a sleeper agent in them could be run without the player of the secret traitor even knowing their true identity. In this kind of 'my friend, my enemy' campaign, play would continue with other plotlines, all the while a nemesis with no name and no visible presence is working against the players, sometimes thwarting their plans before anyone else would have a right to know of them. The action in this story thread would build until

finally some kind of showdown would occur, either between the other players and the 'sleepwalking' agent or their discovery of the process and their search for a cure. Just the latter possibility alone could be an entire story arc, with the players racing from rumour to rumour trying desperately to find a telepath or procedure powerful enough to remove the deadly agent lurking in the subconscious of their compatriot.

5 Universe Today is a powerful periodical with billions of readers across Earth controlled and inhabited space, but it is certainly not the only newspaper in existence. A campaign idea for a single player or a group of players is the inheritance of a failing newspaper and the responsibility to turn its flagging fortunes around. If the paper goes bankrupt, something it is only a few months from doing, the inheritors will be left destitute when its credit markers are called in, but the periodical could also be the source of great wealth and prestige if it can be turned around and built back up to the popularity it had before Universe Today appeared. How the players do this is up to them, but heavy negotiations, diplomatic or otherwise, would be an excellent way to start securing events to cover and hiring effective personnel to cover the many positions of a major newspaper. Before the story arcs are through, this kind of campaign could teach the players a lot about the cutthroat world of major league reporting and value of honest, or scandalously dishonest depending on the player's tastes, journalism.

The Long, Twilight Struggle (November 27th 2258)

'No dictator, no invader, can hold an imprisoned population by the force of arms forever. There is no greater power in the universe than the need for freedom. Against that power governments, and tyrants, and armies can not stand. The Centauri learned this lesson once. We will teach it to them again. Though it take a thousand years, we will be free.'

G'Kar

Two beautifully painted purple and gold sentri fighters and a deep violent vorchan warship flew through the stars in orbit above the lush greens and blues of Centauri Prime. Below, the Royal Palace twinkled like a jewel in the night. Two crystalline blue fountains sprayed up into the sky while young lovers wandered around its alabaster sides within the sheltering shadows of the Palace's polished white walls. Inside the ancient and majestic building, Lord Refa patted down the back of the Imperial Throne fondly. Before he could sit on it, as he very much appeared to wish to, Londo arrived and he greeted him warmly.

Londo returned the welcome, though his manner was slightly colder. Lord Refa dismissed Londo's gold-helmeted Centarum escort and took him back up to the throne to talk a bit more privately. Londo was concerned about the Emperor's absence, but Refa assured him



there was no cause for concern. Emperor Cartagia was out basking in, as Refa put it, the Centauri people's almost sincere adulation. It did not matter, he stressed again, as the Royal Court could function just as well with out him and often better. As if to punctuate his point, Refa sat down on the throne, making himself comfortable at the expense of Londo's visible comfort level.

Londo had a feeling this point was not lost of Cartagia either as said as much. Refa assured him that Cartagia understood his place and accepted it as he accepted Refa and his contacts, including Londo. Refa mentioned Londo's importance to the current administration and told him that he was often in the thoughts and words of folk on Centauri Prime. Londo's actions had brought him fame and a rising star in court, but the price had been the life of a dear friend and, he suspected, many more before Refa and his political jackals were through.

Death was surely on Refa's mind, but not that of anyone Londo knew and cared about. The blood to fuel his ambition was that of the Narn. The war that had begun six months earlier was about to end much sooner than anyone had projected and Londo was to be the hand that guided that victory firmly onto the side of the Centauri. He did not say how just yet, but Refa's eyes sparkled with a deadly plan.

On Babylon 5 many light years away, there was little on Delenn's mind but her evening's meditations. As she concentrated on letting each stress of the day flow through her and out into the universe for its much broader shoulders to carry, a warm and familiar light shone on her face. She recognized the feel of it and greeted the radiance, without opening her eyes, as a dear friend. In Command and Control, Lieutenant Corwin picked up an unusual energy surge from the supposedly dead world of Epsilon 3, the planet Babylon 5 orbited. Knowing that Commander Ivanova had always been prepared for something like this, he tried to alert her of the activity.

The last thing Sheridan expected to see after just coming out of a hot shower was a glowing Minbari male appearing in his living room and disrupting a communication from Ivanova. She had been telling him of something unusual he needed to know about when the stranger appeared and proved that she was right. Sheridan did not know who this person was, but the man seemed to know him. Moreover, he seemed convinced that they should talk. From his tone, the Minbari was not going to be denied.

While Sheridan stood there in his bathrobe, the Minbari introduced himself as Draal. Though he doubted Sheridan knew who he was, the Captain had carefully studied the notes left behind by his

predecessor and knew the name as belonging to the Minbari that had taken custody of the machine on Epsilon 3. Draal disagreed, not in who he was but in the concept that one could take custody of a planet. As he informed Sheridan, the planet took custody of him.

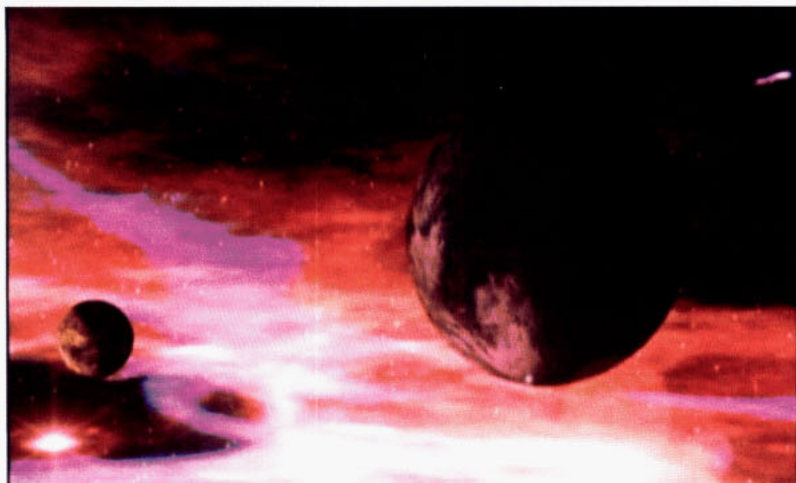
He did not appear to be the same person that had gone down to Epsilon 3 with Delenn and Londo a year before, but that was also easily explained. The Great Machine had restored and nourished him, returning his appearance and health to a the point he was at thirty years prior. He was its steward now, taken over from the one that had been there before him and would remain until his own death some time in the future. He did not wish to bore Sheridan with the details of his humble, but remarkably overstated credentials, but the Captain was anything but bored even if he had just come out of the shower.

Draal had not appeared merely to say hello; he had another purpose in mind, one that required Sheridan to come down to see him personally. He was not worried about such silly details as transportation, Epsilon 3's defences, or communications. He had all of that under control. He informed Sheridan to come down as soon as it was convenient, provided that his earliest convenience was as soon as possible. He also told Sheridan before disappearing from sight that he could bring one other person with him. Draal was confident Sheridan would know to take.

In another small meeting room in Green Sector, confidence was in short supply. G'Sten, G'Kar's uncle and one of the Narn War Leaders, tells his nephew that the war against the Centauri was not going well. Colonies and outposts in three of the Narn systems had all lost contact and were presumed conquered by the enemy. The war had pushed the Narn back farther than they had been in thirty years, and this news gave G'Kar reason to despair. None of this had been in his weekly reports, but that was the Ka'Rhi trying to foster the idea that there was still hope of defeating the Centauri. Now, it seemed there was none.

G'Sten tried to cheer up his favourite relation. He told G'Kar there was always hope, though he also admitted that such things were what he told himself late at night when all he could hear was the beating of his own desperate heart. Still, he did have a plan. Narn intelligence had learned of the location of the Centauri fleet's main supply world, Gorash 7. If they committed the bulk of their fleet to an all out strike against that planet, they could take it, making the war too expensive for the Centauri to fight easily. Their foes wanted a quick victory, not a prolonged struggle. Making them pay dearly for every inch of Narn space they took might take the taste for war away from the Centauri and buy the Narn time to bolster their defences and rally their fleets into a renewed fighting force. It was desperate and it left their homeworld vulnerable, but it was the only chance they had.

G'Kar saw this as a dangerous gamble, but the window of vulnerability for homeworld was very small and he could appreciate the need to change strategies now while there was still time to snatch victory from the looming jaws of defeat. He dearly wished he was going with his uncle, but G'Sten knew that G'Kar's place was here, doing work that would prove to be more valuable to the Narn than an entire fleet of ships. He grasped his nephew's arms and bid him goodby. G'Sten told him that his father would have been very proud, something G'Kar took as the highest of compliments.



In the Royal Palace on Centauri Prime, the entire plan G'Kar had just heard was relayed to Londo as well. Refa had received an intercepted transmission between Narn ships detailing the Gorash 7 assault. It might have been a fake, but Refa thought it had the right ring of true desperation to be true. He had convinced enough generals of this to accomplish his grand plan, a plan Londo was to play a vital role in bringing to fruition.

Instead of setting a trap with the bulk of Centauri forces at Gorash 7 for the Narn fleet, Refa wanted Londo to set one there with the mysterious forces at his command. While those shadowy allies were slicing the Narns apart, Refa's generals would be launching an all-out assault on the barely defended Narn homeworld. Though Londo was correct that any invading force trying to conquer Narn on the ground would be up to its own necks in Centauri blood, Refa had on intention of having that happen. Instead, he would be using mass drivers to flatten the planet's cities and based from orbit. Mass drivers had been banned by every civilized race in the galaxy, but as Refa said with the same air of disregard that he had accepted being damned by Emperor Turhan, these were uncivilized times.

Londo was plagued with doubt over this plan. His allies had begun to scare him. Their strength and power were the very assets Refa desired but they were also worrisome to Londo because this was happening too quickly and things were spinning out of control. Refa, convincing as ever, made an impassioned plea that touched on all of Mollari's weaknesses. This move, while risky and illegal by galactic standards and by their own treaties, would end the war in days instead of months and save thousands of Centauri lives. It was a chance for the Centauri to achieve victory and glory once again, crushing her enemies and standing tall among the stars as the race had done before. It all hinged on Londo and his decision. A dozen battlecruisers were waiting in hyperspace, his word alone the force that would set them into motion. Pride and a desire to serve his people proved to be his undoing once more; Londo agreed but on the condition that this was the last time. After this, the Centauri would have to earn its own destiny without the help of others.

In Sheridan's office, Garibaldi ranted to them about how much of a risk this message from Draal, if he was even the one who sent it, could be. Delenn did not believe it was anything but genuine; Draal did look differently, but he appeared as he did when she was his pupil back on Minbar. Garibaldi was worried that he might have changed after a year's exposure to the Great Machine or that another power had sent it hoping to get Sheridan and Delenn in a shuttle and exposing them to Epsilon 3's lethal defence. It was a valid concern, but Ivanova's confirmation that the message was

at least genuinely from the planet was all Sheridan needed. He and Delenn would accept the invitation. Garibaldi would have felt more comfortable sending a security team with the Captain, but Draal had specified only one other guest, and that evidently meant Delenn.

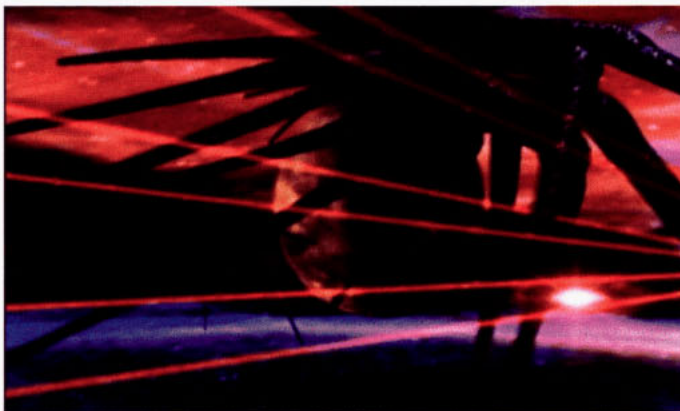
After making contact with his allies and arranging for the trap at Gorash 7, Londo met with Refa and some of his allies in the court. The others were sent on ahead, but Refa remained to give Londo a special surprise. He had reserved a place for them both aboard the primus battlecruiser *Valerius*, the ship at the head of the fleet headed for the Narn homeworld. Not only had he signed the death warrant for an entire world, he would now have to watch from a front row seat at its execution was carried out.

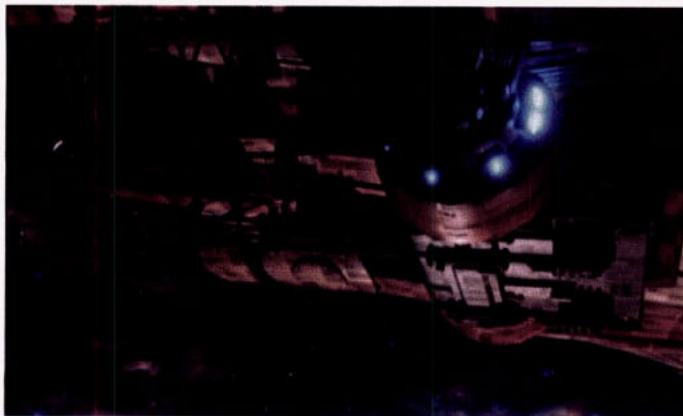
A lone shuttle left Babylon 5 and made its way to the surface of Epsilon 3. Aboard, Sheridan and Delenn were excited about seeing Draal and the Great Machine. Back on the station, there was no excitement in G'Kar at all, just a sense of dread as he entered MedLab and saw firsthand the price of their war with the Centauri. The dying and wounded were on every table and bed the facility had, with human medical personnel rushing to save those they could and ease the passing of those they could not. He was there to answer a summons from Doctor Franklin, though the sight of this suffering made him wish he could do more to help them.

One of Franklin's patients from this batch of refugees, all from the agricultural Narn world of Dross, had told him that he had been thoroughly interrogated by Centauri soldiers about the Narn homeworld's defences. That did not surprise G'Kar, but the fact that the Centauri warships pulled out before fully securing Dross did. They were normally very thorough, which made this withdraw very out of character for them. While their pulling out of Dross had saved this group of refugees, it bode very ill for his homeworld.

It reminded Franklin of the last days of the Earth/Minbari War when the Minbari stopped meticulously killing every human in their path and went past colonies on Mars and Io to strike directly at Earth. The analogy was not lost on the Narn ambassador. G'Kar thanked Franklin sincerely and rushed out of MedBay to relay the news to his uncle. There might still be time to turn the fleet back.

In the tunnels under the surface of Epsilon 3, Sheridan was being led by Delenn's self-professed excellent sense of direction towards the Great Machine. They walked past archaic corridors of solid stone in a labyrinth of small passages. He wanted to be sure she





knew where she was going, and she told him she was certain, 'absofragginglutely, damn it.' She had been studying the human use of language and hoped he approved. He was not so sure he did, but this was not the time or place for a discussion on cursing.

Any concerns of that kind fell away as they entered the central spire of the Great Machine's complex. It was a vast chamber that extended as high and as far down as they could see. Blue columns of cut stone and glowing light lines the massive walls, pulses of radiance shuttling up and down them at seemingly random intervals. A long railless bridge spanned the cavern and led deeper into the planet's crust. It was a magnificent structure, so much so that Sheridan wondered if he would ever wish to go home again.

On the station, G'Kar shouted into a BabCom unit at his uncle to no avail. He knew the Centauri war pattern of attack, neutralize, secure, advance as well as the older War Leader, but G'Sten was not convinced. He thought perhaps the Centauri had withdrawn from Dross because of heavy resistance, but G'Kar had just seen the broken truth of that fallacy in MedLab. He begged for more time to get the proof G'Sten would need to turn the fleet around, but the attack was about to launch. G'Sten ended the transmission, promising to continue the conversation upon his return.

There was no conversation between Sheridan and Delenn many miles below. The sights and sounds of the Great Machine were simply overwhelming. Draal was not one to every be short of words, it would seem. Within a minute of their arriving, he had complimented Delenn's new appearance and told Sheridan that while he had not been sure of him at first, the Captain's choices had been wise, his attitudes commendable, and his patience greater than Draal's would have been. He had also mentioned the loss of Sheridan's wife and his role in, as the Keeper of the Great Machine put it, 'a grand conspiracy of light aimed against his own government'. Sheridan tried to protest ignorance, but Draal could see and hear the thoughts of distant stars; spying on a space station orbiting above his head was no big deal.

The mention of Sheridan's past marriage made Delenn uncomfortable and being called out on what he had been trying to keep secret made Sheridan feel the same way. Draal, for his part, seemed to be enjoying both reactions in a voyeuristic sort of way, but that was not why he had called them here. All their secrets were safe with him. Anyone wanting to learn his secrets would have to dig three miles into Epsilon 3 just to find him and no one that tried would survive the attempt, he assured them. All of that aside, he was prepared to make good on his promise of a year ago. He had seen enough and now that he knew all that the Great Machine could do, it was time to put that power in Sheridan's hands. It would be a

hard fought battle to defeat the coming of the Shadows, but in that long, twilight struggle, there was the possibility of hope. Sheridan and his allies, of which there would be many more to come, were not alone.

The same could not be said for the Narn. Their massive fleet of G'Quan cruisers and Frazi heavy fighters emerged from hyperspace and proceeded on their attack vector to the supply planet of Gorash 7. They intended to destroy its capabilities utterly, crippling the Centauri offensive. It was a battle they would never fight, as their true opponents lay elsewhere, hidden in the darkness between the stars. Like deadly blights in the midnight sky they came, Shadow ships of terrible design and power.

G'Sten, a cautious man even if he did not believe his nephew's warning before, inquired about their ability to jump. The fleet's engines needed time to recharge. This left them with only one option; they closed formation and prepared to attack. They did not recognize these strange vessels but they were moving in on the Narn on an attack vector. The two fleets clashed, the bulk of Narn's war machine versus four Shadow ships. The result was a fire fight of epic proportions. The Narn opened up the engagement with a flight of energy mines. These erupted in a corona of bright light, discomfiting but not seriously injuring the Shadow vessels. The weapons must have had some effect though, as even in the vacuum of space there was a resonating inhuman shriek of pain from them all.

Their response was far deadlier. The lead vessel fired a spiked ball of dark matter that exploded into hundreds of tiny shards, each one a fighter craft half the size of a Frazi but twice as fast and manoeuvrable. They swarmed the Narn Fleet while another Shadow ship unleashed a devastating energy beam. The lance of bright purple light tore straight through one of the G'Quan heavy cruisers, ripping its engines apart and leaving it dead in space. The battle of Gorash 7 had begun.

From his apartment on Babylon 5, G'Kar was with them in prayer and in spirit. He sat in a meditation chair, surrounded by candles with his copy of the Book of G'Quan at hand, and prayed for the survival and victory of the fleet. He knew this was their one chance, their only chance to emerge from the war with the Centauri victorious. Though he could not know what demons they were facing, G'Kar knew they were in a desperate battle and as he prayed, he could somehow sense that the hand of the universe was closing around them, crushing out their light and their lives.

The Shadows were indeed annihilating the Narn Fleet. While the tiny black fighters overwhelmed the Frazi screen in front of the cruisers, beam after scything beam of light from the four larger ships were cutting everything in their path asunder. The pride of the Narn navy was being slashed to pieces and there was nothing they could do in retaliation. The best they could do, combining the fire of three cruisers, was injure one of the Shadow vessels by blowing off one of its spiny extremities. It was too little, too late and G'Sten knew it.

Ordering the fleet to fall back, he had every remaining ship open jump points and try to flee into hyperspace. The Shadows, still not prepared to have any survivors spread the news of their return just yet, unleashed another devastating weapon. The Shadow ships each disgorged a ball of brilliant white light and fired them into the hearts of the jump points before the cruisers could make it out. The balls burst on contact with the hyperspace window at the centre of the points and caused the jumpgates to fall apart with the ships

Eye on History: The War of Retribution - End of the Line

With every system in the Narn Regime effectively lost to the Centauri except for homeworld, things have gone from desperate to all but defeated. With all hope gone except for the possibility of a miracle, one is provided to the Ka'Rhi in the form of intelligence garnered by isolated Narn ships trapped behind enemy lines. The Narn learnt that this world is the main supply line garrison for the entire Centauri offensive. Without this system, the armada assembled by Grand Admiral Dromo will be unable to press on into Homeworld and may have to fall back across the occupied line to prepare for any further offensives.

Attacking the garrison world of Gorash 7 has a slim chance of success unless the Narn commit the remaining bulk of the Silver fleet under War Leader G'Sten to the mission. Doing this would strip most of the defences away from homeworld, but everyone involved in making the decision knows the truth about the Regime's chances of repelling the 15th Victorious Fleet and its supplemental attack waves in any case. With literally nothing to lose, the orders are given and the Silver Fleet enters hyperspace to mass near Gorash 7 for Narn's valiant last attempt to prolong the war and buy themselves precious time.

Multiple potential engagements were between the Silver Fleet and the Gorash system, but in each one, the fleet went unnoticed by the Centauri fleets. The Narn were able to pass undetected through Quadrant 1 and Beta 3, both systems in which the Silver Fleet had anticipated difficult battles. The Narn on the Silver Fleet attributed this to fortune and the Gods, but there were a few who saw this for the trap it was. Even Grand Admiral Dromo was not informed of Centauri Prime's true goals regarding Gorash 7, but like a dutiful soldier he followed orders and did not jeopardize plans he was not privy to. If he had, the tragedy of Gorash 7 might have been prevented, which merely highlighted his effectiveness as one of the greatest Admirals in Centauri history.

Dromo realized the position the Narn homeworld was now in with most of its active defenders away. Instead of pressing the attack, he requested confirmation of his intention to merely blockade the planet and return the bulk of his forces to Quadrant 1 to catch the Silver Fleet when it returned from its inexplicably permitted raid against the Gorash system. The Narn homeworld had innumerable mines, automated defences, and literally millions of Narn troops prepared to fight to the death against any ground assault. Why spend Centauri lives attacking this place when it could simply be forced to surrender once its defenders were destroyed at Quadrant 1?

Instead, he was met in Quadrant 14 by a sizable fleet direct from Centauri Prime and a field promotion to Grand Fleet Admiral. The latter was an inducement to convince him to continue the assault on the Narn homeworld, orders that he nearly retired over rather than carry out. The ships from Centauri Prime were under the direct command of Lord Refa's supporters and were carrying retrofitted mass drivers, weapons of mass destruction as banned and forbidden as the fusion bombs the Narns has refrained from using earlier in the war.

Ships from every nearby area were pulled in for the final assault. While the Silver Fleet met its end cut apart by the deadly energy beams of mysterious Shadow ships, the same force that had echoed the beginning of this conflict with their attack on Quadrant 37 in 2258, the Centauri contingents at Kotok, Quadrant 1, and his own 15th Victorious Fleet in Quadrant 14 combined into a single, vast armada with one goal- the destruction of the Narn capital and the end of the War of Retribution.

On December 9th 2259, the Centauri tore through the automated defences and began the bombardment of the Narn homeworld. Within hours, the only way for the Centauri primus battlecruisers to target their mass drivers through the intense dust clouds obscuring the world's atmosphere was through magnetic imaging and even that was difficult because of planet-wide distortions. By this point, targeting was hardly necessary. The War was over, though it officially did not end until three days later when the Ka'Rhi, left with no choice except the complete eradication of all life on the Narn homeworld and then outward towards every other colony world in the Regime, offered unconditional surrender on December 12th, 2259.

Key Events: Silver Fleet destroyed by the Shadows at Gorash 7; Dromo promoted to Grand Fleet Admiral; Surface devastation of Narn homeworld by mass drivers; Surrender by Ka'Rhi resulting in the end of the War of Retribution

Worlds/Systems Lost: Narn Homeworld (Ruined), Entire territory of Narn Regime (Victor: Centauri)

still in them. The resulting energies annihilated the last surviving ships of the Narn attack fleet, sending G'Sten to an unmarked grave among the stars and ending the battle at Gorash 7. Their work done, the Shadows turned and disappeared into the darkness as quietly as they had come, leaving only the slight echo of their terrible, alien screams and the floating debris of dozens of Narn ships to mark their passing.

Alone, in the dark of his room and the gutting light of his dying candles, G'Kar knew. His race had not been psychic in any fashion since the Centauri had killed everyone in the bloodlines with the talent, but somehow he knew the moment the Shadows killed his uncle. He knew the fleet had failed. He knew the war was lost. He

knew, in the instant that the Shadows vanished, that all hope for his people was fading from the universe. He did not know how, but he knew. With trembling, gloved fingers, he snuffed out the last candle and collapsed into his chair. The future had grown dark indeed.

In the heart of Epsilon 3, Draal recommended that Sheridan not inform his government of their alliance. Sheridan was inclined to agree, as the thought of this as a very valuable ace in the hole against the day he would need to draw upon its strength. Earth Dome would only try to use the Great Machine for Clark's agenda, not something he wanted to have any part of. As they talked, Draal began picking up distress calls and sent Sheridan on ahead.,



knowing that the station would need him very soon. Delenn remained behind for a moment after Draal told her to introduce Sheridan to 'the others' and inquired to her friend's health. He assured her he was all right and that now that he was out of hiding and had become one with the Great Machine, he would be around her more often. The news pleased her greatly. As she left, Draal called out for one of the creature he mentioned as living in the complex as well, caretakers of the Machine. 'Zathras!' he shouted, but to no avail. The quirky little man was never around when he was needed.

On the station, they indeed needed Sheridan's leadership. News of the Centauri attack on the Narn homeworld had reached the general population and all hell was breaking loose between the Narn and Centauri populations. Despite Garibaldi's quick thinking and Ivanova's prepared responses to the emergency, the 'balloon had gone up' to quote the commander and there was little they could do to contain the situation. Traffic between levels had been closed off and security was breaking up any group larger than five, but they were only patches on a very large and rapidly widening chasm.

The Zocalo in particular, always the centre of any crisis among the station's general population, had exploded into violence when ISN broadcast a report of the attack. Narn and Centauri began beating each other in to unconsciousness or worse before Security could so much as begin to intervene. The war had spilled over into Babylon 5 and it showed no signs of being controllable.

Rumour on the station among the Command Staff was that the Centauri were using mass drivers to bombard the Narn homeworld, something Ivanova found hard to believe and Sheridan found all too easy to trust. At Narn itself, the truth could be seen from space, as primus battlecruisers hurled asteroids through gravitic accelerators down onto the planet's surface. Massive atmospheric disruptions exploded around each meteor's entry and closed around the resulting fiery plume of rock and soil that shattered outward from its impact point. The assault was relentless, coming from multiple ships and directed against all of Narn's major cities and defensive installations. The destruction was obscene in its scope, reducing most of the surface of the world to ruins.

From his forward observation chamber aboard the Valerius, Londo watched in mounting horror as the hell he had created for the Narn people came to pass. He had dreamed of glory and a return to the old days of the Centauri Republic; now that dream was coming to pass and all he could feel was revulsion at what he had done. His road to the Throne was being paved with asteroids, each one a terrible strike against an already doomed race. The weight of

his decisions left him shaken, cringing inwards as the mass drivers aboard the ships around him glowed again and again with each shot.

On Babylon 5, four days of this barbarism passed with their Advisory Council's protests against the use of mass drivers against civilian populations having no effect or acknowledgment that they had even been heard. Communication with Narn was almost impossible given the continuing siege, but the Ka'Rhi were refusing to surrender even though the surface of their world was all but destroyed, with all of the cities lying in rubble without power or water for the few who had survived the assault. Narn's economy had already crumbled and there was no appreciable medical attention for its people. If the Ka'Rhi did not surrender soon, Earth analysts feared, the entire planet's infrastructure would collapse.

In the Zocalo, there was no activity at all; armed security in full body armour and PPG rifles ensured that the corridor was kept clear. The riots were contained for now, more out of a sense of numbness and shock at the Narn travesty than because of anything else. In another of his less than sensitive statements, ISN quoted Senator Ronald Quantrell as saying, 'They are being bombed back into the Stone Age.'

In G'Kar's quarters, he was taking what would likely be the last message he would ever receive from his friend Kha'Mak. Still on Narn, Kha'Mak had learned of the Ka'Rhi's decision to surrender as it was their only hope for the survival of their race. G'Kar's desire to return home to his family was understandable but he was the only member of the Ka'Rhi still safe because he was on Babylon 5. With luck, the Centauri would feel generous and allow the Narn on the station to remain free, but if not, they would surely need the support and guidance he could give them. Kha'Mak could not talk much longer as the power where he was on Narn kept failed, but before his final transmission ended, he had to ask something of G'Kar. It would be the last order of the Ka'Rhi and the hardest thing he would ever have to do.

In Sheridan's quarters, darkened since he shut off his BabCom unit in disgust over the war coverage, G'Kar came to him, humbled and near broken by the weight of the request he had to make. On the behest of his government as the only thing that could ensure his safety, G'Kar had been instructed to swallow what was left of his pride and ask for sanctuary aboard Babylon 5.

In one of the docking bays, Londo Mollari returned to an armed contingent of security guards, there at Garibaldi's orders to ensure his safety. It was clear from the resentment in his eyes that the Security Chief was doing this only out of duty, not some any concern for the man he had once called friend. The truth of this was not lost on Londo, but then, what was the loss of one more to the pyre of his ambition? At least he had not been forced to drive a coutari through Garibaldi as he had with Urza. Avoiding eye contact, the only outward sign of his shame, Londo requested an immediate meeting of the Advisory Council and the league of Non-Aligned Worlds. He had an announcement to make.

The announcement was as dire as everyone present for the meeting had feared. The Narn Regime was broken and its war with the Centauri was at an end; the Ka'Rhi had offered its total and unconditional surrender. On the wake of this shocking but not unexpected announcement, Londo laid out the terms imposed by his government. The first was that the ruling body known as the

Ka'Rhi would be disbanded and its members subject to arrest and trial for the commission of war crimes against the Centauri. This term drew a request from Sheridan that Earth be allowed to send a representative to oversee those trials, but Londo denied it.

The second term was imposed to prevent further acts of terror by the Narn. From that day forth, the penalty for the murder of any Centauri by any Narn would be the execution of five hundred Narns, beginning with the perpetrator's own family. It was a barbaric term, but the Centauri had no cause to be kind and with Refa and his allies in power, there would be little chance of generosity. This was shown clearly in the third terms, that of the formation of a provisional ruling council appointed by Londo's government to take up the responsibility of rebuilding a more civilized Narn government as a colony of the greater Centauri Republic.

Londo's last term sounded far more personal than the rest. 'Because the Narn homeworld is now a protectorate of the Centauri Republic, we reserve the right to determine who can speak for Narn. As a result, Ambassador G'Kar may no longer represent the Narn in any official capacity whatsoever. His appointment as ambassador to Babylon 5 is hereby withdrawn. As the only member of the Ka'Rhi still at large, Citizen G'Kar will return to Narn for trial.'

This time, it was Sheridan's turn to deny Londo. He informed Londo that prior to the meeting, G'Kar came to him and asked for sanctuary. As it was within his power grant, he did so, meaning that as a neutral station, even the wishes of the Centauri had no bearing on G'Kar's disposition. Despite the agreement between the Narn and the Centauri for the complete surrender of all members of the Ka'Rhi, Sheridan did not sign that agreement and Delenn, speaking for the Minbari government, agreed with his decision to offer G'Kar the safety guaranteed by Babylon 5's political neutrality charter. Londo, forced to agree, did so but that the stipulation that Citizen G'Kar could no longer remain in the Council Chamber. Sheridan tried to convince Londo that the Centauri would need a credible symbol of the Narn to keep the peace here, but he would not be denied this victory over G'Kar.

Before the argument could come to blows, G'Kar himself solved the dilemma. Rising from his chair, he straightened his clothes of office and addressed the Council. His presence was incredible as he began to speak, even capturing the attention of Kosh. 'No dictator,' he told the assembly, 'no invader can hold an imprisoned population by force of arms forever. There is no greater power in the universe than the need for freedom. Against that power, governments and tyrants and armies cannot stand. The Centauri learned this lesson once. We will teach it to them again. Though it take a thousand years, we will be free.' With that, he left the Chamber, no longer a legal member of the Council yet retaining the one thing Londo thought he could destroy- his pride.

In his quarters later, Londo took some small consolation in the news that there was joy and dancing in the streets on Centauri Prime as Emperor Cartagia announced a week long festival in commemoration of their victory over the Narn. His contentment at this news quickly faded as he learned the his own government had also annexed several other small colony worlds around their borders unrelated to the conflict. This was the first sign of the 'spinning out of control' he had warned Refa about. Though the official word from Centauri Prime was that they did not have expansionistic intent at this time, even Earth Dome was not so sure.

In a nearby room, Sheridan was offering G'Kar any support he could give to help the man he had come to respect through his

words and his courage win back his planet. He told G'Kar that he could not imagine the next ten years passing by without seeing him in the Council Chamber or hearing his unique insight. The Narn's words had become very valuable to him and if there was anything he could do, any contact or resource he could offer, it was at G'Kar's command. He extended his hand in friendship, but G'Kar has reservations. The last time he had reached out his hand to someone, they were at war with each other 24 hours later. Still, the past was dead and the future could not be reborn without allies. Daring just once more to hope, he took the hand that was offered and accepted all that went with it.

On his way out of that meeting, Sheridan was called to the Conference Centre, a large meeting hall reserved for sizable gathering of people on the station, by Delenn. He arrived to find a room filled with humans and Minbari, many dressed in the same robes the Ranger that had contacted Garibaldi wore. He found Delenn among them and asked incredulously what this was all about. His conspiracy of light was about to get much larger, as Delenn had brought him here to meet the 'others' Draal had mentioned. Garibaldi was also here, finally able to tell his Captain about the Rangers and admitting that he had not done so before now because Sinclair had asked him not to. Even Kosh was in attendance, though he was silent through the entire meeting.

But now it was time for all to be revealed to Sheridan. Delenn and Garibaldi explained the gather to him and how all of these people had come to pledge themselves directly to his service. They had sworn their lives, their fortunes, and their blood to fight the coming darkness. The Rangers in this area and their allies had been under Delenn's direct command, an authority she now invested equally in him. Like them, she would stand with him in the days ahead and help him fight the Great War that would come quickly now that the Narn-Centauri conflict was ended.

Seeing them all, Rangers and their allies with everything they had to offer and their pledge of support, made Sheridan swell with pride. Addressing them now as their commander, he could only say that he did not quite know what to say. Then he found the right words to stir their hearts and their blood, proving that he was the right choice to lead them after all.

'For the last year, things haven't exactly been going our way. I was starting to wonder if it would ever get better. I think it just did. Tell the other Rangers, the ambassadors, everyone in this army of Light that Babylon 5 stands with you. Tell them that from this place, we will deliver notice to the parliaments of conquerors that a line has been drawn against the darkness. And we will hold that line, no matter the cost.'

The Great Machine of Epsilon 3

With Draal of Minbar at the heart of the Great Machine, its vast resources and power are now at the disposal of Captain John Sheridan and the Minbari ambassador and former Satai of the Grey Council Delenn. With these two guiding its searches into the location of allies and the accumulation of vital information in the day preceding the Great War, the forces amassed against the Shadows will have all the tools they need to defend themselves and have a real chance at turning back the darkness.

The Great Machine has revealed a number of capabilities to Sheridan and Delenn. In addition to its impressive array of particle beam and missile defences, it can project a holographic

image of its Keeper (Draal, in this case) anywhere within at least the orbital range of Epsilon 3. It has impressive abilities of surveillance, allowing Draal to see and hear over an undisclosed but presumably vast distance. The Machine may also grant extra-sensory perceptions and even the ability to hear thoughts, as he has been able to learn things that have remained unsaid within his range. These sensors will be invaluable in the Great War, as it will allow Sheridan and Delenn to monitor the state of affairs all around them instantly, as they will not be limited to mundane devices for their information.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

As seen during the bombing of Narn by Centauri battlecruisers using mass drivers, the use of certain weapons of war are banned by multiple treaties within the civilized races of the galaxy. Banned because of the incredible violence and destruction they cause as well as the impact their use could potentially have in interstellar commerce and planetary viability, weapons of mass destruction have not been seen in any major conflict since they were deployed by the Dilgar during their disastrous war with the newborn Earth fleet.

The weapons left a devastated series of planets behind, a testament both to the sheer folly of using such terrible engines of war and the insanity of the Dilgar that they would turn them against their own planets just to kill human ground troops sieging their cities. These lessons were well learned after the Earth defeated the Dilgar despite these weapons, leading the galactic community to unilaterally ban them as the threats they truly were. Only when the Centauri used them successfully to end their war of aggression against the Narn were these devices considered again by other starfaring races. Now, the future of weapons of mass destruction is unclear.

Sanctions against the Centauri for their indiscretion have reopened the possibility of other planetary systems using them against their neighbours. The decimated Narn may have company on the list of civilizations to suffer the depredations of these terrible devices. Unless string measures are taken in the wake of the Narn-Centauri War, mass drivers, nuclear missiles, and other weapons of mass destruction will certainly see increasing use in the conflicts ahead.

The End of the Narn-Centauri War

In a storm of stones from the heavens, the planet of Narn was given a fatal baptism of fire, one from which it emerges not cleansed but utterly devastated. The Centauri ended six months of costly warfare in a few short hours with their mass driver attack, forcing the Ka'Rhi, the ruling body of the Narn, to offer an unconditional surrender to stop the merciless bombardment of their homeworld and the ceaseless slaughter of their people in the year 2259. The first was accomplished, but the second was relegated to a slower form of massacre in the guise of forced work camps and military executions.

This was a dark time for the Narn people, but it was not necessarily the end for them. The Narn homeworld was all but destroyed and occupied heavily by the Centauri and the race's many planets and colonies were absorbed as protectorates by the Republic, but there were still many free Narns abroad in places like Babylon 5 and on military vessels refusing to surrender. What will follow this is a period of hunting and readjustment, while the surviving Narn race

find their own place in the galaxy again and plot the long, hard road to regaining their freedom.

Scenarios and Campaign Hooks

5 The end of the war between the Narn and the Centauri opens up several new campaign and story arc possibilities. The annexation of smaller worlds along the borders of Centauri space will mostly happen peacefully as no other race on that area can hope to stand against the might of the Republic, but not every world will surrender easily. Players may be drawn into these conflicts as mercenaries, traders caught in the wrong Quadrant at the wrong time, or Centauri soldiers ordered to pacify a world full of civilians at gun point. A lot of hard decisions and difficult choices can be posed in game, with the results having sweeping consequences for the players and the campaign alike. Will a Centaurum player shoot unarmed civilians just because some noble back on Centauri Prime wants to build a summer home on the family's land? With an Earth merchant trader use their empty cargo space to air lift refugees off a contested world, knowing that it might be shot down for doing so? How long will delegates and diplomats from other races stay quiet while this slow erosion of the galaxy takes place and what risk will they endure to try and act against it?

5 For Narn players, this is a time of great turmoil. Even those who have completely avoided entering the Narn-Centauri War in any capacity will have to make a hard choice now; he is no longer considered a free Narn but a conscript of the Narn Protectorate under the rulership of the Centauri Republic. Little better than slaves, they no longer have personal rights aside from the few afforded them by their new masters. Ownership of material assets is an indulgence the Centauri can revoke at any time, putting Narn traders and ship captains in a very tenuous position. Some races will shelter Narns in their territory, while others will turn them in hoping to receive better treatment from the Centauri when the Republic turns its attention their way. While the Great War will interrupt the plans of Centauri Prime, there is no way for Narn players to know that in character yet, which means all of these things must be considered and weighed carefully. Narn soldiers may take part in the resistance movement coordinated through G'Kar and the remnants of their military, while diplomats and agents will have their hands full trying to curry favour with other races. It will be a long, twilight struggle of a different kind of the Narn, but it is one that virtually every Narn character in campaigns set during this period must fight.

5 For the first time in the official campaign timeline, a number of Rangers and allies have been seen. The Rangers are still a closed group, their membership the province of Jeffrey Sinclair and the group's founders back on Minbar. Allies are a different story now, and Games Masters should carefully consider the idea of letting players wishing to serve the Army of Light join this select organization. Only people with something important to contribute will be brought in initially, with their backgrounds undergoing great scrutiny before they are ever approached. Players found worthy will be taken in, made a part of the coalition, and given an idea of the darkness to come. This should be the first time the Shadows are mentioned to players in any campaign approximating the official story line, though as always, individual campaigns may make exceptions. The Great War is nearly upon the younger races of the galaxy, and an entire campaign can be based around which side, if any, the players decide to take.



Comes the Inquisitor (December 19th 2258)

'Unacceptable! What a sad thing you are. Unable to answer even such a simple question without falling back on references, and genealogies and what other people call you. Have you nothing of your own? Nothing to stand on that is not provided, defined, delineated, stamped, sanctioned, numbered, and approved by others? How can you expected to fight for someone else when you haven't the fairest idea who you are?'

Sebastian

G'Kar was no longer an ambassador, but his right to speak in public had not been taken away. He could see the oppression that would come soon enough to the other races if they did not take action and perhaps, if they did, the Centauri would be distracted from subjugating his people for a time. On a small riser in the Zocalo, he tried to warn anyone who would listen that while the Centauri's guns were silent for now, it was only a matter of time before they were trained on another civilization. Some in the Zocalo argued that the dispute had been between the two races and no one else, but G'Kar knew better. They were an empire, and empires only thrive on conquest.

Another Narn, hearing this public oration, mounted the riser and tried to stop him from being an embarrassment to himself and the others. G'Kar did not see it that way. It was duty to make sure that no one could forget about the Narn. If they fell out of sight, they would surely fall out of mind and then oblivion would truly claim the Narn Race. To keep that from happening, he had to go on reminding anyone who would hear him of what the Centauri did to his race and would eventually do to theirs now that they had been allowed to do so without protest.

There was another reason for the Narn's interruption. The other Narn were holding a meeting and as their leader, he was required to attend. He was hardly through speaking in the Zocalo, but there would be time for speeches to the masses later. If his people

were gathering for matter of some import, then that was where he was needed most. As he left, he failed to notice that his words had mattered to someone. Standing on a gantry above the Zocalo, Vir Cotto had heard him all too clearly.

Delenn was in Red Sector, called there by the Vorlon Kosh. He was standing, covered in shadows, at the end of a long hallway. For the first time since she had known him, she was afraid. Not of him, but of something about him. She could sense his news was dire before she even learned it, but when she did, her feeling had been correct. The other Vorlons were unsure of her and her worthiness to be in the spotlight of the upcoming Great War. They were sending an inquisitor to make sure. Delenn knew what the word meant and her fear grew. It passed all measuring when Kosh told her that she would know she was worthy, but only if she survived.

In Sheridan's office, Delenn secured permission for the inquisitor to come aboard and conduct his interrogation unimpeded. This was made more difficult because she could not tell him who the man was or what he wanted; she was forbidden to do so by Kosh. Sheridan did not object to the vague request coming as it did from someone he had been through so much with and was growing more fond of with each passing day. He just wanted to understand what was happening.

Delenn and Lenneir tried to explain without breaking Kosh's edict. She told Sheridan that Kosh had doubts about her, but she was corrected by Lenneir. In his estimation, it was not doubt rather than simply wishing to be sure. To the Vorlons, the wrong person doing the right thing for the wrong reason was not preferable to the right thing not being done at all. To make sure that Delenn was the right person doing the right thing for the right reason, someone was coming from Vorlon space to verify her place in the scheme of things to come. Otherwise, as Lenneir said, her work might become corrupted and ultimately self-destructive. The Vorlons could not take that chance. That was all they could tell him, and they begged him to understand. He did not, but he did approve. If it was important to Delenn, it was important to him.

The vital meeting G'Kar needed to preside over took place in his quarters with a human weapons dealer of questionable character named Mr Chase. The man had an inventory G'Kar needed to arm the resistance with, things like rifles, mines, PPGs, and jamming equipment. The human thought the war was over, but G'Kar was happy to tell him he had been misinformed. The price for the shipment, which would have to be smuggled in through aerial drops or ground couriers, was far too high, but the human stood





fast by his numbers. He was willing to give G'Kar a 10% discount out of sympathy for the Narn cause, but he would ask for twice the price if he had to come back. G'Kar agreed out of desperation, but made sure Mr Chase understood the blood money these things were being bought with. He would vanish, never to be seen again and his corpse unrecognizable even if he was, if the shipment did not arrive.

In Command and Control, Lieutenant Corwin contacted Ivanova and let her know a Vorlon transport had just come through the jump gate. As the yellow and green living vessel spread its tail wings and sailed towards the station, Ivanova hailed Sheridan with the news. Quickly, the Captain arranged to be in the docking bay alone when it docked. He expected this to be the man Delenn had mentioned.

He was correct, but the man emerging from the Vorlon transport was nothing like he had imagined. Preceded long before he became visible around the docking bay gantries by a resonating click of his cane, the man was dressed in the garb of an 19th century Englishman. He did not so greet Sheridan as acknowledge his presence, although the latter did his best to be cordial. Still there was some hostility between them. The man represented a threat to Delenn, something Sheridan could not accept without getting at least a little defensive.

Sheridan tried to get to know the man a little better, but his attempts at small talk and simple questions such as what he was doing on a Vorlon transport were all bluntly turned aside. The man wanted only to know where Delenn was, but Sheridan was not prepared to tell him that until he was ready to do so. The inquisitor had no patience for being interrogated himself. He was seething at the sight of the Zocalo and women in scandalous behaviour. He commented that nothing ever changed and corruption and sin were still everywhere. This prompted Sheridan to ask when the last time was the man had been on Earth. A long time ago was the inquisitor's only response.

Sheridan had no intention of letting the man go that easily. He kept asking questions. Had the man been to the Vorlon homeworld? The terse reply he got back was yes. Did he know what they looked like? Yes. Before he could ask for the truth, Sheridan was informed he could not handle the truth. If facts about the man was the only way Sheridan would stand aside and let him do his job, he would give them to him until he choked on them.

The Vorlons had been to Earth. The Vorlons had been everywhere. The Vorlons, simply put, were. His name was Sebastian. He resided at 14-B Harrisford Lane in London in the Year of Our Lord 1888. The Vorlons found him, took him from Earth, and

made him one of their messengers. They told him the truth about everything and when they did, his eyes were opened to a universe of majesty and terror the likes of which Sheridan could not possibly imagine. If he was going to let the inquisitor do his work, then he should step aside. If not, Sebastian would return to his ship and leave. Either way, he was through answering questions. Faced with this, Sheridan let the man proceed on his way to meet Delenn, leading him there himself.

In one of the side meeting rooms off the Zocalo, G'Kar came to speak with Garibaldi. The Security Chief had heard he was buying weapons for shipment back to Narn and wanted to ask if it was true. G'Kar knew the man well enough to know that he did not ask questions like that unless he already knew the answer. Too tired to dance with Garibaldi this way, he suggested that they assume he had lied, that Garibaldi caught him in it, that he had protested, that Garibaldi had revered the protest, and that he was finally prepared to reveal the truth. Yes, he was buying weapons.

Garibaldi knew Sheridan wanted to help the Narns. He wanted to help them too, but he did not want the weapons coming through Babylon 5. If that got out, it would blow the neutrality of the station straight to Hell. G'Kar pointed out that everything, as he had so quaintly put it, had already gone straight to Hell. The proof of this was all around them if he would only look. Garibaldi already had, he did so every day, and the Narn was right. Still, he could not have the weapons coming through here. G'Kar understood, even if he did not like it. Without Babylon 5 as a checkpoint for his shipments, all was lost.

Or perhaps it was not. Garibaldi was a tough but fair man, and he really did care about the Narn's plight. He passed G'Kar a data crystal with the location of a transfer station run by a friend of his in Sector 90 near the Narn jump lanes. Most of traffic coming through that point was illegal anyway, so his friend would transfer anything G'Kar needed free of charge. The favour his friend owed him was now even, but G'Kar wanted to know why Garibaldi would do this.

It all came down to lies. Usually, when he confronted people, they lied to him and made him work twice as hard to achieve the same result he got anyway. G'Kar had not lied to him, which was refreshing change of pace. He had not offered the crystal to begin with because, in Garibaldi's words, he always left people enough room to disappoint him. He was happy G'Kar had not done so.

Delenn walked into Grey 19, the place Sheridan had set aside at Sebastian's request for the interrogation. He did not like what he saw in the inquisitor, but her wishes came first and her wish in this case was to go through with the Vorlons' demand that she submit to this exercise. She entered Grey 19 trepidantly all the same, especially when the bulkhead doors into the area opened by themselves. Mastering her fear as best she could, Delenn stepped inside.

Inside the chamber was a collection of spotlights shining on random sections of empty floor. Except for these, the lighting in the area was so dim, the walls could barely be seen at all. As her eyes tried to adjust to the spots, Sebastian's voice called out from the shadows that she had walked far enough. She stood still and two greenish iron heavy bracelets moved across the floor of their own volition, stopping at her feet. She was instructed to put them on. The manacles as he called them were made just for her and while she could take them off at any times, doing so meant defeat

in the eyes of the Vorlons and she would be found inadequate for the task ahead. She was asked if she understood. Delenn replied that she did.

With this, Sebastian the inquisitor came out of the shadows and walked into view. He circled her, never staying in any of the spotlights. Delenn, in contrast, was standing in the brightest of them. His look was one of slight disdain, as if he knew the answer to this trial before it had even begun. The interrogation began with a single question, 'Who are you?'

She answered with her name, Delenn. That, he told her was incorrect. It was her name, nothing more. He asked her again, 'Who are you?' She did not know what he wanted, so she said 'Delenn' once again. Instantly, the bracelets surged with a painful shock of electricity that surged through her for a moment. As he informed her, the bracelets would increase their penalty each time she repeated an inappropriate answer. Then, without pause, he repeated the question. 'Who are you?' Each time she answered, it was with a reference to something about her. It was never what he wanted to hear and with each wrong answer, the shocks grew worse.

What a sad thing she was, he lamented falsely, unable to even answer a simple question without falling back on genialities, references, and what other people labelled her when she wished to fall back on formality. Did she have nothing of her own? Nothing that was not chosen, given, and approved by others without her choice? Many had stood before him like her, and he marvelled at how they, or she, could presume to lead others when they did not have the faintest idea who they were themselves. She had the audacity to think that she was special, chosen by a higher power to lead the galaxy against the coming darkness. He did not believe she was anything of the kind. Derisively, he assured her that by the time she left this room, she would not believe it either.

She might even be destined to die in this room, he told her. She could not help but ask what purpose could possibly be served by killing her. Sebastian let her know that he would never do such a thing; he would not be the one to kill her, her own pride would do that. She could take off her manacles at any time, but doing so would be admitting her defeat and that was something that, if she truly believed she was the chosen one, she would never do. If she was right, the universe would somehow be obligated to keep her alive. If, as he expected, she was wrong, then her refusal to accept the truth would keep the bracelets on her wrists and she would die.

Vir Cotto had gotten very good at dodging the sycophants constantly plaguing him with requests for ambassador Mollari. He evaded one on his way to the lift, closing the doors in the noble's face and backing up to get some breathing room. The one thing he did not do was look in the lift before leaping into it. There in the corner stood G'Kar, staring daggers at him no matter where he moved in the tube. For several long seconds, they rode in the lift surrounded by an uncomfortable silence, but Vir could not let that go. Building up his courage, he turned to the Narn and said something he meant from the depths of heart. 'I am sorry.'

G'Kar acted at first as if he had not heard the aide. The lift continued on its way and the lights inside turned green to indicate the current Sector, casting an eerie glow over the Narn's face as he moved out the open doors. Vir watched him go, and his hearts almost stopped as G'Kar turned around with a raised dagger in his hand. The Narn approached him, but instead of striking, he

slashed open his open palm. Blood dropped from the wound. As each droplet fell, he chanted over and over again, 'Dead. Dead. Dead. Dead.'

'How do you apologise to them?' G'Kar's face was earnest, as if he truly wanted an answer. Vir thought, but no one ever listened to him. They had ignored his advice before the war and during it, so why would anyone listen now? Sadly, he admitted to the bleeding Narn that he could not. 'Then I cannot forgive.' The doors closed and Vir, wounded far deeper than if G'Kar had struck with his blade, retreated to the far side of the lift.

In Grey 19, the interrogation continued. Sebastian was berating Delenn again for wishing she were in bed asleep, dreaming dreams of honour and glory. She was obviously unafraid of him, because at a word from her, heaven itself would reach down and lift her far away. Was that not the case? After all, did she not have a destiny? Her response was that everyone had a destiny. Some just could not see it because they had been taught by some people that they were unimportant.

These words amused Sebastian because in all likelihood, he was one of the teachers she spoke of. He even admitted she might be right. But, he wondered aloud, was he a destroyer of dreams or a protector of the public good. He invited her to call out to the universe for deliverance from him. If she was destined to lead the Army of Light, then the universe would surely respond and rescue her from any harm that might befall her here. The manacles began to flash again and pain rocketed through her frail form. She screamed, just the sound he had asked for. The manacles stopped and together, they waited for the universe to answer her cries. Greeted only by silence, the inquisitor was satisfied and began a different line of questions.

'Why are you here? In this form? In this life?' Her only answer was that she was meant to be here. 'By whom?' She could not answer that because she did not know. 'Why?' She did not know that either. All she knew was that she was meant to be here. 'And if the world said otherwise?' Then, she replied, the world was mistaken. 'Or perhaps you are wrong and the world is right? Have you ever considered that?'

This was a question she could answer. Yes, she had. In the cold loneliness in the night when she had hard decisions to make like when she had given up her purity of body to become half-human and leave her life on Minbar behind, she had indeed wondered if she was mistaken in her beliefs. Few of his subjects had ever been honest with him like that before, and it gave him reason to pause. For learning this lesson of humility, he gave Delenn ten minutes of respite.

G'Kar had bad news to deliver to his people. The weapons were ready to be coordinated with their drops, but to buy them, it would take 500,000 credits for the initial batch. It was a lot to ask, he knew, but as he looked around at the dozens of disappointed and disapproving faces, he called for sacrifices on everyone's part. One of the Narn asked how they could even be sure the weapons would arrive. G'Kar asked him if his word was not good enough. His word was not in question, the dissident Narn said in front of the others. It was his ability to deliver on his promises that was in doubt. Perhaps the Narn suggested, obviously referring to himself, someone else might do a better job.

G'Kar has been in the game of negotiation and diplomacy since before this Narn was born, and he knew how to win over his people.

He asked how he could prove his ability to act on his word and was given a task the agitator thought would be impossible. If G'Kar could bring him word from his family on homeworld through the Centauri blockades, it would be enough and he would never question him again. If not, G'Kar would have to step aside for a new leader. This was the only way to keep their faith, so G'Kar agreed. Just how he would accomplish this near-miracle was beyond his knowing, but somehow he had to find a way.

The interrogation had taken a calmer turn. As she rested, Delenn had to listen to Sebastian give her some calm, almost friendly sounding advice. She was, he told her, a piece of a machine that thought it was the whole of the machine. She had malfunctioned, becoming convinced of an overblown and unwarranted sense of value when all she really was could be described as no more than a cog amidst much larger gears. She was but one voice that assumed itself the entire symphony. The sooner she admitted her lack of importance, the sooner she could return to her simple life and step out of the destiny's spotlight that was never meant for her in the first place.

He called her a fool for not seeing that she was but a single nail, should only fate was to get hammered down in line with all the others. She answered back, weary and obviously the worse for wear, that it was better to be a fool than to be what he was. Amused again, he inquired what that might be. She told him, and the answer cut far deeper than he was prepared to feel. In her eyes, he was a creature who had lived with the giving and receiving of pain so long, he took joy in its application. He had aspired to dreams but come up short, not worthy or right enough to see them through. This left him determined to tear others down because everyone else had to be just as flawed, just as weak, and just as unrighteous as he had been.

Flinching, but only for a moment, he gave her his response to her observation. Bang! Down came his cane, triggering the manacles to flood her with agony. 'Who are you, he asked. Delenn was her answer, so Bang! The manacles surged again. He entreated her to be a nice Minbari and conform. He asked her to admit she was inadequate. She would not. Bang! Now she was on the ground, writhing in continuous, unbearable pain. Sebastian's cane blazed like a captive sun, though its light was in no way comforting. Bang! Kneeling beside her on the ground, she told her that he could feel her heart in his hand. They both hear the beating of it, slowing as his fingers began to close. Another inch, he told her, and he would close his fist and stop it forever. An insensate scream of anguish was her only reply.



In Security Central, G'Kar had to ask a desperate favour from Garibaldi and Sinclair. The former had already gone to the line once for the Narn today with his gift in Sector 90, but this was something G'Kar had to ask. He had to get a message to Narn and then a reply back or he would lose the faith of his people here. Everyone present knew that G'Kar was the only thing keeping these people even vaguely controllable, but doing it would not be easy. Sheridan had been sincere in his offer to help, and so he agreed to do anything he could.

Once G'Kar left the room, Sheridan asked Garibaldi what he thought about using the Rangers for this job. They might not be ready to enter a war zone, but it was high time they got that way. The time for planning and watching was over. If there was ever time to start acting, this was it. He asked Garibaldi to get this accomplished. Garibaldi promised his best; that was all Sheridan wanted to hear.

Lenneir, worried and frightened for Delenn, went against her orders and entered Grey 19. He found Delenn all but unconscious on the ground. He tried to help her up and out of the chamber, but she knew that leaving was also an admission of failure. If Sebastian found Lenneir there, he might punish the Minbari aide just for being present, so she implored him to leave. He did not wish to abandon her, but she had to stay. Leaving meant she had failed everyone; he would let down Kosh, Sheridan, and the others. Even if it meant risking her life, she had to stay, but she did not want to lose Lenneir. She begged him to go as the sounds of Sebastian's cane came closer. Out of respect for her wishes, he reluctantly fled before the inquisitor arrived.

He did not have to go very far, just far enough to find Sheridan. He knew that only Sheridan had a chance to defy Kosh and end this horrible inquisition. Only Sheridan could help her now. He did not know why his mentor was being put through this torture, but Lenneir was sure of one thing. If the man sent by the Vorlons was not stopped, if Sheridan did not find Kosh or confront the inquisitor himself, Delenn would most likely die.

Crouching beside a gasping Delenn very near death, Sebastian informed her sadly that he did not think this was going to work out for her. It was not really her fault, he said. She had been doomed from the moment of her birth. Her fate and her life were all in the hands of others. As if on cue, the doors to Grey 19 opened again. Rather than be surprised, he looked almost resigned. 'And now the final player in our little drama arrives at last.' His sentence was punctuated by the sound of a PPG powering up behind him. Sheridan was there, he was armed, and he would never let this terrible man hurt Delenn again, no matter what his purpose.

Sebastian stood up, his cane raised above the floor. He asked what Delenn was to him, but Sheridan was not about to give him the satisfaction of an answer. Before the Captain could act, down came the cane. Bang! A streak of fire raced along the ground and ended with a massive impact of force that sent Sheridan sprawling hard into the bulkhead behind him. His PPG went flying and he slumped to the ground. As he struggled to remain conscious, Sebastian loomed over him and said without a hint of amusement, 'Your turn now.'

When Sheridan awoke, he was lashed to a support framework in front of one of the station's main circulation fans. Sebastian told him that while he did not have to answer any of his questions, there was no reason to excluding him from the deliberations. He was just as bad as Delenn but unlike her, he was a soldier. How far was

he willing to go? How many lives would he sacrifice for victory? Would he be willing to die friendless and alone, because that might be required of him in the war to come. In response to Sheridan's telling him to go to Hell, he merely relied that this was Hell and Sheridan was its chief damned soul.

Using energy waves from his cane like a whip, he reinforced each of his questions with a lash against Sheridan's face. Would he sacrifice anything for victory in the war ahead? What about his friends? Bang. What about his family? Bang. What about his god? Bang? What about truth? What about blood? What about right? What about wrong? What about faith? What about sin? What about life? What about death? With each question, without waiting for an answer, the cane came up and the lash struck Sheridan more forcefully each time.

Before it could go on, Delenn spoke up. She screamed at him to return to her. His quarrel was with her. He had been sent to be her inquisitor, not Sheridan's. She begged him to return to her interrogation, even though it certainly meant her death in her weakened state. She did not care. All she cared about was sparing Sheridan any more pain.

Sebastian, for the second time, fell silent and thoughtful. He saw them as they were, a mutual admiration and sacrificial society. He asked her what Sheridan was to her, but she told him it was none of his concern. Sheridan, behind the inquisitor now and close to collapse from pain, shouted for her to get out but she was told that one move, one single gesture and Sheridan's life would be snuffed out. Still, she had a destiny, so perhaps that was for the best. After all, was not destiny would one life, one single life not her own if it meant her survival?

The answer was a strong and unyielding no. There was no great cause outside this; her cause was life, her destiny was life. One life or a billion, it did not matter. If her death would save Sheridan's life, she would sacrifice herself willingly. She craved no fame, no glory, no choirs of angels singing her praises. She would die friendless and alone, but she would not die afraid. Her body was only a shell. Sebastian could not harm her. Even as his cane, the head burning with a malevolent light, came past her face, she did not flinch. She was beyond his ability to hurt, even if he killed her. Sheridan would live, and that was enough.

Then Sheridan's binding disappeared and Delenn's wrists were freed as the manacles vanished. Sebastian too was gone and there was only the one spotlight in the chamber, illuminating them both. Relieved and freed of pain, they embraced each other with the desperation of those who had been through Hell together and emerged alive. The door to the chamber opened as if giving them leave to depart. Sheridan was more than happy to take it but before they could reach the other side, the clicking of the inquisitor's cane prefaced his appearance in the doorway. 'You can go,' he told them. 'You have passed; both of you.'

To Delenn's question of what had they passed, he answered in a calm, almost reluctant voice. 'How do you know the chosen ones? No greater love hath a man than he lay down his life for his friend. Not for millions, not for glory, not for fame, but for just one person. In the dark. Where no one will ever know or see. I've been in the service of the Vorlons for centuries, searching. Diogenes with his lamp looking for a honest man willing to die for all the wrong reasons.' At last, his job was finished, but theirs was just beginning. 'When the darkness comes,' he told them before disappearing

again, 'know this. You are the right people, in the right place, at the right time'

At his station in Command and Control, Sheridan had a lot to think about. He was unharmed physically, but mentally he was in a great deal of turmoil. Who was this Sebastian? Why would the Vorlons use such a man, and why would they put their own allies through such a horrible experience? Ivanova came over to tell him that the Vorlon ship in Bay 25 would be ready to leave in two hours. His only reaction was to ask her how far back their archives of Old Earth went. He wanted to look up a certain name, Sebastian, at a given address in 1888. He was not sure whether it was a first or last name, but if it could be verified, he just had to know.

In a meeting with all the other Narns aboard Babylon 5, G'Kar's message played to a rapt audience. It was the dissident Narn's wife and family. His daughter Na'lah was injured in the fighting, but she had recovered through the help of the Ranger sent to get their message. His father had just been discovered alive and she thanked G'Kar for that news. She urged him not to worry for them; one way or another, they would survive. The news touched him deeply and he knew that no matter his own ambitions, G'Kar was the true hope of their people. Humbled, he submitted to the older, wiser Narn. By his oath, none would ever question his authority again.

By the entrance to Bay 25, Sebastian waited to board his ship. Sheridan caught up with him and gave his approval for the door leading inside to open. Before he could leave, Sheridan told him that during the wait, he had done a little digging. There had indeed been a Sebastian living at 14-B Harrisford Lane in London, England in the year 1888, one who had vanished on November 11th of that same year. He had also discovered that the date had another historical significance; the night before had seen the last of a string of murders in the city's West End.

Sebastian did not deny what Sheridan was implying. The city of his time has been drowning in chaos an immorality. A message had to be sent, etched in blood for others to see, and he had believed himself the divine harbinger of that word. In its pursuit, he did horrible things, but he did not care for in his heart and mind he believed himself to be chosen. The Vorlons found him, took him from Earth, and showed him the terrible truth of his actions. In their service, he had done 400 years of penance and now, perhaps with his task done, they would finally let him die.

Sheridan thought that perhaps that would be for the best. The inquisitor did not take any offence. Instead, he inwardly agreed and walked away towards his ship, never looking back. His last words would haunt Sheridan in his dreams for years to come. 'Good luck to you in your holy cause, Captain Sheridan. May your choices have better results than mine. For I will be remembered not as a messenger, remembered not as a reformer, not as a prophet, not as a hero. Not even as Sebastian. Remembered only as Jack.'

Agents of the Vorlons

Though the Vorlons do not visibly reach out to the other races for communication or interaction, they have reason to stay in contact with them in their own, private way. Since their victory against the Shadows a thousand years before the founding of Babylon 5, the Vorlons have remained shrouded in secrecy. Even so, there are reasons for the Vorlons to watch the others that live in this galaxy, the younger races so far behind them in technology and development that as the last of the First Ones, they seemed like gods when they walked openly among them.

To gather their information and do what the Vorlons felt needed to be done outside their own space, the Vorlons have taken members of the other races and altered them to suit their purposes. These agents always serve willingly, as they would never have been approached if they were not uniquely suited to the First One's calling. Each is a unique being, chosen for its talents and modified just enough to serve without drawing attention to the power and abilities of their Vorlon masters. In return for this service, the Vorlons ensure that they want for nothing and are always afforded excellent protection. Few can harm a Vorlon agent, though fewer still are those who know their target is an agent in the first place.

The Narn Resistance

Hours after the last gun sounded in the Narn-Centauri War, before the ink on the Ka'Rhi's surrender proclamation was even dry, there were members of the Narn race organizing a resistance movement to what they saw as the coming tyranny of the Centauri. They were correct in their vision, and the Narn have hope of freedom some day larger through this foresight and the resistance's refusal to give in to their people's oppressors. G'Kar's words to the Advisory Council of Babylon 5 on the day of his dismissal as ambassador of the Narn ring true every time the resistance strikes out at those who would hold their worlds hostage by force of arms.

The resistance is a fragile entity forced to work in total secrecy because of the Centauri's constant hunt for their members and the edict of 500 executed Narns in exchange for any one Centauri they slay. This has not kept some cells of the resistance from enacting minor wars of terror ending in massive bloodshed on both sides, but the majority of the resistance is heeding the quiet wisdom of leaders like G'Kar and bidding their time. With the edict putting their families and loved ones at risk, most are content to simply prepare for now, getting ready for they when they can finally revisit their pain upon the Centauri that enslave them now.

Scenarios and Campaign

Hooks

3 A campaign or story arc could be centred around players taking part in the Narn resistance, running weapons and supplies or getting information on Centauri targets to those who can take advantage of it best. Conversely, loyal Centauri can be employed to hunt and kill resistance members identified by the Centaurum. The greatest prize in this hunt would undoubtedly be G'Kar on Babylon 5, but his placement there and the protection of the station's security forces put him out of the reach of all but the greatest of bounty hunters. A scenario centred around such a hunt would make for an exciting cat and mouse game, with the mouse being every bit as dangerous as the cats daring to chase him. EarthForce players will have some interesting moral and legal dilemmas in a Narn resistance campaign, as their government has not extended any official aid to the planet and are prohibited from doing so without coming into conflict with its Centauri treaties. Other races are not so constrained, with cultures like the Religious Caste Minbari almost obligated to get involved in some way if placed in the situation.

3 Sebastian may indeed have been given his final rest after his interrogation of Delenn and Sheridan on the station, but he was only one of several inquisitors in the service of the Vorlons. A campaign based on the coming of the Great War or concerned with some of the same events might draw its players into direct contact with an inquisitor or other agent of the Vorlon. If circumstances dictate it, they may even see the person for what they are and be consequently drawn into the web of galactic fate binding all

those with a part to play in the upcoming drama. There was a time when those who discovered the secrets of the Vorlons simply disappeared, but now even the last remaining First Ones cannot risk losing what few allies they have. Instead of deletion, players who learn things they should not may be approached to become part of the Army of Light. If the Games Master wishes to bring one or more of them into the direct service of the Vorlons as agents, they may be required to pass an inquisition of their own. Those who survive may even become inquisitors themselves or go on to serve in some other capacity. Those who do not are best removed from the wheels of fate in any case lest they disrupt its careful design. As Sebastian clearly shows, the Vorlons may be a force of Light, but they are not always what some would call a force of Good.

3 A campaign could be set in the turmoil of the racial balance on Babylon 5 or some other mixed outpost. While Babylon 5 is the largest and most culturally diverse, Centauri and Narns exist together in other areas, as to representatives of the Non-Aligned Worlds. These populations will likely be no better unified than on the station, especially if there is not the strong Security and diplomacy present to keep the peace the way Babylon 5 does. A large but barely functional starship with several groups of beings, each with cultural differences but reliant on each other for survival would make for excellent roleplaying potential, especially when their instincts and racial honour demand one course of action and logic dictates another. If the only engineer capable of keeping the ship running and life support functioning is a Centauri, how will the Narns aboard react when they learn of the mass driver bombing of their homeworld?

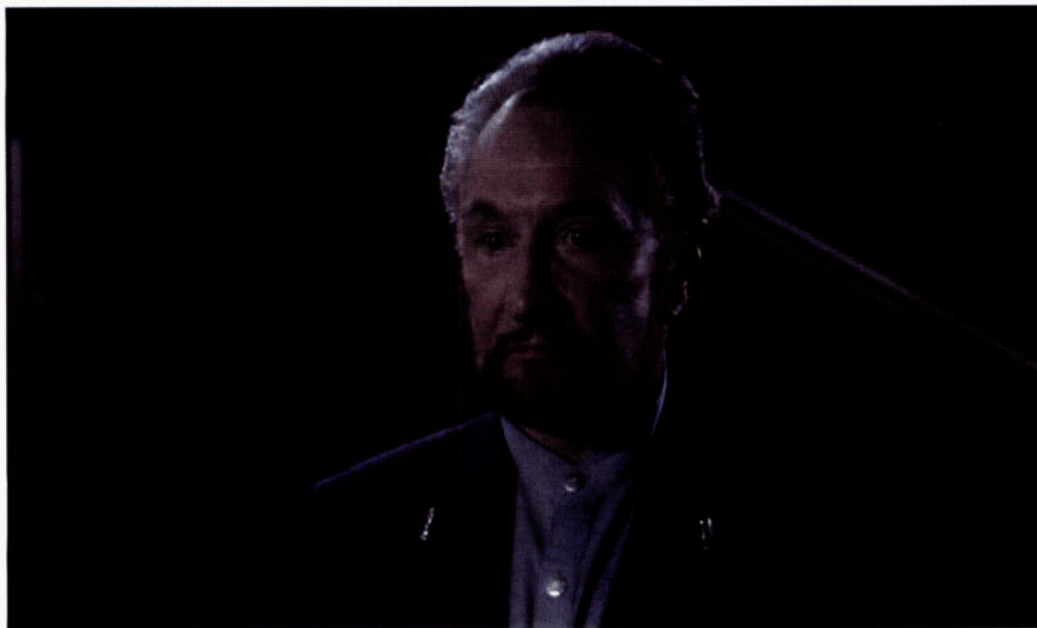
The Fall of Night (December 21st 2258)

'I apologize. I'm... sorry. I'm sorry we had to defend ourselves against an unwarranted attack. I'm sorry that your crew was stupid enough to fire on a station filled with a quarter million civilians, including your own people. And I'm sorry I waited as long as I did before I blew them all straight to hell... As with everything else, it's the thought that counts.'

John Sheridan

In the cold of space near Babylon 5, Zeta and Delta Flights under the watchful eye of Captain Sheridan were going through combat readiness drills. Zeta Leader, Lieutenant Warren Keffer, came in behind Delta 7 and fired off a single burst with his Starfury's uni pulse cannons. The bolts skated under Delta 7 as it fired its ventral thrusters and 'jumped' the shots. While still turning above Keffer, Delta 7 fired a spray of shots, two of which hit Keffer right in the canopy. Command and Control confirmed the hits. It was Fox 1 situation; Keffer was technically dead.

Keffer was not pleased with this turn of events, but Sheridan was happy for the lesson. Delta 7's pilot had almost blacked out from the gravitation stress of her stunt, but that was a good example as well for the group. When the enemy did something unexpected, it was better to evade immediately than to try and maintain a targeting lock. Also, some alien races could withstand g-forces better than humans. Even the Centauri were known for their trick of setting



their fighter on auto pilot, blacking out, and coming to in a much better firing pattern. He expected them all to learn these tricks; they might someday be enough to save their lives in combat.

Before he could teach them anything more, Ivanova called with an undisclosed matter that required Sheridan to return to the station for. Frustrated that his time was cut short, he turned his fighter and headed back. Just because he had to leave was no excuse for the others to stop practicing. Tasking Keffer with the role of ensuring that his people kept training with these new manoeuvres until they got them right, Sheridan left to find out what was so important.

In the Zocalo, Vir sat alone, a well nursed drink in his folded hands. As he stared off into nothingness, Lenneir came and took the stool next to his. Lenneir said to Vir, without actually turning to face him, that he sometimes felt he was getting shut out of important things. Vir could relate, saying that his ambassador was going through tough changes. Londo even looked different these days. Lenneir, commiserating, lamented the fact that the military on his world was now getting into everything and making matters much harder than they needed to be. Vir knew all about that, and he hated how everyone was coming and go, getting involved in secret meeting. Lenneir nodded; they never knew what any of it was all about. Together, they told each other in unison that the whole thing made them nervous. Then, with a sigh, Vir asked Lenneir, 'Same time tomorrow?' Lenneir answered with a very casual, 'Sure,' and they parted ways again.

The matter Sheridan had been asked to return for was a meeting with the Pak'ma'ra and Drazi ambassadors. He was in the flight deck's dressing room when Ivanova found him for a briefing on the situation. She asked how the pilots were doing, and when Sheridan said that they were good but they could be better, she suggested issuing live ammunition as a morale booster. Sheridan did not respond, but she could see he was tempted. The recommendation was not appreciated by the other pilots in the room; that much was certain.

In his office, Sheridan asked the Pak'ma'ra delegate if he was certain what he had just said was true. Using a translation/vocal generator to create human speech, the alien confirmed his statement.

The Drazi confirmed the dire news as well. The Centauri had attacked worlds in both their territories, going so far as to 'liberate' a listening post in Drazi space. War was spreading. Eventually, it might even touch Earth space.

As soon as he heard this, Sheridan sent for Londo Mollari. The ambassador came as requested, but he was in no mood for the Captain's hostility. He had only come out of a sense of respect and would not be addressed in anything but a civil tone. Sheridan felt anything but civil, and he demanded to know where the line of Centauri aggression was intended to end. Londo called their

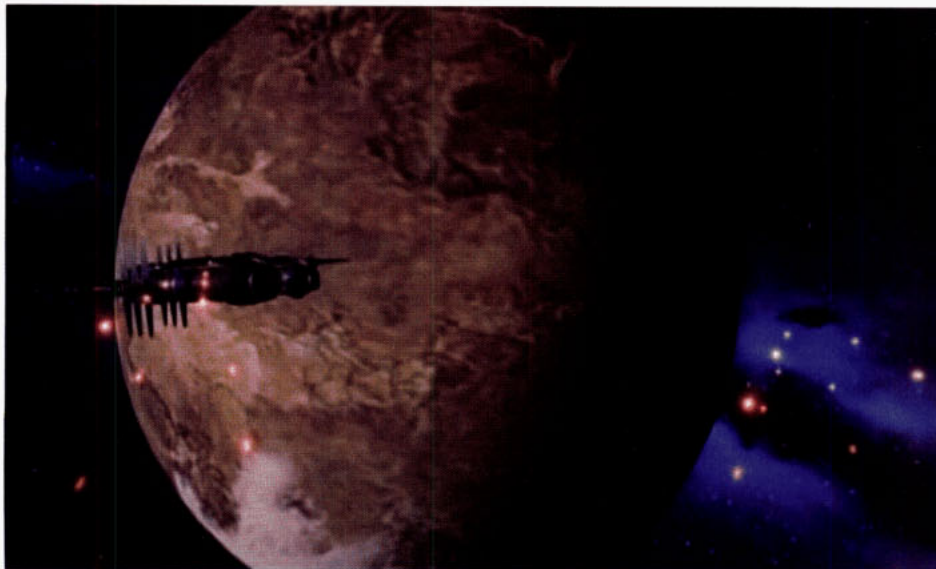
actions in Drazi territory establishing a buffer zone, but Sheridan and the Drazi had another name for it- invasion. Londo dismissed the term as mere exaggeration.

Trying to appeal to the Londo he used to know and trust, he asked Londo if he could not see that the galactic situation was falling apart and that the Centauri were at the middle of it all. He knew that somewhere in this man before him, the reasonable ambassador he was once called a friend still existed. Unfortunately, if he did, he was in no mood to show himself. Londo warned Sheridan not to get delusions of grandeur he could not survive and reminded him that his authority ended at Babylon 5. No longer amused by the conversation, the ambassador from the Centauri Republic excused himself and left the room.

Sheridan was not the only one saddened at the loss of the old Londo. Garibaldi remembered a time when he could talk to Mollari and reason with him. True, the old Londo was a pain in the butt, but he had been their pain in the butt. Now, he just did not know who the man he was really was any more. Sheridan knew that Garibaldi was the closest thing Londo had to a friend and asked if he could find a way to get through to the man. Garibaldi did not think so, not as long as Londo was afraid.

That surprised Sheridan. What did Londo Mollari, one of the architects of the current regime of fear and aggression in the Centauri Republic have to be afraid of? Garibaldi knew Londo's fear and he could put a name to it. It was the fear of seeing how fast things were happening and not wanting to get swept away with them. He likened it to holding on tight to a wild horse for fear of getting thrown. The fear made him hold on harder, but holding on harder made the horse even more wild. Half the time, he wanted to wring Londo's neck these days, but the other half found him feeling sorry for his old friend.

The only thing Sheridan could do about this had already been done. He filed a full report with recommendations to Earth Dome, though he did not expect anything to be done about it. Still, Earth could afford to ignore the problem while it was just the Centauri and the Narns. Now that other races were involved, someone somewhere would have to pay attention before it was too late.



Right on time, an EarthForce transport appeared through the jump gate carrying Fredrick Lantz from the Ministry of Peace. The chance was slim of course, but it appeared that for once, someone might have read Sheridan's report. He hurried to the debarkation hall and met with Lantz and his co-director Mr Wells as quickly as he could. They were both happy to come to Babylon 5, especially Mr Wells who wanted very much to meet with Babylon 5's Nightwatch members as that was the department he was directly in charge of. Sheridan did not mind accommodating him in that request, assigning Ivanova to be his liaison for the time being.

Director Lantz wanted to meet with the Centauri ambassador and every member of the League of Non-Aligned Worlds whose territory had been infringed upon. Sheridan had anticipated that request and the meetings had already been arranged. Lantz obviously appreciated the efficiency; that kind of expedient cooperation would certainly make his job here easier. Both Ivanova and Sheridan expressed their relief that someone from Earth had finally come out to deal with the Centauri problem. Lantz agreed; the voice of Earth Dome could not stay silent forever.

In the Zocalo, Keffer sat down next to Mitch Harvey, a pilot from another flight. He had heard from one of his own pilots that Harvey and a friend of his had both claimed to see a 'ghost' in hyperspace coming back from a run in Quadrant 14. In their words, it looked like a cross between a spider and their worst nightmare. That matched what Keffer had seen months ago perfectly, so he wanted to come confirm the report for himself. Harvey was less than cooperative; inter-flight rivalry could be fierce, especially since Keffer's Zeta Flight had gotten new fighter personally presented to them by the President.

Keffer did not want to fight over something that petty and he tried to calm the situation down and just get to discussing the ghost. Once he convinced Harvey that his interest was genuine and not a practical joke, the older pilot told him what he knew. It was exactly the same thing Keffer had seen and this pilot had recorded background anomalies in the form of neutrino emissions at the time he had seen it. Later, in the flight room, he gave the recording to Keffer but warned him off looking for the thing. That, he told the young hotshot, would be pure suicide. He had heard the shadowy vessel scream in his head once; that was enough for any one lifetime.

In a nice set of ambassadorial apartments, Ivanova listed the meeting itinerary for Director Lantz while he hunted for his pen. She found it on the room's central desk and offered it to him, commenting on its appearance as a real antique. The pen was a gift from his wife that last Christmas, something he treasured beyond all else. Holding it reminded him that it was almost Christmas back on Earth again. Ivanova knew, but it was certainly easy to forget on Babylon 5, especially with the stressful condition and lack of seasons.

He asked Ivanova if she had ever been to the Christmas festival in Geneva. It was marvellous, he told her, with fireworks and music and more food than anyone could eat in a lifetime. He smiled as he remembered how happy the festival made all the children in attendance. Ivanova could tell from everything about him that he was a grandfather, something he proudly confirmed. They were why he was here; he wanted to give them a legacy of his own, something they could be proud to call a part of their family's history. He asked about Ivanova's family and was saddened to hear of her losses in that regard. It did mean that she understood why he was doing all of this. There had been enough death, he felt. It was time to create something better.

While they attended the Director's first meeting, Command and Control picked up a jump point forming on the far side of Epsilon 3. Jumping out of hyperspace there meant only Babylon 5 could see them; other long ranges sensors would not be able to pick them up. From the vortex came the G'Toc, a badly damaged G'Kwan heavy cruiser. As soon as they were out, they hailed the station. The commander of the ship, Na'Kal, identified himself and asked if he was speaking to the human named Sheridan. As soon as he learned he was, the Narn looked relieved. His ship, which had been on deep space patrol when the Centauri attacked homeworld, was almost dead in space. They had to have a safe place to evade their enemies and repair before moving on. Without aid, they would be hunted down and destroyed, but with others, they had the chance of someday helping to liberate their homeworld. Na'Kal, wishing he had another option, asked for sanctuary for his vessel.

Mr Wells came to Ivanova's quarters just as she was settling in to take in a hot cup of tea. She had taken off her jacket and was about to relax for a while when he chimed at her door. She let him in and asked what he needed. All he wanted to do was talk, so she invited him in for tea. He declined the tea, and asked her if she was happy here at Babylon 5. By the time their conversation was over a minute later, he had all but offered her a command of her own in exchange for turning informant of the rest of the station's staff and she had all but bodily ejected him from her quarters. Any command she got, she would earn, and that would definitely not be by turning traitor on her friends. Mr Lantz had nothing to do with the Nightwatch, that much she was happy about. Everything else made her deeply upset.

For once, G'Kar was not upset. As Sheridan showed him an image of the G'Toc on the other side of the planet below them in Command and Control, he felt hope for the first time since the

occupation of his world. Sheridan's news that he would be offering sanctuary to the ship made him doubly pleased. His mood was complete when he learned of Mr Lantz and the probability of Earth acting against the Centauri that he represented. The Captain could see no reason why G'Kar could not go speak to him personally. With a spring in his step once more, G'Kar left to go prepare his presentation.

In an informal meeting of the Nightwatch later that night, Mr Wells expressed his appreciation at seeing new faces in the organization. The room was a cross section of life in the service of Babylon 5, from pilots to operational staff with several security guards like Zack Allen for good measure. It was Allen that concerned Wells during this meeting, especially as the Security officer had yet to file any reports. Zack explained that away by saying there had not really been anything he thought needed to be reported. Mr Wells could understand that attitude, but several of Allen's peers had filed a report on a potentially seditious store owner named Xavier Darabuto.

Zack knew the shopkeeper they were talking about, though he wondered who on Security would turn in an old man just for complaining about new regulations on import tariffs. Mr Wells could sense Allen's discomfort with the situation and tried to diffuse it by explaining that sedition could come in small packages. He wanted members of the Nightwatch to use their own discretion of course, but the group needed to be informed of everything so they could make judgement calls about who was just unhappy and who was dangerously maladjusted.

Mr Wells went on to discuss other reports that had been filed as well, from dock workers late for work and lurkers who were talking to the press about bad conditions both on the station and on Earth. The former were sabotaging efficiency through their tardiness, while the latter were striking at humanity itself through their disregard for public morale. This was all sedition and it had to stop. To help, all Allen had to do was stay alert and confirm a few reports like the one on Mr Darabuto. For a long while, Allen tried to avoid saying anything but the pressure of so many of his co-workers staring at him caved in his resistance and he agreed that Darabuto had been complaining. It was just talk, he said, but he did confirm the report. That was all Mr Wells wanted, and he smiled as he told Zack Allen that he showed great promise for a Nightwatch member. What had started as a dodge to make an easy 50 credits a week was turning into a real nightmare.

With a smile, Director Lantz dismissed the Brakiri ambassador from his meeting room, ending the last of his appointments with the League of Non-Aligned worlds. He had heard enough, he felt, to meet with ambassador Mollari and get down to the real heart of the negotiations; he was ready to talk face to face with the representative of the Centauri; the race at the centre of this whole controversy. As he stood in the hall telling this to Ivanova, G'Kar entered from the same direction the Brakiri had left. He was enthusiastic about the chance to meet with Mr Lantz, but the Earth representative was extremely reluctant to have

anything to do with him. Not even willing to spare five minutes to speak with him once he learned G'Kar identity as the former Narn ambassador, Mr Lantz beat a hasty retreat. G'Kar was left alone in the hallway, wondering what he had done wrong.

In Command and Control, Sheridan helped War Leader Na'Kal make a difficult decision. Without proper energy resources, repairs were going slowly and their medical facilities were barely functioning. If he took the jump engines offline, he would have the power he needed but they would be vulnerable to attack if a threat appeared before they could charge them up again. Sheridan promised the Narn the protection of Babylon 5. It was enough for Na'Kal and in moments, the G'Toc's engines went offline.

A moment after that, Mr Lantz and Mr Wells stepped into the Observation Dome. Mr Lantz had heard some disturbing reports that as part of their combat training, the station's fighter pilots were using Centauri combat models to fight against. This kind of thing jeopardized everything he was here to do. Sheridan did not understand and neither did Ivanova. They had been under the impression that the Ministry of Peace was here to investigate the Centauri because the threat they posed. That much was true, but his intentions were altogether different was they had assumed. Instead of working against the interests of the Centauri, Lantz had just received permission from EarthDome to proceed with his original mission, the signing of a non-aggression treaty with them. By the time he left the station, Director Lantz intended to have an alliance between the Earth and the Centauri Republic.

Alone in his office, Sheridan and Ivanova talked about the futility of trying to have an alliance with the Centauri. They had no idea that a few dozen yards away, one of the crew of Command and Control was turning them in to Mr Wells for harbouring the G'Toc. What Sheridan did know was that the first time in his career with EarthForce, he felt dirty wearing its uniform. It was just cloth to him now, meaningless. Ivanova saw this all as an excuse to get Earth out of the way so the Centauri could move in uncontested on the League of Non-Aligned Worlds. Earth wanted peace at any cost, even if that meant letting the Centauri have their way with every other race in the galaxy.

She could do nothing about that, but Ivanova could try to make her friend feel better. After hoping that in the new year coming in



a week or so, they would redefine their uniforms and make them mean something again. She even had a gift for Sheridan, be it for Christmas or Channukah. He opened it, more than a little confused at what the strange piece of twisted metal in the shiny little box was supposed to mean. She told him that the metal was shrapnel from the Black Star, the 'invincible' Minbari ship he destroyed during the war. With the way things were going, she thought he could use a reminder that sometimes, the impossible was possible.

Speaking of impossible, the BabCom unit on the wall beside them beeped and an image of a very irate ambassador Mollari appeared on the screen. He had just learned of the Narn cruiser they were protecting and he was not at all pleased to hear of it. He demanded that the ship and its crew be turned over to him at once. Sheridan was not at all inclined to agree with that decision but he needed time to think. A quick lie about the ambassador's signal breaking up and locking his BabCom into a diagnostic bought him that time. Ivanova figured it was Wells who had tipped Mollari off, but there was nothing to do about that now. They needed a plan and they needed one fast. Sheridan knew that Londo would not have said anything openly unless he had already warned his government. Ivanova knew what that meant; company was on its way, and it was not likely to show up friendly.

Back at Command and Control, Sheridan told Na'Kal of the impending arrival of the Centauri. It would be some time before the G'Toc's jump engines were functional, but they could manoeuvre slightly if they had to. A big reason to manoeuvre came through its own jump point just then, a fully armed and active primus Centauri battlecruiser. No sooner was it in Babylon 5's space than it began demanding the surrender of the Narn vessel. As it made its ultimatum, the battlecruiser took up position between Epsilon 3 and the jumpgate, blocking the G'Toc's only means of escape.

Sheridan played a dangerous game, stalling Mollari on the link, ignoring the demands of the battlecruiser, and making sure that he stuck by his promise of protecting the G'Toc while it was in his jurisdiction. He was not about to break that promise, a decision his second in command supported completely. His first decision was to scramble every fighter on the station and have them surround the Narn ship. Before he could make his second decision, Director Lantz came into Command and Control, livid at what he saw as the Captain's efforts to shatter the fragile peace he was trying so hard to build.

That was fortunately not a problem Sheridan had to worry about, not that he cared to. The treaty with the Centauri had not been formalized or announced, which meant he was still legally able to offer sanctuary to the G'Toc. Before Mr Lantz could protest again, Sheridan had him escorted off the Command deck and launched all fighters. The starfuries screamed out of their bays and set approach vectors for the Narn vessel. They were putting themselves in harm's way if the primus decided to open fire, but those were the Captain's orders.

Now he was ready to talk to Mollari. He told the angry Centauri noble that the G'Toc was under his protection. Once its jump engines were repaired at it was out of Babylon 5's territory it was not his concern any more, but until then, he would do whatever it took to protect that ship. He ordered Mollari in no uncertain terms to tell his government's battlecruiser to withdraw while the station's fighters escorted the ship out of the area. If the primus fired on any of his fighters, Sheridan was prepared to respond with deadly force. With that, and without waiting for an answer, Sheridan ended the

BabCom link conversation. A copy of his demand was sent to the battlecruiser and Babylon 5's defence grid went active.

Sheridan had in the past stood down Centauri ships in this position, but history did not look like it was going to repeat itself. As soon as the G'Toc left its shelter on the far side of the planet, the battlecruiser moved into an intercept position and targeted everything in range of it, including all of the fighters and the station itself. Sheridan returned the gesture, targeting the primus in kind. The starfuries got their orders to return fire only if fired upon and Command and Control closed its outer blast doors. As it did, the Centauri ship locked on its many targets. Ivanova was hoping it was just trying to provoke them into making the first move, but Sheridan suspected not.

His instinct was confirmed when Lieutenant Corwin detected an energy spike on the Centauri battlecruiser. Unwilling to back down, it had opened fire. In response, Babylon 5 and the Starfury squadrons did the same. Interceptors on the station fired, knocking down most of the enemy ship's attacks. The ones they could not stop slammed home, rupturing hull plates in flashes of crimson fire. Zeta flight broke formation and attacked, sending their own small pulses of destruction to rain down over the enemy vessel. Concentrating its fire on the station and ignoring both the fighters and the Narn cruiser, the Centauri ship's deadly barrage ripped through one of the two main station mandibles above the observation dome. It was a devastating blow, one felt throughout Babylon 5.

That was all Sheridan could stand. He ordered the launch of everything he had left and directed the station's weapons batteries against the primus. As shot after lethal shot slammed into the burning hull of the Centauri war machine, its foolish aggression towards Babylon 5 cost it the prize it was here after in the first place. The G'Toc slipped through because it had concentrated its fire on Babylon 5 and escaped into hyperspace.

That was good news for the Narn ship, but the price of its freedom had been high. There were fires on several decks of the station and multiple hull breaches. It was nothing compared to the richly deserved but still tragic immolation and explosion of the battlecruiser. She had received heavy damage, too much for her systems to bear. She turned once in space and broke apart in a fire blossom among the uncaring stars. There was no time to dispatch medical ships or attempt to save her; the ship was beyond hope.

In his office later, while the station was being repaired and life was slowly returning to normal, Director Lantz was beside himself over the entire incident. The Centauri government was furious, of course, but that was not Sheridan's problem either. Yes, he had destroyed a Centauri warship, but the vessel had fired first. Lantz blamed that on Sheridan's foolish insistence on rendering aid to a Narn ship, but Sheridan had an answer for that as well. He was only following regulations. As he quoted to the still angry Mr Lantz, EarthForce General Order 47 required all Earth vessels to offer aid and answer distress calls from any ship not directly engaged in hostilities with Earth. It was enough to silence Lantz's protests, but the argument had not satisfied him nor would it placate the Centauri.

Mr Wells, who had been silently watching the whole exchange, had an idea of what would. He agreed that Captain Sheridan had done the correct thing from a legal standpoint and that the Joint Chiefs back at EarthDome agreed as well. He was not pleased, however, with the decisions or actions Sheridan had taken leading up to the

incident. Had the Ministry of Peace been informed as soon as the G'Toc arrived, they would have had time to inform the Centauri government. Then, they could have turned over the cruiser and given the crew sanctuary.

Sheridan did not agree with that at all, but Lantz felt he knew better. Instead of the near-warmongers Sheridan was making the Centauri out to be, he has found them very reasonable. Despite the loss of their ship and the escape of the G'Toc, the Centauri government was willing to let the whole matter drop with an apology. The very idea turned Sheridan's stomach, but he had no choice. He was ordered directly by the Joint Chiefs and the President to offer an apology, so like it or not, he would have to comply. If he did not, it would be an act of insubordination and he would be removed from command.

The meeting to tender the apology had already been set by the painfully helpful Mr Wells in one hour in the Zen Garden, a location suitable for such a gesture. At least Sheridan was allowed to write his own apology. As Mr Wells put it, there was no need to write it for him. As with everything else, it was the thought that counted.

After they left, Sheridan considered his speech. Thinking out loud, he phrased it exactly the way he wanted it to sound. 'I apologize. I'm sorry. I'm sorry we had to defend ourselves against an unwarranted attack. I'm sorry that your crew was stupid enough to fire on a station filled with a quarter million civilians, including your own people. And I'm sorry I waited as long as I did before I blew them all straight to hell.' Musing as he left to give this lovely speech in person, he added. 'As with everything else, it's the thought that counts.'

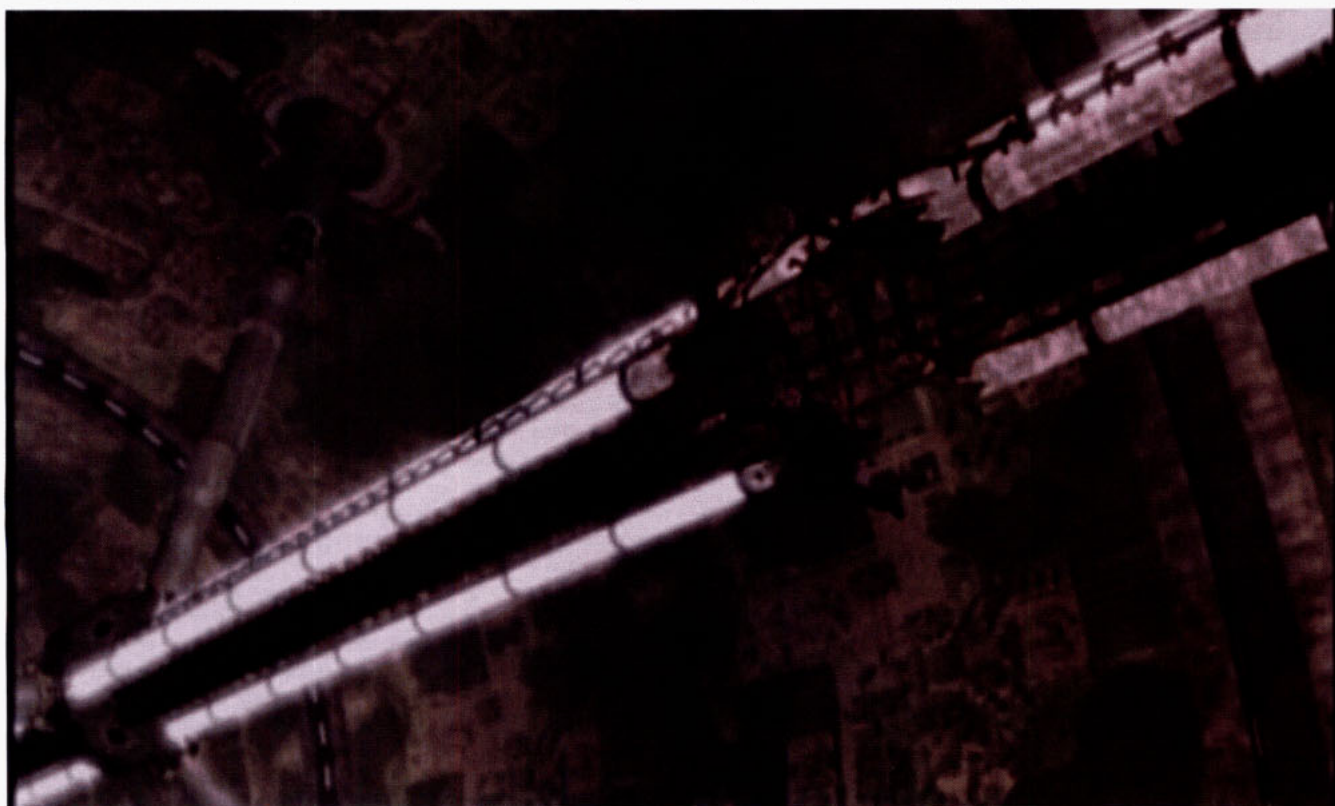
In hyperspace, Lieutenant Keffer and his flight continued escort the G'Toc to safety. As they travelled further and further away

from Babylon 5, his Starfury's computer registered the neutrino anomaly on Harvey's data crystal. He broke off the escort to follow it. He had to know what the strange ship had been. He just had to. He did not have to chase it for long. As if appearing from a fold in the scarlet and rippling black sea of hyperspace, a Shadow vessel appeared in front of him. Setting his ship on a following vector, he activated his gun camera and began recording what he had known was out there all along. Now everyone would have to believe him.

In the Zen Garden, everyone assembled to hear the Captain's apology. Kosh, Delenn, and most of the other ambassadors are there with Ivanova and several security escorts. Even G'Kar made an appearance, hiding behind a tall bush. Ivanova told him that he should not be here, but the Narn felt compelled to speak on Sheridan's behalf. He still had a few supporters left in the League of Non-Aligned Worlds. The incident was caused by his honourably standing by his decision to help the G'Toc, after all.

On his way to the Garden, Sheridan walked through the Zocalo to catch the station's core shuttle at its stop on this end of the station. He did not notice the two Centauri males, gloved and suspicious looking, watch him intently as he passed. He boarded the shuttle and took his seat, waiting patiently as it made its stops and loomed closer to the speech he dearly did not want to make. He was so preoccupied he almost did not see the foul look of a Centauri passenger as he left the shuttle. His concern over that kept him from seeing the small electronic device left on the seat the Centauri had been occupying until its low building whine caught his attention. High over the Garden, he had no choice but to override the doors and jump.

The move saved him from the detonation, but it was a temporary solution at best. The transport tube and its core shuttle operated by being in the centre of the gravity place on the station. As soon as





Sheridan's slow momentum carried him to the edge of that field, he would either be torn apart or slam into the rotating inner hull of the ship at sixty miles an hour. Ivanova desperately tried to get jump packs into the area fast enough to catch him, but there just was not time. Sheridan had escaped the bomb, but his death was just as certain now.

Death was coming for another member of Babylon 5 light years away. Keffer's ship was scanned by the Shadow vessel. It knew he was following it now. Acting quickly, he ejected the gun camera footage in a homing pod set to return to Babylon 5 and kept up transmission to it for as long as he could. The Shadow ship turned around and a wash of its psychic scream filling his thoughts. Then Keffer and his ship were dissolved into a bright white light, his own scream fading into oblivion.

With Sheridan looming precariously above them, Delenn appealed to Kosh. There was no other way and Sheridan was too important to the future to lose now. With no one else able to help him, then in Valen's name, the Vorlon was his only hope. As the assembled ambassadors from every sentient race with a presence on the station looked onward, he left his encounter suit and flew up to catch him.

Kosh's appearance was radiant, a being of light one might describe as an angel. That is, if the person looking at him were human. To Lenneir, he appeared as Valaria, a religious icon of his culture. To the Drazi watching him ascend, he was Droshala. G'Kar looked up and saw G'Lon. All of these beings were winged figures of holy significance to those that saw him. Only Londo looked upon Kosh and did not see an icon of his religion. Instead, he saw nothing. The majesty of the Vorlon was invisible to his eyes, clouded as they were by the Shadows.

On wings of blazing light, Kosh brought Sheridan safely to the ground. He held him in strong arms that did not yield to gravity or inertia. Once they landed, Kosh returned to his encounter suit, but the damage was done. He had not been harmed by the atmosphere but rather by recognition. As he had told Sheridan in the past, he had been seen and in being seen, had been recognized by everyone. Still, it had been the only way to save Sheridan's life and in that, the Vorlon did not appear to have any regrets.

In his quarters later, Delenn came to check on Sheridan. He was fine, though he had been lost in thought. The entire station was talking about what had happened. Every race that had been in the garden had seen something similar yet different. For millions of years, Delenn told him, the Vorlons had been guiding those races and many more, teaching them and as such, their appearance was a special gift given to each race. Sheridan hated to think it, but it sounded more like manipulation to him. It was a way to ensure that when any race saw the Vorlons, they would react with reverence and awe. Regardless of perspective, Delenn made Sheridan realize that Kosh had now revealed himself not only to them, but to those who had been watching for the Vorlon's return. Now, the Shadows would worry about the possibility of the Vorlons standing against them. Delenn was not sure the Vorlons were ready to do that just yet, but as long as the Shadows did not think the other races knew of their existence, that worry would give them the time they needed to prepare.

It was a hope, and on Babylon 5, hopes did not often last long. While talk on the station bubbled with the sighting of Kosh in his many forms to the various races in the Garden, a different sort of news brought those who knew its meaning to their knees. While Londo ranted at the Non-Aligned Worlds, calling for many of them to surrender to his people or be destroyed, Zak Allen saw the effects of his confirmation firsthand as Security hauled away a harmless old shopkeeper in the name of the Nightwatch. Ivanova

lit candles on her menorah, reflecting on the shattered peace, while on the monitors all around the station, ISN had another special report.

This was exclusive footage from a gun camera that oddly never made it back to Babylon 5. Instead, it found its way into the hands of the media and from them to billions of viewers all over the known galaxy. Eager viewers got their first glimpse of a Shadow vessel from Keffer's camera. It may have come posthumously, but no one could disbelieve him now. As Ivanova said, 'Secrets have a way of getting out.'

Combat Readiness on Babylon 5

No one serving any time on Babylon 5 could deny that the station can be a dangerous place. With any number of threats, internal and external, all with the potential to jeopardize the safety of the quarter million humans and aliens living in the station, it is a matter of course that its Security and Flights crews have to train constantly to keep abreast of how best to combat them. Starfuries, PPGs, the station's own defence grid, and active duty EarthForce soldiers are all part of that combat strategy, but Babylon 5's greatest weapon is preparation.

With increasing frequency in the latter half of 2259, the personnel responsible for combating threats to the station are put through rigorous training exercises to maintain combat readiness, but Babylon 5's preparation for defensive situations does not end there. Between evacuation drills for different sectors of the ship on a rotating yearly schedule and monthly checks for contaminants and flaws in the life support equipment, the station is capable of making it through the worst situation with a minimum loss of life. Combat is more a certainty with each passing year for the station, with minor conflicts and major encounters making it more important than ever to keep combat readiness as a primary concern.

War and the Centauri

The end of the Narn-Centauri war and the advent of the Earth-Centauri non-aggression treaty has ushered in a new age of conquest for the Centauri Republic. Assured of non-interference by EarthForce as long as no holding, outpost, major military asset, or colony is targeted by their military, the Republic are essentially free now to do as they like with the League of Non-Aligned Worlds. Within days of the formalization of the treaty, multiple war fronts spring up all along the borders of Centauri space. These minor conflicts with worlds too small to pose a threat to the might of the Centauri military machine provide what the Republic calls a needed buffer zone to stabilize their region of space and ensure that no greater conflicts are allowed to start.

The races who have worlds seized from them during this time do not find anything small about these conflicts. While they are powerless to prevent the Centauri Republic from striking into their territories, there is always the hope that they will take on too many war fronts simultaneously and over-extend themselves. If this occurs, the Centauri are certain to learn that while the lesser races they were conquering could not fight back by themselves, they all have very long memories. The fate of the Narn is a lesson not soon forgotten by those who have also felt the hand of the Centaurum squeezing around their throats, nor is the lesson of the terror tactics that once freed them. No matter how the Centauri war of aggression proceeds, it will almost certainly end only one way - in fire.

Scenarios and Campaign Hooks

5 Kosh Naranek has shown himself to the collected races of Babylon 5, an act that will impact his race's future and his own. It is a signal that will set into motion the momentous events of the next two years of galactic history and prompt many others to act as their spirituality, sense of honour, or dark designs demand. An entire campaign can be set with this one event as its catalyst anywhere in the galaxy. A group of religious humans, aliens, or a mix of the two may begin a pilgrimage to Babylon 5 to bask in the light of its 'blessing'. While few are aware that Kosh was the being of light seen rescuing Sheridan, a few do and that knowledge will spread. Scenarios involving governments and private organizations trying to contact Kosh, and likely being rebuffed in silence, for some ecclesiastic purpose or to fulfil a bygone prophecy involving scions of heaven will provide excellent roleplaying and diplomatic possibilities. Kosh is still as great a mystery as he was before, but campaigns can now feature him in, no pun intended, a new light.

5 There were dozens of crew aboard the primus battlecruiser Babylon 5 destroyed. The bombing attempt against him may have failed, but there will no doubt be other attempts on Sheridan's life because of this incident. The Centauri are reaching out and reclaiming their past glory; few in the Centaurum will want to live with the insult this EarthForce Captain has just handed them. Another scenario or campaign aspect that can result from this is the possibility that the bomb was actually part of an EarthDome conspiracy for the Centauri to remove someone who has proven to be a thorn in the side of President Clark and his advisors. In this instance, there will be even bigger problems than just the Centauri to worry about, especially in the light of the alliance between Earth and their Republic. Either working against these elements to protect Sheridan or any of the many other targets these newly allied forces might move against or helping them as loyal players in their respective agencies could be the basis for an entire story arc and span many intriguing episodes.

5 The Shadows are on the move now. The ISN broadcast will not be enough to bring them fully out of hiding, but they will have to move up their timetable of terror, leaving the Army of Light and anyone else caught between the Shadows and their apparent goal of galactic dominion with a great deal less time to prepare for their coming. A campaign involving players on the side of Light being sent to limit the expansion of the Shadow's plans through negotiation with other races for alliance with Babylon 5 or through spreading disinformation about the younger race's lack of knowledge about the Shadows could delay the Shadows' advance and give everyone involved vital time to bolster their lines of defence. In contract, a campaign involving knowing or unknowing forces of the Shadows (such as the Centauri, who count as both allies of Light and minions of the Dark) uncovering the truth behind what the younger races really know and providing its to their hidden masters might have the Shadows moving faster and taking a terrible toll on the unprepared races of the galaxy. In the middle somewhere, a campaign could be set for players with no allegiance at all operating as merchants, mercenaries, or operatives of a neutral power caught in between these two clashing sides. Staying out of the way of the Great War would be a Herculean task but could make for an exciting campaign option nonetheless.

Rules Additions

This chapter introduces new rules systems that Games Master may choose to add to their sessions of the Babylon 5 roleplaying game. They expand and enhance those of the main rulebook and while none are essential to run a game, they will add a new dimension to scenarios if the choice is made to include them.

In addition to new rules and variant methods of handling certain situations that may arise in a game, this chapter also includes new races and prestige classes. Players may adopt any of these for their characters or Games Masters may use them to flesh out the personalities within his own scenarios and story arcs.

Critically Injured Characters

The Babylon 5 roleplaying game uses a system of hit points to gauge a character's health and proximity to death when injured. This works fine during battles and major disasters but the Games Master may sometimes wish to have a character become critically ill after a serious injury. As such these characters are beyond the help of a few mere first aid kits and brief medical attention, required protracted medical attention and even ongoing surgery, such as Garibaldi suffered after being shot in the back at the end of the Earth year 2258.

When a character is reduced to -5 hit points or less, the Games Master may rule that he has become critically injured. Any attempt to heal the character may stabilise him as normal but it will not increase his hit points in any way - he will be critically ill and if not moved to good medical facilities within an hour, will still die. From this point on, the character is considered to be in a coma or otherwise completely incapacitated.

Once in long-term medical care, the character is permitted to attempt a Fortitude saving throw (DC 20) once per week to revive himself. Any character administering long-term care to him may attempt, once per week, a Medical check (DC 30) to revive him. Once revived, the character will still be seriously ill but can be returned to 0 hit points - he will be conscious at times and be able to converse with others. However, he will still be incapacitated and will not return to normal for at least a week after this time. Once this period of convalescence is complete, the Games Master can restore the character to full health and full hit points, ready to face the next scenario.

It is not recommended that the Games Master apply this rule to characters during a high-drama scenario, as this will naturally remove them from the game for a long period of time. However, it can add an extra edge to any period of 'downtime' when characters have more or less completed their objectives and are taking time out to rest or complete personal projects.

Medical Specialities

Characters in the Babylon 5 roleplaying game with medical training beyond basic first aid skills tend to be professionals in the field with a leaning towards certain kinds of medicine and a preference for practising one kind of treatment over another. Assuming that a character's background permits the choice of a speciality and he or she meets the minimum number of skill ranks required for one, the character may select one of the following specialities as an indication of this preference. Note that even characters with a speciality understand basic medicine and can always take full advantage of their skill ranks, even if their specialisation is far removed from the task at hand.

5 Toxicology (*Knowledge (chemistry) 5+, Medical 5+*):

When a toxicology specialist makes a Medical check to treat any kind of disease or poison, he gains a +2 circumstance bonus to the roll and can heal one point of ability score loss associated with the condition with an hour's treatment even if the check fails. Poisons and diseases made by a toxicologist always inflict +1 point of attribute damage whenever they deal damage or reach their incubation period.

5 Xenobiology (*Knowledge (xenobiology) 6+, Medical 8+*):

A xenobiologist only suffers a -5 circumstance penalty to Medical checks performed on an alien, no matter how bizarre their biology. If treating an alien patient he can communicate verbally with, he suffers no penalty and gains a +1 bonus instead. If he also has the Alien Anatomy feat, this bonus increases to +3.

5 Pharmacology (*Knowledge (chemistry) 4+, Medical 5+*):

The study of drugs, especially biological derivatives, allows a Pharmacologist to get the most from any medical chemical he creates or administers himself. As long as a Pharmacologist can take ten full minutes to tailor and refine a drug, it will always have its maximum listed effect and/or work in the shortest amount of time possible.

5 Veterinary (*Knowledge (animal life) 4+, Medical 4+, Sense Motive 2+*):

A veterinarian can treat animals and non-sentient lifeforms as effectively as a medical doctor treats communicative patients. They gain the non-standard skills Animal Empathy and Handle Animal (as listed in the *Core Rulebook I*) as class skills, though they must still purchase ranks in them as normal.

5 Paediatrics/Geriatrics (*Diplomacy 5+, Gather Information 4+, Medical 7+*):

A specialist in these fields is an expert at dealing with either children or the elderly and picking up on their less intelligible clues for what ails them. This kind of specialist gains a +1 circumstance bonus on all Diplomacy, Gather Information, or Medical checks made with his preferred type of patient.

5 Trauma Care (*Medical 6+, Concentration 6+*):

A trauma specialist is adept at working on emergency cases with very little time and minimal equipment when necessary. A specialist in this field does not need a first aid kit to administer first aid and if such equipment is available, he gains a +1 equipment bonus in addition to anything else it might grant to Medical checks.

Memory Vaulting

Telepaths of P5 rating with five or more ranks in Telepathy and Knowledge (telepathy) or higher can learn how to create a special place in their mind called a memory vault, a place where things they do not wish others to see can be placed for safe keeping. Unlike a normal Defensive Block or resisting a scan, a memory vault can only be used to place away a

single memory of an event, a person, or a place. While the memory is in this vault, it is not available for the telepath to review or even casually recall. The telepath will not even know consciously that the memory exists, which keeps the telepath's awareness of the vault's existence safe from scans as well.

To create a memory vault, a telepath undergoes a deep meditative trance, one that lasts for a full hour and cannot be interrupted without ruining the procedure and requiring the telepath to rest a full day before trying again. At the end of the meditation, the telepath effectively Takes 20 on a Telepathy check and places the memory in the newly created vault. A telepath can only have one vault at a time, and a vault can only hold a single memory or set of closely related memories. At any time, the vault's creator can take one full minute to bring the memory out of the vault and remember it again. Putting the memory back is a free action, though it may be intercepted with a deep scan if interrupted while reliving it. The defensive value of a memory vault is the number generated when its maker Takes 20 on a Telepathy check.

To even discover the existence of a memory vault in a subject, a scanning Telepath must have a higher P rating than the subject of the scan and be able to make a Telepathy roll greater than its defensive value. This roll must be made while specifically looking for a memory vault and if it fails, any further checks made by the same person suffer a cumulative -1 penalty. Once a memory vault is created, a scanning telepath must still successfully force a deep scan through the subject's defences to get inside it and see what the memory is. As a last ditch defence, a telepath can erase the contents of a memory vault as a free action even on someone else's turn, though this destroys the memory permanently. A scanning telepath can try an opposed Telepathy check to glimpse a deleted memory as it fades away, but they will only see the barest of details.

Prestige Classes

GROPOS Hoverpilot

The best way on many worlds for EarthForce to transport ground combat personnel into hostile territory is aboard specially designed VTOL capable vehicles armed for heavy combat and equipped with armoured drop bays for rapid deployment. These hovercraft are highly visible targets and since each one that gets destroyed in the air on approach to an enemy front means the loss of an entire GROPOS unit, EarthForce ensures that their pilots receive the very best training available.

The result of this special training is the GROPOS Hoverpilot, a hot shot pilot with a massive array of electronics gear and heavy firepower at his fingertips and the fate of twenty men and women in his hand. GROPOS Hoverpilots take their responsibility to EarthForce and their charges very seriously, constantly honing their skills during simulations when they are not in actual combat. GROPOS Hoverpilots and EarthForce fighter pilots tend to have a friendly rivalry going between them, mostly because they are very similar and yet fight on two very different fronts. GROPOS Hoverpilots do not get a lot of glory for what they do, but every time they make a successful drop, their names are praised by the

soldiers they have kept alive. For most of them, it is all the recognition they need.

Episode Reference: GROPOS

Additional Hit Points: 2.

Requirements

To qualify to become a GROPOS Hoverpilot, a character must fulfil all the following criteria.

Ability Scores: Dexterity 16+

Skills: Concentration 6 ranks, Pilot 8 ranks.

Feats: Skill Focus (Pilot), Vehicle Combat, Vehicle Dodge

Special: Must be a member of the GROPOS EarthForce Marines. A character can leave GROPOS after taking this prestige class without losing any of its benefits.

Class Skills

The Earth Intelligence Agent's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Drive (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Listen (Wis), Pilot (Dex), Profession (any) (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), and Technical (any) (Int).

Skill points at each level: 3 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the GROPOS Hoverpilot prestige class.

Quick on the Stick: In the dangerous world of ground combat, a GROPOS Hoverpilot knows that he who moves last gets shot first, not a position he ever wishes to be in. To avoid it, he develops lightning fast reflexes while piloting his vehicle. When a GROPOS Hoverpilot is at the controls of a VTOL capable vehicle, he benefits from Improved Initiative even if he does not have the feat. If he does, this bonus increases to +6.

Fearless: GROPOS Hoverpilots become quickly inured to the horrors of war. In their position in the skies, one solid blow to their vehicle is the end, not only for them, but the unit of Marines in its hold. This certain knowledge of his own mortality makes a GROPOS Hoverpilot extremely resistant to the fear that can cripple other pilots. He is immune to any mundane situation that would normally require him to make a Will saving throw or suffer any effects of fear or terror. A GROPOS Hoverpilot has a job to do and he does it, no matter how suicidal or fearsome it might be.

Defensive Flyer: A GROPOS Hoverpilot learns quickly how to evade heavy fire while trying to get to a drop zone or when assaulting a static fortification. This training culminates in his ability to make his craft harder to hit than normal. A VTOL capable vehicle piloted by a GROPOS Hoverpilot gains a bonus to its Defence Value equal to his class feature's listed amount (+1 at 2nd level, +2 at 3rd, and +3 at 4th). This is a constant bonus and does not require an action to perform.

Strafing Expert: When a GROPOS Hoverpilot makes an attack in a moving VTOL capable vehicle, he gains a +1 competence bonus to the roll. If he desires, he can forego this bonus to gain an extra attack; all attacks made in a

The GROPOS Hoverpilot

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+1	+0	Quick on the Stick, Fearless
2	+2	+0	+2	+0	Defensive Flyer +1
3	+3	+1	+3	+1	Defensive Flyer +2, Strafing Expert
4	+4	+1	+3	+1	Defensive Flyer +3
5	+5	+1	+4	+1	Hovercraft Mastery

given round if this option is chosen suffer an additional -2 to the roll. For any of these advantages to come into play, the vehicle must be moving at its maximum normal combat speed, as these skills are learned during rapid strafing runs using the momentum and manoeuvrability of the GROPOS Hoverpilot's vehicle to aid in the attack.

Hovercraft Mastery: GROPOS Hoverpilots are undisputed masters of VTOL vehicles, gaining a special form of defensive reaction when piloting them in battle. Whenever a GROPOS Hoverpilot's VTOL vehicle is struck in combat, he gains a Reflex save against a DC equal to the attack roll as a free action that can be taken as many times each round as the character has levels in this class. If the roll is successful, the damage from the attack is halved. If the attack does not inflict direct damage, its effects are entirely avoided instead.

EarthForce Intelligence Agent

The EarthForce Central Intelligence Agency is an official part of EarthGov, but many of its activities are kept far from the official eyes of those who oversee the ruling body's activities. ECIA often has to take care of problems that the central government cannot send through normal channels. This need for clandestine operation and effective functioning either alone or in small, unsupported groups has lead to the development and training of a special breed of agent. These operatives of the ECIA wear two faces, the one they show in public as a representative of Earth and the one that they adopt when they must undertake special assignments for Earth far from the public eye.

EarthForce Intelligence agents are trained in covert operations and diplomatic relations, as they often find themselves having to perform both duties on behalf of their agency far from home. Few operatives in EarthForce can match their espionage and black ops expertise or their combat capabilities, though the latter suffers slightly due to the predominance of their education in the former. In the field, an EarthForce Intelligence agent is a difficult opponent for others to deal with. Not only are they perfectly capable of defending themselves, but they have the official backing of the Earth government when they are not performing some illicit duty, which makes them a very visible target. Few alien governments wish the level of galactic incident it would

cause were they to openly move against a symbol of Earth authority.

This authority comes at a price. EarthForce Intelligence agents must always act in the best interests of the administration back on Earth, as not doing so could get their authority removed and their protection revoked. By the time an agent reaches the upper ranks of this agency, they are likely to have made many enemies. While these forces would never dare strike at them while Earth is watching, an agent whose government has turned against him has a very short life expectancy.

Episode Reference: Hunter, Prey

Additional Hit Points: 2.

Requirements

To qualify to become an EarthForce Intelligence Agent, a character must fulfil all the following criteria.

Ability Scores: Intelligence 14+, Wisdom 14+

Skills: Computer Use 6 ranks, Diplomacy 6 ranks, Gather Information 8 ranks.

Feats: Data Access, Skill Focus (Gather Information)

Special: Must be a member of EarthForce Intelligence before taking this prestige class with at least one year's good service record. The Games Master must approve any member of this prestige class before levels in it can be taken, as new agents are specially chosen by Earth administration.

Class Skills

The Earth Intelligence Agent's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Computer Use (Int), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Hide (Dex), Listen (Wis), Knowledge (any) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Pilot (Dex), Profession (any) (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), and Technical (any) (Int).

Skill points at each level: 6 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the EarthForce Intelligence agent prestige class.

Cross Training: Many of the people accepted into the ranks of EarthForce Intelligence from other government agencies have no prior military background, but they are required to deal with the EarthForce chain of command as part of their daily duties. As such, they become the equivalent of brevet officers of Lieutenant rank upon their indoctrination into the organisation. This rank comes with basic military training, primarily for the purpose of allowing the agent to 'act the part' of an officer when need be. The character gains proficiency in pistol, rifle, and grenade weapons and all forms of standard body armour, as well as a +4 bonus to all military-related Knowledge skill checks and the ability to make them untrained if need be.

Agent Speciality: All agents choose a speciality when they join EarthForce Intelligence. This is either Interaction (Bluff, Diplomacy, Interrogation, and Sense Motive), Espionage (Hide, Move Silently, Listen, Spot, and Search), Sciences (Technical, Profession, Computer Use), or Intelligence (Speak Languages, Concentration, Gather Information, and Knowledge). Whenever the character makes a skill check in one of his specialities, he gains a bonus equal to the one listed for this class feature. In the case of Speak Languages, an agent of 1st level gains an extra language he can read, write, and speak. At 3rd level, the bonus for this feature increases to +4 and an Intelligence specialised agent gains a second free language at full literacy.

Dark Privilege: The forces back home in EarthGov have recognised the agent and appreciate his skills. Once per scenario at an appropriate moment, the agent can call upon his friends in government to get a piece of vital information, get him out of a legal entanglement, or bail him out of a combat situation. The agent must be able to make contact with someone in authority in any Earth controlled territory to secure this aid, but it will not be refused unless there is extremely good cause to do so. The Games Master is the final judge of what this ability can and cannot do, but it should always be helpful in some way when used appropriately.

Well Connected: The connections an agent develops in the course of his duties begin to intermingle at this level, increasing his ability to call upon people he knows when he needs their support and aid. His Dark Privilege class feature can now be used twice per scenario, and all Diplomacy checks he makes gain a +1 circumstance bonus when they are used against a target that recognises the authority of EarthGov. If the target is an Earth official or a citizen of the

Earth Alliance, the bonus becomes +2. People may not like the agent at all, but they are inclined to agree to his requests because of his implied connections and personal authority.

Government Protection: A form of Dark Privilege, Government Protection is the network of support available to agents at the top of the Intelligence organisation. At 5th level, an EarthForce Intelligence agent can always expect to be rescued from legal prosecution or diplomatic incidents as long as Earth can become involved in some way, either officially or not. This authority also extends to the agent's ability to requisition aid; when an agent needs a ship or given piece of equipment, other Earth citizens and officials are duty bound to provide it if it is at all available. As with all of an agent's social features, this ability can be used until it is truly abused. EarthGov detests embarrassments and agents who flaunt their power will quickly lose it.

Centaurum Royal Guard

The Centaurum Royal Guard serve the Emperor of the Centauri Republic in many different ways, acting in any role from bodyguard to elite trooper on the front lines of battle to an expedient assassination in the dark if such is the Emperor's will. The temperament of these, the finest members of the Centaurum, largely depends on the personality of the Emperor during their service, though certain facets of their training and skills have remained the same for generations. Since the glorious days of the old Republic, when the Centauri stretched forth their hand and saw it close around a hundred star systems, the Centaurum Royal Guards have been the proud arm supporting that grasp.

Each Centaurum Royal Guard is one of the greatest assets of the Imperial Court and none are used lightly. In exchange for their expensive training and exquisite arms of service, the Royal Guard swear a life long oath under the administration of telepathy to forever uphold the will of the Emperor. As such, they can never be bought or bribed and will never yield to any force that could turn them against the recognised regent of the Centauri people, no matter who sits on the throne. This loyalty is absolute, which can be a grave detriment to the Guards in service when someone wishes to move against the Emperor. More often than not, Royal Guards have to be eliminated during the course of this ambition.

The EarthForce Intelligence Agent

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+1	+1	Cross Training, Agent Speciality +2
2	+1	+0	+2	+2	Dark Privilege
3	+2	+1	+2	+2	Agent Speciality +4
4	+3	+1	+2	+2	Well Connected
5	+3	+1	+3	+3	Government Protection

The Royal Guard of the Centaurum have a great deal of cross training, allowing them to serve on starships, in ground vehicles, as escorts and warriors, and even as diplomats on the rare occasions when a Centauri noble is not present to act in that capacity. As such, their value is not lost on others of their kind and members of alien races with any cause to recognise their station. The authority they wield as the right hands of the Emperor often place them in positions of command, although they do not technically hold any rank in the Centauri military unless they held one prior to their appointment to the Royal Guard.

Episode Reference: Numerous, including *The Coming of Shadows*

Additional Hit Points: 2.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Centauri Royal Guard, a character must fulfil all the following criteria.

Ability Scores: Every Ability score must be 12+, making Centaurum Royal Guards some of the finest examples of the race in all physical and mental respects.

Race: Only Centauri can become Centaurum Royal Guards.

Skills: Concentration 5+, Diplomacy 6 ranks, Intimidate 7 ranks, Pilot 5 ranks, Spot 5 ranks

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Harm's Way

Special: Centaurum Royal Guards are appointed by the Emperor directly, though political manoeuvring and currying favours among the nobility on Centauri Prime can go a long way towards being noticed for such an honour. The Games Master must approve every level of this prestige class, including the first one, as the Emperor is also personally responsible for his Guards receiving the honour of additional training throughout their career.

Special: Because one of the requirements of this class is a telepathic binding to the will of the Emperor, it is a security risk for any members of the Royal Guard to be telepathic themselves. As such, only in extraordinary circumstances should a telepathic Centauri to become a Centaurum Royal Guard

Class Skills

The Centaurum Royal Guard's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Computer Use (Int), Concentration (Con), Disguise (Cha), Drive (Dex), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Pick Pocket (Dex), Pilot (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (None), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), and Technical (Int).

Skill points at each level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Centaurum Royal Guard prestige class.

Oath Bond: When a Centaurum Royal Guard is first taken into the service, he undergoes a one month period of psychic conditioning by court telepaths. During this time, he is conditioned to serve the Emperor unswervingly, to place the laws and edicts of the Republic above his own desires, and to never act in any way against the best interests of whoever

is currently acting as the regent or Emperor. This makes them immune to any form of mundane or telepathic coercion, including mind control and all manners of bribes and threats. For all intents and purposes, Centaurum are mentally incapable of turning against the Centauri Emperor for as long as they have physical control over their bodies.

Centaurum Special Training: Centaurum Royal Guards are often called upon to render service to the Emperor far from his side by acting as a liaison to military units, commercial interests, or in a diplomatic situation. Every time this feature is gained, the character gains a virtual Skill Focus feat in the prestige class skill of his choosing. This represents intensive training provided through the Royal Court and involves telepathic conditioning and a deep scan by a telepath in the service of the Centaurum.

Imperial Crescent: The first rank of honour among the Centaurum Royal Guard, the Imperial Crescent is a medallion awarded in high ceremony by the Emperor himself in recognition of the character's continued good service. Centaurum Royal Guard wearing their Imperial Crescent openly gain a +2 bonus to all Diplomacy and Intimidation checks made against non-noble born Centauri.

Chosen Duty: Each Centaurum Royal Guard has a slightly different skill set, reflecting his abilities and preference in how he serves the Emperor. Their individual talents mark them at being better suited for one form of duty or another, which naturally guides them towards different divisions of service. The first time this feature is gained at 3rd level, a Centaurum Royal Guard can choose any one feat he meets all of the qualifications for as a bonus gained through his specialised training regimen.

At 7th level, the Centaurum Royal Guard may select any of the following class features from other professions to simulate his increased training and growing expertise in his chosen role as one of the Republic's elite: *Security Systems* (as per an Agent), *Sneak Attack +1d6* (as per an Agent), *Contact* (as per a Diplomat), *Rallying Call* (as per an Officer), *Weapons Training* (as per a Soldier), or *Covering Fire* (as per a soldier).

Purple Freedom: To keep Centaurum Royal Guard from being susceptible to any kind of leverage, including that of actions take by his family through others blackmailing them, Imperial decree orders the purple files of the character's family permanently erased and levies a sentence of death on anyone found in possession of a copy or them or caught attempting to use information within them against any member of the Centaurum Royal Guard's relatives. This act, which effectively frees an entire family line from one of the key tools of back-stabbing and politics in the Republic, is considered a great honour and one of the most important rewards a Guard can attain.

Imperial Eagle: Centaurum Royal Guards of 6th level are honoured in a special ceremony in which a masterfully worked helmet of reinforced steel and gold plating is presented to them by the hand of the Emperor. This helmet bears the crest of the Imperial Eagle, a sign of his boundless devotion and countless acts of heroism in the service of the Republic. While the helmet has no rules significance, wearing it increases the bonus provided by the Imperial

Crescent feature to +3 and extends the effect at +1 to Centauri nobles who must now begrudgingly acknowledge his growing worth to the court.

Devotion Is Its Own Reward: At 8th level, a Centaurum Royal Guard has faced great dangers, defended the Emperor numerous times, and likely risked his life in the endless pursuit of glory for all Centauri. This has spread his fame and reputation across the colonies and outposts of the Centauri Republic, resulting in his name being known virtually everywhere he goes. This recognition allows him to simply request any normal services he desires while in Centauri-controlled areas and receive them for free. Once each scenario, provided the Centaurum Royal Guard is in an appropriate place to do so, he can requisition 1000 times his Charisma modifier's worth of any form of equipment or goods and get them free of charge. This benefit is in the name of the Emperor and can be lost if the character makes a habit of using his requisition ability for his own personal gain. However, Centauri being Centauri, a little personal gain is expected and even approved of, as long as it does not get out of hand (Games Master's discretion).

Imperial Champion: The highest honour the Emperor can bestow upon a Centaurum Royal Guard is the title of Imperial Champion. Only one Centauri at a time can hold this title and only 10th level Centaurum Royal Guard characters qualify for consideration. There may be more than one 10th level member of this prestige class, but only one can wield this distinct honour. Each Emperor has his own way of selecting an Imperial Champion, from political acumen to actual gladiatorial combat amongst all those eligible. An Emperor can strip this title from a character just as easily, but in practice this is rarely done.

An Imperial Champion cannot fail Charisma-based skill rolls against other Centauri with the sole exception of the Emperor. In addition, their requisition value for the Devotion Is Its Own Reward feature is doubled for as long as he holds the title and frequent use of it is rarely considered excessive. A Centaurum Royal Guard with this distinction is expected

to live large and enjoy the luxuries that his service has entitled him to.

The Techno-Mage

The techno-mages are a breed apart. Drawn from races all over the galaxy, though in present times predominantly human, they are a collection of scientists and high technologists who have abandoned the endless commercial and military pursuits of their fields to explore the calling of pure science. Over the centuries, their organisation has become a secret order even as their studies have become ritualistic and magical, akin to the spells of old. Despite their mystic outlook and appearance, everything the techno-mages do and believe in has a solid grounding in high technology. A deep understanding of lasers, circuitry and the principles of fusion grants a techno-mage incredible personal power, but this is in turn dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge in all its many forms. As an order, the techno-mages are one of the most learned organisation in the entire galaxy but they do not share their knowledge easily or freely, for they are all too aware of the selfish purposes such treasures could be put to. As a result, techno-mages are also very secretive and are rarely seen outside their places of power. They prefer to work in the shadows, far from the prying eyes of those who would bend their knowledge to ill purpose.

It should be noted that the techno-mage prestige class presented here represents an individual who has been inducted into the order at a late stage in life. This is a very rare occurrence but occasionally an individual will distinguish himself enough in the eyes of a techno-mage to be granted access to a few of their secrets. Most techno-mages, however, are raised within the order from birth and they possess almost unimaginable power. Such techno-mages will be detailed fully in a later sourcebook.

Episode Reference: Geometry of Shadows.

Additional Hit Points: 1.

The Centaurum Royal Guard

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+1	+1	Oath Bond, Centaurum Special Training
2	+2	+0	+2	+2	Imperial Crescent
3	+3	+1	+2	+2	Chosen Duty
4	+4	+1	+2	+2	Purple Freedom
5	+5	+1	+3	+3	Centaurum Special Training
6	+6	+2	+3	+3	Imperial Eagle
7	+7	+2	+4	+4	Chosen Duty II
8	+8	+2	+4	+4	Devotion Is Its Own Reward
9	+9	+3	+4	+4	Centaurum Special Training
10	+10	+3	+5	+5	Imperial Champion

Requirements

To qualify to become a techno-mage, a character must fulfil all the following criteria.

Ability Scores: Intelligence 17+, Wisdom 15+

Skills: Computer Use 10 ranks, Concentration 10 ranks, Knowledge (any) 10 ranks, Technical 10 ranks.

Feats: Data Access, Skill Focus (computer use), Skill Focus (technical – any).

Special: Must be invited into the order by another techno-mage – a very rare event and one in which the character must have distinguished himself in some way to the techno-mage.

Class Skills

The techno-mage's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Computer Use (Int), Concentration (Con), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (any) (Int), Pilot (Dex), Profession (any) (Wis), Speak Language (none), and Technical (any) (Int).

Skill points at each level: 6 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the techno-mage prestige class.

Techno-mage's Garb: The many scientific advantages of techno-magic pervade every aspect of the techno-mage's life. Upon joining the order, the techno-mage receives numerous items of incredible technology, bound into personal decorations and clothing, including the trademark of all techno-mages, a heavy black hooded cloak. Collectively, these items weigh 15 lb. and act as a first aid kit (unlimited uses), hand unit communicator, hand computer, data recorder, cold weather clothing and all three types of advanced toolkit. In addition, the techno-mage's garb acts as armour, granting Damage Reduction 3.

Wisdom of the Ages: The Technet is a vast array of recorded technical lore, stretching back to the technological adolescence of many races and containing some of the most advanced scientific knowledge of the galaxy. The secrets of this great repository are shrouded in rituals, mantras and spells but have very real effects when accessed via the techno-mage's garb. Each individual techno-mage puts this information to use in his own way, as shown by their personal choices of Technarcane Lore. All share the same basic benefit, however – the Wisdom of the Ages, drawn from the Technet, allows the techno-mage to Take 10 on any Computer Use or Technical check regardless of distraction or other conditions that would normally prevent him from doing so. Only a techno-mage is able to access the Technet and read its secrets. Any other character attempting to do so will find only an empty dataframe.

Technarcane Lore: The primary focus of any techno-mage's life is the exploration of scientific frontiers within a framework of mysticism. This study yields fantastic creations and give techno-mages an incredible insight into matters of both man and machine. Over time, the techno-mage will become as much a philosopher as an engineer and scientist. At 2nd level and every two levels thereafter, the techno-mage may select one of the Technarcane Lore disciplines detailed below. However, as the realms of science are virtually unlimited, players and Games Masters are free

to work together to create new disciplines covering other areas of learned study.

Arcane Augmentation: Through the application of advanced technology, a techno-mage can modify mechanical and electronic objects. The amount of time this modification required is one day per 100 credits or part thereof of the object's original market value. If the item uses a skill check for its basic function, such as a hand computer, this modification grants a permanent +2 equipment bonus to all future operations, while armour will have its DR increased by +1. Weapons gain a +1 equipment bonus to damage or gain a 50% bonus to their range increment. Items may only have Arcane Augmentation applied to them once. The techno-mage is assumed to have access to all the tools and parts required for any modification at no extra cost.

Computations of Subterfuge: Before selecting Computations of Subterfuge, the techno-mage must possess the ability of Arcane Augmentation. A techno-mage with this discipline can render himself virtually invisible for short periods of time, even when in motion. This function requires a Technical check opposed by any observer's Spot check. If this is successful, the techno-mage gains the benefit of 100% concealment for a period of up to one hour. This discipline may also be used on any spacecraft of gargantuan size or smaller that the techno-mage has had the chance to make modifications to – such modifications require a week of work but have no cost in materials. Computations of Subterfuge may be used only once per day, due to the severe power drain placed on the techno-mage's resources.

Digital Familiar: Before selecting Digital Familiar, the techno-mage must possess the ability to use Infomancy. A Digital Familiar is a complex array of code intended to assist the techno-mage in matters of computer use and data manipulation. This incredibly complicated program has, what seems to be, the ability to think, reason and make decisions. The familiar exists only within computer systems but can project an image of itself from any holographic display – its exact form is determined by the techno-mage who creates it. Treat the Digital Familiar as a 5th level scientist with no physical ability scores, Intelligence 20, Wisdom 18, Charisma 10. It also possesses Computer Use 8 ranks, Technical (electronics) 8 ranks, with Skill Focus in both skills.

Infomancy: A techno-mage with this discipline is a sovereign ruler of information technologies. In addition to the benefits granted to all techno-mages by the Technet, the techno-mage also gains a +5 competence bonus to all Computer Use checks made to avoid detection when accessing other systems. In addition, the techno-mage can never fail any Computer Use check with a DC lower than 20.

Lexicon of Power: By using a special array of devices woven into his garb that contact the cerebral processes of any living sentient being the techno-mage makes eye contact with, he can intone special sounds and words that stimulate certain emotional reactions. A techno-mage may force any intelligent subject he makes eye contact within to making a Will saving throw (DC 10 + the techno-mage's class level + the techno-mage's Intelligence modifier). If the saving throw is failed, the techno-mage may choose to cause the subject to suffer one of the following effects; be stunned for one round,

experience any one emotion of the techno-mage's choice or take on any one minor personality quirk (fussy, meticulous, suspicious, etc. . .) for a period of one hour. This discipline has massive personal power consumption and so the techno-mage may only use it once per day.

Mystic Machinesmith: Before selecting Mystic Machinesmith, the techno-mage must possess the of Arcane Augmentation, Digital Familiar and Infomancy abilities. Through the use of this discipline, the techno-mage may construct almost any mechanical or electronic device. This takes one day per 100 credits, or part thereof of the market value of the device being constructed. In addition, the techno-mage must succeed in a Technical (mechanical or electronics as appropriate) check (DC 25) every day during this construction – failure will result in the work being wasted and the process must begin again from scratch. The techno-mage is assumed to have all the parts and materials required to create these items, but the Games Master may require him to gain specific components if the item is exotic or being constructed in extremely adverse conditions.

Primal Focus: Before selecting Primal Focus, the techno-mage must possess the ability of Arcane Augmentation. A techno-mage trained in this discipline creates a network of tiny machines in his garb that can generate and direct focussed energy. This can be used to recharge spent energy pods and caps in one minute, provide power to a device at the techno-mage's touch as if it had a power pod or cap, or unleash a blast of energy (2d8 damage, 19-20/x2 critical, 50 ft. range increment). The network takes time to recharge and so this discipline may only be used once per day per character level.

Shadows of Light and Sound: Before selecting Shadows of Light and Sound, the techno-mage must possess the of Arcane Augmentation, Computations of Subterfuge, Infomancy and Lexicon of Power abilities. This is the art of

generating intricate illusions of anything the techno-mage can imagine. Such illusions have full auditory and visual elements, and may be projected anywhere that the techno-mage has direct line of sight to. Each illusion can cover an area of up to one cubic mile and lasts for a period of up to one hour. Shadows of Light and Sound may be used up to three times per day.

Templates

The Empath Template

Created as a side effect of a failed Psi Corp experiment, empathes are former telepaths whose normal abilities have been lost as a result of the shuffle in their genetic code and the scrambling of their neural pathways. Instead of being able to read minds and detect thoughts as they once could, they have developed a new set of abilities that allow them to control the emotions and, to a more limited degree, the perceptions of any target that makes contact with them for a short time.

Empath is a template that can be added to any living creature with a telepathic P rating of 1 or higher. Performing the empathy procedure on a latent telepath removes the slight abilities they had before, but does not grant them this template until such time as their abilities are brought out by some other method. The creature's type does not change as a result of this template.

Hit Points: Same as the creature

Speed: Same as the creature

DV: While an empathy often makes friends and their natural amiability keeps most people from attacking them outright, they are no harder to hit than they were before. No change.

The Techno-mage

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+1	Techno-mage's Garb, Wisdom of the Ages
2	+1	+0	+0	+2	Technarcane Lore
3	+2	+1	+1	+2	
4	+3	+1	+1	+2	Technarcane Lore
5	+3	+1	+1	+3	
6	+4	+2	+2	+3	Technarcane Lore
7	+5	+2	+2	+4	
8	+6/+1	+2	+2	+4	Technarcane Lore
9	+6/+1	+3	+3	+4	
10	+7/+2	+3	+3	+5	Technarcane Lore

Damage: Same as the creature

Special Attacks: An empath retains all of its previous special attacks unless the special attack in question was the result of their telepathic abilities. Those attacks are lost when the creature becomes an empath. In addition, an empath gains the special attack listed below.

Moment's Pause: Empaths who win initiative against an opponent can take a standard action and focus on a single target. This target, if it is susceptible to mind-affecting abilities, must make a Will save or be unable to initiate any hostile action against the empath that round. Instead, it spends its action this round standing quietly and staring at the empath, though it can defend itself normally. If the empathy attacks the target at all during this round, the effect is broken completely. The DC for this power is 5 + the empath's Charisma Modifier + the creature's P rating + any feats that would raise the DC of the empath's telepathic abilities.

Special Qualities: An empath retains all of the creature's special qualities aside from those related to its telepathy, since they lose the ability to use any telepathic ability or skill, and gains the additional ability listed below. Note that empaths lose all use of their telepathic abilities; all telepathic powers and normal uses of the Telepathy skill are lost to the character when they become an empath.

Trusted Friend: An empath that can make eye contact with a subject for a full, uninterrupted round (this can include the action spent using *Moment's Pause*) can force it to make a Will saving through. The DC for this is the same as the *Moment's Pause* ability and it can only affect targets susceptible to mind-affecting effects. Failure

means the target trusts the empath, considers him a friend, and will accede to any reasonable request he makes. A victim of this power remains affected until the empath leaves its presence for more than one full hour or loses consciousness, whichever occurs first. The requests an empath can make of a *trusted friend* cannot directly endanger them, but someone trained in combat might fight for him or hold off pursuers while he escaped.

Saves: Same as the creature; +2 to Will saves

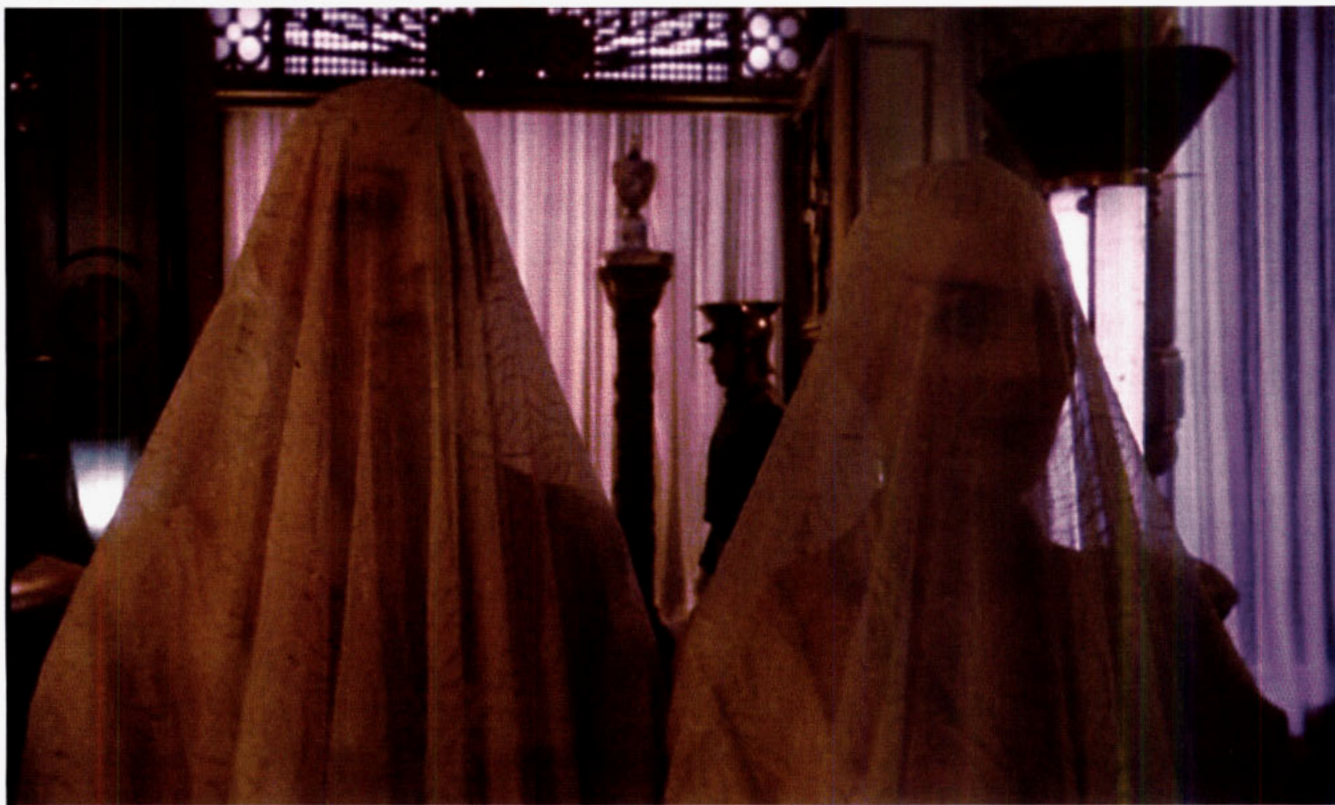
Abilities: An empath gains a +2 to his Charisma score due to the general field of empathic power that convinces people around him to consider him a friend. This bonus does not occur when relating to a given being if it is immune to mind-affecting abilities.

Skills: Same as the creature

Feats: Same as the creature, plus the creature gains the ability to take the Commanding Presence feat listed below if it otherwise qualifies

The Imperial Telepath Template

Easily identified by the white veils and simple formal gowns they always wear while in the presence of the Emperor, these trained telepaths serve as the ruler of the Centauri people's eyes and ears while he is away on matters of state. Their special training and lifestyle grant these gifted women an extraordinary ability, one that is unique among the known races with telepathic potential. Always serving in groups of four, these women are a



very special part of the Centauri culture and an Imperial treasure guarded jealously throughout their pampered and indulgent, though completely sheltered lives.

Imperial telepath is a template that can be added to any Centauri female with a telepathic P rating of 10 or higher. While this is normally a position a character is born into and trained from the time she can think coherently, it is not outside the realm of possibility that extraordinary circumstances might call for a way to replace the loss of one of the four people serving the Emperor in this capacity. With the Game Master's permission, this template could be applied to a suitable candidate willing to undergo a special intense training regimen of Centauri devising.

If any one of the four current Imperial telepaths die, the other three must make a Fortitude save (without the benefit of their usual bonus, see below) at a DC 15 or also expire from the terrible shock and loss of their shared psychic pain. Unfortunately, if one of the telepaths fails this save and dies, it forces the survivors to save again because of the additional death. In this way, the loss of one Imperial telepath usually results in the loss of them all. In any case, survivors lose this template immediately after one of the four dies. The bond they share is a special one that requires all of them to maintain.

Hit Points: Same as the creature

Speed: Same as the creature

DV: No change, though all of these women have a constant detail of bodyguards and will rarely come under any form of direct attack while in the course of their normal duties

Damage: Same as the creature

Special Attacks: An Imperial telepath retains all of her previous special attacks. In addition, an imperial telepath gains the special attack listed below.

Boundless Contact: An Imperial telepath can initiate telepathic contact without the need for a skill check with any other Imperial telepath regardless of the distance between them. This works even if one is hundreds of light years away and ignores any mental defences or barriers that might be in the way. Exceptionally powerful telepathic interference (of a P13 or higher rating) might temporarily shut down this contact, but otherwise is it constantly active and cannot be interrupted.

Imperial Sense: Imperial telepaths are always in subtle contact with the Emperor they serve and are aware of his presence as well as his mental and physical condition at all times. An Imperial telepath is instantly alerted to any danger the emperor himself knows of and will be informed if he ever becomes diseased, poisoned, telepathically contacted, or injured.

Special Qualities: An Imperial telepath retains all of the creature's special qualities and gain the following additional one.

Simultaneous Action: Imperial telepaths effectively share the same tasks when they are together, with one acting directly and the others assisting through repeated effort. This increases the bonus from the Aid Another action to +3 instead of the usual +2. This is constantly in effect and when Imperial telepaths do anything that requires a skill check or attack roll, only one of them makes the roll while the others (either one or three, since they are never willingly alone) assist.

Saves: Same as the creature. In addition, Imperial telepaths gain a general +1 bonus to all saving throws that result from any effect that does not simultaneously occur to all four Imperial telepaths at once.

Abilities: An Imperial telepath gains a +2 to Wisdom and Intelligence, all stemming from their mutual brain processes and their ability to telepathically probe each other for insight and memories.

Skills: Same as the creature

Feats: Same as the creature, plus Imperial Telepaths gain Gestalt as a bonus feat.

Feats

Commanding Presence (Telepath)

Your voice carries with it some subtle level of empathic power of its own. When you speak to a being in a language it understands, you can exert influence through sheer force of will and personality.

Prerequisites: Must have the Empath template, Charisma of 16+

Benefit: By speaking to a creature you have affected with the ability *Trusted Friend*, you can force it to comply with a single word command of your choice. This one word command must be a verb ('walk', 'crawl', 'jump' and even 'swallow' in some cases) and must be something the target can physically perform. The target will assume that it has complied through its own free will while it is under this form of empathic control, though once it is freed of your power, it will realise that it was being compelled. Using this feat is a standard action, and you may invoke your Commanding Presence once per day.

Equipment and Vehicles

Technological development continues at a high pace throughout the galaxy, as every race tries to gain commercial, scientific and military superiority over its rivals. The Earth year 2259 saw many governments begin preparations for wide-ranging conflicts, driving the need for new weapons, spacecraft and technologies, all of which opportune players can take advantage of if they know where to look.

This chapter details new equipment and vehicles that become available in 2259, greatly expanding the options players and Games Masters have when developing their characters.

Advanced Medical Stretcher: This is a large wheeled unit used by emergency teams to stabilise seriously injured patients during transfer to proper medical facilities. The advanced medical stretcher includes a cardiac stimulator and acts as a first aid kit with effectively unlimited uses but also grants a +2 equipment bonus to all Medical checks made to stabilise a patient lying upon it. It also incorporates a basic med-scanner, allowing medical personnel to make preliminary diagnosis during transport to a Medlab.

Cryogenic Freezer Unit: Found only in hospital units and highly specialised spacecraft, the cryogenic freezer unit is capable of slowing down the metabolism of one humanoid creature to below hibernation levels, effectively halting all life processes. Its main use is in the immediate stabilisation of critically injured patients for whom medical technology currently holds no salvation – they are placed within the freezer unit for retrieval years in the future when they may be cured or healed. However, few can afford such luxuries, as costs for the maintenance of a unit can easily exceed 200 credits per month. A century ago, freezer units were also the only realistic method of deep space travel available to the Earth Alliance, with crew being frozen before departure and vessels placed on automatic navigation as they slowly crawled across the light years between stars. A character placed in a freezer unit will effectively not age, nor gain or lose any hit points due to rest or injury. Furthermore, the character will also avoid any continuing effects of disease or poison. It should be noted, however, that as soon as the character is removed from the unit, any such ongoing health problems will immediately begin once more unless treated. It takes an hour to prepare a character for placement within a freezer unit, and a further hour to remove them safely – both require the use of extensive medical facilities, though most freezer units can slowly revive occupants automatically over a period of a day.

Hovercam: A piece of engineering genius turned to a very mundane purpose, the hovercam is a full spectrum camera built around a vectored thrust electromagnetic propulsion engine, all housed in an armoured shell roughly the size of a flat beach ball. Hovercams are used by most Earth media groups and while they may have been invented by Humans, variants have found their way into the hands of most of the galaxy's civilized races. Hovercams can be used for 72 hours on a single power charge and stores 4 hours of video and audio on a data crystal. Hovercams can hold 3 crystals at a time, allowing for 12 hours of uninterrupted recording. Intended for rough duty and designed not to break if its hover jet should fail, a hovercam has a Damage Reduction of 6 and 30 hit points.

Jammer: A tiny piece of electronic espionage hardware, the Jammer sets up an oscillating wave field that is virtually inaudible to normal range of human hearing but is clearly picked up on recording devices and audio sensors as a form of white noise. Any attempt to digitally record or eavesdrop within a 20-foot radius of an active jammer result in nothing but silence. This might make anyone monitoring such listening devices suspicious, but they will be unable to make out any intelligible sound in the area. Jammers only work on audio devices; video feeds and actual hearing operate normally.

Inquisitor's Cane: A powerful weapon and tool of office carried by Vorlon inquisitors, the inquisitor's cane has many functions vital to the protection and effectiveness of these specialized and somewhat sinister agents. Each cane is made for a specific individual and is utterly powerless in the hands of any other. An inquisitor using his own cane can generate blasts of force, project light-based illusions, exercise a form of telekinetic control over his environment, and control pieces of special technology like Vorlon Manacles. Specific powers differ from cane to cane, depending on the person using it, but the following are suggested abilities.

- † Emits light of varying intensities from a dim glow to a 200 metre radius sphere of virtual sunlight. This power can be used at will.
- † Acts as a weapon, firing blasts of pure gravitational force. Treat this as a ranged attack with doing 1d6, 2d6, or 3d6 of either subdual or lethal bludgeoning damage with a successful hit. Both power and subdual versus lethal can be determined as a free action during the user's attack, but only one attack can be made with an inquisitor's cane each round.
- † Can create holograms of any kind within 300 metres of the cane. These holograms can be quite complex, but they alone cannot inflict damage or affect solid matter. This power is often used in conjunction with an attack to make it seem more terrifying or effective than it really is, such as trailing flames behind a force blast.
- † The cane can exert a Strength score of 30 against any single target perceivable by the inquisitor within 100 metres. This is often used in conjunction with the hologram power to create the illusion of bindings or other solid objects as the strength can be used as a ranged grapple attempt capable of pinning a subject if desired.
- † The cane is a control device for other pieces of Vorlon technology, allowing remote operation at will without the manipulation of buttons or switches. This allows inquisitors to activate items like Vorlon manacles without any visible effort.

Micro-Bug: A tiny recording device no larger than a button, the micro-bug is a technologically advanced spying tool manufactured by most races. Capable of holographically recording images and sounds within a 360° arc for up to an hour, it must nevertheless rely on a holographic projector to reproduce its stored images or transfer them to a data crystal. The micro-bug is often used in covert operations but many private citizens also purchase them for use in business negotiations or civil proceedings. An upgraded micro-bug is also available for an additional 1,000 credits, no larger than its standard counterpart but incorporating a secure

transmitter to relay images to a waiting recorder or hand computer over distances of up to five miles.

Regen Pack: Combining a potent mix of synthetic nutrients and stimulants designed to boost the body's own immune and regenerative systems, regen packs are expensive but highly desirable addition to any medical facility and are commonly used in the care of critically injured patients. Each regen pack used on a patient will grant a +1 circumstance bonus to any Medical check made to provide long term care (see p46 of the main rulebook). However, over use regen packs can have potentially lethal side effects. Every regen pack used after the first in the same one week period will stack its bonus to Medical checks but will also force the patient to make a Fortitude save (DC 5 + 1 per extra regen pack used). Failure will result in the patient suffering temporary Constitution damage equal to the total number of regen packs used within the one week period. This Constitution damage will be recovered at a rate of one point per day, if the patient survives the resultant hit point loss.

Rescue Jump Packs: Bulky flight capable backpacks that utilize vectored thrust generated through miniature turbo fans. Rescue jump packs are cumbersome and require a special suit (considered part of the rescue jump pack for purposes of purchase and storage) to use safely. Any Medium humanoid wearing a rescue jump pack can fly at a rate of 30-feet. Rescue jump packs are not vehicles and do not have handling, acceleration or deceleration values; users can move in any direction while wearing one, travelling as little or as much as they wish. Rescue jump packs have a major limitation that relegates them to their normal use as emergency equipment only. The charge on a rescue jump pack is only good for 30 rounds of flight. After this time, the unit must recharge in a special charging cradle for four hours before it can be used again.

Stims: A metabolic mix intended for mammalian humanoids (though alternate formulas can easily be created to serve any sentient race given time and resources), a dose of stims grants a +2 bonus to all Fortitude saving throws, and banishes all current effects of fatigue and pain. These effects come from the swiftly acting endorphins and adrenaline derivatives in the chemical stream and work immediately after an injection for 1d4 times 10 minutes. During this time, the subject benefits from the Endurance feat and gains 10 temporary hit points; damage taken whilst the stim is active are taken from these first. Doses of stims are not cumulative; new doses supersede older ones. The real risk to stims is in addiction; once a character has taken stims, they must make a Will saving throw during times of heavy stress (DC 10 + 1 for every five previous doses of stims taken in the past month) to keep from taking another dose or seeking one out if stems are unavailable.

Vorlon Manacles: A device most often used by inquisitors in service to the Vorlons, there can take many forms and are specially crafted for their intended subjects. A general version capable of acting on any creature exists, but it is not as effective as a set tailored for a specific being. Vorlon manacles do not lock and can be removed as a standard action by any subject with the ability to move freely. While they are being worn, their controller can force the wearer to make a Fortitude save or suffer anywhere from 1 to 4 points of either lethal or subdual energy damage. This damage cannot be healed while the manacles are still being worn, and the DC of the save is 13 (15 for a set of tailored manacles worn by their intended subject). Vorlon manacles can only be controlled by a Vorlon or one of their agents.

General Equipment

Item	Cost	Weight
Advanced Medical Stretcher	87,000 cr.	350 lb.
Cryogenic Freezer Unit	275,000 cr.	1,000 lb.
Hovercam	3,500 cr.	15 lb.
Jammer	25,000 cr.	-
Inquisitor's Cane	n/a	4 lb.
Micro-Bug	1,500 cr.	-
Regen Pack	195 cr.	1 lb.
Stims	200 cr./dose	-
Rescue Jump Packs	12,500 cr.	45 lbs.
Vorlon Manacles	n/a	1 lb. each

Spacecraft and Conventional Vehicles

The spacecraft and vehicles detailed below are new designs that appear during 2259. In many cases, these vessels may have been in development and even limited service several years before but it is only now, during *The Coming of Shadows*, that they see widespread use. Games Masters are free to introduce them earlier but should ensure they never become commonplace until 2259.

Copernicus, Deep Space Exploratory Craft, Earth Alliance

The Copernicus is typical of the long-ranged sub-light ships sent by the Earth Alliance to other star systems before the acquisition of jumpgate technology. Over one hundred years old, these vessels are extremely primitive by modern standards, lacking many of the technological refinements that are now taken for granted. They typically have facilities for two cryogenic freezer units to keep the minimal crew alive over long voyages, with extensive automatic navigation systems that allow the vessel to home in on any artificial signals or energy emanations. However, these systems are only designed for minor course corrections and braking manoeuvres over millions of kilometres and crew are required to perform more sophisticated operations such as docking and orbital insertion.

Gargantuan Spacecraft; hp 50; DV 3 (-4 size, -3 agility); DR 6; Spd -; Acc 1; Dec 1; Han +0; Sensor +0; Stealth 11; Cargo 2,000 lb.; 2 Crew



Amerigo Survey and Exploration Vehicle, Interplanetary Expeditions (Earth)

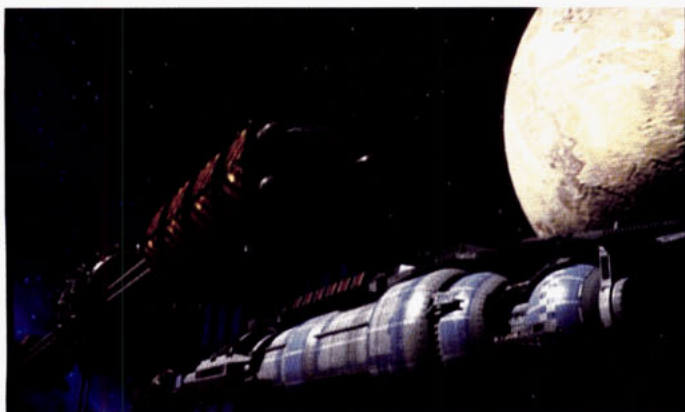
A specialized form of expedition rover created for truly hostile or difficult levels of terrain resistance and gravitic stress, Amerigo survey and exploration vehicles (SEVs) are built with an extra axle and pair of heavy wheels between the standard sets, providing a more stable platform for travel and cargo hauling. Several pieces of electronic equipment are built as standard into the Amerigo, allowing its operators to scan for magnetic, radioactive, or vibrational anomalies as well as transmit and receive on all electromagnetic, microwave, and radio frequencies. Like the expedition rover, the compartments of the vehicle can be rearranged to make room for either 4000 lbs of additional cargo space or up to 12 more passengers.

Huge Surface Vehicle; hp 36; DV 8 (-2 size); DR 7; Spd 6; Acc 1; Dec 1; Han +1; Sensor +0; Stealth 15; Cargo 1000 lb.; 1 Driver, 4 passengers

Explorer Survey Ship, Earth Alliance

The Explorer survey ships, the largest vessels of the Earth Alliance, are designed to roam unexplored regions of hyperspace, acting as the vanguard to other craft as the frontier of known space is pushed further outward. It is the role of the Explorers to plot positions of new star systems and build the jumpgates that will be used by surveyors later on to fully catalogue worlds for resources and exploitation. Along its immense superstructure, the command, control and personnel quarters fill the rotating centre section, while to the fore are the zero-gravity construction and launch facilities. Only six Explorer ships are currently in service but combined they map the Rim and uncover a multitude of new scientific discoveries that have fuelled research and development in the Earth Alliance. However, because of their extremely extended missions (up to five years in duration), it is extremely rare for even high-ranking EarthForce officials to see one. It remains the dream of many ship captains to one day gain command of an Explorer ship and begin searching the Rim, travelling to stars never before seen by human eyes.

Colossal VI Spacecraft; hp 1,650; DV 1 (-20 size, +19 agility); DR 17; Spd -; Acc 1; Dec 1; Han +0; Sensor +4; Stealth 8; SQ Artificial Gravity, Extremely Long-Ranged, Jump Point; Cargo 390,000 lb.; 12 Officers, 8 Pilots, 4 Sensor Operators, 23 Crewmen



Weapons:

Twin-linked Heavy Pulse Cannon; Boresight; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 30+2d10; Critical 19-20; Range 5; Rapid Fire
Eight Particle Beams; 4 Left, 4 Right; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 10+3d10; Critical 20; Range 3
Eight Mk 1 Interceptors; 2 Front, 2 Rear, 2 Left, 2 Right; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 10+2d10; Critical 20; Range 1; Rapid Fire

Craft(1):

24 Starfuries, 6 Shuttles



G'Quan Heavy Cruiser, Narn Regime

The G'Quan heavy cruiser is perhaps the best known of all Narn warships and examples can be seen throughout Regime space. Though technologically behind races such as the Minbari and Centauri, the G'Quan possesses a brutal efficiency that allows it to compete on an almost even level with its peers in the fleets of other governments. It boasts an impressive array of weapons, many based on technology captured from the Centauri during their occupation of Narn, and its crewmen are usually very highly trained. Many variants of the G'Quan have been constructed and vessels heavily damaged in battle are often refitted into one of these new types while in space dock.

Colossal III Spacecraft; hp 625; DV 8 (-12 size, +10 agility); DR 19; Spd -; Acc 4; Dec 2; Han +3; Sensor +3; Stealth 18; SQ Jump Point, Long-Ranged; Cargo 22,000 lb.; 2 Officers, 3 Pilots, 6 Sensor Operators, 10 Crewmen

Weapons:

Twin-linked Heavy Laser Cannon; Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 60+6d10; Critical 19-20; Range 5
Energy Mine; Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 20+3d10; Critical 19-20; Range 8; Burst Radius 2
Two twin-linked Particle Arrays; Front, Rear; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 25+2d10; Critical 20; Range 2
Two twin-linked Light Pulse Cannon; Front, Rear; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 10+2d6; Critical 20; Range 3; Rapid Fire

Craft (1):

2 Shuttles

Primus Battlecruiser, Centauri Republic

The Primus is the flagship class of battlecruiser, a testament to the might and power the Centauri once wielded in the galaxy and the strongest of their front line vessels. Primus battlecruisers can mount a variety of weapons and this flexibility allows them to be refitted at orbital shipyards for mission-specific profiles, always ensuring that a Primus battlecruiser with advanced warning of a mission can come into a conflict with exactly the right armament for any task.

Colossal IV Spacecraft; hp 860; DV 2 (-14 size, +6 agility); DR 20; Spd -; Acc 4; Dec 2; Han +2; Sensor +4; Stealth 15; SQ Artificial Gravity, Jump Point, Long-Range; Cargo 160,000 lb.; 4 Officers, 20 Pilots, 25 Sensor Operators, 50 Crewmen

Weapons:

Two Twin-linked Battle Lasers; Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 40+4d10; Critical 19-20; Range 6
Eight Twin-linked Particle Arrays; 8 Front; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 10+3d10; Critical 20; Range 3

Craft (4):

12 Sentri Fighters, 2 Shuttles.



Vorchan Warship, Centauri Republic

A notable craft with a long service record and astounding lethality, the Vorchan is one of the more easily recognized ships in the Centauri fleet because of its twin crescent wings placed perpendicular to each other. Looking much like a bird of prey with its beak-like forward cabin, the Vorchan mounts a deadly main plasma accelerator as its main gun and a pair of twin lasers for increased stopping power and effective long range attack. When the Republic needs to hunt down a mobile enemy or take out large numbers of fighters, it relies heavily on its swift, efficient Vorchan armada.

Colossal III Spacecraft; hp 600; DV 10 (-12 size, +12 agility); DR 18; Spd -; Acc 4; Dec 2; Han +3; Sensor +3; Stealth 17; SQ Jump Point, Long-Range, Atmospheric Capable; Cargo 20,000 lb.; 2 Officers, 10 Pilots, 6 Sensor Operators, 14 Crewmen

Weapons:

Twin-linked Laser Arrays; 2 Front; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 20+3d10; Critical 19-20; Range 5
One Plasma Accelerator; Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 50+5d10 (20 + 2d10 if Rapid Fired); Critical 20; Range 3; Rapid Fire

Craft (1):

2 Shuttles



Sentri Medium Fighters, Centauri Republic

The mainstay of the Centauri fighter fleets, the Sentri sports the recognizable crescent wing the race's ships are renowned for and carries a pair of linked particle guns. While they are a fairly even match for Nam Frazi fighters on a firepower basis, they often get the better of combat engagements with them due to their superior manoeuvrability, accuracy, and speed.

Huge Spacecraft; hp 35; DV 12 (-2 size, +4 agility); DR 5; Spd 32; Acc 7; Dec 5; Han +4; Sensor +3; Stealth 15; SQ Atmospheric Capable, Grapple; Cargo 25 lb.; 1 Pilot

Weapons:

Particle Gun; Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 3d8; Critical 20; Range 1

Valkyrie Military Ground Assault Shuttle, Earth Alliance

Built around its vectored thrust engines and a pair of light pulse cannons, the Valkyrie shuttle is designed to take a squad of GROPOS marines into the heat of battle. Intended as an assault craft capable of clearing a landing zone by itself or in a squadron with others, Valkyrie units can move an entire detachment of soldiers into hostile territory and neutralize any ground defences that might prove a threat to them before lifting off again.

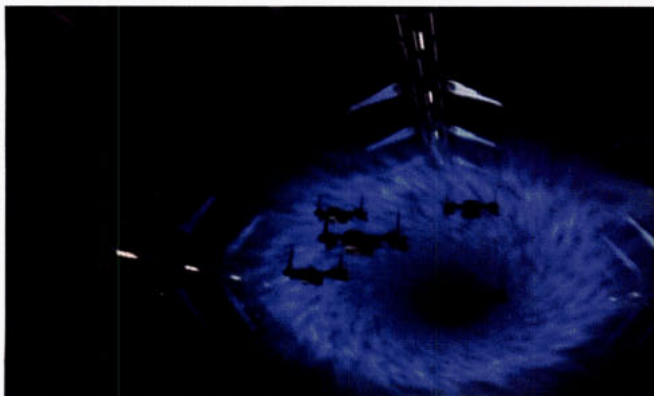
Gargantuan Spacecraft; hp 60; DV 10 (-4 size, +4 agility); DR 7; Spd 6(-1 from VTOL); Acc 3; Dec 2; Han +3 (+1 from VTOL); Sensor +0; Stealth 15; Cargo 5,000 lb.; 1 Pilot, 20 Passengers

Two Light Pulse Cannons; Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 10+2d6; Critical 20; Range 3; Rapid Fire

Condor Transport, Earth Alliance

The standard military transport used for EarthForce troops and armoured vehicles, the Condor transport is a powerful ship that mounts heavy armour and multiple defensive interceptors for the security of its military cargo. Very few Condor transports have ever been destroyed during combat engagements, a testimony to their excellent design, their defensive capabilities, and the skill of their exceptionally well trained pilots. Despite carrying two particle beams, the Condor is rarely ever used in an offensive capacity; the weapons exist primarily for anti-fighter support.

Colossal Spacecraft; hp 280; DV 5 (-8 size, +3 agility); DR 8; Spd -; Acc 4; Dec 2; Han +1; Sensor +0; SQ Atmospheric



Capable; Stealth 15; Cargo 250 soldiers + 6 vehicle pods; 5 Officers/Pilots, 1 Sensor Operator, 6 Crewmen

Weapons:

2 Particle Beams; Turret; Attack +1 (targeting computer); Damage 10+3d10; Critical 20; Range 3
Four Mk I Interceptors; 2 Front/Left/Right, 2 Rear/Left/Right; Attack +1 (targeting computer); Damage 10+2d10; Critical 20; Range 1; Rapid Fire

Craft (1):

2 Shuttles

Omega Heavy Destroyer, Earth Alliance

The Omega heavy destroyer is the premier warship of EarthForce, a direct development of lessons learnt during the Earth/Minbari War. The conflict that nearly annihilated humanity brought home the need for an advanced warship capable of standing against the worst other races could throw against the Earth Alliance. While the Omega is by no means the equal of the Minbari Sharlin, it remains one of the most capable vessels possessed by EarthForce. A much larger ship than the Hyperion, the Omega carries two full squadrons of Starfuries, a heavier weapons load and a rotating command section that generates artificial gravity. Though still cramped on board, crews much prefer to serve on an Omega than a Hyperion, as its artificial gravity makes long-ranged missions far more bearable, allowing the warship to stay out on patrol for months at a time if needed.

Colossal IV Spacecraft; hp 875; DV 2 (-14 size, +6 agility); DR 22; Spd -; Acc 4; Dec 2; Han +2; Sensor +4; Stealth 16; SQ



Artificial Gravity, Jump Point, Long-Ranged; Cargo 185,000 lb.; 6 Officers, 28 Pilots, 24 Sensor Operators, 49 Crewmen

Weapons:

Two twin-linked Heavy Laser Cannon; Boresight, Rear Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 80+8d10; Critical 19-20; Range 7
Twin-linked Heavy Pulse Cannon; Boresight; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 20+4d10; Critical 19-20; Range 4; Rapid Fire
Twelve Particle Beams; 6 Left, 6 Right; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 10+3d10; Critical 20; Range 3
Six Mk II Interceptors; 2 Front, 2 Rear, 1 Left, 1 Right; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 20+2d10; Critical 19-20; Range 2; Rapid Fire

Craft (12):

24 Starfuries, 2 Shuttles

Lightning Shuttle/ Fighter, Earth Alliance

An old design dating back to the time of the Dilgar War, Lightning shuttle/fighters are small one man craft with long range capability and enough firepower to hold their own despite being seriously outmatched by more modern designs. The Lightning is currently available to civilians and merchants looking for the advantages it can grant, a vessel with enough deterrent to make raiders think twice about attacking them and just enough cargo space to carry supplies and valuables without presenting too tempting a target. Lightning shuttles are a common sight on Mars, where several have become part of the resistance movement as their first and usually only line of starship defence.

Huge Spacecraft; hp 32; DV 11 (-2 size, +3 agility); DR 5; Spd 40; Acc 8; Dec 4; Han +4; Sensor +1; Stealth 13; SQ
Atmospheric Capable, Long- Ranged; Cargo 200 lb.; 1 Pilot, 4 Passengers

Weapons:

3 Twin-linked Light Particle Guns; 2 Boresight, 1 Rear; Attack +0; Damage 2d8; Critical 20; Range 1

Collector Ship, Streibs

A mysterious vessel that relies as much on its stealth, ability to open its own jumpgate and its serious complement of beam and tractor weapons to overwhelm opponents. The collector ship is not intended for front line combat. Instead, the collector ship is built to gate in from hyperspace, unleash a short term, heavy barrage on any ships nearby, gather survivors and then jump out for points unknown before its prey can mount any kind of counter strike.

Colossal III Spacecraft; hp 650; DV 2 (-12 size, +4 agility); DR 22; Spd -; Acc 3; Dec 2; Han +0; Sensor +1; Stealth 18; SQ
Jump Point, Long-Ranged; Cargo 100,000 lb.; 4 Officers, 12 Pilots, 4 Sensor Operators, 20 Crewmen

Weapons:

Four Twin-linked Laser Arrays; 2 Front, 2 Rear; Attack +3 (superior targeting computer); Damage 20+3d10 laser; Critical 19-20; Range 5
Six Light Laser Arrays; 3 Left, 3 Right; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 10+2d10 laser; Critical 19-20; Range 5
Tractor Beam; Front; Range 10, Str 40

Shorab Heavy Transport; Markab Theocracy

Shorab heavy transports are used by the Markab to shuttle goods and people between their homeworld and their distant colonies. The smallest ship in the Markab fleet, the Shorab is well armed and armoured, though remains no match for a truly combat capable capital ship. Due to the Markab's long association with the Gaim, Shorab transports are often found in their service as well.

Gargantuan Spacecraft; hp 60; DV 5 (-4 size, -1 agility); DR 6; Spd -; Acc 1; Dec 1; Han +0; Sensor +1; Stealth 12; Cargo 14,000 lb. or 300 passengers; 2 Pilots, 4 Crewmen

Three Twin-linked Light Laser Arrays; 3 Boresight; Attack +1 (targeting computer); Damage 10+2d10 laser; Critical 19-20; Range 5

Vehicle Technology

The engineering and technological achievements of 2259 have developed in line with the sentient races of the galaxy, driven by the coming wars and the conflicts that already define this period in history. With hundreds of new ships leaving the space foundries of a hundred worlds, new equipment designed for deadlier warfare or more efficient travel, leaves with them. The following items have seen service on vessels long before 2259, but they become more prominent or visible during this year.

Tractor Beams

Tractor beams are a weapon of opportunity, with no direct lethal effect but a number of tactical possibilities. The tractor beam weapons in Babylon 5 are limited to the most advanced races in the galaxy, races with the technological base to master gravitics enough to focus them into a ray of directional force. At present, only the Vorlons, the Shadows, the Streibs, and Minbari are known to have access to these items.

A tractor beam is available in three range categories and a variable strength setting. Treat an attack with a tractor beam as a grapple attempt that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. The thrust of a vessel caught in a tractor beam is treated as its Strength for escaping one, with its speed value acting as the score involved. Ships with stellar capability but without a Speed score are generally too powerful or too large to be targeted by a tractor beam; such attempts automatically fail against ships of that scale. Ships caught in a tractor beam cannot move unless they break free, but they may still fire weapons at a penalty of -2 due to the interference of the gravitation force.

Objects caught in a tractor beam can be pulled towards the initiating ship or pushed away from it at a speed of 500 feet per round, out to the maximum range of the tractor beam or in to the hull of the ship itself, generally into a loading bay of some sort. The range entries for a tractor beam are Short (10 squares, 50,000 feet), Medium (25 squares, 125,000 feet), or Long (50 squares, 250,000 feet).

Tractor beams cost 2,000 credits at a base power of Short range and a Strength score of 25. Medium range costs 5,000 credits as an upgrade, and Long range costs 15,000 credits instead. Each point of Strength costs another 1,000 credits on top of the range cost. Thus, a Medium range, 30 Strength tractor beam costs

Vehicular Equipment

Item	Cost	Weight
Tractor Beam	See Text	1 lb. per credit of cost
Energy Mine	120,000 cr.	1500 lb.
Extremely Long Ranged	n/a	n/a
Mass Driver	2,000,000 cr.	500 tons

(2,000 + 5,000 + 5,000) 12,000 credits. Only ships with the ability to generate their own gravity can mount tractor beams.

Energy Mine: The energy mines used by the Narn Regime are extremely potent weapons that have been designed to damage enemy vessels at long range and break up attacking formations before they engage with Narn fleets. Though unlikely to cripple warships, they are capable of scoring telling damage and are absolutely lethal to deployed fighters. Based around a warhead with a self-generating plasma field, energy mines are pre-programmed on launch to detonate at a set range, unleashing a destructive pulse with a huge area of effect which allows them to batter several vessels at once.

An energy mine is targeted at a specified square, rather than an enemy spacecraft and the attack is required to hit DV 10, modified for range and speed as normal. Any object within the target square or up to 2 squares away from this point will be automatically hit by the energy mine, taking 3d10+20 points of damage.

Mass Driver: A terrible weapon of mass destruction, mass drivers use magnetic and gravitic technology to hurl an asteroid small enough to fit within its massive enclosure in a straight line forward. Ultimately, that is all a mass driver does, but the havoc they can wreak on a planetary scale is unbelievable. In starship combat, assume that a hit from a mass driver inflicts 8d10 damage with a critical multiplier of x2, having no inherent bonus to hit and a range of 10. In planetary terms, any structure within a 10 kilometre radius of the impact point is destroyed, with serious damage to anything five kilometres beyond that. Living creatures caught in the 10 kilometre impact point are killed instantly, with those in the additional 5 kilometre zone receiving a Fortitude save (DC 18) to avoid death. Successful saves leave the victim at 0 hit points instead. The incredible power requirements and structural size of a mass driver prohibit any vehicle smaller than Colossal II from carrying them or firing any weapons other than it in the same round.

Extremely Long-Ranged: The Explorer class survey ships of the Earth Alliance are purposed designed to spend extended periods of time without resupply or maintenance and are highly self-sufficient. Any ship designated as Extremely Long-Ranged may operate for up to five years without need to restock with new supplies. Spacecraft of Huge size or smaller that are designated as Extremely Long-Ranged may operate for three months before requiring new supplies.

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