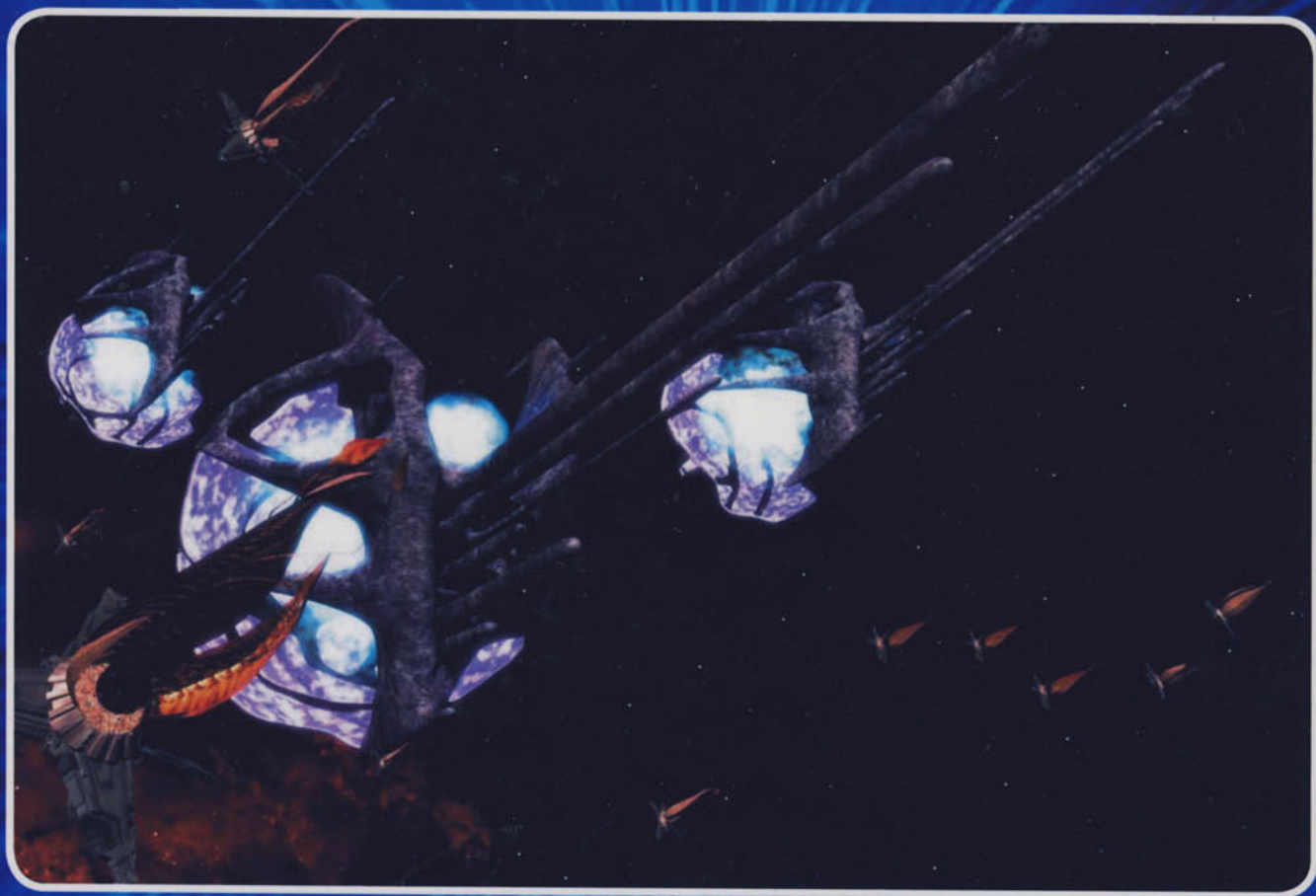


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The Roleplaying Game

Second Edition



Thirdspace

Written By Bryan Steele

Babylon 5 created by J. Michael Straczynski

THIRDSPEACE

CREDITS

Author

Bryan Steele

Editor

Chris Longhurst

Cover Image

Brandon Bray

Artwork & Graphics

Scott Clark

Proofreading

Scribendi

Internal Layout

Charlotte Law

Playtesting

Robert Poulin

Special Thanks

J. Michael Straczynski, Fiona Avery, Isabelle Richard, Skye Herzog

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INTRODUCTION

'I only hope we never come across it again, because next time, no one's going to survive it.'

- Captain John J. Sheridan

The year was 2261. The Shadow War had ended and the galaxy was predominantly licking its collective wounds after the raging planet killers had taken worlds apart in the previous few months. The hub of interstellar gossip and scandal, the Babylon 5 diplomatic station, was dealing with progressively worsening relations with President Clark and his xenophobic regime. The station was suffering from a thick travel embargo and only by the grace of the aliens that fought beside it against the Shadows and the Vorlons was the station able to keep functioning. Even with extensive help from its interplanetary neighbours, Babylon 5 was in trouble.

It was then that a huge, strange and uniquely powerful artefact fell into Babylon 5's lap. This massive ancient object would promise to be the solution to Babylon 5's problems but this promise quickly turned sour and very nearly tore the station apart.

Even though the opening of the Thirdspace gate was generally kept a secret, there were tens of thousands of people from dozens of different races that were affected by the gate. Making sure that no other galactic powers went searching for the other gates that were rumoured to exist in hyperspace or beyond the Rim was a fool's errand to say the least, although no one actually found another gate for 150 years. No one was ready for what happened in 2261 when the gate opened; there was no way they could possibly have been prepared.

This sourcebook is not only a detailed guide through which we show the readers exactly what happened during the events of the Babylon 5 telemovie *Thirdspace*, it is also a collection of resources that contains new information about the repercussions concerning IPX's involvement, the galaxy's reaction to what happened and a deadly new piece of ancient history for Games Masters to frighten their players with. The facts and rules found in the following pages are useful in helping to create interesting and new facets for existing campaigns that take place in 2261 and also provide a solid foundation on which to begin completely new ones.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Thirdspace is designed to help Games Masters deal with what takes place in the telemovie of the same name and how best to use the information in the *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game 2nd Edition* sourcebook. The opening of the Thirdspace gate was no small event in the greater scheme of the universe. Morals were tested while willpower was stretched to its thinnest and an all-consuming evil was very nearly allowed entrance to the galaxy. A dimension unlike any other was revealed to the races of the Third Age and the bogeymen from the collective nightmares of a million races tried to seep into a new realm. We hope to emphasise all of these things in this guide and show readers how the information can be used in their own *Babylon 5* gaming groups.

The book's opening chapter discusses the events surrounding the 2261 Thirdspace event in great detail. It will help those who have not watched the telemovie understand exactly what took place on Babylon 5 during this time. This chapter will give all readers game rules and mechanics for how the event affected the station's populace and explain how Games Masters could use these rules in their own games. Although it was a dangerous setting in which Player Characters could end up killing one another as easily as they could get killed themselves, Babylon 5 was a *unique* place to live during the few days that the Thirdspace gate wreaked havoc upon it.

After readers are informed as to what took place during the 2261 event, the book turns back the clock a few million years to show how the Vorlons came to create the Thirdspace gates, why they felt they could do it and what their mistake in the Age of Ancients unleashed upon the galaxy. The Harbingers took a toll upon the First Ones and even had a large stake in further shaping the Hand. This sourcebook explains the kinds of ripples in reality the Thirdspace gates created and what was done to help stop this universe from being torn apart. This chapter in particular looks at the other experiments and possible errors the First Ones made that later affected the inheritors of the Third Age.

The book then moves deeper into the Harbingers themselves. Details about their dimension, their society and the sciences they have at their disposal are given game mechanics for Games Masters to unleash upon their players. Even the statistics on the creatures themselves can be found in this revealing and terrifying chapter! Truly alien to even the transcended beings of the Age of Ancients, these dark and twisted creatures have reached into the minds of a surprising number of beings over the ages – even if they could not get to them!

The fact that Sheridan and his friends were able to close the funnel from Thirdspace by destroying the gate in 2261



does not mean that the Harbingers are done wreaking devastation upon the galaxy. Other gates still exist, telepathic rifts continue to seep dark thoughts into Cultists and several small Harbinger ships survived the blast that ripped their gate apart. This book gives several instances of the fallout that discovering Thirdspace and its elder inhabitants had upon the people of this universe. The fact that Sheridan and the others do not directly deal with the inhabitants of Thirdspace again does not mean that others do not. Perhaps the next time there is a Harbinger invasion, it will be up to the Player Characters to thwart...

This sourcebook ends with *This is Pandora's Box*, an interesting look at some of what happened at the Thirdspace event of 2261. This scenario places the Player Characters as members of the IPX field team (or freelancers working with it) that researched the gate and survived its opening. Although Dr. Trent seemed to be penitent for what the Harbingers 'made' her do during the event, she was not the only doctor with access to the gate's information – and an IPX up-and-comer looking for a step up might not be so ready to discount the use of Thirdspace artefacts. In *This is Pandora's Box*, the Player Characters will need to deal with greed, foolishness and betrayal. Maybe even be their own...

Thirdspace is designed to arm its readers with an understanding of the sheer scope of the universe surrounding Babylon 5. It allows Games Masters to utilise an evil from beyond the edges of the known universe and shows players

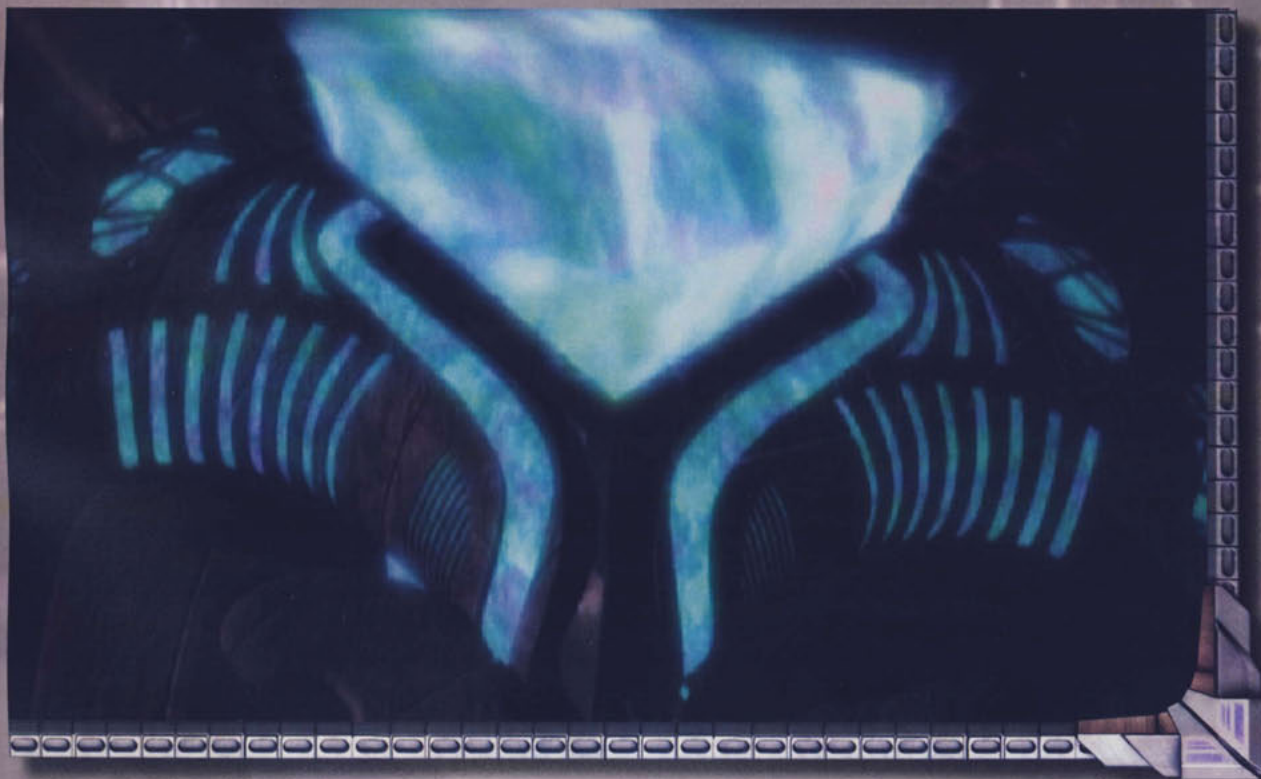
how they might be affected by the dimensional tides of the Vorlons' greatest mistake. The galaxy might survive the coming of the Harbingers but can you?

A WORD OF WARNING

It must be noted here that, unlike most of Mongoose Publishing's other *Babylon 5* products, the information found in this sourcebook was designed with a no-holds-barred attitude. Much of what readers will find in this book is vastly more powerful than anything they may have come across before. The new ships, aliens and rules might look overwhelming and unbalanced at first glance. To a certain extent that is very much the case.

Thirdspace is not a guide to some trivial alien world to be explored and exploited by curious travellers. It is the revelation of an alternate universe of pain, anguish and suffering that has spawned some of the oldest works of horror in a thousand different languages across the galaxy. What *Thirdspace* offers to Games Masters and players is a realistic look upon hell itself (or some might believe) and the dark demons that call it home. It is not for the weak of heart, nor is it a challenge to be overcome. *Thirdspace* is nothing short of a Herculean task to be weathered, survived and learned from.

This book does not pull its punches for just that reason. Games Masters be warned and players be afraid – *Thirdspace* is here and it will not be ignored.



THE DOOR IS OPENED

'We're having to move the struts of the jump gate far enough apart to allow the artefact to get through.'

'It's that big?'

'Bigger.'

- Lieutenant David Corwin and Captain John J. Sheridan

The finding, opening and summary destruction of the first Thirdspace gate to be discovered in the current age was one of the strangest and darkest times for the population of Babylon 5. The details of much of what happened were muddled by secrets and conflicting accounts told by those involved but even the main facts would haunt researchers for decades. No matter whether anyone remembered it perfectly or not, the 2261 opening of a true portal between universes took its toll on Babylon 5, IPX and a surprising number of alien worlds.

The following chapter, which is broken into individual sections, represents how the tale was told in the *Thirdspace* telemovie. Sidebars and inserts that give interesting facts or game mechanics for exactly what was taking place in the story at the time are included. Games Masters can use this information to run their own games on Babylon 5 during the Thirdspace events or simply file it away for later consideration.

IN THE WAKE OF THE SHADOW WAR

It was in early 2261 that the Vorlons and Shadows left with Lorien to go beyond the Rim, leaving the galaxy in a state of discord. Entire planets were destroyed during the war and governments that had been cannibalising one another just a few short months before had settled into a tense but peaceful relationship. The situation with the Earth Alliance and its draconian president had reached new heights and the 'heroes' of Babylon 5 were cut off from much needed supplies from home.

The travel and trade embargo placed upon the station forced the command staff of Babylon 5 to deal heavily with outside governments and supply sources. Many of these other governments needed the supplies to repair the damage done to their

territories and fleets during the war, so the galactic market was rocked with rising prices and corporate profiteering. Unfortunately for Babylon 5, that meant paying very high prices or acquiring goods from backwater colonies – both options being quite expensive in the long.

The long distance cargo runs undertaken all across the galaxy were also frequently targeted by raiders and pirates all over the League. Several raider cells grew to enormous size, acquiring damaged or scrapped hulls that were left in the path of the Ancient ships during the war. These cells were a very real danger to most commercial crafts.

EarthForce ships blockaded the fastest or safest routes to Babylon 5, forcing trade convoys to use side routes and otherwise unguarded paths in order to avoid being detained or worse. President Clark made it very difficult to have any commercial contact with the heroes of the Shadow War; those that could find their way to them did so at their own peril and the expense of the station.

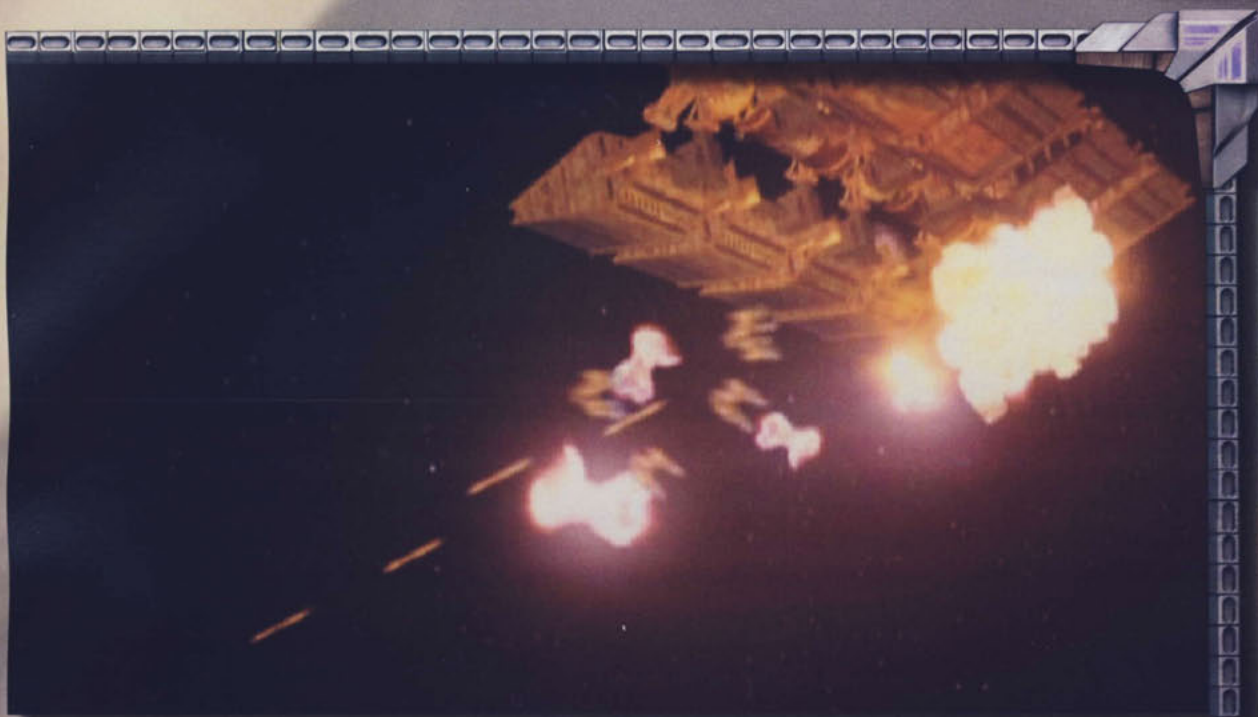
With the need for supplies growing exponentially on Babylon 5, something had to be done concerning the dangerous space lanes. It was not long before Susan Ivanova came up with a plan.

THE MOFAKA MOUSETRAP

Ivanova knew that specific cargo supplies were being hit more often than others and she knew that a mostly unguarded vessel would be preyed upon in short order. After obtaining a ghost scan emitter from a smuggler on Babylon 5 in exchange for conveniently misplacing the charges levied against him, Susan took Delta Squadron and a commercial freighter out to where the Drazis had been reporting high raider activity. Giving off the signatures for Quantum-40 stores would surely bring the raiders like sharks to blood in the water.

Outside the jump beacon of the Mofaka system in the Drazis Freehold, Delta Squadron picked up a rapid hyperspace event – a jump point through which a dozen or more Delta-V fighters swarmed. The raiders had taken the bait and set immediately to trying to disable the escorting Starfuries. Even with the added Foxhunt missile racks Ivanova was testing, the Deltas and their raider ace pilots had Delta Squadron outnumbered and possibly outclassed.

The raiders were a wing of a local scrap-cell called the Red Star Ravens, led by a particularly untrustworthy pilot named Darren Whitefall, and they were hell-bent on getting at the supposed Q-40 in the freighter's hold. Even though a Starfury was a vastly superior vessel to a Delta-V, Darren and his wingmen



Starfuries with Missiles?

In the raider combat that takes place in the telemovie, Delta Squadron uses offensive missiles that are mounted three to a side under the primary 'wings' of their Starfuries. This is not a standard layout for the Starfury and was added as a test of Ivanova's idea that raiders occasionally have patrol cutters and salvage ships that might require heavier weaponry to damage. Ivanova had commercially-available Foxhunt missile systems attached to Delta Squadron's wings.

Although this layout was deemed too expensive to retain for later missions, we have included the weapon system here to be used on other vessels if desired.

Foxhunt Missile Rack

Cost: 50,000 cr. (750 cr. per reload)

Minimum Craft Size: Tiny

The magnetically attached impact missiles of the Foxhunt come in sets of six and launch in pairs like twin-linked weapons. The Foxhunt requires a steady hand and excellent timing and is best served as a ship-pounding weapon launched in salvos from multiple ships. It can be used as a dogfighting weapon if the pilot is skilled enough but the 'dumb fire' setting of the rack makes this quite difficult. Each warhead is actually quite powerful but these warheads are expensive to replenish in great numbers.

Name	Range	Offence	Qualities	Weapon Spaces
Foxhunt Missile Rack	Close	15	Max three shots per reload	One

were consummate fighter jocks and knew how to use many tricks to their advantage.

After their fighting resulted in casualties on both sides Ivanova tried to reason with White, explaining that they were likely going to fight to a standoff. The Red Star Ravens were not exactly known to play by the rules, so Darren gave the signal and one of their cell's mobile bases – a battle wagon called the *Rookery* – arrived to put the odds in their favour. A single battlewagon would have more than enough firepower and resilience to fight off the ten remaining Starfuries and disable the freighter and Darren felt smug in his obvious victory.

Then the trap was sprung. On Ivanova's signal the black curtain of space was torn into pieces by five vortices of energy. Hyperspace portals lit up the horizon as Sheridan and a flight group of White Stars emerged and immediately targeted the *Rookery*. Easily disabling the ship's engines and jump capability in seconds, Starfuries and White Stars alike surrounded the Delta-Vs and cut them off from escape. Even the notorious Darren Whitefall had to surrender and admit defeat.

Sheridan and the White Stars saw to the raiders' incarceration on Zhabar's massive penal colony and Delta Squadron was released back to Babylon 5. It was a long flight back along several hyperspace jump routes but it was far less troublesome than having to deal with Drazi paperwork.

Flight Captain Darren Whitefall, Red Star Raven



Raised in the gutters of Mars, Darren was orphaned into a life of crime and poverty when his parents were killed in a shuttle accident when he was twelve years old. The next twenty years were filled with mugging, stealing, killing and eventually piracy. Joining the Red Star Ravens in 2256 after stealing a Starfox fighter from the Martian Museum of Spacecraft, Darren rapidly became one of the best pilots they had ever had at their disposal.

Even though he was incarcerated on Zhabar for three years for piracy, Darren never forgot being made a fool of by Ivanova and Sheridan and made it his personal mission to harm them later in life.

5th Level Human Raider / 2nd Level Raider Ace

Hit Points: 20

Initiative: +3 (+3 Dex)

Speed: 30ft

DV: 17 (+4 Class, +3 Dex)

Attacks: +5 close combat, +8 ranged

Special Qualities: Infamy (+3), Hard Target (+2), Glancing Shot, Safe Distance, Raider Captain, Crippling Shot, Hasty Retreat, Born to Fly

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

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8

Skills: Acrobatics +4, Athletics +7, Bluff +6, Computer Use +6, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (astrophysics) +3, Knowledge (law) +4, Notice +4, Operation (Gunnery) +6 (+9), Pilot +12 (+15), Technical (electronics) +8

Feats: Dogfighter, Elite Pilot, Fire Control, Fluency (Human), Spacecraft Proficiency, Veteran Pilot

The above character was created using the additional class information on raiders found in the *Freedom Station* sourcebook.

WAKING DREAMS

While Ivanova and Delta Squadron were plodding along the twist of jump routes to get back to Babylon 5, Lyta Alexander was trying to make ends meet on the station. Since her career with the Psi Corps had been sketchy to say the least, turning freelance was a dangerous financial move. It forced her to take contracts that she would never have looked twice at in the days when she was a sanctioned commercial telepath.

One of these undesirable – but well paid – contracts was occupying Lyta's time at the moment. A Mr. Leo Rosen contacted her after several unsuccessful attempts at getting a Psi Corps telepath to take his case. It seemed that Leo needed Lyta for a simple veracity scan of his older brother, Alex. A job of that calibre is never difficult but emotions can get high when dealing with family members and a telepath could suffer mental feedback in the process.

Such was the case with the Rosen brothers. Twenty years earlier, Leo claimed his brother Alex was having an affair with his, Leo's, wife. Leo was so sure this was the case that he would not let the matter drop and it ended up tearing his marriage and his relationship with his brother apart. The two had not spoken but for the occasional quip for nearly two decades. This situation drove Leo to near madness and caused his entire family to turn away from him. It was only when Leo discovered he was afflicted with Felmar's Syndrome that Alex agreed to come and meet his brother on Babylon 5 to air the truth once and for all.

Felmar's Syndrome

Felmar's Syndrome, discovered in 2211 by Doctor Alfred Felmar, is a circulatory-based condition that actually causes the arteries of the limbs and organs to eventually collapse into spongy masses. The arterial masses still pass blood and nutrients to the necessary areas, although at a slower rate and with great amounts of bruising to the surrounding tissues. The early stages of the disease cause numbness and skin bruises but the condition is eventually fatal over ten years or so. That expectation can be prolonged two or three times with expensive weekly medical treatments.

Negative emotions clouded the telepathic mindscape around the Rosen brothers and Lyta had a difficult time focussing on the matter at hand. Something kept pulling her mind's eye toward a strange horrible object floating in hyperspace millions of miles away. This object seemed to whisper to her about 'waiting' and 'wanting.'

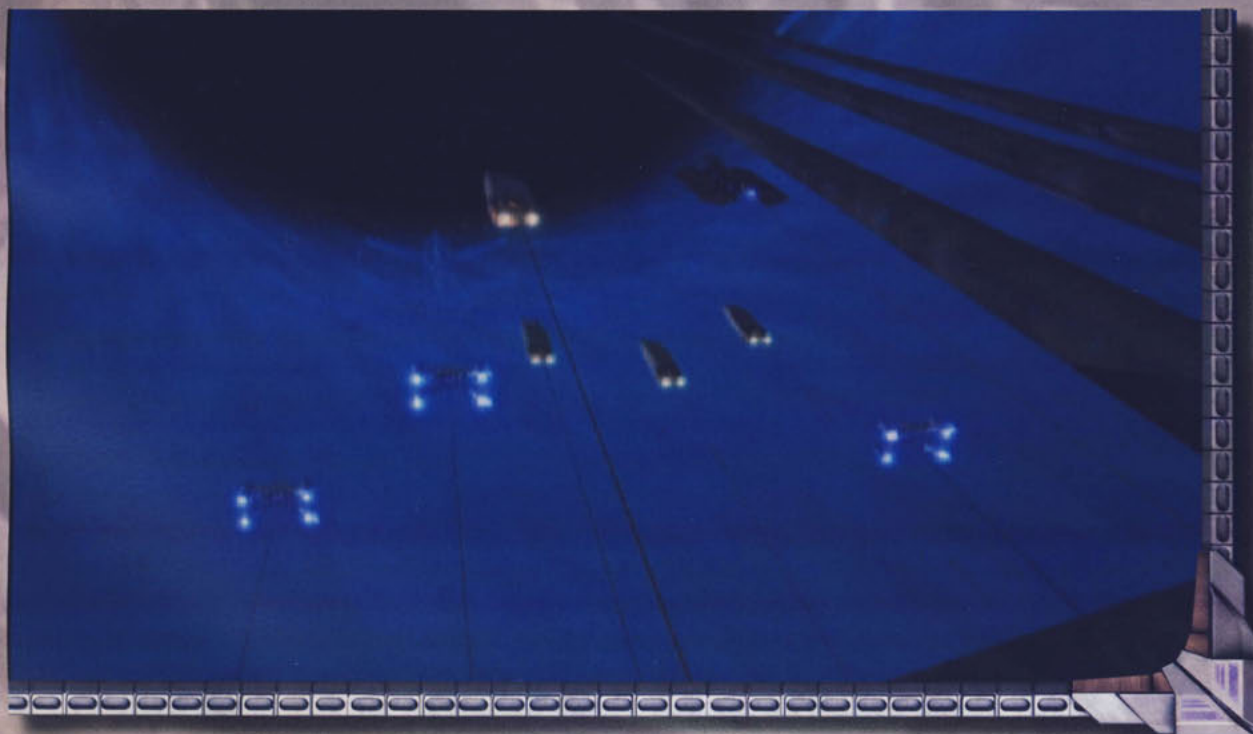
When Leo asked his brother about the affair, Lyta had to push slightly harder to cut through the wall of negativity

at the table and when she did so – she made some kind of contact with the whispering object. She could see it, plainly and vividly and it dominated her mental vision for a moment. Lyta had become a powerful telepath after the Vorlons modified her but this image was too strong for her to push aside. Even after she proclaimed that Alex was not lying and that Leo's wife had not been cheating on him with his brother, Lyta fought to keep her balance and her mind from spinning out of control.

She eventually cleared her head enough to make it back to her room, where she tried to rest. Part of her – the Vorlon part – knew something evil and terrible was coming.

BRINGING SOMETHING HOME WITH DELTA SQUADRON

During Delta Squadron's return trip from the Mofaka system, somewhere between the Sigma 957 and Epsilon Eridani jump gates, Ivanova's scanners picked up an anomaly off the beacon. Making sure that no one had reported any ships lost or missing in the area, she put Delta Squadron on alert and made the decision to check it out. Using a risky but tested manoeuvre, the 'relay chain,' Ivanova led her fighters on a direct route for the wayward object. Initial reports came back that the object was solid, nearly half a mile across and showing no energy or life signs. Whatever it was, it was huge and very much dead.



Upon reaching the object Susan knew she had found something unique. It was truly enormous, larger than some of the largest EarthForce warships and it was covered in strange hieroglyphs and technologies she could not recognise. Scans reported that it was a carbon-based inorganic substance but also that it did not have even a single nanowatt of energy within it.

Knowing that she could not leave the object floating in hyperspace, Susan chose to hold the relay chain open and request additional ships to help tow the artefact back to Babylon 5 for study. Even though she could not help but feel as if the thing was dangerous in some way (she referred to it as 'a possible trap' several times), she also knew that her duty was to bring it to Sheridan and the others.

Susan was close enough to request a sizeable retrieval force so she had Lieutenant Corwin launch five White Stars and as many Starfuries as the station had on standby to salvage the artefact. With the White Stars serving as a picket against the possibility of raiders, Corwin also sent a handful of cargo shuttles and a small freighter to help with the towing. Using hydraulic grapples, the salvage fleet took up several positions around the artefact and headed for the station. It would be a slow haul but it would be a safe one.

Using a procedure that was rarely necessary for starships due to the addition of jump engines for craft too large, Babylon Control had to manually move the jump gate struts farther apart to accommodate the gigantic artefact. This could be done with a quick few strokes of manual control consoles but it was so rarely undertaken that even Corwin had to leave it in the hands of the technicians. The manoeuvre required a steady hand and a skilled command of astrophysics to make sure that the struts were within the proper equations and the vortex not open – lest it become dangerously unstable.

With all of the proper safety precautions in place and the struts in position, Ivanova was given the go-ahead to bring the artefact into realspace. There was no way to know exactly how the artefact would react to being brought into the calm surroundings of a regular void (as compared to the chaos of hyperspace) so the station was placed on medium alert until the object could be placed in synchronous orbit. The procedure would not take long but things would be a very tense for the few hours that were required.

As her towing fleet slowly dragged the titanic device against the currents of hyperspace, it started to have a stronger effect on Lyta Alexander. Drawn to the observation deck, she watched as the enormous artefact was twisted and tugged into position. As the ancient glyphs upon the object's surface came into her focus, Lyta's mind reeled with images she could not block.

She saw one of the many common rooms on the station. The room

was demolished, as if a riot had passed through unchecked. It was littered with the bodies of station inhabitants and personnel, broken and bloodied by unknown causes. In her mind's eye Lyta herself looked worse for wear, her clothes torn and bleeding from several gashes, and she seemed to be the last living soul in the room. The Lyta in the vision plodded carefully through the wreckage of the room trying not to step on the discarded dead and then froze. A deep rumbling growl rolled up from behind a toppled wall section and Lyta slowly turned to see where it came from.

Lyta snapped out of the vision just before the creature's writhing tendrils were about to close upon her. Its presence in her mind triggered something and Lyta retreated inside

Jump Gate Alignment

It is not often that a jump gate ever needs to be moved at all, let alone adjusted for a larger vortex. Most jump gates are also home to the powerful tachyon-enhanced hyperspace beacons that tie the galaxy together into a navigable network. Similar to moving a long-range signal light a fraction of an inch to create a shift of several feet at the beam's end, the moving of a jump gate could alter the beacon line enough to strand ships in hyperspace or possibly cross paths with a stellar body. It is for this reason that jump gates are not moved frequently and why it is considered a war crime to target an active jump gate for destruction.

Adjusting a jump gate is a three-step process. It initially requires a Knowledge (astrophysics) skill check at DC 20 to ensure that the gate struts can be moved enough to let the object pass through without endangering the beacon signal. The next check is actually an Operations (systems) skill check at DC 15 that is used to program the mobility sequence into the thrusters to move the struts. The final check is another Knowledge (astrophysics) skill check at DC 15, which is only used to verify the stability of the vortex when it is opened.

This process is required for any vessel or object larger than Gargantuan-sized (on the spacecraft scale, naturally).

The Door Is Opened

her own mind. She had little choice in the matter as the Vorlon programming began to take over. While her Human side fought against the Vorlon messages assaulting her brain, she locked herself in her quarters and began to think, then say, then write one phrase—‘There is danger. Remember.’

CURIOSITY ONLY BEGS MORE QUESTIONS

As word of the object began to circulate through the station, there were several secret meetings and open councils between members of the League of Non-Aligned Worlds. The arrival of the ancient artefact put credit signs in the eyes of many alien ambassadors and more than a few believed it to be some kind of weapon. With the galaxy having been only recently rocked by the Shadow War, everyone was quite sensitive to the idea of First One technology. Depending on where the various aliens hailed from, they had different aspirations concerning what should be done with the artefact. More importantly, they knew what *they* wanted from it.

After several minor meetings were held to discuss what should be done, Ambassador Po’qeer of the Llort orchestrated a full gathering of the League of Non-Aligned Worlds and invited Vir Cotto (who was acting as Centauri representative at the time) to hear their opinions. By the end of the shouting, cursing and fist-shaking meeting Vir knew that he had to speak to Sheridan and Delenn on the League’s behalf.

Requesting that the League be granted access to the artefact because of their technological superiority and possible greater understanding of alien sciences, Vir explained that the other races were feeling a bit left out. He tried to make the Centauri see that the League could help figure out what the object was, so long as they got a cut of what it was worth in the end.

Vir was sent away to tell the League that the station could not afford to bring them in on the artefact’s research until they knew more even though Delenn quietly agreed that perhaps the League worlds could help. Sheridan however, was thinking far more pragmatically. He knew that the League races were so competitive and selfish most of the time that they would try to claim as much as they could as the object was researched and that if any of them felt the artefact was a weapon they would surely destroy it. They would eliminate it rather than risk one of their peers or neighbours getting an edge in their squabbles and border wars. It would be safer for station personnel to lead the examination of the artefact, even if it made Sheridan look greedy and secretive.

Delenn chided Sheridan for what she saw as his want to be the first to unlock the artefact’s secrets, knowing that Babylon 5 did not have the manpower or the expertise required to fully research such a find. Although he denied her claims long enough to get her to leave the office, Sheridan did have a familiar sparkle in his eyes when he looked upon the security-cam footage of the artefact, saying to himself, ‘Besides, it *is* mine.’

Meanwhile, Zack Allen was conducting a security sweep of the artefact from the cockpit of a Starfury. As chief of security for the station, it was his responsibility to look over any sort of unknown item before station personnel investigated it further. Zack saw several signs of weapons fire and impacts on the surface of the artefact, meaning that it must have been involved in some hostilities. Zack wondered if it could still be dangerous in some way.

Zack gave his approval for the first research team to commence their examination of the artefact and everyone in the near vicinity pulled back to what initial sensor equations had determined to be a minimum safe distance in case there was some kind of mishap. Once everyone was positioned safely the research team sent in a single maintbot on remote control to take the first physical surface sample of the object.

When the maintbot closed in on the artefact and applied the first touch of its plasma torch, however, a single symbol on the artefact glowed for a brief second and the maintbot shuddered into stillness. The ‘bot rapidly lost core power. This power drain happened faster than could be explained by any sort of common battery leak and resulted in 100% loss of the maintbot’s power in less than twenty seconds.

Once the technicians managed to get the maintbot back inside, they discovered that it had been *completely* discharged. It would not even take a new charge when hooked to power cells on the station. From what the technicians could tell the device had drained the maintbot because its power source had drawn too near the artefact’s surface. Delta Squadron’s Starfuries had used grapples to tow the artefact and had not gotten too close to it, which was the only reason they were not left for dead in hyperspace when they found it. This was not too comforting a thought.

Not being able to get within a few feet of the device with any sort of power source would make analysing the artefact nearly impossible. Nearly every xenoarchaeological method in use at the time required the use of sonic drills, iso-vacuums and other intricate and technologically advanced instruments. This ugly fact, combined with Babylon 5’s utter inexperience in researching this sort of find set the stage for a long and clumsy future concerning the device.

Dormant Power Drain

The gate to Thirdspace had floated in hyperspace after being shut down by the Harbinger-friendly Vorlons for more than two million years, thus forcing it to bleed off its last remnants of power. Having been separated from its original power source, the gate had essentially become a sponge for ambient energy that it could use to re-activate. Anything with an active charge that got within the gate's meagre range was siphoned off and absorbed by the gate.

Any device with a power source (ships, 'bots, energy weapons and so on) that draws within ten feet of the surface of the gate while it is dormant will trigger its power draining capabilities. This is automatic but will not occur if the gate has been fully activated – in which case it gets all the power it needs from Thirdspace itself.

All skill checks involving an object being sapped are taken at a – 10 penalty. Depending on the amount and type of energy being drained (fusion versus gravitational and so on), this process could take seconds like it did with the maintbot, or hours in the case of a vessel mistakenly landing on its surface.

The dormant power drain is actually the automated version of the Energy Siphon, one of the gate's primary defences. This device and how it functions is covered later in this chapter.

INTERPLANETARY EXPEDITIONS TO THE RESCUE

When the first meetings concerning the massive artefact outside the station began, the paid informants of IPX were quick to send many messages to their employers. Even though there was a communications blackout and a travel blockade, mega-corporations can generally get what they want and where they want no matter the silly politics standing in their way. They have so many contracts and favours owed to them that they always get what they want if they want it bad enough.

In this case what they wanted was first access to the artefact. After getting the clearances they needed to fly past EarthForce blockades, a crack team of IPX response field-technicians was gathered and sent to Babylon 5. They came in one of their elite Argo-class ships, showing the importance of the mission to those who understood the rarity of the vessel. IPX knew that Sheridan had found something important, both scientifically and financially, and they wanted a chance to get their talons on it before anyone else could.

IPX put together a skilled and professional team of researchers

and agents for what would later be called 'Mission: Epsilon.' The following list comprises the members of the IPX team. (those listed in *italics* are unofficial agents not listed on the crew manifest).

Dr. Elizabeth Trent, Field Co-ordinator (see statistics below)

Dr. Bill Morishi, Field Co-ordinator (7th level Human Scientist)

Dr. Beatrice Nightingale, Theoretical Physicist (see *This is Pandora's Box*, page 95)

Arthur Wellview, Computer Analyst and Electronics Expert (6th level Human Scientist)

Dr. Josef Mankowitz, Xenotechnician (8th level Human Scientist/ 3rd level Xenobiologist)

Sergio Duprei, *Corporate Security Executive Officer* (see *This is Pandora's Box*, page 95)

23 IPX-licensed Technical Pilots (3rd level Blue-Collar Workers)

21 IPX Operations Staff Members (3rd level White-Collar Workers or 2nd level Scientists)

48 IPX Field Technicians (2nd level White-Collar Workers or 1st level Scientists)

12 Corporate Security Agents (see *This is Pandora's Box*, page 88)

A team of this calibre does not come easily or cheaply. It was drawn from a dozen other projects at short notice and *Argo-Seven-Niner* was originally

The Door Is Opened

destined for a spot researching the collapsing star remains at Omelos. Whether the higher ups at IPX actually knew what they might be dealing with or whether they simply thought they could take the most advantage of Babylon 5 because of the embargo – they obviously meant business.

When the chief field co-ordinator for the team reached the Epsilon system she immediately communicated her wish to come aboard. Although IPX was easily the largest corporation in the galaxy and spanned several different governments, it was still considered an Earth-based company. Therefore, it was only with some concern that Sheridan gave the company access to cargo delivery bay 9 and agreed to meet with Dr. Elizabeth Trent.

Dr. Trent was the typical IPX officer: smug, corporate-minded and unafraid to tell anyone anything in order to get what she came for. She and her team wanted access to the alien artefact outside the station and Trent was not afraid to imply that the Babylon 5 crew was more likely to blow themselves up than actually discover anything about the artefact. In her bragging however, she mentioned that IPX could come and go as it pleased through the embargo, that they were, in essence, immune.

Sheridan did not hesitate to use that information to the advantage of his station. He offered Dr. Trent and her team access to the artefact under a few conditions: IPX would have to work hand in hand with Babylon 5 at all times, giving them full access to any data discovered and first call on any of their findings. Also, if it was discovered that the technology in the artefact could be used by President Clark against others, alien or Human, the information must never leave Babylon 5. Finally, and most importantly to the Captain, Trent and her people would have to use their IPX immunity to the embargo to secretly re-supply the station with food and such that they could not get on their own. Lastly, if any of his conditions were broken, Sheridan would destroy the artefact to keep it from falling into the wrong hands.

Appalled at the corner he was backing her company into, Trent was not far from walking away from the negotiations when Sheridan received an interesting bit of information across his link. Susan had news concerning the initial scans and carbon dating that the manual sampling teams had managed to take. She informed Sheridan, and unknowingly Trent, that the samples taken from the artefact placed it in excess of one million years old. In actuality the gate was much closer to 2,150,000 years old but 'over a million years' was the closest science could estimate.

After hearing that well-timed piece of information, Trent knew that she could not possibly walk away from the table without access to the artefact. Not only would IPX never forgive her for letting something so unique and wonderful slip by her, she would never forgive herself for not getting to investigate such a device. She agreed to Sheridan's

conditions knowing that she would likely be able to worm her way through some of them later but eager to start researching the 'find of a lifetime.'

Trent gave her people the go ahead before she even left the level and had her crew begin the long and chaotic process of unloading their equipment. Several tons worth of crates needed to be unloaded into makeshift workstations and technical pilots began setting up a lighting and scanning framework outside the station. All of these parts formed the well-oiled machine that an IPX research assignment could become in just a few hours despite a few bumps and scrapes with station personnel along the way.

Doctor Elizabeth Trent, IPX Field Co-ordinator

Elizabeth Trent was born in 2223 to an affluent family on Earth and from a very young age was destined to be a ladder-climbing executive. She was hurled through numerous private schools and training programs and earned her degree two years early. Originally working for a small research facility, she became an IPX employee when the conglomerate bought her employers in 2252. Once she was exposed to the cutthroat politics and corporate competition of the larger company, she wanted nothing but to excel.

Elizabeth is a crafty woman who relies heavily on the power of her employers. She knows that she can get away with a lot more than a normal research co-ordinator and she has no moral or ethical issues with doing so. In her mind IPX has brought the galaxy and its governments enough wonders to more than pay for a few broken laws.

7th Level Human Scientist

Hit Points: 11

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30ft

DV: 14 (+3 Class, +1 Dex)

Attacks: +2 close combat, +4 ranged

Special Qualities: Mental Agility, Primary Area of Study (xenoscience), Peripheral Studies (Linguistics, Technical (electronics), Knowledge (commerce)), Alien Technology Familiarity (Narn, Centauri, Dilgar)

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

Abilities: Str 9, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 16

Skills: Appraise +10, Athletics +5, Bluff +16, Computer Use +10, Diplomacy +10, Intrigue +7, Investigate +8, Knowledge (xenoscience) +21, Knowledge (commerce) +10, Linguistics +8, Notice +8, Operations (sensors) +6, Subterfuge +6, Technical (electronics) +14

Feats: Fluency (Human, Interlac, Centauri), Independently Wealthy, Skill Focus (Bluff)



STATION MALFUNCTIONS

From the moment the artefact got a taste of power from the single maintbot it drained, it subtly targeted Babylon 5 for more energy. The wavelengths the researchers used to scan the artefact allowed it to create invisible power-siphoning connections between itself and the station. These insubstantial connections drew small amounts of energy from the station, causing it to be riddled with brown outs and electrical malfunctions.

Rooms would suddenly go black for a few minutes, only to then leap back to life as if nothing had happened. Automated surveillance systems would switch off or flicker for hours at a time. It was beginning to look as if the station had picked up some kind of virus but many of the staff believed the problems had been caused by IPX and all of their equipment. It was silly to believe that a few dozen additional instruments and a lighting frame outside the station could put a strain on its massive fusion reactor chain but the staff were feeling intruded upon and needed someone to blame.

One of these power malfunctions was a happenstance power failure in tube 9. Lyta Alexander and Zack Allen were stuck between levels as the power shut down and while C&C worked on fixing the tube Zack gathered up his courage and explained to Lyta how much he cared for her. Although it looked as though Lyta was mumbling and thinking about things very far away, Zack poured his heart out to her. In her silence he ended up rescinding his words and told her to act as though his emotional outburst had never happened. Lyta appeared not to have heard him anyway, power was restored and Zack chose the next possible level to get off the tube, his embarrassment getting the better of him.

While the inside of the station was suffering several strange malfunctions, the outside of the station was not immune. The IPX machinery used to set up the lighting grid was getting strange static signals from the station, causing it to stutter in its duties. Although a very minor setback for professionals such as IPX, this added an element of danger to the performance of more sensitive or important functions.

Overall these malfunctions were

easily avoided or dealt with but one 'malfunction' nearly proved fatal for several maintenance pod pilots.

While the last few girders of the IPX scan-grid were being secured, something triggered the activation codes in *all* of the maintbots. The slow-moving scarab-like remote drones leapt off of their various recharging ports and holding frames, assumed a patterned formation and headed straight for the artefact. As they picked up speed, it became obvious that they were going to ram the artefact. Each maintbot is powered by a rechargeable fusion cell which has the explosive power equal to that of a heavy EarthForce warhead (Offence 40), meaning that thirty of them crashing into the artefact would have been disastrous. Although it was doubtful that the explosions would do much more than scar up the surface of the artefact, they would undoubtedly destroy the IPX grid and the technical pilots putting it together!

The maintbots did not respond to the IPX remote controls, nor did they respond to C&C's master controller. Drastic measures were taken in order to stop them. Alpha Squadron swung in from a routine patrol and swiftly destroyed all of the maintbots before any of them could reach the artefact. This 'malfunction' cost the station *billions* of credits worth of equipment, as maintbots are not cheap and Alpha Squadron was forced to obliterate over two dozen of them in seconds. The cost was worth it however, as no one was injured and the artefact was unharmed.

C&C tried several times to hail the Maintenance Office on board the station to see what they could say about the maintbot swarm but they could not get anyone to answer the link. Thinking that perhaps someone might be trying to sabotage the artefact, Zack met with a security team at Blue Sector 54 to investigate.

A Brief Look at Zack's History

At one point in his attempt at starting a romance with Lyta, Zack Allen begins to say 'You've been through a lot, and I guess I just wanna do for you...' but is interrupted by an awkward glance from the mesmerised Lyta. What Zack had started to say was that he wanted to do for Lyta what Garibaldi had done for him a long time ago.

Zack was a two-bit thug and drug addict when Garibaldi found him and cleaned him up, got him his job on the station and turned his whole life around. Zack wanted to help someone else who had been dealt a rough life and he saw such a person in Lyta. Zack's encounter with Lyta is very brief but it is a very revealing piece of what makes Zack who he is.

The Door Is Opened

The Door Is Opened

When they found a maintenance worker unconscious but unharmed on the floor outside the controller's office, Zack tried to use his personal codes to get into the room but could not. Unless the door controls had been re-programmed, it seemed that the door had simply been broken from the other side. Zack ordered the team to bring the door down and they opened fire with their high-yield PPGs and cut through the bindings.

Inside, Zack and his team were surprised to find Lyta brandishing a PPG at them. She was sweaty, distant and confused but she managed to hold the pistol steady on Zack. He knew that something was not right with her at the moment but he trusted that she would not shoot him. As he approached her she explained that 'we' have to stop it. Whether that 'we' meant her and the rest of station personnel or her and the Vorlon programming inside of her are unknown. No sooner did Lyta utter the cryptic warning than her eyes fluttered and she collapsed to the ground.

Zack took her into custody but not to arrest her – to protect her.

LYTA IS SOMETHING SPECIAL

After Lyta was brought to MedBay and Doctor Franklin checked her to the best of his ability, he discovered that there was nothing physically wrong with her. She seemed

unable to figure out exactly why she had been in the maintbot control room at all, let alone why she tried to ram the artefact with the 'bots. All Lyta could remember was that she had lain down to get some rest after her last contract scan and waking up in MedBay.

Franklin knew that telepaths tend to have very powerful dream behaviour. He believed that Lyta could possibly have been sleepwalking, reacting to some strange dream or steered by a trigger she did not know about. He figured her behaviour had to be based on the artefact in some way. Lyta was reluctant to tell Franklin of her recent experiences but she justified his beliefs by explaining that ever since the artefact had arrived she had been plagued by the strangest feelings. She told him that she felt as though she had seen the artefact before and that it made her very nervous. She could not explain why she felt that way, she merely knew that she did.

While Lyta waited for Franklin to give her some sedatives to help her sleep, something 'switched on' in her again. Her eyes glazed over slightly and her telepathic senses caused her to swivel her head up to look directly at a hidden security camera being used to watch her.

Sheridan, Ivanova, Zack and Dr. Trent were indeed watching Lyta through the camera, trying to figure out what to do with her. Lyta claimed that she had tried to destroy the artefact subconsciously but IPX did not buy such an explanation. Although it was technically impossible that a telepath rated as low as Lyta (P5 at last testing)



could possibly sense electronic equipment focussing on her, Trent wanted to test her. Humouring Trent's hunch, Sheridan had the viewer switch from one camera to the next and they all watched as Lyta swivelled her glassy-eyed stare toward the new camera. Trent was right: Lyta knew exactly which camera was looking at her!

Trent did not seem too shocked that a common P5 telepath was sensing electronic surveillance, something that only more powerful telepaths were supposed to be able to do. In fact, Trent almost immediately deduced that this ability had to be one of the many things that had happened to Lyta when she went to the Vorlon homeworld and said as much. Lyta's trip was not exactly common knowledge, so Sheridan was quite interested in how Dr. Trent could act so casually when she spoke of it.

Trent went on to brag about IPX's omniscience concerning long-range explorers and any ship excursions toward quarantined or blockaded space. With Vorlon space being off-limits to explorers since the days the race had still lived within the confines of the galaxy, it drew specific attention when David Slayner's commercial starship, the *Solar Wind*, scheduled time for a flyby of the Vorlon border outside of Dorac. IPX later questioned the pilot about the flight and got him to explain what had happened.

David Slayner had agreed to take Lyta to Vorlon space for a pre-paid sum but when they got to the border he refused to go any further out of fear for his ship and his life. Instead he opened a broadcast channel and transmitted Lyta's whereabouts and her intentions in Interlac, directing the signal into Vorlon territory. For nearly ten days Slayner transmitted the signal without a single response from the Vorlons. Slayner knew that he had to get back to his regular contracts and routes but Lyta was adamant that she must stay so Slayner gave her one of his ship's escape pods to go on her own. No matter how suicidal it seemed, he was not going to stop her from staying if it meant he got out of there faster. According to Slayner, that was the last time he ever saw Lyta.

Trent continued to summarise what IPX believed had happened. They felt that the Vorlons had arrived as soon as the *Solar Wind* jumped away and that the Vorlons had saved Lyta from a lonely death stranded in an escape pod. IPX believed that the Vorlons had come for Lyta and taken her back to their homeworld, subjecting her to who knows what sort of training or modification. IPX knew through their Psi Corps contacts that Lyta was performing far more powerfully than before her trip to see the Vorlons. Ever since her return, Lyta had been under some kind of secret surveillance by IPX agents there on the station.

It was Trent's correct assumption that Lyta could somehow still be acting under some form of Vorlon influence, even if all the Vorlons had gone beyond the Rim. Trent

thought that perhaps Lyta was simply following Vorlon orders, trying to destroy the artefact in order to keep advanced technologies from falling into Human hands. The Vorlons admitted to having done this several times, making this topic all the more sensitive. Trent made an unsubtle threat that if Lyta was indeed targeting the artefact for destruction, Sheridan and his people would need to keep her under control – or IPX would deal with her.

After leaving the meeting with Sheridan and the others, Trent chose to go behind their backs and send some of her Corporate Security Agents to keep an eye on Lyta at all times. These agents were skilled in blending in with crowds and not being noticed but Lyta could sense their

Sensing Electronic Surveillance

All telepaths can sense when others are looking at them and some can even tell when the surveillance is from a very far distance. Very few can accurately sense when someone is looking at them through a machine. This is a power that is mostly reserved for high-powered telepaths or those who have been adjusted. This rare ability is reflected in the following telepathic ability from the Sensing Discipline.

Sense Electronic Attention

Power Required: 13
Range: Medium (P12 Long)
Action: Standard
Telepathy Check: DC 16
Concentration: Yes
Multiple Subjects: No

With a successful Telepathy skill check the telepath can know when any sort of electronic device is looking at him. Cameras or directional scanners are the most common of these devices but targeting systems or other devices could be used as well. If the device is not targeted specifically at the telepath but detects him anyway – a security camera on a regular sweep, for example – the check has a -2 modifier. However, depending on how close and how large the electronic device is, the Games Master could give up to a +3 bonus to the telepath's check for proximity or size.



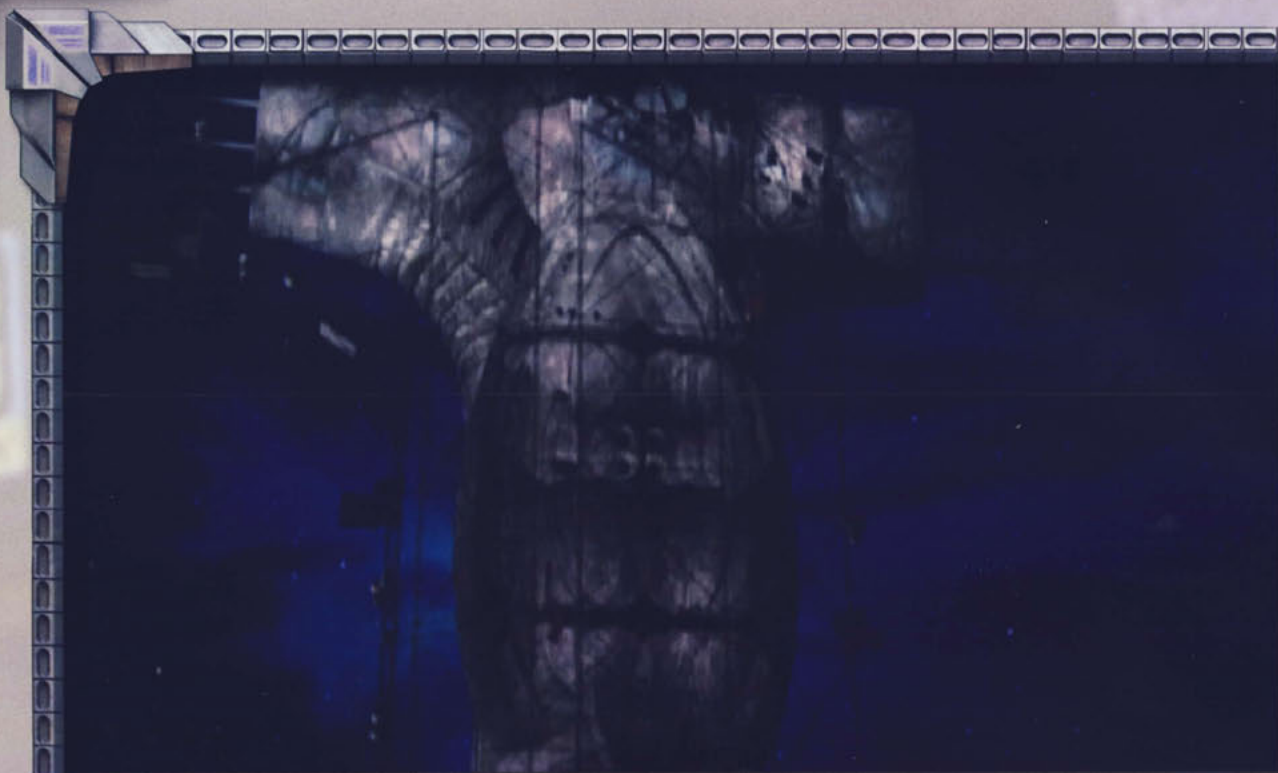
Power Fluctuations on Space Stations

Although the contact with the Thirdspace gate triggered many power fluctuation malfunctions on Babylon 5, there are many times when simple hardware or computer errors can have the same effect. The electronic systems of a station as large as Babylon 5 have a lot of room to make errors.

The following table can be used to randomly determine what sort of power fluctuation might be affecting a group of Player Characters at any given time on a space station. In special cases the Games Master can roll more frequently but this table can be used for common electronic mishaps as well.

2d6	Power Fluctuation	Skill Check to Repair or Bypass ¹
2	<i>Airlock Error</i> ; airlock unlocks or is triggered to be opened in 1d3 minutes.	DC 15
3	<i>Weapon Systems Misfire</i> ; station defences only fire 50% of the time when triggered but 15% of the time when not triggered.	DC 18
4	<i>Door Systems Erratic</i> ; internal doors are stuck open or closed.	DC 12
5	<i>Plumbing Backup</i> ; automated plumbing systems shut down, causing foul backups.	DC 15
6	<i>Station Communications Down</i> ; any link or comm-unit routed through the station does not function.	DC 18
7	<i>Light Flickers</i> ; lighting systems become erratic and unresponsive, penalising all ranged combat by -2.	DC 10
8	<i>Tube Malfunction</i> ; misses levels and/or delays route 2d6 minutes	DC 14
9	<i>Hangar Access Blocked</i> ; all forms of hangars with automated external access do not function.	DC 15
10	<i>StellarCom Down</i> ; any form of communication off the station does not function.	DC 20
11	<i>Banking Software Errors</i> ; any access of banking systems has an equal 50% chance to double or halve the amount of money it produces/credits.	DC 22
12	<i>Surveillance Blackout</i> ; Security cannot use visual surveillance or energy scanners.	DC 18

¹ This is based on the Computer Use, Operations or Technical skills depending on the circumstance.



attentiveness and avoided them most of the time. Those she could not avoid she telepathically re-directed, making effective surveillance nearly impossible.

THE GATE STIRS

Once the sensor and lighting grid was fully built around the artefact, Trent gave the order to turn it on. Built far enough away to not be drained by the artefact's power leeching, the grid used dozens of halogen lights and magnetic resonance scanners to get both a good visual look and a three-dimensional layout of the device. The grid used a powerful tachyon-based relay system to gather the information and several fusion cells for power. By switching it on and ordering basic scans to commence, Trent was unknowingly feeding the gate small amounts of power.

As the grid poured magnetic wavelengths, tachyon pulses and common heat from the lights into the artefact, the ancient device began to react. Deep within the impenetrable shell of the gate a swirling mass of ancient energies awakened, allowing the telepathic powers of those who waited on the other side to seep into the galaxy. Just as they had in varying degrees over hundreds of thousands of years, the Harbingers could *feel* the other dimension – and they called out to it to help them cross over.

At first the telepathic emissions were thin and generally

unobtrusive, seeking out those with dark passions inside them. These telepathic probes showed those who wanted to see a dark tower and a city of black desires, touched upon them invitingly and began to steer their actions. People were affected in different ways by the telepathic probes of darkness. Many simply stopped caring about anything but serving the opening of the gate, like the Harbinger Cult of Ancient times. There were many who were terrified of what they were being shown, losing control of themselves in frenzied violence or frantic screaming. Some people had strange or interesting dreams that foretold what could be and several were unaffected completely. The gate was not even close to fully powered yet, so the denizens of the dimension it led to could not assert their powers completely yet.

Babylon 5 had a hard enough time dealing with the repercussions of what little was getting through at the moment. Station security was constantly being called from one place to another. They would stop one chaotic brawl just to be called in on another one. Several station-goers were found screaming themselves hoarse in their quarters, unable to do or say anything. Reports of violence and strange behaviour came in faster than security could handle and it looked like it was just the beginning.

Down in red sector, in one of the busier hallways, a local station 'celebrity criminal' named Deuce was touched by the gate's presence. He was

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seen by many just staring up at the ceiling, a smile on his face, occasionally uttering a declaration of wonder or excitement. Although it looked like he had lost his mind, he was looking up at what only those others who had fallen under the Harbingers' charms could see. The station had been ripped away in his mind's eye, revealing a dark and twisted tower that sparkled and shone like a massive black gemstone. It was a breathtaking sight to behold but only those who were 'blessed' by the Harbingers could possibly see it as they did.

Elsewhere in the station, Susan Ivanova was also touched by the gate's presence but her latent telepathy somehow blocked some of its effect on her. She saw the tower and the dark city around it, saw the creatures floating around preparing for the next step in their conquest but she was not fully seduced. In her dreaming mind Susan found Vir staring out over the edge of the cliff at the dark and beautiful scene as he lusted for whatever it was the city represented. He told her how much he wanted to be there but then warned her when she wanted to know what it was. As if being rewarded for scolding her, Susan dreamt that Vir was pulled away by two attractive Centauri women, leaving her to stare at the tower alone. A black tendril crept out of the shadows to brush against her face – waking her instantly to sweat and screams in her room once more.

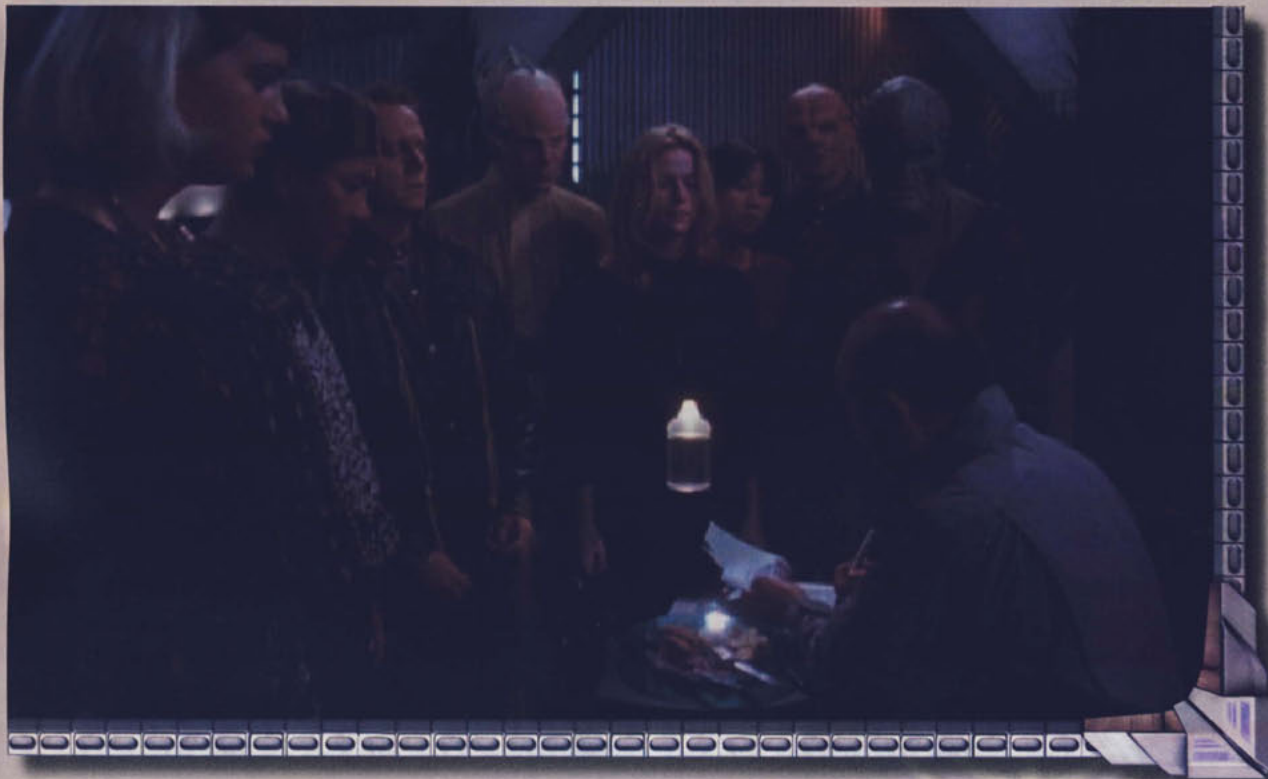
At the same time as Ivanova was calming herself after her telepathic brush with the enemy, Bill Morishi (one of

the IPX lead scientists) had his own interaction with the growing Harbinger Cult. Down in one of the public cafes where Morishi was having a healthy breakfast of hydroponic bananas and centaberry relish, an eerie crowd was forming. When Morishi looked up from his work he saw several gawking bystanders, all staring at him. The crowd grew larger and closer, eventually standing around his table as if he was some kind of attraction. When Morishi finally confronted them, Deuce stepped forward to be their spokesperson. The entranced criminal scolded Morishi for not working fast enough, for not getting the artefact to work yet. Suddenly, as if called elsewhere, the crowd dispersed and left Morishi to his confused and worrisome thoughts.

Similar scenes unfolded before IPX workers and scientists all over the station, with groups of the Cult's members informing them that the artefact must be activated. The telepathic energies sent from the Thirdspace gate were turning regular people into loyal servants of the Harbingers' will and they had begun to group together to pave the way for their unseen masters.

THE FIVE DAY MARK

After five days of IPX involvement with the artefact they had yet to report any real findings to Sheridan. Although IPX had come through in spades with the supplies Trent had promised, she had not given any form of data report to



C&C and Sheridan was beginning to think she was hiding something. After several hours of trying to track her down he finally confronted her in a hallway. Talking to her as she briskly walked toward their makeshift lab on the station, Sheridan blatantly asked her why they had yet to be able to provide any information.

Trent circled the question with more red tape, citing that things take as long as they need to and that 'science does not pay attention to a clock.' Her argument would have been convincing to the common person but Sheridan had been married for several years to a professional xenoarchaeologist and was not exactly common. He knew that a massive project such as that would have come back with at least some preliminary data by that time. He was aware that IPX should have had surface reports, magnetic resonance scans, a good idea as to whether the artefact was a ship or a mechanism of some kind and a general notion as to what purpose it served.

Even though she was cornered by Sheridan's argument, Trent deftly manoeuvred the conversation toward the uniqueness of the project. She explained that Sheridan would be right if the artefact was a conventional find but because of what it was there was no way to gauge true progress. Not fully ready to concede her point, Sheridan had to admit that Trent was right about the artefact's strangeness. In the six days it had been looming outside the station, Babylon 5 had seen a 30% increase in violent crimes and outbreaks of mental instability. The artefact's effect on the station population was part of why Sheridan was so insistent that progress be made – if it was some kind of weapon, he needed to know how to turn it off before his station's populace tore itself apart.

Trent saw Sheridan's bringing up of station matters as a good exit to the conversation, arguing that station problems were his concern and that she was not interested in them. When Sheridan pointed out that the strange occurrences on the station were almost assuredly connected to the artefact, and therefore to her work, Trent got defensive and tried to back out of the debate into a conveniently opening tube behind her.

As she did so, Sheridan noticed the work on her clipboard and asked her about it. He knew at first glance that the hieroglyphs she had transcribed were actually the Vorlon written language. Trent was shocked that a 'simple EarthForce captain' knew Vorlon. No matter her reaction, Sheridan used the fact that she was hiding the Vorlon script from him to lay down an ultimatum: Trent's team had forty-eight hours to compile a full report of *everything* they had found up to that point or he would cancel their arrangement and force IPX off the station and far away from the project.

Trent retreated upset that the captain had gotten the best of her and more distraught that she could not

give up what she had figured out about the artefact. If Sheridan was the kind of man that IPX had warned her about, he would see the potential wartime uses of the Thirdspace gate and shut down her research before she could open the gate fully. Her drive for success would simply not let the bull-headed Sheridan get in the way of Trent opening that gate.

When Trent returned to the lab she tried to get Dr. Morishi to see her point about hiding information from the Babylon 5 staff, even going so far as to suggest that Sheridan wanted the gate for his own personal use. She seemed upset that the captain could possibly think the gate and the station's discipline problems were related somehow. So focussed was she on keeping the artefact to herself that she did not even hear when her co-worker told her about his strange encounter at breakfast. She carried on trying to piece together how to keep the gate to herself and her people. She took Sheridan's forty-eight hour demand as a deadline to get the gate opened – not to collate information about it.

Dr. Morishi changed the subject quickly in order to derail Trent's growing obsession, showing her what he thought was a good reason to be careful about the artefact. It seemed that one of their colleagues had discovered what looked like power relays on the artefact where he believed an outside power source had been used to actually start the device's internal power supplies, like a jump start system of sorts. Morishi pointed out to Trent that there were massive amounts of combat damage on the artefact, which suggested that someone most definitely did not want it to be powered back up. The internal relays were shot up pretty badly and the surface all around was rough with blast marks. Over the million-plus years that it had drifted in hyperspace, the artefact's energy stores must have bled off from this damage as was likely the intention of those who had inflicted it.

Morishi's safety warnings aside, Trent wanted only to accelerate the project and get the gate working again. If she could attach her name to the first opening of what she was calling 'Thirdspace,' her career would be cast in platinum and no one would be able to take it away from her. She was ready to make history. When Morishi disagreed with her idea of jury-rigging the largest fusion cells they had to attach to the severed power relays, Trent preyed upon his hunger for science.

She got him talking about the mysterious origins of the jump gates currently in use in the galaxy and explained that she thought the artefact was actually some kind of ancient jump gate enabled a new kind of travel – Thirdspace as she called it. She believed the artefact represented an almost instantaneous system of travel through the galaxy. She told Morishi that this discovery would single-handedly revolutionise space travel and make them both rich beyond imagination.

The Door Is Opened

The Harbingers' Whispers

Once the Thirdspace gate had siphoned enough power to begin the internal processes of opening the door between dimensions, the Harbingers began to send their telepathic signals to the waiting minds on Babylon 5. As they had done thousands of times before when the dimensions drew close to one another, their signals crept out into the galaxy to create chaos and servitude.

These telepathic 'whispers' affect each target differently depending on the individual targeted. Anyone in the vicinity of the Harbingers' whispers has a 75% chance of being sought out by the telepathic probes. If someone is targeted he must immediately pass a DC 15 Will save or be subject to the various effects of the probe. If the subject is telepathic in any way he receives a penalty to his saving throw equal to his P-Rating. If the target passes the save, nothing occurs and he is unaware that anything has happened to him. If he fails the save however, he is subjected to the effects listed on the table below depending on his Wisdom score.

Wisdom Score	Harbinger Probe Effects
9 or less	<i>One Of Us</i> ; become Servitor Harbinger Cult member (see page 91 for details).
10 – 11	<i>Raging Terror</i> ; character will flee from hallucinations and attack anyone who gets in his way.
12 – 14	<i>Seductive Dreams</i> ; DC 15 Will save nightly to avoid becoming a Harbinger Cult member.
15 – 17	<i>Subtle Servitude</i> ; character will want to help the Harbinger cause, perhaps even subconsciously.
18 +	<i>Narcoleptic Lapse</i> ; character will need to make hourly DC 12 Fortitude saves to not succumb to the exhausting weight on his mind.

For obvious reasons, the Games Master has the final say as to what happens when certain characters are affected by the Harbingers' telepathic whispers. Those who have been touched by the Vorlons (Sheridan and Delenn, for instance) could be immune, where those who have been altered by First Ones (Lyta, Morden and so on) might want to destroy the gate before it can be opened. It is ultimately up to the Games Master as to what he wants the telepathic probes to do; we merely suggest the above results.



Morishi was not fully convinced. Trent's argument left him wondering why any race would have attacked such a powerful thing to disable it, only to dump it in hyperspace to be lost for millions of years. He felt that whoever would do such a thing knew something they did not and that maybe they should be more cautious because of that.

Trent could not be budged on the issue. She explained that if they did not figure out how the gate worked, which would require them to turn it on, someone would eventually discover what they were sitting on and take it from them. With Babylon 5 being such a hotspot for scandal and media attention anyway, Trent claimed that this was more likely to happen sooner than later. She all but begged Morishi to back her play on this.

Even though it was obvious he was not fully convinced of the wisdom of the decision, Morishi agreed to Trent's plan and Trent set to figuring out how to jump-start the gate.

THE BLACK CITY

As IPX continued to work on figuring out what made the artefact tick, people all over the station were getting clearer and clearer images of the disturbingly beautiful city the Harbingers were telepathically promising to them. Where some were merely

longing to see where the whispers in their heads came from, others were performing insane activities to attempt to reach the Black City.

Those who had been drawn into the Harbinger Cult were in a constant state of feeling the Black City's presence and many of them were lashing out at fellow station-goers in frustration. Some believed that the city was heaven itself and thought that suicide might bring them there. In the weeks that followed the Thirdspace incident, over twenty bodies bearing self-inflicted fatal wounds were discovered in people's quarters throughout the station.

A few of the strangest incidents that were reported made it into Sheridan's final record of the event. An attempted hijacking of a commercial cargo shuttle by an untrained pilot never got out of the hangar but managed to involve three station security officers in a huge brawl with the 'pilot' and his co-Cult members. A record number of forged stim prescriptions crossed Dr. Franklin's desk from dozens of people looking to avoid the dark dreams that had been assaulting them nightly. Security even had to stop the infamous racketeer Deuce from opening an access airlock in the maintenance area. He explained that he wanted to go outside to be closer to the gate where the Black City was. The station was being turned upside down with an obsession about the artefact and its seductive Black City.

All this strangeness surrounding these images of dark cities and enormous

The Door Is Opened



What is the Black City?

The image of the beautiful Black City at the foot of the spire is one of many dark promises that the Harbingers' telepathic probes make to those who serve them. It was the same image shown when the Harbingers seduced the Hand in the Age of Ancients, the same shown to Elder God worshippers on earth in the 1920s and it would remain the same for all eternity. The image of the Black City represents the uniform perfection and 'peace' that the Harbingers want its Cult to think waits for them beyond the gate to the dark dimension. It is the culmination of what the Harbingers want their minions to lust for – solidarity through servitude.

Although not necessarily beautiful to those who look upon it with reservation or individual questions, the image of the Black City works well on many of the Harbingers' targets. Little do they realise that this promised land does not really exist *anywhere*. It is an empty promise given to weak minds, forcing them to do anything necessary to open the door between the dimensions and let the Harbingers into a new universe to destroy.

Essentially, the Black City is a fanciful lure and nothing more.



towers gave Ivanova pause when she bumped into Vir in a transport tube. Whether he did so as part of Centauri tradition or because he was being steered by the dark whispers in his mind, Vir mentioned that Susan had been in his dreams the night before. Humouring him at first, she froze when he described to her the same dream she had had – except that in Vir's dream Susan had been *eaten* by the tentacled beast.

The coincidences about the artefact, the Black City and how strangely everyone was acting were mounting up. Knowing what sorts of horrible mysteries existed in the galaxy from her dealings with the Shadow War and the Great Machine, Ivanova was convinced that something

very bad was about to happen. Unfortunately for everyone, she was just slightly late figuring that out.

IPX was already moving altered fusion cells into position to open the gate.

OPENING THE GATE

Tricked into setting the energy cell into the power relays by fraudulent orders given by IPX, the Babylon 5 maintenance crew was warned away from doing so just a second or two too late. The artefact sensed the powerful energy source so near to its surface and actually moulded its own hull to envelop the cell. Even with their retro-thrusters burning at

Station Lockdown

Rarely can the Chief of Security issue a full and total lockdown of Babylon 5. Localised lockdowns and security curfews are more common but a full lockdown is necessary only when an emergency is widespread enough. So long as the captain or commander does not override the order, Babylon 5 can be placed under its highest level of security.

When Babylon 5 is on lockdown the following effects are in place:

- ⑤ **Door Locks** – All non-essential hatches and doors are magnetically sealed during the hours of the curfew. It would take a massive amount of strength (DC 40) or a savvy technician (Technical or Computer Use DC 25) to open a locked hatch or door.
- ⑤ **Additional Surveillance** – Camera and sound systems that are normally reserved for specialist services (casino security, StellarCom picks and so on) are switched into an electronic storage mode that the station security office can use to gain better surveillance coverage of common areas in the station. All skill checks used to avoid electronic surveillance have their DCs increased by +3.
- ⑤ **Communication Blackout** – All internal communications are limited to emergency channels only, meaning that station-goers can only reach security, C&C routing service and MedBay without special access. External communications are cut off entirely without special permission. Hacking past this blackout requires a Computer Use skill check DC 30.
- ⑤ **Security Level Increase** – All current security and EarthForce officers are placed 'on call' or on duty until the lockdown is dismissed. Additionally, security officers who are on active duty are issued PPG rifles, riot shields, shock sticks and increased armour (DR 4).
- ⑤ **Justifiable Force** – Security officers are given the jurisdiction to use the level of force to deal with a curfew breaking civilian they see fit for the situation. This does not leave them fully unaccountable but the worst charge they could suffer in this case is *wrongful military action in the line of duty* (suspension of up to a year) instead of the normal charges associated with their actions.

full power, the maintenance pods could not pull the fusion cell apparatus from the gate.

As soon as the connection was made and the gate began to siphon the power from the cells to start its own internal mechanisms, the people on board Babylon 5 knew about it. Those who had been touched by the Harbingers' whispers were suddenly aware of the gate's activation and saw in their minds the image of the glowing runes pulsing with otherworldly energy. They froze in awe of what was happening, no matter what they were doing at the time.

The internal generators within the gate surged to life. The gate

began folding space and matter upon itself to create an infinite supply of energy in ways that would give the finest Minbari astrophysicists aneurisms. The gate began to glow brilliantly, the Vorlon warnings scripted on its surface ironically blanched out in the growing brightness. As the unfathomable machine switched on its various functions, the maintenance crew was dumbfounded by what they had started. Unluckily for them, their awe would be quickly lost in a split second of pain and then nothingness.

The first of the gate's systems to activate was its powerful and formidable defence shield. An invisible bubble of pure energy that extended out several dozen metres all around the gate's surface, the defence

The Door Is Opened

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shield rolled out of thousands of tiny generator points fast enough to blow through the IPX sensor grid and the four maintenance pods like a stiff wind through a house of cards. There were several small explosions as the power supplies for the grid and the fusion reactors on the pods were torn open violently but the gate itself was protected from harm by the shield – so it did not so much as bear a scratch from them.

With the gate beginning to power itself to capacity, its formerly slow drain of energy from the station became much stronger. Malfunctions in several integral systems were becoming commonplace and station maintenance were having a hard time keeping up with the needed repairs as they were reported. Tubes were shutting down all over the station, communications were sporadic at best and even the cobra bay hatches to the Starfuries were not functioning. Sheridan was forced to reroute power from outside systems just to make sure life support and rotation stayed online. On a technical level, Babylon 5 had become a nightmare.

Things were not any better with the population either. Massive throngs of station-goers seduced into the Harbinger Cult gathered at portholes and observation decks to look upon the unfolding gate as it powered up. Where they were blocked or questioned violence broke out and even the threat of bodily harm or death would not dissuade them.

One such confrontation took place just outside the hangar access landing, where a massive group of Harbinger Cult members tried to force their way to the fighter bays in order to stop them from launching. Something inside their minds told them the bay doors were getting closer to being opened and that they had to try to keep those fighters from getting outside where they could theoretically harm the gate. The Cultists were so driven by their need to serve the Harbingers' will that they seemed ignorant of minor wounds. Zack and a full squad of security officers stood their ground against them anyway, using hand to hand combat and shock sticks to incapacitate instead of kill but a few Cultists had to be seriously hurt in order to get them to stop.

With everything turning sour on the station and Ivanova reporting that the maintenance crew had activated the gate on false orders, Sheridan accurately feared that Dr. Trent had done something rash. He knew that she was ambitious and self-absorbed but he needed Susan to go and talk to her while he saw Lyta. The artefact was covered in Vorlon script and no one knew the Vorlons better than Lyta. Just as the two officers parted to run to their respective meetings, Zack patched into the remaining public speakers working across the station and ordered an immediate lockdown and curfew.

The Harbinger Cult did not care for curfews or lockdowns and they continued to rush toward anyone who might have the capability to harm their precious masters' gate. They

stormed the hangars and Zocalo, they attacked spacers and station-goers who were trying to get to their quarters and they even started a riot in the IPX loading facility in bay 9.

Things had gone from bad to worse and were not about to get any better. When the power was restored to the cobra bays, every Starfury and thunderbolt they had on hand launched. Their weapons were not able to penetrate the defence shielding of the gate, let alone damage the hull but they had to try nonetheless. There was no telling what the thing might do to them next so they poured on the fire in the hope that something might get through to hurt the gate. Nothing did, of course and the energy stores of the thing continued to swell as they fruitlessly fired their unit-pulse cannons at it.

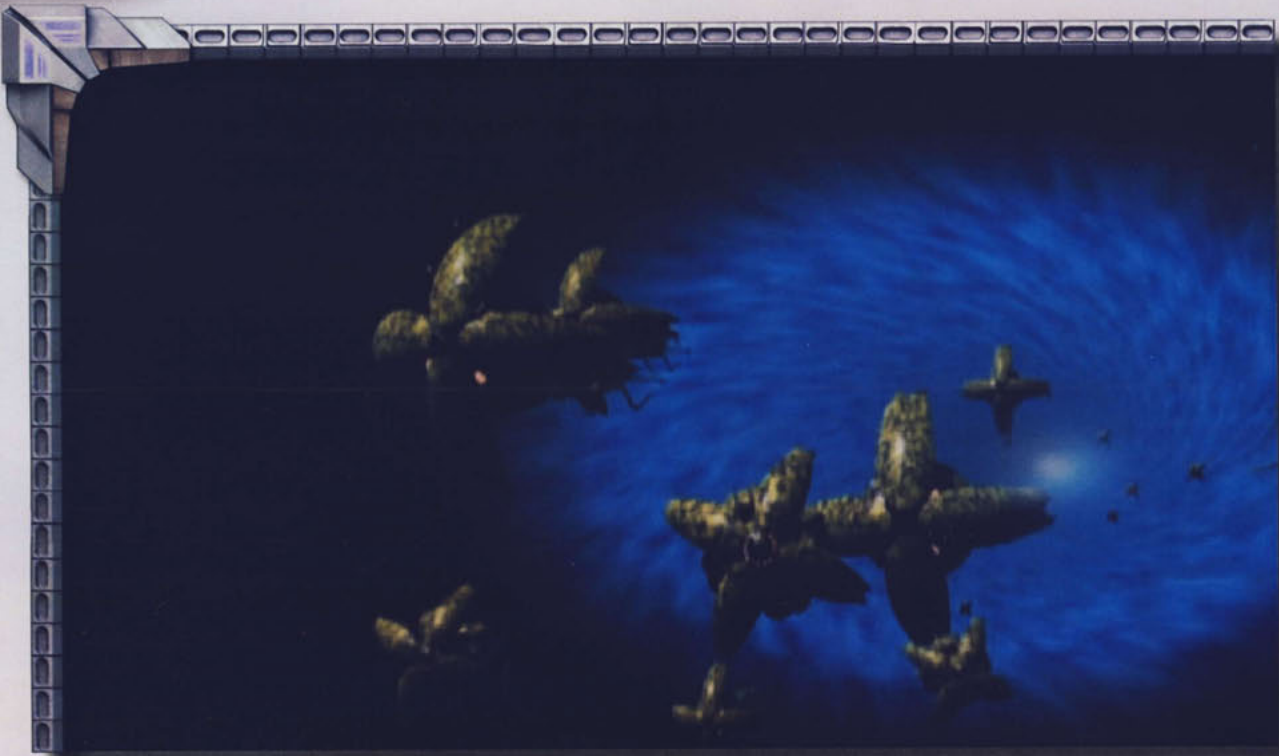
LIES, PRIDE AND ERROR

While Ivanova rushed to see if Dr. Trent had anything to say about the false orders, Delenn and Sheridan both decided to see how Lyta was reacting to the situation. With how she had been reacting up to that point with the mere presence of the thing, they rightly believed that she would be affected severely by the gate's powering up. When they arrived at her quarters Lyta would not answer and Sheridan had to use his security access to open the door.

Once inside they were shocked by the room's disarray and the words scribbled all over *everything* inside. Before they could process what they were seeing, Lyta walked out of the shadows with her eyes ablaze with energy. This was not the first time Delenn and Sheridan had seen Lyta's Vorlon augmentation at work and when a multi-tonal voice issued from her they knew it was not wholly Lyta that was speaking.

Even as the object outside was reaching full power and unfolding into its gate form, Lyta sadly explained what they had discovered. The gate's arrival had jarred loose some old memories and she was having a hard time putting the pieces together but Lyta now remembered it all. She called the artefact the 'Vorlons' greatest mistake' and said that the danger it represented had been compounded by the younger races uncovering it. She poetically called it 'the error of pride.'

Lyta continued to explain. She told of the Age of Ancients, when the Vorlons were at the height of their manipulations of the galaxy. The Vorlons had brought their brand of order and discipline to thousands of worlds and billions of people to seed them for the eventual rising of the Shadows and in doing so became like gods in the eyes of those beings. As a result, the Vorlons began to think of themselves as gods and they turned away from their fellow First Ones in search of Heaven itself. They felt that just as they had transcended flesh they had transcended this universe and they wanted to aspire to a higher plane of existence. As gods, it was only natural.



For thousands of years (nothing to the First Ones) the Vorlons secretly focussed their efforts toward building a doorway to another plane. They believed that if they could build a gate to the beginning of life itself they could sit atop the wellspring of souls as true gods of all things and that no one could question their divinity. The gate was built and it was not until it was opened that they remembered one minor fact. A door can swing both ways.

When they opened the gate to this other plane, what Dr. Trent called 'Thirdspace,' they never expected anything to come *out*. Although they never had a chance to form a dialog with the newcomers before their ships began to attack, the Vorlons called them 'the Harbingers' and they were more powerful than anything the Vorlons had faced. Thirdspace was supposed to be Heaven, so the Harbingers should have been its angels. Instead they came without demands or words of warning; they simply came with an unequalled hunger to destroy.

The Vorlons found that even they were not immune to the Harbingers' seductive telepathic call and many joined them. Other First Ones did as well and the Harbinger Cult stood in the way of any attempts to destroy the gate.

Only with the help of other First Ones that had not been affected by Harbinger influence did the Vorlons manage to disable the gate as best they could. Before they could fully destroy it, the remnants of

the Harbinger Cult – mostly made up of rogue Vorlons and members of the Hand – sacrificed themselves to hurl it into hyperspace. The rest of the Cult was destroyed and although the Vorlons would search for it for eons it never reappeared until Ivanova and Delta squadron found it.

Lyta knew that the Harbingers cared only to exterminate all life not their own, even devouring their loyal subjects when they had served their purposes. The Harbingers had scoured their own universe of thousands peoples before the Vorlons showed them the way to a new universe, which was pulled out of their grasp just as they tried to reach it. The Harbingers' devotion and dark desire ensured they would never give up until they reached it again.

The Harbingers, although able to influence the galaxy through their telepathic probes at weak points between the universes (see page 89), could not cross between without a gate being open. If the gate could be destroyed, the Harbingers could be stopped before they came through. If not, the galaxy would be doomed.

Sheridan asked Lyta how something built by the First Ones a million years ago could be stopped and his heart sank with her answer. Lyta, knowing that Sheridan had been touched by Lorien himself and could handle the transference, allowed part of her Vorlon knowledge to go to him. In just seconds of a brilliant connection of light, Sheridan knew how the gate worked and how it was designed.



Deleenn and Sheridan left Lyta to her Vorlon musings. They were both aware of what they had to do in order to have a chance to stop the gate before the Harbingers fully arrived. Sheridan had to prepare for the hardest space walk of his life and Deleenn needed to muster as much firepower outside the station as she could in just an hour's time.

As Lyta passed out from the stress of having her Vorlon augmentations active for so long, Ivanova reached the IPX lab. She was immediately aware of the smell of burnt flesh and she quickly drew her PPG. She hoped the rioters had not gotten into the room. Much of the violence had been hand to hand or with improvised weaponry and any arms escalation would give security a reason to use reciprocal force to put them down.

With a quick scan of the room Susan found Dr. Morishi's body lying over a control console and knew right away that he was already dead. There was a large PPG burn at the centre of his back and his skin had already gone cold. Shouting for Dr. Trent in case she was hurt too, Susan was startled when Trent came out from behind a console. Trent was unharmed physically but her eyes looked glassy and strange. Susan assumed Trent was in shock and asked what had happened.

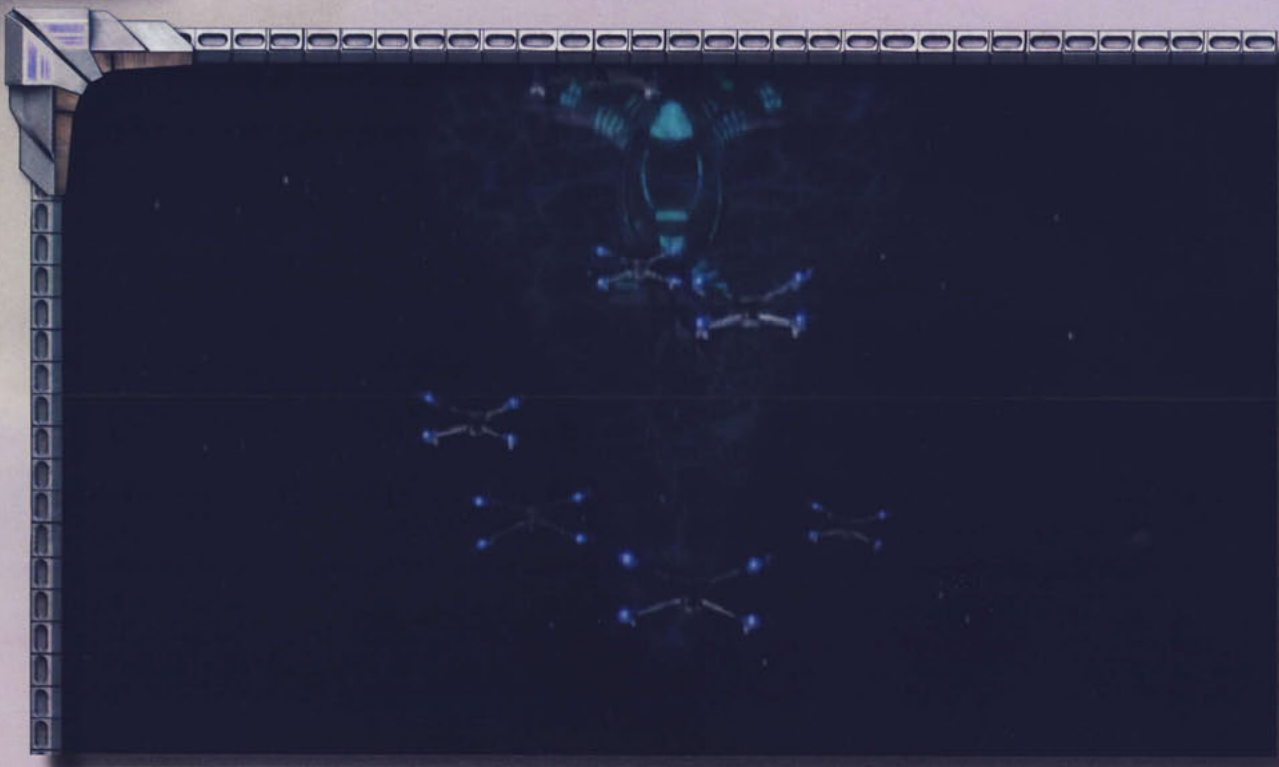
Trent falsely said that Morishi had seen the Starfuries going after the artefact and planned to interfere in some way. She claimed that the device must have taken control of him

like it had the others, because he suddenly came at her when she argued against meddling in station affairs. She said that he had come at her in his mad rage to protect the artefact and that she had been forced to shoot him.

Our mistake. One of many, so many.

Lyta says those cryptic words before she passes out after telling Sheridan and Deleenn the secret behind the Thirdspace gate, leaving a great deal to the imagination as to what she is thinking about. Although her thoughts are never fully spelled out for the viewers, we have dedicated a section of this book to the follies of the Ancients.

See the section on the First Ones' influences on the galaxy starting on page 48 for more details.



In the hurried state she was in, Susan believed the story and added it to her long mental list of unexpected violent acts. Getting back to the real reason she had come, Susan asked Trent if she knew anything that could help stop the artefact. Trent seemed more interested in the fact that the captain did not have any ideas of his own and claimed that she could not help if she did not know what the captain wanted to do with the gate.

Interrupted by a call from Sheridan over the link, Susan finally registered the fact that Morishi had been shot in the *back* and instantly knew what had happened. Trent was under the influence of the device and had shot Morishi before he could try to stop it. After a brief exchange of Susan's military combat training and the blind determination of the Harbinger's influence on Trent, the doctor was rendered unconscious and an arrest team was on its way.

THE HARBINGERS ARRIVE

Not long after the gate opened and activated the dimensional door to Thirdspace did a quartet of the Harbingers' automated scout vessels (see the entry for Cherubim on page 58) emerge to see what awaited them. Scanning the area to find no Vorlons, Travellers or Mindriders waiting for them, the vessels sent a signal into the vortex to summon the

next stage of the invasion. Signal sent, the scout ships were free to attack the Starfuries that were still firing at the gate's shield.

Lyta's comments about the Harbingers were right. Those few scouts were more than enough to take on the Starfuries. They were shielded like the gate itself, manoeuvrable and half the size of the Whitestars with just as much firepower. The weapon systems of the station itself had been drained by the gate's energy siphon; not even the defence network was functional. Although Delta Squadron fought hard and bravely, they were outmatched and had to pull back to the safety of the station until a bigger offensive could be orchestrated.

Delenn was successful in gathering that offensive force. Several Whitestars, Sharlin battle cruisers and all the fighters she could muster formed a defiant line against the gate and its inhabitants but had to wait for some prearranged signal from Sheridan to attack. They had weapons powered and nothing but space between them and their targets but they needed to wait to engage if the plan was going to work.

While a huge battle was waiting to happen outside the station, the inside was being torn apart by smaller ones. Like swarms of insects clashing with one another security fought with the Harbinger Cult, who fought with those station-goers and personnel caught in the middle. Fires were started all over the station,

The Gates of Heaven

Once the gate mechanism is fully powered, it is no longer simply an artefact made of carbon-based slabs hundreds of feet thick. It is turned on, becoming more akin to a space station or satellite in nature.

This device (and the others like it) is all but impervious to outside damage but we have included the actual game statistics for the Thirdspace Gate in case Games Masters want to have their characters be part of this event or any like it.

Gate Artefact

Colossal Construction

Defence Value: -8 (-16 size, - 2 Handling); **Armour:** 40; **Handling:** - 2; **Sensors:** N/A; **Stealth:** 0; **Stress:** 0; **Features:** Dimensional Gate¹, Dormant Energy Siphon, Defence Shield², Energy Re-doubler³

Crew: Harbinger Automaton (+10 BAB, +18 Training); Fully Autonomous (Zero Crew, but is home to 1d6 Harbingers after activation)

Structural Spaces: 1,500 (Control 200, Crew 100, Dimensional Drive 500, Power Replication System 350, Energy Relay System 50, Energy Siphons 100, Defence Shielding 200)

Fore Arc Weapons

⑤ Energy Siphon Focuser (Close, Offence Special⁴, 25 weapon spaces)

Port Arc Weapons

⑤ Energy Siphon Focuser (Close, Offence Special⁴, 25 weapon spaces)

Starboard Arc Weapons

⑤ Energy Siphon Focuser (Close, Offence Special⁴, 25 weapon spaces)

Turret Arc Weapons

⑤ Energy Siphon Focuser (Close, Offence Special⁴, 25 weapon spaces)

Craft (Special)¹: Dimensional Gate can allow up to 20 Medium-sized vessels, eight Large-sized vessels, two Gargantuan-sized vessels or one Colossal-sized vessel through every 2d6 combat rounds.

² The Defence Shield of the Gate cuts the Offence value of all attacks that strike it by 90% before it absorbs it. Additionally, it can absorb up to 100 points (after reduction) before it begins to weaken. For every 100 points of damage beyond the first cuts the shield's presence from one Arc. This starts with the Aft Arc, then Port Arc, Starboard Arc and finally Fore Arc – but only after the shield has absorbed a staggering total of 500 points of damage AFTER the shield's reduction!

³ The details of this device are found on page 58 of this sourcebook.

⁴ Nothing targeted in combat by an Energy Siphon Focuser can use weapon systems or special orders for 2d3 rounds.

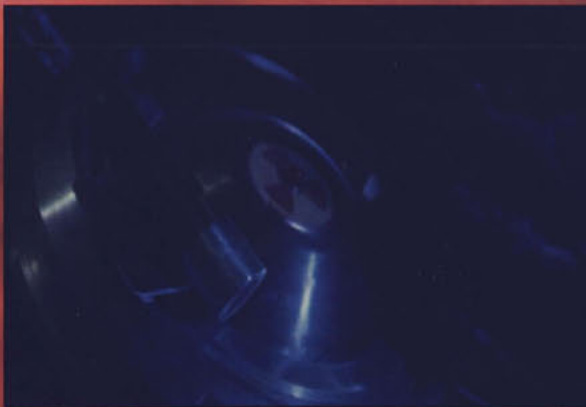
Tactical Nuclear Munitions

The equivalent of a Gaim-built fusion bomb, a Centauri ion cannon or a Dilgar neutron bomb, the Human-made nuclear warhead is a powerful weapon of mass destruction rarely used due to its unforgiving nature. Typically packing two cores into a single detonator with dual-computerised triggers and failsafe codes, nuclear warheads are capable of ripping a space station in two or atomising several ships.

After being armed using a standard EarthForce missile system or by hand (Technical (electronics) DC 15 with the proper codes, DC 30 without), the weapon will detonate after a set amount of time. That time could be a few seconds if the device is shot as a missile, or several hours if it is used as a placed weapon.

Regardless as to how the weapon is detonated, anything caught within the blast should suffer a hit from the following weapon profile:

Tactical Nuclear Weapon Blast
(Close Range, Offence 250, Ignores Armour)



furniture was broken and turned into makeshift barricades and weapons and no one was safe. Throngs of Cultists roamed the corridors and anyone foolish enough to stand in their paths were set upon like a pack of predators upon a game animal.

With the gate fully powered and the Harbingers amassing to exit the doorway, it looked as though the galaxy was truly doomed. If the enemy was nearly too much for the First Ones to defeat, what chance did a fleet of Ranger and Minbari warships have?

INGENUITY AND RISK

Based on the information the Vorlon portion of Lyta had given him about the design of the gate, Sheridan knew that a directed effort toward its front shields would force a short lapse in the rear shielding long enough for a small craft to get inside the controlling mechanisms.

A ship or shuttle would not likely manage to get through what was going to be a tight and deadly battle, especially if most ships' guns were targeting

the shields and not enemy vessels. A single space suit could make it and Sheridan knew that his closeness with the Vorlons and Lorien would keep him safe from the Harbingers' telepathic probes until he could get inside and deliver his payload.

Using the rarely called for 'Abraxas Protocol,' Sheridan acquired a tactical nuclear warhead from one of Babylon 5's secret supplies. He could not risk using a missile or bomb; the warhead would have to be placed and set off by hand. Detonation codes and warhead case in hand, Sheridan began to prepare himself for the most dangerous space-walk he had ever taken, perhaps the most dangerous *anyone* had ever taken before.

Although the internal layering of the space suit would keep him insulated from the cold of space and the massive levels of radiation from the concentrated weapons fire, a single miscalculated shot or trajectory would surely incinerate him to atoms. Even worse, considering he would be so close to the battling fleets with an active nuclear device there was always the risk of accidental detonation from scanner wavelengths or the energy

The Door Is Opened

siphons of the Gate. A premature explosion in the centre of the battle would kill thousands and would not likely pierce the shield.

The plan had only one chance to work and the fate of the entire universe was hanging in the balance. Sheridan would have to cross a raging starship battle in a simple space suit to gain access to a device older than any existing civilisation at the time, set a twin-core nuclear warhead for timed detonation and then manage to escape before it went off.

He would have to do it, because no one else could.

THE ASSAULT BEGINS

When Sheridan signalled Ivanova and Delenn that he was ready, they began to assault the flights of Harbinger Cherubim that were flooding out of the gate. Ordered to fire as tightly as possible, firing whenever they could against the Gate itself, the assault fleet met the Harbingers halfway. Lancets and pulses of otherworldly energy tore into them from the smaller Ancient ships, but Ivanova and Delenn remained stalwart and brought their weapons to bear upon the enemy.

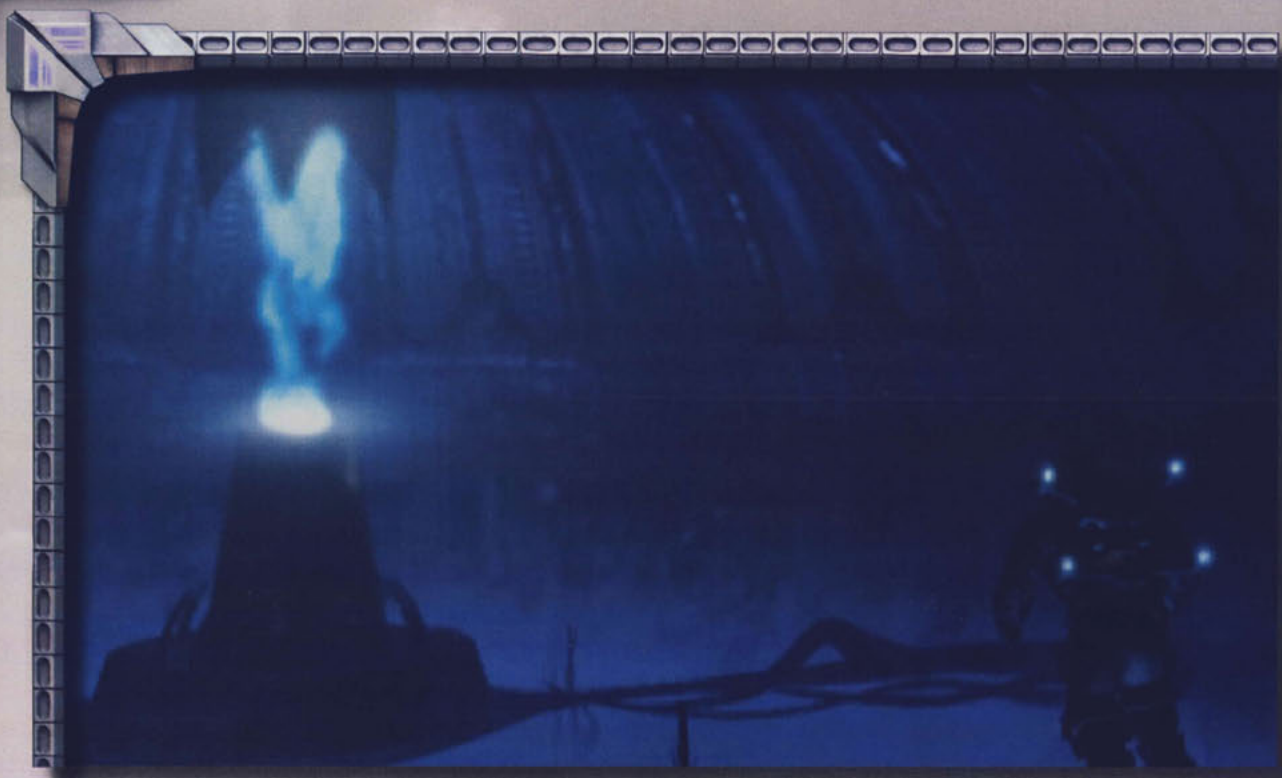
The Harbinger ships had similar shields to the Gate itself and most weaponry glanced off them harmlessly;

only concentrated firepower could push past them and cause damage to the automated vessels. Unlike normal battle tactics that involve a crew to manoeuvre and dodge enemy fire, the Harbingers simply absorbed the barrage of firepower while they lined up for the next shot. They were superior vessels and they fought like it, uncaring of damage until it was too late anyway and making sure that any losses they suffered would be turned back upon Delenn and Ivanova's fleet threefold. The battle was becoming far too costly but Ivanova and Delenn were making headway on the shield, which is all they really could hope to do.

While the ships blazed away at one another outside, things came to a head inside as well. The Harbinger Cult had more or less amassed in the docking lobby area, having pushed security from all over to that area. Even though people like Stephen Franklin attempted to help the wounded, the Cultists made it more and more difficult for anyone to do anything other than try not to get beaten or worse. It was as if the Cult was trying to get everyone who had not succumbed to the Harbingers' call into one area – most likely to be spaced by a willing sacrifice or devoured when the Harbingers boarded the station.

It was pandemonium. Friends fought friends, lovers tried to kill each other and general chaos ruled the station's halls and common areas. Even some of those normally opposed to violence found solace in the Harbingers' promises





and took up arms. Even Vir, who had seemed passive at first, gave in to the primal storm around him and tried to strangle Zack when he realised Zack was not on the side of the Harbingers. Something had to be done about the fighting, because the Cult was growing rapidly while the defenders of the station were only growing more tired with every hallway skirmish or café riot they quelled.

Things did not look any better outside. The Harbinger ships were slowly being whittled down to a manageable number but at great costs to the fleet. These Cherubim, the smallest of the enemy's vessels, were a match for four of the fleet's and it was safe to assume that larger ships were on their way. Huge shapes loomed at the rearmost end of the dimensional gate, ready to emerge and lay waste to anything that could possibly stand in their way.

With pilots dying all around her and many more asking to withdraw, Ivanova stayed true to the plan and kept fighting. She knew that Sheridan was out there somewhere, a speck amidst the torrent of particle weapons and laser beams and that he needed to get inside the device. Her orders remained: defend their own ships and keep firing at the energy shield.

BEYOND THE BLACK DOOR

Once in position Sheridan gave Ivanova the signal and the fleet poured fire into the artefact's shield. One Sharlin, the *Derifal*, ignored three Cherubim to focus all of its firepower onto the shield and sacrificed itself in the process. Several other ships also took massive damage as they set their attention on the artefact, leaving them open to brutal counterattack. Great losses notwithstanding, the manoeuvre worked and the energy defence shield was forced to pull away from the rear of the artefact for a moment to compensate. During that moment, Sheridan fired his navigational pack and entered the gate.

Once inside the artefact, Sheridan marvelled at the sheer expanse of its inner chamber. Huge twisted pillars of black, violet and gray surrounded him and ambient teal light shone from energy storage systems and strange alien technology all around. Jagged spires rose up from a seemingly bottomless chasm below and from the impossibly high ceilings above, some meeting in the centre like titanic stone snakes in a sick mating coil. It was an oddly beautiful place and it terrified him to the core.

The Door Is Opened

At the centre of the chamber was the heart of the gate, just as the Vorlon designs in his mind had lain out. A landing suspended by thin walkways of coiled stone tendrils held the core of the device. A conical structure rose up from the landing to match a jagged power emitter on the ceiling, the two structures together forming something larger than some skyscrapers back on Earth. A double helix of incandescent energy swirled openly in the space between them, doubling and redoubling the power needed to hold the dimensional portal open. Seeing such a creation, knowing it was over a million years old and that it had been built by Vorlon hands made Sheridan take a gasping breath – he was going to have to destroy it.

He quickly shook off his awe, landed on the platform and readied the nuclear device. While he did so a dark and

looming shape floated up out of the bottomless chasm nearby, watching hungrily and trying in vain to control Sheridan's mind. Arming a nuclear detonator is not hard but it took longer than Sheridan wanted, especially as he began to feel the ancient presence behind him. Seeing several more waves of Cherubim and the larger Seraphim vessels nearing the dimensional gateway, Sheridan hurried in his task, knowing that if just one of those capital ships reached realspace it would be the end of Babylon 5 and the fleet protecting it.

The weapon armed, Sheridan had five minutes to flee the artefact. No longer as focussed on his task, he realised that he was not alone and turned to look at the hulking beast that had been stalking him since his arrival. Like something from an H.P. Lovecraft story, the Harbinger was

Pressure Suit Navigation

The common pressure suit used by most travellers and space stations is made by Transpace Incorporated, costs 950 credits on the open market and can be found in the *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game Second Edition Core Rulebook* (page 140). The type used by Sheridan in *Thirdspace* is actually a slightly modified 'Nav Suit' (designed by the same company) for use in starship repairs and external space station maintenance. It has a programmable navigational computer and heavy duty flight pack.

The wearer of the Nav Pressure Suit controls it based on his skill score or a default skill score of + 5 if the computer is programmed to fly the suit automatically. It has a DR of two, a Speed Reduction of – 10 ft. when the suit's magnetic soles are engaged and an ACP of – 2. It has only a six hour supply of air in it to make room for the fuel tanks on the flight pack, which is not much of an issue for maintenance crews and repair specialists. When engaged, the flight pack raises the wearer's Speed to 90 feet but can only do so for up to twelve rounds of prolonged flight before needing to recharge.

A new Nav Pressure Suit costs 1,350 credits from Transpace Incorporated.



an armoured shell with many eyes atop a ring of tentacles and numerous folds of flesh that hid fanged maws. It was large, ominous and desired nothing more than to suck the flesh from Sheridan's bones.

Setting the navigational pack on its return course using computerised commands that might move faster than his fear-addled reflexes could, Sheridan leapt away from the creature just as one of its thorny tentacles lashed by him. Even with the artefact's energy siphons honing in on the suit's simple flight system, Sheridan was well on his way to escape. A second Harbinger materialised from a hollow in the wall, gnashing its teeth and screeching its horrible language at him but he switched back to manual control and dodged the beast. He was just a few dozen feet from the exit port when one of the Harbingers used some kind of telepathic ability to create matter and hurl a stone spear of some kind into the exit, blocking Sheridan's path.

Knowing he did not have much time, Sheridan dove into the nearest hole in the wall, trying desperately to remember the artefact's design schematics in his head. The Harbingers flew in after him, their stretching tentacles never farther than a few feet behind him. The tunnel behind the doorway was twisted and tight but he managed to clear it before the Harbingers could reach him – and as they could not emerge fully into the void of space, he was safe from them.

He was not *completely* safe, however. There were a few hundred feet between the surface of the artefact and the beginning of the energy shield that he had to cross before the nuclear device detonated but he could not go too fast or he would smash into the shield and likely be atomised by it. Calling to the fleet to pull back and get away from the artefact, Sheridan tried to time his flight.

SLAMMING THE DOORWAY

From the front of the artefact things looked very grim. The first of the massive Seraphim-class vessels was breaking through the ellipse of the portal and the smaller Cherubim and Nephilim were still tearing holes in the fleet. Delenn could not see anything but the burning wrecks of friendly ships from her position on the holo-chamber of the lead Sharlin and there was no sign of Sheridan. Ivanova's White Star had taken the brunt of an exploding Cherubim and was bleeding atmosphere from several hull breaches but she continued to focus the fleet's efforts at the artefact.

Then suddenly the call came in from Sheridan telling Ivanova to move everyone away from the gate, which meant that he had been successful in planting the bomb. Ivanova relayed the order and all ships pulled back or away as quickly as they could, taking several stray shots as they did so.

The resulting detonation from within the artefact tore the entire thing to shreds in an instant. The chain reaction from the disruption of the gate's power source sent a tidal wave of unchecked energy through the artefact's surface, causing it to be torn to pieces and scattered by the force of the explosion. Sheridan, shielded from the radiation by the suit, was hurled away from the explosion and not caught by its blast. He was thankfully not smashed against the energy shield either, which failed as soon as the bomb detonated.

The fleet watched as the Harbingers' capital ship, still only halfway out of the portal, was ripped apart by the exploding gate. The expanding ball of fiery destruction consumed numerous Cherubim as well and unfortunately took a few fighters and a Whitestar as well. The vast majority of the fleet had received the order to withdraw fast enough to get safely away and they shielded their eyes from the atomic fireball that expanded nearly two miles in every direction.

When the glare vanished nothing seemingly remained of the invading force and only fragments remained of the artefact itself. The fleet had suffered terrible losses and some Cherubim or even Nephilim might have escaped the blast but the gate had been destroyed and the Harbingers were no longer pushing into the universe. Sheridan and his fleet had succeeded where the Vorlons themselves had failed over two million years before.

Inside the station the effects of the gate's destruction were immediately felt. Unlike the Harbinger Cult from the Age of Ancients, which had to be slowly pulled away from the gate's influence, the riotous throngs of Cultists on the station were instantly snapped out of their servitude when the artefact came apart outside. Confusion settled in at first as adrenaline levels equalled out and soon several thousand former Cultists began to feel the weight of the wounds they had until recently been ignoring. Some fights in Downbelow supposedly carried on for a few more minutes from old rivalries and the like but the station-goers were more or less back to normal.

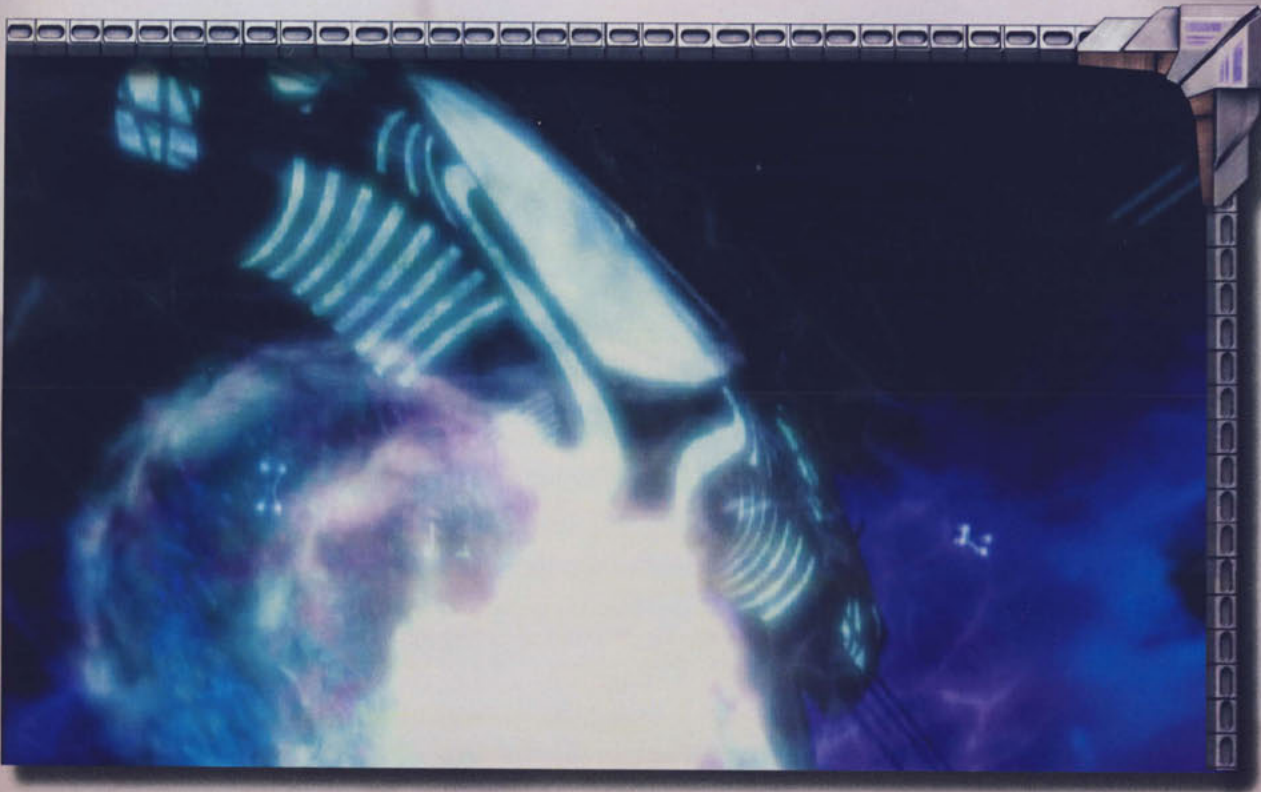
The gate was destroyed and the Harbingers were thwarted from bringing extinction to the galaxy. All that was left was to pick up the pieces, treat the wounded and mourn the dead.

The Door Is Opened

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THE AFTERMATH OF REACHING THIRDSPACE

In the days and weeks following what would be called the 'Thirdspace Event,' Babylon 5 (with some help from IPX) repaired the damage done to the station. Ships needed to be rebuilt or repaired and entire levels of the station required intensive cleaning and maintenance before they would even be habitable again. Some areas were still considered in lockdown due to dangerous power leaks and coolant pooling from external damages but the rest of Babylon 5 was beginning to pull together.

Doctor Trent, after the Harbingers' influence on her had been broken, spent three straight days in her cell doing nothing but sobbing. Whether she was sorrowful for her actions, getting caught or the destruction of the artefact was never learned (see *This is Pandora's Box* for details on what happened to Dr. Trent) but she arranged for IPX to help financially as well as physically with the station's repairs. She also gave a data file on the artefact and IPX's findings to Sheridan after she was released from the brig.

The file did not tell of everything IPX had discovered but it detailed much of what they knew – merely not to the extent that they knew it.

Babylon 5's dealings with IPX would last only for a few short weeks before the situation with President Clark would become too hostile for the company to ignore and they backed away from Babylon 5 for 'public relations reasons.' IPX was a powerful megacorp but they knew when things had gotten too hot between the station and the Earth Alliance for them to meddle any longer. It was best for them to cut all ties, unofficial or otherwise, while the dust settled.

Many would forget the terrible precipice that Babylon 5 lingered over in those dark days. The Thirdspace Event would remain a powerful reminder to the galaxy that even though the First Ones had gone they had not gone quietly and many of their mistakes still lingered as a legacy to the inheritors of the Third Age.

Station Repairs

It took twenty days to fully repair the Babylon 5 station, even with IPX's help. During that time however, the station was a prime source of employment and work for the most common of station-goers. Homeless people from Downbelow were given menial tasks and physical labour, experts were contracted at higher rates to give the station priority and supply merchants could not keep their stores stocked.

In the three weeks immediately following the Thirdspace event, all Profession skill rolls undertaken for the station's repairs and maintenance are made at a +5 bonus. Additionally, any character without an applicable Profession skill can make an untrained Profession skill check using his Strength bonus as a modifier instead of the normal ability to signify his serving as a labourer.



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THE ERRORS OF PRIDE

'Our failing. And now your failing. The error is compounded.'

- Lyta Alexander; through Vorlon programming

The activation and summary destruction of the Thirdspace Gate in 2261 brought what the Vorlons considered to be their greatest mistake into the forefront of the younger races' existence. They were able to deal with them well enough but only with the help of the Vorlon programming left behind in Lyta. Without the designs given to Sheridan by Lyta's augmentations, he would never have known of the gate's inner chamber or of the energy shield's thresholds. Without that information, would the galaxy have fallen to the Harbingers? Would the young races have come together to defeat them after all? No one can truthfully answer those questions, even if they wanted to.

The millions of years before the rise of the current age collectively called the Age of Ancients by theoretical historians and archaeologists. It was during this time that the First Ones were shaped the galaxy, fighting amongst themselves and bending (or breaking!) the laws of physics as any young race knows them. It was a dangerous time but it was also a time of wonder.

This chapter looks at what sorts of interesting things the First Ones actually left behind for the younger races to eventually seek out, stumble upon or get crushed by. These things were not all left in error and this chapter contains several oddities and unique instances that Games Masters are free to include in their own campaigns – if they dare.

THE OTHER THIRDSPEACE GATES - AN UNHOLY TRINITY

The gate found between Sigma 957 and the Epsilon system, the one that Sheridan managed to destroy, was thought to be the only gate of its kind. Though the fact was only implied by the cryptic words of Lyta Alexander's Vorlon programming, there were actually *two* other Thirdspace gates created by the Vorlons during the Age of Ancients.

Two million years before the first gate surfaced at Babylon 5, the Vorlons tried to breach the walls of Heaven and touch the face of god. In their hubris they believed they could become true gods and created a trio of inter-dimensional gateways that they planned to use to do so. The Travellers,

elder First Ones who had mastered dimensional travel an eon before, warned the Vorlons that they might not be ready for their own ambitions. In their pride, the Vorlons thought the Travellers were just trying to remain the only inter-dimensional beings. Fuelled by desire and foolish egotism they continued the project and eventually amassed at one of the gates, ready to open it and pass through to godhood.

When the door was opened, the Harbingers and their unbelievable telepathic power burst through into this universe. No less than half of the Vorlons present immediately became enthralled by the Harbingers, followed shortly by the Hand and their mortal minions. The Vorlons' corner of the galaxy was thrown into chaos. Vorlon fought against Vorlon, Hand against Hand and entire worlds were set ablaze by the Harbingers.

The Vorlon homeworld was the first to fall to the telepathic swarm of Harbinger ships, the mythic force of an elder race that defied imagination crushing or converting their foes wherever they went. Their floating, tentacled bodies darkly slithered through the cosmos in search of life to extinguish. The Hand grew very strong during this period, serving as the Harbingers' primary army of First Ones and mortals.

Something had to be done before the Harbinger Cult managed to open all three gates and even those First Ones who were not directly involved in the war against the Harbingers (except the Travellers, who had warned the Vorlons) came together against them. The threat implied by the Harbingers' ability to control the minds of First Ones was enough to mobilise a massive force against them – including even the Shadows.

The enormous fleet laid siege to the Harbinger ships surrounding the gate, with the Vorlons eventually sneaking in behind their creation to destroy the gate's power supply. Before the gate could be destroyed however, the Harbinger Cultists and Hand members still loyal to the telepathic promises of the remaining Harbingers stole the gate and took it with them into hyperspace.

In the following few weeks, as the First Ones scoured the galaxy for the remaining Harbingers and their ships, the Cultists sought to protect the other two gates from destruction by hiding them as well. Even though this would surely separate them from their masters' influence, it was the only choice they had to preserve the chance that the Harbingers would one day return.

Once all three gates were lost in hyperspace, the First One armada set to cleansing the galaxy of the Harbingers' presence. The Hand recovered the quickest from the Harbingers' influence, learning much about subtle mastery from being mastered and severing the ties to the Cultists in

bloody coups all over Hand territory. The other First Ones that were affected by the Harbingers' telepathic presence fell upon their own with single-minded focus, either undoing the mental links or destroying the rebels outright. During this period of investigation and elimination the Mindriders were pivotal in unravelling the psychic bonds left behind by the Harbingers, strengthening their own mastery of telepathy in the process.

Once the last known remnants of the Harbinger Cult were eliminated and the gates were thoroughly lost in the folds of hyperspace, the First Ones turned away from their brief alliance. They left the Vorlons to the dirty work of seeking out the gates, which that race did with great fervour for several millennia to no avail. Their efforts took priority over all things until the next awakening of the Shadows during the Kirishiac War, when old grudges outweighed the Vorlons' responsibilities and overtook their attention.

It was due to their renewed interest in the upbringing and manipulation of the younger races that the Vorlons wrote the Thirdspace gates off as lost, setting aside the search for them as a fool's errand. Because of their choice to focus on meddling in the evolution of the galaxy rather than cleaning up their own mistakes, all three gates would eventually resurface to wreak havoc again.

The 2261 Thirdspace Event

In the single event that would give Thirdspace its name and reveal the true nature of the Harbingers to a select few in the galaxy, the original dimensional gate activated by the Vorlons gate was found and destroyed in 2261. The full details as to what happened concerning the gate, its opening and its destruction are detailed in the previous chapter of this sourcebook.

2401: A Great Sacrifice

When a second Thirdspace gate was stumbled upon by the Minbari at the dawn of the 25th Century, it was dragged into a neutral corner of space to be studied. The beginning signs of the Harbingers' attentions started to show and strange behaviours and eerily power-drained ships cropped up with great frequency among the Minbari. The Minbari accessed their historic records and discovered what Sheridan had done to stop the beasts from the other side from emerging.

A radical group of Minbari Warriors looking to emulate the heroic battle of Sheridan and his Anla'Shok gathered around the Thirdspace gate and waited for it to open and give them a worthy battle. Calling themselves the 'Swords of Sheridan,' these foolish Minbari almost immediately began to succumb to the dark promises of the Harbingers. They turned on one another

without pause and for the first time in over a century Minbari slew Minbari and they did so in large numbers. In their raging battles they continually drew too near to the device and fed the power supplies of their vessels to it, damning them to painful deaths without life support while bringing the gate one step closer to activation.

Seeking the advice of the venerable Delenn, who had been at the 2261 Thirdspace Event, the Grey Council came to the conclusion that drastic action must be taken to stop the gate from opening. Delenn implored them to make sure the gate was destroyed and warned them that the actions of the Swords of Sheridan were just the beginning of the problems it would bring into their galaxy. Heeding her words, the Council deployed a Sharkosaaan dreadnought crewed solely by high-powered Minbari telepaths (to help block the Harbingers' signals), watched from afar and prayed to their dead heroes as the massive warship approached the gate's position.

The gate had been open for only a few minutes by the time the *Lennier'fi* arrived. Cherubim and Nephilim cruisers had already joined the surviving cultist Minbari ships and were set up to defend the gate while the deadly Seraphim drew closer to the dimensional doorway. The *Lennier'fi* soared forward like a juggernaut of crystal and shielding, its numerous guns carving its brethren ships to pieces alongside Harbinger ships that got in its way. Telepaths inside the warship wailed at the agony of Harbinger probes trying to dissuade them from their orders but the course was plotted and nothing would sway it.

Ignoring the great gouts of flame it was spewing from dozens of enemy weapon strikes, the dreadnought barrelled into the energy shield at full thrust and weapons fire. The shield buckled just long enough for the ship to slip halfway inside the dimensional gate – and ram the first Seraphim headlong. The resulting dual-vessel explosion was multiplied by the energies of the doorway itself and everything within a thousand miles was instantly disintegrated by the otherworldly implosion.

The Grey Council sacrificed their largest and most holy of warships, not to mention the tens of thousands of Minbari serving on the vessels around the gate, to stop the Harbingers from passing through the gate. Delenn watched as the vessel named for her long lost aide sacrificed itself for the safety of the universe, an ironic mirror of what had happened to Lennier himself over a century before.

5325: The Rise of Fei Castro

In the chaos surrounding the fall and reconstruction of the Third Interstellar Alliance, a dark voice echoed from millions of years in the past and gathered a massive power base on Mars. A charismatic and seductively intelligent man going by the name of Fei Castro claimed to have contact with Elder Gods

from beyond, a force of unspeakable power called the Harbingers. In a time where the common man was being swept aside by aristocracy and the wealthy, it was easy for Castro to create an enormous following that he called the Harbinger Cult.

Gaining Cultists from the spacefaring programs of his world, Castro mapped out exactly where his followers needed to go and what they had to do to activate a dormant jump gate outside the long-dead Markar system. He filled a small fleet of transports with his Cultists and led them to the jump gate, ordered his zealous technicians to activate it and took his fleet inside to find the last remaining Thirdspace gate.

Sacrificing dozens of unskilled Cultists to attach simple tethers to the gate, Castro towed the massive artefact into realspace and began to orchestrate one of the largest mass rituals ever to take place in the galaxy. Cultists willingly gave their lives to pilot Castro's ships, full of fusion cells scavenged from ISA vessels, next to the giant gate – giving all of their power to the device at Castro's behest. He told them the Harbingers would come and take them all, the living and the dead, back to the Black City where Heaven awaited.

The gate was activated and the Harbinger ships came into the galaxy with the same hunger for destruction they had shown millions of years before. Cherubim rendered the

cultist fleet to atoms in seconds, leaving only Castro's ship to greet the first of the Seraphim-class ships. The hulking capital vessels arrived and paused to listen to Castro's religious banter for as long as it took for them to charge their lightbringer arrays and burn him from existence with otherworldly energy.

After Castro's cult opened the Thirdspace gate, it took the combined masses of the entire galaxy a full nineteen years to eventually close and destroy the thing. Hundreds of worlds fell to the power of the Harbingers but the advanced technologies of the younger races gave them a fighting chance. Although it cost two entire species of alien lifeforms and a hundred billion other lives, the last Thirdspace War was the event that brought the galaxy back together, just as the last Shadow War had done over three thousand years earlier. Although peace never lasts forever, it was yet again born from suffering and war.

The Harbinger Cult and Thirdspace Rifts

Throughout the history of the galaxy, since the moment the Vorlons opened the first Thirdspace gate, there have been tales of horrible gods and the cults that worship the Harbingers. There have even been tales and myths of the Harbingers crossing over into this dimension because of the deals and rituals of those foolish enough to deify them.



For more on the Harbinger Cult and the effects the Harbingers have had on the galaxy outside of the arrival of the Thirdspace Gates, see the section beginning on page 62.

THE SOUL HUNTERS - THE MINDRIDERS' FALSE HOPES

Well over a million years before mankind rose up onto two legs, Lorien's people, the first amongst the First Ones, began to die one by one. Their children, the other First Ones, were sad to watch their elders vanish from the galaxy. Some mourned by trying to heal the ailments of those who remained; others looked for ways to honour them after they had passed on. Of all the ways that Lorien and his people were esteemed by the First Ones during their decline, it was the actions of the mysterious and powerful Mindriders that left the largest mark on the galaxy.

Acquiring the bodies of several of the Ancient ones that passed on, the Mindriders applied their telepathic sciences in the hope of restoring the fallen's mental energies – something that some beings have called 'souls.' The resulting biological storage bodies cloned from the Ancient ones' bodies were imperfect; the Mindriders could not replicate whatever it was that had created Lorien's people in the dawn of time. Although the flawed clones were sentient beings capable of sensing death a long time coming, they could not revive Lorien's brothers and sisters.

Unwanted because of their imperfection, the artificial race turned inward upon themselves and tried to fill the role they were created for in a different way. They devoted their entire existence to the preservation of the mental energies of those who were dying. The race knew they had been created to save the Ancients but it was beyond their scope of thought as to how they could do so. Although they would not manage to perfect the technology until long after the Exodus of the First Ones, the self-titled 'Soul Hunters' answered their calling by developing a way to remove the mental energy from a living being. This energy, or 'soul', would then be placed in a virtual realm where it could continue to exist forever. None of the being's knowledge or abilities would be lost; the Soul Hunters would hold these faculties until they were needed again.

The Soul Hunters are a composite and artificial race that do not reproduce by breeding at all but instead use the same kind of cloning technology the Mindriders originally used to create them. As happens when one makes a copy of a copy, the pure strain of Soul Hunter became muddled some over the generations. By the era of the Third Age very few of the original breed of Soul Hunters existed, leaving behind only the newer muted breed to carry on the work of preserving important souls.

Having lost their innate ability to preserve mental presences, the newer Soul Hunters devised a machine to do it for them. The machine could remove someone's mental energies and place them in an orb made of an unknown substance, in which they would live out eternity in a virtual paradise of the Soul Hunters' choosing.

The Soul Hunters performed according to a plan designed for them millions of years before the rise of mankind, without guidance and without restraint or limitation. They formed their own order of sorts to mirror the Shadow's Taratimude Techno-Mages, governing themselves and putting the preservation of important minds above the politics and foolishness of the races evolving around them. The Soul Hunters were a powerful force to be reckoned with if someone or something stood in the way of their work.

8000 B.C. – The Claiming of Ralga

One of the most horrific mistakes in the history of the galaxy took place on a distant world called Ralga, just inside the Rim of currently known space. Ralga was a very advanced world filled with a large population of wondrous minds that had existed alongside the First Ones during the most tumultuous times of their era. Around 8000 B.C., the Ralgans were as advanced as they could be in their current state of being and their planet was slowly spinning closer and closer to the Greater Void beyond the Rim. They knew that something had to be done.

At the same time that the Ralgans looked for a way to survive the expulsion of their planet from the galaxy, the Soul Hunters' leaders sensed the impending demise of millions of Ralgans. Knowing that the minds of such a wondrous race could not be left to die unpreserved, the Soul Hunters came to the planet in a massive armada of their strange ships. They surrounded the planet and prepared their 'soul collectors' to absorb the minds of the Ralgans at the point of their deaths. Over the course of time the Soul Hunters managed to do just what they had promised – they collected the souls of a billion Ralgans as their physical bodies died. The Soul Hunters did not care to know why their bodies were dying, merely that they were.

What the Soul Hunters failed to grasp was that the Ralgans' physical bodies were dying because they were transcending the flesh to become beings of energy – like the First Ones. It may have looked like death to the Soul Hunters but it was a magical moment of ascendance the Ralgans had earned to get away from their doomed planet. The Soul Hunters' collectors captured these free energies as if they were fleeting souls and confined them all to one ancient orb that was designed to look and feel just like Ralga.

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their will in a fake world they knew to be damned. It was ten thousand years before the Ralgan Orb resurfaced and during that time many of the mental presences in the orb went mad, setting the stage for another event in the far future – when the mad souls escaped on Babylon 5.

2268 – The Coming for Earth

After the Drakh released their deadly nanovirus into Earth's atmosphere, the Soul Hunters became aware that hundreds of thousands of Humans were soon going to die. This dire event brought a hundred Soul Hunter ships to Earth and many used their advanced technology to slip past the EarthForce blockade to preserve those who needed to be saved below. With the defence grid all but neutralised after the battle with the Drakh and most of the ships remaining damaged or thrown into chaos, this was an easy enough task for the Soul Hunters' tiny, shuttle-like ships to accomplish.

They 'saved' one thousand and seventy-three doctors, poets, singers and scientists before the EAS *Medusa* found several of their ships leaving the quarantine and turned its guns upon them – on orders from EarthGov. The Soul Hunter ships were very advanced and extremely difficult to destroy but the *Medusa* was one of the newer Omega-class variants using ISA technologies and managed to eliminate all five ships before they could escape.

Once the Soul Hunters knew they could not come and go unmolested any longer, they used what they had learned from dealing with Humans on Babylon 5 and chose not to return to Earth. In their minds, getting a collection orb filled with souls destroyed on their way back from saving them would do no good and was a situation that should be avoided. If the Humans would rather perish than live on, so be it.

LLIESTA IV - THE SAMPLING MACHINE OF THE TRIAD

During one of the last Shadow Wars to rampage across the galaxy during the Age of Ancients, the Vorlons unveiled their ability to manipulate the younger races to align against the Shadows. In response the Shadows took drastic action, choosing to punish those races that aligned with their enemy.

One way the Shadows sought to punish was through the use of biological warfare. Seeding the servants of their enemy with time-released nanoviruses would not only get their point across but if the species that was infected could manage to cure the plague it would teach the galaxy that conflict and catastrophe truly bring out the strength

Lliestan Sampling Drones

Although the *Excalibur* destroys them in 2267, the machine's sampling drones are encountered by countless other species' investigative teams. This means that Games Masters could use the planet with its automated sampling machines as a plot hook in their own games if they so chose.

The following profile should be used for the Sampling Drones on Llista IV.



Sampling Drone

Tiny Spacecraft

Defence Value: 24 (+4 size, +10 Handling); **Armour:** 10; **Handling:** +10, **Sensors:** +6; **Stealth:** 26; **Stress:** 12; **Features:** Atmospheric Capable, Gravitic Engine, Sample Storage, Targeting Computer (+4)

Crew: Automated (+6 BAB, +10 Training); One Pilot (remote controlled)

Structural Spaces: Nine (Cargo one, Control one, Engine six, Weapons one)

Fore Arc Weapons

- Precision Beam (Close, Offence 20, Beam 1d4, One weapon space)¹

¹ When used on a personnel-scale target, the beam can cause any of the following damage increments, ignoring DR of any kind: 5d10, 4d8, 3d6, 2d4, 1d3

of life. One of the planets struck down by the Shadows' viral attacks was a smallish Earth-like world called Llista IV. Even though the inhabitants of Llista IV did not know they had served as a Vorlon listening post during the Shadow War, they were targeted by the Shadows and infected with a horrible virus that began to tear them apart.

When that Shadow War concluded and the Vorlons left the Llistans to die, it was the Triad that stepped in and sought to help them. Seeking a way to maintain the balance between the casualties among younger races, as Lorien had instructed them, the Triad came to the Llistans in dreams and visions. They showed the doomed race how to cryogenically freeze their species within a great and powerful machine inside the planet itself. The Triad built the machine and all of its

saucer-like sampling drones and gave instructions for its use to the Llistans through dreams but did not tell them how best to utilise their new technology. It was up to the Llistans to make that choice.

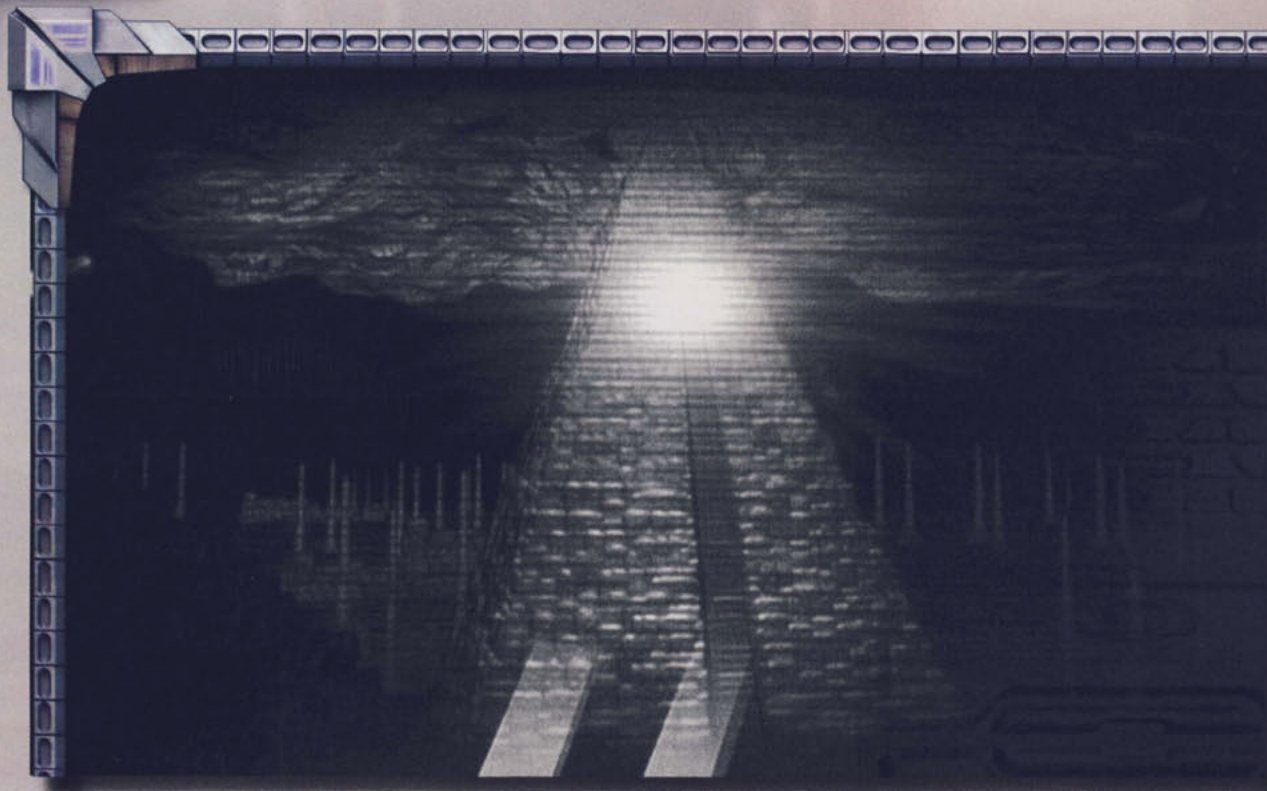
The Triad, a force for neutrality in all things, did not want to instruct the Llistans as to how to apply the science of the machine. If they wanted to find a cure for the plague they could use the saucers for extra-stellar travel and medical sampling of other races but if they chose instead to become a vengeful force bent against the Shadows the Triad would not stop them. What the Llistans actually chose to do was somewhere in between. They created an interesting automated system that revived a watchman every two years to operate the machine. The watchman's job was to stand vigilant with the machine to protect his species while making the planet as attractive as possible to outsiders.

Soul Hunter Racial Traits

This traits section can be used to create a strange and powerful Soul Hunter character and requires Games Master permission to use.

- ⑤ 2 Dexterity, +2 Constitution, -4 Charisma: Soul Hunters are rather slow and deliberate in all their activities. They generally fail in social interaction with other living beings.
- ⑤ All Soul Hunters are of Medium size.
- ⑤ Soul Hunters have a base speed of 30 feet.
- ⑤ Soul Hunters are exceptionally well informed due to their contact with preserved souls. They receive a bonus four skill points at every level (including 1st) in which they must spend on Knowledge skills.
- ⑤ Soul Hunters are artificial life forms and do not need to eat, drink or even breathe. They do not age and are immune to all known diseases and poisons. They do not heal lethal damage naturally either, however. Once every seven days they must 'recharge' by connecting themselves to their ships. This process takes seven hours to complete and heals all damage the Soul Hunter has suffered. The Soul Hunter remains aware during this time, but any interruption in the process requires it to start again.
- ⑤ Soul Hunters can sense the impending demise of flesh, so long as the mind associated to it has a Wisdom score of 13 or higher. This 'death sense' is not infallible and should require the Games Master to inform the character when something is about to die and from where the sense is coming.
- ⑤ Soul Hunters are all partially telepathic. They are all considered to be rated P6 but are limited to only using abilities associated to the Biokinetics Discipline. They are also immune to any telepathic ability targeting them by a telepath rating less than P10.
- ⑤ Soul Hunters can only have Influence in their own Order, which they are severed from if they ever take any other Influence – becoming hunted by their own Order.
- ⑤ Automatic Language Feats: Fluency (Allspeak). This language is partially telepathic and is heard by anyone listening as his commonly spoken language.
- ⑤ Favoured Class: Lurker. A multiclass Soul Hunter's Lurker class does not count when determining whether it suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing.





The Lliestan Machine became a mousetrap to space travellers. It kept the ancient cities in pristine shape and covered them with half-finished science advancements. Those who came to investigate the mysteriously empty planet often stayed for long periods of time to explore. During their stay on the planet however, the machine's saucers would emerge and take vivisections of the visitors – always looking for the secret of the cure. Entire starships would be cut apart, only to be later re-assembled in the hollow of the planet's machine. Anything that could be useful was sampled by these automated saucers; the entire Lliestan race counted on finding a cure.

Eventually the interference of Captain Matthew Gideon and the EAS *Excalibur* in 2267 saw the machine crippled and all of its sampling saucers destroyed. The fate of the Lliestans was placed in the hands of others yet again. Although the Drakh Plague was cured by the captain's efforts, he never managed to return to Lliesta IV before the race succumbed to the Shadow virus.

THE DOOR TO DARKNESS - THE BANISHMENT OF THE HAND

There were many rises and falls during the Age of Ancients that made the centuries interesting for the

First Ones, especially when it came to those races whose technologies rivalled their own. After the horrors of the Thirdspace War the First Ones known only as the Hand became obsessed with the idea that other races could be manipulated secretly as they were by the Harbingers. The Hand's obsession would lead to one of the largest and deadliest wars the First Ones would ever suffer.

An up and coming race of flesh-bound giants nearing the edge of their own evolution – the Kirishiac Lords – gained the attentions of the Hand. The Hand used telepathy, hidden secrets, dream visions and an assortment of enigmatic appearances to try and control the Kirishiacs but all they managed to do was fuel the curiosity of the younger race. Finally, the Kirishiacs boarded massive warships and took to the stars in search of their own godhood. The Hand, knowing they could not support their own folly, hid from the ensuing onslaught. The Kirishiac War killed more First Ones in battle than any but the Thirdspace War and when the collective First Ones halted the younger Ancients' advance it took a toll on the galaxy.

The Kirishiacs told their captors about the mysterious directions they had received from the Hand and the other First Ones chose to punish the meddlesome Hand. Having seen too many First Ones killed in the galactic wars of the Age already, they showed mercy on the Hand by devising a way to fully banish them. Although the idea to hurl the Hand into a parallel dimension came up, the Vorlons' gates to Thirdspace showed that such a

The Errors Of Pride

plan could be more dangerous than it was worth. Instead, with the help of the Travellers, The First Ones chose to use banish the Hand to the Greater Void between galaxies instead.

The Hand, their starships and their homeworld were forced into a wormhole that led far beyond the Rim of known space and were sealed under miles of rock and soil on the planet that would later be called Beta Durani VII. A race of servile loyalists to the First Ones were given a city to live in around what they named the 'Door to Darkness' and were placed in charge of keeping it safe from anyone who tried to contact the Hand.

Over a million years passed, the guardians of the Door died out and Beta Durani VII became just another planet in the galaxy. The planet was surveyed by a multitude of races but the city was not actually discovered until 2265 when a group of Human xenoarchaeologists dug for traces of sentient life on the planet.

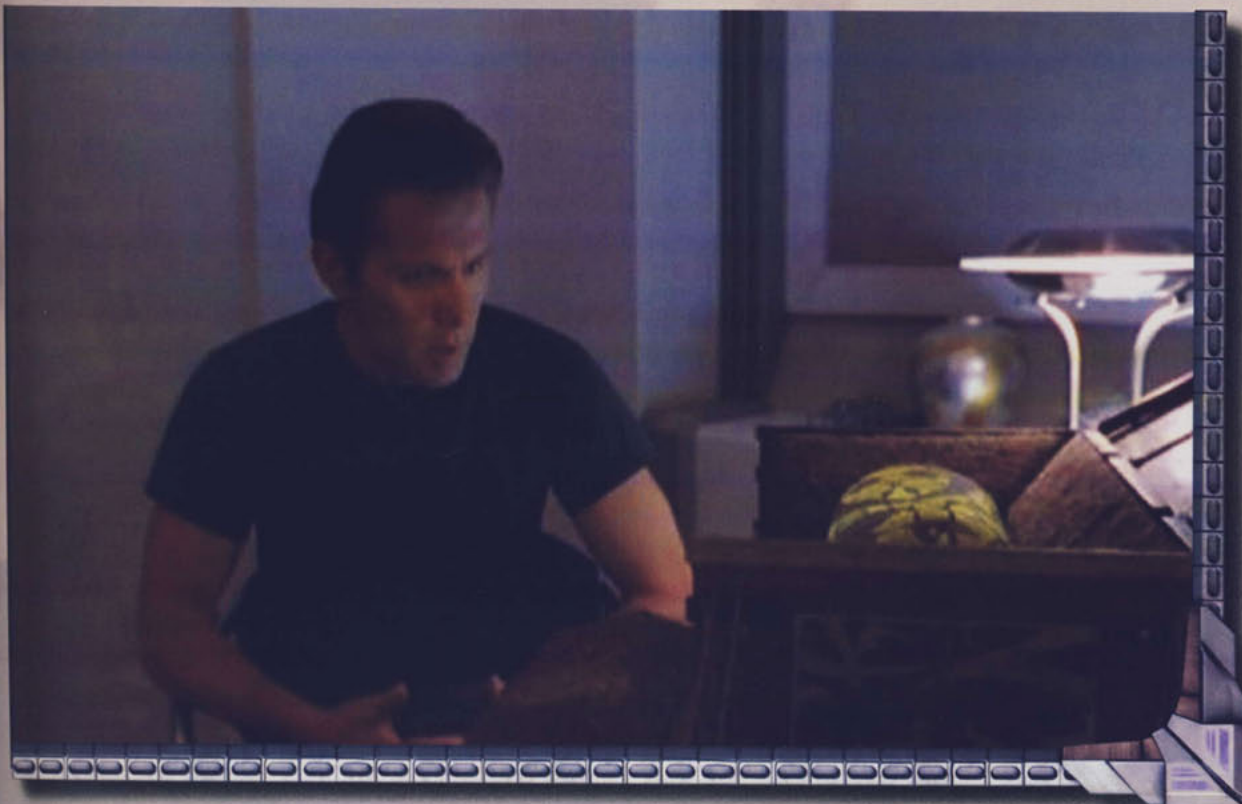
The discovery of the Door to Darkness sparked a direct confrontation between the Hand and its minions in the galaxy and the Anla'Shok Rangers. The Door to Darkness was buried under tons of rubble in 2265 but once its presence was known and the minions of the Hand became more interested in it than ever before.

The Hand, their history and the war against their return is covered in much greater detail in *The Legend of the Rangers* sourcebook.

THE APOCALYPSE BOXES - FONTS OF LIES AND WISDOM

During the Shadow War of 1250, a younger yet advanced telepathic race called the Shierren placed their essences inside sixteen extremely durable containers. Created as a way to escape the bloody-handed vengeance of the Shadows, these Apocalypse Boxes gave the Shierren refuge against the planetary bombardment they were suffering after turning their loyalty to the Shadows into an effort to control the First Ones, earning only the Shadow's spite instead.

The containers were ejected into space in hopes of surviving the Shadows' vengeance. Some were lost to their deadly weapons and others were absorbed into hyperspace never to be seen again. Although the Shierren did not survive on their planet, which would later be absorbed into the Tal-kona'sha Virtuality, the six appropriately-named 'Apocalypse Boxes' that managed to slip by the Shadows





resurfaced to wreak their own brand of havoc from time to time.

Each Apocalypse Box contains a single mental presence of one of the elite Shierren telepaths. From within its composite yellow shell the Shierren speaks to its owner, directing him with sinister intentions caused from centuries of loneliness and madness. The inhabitants of these boxes have only two goals in their fractured minds – to survive no matter the price and to take action against the influence of the First Ones whenever possible.

The six surviving Apocalypse Boxes leave a mark wherever they go. The following list of (in)famous owners shows just some of the poor souls that have followed a mad Shierren's instructions throughout the centuries.

Arufio Vallas (1755 – 1757) – Centauri salvage expert; used the box to become elite advisor to the Emperor but was assassinated horribly by unknown forces

Michel de Nostredame (1854 – 1866) – Human prophet; published much of what the box told him but was not fully believed until long after his painful death by an incurable illness

Ikk'ytt Seveol (2111) – Yolu missionary; followed the advice

of the box to take his faith abroad just long enough for his expedition to crash land into a Drakh complex on Thenothk

Placcatte (2225 – 2231) – Abbai physician; discovered a cure to several Dilgar War bio-weapons but was killed by a Dilgar assassin early into the Invasion

Matthew Gideon (2264 – 2270) – Human starship captain; used the box to help find cure for the Drakh Plague killing Earth but caused the destruction of several lesser races touched by First Ones in the process

Oxi'zy Fenirus (2301 – 2304) – Sh'lassan Imperialist; used the box to elevate the Sh'lassan people to a larger governmental power in the Interstellar Alliance but was shot and killed by separatist radicals during his ISN-televised recognition speech

SECTOR 14 - EVEN TRAVELLERS MAKE MISTAKES

The most powerful of the First Ones, save for Lorien and his brethren, the entities known as

Apocalypse Box - 2nd Edition Game Statistics

The following statistics and special rules should be used for an Apocalypse Box in any 2nd edition *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game* session. This information has been modified from its 1st edition format.

Apocalypse Box: Tiny Artefact; HP: 30; Hardness 10; SQ Acceptance, Advice, Hatred of Ancient Influence, Telepathic Suggestions

Acceptance: Each Apocalypse Box finds a way to be willingly accepted by its owner *before* it begins to make any sort of connection with him. What the new owner does not realise is that by willingly accepting the box he opens his mind to the telepathic suggestions the Shierren inside relies upon. This telepathic bridge is automatic when the box is willingly accepted by a new owner. The only exception to this is any being that has been influenced by the First Ones in some way (see Hatred of Ancient Influence below).

Advice: Although its presence is dangerous and insidious, the Shierren inside the Apocalypse Box is capable of great insight and wisdom. The owner of an Apocalypse Box can make a Knowledge (Galactic Lore) skill check with a +5 bonus by asking for the box's advice. Alternatively the box can give a +5 bonus to the Intrigue skill for the purposes of Gathering Information. Either of these abilities can be accessed only once per month due to the strain placed on the Shierren to speak. The information provided by the Shierren can be misleading and half-true and comprises a combination of facts and thoughts gathered from a thousand different telepathic contacts over the centuries.

Hatred of Ancient Influence: Every Apocalypse Box has one root race memory – which is that the First Ones are not to be trusted and should be punished for the destruction of the Shierren. For the maddened Shierren inside the box, someone who has been touched by the Ancients is just as good a target as a First One. If an active Apocalypse Box is in the custody of an individual who has been 'touched' or physically influenced in some way by one of the First Ones (Shadow/Vorlon servants, Techno-Mages, Hand minions and so on) it will launch a powerful telepathic assault against the target. This should be treated as the *agony* variation of the *pain* telepathic ability (see pages 126 to 127 of the *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game Second Edition*) issued from a P12 telepath with the Mindshredder feat. The Will save DC to resist this attack is 25 and it manifests as bolts of electricity leaping from the box's surface to the target.

As a side note, anyone who tries to harm the Apocalypse Box will suffer the same attacks, but the Will save to resist is only DC 20.

Telepathic Suggestions: In a sick effort to control its surroundings, the Shierren within an Apocalypse Box affects the fate of its owners through subtle telepathic suggestions. A box's owner may be made to prevail in a card game or to unfortunately pause just as a hovertrak comes barrelling through a colony street, for example. Once per week the Apocalypse Box can affect any one skill check or saving throw by + or – 20. So long as the target is within 100 kilometres of the box and within one kilometre of the current owner of the box, this effect is automatic and part of the telepathic tether between the box and its owner. The box tends to use this ability to keep itself safe and its owner from getting rid of it and quickly punishes any owner that does manage to get rid of it.

For example, Matthew Gideon was affected by the Apocalypse Box on several occasions. It added +20 to several Operations skill checks and Fortitude saving throws to make sure its owner survived to protect it and happily applied –20 to it's previous owner's Reflex save to avoid the oncoming cargo skimmer.

the Travellers evolved into beings of energy long before any of the others. They were the first children of Lorien and they were shining examples of the awesome power of the First Ones. It was in their scope of ability to shape matter, mould energy and even cross between dimensions without the need for jump gates or engines. The spatial difference between one dimension and the next was just a line for them to cross if they so chose.

With great power such as theirs also came the burden of stagnation. When crossing dimensions became too easy for the Travellers and they could cross the galaxy in just a few hours, they looked to a new type of travel that had eluded even Lorien and his people. The Travellers moved a few thousand light years away from their homeworld (what would become Sigma 957) and began their newest experiment.

Time travel.

Crossing dimensions was not enough for the Travellers in their youth; they also wanted to walk backwards to see what they may have missed at the beginning of time and forwards on the path of events yet to occur. Testing many different methods to achieve this goal, they eventually managed to define 'time' as a facet of its own dimension and build a vessel designed specifically to reach it. The ship could cut through the barriers between time and space and move through the time stream like any other vessel in hyperspace.

The maiden voyage of the Traveller's time-ship was successful but it was also its last. The test took place in a barren area of space that the Third Age would title 'Sector 14' and was witnessed by a huge fleet of Traveller ships lending their energy to the vessel as it broke through the dimensional wall. When the ship began to glow with infused tachyons from a hundred Traveller power supplies, space itself began to warp around it. A massive rift opened and drew the ship into it but did not close. Suddenly, all the Travellers knew they had made a massive miscalculation.

Unlike their dimensional travels up to that point, which had allowed the Travellers to move between *parallel* dimensions such as hyperspace, the time stream was *coexistent* with their current dimension. The Travellers could use the matter and energy from the new dimension to close dimensional doors once they had passed through them. The matter and energy in the time stream was essentially the same as that that had opened the rift, just from a different moment. The Travellers could not close the rift and anything that passed through it would be thrown into a random moment in time.

As centuries passed and other First Ones began to evolve and join the Travellers in the hierarchy of the galaxy, the Travellers never failed to explain the dangers of the temporal rift. They did not

know what would happen if these newer races accidentally slipped into the rift. They might appear in the past to meddle in events that had already occurred or jump forward to learn from the future. They might never return. It was best that the rift be avoided altogether.

A million or more years later, once the First Ones had taken their leave of the galaxy for the most part, the Vorlons began to imagine uses for the temporal rift. They decided to test travel into and out of the rift by using the technologically savvy and highly servile Ru Ha'ru people. The Vorlons eventually persuaded the Ru Ha'rus to build and facilitate a Great Machine on Epsilon Eridani to monitor and stabilise the rift. The Machine, which could see into and out of the rift, allowed the Vorlons to pick and choose events in the time stream to affect. By affecting time and rearranging certain objects and events they could better reinforce their god-like image and use it as a great weapon in their ever-escalating war against the Shadows.

The Vorlons openly used the rift in Sector 14 to acquire and deliver the Babylon 4 station and its important cargo – Valen – to the Minbari during the Shadow War of 1250. The temporal rift was also used at various times without the Vorlon's knowledge. The following are a few of the other important events concerning the temporal rift.

1755 – The Ru Ha'ru Revolt

Once it was apparent to the majority of the Ru Ha'ru people that the Vorlons were using them, many of them raised their voices against the Ancients and even formed a fleet to reinforce their point. They wanted to use the Great Machine for their own purposes, something expressly forbidden by the Vorlons. Although the Ru Ha'ru's ships were powerful they were no match for the Vorlons and the coup was crushed in just a few days. What remained of the Ru Ha'ru fell into two camps: those who willingly served the Vorlon Empire and those who ran to escape the Vorlons. The Vorlons chose one loyalist to serve as the Guardian of the Great Machine and froze the remainder of the loyalist Ru Ha'ru on the Vorlon Homeworld to be revived for future use as necessary.

Some of the powerful Ru Ha'ru ships flew into the rift to get away; these appeared in 2258 to try and reclaim the machine. These ships were to a certain extent aware of the time that had passed but this did not make them any more capable of taking it from the Vorlons' allies in 2258.

2011 – The Sentry Returns

Seemingly from out of nowhere a strange vessel made of semi-organic technology, devoid of crew and covered in writing that only a few beings in the galaxy could have recognised as the Travellers' written language, appeared outside of Sector 14. The ship,



which was the original time travelling vessel that had opened the rift in the first place, had finally returned from its mysterious voyage.

Seeing an opportunity to gain yet another weapon against the Shadows, the Vorlons formed a salvage fleet and made best speed for the derelict ship. Even with the Vorlons' high levels of technology the Travellers were millions of years ahead of them and the Traveller's ship was the one thing that could tip the scales in the Vorlons' favour and win them the war once and for all.

When they arrived however, the ship was not alone. The Traveller ship of Sigma 957 had sensed their wayward vessel and come to reclaim it, arriving just seconds before the Vorlons. When the Travellers saw the power hungry Vorlons coming, they scolded the younger First Ones for their greed and underhanded plans of theft. The Vorlons answered by powering up their weapon systems, claiming that the Travellers' time had passed and that the ship was theirs to take.

The Travellers, disgusted at their younger cousins' reaction, disintegrated the time travelling vessel with a single stroke. The Vorlons, seeing the might of the Travellers' warship, turned away from the conflict. Even so, their presence had given the Travellers a new opinion of the younger Ancients – which would be revealed much later when they were called upon in 2261.

2325 – The Ru Ha'ru Dèja vu

Seventy-five years after the last Ru Ha'ru loyalist gave up his position as Guardian of the Great Machine, another wave of separatist Ru Ha'ru warships emerged from the temporal rift. Unlike the last separatists that had come for the Machine, these had no idea where they were or *when* they had come back to the galaxy. For what they remembered, the Vorlons were still around and still oppressing their people. Little did they know that the rest of their people were actually still cryogenically stored on the Vorlon homeworld.

The advanced ships of the Ru Ha'ru struck out against the Interstellar Alliance, seeing the Vorlon technology in the White Stars patrolling the Epsilon area as a sign of Vorlon membership in the Alliance. The Ru Ha'ru warships and the ISA fleet were evenly matched, unlike the last time the Ru Ha'ru had arrived to fight against the EAS *Hyperion* in 2258. The Ru Ha'ru force was demolished at some great cost to the White Star Fleet and the last of the conscious Ru Ha'ru were extinguished in several long days of fighting.

Throughout the entire ordeal however, the Great Machine remained utterly silent. Draal, the current Guardian of the Machine, adhered to his original purpose of protecting the planet without interfering elsewhere. He merely watched as the people of the Interstellar Alliance battled to keep him from having to do so.

THE CIRCLE OF ANCIENTS - LEFT BEHIND TO WATCH IN SILENCE

A few thousand years after the Kirishiac War, after Lorien took his refuge on Z'ha'dum, it was decided that the First Ones would follow so many others to see what existed beyond the Rim in a mass exodus of this galaxy. The Shadows slumbered after their taxing role in the war and the Vorlons chose to remain in the galaxy to make sure their nemesis did not go unchecked.

When the two volatile and diametrically opposed forces made it obvious they were not leaving with the others, Lorien secretly asked each of the other First Ones to leave one of their warships behind. He knew that one day in the future this ancient circle of secret watchmen would ensure the galaxy's survival. In respect to their elder they all agreed, even though they would not actually communicate with each other or Lorien for a million years or more.

The Circle of Ancients, the ring of First One warships left in the galaxy to babysit the Vorlons and the Shadows, occasionally appeared to interact with the other races of the galaxy. They were like the gods of space and even the Vorlons paid attention when they reared their heads.

Each vessel in the Circle has inspired reams of tales among the various races and sources who have encountered them. The final gathering of the Circle at Coriana VI in 2261 would be remembered throughout history as the last time the First Ones existed in the galaxy.

The Ancients' Vessels

The following entries are the game statistics to be used for the First Ones' ships that remained behind in the galaxy to form the Circle of Ancients. Each one is unique and has many of its own interesting powers and abilities and they are all almost unstoppable by the standards of the younger races.

There have been several recorded encounters in the history of the galaxy of these vessels crushing entire fleets that might have tried to interact with them but this would not be the most enjoyable of gaming sessions for many Players. We encourage Games Masters who choose to use any or all of these ships in their campaigns to feel free to have the First Ones to toy with the younger races but outright destruction should be limited to the truly foolish or suicidal.

The Kirishiac Lords – The Lordship

Taught their lesson in the war that bears their name, the Kirishiacs remained loyal to Lorien and the other First Ones once the First Ones assured the Kirishiacs that the Hand would no longer manipulate them. This vessel, one of their largest, is their testament to that loyalty. The gigantic Kirishiacs built their vessels from pieces of their own world, held together by a mastery of gravitics that would cause the Brakiri to weep. This ship, the *Lordship*, is a powerful reminder that even those still made of flesh can be considered First Ones.

The *Lordship* uses a series of small revolving satellite systems to generate the necessary gravitational fields to power the vessel and its weapons and keep the ten-metre tall Lords comfortable. The small satellites make it impossible for lesser craft to get anywhere near the *Lordship* and the vessel's main gun can crush enemy ships with the force of converging black holes in seconds.

Lordship, the Kirishiac Lords' Vessel

Gargantuan Spacecraft

Defence Value: Eight (-6 size, +4 Handling); **Armour:** 50¹; **Handling:** +4, **Sensors:** +15; **Stealth:** 25; **Stress:** N/A; **Features:** First One Vessel², Hyperspace Mastery³, Gravitic Satellites⁴, Targeting Computer (+12), Self-Repairing **Crew:** Kirishiac Court (+8 BAB, +12 Training); Six Kirishiac Lords

Structural Spaces: 425 (Hull Construction 200, Control 20, Crew 35, Satellite Construction 160, Weapons 10)

Fore Arc Weapons

⑤ Hypergraviton Beam (Long, Offence 300, Beam 2d10, 10 weapon spaces)

⑤ Satellite Anti-Gravity Beam (Close, Offence 50, Beam 1d10, zero weapon spaces)

Port Arc Weapons

⑤ Satellite Anti-Gravity Beam (Close, Offence 50, Beam 1d10, zero weapon spaces)

Starboard Arc Weapons

⑤ Satellite Anti-Gravity Beam (Close, Offence 50, Beam 1d10, zero weapon spaces)

Aft Arc Weapons

⑤ Satellite Anti-Gravity Beam (Close, Offence 50, Beam 1d10, zero weapon spaces)

Craft (0): None

¹ This Armour rating cannot be lowered or adjusted by the Beam trait or any other special rule of non-First One vessels.

² First One vessels are unique ships that cannot be boarded, scanned or otherwise negatively affected by non-weapon technologies designed by the younger spacefaring races.



They also never suffer Crew damage and always pass any skill checks necessary to perform special orders.

³Without the use of traditional jump engines, the *Lordship* can instantly travel in or out of normal space as a standard action.

⁴The *Lordship* focuses its anti-gravity beams on its gravitic satellites while blocking incoming attacks. Any attack that targets the *Lordship* has a 50% chance of being deflected by one of the revolving satellites, meaning that all damage inflicted is applied to 'Satellite Construction' spaces. Every time this original number is damaged by half (160 to 80, 80 to 40 and so on) the *Lordship* loses access to one of its Satellite Anti-Gravity Beam weapon systems until repaired.

Mindriders – The Thoughtforce

Constructed of telekinetically-compressed carbon molecules, the shell contains a localised bubble of concentrated telepathic energy in which the Mindriders themselves exist. The weapons of the *Thoughtforce* are projectors of multi-wavelength pulses aimed and operated telepathically, homed in on the mental signatures of the crew inside the Mindriders' target.

The Mindriders inside the vessel project a constant field of telekinesis to both propel and protect the ship. This field is so powerful that only high-energy weaponry can hope

to get through it without being deflected. The invisible 'thought shield' makes the vessel impervious to most races' common munitions, a fact that has startled many foolish spacecraft that have foolishly attacked the *Thoughtforce*.

Thoughtforce, the Mindriders' Vessel

Huge Spacecraft

Defence Value: Eight (-4 size, +2 Handling); **Armour:** 40¹; **Handling:** +2, **Sensors:** +20; **Stealth:** 40; **Stress:** N/A; **Features:** Atmospheric Capable, First One Vessel², Hyperspace Mastery³, Thought Shield⁴, Targeting Computer (+ X⁵), Self-Repairing

Crew: Mindrider Collective (+8 BAB, +15 Training); One Mindrider Collective

Structural Spaces: 345 (Shell Construction 300, Control 24, Weapons 21)

Fore Arc Weapons

⑤ Trioptic Pulsar Cannon (Long, Offence 50, Rapid Fire 3, four weapon spaces)

Port Arc Weapons

⑤ Trioptic Pulsar Cannon (Long, Offence 50, Rapid Fire 3, four weapon spaces)

Starboard Arc Weapons

⑤ Trioptic Pulsar Cannon (Long, Offence 50, Rapid Fire 3, four weapon spaces)

Aft Arc Weapons

⑤ Trioptic Pulsar Cannon (Long, Offence 50, Rapid Fire 3, four weapon spaces)



Turreted Weapons

⑤ Ultra Pulsar Cannon (Long, Offence 100, Rapid Fire 10, five weapon spaces)

Craft (0): None

¹ This Armour rating cannot be lowered or adjusted by the Beam trait or any other special rule of non-First One vessels.

² First One vessels are unique ships that cannot be boarded, scanned or otherwise negatively affected by non-weapon technologies designed by the younger spacefaring races. They also never suffer Crew damage and always pass any skill checks necessary to perform special orders.

³ Although the ship travels in the Mindscape and not hyperspace, *Thoughtforce* can instantly travel in or out of normal space as a standard action.

⁴ The Thought Shield allows the ship to ignore the first 100 points of total Offence inflicted against it each combat round (calculated *before* reducing for Armour).

⁵ Because the Mindriders use the thought patterns of others to see their targets they act as though the Targeting Computer bonus to their offensive fire is equal to the number of Crew on board a target ship divided by ten (round down), adding +1 for every telepath on board the target vessel.

For example, Thoughtforce is being attacked by a Hurr Gunship at full

crew value (55). The Gunship has three captured commercial telepaths on board from its last stop. When Thoughtforce makes an offensive attack roll against the Gunship, its total to-hit bonus will be a staggering +16 (+8 BAB, +5 from 55 crew, and +3 from on-board telepaths). The Gunship does not stand a chance...

The Torvalus – The Dark Knife

Oddly built to avoid combat altogether if possible, the *Dark Knife* is the finest scouting vessel the wormlike Torvalus could have hoped for. Curious to a fault, but unwilling to meddle in the affairs of younger races, the Torvalus used their remarkably advanced stealth technology to build their signature ship. Although more than capable of defending itself, the *Dark Knife* is well suited for hit and run tactics often overlooked by the other First Ones.

The most powerful weapon in the *Dark Knife* is not a weapon at all but an electronically generated 'shading field' that renders the vessel all but invisible on the backdrop of space. The ship can simply vanish from enemy sensors and visual recorders, only to reappear with its powerful laser weaponry carving into its target. The *Dark Knife* is the 'weakest' of the First One ships but it is still exponentially more powerful than anything the Third Age has seen in action.

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Dark Knife, the Torvalus' Vessel

Huge Spacecraft

Defence Value: 25 (-4 size, +9 Handling, +10 Shading Field); **Armour:** 35¹; **Handling:** +9, **Sensors:** +20; **Stealth:** 50; **Stress:** N/A; **Features:** First One Vessel², Hyperspace Mastery³, Shading Field⁴, Targeting Computer (+10), Self-Repairing

Crew: Torvalus Speculation (+6 BAB, +18 Training); 12 Torvalus Operators

Structural Spaces: 245 (Hull Construction 200, Control 20, Crew 15, Weapons 10)

Fore Arc Weapons

⑤ Power Laser Cannon (Long, Offence 150, Beam 3d4, four weapon spaces)

⑤ Volley Laser Array (Long, Offence 75, Rapid Fire 5, six weapon spaces)

Craft (0): None

¹ This Armour rating cannot be lowered or adjusted by the Beam trait or any other special rule of non-First One vessels.

² First One vessels are unique ships that cannot be boarded, scanned or otherwise negatively affected by non-weapon technologies designed by the younger spacefaring races. They also never suffer Crew damage and always pass any skill checks necessary to perform special orders.

³ The *Dark Knife* can instantly travel in or out of normal

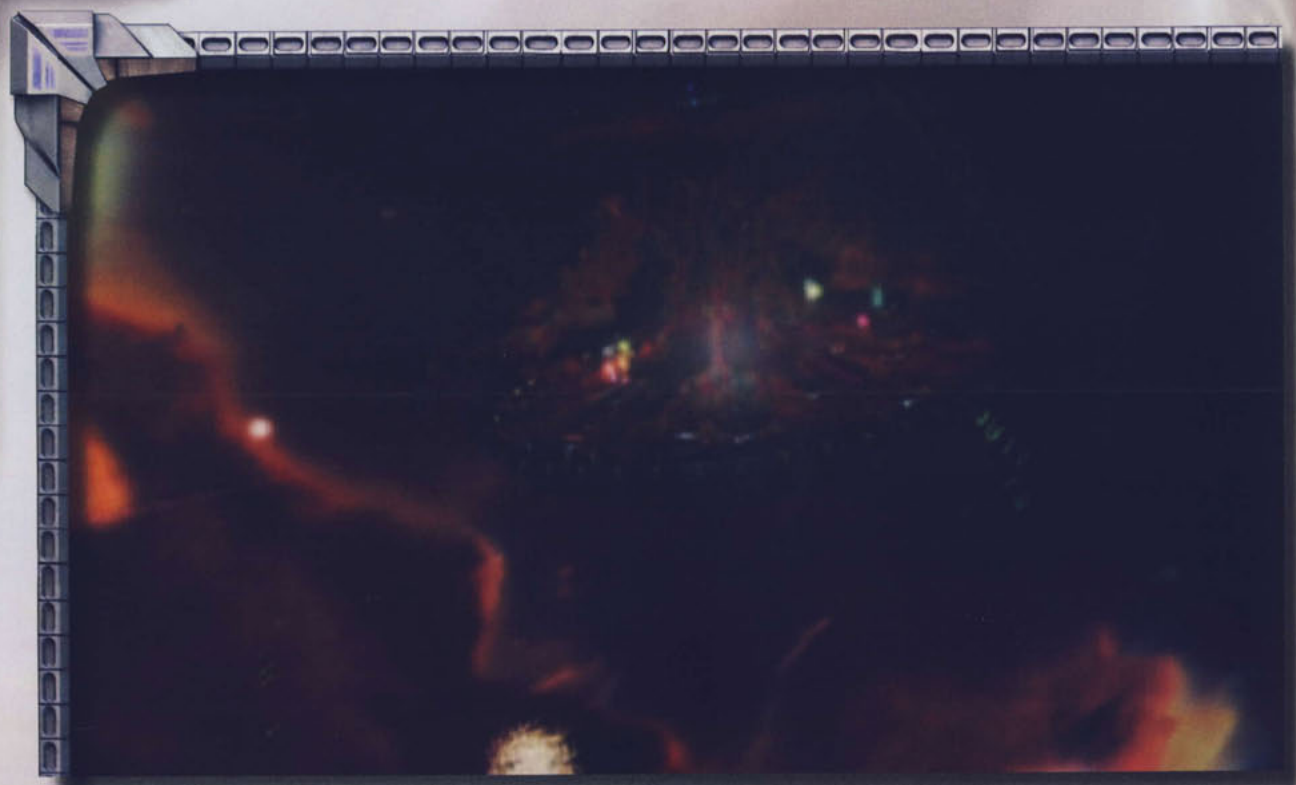
space as a standard action without the use of traditional jump engines.

⁴ The Shading Field grants the ship an 80% chance of being missed by weapons fire during any combat round in which the *Dark Knife* has not yet fired its own weapon systems.

The Traveller of Sigma 957

A perfect vessel designed long before the first Minbari could speak coherently, the name of the Traveller ship as mysterious as the race that created it. Surrounding energy, which it absorbs instantaneously, fuels its powerful inter-dimensional weaponry; the Traveller can turn an enemy ship to atoms with a single stroke of its lightning array. It is a terrifying vessel that has been sighted many times in the area surrounding Sigma 957, a planet that for some reason holds some significance to the Ancient beings.

Coming and going as it pleases through the dimensional barriers, the Traveller is often considered the most powerful of the Ancient ships. It shuts down anyone it wants to, routing its target's power supplies into the void of a bleak dimension with little effort or rendering it into nothingness with its weaponry. Nothing has ever stood in the face of a Traveller warship for long except other First Ones and even most of them know better.



The Traveller

Gargantuan Spacecraft

Defence Value: Six (-6 size, +2 Handling); **Armour:** 40¹;

Handling: +2, **Sensors:** +25; **Stealth:** 20; **Stress:** N/A;

Features: First One Vessel², Hyperspace Mastery³, Power Drain⁴, Targeting Computer (+15), Self-Repairing

Crew: The Travellers (+10 BAB, +15 Training); One Voice of the Travellers

Structural Spaces: 450 (Hull Construction 400, Control 20, Weapons 30)

Fore Arc Weapons

③ Lightning Array (Long, Offence 300, Beam 3d8, 15 weapon spaces)

③ Chromatic Pulse Driver (Close, Offence 60, Rapid Fire 10, five weapon spaces)

Port Arc Weapons

③ Chromatic Pulse Driver (Close, Offence 60, Rapid Fire 10, five weapon spaces)

Starboard Arc Weapons

③ Chromatic Pulse Driver (Close, Offence 60, Rapid Fire 10, five weapon spaces)

Craft (0): None

¹ This Armour rating cannot be lowered or adjusted by the Beam trait or any other special rule of non-First One vessels.

² First One vessels are unique ships that cannot be boarded,

scanned or otherwise negatively affected by non-weapon technologies designed by the younger spacefaring races. They also never suffer Crew damage and always pass any skill checks necessary to perform special orders.

³ Although it passes through dimensional walls and not necessarily hyperspace, the Traveller can instantly travel in or out of normal space as a standard action.

⁴ The Traveller can target any single ship in Close range and funnel the ship's power into another dimension each round. This requires no roll on the part of the Traveller and only other ships using true First One technology (Vorlons, Shadows, Hand and so on) are immune. Any ship drained in this way can take no Special Orders or fire any weapon systems – it can simply pray that the Traveller lets it exist a little longer.

The Triad – The Triumviron

Based on the phantasmal designs of the Triad, the *Triumviron* is most commonly seen as a three-pronged ship similar in shape to a claw. Not built in the traditional sense of the word but instead 'fashioned' by the Triad's ability to shape matter with their minds, this vessel displays abilities that no other ship can or will. From a seamless and rapidly melding hull made of the densest of materials to weapon arrays that spew plasma hotter than a white star's core, the *Triumviron* is a dream given form.

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Craft (0)



The Triad, three powerful entities that constantly keep one another in check to achieve true neutrality, created the ship to serve as the instrument of their will. Made equally of the wants of all three Triad entities, the *Triumviron* is the lens through which they view the galaxy and the tool they use to interact with it. It is driven by a desire to function at the behest of its three components and it reshapes and remoulds itself as necessary to complete the desires of the Triad.

Triumviron, the Triad's Vessel

Huge Spacecraft

Defence Value: 12 (-4 size, +6 Handling); **Armour:** 50¹; **Handling:** +6, **Sensors:** +15; **Stealth:** 30; **Stress:** N/A; **Features:** First One Vessel², Hyperspace Mastery³, Malleable Hull⁴, Targeting Computer (+10)
Crew: Triad Will (+8 BAB, +16 Training); Three Triad Essences

Structural Spaces: 204 (Hull Construction 150, Control 27, Weapons 27)

Fore Arc Weapons

- ⑤ Hyperplasma Cutter (Long, Offence 100 plus special⁵, Beam 2d6, nine weapon spaces)
- ⑤ Hyperplasma Cutter (Long, Offence 100 plus special⁵, Beam 2d6, nine weapon spaces)
- ⑤ Hyperplasma Cutter (Long, Offence 100 plus special⁵, Beam 2d6, nine weapon spaces)

Craft (0): None

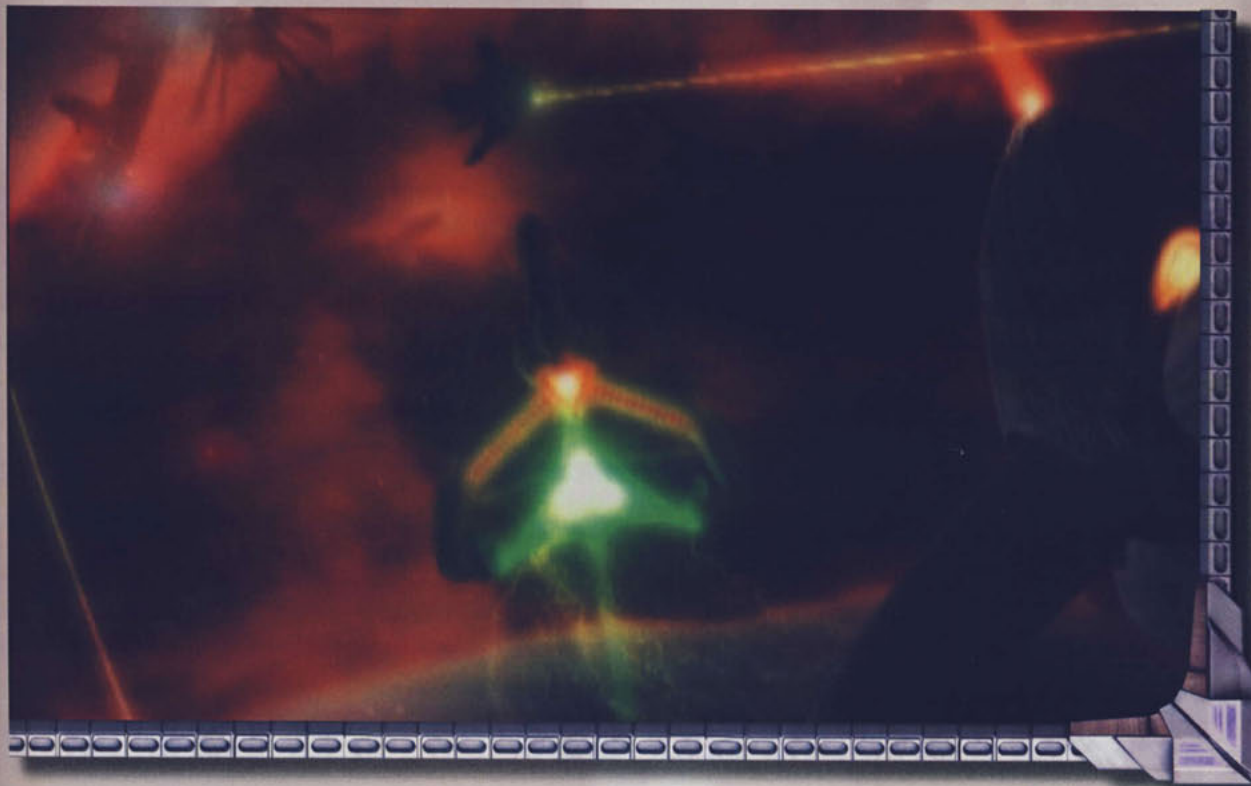
¹ This Armour rating cannot be lowered or adjusted by the Beam trait or any other special rules of non-First One vessels.

² First One vessels are unique ships that cannot be boarded, scanned or otherwise negatively affected by non-weapon technologies designed by the younger spacefaring races. They also never suffer Crew damage and always pass any skill checks necessary to perform special orders.

³ The *Triumviron* can instantly materialise out of nothingness and travel in or out of normal space as a standard action.

⁴ The Malleable Hull of the *Triumviron* allows it to repair damage at a staggering rate, at some cost to the ship's weapon system output. For every Hyperplasma Cutter weapon system that does not fire in a given combat round the ship automatically repairs 33% of the damage it has suffered (round up). This means that the *Triumviron* can effectively repair all of its damage in any round where it does not fire its weaponry at all.

⁵ Every additional Hyperplasma Cutter that hits a single target effectively doubles the Offence rating of *all* Hyperplasma Cutters hitting that target that round. So, two Hyperplasma Cutters striking a single target take both weapon systems' Offence Ratings to 200 and if all three strike the same target their Offence Ratings rise to 400 each!



THE HARBRINGERS

'We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far.'

- H.P. Lovecraft, 'The Call of Cthulhu'

For as long as any race of the Third Age can remember, there have been stories of demons that lurk in dark places ready to spring forth to conquer, devour and defeat them all. The Humans have tales of the Elder Gods that lurk in a city called R'Lyeh. Drazi tell stories of the Tek'rak horrors that live in the 'space between fear and death.' Even the Minbari, tutored to be strong in the Light by the Vorlons, believe of the vile swarming blackness that lives in the Mu'r Realm. There is not a race in the galaxy that does not believe in a faceless evil in some form and to most such evil lives in superstition or faerie tales told to children to get them to grow into productive members of their society. These horrors are believed to be phantoms of imagination and nothing more.

Like so many ancient myths and stories, the dark tales of these otherworldly beasts have roots in fact. Millions of years before the races of the Third Age rose to civilisation, when only the First Ones roamed the stars, the Vorlons opened the door to another dimension that they believed was heaven. When the 'angels' of that heaven stormed out from the gate and enslaved a great portion of the galaxy, billions upon billions were touched by their presence. These beastly creatures, the Harbringers, came to the galaxy with total extinction as their goal.

Although they were eventually beaten back, the Harbringers left a blemish upon the galaxy. Their very presence blackened the minds of countless young and evolving races, many of which would pass on their knowledge of evil beings from elsewhere to future generations in folklore, stories and even instincts. These race memories pushed the hands of authors and poets from across the galaxy, immortalising the evil that forever awaits beyond the wall between their dimensions.

This chapter looks at the Harbringers and how they interact with the Babylon 5 universe. It looks closely at their influence on the galaxy even between the openings of the gates and how they have manage to keep the Harbinger Cult alive in the galaxy without actually being there. For Games Masters who want to set

a supreme challenge for their Players, full statistic blocks for the Harbringers and their savagely powerful spacecraft are detailed as well.

THE HARBRINGERS - HUNGER AND DEATH INCARNATE

The beings called the Harbringers, named by their cultists and not due to any communication with them, are a powerful species from another dimension bent solely on the extinction of all life that is not theirs. They use their dark telepathic powers to influence the masses to serve their needs, happily falling upon them after any resistance has been quelled. They have no loyalty other than to the destruction they inflict and they seem unable to understand any form of negotiation or surrender – or they simply do not care.

On par with the First Ones in terms of their power and capabilities, the Harbringers are surprisingly still beings of flesh and not energy. They are hulking beasts of stony chitin and malleable sinew atop swirling masses of segmented legs and tentacle-like pseudopods. They use their mental powers to float like giant jellyfish or shoot forward like squid, depending on their desire for speed. They are limited only by the physical size of their bodies as to where they can go as they are seemingly ignorant of the effects of gravity.

Unlike many super-evolved races that have turned into beings of energy, the Harbringers are still animals in the basest sense of the term. They are still required to eat and are quite obviously carnivorous, as evidenced by the multiple fang-filled maws hidden between the folds of flesh in their bodies. Harbringers seem to be uncaring as to what they tear apart and devour but many choose to consume their own cultists as a 'reward' for long and loyal servitude. In the sick Harbinger Cult, to be eaten by one of the 'Elders' is a great honour.

Harbringers are physically identical to one another but have the capability to mould their flesh to a certain extent or produce stony chitin to differentiate themselves. Their flesh forms into the tentacles they need to manipulate the world around them, grasp their food or even activate the controls on their vessels. Areas of chitin mean their bodies are not completely malleable but their ability to twist and reform their fleshy parts explains why so many legends describe them similarly but not identically.

Trying to understand what goes through the mind of a Harbinger is futile.

The Harbringers

Lesser minds have been thrown into insanity trying to understand what the Harbringers know, or what they want or even what they are thinking at any given moment. Harbringers have been compared to a force rather than a species but even that definition is based on the idea that the Harbringers desire anything at all.

The Harbinger Physical Form

The following statistics should be used if Games Masters ever want to have an actual Harbinger interact with their Players in some manner. The descriptions of their Special Qualities are found below.

Harbinger

Huge Alien Being

Hit Points: 60

Initiative: +2

Speed: Fly 40 ft (perfect)

DV: 8 (-4 Size, +2 Dex)

Attack: Tentacles +17/+12/+7 or Grapple +17 or Impale +17/+12/+7 or Bite +17

Damage: Tentacles 1d4+5; Impale 2d6+2; Bite 2d8+5

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction 12, Fearless, Metapath, Regeneration 2d4, Telekinetic, Telepathy (P15), Whispers

Saves: Fort +22, Ref +5, Will +15

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 14, Con 40, Int 20, Wis 20, Cha 14

Skills: Athletics +10, Concentration +20, Intimidate +20, Notice +15, Stealth +5, Telepathy +20

Feats: Adaptive Mind, Brawler, Mindshredder, Telepath

Fearless: Harbringers are ancient beings that are driven by an instinct to devour entire universes. They do not suffer any emotional effects and cannot be made to feel anything but hunger or anger. It is questionable whether they are capable of feeling anything but these emotions at all.

Metapath: Using their powerful telepathic talents, Harbringers can create solid matter in the shape of chitin or stone (or both) as a standard action once per day. The objects created must be free-standing or attached to the Harbinger and have a DR of 12 and 25 Hit Points per square foot of material. The objects must be made within 30 feet of the Harbinger and cannot exceed Huge-size.

Regeneration: The fleshy parts of a Harbinger reshape and knit extremely quickly when injured, regaining 2d4 Hit Points at the end of every combat round.

Telekinetic: The Harbinger can lift, move and hurl objects of Large-size or smaller. It can effectively lift or throw these objects as if it were using a Strength score of 30. A ranged attack made by hurling an object in this fashion has an attack bonus of +15 and both the object and the target must be within the telepath's line of sight.

Whispers: Harbringers instinctively emit telepathic whispers that cause other races to hear dark promises and see utopian places. See the sidebar concerning 'The Harbringers' Whispers' on page 19 of this sourcebook for details as to how this telepathic assault functions.

THIRDSACE, R'LYEH AND MUA'R - THE HARBRINGERS' REALM

It goes by a thousand different names in a hundred times that number of languages but the dimension the Harbringers hail from bears the same shape in all of them. It is a place of darkness and turmoil, where the creatures of that universe either serve the Harbringers or are devoured by them - sometimes both. The Harbringers' hunger for destruction and has turned their home universe into a hunting ground, with anything that is not them in an eternal state of running and hiding.

Thousands of sentient species and countless lesser ones have fallen to the Harbringers' appetite over the course of several million years, lured into their cults or consumed by their voracious mouths. The Harbringers have scourged scores of entire worlds, leaving nothing but barren rocks tumbling in the void.

This was not always so, however. The Harbringers' current dimension is not their original one. Like the Vorlons, an advanced race from another dimension tried to bridge the gap to their version of heaven and found only the Harbringers waiting for them. Unlike what occurred with the Vorlons, the beings of the other dimension could not stem the tide of the Harbringers and eventually the massive Throne-class ships emerged and took root there. From that point forward their universe was doomed, just as many others had been before.

The Harbringers wait for the chance to spread into a new universe on the backs of those foolish enough to discover them and then absorb it into their ever-growing realm of destruction. Although they are incapable of bridging dimensional gaps without their Thrones or an existing portal (such as a Thirdspace Gate), they link all of their conquered universes together to create one expanding territory of pain and suffering.

It is only due to their need to conquer, destroy and consume that they seek new universes to add to theirs. Until the actions of the First Ones, Sheridan and the rest blocked their way into this reality, the Harbringers had never been unsuccessful in their marauding and even though they were defeated the Harbringers' very presence weakened the boundaries between the two dimensions forever. If ever the door was opened long enough to allow the Harbinger Thrones into the universe, nothing could stop their eventual victory.



HARBINGER TECHNOLOGY - THE WEAPONS OF ENTROPY

The Harbingers have had tens of millions of years to perfect their weapons and vessels and many might believe they have done so without error. Their ships are powerful and deadly and capable of shrugging off the vast majority of enemy attacks while attacking with advanced weaponry that makes conventional weaponry look like pop guns. Harbinger constructions are timeless and can weather millennia without suffering a single scratch of erosion.

The majority of their technology looks oddly biomechanical in nature, mixing plainly inorganic materials with plant-like or crystalline substances to create buildings, ships and devices. Unlike the Vorlons' living vessels or the cybernetic joining of Shadow ships, Harbinger technology uses a manufactured life form to serve as basic programming for its devices; devoid of thought or instincts, these things do what they are created to do – and nothing more.

How the Harbingers ever managed to design anything as

intricate or powerful as their naval armada is difficult to say, as that they have not shown any instinct but the singular drive to destroy. It can be assumed that some time during their multi-million (billion?) year existence they must have needed to travel the stars to conquer and devour.

The remnants of Harbinger spacecraft that were gathered after the 2261 Thirdspace Event and the ruins of Harbinger Cult temples throughout the ages are documented proof that the Harbingers' constructions are not built but rather *grown*. The Harbingers create and shape stony chitin into the shapes they require, allowing the artificial life forms to take root and function as needed. The same can be assumed of all other Harbinger technology but considering the lack of contact with anything other than their extinction armadas this cannot be verified.

Harbinger Constructs

All of the Harbingers' devices are grown into semi-living constructs that serve one purpose or another. From their energy re-doubling generators to the doorways on their buildings, the combination of 'metapathically' created matter and artificial life is omnipresent. The following entries are all of the known Harbinger constructs that have ever existed in the galaxy at one time or another.

The Harbringers

Defensive Portal

This simple construct is used in every Harbinger vessel and building and works as a one-way door from one area of a vessel to another. Large enough that a full-grown Harbinger can float through, each portal is a circular set of jagged 'teeth' that spiral together like an iris of chitin when closed. The artificial life inside each portal is telepathically active, waiting for the telepathic presence of a Harbinger to trigger the opening of its teeth. Should something or someone try to force its way into a defensive portal without a strong enough telepathic presence (P10 or higher), the teeth will rapidly scissor shut in an attempt to bisect the intruder. To help in this, the portals' default setting is retracted and a DC 30 Notice skill check is required to see the teeth set in the wall.

Anyone caught in a defensive portal when it attacks must make a Reflex save at DC 20 to stop it or DC 25 to dive through. Failure inflicts 3d10 physical damage with an AP of five. The portal itself has a DR of 12 and 50 Hit Points.

Defensive Shield Generator

A complex construct that is structurally similar to biomechanical algae, the shield generator uses a meta-scientific cousin of photosynthesis to produce a tangible

wall of ambient energy to protect itself and anything it is grown upon. The nacelles of the generators are grown physically into an object like symbiotic organisms and are attached to an energy source of some kind. The generator then emits a protective barrier that can withstand tremendous amounts of damage.

Generators come in three effective sizes – personal, spacecraft and architectural. So long as the generator has access to a sufficient power source (re-doubler, fusion cell and so on) it will surround the object it is grown to with a variable-level defensive shield when activated.

Personal-sized generators give any object or person not larger than ten feet tall or wide a shield that will absorb 20% of all incoming damage, up to a maximum of 25 points per round. When the shield is active however, it becomes impermeable to gases – including air. This gives the wearer a number of minutes of air roughly equal to one plus his Constitution modifier times two (minimum of one minute). This can have positive side effects as well, most notably in the instances of exposure to poison gases or vacuum.

Spacecraft-sized generators are often found on spacecraft, unsurprisingly. They give a variable level of protection to the object they are grown on depending on its size and come in the three sizes found on the warships of the

Harbingers. This level of defensive ability varies between 30%, 50% and 70% of damage potentially absorbed (see the ship statistics below for details).

Architectural-sized generators are used solely on massive space-conquering vessels and the very rare buildings grown on planets' surfaces. They can absorb 90% of all damage and require truly huge re-doublers to work for any length of time.

Energy Re-Doubler

This is an ambient power supply that is designed to draw from local energy sources in order to be exponentially doubled and re-doubled to generate the power necessary to fuel the systems and devices of the Harbingers. Invisible wavelengths of power are drawn into the nacelles of the device, gathered and focussed until they can be surged through the device properly. Once the first power surge takes place the generator can use the same energy over and over to go on forever. The re-doubler is effectively an infinite power source for any Harbinger device. The Harbingers grow larger re-doublers for larger devices, with no need for secondary power sources.

Any construct fitted with an energy re-doubler can run indefinitely without refuelling, rearming or recharging. A variable source of energy is required to start the re-doubler, as determined by the Games Master.

Reinforced Tendril Construction

The Harbingers use their metapathic ability to materialise and grow a stone-like chitin substance into natural shapes to make extremely durable buildings and starship hulls. Best served as ropey supports and reinforcing tendrils inside of a metallic shell, this style of construction is present in most of the Harbingers' ships, buildings and defensive structures.

Anything grown, built or modified by the Harbingers with this technique will be dramatically more resilient to physical damage, doubling its effective Hit Points and weight-bearing strength.

Telepathic Enhancement Focuser

The Harbingers thrive on their ability to send telepathic whispers to minds on the other side of dimensional barriers, using them to pave the way for the Harbingers' imminent arrival. Conventional telepathy, even on a scale such as the Harbingers', cannot cross dimensions. The Harbingers learned several universes ago how to grow a very specific two-part construct to serve as a conduit for their telepathic messages. One part is grown on some kind of object that will exist in the targeted dimension (the Thirdspace Gate in 2261, for instance) after a doorway has been opened. The second

part exists on the closest Throne ship to that dimension and constantly sends ambient telepathic signals from the Harbingers to its other half. Even though this construct requires a significant amount of power to activate and can only be used when someone has foolishly bridged universes to where the Harbingers await, it is a very effective tool to spread the word of the Harbinger Cult.

The Focuser allows the Harbingers to send their telepathic whispers across dimensions but only as if they were P12 rated telepaths (instead of the P15 they actually are).

Harbinger Starships

The following vessels are the only starships ever to have been seen in the Harbingers' extinction armadas. They are very powerful ships capable of dealing massive amounts of damage in short periods of time while withstanding tremendous counterattacks. Three of the vessels were present in one way, shape or form at the 2261 Thirdspace Event and one was in our galaxy in the Age of Ancients. Each vessel is named using Human mythology based on what John Sheridan learned from Lyta Alexander. The vessels' classifications were eventually entered in the data files of the Anla'Shok and summarily into the Library of the Interstellar Alliance.

Cherubim-class Invasion Frigates

The basic fleet vessels of the Harbinger extinction armadas, Cherubim are the first vessels to arrive in a targeted area. Each Cherubim uses its massive lens-like eye to scan the general area for anything that might stand in the way of the progress of larger ships. Depending on what they discover, the Cherubim immediately go into 'attack mode,' paving the way for the Nephilim and Seraphim to arrive.

The primary weapon on the Cherubim is the 'hellfire lance' named for the flaming projectile wreathed in reddish light it emits. Both solid and gaseous like a plasma weapon but as powerful as a neutron laser, the lance has a staggering level of mass for its size. When one of the 'flaming' projectiles hits a target it actually burns and impacts it, inflicting tremendous amounts of physical damage.

Cherubim Invasion Frigate

Medium Spacecraft

Defence Value: 13 (+3 Handling); **Armour:** 28¹; **Handling:** +3, **Sensors:** +10; **Stealth:** 10; **Stress:** N/A; **Features:** First One Vessel², Defence Shield³, Energy Re-doubler⁴, Hybrid Engine (Gravitic/Biological), Self-Repairing, Targeting Computer (+3)

Crew: Harbinger Construct (+6 BAB, +8 Training)

Structural Spaces: 24 (Hull Construction 10, Control five, Engine six, Weapons three)

Fore Arc Weapons

The Harbingers



☞ Hellfire Lancet (Close, Offence 50, three weapon spaces)
Craft (0): None

¹ This Armour rating cannot be lowered or adjusted by the Beam trait or any other special rule of non-First One vessels.

² First One vessels (and the equivalent) are unique ships that cannot be boarded, scanned or otherwise negatively affected by non-weapon technologies designed by the younger spacefaring races. They also never suffer Crew damage and always pass any skill checks necessary to perform special orders.

³ The Defence Shield of the Cherubim cuts the Offence value of all attacks that strike it by 30%. It can only negate up to 50 points of damage in this manner every turn.

⁴ See earlier in this chapter for the details of this device.

Nephilim-class Destroyers

Slightly larger than the hordes of invasion frigates at the head of the armada, the Nephilim destroyers are grown for the single-minded task of taking on those targets that the Cherubim are outmatched by. With thicker biological hulls and reinforced chitin plating, these destroyers are more survivable and can generate thicker defence shields

to protect themselves. A Nephilim can take on several ships its own size and come out victorious, especially when supported by several Cherubim.

Packing a pair of deadly lancets and a small version of the energy siphon found on the Thirdspace Gates, each Nephilim is programmed to incapacitate enemy ships for the Cherubim to swarm over. Rarely ever firing its lancets at separate targets, each destroyer generally crushes one opponent at the same time it cripples another. It is the largest of the automated constructs and what it loses in individuality or cleverness it makes up for in sheer ability.

Nephilim Destroyer

Large Spacecraft

Defence Value: 11 (-1 Size, +2 Handling); **Armour:** 30¹; **Handling:** +2, **Sensors:** +8; **Stealth:** 8; **Stress:** N/A; **Features:** First One Vessel², Defence Shield³, Energy Re-doubler⁴, Hybrid Engine (Gravitic/Biological), Self-Repairing, Targeting Computer (+4)

Crew: Harbinger Construct (+6 BAB, +8 Training)

Structural Spaces: 48 (Hull Construction 25, Control six, Engine six, Weapons 11)

Fore Arc Weapons

☞ Hellfire Lancet (Close, Offence 50, three weapon spaces)

③ Hellfire Lancet (Close, Offence 50, three weapon spaces)

Turret Weapons

③ Light Energy Siphon (Close, Offence Special⁵, five weapon spaces)

Craft (0): None

¹ This Armour rating cannot be lowered or adjusted by the Beam trait or any other special rule of non-First One vessels.

² First One vessels (and the equivalent) are unique ships that cannot be boarded, scanned or otherwise negatively affected by non-weapon technologies designed by the younger spacefaring races. They also never suffer Crew damage and always pass any skill checks necessary to perform special orders.

³ The Defence Shield of the Nephilim cuts the Offence value of all attacks that strike it by 50%. It can only negate up to 100 points of damage in this manner every turn.

⁴ See earlier in this chapter for the details of this device.

⁵ Nothing targeted in combat by a Light Energy Siphon can use weapon systems or special orders for the rest of the current or subsequent round.

Seraphim-class Dreadnoughts

Huge and imposing vessels that are piloted by the actual Harbingers themselves, the Seraphim are the main spearheads in the extinction armada. It is their role to make room for the Thrones to arrive and expand the Harbingers' territory. Seraphim are slow and relentless, just like the expansion of the Harbingers. Equipped with a higher-powered defence shield than that found on the automated Harbinger ships so as to protect the actual Harbingers inside, they can weather entire fleets of lesser ships. These hulking warships form the lynchpin of the extinction armada. When the Seraphim arrive in a targeted area, little can stand in their way.

Each Seraphim is a weapon-laden fortress of a starship. Seraphim are covered in hellfire lancets and support a powerful energy siphon; groups of enemy ships have little chance when confronted by the dreadnoughts. Powered by a massive energy re-doubler swirling in the violet mass at the aft of the ship, each Seraphim also wields what researchers have named the 'lightbringer array' after the infamous fallen angel in human legendry. The array can focus a pair of white-hot energy beams upon a single target, cutting and atomising it in seconds.

Because the Seraphim are actually manned vessels that have dozens of Harbingers on board, they are rarely used at the forefront of any assault into new territory.

Although the Harbingers' population levels are unknown and possibly inexhaustible, they seem reluctant to commit their larger warships until the automated constructs have gauged the likelihood of a Seraphim being overwhelmed.

Seraphim Dreadnought

Gargantuan Spacecraft

Defence Value: Three (-8 Size, +1 Handling); **Armour:** 32¹; **Handling:** +1, **Sensors:** +12; **Stealth:** 5; **Stress:** N/A; **Features:** First One Vessel², Defence Shield³, Energy Redoubler⁴, Hybrid Engine (Gravitic/Biological), Targeting Computer (+4)

Crew: Harbinger Elite (+10 BAB, +15 Training); 50 Harbingers

Structural Spaces: 192 (Hull Construction 78, Cargo 20, Control 20, Crew five, Engine 10, Weapons 59)

Fore Arc Weapons

③ Lightbringer Array (Long, Offence 200, Beam 2d10, Rapid Fire two, five weapon spaces)

③ Twin-Linked Hellfire Lancets (Close, Offence 75, five weapon spaces)

③ Twin-Linked Hellfire Lancets (Close, Offence 75, five weapon spaces)

③ Twin-Linked Hellfire Lancets (Close, Offence 75, five weapon spaces)

Port Arc Weapons

③ Hellfire Lancet (Close, Offence 50, three weapon spaces)

③ Hellfire Lancet (Close, Offence 50, three weapon spaces)

③ Hellfire Lancet (Close, Offence 50, three weapon spaces)

③ Hellfire Lancet (Close, Offence 50, three weapon spaces)

Starboard Arc Weapons

③ Hellfire Lancet (Close, Offence 50, three weapon spaces)

③ Hellfire Lancet (Close, Offence 50, three weapon spaces)

③ Hellfire Lancet (Close, Offence 50, three weapon spaces)

③ Hellfire Lancet (Close, Offence 50, three weapon spaces)

Turret Weapons

③ Energy Siphon Focuser (Close, Offence Special⁴, 15 weapon spaces)

Craft (0): None

¹ This Armour rating cannot be lowered or adjusted by the Beam trait or any other special rule of non-First One vessels.

² First One vessels (and the equivalent) are unique ships that cannot be boarded, scanned or otherwise negatively affected by non-weapon technologies designed by the younger spacefaring races. They also never suffer Crew damage and always pass any skill checks necessary to perform special orders.

³ The Defence Shield of the Seraphim cuts the Offence value of all attacks that strike it by 70%. It can only reduce up to 200 points of damage in this manner every turn.

⁴ See earlier in this chapter for the details of this device.

⁵ Nothing targeted in combat by an Energy Siphon Focuser can use weapon systems or special orders for 1d3 rounds.

The Harbringers

The Thrones

Although only three of the terrible Thrones made it into the universe when the Vorlons bridged the gap between dimensions, they left a lasting mark on the galaxy while they were there. Although no naming convention has ever been recorded concerning the Harbringers, those Harbinger Cult members who were questioned about their connection to the Throne ships all used the same terminology.

While this only means that the Harbringers' telepathic whispers are uniform, it does not actually suggest that any Harbinger has use for a name, title or any other identification. Each of these Thrones somehow engraved its nomenclature into the local peoples, rising again and again in folklore, legendry and mythology.

The names that local cultists used for the three Thrones and where they were finally destroyed are as follows:

- ⑤ **Baa'ul** – Destroyed as a result of Mindrider machinations near the sun of the Antares Sector. The remaining pieces of the Throne were pushed into the star and were likely disintegrated.
- ⑤ **Azathoth** – Destroyed in one of the largest battles of the Thirdspace War in what would later be called the Sol System. Several chunks of the Throne crashed into the seas of Sol III (Earth).
- ⑤ **Mua'dor** – Destroyed in the centre of the Minbar System, caught between Vorlon and Triad forces. The Throne was obliterated and all of its pieces were scattered into hyperspace to keep them from landing on the formative planets.

Throne-class Gateship

If the Harbringers have a command structure to their extinction armadas, the Thrones are the highest vessels in their forces. Shaped like spikes or spears roughly three miles long, the Thrones slowly drift through space in the wake of the Seraphim. Where the dreadnoughts go at least one Throne is sure to follow. It might take decades for the massive vessels to arrive but they surely will and when they do there is no stemming the Harbinger onslaught. The Thrones, which only number a few dozen at most, are not just titanic warships. They are also routing gates through which more Harbringers can arrive.

Armed and shielded like a space station, the flying spike of a Throne can fit through any normal dimensional portal that has been opened. Once it does so however, the Throne itself can take over as the doorway for the Harbinger advance. The process is simple. First, foolish outsiders open a door or portal to the Harbringers' dimensional territory. Next, the Harbringers' extinction fleet begins to move in and protect the portal, with the Seraphim forming a blockade around it until the nearest Throne can emerge. Once a Throne is through it begins to claim all life it comes across, allowing new Harbinger vessels to emerge from the gateway.

Only three Thrones have ever managed to arrive in the Babylon 5 universe. This occurred during the first Thirdspace War in the Age of Ancients. It took the might of most of the First Ones to eventually destroy the Thrones after shutting down the gate. After the First Ones' exodus, there was likely nothing left in the galaxy able to stop even one more Throne, let alone three.

Throne Gateship

Colossal Spacecraft

Defence Value: – 6 (-16 Size, +0 Handling); **Armour:** 40¹; **Handling:** +0, **Sensors:** +20; **Stealth:** 0; **Stress:** N/A; **Features:** Dimensional Gate², First One Vessel³, Defence Shield⁴, Energy Re-doubler⁵, Hybrid Engine (Gravitic/Biological), Targeting Computer (+ 4)

Crew: Harbinger Elite (+10 BAB, +15 Training); 500 Harbringers

Structural Spaces: 500 (Hull Construction 217, Cargo 50, Control 30, Crew 50, Engine 20, Weapons 133)

Fore Arc Weapons

- ⑤ Lightbringer Array (Long, Offence 200, Beam 2d10, Rapid Fire two, five weapon spaces)
- ⑤ Twin-Linked Hellfire Lancets (Close, Offence 75, five weapon spaces)
- ⑤ Twin-Linked Hellfire Lancets (Close, Offence 75, five weapon spaces)

- ⑤ Twin-Linked Hellfire Lancets (Close, Offence 75, five weapon spaces)

Port Arc Weapons

- ⑤ Lightbringer Array (Long, Offence 200, Beam 2d10, Rapid Fire two, five weapon spaces)
- ⑤ Twin-Linked Hellfire Lancets (Close, Offence 75, five weapon spaces)
- ⑤ Twin-Linked Hellfire Lancets (Close, Offence 75, five weapon spaces)
- ⑤ Hellfire Lancet (Close, Offence 50, three weapon spaces)
- ⑤ Hellfire Lancet (Close, Offence 50, three weapon spaces)

Starboard Arc Weapons

- ⑤ Lightbringer Array (Long, Offence 200, Beam 2d10, Rapid Fire two, five weapon spaces)
- ⑤ Twin-Linked Hellfire Lancets (Close, Offence 75, five weapon spaces)
- ⑤ Twin-Linked Hellfire Lancets (Close, Offence 75, five weapon spaces)
- ⑤ Hellfire Lancet (Close, Offence 50, three weapon spaces)
- ⑤ Hellfire Lancet (Close, Offence 50, three weapon spaces)

Aft Arc Weapons

- ⑤ Lightbringer Array (Long, Offence 200, Beam 2d10, Rapid Fire two, five weapon spaces)
- ⑤ Twin-Linked Hellfire Lancets (Close, Offence 75, five weapon spaces)
- ⑤ Twin-Linked Hellfire Lancets (Close, Offence 75, five weapon spaces)
- ⑤ Hellfire Lancet (Close, Offence 50, three weapon spaces)
- ⑤ Hellfire Lancet (Close, Offence 50, three weapon spaces)

Turret Weapons

- ⑤ Energy Siphon Focuser (Close, Offence Special⁶, 25 weapon spaces)
- ⑤ Energy Siphon Focuser (Close, Offence Special⁶, 25 weapon spaces)

Craft (Special) ¹: Dimensional Gate can allow up to five Medium-sized vessels, two Large-sized vessels or one Gargantuan-sized vessel through every 2d6 hours.

² This Armour rating cannot be lowered or adjusted by the Beam trait or any other special rule of non-First One vessels.

³ First One vessels (and the equivalent) are unique ships that cannot be boarded, scanned, or otherwise negatively affected by non-weapon technologies designed by the younger spacefaring races. They also never suffer Crew damage and always pass any skill checks necessary to perform special orders.

⁴ The Defence Shield of the Throne cuts the Offence value of all attacks that strike it by 90%. It can only reduce up to 300 points of damage in this manner every turn.

⁵ See earlier in this chapter for the details of this device.

⁶ Nothing targeted in combat by an Energy Siphon Focuser can use weapon systems or special orders for 2d3 rounds.

THE HARBINGER CULT - THE HERALDS OF THE END

Considering the Harbingers themselves have only managed to spend a minute fraction of their existence in the Babylon 5 universe, the cultures of that universe can likely discount their arrival as a somewhat minor threat. For the most part they would be correct. The Harbingers themselves have assaulted the galaxy a half dozen times over the many Ages but their hellfire lancets and metaphathic creations are not the only weapons in their arsenal. Their most insidious and, to some degree, powerful tool is not a weapon system or telepathic assault – it is the loyalty of the Harbinger Cult.

The Harbinger Cult comes in two distinct forms: those who follow the legends of the Harbingers in whatever form their species have unearthed and those who have been seduced into servitude by the Harbingers' telepathic whispers. Secret sects form the ranks of the collective Harbinger Cult and they often have no idea that others exist. Only through history when the Harbingers themselves have been able to arrive have the cultists come together and been capable of remarkable feats of their dark and misguided faith.

The Cult might not seem as directly deadly as a Seraphim Dreadnought or the devouring maws of the Harbingers but it is far more vast and timeless. It can exist where the Harbingers cannot, working toward their dark ends with loyal determination.

The Cult's Origins

Ever since the first gate was thrown open by the Vorlons and the Harbingers spilled into the galaxy, there has been a Harbinger Cult. The Harbingers' telepathic presences engraved their promises on the genetic structures of a thousand races, surfacing from time to time in the faithful. Dark prophets spoke of formless forces that would reward believers with fathomless power and religions drew images of their devils using their genetic memories of the Harbingers as a model.

Once the Harbingers find a new universe their hunger will not allow them to forget its location or its inhabitants. Even after they are pushed back into their own dimension, the gates lost and the Thrones destroyed, the Harbinger Cult remembers. Although their dark masters were being hunted down by the First Ones, severing many of the minor telepathic tethers that created many Cultists, the Harbingers continued to broadcast their promises across

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dimensional boundaries. The great masses of servile Cultists dispersed at the same rate that the Harbinger presences were removed from the galaxy but many willing servants remained to continue their worship.

It was these primitive cultists that seeded the Harbinger 'faith' among their respective peoples. Over the course of the following million years the Harbringers crowded around the places in the universe where the boundaries were thinnest, communicating through telepathic enhancements and other connections to those who remembered them. The Harbringers would survive to keep a tether to their only failed conquest, because one day they would return to finish what they had started.

The Two Types of Cultist

Even though there are literally hundreds of different sects within the Harbinger Cult from species to species, historians and theorists break the Harbinger Cult into two main types: the Servitors and the Devout. Every Harbinger Cultist falls into one of these two categories depending on his level of free will.

Servitor cultists are the general masses who fall under the telepathic influence of the Harbringers as they draw nearer

to their dimension. Although these cultists might choose to become Devout after long periods of time as Servitors, most do not remember being controlled by the telepathic whispers and view their time in service to the Harbringers much the same as they would a bad dream. Although crowds of self-sacrificing Servitors are deadly in their own rights, they are often too mindless and chaotic to be much more than a distraction for whatever the true goal of the Cult is.

Devout cultists, on the other hand, are willing servants to the coming of the Harbringers. They have either been touched directly by the Harbringers' telepathic promises and decided to believe them or researched the idea of the Harbringers enough to want to serve them. Several doomsday cults and sub-culture religious groups may be Devout Harbinger Cult sects and not even know that they are worshipping an inter-dimensional evil that stretches back millions of years. On the other hand, some are well aware of what they worship – and they revel in it.

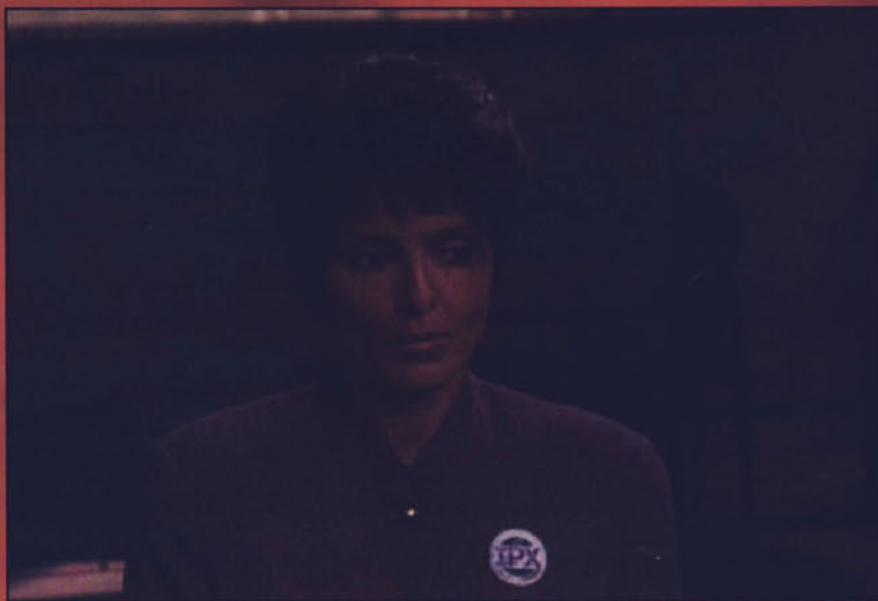
While Servitors only appear when the Harbringers draw near or enter their dimension, Devout exist in some form at all times. They might read ancient texts on dark gods and study engravings taken from artefacts that date back to the Thirdspace War but few are able to say that they have communicated directly with the Harbringers. Almost none can say they have seen one. The Devout base their faith

Harbinger Cult Servitors

The Servitor cultists ensnared by the Harbingers' telepathic whispers are caught somewhere between being automatons and frenzied servants. Those who succumb to the whispers (see page 19 for details) will carry out whatever duties the Harbingers require of them. To better do so, they are able to shut off certain aspects of their nervous and endocrine systems.

All Harbinger Servitors have the following special rules:

- ⑤ **Relentless** – Servitor Cultists ignore the effects of nonlethal damage and will fight if necessary until they are at –9 Hit Points. They die as normal at –10 Hit Points.
- ⑤ **Dedication** – Servitor Cultists act as though they have a minimum Strength and Constitution score of 18 and are considered to automatically pass any Will saves they are required to take.
- ⑤ **Violent** – Servitors Cultists will automatically respond to any obstacle to their service with violence. If they are armed they will use their weapons normally; if they are not armed, they will resort to unarmed attacks.
- ⑤ **Amnesia** – Once a Servitor Cultist is freed from the Harbingers' direct influence he tends to want to forget everything that happened while he was a member of the Cult. Anyone freed from the Harbingers' telepathic probes can make an immediate Will save at a DC equal to 25 – the number of days spent as a cultist in order to block out the memories of what happened.



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on what they have learned from tomes and scrolls or from what a prophet wrote down the last time the 'great ones' came to the planet.

Servitor cultists serve because they are weak-willed and have no choice but to bend under the growing telepathic assault of a nearing Harbinger presence. Devout cultist serve as a matter of belief and faith that the Harbringers (or whatever name they attribute to them) will one day reward them with supreme power and their version of utopia.

What the Cult Can Do

It might seem to some that the members of a cult that worships and serves extra-dimensional beings might not have much in the way of power without their masters present. This could not be farther from the truth. The whole reason the Harbinger Cult exists is to try and help bring the Harbringers to their dimension, no matter how foolish and suicidal such an endeavour might be. The Harbringers use the Cult to manipulate their target universes into opening the doors for them once more.

Devout cultists are open to the cross-dimensional broadcasts of telepathic messages from the Harbringers. Their closeness and belief in the Harbringers' existence is enough to thin the barriers between dimensions, in much the same way that telepaths can 'think' their way into clairvoyance or precognition. Through the wonders of First One-level metascience, Cultist belief becomes a strong beacon to the Harbringers waiting in their own dimension. If the belief is strong enough, it may even forge a limited bridge between the dimensions.

Throughout the ages dedicated groups of cultists have actually been able to *summon* the Harbringers – or their constructs – from their dimension into the cultists'. These rituals often require a massive sacrifice of cultists, captives and the like in order to weaken the barriers.

Following the directions written in ancient artefacts or communicated to them through 'prayer,' Harbinger Cultists ensure that the two dimensions remain close to one another at all times. They do this through a number of commonplace events and activities. These activities and events are rarely viewed by the masses as anything but strange religious or archaeological practices, which is why so many Cult sects are unknowingly allowed to continue to exist.

Spreading the Faith

The primary source of the Harbinger Cult's overall power is its ability to spread and populate, like a virus. Even when the Harbringers themselves are too far away to influence the wills of would-be Servitors, the Devout members of the many sects will continue to make others believe in them. With the occasional show of faith to prove the existence of the 'dark gods,' the cult leaders attract more and more to their cause.

The only real problem the Cult faces is the very nature of the Cult itself. Designed to be fractious and shattered in order to avoid detection, the many sects of the Harbinger Cult are for the most part unaware of their brethren. One sect devoted to the all-consuming elder god Azathoth on Mars might discover a visiting cell of Abbai cultists that worship the star-eater Er'illin, think of them as belonging to an opposing faith and choose to eliminate them – even though both are actually pieces of the same intergalactic cult. Only those who have been directly touched by the Harbringers will recognise their fellow worshippers quickly enough to stem any conflicts. It is the nature of such a many-headed beast to occasionally bite itself in its frenzied feeding.

Gathering Pieces of History

The Harbringers came to the galaxy only once before the Thirdspace Event of 2261 but they were widespread and numerous. When the First Ones forged their armies and hunted down the Harbringers there were terrible battles by the light of a thousand stars. Their destroyed ships, artefacts and even their bodies were strewn to the farthest corners of known space – where many of them would remain for millions of years until discovered by xenoarchaeologists.

These Harbinger items (or fragments of items) are very important to the Harbinger Cult. Cultists view these items

Telepathic Enmity

Harbinger Cult members in the Babylon 5 universe, both Servitor and Devout, are telepathically or instinctively steered against the teachings and followers of the First Ones. They might not know the extent of their contrariness but it is definitely present in anyone touched by the Harbringers.

In game terms, anyone who is an active member of a Harbinger Cult sect must pass a Will save at DC 20 in order to knowingly perform any sort of action that he is aware will help the goals of the First Ones or their servants. Should a failed Will save score less than 10, the Cultist will choose to fail maliciously in the action instead.

Servitor cultists automatically fail this save and react violently as per their specific rules (see above).

like holy relics from when their gods walked the stars. From tiny shards of chitin to dormant constructs, cultists seek out anything that has been touched by their gods. The Harbinger Cult gathers these pieces of ancient history not only for their value to the reliquary but also because the most ancient writings of all their sects tell them to.

The Harbinger relics are mostly just long dead pieces of ancient history but some are still biologically active pieces of grown constructs that can be unearthed, awakened and eventually activated. This means that even long after a Harbinger extinction has been defeated the Cult may be able to piece together a way to cross into that dimension again. Telepathic focusers, portal stabilisers and other constructs could be reactivated by Devout members in order to strengthen their ties to the Harbingers and eventually invite them into the dimension once again.

Working against their Enemies

When the Harbingers come to a new dimension they are almost always attacked by the most advanced beings in that universe, who probably opened the door to let them through in the first place. Whatever the outcome of these battles, the telepathic imprint of what those beings represent to the Harbingers is passed on to their cultists. The enemies of the Harbingers become the instinctual enemies of the Cult.

This telepathic enmity means that the Harbinger Cult will grow over generations to instinctively work against any beings that have stood against the Harbingers. In some universes the Harbinger Cult becomes directly opposes its masters' foes, but in most – like the Babylon 5 universe – the Cult is simply a growing annoyance of opposed beliefs and teachings. For example, the Azathoth sect of the Harbinger Cult is very strong throughout the Earth Alliance's worlds due to the written works of H.P. Lovecraft. The subtle strengthening of the Harbinger Cult is one reason the Earthers have such a varied and broken stance on religion compared to the many faiths elsewhere in the galaxy. The Vorlons, who stood against the Harbingers, want their vassals to believe in them as gods – and the Harbinger Cult works against this view.

Although only the Devout cultists can actively work against the Harbingers' enemies, they are often very capable. Considering that 98% of the galaxy's sentient population does not even believe in the Harbingers, the many sects of the Harbinger Cult depend on their ability to move unnoticed in order to influence communities, governments or entire cultures. In a fitting parallel of the telepathic dark whispers and promises the Harbingers use to create the Cult, the Cult becomes a voice in the ear of others.

The manipulation and utilisation of unknowing masses are the cult's greatest weapons, defences and goals.

Summoning Rites

The Harbinger Cult exists to serve its dark masters from beyond, even if cultists are not aware of the true nature of their masters. Through telepathic messages and ancient written secrets, it is possible for some Devout cultists to actually draw out the equation required to open a tiny doorway between the dimensions – if only for the blink of an eye. In older times when science could not explain the bending and breaking of dimensional boundaries this was called 'sorcery' but regardless of what it is called it can result in the unthinkable.

Using the dark designs and specific sacrifices shown to their predecessors in the Age of Ancients, the Harbinger Cult recreates involved rituals that turn the life energies and telepathic wavelengths of believers into a palpable force that can open doorways between the dimensions. These rituals must be led by the most experienced of Devouts (see the prestige class below for details) in order to function properly but can result in new Harbinger constructs being pulled into the universe.

Occasionally lone Harbingers have been brought across in these summoning rites, at the cost of many lives. A single Harbinger is a powerful being to be sure but it is not immune to the armaments of other universes and will eventually attract enough attention to be dealt with. During that time however, many Servitors can be forced to protect it while it creates and grows numerous constructs to further the ultimate goal – to create a gate big enough to bring the Thrones through.

After a summoning has taken place the Cult generally takes a drastic shift. Many of the sceptical members that might not have fully believed in the Harbingers become frightened and try to leave the sect. Devout cultists rarely allow that to happen and attempted deserters often comprise the next round of sacrifices. An increase in Servitors means the sect gains a small army of willing servants to do the Devouts' will but the ultimate leadership comes from the Harbingers. Even if the sect is not strong enough to bring an actual Harbinger across dimensional walls, each successful summoning brings it that much closer to being able to do so.

Eventually the individual sects of the Harbinger Cult will succeed in calling one of their dark masters 'home' and the Harbinger summoned will begin to pull the various sects together into one pure and unmolested cult again. The more successful the number of sects that can bring the summoned Harbingers together, the more these interdimensional invaders can accomplish.

The Harbingers

What can one Harbinger create?

Summoning Harbringers allows for the extra-dimensional beings to put their millennia-old talents for matter rearrangement and metaphathic creation to great use. Unlike in universes where their extinction armadas have already conquered the dominant life forms, the Harbringers do not have the population in the universes to which they have been summoned to draw together war constructs and starships. It takes more than just the ability to gather matter from energy to make artificial living constructs. A single Harbinger can use its abilities to create simple devices and the like but it is only when these summoned Harbringers gather that they can create bigger and better things.

The following table shows the kinds of constructs and devices that can be created by a variable number of summoned Harbringers.

Number of Harbringers Working in Concert	Examples of Possible Constructs	Time Required to Create ¹
1	Reinforcing Tendrils, Chitin Armouring (DR 12).	2d6 minutes
2 – 3	Purely Chitin Construction, Defensive Portal.	2d6 hours
4 – 5	Telepathic Enhancement Focuser.	2d6 days
6 – 9	Small Energy Re-doubler.	2d6 weeks
10 – 14	Cherubim-class vessel, Defensive Shield Generator (personal).	2d6 months
15 – 24	Nephilim-class vessel, Large Energy Re-doubler.	1d3 years
25 – 49	Defensive Shield Generator (spacecraft).	1d6 years
50 – 99	Seraphim-class vessel, Huge Energy Re-doubler.	2d6 years
100 – 499	Gargantuan Energy Re-doubler, Defensive Shield Generator (architectural).	2d6 decades
500 +	Throne-class vessel, Thirdspace Gate replication.	2d6 centuries

¹This assumes uninterrupted concentration for the listed amount of time; counting ten-hour work shifts as a single 'day.'

New Prestige Class - The Harbinger Devout

There are those who read too deeply into ancient texts or seek out long and forgotten religions in order to find new or unique aspects of history. They dig through tombs and libraries in search of locked away secrets. Some do it

for money, others for the love of the find. Still others do it out of a desire to interact with the taboo. Many find nothing but dusty stories and legends but a select few find something more. Once uncovered, the secrets of the Harbinger Cult can sink their fangs deep into the mind of the discoverer, seducing him from within to become a servant of dark, alien beings.

Those who are willingly persuaded to walk the path of the Harbinger Cult, no matter its name in their corner of the galaxy, unlock ancient secrets that will change their lives forever. By becoming a Devout member of the Cult, even if one has no idea about it, a convert taps into unfathomable power in exchange for continued servitude. The Harbinger Devout knows that his faith is a key to something greater than himself, his fellows or anything else for that matter.

Each Harbinger Devout has the ability to manipulate the world around him using a combination of his inherent skills and powerful connection to the Harbingers. Through the strength of his belief and several recorded and ancient rituals he can communicate with the Harbingers, allowing them to work their dark machinations through him.

Additional Hit Points: 2

Requirements

To qualify to become a Harbinger Devout (HDv), a character must fulfil all the following criteria:

Abilities: Wisdom 13+, Charisma 12+

Feats: Skill Focus (Knowledge (ancient theology))

Skills: Bluff 6 ranks, Knowledge (ancient theology) 6 ranks

Special Requirements: The character must have come into contact with Harbinger-centric texts, artefacts, relics and so on and at least be devoted to the study (if not the recalling) of some kind of mythic and all-consuming darkness. Games Master permission is required before any specific belief or study can count for these purposes, as not all ancient myths of this kind refer to the Harbingers.

Class Skills

The Harbinger Devout's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Athletics (Str), Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Intrigue (Cha), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (any), Linguistics (Int), Notice (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Stealth (Dex), Subterfuge (Dex) and Technical (any).

Skill Points At Each Level: 6 +Int modifier

Additional Influence: A Harbinger Devout's Influences reflect his ability to manipulate others within the cult and can be used as a power base in many ways. The character gains 1d4 Influence points plus his Charisma bonus every level to be added to any Influences he has access to.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Harbinger Devout prestige class:

Weapon Proficiency: A Harbinger Devout is proficient with all close combat and pistol weapons.

Induction Boon: At 1st level, the character has just begun his journey into his sect of the Harbinger Cult. The character is inducted into the sect with a tattoo, scar or similar permanent marking, granting him access to secret meetings, assets and places. The character with this class feature can simply show other members of his sect his marking to automatically prove his membership. Faking such a marking is a dangerous affair and anyone caught infiltrating a Harbinger Cult sect will surely be in the next round of sacrifices.

Strength of Faith: The Harbinger Devout can calm his fears and seek shelter within his belief, discovering there is more and more lurking within the folds of the sect secrets. There are three levels of this class feature: Initiate, Acolyte and Patron. Initiates find a calming influence in the text of their sect, gaining a +1 bonus to their Will saves. Acolytes have begun to understand that their flesh is temporary in the grand scheme of their gods and can ignore an amount of nonlethal damage inflicted upon them equal to their Wisdom bonus each round. Patrons no longer fear death as long as they remain in the service of their gods: each round they may, as a free action, make a Will save and instantly heal an amount of nonlethal damage equal to the result -10.

Power Structure: At 2nd level the Harbinger Devout has begun to link his allies together through the many members of his sect. He can make new contacts and connections that might otherwise be unavailable to him. Whenever the character wants to add a new type of Influence to his list of Influences he has a chance equal to 10% times his Charisma bonus to do so without ever having to go through normal channels to garner that Influence. Although nearly any Influence can be gained in this way, some - Anla'Shok or Drakh Entire, for example - are just too implausible. The Games Master retains the final say.

Summoning: Beginning at 2nd level, the character can begin to participate in the powerful sacrificial rituals that bridge the space between dimensions and summon proof of the Harbingers' existence in some way. These rituals require a certain amount of life force to be sacrificed at the time of the summoning and at least one Harbinger Devout of the listed level must conduct the rite.

The table below shows what each degree of Summoning is capable of, what sort of sacrifices must be made and how long it takes to do so.

The Harbringers

Class Feature Required	HP in Sacrifice(s)	Time of Ritual	Possible Object Summoneds ¹
Summoning I	10	1d3 hours	Chitin Objects, Personal Defensive Shield Generator
Summoning II	50	2d6 hours	Spacecraft Shield Generator, Small Energy Redoubler, Telepathic Enhancement Focuser
Summoning III	200	4d6 hours	Harbinger

¹ Games Master's Choice

Litany of Darkness: By 3rd level the Harbinger Devout has memorised several of the ancient litanies, psalms, stories and so on so that he may recite them in times of desperation. When chosen carefully for the situation at hand, these passages can be exactly what allies need to hear to embolden them with determination and drive. The Harbinger Devout can spend a full round quoting the sect's teachings but a Knowledge (ancient theology) skill check is required at DC 15 to choose the proper litany. If successful, all allied Harbinger Cult members within 30 feet of the Devout (including the Harbinger Devout himself) gain a +1 bonus to all attack rolls and skill checks for 2d6 rounds. This class feature can only benefit someone once in a given scene or combat but could be used multiple times to affect multiple groups of allies.

Manipulative: A member of any secret cult must learn to protect his brethren through masterful command of half-truths, misdirection and social manipulation. Starting at 3rd level, increasing at 6th and 9th levels, the character gains a miscellaneous bonus to the following skills: Bluff, Intrigue, Stealth and Subterfuge.

Induction Rites: Having served faithfully in the sect long enough, a 4th level Harbinger Devout can now spread the faith to others. The character with this Class Feature counts as a sufficient source of Harbinger Cult knowledge to fulfil the Special Requirement of gaining this prestige class for other characters.

Telepathic Awakening: At 4th level, the character is granted a miraculous evolution in his mind due to constant telepathic contact from his dark masters. Although not terribly potent for one who does not already have the gift, the character adds +1 to any P-Rating he might have. He can count Telepathy as a class skill from that point forward. An existing telepath will increase his P-Rating by 1, where a newly created telepath will be considered a P1. At 8th level the P-Level of the character is increased by a further +1.

Voice of Darkness: Deep within the hidden writings are certain passages that can chill even the strongest foe who hears them spoken with the proper faith behind them. Through a sheer force of belief and a full round of reciting emotionally-charged passages, the character can attempt to frighten any non-cult members within 30 feet. A Knowledge (ancient theology) skill check at DC 15 is required to choose the proper passage. If successful, all non-Harbinger Cult members who

can hear and understand the words being spoken in range of the Devout suffer a -1 penalty to all attack rolls and skill checks for 2d6 rounds. This class feature can only penalise someone once in a given scene or combat but could be used multiple times in order to affect multiple groups of enemies.

Relentless Devotion: At 7th level, the Harbinger Devout is a true bastion of the beliefs of his sect. If he concentrates on the knowledge that he is working for the will of his gods, he can push his body to great lengths. Although a temporary fix for some situations, this can help the character do what is needed to keep the sect safe. Should the character be knocked unconscious, sedated, dying, telepathically robbed of action (*pain, daze* and so on) or otherwise forced to forfeit actions he can choose to make Will saves at DC 20 each round to stave off the effects in order to function normally. Once he fails one of these saves the full effects of the situation catch up with the Harbinger Devout and he succumbs to them at that time.

Unflinching Faith: Upon reaching 8th level the character is well within the upper echelons of the sect's faithful members, with many lesser cultists looking up to him as a symbol of what the sect can do. Fully dedicating his flesh and soul to the cause of his cult, the character can consider half (round down) of any lethal damage suffered as nonlethal damage instead – applying all other class features to mitigate this as normal.

Sect Leader: The highest achievement next to transcendence a Harbinger Devout can ever hope for is to be the esteemed leader of a sect within the greater Harbinger Cult. At 10th level a character is one of the most powerful individuals in the servitude of the Cult and can call upon his brethren to perform nearly any act. The character can assume control of any sect gathering and try to persuade a number of other Harbinger Devout cultists to undertake an action – even an extremely dangerous or suicidal one. The Sect Leader can call upon cultists to do his bidding once per month. The cultists he gives specific order to cannot have more experience levels between them than 1d6 + his Charisma bonus (although this number refreshes each month). The sect leader must pass a DC 20 Diplomacy or Intimidate check to convince his underlings of the new course of action (DC 25 for suicidal orders) but this should be a formality for him at this stage of his career. The Games Master has the final say as to what happens concerning these orders but he should remember the sheer fanaticism of the Harbinger Cult when deciding the outcomes.

The Harbinger Devout

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Defence Bonus	Class Features
1 st	+0	+0	+0	+2	+1	Induction Boon, Strength of Faith (Initiate)
2 nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	+2	Power Structure, Summoning I
3 rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	+2	Litany of Darkness, Manipulative (+1)
4 th	+3	+1	+1	+4	+3	Induction Rites, Telepathic Awakening I
5 th	+3	+1	+1	+4	+4	Strength of Faith (Acolyte), Voice of Darkness
6 th	+4	+1	+1	+5	+4	Manipulative (+3), Summoning II
7 th	+5	+2	+2	+5	+5	Relentless Devotion
8 th	+6/+1	+2	+2	+6	+6	Telepathic Awakening II, Unflinching Faith
9 th	+6/+1	+2	+2	+6	+6	Manipulative (+5), Strength of Faith (Patron)
10 th	+7/+2	+3	+3	+7	+7	Sect Leader, Summoning III

Sample Harbinger Cult Sects

The following table details the ten most common Harbinger Cult sects, their average cell population, where they occur and general information concerning their style of worship.

Name of Sect	Sect Occurs in the...	Average Population	Description
Bauline Trilogy	Abbai Matriarchate	12	Worshippers of a secret 'Dark Father' that looks to rape and kill the Great Mother.
Dagohn's Chosen	Brakiri Syndicracy	10	Devoted to a Water God from the Ocean of Death who will come and drown the non-believers.
Eyes of Azathoth	Earth Alliance	25	Traditional doomsday cult of the Elder Gods who will come to devour the universe for its lack of purity.
Ftaghn Po'ka	Pak'ma'ra Civility	5	Scandalous worshippers of a forbidden dark entity outside of the pak'ma'ra religion.
House Laucine	Centauri Republic	25	Ancient Royal House dedicated to the end of the Republic and all imperial supporters.
Muar'ul	Minbari Protectorate	8	Taboo practice of learning about a greater darkness in order to battle the Shadows.
Ser'kin'azath	Sh'lissan Royal Empire	12	Offshoot of the Eyes of Azathoth who believe that they are worshipping the destruction of Humankind.
Tek'rakkan Monks	Drazi Freehold	10	Power hungry monastic order that seeks the end of all their enemies through the worship of a dark spirit banished by Droshalla.
The Red Masks of Vice Ares	Earth Alliance (Mars-specific)	10	Doomsday cultists that think Ares the war god is real and is their inheritance for living on his planet.
Yoggite Principles	Earth Alliance	10	Religious zealots reaching for the awakening of ancient gods in order to be elevated as their only servants.

IN THE WAKE OF THIRDSPACE

'Everyone wants a piece of the pie.'

'Even if the pie is filled with demons from another dimension?'

'Especially then.'

- Max Eilerson to Beatrice Nightingale during IPX training classes

After the Thirdspace gate arrived at Babylon 5 in 2261 and caused seven days of panic, chaos and destruction it was destroyed by the valiant actions of John Sheridan. The parts of the gate that were not consumed by atomic energy were sundered into thousands of fragments that went spinning into the void and the Harbinger warships were utterly disintegrated by the blast.

Or were they?

There were many pieces of the gate that were large enough to be salvaged, even though the people of IPX claimed to not have found any before they left the area. Several of the Harbingers' Cherubim ships were fast enough to get beyond the expanding destruction, taking the brunt of the damage to their shields and using the sensor-blinding EMP shockwave to slip away unnoticed. A dozen different alien races saw what had happened and wanted to know more – if only out of paranoia. The Harbingers' hunger for Babylon 5's universe was stoked like a furnace and their focus on the Harbinger Cult lingering in its dark corners rapidly swelled.

Although kept secret by many of the galaxy's governments, the event in 2261 was not the only instance where Thirdspace and its deadly inhabitants would affect the galaxy. This chapter deals with a handful of Thirdspace-related events that were directly related to the gate's discovery and destruction in 2261.

THE GATE FRAGMENTS

Immediately after the Thirdspace gate exploded in 2261, thousands of chunks of ancient alloy spread out in every direction. Some were irrevocably lost in space; others banged loudly against the hull of the assault fleet and Babylon 5 itself, keeping those pieces from being lost

forever. Many of these floating chunks were gathered up by station personnel during the clean up of the area but some were scooped up by profiteers and IPX ladder-climbers.

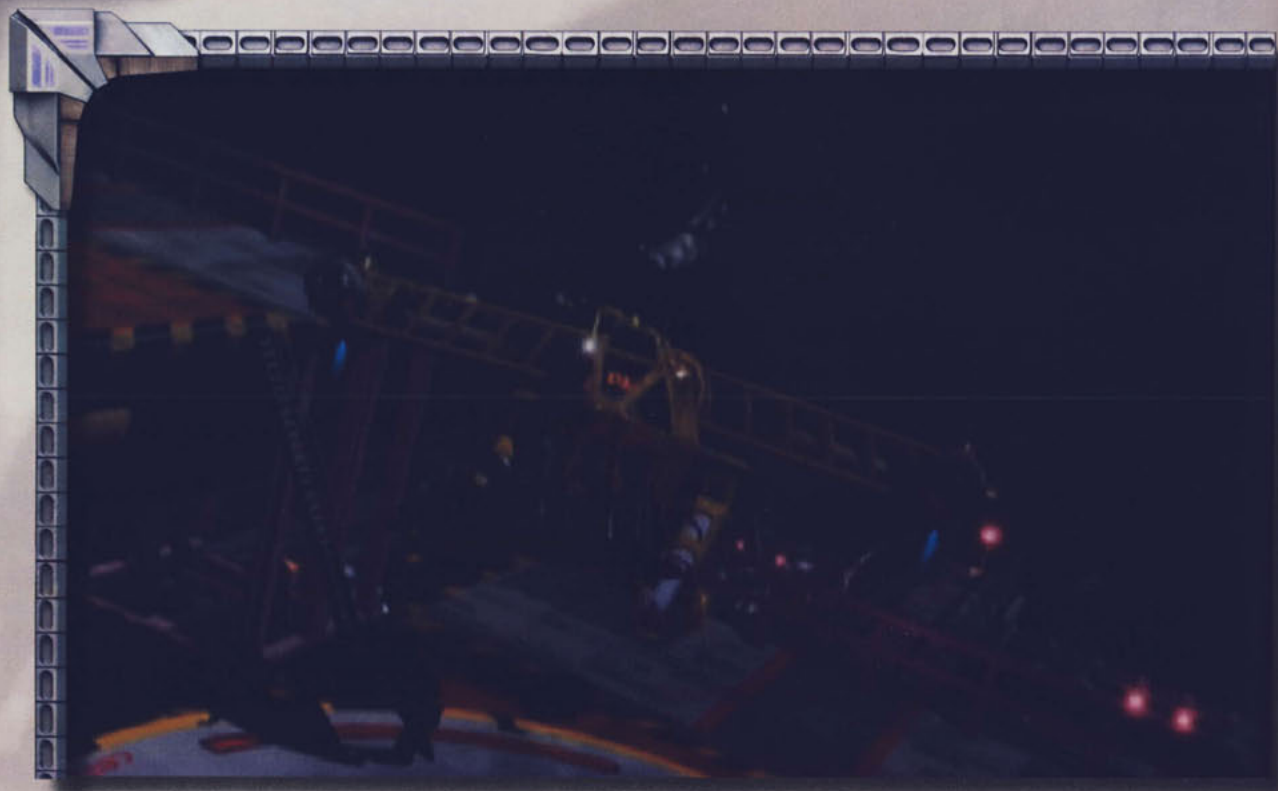
Although the individual pieces of the gate mechanism were not especially helpful to the average xenoscientist, the elements and alloys they were comprised of thrust their governments decades ahead in metallurgy alone. Any fragments that might contain circuitry or device components that helped operate the gate could possibly further space travel or jump engine construction. When dealing with First Ones technology, even shattered chunks of a device could hold the key to unimaginable breakthroughs.

Knowing this to be true, Sheridan told his people to gather up every piece of the gate they could and confiscated them. After a full week of scans and salvage walks outside the station Sheridan packaged all of the collected fragments into a damaged freighter and had Delta squadron tow it to the gravity well of Epsilon Eridani V, a fiercely turbulent gas giant. Sheridan ordered the vessel to be hurled into the planet to be crushed by the atmospheric forces there. As far as Sheridan was concerned this was necessary to ensure that no one had the chance to research those pieces and risk opening another door to Thirdspace.

Sheridan's desire to clean up all the gate's pieces was noble but futile. By the time he arranged for the freighter to be wrecked, two dozen or more large pieces and several tiny ones were already on their way across the galaxy to be studied by a host of scientists. One particular piece, something that was later called the 'keymost fragment' in Doctor Nightingale's journals, would become something of a problem for Interplanetary Expeditions. The finding and secret research of the keymost fragment is the basis of the scenario *This is Pandora's Box*, found in this sourcebook beginning on page 80.

The other fragments, those that were not particularly special except as scientific research materials, ended up in labs and black markets at the corners of known space. A few of the smaller pieces fetched tens of thousands of credits between dealers and any chunk that bore even a tiny amount of Vorlon writing could sell for *millions*.

Most of these pieces were nothing more than samples of the alloy the gate was made of, with a few containing a fraction of a scientific conduit or partial Vorlon letter. Even though their general uselessness was verified over and over again, fragments of the Thirdspace gate appeared in reliquaries all over the galaxy for the next decade.



Scenarios and Plot Hooks

- 5 The next chapter in this sourcebook contains a scenario called *This is Pandora's Box*, which is based on a specific fragment of the gate. It begins on page 80.
- 5 One of the station dockworkers asks the Player Characters to hold a package for him until he gets off his next shift and starts his vacation but will not tell them what it is. The lockbox is about the size of a backpack and weighs around 100 lbs but he is willing to pay them 200 credits just to keep an eye on it for the rest of the night. When security starts poking around to check on ambient radiation turning up on station scans, what will the Player Characters do?
- 5 One of the League of Non-Aligned Worlds' ambassadors has made purchasing arrangements with a very shady character in Downbelow who claims to have a cargo crate in Bay 9 filled with pieces of the Thirdspace gate. Due to the ambassador's reputation and recognisable face he cannot make the monetary exchange himself and turns to the Player Characters for help. He pays them adequately but when a conman in Downbelow delivers a cargo crate full of scrap deck plates the ambassador blames the Player Characters for not checking it out! The ambassador then tells the Player Characters to either get

his money or the promised crate back or he will turn his significant influence against them!

FALLEN ANGELS

When the Thirdspace gate detonated from within there was no question that the massive Seraphim-class vessel in the dimensional door was destroyed utterly. Of the three dozen or so Cherubim and Nephilim that were just outside the gate, several fighter pilots claim to have seen no less than twenty consumed by the atomic fireball before they could not stand to look upon the brightness. With the EMP pulse from the explosion knocking out ship scanners for miles around, the defence fleet suffered a full ten to twenty seconds of blindness.

It was during that time that a handful of Harbinger vessels roared away from the destruction, taking a course behind the planet's dark side to avoid being seen. With so much gate debris floating throughout the area and many of the station's larger ships heavily damaged from the battle, the scattering Harbinger ships escaped without pursuit. Although Sheridan and his allies believed that a few of the powerful enemy ships could have survived the explosion, they did not know how many.

Seven Cherubim and a single Nephilim survived the battle to lash out

The Wake of Thirdspace

The Wake of Thirdspace

at anything they came in contact with. Being artificial constructs they did not have any aspirations or goals; they merely knew that they would have been destroyed if they had remained. Without direct orders from the Harbingers however, the constructs ran on programming alone. Withdrawing to a safe place between solar systems, the constructs repaired their structural damage before returning to the 'search and destroy' protocols they were created with.

Splitting up to cover as much space as possible, the vessels all went in different directions. Although they were powerful ships capable of inflicting and sustaining tremendous damage they were from a chain of dimensions without hyperspace travel. Therefore, none of them had a jump engine or the capability to activate existing jump gates. This made the speed of their advance much slower, especially in the voids between solar systems. As advanced constructs with eternal power sources and relentless programming the Harbinger ships never needed to rest, recharge or even pause in their search. The passing of time was not essential to their programs and they would not stop until they were destroyed.

Over the next twenty years there were several sightings and conflicts with the individual Harbinger ships, mostly localised around the Epsilon Eridani, Sigma 957 and Sector 49 systems. Whenever one of the ships appeared, a small White Star fleet soon followed and attempted to catch the

deadly construct before it got too far from the scene. The White Stars set to destroying the Harbingers' ships as soon as they could, often at some cost.

Six of the seven Cherubim were eventually recorded as destroyed by the year 2284, with one of the smaller constructs following a target ship into a jump point and getting stranded in hyperspace. Whatever became of the advanced ship in the tides of hyperspace would never be officially discovered but several space travellers claimed to have seen a similar craft in the red swirls. This mysterious craft has become a bogeyman of sorts for hyperspace travellers in the Sigma 957 area, even though it has not attacked anyone thus far.

In 2280, the surviving Nephilim was encountered in the space near the Beta 4 system by a cell of foolish raiders. They saw the advanced technology and the lack of hail responses as a prime opportunity to steal new weapons but realised they had bitten off way more than they could chew when the ship's shields absorbed their weapons' fire. Although the destroyer's hellfire lancets ripped the raiders' carriers into scrap in seconds, it took the Nephilim too long to deal with the swarming fighters. By the time it had dealt with all but six of the buzzing Delta-V2s, a trio of powerful White Star Gunships had jumped into the scene and focussed their fire upon it. Incapable of making a hyperspace escape like most ships, the Nephilim was only able to destroy one of the advanced ships before it was overcome.



These dangerous vessels escaped destruction in 2261 to continue to wreak havoc upon the galaxy for over two decades. They would remind those who knew what happened just how close the galaxy came to being invaded by a power they could not have stopped for a very long time.

Scenarios and Plot Hooks

⑤ Shortly after the Thirdspace Event, one of the escaped Cherubim is detected nearing a trade convoy heading toward Earth Alliance space. With the relations between Sheridan and President Clark growing worse every day, Sheridan cannot afford to send in any military vessels to deal with the deadly Harbinger ship. Even so, he cannot stand back and watch civilian vessels get torn apart by the Thirdspace alien either. He instead turns to the Player Characters to go and persuade a local militarised raider cell to attack the Cherubim, offering them a free pass through Babylon 5's space in exchange for saving the convoy. Will the raiders stick to the deal just long enough to deal with the Cherubim and then sink their own teeth into the convoy, or will an EarthForce fleet arrive to see an alien ship attacking Human spacers?

⑤ Several refugee supply ships sent from the League of Non-Aligned Worlds to Narn space via Babylon 5 have been reported missing, always around the Sigma transfer flotilla – which cannot be reached. The space in question has been considered safe since the Travellers left earlier that year, so freelance investigators are dispatched to the scene to see what is happening. The Player Characters are hired to simply do a quick flyby of the area and report back but when they arrive they find a veritable graveyard of demolished ships orbiting a punctured flotilla. A Cherubim waits nearby like a lioness protecting its kills.

RE-INVENTING THIRDSPEACE

Those who could remember what happened during the Thirdspace Event returned to their respective governments with fantastic stories. They relayed rumours about faster-than-hyperspace portals and ancient technologies more advanced than the Shadows or the Vorlons. The power hungry governments of the galaxy, still reeling from the damage inflicted to their fleets and planets during the Shadow War, turned their attentions toward mastering the idea of dimensional travel before their competition could.

No matter the dangers involved or the doomsday warnings that came along with the rumours, a host of different galactic researchers began to look into this dangerous idea. They wanted to find a new Thirdspace and use it to their benefit.

Through countless failed experiments, sometimes involving purchased Thirdspace gate fragments and sometimes not, the galaxy's scattered scientific minds began to test the ability to reach alternate dimensions besides hyperspace. Rumours began to spread that these experiments were taking place and those who had fought in and survived the Thirdspace Event spoke vehemently against them. Many scientists listened to the comments and decided to abandon their plans but there were a few who ignored all warnings and pushed on heedless of the dangers.

Though Thirdspace itself was thankfully never reached, these experiments did result in a handful of smaller breakthroughs in jump engine technology and an unexpected advancement in beam-based trajectories. The following are some of the more well-known technological findings from the attempts to find a new way to a new Thirdspace.

Electromagnetic Feedback Sensors

The Abbai learned through research and rumours that the Vorlons had built the Thirdspace gates, that their ships were all living creatures of a sort and that their technology revolved greatly around bio-electric energy. With the hope of bridging the scientific gap between hyperspace and interdimensional travel, the Matriarchy studied the creatures on their homeworld that used bio-electric currents as a way to see. The blackness of the void was surprisingly similar to the crushing darkness of Abba's oceans, so, in theory, devising a sensory system of mechanical nacelles similar to those found on the nose of the oceanic requia (a shark-like creature) would allow their ships to 'see' dimensional currents.

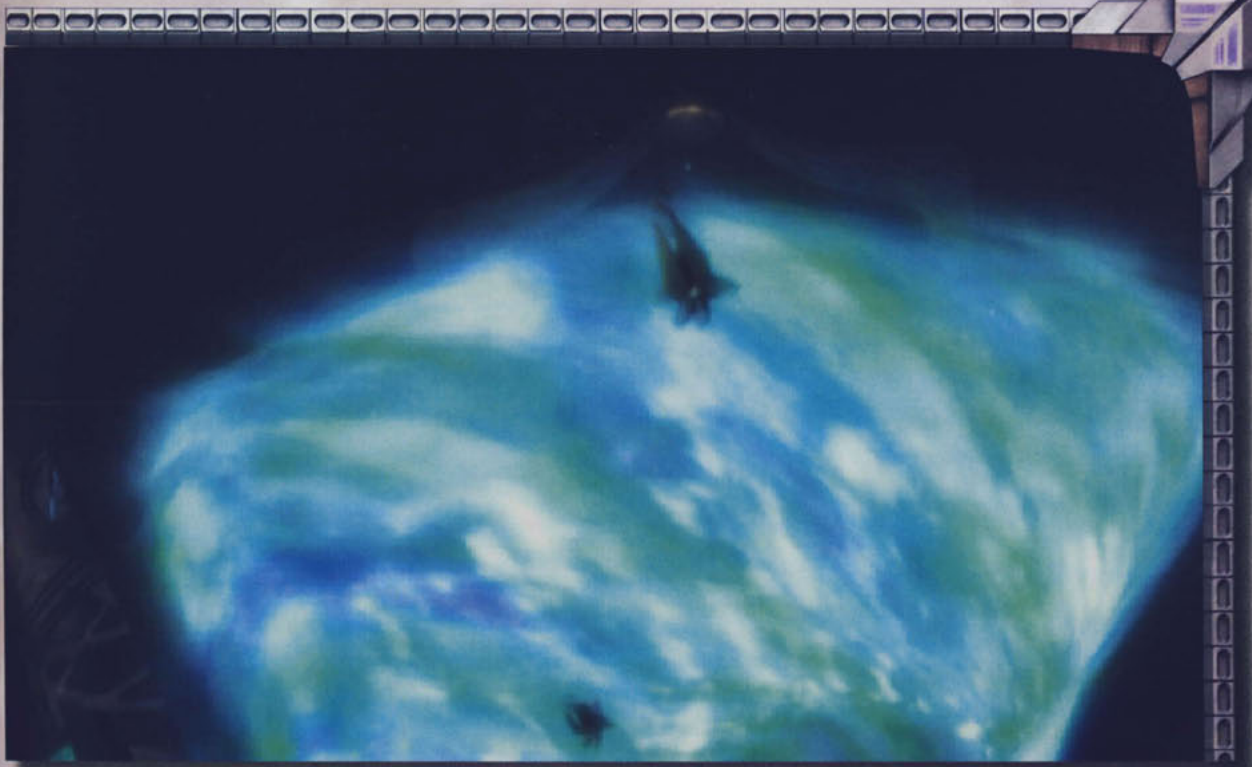
Their initial idea failed. Their new sensor system was extremely powerful and could detect even the subtle electromagnetic pulse that precedes the opening of a jump point but it did nothing to help find alternate dimensions.

An Electromagnetic Feedback Sensor (EFS) suite component would cost 300,000 credits on the open market, requires an additional Command Space on a ship and increases the Sensor rating of the ship by +3. Additionally, any ship or fleet that tries to use a jump point of any type to ambush the EFS-bearing ship or its fleet will automatically lose Initiative to the EFS-equipped vessel in the first round of combat.

Temporal Alignment Targeters

The Hyach, well aware of their impending genetic extinction, decided that alternate dimensions might hold the answer to their plight. Perhaps an advanced extra-dimensional race like the Harbingers (albeit hopefully a less violent one) could save them from their own deeds.

The Wake of Thirdspace



Using their already advanced sciences of light-transmitted harmonics in combination with several energy-siphoning pieces of technology purchased from the Thirdspace Event, the Hyach planned on building a small ship that could dive back and forth between dimensions. They assumed this would be far safer than actually opening a portal through which possibly malicious forces could come.

Their theories were sound but they could not get the transmission beams from the altered jump engines to perform as desired. Their ability to target a few square feet of space with their harmonics became uncanny, even if they could not slice open dimensional walls like they wanted to. The resulting software/lens combination was shelved for a few years until a military genius named Yuppika added it to his warship's harmonic lasers. The resulting accuracy granted from the advanced targeting software, which used the passage of time to figure the best point of impact, was remarkable.

A Temporal Alignment Targeter component would cost 150,000 credits per weapon system fitted on the open market and allow the firer of an enhanced weapon system to choose where the first 10% of that weapon's Offence (after armour) would be applied against an enemy target.

Zero Point Jump Engines

Using common jump drive technology to try and place dual-layered jump points in order to break into another

dimension, the Brakiri invented a type of jump engine that opened *exactly* where it was required. So long as the ship creating the jump point was in realspace, the hyperspace vortex would open at a specific point instead of a general area. This was a huge advance in the Brakiri's jump technology and although they never found a faster dimension to travel in, it was soon fitted to many of their warships.

A Zero Point Jump Engine component would cost 500,000 credits on the open market, require a gravitic engine to function properly and grant the ship it is attached to the Jump Point ship feature. Also, it would allow a ship to use the *Open Jump Point!* special order without need for any skill checks.

Scenarios and Plot Hooks

- 5 The Drazis are looking for a group of brave freelance spacers to test out their new hyperspace-enhancing engine and are even willing to provide the vessel in which it must be tested. They are paying very well and can be more than a little influential when they want to be. What they are not telling the Player Characters is that they will not be on the actual test ship; they will merely be sent in as an open space decoy to distract the local raiders while the real ship is tested. What will the characters do when the raiders arrive and they discover that they do not have a jump engine at all, let alone an experimental one?

5 Word is spreading fast in spacer circles that the Centauri have managed to actually open small portals to alternate dimensions using the alloys salvaged from the Thirdspace gate. The scientific community wants to see some kind of proof of this and the Centauri Republic are not confirming or denying the claims. For the Narn, the idea that the Centauri could ever have such power at their disposal is unacceptable. The Regime will go to great lengths to sabotage the Centauri science vessel, the *Jadavi Dream*, which is believed to house the research. They will even use the Player Characters to help their saboteur get on board, whether the Player Characters know it or not!

A NEW RISE OF THE HARBINGER CULTS

The Harbingers had not been to the Babylon 5 universe in over two million years (other than the occasional summoning) and had never been there in high enough numbers to make an impact. The Thirdspace Event in 2261 allowed for dozens of Harbinger constructs and even a few Harbingers to cross over, sending their telepathic promises and ancient triggers into space to be heard by their devoted cultists.

While the Harbingers' arrival caused hundreds of Servitor cultists (see page 64) to rise up and nearly demolish the station, the Harbingers' dark whispers found more individual ears as well. Several hidden Devout cultists saw their arrival as an unholy miracle and chose to serve the will of the dark aliens willingly.

When the gate was destroyed and the Servitors rapidly shook off the influence of the Harbingers, most of them were thankful to forget what had happened and why. In the confusion that followed there was no way to know who had willingly committed acts of evil and who had been driven telepathically. Devout cultists kept their anonymity by acting as though they had no choice and the few Servitors who remembered and *liked* what they had done became new Devouts. Even though the Harbingers had been defeated, they had stoked the flames of the Harbinger Cult in the galaxy.

Word that the 'dark gods' had arrived spread fast through the Cultists' ranks, with each sect believing its own version of the stories. In an ironic mirror of what had happened when the Vorlon Ambassador Kosh revealed his true shape to dozens of onlookers on Babylon 5, the cultists saw only their own theology at the Thirdspace Event.

There was one single poignant fact about the event that stuck out in every Harbinger cultist's mind—that John Sheridan had robbed them of their gods' arrival. In a time where Sheridan and

his command staff had enough to worry about in the form of the growing problems with President Clark, he had inadvertently turned thousands of different cultists from various races against himself.

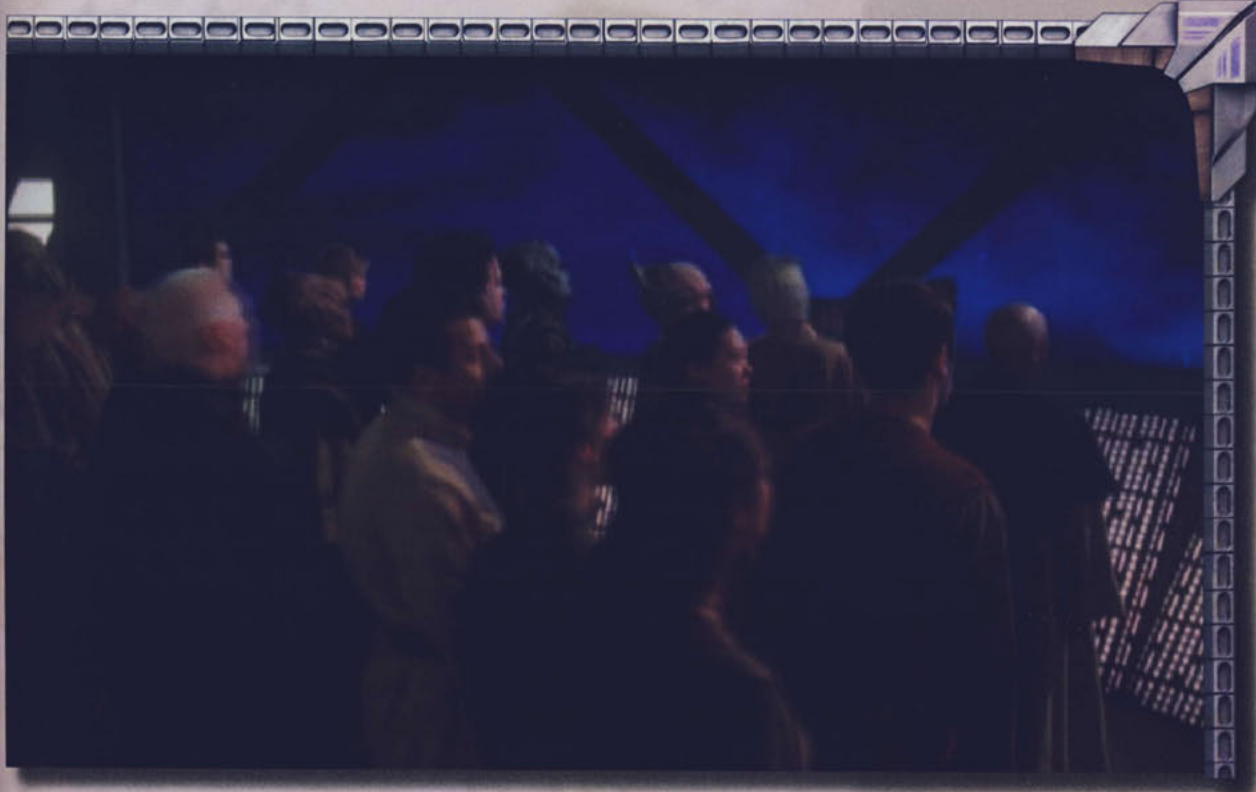
Not as directly powerful as any specific galactic government, the Harbinger Cult was more like a swarm of parasites in the following years. Using their significant allies and contacts they helped Sheridan's enemies and fed information to them. Cultists crewing Sheridan's EarthForce ships made silly mistakes on purpose, doing what they could from 'behind enemy lines' to cause hardship for the man who had thwarted their gods.

Their enmity for Sheridan aside, the Harbinger Cult experienced a huge surge of activity when the Harbingers' arrived. With the dark aliens hovering so close to the dimensional barriers, the telepathic whispers to their longest surviving cultists were stronger and more constant than ever before. New sects of the Cult sprouted up all over Earth Alliance space and in the League of Non-Aligned Worlds, many on worlds that had never even seen cultists before.

Scenarios and Plot Hooks

5 A charismatic Cult leader in Downbelow is trying to gather all the willing Human servants of the Harbingers under the banner of his sect, the Eyes of Azathoth. He is looking for a sacred number of initiates for what he is calling a 'worthy sacrifice.' When he reaches that number, he is planning on storming the fusion reactor of the station and sabotaging it. Word travels fast on the station and Zack Allen wants to squash this little uprising but no one knows who the leader really is. Zack will need to turn to new faces that are not part of station security to infiltrate and uncover the cult's leader. Will the Player Characters be up to the task or will they succumb to the draw of the cult's power?

5 One of the new Devout cultists on Babylon 5 has an older brother in Earth Alliance politics and he believes that he can use his brother's position to hurt Sheridan's efforts against President Clark. He knows that he cannot move openly against the station captain, as he would be too easily dealt with. He must instead work through a group of unknowing patsies — the Player Characters. When he gives them a pair of data crystals to smuggle to an ISN contact of his he does not inform them of what they are carrying: the mapping schematics to the most damaged sections of the station! With that information, Clark's agents could easily deal a fatal blow to several of the station's decks at once and take Babylon 5 by force! If the Player Characters find out what they have in their possession, what will they do?



5 Perhaps one of the Player Characters is secretly turned into a Devout Harbinger cultist under the noses of his friends and allies. He must work his dark missions and machinations without being caught by his closest companions or he might need to try and seduce them into seeing what the cult offers to those with open minds. Even if the other Player Characters discover what kind of faith their companion has begun to follow, will they care? Will they try and change his mind? Will they see what he is capable of as he grows in power... and join the cult alongside him?

THE PROPAGANDA ENGINE

It did not take terribly long for the gossipmongers and reporting officials of the galaxy to get their greedy talons onto the story that Babylon 5 had been in possession of a massive and ancient artefact, that they had activated it and that they had been forced to destroy it. The facts were simple enough but with Clark's propaganda machine working overtime through StellarCom and ISN, the facts quickly morphed into scandal for the station once again.

Reports on ISN began to discuss how Sheridan and his alien-influenced cabinet of advisors had somehow managed

to create some kind of alien doomsday weapon to target Earth. Clark-sponsored media stars claimed that Sheridan had had plans to set the device against his own people, but that it had gone off prematurely, destroying itself. Several pictures of the device exploding from within, likely from stolen records of surveillance cameras on IPX maintenance drones, made it onto these reports. All images of White Stars and Sharlins battling the gate removed were removed for television and the galaxy was shown only the gate arriving and detonating.

Even though nearly all of the League governments were receiving eye-witness reports that spoke differently, several diplomats and negotiators were influenced at least partially by the media's spin. Sheridan had to spend many hours in private meetings with ambassadors and hold information releases to calm fears and worries. Knowing that a lot of what he was dealing with was just a smokescreen for various races to try and get more intelligence on the Thirdspace gate, he had to carefully weigh what sort of information he could give out. Sheridan revealed only what he thought the other races could handle, which was a number of half-truths that sugar-coated what had really happened.

It was obvious to most that the media circles were twisting the event terribly to make Babylon 5 seem like a haven for weapons of mass destruction and Sheridan like a power-

maddened despot. Even as other alien races began to publish contrary reports through different publications, Clark's spin specialists continued to condemn the station and everything they had tried to do. Similar to the secrecy and cover ups that Clark sponsored concerning the Shadow War, the Thirdspace Event was attributed to Sheridan and his 'alien conspirators.' It was not until long after Clark's presidency was violently ended that the Human population was informed of the truth of what had happened.

While the Human-controlled ISN and Stellar Com were being used against Babylon 5, the more alien-centric media covered the Thirdspace Event in their own styles for their own reasons. The following few mass media sources had much different takes on the event:

Galactic Underground Report

Considered to be the leading amateur newspaper at transfer stations and other spacer hangouts throughout the galaxy, the 'Goo Report' is often a mix of personal ads, classifieds and breaking news that might affect interstellar travel. When word came out that a gigantic artefact nearly two miles in size had been pulled out of hyperspace, the Report listed a huge collection of the various galactic governments' laws on hyperspace salvage. Rather than paying any attention to the Thirdspace Event at all, the writers at the Report simply wanted to inform their readers how to make the most out of anything they might find!

The Huntsman's Listing Network

The main source of information used by both bounty hunters and listing employers, the HLN is a widespread and secretly run network of linked data sources to help hunters catch their bounties. For six weeks after the Thirdspace Event the HLN placed a hold on all bounties in the Babylon 5 area, claiming that the incident could result in undue hardship for hunters. Many bounty hunters still came and went as they pleased, using the chaos of Babylon 5's repairs as cover for their activities, but the HLN did not let anyone collect on official bounties until things were 'normal' again there.

The League *Minutia*

A Brakiri owned and operated periodical that was originally intended to explain what the League of Non-Aligned Worlds was up to politically, the *Minutia* became little more than a tabloid gossip rag during its first few years of circulation. One of the rag's co-owners, Huxt Uhser, was actually injured badly during the Thirdspace Event – as

a result of his becoming a Servitor cultist and attacking a well-armed security patrol. The *Minutia* actually only told the facts that he could remember: that the artefact had come out of hyperspace, that it had made people go a little crazy and that Sheridan had been forced to send a fleet to destroy it. Due to the lack of additional flavour or colourful commentary in the article, it was almost completely overlooked by its some three million galactic subscribers.

The Neutral Voice of Reason

A privately-owned anti-war transmission that is beamed out over tachyon channels throughout neutral space (of which Babylon 5 is a part), the *Neutral Voice of Reason* took a very interesting stance on the Thirdspace Event. Their masked correspondent, who goes by the handle 'Sister Seven,' explained to all her viewers that she believed Sheridan got what he deserved. She told everyone that Sheridan had meddled with powers well beyond his understanding and that he had opened a can of worms that would one day come back to haunt him and his loved ones. It was the singularly most violent statement Sister Seven had ever made on her show and it revealed her to those in the know as a Devout cultist.

Universe Today

The Universe Today gave front page coverage to a single blurry picture of the Seraphim warship trying to leave the dimensional portal but spoke little of the gate or the event itself. Instead they chose to focus on the beings that had tried to come out of the gate. They ran the headline 'Proof of Life in Alternate Dimensions Found!' and sold a record-breaking number of issues that week.

Scenarios and Plot Hooks

- 5 An undercover reporter for the ISN nightly news reveals himself to the Player Characters during the repairs of the Babylon 5 station after the Thirdspace Event. He needs good footage from around the station for his next expose on the state of things. He promises that he will be fair and make sure not to implicate the Player Characters in any way and says that he will pay them handsomely. All they need to do is wear a few hidden camera buds and audio microphones and walk around a few special areas of the station...
- 5 With the revelation that Sister Seven is actually a Devout cultist, another cultist wants to meet her in

The Wake of Thirdspace

person. He is willing to pay nearly anything to get in touch with the mysterious media star and has even gotten a good lead as to where and who she really is. He only needs someone to help him get there and he looks to the Player Characters for protection and travel arrangements. He will gladly pay for everything, because once he can combine forces with Sister Seven, he knows the cult will be able to use her show to gather even more cultists. What will the Player Characters do when they eventually find Sister Seven and she turns on the new cultist as a 'faulty visionary of a false message?'

5 Sheridan knows that he is being proverbially raked over the coals for what happened with the Thirdspace gate, especially by Clark's supporters and those who believe the president's media angles. Sheridan looks to the Player Characters, who have no direct connection to him, to start a morale boosting pirate transmission using the communication arrays on Babylon 5. Will they accept his offer in order to become famous and important to the command staff or will they turn tail at the first of the death threats that come shortly thereafter?



THIS IS PANDORA'S BOX

'Be careful what you wish for.'

- Famous human proverb

This chapter contains a mini-scenario dedicated to how the aftermath of the Thirdspace Event could interact with a normal *Babylon 5* roleplaying group. It is designed for four to six low- to mid-experienced Player Characters but could easily be scaled forward or back to make it more or less difficult.

Even though the Babylon 5 station is a good place for many roleplaying campaigns to be based around, this scenario takes into consideration that the Player Characters might be from a completely different corner of the galaxy. *This is Pandora's Box* is essentially a detailed introduction to events that could lead to further adventures. It can be used with existing storylines or to begin new ones.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

It is the year 2261 and the people at Babylon 5 have just recently avoided disaster in the form of the Thirdspace gate and its summary destruction. Things at the station have pretty much crawled to a stop while they employ as many people as they can to perform the necessary repairs and the galaxy is just beginning to hear the first whispers about what actually happened there.

One of the project doctors, Doctor Beatrice Nightingale, and a few of her associates have just finished dropping the forlorn Doctor Elizabeth Trent off at an IPX debriefing station and are now headed toward home. Not telling anyone about what she and her colleagues have salvaged and smuggled off the station from the Thirdspace gate, Nightingale chooses to use a passenger-laden commercial liner to get back to their offices on Mars rather than the normal IPX transport.

Nightingale and her associates travel aboard the *Epimetheus*, which just so happens to be the same liner the Player Characters are on when strange things begin to happen to the passengers and crew. Disappearances, bloody-handed murders, strange dreams; these are all just the beginning. Will the Player Characters manage to survive against the ancient evil unleashed by the foolishly curious woman?

THE EPIMETHEUS

[This hulking commercial transport liner is owned by an Earth-based transit corporation called Wellington Yards and is one of the many affordable ways to get from one end of the galaxy to the other in just a few weeks. Wellington's

ships generally travel along neutral space lanes to avoid heavy taxes and jump gate fees. This saves the company millions of credits a year but puts the ship at higher risk from raiders. The *Epimetheus* is one of ten ships in the Wellington Yards transit fleet and it is one of their oldest (it was built back in 2251).

The *Epimetheus* is on one of its neutral space tours, occasionally dipping into governmental space to pick up special passengers (who pay higher prices to make up for the side trip). The ship is offering special fares for its tenth anniversary, including galaxy-wide travel for no more than 1,000 credits per person. There are well over two hundred passengers aboard, many of whom are aliens from throughout the League of Non-Aligned Worlds.

Epimetheus; Asimov-class Space Liner

Huge Spacecraft

Defence Value: 6 (-4 size); **Armour:** 30; **Handling:** +0; **Sensors:** +1; **Stealth:** 4; **Stress:** 12; **Features:** Artificial Gravity, Fusion Engine, Targeting Computer (+1)

Crew: Civilian Line (+1 BAB, +4 Training); three Officers, four Pilots, four Sensor Operatives, 25 Crewmen, 250 Passengers (current)

Construction Spaces: 90 (Cargo 65, Control 5, Crew 5, Engine 5, Hangar 6, Weapons 4)

Fore Arc Weapons

⑤ Particle Beam (Close, Offence 6, one weapon space)

Port Arc Weapons

⑤ Particle Beam (Close, Offence 6, one weapon space)

Starboard Arc Weapons

⑤ Particle Beam (Close, Offence 6, one weapon space)

Aft Arc Weapons

⑤ Particle Beam (Close, Offence 6, one weapon space)

Craft (1): Four Shuttles

The Epimetheus' Notable Crew Members

The following statistics and information are for the crew members of the *Epimetheus*. The Player Characters might have time before or during the scenario to interact with the crew members of the ship, or Games Masters can use these personalities and the *Epimetheus* in different scenarios if they wish.

Captain Lonnie Palamento

The good captain is not much more than a glorified shipwright, having been given a few stripes on his collar and a pay raise to go with his added responsibility of setting work shift schedules and making speeches in front of passengers. He is a nice enough gentleman but has a rough sense of humour that can sometime seem cynical or even arrogant to those who just meet him.

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2nd Level Human Worker (Blue Collar) / 1st Level Officer (fleet)

Hit Points: 8

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 14

Attacks: +3 close combat or +4 ranged

Special Qualities: Vocation Bonus, Branch Specialisation

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10
Skills: Athletics +5, Bluff +4, Computer Use +5, Intimidate +2, Investigate +3, Knowledge (astrophysics) +5, Notice +5, Operations (systems) +9, Sense Motive +6, Subterfuge +3, Technical (electronics) +6

Feats: Dodge, Fluency (Human), Independently Wealthy, Skill Focus (Operations), Spacecraft Proficiency

Equipment: Secured channel link, Wellington Yards uniform.

Brian 'Cookie' Martino

In charge of the mess hall and kitchen, 'Cookie' has a love of the culinary arts and a nigh-military style of managing his staff. Once heralded as the best chef on the *EAS Singletary*, Martino retired from the EarthForce service instead of serving under the draconian Clark Regime. He is a strict taskmaster for his kitchen crew but his Breen-Florentine is among the best in the galaxy. Always willing to chat with

visitors between meal preparations, he is the most dependable font of gossip and hearsay on the ship.

2nd Level Human Soldier / 2nd Level Worker (White Collar)

Hit Points: 13

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 13

Attacks: +3 close combat or +3 ranged

Special Qualities: Co-ordinated Unit +1, Vocation Bonus

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 13
Skills: Athletics +5, Bluff +5, Computer Use +4, Intimidate +4, Intrigue +4, Investigate +4, Knowledge (culinary arts) +10, Notice +5, Sense Motive +6, Subterfuge +4, Technical (mechanical) +5

Feats: Brawler, Fluency (Human, Centauri), Skill Focus (Knowledge (culinary arts)), Spacecraft Proficiency

Equipment: Kitchen tools, Wellington Yards uniform w/ removable apron and chef's hat.

Doctor Wyk'akik

The highest ranking non-Human on the *Epimetheus*' staff, Wyk'akik is a masterful Abbai physician who was hired after she saved a dozen people from violent food poisoning

on the ship nearly a year ago. When the ordeal had passed the ship's captain at the time offered her a job as ship's physician, which she readily accepted. She is a kind soul always looking to help where she can and has a problem turning away from those in need.

3rd Level Abbai Scientist

Hit Points: 7

Initiative: -3

Speed: 30 ft. Swim 40 ft.

DV: 12

Attacks: +2 close combat or +2 ranged

Special Qualities: Mental Agility, Primary Area of Study (Medicine), Peripheral Studies (Technical (electronics)), Alien Technology Familiarity (Human)

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +6; Str 8, Dex 9, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 15

Skills: Athletics +2 (+10 Swimming), Computer Use +6, Investigate +6, Knowledge (galactic cultures) +7, Knowledge (medicine) +10, Medicine +13, Notice +6, Operations (systems) +6, Sense Motive +7, Technical (electronics) +10

Feats: Alien Anatomy, Fluency (Abbai, Human, Narn), Skill Focus (Medicine)

Equipment: Secured channel link, medical kit, Wellington Yards uniform w/matching face mask and doctor's smock.

General Shipwright

There are almost forty crewmen in total serving on the *Epimetheus* and the vast majority of them are Human (easier for Earth Alliance tax purposes). They wear simple magenta uniforms with white trim that cause them to stand out in most crowds. They are adequately paid for their roles on the ship but a few extra credits here and there can often get them to bend rules and look the other way if need be.

2nd Level Human Worker (Blue Collar)

Hit Points: 6

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 12

Attacks: +2 close combat or +2 ranged

Special Qualities: Vocation Bonus

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0

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

Skills: Athletics +4, Computer Use +3, Investigate +4, Notice +4, Operations (piloting, systems or sensors) +8, Sense Motive +5, Technical (electronics or mechanical) +6

Feats: Fluency (Human), Skill Focus (Operations), Spacecraft Proficiency

Equipment: Secured channel link, Wellington Yards uniform

Getting the Player Characters on the Ship

Depending on the status of an ongoing gaming campaign, some Games Masters might find it slightly difficult to get their Players embroiled in the events of this scenario. *This is Pandora's Box* was written with an open beginning that does not have a specific date, time or location in order to give Games Masters the freedom of starting it wherever and whenever they need to.

A ship like the *Epimetheus* is a commonplace sight throughout the galaxy and using one to travel from one star system to another should not be anything out of the ordinary for most *Babylon 5* roleplaying groups. Inserting a stop on the *Epimetheus'* vast and twisting route wherever and whenever the Player Characters need to board a transport, making sure that their desired destination is further down the ship's path, is a good way to get them directly involved.

If the Player Characters are involved with any sort of corporate sponsors or are performing actions on behalf of one of their Influences, Games Masters can simply arrange for their employers to buy the characters tickets to the *Epimetheus*. Word travels very fast in financial circles when large amounts of money can be saved (like in the case of a tenth anniversary discount) and companies all over the galaxy will be trying to jump onto the bandwagon.

For more nefarious or underhanded groups of Player Characters Games Masters could arrange a mysterious rendezvous with a criminal contact or smuggler on the ship. Considering that the *Epimetheus* spends most of its time in neutral space, an otherwise illegal business meeting is much less likely to attract the authorities.

Once the strange events begin the Player Characters will have no choice but to investigate, placing them on the plot path of the scenario.

THE PROLOGUE - THE IPX INITIATIVE

After the Thirdspace Event at Babylon 5, during which Doctor Elizabeth Trent shot and killed Doctor Bill Morishi while under the influence of the Harbingers, IPX's Thirdspace Project was immediately placed in the command of a young and ambitious theoretical physicist named Beatrice Nightingale. After it came out that Morishi had been murdered by Trent, Trent was placed in the custody of the project's executive security officer, Sergio Duprei.

With both co-directors of the project either dead or in custody, Nightingale was given full control of the remainder of the project. She put together the abridged report to give

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to Sheridan but chose to have an escorted Trent deliver it. Beatrice felt it was necessary to keep her own face out of the limelight when Trent was already proverbially in the crosshairs. Once the report was delivered and Nightingale instructed IPX personnel to help clean up the station, one of the field technicians reported to her that they had 'found something.'

Waking Nightingale in the early hours of the morning to bring her a mysterious glowing chunk of the Thirdspace gate, the technician explained that the piece seemed like a fully intact device of some kind from the artefact. Upon closer inspection Nightingale believed the oblong glowing mass to be the 'keymost fragment,' the piece of the gate that had caused it to function.

Choosing not to report the find to Sheridan, Nightingale dismissed the technician and immediately began her preparations to get the device off of the station and back to Mars to be studied further. Knowing that all IPX transports would be closely watched by Babylon 5 security for just this reason she instead tied her travel arrangements with those of Sergio Duprei. He was scheduled to secretly take Trent to IPX detainment and debriefing elsewhere in the galaxy and Sheridan had already given his blessing to Trent's departure.

Packing the device carefully in her own private luggage instead of the cargo hold, Nightingale explained to Duprei and his security agents that secrecy was of the utmost priority. The protection of the device came first and when they reached Mars with their precious find, all of them would receive huge bonuses. Money goes a long way for most IPX employees and Duprei's security agents were no exception.

Shortly after arranging secure IPX travel from Babylon 5 to neutral space IPX offices for Dr. Trent, they bought a dozen passes on the *Epimetheus* for themselves. Mars was somewhere down the ship's route, and Nightingale had to keep her secret discovery safe until they got there.

The Keymost Fragment

The device that Nightingale is hiding and protecting actually had nothing to do with the Thirdspace gate's activation at all but is indeed fully functional. The device is one of the Harbingers' biomechanical constructs, the receiver for a Telepathic Enhancement Focuser (see page 58) that somehow survived the explosion of the gate intact.

From the moment the IPX field technician discovered the fragment it began to send powerful telepathic signals into the minds of all those it came near. These signals slowly bent the decisions of the fragment's victims into those of Harbinger Cultists, some faster than others.

The events of this scenario revolve around the chaos that this device can cause among the unwary and what its servants will do to protect it and further the goals of the Harbingers.

NEW PASSENGERS ARRIVE

The Player Characters should already have been on board the *Epimetheus* for a few days by this time, as they will have needed time to get comfortable with the ship, its layout and its crew. They will have realised that it is kind of a tradition to go to the embarkation deck to welcome new passengers as they come aboard. While it is not the most exciting of times on board the vessel, there are always specials on the drinks and free appetisers being served. It is for these reasons alone that many of the ship's passengers show up for these occasions, not to mention that they get to meet Captain Palamento (who greets every passenger personally).

It is during one of these new embarkations that the secret IPX agents come on board with their ill-fated possession. The following scene is designed to have the Player Characters interact with one of the IPX agents and discover that something strange is afoot.

'Embarkation ramp has withdrawn, Captain,' a crewman says over his shoulder to the pale, wiry man standing to the left of the brightly coloured airlock door. The captain answers with a curt nod. The door hisses and opens, revealing a line of nearly twenty new passengers.

'Welcome to the *Epimetheus*,' Captain Palamento says with a smile, shaking the hand of each passenger as they stream through the doorway. 'We hope your stay is a pleasant one. If you have any questions or inquiries—'

'No! Don't touch that!' A female voice cuts into the captain's well-practiced speech as he reaches to shake her hand. She is an attractive woman in her middle 40s, clutching a canvas duffle bag with white knuckles. Her blonde hair is unkempt and falling out of a strained barrette on top of her head. Seeing all eyes on her suddenly, she laughs nervously, 'Yes, yes, captain, a good time will be had by all.'

As she walks away you can see the captain nodding to one of his deck hands, who sets his floor polisher against the nearest wall and follows her...

The woman is Beatrice Nightingale and the bag contains the Thirdspace fragment. It has already begun to warp her into a willing servant of the Harbingers and she has become quite protective of it.

If any of the Player Characters succeed in a Notice check DC 12, they can also tell that a group of ten male passengers (IPX security agents) are following her. If anyone scores higher than a 24 on the Notice check he can also pick up a strange fact — all of the IPX agents (Nightingale excluded) are wearing the same kind of combat boot.

Should any of the Player Characters choose to follow her or them, it will not take long before they are noticed (make

a few Stealth versus Notice checks to be sure) by Sergio Duprei, who will initiate the following scene:

'Exactly what do you think you're doing?' a deep and calm voice asks from behind you. 'It looks to me like you are getting involved where you should not.'

Turning to face the voice you see an athletic man in a grey jogging suit folding his arms and staring at you from over yellow tinted marksman's glasses. The edge of a large tattoo pokes out from above his collar and he has the steely gaze of a soldier.

'If I were you,' he says coldly, 'I'd keep on walking.'

Sergio is a no-nonsense type of guy but he would rather not get into a fistfight in the middle of the hallway. If the Player Characters ask him anything about Nightingale or the security agents he will tell them that it is not any of their business and that they 'do not know who they are messing with.' If they press the issue he will say nothing and walk away, making a mental note of who he will need to ambush later to make an example out of them. If the Player Characters try to stop him, he will not hesitate to use his significant martial prowess to dissuade them.

THE FIRST NIGHT - BAD DREAMS

The evening the IPX agents arrive there will be a strange rash of horrible nightmares that spread through the crew and passengers because of the Harbinger device being activated by Nightingale in her room. While it transmits the Harbingers' dark whispers into her mind it also sends waves of ambient telepathic contact into the minds of many of the others sleeping on the ship.

Each sleeping Player Character will need to roll a Will save at precisely 3:13 a.m. the first night. Instead of a normal Will save, the result needs to be compared to the following table to determine what happens when the Player's mind is assaulted by the Harbingers' telepathic probes.

Will Save Result	Effects on Sleeping Mind
Less than 8	Servitor Seeding
9 - 10	Devouring Nightmares
11 - 13	Black City Nightmares
14 - 17	Malicious Precognition
18 - 20	Unsettling Dreams
21 - 24	Restless sleep
25 or higher	No effect

Servitor Seeding – The character has been shown the wonders of the Black City and the dark utopia that awaits him if he serves the Harbingers as a proper

Servitor. The will to serve is not strong enough to make him into a Servitor cultist but when the Final Sacrifice takes place he will suffer a -5 penalty to the Will save required (see page 91 for details) to attack the telepathic focuser.

Devouring Nightmares – The character is plagued with horribly visceral nightmares of being devoured by swarming masses of mouths, tentacles and jabbing fangs. So bad are these nightmares that the character's body is wracked with tendon-tearing spasms that actually cause 1d3 points of temporary Dexterity damage by morning. The character receives no benefits for this period of rest and the ability score damage returns at a rate of one point per day until healed.

Black City Nightmares – The character is shown the heaps of cultist bodies and sacrificed beings on the streets of the mythic Black City and is trapped within its walls. Although frightening to a certain extent, the dream is more worrisome than scary, making it feel even more real when the character eventually awakens. For the remainder of the following day the character will not be able to shake the images from his nightmare, imposing a -1 penalty to all Will saves and Concentration skill checks until he can get a full night's rest.

Malicious Precognition – The character sees the *Epimetheus* in a horrible state of disrepair, with the character walking through hallways of shorn limbs and shed blood. Nothing is untouched and bloody handprints and dead bodies the character can recognise as crew and passengers alike are strewn everywhere. Everywhere the character turns however, there is an ominous presence lurking nearby – nearly grabbing him with savage tentacles just before the character awakens. The character's sleep is considered not to have been restful and the character has a -2 penalty to all Notice skill checks until he can get a full night's sleep due to his constant distraction.

Unsettling Dreams – Flashing images of tentacled shadows and crazed people invade the character's subconscious mind all night long. He cannot put his finger on exactly what is plaguing his mind but it is frightening nonetheless. Tossing and turning all night long, the character suffers a -1 to any Constitution-based skill checks the following day.

Restless Sleep – The character cannot find a comfortable place in bed, has a headache or cannot get to sleep for some other reason. No matter what the character does, barring chemical sedation, he cannot get fully to sleep for more than an hour at a time. It is a frustrating evening to say the least and it does not count as a full night's sleep for the character.

In the Middle of the Night

If any Player Character happens to be awake at exactly 3:13 a.m. and out in the hallways of the ship, he will have the chance to hear an interesting series of sounds from the workout room. In this case, the Games Master can have the late night Player Character make an immediate Notice skill check at DC 10. If failed, the character will not hear anything (likely due to how tired he probably is).

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If the check succeeds however, read the following aloud to that Player:

As you walk through the late night deserted halls of the Epimetheus, your palms suddenly become tingly and the back of your neck chills as what you believe is a muffled scream echoes out from around the corner!

The character will most likely run to investigate the scream, finding the sliding door leading to the crew workout room opening and closing rhythmically on the alloy bar of a weightlifting barbell. The character can open the door fully with the press of the access button, or he can jump through between closings with a simple Reflex save DC 10. If the character tries but fails to jump through the door, he will suffer 1d4 points of nonlethal damage as the door batters against him.

Inside the workout room, the character finds the following scene:

Your eyes scan the equipment-laden workout room and you notice the various machines designed to help both crew and passenger stay in shape over the sometimes lengthy trips. Treadmills, stair machines, butterfly weights; these all are scattered through the rather large and well-

ventilated room. For a moment you cannot see anything but the blinking lights on the machines and the trickle of steam from the attached shower room.

Then you notice the pool of blood spreading out from under the free weight stand. You move in for a closer look and find one of the ship's crewmen laying crumpled on the floor in a spreading stain of red. His fingers are clutching at the air reflexively and his right foot kicks uncontrollably every few seconds. The brutal wound on his head is seeping dark red gore at a steady rate. Lying across his shoulders is the barbell that must have slipped from his fingers and punched through his skull, a sticky bloody smear on the bar's weight-attachment pinion.

The Player Character(s) might think to check the unfortunate crewman for life signs with a Medicine skill check DC 12. They will find that he died from a massive head trauma that broke through his skull and into his brain. His movements are the last twitches of life leaving the body.

Clever characters might also want to look over the scene for signs of foul play. An Investigate skill check will give some insight into the scene. Use the following table to determine what can be learned from a single check.

Investigate Result

Less than 10

11 – 15

16 – 20

21 – 25

26 or higher

Information Gleaned

Nothing; looks like a weightlifting accident to you.

The amount of weight on the bar seems a great deal more than what the small-framed crewman should be lifting.

The wound on the crewman's head is *in the back*, which would be very hard to self-inflict.

The crewman is wearing his normal work uniform, something that would be quite uncomfortable to work out in. He was likely not there to work out at all.

If the blow came suddenly and was hard enough to shatter the skull like it did, there would not have been enough time for the crewman to scream. He must have screamed *before* the blow landed.

All results include the beneficial information from lower results as well.

In 2d6 minutes the nearest ship security patrol will come to the workout room, perhaps finding the Player Character(s), perhaps not. If the Player Characters are not present when the security crewmen (two of them) arrive, they will not be questioned or tracked later for their involvement unless the Games Master feels that they left something behind that could link them to the incident.

If the Player Character(s) are in the workout room when security arrives, the officers will come into the room inquisitive at first – then draw PPG pistols and detain the characters as soon as they see their co-worker's corpse. Clever uses of the Diplomacy, Bluff or Intimidate skill against the security crewmembers (see General Shipwright on page 82 for statistics) can dissuade them from making a full arrest but simply saying 'I didn't do it' will only result in the security officers being more suspicious. Security will not use force the issue unless they are pushed into it by the Player Characters they can be easily talked into believing the characters are innocent.

If forced to arrest the Player Character(s), security will simply place them under house arrest and lock them in their quarters. This will of course become moot when the electronic systems of the ship are sabotaged (see *Sowing Chaos*, page 91).

The dead crewman's name is Herod Wailings and he was on night patrol in the area of the workout room when he died. It is safe to say that even if no Player Character is awake to discover the body that it will be the talk of many passengers and crewmen the following day, making the Player Characters aware that a man was killed at the same time that everyone was suffering from strange nightmares and other dark dreams.

DAY TWO - UNEASY EVENTS

The day after the IPX agents arrive, the entire ship feels a bit 'off.' Many of the passengers have sleepy, bleary-eyed faces due to poor sleep the night before. Crew members go about their duties slowly and without care, the casino hangs mostly empty and the restaurant serves only a few people at a time.

Roll 1d3 for each Player Character. That is the number of rolls that character gets on the event table below during day two:

2d6	Day Two Encounter
2	Dangerous Crew Apathy
3 – 5	Silent Passenger Throng
6 – 8	Awkward Moment
9 – 10	Request for Help
11	Worried Passenger
12	Dark Agent Manoeuvrings

Dangerous Crew Apathy

Due to the weight of the imagery and visions from the night before, a ship's crew member has just committed a grave error in his duties. Wherever the Player Character is going on the ship, something bad is about to happen. An engineer might forget to turn back on system safety measures, a pilot could leave the security doors to the airlock open or perhaps a janitor might ignore a pool of toxic spillage on the floor for others to come into contact with. None of these things are done out of any sort of malice or spite, merely out of an absent-minded lack of focus.

The situation the Games Master decides upon will vary exactly what sort of danger the character is in but all characters in the area will suffer the same effects. The DC of any of these dangerous situations should only be 15 and should require a Reflex or Fortitude save to bypass safely. Depending on the event type, failure should cause either 1d6 Hit Points of lethal damage or 1d3 ability score damage.

Example: A mechanic who was tasked to fix a coolant leak on a lower deck forgets to open the pressure valve when he leaves. By the time the Player Character arrives in the area, the pressure has built up too high and explodes! Everyone in the area needs to pass a Reflex save DC 15 or suffer 1d6 points

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What Really Happened in the Workout Room?

Earlier in the evening, when he was doing room to room passenger checks, the crewman named Herod Wailings stumbled upon Dr. Nightingale holding a glowing device and talking to thin air (the Harbingers). Knowing that the simple crewman had seen too much, Nightingale seduced him long enough to set up a late-night rendezvous – in the workout room.

Foiled by her feminine wiles, Wailings arrived at the workout room to find that Nightingale was hiding from him. She flirted and taunted him to come and find her and when he did she was clutching the glowing object in her hands. Nightingale pointed the telepathic focuser at Wailings and the Harbingers wracked him with an awful vision – which caused him to scream.

Knowing that others would be coming in response to the shrill cry, Sergio – who was lurking nearby – plunged the barbell into Wailings' head at the same moment Nightingale opened her mind to the Harbinger device, using the bloody deed to strengthen her connection to them.

When the deed was done, Sergio let the barbell drop to make his crime seem like a simple weightlifting accident. The barbell struck another, which rolled into the doorway as the two IPX murderers disappeared into the shadows of the hallway.

The Player Character(s) arrived less than a minute later.

of damage from lacerating pipe shrapnel and superheated droplets of coolant.

Silent Passenger Throng

The beginnings of the Harbinger Cult Servitors have taken root in several of the least wilful passengers and crewmen

and many have formed odd throngs of five to seven people that wander the ship in eerie silence. These throngs do not know exactly what they are looking for and will happily say so if anyone stops them and asks what they are doing. They simply 'need to find something' and will remain in their silent groups until they do.

Awkward Moment

Occasionally one of the passengers or crewmen that suffered one of the more memorable visions or dreams during the previous night's telepathic assault will confront the Player Character with an odd or awkward question. These people are obviously distraught or confused and unless the character does a good job engaging them in a conversation about their inquiry they will move on in seconds.

Good sample questions the passengers might clumsily ask are:

- ⑤ *Are you going to the black city, too? The city of dreams?*
- ⑤ *All things will end someday; do you know when my time will come?*
- ⑤ *What did you see when they opened your eyes?*
- ⑤ *Have you seen them? Have they seen you? Where will you stand when all else falls?*
- ⑤ *Do you believe in Heaven or Hell? Do you think you'd know one from the other?*

Request for Help

Some of the crewmen and passengers were not seduced or maddened by the dreams and visions. Instead, they were left with heavy feelings of foreboding and fear. These rare passengers will be able to see the normality (perhaps mistakenly) in the eyes of the Player Characters and come to them. These passengers will plead with the character, begging him to join them in search of a way off the ship 'before they come.' Even if the Player Character(s) is not looking for an escape route, the passenger believes he is and wants to go with him.

If the Player Character(s) explains that he is not leaving, the passenger will become entirely fearful of him and scramble away. The passenger will point at the character and repeat, 'You're one of them! You're with them! You're doomed too!'

Worried Passenger

There are many passengers and crewmen on the ship the first night that were not affected by the telepathic surge. If any of them happen to cross paths with the Player Character(s), they will try to direct any conversation toward the weirdness among their fellow passengers. They think that maybe somebody put some kind of drug in the

food or perhaps a chemical in the air circulators that is making everyone act so strangely.

If any of the Player Characters try to explain that they too had strange dreams and visions the night before, the passenger will get a concerned look on his face and excuse himself. As he leaves the area, he will mumble something about 'it must have got to them too.'

Dark Agent Manoeuvrings

The IPX security agents that came onto the ship with Nightingale have been in the vicinity of the Harbinger construct long enough to have been thoroughly affected by the telepathic whispers it projects. After the first night of telepathic contacts, more than a few of these men have fully vested their minds in the protection and empowerment of the telepathic focuser.

To better serve the needs of Nightingale and Duprei, the IPX security agents have been instructed to go and cause several internal systems on the ship to malfunction. These malfunctions are almost all terribly minor, like a door staying open or a lighting coil turning off but they serve a much higher function in the grand scheme of the Harbingers.

With a simple Will save at DC 12, the Player Character(s) can remember seeing one of the combat-booted men from the day before performing a mechanically-inclined act upon a pried open circuit panel or access box. It should be evident to the Player Character that the passenger should not be interfering with ship electronics and the character might try to stop the agent.

If the Player Character(s) simply tries to stop the agent verbally, the agent will ignore the character as long as he can. At the very most the agent will reply with a 'Mind your own business; do not get involved with what you cannot understand.' This might not be enough to dissuade a Player Character, who could resort to physical means.

Should a physical altercation take place, the agent will use a tool from his electronic kit (treat as a knife) to try and attack the Player Character. He will not back off and a Notice check DC 12 will reveal a glassy stare in his eyes even when he is vigorously attacking.

The statistics for a Servitor IPX Agent are as follows:

Servitor IPX Agent

4th Level Human Soldier/3rd Level Agent

Hit Points: 23

Initiative: +6; Spd 30 ft.

DV: 17; Atk +7/+2 close combat or +8/+3 ranged

Special Qualities: Stunning

Attack, Co-ordinated Unit +1, Servitor Abilities¹

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +4

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

Skills: Athletics +5, Bluff +4, Computer Use +6, Intimidate +7, Intrigue +6, Investigate +7, Notice +10, Sense Motive +8, Stealth +5, Technical (electronics) +5

Feats: Brawler, Dodge, Fluency (Human, Interlac), Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Notice), Weapon Focus (PPG)

¹ See page 64 for the rules on Harbinger Servitors.

It should be noted that the agent will gladly fight to the death. Also, besides the electronics tool kit and 5d10 credits in his pockets, he should also have an IPX data card bearing his real name, photo and serial number on it. This is a very important clue, as it reveals who the agents work for.

NIGHT TWO - SACRIFICE I

In the midst of the growing strangeness on board the *Epimetheus*, the connection between the Harbinger device and Nightingale is also growing. She is receiving almost constant telepathic messages through the construct telling her exactly what she needs to do to earn her place at the Harbingers' feet when they arrive.

Too busy following the Harbingers' directions, Nightingale remains locked in her quarters while she gives Sergio Duprei missions to relay to his agents throughout the ship. Nightingale also tells Sergio that the device needs another life (like the workout room) to strengthen the bonds again. This time she has a specific person in mind – the captain of the vessel.

What this means is that Captain Palamento is in very deep trouble if he is caught alone by the four Servitor IPX Agents. The Captain commonly heads down to the mess hall/kitchenette for a glass of warm scotch before he goes to bed, something that is a common topic for gossip on the *Epimetheus*.

If the Player Characters are up and about in the early evening, they should be given a chance to witness the IPX agents moving toward the kitchenette. A Notice check at DC 12 can reveal that each man carries a shock stick and anyone who scores higher than a 20 on the check will see the identical combat boots on all four men's feet.

If the Player Characters ignore the agents' silent passing, it can be assumed that Captain Palamento will try his best to defend himself for a few moments before being rendered unconscious and taken back to Nightingale and Duprei – who will sacrifice him to the Harbinger device and cause the next wave of telepathic assaults (see below).

If the Player Characters hesitate for just a moment but still get closer to what is happening, they will hear the following from around the corner where the four men disappeared:

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'Hey,' the Captain's familiar voice laughs, 'you ought to be careful with those things... they're not for the... OUCH! Hey! What the hell do you think you're doing? Help! Help!'

When the Player Characters enter the scene, the Captain will already be cornered by the IPX agents (who will have the same glassy Servitor stare):

'Help me!' the Captain says, waving a broken bottleneck from an expensive scotch like a knife at his four attackers, 'They are trying to kill me!'

'Stay out...', one of the glassy-eyed attackers begins

'...of what you...' a second adds

'...cannot understand,' finishes a third.

All four men hold their shock sticks flashing in front of them and one turns his toward you.

The Servitor IPX agents are under orders not to kill the Captain because they need to bring him to Nightingale but they have no such instructions concerning the Player Characters. In fact, if the characters do *anything* other than simply back away the agents will attack them as well. During the fight the agents will use shock sticks against Captain Palamento but will use lethal Brawler attacks against the Player Characters.

If the Player Characters manage to fight off the agents and save Captain Palamento, he will be ecstatic that they came to his rescue and offer them anything he can from the ship's surplus. He will also explain that the men told him something about 'being needed' right before they started attacking him. He is as confused as anyone else and believes that the men's behaviour had something to do with the latest load of passengers he took on. He wondered why a twelve-person booking had no cargo luggage and why they were *all* heading to Mars at the same time when none of them claimed to be related, having identicards from all over the galaxy. In appreciation for saving him, the Captain will be as helpful as he can for the Player Characters while he is still in power on the ship.

The Sacrifice is Successful

Whether because Captain Palamento is taken hostage or the Servitor agents have to find another 'suitable' crew member to be sacrificed, at exactly 2:47 a.m. on the second evening another telepathic surge erupts from the Harbinger focuser – due to the purposeful sacrifice undertaken by Nightingale and Duprei in her quarters.

Using her sampling tool, which is little more than a precision sonic-based cutter, Nightingale opens the throat of her captive and smears the blood on the Harbinger device.

Although the actual contact with blood does nothing for the construct, the belief that it does floods into the barrier between dimensions and weakens them slightly. While the barrier is weak, the Harbingers waiting on the other side hurl a wave of telepathic probes into the *Epimetheus*.

The result of the second wave of telepathic contact is stronger than before. All characters, not just those who are sleeping, will need to make a Will save DC 15 to avoid the probing messages. If successful, a character will have a dark and painful feeling of mental invasion, suffering 1d6 points of nonlethal damage in the process. If the Will save is failed, the character must roll on the following table to determine what sort of effect the probe has upon him.

2d6	Telepathic Probe Effect
2	Cerebral Spasm
3 – 4	Servitor Seeding
5 – 6	Call to Witness
7 – 9	Waking Promises
10 – 11	Terrible Hallucinations
12	Hardened Defences

Cerebral Spasm – The character has been directly assaulted by the weight of the Harbingers' initial telepathic surge and it is too much for his mind to handle. The telepathic focuser turns up the power of its creators' telepathic abilities, making even their normally seductive whispers painful and damaging to the first few mental presences they contact. The character is immediately struck as if by the *Agony* variation of the *Pain* telepathic ability (see page 126 of the *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game Second Edition* rulebook) as if inflicted by a P15 with the *Mindshredder* feat, with no save possible. If this effect knocks the character unconscious, the character effectively becomes a Harbinger Servitor in service to Nightingale after the pain passes.

Servitor Seeding – The character has been subtly readied for further seductions. When the Final Sacrifice takes place he will suffer a – 5 penalty to the Will save required (see page 91 for details) to attack the telepathic focuser.

Call to Witness – The character is knocked into a sort of semi-awake stupor. His mind is filled with images of the Black City and of the teeming masses of 'happy servants' within it but his body is slowly walking toward the site of the sacrifice like a sleepwalking automaton. The character, along with dozens of others, will slowly shamble, eyes fluttering in their dreams, to Doctor Nightingale's quarters.

When they awake (when the sacrifice finally bleeds out at 3:02 a.m.) they will be disoriented and confused as to why they are in a crowded hallway and not where they were when the telepathic surge took place. This may lead to arguments and questions between the varied 'sleepwalkers,' especially if the Player Character(s) bring up the visions they have been having.

A Notice check DC 20 will show that two of the combat-booted Servitor agents are standing guard to a nearby stateroom. If the characters try to gain entry to the room the Servitors will happily fight them and if they manage to get by them Sergio Duprei will already have gotten Nightingale and the device to safety – but the bloody body from the sacrifice will remain.

Waking Promises – The character is shown a local version of his idea of a 'perfect place'. A gambler might find that the ship has the best casino around, a womaniser might discover a brothel and a veteran soldier might find an officer's club for seasoned military personnel only. Whatever the case may be, the character sees whatever they believe would be the perfect addition to the *Epimetheus*. Although not verbally, the telepathic probe will insinuate to the character that this perfect place will be made for the character's use only, as long as he *obeys*. The next time the character is called upon to fight any Servitor agent, Duprei or even Nightingale herself, he will know that doing so would ruin any chance of earning this perfect place. He will also discover that he cannot act against them for the first 1d3 rounds of combat but he can defend himself normally.

Terrible Hallucinations – The character's mind can only see what horrible fate lies in the possible future of the *Epimetheus*. The walls are covered in blood, bodies and pieces of bodies are cast about unceremoniously and the air is thick with smoke and decay. Unlike a normal dream, from which the character could awake and calm himself, these hallucinations return as flashes of disgusting imagery for hours after the telepathic surge ceases. For the next 3d6 hours the character will suffer a – 2 penalty to all skill checks, as any sort of focus on his part is shattered by gut wrenching illusions of the ship-turned-charnel house.

Hardened Defences – For whatever reason, the telepathic probe awakens ancient genetic programming (perhaps from Vorlon or Mindrider tampering?) that shuts the character's brain down from further telepathic contact. Like closing a bulkhead on a spacecraft the character blocks the Harbingers' signal and any others from making contact with his mental presence. For most characters this is a boon as any form of telepathic contact simply *fails* against him. For a character with the Telepath trait however, his P-Rating is reduced to P0 and he suffers massive amounts of nonlethal damage when he attempts to perform the most basic of abilities. This affect lasts for 2d3 days and protects the character for the rest of this scenario and perhaps a few days beyond.

Late Night Body Disposal

An hour or so after the sacrifice Sergio instructs one of his remaining Servitor agents and two glassy-eyed Servitor passengers to drag the body to an airlock and jettison it. They are not terribly stealthy in their activity and are careless as to whether they get caught. Nightingale has told them that they are the heralds of the

Harbingers' next coming and the dark promises that invade their minds cement her words as fact.

It is possible that the Player Characters will hole up in their staterooms and avoid going out after the second night's worth of telepathic assaults but after the murder that occurred the night before this is unlikely. If they decide to stay behind closed doors they will not have a chance to witness the Servitors at all.

If any of the Player Characters do in fact decide to investigate the ship after the sacrifice, they might find the Servitor agent and his cohorts carrying the limp body of the sacrifice (the captain or his replacement):

Two men and a young woman pass ahead of you in the hallway. In their arms they carry the limp body of a man wrapped in a wrinkled bed sheet. They seem not to notice your attention, as if what they are doing is as normal as taking a pet for a walk.

A Notice check DC 15 will show that only one of the three people is wearing the IPX-issue combat boots and if the check result is 20 or higher the character will see a large bloodstain on the sheet.

The Player Characters can then choose either to stealthily follow the group to the airlock or directly confront them. If they choose to follow the Servitors, the Games Master should have them make a few Stealth checks to keep their anxiety high even though the Servitors are not actively looking for them at all. Eventually, when the group reaches the airlock, they should be read the following:

The three silent passengers abruptly stop at one of the emergency airlock systems and drop their cargo onto the hallway floor with a heavy thud. The young woman turns to the activation plate for the airlock and single-handedly rips it off the wall as if it were taped in place, revealing a nest of wire harnesses. Without so much as looking at what she is doing, she twists several wires together and the internal door to the airlock hisses open.

'What the hell do you think you're doing?' a voice shouts from behind the corner as the three shove the body into the airlock. 'You want to kill us all?'

The voice is coming from Brian 'Cookie' Martino (see Martino's stats earlier in this chapter) who has not yet been affected by the Harbingers' telepathic probes. Cookie sees the Servitors open the airlock and comes over to protest. Cookie sees the body just a few seconds late, as the Servitors immediately attack him.

The Player Characters can get involved at any time if they so choose. If the combat goes longer than the first round however, Cookie will be overcome and thrown into the airlock with the body just before the internal door slams shut. If the Player Characters choose

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to simply stand by and watch they will hear Cookie shouting and pounding from inside the airlock until the young woman reaches into the wiring harnesses again and opens the external door – ejecting Cookie and the body into space.

If they get involved before that happens however, they will need to fight off the Servitor agent (stats are found above) and two Servitor passengers. Cookie will help if he has not been locked in the airlock and he will shout for help from the inside if he has. So long as the young girl Servitor (who has the proper Technical skill to hotwire the access panel) is not left alone for two consecutive combat rounds the airlock will not open. The Servitors will fight until they are unconscious or dead and they will not retreat.

The Servitor IPX agent should use the statistics seen earlier in this chapter. The statistics for the two Servitor passengers are as follows:

Servitor Passengers

2nd Level Human Worker (White Collar)

Hit Points: 6

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 12

Attacks: +1 close combat or +1 ranged

Special Qualities: Vocation Bonus, Servitor Abilities¹

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

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

Skills: Athletics +3, Computer Use +5, Intrigue +4, Notice +4, Sense Motive +5, Technical (electronics) +7

Feats: Dodge, Fluency (Human), Skill Focus (Technical (electronics))

¹ See page 64 for the rules on Harbinger Servitors

After the Player Characters finish with the Servitors, they will need to open the airlock doors if Cookie is locked inside. If they have to open the door physically, by cutting through with plasma torches for instance, he will run out of air long before they ever get through the heavy internal plating. The only good way to get through is to hotwire the wire harnesses in the access panel, like the young woman did.

This show of electrical prowess requires a Technical (electronics) skill check DC 25, which can be reduced to a DC 20 if the character paid specific attention to what the young woman did to open the airlock in the first place. Success means that the door opens and Cookie is safe. If the check fails by more than 5 points the Player Character has crossed the wrong wires and opened the airlock's external door, with bad consequences for anyone in the airlock at the time. If the Player Characters accidentally eject the body and/or Cookie into space, they must watch as they spin out into the void.

If they succeed in freeing Cookie and he survives the combat, he will be very grateful:

'Oh by all of the gods of humanity!' the sweaty, winded chef says as he swings his arms out wide to embrace you. 'Thank you for not being one of those weirdoes! I thought I was a goner for sure!' He pauses, then hands you a key card from his breast pocket.

'Take this,' he says with a sly smile. 'It'll get you into the food storage area behind the kitchen. Grab whatever you want back there; just make sure to write me a note if you take the last of anything. It is the least I can do for the folks who saved me from spacing.'

Cookie will answer the Player Characters' questions to the best of his ability but he knows very little about the happenings around the ship. All he knows is that half his staff did not show up for work that day and that people have been acting weirder than usual. He will excuse himself as soon as he can and head off toward his quarters.

If the Player Characters investigate the body from the sacrifice, whether it is the captain or not, they will discover the perfectly even incision in the body's throat at first glance. A quick Medical or Investigate skill check DC 15 will determine that the body has been dead for roughly an hour and has been drained of most of its blood. A further Medical check at DC 18 will show that the body's eyes are swollen and distended in their sockets, meaning that the body was hung upside down; probably to drain the blood from the neck wound.

What the Player Characters do with the body is up to them. Turning it in to the ship's security will result in blank stares and eerie curiosity toward the corpse(s), as most of the security officers are already telepathic automatons by this time. If the Player Characters choose to stash the body somewhere, it will not be found until many days after this scenario is over. If the Player Characters leave the body where it is it will disappear sometime before morning, picked up by the next Servitors who come and investigate what happened to the first trio.

DAY THREE - SOWING CHAOS

The Harbingers' influence on the *Epimetheus* has dug its roots deeper into the crew and passengers and things are getting chaotic. New Servitor passengers and crewmen are going about the ship sabotaging particular systems and functions in order to give Nightingale and her growing cult better access to those who have not converted.

Nearly every passenger the Player Characters will come in contact with will be at least glassy-eyed and cowed by the telepathic probes and several of them have become full Harbinger Servitor cultists by this time. Most will simply ignore the Player Characters unless directly confronted. Those who are confronted will react violently, in small groups. For any of these violent interactions, use the

statistics for Servitor passengers found in the previous section.

Throughout the day the Player Characters will encounter numerous short-circuiting or otherwise non-functional electronics on the ship. The following are some samples of the sorts of things are being shut down by the Servitors.

Opened Doors and Hatches – Most doorways, hatches and bulkheads have been hotwired into the 'open' position, making sure that the groups of cultists are able to move freely throughout the ship when the final sacrifice takes place. All rooms and all general staterooms are included in this list of opened portals. Anyone who tries to electronically close one of these doors will need to pass a Technical (electronics) skill check DC 25.

Darkened or Flickering Lights – Many of the brightest lamps and lighting fixtures in the hallways and larger rooms have been shut down or are flickering weakly. Nightingale instructed the Servitors to do this to help her eventually move the device into a larger area for the next round of sacrifices. She knows she will need bigger and bigger sacrifices in order to fully awaken her new masters' powers. Anyone who tries to repair the lights will need to pass a Technical (mechanical) skill check DC 18 but even if he is successful there is a 75% chance that the light is simply broken and irreparable.

Leaking Fire Control Systems – The integral fire control lines that spray retardant foam onto any open flames in the rooms and corridors of the spacecraft have all been carefully punctured in order to allow the foam to slowly spill out and evaporate uselessly. When Nightingale begins the final sacrifice to the dark gods on the following day, she does not want to have her ascendance thwarted by the foam sprayers. There is no real way to repair the damage without a full docking station to refill the fire control lines but no open flame will last longer than 2d3 minutes for the rest of that day and night in any unsheltered area. By morning all of the foam will have been leaked and evaporated and will have no further affect.

Higher Oxygen Content – The atmospheric processor scrubbers in the ship's internal maintenance levels have been hotwired to produce more oxygen than normal. This means that all oxygen-breathing species on the ship will be slightly light-headed, suffering a – 2 penalty to Fortitude saves; they will suffer no further effect. Fire will burn hotter due to the higher oxygen levels, upgrading any fire damage dice by one type. Undoing the processor control sabotage would require a Technical (electronics) and Operations (systems) skill check at DC 25 each as well as access to the maintenance levels.

For example, a burning table leg would normally cause 1d4 fire-based damage while a welding torch would cause 1d8. In the higher oxygen levels of the ship at

this time, these items would inflict 1d6 and 1d10 damage respectively.

Saving the Escape Pods

Sometime during the day, while the Servitors agents and passengers are performing their various duties as ordered by Nightingale and Duprei, a team of three Servitor agents is dispatched to launch all twelve of the *Epimetheus* escape pods – eliminating any hope of escape.

As a note, the Player Characters should be located nearby the escape pod loading ramps when this scene takes place or they may not have the chance to save themselves later. If they miss the opportunity to secure an escape route for later, their chances for survival will be very low.

When the Games Master is ready to further the Player Characters' role in the story, he should read the following aloud:

The deck plate under your feet vibrates suddenly and you can hear the distinct sound of fusion-based engines firing up nearby. The sound rapidly fades but then you hear it again. And again.

Not many Player Characters will just sit back idly while this sort of thing happens close to them and hopefully they will want to investigate what is going on. If they do nothing they will hear a total of twelve engine sounds and they will be left with no escape pods for the remainder of the scenario. Although this could be problematic for them in the future, it is their own fault for being disinterested in their surroundings.

If the Player Characters jump up after the first couple of launches to investigate, they should feel another vibration as they round the corner to see the following scene:

'Escape pod secured for launch,' an electronic voice rattles out in several languages over a localised speaker as a shirtless man pulls the levers next to a spiral hatch. 'Sensors show no lifeforms on board. Override?' You watch as the man reaches for the blinking red light...

By the time the Player Characters reach the escape pod corridor four of the twelve pods have already been launched into empty space, with additional pods being launched every minute. The characters can either decide to watch as the Servitor agent walks down the row of escape pods and launches them or they can try to stop him. Stopping him will require that they at least knock him unconscious and they may even have to injure him enough to keep him from resuming his task when he awakens.

Use the statistics found earlier for Servitor IPX agents for the shirtless man, who will be wielding the nearest activation lever as a club (1d6 lethal damage).

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NIGHT THREE - SACRIFICE II

The evening of the third night after IPX's arrival is eerily quiet. The Servitor IPX agents and what passengers have succumbed to the Harbingers' telepathic pulses have gathered in the hallway surrounding Dr. Nightingale's stateroom to protect her next bloody sacrifice. The Player Characters may or may not see the throngs of people heading toward her stateroom (which they might recognise if they had been affected with *Call to Witness* the night before) and they may try to investigate.

The Player Characters will see the following scene if they do go and investigate:

A crowd of several dozen has amassed silently, shoulder to shoulder, in the corridor ahead of you. Shirtless men and women stand on stacks of furniture, forming a manned barricade around a single doorway. In front of the doorway stands a pale man. You have seen him before. He is armed with a huge chunk of twisted metal, which he holds like a primitive sword.

If the Player Characters stand around and watch for a while, eventually the door will open and Nightingale will walk out holding the telepathic focuser over her head like some kind of idol. The crowd will hum slightly when she arrives and many will kneel down. Three shirtless passengers (one of them should be someone the Player Characters met in previous days) will step forward toward Nightingale and lean back, exposing their throats.

The Player Characters might try to interfere here, which could result in a massive combat situation. The Games Master should let his Players know the odds of such a fight before they commit to it. Some might believe they can pull through anyway and continue to commit to the combat. If they do, the following numbers of hostile targets will assault them:

- ⑤ Twenty-three Servitor passengers
- ⑤ Four Servitor IPX agents
- ⑤ Sergio Duprei
- ⑤ Doctor Nightingale (who will retreat into her room at the first sign of danger)

If the Player Characters decide to watch from the shadows (not that they would be greatly noticed anyway), they will see the following terrifying scene:

'Now,' the glowing object pulses brightly and the woman holding it aloft looks to the man at her side, 'we give up what we must in order to bring the worlds of our master closer.'

In a flash of the crude sword, the steely-eyed man runs its edge across the exposed throats of the three entranced

passengers. You cringe as they stand there mesmerised, their blood pumping from jagged wounds onto the woman and her brightly glowing artefact.

'To us they give their blessings!' she cries shrilly and then you are blinded by a flash of light.

The flash of light is the dimensional teleportation of a Personal Defence Shield Generator, which looks like a web of hair or slick cabling lying in a heap on the floor. There will be a cheer from the crowd as Nightingale raises up the mass of strange webbing and those gathered regard it like some kind of holy relic. Nightingale hands the mass to Sergio, who accepts it with a deep bow, then both of them disappear into her room (to fit the device to Sergio).

When Nightingale goes into her room the crowd begins to disperse, breaking into three groups of nine (one group includes two Servitor IPX; the other groups have one IPX agent each) to drag the dead bodies to the nearest airlock for disposal.

As long as the Player Characters do not start any conflict with the dispersing crowd or openly announce that they are against what just happened, the three groups will leave the area without even seeming to notice them. Should the Player Characters try to stop any of them, violent reactions are normal.

If the Player Characters hide or otherwise avoid trouble with the crowd they can investigate the scene closer with an Investigate skill check DC 12. Failure means they cannot find anything of worth in the area. Success shows that the stacked furniture and refuse is all from the dining hall and that the door panel to the stateroom is smashed in from the outside.

Trying to gain entry to the stateroom will require a Technical (electronics) skill check DC 30, as the circuitry has been smashed and torn to pieces in order to keep others out. Only by touching three very specific wires together will the door open. Should the Player Characters actually manage to get the stateroom door open, they will find Sergio being fitted with the defence shield generator and Nightingale activating it. Sergio will then attack the Player Characters in order to protect Nightingale, who will escape with the device through a passage previously plasma-torched through a bulkhead in the back of her room.

DAY FOUR - WHAT IS THAT SMELL?

The day after the brutal sacrifice that breached dimensions for a split second the Player Characters are surprised to awaken (if they were able to sleep at all) to a pungent chemical smell. As they enter the larger corridors in the ship, they should be read the following:

The fumes from some strange chemicals sting your nose and occasionally bring a tear to your eye as you walk through the corridor. You notice that the floor is slightly tacky as if something has been spilled and everything you look upon seems wet or sticky.

You turn a corner and are shocked to see two shirtless passengers pouring the contents of large liquor and cleaning solution bottles onto the floor and walls, dropping them carelessly as they empty only to reach into a large cart behind them for more.

The Servitor passengers and agents have looted the dining hall of all of its liquor and cleaning products, maintenance of its fuel reserves and the surplus lockers of any flammable liquids or gels. Under instruction from Nightingale they are now pouring them over everything in the ship and creating an ancient pattern of accelerants leading to the dining hall – where Nightingale is planning to hold the final and ultimate sacrifice.

Why no Telepathic Surge?

The telepathic enhancement focuser did not send a surge of probes into the crew for this sacrifice because all of its energy was used to open the tiny doorway and summon the Personal Defence Shield Generator. Inter-dimensional travel requires a massive amount of energy, which is why the focuser could not transmit the telepathic whispers like it had the previous two nights.

The Player Characters can try to stop the Servitors here but this sort of scene is happening all over the ship. Although the characters could tour the vessel all day dealing with groups of two or three Servitor passengers at a time, they will not stop the thickening layer of flammable chemicals from being spread all over the rest of the *Epimetheus*.

What all of these chemicals do in game terms is make any common corridor or large hall into a dangerous prospect for anyone using energy weapons or open flame carelessly. Any weapon that uses heat, electricity or plasma has a 10% chance per shot of igniting the flammable fluids and causing a catastrophic chain of fire to rip through most of the ship. This chance is significantly higher if your characters are foolish enough to start using naked flame weapons such as flamethrowers. If that occurs, see the sidebar entitled 'Racing the Inferno' below for details on how the characters might manage to survive. Hopefully they will understand how dangerous the situation really is and tread carefully.

If they have the capability to do so the Player Characters might want to use the escape pods to

get off a ship that has essentially become one gigantic incendiary bomb. Even if they do decide to leave, they will get a chance to see Nightingale's invitation on a view screen as they head toward the escape pods (see below). If they ignore the plight of the *Epimetheus* and continue to escape via the pods, move on to *The Escape* section of this scenario.

Nightingale Speaks

As the Player Characters move through the ship unnoticed by the many Servitors around them, Dr. Nightingale activates the public announcement system of the ship and proclaims the following message:

'Brothers and sisters,' a woman's voice erupts in unison from dozens of ship speakers next to her pale and blood spattered face on accompanying view screens, 'last night our god gave us a sign of his love for our faith. Even after the fools at Babylon 5 shut the door upon him, he basks in our worship and sacrifice. He tells me even now that we can join him; all we must do is throw off these mortal shells and cross over. In one hour's time, join me in the dining hall. In fire, blood and pain we will give ourselves to him... and he will gather our souls in his arms and take us home.'

The message ends abruptly and the ship reverberates with the shouts of cultists throughout the open corridors and rooms.

As soon as the message has been read the Servitors will abandon their duties and start to mill toward the dining hall. They will completely ignore the Player Characters unless directly bothered, allowing them to move freely about the ship and do pretty much whatever they would like for the next hour. This could be anything from re-arming themselves in the security office to looting the supply shelves at the general commissary to fleeing the ship through any remaining escape pods.

Whatever the Player Characters choose to do, they will need to either be in a safe place (see *Racing the Inferno sidebar*) to hide from the flaming sacrifice, the dining hall to try and stop it or off the ship to avoid it completely.

THE FINAL SACRIFICE

One hour after Nightingale's announcement, the ritual in the dining hall will begin. If the Player Characters are in a position to witness the event, read the following to them:

In the centre of a throng of shirtless passengers covered in a myriad of sticky flammable fluids, a man and woman stand motionless. The man carries a bloody and twisted spar of metal like a sword and wears a strange network of insectoid cables wrapped around his bare chest. The woman is wrapped in a bedsheet cloak and her hair is matted with blood and sweat.

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'Welcome,' the woman says as she tears off her cloak, standing naked as the day she was born on top of a pile of broken dining tables. 'We now prepare to burn away these material bodies of flesh and enter the realm of our master!' She lifts her hands, showing the method by which she plans to start the conflagration. In one hand she carries the strange pulsating artefact; in the other she holds a single unlit magnesium flare.

'For all who cannot join us until the master arrives,' she says as she bows her head, 'we give a moment of silence.'

This 'moment of silence' will last roughly a minute. This could give the Player Characters a chance to possibly surprise her and Duprei to stop the ritual or flee the scene completely and try to find escape or safety. Although the Player Characters could come up with their own unique ideas, these three options are covered below.

Stopping the Ritual

Depending on where the Player Characters are, a combat with the Harbinger Cult could be a horribly violent climax to this scenario. If they are at the back of the throng of cultists they will need to move silently (Stealth checks) to get closer to the centre of the room and up to Duprei and Nightingale. Conversely, if the Player Characters are already in the kitchenette (which they could easily access with Cookie's storage keycard) behind the dining room, they will be able to surprise the two cult leaders – which could end the conflict in a single action if the characters are lucky enough.

Even if the Player Characters manage to kill Nightingale (they will not be able to dissuade her otherwise), they will still need to deal with Sergio Duprei and the soon-to-be angry cultists – unless they can destroy the telepathic enhancement focuser.

The focuser is a difficult target to hit perfectly. It has a Defence Value of 14, a hardness of 12 and can withstand 10 Hit Points of damage before it cracks apart and is destroyed. Targeting the focuser warns the artificial construct of danger and it will try to focus its emissions at its attacker to protect itself. This comes in the form of a pleasurable telepathic promise and forces anyone attacking the focuser to pass a Will save DC 15 in order to do anything but stand motionless and enjoy the telepathic vision for 1d6 rounds.

Destroying the focuser is the only way to break the telepathic hold the Harbingers have on the passengers, IPX agents and Sergio. Although Sergio seems to have great deal more control over his actions than other Servitors, he is still just a telepathic puppet held sway by the focuser's emissions. Only Nightingale has been thoroughly and willingly influenced by the seduction of the Harbingers' whispers and she will continue to try and light the flare (a full round action when not in combat) and plunge it into the pool of fluids on the furniture she is standing on (thereby setting it ablaze and starting the *Racing the Inferno* sidebar below).

The statistics for Duprei and Nightingale are as follows:

Sergio Duprei, IPX Corporate Executive Security Officer

4th Level Human Soldier/5th Level Agent

Hit Points: 27

Initiative: +7

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 19

Attacks: +8/+3 close combat or +10/+5 ranged

Special Qualities: Stunning Attack, Co-ordinated Unit +1, Skill Mastery (Computer Use), Servitor Abilities¹

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

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

Skills: Athletics +8, Bluff +8, Computer Use +12, Intimidate +10, Intrigue +8, Investigate +10, Notice +12, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +11, Technical (electronics) +12

Feats: Dodge, Fluency (Human, Interlac), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Martial Arts, Resist Scan, Skill Focus (Notice), Skill Focus (Technical (electronics)), Weapon Focus (Unarmed)

Equipment: Secured channel link, Personal Defence Shield Generator (see page 57), Scrap-metal 'Sword' (2d4+Str bonus damage, 19-20 critical)

¹ See page 64 for the rules on Harbinger Servitors.

NOTE: Sergio will need to take the first round of any conflict to activate the Personal Defence Shield once he has acquired it.

Doctor Beatrice Nightingale, IPX Theoretical Physicist

6th Level Human Scientist/2nd Level Harbinger Devout

Hit Points: 14

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 16

Attacks: +3 close combat or +5 ranged

Special Qualities: Mental Agility, Primary Area of Study (theoretical sciences), Peripheral Studies (ancient theology, xenobotany, theoretical sciences), Alien Technology Familiarity (Minbari, Centauri), Induction Boon, Strength of Faith (Initiate), Power Structure, Summoning I

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +13

Abilities: Str 9, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 13

Skills: Appraise +9, Bluff +7, Computer Use +11, Diplomacy +7, Investigate +12, Knowledge (ancient theology) +10, Knowledge (xenobiology) +13, Knowledge (theoretical sciences) +14, Operations (systems) +8, Notice +9, Technical (electronics) +12

Feats: Fluency (Human, Centauri, Interlac), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (ancient theology)

Equipment: Secured channel link, Telepathic Enhancement Focuser (the Keymost Fragment)

Should the Player Characters stop the ritual and destroy the focuser, they can move on to the *Bitter End*.

Fleeing the Scene

With the odds stacked against them and a suicidal cult leader wanting to set the entire ship ablaze, the Player Characters might want to run to safety. If they do, they will get one minute to flee before Nightingale lights the flare and drops it into the pool of accelerants. This will send a roaring, atmosphere-eating wave of flame through the ship's corridors.

The Player Characters will need to find either shelter or the escape pods. See the *Racing the Inferno* sidebar for details.

The Escape

Sometime during the scenario the Player Characters may choose to make use of the *Epimetheus*' escape pods to get away from the situation on board. Whether they attempt this early on to simply avoid further interaction with the Harbinger Cult or whether they attempt it at the end of a sprinting escape from a growing ball of fire, they can use the escape pods to get away from the scenario if need be (assuming there are any to escape with).

Launching an Escape Pod

The process of launching a spacecraft escape pod, rescue boat or life pod is a series of easy to follow directions found both inside and outside of the device. The directions are often written in several languages, including Interlac, to help different species use it in case of emergency.

The steps are as follows:

- ⑤ Open Hatch – Intelligence check DC 8 to find and pull lever as directed.
- ⑤ Power Pod Systems – Computer Use check DC 10 to activate atmospheric processor and internal trajectory beacons.
- ⑤ Seal Hatch – Intelligence check DC 10 to flip marked switch to shut hatch when pod is loaded with occupants. Requires additional override lever (no check) if pod is below maximum occupancy.
- ⑤ Launch – Computer Use check (DC 12) or Operations (systems) check (DC 8) to activate five-second launch sequence.

Once launched, the common escape pod used in most commercial spacecraft activates visual strobe beacons in gold, violet and crimson to catch the various vision spectrums of galactic spacers. It also sets its trajectory to the nearest jump beacon signature and travels slowly toward it.

Racing the Inferno

There is a distinct possibility that at some point in this scenario the *Epimetheus*' corridors and common rooms will be filled with a growing flash fire from the generously applied flammable accelerants throughout the ship. If this is the case, anyone caught out in the open for more than a few moments will likely be incinerated. Those who are not incinerated will suffocate soon after, as all of the oxygen in the ship will be used in the fire.

In game terms, anyone caught unprotected in the *Epimetheus* after the blaze has been ignited will suffer 2d6 fire damage every round. This fire will burn quickly but will still last for 2d8 minutes – long enough to kill almost anything on the ship not behind sealed doors.

There are only so many places on a spacecraft that are fully sealed to protect someone from such a raging inferno. These places are the escape pod bays, the airlocks, freezer storage, pak'ma'rea restrooms and so forth. If players think to seal themselves in, assume they can reach the closest such area with 2d3 rounds of all-out sprinting.

Player Characters who have a Speed of 30 or higher can run to stay ahead of the growing flame to find a sealable room or get to the escape pods, so long as they are not present at the point of ignition. One DC 15 Fortitude save per round is required to keep up an adrenaline-fuelled sprint. The character must also make a DC 18 Reflex save at the beginning of the run to avoid being thrown off his feet by the rush of heat and wind that precedes the blast.

For those that survive the burning, either through sheer luck or adequate protection, the atmosphere levels in the *Epimetheus* will be dangerously low after the fire has run its course and all of the normal penalties for hypoxia from Thin Atmospheres will apply (see page 286 in the *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game Second Edition* core rulebook).

THE BITTER END

There are many ways for this scenario to actually end depending on whether the Player Characters leave early, stop the ritual or even weather the fiery sacrifice to inherit the burnt shell of the *Epimetheus*. Exactly what happens to the Player Characters depends on where the Games Master wants to take them next but we have put together a few logical routes the story could take. Games Masters should feel free to use these suggestions but we encourage them to also work other endings to this unique and interesting scenario into their ongoing campaign ideas.

This is Pandora's Box



They Did Not Make It

Obviously, if the Player Characters are killed in the scenario there is nothing further for *them* in the gaming chronicle but such a mysterious travesty surrounding the *Epimetheus* could spark a volume of investigations and research into the disappearance of the *Epimetheus*, its crew and all of its passengers. Although the death of a Player Character group or team is often a dark moment in roleplaying sessions, it could be a fantastic root for new adventures based on the events surrounding its demise.

They Save the *Epimetheus*!

If the Player Characters manage to stop the ritual, the awakening crew (perhaps even Captain Palamento, if he is alive) will proclaim them heroes, even if they cannot remember exactly what happened. The Wellington Yards company will give them free transport on any of their ships for life, as the Players have saved the company billions in repair costs and insurance fees. IPX might want to talk to them about what happened, especially if none of their agents live to tell the tale themselves. Should Sergio survive, he will not remember anything... or he will claim not to.

They are the Last Survivors on the *Epimetheus*

If the Player Characters manage to avoid being killed by the flaming final sacrifice, they will soon find they are not

the only ones who live through the blast. A handful of crew members, Cookie (if he lived through the scenario) and a small number of passengers make it as well. Most are burned and wounded and some cannot remember what happened to them but with the telepathic focuser destroyed in the blast they are no longer under the sway of the Harbingers' telepathic probes. The survivors of the blast will need to do some major repairs to the vessel before it can limp back to Mars, where IPX will want to talk to them, since none of their agents lived to tell the tale themselves.

They Escaped!

If the Player Characters escape the *Epimetheus* during the events of the scenario they will later hear about the ship's strange disappearance, providing they get picked up by a freighter or transport at the nearest jump gate. No one will believe their stories of bloody rituals or hypnotised passengers. Wellington Yards Inc. and IPX will be very eager to find out what the Player Characters actually know about their agents, employees and property – perhaps even looking into legal action against what would look a lot like terrorism to them. What really happened to the *Epimetheus* will be a mystery to the Player Characters, depending on how much they learned while on board. The events that took place there might haunt their dreams for a very long time to come. Whether these memories manifest as just bad dreams or subtle Harbinger probes is yet to be seen, as the Harbingers will never stop looking hungrily at the universe.



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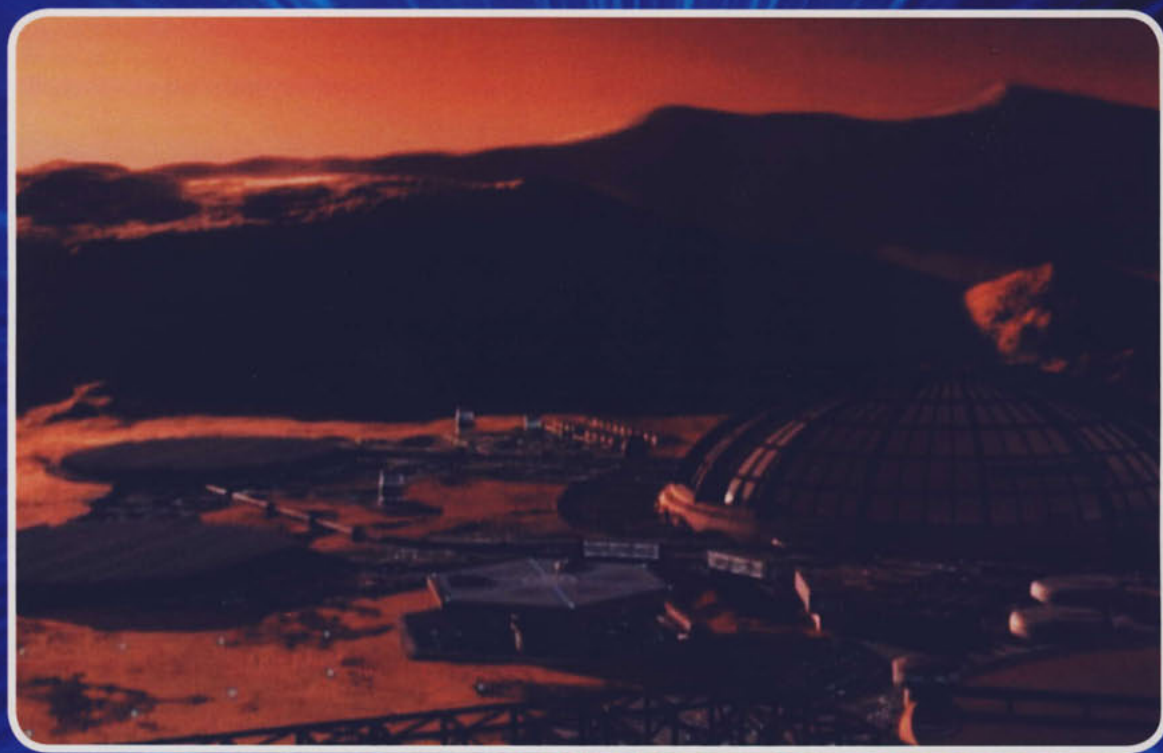
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The Roleplaying Game

Second Edition



The Lurker's guide to Starports

Written By
Lawrence Whitaker

Babylon 5 created by J. Michael Straczynski



The Roleplaying Game

Second Edition

Thirdspace

In 2261 the galaxy was thrown into upheaval in the wake of the last great Shadow War, and the galaxy was caught between ages. It was a time of great change and the responsibilities of the younger races were compounded by the loss of the Ancients. The galaxy ñ and all within it ñ was theirs. When a huge and ancient artefact was found drifting in hyperspace by flight crews of the newly neutral Babylon 5, it was brought back to the station to be studied. Bringing the artefact into realspace would trigger a chain of events the Vorlons were only able to postpone at their strongest, that would test the tenacity of Captain Sheridan and his crew to the fullest. Through the artefact they found a dimension they called Thirdspace, and the Harbingers it was home to.

This is a sourcebook for the Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game Second Edition that explains in more detail the events that take place in the Babylon 5 telemovie Thirdspace. Such a massive event would send ripples through the galaxy, and this book explains a few of them. Containing rules on how the Thirdspace gate affected Babylon 5 and its occupants, statistics for the deadly Harbingers and the personalities involved, this sourcebook gives readers everything they need to use the events in their own campaigns ñ if they dare to do so.



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