

Alanthrasil Swiftblade

By Phil Kelly

Aliachemoranthrashe'ill, broadly translating as 'the swift and final twist of the crescent blade', was born on Craftworld Biel-tan eight hundred standard years ago. The youngest of two siblings, his father Morecthias was an incredibly accomplished Dire Avenger Exarch, as was his father before him. Millennia ago, Alanthrasil's ancestors had pioneered the martial discipline of Imaluan, hinted at in the teachings of Asuryan. These learned warriors taught their many disciples the virtue of total grace and economy of movement. When the masters of the art performed the complex dance of war, not a single iota of energy was wasted. Every action and reaction was perfectly executed, every cut and parry timed to precision, achieving an almost supernatural state of grace.

It was thought by some that the true masters of Imaluan could achieve a transcendental state, their quicksilver dance so fast that their opponents seemed to move as if underwater.

Alanthrasil and his sister Eminielle had progressed far toward this level of mastery when their father Morecthias was granted the single highest honour the Farseers of Biel-Tan could bestow; to be crowned as the Young King.

Given the war-like nature of Craftworld Biel-Tan, it was not long until the Swordwind marched to war once more. Alanthrasil, watched as his father and mentor was led to

the ritual sacrifice that would awaken the Craftworld's war god. The Eldar consider it a great honour to be a Young King, consumed by the Avatar, becoming one with the raging furnace that was its soul. But no matter how many times Alanthrasil told himself this, it did not comfort him. Alanthrasil could take no joy in anything other than the savage thrill of killing, mercilessly and without pause, in the fiery shadow of what had once been his father.

Years later, when the scars of bereavement had begun to heal, he and his sister finally achieved perfection in their discipline. Their relationship was a complex interaction of dark passion and purest commitment, with Alanthrasil the darkness tinged with light and his sister the light tainted by darkness. They would duel from dawn till dusk in the Forest of Silence, their movements blurring as the consummate swordsmanship taught to them by their father weaved a dance in which neither could truly triumph. Only the harmony of their kinship prevented them from descending the solitary path of the Exarch, locked forever into the Path of the Warrior, held in awe and fear in equal measure by their fellow Eldar. When the tendrils of Hive Fleet Leviathan curled toward Craftworld Biel-Tan, Alanthrasil and his sister were at the forefront of the fight against the Tyranids. Although each attack was planned with surgical precision, the Eldar lost

thousands of warriors, Eminielle among them. The chittering swarm that pulled Eminielle down and gorged on her flesh were too numerous for Alanthrasil to defeat. Only by leaping onto the vane of a swooping Vyper jetbike did he escape at all, scores of razor-sharp bites shredding his armour and disfiguring his face.

But the Tyranid infestation was ultimately suppressed by the Eldar counter-strikes. Whilst the rest of the Biel-Tan army returned to their Craftworld, Alanthrasil spent long days trawling through the detritus of battle, flitting like a ghost from corpse to corpse. When he eventually found the site of Eminielle's death, everything other than the impenetrable psychocrystal of her spirit stone had been consumed by the ravenous swarm that had pulled her down. Alanthrasil took it back to his ship, and forged it into the hilt of his sword, that he could fight alongside his sister until the time of his own death.

It did not take long for Alanthrasil's lonely flight away from the battlezone to run into hostile space. A fleet of Eldar Pirates held dominion over the territories into which Alanthrasil flew, and welcomed the possibility of adding a new craft to their armada. The Pirate Lord Hiriag ordered the fighter to be taken intact, and it was not long before Alanthrasil was surrounded with no hope of escape. Alanthrasil knew to fight was a pointless exercise as the pirates would

not hesitate to destroy him if he made any real show of resistance. A looming frigate bore down on his fighter, the docking bay opening to swallow the fighter craft like some vast aquatic predator. Once within its massive hull, he was led from his craft, by a group of heavily armed Eldar pirates.

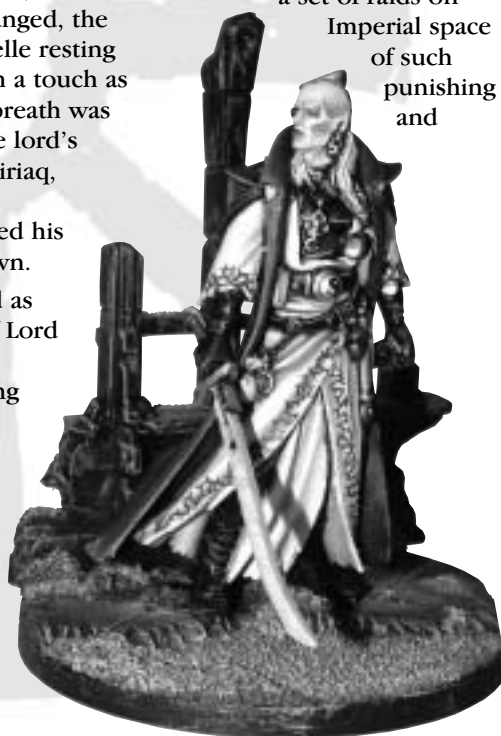
Alanthrasil remained silent as he was led before Lord Hiriaq, and did not respond to their questions or their cruel taunts. Even when they goaded him forward with sharp blades the warrior remained impassive, his scarred features betraying no sign of emotion. It was only when the pirates reached to take the sword Eminielle from her scabbard that Alanthrasil acted. Making a cutting gesture with his hand toward his foe, his sword appeared in his hand a split second before the motion's conclusion. Two pirates fell, bisected cleanly across the torso. The streams of shuriken fire from the other pirates did not find their mark, for Alanthrasil was already above them, stepping lightly up the falling bodies of his victims and vaulting backward in a graceful arc. His body seemed to occupy only the space in which the streams did not pass, the diresword Eminielle flickering down to take one, two, three heads from the necks of his assailants. Time seemed to slow for Alanthrasil as more pirates rushed to bar his advance toward Hiriaq. He slid and darted through the oncoming fire, anticipating every

movement of his enemy and positioning himself for a perfect counterstrike, flinging the diresword forward in an underarm throw that passed through the chest of one pirate and into the neck of another before smoothly reversing direction and returning hilt-first to his outstretched hand. His sinuous, complex dance was unstoppable, a roll under enemy fire culminating in an outstretched sword to the heart, a rising pirouette that seemed an evasive manoeuvre leaving the two nearest assailants cloven from hip to shoulder. Hiriaq backed away, assuming the classic guarding position with his curved power weapon, but the ornate sword fell from his outstretched hand, as did the fingers holding it. Alanthrasil was face to face with the pirate lord, calm expression unchanged, the diresword Eminielle resting on his throat with a touch as light as silk. His breath was cool on the pirate lord's sweating brow. Hiriaq, understandably impressed, ordered his men to stand down.

Alanthrasil served as the bodyguard of Lord Hiriaq for many decades, absorbing everything the infamous rogue could teach him about starcraft and piracy in return for tutelage in the ways of Imaluan. Hiriaq had his crippled hand replaced by the

finest of gilt bionics, just as Alanthrasil's damaged face was covered by the most advanced of augmetic replacements. The two became close, and over time the warrior began to regard the pirate lord as a mentor and friend. But the dark curse that seemed to be following Alanthrasil eventually struck once more. During a period of dissent within the ranks of the pirate fleet, Alanthrasil returned to the flagship to find the cooling corpse of Hiriaq slumped across his antique dining table, a thin trickle of blood-flecked drool testament to the manner of his death. Alanthrasil hunted down the culprit and his coterie of mutinous traitors, one by one.

Assuming command of the pirate fleet, Alanthrasil began a set of raids on Imperial space of such punishing and



Sample Characters

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unparalleled aggression that the overstretched Imperial forces in the region soon changed their views on the pirate fleet from a regrettably tolerable parasite to a priority target. Alanthrasil earned his infamy in a remarkably short time due to his insistence that he lead every boarding action, and soon came to the attention of the Inquisition. It did not take long for one of their number to learn about the behaviour of the pirate prince Alanthrasil, and arrange the detour of Battlegroup Gravis, bound for Biel-Tan, toward the territory of the pirate fleet.

Although Alanthrasil was well-skilled in the arts of piracy, the Inquisitor had studied the patterns of his raids well and set up a trap, using a seemingly crippled frigate as bait. The pirate prince descended upon the ship, only to find that a far larger fleet of Ork pirates was following the same frigate. The Orks, upon the arrival of

the Eldar Pirates, changed their priorities immediately and engaged Alanthrasil's pirates in a series of aggressive attacks. Even with his evasive skills there was no escape, for he was badly outnumbered and not the equal of his former mentor. After a comparatively short engagement, his fleet was all but destroyed, and the stellar sails of his flagship irrevocably damaged.

The pirate prince was fully expecting to be obliterated, and watched open-mouthed as the Imperial Fleet smashed into the Ork pirates. The resultant display of raw military power was no doubt intended for him, the Imperial attack decimating the Orks and scattering the remainder in a few short hours.

In the resultant parley, Alanthrasil's unlikely saviour revealed himself to be one Inquisitor Lichtenstein, a noted figure within the ranks of Imperial society.

Alanthrasil suspected he had a hand in setting the trap that has cost him his fleet and a great many trusted friends and advisors. Nevertheless, he stayed his blade, for Imaluan taught that should a warrior save another warrior's life, be he rival, enemy or friend, a debt was owed to him up to the point at which the deed could be repaid in kind. As the human droned on and on in his condescending monotone, Alanthrasil felt his father's eyes upon him, and felt his sister's spirit-stone grow hot within the hilt of his sword. The human had saved his life, therefore he was beholden to him. The matter was simple, to dishonour it was to dishonour the code of his forefathers. Before him, the human was insisting the debt was equal to a year's servitude.

For the time being at least, he had no choice but to comply.

Alanthrasil Swiftblade, Eldar Pirate Prince

Equipment: Advanced bionic right eye, Eldar Long Rifle with built-in rangefinder and motion predictor, 1 Haywire Grenade, antique duelling pistol, Runic Talisman (counts as pentagrammatic wards), the Diresword Eminielle.

Special Abilities: Acrobatic, Ambidextrous, Catfall, Dodge, Feint, First Strike, Force of Will, Furious Assault, Lightning Reflexes, Nerves of Steel.

	WS	BS	S	T	I	Wp	Sg	Nv	Ld
Alanthrasil	133	88	54	58	141	92	73	88	71

The Diresword Eminielle: Eminielle is a power sword. It counts as having the Daemonic properties Bound and Deflection. When a character takes more unsaved damage from Eminielle than their System Shock value from any one wound, they must pass a Wp test or add a further D10 damage to their Injury total.

Jinx: Even as Alanthrasil flaunts death in battle, it strikes down those around him, ending the lives of those he is close to in violent or painful ways. If Alanthrasil is allied to any other models on the battlefield, ie, those of his warrior group, they must add +10 to every roll made on their Hit Location chart.