

POR'LA VIOR'LA KAIS'UAM, WATER CASTE ENVOY

The Water Caste envoy Por'la Vior'la Kais'uam, like many of his race, has an ambition and drive far above his current station. Although elements of his name roughly translate as 'skilful mediator' and 'water caste bureaucrat', Por'la has the fiery temperament and outgoing nature typical to those from the sept world of Vior'la. Though young by Tau standards, Por'la is extremely well-travelled, having fled the Tau sept worlds and crossed vast tracts of space to distant Karis Cephalon. The reasons behind this self-imposed odyssey hail back to one of the most important and bloody eras in Tau history - the Damocles Gulf Crusade.

Ever since the crucial and near-unprecedented outcome of the Damocles Crusade, an Imperial purge of Tau space that ended not in sustained genocide as with other Crusades but with a shaky peace treaty, Por'la's family have been extremely well respected. The Water Caste envoy is a direct descendant of Por'O Vior'la Ko'vash M'yen Shi (lit. Strives for Unforseen Victory), the Water Caste Ambassador primarily

responsible for implementing the peace treaty with the Imperial forces after the armies of the two races had ground each other to a standstill during the latter stages of the crusade. Those scholars who know anything of Imperial history know well that this was no mean feat, and that it was the first time in several millennia that an Imperial Crusade has ended before its bloody conclusion. Thus Por'la has grown up as the latest in the most celebrated Water Caste bloodline of the Tau Sept Worlds. It is no small wonder he chose to leave when the most recent of his now-legendary Initiatives garnered a little too much attention from those keenly watching his progress.

Por'la has inherited his bloodline's natural flair for relating to the other castes of Tau society, so much so that his mentors suspect he prefers the company of the other castes to that of his peers. He has always aspired to the honorific Vash'ya, literally 'between spheres', a suffix bestowed on those who have forged strong bonds with castes other than that of their birth. As a nascent envoy, Por'la had strong connections to both the Earth and Fire Caste, and had many friends within the ranks of the Tau army. These included Shas'ui Mal'caor, the quartermaster of the Fire Warrior Hunter Cadre with which he was posted to the sept world of

Tash'va. The two had become fast friends after the diplomatic coup known as the Ria'tan Convocation whereby the Savage Blade, a large faction of Kroot Mercenaries led by the rogue Master Shaper Jhongor Omotu, were brought back into the arms of the Tau empire. The Tau fleet were relieved not to have to waste resources joining in battle with the immense warsphere of this splinter faction of Kroot, although the Earth Caste was a little shocked to find that they had been pledged to upgrade the Kroot vessel's defensive capabilities over the next Tau'cyr. Nonetheless, Por'la impressed his superiors with what they euphemistically termed 'exceptional initiative'. He had broken a few rules, but the end result had most definitely been for the Greater Good, and with the incursions of the Tyranids in the south-east galactic quarter of the Sept Worlds his omissions toward protocol were ignored. However, the young Tau let his success go to his head.

Shortly after the Ria'tan Convocation, Por'la uncovered information relating to a nascent Tyrannic cult within the families of Tash'va. The cult had perverted the Tau life-ritual of the Ta'lissera, a sacred bonding ceremony, into something far worse that culminated in the genestealer's kiss. Enraged, and confident that he could take the initiative and tackle the problem on his own, Por'la called upon a pack of Savage Blade Kroot still planetside and 'acquired' enough pulse carbines and photon grenades from his quartermaster friend's property to ensure every member of the carnivore squad was armed to the teeth. Unleashed upon the cult's underground headquarters, the Kroot reaped a massive toll of blood from the corrupted Tau, putting the place to flame and



feasting on the few Tau that had merely been hypnotised instead of contaminated by the insidious genestealer cult. The action was a bloody and a swift success, but the Tau Fire Caste was enraged at having been bypassed in favour of a group of unpredictable mercenaries, and the relatives of the Tau needlessly killed in the operation would not be content with Por'la's half-hearted apologies. After all, Por'la knew what he had done was for the Greater Good, and felt no need to repent. To add insult to injury, getting the high-tech weaponry back from the Kroot proved rather more difficult than securing it in the first place, and was eventually written off rather than endanger the volatile Kroot warband's renewed oaths of loyalty.

Despite a lengthy and successful cover-up by those high-ranking Tau that would not see the line of Ko'vash Myen Shi scandalised, Por'la was still on thin ice. The ambitious Tau's fate was sealed, however, when he was liaising with the Ria'tan Hunter Cadres during the time a state of emergency was called at their base. Tyranid vanguard creatures had been sighted two decs to the north, usually a sign of impending Tyranid invasion. Having suffered heavy casualties in previous engagements, the Fire Caste was dangerously under strength and, in their haste, left Por'la to his own devices in the compound. It was

not long before Por'la heard the screams broadcast from the compound's comm-links, and after calling up a remote tactical analysis program, the young Tau began to panic. The Fire Caste were being systematically butchered by the Tyranid swarm raining down from orbit, and were unlikely to see the dawn. After an agonising period of indecision, Por'la decided that whatever the cost he could not sit by and allow his fellow Tau to be rendered down in Tyranid digestion pools and assimilated. Deciding to take the initiative once more, he sent a prearranged alarm signal to his contact in the Savage Blade, promising great reward to any who came to the Fire Caste's aid.

Within three hours, a massive warband of Kroot and several packs of Kroothounds had accumulated within the hangar, leaping and climbing over the Tau vehicles and heavy weaponry. Por'la quickly lost all control of the situation as his delicately-tuned speeches were drowned out by the excited whoops and chirrups of the Kroot mercenaries, many of whom were quite familiar with the weaponry and technology of the Fire Caste. The Kroot force took everything they could find, some of them even attempting to drive the damaged Hammerheads out of the repair bays. At the head of a ramshackle army of exceptionally well-armed Kroot, Por'la rode to the aid of the

beleaguered Hunter Cadre.

Although the precise details of the resultant military action are withheld from all those of Shas'vere rank or less, it is widely believed that without the intervention of Por'la's improvised force, the Tau lines would not have held. The cost in Kroot lives and Tau wargear was galling, but the Hunter Cadres were able to hold out long enough for Manta Missile Destroyers from nearby Ui'Shosa to reach the scene with reinforcements. The resultant military action was decisive and swift, and many of the Ria'tan Fire Warriors made it back alive.

Although a financial settlement was eventually reached with the Savage Blade, Por'la knew full well the scale of the protocol breach he had committed by his actions. He quickly 'volunteered' to leave the Sept Worlds as a pioneer for the Tau expansion, in essence fleeing to the darkest galactic backwater he could find, as many believed he had tainted the honour of his bloodline. Por'la left as soon as he had stuffed the cargo hold of his ship with as much Tau weaponry and technology as possible. One day, he hopes to return triumphant and erase the stigma of his actions, having proved his capability to think outside of proscribed Tau doctrine to be a valid path to the Greater Good.

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Por'la is left-handed.

Equipment: Tau Gizmo (functions as a Polyglot Hedron, HPD and Man-Portable Disruption Field), Escort Drone, heavy robes, ceremonial kris (counts as knife)

Special Abilities: *Blunt, Persuade*

	WS	BS	S	T	I	Wp	Sg	Nv	Ld
Por'la	24	42	41	50	45	68	92	81	77