

ROGUE TRADER™

FORSAKEN BOUNTY™



AN INTRODUCTION TO
ROGUE TRADER



IT IS THE 41ST MILLENNIUM

For more than a hundred centuries the Emperor has sat immobile on the Golden Throne of Earth. He is the master of mankind by the will of the gods, and master of a million worlds by the might of his inexhaustible armies. He is a rotting carcass writhing invisibly with power from the Dark Age of Technology. He is the Carrion Lord of the Imperium for whom a thousand souls are sacrificed every day so that he may never truly die.

Yet in his deathless state, the Emperor continues his eternal vigilance. Mighty battlefleets cross the Daemon-infested miasma of the warp, the only route between distant stars, their way lit by the Astronomicon, the psychic manifestation of the Emperor's will. Vast armies give battle in his name on uncounted worlds, but for all their multitudes, they are barely enough to hold off the ever-present threat from aliens, heretics, mutants, and worse.

To be a man in such times is to be one amongst untold billions. It is to live in the cruelest and most bloody regime imaginable. Yet you are not just any individual—you are an Explorer on a Rogue Trader ship with authority and freedom far beyond the comprehension of the masses. Empowered by an ancient warrant of trade and a warp-capable ship, you will venture into the uncharted voids, discovering new worlds, lost civilisations, and bizarre alien technology. Fortune and glory are within reach. Rogue Traders stand on the threshold of unlimited opportunity and innumerable dangers.

WHAT IS ROGUE TRADER?

In **ROGUE TRADER**, you will assume the roles of a privateering merchant prince, or “Rogue Trader,” or one of his trusted counsellors. You are empowered by an ancient warrant of trade to seek out profit and plunder amongst unexplored regions of space, outside the Imperium's grasp. Your ship will take you to new worlds and uncharted reaches of the void, where you will encounter rivals, pirates, aliens, and possibly even daemons of the warp. You will acquire and spend great wealth and riches, and fame or infamy will follow in your footsteps. You will discover ancient and forgotten mysteries and search out the unknown to find lost human worlds and never before seen celestial phenomena. You must survive the dangers of space, not only the threat of vacuum, cold, and deadly radiation, but the things that lurk in the dark void between stars that man was never meant to find.

To be part of a Rogue Trader crew is to stand on the threshold of nearly unlimited opportunity. Vast fortunes await on the edges of the galaxy, if you and your fellow Explorers can muster the courage to find and claim them. Renown and riches reward the bold, but the unwary find only an anonymous death.

A Rogue Trader's true reward lies beyond fame and fortune, however. A Rogue Trader who can take risks and wrest them into profits by skill, luck, or sheer force of will enjoys something few humans in the 41st Millennium even know. A Rogue Trader's life is one of adventure and true freedom, the freedom to choose his course, and to see the consequences of his choices for good or ill. This is not to say, however, that the course is not fraught with peril. Foul aliens, pernicious raiders, and even other Rogue Traders will stand in your way on the path to greatness. Your wits and courage will be tested to their utmost limits. To survive is to face even greater challenges—and to wield even greater power.

PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS

The following sample characters have been specifically designed for the **FORSAKEN BOUNTY** preview adventure that begins on page 14 of this booklet. While only three different characters are provided, **FORSAKEN BOUNTY** can easily accommodate larger player groups by adding additional Arch-militant characters.



Character Name: Sarvus Trask

Home World: Port Wander (Void-Born)

Motivation: Renown

Player Name _____

Career Path: Rogue Trader

Quote: "Remember my name. You will soon hear it spoken across the Expanse."

Rank: 1

Description: Sarvus Trask is a bold, charismatic man of class and culture; he was born aboard the orbital station of Port Wander and rose to prominence there as a scion of a young and fairly new Rogue Trader dynasty. Founded by Sarvus' paternal grandfather, Jorvus Trask, the lineage has suffered from hard times and setbacks. Sarvus is determined to bring his family's warrant of trade back to greatness.

CHARACTERISTICS

Weapon Skill
WS

4 4

Ballistic Skill
BS

3 4

Strength
Str

3 0

Toughness
T

3 1

Agility
Ag

3 8

Intelligence
Int

4 2

Perception
Per

3 3

Will Power
WP

4 6

Fellowship
Fel

5 1



SKILLS

Awareness (Per)

Charm (Fel)

Common Lore (Int)[†] (Imperium)

Deceive (Fel)

Dodge (Ag)

Pilot (Ag)[†] (Space Craft)

Scholastic Lore (Int)[†]

Astromancy

Occult

Search (Per)

Basic	Skilled	+10%	+20%
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GEAR

Micro-bead, void-breather, set of fine clothing, xeno-pelt cloak, 2 clips of stub ammo.

TALENTS AND SPECIAL RULES

Special Ability: Trask possesses the Commanding Presence special ability. Once per Round, he can grant a +10% bonus to an ally for any Test, as long as the ally can see and hear him.

Balanced: Trask's power sword is expertly crafted and easy for a trained combatant to wield. He receives a +10% bonus to his Weapon Skill Tests made to Parry with this weapon.

Power Field: Trask's power sword is wreathed in energy that increases its Damage and Penetration (already included in the weapon's stats). Additionally, when this power sword is used to Parry an attack from a weapon without a power field, there is a 75% chance the attacking weapon is destroyed.

Two-Weapon Wielder: Rogue Trader Sarvus Trask is ambidextrous and trained to fight with both his power sword and pistol at the same time. On his Turn, he can make one Standard Attack with either weapon without penalty. Alternatively, as a Full Action, he can attack with both weapons at the same time.

The three most important things to know about playing Trask are:

- You are very skilled with a sword and fight well in close combat.
- You are a naturally charismatic leader and are skilled at dealing with other people.
- You are committed to restoring renown to your family name and lineage.

WEAPON

Name: Power sword

Class: Melee **Damage:** 1d10+8 **Pen:** 6

Special Rules: Balanced, Power Field

WEAPON

Name: Kulth Sixkiller Stub Revolver

Class: Pistol **Damage:** 1d10+4 **Pen:** 2

Range: 30m **ROF:** S/-/- **Clip:** 6 **Reload:** Full

Special Rules: None

ARMOUR

Storm Trooper Carapace Armour

Armour Points: 6

MOVEMENT

Half Action: 3m **Full Action:** 6m

Charge: 9m **Run:** 18m

WOUNDS

Total: 12

Current _____

Fatigue _____

FATE POINTS

Total: 3

Current _____

Character Name: Lorayne Thornhallow

Home World: Veneris (Imperial World)

Motivation: Vengeance

Player Name _____

Career Path: Arch-militant

Rank: 1

Quote: "The taste of both war and revenge is sweet upon my tongue. I hunger for more."

Description: Lorayne Thornhallow has been many things: mercenary, bounty hunter, and now bodyguard to Rogue Trader Sarvus Trask. Lorayne had a normal life on the Shrine World of Veneris until her seventeenth year. A merchant's greed ruined her family's fortune and drove her brother to suicide. Consumed by anger and despair, Lorayne left her home world and wandered, learning the ways of war as a soldier for hire and then as a bounty hunter, until she finally tracked down her prey and made the merchant pay dearly for his ill-gotten gains. Sarvus Trask then took her on as a bodyguard, and she has stayed with him since.

CHARACTERISTICS

Weapon Skill

WS

3 5

Ballistic Skill

BS

4 5

Strength

Str

3 3

Toughness

T

4 1

Agility

Ag

4 3

Intelligence

Int

4 3

Perception

Per

3 7

Will Power

WP

3 5

Fellowship

Fel

4 3



SKILLS

Awareness (Per)
Common Lore (Int)[†]
Imperium
War
Dodge (Ag)
Intimidate (S)
Medicae (Int)
Scholastic Lore (Int)[†]
Tactica Imperialis
Search (Per)

Basic	Skilled	+10%	+20%
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GEAR

Micro-bead, void-breather, bolt shell keepsake, medikit, manacles, data-slate full of wanted bounties, 2 clips of bolt ammo.

TALENTS AND SPECIAL RULES

Special Ability: Lorayne possesses the Weapon Master special ability. With any Basic-class weapon (such as her Locke-pattern Boltgun), she gains a +10% bonus to hit, +2 to Damage (already added in), and +2 initiative.

Tearing: Thornhallow's Locke-pattern boltgun fires volleys of armour penetrating rounds that explode upon impact. When rolling for Damage, make two rolls and choose the highest result.

Combat Formation: Lorayne can direct her comrades to be prepared for danger. Before rolling initiative, any group involving Lorayne can choose to use her Intelligence Bonus (4) for all initiative rolls rather than their individual Agility bonuses. Remember that Lorayne (and only Lorayne!) gains a +2 bonus to her initiative when using her boltgun in combat.

The three most important things to know about playing Lorayne are:

- You are a master of ranged combat and excel at shooting with your chosen weapon, a Locke-pattern boltgun.
- You have the Medicae Skill and possess some talent and sewing up wounds.
- You live for the thrill of the hunt and enjoy the hot-blooded rush of battle.

WEAPON

Name: Locke-pattern Boltgun

Class: Basic **Damage:** 1d10+7 **Pen:** 4

Range: 90m **ROF:** S/2/4 **Clip:** 24 **Reload:** Full

Special Rules: Tearing

ARMOUR

Enforcer Light Carapace

Armour Points: 5

WOUNDS

Total: 15

Current _____

Fatigue _____

MOVEMENT

Half Action: 4m **Full Action:** 8m

Charge: 12m **Run:** 24m

FATE POINTS

Total: 3

Current _____

Character Name: Nathin Tsanthos **Player Name** _____

Home World: Spectoris (Imperial World)

Career Path: Seneschal

Rank: 1

Motivation: Prestige

Quote: "The Expanse brims with stories waiting to be told."

Description: Nathin Tsanthos is a visionary and an elitist, a poor combination for the parochial Agri-world of Spectoris. He quietly arranged off-world transport with a bribe to the right free trader, and was soon on his way to becoming a much more cultured and educated man. In time, Tsanthos became obsessed with knowledge, pouring his efforts and wealth into obtaining passage into the Koronus Expanse where great discoveries awaited only his autoquill to tell the tale. The Rogue Trader Sarvus Trask encountered Tsanthos and found a kindred spirit; the scholar agreed to lend his knowledge to Trask's designs (in return for influence and reputation), and Tsanthos accompanied the Rogue Trader on his voyages thereafter.

CHARACTERISTICS

Weapon Skill	Ballistic Skill	Strength	Toughness	Agility	Intelligence	Perception	Will Power	Fellowship
WS	BS	Str	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
3 7	3 9	3 4	3 1	3 6	4 8	3 8	4 8	4 7

SKILLS

	Basic	Skilled	+10%	+20%
Awareness (Per)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Common Lore (Int) [†]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Imperium	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Underworld	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
War	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deceive (Fel)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dodge (Ag)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Logic (Int)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scholastic Lore (Int) [†]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bureaucracy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legend	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Search (Per)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tech-Use (Int)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

GEAR

Autoquill, dataslate, micro-bead, two sets of robes, chrono, 2 clips of hellpistol ammo, void-breather.

TALENTS AND SPECIAL RULES

Special Ability: Nathin possesses the Seeker of Lore special ability. He may spend a Fate Point to automatically succeed at any Lore or Logic Test in the minimum time required.

Accurate: Nathin's Archeotech Hellpistol is an ancient weapon of precision designed to respond superbly in skilled hands. When he declares an Aim action with this weapon, he receives a +10 bonus to his next Ballistic Skill Test in addition to the normal bonus granted by Aiming.

Quick Draw: Nathin is able to draw his weapon as a Free Action.

Talented (Tech-Use): Nathin has a knack for understanding and repairing mechanical items and unusual technological artefacts. He gains a +10 bonus to all Tech-Use Skill Tests.

ARMOUR

Xeno-mesh

Armour Points: 4

WOUNDS

Total: 12

Current _____

Fatigue _____

MOVEMENT

Half Action: 3m **Full Action:** 6m

Charge: 9m **Run:** 18m

FATE POINTS

Total: 3

Current _____



The three most important things to know about playing Nathin are:

- You are a living repository of knowledge and can call to mind obscure facts and legends in the blink of an eye.
- You can operate many tech-devices and commune with machine-spirits.
- You desire to see your discoveries and writings exalted one day as those of a pre-eminent scholar of the Expanse.

WEAPON

Name: Archeotech Hellpistol

Class: Pistol **Damage:** 1d10+5 **Pen:** 7

Range: 35m **ROF:** S/-/- **Clip:** 20 **Reload:** Full

Special Rules: Accurate

RULES SUMMARY

The following pages summarise some of the most important rules in the **ROGUE TRADER** game, especially those needed to play through the preview adventure, **FORSAKEN BOUNTY**.

CHARACTER ANATOMY

In **ROGUE TRADER**, each player controls a character, who is also known as an Explorer. Explorers are a varied bunch of individuals who share a common urge to reject a “normal” lifestyle within the Imperium and who instead desire to venture into the unknown. In addition to personality, disposition, background, and moral compass, exactly what a particular Explorer is like is defined by set of Characteristics, Skills, Traits, and Talents.

CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristics represent an Explorer’s raw ability in a variety of physical and mental areas. There are nine different Characteristics, each rated on a scale of 0 to 100. The higher the Characteristic score, the better.

Weapon Skill (WS)

Weapon Skill measures an Explorer’s competence in hand-to-hand fighting, whether using fists, knives, or chainswords.

Ballistic Skill (BS)

Ballistic Skill reflects an Explorer’s accuracy with ranged weapons, such as boltguns and plasma pistols.

Strength (S)

Strength is a measure of an Explorer’s physique and determines how much he can carry as well as how hard he can hit with melee attacks.

Toughness (T)

Toughness defines how easily an Explorer can shrug off injury and how resilient he is to toxins, poisonous environments, and other physical ailments.

Agility (Ag)

Agility measures an Explorer’s quickness, reflexes, and poise.

Intelligence (Int)

Intelligence describes an Explorer’s acumen, reason, education, and general knowledge.

GEAR DEFINITIONS

- A micro-bead is a short-range communications device.
- A chrono is a timepiece.
- A void-breather is a protective garment worn to ward off the effects of exposure to space.
- A data-slate is a small, hand-held computer device.

Perception (Per)

Perception measures the acuteness of an Explorer’s senses and determines how accurately he perceives his surroundings.

Willpower (WP)

Willpower describes an Explorer’s mental fortitude, indicates how well he can withstand the multitude of horrors in the universe, and serves as a key measure for psychic potential.

Fellowship (Fel)

Fellowship is an Explorer’s ability to interact with others, deceive, charm, befriend, or lead.

CHARACTERISTIC BONUSES

Except for Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill, all Characteristics have an associated bonus. The Characteristic Bonus is equal to the tens digit of the Characteristic.

Characteristic Bonuses are often used as modifiers. Since these bonuses are determined by the Characteristic, they may rise and fall throughout the game. Should a Characteristic take a penalty, that penalty likewise applies to the Characteristic Bonus.

SKILLS

The following Skills represent only a sampling of the Skills that will be available in **ROGUE TRADER**.

Skill Types

Skills are divided into two general categories: Basic and Advanced. Basic Skills are common to citizens throughout the Imperium, while Advanced Skills require special training or experience.

Awareness

Type: Basic

Governing Characteristic: Perception

Awareness reflects a character’s ability to perceive hidden dangers and to notice small details about his physical surroundings. Awareness is not tied to any one sense; it encompasses them all. Awareness differs from Search in that Awareness is more instinctual; it is tested passively or in response to a subtle change. Making an Awareness Skill Test is usually a Free Action.

Charm

Type: Basic

Governing Characteristic: Fellowship

Charm is used to befriend, persuade, or influence others in ways that are generally perceived as positive, or a least non-hostile. Making a Charm Skill Test usually takes about a minute.

Common Lore

Type: Advanced

Governing Characteristic: Intelligence

Skill Group: Adeptus Arbites, Machine Cult, Administratum, Ecclesiarchy, Imperial Creed, Imperial Guard, Imperium, Tech, Underworld, War

Common Lore is divided into a number of different groups that represent general knowledge about a topic or organization. Making a Common Lore Skill Test requires no time at all; a character either knows something or he does not.

Deceive

Type: Basic

Governing Characteristic: Fellowship

Deceive is used to lie, dupe, swindle, or mislead others. Failing a Deceive Test can often provoke a negative, even hostile reaction by the target. Making a Deceive Skill Test usually takes about a minute.

Dodge

Type: Basic

Governing Characteristic: Agility

Dodge is used as a Reaction in combat to negate a hit. See Combat Action Descriptions on page 9 for more information.

Intimidate

Type: Basic

Governing Characteristic: Strength

Intimidate is used to frighten, coerce, bully, or threaten others. While Intimidate is usually backed up by Strength, the Game Master can allow more subtle uses of Intimidate that rely on Intelligence or Fellowship. Making an Intimidate Skill Test is a Full Action.

Logic

Type: Basic

Governing Characteristic: Intelligence

Logic represents a character's proficiency at reasoning and problem solving. It might be used to help form a complex plan, extrapolate the interior layout of a structure based on exterior observation, decipher a code, or solve a troublesome mathematic equation. Note that Logic is a theoretical Skill—Tech-Use is its practical counterpart.

Medicae

Type: Advanced

Governing Characteristic: Intelligence

The Medicae Skill is used to treat and repair injuries by closing wounds and restoring the balance of the body's humours. A successful Medicae Test removes Damage equal to the character's Intelligence Bonus. A failure by more than three degrees of success inflicts one additional point of Damage. Using Medicae is a Full Action for both the character using the Skill and his patient. Medicae can also be used to determine the cause of death when studying a body.

Pilot

Type: Advanced

Governing Characteristic: Agility

Skill Group: Personal, Flyers, Space Craft

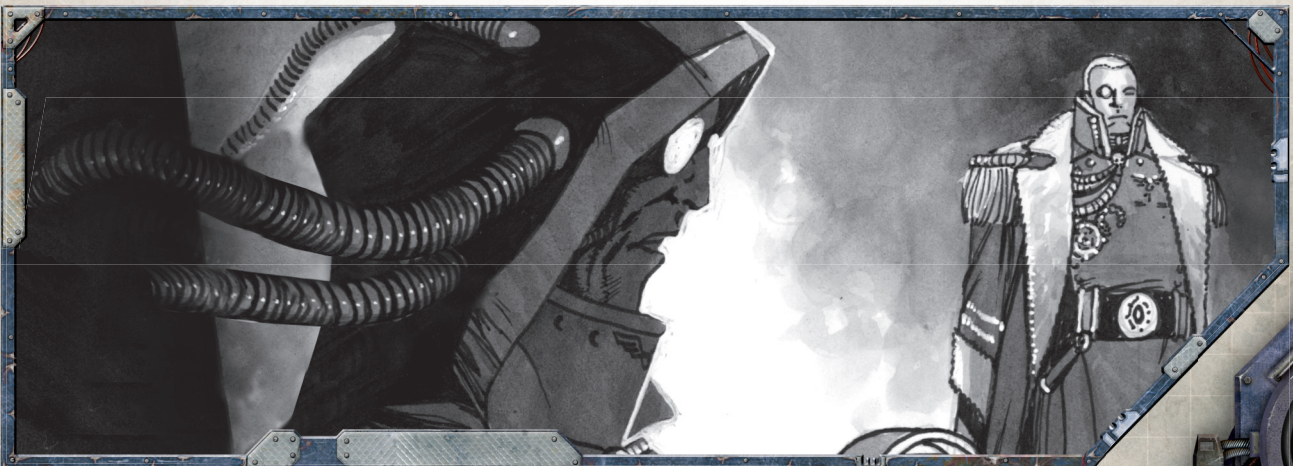
The Pilot Skill is used to fly anything from personal jump packs to small atmospheric and void-capable ships, such as gun-cutters, to large capital ships, such as a Rogue Trader's frigate. Under normal conditions, a trained pilot does not need to make a Piloting Test, but special manoeuvres, unusual circumstances, or difficult flying conditions do require Tests. Making a Piloting Skill Test is a Half Action.

Scholastic Lore

Type: Advanced

Governing Characteristic: Intelligence

Skill Group: Archaic, Astromancy, Beasts, Bureaucracy, Chymistry, Cryptology, Heraldry, Imperial Creed, Judgement, Legend, Numerology, Occult, Philosophy, Tactica Imperialis
Scholastic Lore grants special, learned knowledge in a particular discipline or subject. A Scholastic Lore Test used to recall a fact requires no time at all; a character either knows something or he does not. Scholastic Lore Tests can also be





used once every 1d10 hours to conduct research in a proper environment (a library, for example).

Search

Type: Basic

Governing Characteristic: Perception

Search is used when a character is trying to find something, or when he is examining an area for concealed objects, clues, or anything else that might be hidden. Search differs from Awareness in that Search is a deliberate activity. A single Search Skill Test is sufficient to cover a small room or the equivalent and usually takes several minutes. Larger areas may require multiple Search Tests and much longer periods of time at the GM's discretion.

Tech-Use

Type: Advanced

Governing Characteristic: Intelligence

A character can use Tech-Use to repair mechanical items or figure out how unusual technical artefacts work. A Tech-Use Skill Test can take anywhere from a minute to an hour, depending on the complexity of the task. Extra degrees of success on a Test can reduce the necessary time.

TESTS

Tests are the basic way of determining success or failure in a game of **ROGUE TRADER**. When an Explorer performs any task that could have dramatic consequences—affecting the story, a character's health, a leader's reputation, the safety of the ship, and so on—a Test should be performed.

DEGREES OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE

For most Tests, it is enough to know whether a character succeeded or failed. Sometimes, however, it is useful to know how well a character succeeded, or how badly he failed. This is particularly important in certain combat situations, such as firing

a gun capable of a semi-automatic or fully automatic burst fire.

Measuring degrees of success and failure in a Skill or Characteristic Test is straightforward. After the percentage roll is made, compare the roll with the modified Characteristic score. For each full 10 points by which the Test succeeded, one degree of success is achieved. Conversely, for each 10 full points by which the Test failed, one degree of failure is gained.

Example: Tod's character is making an attack and has a BS of 44. He rolls a 22 to hit, and has succeeded by two degrees of success.

SKILL TESTS

The most common type of Test an Explorer performs during the game are Skill Tests. Each Skill is governed by a Characteristic. For example, the Dodge Skill is governed by the Agility Characteristic. To make a Skill Test, add any relevant modifiers to the Skill's governing Characteristic, then make a percentage roll. If the result is equal to or less than the modified Characteristic, the Test succeeds. If the result is greater than the modified Characteristic, the Test fails.

Example: Sarvus Trask must make a Charm Test. He has a Fellowship of 51 and Charm +10 as a Skill. Trask must roll a 61 or less in order to succeed.

CHARACTERISTIC TESTS

Sometimes an Explorer wants to attempt something not covered by a Skill. In such cases, a Characteristic Test can be used instead of a Skill Test. The GM determines the most appropriate Characteristic for the Test, then the player makes a percentage roll. If the roll is equal to or less than the Characteristic, the Test succeeds. If the roll is greater than the Characteristic, the Test fails.

TEST DIFFICULTY

Not all tests are equal. A routine landing at a spaceport and navigating a dense asteroid field at high speed may both require Piloting Skill Tests, but the latter is clearly harder than the former. But how much harder is navigating an asteroid field than landing at a spaceport? This is where Test Difficulty and the role of the GM both come into play.

In some cases, the Difficulty of a Test is pre-determined by the rules; in other cases, the GM should decide the Difficulty

TABLE 1-1: TEST DIFFICULTY

Difficulty	Modifier
Easy	+30
Routine	+20
Ordinary	+10
Challenging	+0
Difficult	-10
Hard	-20
Very Hard	-30

and consult Table 1-1: Test Difficulty to determine the appropriate modifier. The Difficulty modifier is applied to the governing Characteristic associated with the Test.

COMBINING DIFFICULTIES

There will be instances where multiple factors make performing a particular action easier or more difficult. If a situation calls for two or more bonuses or penalties, simply combine all modifiers together and apply the total to the Skill or Characteristic.

The maximum modifier that can be applied to a Skill Test or Characteristic Test is +60 or -60.

THE ROLE OF FATE

Explorers are unusual people—individuals with abilities, backgrounds, and experiences well beyond those of ordinary citizens of the Imperium. More than anything, the role of Fate in an Explorer's life is what separates him from the masses. All Explorers begin play with a number Fate Points, which are determined at character creation. For some, these Fate Points represent destiny, a sign that the Emperor has marked them for greatness. For others, Fate represents simple luck.

COMBAT

Combat is usually resolved using structured time divided into Rounds, Turns, and Actions. Each character, including Non-Player Characters, takes one Turn each Round. The order in which Turns are resolved depends on Initiative Order.

COMBAT OVERVIEW

When a new combat begins, follow these steps to determine what happens.

Step One: Surprise

At the beginning of a combat, the GM determines if any

USING FATE POINTS

Fate Points allow an Explorer to manipulate situations by mitigating bad results or turning a mishap into fortune. An Explorer has a limited pool of Fate Points, and when a Fate Point is spent, that pool is reduced by one. Spent Fate Points are restored at the beginning of the next gaming session, or possibly under special circumstances in the middle of a game session that the GM deems appropriate.

Spending one Fate Point allows for one of the following:

- Re-roll a failed Test once. The results of the re-roll are final.
- Gain a +10 bonus to a Test. This must be chosen before dice are rolled.
- Add an extra degree of success to a Test. This may be chosen after dice are rolled.
- Count as having rolled a 10 for Initiative.
- Instantly recover 1d5 Wounds.

THE CORE MECHANIC

- Determine the a Skill or Characteristic to Test.
- Add or subtract any relevant modifiers to the Skill or Characteristic.
- Make a percentile roll (1d100).

If the percentile roll is less than or equal to the Skill or Characteristic being tested, the Test succeeds.

If the percentile roll is greater than the Skill or Characteristic being tested, the Test fails.

characters are Surprised. This can only happen once at the beginning of a combat, and there will be many combats where nobody is Surprised. A Surprised character loses his Turn on the first Round of combat because he has been caught unawares by his enemies and may take no actions. If no one is Surprised, move immediately to Step Two.

Step Two: Roll Initiative

At the start of the first Round, each character rolls for Initiative. Each character rolls 1d10 and adds his Agility Bonus (the tens digit of his Agility Characteristic). The result of the roll applies for all successive Rounds in the combat.

Step Three: Determine Initiative Order

The GM ranks all the Initiative rolls, including those of the NPCs, from highest to lowest. This is the order in which the characters take their Turns during each Round of combat.

Step Four: Combatants Take Turns

Starting with the character at the top of the Initiative Order, each character takes a Turn. The character currently taking his Turn is known as the Active Character. During his Turn, the Active Character can perform one or more Actions. Once his Actions have been resolved, the next character in the Initiative Order becomes the Active Character and takes his Turn, and so forth. A combat Round is roughly 5 seconds long.

Step Five: Round Ends

Once each character has taken a Turn, the Round is over. Any lingering effects that specify a duration of "until the end of the Round" now end.

Step Six: Repeat Steps Four and Five as Needed

Play successive Rounds until the combat is complete.

ACTIONS IN COMBAT

During each normal Round, every character gets a Turn to act. On his Turn, a character can take one or more Actions.

TABLE 1-2: COMBAT ACTIONS

Action	Type	Description
Aim	Half/Full	+10 bonus to hit as a Half Action or +20 to hit as a Full Action on your next attack
All Out Attack	Full	+20 to Weapon Skill Test, you cannot Dodge or Parry
Charge	Full	Rush at an opponent and make a melee attack with a +10 bonus to Weapon Skill
Dodge	Reaction	Test Dodge to negate a hit
Full Auto Burst	Full	+20 to Ballistic Skill Test, each degree of success scores an additional hit
Move	Half/Full	As a Half Action, move a distance up to your Half Move in metres (equal to your Agility Bonus), or as a Full Action, move as distance up to your Full Move in metres (twice your Agility Bonus)
Parry	Reaction	Test Weapon Skill to negate a hit from a melee attack (must be wielding a melee weapon capable of parrying)
Ready	Half	Draw a weapon or prepare item for use
Reload	Varies	Reload a ranged weapon
Run	Full	Move a distance up to your Run Move, enemies receive a -20 to Ballistic Skill to hit you and a +20 to Weapon Skill to hit you
Semi-Auto Burst	Full	+10 to Ballistic Skill Test, each two degrees of success scores an additional hit
Standard Attack	Half	Make one melee or ranged attack
Use Skill	Varies	You may use a Skill

Types of Actions

Every Action is categorised into one of the following types.

Full Actions

A Full Action requires a character's complete attention to accomplish. A character can take one Full Action on his Turn instead of taking any Half Actions.

Half Actions

A Half Action is fairly simple; it requires some effort or concentration, but not so much that it consumes a character's entire Turn. A character can take two different Half Actions on his Turn instead of taking one Full Action. A character cannot take the same Half Action twice in the same Turn.

Reactions

A Reaction is a special Action made in response to some event, such as an attack. A character receives one Reaction each Round. Unlike the other types of actions, a character usually performs a Reaction when it is not his Turn.

Free Actions

A Free Action takes only a moment and requires no real effort by the character. Free Actions may be performed in addition to any other Actions on a character's Turn, and there is no formal limit to the number of Free Actions one character can take. The GM should use common sense to set reasonable limits on what can be done in a few seconds.

Action Subtypes

Into addition to its type, every Action is also categorised into one or more subtypes. Action subtypes don't do anything in and of themselves, but they are used to clarify what

a character is and is not allowed to do in a variety of special circumstances. For example, a character who is Immobilised cannot perform any Actions with the Movement subtype.

Using Actions

During his Turn, a character may perform one Full Action or two different Half Actions. A character could, for example, make an All Out Attack (Full Action) or Aim and make a Standard Attack (two Half Actions).

More Actions

The combat actions described in this booklet represent only a sampling of the options that will be available in **ROGUE TRADER**.

COMBAT ACTION DESCRIPTIONS

These Actions provide characters with a variety of options in combat.

Aim

Type: Half Action or Full Action

Subtype: Concentration

The character spends extra time to perform a more precise attack. Aiming as a Half Action grants a +10 bonus to the next Weapon Skill or Ballistic Skill Test made as an attack. Aiming as a Full Action increases the bonus to +20. The next action the character performs must be an attack or the benefits of Aiming are lost.

All Out Attack

Type: Full Action

Subtypes: Attack, Melee

The character makes a furious attack at the expense of safety. He gains a +20 bonus to his next Weapon Skill Test, but he cannot Dodge or Parry until the start of his next Turn.

Charge

Type: Full Action

Subtypes: Attack, Melee, Movement

The character rushes at his target and delivers a single melee attack. The target must be at least four metres away, but still within the attacker's Charge Move (three times your Agility Bonus). The last four metres of the Charge must be in a straight line so the attacker can build speed and line up with his target. The attacker gains a +10 bonus to his Weapon Skill Test made at the end of the Charge.

Dodge

Type: Reaction

Subtype: Defence, Movement

Dodge is a Reaction that a character can perform when it is not his Turn. After a character is hit, but before Damage is rolled, the character can attempt to avoid the attack by making a Dodge Skill Test. A character must be aware of the attack in order to make the Test. If the Test succeeds, the character gets out of the way at the last moment and the attack is considered to have missed (and thus no Damage is rolled). If the Dodge Skill Test fails, the attack connects and deals Damage normally. Dodge can be used to avoid both melee and ranged attacks.

DODGING AUTO-FIRE AND AREA EFFECT ATTACKS

When Dodging Fully-Automatic or Semi-Automatic Bursts, each degree of success on the Dodge Skill Test negates one additional hit.

Full Auto Burst

Type: Full Action

Subtype: Attack, Ranged

The character hurls a roaring burst of fully automatic gunfire at his enemies. The attacker must be wielding a ranged weapon capable of fully automatic fire to take this action.

The attacker makes a Ballistic Skill Test with a +20 bonus. If he succeeds, the attack scores a hit normally. Furthermore, each degree of success scores an extra hit. The number of extra hits scored in this manner cannot exceed the weapon's fully automatic Rate of Fire. Extra hits can either be allocated to the original target or any other targets within two metres, provided none of the new targets would have been harder to hit than the original target.



Move

Type: Half or Full Action

SubType: Movement

The character can spend a Half Action to move a number of metres equal to his Agility Bonus. As a Full Action, he may move twice that distance.

Parry

Type: Reaction

SubType: Defence

Parry is a Reaction that a character can perform if it is not his Turn. If the character is wielding a melee weapon, he can use it to attempt to Parry a melee attack against him, provided he is aware of the attack. To Parry, Test Weapon Skill. If the Test succeeds, the attack is considered to have missed (thus no Damage is rolled). If the Test fails, the attack connects and Damage is rolled normally. Parry can be used against melee attacks but not ranged attacks.

Ready

Type: Half Action

SubType: Miscellaneous

The character draws a weapon or retrieves an object stowed in a pouch or pocket. A weapon or item can also be properly stowed away with this action (but note that simply dropping an item is considered a Free Action). Ready can be declared twice in the same Turn if it is used on two different weapons or items.

Reload

Type: Half, Full, or Extended Action (Varies by Weapon)

SubType: Miscellaneous

Declaring this action allows a character to reload a ranged weapon. The duration of Reload (Half Action, Full Action, etc.) is dictated by the weapon's description.

Semi-Auto Burst

Type: Full Action

SubType: Attack

The character hurls a burst of semi-automatic gunfire at his opponents. The attacker must be wielding a weapon capable of semi-automatic fire to take this action.

The attacker makes a Ballistic Skill Test with a +10 bonus. If he succeeds, the attack scores a hit normally. Furthermore, every two degrees of success scores an extra hit. The number of extra hits scored in this manner cannot exceed the weapon's semi-automatic Rate of Fire. Extra hits can either be allocated to the original target or any other targets within two metres, provided none of the new targets would have been harder to hit than the original target.

Standard Attack

Type: Half Action

SubType: Attack

The character either performs one melee attack by testing Weapon Skill or one ranged attack by testing Ballistic Skill.

Run

Type: Full Action

SubType: Movement

The character runs at full speed, covering a distance up to six times his Agility Bonus in metres. Until the character's next turn, ranged attacks against him suffer a -20 penalty to Ballistic Skill Tests, but melee attacks against him gain a +20 bonus to Weapon Skill Tests.

Use a Skill

Type: Half, Full, or Extended Action (Varies by circumstance)

SubType: Miscellaneous

The character uses a Skill, which typically involves making a Skill Test.

SINGLE SHOT, SEMI-AUTO, AND FULL AUTO FIRE

Each weapon has a code that indicates whether it is capable of firing more than a single shot in combat, and how many shots the weapon expends when doing so. A weapons rate of fire has three entries to indicate the modes a weapon can be fired in. The first entry indicates whether the weapon can be fired singly (S). The second entry indicates whether or not a weapon can be fired semi-automatically, and the number listed describes the shots fired. Finally, the third entry describes if the weapon can be fired on full automatic. Any mode in which the weapon cannot be fired is indicated with a "-".

Some weapons can be fired in more than one mode. If this is the case, each of its different rates of fire will be listed in its profile. Characters must choose which mode they are firing their weapon in before making an attack.

Lorayne Thornhallow's Locke-pattern boltgun has a rate of fire of S/2/4, meaning that it can fire a single shot, two shots when fired on semi-auto, or four shots when fired on fully automatic.

OTHER ACTIONS

There are many more combat action options in the full game of **ROGUE TRADER**. Additionally, the GM may allow players to perform special actions not covered by any of the above. Such improvised actions should usually involve some kind of Skill or Characteristic Test.

THE ATTACK

There are several attack Actions in **ROGUE TRADER**, from the All Out Attack to Full Auto Burst to the straightforward Standard Attack; regardless of which is used, the process of inflicting harm upon an opponent is resolved the same way. Follow these steps to resolve attacks in combat.

Step One: Determine if the Attack is Possible

Melee attacks require the attacker to be engaged in melee with his target. Ranged attacks cannot be made if the attacker is engaged in melee unless he is firing a pistol class weapon. In either case, the attacker must be aware of his target.

Step Two: Test

A melee attack requires a successful Weapon Skill Test. A ranged attack requires a successful Ballistic Skill Test. As with other Tests, if the dice roll is equal to or less than the Skill being tested, the attack hits the target.

Step Three: Determine Damage

If an attack hits, it damages its target. Each weapon has a Damage listing, which usually involves a die roll, plus or minus some number. Roll the appropriate die, add any relevant modifiers, and if the attack was a melee attack, add

the attacker's Strength Bonus. The result is the total Damage applied to the target.

If any die rolled for Damage results in a natural "10," there is a chance of Righteous Fury.

Righteous Fury

When rolling Damage after a successful attack, if any die roll results in a natural "10," there is a chance the Emperor's favour is with the attacker. (This includes a result of "10" when rolling 1d5 for Damage.) This result calls for a second attack roll that is identical, all modifiers included, to the original attack. If that second attack hits, the attacker may roll an additional die for Damage and add it to the Damage total.

If the additional Damage roll also results in a natural "10," the Emperor has indeed smiled upon the attacker and the attacker may roll another die for Damage and add it to the Damage total. This process continues until a number other than "10" is rolled on the Damage die. Normally, only Player Characters gain the benefits of Righteous Fury. The Game Master may, at his discretion, allow important NPC's and villains to gain the benefits of Righteous Fury as well.

Step Four: Apply Damage

From the Damage total, the target of the attack subtracts his Toughness Bonus and his Armour Points (modified by Penetration—see below). If this reduces the Damage total to zero or less, the attack is shrugged off with no ill effect. Otherwise, any remaining Damage is applied to the target. If the target's Damage exceeds his Wounds, he is killed.

Penetration

All weapons have a Penetration rating, reflecting how good the weapon is at going through armour. When a shot or blow from this weapon hits a target, reduce the target's Armour Points by the weapon's Penetration, with results of less than 0 counting as 0 (i.e., the armour provides no protection at all). Then, work out Damage as normal.

COMBAT CIRCUMSTANCES

The chances of hitting in combat can be modified in a similar manner to Skill Tests. These combat circumstances can be used to reflect the effects of terrain, the weather, tactical situations and a variety of other factors. Characters should make as much use of beneficial circumstances as possible. A good plan, suitable equipment, or skilful use of tactics can often make the difference between life and death for an Explorer. The following circumstances are some of the most common encountered in combat. The GM has the final say about the Difficulty of any particular Test.

Darkness

Weapon Skill Tests made in darkness are regarded as Hard (−20), while Ballistic Skill Tests are regarded as Very Hard (−30).

Difficult or Arduous Terrain

Weapon Skill and Dodge Tests made whilst standing in difficult terrain, such as mud, are Difficult (−10). Tests made whilst standing in arduous terrain such as deep snow or upon ice are Very Hard (−30).

Engaged in Melee

When a character is adjacent to an enemy, he can engage that enemy in melee combat by performing any attack action with a melee weapon. If a character moves away from an enemy whilst engaged in melee combat, that enemy can make a free melee attack against the character moving away. A character engaged in melee combat cannot make ranged attacks unless he is wielding a pistol class weapon.

Helpless Targets

Weapon Skill Tests made to hit a sleeping, unconscious, or otherwise helpless target automatically succeed. When rolling Damage against such a target, roll twice and add the results.

Off Hand Attacks

Weapon Skill Tests or Ballistic Skill Tests made to attack with a weapon wielded in a character's off hand are considered Hard (−20).

Point Blank

Ballistic Skill Tests made to hit a target within three metres are Easy (+30). Note that this bonus does not apply when shooting targets that are engaged in melee combat with the character.

Shooting into Melee Combat

Ballistic Skill Tests made to hit a target that is engaged in melee combat are Hard (−20).

Unaware Targets

Weapon Skill or Ballistic Skill Tests made to attack unaware targets (i.e. Surprised targets) are Easy (+30).

Injury

As a consequence of fighting, characters take Damage. A combatant can take Damage up to an amount equal to his Wounds. When the Damage equals or exceeds the character's Wounds, he is killed.

Critical Damage

The injury rules in this booklet have been simplified due to space restrictions. **ROGUE TRADER** will include a full array of colourful critical Damage effects, including permanent injuries such as limb loss.

FORSAKEN BOUNTY

"The Maw. That is what they call the gateway to the Koronus Expanse; an apt name given its history. As long as I have sat the captain's throne, I have seen countless ships, and souls, vanish down its gullet. Of course they still come, for the Maw leads to a belly full of riches."

—Lord-Captain Ezekiel Pengalia

FORSAKEN BOUNTY is a short introductory adventure intended to give players a chance to experience the **ROGUE TRADER** game. The adventure follows the PCs' efforts to find and salvage the *Emperor's Bounty*, a vessel lost in the Maw, and encapsulates the core themes of the game—profit and exploration. It will also provide both players and GMs alike with a starting point for further adventures in the dark and perilous Warhammer 40,000 universe.

GETTING STARTED

All of the information required to run this adventure has been provided in this booklet, including basic rules and pre-generated characters for the players. Some background information on the setting has also been presented; however, **FORSAKEN BOUNTY** has been designed as a self-contained scenario and does not require any detailed understanding of the setting. The adventure begins with Sarvas Trask and his crew having ventured into the Maw in search of a lost vessel and the fortune and glory it promises. The *Rogue Trader* is aboard his ship, the *Sovereign Venture*—an ancient Imperial cruiser patterned after the grand iconography of his dynasty. The *Venture* is a formidable vessel, capable of laying waste to cities and navigating the perilous currents of the warp. Of course, of most importance to Trask and his crew are its deep holds and the wealth they can store.

A SALVAGEABLE SITUATION

The focus of this scenario is the salvage of a vessel known as the *Emperor's Bounty*. In **ROGUE TRADER**, this kind of mission is known as an Endeavour (see box). The GM should explain to the players that their purpose in finding and recovering the Bounty is to successfully complete this Endeavour, thus increasing their wealth and adding to the glory of their dynasty. As well as outlining the Endeavour, the GM should also give the players a bit of background on how they came into the information leading to the wreck and the other requirements they had to fulfil before beginning their mission. In a normal Endeavour, the PCs would be required to secure these requirements themselves during play; however, for the purposes of this adventure they are considered to have already been secured.

The requirements for this Endeavour and how the PCs have acquired them are:

The Location of the Vessel: Recently an Imperial Naval scout detected the Salvation Beacon of the *Emperor's Bounty* in the Battleground, a blighted section of space in the Maw. This information found its way into the lower echelons of the Battlefleet Calixis command staff, where it was disregarded until an enterprising young officer sold it, along with the vox frequency to detect the beacon, to Trask and his crew.

A Writ of Claim: On behalf of Trask, Tsanthos made the appropriate supplications and entreaties to the Administratum, receiving (eventually) a Writ of Claim pertaining to the recovery and salvage of the *Emperor's Bounty*. Under the conditions of this claim, the *Rogue Trader* himself must be the first to set foot on board the derelict vessel.

Salvage Equipment and Crew: Using a measure of his capital, Trask has taken on a crew of junkers, or salvage men, from Port Wander.

For the purposes of this adventure, the final amount of Profit the PCs garner from their actions makes a good benchmark for their overall success or failure. The GM should impress upon the players that, whatever else they achieve, their ultimate goal is the recovery of the *Emperor's Bounty* and the Profit its salvage will bring. Read or paraphrase the following:

Recently, an Imperial scout vessel detected the Salvation Beacon of the Emperor's Bounty in the Battleground, a blighted section of space in the Maw. The Maw is a dangerous warp passage that links the Calixis Sector to the mostly-uncharted Koronus Expanse, an area of space that lies beyond Imperial rule.

Nathin Tsanthos, a scholar of the Expanse, knows that the Emperor's Bounty is a Lathe-class Light Cruiser, a rich prize indeed if it can be salvaged. On behalf of Rogue Trader Sarvas Trask, Tsanthos made the appropriate supplications and entreaties to the Administratum, eventually receiving a Writ of Claim pertaining to the recovery and salvage of the Emperor's Bounty. Under the conditions of the claim, the Rogue Trader himself must be the first to set foot upon the derelict vessel. To that end, you have set forth upon the Sovereign Venture, a massive and powerful cruiser owned by the Trask dynasty for centuries.

HOW ENDEAVOURS WORK

In **ROGUE TRADER**, a primary goal for the PCs is the acquisition of Profit. Profit is a measure of the PCs' wealth, both materially and on paper. More than simply what the Lord-Captain keeps stowed in his private chambers, it represents a real scale for the PCs' success, as well as allowing them to expand their dynasty and acquire and maintain vastly expensive things such as starships, mercenary armies, and space stations. Part of most things the PCs do will be tied to increasing or maintaining their Profit.

An Endeavour is a specific mission (in the case of this adventure, a salvage operation) that if successful will provide the PCs with a significant bonus to their Profit. Each Endeavour is different and has a set list of requirements (the things the PCs need before they can start it) as well as a level of reward (Profit) when it is completed.

PROFIT

The collective wealth and influence of a Rogue Trader and his advisors—the player characters—is measured by one value: Profit. This value is used to determine whether or not goods and services can be afforded, the scale of the group's ventures, and their standing amongst peers and other powers of the Imperium.

In Rogue Trader, the player characters may, if they choose, increase their group's Profit by completing Endeavours. Each completed Endeavour adds to the groups Profit rating, enabling them to grow in wealth and power—perhaps eventually commanding entire fleets of starships or owning their own planet.

THE BATTLEGROUND

The scenario begins with the Sovereign Venture having just entered the Battleground. Read or paraphrase the following:

It is several days since you embarked from Port Wander into the darkness and peril of the Maw. In that time, your vessel has been buffeted and battered by the violent warp tides of the passage, and you have had to translate into real space numerous times to maintain your heading. The Sovereign Venture's Gellar Field—the energy halo that protects all Imperial ships from the baleful entities of the warp—has also been strained by the intense nature of the passage and the volatile nature of the Maw. Now, finally, your ship has arrived at the cursed place known as the Battleground, a forsaken stretch of void scattered with the debris of ancient warships. Somewhere here lies the Emperor's Bounty and the salvage you have come to collect.

Having reached the Battleground, the Explorers will need to begin their search for the Bounty. This search should take several hours at best and perhaps even a few days (the

Battleground is a truly vast place). This is a good point for the PCs to describe themselves to each other and to gain more understanding of their roles aboard the vessel (see PC descriptions). The GM can also use this brief introduction to impress upon the players the lonely desolate nature of the Battleground and its unnatural eeriness. When the GM is ready, he can have the PCs detect the weak vox signal from the Bounty's Salvation Beacon, leading them to its resting place.

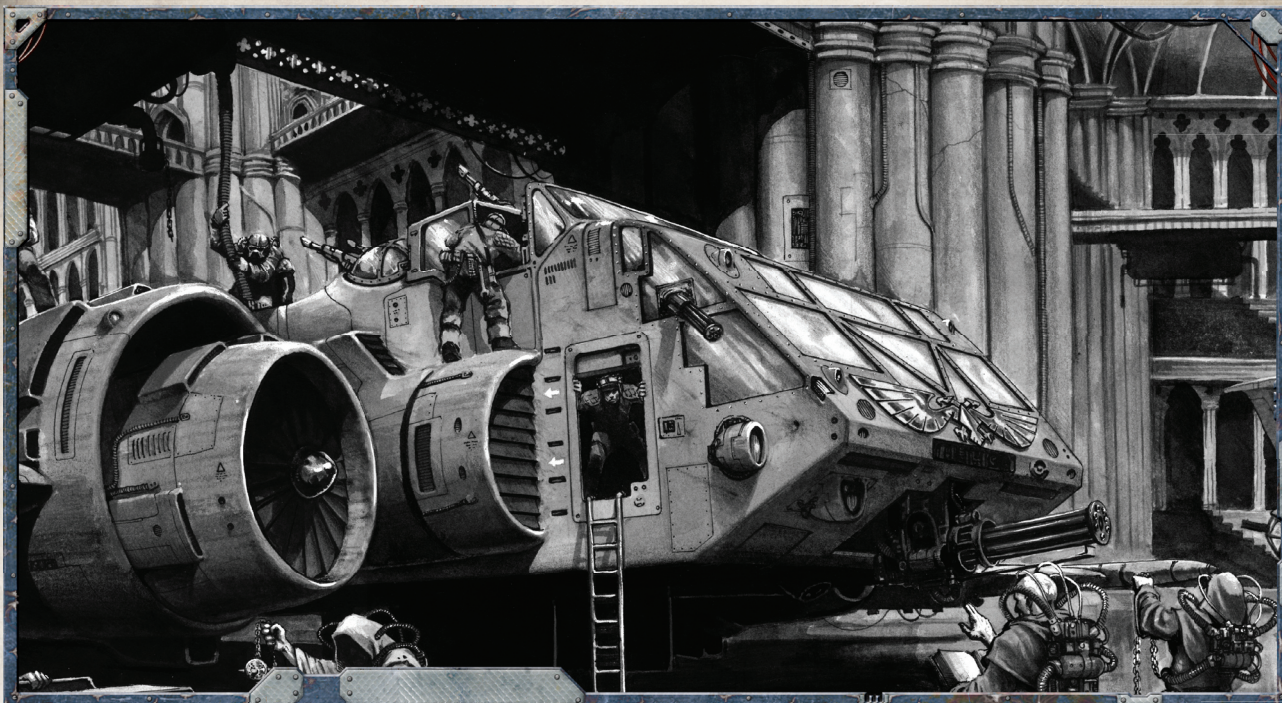
A GLORIOUS BOUNTY

Reaching the Bounty, however, is easier said than done, as it lies deep within the heart of a massive debris field some 300,000 kilometres in diameter. As the PCs' vessel approaches the field, read or paraphrase the following:

Through the vista panels of your vessel, you begin to make out a massive glittering cloud scattered across the void. As you get closer, you can faintly discern the blasted shells of vessels, desiccated and corroded by centuries of unprotected exposure to hard vacuum and solar radiation. It looks like long ago a great engagement took place here that left behind the twisted remains of assault vessels, ordnance, and other detritus of war. Even as you watch, the cloud moves like a sluggish whirlpool of junk, fragments smashing into each other and breaking into showers of debris and dust. You can just make out the weak flicker of a plasma drive as it leaks a feeble glow out into space near the centre of the chaotic mass of broken vessels and blackened hulks.

Once in close proximity to the cloud of debris, the ship's sensors register all manner of hazards, from fluctuating radioactive wrecks to hidden unexploded ordnance. In fact, the *Bounty* itself seems to have suffered serious damage when it drifted into the field several months ago, and both the PCs' helmsman and Navigator will warn them that taking the vessel





into the cloud would be a very bad idea indeed. A smaller craft, however, could make the journey unscathed. Sensor sweeps of the *Bounty* will also reveal that the ship's Gellar Field is partially active, though weak and fluctuating—the reason for which the PCs will discover later...

NAVIGATING THE FIELD

At this point, the PCs will need to figure out the best way to free the trapped vessel from its junk-filled grave. It should be made clear to them that taking their own vessel in would not be advisable; even should they reach the *Bounty* alive, the damage they would sustain would negate any real profit from the endeavour. Piloting the *Bounty* out or at least getting to it and ferrying out its most valuable components are their best options for obtaining their prize. The most obvious way to reach the *Bounty* is by using a small agile craft such as a Guncutter (the PCs have such a craft on board for planetary landing and the like). Such a craft could avoid the worst of the debris and would be too small to trigger any hidden ordnance like mines or torpedoes.

However, any efforts to navigate the field in a small craft are not without danger and will require a **Challenging (+0) Piloting Test**. Failing this Test will result in some damage to the craft, as it strikes debris or sets off ancient ordnance, though the craft will still be able to reach the vessel, albeit a little worse for wear. Clever PCs might have the idea of blasting a path through the field with their ship's guns, making it easier for a small vessel to pass. If the PCs had the presence of mind to do this before embarking, then all the Piloting Tests become **Easy (+30)**.

THE GUNCUTTER

The term "Guncutter," refers to a variety of armed and armoured spacecraft that can be used for in-system space travel, orbit-to-ground

transport, hostile landings, or even dogfighting.

The Explorers' particular guncutter is crewed by one or two pilots, one or two gunners, and an engineer. The craft has several weapon systems, crew quarters for six, and a cargo hold large enough to transport about 30 people or the equivalent in cargo). There are six void-suits on board.

SALVAGING THE CLOUD

The PCs might also have the idea of searching the rest of the cloud for useful salvage. While most of the debris has either long since been stripped of useful components or wrecked beyond recognition, time and effort could yield some profit. If the PCs think of undertaking this search, they can make a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** (as long as they are aboard their vessel with access to its sensors). If they are successful, then they have identified some potentially valuable debris in the cloud and can pass on the information to their salvage teams, adding to their Profit (see rewards).

BOARDING THE BOUNTY

As the PCs approach the *Bounty*, read or paraphrase the following:

Up close, the Emperor's Bounty is in bad shape indeed; large rents score its hull, and its bastions and bulkheads are pitted and worn by months of unshielded exposure to the void. There are, however, a faint glow from the drives and a shadow of light spilling from the vista dome of the bridge, indicating that the vessel's plasma reactors have not gone completely cold.

The PCs will be able to find a void-lock without too much difficulty, either near the bridge or along the hull, and make a hard seal against the hull. Faint amber runes indicate that

there is still an atmosphere within the ship, and the PCs can proceed without full void suits, though they may benefit from void-breathers (see running out of air, later). When the seal is broken, a blast of stale dusty air streams into the lock, carrying with it the dry taste of old death. At this point, the PCs are free to search the vessel, and as they wander its dust-filled corridors, a few things should become apparent to them:

Warren of Shadows: While the plasma reactor must still be active, the whole ship is on minimal power. This means that the galley-lamps along the corridors cast only a dim light, leaving most chambers and walkways in shadow. Many portals, reactive plating, and internal auspex devices are not functioning, and all intervox systems are inactive. A **Routine (+10) Tech-Use Test** will reveal, however, that some conduit lines, namely those leading to the bridge, do seem to be drawing full power.

Corpses and Dust: Scattered throughout the vessel are the dusty, shrivelled bodies of crew members and servitors sprawled on the decks and slumped over controls. With weapons still holstered and no signs of violence, the corpses don't readily reveal just what killed them. A **Challenging (+0) Medicine Test** will reveal that they probably died of asphyxiation.

Locks and Seals: As they explore, the PCs will also discover that much of the vessel is sealed off by imposing pressure doors, including most of the lower decks and reactor levels. These doors are encrusted with dust and glowing with scarlet runes, indicating toxic atmospheres or vacuum beyond. Cutting through the doors or restoring atmosphere to the chambers beyond will take time and it will be far easier to open them from the bridge.

Whatever the PCs decide to do, they will eventually need to get to the bridge to try to gain control of the vessel and restore power to its systems. The GM can either suggest this to the players, or if they have brought any NPCs with them, they will make the suggestion. Alternatively, their exploration may just lead them there in due course.

Extra Muscle

It is possible that the PCs might decide to bring along some extra crew members to help. Though the *Venture* has a massive crew (approximately 100,000), they are not soldiers, and most of them are essential to the running of the vessel. Of the three extra places available in the guncutter, the PCs can either take some salvagemen or are few of their less important crewmen. Assume that crewmen or salvagemen have all Characteristics of 25 and always go last in the Initiative order. They will be all armed with stub automatics (30m; S/3/-; 1d10+3, Pen 0, Clip 8, Reload Full).

PCs might also decide to send others in their stead aboard the Guncutter. If this happens, the GM should let the player controlling Tsanthos know that under the clauses of the Writ of Claim, the Rogue Trader himself must be the first to set foot on the object of salvage for it to be valid in the eyes of the Administratum, not to mention that no true Rogue Trader would refuse the glory of claiming such a prize personally.

HALO DEVICES

Halo Devices are xeno artefacts discovered amidst the ruins of ancient alien worlds in the Halo Stars. Possessed of strange and potent properties, they can fetch high prices within the Imperium where collectors covet their ability to empower the human form and defeat even mortality itself. Needless to say, possession of such dangerous xeno archeotech is highly heretical.

THE PSYCHARUS WORM

Long before the coming of man, the Halo Stars and the Expanse were home to strange and terrible xeno empires. Occasionally, artefacts from these lost civilisations are found by traders, explorers and smugglers and filter back into the Imperium. The Psycharus Worm is one such device. Appearing like a tarnished brass maggot some six inches in length, the worm is cold and greasy to the touch and on first inspection appears to be nothing more than a macabre curio. However, when linked to the warp it possesses a terrible intelligence and the power to animate the dead and the never-living into vile warp puppets.

THE TALE OF THE EMPEROR'S BOUNTY

The *Emperor's Bounty* fell afoul of a deadly Halo Device known as a Psycharus Worm, brought on board by its unsuspecting captain, Janrak Spargan, while travelling the Expanse. The device remained inactive in the care of Janrak for much of the return journey to the Calixis Sector until it was examined by his Navigator, Orden Hyort. A Navigator from House Benetek, Orden was a loyal member of Janrak's crew and had served with him for many years. He was, however, singularly unprepared to deal with the Psycharus Worm and its ancient evil. No sooner had he touched the cursed artefact than it clawed its way onto his face and latched over his third eye, forcing it open. Drinking deep from the link to the warp, the Worm infused Orden with unnatural power and dark alien desires. Compelled by the Worm, the Navigator vented much of the ship atmosphere into space, killing hundreds of the crew. He then attempted to take control of the vessel using the Worm's powers to animate the corpses of those killed to aid him. A bitter and bloody struggle ensued in which most of the remaining crew, including Janrak, were killed. Though the few survivors were not able to kill Orden or destroy the Worm, they did manage to scuttle the vessel, preventing him from taking control. Thwarted, Orden now waits for another chance to escape.

THE JAWS CLOSE

The bridge of the *Bounty* is a disquieting sight, littered with bodies and blanketed in dust. Unlike in the rest of the vessel, there are signs of conflict here. Bulkheads bear las burns and bolt shell impacts, corpses are twisted in violent death, and spent casings are scattered across the deck. Exploring the bridge, the PCs will quickly discover the epicentre of the combat. Read or paraphrase the following:

Stepping over the fallen corpses of the ships crew, you ascend to the command plinth and the foot of the Lord-Captain's throne. At the base of the throne lies what must be the remains of the captain himself, broken and contorted, wires and tubes roughly severed or torn free from their housings. In his place atop the throne, a man in the robes of a Navigator sits, his head bowed, apparently dead. Curiously, the man's hood is thrown back, revealing a strange metallic worm-like device attached to his forehead where his third eye would be. Suddenly the Navigator's head snaps up, and he regards you with empty dead eyes.

Orden immediately sees the PCs, and their functioning starship, as an opportunity to escape his prison; of course they are only useful to him dead. The first thing that happens is all of the portals to the bridge seal, crashing down with pressurised hisses. Then a baleful crimson glow begins to build around the Worm as it gathers its power. All of this only takes a few seconds, during which time the PCs may decide to either attack Orden or talk to him. Such efforts, however, are futile, as he does not respond to questions and is protected by a powerful psy-shield that causes all but the most powerful bolts and blasts to arc off and melee attacks to glance aside. It should become immediately apparent that the device on the Navigator's head is somehow protecting him from harm (see Fighting Orden below).

As soon as the bridge is sealed, twisting cords of warp energy writhe out from the device on the Navigator's forehead to dance among the dead. A second later, the corpses begin to stir. At first, only a few lurch clumsily to their feet and stagger toward the PCs with murderous intent, but soon dozens are pushing themselves up from the dusty floor. A motley collection of crewmen and servitors (some hauling themselves up from the control pits, others tearing themselves free of their stations) converge on the characters in a shambling mass. The GM should start by having six human or servitor Warp Puppets (see page 19) attack. These start several metres from the PCs, giving the players some time to react. After 2 rounds, six more join the fight and then after 5 rounds, another 12. In addition to animating the Warp Puppets, as soon as he awakens, Orden begins to purge the bridge's atmosphere, causing streams of dust to flow toward the vents. From that point, the Running out of Air rules apply (see below). Note that during this fight Orden will not attack the PCs himself, preferring to first gauge their abilities. If physically harmed himself, he will flee.

FIGHTING ORDEN

With the power of the Worm protecting him, it will be almost impossible for the PCs to harm him directly. The GM should make it clear to any PCs that direct attacks against the

Navigator that their blows or blasts are being stopped by some kind of shimmering crimson shield. Characters with Scholastic Lore pertaining to legends, the occult, or the *Tactica Imperialis* can make a **Challenging (+0) Test** to recognise this as a powerful psy shield. The shield does flicker,

RUNNING OUT OF AIR

At several points during the PCs' time on the Bounty they might find themselves running out of air. This circumstance has the following effects:

- For the first 5 rounds, each PC will feel light headed and suffer -10 on all Skill Tests.
- Each round after the fifth, each PC must make a Toughness Test with a cumulative -5 penalty or suffer one point of Damage (A character's Toughness Bonus and Armour is no protection!). If a PC suffers Damage equal to his Wounds, he will fall unconscious and die in 1d5 minutes.

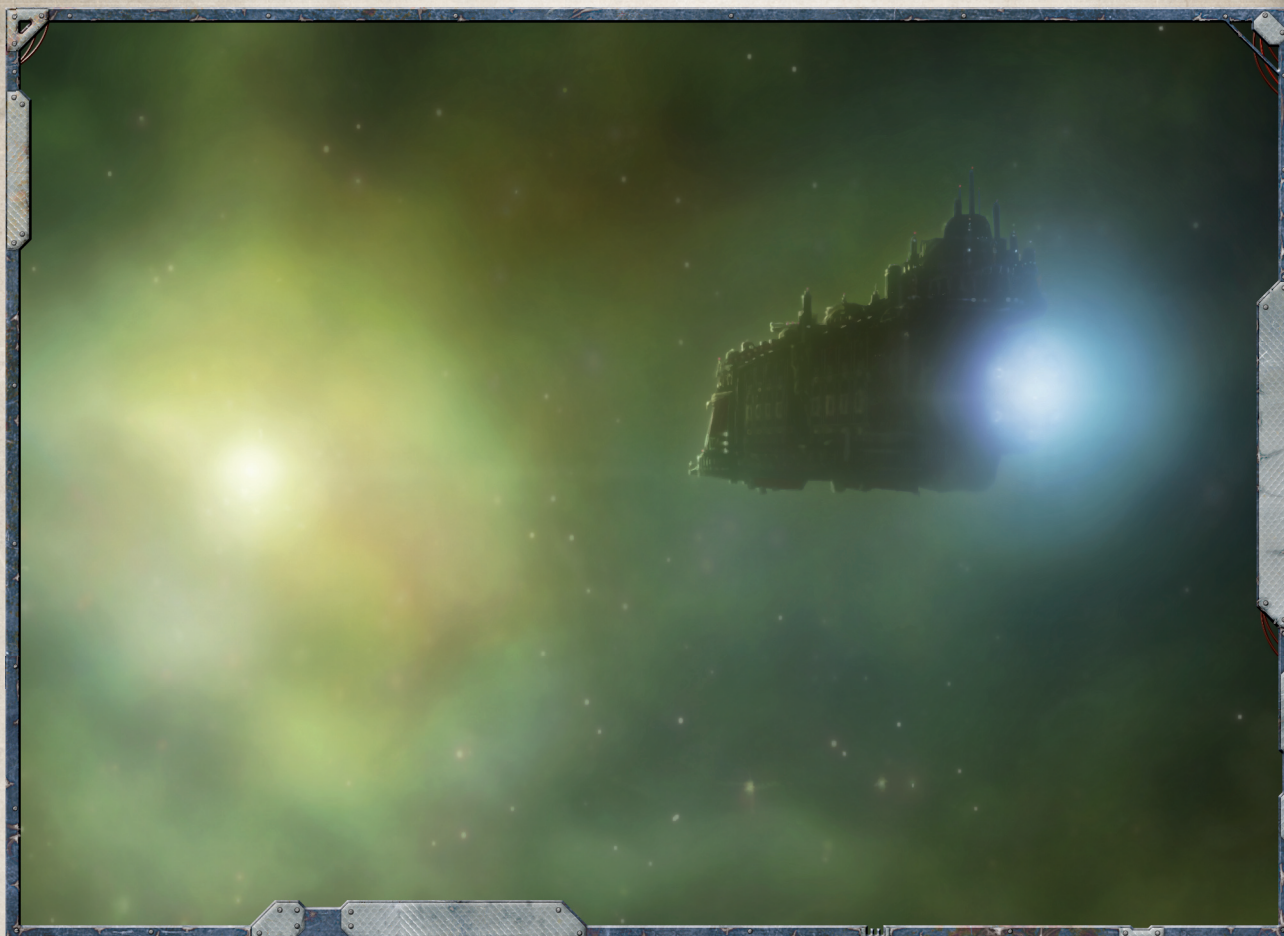
If the PCs are wearing their void-breathers, they can ignore these effects altogether.

however, and does not seem to be completely substantial. This instability is a result of the intermittent power surges from the Gellar Field interfering with the power of the Worm. The Game Master should encourage the Player Characters to make **Challenging (+0) Logic Tests** to make the connection (most spacefarers, the void-born especially, can tell when the Gellar Field is raised or lowered from the way their skin crawls). The fluctuations do not, however, affect the shield's strength, and it is practically impossible for the PCs to breach it (see Orden's Profile). There are, however, other ways for them to hurt Orden. The GM should allow the PCs a **Challenging (+0) Awareness Test** to notice the cracked vista panels or exposed power conduits leading to the captain's throne tipping them off to these options:

A Sizable Explosion: If the PCs can cause a sizable explosion, possibly using salvage charges or making a **Difficult (-10) Tech-Use Test** to overload the power cisterns within the captain's throne, then Orden will be visibly hurt and retreat into the Navigator's Oculus (using the Warp Puppets to cover his escape), barring the way behind him.

Breaching the Hull: Using explosives or any weapons with a Pen of 4 or more, the PCs can blow out the bridge's vista panels and plunge the chamber into hard vacuum. This will force Orden to retreat (as above) lest he be dragged into the void. Any PC not wearing a void suit will immediately suffer 2d10 Damage, not reduced for armour, and begin to suffocate (see Running out of Air).





ESCAPING THE BRIDGE

Regardless of whether or not the PCs can drive off Orden, they will need to escape the bridge before it empties of air or they are overwhelmed by Warp Puppets as they rise again and again. There are a couple of ways for the PCs to get off the bridge:

Breaching the Portals: If they brought extra men or equipment with them, they might have the firepower or tools to cut through one of the portals. This is not an easy task and will take three men working in concert for 3 rounds, during which they must be protected. Alternatively, a PC can make a **Hard (-20) Tech-Use Test** to manually open a portal from one of the main control panels. This process requires the PC to work undisturbed for 3 rounds.

Down the Vents: As a Full Action, a PC can blast open one of the air vents and leap down into the dark. Finding a vent that leads somewhere other than a rapidly spinning fan requires a **Challenging (+0) Search Test**. If multiple characters attempt this Test, only one needs to succeed. If the PCs fail or if they simply choose a vent at random, the PCs have run afoul of some grinding machinery, plummeting drop, or similar peril and must make a **Challenging (+0) Agility Test** or suffer 1d10+4 Damage. At the GM's discretion, he can expand on this section, having the characters scrambling for their lives while Warp Puppets clamber down the vents behind them (possibly meeting messy ends in fans).

WARP PUPPETS

These disgusting parodies of life are animated bodies under the Worm's control. Sluggish and clumsy, they offer no real danger singly, though in numbers they can be deadly.



Warp Puppet Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
33	13	64	21	11	—	12	13	—

Wounds: 6

Movement: 1/2/3/6

Skills: None.

Talents: Weapon Training (as appropriate).

Traits: Meat Puppet (see below).

Weapons: Warp-enhanced jagged debris (1d5+6; Pen 2) or laspistol (30m, S/-/-; 1d10+3).

Gear: None.

Meat Puppet: Neither dead nor alive, the Warp Puppets are just objects animated by the power of the Psycharus Worm. As such, they cannot truly be killed. When they reach 0 Wounds, they will collapse for 5 rounds before rising again with new gaping wounds and missing limbs. Only massive damage inflicting 15 points of Damage in a single hit can put them down for good. The GM should allow PCs to hack up inactive puppets with melee weapons. Warp Puppets only ever use the Charge or Standard Attack actions.

ORDEN, THRALL OF THE PSYCHARUS

WORM

Little of Orden now remains, his mind hollowed out by the Psycharus Worm. What he does remember comes only to him briefly as flashes of human memory amidst alien images and the desires of the Worm.

Orden Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
53	13	34	51	47	40	39	58	12

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Skills: None.

Talents: None.

Weapons: Energised Fists (2d10+4).

Armour: None.

Gear: None.

In addition, as long as the Worm has a link to the Warp, then it will be able to regenerate Orden even if he is killed.

THE EMPEROR'S GHOSTS

Once the PCs have escaped the bridge, their two main goals will no doubt be to contact their vessel and get back to their guncutter. Unfortunately, they have been cut off from both. Vox signals are only answered with static, and the routes back to the void-seal they entered through have been sealed and purged of atmosphere. Attempts to reach their vessel are met with packs of Warp Puppets (at first a few, but then more) as well as the perils of trying to pass through airless chambers. The GM should play up the fact that the PCs are trapped, allowing them to cut through doors or find alternative paths only to run into impassable obstacles. All the while they will be stumbling into groups of Warp Puppets and be forced to retreat or engage in brief fire fights, possibly using up precious ammunition. After a few attempts to reach their ship, they should come across Erart, one of the few survivors of the *Bounty*.

A bedraggled and filthy man in an ancient shipsuit approaches from the shadows, holding out his hands and asking the PCs not to shoot. If they comply, he approaches and tells them his name is Erart and he knows a safe place they can hide. If the PCs want to question him, he tells them it is not safe to talk where they are and offers to tell them all he knows when they are below decks. If he has to, he pleads with them to follow, but ultimately if they wish to stay, he will leave them alone. If they do follow him, he leads them into a series of code-locked service tunnels and down into the bowels of the ship, explaining that the Worm's powers are weaker near the reactor. In this disgusting warren of corridors, they come across the other survivors, emaciated scavengers, ironically more horrific looking than the Warp Puppets.

Initially distrustful of the PCs, the survivors will need to be convinced the PCs are there to help. This convincing can be roleplayed out with the PCs presenting reasons to the survivors' leader

Erart. Depending on his choice of a method of persuasion a PC can make a **Routine (+20) Charm, Deceive, or Intimidate Test**, but as long as the PCs agree to try to destroy Orden and get them off the vessel and out of the Battleground, they eventually offer their help. Erart then tells them the Tale of the *Emperor's Bounty* (see page 17) and what he knows about the Halo Device (which he calls the Worm). He tells them of the attempt to kill Orden and their ill-fated battle on the bridge. It was during that battle that they realised the true power of the device and its abilities. They also came to the conclusion that the device was somehow drawing its power from Orden and preventing them from killing him.

There is hope, however. Before he died, the captain surmised that the device must somehow draw power from the warp, as it only became active in the presence of Orden and his third eye. It also remained inert when the ship was in transit, shielded from the warp by its Gellar Field. Erart believes that if the Gellar Field could be brought to full strength it might sever the device's power supply and allow them to kill Orden. Of course, this idea remains only a theory as one of the first things Orden did when he killed the crew was deactivate the Core Cogitator and purge its machine spirit, allowing the Worm free reign over the ship's systems. Without the Cogitator and the machine spirit, the Gellar Field cannot be fully raised.

At this point, Erart tries to convince the PCs they should be the ones to travel to the Core and awaken the machine spirit. If the PCs ask him why they have never done this themselves, he tells them that he has never been able to get the Cogitator to respond to him (the truth is, however, that all of the survivors are too terrified to leave the safety of their tunnels and too weak to then try to kill Orden).

If the PCs choose not to try to awaken the machine spirit, then they will have to wait for rescue.

AWAKENING THE MACHINE SPIRIT

To reach the Core Cogitator, the PCs must pass through a substantial portion of the ship. While this journey should be harrowing—taking them past heavily damaged hull passages, debris-filled cargo holds, and leaking gravity pumps—the PCs should be able to make it without serious problems. Once they reach the Core, read or paraphrase the following:

You crawl out into a vast cylindrical chamber with energy feeds and fluid interchangers spiralling both up and down into the darkness. Suspended amid the chaos of tubes and wires is a collection of massive brass spheres surrounded by inactive servitors. You have reached the Core Cogitator.

To awaken the machine spirit, the PCs must first enact the correct rituals and supplications. This will not require any Tests, so long as they follow instructions given to them by Erart, though it will take the better part of an hour as they set off rune-cascades and fill fluid reserves bringing the ancient machine back to life. Alternatively (if the group did not accompany Erart or wish to do this themselves), a successful **Ordinary (+10) Tech-Use Test** can awaken the machine-

spirit. Once active, the machine spirit's interface, the leathery head and torso of a servitor, addresses them, asking them to identify themselves. The GM should play the machine spirit as a coldly logical personality, remembering that it is not truly alive. It is up to the PCs to satisfactorily answer the machine spirit's following questions and then convince it to raise the Gellar Field:

Who are you?: Only if one of the PCs identifies himself as the captain will the machine spirit become responsive. If the PCs have forgotten the captain's name (told to them by Erart during his story), allow them an **Easy (+30) Intelligence Test** to remember.

Why is there a time discrepancy in the Core Cogitator?: The PCs cannot merely explain that the machine spirit has been offline, as it does not understand this concept (having been designed to stand eternal vigil over its vessel). Instead they must come up with a story; if they blame warp transition or similar phenomena, the spirit will be appeased.

The machine spirit continues to ask these questions until they are answered. After satisfactorily answering the questions, the PCs are free to ask the Core Cogitator their own questions. Regarding the state of the vessel, they will be able to learn little more than they already know. If they ask it to raise the Gellar Field, it will tell them that this is not required as they are not in transition. If they explain about Orden and the Halo device, it will fail to understand. To convince the machine spirit to raise the field, the PCs can use the following arguments:

- The captain wants to test the field
- The ship is approaching a warp rift, and the Gellar Field is needed to strengthen the Void Shielding
- The vessel is preparing for a transition and the Navigator wants the field raised early
- A warp entity has invaded the ship and must be purged

Other logical arguments may also work at the GM's discretion. Note, however, that it is not possible for the ship to enter the warp (it has suffered too much damage), a fact known to the machine spirit. If the PCs get stuck, the GM can allow one of them to make a **Challenging (+0) Logic Test** to work out one of these likely tactics.

CONFRONTING THE WORM

Once the machine spirit is awakened and the Gellar Field active, the PCs are now ready to return to the bridge and kill Orden. The Worm will try to impede their progress, either throwing Warp Puppets in their way or trying to vent sections of the ship. Clever PCs should be able to get to the bridge with stealth, taking advantage of information provided by the machine spirit. The GM should allow the PCs to come up with a plan to reach the bridge and avoid the bulk of the Warp Puppets and, as long as it sounds reasonable, should allow it to work. Once they reach the bridge, though, they are in for a fight. Orden now stands before the throne in a ring of 12 Warp Puppets, and as soon as he detects the PCs, he attacks, his fists haloed in energy. Fortunately for the PCs, his psy-shield is down, and he can be more easily harmed by their weapons. In addition, without its link to the warp, the Worm cannot regenerate him.

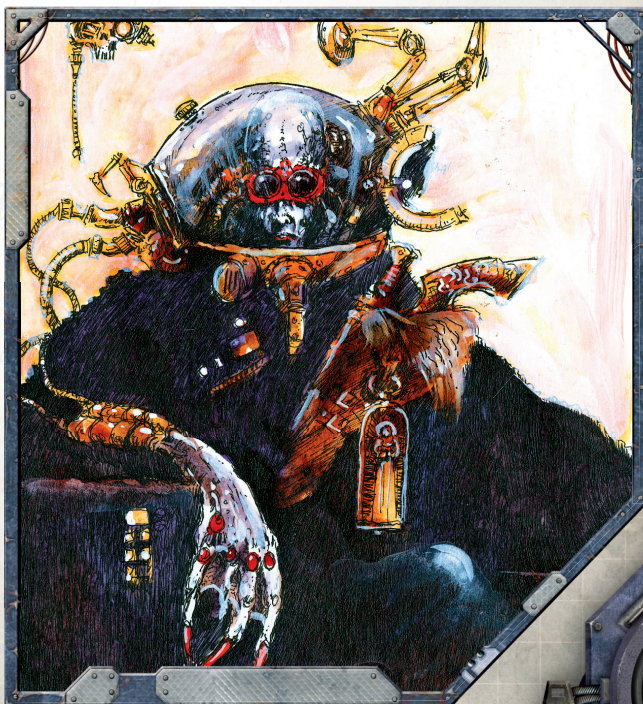
CONCLUSION

Once Orden is dead, the Psycharus Worm once again becomes inert, little more than a cold alien object, and any surviving Warp Puppets fall where they stand. The PCs might try to destroy the device, but it will resist damage from any kind of personal weapon. Even in the presence of psykers, it remains dead and inactive. What the PCs do with the device is up to them, but whatever they decide, it will surely spell trouble in the future. It is also up to the PCs to decide what to do with the survivors. Kindhearted PCs may ferry them back to the Calixis Sector or even offer them service, though it is also possible to sell them off or flush them out an airlock should the Rogue Trader so choose. The PCs can now continue with their salvage operation unhindered and are free to return to their vessel and leave the Battleground behind.

REWARDS

For their efforts aboard the *Bounty* each character should receive 500xp. They will also have completed the Endeavour to salvage the *Emperor's Bounty*, adding a bonus of +10 to the PCs' Profit as operations slowly strip the vessel down. This bonus is modified depending on the actions of the PCs during the adventure:

- If they successfully scanned the debris field: +2
- If their Gun-cutter was damaged: -1
- If they managed to move the vessel outside the cloud, making the salvage easier: +5
- If the *Bounty* suffered serious damage, from ship to ship weapons or the like: -3
- If the PCs decided to enlist the help of the survivors in the salvage: +2
- If their own vessel tried to enter the cloud: -8



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