FRAGGED EMPIRE

EMPIRE

Core Rule Book

Dedicated to:

Shell; Your kindness and generosity are a constant
reminder to me of God's grace and love.

Frank, Geordie, Jye, Mark, and Simon;
Thank you for your ceaseless friendship.
Without you, this book would not exist.

FRAGGED EMPIRE

EMPIRE

Betrayed by your creators, you are a genetically engineered
remnant, emerging from the ruin of genocidal war.

You and this new civilisation are on the precipice
of great opportunity and danger.

www.fraggedempire.com

It is over 10,000 years into the future.
Earth is forgotten.

Humanity is dead.
Genetic erosion, brought on by thousands of years of apathy.

You are one of many genetically engineered descendants.
Created by the eugenicist Archons (humanity's heirs), or the vengeful monster X'ion.

A genocidal war has ravaged the known galaxy.
X'ion won, killing the Archons, destroying their empire, and then abandoning his army to vanish without a trace.
This event threw the galaxy into 100 years of brutal tribalism.

After 100 years, your people have just re-entered space.
No one knows what's out there.

Four surviving races have banded together.
Not out of a common direction, but out of necessity.
No one knows where this new society is headed.

Each race is struggling for survival.
They need each other.

What's in the Name?

Fragging

A term used to describe the assassination of a leader during wartime by their own soldiers, usually in a manner that could look like an accident (eg: dropping a fragmentation grenade at their feet), commonly during the heat of battle.

Can also describe the manipulation of the chain of command to have a subordinate deliberately killed by placing them in great mortal danger, such as sending a soldier or unit on a suicide mission.

> » Did your people kill their creator?
> » Were you betrayed by your creator?

Fragmentation

Denoting the process or state of breaking or being broken into smaller disconnected parts. Used to describe both physical and metaphysical breakdowns.

> » Will society's broken nature be its downfall?

Frag

A popular term used for killing someone in a computer game.

Because this is a game where you kill people.

Key Setting Themes

Post-Post-Apocalyptic Setting

Exploring the state of the universe after a cataclysmic event is a popular theme in science fiction literature. It allows us to delve into the nature of civilisation, humanity, and rediscovery after we have lost all that we know.

This setting does not take place immediately after this cataclysmic event (a genocidal war), but a hundred years later. Enough time has passed for people to partially accept what has happened and start to rebuild. You are at the dawn of a new civilisation, a time of great opportunity and danger.

> » What should this new society look like?

Cultural Tension

Shaped by the Great War and what it took to survive it, the races have had one hundred years to create their own distinctive cultures, formed from their experiences, core beliefs, and genetic nature.

These races have only had a few years to interact with one another: not enough time to fully understand or accept each other. Their delicate coexistence is held together more by need than choice.

> » What do you live for?

Genetic Engineering

Humanity is long dead, but they managed to created their own genetically engineered successors: the Archons. The Archons repopulated their inherited empire with their own creations in an effort to create the perfect race. This pursuit not only led to a wealth of technological advancements, but also empire-wide genocidal war. Eventually, the Archons fell to their deaths at the hands of their own vengeful creations.

> » What responsibility comes with the ability to make life?

Exploration

This new society is built not only on the ruins of the Archons' empire, but also on top of the ancient human empire and who knows what else.

> » What is out there?

The Habrixis Sector

Black Reach Nebula

Haven

Legion

Cerberus

Halo Nebula

Ley Line

Var
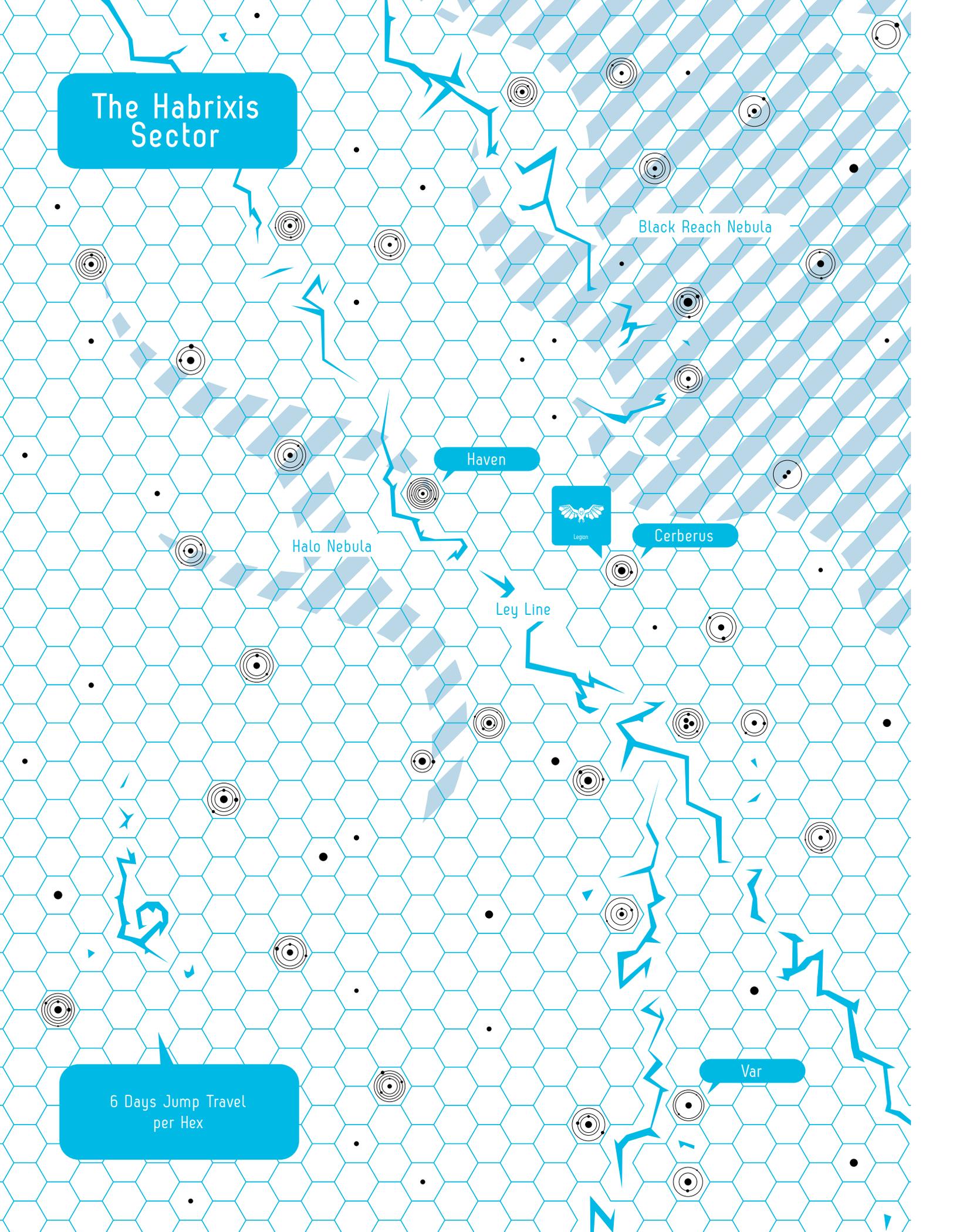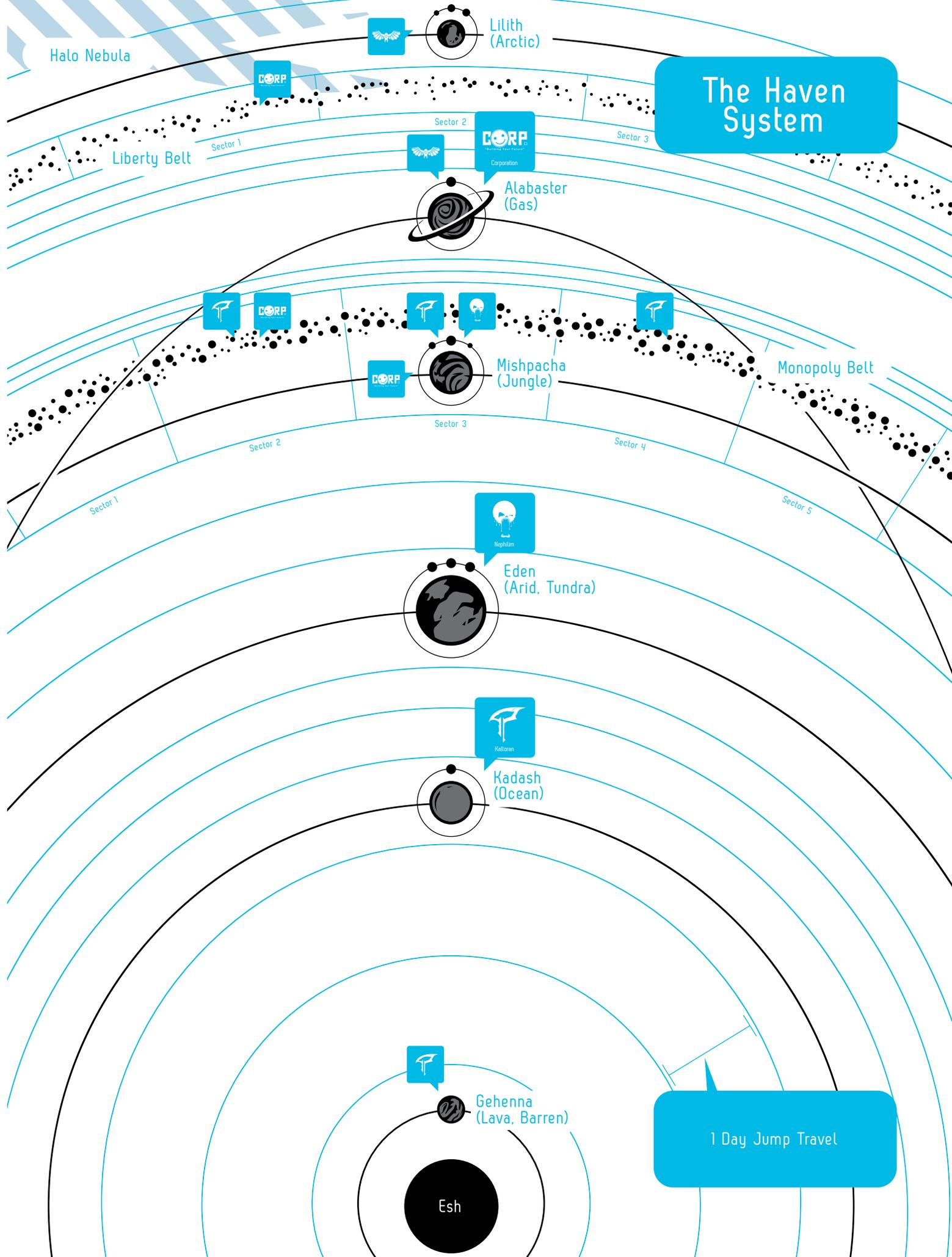
Short Story: Galatèa

They were only four hours into their voyage, and Rachel was ready to pistol-whip her boss.

One good smack in the face, it'd barely hurt him.

It would actually hurt quite a lot, and Rachel had a feeling that Theodore would take it personally.

She contented herself with screwing in a loose bolt more vigorously than was necessary, wiping beads of sweat from her forehead as she did so.

Theodore might not have been her boss in the traditional sense – more like the guy who owned the ship and made sure the occupants didn't kill each other. But he was still a typical Corporation lackey: obsessed with hierarchy, efficiency, money and a host of other Corporate concerns that Rachel didn't care for.

"Swag, status report."

Rachel glanced over her shoulder and saw the hazy blue, hologramatic head and shoulders of Theodore himself. Of course, he couldn't possibly make the trip all the way down to the engine room. Too many flashy displays needed his attention.

"Repairs 92% complete," she replied in an exaggerated monotone. "Hull stability achieved, Archon drive almost at full capacity, Gauss batteries loaded, Ley Line system…"

"Report to the bridge."

The hologram flickered and vanished, and she grinned. Technically, information overload wasn't insubordination, so it was Rachel's favourite method of irritation. It would sate her urge for a good pistol-whipping, for the moment at least.

With a sigh, the young Kaltoran tucked the spanner into her tool-belt and began the journey through the bowels of the ship to the bridge. She definitely wasn't in a hurry.

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The Galatèa wasn't a large ship, designed as it was to be operated by a skeleton crew, but it still took Rachel a fair effort to extricate herself from the tangle of wires and machinery that formed the engine room. It was a cut 'n' shut vessel, formed from at least two different Kaltoran hulls and a Legion gunship, and stuffed full of the best spare parts the crew could… "acquire".

Still, the Galatèa's unique nature made her repairs and various patch jobs all the more interesting. It was the one part of the job that Rachel truly loved. With practiced precision, she swung herself onto the main catwalk that led to the exit. Heights and darkness never bothered her, or any Kaltoran; after all, she'd grown up in a gigantic

pit city with dwellings honeycombing the deep crust of her home world. A childhood of badly lit walkways and cramped metal spaces made the engine room of the Galatèa practically roomy.

She emerged into the hallway, unbinding her long blue dreadlocks, and almost ran headlong into Maximus. The Legionnaire grabbed her by the shoulders with strong, gentle hands, thus avoiding the collision. Not that it would've hurt him, given that he was eight feet of pure simian muscle wrapped in red Tactical Armour.

"Watch out, four-ears," Maximus grunted, letting her go and stepping to the side.

"Sorry, Max," Rachel said, smirking as she walked around and punched him on the arm. "I'll try not to hurt you."

"Captain called?"

"Yeah. Probably another scolding."

She arranged her face in what she thought was an approximation of Theodore's and put on her best high-class Corp accent.

"Swagger, I think you might have set the self-destruct. If we're not dead in two minutes, I'm taking this out of your commission."

Maximus stared at her, expressionless.

"That was good," Rachel said, pointing at the Legionnaire as she turned towards the bridge. "Your impersonations are almost as good as mine."

In reality, Rachel knew Maximus was a firm believer in Legion tradition: never disrespect a commander.

Just then, as Rachel was about to round the corner, she heard Max's soft rumble.

"Captain would sound more growly."

She whirled around to see Maximus disappearing into the armoury, and stood motionless for a moment before giving a short laugh. Maybe she could mould their ship's gunner into a rebel after all.

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Rachel had to pass the lab to get to the bridge, and she used this opportunity to check in on the group's resident Nephilim. A young woman in appearance, with grey skin and tendril-like hair, Hraks stood observing their prize, the mysterious piece of tech they'd swiped from under the noses of unscrupulous Draz raiders. No one was exactly sure what it was; it looked like a simple cube, a quarter meter wide, metallic silver with glowing purple veins in a fractal pattern and no visible controls, save for a large purple button

in the centre. Rachel had been all for pressing it, but Theodore had forbidden any action until they knew it wasn't something that would blow a hole in their ship. The artefact was suspended in an Electro-Gravity field in the centre of the lab, with Hraks intensely studying data readouts on the surrounding displays.

"How's it coming along?" Rachel said, leaning against the doorframe. She immediately cursed herself.

Too chirpy.

"Not good," Hraks replied, without shifting her eyes from the console. "The artefact does not respond to any testing or diagnosis method I currently have access to on this backwards ship."

"Aw, be nice to Galatèa. She does her best."

Rachel leant in to view the box, which saved her having to make awkward eye contact with Hraks. The two had a curious and volatile relationship; Rachel thrived on its curious nature, while Hraks thrived on its volatility. Rachel had little personal experience outside her home world's pit cities, but she had many memories, genetically passed on from her parents and grandparents. Dark memories of death and suffering, brought on by Hraks's people, the Nephilim.

Despite this, Rachel was keen to make new memories, better memories for the children she was yet to have. She wanted to build some kind of positive relationship with Hraks.

The Nephilim had no room for such focused prejudice; Nephilim were equally prejudiced against everyone, even their own kind.

Hraks was a Nephilim Emissary, grown in a lab no more than three years ago, with a head full of false memories to give context to her implanted skills; a brilliant mind that jostled for space with an aggressive thirst for knowledge. Rachel couldn't imagine what it was like to be born full-grown.

Rachel turned from inspecting the mystery box to see the Nephilim woman gazing at her with a curious expression.

"What?" Rachel asked.

"I was curious about your relationship with the ship," Hraks replied. "You spend such a great deal of time in the engine room. And you refer to it as if it were a person. As if it were alive, or… one of us."

"Some Nephilim ships are alive."

"The Galatèa is obviously not alive."

Rachel stepped back from the gravity field and folded her arms, pausing to think.

"You can still form attachments to things that aren't alive; you make it alive. With… your imagination."

"That is foolish," Hraks replied, turning back to her work.

Rachel needed to word things in a way that Hraks could accept.

"Think of it this way… by forming an attachment with something, it increases our investment in that thing…"

"Thus facilitating the lengths to which you will go to support said thing." Hraks was facing Rachel again. "That sounds like you are voluntarily choosing to believe a lie because you lack the faculties to…"

"I know the ship is not alive in the traditional sense of the word. People don't always mean exactly what they say."

"That is also foolish."

Hraks once again turned back to her work.

"Did captain not call for you?"

"Right," the girl replied, backing out the door and nearly tripping over some loose coils. "Right, yeah. I'll get on that. Good luck with the… thing."

Hraks may have replied, but the lab door slid shut before she could hear it.

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The Kaltoran reached the door to the bridge and jogged on the spot for a few moments, just to make it seem like she'd been hurrying. Then she pressed her hand to the scanner, and the door to the bridge slid open.

By bridge standards, it wasn't all that impressive. A large transparent steel window loomed over four chairs, arranged in a rough square, none of which were used regularly. Rachel was mostly in the engine room, Hraks in the lab, Maximus in the gun-pod, and Theodore at the navigation console as he was now, cigarette in mouth, one hand in his pocket and the other tracing coordinates on the display.

Texos, Theodore's personal drone, was engaged at the pilot's station as always, its thin metal arms extending from a small circular hovering metal shell. Despite Theo's constant control over the drone, knowing that the fate of their ship lay in the cold metallic stick-fingers of a lifeless probe gave Rachel the shivers.

"Reporting for duty," she barked, standing at the bridge's midsection and breathing heavily.

"I could hear you jogging outside the door."

Rachel kept up her charade for a few more moments before rolling her eyes and leaning against the railing.

"Fine. What do you need me for?"

Theodore took a few moments to respond, engaged as he was in some kind of complex calculation. Rachel watched him for a moment, standing there in his impeccable dark suit and gold vest, cigarette hanging loosely from his mouth. His short hair was so controlled it was like he'd run over it with a toothbrush; the same could be said for his sparse stubble. Spotless, clean-cut, and utterly collected at all times: Theodore was practically the physical embodiment of the Corporation.

"I have a new assignment for you," he said, removing the cigarette from his mouth and staring straight ahead into literal space. "It's going to last for the remainder of the voyage."

"Just remember I still have repairs from our escape," Rachel replied. "I'm not even sure if we'll get them done before we dock."

"This takes priority."

"As in, higher priority than life support?"

"Ask Hraks to deal with that. I want you to work on optimising our Ley Line drive. We need more speed."

He said it so matter-of-factly, as if it were as simple as asking someone to pass the salt. Rachel bristled and folded her arms.

"Hraks is busy with the artefact and I've told you, we…"

The sensor consoles suddenly changed from green to red. Rachel wasn't well-versed in sensor displays, but she made the assumption that this was a bad thing. Red generally meant trouble. The wailing siren was also a clue.

"Unknown vessel approaching!" chirped Texos in its usual high-pitched monotone that Theodore refused to change for some reason. "Signs of aggression! Unidentified beam technology, locking on! Recommend…"

"Calm down, Texos," Theodore said, unruffled as his hands moved in a blur across the console. "Give me visual."

Rachel stepped out of the way as a slightly fuzzy hologram sprang to life in the middle of the bridge, showing a large, well-armed battleship. The Kaltoran swallowed, instantly recognizing the ancient Archon design: Mechonid.

"So they found us," the captain mused. He reached to the far right of his holographic console and held down the intercom control. "Maximus, in the very unlikely event that you aren't already inside the gun-pod, I need you in there. We have Mechonids on our tail. Hraks, if you're…"

He and Rachel were thrown off balance by a sudden tremor that ran the full length of the ship, causing the lights to flicker. With her four keen ears, Rachel traced the echo to its source, and felt her blood run cold.

"The engine room," she breathed, already sprinting through the hologram and into the main corridor. Theodore called her back, but she couldn't stop. Somehow, they'd found a way onto the ship. Those foul machines could be inside, ruining all her precious work. If they did enough damage, it could cripple the Galatèa, leaving them all stranded – or worse. She wouldn't allow that to happen.

The trip from the engine room to the bridge had taken minutes; the return journey was over in seconds. Rachel charged through the door and heard the echoes from down below. It was cannon fire. Fuelled by the unbridled rage of a girl who finds someone touching her stuff, Rachel vaulted over the catwalk and jumped from one pile of machinery to another. She descended into the bowels of the ship, wincing as the sound grew louder, until a brief somersault brought her to a walkway directly above the floor of the main engine room.

Peering over the rail, it was exactly as she'd feared: a Mechonid stood flanked by machinery, firing its gun-arm at everything in sight. White-hot rage flooded through Rachel's veins, but she forced herself to think. That thing was a vaguely humanoid hunk of metal, and she was slightly more squishy. An array of purple orbs formed the Mechonid's sensor cluster, and she decided that these were her best target.

Rachel silently drew a long dagger from her leg holster, wishing she had her gun. A flick of a switch bathed the blade's metal in a blue glow – all the better to slice rogue machines into bits. With a final glance, the young Kaltoran flung herself over the railing, dagger raised over her head and her lips parted in a silent battle cry.

This was when the plan went wrong. In the split-second before the blade made contact, Rachel identified a faint aura similar to her dagger's around the Mechonid. It was an uncommon feature, but this machine was obviously meant to be an advance guard and was therefore better protected. It had a burst shield, and it was too late to account for; her strike was already descending. The dagger deflected off the shield and flew into the mass of machines, leaving Rachel to awkwardly land clinging to the Mechonid's head.

She wasn't there for long, leaping off and landing in a crouch, just in time for the Mechonid to wheel around and let loose with a barrage of cannon fire. She leapt forward, rolled, and came up in a sprint, ducking as shells flew over her head. Scooping up her fallen dagger, Rachel dove behind the Galatèa's large dorsal landing-gear piston and pressed her back against the cold metal. The gunfire halted, replaced by the clanking of Mechonid footsteps.

She didn't have her gun. Her dagger wouldn't work against the shield. She only had seconds before the Mechonid began tearing the place apart once more. This was definitely not what she'd signed up for.

Rachel gritted her teeth and grasped the hilt of her weapon. The only option was to stall for time.

She pulled herself onto the large piston and saw the Mechonid raise its purple sensor orbs towards her. The gun-arm followed, and Rachel leapt to the next shot-blocking hunk of metal. She hopped from one piece of machinery to the next, ducking and weaving through pipes, coils, beams, and every other piece of haphazard equipment in the cluttered engine room. The Mechonid slowly turned on the spot, but she knew the room better than it did, and she gave it no chance for a clear shot.

It was as she ducked behind a mass of thick coolant coils that the firing abruptly stopped. For a moment, Rachel thought that it had run out of ammunition, and she drew her dagger in preparation. Then there was a hiss of rapidly released gas.

Oh crap.

She'd never expected it to use a missile in such close quarters. The girl emerged from her hiding place in time to see a tiny torpedo arcing towards her position. She broke into a sprint, but the explosion blasted her off her feet.

By explosion standards it was small, but this didn't occur to Rachel as her slight frame catapulted through the air, landing almost directly in the middle of the engine room floor. The wind left her lungs and she came to a stop, the world spinning.

Splayed on her back, Rachel raised her head just in time to see the barrel of a gun being pointed in her face.

So this is it.

Strangely, all she could think about was the fact that their water coils were now in flames and utterly ruined. The ship would now have cooling problems for the rest of the voyage.

The barrel lit up with a purple glow and made a sound like rushing wind, signalling the end of the girl's life.

Then there was a loud clang, followed by an electrical discharge. The Mechonid's head snapped upwards and it began to tremble. Rachel was forced to roll backwards as the robot pitched on its face and lay in a heap, devoid of power.

Theodore stood a little way off, smoke wafting from both the cigarette in his left hand and the pistol in his right. As per usual, he looked like he was posing for a photo-shoot. If he hadn't just saved her life, Rachel would've rolled her eyes.

He lowered the gun, and Rachel stood on shaky legs. She noticed that the back of the Mechonid's head was emitting an orange glow and a slight fizzling sound, and realised that Theodore had switched his pistol from his usual energy rounds to swivel rounds – using a miniature nuclear reaction to fire an irradiated bullet at ridiculous

speeds, spinning fast enough to cut through most known substances.

The Corporation considered these weapons illegal, given their penchant for uranium leaks. Theodore's gun was shielded, but many an intrepid adventurer had been swindled by shady dealers into carrying shoddy nuclear handhelds.

"Where'd you get that?" Rachel panted, still catching her breath through the rippling pain down her side.

"You're welcome," he replied.

"Since when do you have a new gun?"

"You can thank me any time."

"But your people consider those things illegal. Even having a gun equipped with…"

"They're very effective against distracted targets with burst shields."

Rachel's calmer thoughts finally caught up with her adrenaline-laced ones.

"Uh… thanks," she said, feeling sheepish.

A curious expression flashed across Theodore's face; was it concern? In a moment, though, he was back to his reserved self.

"Don't mention it," he grunted, spinning his pistol in a full circle. It collapsed into a flat rectangle, which he clipped into his belt buckle. "Besides, there's a larger issue at hand."

They took the elevator to the top of the engine room and made their way to the bridge, where Hraks was already in the pilot's seat.

Rachel limped straight for the diagnostics console, while Theodore moved to his own command station. Hraks expertly avoided a hail of purple bolts as Galatèa returned a well-aimed burst of Gauss fire, striking the Mechonid ship's rear thruster and practically shearing it off.

"Status report," the captain ordered.

Rachel scanned the display and compressed the information in her head. Theodore wasn't a huge fan of frills.

"We're stable. They managed to land a hit on the hull, but the damage is minimal; shields are at 90% efficiency."

"I suggest holding on," Hraks said, vigorously jerking the controls to the left. Rachel caught a brief glimpse of a cluster of missiles careening towards them before her view-screen tipped on its side and they went into a spiral. The homing missiles collided with each other and exploded, leaving only a few on their tail. Seconds later, a storm of shells from the Galatèa's gun-pod cut down the stragglers.

Theodore, who hadn't even stumbled during the ordeal, waved his hand across the holographic display, splaying it over the front viewport.

"Hraks, offensive pattern," he said. "Give Maximus the best shot possible."

Hraks nodded and brought them around to face the Mechonid ship, which had sustained even more damage in the interim. For a moment they were stationary, then the engines roared to life, propelling them straight for the enemy vessel.

"Engines at max output," Rachel reported. "Our acceleration is stable."

The ships traded fire, and Rachel winced as the occasional shot pierced their shields.

"Maximus, aim for the fuel cells on my mark," the captain ordered. A grunt from the intercom was the only response. They were getting closer. They could now physically see the Mechonid ship – a large, cruel vessel shaped like a claw. It dwarfed the Galatèa, but this would work to their advantage, making it an easier target. They were almost at the collision point, where their ship would be smashed like a bug on a windshield.

"Bank down," Theodore barked, and Hraks sent their ship into a half-spiral that had them sailing underneath the Mechonid ship.

"Fire!"

Maximus let loose with their most powerful weapon: a Legion rail gun, modified for close range and maximum damage. The Mechonid fuel cells ripped open, the single shell carving a deep scar on the ship's underside. Rachel transferred power to the engines as Hraks punched the throttle. They blasted out from the shadow of the great ship in time to see the fuel cells go up in flames, quickly consumed by the lack of atmosphere. The Mechonid ship was dead in the void.

There was silence for a moment before Rachel realised that it was her job to speak next.

"Uh… Mechonid ship is crippled. Their auto-repairs seem to be underway, but they don't have movement. The Galatèa is stable; minor damage to landing gear, and two shield nodes are burnt out."

"That'll give them something to worry about," Theodore replied. "Maximus, report to the bridge. We…"

The entire ship shook, and Rachel was thrown out of her seat. The metal floor didn't make for a particularly soft landing.

"What was…"

The sentence remained unfinished as a purple crack ripped open in the centre of the bridge, flooding the room with light. A Mechonid

tumbled out of the breach, landed on its feet, and immediately aimed its gun at the main console.

Hraks was faster. The Nephilim whipped out her spine rifle and blasted the Mechonid's head off with a well-placed burst of bone needles. It trembled and collapsed, the crack in the air already sealing. There was another moment of shocked silence.

"Hraks, get us out of here," Theodore ordered, turning back to the navigation console and punching in a destination. "Full speed. I don't know how they're getting onto the ship, but I want them gone."

Hraks dropped her rifle and gunned the engines. In seconds, the Mechonid ship was a speck in the distance, and rapidly vanishing.

"Rachel, with me," the captain continued. Rachel nodded and drew her gun as Theodore unfolded his own.

"You think there are more?"

"Almost certainly. We'll meet up with Maximus, then…"

They both halted as the corridor outside echoed with gunfire. There was the sound of grinding metal, clanking footsteps, and a lot of roaring, followed by an ominous wrenching. Theodore crossed to the door, pistol aimed forward, and reached for the button. Before he could press it, the door slid open, revealing the hulking frame of Maximus.

Rachel exhaled with relief as she saw he was unharmed. Then she noticed the two Mechonid heads dangling by wires from the Legionnaire's hands, with their bodies lying in the corridor beyond. They might have been robots, but it was somehow still a gruesome sight.

"I checked," Maximus grunted, still framed in the doorway. "They're all dead."

Theodore nodded and holstered his pistol. When Maximus said there was no more fighting to be done, there usually wasn't.

"So it's over?" Rachel breathed, sinking back into her chair. They were away, and everyone was safe. Her stupid, argumentative, dysfunctional family was safe. Her relief was palpable. Theodore

kicked the headless Mechonid body that lay in the centre of the bridge with an expression of disdain.

"It's not over until I find out how they got on my ship, and that damn artefact is sold. Hraks, take them apart." Without a backwards glance, Theo turned and left the bridge. Maximus still holding the Mechonid heads, watched him go,

"Let's just be glad there were only the four of them," Rachel said, to break the silence. "I wouldn't want to go up against an entire ship's worth."

Maximus grunted and stalked out, but not before mumbling something that sounded very much like "Speak for yourself."

Rachel glared at the back of his head, but the Legionnaire didn't notice.

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The Mechonid husks lay piled in the lab, where Maximus had dumped them hours beforehand. Three were missing their heads, while one had a single bullet hole in its central processor.

The lab was dark, lit only by the soft purple glow of the box suspended in the Electro-Gravity field.

There was a soft hum. The sound wasn't loud enough to penetrate the walls, but it echoed around the room and seemed to multiply until it created a mechanical harmony. The purple veins of the box began to pulse erratically, as if transmitting some kind of code.

The Mechonid that still retained its head stirred. Then its purple sensor orbs flickered and slowly lit up, one by one.

Timeline

Golden Age 10,000+ Years
- Electronic Technology Singularity
- Ley Lines Created
- Humanity Stops Advancing
- Genetic Erosion Tipping Point
- Archons Created
- Last Human Dies

Age of Creation 3,000 Years
- Archons Start Genetically Engineering New Races
- Vargarti Created
- Kaltorans Created
- X'ions Created

Great X'ion War 6 Year
- X'ions & Archons Fight, Single X'ion Escapes
- X'ion Returns with Nephilim Army
- Legion Hastily Created
- Last Archon Dies & X'ion Leaves

Years of Darkness 100 Years
- Legion & Nephilim Lose Capacity to Continue Fighting
- Corporation Rediscover Space Travel
- Corporation Settle in Haven System
- Corporation & Nephilm Trade Alliance Formed
- Kaltorans Return to Space

Rebirth 5 Years
- Legion & Corporation Economic Alliance Formed
- Now

Short Story: History

"History is a tricky thing. You'd think that it would be static… and it is. But like anything, it changes depending on what angle you look at it from, and the longer you look, the more nuanced it becomes." Gregory sunk back into his office chair as he settled in for a long discussion with his dear friend, Grofix.

It had been a long shift, and both friends were keen to make the most of the temporary stillness in Gregory's office to indulge their philosophical and intellectual pursuits.

"Thas iz troo." Grofix took a seat on the nearby coffee table. The fact that none of the many chairs in the room could accommodate his tail said a lot about the type of people Gregory was "supposed" to entertain. "Itz also doos not helps that wees ar trying to look buck thruw ten thousand yeargs of time and thruw manyz collapsed empirez."

Even Gregory found it hard to understand his friend's heavy accent at times. He often repeated what he had just heard, to make sure he had listened correctly — a form of "active listening" as he liked to think of it.

"Yes, we are trying to look back over a long time and through the haze of many fallen empires, the greatest of these clearly being the humans, and only the religious dare to speculate what came before them." Gregory took a cigar from his desk drawer as he keyed the word "human" into his computer's Stream Search program.

Humanity

"The problem with talking about a long-dead race, one which has shaped our universe so much, is that we can't help but reduce them down to a caricature. A soulless list of notable achievements and failures." Gregory fiddled with his unlit cigar as he thought about where to start. "While I'm sure humans were just as culturally diverse as us, how can we know for sure? Maybe they invented emotions, currency… and family."

That last point struck a painful emotional chord in Gregory's capitalistic heart.

"Weez cans specululate all night if youz want. But we dontz haz time." Empathy did not come easily to Grofix; it wasn't in his genes. But even he could emulate it, if it would make this information exchange more efficient. "Whatz is this 'soullezz' list?"

Gregory quickly regained his composure, lighting his cigar.

"We can't be exactly sure about the order of events; the Stream Search gives them as follows: reached electronic-based Technology Singularity…"

"Az whutz?"

"Um… 'A point of exponential technological progress," Gregory

paraphrased, looking to his friend for a visual cue that his answer was sufficient; it appeared to be. "Leading to a singular momentous event known as The Reality Fracture, resulting in what we call Ley Lines – mappable areas of space where some scientific laws can be bent, namely the ability to travel faster than light without exponential mass increase or time dilatation – enabling humanity to spread throughout the galaxy, possibly further, and to terraform many worlds. With more resources and space than they ever needed, humanity found itself without want, and all conflict ceased."

"Hmrgh…" Having been created for conflict, Grofix found this concept difficult to believe and more challenging than any other human achievement.

"But humanity became stale. They stopped learning, advancing, travelling, or growing."

"Thass what happenz when you stop fightin for life."

"Evidently…" While Gregory's idea of healthy conflict was far less physical than his friend's, he did agree. "… Leading to their genetic erosion, and a breakdown in their biological diversity. They died in the billions to disease, famine, and birth defects, troubles they had forgotten how to fight. Out of desperation, they created the Archons…"

The Archons

"… A genetically engineered race, created to replace humanity."

Gregory paused for a moment; any thought of his creators, the Archons, brought up complex thoughts and feelings.

"They iz like your negligant parenttz and myz estranged grandparents," Grofix mused. He never quite knew how to think of the Archons. But he momentarily put these thoughts to the side; very soon Gregory would get to his creator, X'ion, and then the Great War. That is where his people came in.

"Not wanting to tread in the footprints of their creators, the Archons did not work towards rediscovering what humanity had formerly achieved. Rather, they pushed out in a different direction, most prominently in repopulating their inherited empire with their own genetically engineered creations. All in a effort to create the perfect race, to be called the X'ion."

Gregory started to seethe as he brought to mind what the Archons had done to his people. Closing down his computer screen, he shared his own raw thoughts.

"They were terrible parents. Pouring their favour out on some, like the ridiculous Kaltorans, and limiting the potential of their 'failed' offspring… like us, the Corporation!" Gregory was almost standing now, from memories of what he and his people had gone through.

"Welz you showdz themz."

"Yes… yes, we did… or more to the point, your people did." Gregory sat back down. "But before we get to that, we need to talk about your own failed parent."

Grofix's expression remained unmoved.

X'ion

"After three thousand years and hundreds of new species, the Archons thought they had finally created the perfect race, worthy of the title 'X'ion'." Gregory rotated his chair to face the large transparent Synth Steel window, giving him a fantastic view of the large gas giant 'Alabaster' that his company's space station was mining for fuel and other chemical compounds.

"Thatz iz correct," Grofix also got up to look out the window. "Butz the Archonz change their minds, they think they notz worth it… how many X'ion had been made at this pointz?"

"Twelve… they were still in the genetics lab where they had been created. Not yet given their own world." An awkward smile crossed his face as he voiced a thought: "Imagine if they had been given their own world and allowed to breed."

"Thenz I darz say we would notz be talkin here as friendz."

"True." Gregory stood up to get a better view of the planet and the space station they were on. "The X'ion did not take the Archons' removal of their title well. I imagine the fight that followed was brutal. But the X'ion did not stand a chance; the Archons flew in reinforcements and quickly killed all of the X'ion… all but one… He, she… it… does X'ion have a gender?"

"Don't knowz."

"Well 'it' stole a ship and fled out into uncharted space, the Archons giving chase for almost five years according to the local pub speculation."

"It wouldz bee back."

"Yes, but it's worth talking about the changes to Archon culture first."

Grofix turned to look directly at Gregory. This was the part of the story he had heard very little about.

"The Archons became ideologically fractured over differing perspectives on 'perfection' and the need to test their existing children. Many Archons thought they needed trials of hardship to grow and prove themselves, while other Archons pushed for all current genetic projects to be halted."

"Isnt itz strange that we carez about all zisss so muchz."

"Not strange at all; in many ways our culture and history shape us more than our genetics."

This idea was contrary to Grofix's upbringing, where the nature of one's birth defined one's entire life. But if this belief was the result of his cultural upbringing, then it only added weight to Gregory's point.

"History shapes us, especially momentous history, like war."

The Great War
"When X'ion returned, it brought a diverse army of genetically engineered warriors." Gregory looked at Grofix. "Your people, the Nephilim, as you have come to be named."

"Myz mother fought during that warz."

"Are many who fought in the war still alive?"

"Yes, manyz… at leastz a fifth of the peoplz from my city." Grofix thought for a little while. "We callz the older Nephilim 'Purebloods'. We suspectz sumz of them can livs for hundrez of yearz. Butz I am notz a Pureblood; I amz a 'Hybrid' as I comez from two different Pureblood species of parentz. Us Hybrids we is veryz diverse."

"And what about the 'Emissaries'? They are very similar to us."

"Yezz, they is new… only made in the lastz few yearz. But we arz off topic; lez get back to the war."

"Yes, well… while it was technically a war, it was closer to a slaughter. X'ion's army of Nephilim and fleets of organic spacecraft laid waste to almost every world with nuclear, biological, and ground combat. Some of the Archons in their stupidity welcomed the war, thinking that it would not only test their children but also themselves."

"Yuz, they werz tested… and found lacking. Theyz all deadz now."

"Once X'ion had killed the last Archon, it just left. Abandoning its army, your people. No one knows why."

Grofix did not know how to feel about this. He had not fought during the war and held no allegiance to his creator.

Re-Emergence
"A hundred years later and we are only now just starting to grasp what happened back then." Gregory sat back at his desk, bringing up a hologram of their solar system, the Haven system. "Our people survived, yours, the Kaltorans and the Legion. We are all now acting outside the scope of our original design."

"Tey possibly leftz uszz to learn to standz on our own?"

"I have heard thousands of ideas as to how this is all part of the 'Creator's' plan. I choose not to believe that; they were created just like us. Flawed, just like us."

Grofix paced the room thoughtfully as Gregory smoked.

"Butz wherez we at nows? Everything hangs on a thread… we have only re-emerged back into spacez a few years ago…"

"My people have been back in space for over fifty years now!" Surprised by his harsh retort, Gregory rotated his chair to face away from his friend.

Grofix loved conflict and misread this as an invitation to speak more forcefully.

"Yus, oh Corporate master!" he said sarcastically, his accent clearing up slightly as his thoughts suddenly focused. "And you don't knowz waz out there! You don't know if X'ion is coming back to finish the job! You escapez from yours wretched home world youz comes here, to this Haven system to build comfortable home for yourselves."

"Grofix I didn't…"

"Still so desperate to prove youselvezz to your dead parents. Wellz I dontz have to proovez myself, I amz Nephilim! If weez wanted, we could killz you allz. There iz more of uz and we haz tha weapons!"

"Damn it, Grof! I and everyone knows that the Nephilim are the military might in this system. But we also know that you need us!" Gregory was now standing, but still not looking at his friend… eye contact would just encourage his genetic desire for conflict. "We all need each other; we don't have a choice. No matter who was to win another war, they would be dead a few years later. You need a stable society and economy."

Steadying himself against a wall, Grofix held his words back. He knew Gregory was right, but his instincts fought against his logical mind. It screamed at him to take the position of authority, both physically and verbally. But Gregory was right; for a race that had no discernible genetic gifts, their occasional wisdom was impressive.

"We all need each other." Gregory could sense that Grofix was calming himself. "Despite the often-greedy nature of my people, we do provide spacecraft fuel and manufacturing. Your people provide science and a cost-effective labour force…"

"Hmmmm."

"… The Legion provide us with an effective military force and a passion for law enforcement." Gregory turned to look his friend in the eyes. "Damn it… we even need the Kaltorans; they provide a large amount of raw minerals and food."

"Iz not onlyz tangiblezz things thaz we oferz each other. We helpz each other find balance, to balance each other's natures."

"There is wisdom in your words my friend…"

Corporation

See pg: 198 for extensive Corporation write-up.

Rejected by their creators (the Archons) as inferior, the Corporation (formerly known as Vargarti) have grown to love the Great X'ion War because it freed them from an existence of insignificance and irrelevance. Discarding their racial identity, they are now eager to prove themselves. Not a nation in the classical sense, the Corporation is a massive corporate entity comprising millions of smaller, affiliated business enterprises – a purely capitalistic society.

Corporation Trait, pg: 340
» +2 Maximum Resources and Influence.
» Gain 1 Resource and Influence.
» +1 Wealth, Operations, and Tactical.
» –1 Fate.
» –2 Maximum Strength.
» Complication: Prejudice from Kaltorans.

Play a Corporate if you:
» Value social power.
» Value money and possessions.
» Value the individual over the group.
» Care about your appearance.
» Want to be a space merchant.
» Refuse to be defined by your genetics.

Physical Qualities
» Average Height: 1.7m.
» Average Weight: 75kg.
» Average Life Span: 80 years.
» Yellow patterned skin along neck, back,
   shoulders, and hairline.

Home World: Alabaster, pg: 256
Alabaster is a massive gas giant, rich in helium-3, with a single large moon and distinctive ring made of ice and rock particles, gathered as its orbit occasionally brings it close to the Monopoly asteroid belt.

The X'ion War left the Corporate home world, Varsphere, a desolate wasteland. After fifty years, the rediscovery of space travel enabled the (newly renamed) Corporates to search for a new home. Accessing Archon data banks, they were able to locate a rare gas giant in a nearby system that could be harvested for vital spacecraft fuel and other valuable chemicals. Naming the newly claimed planet "Alabaster", they quickly set about building a new home for themselves.

The Corporation has built numerous large chemical-mining space stations in close orbit to the dangerous Alabaster atmosphere. These stations undergo constant repair and expansion, using asteroid-mined materials and imported supplies. Space travel around Alabaster often frustrates pilots, who face a relentless bombardment of digital advertisement and near-constant traffic deadlock.

Corporation Culture
Largely motivated by a desire for personal success and shaped by social expectations, Corporate culture is deceptively simple to outsiders. While most Corporates are materially well provided for, nearly all present an image of greater personal success than they have actually achieved, especially around other Corporates.

No matter how impoverished, every Corporate will have at least one set of expensive-looking clothes to wear in public. The most wealthy frequently throw extravagant parties to firmly establish public knowledge of their success.

Corporates mostly live on large, crowded, and hastily constructed space stations orbiting the gas giant Alabaster, with large central chambers full of garish advertisements and shops, and surrounded by large space ports.

The Corporates are the greatest unifying force in the Haven system – with most of their manual labour and production done by Nephilim-created biological drones called "Flesh", law enforcement largely managed by the Legion, and even food and raw minerals provided for by trade with the often-troublesome Kaltorans.

Common Characteristics
Abrasive, decisive, entrepreneurial, organised, and pragmatic.

Common Male Names
Aaron, Dale, Derrick, James, Lucas, Malvin, Milo, Steve, or Theodore.

Common Female Names
Abbey, Amy, Isabel, Judy, Julie, Rita, Robyn, or Stephanie.

Common Family Names
Angelson, Bolt, Cartove, Darrison, Jefferson, or Smith.

Example Corporation Character
Theodore grew up in the early years of the Corporation's space colonisation of Haven. Both parents struggled to even meet their own basic needs, forcing Theodore to do whatever it took to survive. Theft, violence, hunger, and sickness followed his every step.

He took any job he could get, anything for a shot at a better future. Eventually, growing tired of the daily drudgery of space colonisation, he moved into security, then into arms dealing as a freelance rep for Body Count Conglomerate™ – a new and dynamic group of companies that catered to a growing demand for armaments and munitions, regardless of intent.

Having put together a diverse and eclectic team, Theodore can make connections amongst any culture and go anywhere he wants. Theodore does not know what this uncertain future holds for him and his crew, but he is eager to make the most of it, possibly one day by starting his own company.

CORP.
"Building Your Future"

Kaltoran

Born with the genetic memories of their ancestors, Kaltorans are an innately gifted and flexible race. They are eager to make a new future for themselves, though they struggle with the "genetic memories" of not only the Great X'ion War but the extreme measures taken by their ancestors to survive it.

Kaltoran Trait, pg: 340
» Reduce all Untrained Primary Skill Roll penalties by 1 (except Wealth).
» +1 Awareness, Command, and Small Arms.
» +1 Fate.
» +2 Defence vs Stealth.
» Reduce all Limited Vision and Low Light penalties by 1 Step.
» Gain Language: Kaltoran.
» −1 Wealth.
» −2 Maximum Focus.
» Unwanted Flashback: If you roll triples with any Fate re-roll, you immediately gain a Minor Psychological Condition (which may be removed with an appropriate Extended Care Healing Roll).
» Complication: Prejudice from Corporation.

Play a Kaltoran if you:
» Value friends and family above all else.
» Want to be a space rogue.
» Make spontaneous decisions.
» Like to make lots of different Skill Rolls.
» Enjoy tactile and dirty technology.
» Distrust greedy Corporates.

Physical Qualities
» Average Height: 1.65m.
» Average Weight: 70kg.
» Average Life Span: 120 years.
» Dreadlock hair.
» Four pointed ears.

Home World: Kadash, pg: 266
A holy planet of the Kaltoran people during their golden age of favour with the Archons, and terraformed into a paradise planet by the ancient humans, Kadash was once a jewel of their empire.

During the Great X'ion War, the losing Kaltorans continually fell back in a fighting retreat. Kadash was their last stand. In a final effort to survive, the Kaltorans modified ancient human terraforming equipment to vaporise much of the water on the planet's surface, wracking their world with violent storms and tidal waves.

The Kaltorans dug beneath the ocean floors and deep into the planet's crust, making new cities for themselves. These cities are complex tangles of caverns and tunnels woven around large hollow chambers, making use of extensive life support systems and airlocks to allow free access to their ancient submersible spacecraft.

Kaltoran Culture
Everything revolves around family for a Kaltoran, a core trait reinforced by the genetic memories that each Kaltoran passes down to their children.

For almost a hundred years after the Great X'ion War, the Kaltorans went to extreme measures to survive, descending into brutal tribalism and cannibalism, horrors and survival instincts that are now passed on to every Kaltoran. Overcompensating for the failures of their ancestors, Kaltorans are often overly optimistic, passionate, and eager for a clean slate and a better future.

With large families and limited living space, they have learnt to make the most of their limited resources, creating eclectic and dense subterranean cities. Kaltoran businesses are frequently run from within family homes or directly from a spacecraft's cargo hold, often selling raw minerals, fish, or weapons.

Kaltorans have a very small and focused government that only deals with major social concerns. Local laws are dictated by prominent family Elders and popular opinion. Few rules are enforced, but those that are, are often dealt with severely and quickly: all Kaltorans carry a weapon — even children and especially the elderly.
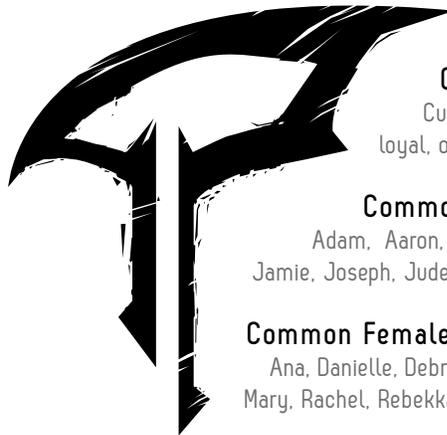
Common Characteristics
Cunning, driven, fun-loving, inquisitive, friendly, loyal, opportunistic, optimistic, and thrifty.

Common Male Names
Adam, Aaron, Cain, Daniel, Elijah, Gideon, Jacob, James, Jamie, Joseph, Jude, Lot, Matthias, or Nathan.

Common Female Names
Ana, Danielle, Debra, Elizabeth, Esther, Eva, Eve, Iva, Jayne, Joan, Mary, Rachel, Rebekkah, Sally, Sarah, Talia, or Zera.

Common Family Names
Chillax, Filch, Game, Jinx, Juked, Omni, Swagger, or Thrift.

Example Kaltoran Character
Rachel Swagger is the adopted middle child of a family of 14. Her family was always active, complicated, and fun. Her siblings were born soldiers and leaders — two traits she was not born with, though she is an amazing mechanic.

Rachel has the genetic memories of her ancestors, including her great grandfather, a master technician to an Archon lab. She inherited his ability to fix anything with an engine and his love for meeting new people. Her grandmother, who fought the Nephilim during the Great X'ion War, gave her the ability to keep a level head in combat. But she also feels her mother's fears and pain from the Dark Years: fear of losing her children to cannibals, and the pain of knowing that her children would remember the horrible things she did to survive.

The Dark Years are in the past, and Rachel is keen to make a better future. Finding work on a spacecraft was her best hope of realising this dream. Her people needed to get out there and make new memories to pass on, not to dwell on the pain of the past.

Legion

A physically imposing race, hastily created by the Archons to fight their losing war against X'ion, the Legion now struggle to create a stable society and to find meaning without a war to fight. In recent times the Legion have formed a close economic relationship with the Corporation, acting as enforcers for hire.

Legion Trait, pg: 340
» +1 Resolve, Gunnery, and Heavy Arms.
» +1 Armour.
» +2 Defence vs Impair.
» Never requires 'Environmental Outfit or Equipment: Arctic'.
» Gain Language: Legion.
» Requires 'Environmental Outfit or Equipment: Temperate' outside Arctic Environments or be Suppressed each Turn.
» -1 Armour when at 0 Endurance.
» -2 Maximum Movement.

Play a Legion if you:
» Value honour, duty, respect, and skill.
» Want to be a space soldier.
» Want to be tough.
» Love big guns and heavy armour.
» Can hold a grudge.
» Distrust monsters.

Physical Qualities
» Average Height: 2.4m.
» Average Weight: 180kg.
» Average Life Span: 60 years.
» Scaled, lizard-like skin.
» Often large and muscular.

Home World: Cerberus Prime
The Legion continued to fight for decades after the Great War, employing guerrilla warfare tactics against the remaining Nephilim forces. But supplies grew thin and the Legion needed a home. They chose the Cerberus system.

With only three planets orbiting a large, unstable star, the Cerberus system was chosen as a home for its defensive attributes and because its third frozen planet was ideal for Legion physiology.

While the Legion no longer consider themselves at war, they are very insular and are suspicious of outsiders entering their territory. They will often search merchant ships and escort travellers to make sure they don't wander.

Secondary Planet: Lilith, pg: 268
The outermost planet of the Haven system, Lilith is a cold tri-mooned world that functions as a base of operations for the Legion. They use the world to facilitate their interactions with the other races and provide refuge for working Legion mercenaries.

Legion Culture
Created by the Archons to be resilient and skilled warriors, these traits have not helped to create a sustainable society during the hundred years following the Great X'ion War. Choosing to have a family or take on full-time civilian work is considered a great and noble sacrifice.

Legion culture is very rigid with many heavily enforced laws. Very protective of their homes, few outsiders are able to visit their small and heavily fortified cities. Settlements have few businesses, as food and other supplies are distributed according to need.

A lot changed for the Legion after they made contact with the other races. The attraction of living a life of action has proven a strong incentive for many Legion. Giving up their pursuit of a self-sustaining society, many now act as mercenaries and enforcers, especially for the Corporation. Old grudges have made interactions with the Nephilim difficult, but the situation is currently stable. They enjoy a natural comradeship with the Kaltorans as they share similar goals despite their contrasting natures.

Common Characteristics
Efficient, focused, honourable, loyal, organised, protective, proud, and stubborn.

Common Male Names
Ajax, Ares, Bacchus, Cronus, Hector, Janus, Mars, Theseus, Vulcan, or Zephyrus.

Common Female Names
Aglaia, Aurora, Brisa, Cassandra, Danu, Electra, Eris, Hydra, Ismini, Kynthia, Medea, or Selene.

Common Family Names
Antonius, Augustus, Aurelius, Brutus, Casca, Cinna, Crassus, Gracchus, Lepidus, Scaevola, or Vespillo.

Example Legion Character
He was born Ares Vespillo, but everyone called him Maximus. Life was very straightforward for Max – not simple... he just always knew what to do. His life had focus and clarity.

Like every Legion, he was born to be a soldier. His parents had sacrificed much to raise him and support their community through their hunting business, but things didn't need to be like that anymore. The other races could provide much of that now. The Corporation could build things, the Kaltorans could provide food, and the Legion could provide protection. The Archons had made them all with a purpose, he thought. But real life was not as straightforward as he would have liked. Maximus learnt this in his first week working as a mercenary on a Corporation merchant ship.

Their Corporate captain was constantly manipulating their clients and suppliers. Their Kaltoran mechanic was extremely fun and kind, but her emotions hung on a thread at times. Their Nephilim medic and resident scientist was the most complex. She was rude and arrogant, but she had clarity and focus about who she was, two traits that Max wished they did not share.

Nephilim

Nephilim: A junk-word term used to describe the diverse descendants of X'ion's genetically engineered army. Created to wage war on the Archons and their creations, before being abandoned by their creator, X'ion, once the war was won.

The Nephilim have an eclectic, primal, and often violent society supported by advanced biological technology. While publicly no longer loyal to X'ion, many Nephilim pursue genetic perfection at any cost.

Nephilim Trait, pg: 340
» +1 Bio Tech, Engineering, and Exotic.
» +1 to all Spare Time Rolls.
» +1 Recover.
» Gain Language: High X'ion or Primal X'ion.
» -1 Conversation.
» -2 Culture.
» Complication: Prejudice from Kaltorans and Legion.

Play a Nephilim if you:
» Value innate ability and science over all else.
» Are motivated by intellect and instinct.
» Like to defy presumptions.
» Possibly want to look like a monster.
» Believe the end always justifies the means.
» Don't mind modifying your body and genetics.

Physical Qualities
» Average Height: 1-2.5m.
» Average Weight: 50-290kg.
» Average Life Span: 20-300 (est.) years.
» Wide range of appearances.
» Often have features of mammals, fish, and/or insects.

Home World: Eden, pg: 260
Before the Great X'ion War, Eden was the Kaltoran home world. Once covered in thriving megacities, lush forests, and great lakes, it is now a wasteland of deserts, salt plains, and ruins. Its surface is littered with giant craters, radiation, poisonous gases, and roaming monsters.

Decades after the Great War and without supplies, the Nephilim ships slowly fell into disrepair. In a desperate attempt to survive, they landed (or according to some, crashed) many of their ships onto the surface of Eden.

Over the remains of these ancient warships, the Nephilim built Necronus, a towering black metal and biological city. The weak masses live amongst the crumpled bases of its many towers, while the most powerful live at the top — a position that must be constantly maintained through force and influence as their towers continue to grow taller.

Nephilim Culture
Life is cheap in this brutal society that values both intelligence and strength. Largely shaped by perceived genetic superiority, the Nephilim split themselves into three broad categories: Purebloods, Hybrids, and Emissaries.

Purebloods are ancient Nephilim who fought in the Great War or are pure blood descendants of those that did. Often large and imposing, they are a living reminder of their people's past service to their creator, X'ion.

Hybrids are the diverse and mixed offspring of the Purebloods. Diverse in appearance and nature, Hybrids make up the bulk of the Nephilim population.

Emissaries are the newest of the Nephilim. Created only a few years ago, they are born fully grown, with a head full of knowledge and memories that are not their own. With the aim of alleviating cultural tension with the other races, they are bred with a physical form closer to those of their former enemies. However, their Nephilim form is not hidden, only softened.

Nephilim culture has very few laws and is only stabilised by the self-serving wills of its powerful leaders, who are largely unconcerned with the masses.

While the Nephilim are easily the most powerful military force in the Haven system, they know that long-term survival and prosperity depends on their forming some kind of functional relationship with the other races — a feat that is incredibly difficult given their war history, old ties to X'ion, appearance, and brutal culture.

Common Characteristics
Blunt, dismissive, focused, proud, honest, instinctual, intelligent, ruthless, and fierce.

Common Names
Beytah, Hegh, Heghta, Hraks, Huch, Jagh, Jatmey, Lonta, Mangghom, Ngabtah, Porghmey, Qeh, Qehpu, Sagh, Yempu, or Wabmey.

Example Nephilim Character
Hraks is only three years old, a child by most races' standards. But she was born fully grown, her head filled with valuable skills and fake memories, which give context to her personality and thoughts. As a Nephilim Emissary, her purpose is to mingle with the other races, a task she was built for.

Spending time in the local space port bars, she was able to pick up work as a medic for a small mercenary group. Life as a mercenary was ideal for Hraks, allowing her to gain real memories and expand her skills, especially in biological technology and combat.

Despite her constant confidence and gifts, the other races often find Hraks difficult to deal with. Her appearance is a constant reminder of darker times, and her blunt way of speaking often causes confrontations. But things would inevitably change. The races would eventually become acclimatised to each other, the past would be forgotten, and they would learn that the Nephilim know best.

Rules Introduction

Welcome to Fragged Empire

What You Need to Play
At least three six-sided dice (3d6) per player.
Character Sheet print outs (can be downloaded from the website).
Pens or pencils.
A laminated square-grid battle map.
Whiteboard markers.
Character and spacecraft miniatures.
Rulebook (print or PDF).
Two to five friends!

If You Are Familiar with Tabletop RPGs
If you are an experienced tabletop role player, you will easily pick up the Fragged Empire rules. (Though as you know, it always takes time to learn a new game system.)

To see what sets this system apart from others, we recommend you read the Traits section (pg: 33) and Acquisition section (pg: 54). Of course, taking a look at a character sheet will give you a good feel for where the simple and more intricate rules of the game are. Don't forget to check out our YouTube channel.

www.fraggedempire.com
Read this book alongside a printout of the
character sheets, and watch our YouTube rules videos.

If You Are New to Tabletop RPGs
The simplest way to think of a tabletop RPG is that it is like a computer RPG, but the rules and story aren't automatically done for you (most computer RPGs started as tabletop RPGs). The story in a tabletop RPG is told by you (a single character) and a Game Master (GM), who runs the game. You are not constrained by what a program says you can do. If you can think of it, you can attempt it.

Learning to play a tabletop RPG can be a daunting task. The best way to learn is from a friend who is already familiar with RPGs or from watching a recorded game on YouTube. You may need to read through this book a few times. Best just read it once, then play a small game, then read it again and play a slightly larger game.

Glossary of Common Terms
GM = Game Master (the person who runs the game).
PC = Player character.
NPC = Non-player character.
1d6 = A six-sided die (like you get in most board games).
3d6 = Three six-sided dice.
1d3 = The result of 1d6, divided by two, and rounded up.

Key Features of the Rules

Adaptable Rules
While these rules are designed for use within the Fragged Empire setting, they are robust and flexible enough to be used for most science fiction settings with just a little creative "house ruling". One of the best ways to alter the feel of a game is to increase or decrease the characters' Resources (pg: 56) and Influence (pg: 58).

Simple 3d6 Resolution System
Most Skill Rolls are resolved with a simple 3d6 dice roll. If your roll, plus any bonuses or penalties, equals or exceeds the required amount, then you succeed.

Nonlinear Character Progression
Characters have many options available to them, with no set paths for ability or equipment progression. This allows for characters to quickly specialise or diversify and to create unique combinations of abilities and Equipment.

Low-level characters, specialised properly, can be dangerous threats to high-level characters. Even if two characters have similar Attributes, Skills, or Equipment, they can function quite differently because of their differing Traits.
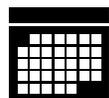
Best for Long Sandbox Games
Fragged Empire can be used to play short games, but it is best when used for long sandbox-style games. In this post-apocalyptic setting, you will regularly have to make the most of what little resources you have, balancing short-term sacrifices and long-term gain.
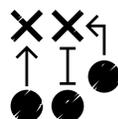
Tactical Miniatures Combat
This ruleset includes intuitive tactical combat in which you will need to react not only to your environment (cover is your friend), but also to your opponents' actions. It also includes optional rules for miniature-free combat (pg: 96). GMs are encouraged to make combat a part of the story and to reward intelligent play. As there are no perfect, statistically balanced encounters, the players' creativity, skill, and teamwork will be the key to victory.

Optional: Game Types

Ragtag Band of Misfits
(Standard Game)

Joined together by unlikely circumstance or need, you and your oddly matched team are trying to make your way in a hostile and mysterious galaxy.

Small freelance mercenary groups and merchant ships are the lifeblood of the Haven system. They are able to quickly respond and adapt to ever-changing opportunities and dangers.

- » Start at Level 1.
- » Start with 3 Current Resources and Influence.
- » Start with 3 Spare Time Points.
- » Often involves the party owning a spacecraft.

Casual Game
(Easier Combat)

The galaxy is not quite so dangerous.

- » Start at Level 1.
- » Start with 3 Current Resources, Influence.
- » Start with 3 Spare Time Points.
- » Often involves the party owning a spacecraft.
- » Each player character gains +1 Armour.
- » Player character spacecraft do not gain -1 Armour at 0 Shields.
- » All Small Arms, Heavy Arms, Tactical, and Exotic Weapons gain +1 Clip.

Survival
(Great for Horror Games)

Bound together out of need or desperation, you and your companions are just trying to survive to see another day.

Please note: It is recommended that you and your players have reasonable grasp of this rule system before you run a game of this type, as managing combat and Spare Time Points can be a little overwhelming.

- » Start at Level 1.
- » Start with 0 Current Resource and Influence.
- » Start with 6 Spare Time Points.
- » +4 Equipment Slots.
- » -1 Fate.
- » +1 Max Resources and Influence per 2 Levels (normally +1 per 1 Level).
- » Gain 2 Spare Time Points per session (normally 1).
- » Personal Combat Weapons with infinite Clips or Ammo cost +2 Resources.
- » Weapon Clips do not refill during Downtime.
- » Refilling personal Combat Clips, Ordnance Clips, rebuilding Destroyed Drone Bodies require a Spare Time Roll of 14t.
- » Your character dies if any Attribute reaches -2 (normally -5).
- » Optional: Food and Water must be acquired with Spare Time Rolls (see Food Supplies, pg: 137).
- » Optional: Intense Damage (pg: 309).

Story Focus
(Light Combat Rules)

Physical conflict is primarily a tool for moving the story forward. While it may be prominent and an important part of your game, it does not need to take up such a large portion of your game time.

Please note: This game type discards much of the combat and equipment rules. Some knowledge of these systems is still advised.

- » Start at Level 1.
- » 0 Max Resources (never increased).
- » Influence is only used to gain Perks and Complications, not for acquiring a spacecraft.
- » Any time you would gain Resources or Influence, gain a Spare Time Point.
- » Start with 3 Influence and Spare Time Points.
- » Always use Optional Theatre of the Mind Combat Rules (pg: 96 and 166).

Character Overview

Making a Character

The Game Master defines your starting Level (usually Level 1).
Select your Race.
Distribute 18 Attribute Points (0-5 Points each).
Select your Trained Skills.
   6 Primary Skills (Everyday or Professional).
   2 Personal Combat Skills.
   2 Vehicle System Skills.
Select your Traits, 1 per Level.
Starting Resources, Influence and Spare Time Points = Your Level+2.
   Allot Resources and Influence.
   Spend Spare Time Points (you may automatically gain any item or service that costs 14t or less, no roll required).

Starting Level, pg: 32

See pg: 341 for a full list of available Traits.

Your character usually begins at Level 1 (with 1 Trait).

You start with Resources, Influence, and Spare Time Points equal to your Level +2. You gain 1 additional Trait, Maximum Resource, and Influence per Level.

Level 0 is a child or unskilled.
Level 1 to 4 is averagely gifted.
Level 5 to 9 is skilled.
Level 10 to 19 is amazingly gifted.
Level 20 or more is legendary.

Choosing Your Starting Traits
The Trait(s) you select at character creation should represent your character's defining nature and history. Some Traits can only be selected at character Creation (eg: Old).

Attributes, pg: 34

You have 18 points to distribute amongst six Attributes: Strength, Reflexes, Movement, Focus, Intelligence, and Perception. Each Attribute may be set from 0 to 5.

0 represents an impairment of some kind.
1 or 2 is average.
3 or 4 is impressive.
5 is amazingly gifted.

Trained Skills, pg: 38

Select 6 Primary Skills, 2 Vehicle System Skills, and 2 Personal Combat Skills to be Trained in. All other Skills are considered Untrained.

Trained Skills give a +1 bonus to your Skill Rolls.
Untrained Skills give a -2 penalty to your Skill Rolls.

Resources and Influence, pg: 54

See pg: 113 for full Equipment rules.
See pg: 141 for full Spacecraft rules.
See pg: 358 for a full list of available Equipment.

You start with Resources and Influence equal to your Level +2.
Resources represent your ability to maintain weapons and equipment, while Influence represents your favour with an NPC group (or groups) and reflects your ability to maintain a spacecraft.

Allotted, Not Spent
You do not decrease your Resources or Influence when you acquire, lose, or change your equipment or spacecraft. Resources and Influence represent the quality and quantity of equipment and spacecraft the character may maintain at any one time.

Spare Time Points, pg: 64

You start with Spare Time Points equal to your Level +2 (eg: a Level 1 character starts with 3 Spare Time Points). You may keep these Spare Time Points for later, or you may spend them on any Spare Time Item with a cost of 14t or less, no roll required (each item still cost 1 Spare Time Point, no matter the roll difficulty).

Any use of Spare Time Points after character Creation uses the standard Spare Time Point rules.

Level 1 Legion, Character Creation Example
Derrick starts at Level 1. For his race he chose Legion. He wants to define himself as a leader, so he selects the Leadership Trait "Inspiration". He has 3 Resources, 3 Influence, and 3 Spare Time Points. He spends his Resources on a Shotgun (2 Resources) and a Combat Outfit (1 Resource). He saves his 3 Influence until he can combine it with his companions to buy a larger spacecraft. He spends 1 Spare Time Point on a Toolbox; this normally requires a Spare Time Roll of 14, but does not during character creation.

Making a Character

Best done alongside the GM and other players.
### Start with a character idea before you start building.

Lv 1

GM Sets the Starting Level
You usually start at a game at Level 1.
An average person is Level 1-4.

Select Your Race
You may select one Race.

18
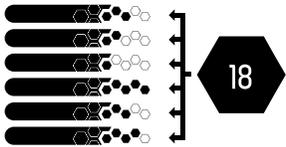
Distribute 18 Attribute Points
You have 18 points to distribute amongst 6 Attributes.
Each Attribute may be set from 0 to 5.
An average person has 1 or 2 points in each Attribute.

+1
-2
-2
+1
+1
-2
-2
+1
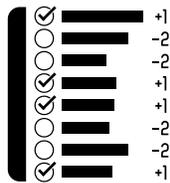
Select your Trained Skills
A Trained Skill grants a +1 bonus to your Skill Rolls.
An Untrained Skill has a -2 penalty to your Skill Rolls.
Select 6 Primary (Everyday or Professional), 2 Personal Combat Skills, and 2 Vehicle Systems to be Trained in.

1 Trait per Level

Select 1 Trait per Level
You may have up to 1 Trait per area: Level, Resource, Influence, Attribute, Fate, Trained Primary Skill and up to 2 Traits per Trained Vehicle System or Personal Combat Skill.
You need to meet all Requirements for any Trait you select.
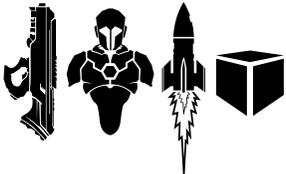
Allot Resources and Influence, Spend Spare Time Points
You start with Resource, Influence and Spare Time Points each equal to your Level +2.
Resources are primarily used to acquire Weapons and Outfits.
Influence is primarily used to acquire a spacecraft.
Spare Time Points are used to acquire minor items or services, or to make Equipment Modifications.
You may start with items or Modifications that requires a Spare Time Roll of 14t or less without needing to roll. Each item costs 1 Spare Time Point.

Level

This represents your character's personal skill and experiential growth.

Gain 1 Level once every 3 game sessions.

When you gain a level:
Gain 1 new Trait (pg: 33).
Increase Maximum Resources and Influence by 1 (pg: 56 & 58).
You may Retro a single part of your character (see below).

Optional Retro

On gaining a new Level, you may change a single Trait, Trained Skill, or allotted Attribute Point (pg: 34). This is called a Retro.

You may not change a Trained Skill if you have already selected a Trait for that Skill. You must first change that Trait to one for another Skill, then you may change the first Skill (requiring 2 Retros).

If changing your Attributes would break a Traits Requirement, you lose the benefits of that Trait but keep the Disadvantages.

All Retro changes must be approved by the GM and will often require some in-game actions to justify the change.

Your First Few Game Sessions
GMs are encouraged to allow players to change their Attributes and Traits after a few sessions.

Gaining a Level Example

After playing three game sessions the Game Master grants Derrick the Legion and his companions a Level up to Level 3.

Derrick needs to choose a Trait. He likes being the up close and personal combatant so he chooses the Tactical Trait 'Second Wind'. This Trait has the "Legion" Requirement, which he meets.

Derrick's maximum potential Resources and Influence are also increased by 1. He wants a new Outfit, but he needs to increase his Current Resources through his actions in-game.

Derrick may also change (Retro) one aspect of his character. He is happy with his Trait choices, but the group has discovered that as a team they are missing the Programming Skill. Derrick decides to untrain one of his Trained Skills and become Trained in Programming. He asks the Game Master for permission to do this. The Game Master says he may untrain the chosen Skill, but he will need to perform some relevant in-game actions to justify learning the new Skill.

Next game session Derrick spends a Spare Time Point to purchase a Personal Computer and says he is also reading a data book on the subject in his spare time. The Game Master says this is reason enough for him to gain the Programming Skill mid-Session.

Traits

See pg: 341 for Traits list.

Traits are what set your character apart from others. They often define the nature of your Attributes and Skills, and can give access to unique abilities.

You gain 1 Trait per Level.

You may select up to 1 Trait per area: Level, Resource, Influence, Attribute, Fate, Trained Primary Skill, and up to 2 Traits per Trained Vehicle System or Personal Combat Skill. This makes every Trait selection important, as each choice also means you are forgoing other Traits.

Requirements

Many Traits have requirements that must be met before that Trait may be selected.

Armour X–Y
Your Armour value must be "X" or higher.
Your Armour value can be no higher than "Y".
Armour vs Energy, Slow, or at 0 Endurance do not affect this.

Char Creation
This Trait can only be selected before your first game session.
This Trait cannot normally be changed through Retro.

GM Approval
The GM must approve your selection of this Trait.
Normally requires an in-game action to justify its choice.

Maximum Attribute (Max X)
The listed Attribute must be equal to or lower than "X".

Minimum Attribute (Min X)
The listed Attribute must be equal to or greater than "X".

Psionic
You must be a Psionic (see right).

Robot
You must be a Robot (see right).

Secret Knowledge (Secret Kn)
You must have Secret Knowledge (from Research, pg: 68) in a field that thematically matches the Trait. This often represents your character learning this Trait.

Trait or Race
You must have the listed Trait or Race.

Traits Should Make Thematic Sense

Choose Traits that match your character's existing personality, history or skill use. Traits can also represent your character developing or changing throughout play.

GMs should feel free to require players to take in-game actions to justify their selecting a Trait (eg: require a character to spend time learning through reading or training).

Implant and Splice Traits

Electronic implants, biological implants, and genetic splicing are all commonplace in the Haven system, pushing an individual's abilities beyond what is naturally achievable through modifications and alterations of one's body or genetics.

All Implant and Splice Traits are identified with the word "Implant" or "Splice" in the Trait name.

If you wish to select an Implant or Splice Trait after you have created your character, you must undergo Medical Surgery, requiring a Surgery Roll (pg: 92). This Surgery Roll represents your Implant being installed into your body or your DNA being re-sequenced through splicing.

A Surgery Roll is also required if you change out (Retro, pg: 32) your Implant or Splice Trait for another Trait.

If the Surgery Roll fails, you may try again at a later time, but you do not lose the Trait.

You Are a Psionic

Some rare and gifted (or cursed) individuals can uniquely interact with reality and people's minds. This is connected to the Ley Lines (pg: 278) in some way and is not an ability that was invented by the Archons (pg: 187) or X'ion (pg: 193) (as far as we know).

You can secretly communicate to others using Telepathy (pg: 37), and you can use Weapons with the Weapon Type: Psionic (pg: 103).

You Are a Robot

You are a construction of mechanics and electronics. You are resistant and vulnerable to different things and have different needs.

» Rather than eating, you require power, lubricants, and components.
» Rather than sleeping, you power down for at least 6 hours a day.
» You are immune to poisons, but can get computer viruses.
» You are immune to low levels of radiation, heat, and cold.
» You do not breathe air.
» You are vulnerable to electromagnetic fields.
» You are vulnerable to Disruptor Weapons.
» Your mind can be Hacked.