

ROGUE TRADER™

THE GAME MASTER'S KIT™



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40,000
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WHISPERS ON THE STORM

A Rogue Trader's dynasty is built on the ambition of his ancestors, be they dreams of glory or nightmares of failure.

—*Wielding the Warrant: A Tale of the Void*

Rogue Trader dynasties often span the centuries, waxing and waning in the light of the Imperium's expansion across the void. Even the least of Rogue Traders can often trace his lineage back generations, citing great deeds and boasts of heroism and avarice in the face of an uncaring galaxy. Some of these stories may even contain a grain of truth. However, for most who carry the Warrant of Trade, knowledge of their ancestors is hazy at best, built on the lies and tall tales of their forbears. Perhaps there is a good reason for this. Rogue Traders live on the very edge of the Imperium's authority, and their actions are often questionable at best. It is also said that no Rogue Trader ever grew to greatness on the goodwill of his peers.

Whispers on the Storm explores this darkness that lurks in the Explorers' past, drawing them into a situation where they must confront the mistakes of their ancestors and decide if they will repeat them or try to make amends. It is far more than just a moral choice, however, and the Explorers will have a chance to win great prestige and profit for themselves (as well as the favour of an entire star system) if they are bold and clever.

OVERVIEW

The adventure begins when the Explorers are intercepted on the edges of Winterscale's Realm by the *Hand of Redemption*—a Lunar Class Imperial cruiser. The *Hand's* commander, Captain Keel, 'invites' the Explorers on board to discuss a matter of great importance. Keel is on a mission for the Battlefleet Calixis—and the shadowy powers that lurk behind its high command—to venture into the Expanse and rescue a missing Imperial Envoy. He has been chosen both because of his loyalty to the Imperium and because of his personal stake in the mission: the Envoy is his brother. As it turns out, the Envoy has gone missing in the Svard system, which by coincidence was founded by the Explorers' dynasty. Keel wants their help in recovering the Envoy and dealing with whatever fate has befallen Svard. To this end, he offers the PCs a deal to aid him and re-establish their claim on the system.

The core of the adventure takes place in the Svard System and follows the Explorers' efforts to help Keel find the envoy, make some profit, and uncover the secrets of the system's founding. When they arrive, they discover a failing Imperial system, fallen into a state of decay and ruin.

Spread across a series of moons orbiting a massive gas giant, the human inhabitants of Svard are barely surviving in the face of a terrible cult known as the Whisperers. With the help of



Captain Keel and the Crystal Council—the Svard's last vestige of Imperial authority—the Explorers must try and turn to the system's fortunes around and restore its moons one by one. They must also uncover the power behind the Whisperers and the darker secrets that reach back into their own past.

The adventure concludes with the rise of the Whisperers and the awakening of their alien master from deep beneath the storm-wracked clouds of the gas giant. The Explorers are truly put to the test as the system descends into open war and they are forced to defend everything they have worked to restore.



IMPERIAL ENTANGLEMENTS

"Never argue with a Nova Cannon."

—Ursa Fel, Lord-Captain of the *Broken Promise*

The adventure begins with the Explorers encountering Captain Keel and the *Hand of Redemption*, either near a system or station or in deep space between transitions into the warp. As written, the adventure assumes that this encounter will take place somewhere on the edge of Winterscale's Realm in the Expanse, perhaps whilst the Explorers are on their way to or from Footfall. The GM should feel free to place this encounter wherever he chooses to best suit his campaign, as its exact location and the location of the system where the core of the scenario takes place are not vital to the plot. One suggestion is to place Svard on the trailing side of Foulstone (see the map on pages 338-339 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook).

Read or paraphrase the following:

*You have just completed a transition from the warp back into real space and the bridge teems with activity as servitors and specialists calibrate sensors and run intricate system checks. Suddenly, the air is rent with the shrieking of alarms and the vista-panels burst to life with images of the near void. Looming out of the darkness, the hard shape of an Imperial Lunar Class cruiser materialises, its armoured prow pointed at your ship as it glides across the dark on an intercept course. Even as the vessel moves closer, your vox crackles to life and an authoritative voice booms across the bridge, "This is the Imperial Navy vessel **Hand of Redemption**; stand to and prepare to be boarded!"*

USING THIS ADVENTURE

This adventure is very broad in its design and assumes that the PCs will be making extensive use of both their vessel and their hirelings. For this reason it can be adapted fairly easily to accommodate Explorers of any Rank. Of more relevance to the difficulty of the adventure is the Explorers' Profit Factor, and by extension their ability to upgrade their vessel and hire and equip large numbers of retainers. It is assumed that the group will begin the adventure with an average Profit Factor of about 30-45. Thus, they will have to undertake numerous Endeavours (presented throughout this adventure) to raise their Profit and increase the size and ability of their forces. This gives them the best chance of surviving the adventure's conclusion. Should the Explorers start with a higher Profit Factor, the GM can either decrease the number of Endeavours available or increase the number and strength of the Explorers' adversaries.

The GM should make sure the Explorers are aware of the unsubtle level of implied threat from the Lunar Class cruiser as it hangs off their port bow, weapon batteries and lance turrets locked on to their hull.

NAVAL HOSPITALITY

Keel will not come across personally. Instead, he sends over a boarding party and one of his junior officers—Ensign Dyna Flen. She will be courteous and professional but insistent about meeting the Rogue Trader and his advisors whilst her men secure the bridge and increase the level of implied violence. At this point, the Explorers will probably be demanding to know what is going on and waving about their Warrant of Trade. Once Flen is face to face with the Rogue Trader and the rest of the Explorers, she will be insistent that they 'please' accompany her back to the Hand to meet Captain Keel to discuss a matter of great importance. Whilst the Ensign is quite tight lipped, the GM should allow the Explorers a chance to try and squeeze some information out of her during their journey across. This will require a **Hard (-20) Charm or Inquiry Test**; Flen's sense of duty plus her armed escort makes Intimidation pointless. She does not know much, but she will be able to let slip that she knows that the *Hand* is on route to a nearby system—under direct orders from the Battlefleet—and that the system is somehow connected to the Explorers.

It is possible that the Explorers may give Flen trouble by either refusing to accompany her or (in the extreme) kidnapping or killing her. Hopefully, the massive Imperial warship only a few kilometres away should help to avoid this outcome. However, if the PCs do begin to pursue a course that would lead down this path, the GM shouldn't be afraid to have Keel make a show of force. He is not a patient man, nor does he play games—if the Explorers are uncooperative, he will fire on their vessel to prove to them that they are no match for his ship or his crew. The GM should stop short of doing any lasting damage to the Explorers or their vessel, but it should be clear that they are not going to be able to shoot their way out of this one.

See page 26 for the profile of the *Hand of Redemption*.

AN AUDIENCE WITH KEEL

Once they have had some time to prepare—perhaps hiding weapons and making other contingency plans depending on their level of paranoia—Flen will escort them to the Imperial shuttle and take them across to the *Hand*. This should be a chance for them to once again experience the gravity of the situation and the GM should point out the size of the Hand (perhaps in reference to their own ship) as they fly into its shadow.

Once on board, they will be taken directly to Keel's staterooms, their armed escort never leaving their side. The GM should point out the differences to their own vessel and the military bustle of crewmen and ratings as they ascend to the officer's deck. Flen will not let them stop and will take them directly into the elaborate captain's mess where she waits

GM GUIDANCE: RUNNING THE ENCOUNTER WITH KEEL

Keel has tracked down the Explorers assuming that a combination of the promise of profit and the threat of his vessel will be enough to get them to accompany him to Svard. He is not expecting trouble. Of course, the PCs may have other ideas and there is always the chance that they might see this as a combat encounter rather than an adventure hook. When running this encounter, the GM should try and steer the players away from the idea that this encounter is a bad thing and that they have somehow been 'caught'. This can most easily be achieved by having Keel be as civil as possible to them—he does after all need their help—and treat the whole thing more as a polite offer than a demand. Remember that Keel is an Imperial Navy Captain and the Explorers are members of a Rogue Trader dynasty—this is not an encounter between rival hive gangs, but rather a meeting of immensely powerful and influential individuals, and as such it should be conducted with civility and respect.

with them. Once they have been there for a few moments, Keel will arrive along with a number of his higher-ranked officers. There will be introductions and then they can sit down to their meal. Keel will not be willing to talk about the 'important matter' right away, insisting that they first eat and relax. In reality, this is a chance for him to size them up—it can also be a chance for the Explorers to try and do the same.

The GM can run this as an Opposed Skill Test (see **Chapter IX: Playing the Game** of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook) between Keel and the Explorers as they trade pleasantries and tales of the Expanse. The contest can either be of Willpower or Fellowship depending on which one the Explorers wish to use. Keel will use his Willpower. Any Explorer with the Carouse or Charm skill can make a Difficult (–10) Test to help win the upper hand, gaining +5 to the next Interaction Skill Test. The winner of the test will have scored important points in their first meeting and will hold the upper hand for the time being—in rule terms, this equates to a +10 on all Interaction Skill Tests used to influence their opponent. It will also make Keel more talkative later on.

The GM can use the Navy Officer Profile from page 372 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook to represent Captain Keel, though he should increase all of Keel's Characteristics by 10 and equip him with a power sword and plasma pistol.

When the meal is done, Keel will usher the Explorers into an adjoining chamber where he will pour them glasses of fine Scintillian amasec and invite them to be at ease. Once they are seated, he will tell them why he has tracked them down.

Read or paraphrase the following:

*You are relaxing in a chamber filled with an eclectic collection of trophies. Keel wanders around the room, his hand tracing the designs of an ancient Eldar war banner, the broken fang of a Dusk Stalker and the gun batteries of a replica of the **Divine Right** before coming to rest on an ancient hellpistol. Keel then turns to you and smiles.*

"I won't waste your time with any more small talk or pleasantries, as I am sure you are keen to learn why I have brought you here. You see, I am on a mission for the Battlefleet, the Calixian Battlefleet of course, which has a vested interest in this area of the Expanse—and in particular, a system known as Svard. It seems that an Imperial Envoy on a mission to Svard has disappeared and I have been tasked with finding him—and helping him to complete whatever it was that got him sent out here in the first place. Of course, Svard is a long way from the hives of Scinitilla and I need help—specifically your help. As you may or may not know, your dynasty founded Svard and so has a connection to it—not to mention extensive records and survey reports which should still be on your vessel. Your presence will also make dealing with the locals easier—for whilst my vessel and crew are well equipped for confrontation, we are not a diplomatic or trade mission. In exchange, I would help you to re-establish your claim on the system and even turn a blind eye on any local profit you might feel is your due. So what do you say?"

ALTERNATIVE ADVENTURE HOOKS

Keel's appearance and his coercion of/deal with the Explorers may not suit the GM's campaign, so presented here are a few alternatives:

DISCOVERING AN OLD RECORD

While refitting a part of the Explorers vessel, a store of old charts and scrolls are found, among them the coordinates and Writ of Claim for the Svard system. A little investigation will reveal that the system has been out of contact for decades and is likely ripe to be reclaimed and milked for profit.

A CRY FOR HELP

The Explorers receive an Astropathic communication from Svard and Speaker Tal. In the message, he pleads with them to fulfil their dynasty's obligations and come save the system from certain destruction in exchange for a healthy slice of its output and profit.

A MERCANTILE ENDEAVOUR

The mission to restore Svard can be handled like an Endeavour, perhaps offered to the Explorers on behalf of an Imperial organisation. Details on constructing Endeavours can be found on page 270 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook.

THE REAL STORY

The reality of the situation is that Keel is working for the Inquisition through the high command of the Battlefleet Calixis. He was chosen for this task because of his genetic bonding to Kaal—ostensibly an Imperial Envoy who was despatched to the Svard System to investigate its falling output and recent troubles. What Keel doesn't know is that Kaal and the Svard system have been of interest to the Inquisition for some time and a suspected source of a dire xenos threat (something that the Explorers' dynasty has a hand in—see below). He believes he has been dispatched to Svard to find his brother and help him restore order to the system. Since only a handful of Keel's crew actually know the real powers behind their expedition to the Expanse (most believe they are on deep patrol for the Battlefleet Claxis), he will not confide this fact in the Explorers. Should any psychic PCs think to try and pluck this information from his brain, they will discover that the state rooms are heavily warded, thwarting such attempts. Keel will however let them know that the Envoy is his brother if the Explorers impressed him at dinner. He will be very clear that he is willing to turn a blind eye to the Explorers' profit making if they agree to help him. For the purposes of this adventure, the Inquisition remains in the shadows (as is right and proper) and so are not detailed.

The GM can, however, add details to Keel's shadowy masters as he sees fit—perhaps leading to further complications for the Explorers and their claim on Svard.

The GM should feel free to draw out the Explorers' meeting with Keel as long as necessary. It may be that the Explorers agree right away and want to get underway immediately, or it could be that they remain suspicious and need to be convinced this is not all some elaborate trap. However it plays out, allow the Explorers a chance to question Keel about the system and the Envoy. He will be able to tell them the following:

- The Envoy is important to the Imperium and the Navy. He doesn't know what the Envoy's mission was, but he believes it was to restore order to the system and help re-establish trade routes.
- Svard was founded about 200 years ago by the Explorers' dynasty. The GM should give the Explorers a brief overview of the system as it exists within their records—i.e., before the coming of the Whisperers.

This section of the adventure concludes when a deal is struck between the Explorers and Keel and both vessels embark for the Svard system.



CAPTAIN KEEL AND THE HAND OF REDEMPTION

Captain Keel is a tall, dark, and imposing man from pure Calixian stock, and like so many noble sons before him has risen from beneath the shadow of his family to find a place in Battlefleet Calixis. Well into his second century, he is a veteran of countless engagements and fleet actions across the width and breath of the sector. His time among the stars and his refusal to move on from an active captaincy has, however, withered his political connections and lost him many friends among the core worlds. Now he finds himself as the pawn of higher powers, wasting his twilight years far from the action and adventure of his youth. All this has tainted his usual stoicism with bitterness, though he remains committed to his duty.

GM GUIDANCE: RUNNING CAPTAIN KEEL

Keel can be both an asset and a liability for the Explorers—while his vessel, skill, and keen sense of duty to the Imperium can all work to make the PCs efforts easier, his devotion to his brother can make him reckless. The GM should allow the Explorers to foster a relationship with Keel and have the captain ostensibly act as their ally. Certainly, as long as the Explorers are interested in finding the source of the Whisperers (and by extension, the Envoy), Keel will be there to aid them on occasion. However, Keel is at the helm of a Lunar-class cruiser, which is undoubtedly more powerful than any vessel the Explorers will have at their disposal. This could result in the very real problem of Keel overshadowing the Explorer's actions. Certainly, in any naval action, he will be much more capable than them, and the players may be frustrated if a NPC blasts away all the bad guys before they even get a chance to fight!

On the other hand, having Keel on hand for the final battle may mean the difference between life and death for the Explorers. With that in mind, here are several guidelines to follow in order to run Captain Keel and his ship without having them overpower the Explorers. (Note: Rules for *The Hand of Redemption* can be found in the Appendix on page 26.

- Keel is well aware of just how shaky his authority is in Svard and knows he is beyond the bounds of the Imperium. Therefore, he prefers to wait out of sight at the edges of the system, demanding updates from the Explorers via astropathic communications. Of course, he will not explain why he is unwilling to offer much in the way of aid to the Explorers, except perhaps some excuses along the lines of his ship is 'too large to safely navigate the storm.' He will, however, be secretly sending a few parties of trusted armsmen to conduct his own investigations on Svard.
- Once the Explorers have discovered the location of Installation 23, Keel will volunteer to join them in the assault. The reason, of course, is that his brother is on the station. If the Explorers have discovered this beforehand, they may use this to try and 'convince' Keel to join them in the assault. If this happens, go with it!
- When Keel joins the assault on Installation 23, he still threatens to overshadow the players. To avoid this, Keel should propose something to the Explorers. As they are the 'rightful rulers of the system, and possess a Warrent of Trade,' he will 'officially' put his vessel under their command for the duration of the battle. The reason behind this, of course, is to provide Keel with a cover. He can claim he was 'aiding the rightful Imperial rulers of the system' when explaining his actions to Battlefleet Command. If the players are curious why he didn't use this reasoning to help them earlier, remember, this is just a cover! Keel has his own motivations.
- To represent Keel placing himself under the Explorer's command, one Explorer should be elected to board *The Hand of Redemption* as a liaison. During Combat, this Explorer should direct the actions of the ship, including manoeuvring, shooting, and a single Extended Action each turn. The Explorer should either use his stats, or that of Keel's Crack (40) Crew.
- However, one thing the GM should always keep in mind, is that Keel is still very much in command of his ship! Should the players attempt to force him to do something the GM feels would be out of character, the GM should have Keel re-take command of his vessel, and likely clap the offending Explorer in irons.

THE ENVOY: KEEL'S BROTHER

In his youth Captain Keel and his brother Kaal were very close; even by the incestuous standards of the Scintillian nobility. Some even speculated that their mother had used some manner of genetic manipulation to give her two identical sons—a not unheard of practice. Whatever the case, they grew up close, excelling equally in the cutthroat world of the Calixian high born. Eventually, however, the stratified rules of Imperial society drew them apart as Keel entered the Navy and Kaal the echelons of the Administratum. Despite distances, their bond remained. It was not, however, until Keel learned of Kaal's disappearance that he realised how deep that bond was—driving Keel to mix duty with personal goals. What Keel does not know is that Kaal is an Acolyte in the employ of the Calixian Ordo Xenos and was sent by them to investigate rumours of the Whisperers of Svard.

STATE OF DECAY

A new world is like a blank canvas waiting for an artist's touch. Who can say, however, whether or not that touch will spawn a masterpiece or a monstrous travesty.

—Knarlol Decanlia, Master Chronicler of the Fel Dynasty

Travelling to Svard will take several days. If the GM wants, he can use this short voyage to remind the Explorers of the perils of warp travel and also give them a greater sense of the vastness of the Expanse. Ideas for warp encounters as well as a random events table can be found in **Chapter X: The Game Master** of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook. Whatever the case, after these few days the Explorers will make their final transition into real space and behold the Svard system.

Read or paraphrase the following:

With a final shudder, your vessel slips back into real space, the crimson vortices and boiling vista of the warp peeling away. Sweeping back and forth across the dark, your sensors quickly build up a picture of your location—complex measurements of solar currents and gravity shadows confirming you have reached the Svard system. Far in the distance you can see the system's star, a bloated scarlet eye brighter than the pinpricks of light surrounding it. The bulk of the system stretches out from this, choked with asteroids and rock fields; all that remains of shattered ancient worlds. Only one significant solar body remains—a massive gas giant just beyond the star's primary biosphere. As you draw closer, you can see that the gas giant seems to be surrounded by a halo of hazy vapour—its mass boiling off into space, creating a massive particle storm. Hidden within that storm are the worlds you have come to visit; a collection of moons settled long ago by your own ancestors.

If the GM is using an alternate adventure hook, the first person they will make contact with is Keel; this encounter playing out in a similar fashion to **Imperial Entanglements** above as he boards their ship and attempts to enlist their cooperation. After this, or if they are already in Keel's company, they will be contacted by the Crystal Council on Svard welcoming them as savours and requesting the honour of their company.

SYSTEM OVERVIEW

The Svard System is centred on an ancient star in the last millennia of its life. Once, it was home to numerous planetary bodies and flourishing biospheres. However, time and the brutal celestial forces of the void have reduced it to mostly asteroid fields and radiation clouds. Only a single true planet—Svard Prime—remains; a massive gas giant resting on the outer edge of the system's dwindling bio-zone. As the star dies, however, and its gravity shadow shrinks, so too does its hold on the gas giant—setting off a rare sympathetic celestial phenomena which is diminishing the planet's own mass. As a result, the gas giant is slowly losing the gravimetric

pull to hold itself together and is gradually boiling away into the void. This has created the 'storm'—an area of near void choked with charged particles and heavy vapours that now engulfs many of its moons. It is here among these moons, and within the storm, that the remnants of life in Svard remain.

In this section the GM will find details on the major moons and NPCs of the Svard system, as well as its history and many secrets. This information is divided into two main components: Antagonists and Locations, both of which the GM will need to familiarise himself with. These two elements interact with each other to give the GM a clear picture of what is really going on and allow him to move the action forward in reaction to the efforts of the Explorers.

THE EXPLORERS' DYNASTY

As part of the premise for this adventure, it is stated that Svard was settled by the Explorers' dynasty centuries in the past. This is intended to create a link to the places and people of Svard and to help draw them into the system's troubles by showing them that they have a stake in its survival. The exact details of this link and the nature of the Explorers' ancestors are left up to the GM. In this way, the GM can either use it (possibly with the help of the players) to flesh out the Explorers' background or keep it vague and mysterious—after all, most Rogue Trader dynasties are thousands of years old, with countless branches and forks in their family trees. At the very minimum, it is worth choosing a name for this ancestor and one for his ship, whether or not the PCs have heard of either before.

GM GUIDANCE: RUNNING AN OPEN SYSTEM

Svard has been presented as a set of locations and antagonists, rather than a series of linked encounters. The reason for this is to allow the Explorers to deal with problems, investigate locations and pursue profit as they see fit, reflecting the freedom of their rank as well as the responsibility of dealing with the fallout of their actions. For the players this means investigation and exploration of the system, while for the GM it means having a good idea about the antagonists and their motives as well as the geography of the system. This is actually not as daunting as it might first seem, as the Svard System is not really such a big place. It consists of only four major locales and a handful of antagonists, all with quite clear motivations. The GM can also use NPCs to nudge the Explorers in the right direction with leading questions or suggestions.

The GM should also encourage the PCs to take advantage of Profit making Endeavours, which can be found in each locale. This is the real reward for the Explorers and is likely the easiest way to motivate them into action. Increasing their Profit Factor will also directly increase their power and influence and have a telling effect in the adventure's conclusion.

ANTAGONISTS

There are three key antagonists in Whispers on the Storm: the Whisperers, Captain Keel, and Speaker Tal and the Crystal Council. The main adversary among these, and the one the PCs will spend most of their time combating, is the Whisperers. A strange Xenos cult, the Whisperers have infiltrated and overcome large sections of Svard's population and turning them against their fellow citizens. There is also Captain Keel and Speaker Tal, ostensibly allies whose own goals intersect with those of the PCs. However, even they can both imperil the Explorers' plans with their own scheming or reckless actions.

THE WHISPERERS

About a decade ago, a strange phenomena began to appear among the citizens of Svard. People were having dreams of a great dark presence—always close by but always unseen—that would whisper into their ear as they slept. No one could remember what this presence was or what it had whispered to them, but the fact that it was afflicting so many people, of all castes, ages and locations, prompted the system's governing body—the Crystal Council—to begin an investigation based on fears of warp-sorcery or the emergence of a proscribed cult.

Unfortunately, before any real knowledge as to the nature of the dreams was uncovered, the entire system began to suffer acts of terrorism and sabotage. Ordinary citizens began attacking their neighbours and striking at the very infrastructure of the system itself. At first, the council thought this was its fears of a cult confirmed, but as reports flooded in, they could find no plan behind the attacks beyond anarchy and no link between the attackers beyond the fact that most seemed to have dreamed of the Whisperer.

Through increased security and screening, the council did manage to reduce the effects of the attacks, however, the Whisperers, as they became known, continued to plague the moons of Svard. The most terrifying thing was that there seemed no defence against them; a man could go to sleep an ordinary citizen and awaken as a Whisperer. The council even employed its few precious psykers to try and track the source of these dreams, but their skills proved too weak; only indicating that it was the power of the warp at work.

The source of these dreams and the subversion of human minds came not from the warp (at least not directly), but from the system itself: the Whisperer was very real and hidden only a few hundred kilometres below the surface of the gas giant's turbulent surface. No warp-spawned daemon or alien god, the Whisperer is in fact a massive Yu'vath Dark-Energy Construct; a blasphemous union of alien technology and raw warp power crafted long ago by a dead Xenos race to fight the Imperium.

Unaware of this horror's existence, the council continued to try and combat the Whisperers in more conventional ways, but it was a battle they were doomed to lose. Over time and the course of what amounted to a civil war, contact with outlying moons and stations was lost one by one as the Whisperers numbers swelled and citizen lost all faith in the loyalty of their fellows.

Eventually, only the ice moon of Svard,

furthest from the gas giant's surface and thus the reach of the Whisperer, remained. It became a settlement under siege and paralyzed with fear. It is now only a question of what will kill Svard first; the cells of Whisperers that infest its hives, or the slow death of its resource-starved populace.

Appearance

In appearance, the Whisperers are just like normal Imperial citizens—perfect copies of their previous selves, now completely and irrevocably under the control of the Whisperer. Only when driven to violence and rage do the Whisperers become easy to spot—their eyes turn black as they are filled with Yu'vath Dark-Energy. Otherwise, Whisperers are only detectable by psychic means. Psychic powers that can detect Corruption Points or that can view either a subject's soul or connection to the warp will work. This means that an Explorer could hold a conversation with a Whisperer, even asking him detailed questions about his life, and he wouldn't be able to tell he was not interrogating an ordinary Imperial citizen. Whisperers will also never reveal their nature under torture, though they may break and tell their questioners everything about their lives—including any recent seditious activities. It then remains up to the torturer to decide if this is indication of a Whisperer or just a malcontent.

GM GUIDANCE: RUNNING THE WHISPERERS

Throughout this adventure the Explorers will face countless scores of Whisperers, ordinary citizens turned by the subversive power of the Yu'vath vessel. They are the 'cannon fodder' for the scenario and exist in the hundreds of thousands—so it is unlikely that the PCs will be able to kill them all, unless they are willing to turn their vessel's macrocannons on the whole system. When running the Whisperers, remember that they are not zombies or automatons, but rather living, breathing, thinking humans that will work together as a well trained team under the guidance of the Whisperer. They are also very creepy to talk to or even to be near when their true nature is known, for while they can counterfeit emotions and even show fear, they have (in a way) had their souls scooped out and show no humanity or reluctance in the face of the terrifying and the amoral. Whisperers are also not religious fanatics—in fact, they do not worship the Whisperer, or even acknowledge his existence since they just do not think about such things. They are just extension of the alien construct's will; clever semi-autonomous extensions that can draw on their past skills and memories, but extensions nevertheless. If the Explorers can manage to find and destroy the Whisperer, those turned by his dark dreams will recover—although they may never be trusted by their fellow citizens again.

Whisperers are, in essence, citizens of Svard turned to the will of the Whisperer, and so the GM can use pretty much any of the human Profiles from **Chapter XIV: Adversaries & Aliens** of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook to represent them.



Motivation

The motivation of the Whisperers is simple; fulfill the will of the Whisperer. In essence, they are its puppets and enact its will within Svard. The motivation of the Whisperer is to repair its wounds and free itself from the gravity well of the gas giant, thus destroying the Svard System, and then to escape into the void to complete its ancient mission of war against the Imperium. To this end, it has spent years dominating the weakest human minds of Svard and using them to supply it with fabricated materials and massive amounts of raw energy. Needless to say, should the Whisperer manage to escape, it would wreak havoc across the Expanse.

Origin

The origins of the Whisperer, and by extension the Whisperers, can be firmly laid at the feet of the Explorers' dynasty. In the aftermath of the Angevin Crusade's bloody war with the Yu'vath, the remnants of Xenos slave armies and techno-warp constructs were scattered, broken and dying, across the near Expanse. For the most part, these grim reminders of the alien's dark empire slunk away into the shadowy corners of the void, and were lost from sight forever. However, some were found by those who came after—explorers, treasure hunters and Rogue Traders. The Whisperer is one such spoil—discovered in a forgotten battlefield between unnamed stars by a Rogue Trader of the Explorers' dynasty. Unable to return with it to the Calixis Sector (where Imperial powers would have been sure to destroy it), but also believing it too valuable to abandon, the

Rogue Trader took it to the newly founded Svard system and concealed it beneath the rolling cloud layers of the gas giant. Here it remained, considered harmless, until such time as the Rogue Trader could return and learn its secrets. Unfortunately, he never did and was lost to the void like so many before him—and so the Whisperer was forgotten.

Creating a Whisperer Encounter

Throughout the adventure, the Explorers will have numerous run-ins with groups, both large and small, of Whisperers. These form the most frequent obstacle to the PCs plans and are likely to be encountered in most locales. To keep these encounters challenging, exciting, and interesting, the GM should consider the following guidelines:

- For a challenging encounter, there should be roughly twice as many Whisperers as Explorers—these numbers can then be increased or decreased to alter difficulty.
- Vary the kinds of Whisperers in encounters using different Profiles chosen from those suggested above.
- Vary the environment in which the Whisperers attack—remember, Whisperers are not mindless assailants and can set ambushes, use cover, and work as a team.
- Finally, Whisperers can be used to even the odds should the Explorers choose to use large numbers of retainers—such as mercenaries or indentured PDF troopers.

- During space combats with the Whisperers, the GM should remember that some ships are much less capable than others. As a general guideline, if the Explorers are using a transport or raider, the GM should halve the number of system ships and Void Wasps they must encounter.

In addition to combat encounters, the GM may also use lone Whisperers, perhaps even harmless looking ones, to steal from the Explorers, deliver creepy messages about their impending demise, or murder other citizens in their presence. In this way, the GM can create an atmosphere of paranoia and hammer home the point that a Whisperer can be anyone, anytime, and anywhere.

Whisperers Among Us

Another peril the Whisperer presents to the Explorers is that it might, over time, start to subvert their own crew or the crew of the *Hand of Redemption*. This can be a useful dramatic tool for the GM to help him build tension and also to illustrate to the Explorers the magnitude of the power they face. Having crew members turn traitor at key moments, or even perform assassination attempts against the Explorers on their own ship, are all possible. The GM should be careful to use this tactic sparingly, perhaps saving it for a situation where it will have the most effect, such as a high ranking member of their



gunnery core opening fire before the order is given or an armsman sergeant sending his own men into an ambush. If the GM is feeling particularly sadistic he could even have one of the players have a dream about the Whisperer...

SPEAKER TAL AND THE CRYSTAL COUNCIL

Shortly after they arrive in Svard, the Explorers will be met by the Crystal Council—the ruling elders of the ice moon and the governing body of the system as a whole. Leading the council is Speaker Tal, an old man dressed in furs with long knots of hair wrapped around his body. Though ancient by the standards of Svard, Tal is possessed of a strength that continues to hold the citizens of the besieged moon together. Tal is a shrewd politician and strong leader who cares only for the prosperity of Svard—something that in past days made him quite unpopular with citizens of the other moons. Because of this, he sees the Explorers and Keel as the opportunity he has been waiting for to reclaim Svard. He knows he will have to appease the Explorers with promises of wealth and rights, however he also knows that once they have these promises and the Whisperers are dealt with, they will leave and he will be in charge once more.

The council also commands Svard's Planetary Defence Force (PDF), the closest thing to a standing army they possess. Though not as well trained or equipped as a regiment of the Imperial Guard, the Svard PDF are nevertheless brave and numerous. These men form Svard's frontline against the Whisperers and represent the most likely kind of aid that Speaker Tal will offer the Explorers should they wish to try and reclaim one of the moons.

GM GUIDANCE: RUNNING TAL AND THE COUNCIL

Speaker Tal is both the voice of reason and the font of information and opportunities for the players. Since he has near complete faith in the Explorers (unless they do something really terrible to Svard like bombarding it from orbit), he will help them in any way he can to restore order and defeat the threat of the Whisperers. The GM should use Tal as the spokesman for Svard, and allow the PCs to propose plans, broker deals and pass on messages to other citizens through him. For his part, Speaker Tal will treat the Explorers like returning royalty and offer them pretty much anything they desire—after all without them it is probably only a matter of time before Svard itself is overrun.

The GM can use the Envoy Profile to represent Speaker Tal and the council and the Hired Gun or Oathsworn Bodyguard Profile to represent the Svard PDF troopers, both of which can be found in **Chapter XIV: Adversaries & Aliens** of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook.

LOCATIONS

The gas giant has literally dozens of moons ranging in size from hunks of rock only a few kilometres across to some that are almost small planets in their own right. Over the centuries, most of these have been extensively explored, and nearly all bear the marks of Imperial settlement. In its current state of decay, however, only three of the moons remain inhabited: Svard—the largest moon and site of the systems' primary settlement, Silence—a religious retreat and location of the Saint Tower, and Cog—the system's main industrial site. The only other inhabited location is the orbital Installation 23, the promethium refinery. This section presents an overview of each of these locations, as well as development for adventures and encounters.

THE STORM

The storm is a constant and visually spectacular effect that surrounds much of the gas giant and constantly engulfs its moons. Caused by the diminishing gravity of the planet, it is literally the world bleeding into space, creating streams of vapour and particles some hundreds of thousands of kilometres long. Visually it looks like the gas giant is shrouded in fog, the ghostly shadows of its moons occasionally appearing and disappearing beneath its shifting blanket. Only Svard—the ice moon for which the system is named—breaks the storm's surface, riding across its turbulent clouds and twisting currents like an island caught in the onslaught of the sea. The storm does not, however, have a great affect on the lives of those that live on the moons. Apart from blotting out the stars and filling the skies with great crimson ribbons of cloud the vapour, it is mostly harmlessly deflected by what passes for atmospheres on Svard, Cog, and Silence. The same cannot be said for void-farers, like the Explorers, who must cross the storm to reach the moons. Such a voyage—even though it is only a few hundred thousand kilometres—comes with the perils of scrambled sensors and the constant assault of the storm on the vessels void shields. Helmsmen must rely on instinct as much as anything to guide their vessel to its destination, peering ahead into the gloom searching for shapes and shadows as they loom out of the cloud.

BRAVING THE STORM

During their time in the Svard System, the Explorers will have to cross the storm to reach its various moons, and only when making their initial arrival on Svard will they be able to approach through open space. Though the distances are not great by even stellar standards, these crossings will provide the PCs with a challenge. Later in the adventure, when they are forced to fight the minions of the Yu'vath, or even the Whisperer itself, it will probably be within the storm's turbulent embrace.

The storm will have the following effects on all vessels (with the exception of the Whisperer):

CLOUDED SENSORS

All Tests when using sensors at distances between 10 VUs and 15 VUs are at -30 . All Tests at distances greater than 15 VUs automatically fail. Failures of tests when using sensors will result in sensor ghosts and other false readings.

SLUGGISH MOVEMENT

All manoeuvring tests are at -10 in addition to any other bonuses or penalties due to the power of the storm. Vessels can however 'ride' the storm as long as they are moving directly away from the gas giant. When a ship moving away from the gas giant makes a successful Adjust Speed Test, the vessel may move one additional VU.

FOULED TARGETING

The chaos of the storm means that the penalties for firing at long range for any ship's weapons are doubled, from -10 to -20 . Any shooting at targets beyond 15 VUs suffer a -40 to hit instead, as the ships are basically firing blind.



SVARD: THE ICE MOON

The namesake of the system, and the gas giant's largest moon, Svard is the primary settlement within the system. From here, the Crystal Council (so named for the ice hive from which they rule) commands the rest of the moons and maintains a tenuous tie to the Imperium. It is a cold and inhospitable place where survival on the surface is practically impossible, the moon's thin atmosphere trapping precious little heat. As a result, the original settlers built vast domes of snow and ice, creating entire cities sheltered from the harsh elements. Over time, these domes grew until they became frozen hives clustered across the moon's surface like icy stalagmites. With a population in the millions, Svard was once hugely prosperous, reaping the resources of the other moons and the fuel rich liquids of the gas giant below. Ruled over by the Crystal Council and protected by thousands of well trained and equipped PDF troopers, Svard was a picture of thriving Imperial power.

Now, however, the rise of the Whisperers and their crippling effect on the population's morale and infrastructure has dealt

Svard a terrible blow. Industry and trade have diminished to almost nothing as contact has slowly been lost with each of the other moons. Violence has become rife as Whisperers infest the hives, appearing and disappearing before the PDF can arrive in force, and people are scared of everyone—never knowing who might or might not have felt the touch of the Whisperer. When the Explorers arrive, they will find a world slipping into ruin and decay whilst its leaders stand by powerless to combat a threat beyond their ability to predict or control. It is a grim place, made grimmer by the vile frozen weather and its terrified, weary inhabitants.

DEVELOPMENT

As soon as the Explorers arrive on Svard they will be invited to an audience with Speaker Tal and the Crystal Council. Along the way, they will get a first hand view of the decay that is setting into the ice hives of Svard; crumbling tunnels, rusting machinery, and hungry, tired-looking citizens. Meeting with the council in their vast glittering chambers atop Hive Iceholm, they will be able to learn about the Whisperers (to the limits of Speaker Tal's knowledge) and the decay afflicting the system. Speaker Tal will reveal the following things to the Explorers:



- **Rise of the Whisperers:** He can relate to them what he knows about the coming of the Whisperers and how they have taken over all the moons save Svard. Though he does not know the source of the whispers (and the existence of the Whisperer), he does suspect some kind of alien influence at work.
- **Fate of the Envoy:** Tal does not know the fate of the Envoy, only that he left Svard some time ago to investigate the rest of the system and try and find the leaders behind the Whisperer uprising. He believes that the Envoy was going to visit Silence first—seeking out its ancient records of the system.
- **State of the System:** Tal will be very clear to the Explorers that Svard now stands alone, having lost contact with the other moons. He will also tell them that without the fuel from Installation 23 or the heavy industry of Cog, their economy and PDF have been crippled.
- **Location of the Moons:** He will also be able to give them the locations of all known moons and installations in the Svard System and their purpose insofar as he knows. He will also enlighten the Explorers about the storm and its known dangers.

After the council has offered up its information, it makes an impassioned plea for the Explorers and Keel to help them restore order to their system. Speaker Tal also makes much of the Explorers' dynasty returning to save 'their' settlement from destruction, and insists on throwing them an extravagant banquet to honour them and announce their arrival to the whole of the moon. During all of this, Keel remains in the background and out of politics, ceding control to Svard's 'rightful' masters. All of this will, of course, come with the expectation that the Explorers are going to organise the defence and cleanse the system of the influence of the Whisperer.

Tal will even go so far as to pledge a company of 500 Svard PDF to the Explorers. These men are now fully under the control of the PCs with the intention of aiding them in their efforts to reclaim the lost moons. Of course, when they are gone, no more replacements are available, and Speaker Tal will take a dim view if the Explorers come asking for more should the troopers perish horribly.

If the GM wishes, he may keep a running tally of these 500 PDF troopers during and after any combat they are involved in.

WHISPERER ATTACK

Shortly after they arrive, the Explorers will have a run in with their first Whisperers. This is the Whisperer testing their resolve and abilities. A group of Whisperers will launch an ambush on them somewhere on the ice moon—either in the cramped tunnels of an ice hive whilst they are on route to see the council or even during the banquet held in their honour—see *Creating a Whisperer Encounter* above.

Whilst on Svard, the Explorers can also investigate additional avenues of profit and ways to restore the productivity of the planet—see *Endeavours* below.

ENDEAVOURS

These are Endeavour seeds that the GM can fully flesh out using the rules for Endeavours from **Chapter IX: Playing the Game** of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook.

Refuel the Fleet (Greater, Military)

Svard's fleet of system ships is rusting at anchor around Svard—lacking the parts from Cog or the fuel from Installation 23 to fly. On behalf of the PDF, and by extension the council, the Explorers can attempt to remedy this situation, though it will involve seizing control of (or raiding!) both Cog and Installation 23 for resources.

Restore the Trade Routes (Greater, Trade)

Without resources or trade, Svard is slowly dying. The Explorers can attempt to restore a trade route to a nearby system or even Footfall—though Svard has a reputation as dangerous, so they will need to broker very favourable deal to get merchants to make the trip. Even a few such shipments, however, could make all the difference.

Luxuries for the Council (Lesser, Criminal)

In hard times there are those, especially the rich and powerful, who refuse to suffer. Either during the banquet or after, the Explorers will be approached by councillors interested in the procurement of luxury items now unavailable in Svard. Agreeing to help will mean importing them somehow and keeping it quiet—but the councillors are willing to pay well.



ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS

Svard is a big place, and in this adventure, only a few of its most important moons have been detailed. If the GM wishes, there is certainly room to add additional locations. Over the course of the system's existence, settlements have come and gone, leaving behind decaying orbital stations, empty mining facilities, and the ruins of industrial installations. If the GM wants, he can have Speaker Tal and the council tell the Explorers about these locations and provide them with a rough idea of where they might be found. Some possible ideas for additional location in Svard could include:

THE CITADEL OF PSYKERS

An ancient solar station and its void born inhabitants have become lost within the storm. As a result of the gas giant's diminished and erratic gravity shadow, the station's orbit has strayed far from the rest of the moons of Svard. Alone and cut off, the void born are facing constant raids by Whisperers from Installation 23, though they themselves, thanks to their psychic heritage, have resisted the call of the Whisperer itself. If the Explorers can find and rescue them, their council of psykers could be quite an asset.

THE HOLLOW WORLDS

Many of the smaller moons of Svard have been mined hollow over the centuries and then abandoned. When the Whisperers began to plague the system, some citizens fled to these ancient empty mines hoping to escape notice and outlast the troubles. Unfortunately, there is no place in Svard to hide from the Whisperer, and eventually its influence turned the citizens against each other in bloody battles to the death. Left behind is their hoarded equipment, making a tempting cache for any Explorer bold enough to venture into the dark caverns to find it.

THE HIDDEN JUNGLE

Svard's many moons provide plenty of privacy for those who seek it, and more than one enterprising individual has laid claim to one for his illicit cargos or secret experiments. One such moon is Kybu, its subterranean tunnels teeming with a jungle of alien fungus created by one of Cog's magos. Filled with floral horrors such as leech-weeds and splinter-vines, the subterranean jungle is also a source of rare and powerful drugs, which the Explorers could harvest for profit or use to boost the fighting prowess of their soldiers.

The GM can also give the Explorers a reason to visit these places by creating Endeavours associated with them. For information and ideas on Endeavours, see **Chapter IX: Playing the Game** of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook.



SILENCE: THE SAINTS TOWER

Wherever traces of the Imperium can be found, so too can the shadow of the Imperial Cult and the faithful of the God-Emperor. In Svard, these faithful have created the Saints Tower. Whilst the Ministorum maintains numerous shrines and temples on the moon of Svard, more extreme elements of the faith, led by a master sculptor named Quiva, decided to settle one of the nearby moons for their own purposes. Dubbed Silence, the moon is, in reality, just a large asteroid perhaps a few hundred kilometres in diameter. With no atmosphere or gravity to speak of, Quiva and his followers constructed a tower fortress, shielded from the void by energy fields and held firm to the rock by powerful gravity sinks. Obsessed with perfection, Quiva used the tower as a workshop as he and his followers strove to create a statue of one of the Emperor's saints to rival the greatest works of the Ecclesiarchy and prove his lasting devotion. Quiva died before his work was ever completed. However, his followers and their descendants carry on the quest. So far, they have not been successful, and Silence is littered with their mistakes. Scribes and attendants scour the tower's vast libraries for new saints for the faithful artisans to sculpt—each time, hoping that this saint's statue will contain the inner light and perfection to make Quiva's vision a reality.

Saints Tower is also the oldest continually maintained settlement within the Svard System, and among the reams of volumes on saints and the Imperial Cults can be found records dating back to the settlement of the moons. It is here that the Explorers will find the most information on their ancestors in meticulously kept tomes written by Quiva himself during the founding. Unfortunately for the Explorers, with the rise of the Whisperers, contact with Silence has been lost. It has been years since anyone from Svard has had contact with the tower.

DEVELOPMENT

The Explorers will likely go to Silence to find the Envoy or to try and find detailed records of their ancestors and the founding of the system. Keel will also be keen to investigate Silence for evidence of his brother. Crossing the storm and landing on Silence is easier said than done, and the GM should emphasize the dangers of even such a short voyage as their ship is tossed about in the particle wash. The GM could also have the Explorers have a brief run in with a Void Wasp (see page 26) which will make a few strafing passes and then vanish into the storm leaving the Explorers to wonder what it was.

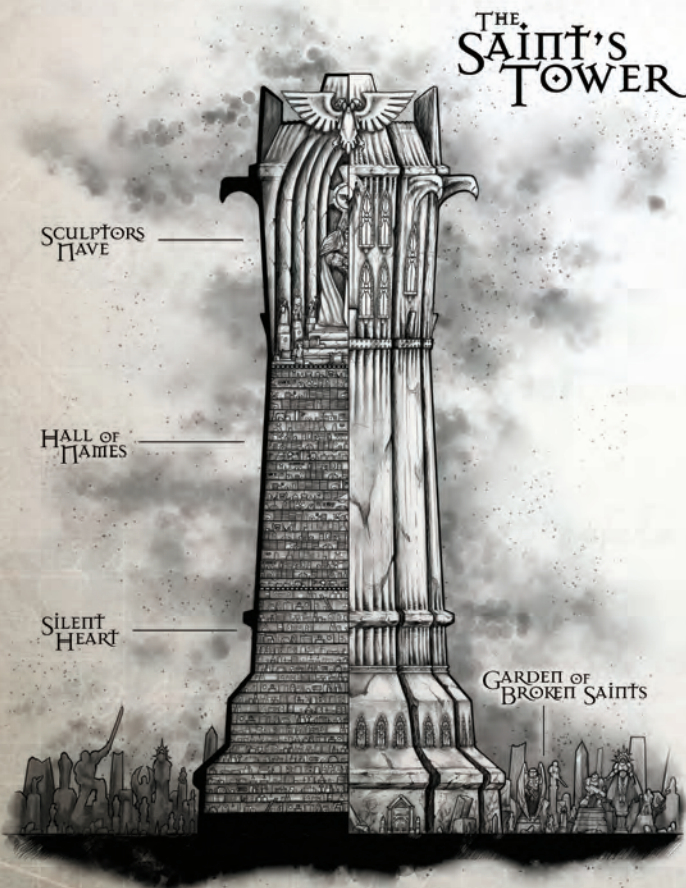
When the Explorers arrive at Silence, they will see its tower looming out of the storm, the waves of gas and vapour rolling off its pressure dome. To land, they will need to take a shuttle, setting down just inside the dome where the air is thin but breathable. There are no Whisperers on Silence—in fact, there is no life at all. The whole tower is under the effects of a Yu'vath Dark Lament which has been installed by the Whisperer to defend it. A Dark-Energy construct, the Lament has infused itself within the very structure of the tower and its contents, turning the very environment into a weapon against intruders. See page 18 for more on the Dark Lament.

Saints Tower is divided into four sections, each with its own perils:

GARDEN OF BROKEN SAINTS

This is the first thing the Explorers will see as they leave their shuttle. Before them will be the broken remains of Quiva's failures stretching out for hundreds of metres all around the base of the tower. If they come in force then they will be in for quite a battle to even reach the base of the tower. The Lament will begin with a measured response, animating statues in equal amount to the trespassers. This means that if the Explorers send 100 PDF troopers to 'secure the area' they are likely to start a full-scale battle. Few of the statues are whole, often missing heads, limbs, or even most of their torsos, and so they will create a limping, crawling mass of stone which is terrifying to behold.

Guidelines for running mass battles can be found on page 292 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook.



STATUES OF THE DARK LAMENT

Brought to life by the will of the Dark Lament, these are juggernauts of living stone with but a single purpose: to kill.

Dark Lament (Statue) Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
43	—	(8) 44	(8) 41	11	37	32	40	—

Movement: 1/2/3/6

Wounds: 15

Traits: From Beyond, Improved Natural Weapons, Natural Armour (4), Natural Weapons, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

Weapons: Fists and Stone Blades (Damage: 1d10+8)

Armour: 4 (All)

SILENT HEART

These are the servants' quarters and stores of the tower. It is known as the Silent Heart for the mute lay priests who met the sculptors' needs. The GM can build up the tension here after the carnage of the battle outside; it is silent and still, littered with broken bodies and shattered furniture. This was also the place where the inhabitants of the tower made their initial stand against the Whisperers, and it is still littered with the detritus of battle—desiccated corpses, spent casings, and scorch marks. Since the Explorers managed to defeat the statues and gain entrance, the Lament will only be observing them whilst they make their way through these levels, only keeping them on edge by creating shadows, rattling doors, and smashing glass. Though Explorers are made of sterner stuff, the GM can have any retainers become badly rattled, perhaps even firing at shadows or refusing to go unless persuaded otherwise (this could be reflected with an Explorer making a **Difficult (-10) Command Test** to push his men on).

Beyond the upper most level of the Silent Heart, stairs will lead the Explorers (and those retainers not mangled by traps) into the Hall of Names.

HALL OF NAMES

This area is a huge library with towering stacks of books and scrolls creating narrow valleys for scribes and scholars to pass. There is far too much information here (mostly records of Imperial Saints and their exploits) for the Explorers to process. However, with a **Challenging (+0) Search Test** they will be able to learn from one of the library indexes that the volumes they seek are held in the Nave above.

Whilst they explore this area, the Lament will once again make its presence known. If the Explorers are still with a large group of retainers, the Lament will try and isolate small groups, crushing them with animated shelves and desks or by flinging books. The GM shouldn't feel the need to play out these combats, and the Explorers can arrive just in time to find only bloody bodies. The Lament will try at least



one major attack against the Explorers however, creating an avalanche of books and scrolls and then sending in a pair of hulking animated spiral pillars. Use the profiles for Dark-Energy statues above. However, increase its Strength by 10 and its Agility by 30. Because of the waist-deep layers of paper and tomes, the Explorers will have their movement halved until they can defeat the snakelike pillars or free themselves from the area. Using flame weapons here is also a very, very bad idea. If the piles of papers ignite and the Explorers do not work quickly to extinguish them, the room becomes engulfed in flame in less than a minute (see page 260 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook for the rules of catching on fire).

SCULPTORS NAVE

The Nave is a giant vaulted chamber crafted to the glory of the Emperor. This was where the sculptors performed their holy work, and also where they made their final stand against the Whisperers. The large circular room is about 60 metres across and filled with a forest of pillars—each covered from floor to ceiling with the faces of saints. It is also littered with the desiccated remains of sculptors and Whisperers alike, heaped around the grand altar to the Emperor, behind which stands a massive 7 metre tall statue of the Emperor wielding a sword. Probably as no surprise to the Explorers, this massive statue will begin to glow with a black light and shudder to life. Mustering its power, the Lament will animate the statue and attempt to lay

waste to the Explorers. Use the profile for Dark-Energy Statues above. However, increase all its Characteristics by 20, and add 30 more wounds. In addition, its blade possesses the Warp Weapon Trait. Ironically, when the Dark Lament takes control of the Emperor's statue, it gives the PCs a chance to destroy it forever, as it must invest its total energised form to animate such a large object. This means that it is then vulnerable to both psychic powers and massive damaging attacks. The GM may also wish to allow particularly pious members of the group to invoke the power the Emperor in the face of the blasphemy of an alien horror possessing His image. This can be achieved with either a **Difficult (-10) Willpower Test** or a suitably impassioned prayer by a player. The exact effects of this are up to the GM, but could include a +10 bonus to the pious Explorer's damage or even a reduction of the Lament's Characteristics by 10 as its power is diminished. As the Lament fights, the faces will also scream, defying the Explorers and making verbal communication near impossible beyond a few metres. Once the Lament has been dealt with, the Explorers can then have a better look around. If they search the Nave, they will uncover the tomes they are seeking which contain some enlightening information about the nature of the Whisperer—essentially, the GM can tell them the tale of their ancestor's misdeed.

ENDEAVOURS

These are Endeavour seeds that the GM can fully flesh out using the rules for Endeavours from **Chapter IX: Playing the Game** of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook.

Plunder the Library (Lesser, Criminal)

Once the Lament has been purged, the Explorers will be free to plunder the tower—assuming they have not damaged it too greatly. Of greatest value is a collection of proscribed texts hidden in the library. However, finding buyers can be difficult, as many of those who would seek such works are dangerous to know.

The Perfect Statue (Lesser, Creed)

The Explorers may learn about Quiva's work from the texts and stories he has left behind. With the sculptors scattered and their leaders dead, the Calixian Ecclesiarchy would still pay well for examples of their work—some of which may still exist either hidden within the Nave or buried out in the Garden of Broken Saints.

Missing Sculptors (Lesser, Exploration)

On learning of the fate of Silence, Speaker Tal will offer a bounty for the return of any sculptors still alive and hiding elsewhere in the system. Some may have fled to abandoned moons, or even been taken by the influence of the Whisperer and ended up on Cog or Installation 23, whilst others may not even be in the system anymore.

YU'VATH DARK-ENERGY CONSTRUCTS

Of far greater danger to the Explorers than the hordes of Whisperers infesting Svard are the Yu'vath Dark-Energy Constructs. These are the forgotten weapons of the ancient war that raged across the Expanse during the time of Saint Drusus and the Angevin Crusade. Of these, the Whisperer is the most powerful, an alien battleship shaped from warp energy and dark technology. However, there are others scattered across the system. These include the Dark Lament; a complex warp energy web that the Yu'vath would lay over ground or structures to turn the very environment against their attackers and the Void Wasps; Yu'vath interceptors.

For more details on the Yu'vath, refer to page 359 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook.

COG: THE INDUSTRIAL MOON

When Svard was settled, the ice moon was deemed unsuitable for heavy Imperial industry—its ice covered mantle too weak and constantly shifting. There was also a fear that the waste caused by such industry could even melt the world itself! To combat this, the settlers moved the bulk of their heavy manufacturing to a smaller, rocky moon nearby. On this moon they built a huge factory, which became known as the Cog, since it was the cog in the gears that made Svard turn. Years after its creation however, the settlers discovered that Cog created too much waste for the moon's weak atmosphere to process, to the point where it was beginning to damage the factory itself. Too expensive to ship off-world, they instead settled on a more lasting solution, and moved the factory to another part of the moon away from the corrosive slag heaps it has spawned. Inevitably, the problem returned with the waste, and the factory was moved again. At this time, they also discovered that the waste at the original factory site was no longer so lethal and thus no longer hazardous to the factory. This situation led to the creation of a system of tracks, carved into the surface of the moon along which the factory could travel—always staying ahead of its prodigious and volatile waste and returning years later once that waste was no longer harmful. To maintain the Cog, a small cadre of Tech-Priests led by Magos Tevla are in constant attendance, overseeing the army of servitors and regular workers and monitoring its output. They also decide when the corrosion levels get too high and supervise the Cog's lumbering journey to its new site.

At the time of the Explorers arrival, Svard has had little contact with Cog for several years, and few ships that venture to the moon in search

of goods and materials ever return. It is generally feared that Cog is now completely in the hands of the Whisperers and that Magos Tevla has been slain—though even the Crystal Council cannot know for sure. More than any of the other moons, Cog is vital to the survival of Svard, and if the Explorers can reopen trade with it, the benefits will be great indeed.

DEVELOPMENT

The Explorers will have to travel to Cog if they wish to restart Svard's industry. Reclaiming Cog will also go a long way to diminishing the Whisperers' power in Svard as well as presenting them with the chance to make some useful allies in the form of the Mechanicus Magos. Unlike Silence, however, taking Cog is no easy feat. Thousands of Whisperers infest the factory, and several Void Wasps and Whisperer system ships protect it from orbit. Aware that there may be stiff resistance, Keel will suggest some kind of recon before making a landing in force—however, the GM should let the Explorers devise their own plans. It is possible that they may be able to sneak in if they can successfully slip past the Whisperer vessels in the storm by taking a small vessel like a guncutter, though this will require a **Hard (-20) Pilot (Spacecraft) Test**.

Approaching the toxic moon in force will prompt immediate action from the Whisperers. Three system ships and two Void Wasps (see page 26) will move out to intercept, whilst the Whisperers in the factory will be put on alert. See **Braving the Storm** on page 13 for the effects of fighting in the storm.

Once the Explorers reach the polluted upper atmosphere of Cog (either by stealth or force), they will discover a grey world of slag and refuse. To find the factory they will need to first find the tracks it runs along—requiring a **Hard (-20) Search Test**, which they may retry every 10 minutes of searching. (If they are on their vessel, they may use its scanners. In this case the test is a Scrutiny+Detection Test) This search will be complicated by two factors:

- **Hunters in the Storm:** The Whisperers will be actively looking for the Explorers. There should be a 30% chance (10% if they arrived with stealth in a small vessel) every 5 minutes of searching that they will be intercepted by a system ship or Void Wasp. Even if they do not run afoul of enemy vessels, the GM can build the tension with sensor ghosts and brief contacts at extreme range.
- **Acidic Atmosphere:** Cog's atmosphere is so volatile that if the Explorers choose to leave their main ship and proceed to the surface in a shuttle, the atmosphere will begin to corrode it. Every hour their shuttle is unprotected in the atmosphere, its control systems will begin to degrade. This will increase the difficulty of all Piloting Tests for the shuttle by one degree per hour, and if the shuttle remains in the atmosphere for more than five hours, it will become unusable (and may crash!). The Explorers should be aware of this slow degradation as they watch the outside of their vessel start to rot away, reminding them that they are on a tight time limit.

Once they locate Cog, a lumbering tower of machinery, gantries and cranes rising up almost 500 metres from the slag below, they will need to decide how to get in. There are three

outer areas to the macro-factory. When the Explorers get close enough to see the factory, they will also be able to pick up a weak vox transmission from Magos Tevla. This is a repeating message in Mechanicus binary (Mechanicus characters and those with any appropriate skill will be able to decipher it at the GM's discretion—the Whisperers have not) that will tell the PCs that the Mechanicus still holds the central control chambers against the Whisperers and that they should not try a frontal assault. It suggests they use the lower workings of the factory, where it rests upon the tracks, as a way in.

UPPER WORKINGS

The upper decks of Cog are covered with huge shielding plates and cloud-vanes to help deflect the atmosphere. There are a number of shuttle and transport hangers—though all have been sealed tight with heavy suspensor locks and would require significant firepower to open.

WELDING DECKS

Below the Upper Workings are a honeycomb of tunnels and accessways sealed off from the atmosphere by pressure doors and void-seals. This is where most of the Whisperers can be found, maintaining the basic function of the factory and guarding its entrances.

Sneaking into either of these areas will be extremely difficult as there are regular Whisperer patrols—heavy suited Whisperers walking the landing points and upper dome armed with heavy weapons such as lascannons and missile launchers. An all out assault will also prove costly, not least because without heavy void-suits or their equivalent, a human can only last a few minutes outside (this equates to 2d10 points of damage every 10 seconds, only reduced by AP once—after which the armour is destroyed—and not reduced for TB). Once inside the maze of corridors, it will take hours (if not days) to clear.

Finally, even if the Explorers should clear the Upper Workings and Welding Decks, the Whisperers will retreat into the core of factory and seal the suspensor locks behind them before starting to systematically destroy it from within. The GM should allow the PCs plenty of warning when this is about to happen—and unless they have come up with a very good plan to swiftly eradicate the Whisperers, they will need the Magos' help.

THE GREAT CARRIAGE

The base of the factory is, in essence, a giant train carriage; a tower of suspension bars and coils some several stories high, all resting on hundreds of massive iron wheels. Even from a distance, the Explorers should be able to see that the carriage has numerous gaps between the suspension and wheels at its base, all of which could be potential entrances to Cog. To get in, however (assuming they are in a shuttle), they will need to make a **Challenging (+0) Pilot (Spacecraft) Test** to swoop in past the machinery. Once inside, there are numerous areas to land, though they will need to proceed on foot (and brave the atmosphere), climbing the workings that tower dark and rusting above them.

If the GM wants to make things more difficult for the Explorers, he can have them run into a group of Whisperers here, creating a tense battle as the atmosphere eats away at their suits or armour. (See **Creating a Whisperer Encounter** on pages 11-12)

At the top of these workings, they will find sealed entrances to the lower workings, just below the welding decks. The access locks to this area will need to be breached. This can be accomplished with a **Challenging (-10) Security Test** or by destroying the security doors. This is easier said than done, however. Consider the doors to have 20 armour and 10 wounds for these purposes. Once beyond these, the Explorers will be protected from the corrosive atmosphere (unless they breach them in a particularly violent manner!).

HEART OF IRON

Climbing up through the gantries and ladders of the lower workings, the Explorers will find the oil feeds for the inner workings of the Great Carriage. This is their way into the core of Cog. It will, however, require a few hours of trudging through slimy dark tunnels. Once in the inner corridors of Cog, the Explorers will be able to meet with Magos Tevla and the Mechanicus, probably through an internal vox whilst being targeted by heavy bolter turrets. It will then fall to the Explorers to convince the Magos they are there in his best interests. The Explorers might also be suspicious of Tevla and whether he has fallen to the Whisperers. The GM can role-play this out, and should encourage the Explorers to use Interaction skills to sway the Magos. Of course, the best argument they can give him is that they will save his installation and bring it back to working order.

PURGING THE WHISPERERS

To fully take control of Cog, the Explorers will need to purge the Whisperers. There are a few ways to do this:

- **Massive Attack:** If the Explorers can commit a few thousand men and heavy weapons to the fight, then over time they will be able to clear out the Whisperers. The GM can have the losses of the PC's troops based on how well they are commanded. Assume that there will be 50% casualties. Then have one Explorer, acting as the general, make a **Challenging (+0) Command Test**. Each degree of success reduces this number by 10% whilst each degree of failure adds 10% to it. Alternatively, the GM can run this as an Exploration Challenge (see page 263 in the Rogue Trader Rulebook), combining the efforts of several characters and allowing the use of the Command Skill as an Exploration Skill in this instance.
- **Point Defence:** If the Explorers make contact and gain the trust of Tevla, he will be able to help them out by activating the factory's internal defensive weapons—concealed turrets, energy webs and detection grids. Not enough to completely purge the Whisperers (hence why he has not used them so far), it will make the job of any attacking troops much easier.

- **Opening the Storm Shields:** A risky but effective tactic is, with Tevla's help, to open the storm shields and void-seals and let the corrosive atmosphere rage throughout the factory. Over the course of about a day this should kill all unprotected life, though it will also cause extensive damage to Cog's inner workings, requiring weeks if not months to repair even with the full support of the Explorers.

There is, of course, no reason that several of these options cannot be combined, and the GM can allow clever plans and combinations of tactics to clear out Cog sooner with less damage to the structure.

ENDEAVOURS

These are Endeavour seeds that the GM can fully flesh out using the rules for Endeavours from **Chapter IX: Playing the Game** of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook.

Repair the Track (Lesser, Exploration)

During the reign of the Whisperers, the great tracks that Cog runs on have fallen into disrepair and become fractured. The Magos no longer have the manpower to find and repair all the breaks and want the Explorers to do a low orbit sweep. To succeed, they will need to find a way of surviving the atmosphere and avoiding those Whisperers that remain.

Survey the System (Lesser, Exploration)

Since the rise of the Whisperers, the Magos have noted changes in the storm's intensity. They believe this might be affecting the orbits of the moons and need the Explorers to do a survey. This is not without danger, as it involves extended periods within the chaos of the particle wash and the possibility of running into Whisperers, Void Wasps or worse.

Artefacts of the Yu'vath (Greater, Criminal)

If the Explorers spend any time on Cog speaking with the Magos, they will meet a group of tech-priests dedicated to the study of Yu'vath artefacts. If they can secure these artefacts (such as the remains of a Void Wasp or a Bone Warden), and then sneak them out of the system to a secure location, the Tech-Priests are willing to pay well.

INSTALLATION 23: THE PROMETHIUM REFINERY

A RAINDROP IN THE WIND

Installation 23 is a massive low orbital station and promethium refinery (located only a few thousand kilometres from the gas giant's surface and well below even the lowest of the moons). About two kilometres in length, the station looks like a great irregular disk dotted with fuel silos and filtration tanks. In its centre, a great command and control dome rises up, providing living quarters for its crew and a foundation for its huge void shield emitter. Without this, the particle wash coming off the gas giant would rip the station apart. Built shortly after the system was settled, it quickly became Svard's primary source of promethium and heavy plasma fuel production.

It was placed so far from the other moons for two reasons: the first was so that its fleet of vapour mining vessels would be close to the rich base of the storm, and the second was so that if there was any kind of accident it would be far from the nearest settlement. There were fears that, if exploded, the resulting fireball could ignite the hydrogen rich storm and literally set the sky on fire. No one knows for sure what this would mean and if such a firestorm could burn long enough to reach even the closet moon—but it was considered dangerous enough to the survival of the system not to risk.

By the time the Explorers arrive, Svard will have had no contact with the station for many years. What was once the pride of the system and its seemingly endless source of energy has become a dark secret to be muttered about behind closed doors. Even the Crystal Council are uncomfortable when speaking of Installation 23. It was there that the first Whisperers appeared, and it was there that some of the greatest atrocities in their name were committed. At first, the Council tried to send men and ships to protect the station, but so many of these were turned by the Whisperer that they soon gave up, surrendering the installation to its new masters. There was even a plan by Speaker Tal to destroy the station, though the council was fearful of the effects this plan might cause. It was scrapped when they realised the Whisperers didn't seem to be using it as a base to stage attacks or to fuel a fleet for the invasion of Svard. Whatever the Whisperers have been doing on Installation 23, the council has no idea. If the Explorers want to find out, they will have to go and see for themselves.

DEVELOPMENT

Reaching Installation 23 is a significant challenge in itself. This is in part due to the ferocity of the storm this close to the gas giant and also because the Whisperers have altered its orbit, changing its charted location.

Here are a few ways the Explorers can locate Installation 23:

- **Interrogation:** The Explorers may be able to squeeze the information out of the mind of a captured Whisperer. This is not easy, however. Any relevant tests, be they Interrogation Skills or psychic powers, should suffer at least a -20 penalty with failure resulting in the death of the Whisperer. Of course, if the Explorers have no qualms, there are plenty more to question...
- **Exploration:** Making forays into the depths of the storm, it is also possible that the PCs may find the station. Once again, this will require psychic skill, navigator powers or several **Very Hard (-30) Navigation Tests**, with each failure resulting in more empty space. This task may also be complicated by frequent attacks by Void Wasps and Whisperer system ships.
- **Annihilation:** Finally, the Explorers could simply purge all the moons, asteroids, and orbitals of Whisperers, and shoot down every Void Wasp or system ship they encounter. After a while, they should be able to deduce where reinforcements are coming from and follow the trail back down through the storm to the doorstep of Installation 23.

Once the Explorers are able to recon the station, the GM can show them Map on page 23 so they can plan their attack.

ASSAULT ON INSTALLATION 23

An attack on the promethium refinery will prove even more difficult than the taking of Cog; something the GM should make sure the PCs are aware of. This is the main Whisperer stronghold in Svard, the concentration of their military power and the direct link to whatever is controlling them. As with Cog, it is possible to sneak in if the Explorers use a small enough ship and have a good pilot. However, once on board, they will discover themselves surrounded by thousands of Whisperers. They may wish to do this if they want to either find the Envoy or take out vital systems like the void-shield array.

An assault on the station is, however, the only real way to take it back. To do this, they will need to neutralise the four system ships and three Void Wasps that are defending it, as well as silence the station's guns.

The four system ships are deployed close to the station (within five Void Units), and are currently in the process of taking on supplies or are docked with the station. When (or if) combat ensues, they will suffer the effects of Surprise during their first turn as they scramble frantically to prepare for combat. The Void Wasps are patrolling around a perimeter to intercept opponents before they can close with the station. Each one should be at least 10 VUs from the station and each other.



Control Sector



Promethium Tanks



The Promethium Tank's internal structure is a complex network of corridors and rooms, designed for maximum efficiency and security. The central control room is the heart of the operation, where the crew monitors the ship's status and coordinates its movements. The surrounding areas are filled with storage tanks and support systems, all meticulously maintained to ensure the ship's survival in the most hostile environments.



The Tanker Dock is a massive structure that houses the ship's fuel reserves and provides a secure area for the crew to rest and work. It is a complex of interconnected rooms and corridors, all designed to withstand the harshest conditions of space travel. The dock is a vital part of the ship's infrastructure, ensuring that the crew has everything they need to survive and succeed in their mission.



Lance Turrets



Tanker Dock



The ship's armaments are a testament to the advanced technology of the Imperium. Each turret is a masterpiece of engineering, designed to provide the ship with a powerful and accurate means of defense. The weapons are capable of taking out even the most formidable enemies, ensuring the ship's safety and the success of its mission.



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One way to capture the station is to close with it and attempt to board it using the space combat rules. At that point, it is up to the GM whether he wants to use the abbreviated rules for resolving boarding actions, or make things a little more detailed. If the Explorers want to get in on the action, the GM should consider running them through a series of running battles and missions. Meanwhile, the larger boarding action can be going on in the background. Remember, rounds in space combat are longer than regular combat rounds. The Explorers may be able to fight several short, intense combats in the time it takes to resolve one round of the larger boarding action.

The main boarding action should focus on assaulting and capturing the Tanker Dock and then storming the Primary Biosphere and Control Sector. If the GM wants to give the Explorers specific objectives they wish to accomplish personally, here are some possibilities:

- The Primary Biosphere Control Centre will be heavily guarded. However, controlling it will give the Explorers control over the main living quarters on the station. They can seal off whole sections with blast doors, trapping the Whisperers inside—or, they can simply vent them into the void...
- The station's central command bastion will also be heavily guarded. It is protected with blast doors and other, more esoteric defences. If the Explorers can find an alternate way around those defences (say, through air ducts or up a transit shaft), they may be able to take the bastion by surprise. Once in control, they can raise or lower the shields and control its guns.

The GM can play this out as a series of battles along corridors and through void-locks. If the Explorers choose to lead from the front or over a vox link, the GM can use the guidelines for mass combats in the same manner as the attack on Silence or a Command skill check as detailed in the assault on Cog.

The GM should use the Profile for a Wayfarer Station from **Chapter VIII: Starships** of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook to represent Installation 23.

Flash! Bang!

The primary danger in any fighting in or around Installation 23 is that the station might suffer a critical hit and explode. This will be very bad for all involved. All the GM needs to remember is:

- The station will explode if it suffers ANY critical hits.
- The Explosion counts as a Plasma Drive Explosion critical as detailed on page 222 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook.

MEETING WITH THE ENVOY

Once they reach the station's control room, or if they are about to blow the station into atoms with their ship, the Whisperer will speak to them through the Envoy.

The Envoy is Keel's brother, and physically looks very similar. However, the cold light of the warp shines through his eyes, and his will has been totally dominated by the Whisperer. Should the Explorers come across him personally,

he will be unarmed and will not fight them. He is more than willing to surrender, and speak to the Explorers for the Whisperer.

This is the point where they will discover the nature of the Whisperer and its plans. The GM should run the Whisperer as completely alien, devoid of hate or fear; it is simply following its master's will in the destruction of the Imperium. The most disturbing thing is that it will recognise them and the marking on their vessel and welcome them back—even thanking them for saving it from the dark. Ultimately, it is just stalling for time, and cannot be reasoned with. The Whisperer-controlled Envoy finishes by simply telling the Explorers that their fates were long ago sealed by the will of the Yu'vath.

THE WHISPERER AWAKENS

With the taking or destruction of Installation 23, the Whisperer knows it must intervene directly against the Explorers, and even though it is not fully repaired, it will rise up out of the storm to wipe them out of existence and lay waste to all of Svard. This is all-out war. The exact timing of this attack is up to the GM, though it should take place shortly after the battle for Installation 23. The Explorer's vessel may even detect the disturbances in the cloud deck far below them as the Explorers speak to the Envoy, prompting them to race back to their vessel and hurriedly prepare for battle. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

As you congratulate yourself on a hard-fought battle well-won, one of your sub-officers looks up from his cogitator display. "Sir! You need to see this!"

The display shows a panoramic visage of the planet below, the storm-cloud breaking up below you to reveal an immeasurably vast grey-green cloudscape that stretches in all directions. As you watch, the clouds begin to roil and twist, as if they are being rent and torn by some giant, invisible hand.

The centre of the disturbance bulges upwards, and a black crystal point pierces the cloud-deck. More crystals follow, and a huge leviathan shoulders its way up, out of the depths of the planet. Cloud vapour streams away from the shards, and violent bolts of energy arc between the orbiting crystals and the impossibly dark, spherical core as it accelerates towards you.

It appears, at long last, that you have found what has plagued the Svard System for so long.

The Whisperer, accompanied by a half dozen Void Wasps, will begin with an assault on the station. Meanwhile, any surviving Whisperers will rise up on each of the moons and attempt to launch an attack on Svard itself. First among these is the destruction of the Explorers—and Installation 23 if it still stands.

The GM can also complicate matters by having Keel turn on the Explorers once he knows the Envoy is alive (although this is not at all recommended unless the Explorers have a ship at least as large as a light cruiser. Anything smaller is unlikely

to survive a confrontation with *The Hand of Redemption*). Ultimately, how long and hard the GM wishes to make this battle is up to him, and it can either be a bloody space battle around the ruins of Installation 23 or a roving war across the whole system where the Explorers must use their hard won Profit Factor to raise more men, repair system ships, and push back the Whisperers once and for all. Once the Whisperer is destroyed, any remaining Void Wasps shatter apart and are consumed by warp-fire from within.

CONCLUSION

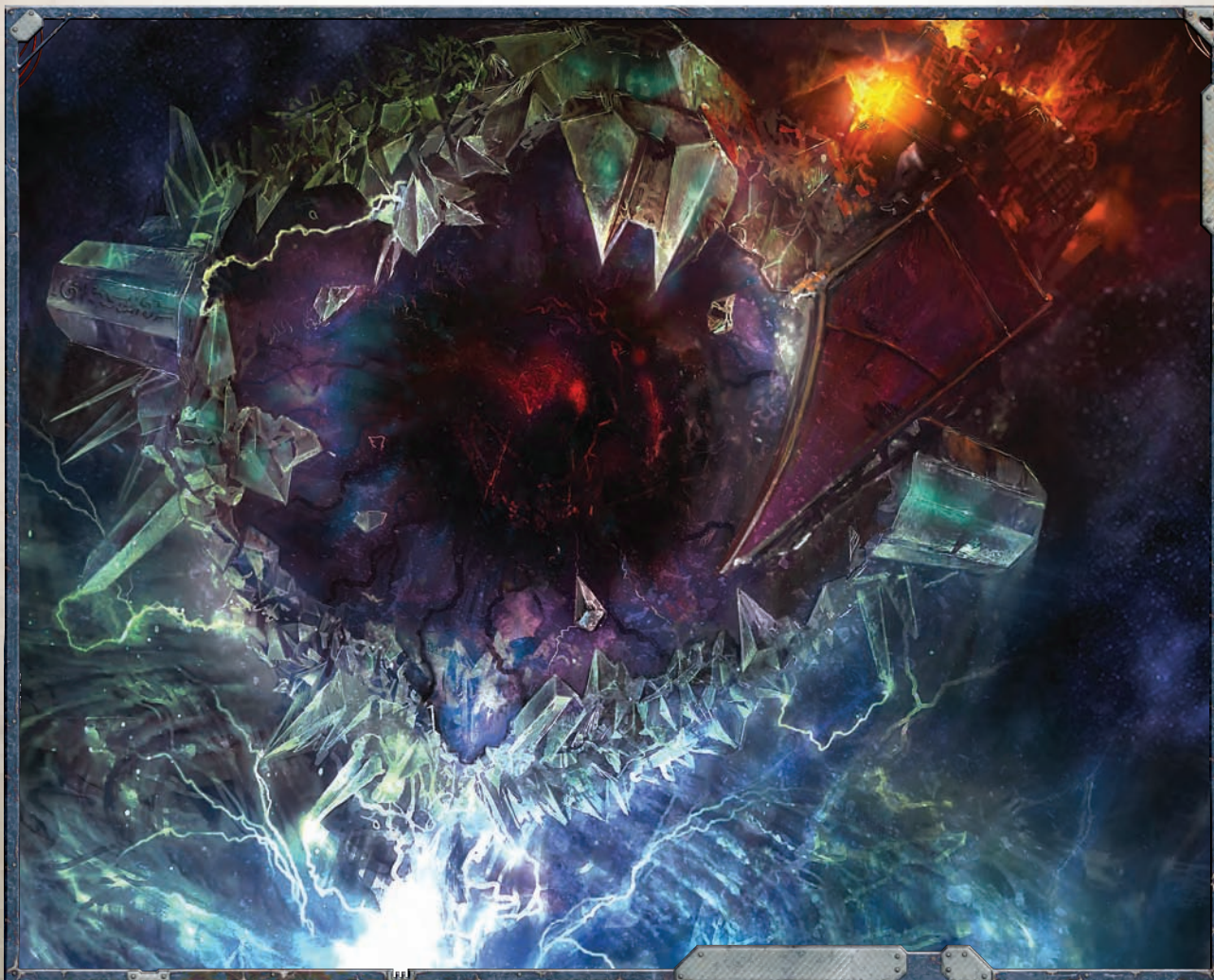
With the Whisperer destroyed and Svard saved—hopefully mostly intact—the Explorers can take a well earned rest and enjoy the profits of their work (though there still may be a few outstanding Endeavours to finish up). Even though it will take years before the damage of the Whisperer War is healed, Speaker Tal will be overjoyed with the Explorers efforts and insist on more celebrations and banquets, as well as a parting gift of the surviving PDF Company. If Keel is still alive, he will disappear with little fanfare—either taking his brother with him or slinking off into the void. In either case, he will return to the Calixis Sector. The Explorers may even cross his path again...

REWARDS

If the Explorers have defeated the Whisperer and reclaimed Svard, then they have achieved a mighty task and should be rewarded accordingly. The GM should award players experience per session using either the abstract or detailed methods found on page 291 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook. In addition, he may also award the following bonus rewards to all PCs:

- 500xp—If any of the PDF Troopers gifted them by Speaker Tal survived.
- 500xp—They actively tried to save any Whisperers (capturing rather than killing) to free later.
- 1,000xp—If the Explorers managed to defeat the Whisperer before it could destroy Installation 23.

The Explorers should also have garnered considerable Profit Factor from completing Endeavours along the way as detailed in each of the Locations. However, if they manage to capture and keep the promethium refinery intact (meaning that the refinery is still operational to service the Svard system moons), the GM should award them an additional +3 to their Profit Factor.



SHIPS OF THE SVARD SYSTEM

The following are some of the starships commonly found in the Svard System, belonging to the Crystal Council, the Imperium, the Whisperers, and the Yu'vath.

THE HAND OF REDEMPTION

Hull: Cruiser

Class: Lunar-class cruiser

Dimensions: 5 km long, 0.8 km abeam at fins approx.

Mass: 28 megatonnes approx.

Crew: 95000 crew, approx.

Accel: 2.5 gravities max sustainable acceleration

This Lunar-class cruiser is an incredibly powerful warship, a testament to the might of the Imperium. It has served with distinction in Battlefleet Calixis for the last five hundred years, before her captain, Keel, decided to take the ship into the Expanse to find his missing brother.

Speed: 5 **Manoeuvrability:** +10

Detection: +15 **Hull Integrity:** 70

Armour: 20 **Turret Rating:** 2

Void Shields: 2

Weapon Capacity: Prow 1, Port 2, Starboard 2

Space: 75 **Power:** 75

Morale: 101 **Crew Population:** 100

Essential Components

Jovian Pattern Class 4 Drive

Strelov 2 Warp Engine

Geller Field

Multiple Void Shield Array

Ship Master's Bridge

M-1.r Life Sustainer

Pressed-crew Quarters

M-201.b Auger Array

Supplemental Components

Port Mars Pattern Macro-cannon Broadside

Starboard Mars Pattern Macro-cannon Broadside

Port Titanforge Lance Battery

Starboard Titanforge Lance Battery

Prow Torpedo Tubes*

Armoured Prow

Munitorium

Temple-shrine to the God Emperor

* The Hand of Redemption has been on extended deployment for almost a year. In that time, it has exhausted its stock of torpedoes, and may not use this Weapon Component in battle.

SYSTEM SHIP

Hull: Transport

Class: any number of a variety of tankers, bulk transports, or void-freighters

Dimensions: .65 km long, 0.45 km abeam at fins approx.

Mass: 4.5 megatonnes approx.

Crew: 2,000 to 5,000 crew, approx.

Accel: 1.5 gravities max sustainable acceleration

The intersystem ships of the Svard system are slow and unwieldy craft, ill suited for battle, and chronically undercrewed. Even armed with macro-weapons, they are dangerous to a true warship only in mass.

Speed: 3

Manoeuvrability: -15

Detection: +0

Hull Integrity: 20

Armour: 12

Turret Rating: 1

Void Shields: 1

Weapon Capacity: Prow 1, Dorsal 1

Space: 25

Power: 20

Morale: 85

Crew Population: 85

Essential Components

Class D Plasma Drive

Single Void Shield Array

Mark 1.r Life Sustainer

Voidsman Quarters

M-100 Auger Array

Supplemental Components

Main Cargo Hold

Prow Thunderstrike Macro-cannons

Dorsal Thunderstrike Macro-cannons

Intersystem Vessel: This vessel cannot travel through the warp, and does not require a Warp Drive or Geller Field. Intersystem ships have a Standard (30) Crew.

VOID WASP

Hull: Unknown

Class: Unknown

Dimensions: .9 km long, .3 km abeam approx

Crew: Unknown

Mass: Unknown

Accel: Unknown max acceleration

Bizarre craft have plagued the Svard system in increasing numbers of late. The strange and sleek craft referred to as void wasps are sinister amalgamations of black crystal shards bound together with a pulsating dark energy. The craft move with a bizarre grace, and their weapons are both terrible and powerful.

Speed: 10

Manoeuvrability: +30

Detection: +30

Hull Integrity: 20

Armour: 18

Turret Rating: 0

Void Shields: 1

Weapon Capacity: Dorsal 1, Keel 1

Essential Components

None identifiable via Imperial auspex devices.

Supplemental Components:

Dorsal Void-skein Rupture Cannon

Keel Void-skein Rupture Cannon

Yu'vath Gravity Sails*

**Benefits included in profile*

Incomprehensible Construction: The ships of the Yu'vath do not seem to require the same components that more mundane vessels do. This vessel may not be boarded or targeted by hit-and-run attacks, and cannot make hit-and-run attacks or board other vessels. Its Essential Components, if they exist, cannot be affected by critical hits. If the vessel is reduced to zero hull integrity, it is not crippled—instead it breaks up and counts as destroyed. This vessel has no actual crew population and no morale, and suffers no penalties for either in any way.

For all space combat actions, this vessel counts as having a crew with a statistic of 50 in all relevant skills. This vessel cannot perform any extended actions except Emergency Repairs.

THE WHISPERER

Hull: Unknown

Class: Unknown

Dimensions: approx 3 km in diameter, crystal orbit out to 6 km

Crew: Unknown

Mass: Unknown

Acceleration: Unknown

An ancient device of the Yu'vath, the Whisperer was created from dark warp magics and cold alien technology. Easily a match for most Imperial ships of the line, it also has the power to subvert minds and bend the weak-willed to his cause. In appearance, it is a massive ball of dark, reflective energy several kilometres across. Around it orbits a collection of monolithic rounded crystals, power constantly arcing between them.

Speed: 4 **Manoeuvrability:** +10

Detection: +30 **Hull Integrity:** 100

Armour: 24 **Turret Rating:** 0

Void Shields: 3

Weapon Capacity: Prow 2, Port 2, Starboard 2, Aft 2*, Keel 2

Essential Components:

None identifiable via Imperial auspex devices.

Supplemental Components:

2x Prow Void-skein Rupture Cannons

2x Port Void-skein Rupture Cannons

2x Starboard Void-skein Rupture Cannons

2x Aft Void-skein Rupture Cannons

2x Keel Immaterium Energy Arcs

Yu'vath Gravity Sails**

**The Aft firing arc covers the 90 degree arc facing directly to the rear of the Whisperer.*

***Benefits included in profile*

Incomprehensible Construction: The ships of the Yu'vath do not seem to require the same components that more mundane vessels do. This vessel may not be boarded or targeted by hit-and-run attacks, and cannot make hit-and-run attacks or board other vessels. Its Essential Components, if they exist, cannot be affected by critical hits. If the vessel is reduced to zero hull integrity, it is not crippled—instead it breaks up and counts as destroyed. This vessel has no actual crew population and no morale, and suffers no penalties for either in any way.

For all space combat actions, this vessel counts as having a crew with a statistic of 50 in all relevant skills. This vessel cannot perform any extended actions except Emergency Repairs.

YU'VATH WARP TECHNOLOGY

The following are some of the few identifiable Components for Yu'vath starships. Yu'vath Components are not powered in ways humans could understand, and do not have space or power requirements. They also cannot be added to human vessels unless the GM decides otherwise, in which case he will have to make up power and space stats for the Components.

YU'VATH GRAVITY SAILS

Gravity sails can touch the forces that bind stellar systems together, allowing their ship to move with agility and grace. As long as they are connected to their ship, they add +1 to the ship's speed and +5 to its manoeuvrability.

IMMATERIUM ENERGY-ARC

Far worse than the ruptur cannons, these energy-arcs seem to be generated from the cores of Yu-vath vessels, and no armour can withstand them.

Type	Strength	Damage	Crit Rating	Range
Lance	1	1d10+3	2	6

Warp Munitions: Whenever these weapon's hits are blocked by void shields, roll 1d10. On an 8 or higher, the munitions emerge in real space behind the void shield, and the void shield does not cancel the hit.

VOID-SKEIN RUPTURE CANNON

A strange and terrible abomination of a macrobattery, little is known about these weapons. They seem to fire munitions through the warp, with the warheads only emerging into realspace just before they strike their target.

Type	Strength	Damage	Crit Rating	Range
Macrobattery	3	1d10+2	4	5

Warp Munitions: Whenever these weapon's hits are blocked by void shields, roll 1d10. On an 8 or higher, the munitions emerge in real space behind the void shield, and the void shield does not cancel the hit.

SHAPING THE VOID: GAME MASTERING TOOLS

"I've seen things you wouldn't believe. Worlds of pure energy alight against the blackness of space, creatures so alien that they would break your mind to look upon them, and riches so grand as to turn even the most pious of men mad with greed."

—Helix Gnaris, sole survivor of the *Divine Truth*

The Imperium is a vast and diverse place, filled with almost anything that can be imagined. It is this epic stage upon which a Rogue Trader treads, traversing the void in search of wealth, power and the unknown. It is the Game Master's role to shape and populate this vast universe for his players to explore. Presented in this section are a number of tables and charts designed to aid the GM in fleshing out the void.

STAR SYSTEM GENERATION

The following is a series of tables that the GM can use to quickly generate a star system. Simply follow the four steps, rolling on each of the tables in turn, to create the framework for a star system. The process is intentionally left simple so that the GM can fill in the details to suit his own plots and adventures.

STEP 1: THE STAR

Every system has a star, or something like a star, at its centre. The nature of this celestial body will often determine what else may be found in the system.

STEP 2: CELESTIAL OBJECTS

Once the star has been generated, the next step is generating celestial objects, such as planets, asteroid fields, and debris clouds. Roll 1d5 to see how many celestial objects the system contains and then roll that many times of the table below.

TABLE 1-1: THE STAR

Roll	Star
1-2	Ancient and Bloated: The star is a decaying giant, swollen and vivid against the blackness of the void. On worlds in this system, the star dominates the sky like the lidless eye of a malevolent god.
3-4	Young and Weak: The star is a tiny pinprick of light against the veil of space, its weak gleam feeble to behold. What life might prosper here does so only barely nourished by the star's watery sustenance.
5-7	Strong and Bright: Healthy and full of colour, the star bathes the system in an even light and warmth. Not unlike the sun of ancient Terra this star blazes out across space strong and unwavering.
8-9	Dark and Brooding: Vile and dark, the star is only faintly visible against the void, its corrupted purple outline blotting out the light from distant systems.
10	Celestial Anomaly: This system is centred on a terrible anomaly and no true star at all. Perhaps it is a crushing black hole, an ancient xenos construct or even a flickering warp bubble soaking the system in baleful energies. Alternatively this could indicate that the system is a binary or trinary star (roll again to see which type(s) of star).

TABLE 1-2: CELESTIAL OBJECTS

Roll	Celestial Object
1-2	Nothing: There is nothing here but the emptiness of the void.
3	Dust Cloud: A huge particle cloud covers part of the system, confounding sensors and peppering ships with tiny debris.
4	Asteroid Field: A dense band of broken rock that stretches for millions of kilometres circles the star. Dangerous to navigate, asteroid fields also make excellent hiding places for pirates and raiders.
5-6	Gas Giant: Vast worlds of vapour and gas, these behemoths are sometimes mined for their chemical particles. Gas Giants also often have moons, some of which may be habitable (a system will only have a single gas giant).
7-8	Barren World: A lifeless ball of rock, ice, or fire, these worlds are usually only home to mining or penal colonies.
9-10	Habitable World (Roll again):
(1-5)	Death World: A toxic jungle, volcanic wasteland, or frozen hell where life is only barely possible.
(6-8)	Temperate World: A Terran-like world.
9	Ruined World: The remains of a civilization now blasted and gone.
10	Paradise World: A rare Eden, ripe for exploitation.

STEP 3: INHABITANTS

The next step after determining celestial objects is to roll on the inhabitants table to see if the system is inhabited. Usually, the GM only needs to roll on this table once. However, if he wants more than one kind of inhabitant in the system, he can roll for each celestial object already generated.

TABLE 1-3: INHABITANTS

Roll	Inhabitants
1-4	Nothing: There is no life here.
5-6	Primitives: A tribe of primitive and feral humans call one of the worlds of this system their home.
7	Industrialists: There is an industrial human civilization here, perhaps even spreading slowly beyond their home world.
8	Warp Empire: A human empire with warp capable ships, perhaps with control over other nearby systems, lost to the Imperium for possibly thousands of years.
9-0	Xenos! Vile xenos inhabit this system. Roll again: It is some form of indigenous bestial creatures that inhabit one or more of the worlds—easily contained and destroyed.
(1-5)	Indigenous and intelligent, the xenos may be advanced or even spacefaring—far more dangerous and difficult to combat.
(6-8)	The system is an outpost for a powerful alien race, such as Orks or Eldar—this is a job for the Imperial Fleet.
(9-0)	

STEP 4: STELLAR SECRETS

Finally, the GM can see if the system has any secrets, such as hidden cults, ship graveyards, or pirate bases.

TABLE 1-4: STELLAR SECRETS

Roll	Secret
1	Warp Rift: There is a rift in the very fabric of space here, loosing creatures of the warp upon those that venture too close.
2	Ship Graveyard: A vast junkyard of lost, damaged, and broken ships exists here. Its rusted space hulks are possibly home to countless lost secrets and dark creatures.
3	Pirate Base: This system is home to a band of pirates who take a dim view on trespassers.
4-7	Nothing: There are no secrets here. At least none visiting captains will ever discover.
8	Hidden Cult: A foul Chaos or xenos cult has taken root here, using it as either a hideout or a place to infiltrate the local population.
9	Xenos Ruins: The remains of an ancient xenos civilisation can be found here, its secrets and wealth possibly still intact.
10	Void Beast: A ship-devouring horror of the void calls this system home, and it is always hungry...



ADVERSARY STARSHIP GENERATOR

A GM can quickly tire of sending his players up against the same pirate raiders or Ork frigates. This series of charts allows a GM to easily generate a wide variety of unique vessels to send his Explorers against. To generate a starship, the GM should complete each of the following steps:

- **Step 1:** Roll 1d10 and compare the result to Table 2-1. Each result has a different starship hull.
- **Step 2:** Roll 1d10 and compare the result to the appropriate section on Table 2-2, according to hull type. Each result will provide the hull with all Essential Components, and how much Power and Space the Components require.
- **Step 3:** Roll 1d10 once for each Weapon Capacity Slot on the starship, comparing the results to Table 2-3, to equip the starship with weapons. Once the Weapon Components are generated, fill them into the appropriate slots, discarding any results of the GM's choice if the starship runs out of space and power.
- **Step 4:** If the starship still has remaining space and power, roll 1d10 once and compare the result to Table 2-4 to equip the starship with additional, unique Components.

TABLE 2-1 NPC VESSEL HULL TYPES

Roll	Result
1	Jericho-class pilgrim vessel (see page 194 in the ROGUE TRADER Rulebook)
2-3	Vagabond-class trader (see page 194 in the ROGUE TRADER Rulebook)
4-5	Hazeroth-class privateer (see page 194 in the ROGUE TRADER Rulebook)
6	Havoc-class merchant raider (see page 195 in the ROGUE TRADER Rulebook)
7	Sword-class frigate (see page 195 in the ROGUE TRADER Rulebook)
8	Tempest-class strike frigate (see page 195 in the ROGUE TRADER Rulebook)
9	Dauntless-class light cruiser (see page 196 in the ROGUE TRADER Rulebook)
10	Wolfpack: 2 Wolfpack raiders (see page 209 in the ROGUE TRADER Rulebook), 1 Vagabond-class trader (see page 194 in the ROGUE TRADER Rulebook), 1 Havoc-class merchant raider (see page 195 in the ROGUE TRADER Rulebook)

TABLE 2-2 NPC VESSEL ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

Transports	
All	Strelor 1 Warp Engine, Geller Field, Single Void Shield Array, Voidsmen Quarters
Plus:	
Roll	Result
1-4	Jovian pattern Class 1 Drive, Commerce Bridge, Vitae Pattern Life Sustainer, Mark-100 Auger Array, Main Cargo Hold
5-10	Lathe pattern Class 1 Drive, Combat Bridge, M-1.r Life Sustainer, Mark-201.b Auger Array, Main Cargo Hold
Raiders & Frigates	
All	Jovian Pattern Class 2 Drive, Strelor 1 Warp Engine, Geller Field, Single Void Shield Array
Plus:	
Roll	Result
1-3	Armoured Command Bridge, M-1.r Life Sustainer, Pressed-crew Quarters, Mark-100 Auger Array
4-8	Command Bridge, M-1.r Life Sustainer, Pressed-crew Quarters, Mark-201.b Auger Array
9-10	Combat Bridge, Vitae Pattern Life Sustainer, Voidsmen Quarters, R-50 Auspex Multiband
Light Cruisers	
All	Jovian Pattern Class 3 Drive, Strelor 2 Warp Engine, Geller Field, Single Void Shield Array
Plus:	
Roll	Result
1-7	Armoured Command Bridge, M-1.r Life Sustainer, Pressed-crew Quarters, M-201.b Auger Array
8-10	Command Bridge, Vitae Pattern Life Sustainer, Voidsmen Quarters, R-50 Auspex Multi-band

TABLE 2-3: NPC VESSEL WEAPON COMPONENTS

Roll	Result
1-2	Thunderstrike Macrocannons
3-5	Mars Pattern Macrocannons
6	Sunsear Laser Battery
7	Ryza Pattern Plasma Battery
8	Starbreaker Lance Weapon
9	Mars Pattern Macrocannon Broadside
10	Titanforge Lance Battery

ENCOUNTER DIFFICULTY LEVELS

This system is not designed to necessarily generate encounters that are within the Explorer's capabilities to overcome. Just like in the real world, some foes may be much too strong for the Explorers to handle, forcing them to deal with the situation by other means.

If the GM would prefer to generate a challenge within his players' difficulty level, there are several simple modifications he can use to adjust the starship generator. When rolling on **Table 2-1**, subtract 3 from the rolled result (to a minimum of 1) if the Explorer's vessel is a transport, and 2 from the rolled result (to a minimum of 1) if the Explorer's vessel is a raider or frigate. If the Explorer's vessel is a light cruiser or larger, add 2 to the rolled result (to a maximum of 10).

TABLE 2-4: NPC VESSEL ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS

Roll	Result
1	Cargo Hold and Lighter Bay
2	Augmented Retro-Thrusters
3	Reinforced Interior Bulkheads
4	Armoured Prow
5	Crew Reclamation Facility
6	Munitorium
7	Murder Servitors
8	Auto-stabilized Logis-targeter
9	Teleportatrium
10	Gravity Sails



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