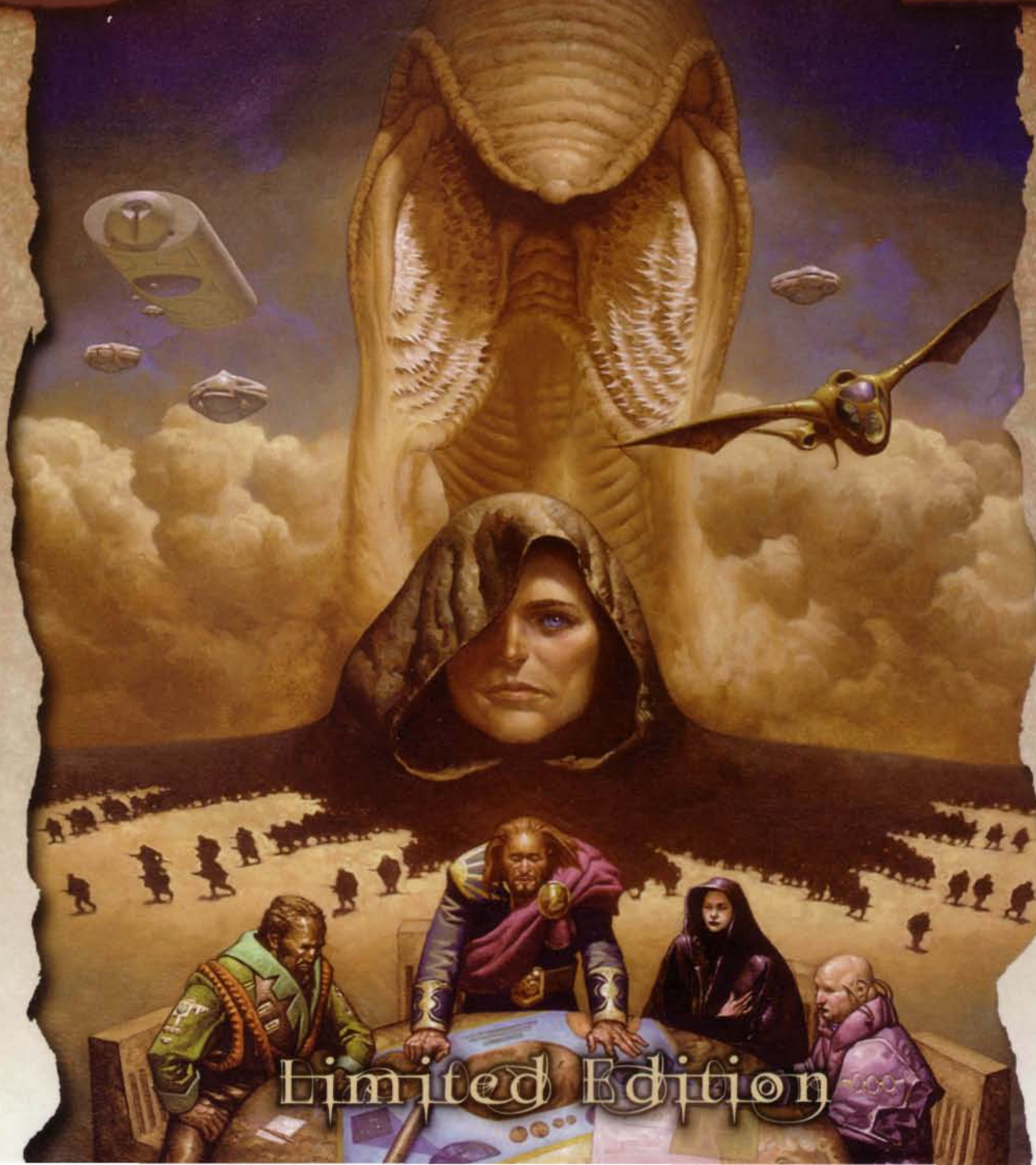
Chronicles of the Imperium

DUNE

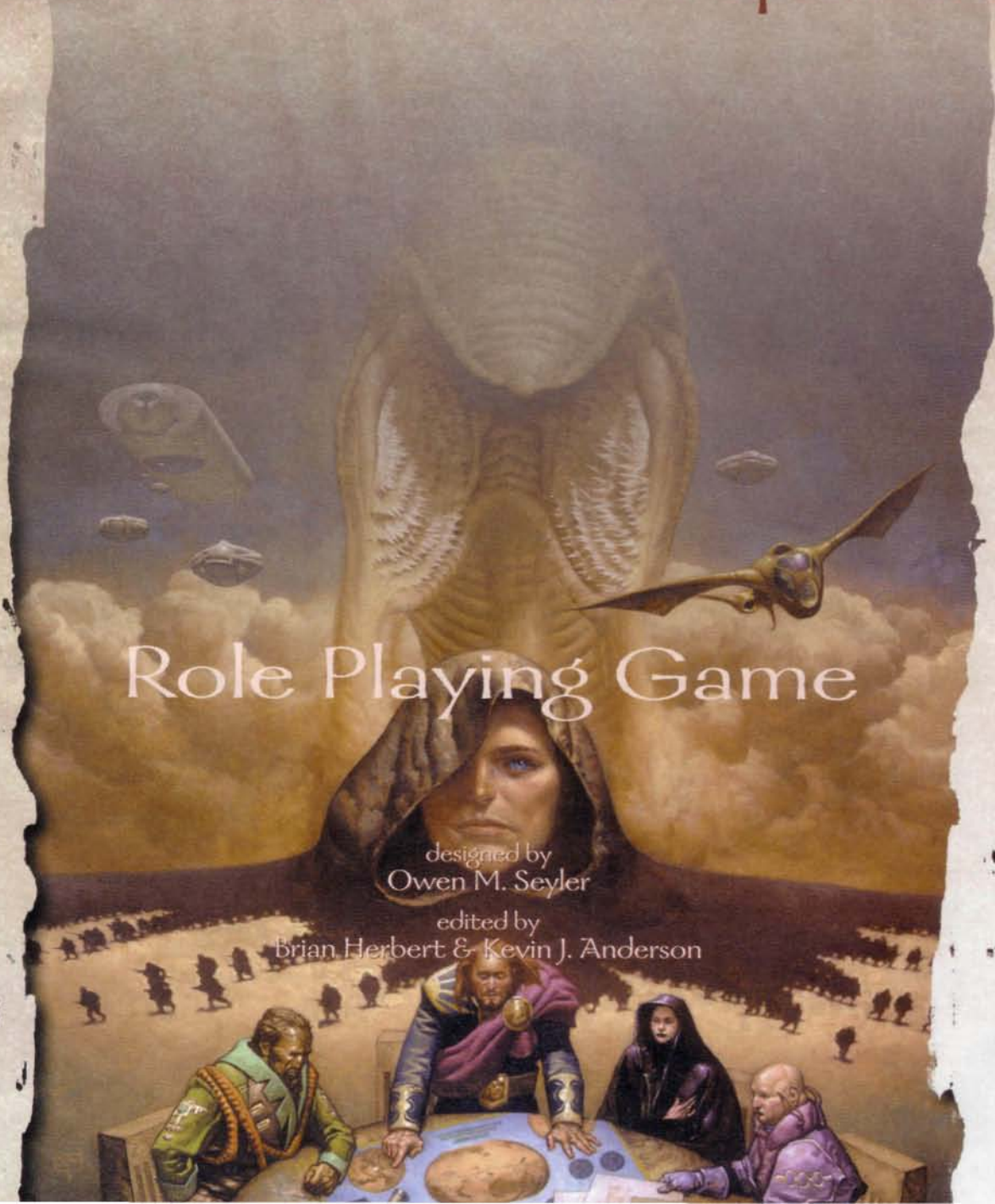
Core Game



Limited Edition

DUNE™

Chronicles of the Imperium



Role Playing Game

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Owen M. Seyler

edited by
Brian Herbert & Kevin J. Anderson

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Disclaimer: The DUNE RPG is based on the DUNE Universe created by Frank Herbert and is presented with the approval of the Herbert Limited Partnership. Additional game materials do not necessarily represent official DUNE canon.

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This limited collector's edition of the DUNE RPG features Last Unicorn Games' ICON System™ and includes everything needed to play countless adventures in Frank Herbert's Dune universe. Future editions of the DUNE RPG will employ the d20 System, and conversion notes will be available online at www.wizards.com.

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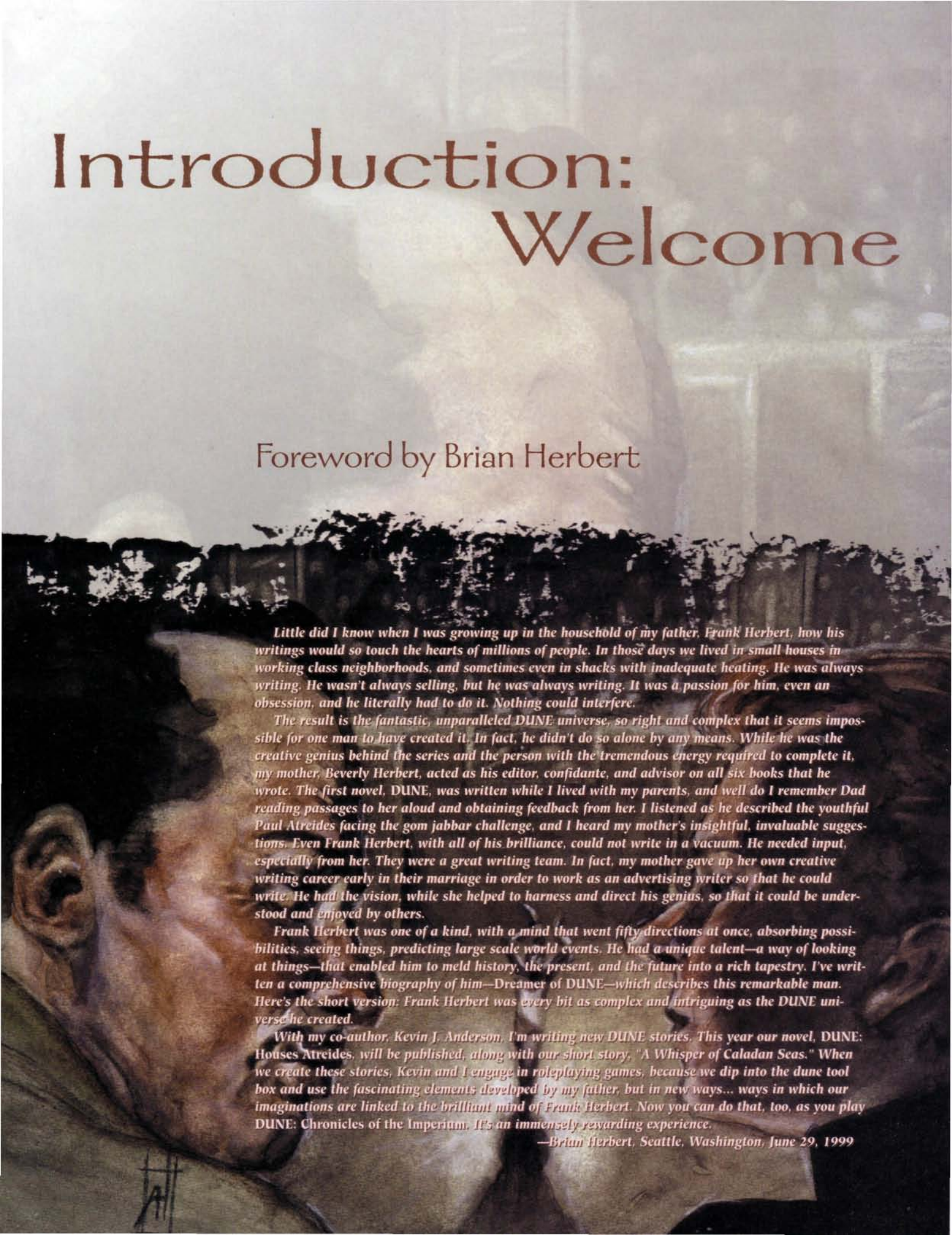
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Introduction: Welcome

Foreword by Brian Herbert



Little did I know when I was growing up in the household of my father, Frank Herbert, how his writings would so touch the hearts of millions of people. In those days we lived in small houses in working class neighborhoods, and sometimes even in shacks with inadequate heating. He was always writing. He wasn't always selling, but he was always writing. It was a passion for him, even an obsession, and he literally had to do it. Nothing could interfere.

The result is the fantastic, unparalleled DUNE universe, so right and complex that it seems impossible for one man to have created it. In fact, he didn't do so alone by any means. While he was the creative genius behind the series and the person with the tremendous energy required to complete it, my mother, Beverly Herbert, acted as his editor, confidante, and advisor on all six books that he wrote. The first novel, DUNE, *was written while I lived with my parents, and well do I remember Dad reading passages to her aloud and obtaining feedback from her. I listened as he described the youthful Paul Atreides facing the gom jabbar challenge, and I heard my mother's insightful, invaluable suggestions. Even Frank Herbert, with all of his brilliance, could not write in a vacuum. He needed input, especially from her. They were a great writing team. In fact, my mother gave up her own creative writing career early in their marriage in order to work as an advertising writer so that he could write. He had the vision, while she helped to harness and direct his genius, so that it could be understood and enjoyed by others.*

*Frank Herbert was one of a kind, with a mind that went fifty directions at once, absorbing possibilities, seeing things, predicting large scale world events. He had a unique talent—a way of looking at things—that enabled him to meld history, the present, and the future into a rich tapestry. I've written a comprehensive biography of him—*Dreamer of DUNE*—which describes this remarkable man. Here's the short version: Frank Herbert was every bit as complex and intriguing as the DUNE universe he created.*

With my co-author, Kevin J. Anderson, I'm writing new DUNE stories. This year our novel, DUNE: Houses Atreides, *will be published, along with our short story, "A Whisper of Caladan Seas." When we create these stories, Kevin and I engage in roleplaying games, because we dip into the dune tool box and use the fascinating elements developed by my father, but in new ways... ways in which our imaginations are linked to the brilliant mind of Frank Herbert. Now you can do that, too, as you play* DUNE: Chronicles of the Imperium. *It's an immensely rewarding experience.*

—Brian Herbert, Seattle, Washington, June 29, 1999

to DUNE

Welcome to an Imperial fete! If you're reading this introduction, you probably fall into one of two categories—either you're a *DUNE* fan who's curious about this whole "roleplaying" thing, or you're a game fan who's been waiting years for a roleplaying game (RPG) set in the *DUNE* universe. Either way, the game you now hold in your hands is what you've been looking for. The phoenix has risen from the flames!

If you're a *DUNE* fan who's new to roleplaying games, prepare to experience your favorite universe in new and exciting ways. Ever wonder what it would be like to command your own noble family? To lead cohorts of assassins or make computations as a Mentat? Using the guidelines found in this game, you'll be able to experience all these things and more.

If you're a game fan who's been patiently awaiting a *DUNE* RPG, we hope this game (and those supplements to follow) answers your previously unheeded prayers. In the pages of this volume, you'll find rules for creating Imperial characters and adventuring in one of the most vivid science fiction universes ever created. As an experienced player, you can probably skip the remainder of this introduction and get right to business. Turn to the *Character Creation* chapter, pick a character archetype and prepare to fold-space. The myriad homeworlds of the *DUNE* Imperium are yours to tame and conquer!

What Are Roleplaying Games?

The *DUNE: Chronicles of the Imperium Roleplaying Game* plays a little differently than the games you're probably used to. The game includes no board, no playing pieces, no computer or video screen. But the game is as rich and engaging as you care to make it; after all, everything you "see" and experience while playing comes from your own imagination, and the imaginations of your friends. All you need is an open mind, a handful of six-sided dice, and the desire to contribute to an interactive story.

Roleplaying games resemble novels and dramas in many ways. In the *DUNE RPG*, each player creates a *character*—an alter ego they play in the game. Characters resemble the main protagonists of a novel or play; they appear in every scene, and their actions and exploits form the basis of the chapter or chronicle. In the *DUNE RPG*, your characters become the Paul Atreides, Thufir Hawats and Duncan Idahos of your own adventure stories. Over the course of many stories, you'll come to your know favorite characters as well as you know yourself.

Roleplaying games differ from novels because they are interactive. In a good RPG adventure, the story is not linear. Your characters are not "locked" into a specific plot. Rather, the choices you make help to shape the story and change it. Stories in the *DUNE RPG* are organic and interactive; their eventual outcomes depend almost exclusively on the actions of your characters and the decisions you make as a player. A few simple rules help you determine the consequences of your actions; does your slow pellet stunner penetrate your rival's activated body shield? Do you evade the hunter-seeker controlled by the assassin lurking in the wings? Does the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood agree to your request for sanctuary? The answers to these questions, and countless others like them, result from the rules which tell you when to roll dice and how to interpret their results.

If you are using only this volume, most player characters will serve one of the noble families of the Imperium. Future books and supplements will show players how to create all manners of characters, including Smugglers, Truthsayers, Spice Miners, Water Merchants, Imperial Planetologists, Spies and even Sandriders.

Players

Who are the players in the *DUNE RPG*? Unless you've decided to take on the role of Narrator, you are! Using the simple guidelines presented in the *Character Creation* chapter, you and your friends can create any household agents you want, from Atreides nobles to Moritani assassins. When you're finished, you'll be ready to embark on your first exciting adventure in the *DUNE* universe.

When playing the *DUNE RPG*, all of the characters are collectively known as the House Entourage or Entourage for short. In some roleplaying games, it can be difficult to bring characters together at the beginning of a new chronicle or adventure. In the *DUNE RPG*, the



House makes this easy. Normally, each character will be a member of a noble House Minor, assigned various roles and duties according to his vocational conditioning. As you and your group become more experienced, House Entourages prosper, bringing power and wealth to their patron House who aspires to rising among the ranks of the Great Houses of the Landsraad.

This is your chance to explore the wonders of the *DUNE* universe on your own, in your own way. Although it can occasionally be fun to re-create favorite chapters or characters from the novels, true entertainment results from creating your own adventures, going beyond what you've read in the series of DUNE novels. Think of the *DUNE* universe as a grand stage, with you and your friends as the actors. You're playing original characters, having adventures of your own. And you can tell the story you want.

Narrator

So you've assembled an Entourage and you're ready to play your first game of *DUNE*. First, you'll need to choose one player to be the Narrator. Think of the Narrator as the author of the games your group will play. It's his job to describe and pace the action in an chapter, recounting the story to the players as events unfold. In a sense, the Narrator "becomes" the universe, telling the players what their characters see, hear and feel.

It's also the Narrator's job to interpret the rules and use them wisely. Players don't want to spend all night rolling dice or arguing over rules. They want to have fun! Using the rules properly is a balancing act; while the game hinges on adventure and storytelling, interpreting the rules too loosely can lead to abuse. You need to retain some structure in order to maintain drama. Games where the characters are invincible lack any sort of tension or danger.

Finally, it's the Narrator's job to create engaging stories and adventures, and to "play" the roles of any supporting cast characters with whom the players interact. While challenging at times, it can be a lot of fun to play a roguish Swordmaster one minute and an Imperial Suk doctor the next. So practice those knaveries and rehearse your philosophies; you've got some dramatic acting ahead of you!

In many ways, the Narrator has the most demanding job in the game. He needs to be able to wear several hats at once, and keep each element of an chapter—story, supporting cast, rules, descriptions—in constant motion. It's a big job, but once you get the hang of it, it can also be the most rewarding role in the game. We give Narrators plenty of advice in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 in addition to a sample setting, cast and adventure in Chapter's 9 and 10. So there's nothing to worry about. In no time at all you'll be narrating your own tales as if you were an Imperial historian.

The Rules

There are no winners or losers in a roleplaying game. Although the *DUNE RPG* may be unusual compared to the games you're used to (like chess or backgammon, for example), it does have something in common with these decidedly more traditional past-times: it has rules that govern what you can and cannot do. But unlike traditional games that are often shaped entirely by their rules, the *DUNE RPG* is shaped by the stories players tell. The rules exist to enhance a chapter or chronicle and allow it to flow more smoothly. And hopefully, rules will prevent any misunderstandings that might crop up among players during the game.

The *DUNE RPG* uses the Icon System, a basic rules system that attempts to explain and account for the random occurrences your characters will face during the course of a narrative. The Icon System was designed to be simple, elegant and easy-to-use. It was also designed to be open-ended and flexible; we know players enjoy tailoring systems to their own tastes and the tastes of their group, and the *DUNE RPG* encourages such customization.

The guidelines presented here are yours to use or modify as you see fit. If you don't like something, change it. If you think we forgot something, make it up. This is your game now and the story, never the rules, should always remain your primary focus.

How to Use this Game

This game is divided into three distinct sections—*Imperium Familia*, *DUNE Oracle* and *Imperial Archives*. Players should familiarize themselves with the chapters found in the "Imperium Familia" section of the game. These chapters show you how to create and play characters; they also describe Imperial civilization and introduce the rules of the game. While you don't need to familiarize yourself with all of the material in the "DUNE Oracle" and "Imperial Archives" sections of the game, you may find some of these chapters highly informative, especially if you're new to the *DUNE* milieu. Feel free to read it at your leisure, but be warned that "Chapter 10" contains a sample adventure your Narrator may want to lead you through. Reading this chapter before you play will spoil the surprises and much of the fun you'll experience if you skip this chapter for the time being.

Narrators need to become familiar with all three sections of the game. The chapters found in the "DUNE Oracle" section are of particular interest to the Narrator, since these deal with the intricacies of telling good *DUNE RPG* stories. The "DUNE Oracle" section contains information about creating and narrating *DUNE* chapters and chronicles, Entourage interactions and House evolution. In short, the heart of any good *DUNE* story probably originates in one of the "DUNE Oracle" chapters.

If the chapters presented by the "DUNE Oracle" give you the pages for your own DUNE chronicles, the "Imperial Archives" provide the narrative details that give it life. Chapters in the "Imperial Archives" detail many of the wonders and anomalies found throughout the *DUNE* universe, from the formal dueling rituals of Kanly to the marvels of fold-space navigation. If you need new homeworlds or supporting characters for your existing game, be sure to review the "Imperial Planetology" and "Imperial Personages" chapters. Imperial Technology occupies its own chapter, as do space travel and Imperial customs.

Tools of the Trade

In addition to pencil and paper, you'll need some six-sided dice to play the *DUNE Roleplaying Game*. You can find dice in any good book or hobby store, or you can simply borrow a few from a couple of those dusty old board games lost in the back of your closet. But make sure that one die is a different color or size than the others, that's an important aspect of the dice rolling system.

It's a Vast Imperium...

If you like what you see in this game, guess what? There's plenty more on the way! Although this volume contains everything you need to play and enjoy the *DUNE RPG* for years to come, Last Unicorn also produces many other *DUNE RPG* products. These include adventures, source books, miniatures and boxed supplements. While none of these products are required to play the game, each of them is designed to expand and enhance your *DUNE* gaming experience. Look for them at a book, game or comic store near you.

The Icon Link

The graphic you see floating behind this text is Last Unicorn Games' proprietary Icon Link. Keyed to particular topics, the icon means you can find bonus material at the Last Unicorn Games website (www.lastunicorngames.com). The Icon Link and related material has been instituted as an added value for our readers. Examples of additional source materials might include supplemental archetypes, expanded histories, sidebar commentaries, further examples, untested materials or experimental rules variants. See you on the web!

GLOSSARY

The following game terms appear throughout the *DUNE RPG*. Each of the terms is described more completely in the appropriate section of the game; they are collected here for ease of reference.

Advantage: Trait benefits; conferring advantages that a character possesses. Examples include having a Ally in a Great House, possessing Machine Logic, or having Imperial Conditioning. Advantages cost a number of Development Points equal to their value; for example, a +2 Advantage costs 2 Development Points.

Allegiance: an oath of fealty sworn to a House Minor or Great House by a subject or vassal; Allegiance imparts familiarity with household customs and protocol.

Allegiance Template: A character creation tool representing the character's fealty to their patron House, such as Atreides or Harkonnen. Each Template includes the basic attributes and other abilities common to an average member of the household.

Attribute: A character's innate capabilities, such as his agility or intelligence. There are five attributes: Physique, Coordination, Intellect, Charisma and Prescience. attributes range in value from 1 to 5 (and, rarely, reach level 6 through special advantages).

Attribute Test: A Test (*q.v.*) made using only an attribute (no skill is involved).

Combined Test: A Test made by several characters working together. The best Test Result acts as a base, and each additional successful result adds +1 to it; failures may subtract from the total or delay completion of the task.

Conditioning Overlay: A character creation tool representing the character's vocational Conditioning and house profession, such as Noble, Mentat or Swordmaster. Each Overlay includes the basic Skills and other abilities needed to perform the profession.

d6: A six-sided die. Six-sided dice are used to make all Tests in the *DUNE RPG*.

Development Points: Points characters use to buy attributes, edges and advantageous Traits. Characters receive a certain number of Development Points at each stage of their Background History, and receive additional Development points for selecting disadvantageous Traits.

Difficulty: How easy or hard it is to accomplish a task. Each task is given a Difficulty (or Difficulty Number) indicating how hard it is—the higher the number, the harder the task. Difficulty Numbers are organized into *categories* (from lowest to highest, Routine [3-5], Moderate [6-8], Challenging [9-11], Difficult [12-14], and Nearly Impossible [15+]). When trying to accomplish a task, a character rolls a Test (*q.v.*); if his Test Result equals or exceeds the Difficulty, he succeeds.

Disadvantage: Trait limitations: hindrances or other problems which afflict a character. Examples include having a Sworn Enemy, being Physically Impaired (for example, blind) or hiding one's emotions.

Drama Die: When a player rolls a Test, one of the dice he rolls is a different color or size. This die is called the Drama Die. If the Drama Die rolls a 6, it indicates a great degree of success; if it rolls a 1, it may indicate a great failure.

Dramatic Failure: A failed Test measuring six or more below the Difficulty Number (for example, a Test Result of 5 when the Difficulty is 12) or any Failure resulting from a 1 on the Drama Die. This indicates a grievous failure which may have terrible consequences for the character.

Dramatic Success: A successful Test measuring six or more above the Difficulty Number (for example, a Test Result of 12 when the Difficulty is 5) or any Success resulting from a 6 on the Drama Die. This indicates an amazing success that may have especially beneficial results for the character.

Edge: Aspects of attributes representing a character's particular level of talent (or lack of talent) with some functions of an attribute. For example, the edges associated with Intellect are *Perception* and *Logic*. Edges range in value from +2 to -2, and act as modifiers to related Tests.

Extended Test: A Test that requires an extensive amount of time, or which is broken up into segments so that the Narrator can gauge the character's progress by requiring multiple Skill Tests.

House Minor: A lesser House or subfamily of a Great House, governing planetary subfiefs and holding titles of minor nobility.

Great House: One of the ruling clans of the Imperium distinguished by their governance of an entire planetary fief (siridar fief) and membership in the Federated Houses of the Landsraad.

Household: any noble family

Initiative: Determines who goes first in combat or similar situations. If surprised, characters must make Initiative Test, rolling the Drama Die (rule of 6 applies) and adding the result to their current initiative.



Karama Points: Karama represents a character's divine luck and cosmic destiny, resulting from miraculous intervention of the spirit world. Characters use Karama points to improve rolls and increase Test Results. A character's overall Karama Point total is sometimes referred to as his Karma Pool.

Level: A character's level of ability in a skill or attribute. For example, a character who buys a skill has a level of 1 in that skill; as his ability improves, the level increases to 2, 3, 4 and so on.

Narrative: A segment or body of a story, ranging from individual scenes to episodic chronicles.

Opposed Test: A Test (*q.v.*) which is opposed or resisted by another character; for example, a character who uses his Stealth skill to sneak past a guard will engage in an Opposed Test with the guard, who uses his Observation

(search) skill in an attempt to locate the character. The character who rolls the highest Test Result in an Opposed Test wins the Test.

Option: Almost anything a character does can be described by options. Making an attack, dodging a blow and using a skill are all options, divided into actions and reactions. Depending on your character's Coordination you can perform a number of options each round, with each subsequent action and reaction costing slightly more Option Points to simulate the extra time needed to shift from offensive to defensive posturing.

Renown: Renown measures how well-known a character is. Renown has four aspects (Valor, Learning, Justice and Prayer). All characters start the game with at least 1 point of Renown in one aspect (according to Conditioning Overlay).

Resistance: A character's ability to withstand damage. Resistance equals a character's (Fitness + Vitality). If the character wears armor or other protection, it will add to his Resistance.

Result: Test Result. See *Test.*

Round: A measure of time in combat, equal to five seconds.

Skill: A character's learned abilities, aptitudes and knowledge. Examples include the ability to administrate holdings, make Mentat computations or fight with blade weapons. Skills range in value from 1 to 5 (and, rarely, higher). Most skills have specializations (*q.v.*).

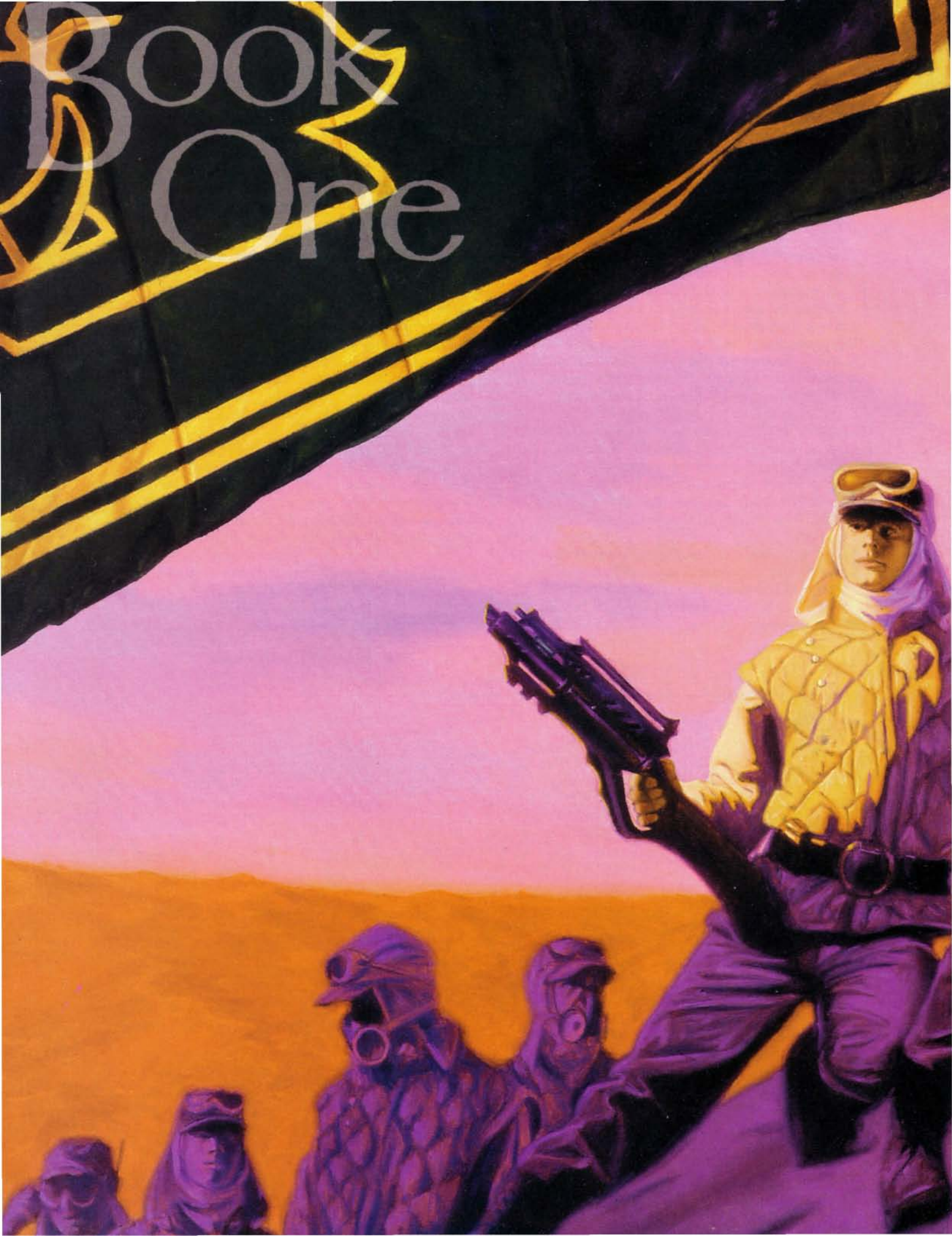
Skill Test: A Test (*q.v.*) in which a character rolls a number of dice equal to the attribute upon which a skill is based, and adds the highest result on any die to his skill level. If the total equals or exceeds the Difficulty Number for the task, the character succeeds.

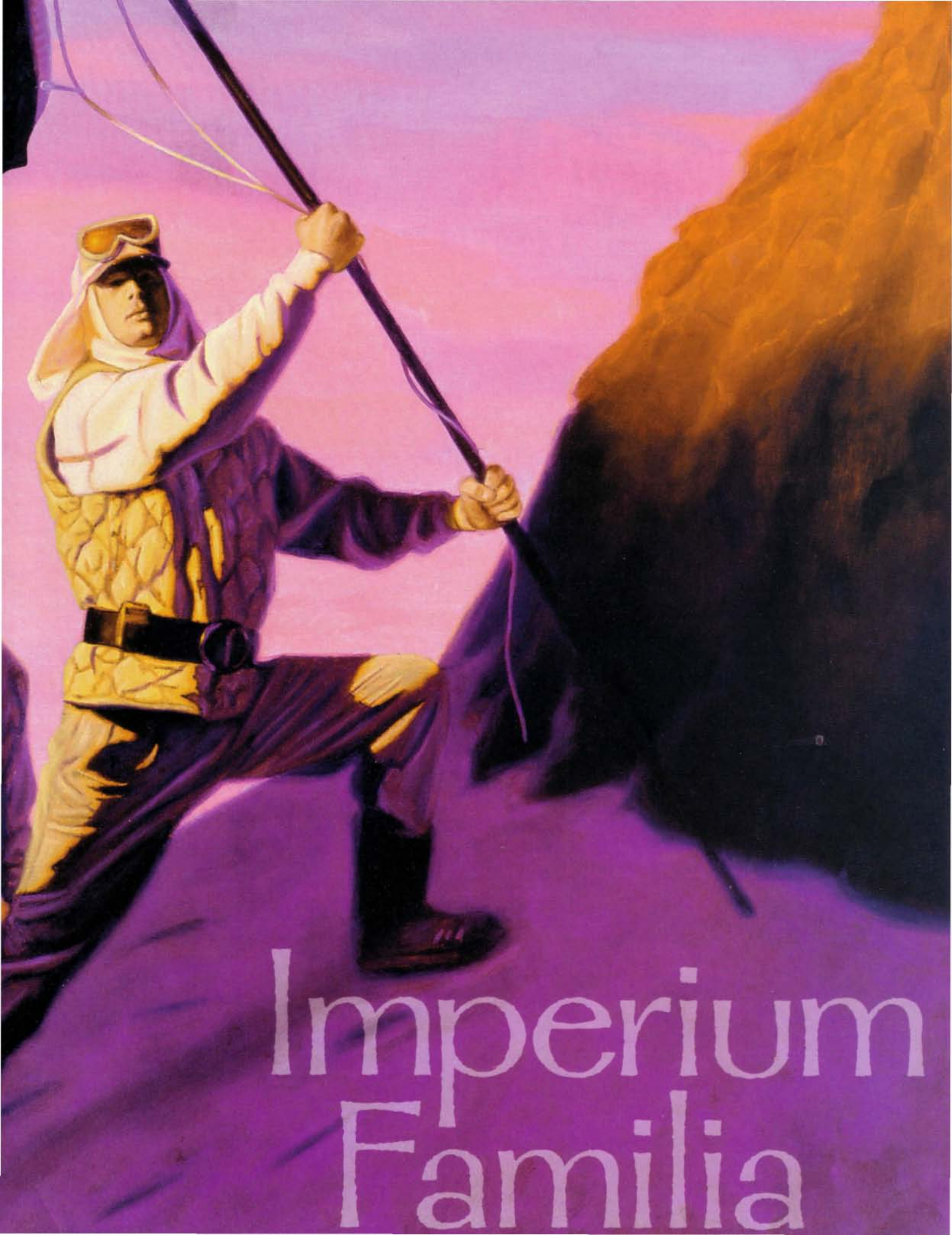
Specialization: Areas of particular expertise and ability within a skill. Many skills require a character to specialize, since they are so broad that few characters will ever learn all aspects of the skill in-depth.

Test: Tests are dice rolls used to determine whether a character succeeds with a particular action. Most Tests are based on a skill + attribute, but there are also Tests based solely on an attribute. Typically, the highest die rolled in a Test is added to the relevant skill level; if that total, or *Test Result,* equals or exceeds the Difficulty of a task, the character succeeds.

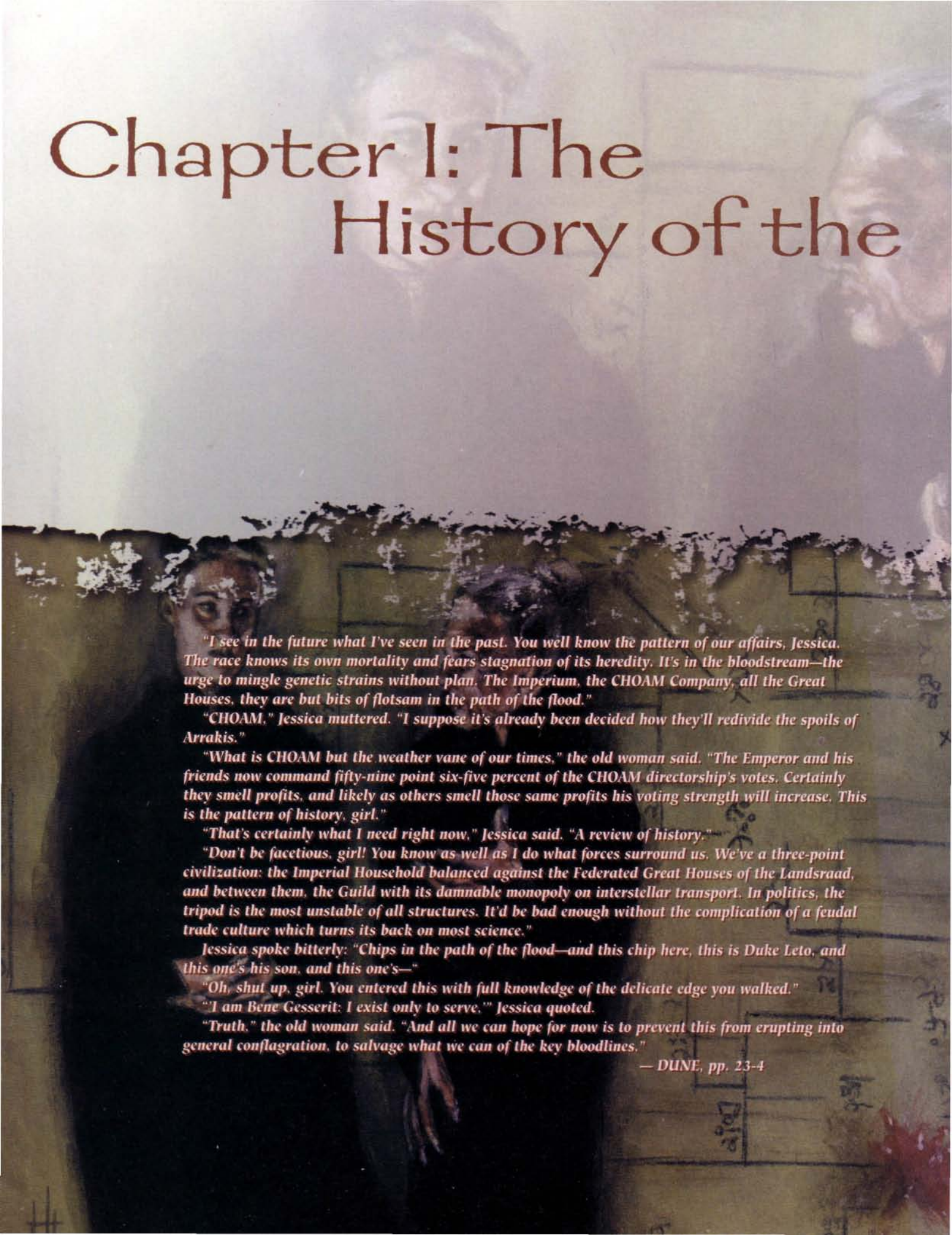
Test Modifier: Circumstances that modify a Test. These include edges, poor visibility, using the off hand, being wounded or trying to perform tasks in zero gravity.

Wound Level: An indication of a character's current injury status. There are seven Wound Levels: Healthy, Stunned, Injured, Wounded, Incapacitated, Near Death and Killed. A character can withstand a number of points of damage equal to his Physique attribute + Constitution edge per Wound Level; when he takes more damage than that, he drops to the next level.


Book One


Imperium
Familia

Chapter I: The History of the



"I see in the future what I've seen in the past. You well know the pattern of our affairs, Jessica. The race knows its own mortality and fears stagnation of its heredity. It's in the bloodstream—the urge to mingle genetic strains without plan. The Imperium, the CHOAM Company, all the Great Houses, they are but bits of flotsam in the path of the flood."

"CHOAM," Jessica muttered. "I suppose it's already been decided how they'll redivide the spoils of Arrakis."

"What is CHOAM but the weather vane of our times," the old woman said. "The Emperor and his friends now command fifty-nine point six-five percent of the CHOAM directorship's votes. Certainly they smell profits, and likely as others smell those same profits his voting strength will increase. This is the pattern of history, girl."

"That's certainly what I need right now," Jessica said. "A review of history."

"Don't be facetious, girl! You know as well as I do what forces surround us. We've a three-point civilization: the Imperial Household balanced against the Federated Great Houses of the Landsraad, and between them, the Guild with its damnable monopoly on interstellar transport. In politics, the tripod is the most unstable of all structures. It'd be bad enough without the complication of a feudal trade culture which turns its back on most science."

Jessica spoke bitterly: "Chips in the path of the flood—and this chip here, this is Duke Leto, and this one's his son, and this one's—"

"Oh, shut up, girl. You entered this with full knowledge of the delicate edge you walked."

"'I am Bene Gesserit: I exist only to serve.'" Jessica quoted.

"Truth," the old woman said. "And all we can hope for now is to prevent this from erupting into general conflagration, to salvage what we can of the key bloodlines."

— DUNE, pp. 23-4

Imperium

The new Imperium arose like a phoenix from the ashes. Its legacy was born of suffering, dependence on technology and disregard for the morality of its applications. A new era of human understanding and enlightenment emerged, one that has expanded the frontiers of human potential into realms hitherto undreamed...

Each of these things possesses a kind of truth, informing the casual observer that the current state of the universe did not spontaneously come into being. Instead, the modern Imperium reveals a legacy of untold hardship, of catastrophic mistakes, of fantastic human evolution and of often terrible consequences precipitated by such events. Most know the story, for it is a difficult one to forget.

The Great Revolt

One cannot hope to understand the modern Imperium, the places of the Great Houses within it, or the basis for the faufreluches caste system without first understanding the history of the ancient Imperium. To truly grasp the import of the empire's early days, one must recognize the motivations behind the Great Revolt—the *Butlerian Jihad*, as it is known—and the effects of this period on the social and political development of the Imperium.

While the old Imperium had endured for thousands of years, its legacy—indeed, its destiny—had been realized centuries before the first revolt on Nitzevine. Its far-flung worlds existed in relative harmony, their governments and rulers linked by a complex system of feudal loyalties and alliances. It was a time of peace, of technological marvels, and of complacency. A once magnificent galactic community—united by a common vision of expansion, discovery, and unity—had reached the apex of its stagnation.

Having grown increasingly dependent on the technological wonders they had once controlled, the Great Houses grew lethargic, losing themselves in the decadence and debaucheries that often accompany such decay. Their horizons exhausted, their goals eclipsed by the demands of the flesh, the planets and Houses of the old Imperium did nothing to stem the growing tides of dissent and dissatisfaction among their subjects. Instead, they retreated even further behind technological barriers of their own devising.

In other regions of the galaxy, technology became less an escape and more a living instrument of terror. Manipulation of artificial intelligence and sentient weapons allowed upstart regimes and makeshift "Houses" to seize entire worlds. It gave them the power to utterly dominate and oppress entire populations and planets. Coupled with the decadence thriving on so many of the ancient worlds, these new abuses served as the final affront to the ideals of the old Imperium. Revolution was imminent, and once begun it spread like a holy flame throughout the Known Universe.

Revolts and uprisings erupted on many worlds, and spread throughout the old Imperium. Worlds were overthrown, rulers expelled, and a wholesale destruction of technology initiated. Entire noble bloodlines—many of which had existed for thousands of years—simply ended, extinguished by the riots sweeping across a seemingly endless string of worlds throughout the Imperial core.

Although a handful of planets survived more or less intact (including such modern technocracies as Ix, Richese, and Tleilax), destruction and chaos reigned throughout much of the Known Universe. In addition to the rulers and their machines, billions of innocents perished in the widespread destruction spawned by the Jihad. The Great Revolt changed the fabric of the universe, plunging the Imperium into a new dark age from which it would not soon recover.

The Butlerian Proscriptions

The Butlerian Jihad left an indelible mark on Imperial history, written in the blood of the period's countless victims. The Revolt also left a lasting mark on Imperial civilization, one that would not soon be forgotten. The aftermath of the Jihad gave birth to an entire collection of new social mandates, the chief commandment of which survives in the Orange Catholic Bible as "Thou shalt not make a machine in the likeness of a human mind."

These mandates—commonly known as the *Butlerian Proscriptions*—remain perhaps the most lasting contribution of this dark time. Ten thousand years later, the humanist philosophy embodied by these directives continues to guide the course of social development within the Imperium. Their spirit captures the essence of this tenuous period in galactic history perhaps better than anything else.

The Butlerian Proscriptions forbid any sort of reliance on automated machinery or artificial intelligence. Such changes caused a radical reassessment of human expec-

tations and capabilities, and led to a number of critical social and cultural adaptations. The most direct result of the proscriptions took the form of a new reliance on human methods. Over time, this reliance would lead to the formation of the *Great Schools*—the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood, the Spacing Guild, the Mentat School, and the Swordmaster's School of Ginaz.



Science, medicine, academia—all such disciplines were initially viewed with suspicion in the wake of the revolution, and their practice was cause for actual punishment on some worlds. While these attitudes would change considerably after the establishment of the Great Schools, these disciplines still carry stigmas with them today.

Emerging technologies that did not require a human operator, or direct human control of some kind, were abandoned. True automation had ceased to exist. While the surviving technocracies of Ix, Richese, and Tleilax began to develop new technologies following the letter of the Proscriptions, such advances would not become widely known, or indeed widely available, for several thousand years. In the early years following the Jihad, such development remained carefully secret.

All spacecraft depending on artificial intelligence for navigation or propulsion were either destroyed or abandoned. Worlds severed contact with each other and with all previously centralized authority, leading to widespread breakdowns in both commerce and communication. As a consequence of this self-imposed isolation on many worlds, the government of the old Imperium finally collapsed.

In the wake of its expiration, each planet struggled in its own way to survive; not only were they forced to provide for their own populations, but they were also forced to defend themselves against Imperial remnants and internal threats without any hope of assistance. Many planets enjoyed no outside contact for centuries, further exacerbating a paranoia that had already spun out of control. The true dark age arrived with a whisper.

An Imperial Dark Age

The Jihad and its fallout ruined many of the ancient Houses and noble families, seriously weakening many others. Planetary governments fell and new regimes emerged to take their places. While many of these old bloodlines did not survive the ensuing turmoil, others adapted. Although most pre-Jihad histories were destroyed with the computers during the Great Revolt, the survivors preserved the 'Oral histories.' The importance of these ancient records would become apparent as a new feudal system began to take shape amid the ashes of the old.

In time, many of the surviving planetary governors and noble Houses of the old Imperium re-emerged. The savviest of these groups had spent the years following the Jihad and its aftermath consolidating their remaining power; in many cases, astute Houses were able to increase their holdings during this chaotic period. As contact among worlds began again in earnest, these groups began to enter into formal alliances. Blood united some, while common ideologies, territories, or commerce brought others together. In time, these new Houses would form the bedrock of a new Imperial order.

After generations of military and political maneuvering, a new feudal system began to coalesce. Most of the newly formed Houses chose to unite under the leadership and guidance of powerful, individual Houses, which were in turn granted dominion over individual planets. In accordance with the ancient traditions, these powerful new Houses claimed legitimacy on the basis of noble ancestry or ancient bloodlines, thus creating a connection between the old Imperium and the emerging territories that would soon form the new Imperium. Military and economic concerns were for a time relegated to second place. These so-called *Great Houses* began the long process of re-establishing links among the far-flung insular regions of the now-shattered galactic community.

Upon recognizing a Great House as the rightful ruler of a planet, the lesser Houses of the world became known as *Houses Minor*. These lesser Houses customarily enjoyed an array of rights and privileges; these Stipulations, as they became known, were traditionally worked into the treaty documents that led to the nomination of a Great House on a particular world. Since Stipulations often differed from one world to the next, a panoply of multi-hued rights and responsibilities evolved, with those of one system being markedly different from those in another.



As the Great Houses began to reach out to one another over the ensuing centuries, these differences would become the cause of much conflict. Before a true Imperial reunification could occur, a universal resolution would become necessary. While such a resolution remained the stated goal of most of the Houses, the road to unification was destined to be long and bloody.

Reunification: Visions of Empire

Once the consolidation process was underway, the need for increased resources and commerce became quickly apparent. The Great Houses began looking to their neighbors for the additional wealth and materials needed to continue the long recovery process and ensure their future prosperity. The widely varying differences in the substance and style of the planetary governments would prove the greatest obstacle to lasting cooperation. Many Great Houses began to take what they needed through the use of military force, warring with each other for the resources and territory they required to provide for their own welfare.

Lineage and heritage became the paramount standards in the ensuing conflicts, with numerous Great Houses claiming Imperial legitimacy by right of blood or noble ancestry. Modern Imperial scholars remember the early period of reunification as the era of the crusade, with one Great House after another manipulating the fanaticism of its subjects in an attempt to reunify the old Imperium under their own House banner.

These kin wars quickly escalated throughout the Known Universe. While not as bloody or all-encompassing as the time of the Jihad, still hundreds of millions lost their lives. Many of the rivalries established during this period continue into the modern day, with current Great Houses fanning the flames of vendettas nearing ten thousand years of age. The specter of the Great Revolt was an ever-present shadow looming over these conflicts, and many of the House leaders realized that some form of final resolution would be necessary to prevent the conflict from erupting into another galaxy-spanning holocaust.

Level heads eventually prevailed, and after a series of failed attempts the leaders of the Great Houses successfully reached a truce. The negotiations that followed led swiftly to the formation of the *Landsraad League*. Styled after the Landsraad Coalition of the old Imperium and created expressly to avert further conflict and unnecessary bloodshed, the League was a loose confederation of mutual support and arbitration.

United under this tenuous association, the new League set forth a collection of basic rights and privileges. These benefits would be accorded to all member Houses so long as they remained in good standing with the League, and the membership agreed to be bound by this set of informal codes and conventions. As a result of the still-disparate natures of many Great Houses, problems arose immediately.

Because the Landsraad League possessed no enforcing agency or universal accountability, the attempt to create a universal set of precepts and governing laws proved premature. The members ignored or circumvented the body's resolutions, and its arbitration efforts proved largely ineffective. Many of the more powerful Great Houses continued their military campaigns, and in many cases the formation of the League actually served to heighten the tensions and suspicions among its powerful members.

The Battle of Corrin and the Founding of the Imperium

Lofty ambitions and noble intentions could not save the floundering Landsraad League. Its members quickly realized that it was ineffective as a governing body, and woefully inadequate as an arbitrating force. These realizations served to re-ignite the old House conflicts with renewed ferocity. Great Houses rose and fell, and the universe once again descended dangerously close to wholesale war.

As the conflict wore on, new alliances took shape and greater powers formed. Centuries of war and political maneuvering finally came to a head at the *Battle of Corrin*, where the remnants of the allied Landsraad League faced a seemingly unstoppable force under the direction of the vastly powerful House Sarda. House Sarda, supported by its fanatical Sardaukar legions, had been making considerable inroads throughout the Imperial core for decades, and its rivals knew that their only hope of victory lay in a final alliance and a final stand against the powerful House and its suicide troops.

But such a victory was not to be. The Battle of Corrin established the preeminence of the deadly Sardaukar on the battlefield, and the remaining Landsraad allies were decimated. The Battle also saw the germination of one of the most notable rivalries in the history of the Imperium. During the battle, Bashar Abulurd Harkonnen abandoned his station in a grave act of cowardice that would later dictate the exile of House Harkonnen. Leading his lancers to fill the Bashar's now-open rearguard position at the flank of the forward Sardaukar legion, Demetrios Atreides saved the Sarda forces from the final Landsraad offensive, thus earning House Atreides lasting accolades for the valorous conduct of its scion.

After the Battle of Corrin, the remaining Landsraad forces were decisively crippled. Few Houses could refuse the subsequent summons to Salusa Secundus, where the surviving Great Houses gathered to pay tribute and bear witness to the coronation of Sheseut Sarda as the first Emperor of the *Golden Lion Throne*. Immediately following his coronation, the new Emperor addressed the assembled nobles, formally claiming the Corrino name for the Imperial House so that none would ever forget the

genesis of the reborn Imperium. Sheseut's coronation commenced the line of *Padishah Emperors* that would rule the Known Universe for the next ten thousand years. Thus ended the opening convocation of the reunited Landsraad, now securely within the grasp of the new Imperial providence.

Following the coronation ceremonies, the representatives of the Landsraad assembled to negotiate terms for a lasting Pax Imperium. It was during this first convention that Emperor Sheseut banished Abulurd Harkonnen for ignominious cowardice in the face of the enemy. It was also during these meetings that Sheseut bestowed great honor upon House Atreides, for valor in the same conflict. And so the ancient enmity between the Houses Atreides and Harkonnen began, on the floor of the Landsraad before their fellow peers of the realm.

Over the course of the three-week conclave, the new Emperor granted certain concessions to the defeated Houses in order to buy their fealty and ongoing loyalty. Thus was the *Order of the Faufreluches* born, along with a basic set of governmental edicts distilled from the original precepts set forth by the old Landsraad League. In time, these original edicts would form the basis for the *Great Convention*.

With the aid of the reunited Houses of the Landsraad, House Corrino embarked on a policy of outright Imperialism, gradually bringing the whole of the Known Universe under its standard. Most citizens remember this period of expansion and conquest as a golden age, a time of colonization and discovery. The manifest destiny of the Imperial House seemed ordained by some higher power, as the Imperium itself grew to contain not hundreds or thousands of worlds, but tens of thousands of inhabited planets. The old empire had been reborn, and its splendor and glory outshone anything the universe had ever known.

By the advent of the Spacing Guild monopoly in the year 0 BG, the Imperium had expanded many times beyond its ancient borders. The combined Greater and Lesser Houses of the Landsraad now numbered in the thousands, an amazing fact considering how little time had passed since the coronation of Sheseut. The unending spread of this new Imperialism spawned vast migrations, with millions of refugees fleeing the relentless approach of the conquerors and their now-legendary Sardaukar legions.

Most notable among these movements, the *Zensunni Migrations* continued for generations, jumping from world to world, and system to system. As Imperial troops advanced to conquer their most recent "homeworld," the Zensunni would flee to the next system. At some point during the course of their wanderings, the Zensunni stopped for a time on a seemingly barren world of endless deserts and fierce storms. Although they did not realize it at the time, their habitation of this savage planet may have been the most momentous event in the history of the Known Universe.

In later times, it became apparent to Bene Gesserit missionaries assigned to the world that its mysterious desert tribes—known as the *Fremen*—were descendants of ancient Zensunni forbears. And the planet that served briefly as their home, a planet that would one day become the true center of the universe, was called Arrakis.

An Imperial Renaissance

Arrakis and the Discovery of the Spice

Modern scholars suspect that the spice, *melange*, was first discovered on Arrakis during the Zensunni migrations, and that its secrets were carried off-planet when the refugees once again took flight. It is also believed that this knowledge made its way into the closely guarded halls of the foundling Spacing Guild near the same time. Of course with the Fremen and Spacing Guild being so notoriously reluctant to give details to outsiders, much of the history of melange and Arrakis proves highly speculative.

The founders of the Guild, along with several of its most trusted scientists and Navigators, conducted an extended series of deep experiments into the mind-altering and consciousness-raising properties of the spice-drug. The success of these early experiments eventually led to the development of an advanced program of human conditioning, ultimately resulting in the discovery of the foldspace metaphysics and prescience-driven navigational techniques employed by the Guild today.

With the discovery of the spice-drug also came knowledge of its unique geriatric properties, its ability to prolong life at the considerable cost of irreversible physiological addiction. Some scholars believe that it was those Zensunni who had become addicted to the spice that elected to remain when most of the Zensunni left Arrakis. Presumably, these stragglers took refuge in the planet's deserts to escape the Imperial scouring of the world; and after centuries of such existence, they adapted completely to their new home, evolving into the *Ichwan Bedwine*, the brotherhood of all Fremen on Arrakis.

It may also be worth noting that the geriatric properties of the spice may be partly responsible for the strong Zensunni influence remaining in modern Fremen tradition. Certainly, longer life spans would contribute to the proliferation of cultural myth and folklore among the Zensunni remnants in their new home. Because of the circumstances of the migration, the wanderers would have had limited technological resources at their disposal. This, in conjunction with the harsh demands of a planet like Arrakis, probably explains the rich oral histories that developed on the world. It could also explain the strong Zensunni cultural grounding that remains apparent in Fremen tradition today.



Although its geriatric properties are well known, the spice-drug is perhaps most famous for the strange metaphysical properties it possesses and the connections these properties provide to the two Great Schools—the *Spacing Guild* and *Bene Gesserit Sisterhood*. When the scientific forefathers of the Spacing Guild discovered the metaphysical properties of the spice, the subsequent revelation was reminiscent of Prometheus delivering the proto-fire on the mountain. With the time awareness and limited prescience provided by large doses of the spice-drug, complex foldspace metaphysics became possible in the absence of navigational computers or sophisticated machines.

The spice provided new hope for replacing the computers and sensors that had once guided starships through the uncertainties of foldspace. Using the powers imbued by the drug, Guild Navigators would become human navigational computers, more sophisticated and far-reaching than any machine had ever been. Their heightened awareness could see roads that normal humans had no hope of comprehending, and this ability would pave the way for a renewed age of space travel and exploration. It would also create a monopoly the likes of which had never before existed in the Known Universe.

The spice also played a pivotal role in the founding and early development of the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood. Thought to be the fabled Truthsayer Drug, it remains uncertain whether the prescient properties of the spice were known to the Sisterhood prior to the advent of the first Reverend Mothers and Truthsayers. What is known is that the spice has played a prominent role in the Sisterhood's quest to understand the limits of human potential and ability. Its awareness-enhancing properties have certainly affected the direction of the Sisterhood's varied programs and experiments into the deepest reaches of human experience, and these properties have also had lasting effects on deeper rituals upon which the Sisterhood was founded.

Although the Sisterhood guards its secrets tightly, it is known that the Bene Gesserit use an array of *awareness spectrum* narcotics to enter the Truthtrance. Whether these substances were derived or developed as substitutes for melange, or whether the spice itself proved to be the most effective of a pre-existing selection, remains a carefully guarded mystery.

Foundation of the Great Schools

While the Great Houses of the Landsraad strove to reshape an empire and realize their political agendas, the emerging academic and scientific communities struggled in the wake of the Jihad. Severely hampered by the proscriptions against technology, these reemerging disciplines were forced to turn inward for continued development.

Their leaders recognized the need to open new avenues of human understanding, to institute programs designed to explore the possibly limitless vistas of human potential. Such programs would eventually succeed in replacing machines with competent and enlightened human counterparts. Their success would open the way for the evolving humanist attitudes that would eventually prevail in the new Imperium.

Although numerous movements began during this period, several Great Schools finally emerged, having assimilated or integrated various lesser schools to consolidate their efforts toward a common goal. The most influential of these Schools were the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood and the Spacing Guild, with the Mentat School, the Swordmaster's School of Ginaz and the Imperial Suk School emerging as prominent institutions that would endure to shape the modern Imperium.

The Bene Gesserit Sisterhood

Seeing how the Great Houses were faltering in their political endeavors, the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood recognized the need to develop a new school for human training and development. On its surface, the Sisterhood embraced the caste system of the faufreluches. The feudal system's emphasis on pure bloodlines and ancient genealogy played perfectly into the Sisterhood's long-term breeding plans, furthering both their ambitions and their secret programs.

The foundation of the Sisterhood was based on three guiding principles. The first principle taught adepts that non-enlightened civilization requires tangible and recog-

nizable threads of continuity in human affairs. Since political leaders and governments represent those elements of society most able to support or hinder this security, the Sisterhood targeted politics as its key focus and made its practice the means of realizing its grand schemes. To this day, the Sisterhood remains a key player behind the Imperial scene, manipulating entire worlds from the shadows of relative anonymity.

The second principle taught the importance of genetic evolution and human supremacy. The Bene Gesserit breeding program resulted from the belief that without separating true humans from animals, genetic de-evolution would threaten the fate of the human race. Clearly only those possessing ideal genetic qualities were fit to rule in the new humanist order, thus ensuring both the progressive evolution of human civilization and the preservation of social and cultural continuity.

The third principle was one of preparation against adversity or times of crisis; it taught the importance of cultural manipulation and preparation. The *Missionaria Protectiva* consisted of teams of Sisterhood myth makers, adepts dispatched throughout the Known Universe to seed primitive cultures with legends and superstitions designed to aid adepts who might visit the cultures at a later time. Any adept could manipulate the resulting myths to assist in their own survival, should one become lost or stranded on one of the visited worlds.

Unofficially, such manipulation facilitated the Sisterhood's other ambitions by imbuing adepts with increased status within these societies. Such manipulation also allowed adepts to infiltrate a society to search for candidates to add to their breeding matrices. In the later Imperium, many worlds seeded long ago were actually forgotten. Arrakis was just such a planet.

The Spacing Guild

The foundation of the Spacing Guild was predicated on the discovery of the spice-drug melange on the planet Arrakis. The enhanced awareness and limited prescience the drug afforded Guild Navigators allowed them once again to perform the delicate calculations necessary for successful foldspace navigation, this time without the benefit of sophisticated technology. The formation of the Guild served as one of the first real benchmarks in the new concentration on human potential and capability.

Though the science of foldspace astrophysics was not lost during the Jihad, the act of navigating foldspace was far too complex for humans to assay without relying on the advanced navigational computers and sensors abandoned in the aftermath of the Great Revolt. The discovery of the time-awareness state imbued by spice overdose offered a solution to this problem. When heavily saturated with the spice-drug, a properly trained human mind could awaken to the complex abstractions of the space–time continuum, allowing the practitioner to see multiple lines of movement and spatial relationships in the ways simulated by the great thinking machines of old. It allowed a trained Navigator to see many possible paths, and gave him the enhanced insight to choose the proper way.

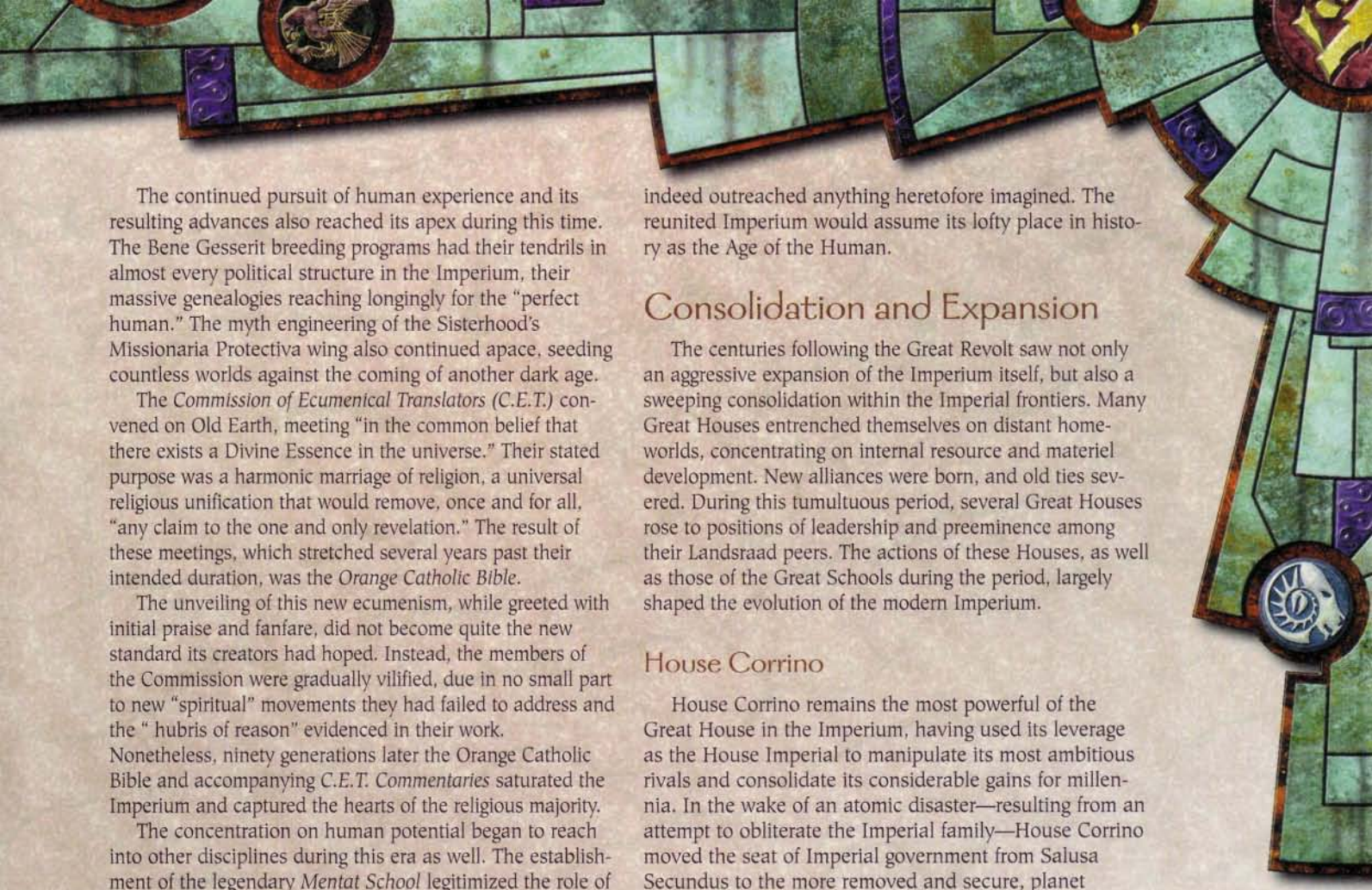
In many ways, this direct experience allows a Navigator to tap into the unused portions of the brain to "instinctively" interpolate the pattern of time-space, using the conscious mind to then select a course from point A to point B through the N-dimension of foldspace. In other words, Navigation Trance is like a combination of Mentat capacity and true prescience, except that the computational part occurs unconsciously as an instinctive manipulation of data not previously available to the human experience. The trance guides the Navigator down the correct path.

Using this knowledge and these abilities as a foundation, a small group of visionary scientists and theoreticians founded the Spacing Guild. Little did these early pioneers understand the impact their researches would have on the long-term development of the Imperium. Because their knowledge remained a closely guarded secret, the Guild developed and began practicing their enlightened version of foldspace navigation in the absence of any real competition. The result became a galaxy-spanning monopoly on interstellar travel that had become nearly all-powerful only a few decades after the founders' initial experiments.

An Imperial Golden Age

Scholars remember the years following the reunification of the Landsraad and the formation of the Great Schools as a kind of golden age for the Imperium. Most of the larger worlds formed planetary *Sysselraads* to govern planetary affairs. Modeled after the Landsraad, these individual Sysselraads were overseen by a Great House and counted all of a world's Houses Minor as members. On enlightened worlds, a Sysselraad served to protect the political and legal rights of these lesser Houses, giving their nobles a voice in the larger affairs of their Great House sponsors. On less-enlightened planets, a Sysselraad might serve as simple window dressing to satisfy Imperial overseers.

This period also saw significant advancements in space travel and interstellar communication, this time under the direction and auspices of the newly formed Spacing Guild. The construction of the first massive *Guild Heighliners* meant that Houses could now travel from world to world, complete with extensive retinues and materiel. A new era of House movement and occupation had begun. Connected to these movements was the establishment of Junction as the Guild homeworld, and the planet or planets of Tupile as the political haven for renegade Houses. Although the Emperor initially tried to keep the Guild under his wing, these efforts ultimately proved fruitless. By the end of this period of growth, the legendary neutrality and independent political power of the Guild had become an established fact.



The continued pursuit of human experience and its resulting advances also reached its apex during this time. The Bene Gesserit breeding programs had their tendrils in almost every political structure in the Imperium, their massive genealogies reaching longingly for the "perfect human." The myth engineering of the Sisterhood's Missionaria Protectiva wing also continued apace, seeding countless worlds against the coming of another dark age.

The *Commission of Ecumenical Translators (C.E.T.)* convened on Old Earth, meeting "in the common belief that there exists a Divine Essence in the universe." Their stated purpose was a harmonic marriage of religion, a universal religious unification that would remove, once and for all, "any claim to the one and only revelation." The result of these meetings, which stretched several years past their intended duration, was the *Orange Catholic Bible*.

The unveiling of this new ecumenism, while greeted with initial praise and fanfare, did not become quite the new standard its creators had hoped. Instead, the members of the Commission were gradually vilified, due in no small part to new "spiritual" movements they had failed to address and the " hubris of reason" evidenced in their work. Nonetheless, ninety generations later the Orange Catholic Bible and accompanying *C.E.T. Commentaries* saturated the Imperium and captured the hearts of the religious majority.

The concentration on human potential began to reach into other disciplines during this era as well. The establishment of the legendary *Mentat School* legitimized the role of these "human computers," and carried human-centric logic accomplishments to new heights. Every Great House soon had Mentats attached to its retinue, and no House head would think of entering into complex negotiations or political machinations without the benefit of Mentat analysis.

Other disciplines also began to solidify as coherent areas of study and training. Dueling academies and war colleges were founded on many worlds to compete with the eminent *Swordmaster's School of Ginaz*, and trained Swordmasters, Warmasters and Weapons Masters became valuable additions to House forces across the Imperium. The *Imperial Suk College* was founded on Salusa Secundus (although the First School was later relocated to Kaitain along with the Imperial seat); and for exorbitant fees, Suk doctors bearing the diamond tattoo of the *Imperial Conditioning* were dispatched to care for the wealthiest of the Imperial Houses. New centers of scholastic learning, assassin guilds and training centers, artistic schools of every proclivity—a human renaissance was sweeping across the Imperium, bearing standards of art, culture, and deep human understanding before it.

The legacy of the Jihad, while predictable in many ways, was perhaps also unlooked-for. While the age of computers and machines now seemed a distant memory, had the Imperium not embarked on a new age of thinking machines? Did flesh and blood dampen the potential of these new examples of enlightened human potential? Human development had far outstripped anything ever thought possible in the days of the old Imperium, had indeed outreached anything heretofore imagined. The reunited Imperium would assume its lofty place in history as the Age of the Human.

Consolidation and Expansion

The centuries following the Great Revolt saw not only an aggressive expansion of the Imperium itself, but also a sweeping consolidation within the Imperial frontiers. Many Great Houses entrenched themselves on distant homeworlds, concentrating on internal resource and materiel development. New alliances were born, and old ties severed. During this tumultuous period, several Great Houses rose to positions of leadership and preeminence among their Landsraad peers. The actions of these Houses, as well as those of the Great Schools during the period, largely shaped the evolution of the modern Imperium.

House Corrino

House Corrino remains the most powerful of the Great House in the Imperium, having used its leverage as the House Imperial to manipulate its most ambitious rivals and consolidate its considerable gains for millennia. In the wake of an atomic disaster—resulting from an attempt to obliterate the Imperial family—House Corrino moved the seat of Imperial government from Salusa Secundus to the more removed and secure, planet Kaitain. After the nuclear winter had ended, the Padishah Emperors converted Salusa Secundus into an Imperial prison planet, a fitting use for the ruined, inhospitable world. Today, Salusa Secundus secretly functions as a planet-wide breeding and training preserve for the dreaded Imperial terror troops, the *Sardaukar*.

Long known for its internal power struggles and intrigues, an ancient saying goes that Corrino heirs meet assassins before they meet their own mothers. While this is obviously an exaggeration, early and untimely deaths do seem to visit the House with alarming regularity. Short-lived Emperors aside, House Corrino rules the Imperium with a steady hand. The House motto—"Law is the ultimate science"—speaks volumes about the measured surety with which the House approaches both problems and threats. Although its actions remain careful, measured, and deliberate, its legions of Sardaukar ensure that none challenge its authority lightly.

House Atreides

Held in high esteem since the earliest days of the new Imperium, House Atreides has produced a long line of honorable scions. Universally beloved by its subjects, the House has ruled its ancestral siridar-fief, the Duchy of Caladan, for some 26 generations. Not known for being one of the wealthier Houses, House Atreides has long been esteemed for its honorable conduct, and has held the respect of its Landsraad peers since the Battle of Corrin long ago.



Recognized for their fairness, morality, and unflagging sense of justice, other members of the Landsraad often turn to the Atreides for leadership in times of crisis. The House is currently beginning to feel the burden such leadership brings. Widely admired among the more placid Houses for taking a firm stand during the Ginaz Incident (as the Atreides call the Ginaz–Moritani War of Assassins), the political repercussions among the more powerful Houses remain uncertain. While open action on the part of its enemies remains doubtful, covert movement and intrigue are another matter. As Menelaus Atreides himself once said during an early Council session: "Calling the Landsraad an 'august body'—now *that's* duplicity."

House Harkonnen

Readmitted to the Landsraad after a long exile brought on by the actions of Abulurd Harkonnen during the Battle of Corrin, House Harkonnen quickly rose to prominence through a fortuitous series of economic successes. The House's monopoly on the whale–fur and other luxury markets allowed it to build a vast commercial infrastructure, eventually making the House an unrivaled industrial power. Of course, its enemies are quick to point out that House Harkonnen has achieved this power through ruthless exploitation of its homeworlds and debasement of its human subjects.

Although the House's ancestral fief remains the siridar-barony of Giedi Prime, its growing economic power and Imperial associations earned it governance over the quasi-fief of Arrakis, which it has now governed for some fifty–odd years. Since replacing House Richese as siridar-governors of Arrakis, control of the spice and the resulting power this accorded solidified House Harkonnen's place as one of the most powerful Houses in the Imperium. Its management of Arrakis will dictate the House's long-term prospects, which seem bright indeed.

House Wallach

The siridar-fief of Wallach VII was granted to Burseg–General Maximillian Banarc during the sixth millennium, some 20 years after leading Imperial legions to victory during the massacre at Poritrin. House Banarc adopted the Wallach surname after being given the title of Siridar-Baron von Wallach VII in recognition of his loyal service to the Emperor. Rallying beneath a standard bearing the ancient motto, "God, Imperium, House," House Wallach was renowned in past centuries for its considerable military prowess and resourcefulness. Although its heirs are still sent to Salusa Secundus for military training and education, in recent centuries the House has preferred to concentrate on diplomatic pursuits and statecraft. Its ambassadors and arbitrators have risen to prominence in many conflicts, serving both the Landsraad and the Emperor with honor.

House Wallach also enjoys unusual political influence because of its uncertain association with the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood. Accepting an invitation from then-Baron Hurdan von Wallach, the Sisterhood moved their Mother School to the House–governed principality of Wallach IX, taking control of the planet by way of some inscrutable agreement. The arrangement seems to have benefited both parties, since relations between the House and the Sisterhood remain deeply intertwined to the present day.

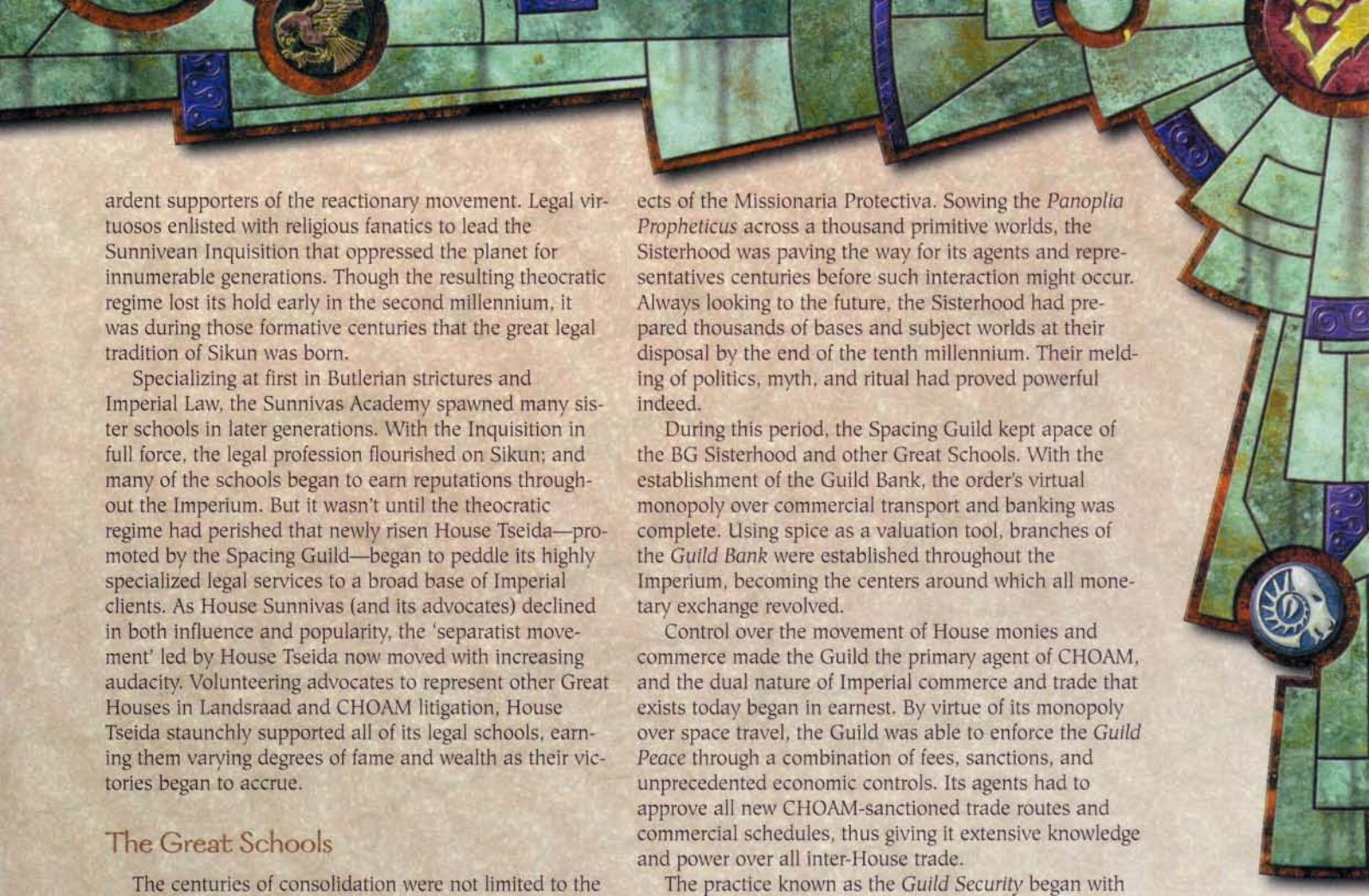
House Moritani

Descended from an ancient order of assassins, House Moritani has worked for generations to shake its black reputation. The House is perhaps best known for its wholesale destruction of the Ginaz, Atreides allies and age-old rivals of the Moritani, during a lightning-quick *war of assassins* on the planet Grumman in 10,166. Officially sanctioned by the current Emperor, Shaddam IV, the events which transpired reminded the Landsraad membership that the old forms were far from dead.

As the undisputed rulers of Grumman, House Moritani then retreated into relative obscurity once more, its ancient honor having been satisfied. Rumors persist that the House has initiated a widespread military and materiel buildup on the world, perhaps in an effort to restore social order, or perhaps to rebuild the Moritani forces sacrificed during the war. Other rumors whisper that the Moritani have revived one of the ancient *Bhotani* assassins schools; but so far, the rumors remain unconfirmed.

House Tseida

Caught up in the fervor of the Butlerian Jihad, the religious populace of Sikun produced some of the most



ardent supporters of the reactionary movement. Legal virtuosos enlisted with religious fanatics to lead the Sunnivean Inquisition that oppressed the planet for innumerable generations. Though the resulting theocratic regime lost its hold early in the second millennium, it was during those formative centuries that the great legal tradition of Sikun was born.

Specializing at first in Butlerian strictures and Imperial Law, the Sunnivas Academy spawned many sister schools in later generations. With the Inquisition in full force, the legal profession flourished on Sikun; and many of the schools began to earn reputations throughout the Imperium. But it wasn't until the theocratic regime had perished that newly risen House Tseida—promoted by the Spacing Guild—began to peddle its highly specialized legal services to a broad base of Imperial clients. As House Sunnivas (and its advocates) declined in both influence and popularity, the 'separatist movement' led by House Tseida now moved with increasing audacity. Volunteering advocates to represent other Great Houses in Landsraad and CHOAM litigation, House Tseida staunchly supported all of its legal schools, earning them varying degrees of fame and wealth as their victories began to accrue.

The Great Schools

The centuries of consolidation were not limited to the Great Houses alone. The pioneers in the ongoing quest for human potential—Bene Gesserit Sisterhood, the Spacing Guild and other so-called Great Schools—evolved during this period into the modern Imperial powers they have become. Of these, the Sisterhood and Guild reveal the most dynamic of changes.

For the Sisterhood, this meant significant advancement along several fronts. After centuries of manipulation, their breeding program had become sophisticated and far-reaching enough to warrant a sub-school of its own. Ten millennia of selective breeding and genetic guidance had created many successes, many within the highest circles of the Sisterhood felt they were growing close to the culmination of their efforts—the so-called *Kwisatz Haderach*.

As an enhancement and aid to the Sisterhood's breeding and political programs, the tradition of educating female members of both the Great and Minor Houses began during this time, as well. While the Sisterhood may have seemed a logical teacher for young noblewomen, the shadowy purpose behind these efforts was never far from the surface. As the Sisterhood gained more and more control over the young women most important to their breeding experiments, they were able to accelerate the steps needed to attain their ultimate goal—the creation and control of the Kwisatz Haderach, the male enlightened superbeing capable of being "many places at once."

The early centuries after the founding of the Guild also saw the acceleration of the so-called *Shari-A* projects of the Missionaria Protectiva. Sowing the *Panoplia Propheticus* across a thousand primitive worlds, the Sisterhood was paving the way for its agents and representatives centuries before such interaction might occur. Always looking to the future, the Sisterhood had prepared thousands of bases and subject worlds at their disposal by the end of the tenth millennium. Their melding of politics, myth, and ritual had proved powerful indeed.

During this period, the Spacing Guild kept apace of the BG Sisterhood and other Great Schools. With the establishment of the Guild Bank, the order's virtual monopoly over commercial transport and banking was complete. Using spice as a valuation tool, branches of the *Guild Bank* were established throughout the Imperium, becoming the centers around which all monetary exchange revolved.

Control over the movement of House monies and commerce made the Guild the primary agent of CHOAM, and the dual nature of Imperial commerce and trade that exists today began in earnest. By virtue of its monopoly over space travel, the Guild was able to enforce the *Guild Peace* through a combination of fees, sanctions, and unprecedented economic controls. Its agents had to approve all new CHOAM-sanctioned trade routes and commercial schedules, thus giving it extensive knowledge and power over all inter-House trade.

The practice known as the *Guild Security* began with the adoption of the new *Shipping Contract*, whereby none except Guild representatives would know the nature of a given transport's cargo or personnel manifests. A Great House could be engaged in open vendetta with a rival, and frigates from each House could be placed next to one another in the vast hold of a Guild Heighliner without either House fearing attack. While the Guild Security remained a necessary control in the new era of monitored commercialism, its secretive nature only served to make the already enigmatic Guild that much more mysterious in the eyes of the Houses.

Into the Present

The current political climate in the Imperium can best be described as a hidden stand-off. With the rising popularity of the Atreides Duke, Leto the Just, in the Landsraad, other Houses have begun to establish secret allegiances behind the scenes. The Harkonnens do little to hide their open contempt for the Atreides, as do the Moritani. Houses Wallach and Tseida, with their mysterious connections to the Great Schools, have retreated to positions of distant observation. House Corrino has become the greatest unknown in an increasingly tense political atmosphere; it is common knowledge that Shaddam IV, the current Emperor, considers the Atreides leadership among the Landsraad Houses a threat. Whether the Imperial House will eventually act on these concerns remains uncertain.

Institutions of the Imperium

One of the seminal documents in the long history of the Imperium, the *Great Convention* sets forth the guiding principles of law for the member Houses of the Landsraad. Considered a "universal truce" established during the early meetings of the Great Houses in the wake of the Jihad, the Convention is maintained by the tripartite powers of the Emperor, the Great Houses of the Landsraad, and the Spacing Guild. The Convention also details the structure and formation of the Imperial *CHOAM Company*, the chief development and economic instrument of both the Emperor and the Great Houses. It is no wonder, then, that most modern Imperial scholars look to this document as a kind of blueprint for the reunited Imperium. In its pages can be found the social and cultural mores that would guide an empire for ten thousand years.

The Great Convention

Founded in the years following the Great Revolt, the Convention defines House rights and obligations, and sets forth the intricate hierarchies and relationships that perpetuate the *Order of the Faufreluches*. It also serves to formally establish the organization of the Imperium, laying out the structure of the *Landsraad High Council*, the *Rights of Succession*, and the *Articles of Kanly*.

The rules of the Convention were primarily designed to minimize human casualties during periods of vendetta or open House warfare. Mandated in part to prevent wholesale slaughters such as those which occurred during the Jihad, each commandment of the Convention begins, "The forms must be obeyed..." The Convention's primary directive remains the most important: that no atomics shall be directed against human targets. The consequences of Convention violation differ according to the severity of the offense; such punishment can range from the sanctioned destruction of the House by the combined Landsraad membership, to loss of title, holdings, or caste.

The Articles of Kanly are those portions of the Great Convention dealing specifically with vendettas among individual nobles and their families. The Articles support three different forms for the legal settlement of such disputes—*Kanly Negotiation*, *Formal Duels*, and the *War of Assassins*. Kanly Negotiation remains the preferred method of settlement; including such options as marriage, ransom, political hostages, and financial or legal remuneration, such negotiations result in a peaceful resolution to a dispute.

Formal duels and Wars of Assassins, while rare in the modern Imperium, still receive Imperial sanction from time to time. Such "open" forms of vendetta are largely self-explanatory. A formal duel involves personal combat between two House members; such combat normally ends in the death of one of the participants. Wars of Assassins entail concerted efforts over time to extinguish all members of a particular House through the formalized codes and conventions. Nearly anything short of atomics is permitted according to the Articles of Kanly.

The Landsraad Council

The Landsraad High Council remains the principal governing body of the Imperium. The Council consists of members and delegates from every Great House, all of whom remain formally bound to obey the edicts and laws set forth by the Great Convention. With the Padishah Emperor at its head, the Council enacts resolutions, disperses aid and other funding, initiates Imperial programs and projects, and hears grievances from its members. While the Emperor is not required to abide by the decisions of the Council, the awesome power of the Landsraad in the modern Imperium means that he will usually act in accordance with the body's wishes.

Landsraad memberships carry numerous rewards. Members Houses gain voting participation on Imperial referendums, a direct voice in Imperial affairs, and ongoing support in the form of diplomatic, legal, military, or economic aid. In return, member Houses must abide by the decisions of the Landsraad and its representatives, keeping their affairs and their retinues in obeisance of the Great Convention, the Guild Peace and Rights of Kanly. They must also provide both financial and personnel support to the Emperor.

In addition to the legal and political intricacies at work beneath the surface of the Landsraad structure, the Guild Peace places additional economic restrictions on warfare among Houses. Since all military transport is arranged through the Guild, the Guild can effectively stop a campaign before it begins. The Guild Peace also sanctions the Spacing Guild to use financial deterrents to quell upstart Houses; such deterrents include prohibitive transport rates, broad commercial embargoes, and material confiscation or extortion.

The Great Convention prevents any House from taking direct retributive action against the Guild; Tupile itself is protected by the Guild Peace. Although its location remains a carefully guarded secret, no House would dare move against the Guild homeworld. It sanctity is inviolate. While the Guild rarely involves itself directly in such matters, its ultimate agenda remains a mystery to the Houses, and a Guild interdiction can ruin a House more surely than enemy troops ever could.

The CHOAM Company

Established by the Great Convention as the Imperial financial reserve, the CHOAM (an acronym for *Combine Honette Ober Advancer Mercantiles*) company also serves as the principal development corporation within the Imperium. With offices and representatives on nearly

every world and outpost, CHOAM and its countless subsidiaries reach into the daily lives of every Imperial citizen. Since it is controlled by the Emperor and the Great Houses themselves (with the Guild and Bene Gesserit as silent partners), CHOAM's interests extend into every conceivable area of production, research, and development. From the gas mines of Avara to the wilderness preserves on Ecaz, from petrochemicals on Giedi Prime to vat-grown biologicals on Tleilax, the CHOAM banner is an ever-present symbol of the all-encompassing nature of Imperial power.

CHOAM control and influence permeates Imperial commerce and production. CHOAM representatives can be found on homeworlds throughout the Known Universe, overseeing the means of production and manufacturing on thousands of worlds. These representatives are responsible for enforcing and setting production quotas, collecting tithes, debts and company fees, maintaining the balance of trade in assigned regions, and supporting or instituting official sanctions, bans or embargoes. Since they derive their power directly from the company's Board, such agents are considered untouchable by outside interests.

Most of the Great Houses control small interests in the CHOAM Corporation, with the Emperor and a small handful of powerful Houses retaining the controlling interest. The CHOAM *Board of Directors* hold the economic fate of the universe in their hands, and Board decisions reverberate throughout the Known Universe, dictating the fates of worlds. The Great Houses, including the House Imperial, control approximately 60% of CHOAM, with an additional 6% held by various Houses Minor, and a final 34% controlled by a number of silent partners (including the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood and the Spacing Guild).

CHOAM Directors enjoy enormous power, and seats on the CHOAM board remain one of the most coveted Imperial appointments for any Great House. These seats are allocated according to CHOAM ownership, and at any time the Board represents a significant portion of the company's overall House-controlled assets. With the company's virtual monopoly over the spice-drug melange, among other things, its power serves as a significant counterbalance to the tremendous influence exerted by the Spacing Guild and the Guild Bank. The complex relationship between these two Imperial economic powers demands cooperation where there might otherwise exist only conflict.

Commerce in the Imperium

In the modern Imperium, interplanetary and interstellar trade have both once again become commonplace. The controlled economy of the Imperium makes the wholesale exchange of goods and services a simple, if not particularly exciting, matter. Most Great Houses have become extensive participants in the commercial and mercantile life of the Imperium. The Great Convention and the CHOAM Company charter set forth the general parameters for such commerce, regulating certain types of trade goods (weapons, technology, narcotics, etc.), establishing the standard transport rates found in the *Guild Shipping Contract*, and generally monitoring the widespread exchange of goods and services within the Imperium.

Individual Houses bear responsibility for regulating their own planetary marketplaces—certain goods deemed acceptable by the Guild or CHOAM may be banned by a House or planetary Sysselraad in the common planetary or interstellar marketplace. Similarly, on some worlds goods produced domestically may be banned by CHOAM but still deemed legal in the domestic or system-wide marketplace. Obviously, such goods cannot be legally transported out-system by the Guild.

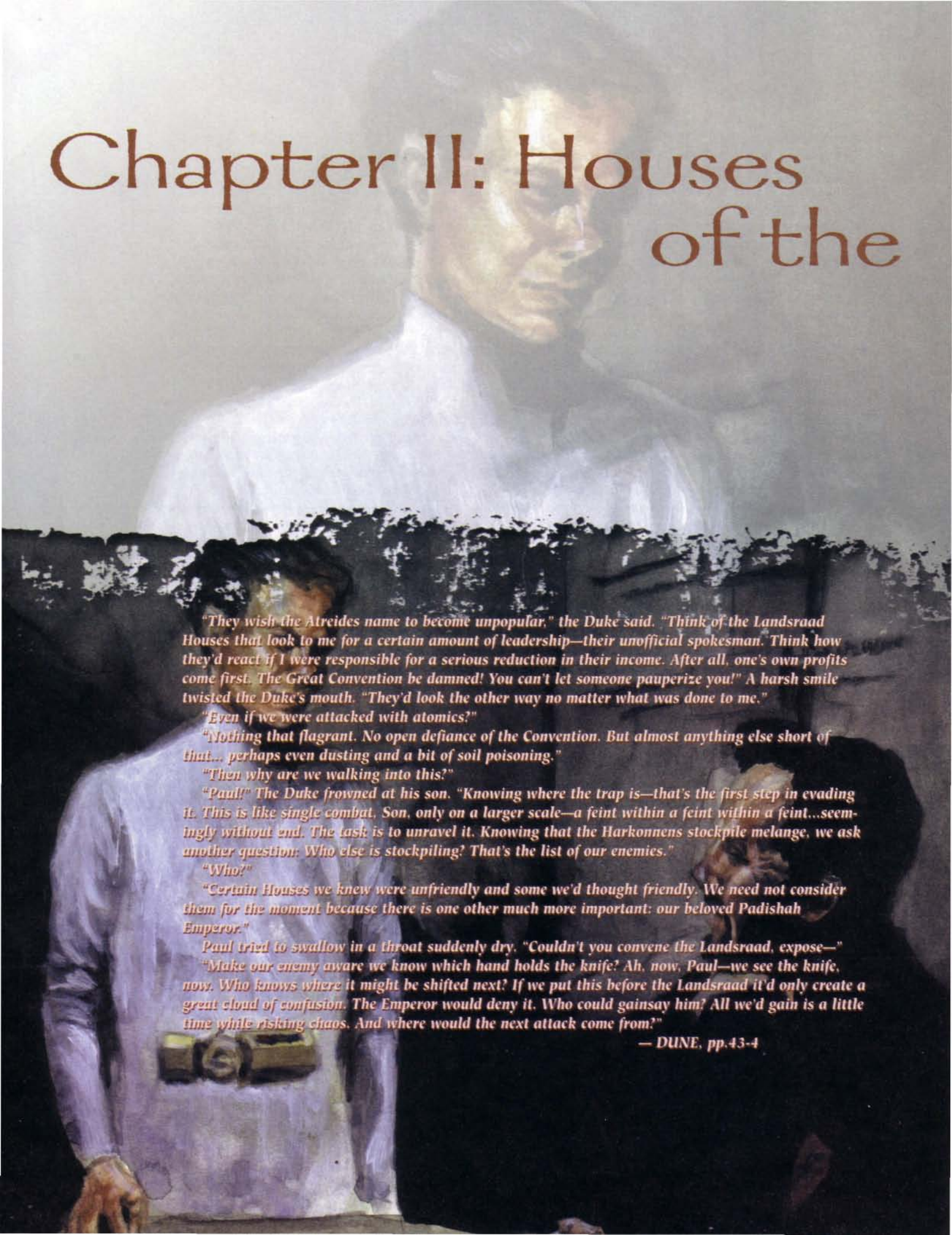
A growing smuggler trade has become a prominent feature in many systems in the latter-day Imperium. Such black market enterprises generally concentrate on planetary or system-wide commerce, preferring to avoid the added attention and difficulties of involving the Spacing Guild. These organizations bow to no law, and most openly defy both the CHOAM Company charter and any local or domestic legal enforcement. It is rumored that some of the boldest of these smugglers do traffic with the Guild, but such rumors cannot be confirmed.

The sanctioned unit of exchange within the Imperium remains the *solari*, or sol. Once based on a convoluted precious metals standard, since the establishment of the Guild Bank *solaris* have been valued according to the current price of the spice-drug, melange, on the Imperial CHOAM Exchange. This sets up a rather unique system of checks and balances, with the Guild controlling actual currency valuation and the Great Houses and the Emperor controlling the price of the spice. If the preeminence of Arrakis was ever in doubt following the discovery of the spice, that changed when the world became the de facto center of Imperial currency valuation.

On the floor of the CHOAM Exchange and within the currency pools of the Guild Bank, stocks, notes and vouchers change hands daily, representing billions of solaris in fiscal trade. In out-freyn societies and Imperial backwaters, hard currency remains the tender of choice. On certain worlds, Houses and merchants still maintain the barter system, trading goods and services according to an accepted Sol Face (or solari face value, as it is known).

While trade and commerce have become prevalent in this age of Guild transport and communication, the stranglehold enjoyed by CHOAM and the Guild over the spice ensures that modern enterprise is anything but free. Most routes and deals are scrutinized by CHOAM or Guild representatives, and enterprising merchants or Houses must satisfy their tribute to these powers above anything else.

Chapter II: Houses of the



"They wish the Atreides name to become unpopular," the Duke said. "Think of the Landsraad Houses that look to me for a certain amount of leadership—their unofficial spokesman. Think how they'd react if I were responsible for a serious reduction in their income. After all, one's own profits come first. The Great Convention be damned! You can't let someone pauperize you!" A harsh smile twisted the Duke's mouth. "They'd look the other way no matter what was done to me."

"Even if we were attacked with atomics?"

"Nothing that flagrant. No open defiance of the Convention. But almost anything else short of that... perhaps even dusting and a bit of soil poisoning."

"Then why are we walking into this?"

"Paul!" The Duke frowned at his son. "Knowing where the trap is—that's the first step in evading it. This is like single combat, Son, only on a larger scale—a feint within a feint within a feint...seemingly without end. The task is to unravel it. Knowing that the Harkonnens stockpile melange, we ask another question: Who else is stockpiling? That's the list of our enemies."

"Who?"

"Certain Houses we knew were unfriendly and some we'd thought friendly. We need not consider them for the moment because there is one other much more important: our beloved Padishah Emperor."

Paul tried to swallow in a throat suddenly dry. "Couldn't you convene the Landsraad, expose—"

"Make our enemy aware we know which hand holds the knife? Ah, now, Paul—we see the knife, now. Who knows where it might be shifted next? If we put this before the Landsraad it'd only create a great cloud of confusion. The Emperor would deny it. Who could gainsay him? All we'd gain is a little time while risking chaos. And where would the next attack come from?"

— DUNE, pp.43-4

Landsraad

The chronicle of the Imperium—its history, laws and customs—emerges as a collection of tales about each of its ruling Houses. Lording over the myriad worlds of the Imperium, the *Federated Houses of the Landsraad* rule the Known Universe according to a feudalistic hierarchy headed by the Padishah Emperor and the Imperial household—House Corrino. Serving as the Emperor's vassals, the federated Houses assume their feudal stations as planetary governors, each ruling a homeworld in *siridar fief*, and participating in the governing assembly called the *Landsraad Council*. Though the member Great Houses share in the Emperor's noble heritage and political authority, not one of them rivals the power of the Imperial House. Only in their combined strength do the Federated Houses of the Landsraad counter-balance the Emperor's immense political, economic and military might.

Role of the Great Houses

First among the Emperor's subjects, the noble families who rule the Great Houses each bear the responsibility of ruling one or more planets under the aegis of the Golden Lion Throne. In return for their noble titles and planetary holdings, the Great Houses owe fealty to the Emperor and homage to the throne, paid in the currency of monetary tithes and military conscripts. As due compensation, the Great Houses enjoy political representation in the Landsraad Council, and share in the profits of the universal development corporation known as the CHOAM Company. Controlled by the Emperor and the member Great Houses, these time-honored institutions form the heart of Imperial civilization, establishing the forms and traditions that regulate all political and economic interchange.

Landsraad Membership

Under the leadership of the Emperor, the Landsraad Council administers the body of Imperial laws dubbed the Great Convention. In accordance with the ancient traditions fixed some 10,000 years ago, the Houses of the Landsraad are charged with upholding its forms and enforcing its conventions. Whether adhering to the terms set forth by the Guild Peace, or observing the codified Articles of Kanly—the member Houses of the Landsraad must abide by the laws of the Great Convention. Failure

Landsraad Great Houses

House	Homeworld
House Argosaz	Argosa IV
House Atreides	Caladan
House Bulgravon	Dho Var
House Canidar	Navascon
House Corrino	Kaitan
House Desivine	Gamont
House D'murjzin	Omrezhij
House Dyvetz	III Septimus
House Ebee	Nitzevine
House Fazeel	Sutanae
House Harkonnen	Giedi Prime
House Hurata	Poritrin
House Imota	Zeitral
House Jongleur	Jongleur
House Jordanaan	Lybrium
House Khirmae	Francgammon
House Lazo	Milius Prime
House Luzurenne	Vintershein
House Marcion	Perdus
House Moritani	Grumman
House Mutelli	Faranz V
House O'Garee	Hagal
House Olin	Risp VII
House Pantherin	Daranglo
House Richese	Richese
House Sor	IV Anbus
House Teranos	Golumina
House Traveleyn	Leere VI
House Tseida	Sikun
House Varota	Chusuk
House Vernius	Ix
House Vidal	Ecaz
House Wallach	Wallach VII
House Wayku	none (dispossessed)
House Ysalamud	Quistorahz

Great Convention

The Great Convention sets forth the body of Imperial Law by which all noble Houses must abide. It presents two comprehensive documents—the Guild Peace and the Articles of Kanly. See page 211 for more information.

1. Noted mainly for its prohibition against the use of House atomics, the Guild Peace serves as the universal truce under which the Great Houses conduct inter-House conflict. Recognizing armed conflict as the ultimate means for resolving long-lasting enmity, the Guild Peace establishes the lawful forms for conducting warfare—placing bans on certain weapons, establishing formal initiation rituals, and setting forth penalties for unlawful transgressions.

2. Aiming to minimize human casualties and massive destruction, the Articles of Kanly encourage small-scale feuding over all-out warfare by sanctioning legal alternatives to military conflict. Namely, the Articles of Kanly establish Formal Duels, Kanly Negotiations and Wars of Assassins as three alternates to mass warfare. The articles cover each form at length, detailing its formal declaration, ritual procedure and lawful consequences. "The forms must be obeyed...."

to conform bears terrible consequences, and willful transgression constitutes high treason—the most serious crime in the Imperium. As a member of the Landsraad, each Great House enjoys one or more seats in that powerful assembly—based largely on their planetary holdings and political favor. While some of the wealthiest Houses have leveraged additional influence through CHOAM, the Landsraad tradition honors birthright and bloodline above all material wealth or economic holdings.

In addition to legislating Imperial matters in the Landsraad Council, their membership obligates the Great Houses to establish and maintain order within their native homeworld and planetary fiefs. Because autonomy confers legal responsibility, most Houses draft constitutions incorporating the spirit, if not the letter, of the Great Convention. Such documents invariably maintain the rigid caste-system of the faufreluches, ensuring "a place for every man, and every man in his place." Thus the Houses help to cement the social hierarchy that constitutes the basis for Imperial civilization and planetary rule.

CHOAM Membership

Chaired by the Emperor and an elect board of directors, the CHOAM Company (or Combine Honnete Ober Advancer Mercantiles) controls all Imperial commerce and enterprise. The Great Houses hold ownership interest in the CHOAM Company, sharing in its regulation and profit. In addition to holder shares, most of the Great Houses enjoy CHOAM entitlements, comprised of mercantile charters and governing directorships. Such grants enable Houses to control production, manipulate markets and make investments that contribute to the welfare of CHOAM in addition to the House itself.

Of the Houses holding CHOAM charters and directorships, each must answer for production setbacks, quota failures or trade deficits. As custodians the Great Houses bear full responsibility for CHOAM profits, and may lose their charters or directorships for abusive stewardship and poor administration. Though embezzlement and kickbacks remain commonplace, mismanagement of CHOAM entitlements can result in serious fines or punitive measures.



House Characteristics

In addition to their Landsraad and CHOAM obligations, the Great Houses share certain characteristics—House legacy, ruling ethos, family entourage, inter-House relations and noble ancestry. While such factors distinguish the Great Houses from other political institutions, they also accentuate the differences among the Houses, revealing their unique cultural and familial identities.

House Legacy

The chronicle of the Imperium begins with the Great Houses. Older than any other Imperial institution, the Great Houses predate the Spacing Guild and Bene Gesserit Sisterhood,

remembering times prior to the Butlerian Jihad. Living relics born of antiquity, the Houses send their legacies form a processional history, each generation bringing new hope for evolution, each millennia revealing how little has changed.

For over 10,000 years, such existence chronicles Imperial history. Still clutching to their hoary traditions, the Great Houses revel in their ancient heritage. From generation to generation, the ruling patriarchs pass the mantle of power from father to son, noble to heir, knowing that each new successor engenders hope for the bloodline to survive.

For their legacy, successors inherit the planetary fiefdoms, noble titles and CHOAM entitlements, treasures greater than the most priceless of jewels or most valuable of heirlooms. Only when Great Houses fall or their bloodlines perish do the family holdings and noble titles revert to the Emperor's charge. Thus the legacy of the Houses defines their moment in history, each a unique story, one small part of the whole.

Holdings

Each Great House rules one siridar-fief as its native homeworld, a whole planet over which the House lords as sole and absolute authority. Houses may also govern additional siridar fiefs as well as any number of lesser quasi-fiefs—planets governed by Imperial appointment, subject to Imperial regulation and retraction. Nearly of equal importance, CHOAM entitlements, such as interminable charters and irrevocable directorships, constitute a major portion of a House's holdings.

House Holdings

Fiefs (Planetary holdings)
Siridar Fief (Earldom, Barony, Marquisate, Duchy)
Quasi-fief (Fief-complete or Siridar governorship)
Subfief (Governorship, usually under a siridar-Caid)
Fee (a Familial holding)

Charters (Mercantile holdings)
Industrial Contracts (Whale-fur market, Plasteel Foundries)
Commercial Enterprises (Miniaturization Technologies, Imperial Foundations)
Trade Accords (Lasgun Exports, Commodity Markets)
Pioneering & Colonization (Planetological surveying, Gas Mining)

Directorships (CHOAM titles)
Irrevocable Directorship
Appointed Directorship
Inherited Directorship

Great House Titles

Lord (Noble Cousine)
Baronette (siridar governor)
Baron (siridar lord)
Viscount
Count / Earl
Marquess (Royal Cousine)
Duke
Emperor

Noble Title

Noble titles identify the scope and importance of the family Holdings. If a House governs a siridar-duchy then it will hold the title Duke (or siridar-Duke for formal occasions). If it holds an additional fiefdom, such as barony or quasi-fief, then titles such siridar-Baron or siridar-governor may also be claimed. In addition to its highest titles, Great Houses also claim ownership of all the lesser titles bequeathed to the Houses Minor who govern as their vassals. The Great Houses reserve titles such as Magistrate, Chevalier and lord for the Houses Minor who rule portions of their fiefdoms at their command.

House Ethos

What stamp each House leaves on history results largely from their ruling ethos. Embracing a plethora of ideologies, agendas and ruling tendencies, the Great Houses gain much of their identity from their individual mystique. Whether a House becomes renowned for just governance, venerated for honor or reviled for tyranny depends on its ethos. Considering the immense responsibility that a House bears for its subject, House ethos often draws the line between the famous and infamous, serving as a hallmark of the individual House.

House Ethos & Culture

House Ethos

Some Houses live in the past, reveling and honoring their glorious ancestors and trying to live up to their example. Others subscribe to a particular religious belief, and try to rule in accordance with the Orange Catholic Bible or other religious teachings as closely as possible. Many Houses observe no such ideologies but rather focus on achieving greater power and glory for themselves. These

Houses train their young to be fierce competitors and are usually among the most crafty and powerful Houses in the Landsraad.

Culture

Houses resemble nations more than traditional, nuclear families. Some Great Houses hold their fiefs for hundreds of generations, sometimes enduring for millennia. Over such long periods of time, House and civilian cultures intermingle to the extent that they become something quite unique in the Imperium. Many Houses develop their own languages, social customs, festivals, and moral teachings, evolved from the intermarriage of diverse customs. For the most part the individual culture descends from the Great House & Houses Minor, but sometimes the common man influences the nobles as well. The only stricture to such cultural evolution resides in the Imperial mandate to enforce the faufreluches caste system.

Within the jurisdiction of their siridar holdings each House prevails as the autonomous source of law and order. House Law governs everything within their planetary domain, from commerce to citizenship, from misdemeanors to capital crimes. Laws vary tremendously from planet to planet, resulting from the divergent tendencies and ethos of the governing Houses.

House Entourage

To govern their holdings and subjects well requires each House to employ a competent and diversified entourage. The House entourage includes the immediate kin of the ruling family and its innermost circle of household retainers. More removed, the extended entourage encompasses the entire body of household retainers, the governing staff and the Houses Minor.

Faufreluches Caste System

Caste Name	Level	Description
Regis-Familia	5	Emperor, Great House nobility, House Minor nobility, Royal Court
Na-Familia	4	Named family, Household vassals, Imperial citizens
Bondsman	3	Bonded professionals, Landed merchants
Pyon	2	Bonded laborers, Landed peasants
Maula	1	Slaves, Outlaws, Criminals

* See Chaper 11, page 213 for more information.

House Entourage

Immediate household

Nobleman, head of noble House
Heir-Designate, sanctioned successor to House legacy
Lady, wife of House Nobleman
Heir, noble family members eligible to inherit House titles and holdings
Bound-Concubine, legal mistress of Lord, capable of producing heir offspring
Concubine, illegitimate mistress, incapable of producing heirs
Demi-progeny (demi-brothers, demi-sisters), illegitimate offspring, sometimes ineligible to inherit legacy

Extended Household

Members of the Royal Court
House CHOAM Advisor
House Mentat
House Swordmaster
House Quartermaster
House Warmaster
House Security Commander
House Spymaster
House Weapon Master
Master of Assassins
Master Statesman

House Relations

As members of the Landsraad Council or CHOAM board of directors, the Great Houses interact on numerous fronts, establishing historical relationships among their allies and rivals. Though the Great Convention exists to foster peace among the Houses, inter-House warfare remains the traditional, if not inevitable, means for resolving long-standing enmity between adversaries. Yet political necessity dictates that the Houses cooperate, settling their differences to find common ground.

Houses Minor

Each of the Great Houses takes pride in its noble heritage and ancestral bloodline. Typically the ruling House can trace its genealogy to the Imperial dynasty, while their lesser kindred, the lords and ladies of the Houses Minor, share more distant ties to the royal family by virtue of the lineage they share with their patron Great House.

Because the survival of a House depends upon the preservation of its bloodline, noble households treat their lesser kindred as extended family, favoring them with titles and entrusting them with lesser planetary holdings. In the event the Great House should ever be deprived of

an heir, the worthiest of the Houses Minor could—upon the Emperor's decree—ascend as the House successor, inheriting the familial name in addition to the House's aggregate holdings and titles. Of the Houses Minor who serve each Great House, three of the most prominent families are listed.

House Descriptions

Governing the myriad planets of the vast Imperium, the Great Houses of the Landsraad number in the thousands—impossible to detail and impractical to list. The following families represent six of the mightiest Great Houses. Each is described in terms of its House Legacy, prevailing Ethos, family Entourage and inter-House Relations. Each description also features three Houses Minor, one bearing complete numerical statistics as needed for play. For a more complete listing of some of the other Great Houses, see the chart "Landsraad Great Houses," page 25. Each of the six Great Houses is further defined in "Chapter 14," pages 257 to 265. In addition, watch for the forthcoming game supplement *Federated Houses of the Landsraad* for more information about these and other powerful noble families.

Houses Minor

Scions of the Great Houses, the Houses Minor serve their patrons in much the same manner as the Great Houses serve the Imperium. Ruling holdings and titles delegated by their Great Houses, the Houses Minor govern subfiefs of their parent homeworld and manage subsidiaries of their sponsor's CHOAM industries. Whereas the Great Houses abide the Great Convention and assemble before the Emperor in the Landsraad Council, Houses Minor answer to House law, congregating in the planetary Sysselraad. And like their noble kin, the Houses Minor fight and squabble amongst themselves, vying to rise above their peers and bring their households to greatness.

The role of the Houses Minor is twofold—serving their Great House by governing subfiefs, and managing subsidiary industries guided by House economic policy. While the burden of administrating entire planets and major CHOAM industries falls upon the Great Houses, much of the day-to-day, routine management filters down to the Houses Minor. Fortunately, the feudal hierarchy subordinating the vassal Houses to their patron House entitles them to economic, political and military assistance as their liege is able to give. In return for such assistance, the Houses Minor owe tribute to their ruling House, paid in the form of tithes and military conscripts just as the Great Houses support the Imperial House.

House Minor Characteristics

The Houses Minor also share characteristics similar to their Great House idols. While the body of Houses descended from a given Great House bear closer similarity to one another than they do to those under another Great House, even minor households reveal substantial differences among their shared characteristics.

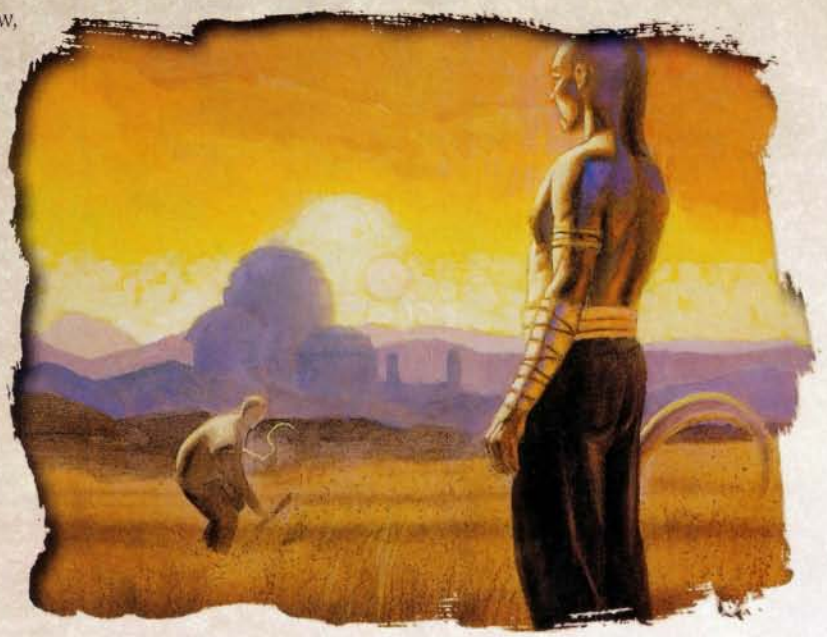
House Legacy

The legacy of the Houses Minor invariably results from their noble heritage. Sharing the same blood as their patron Great Houses, Houses Minor inherit lesser ancestry, holdings and titles. These they pass along from generation to generation within their family bloodline, continuing the tradition established by the Great Houses.

House Ancestry

Most Houses Minor trace their bloodlines to one of the Great Houses of the Landsraad. From their House ancestry, Houses Minor trace their family lineage to an original progenitor, or common ancestor who is considered the founder of their line. Genealogical descent from the mother's family is called *distaff*, or maternal lineage. Ancestry traced back to the father's family yields paternal lineage, called *spear* lineage. Regardless of the type of heritage they share, Houses Minor all claim blood relation and noble birth as a result of their Great House ancestry.

(continues on page 42)



Atreides Profile

Noble Titles: Siridar Dukes of Caladan
Houses Minor: House Demios, House Parthenope, and House Spiridon
House Holdings: Caladan (Siridar Duchy)



Atreides House Minor—House Demios

Most closely related of the Houses Minor, House Demios traces its spear lineage back to the pre-Caladanan era. House Demios is favored by the Atreides for its strident political support and deft statesmanship. Of those tools of statecraft held within its arsenal, House Demios specializes in political intrigue and adroit negotiation.

Demios Profile

Name: Demios
Ancestry: Atreides
Homeworld: Caladan
Title: 3 (Regent-Governor)
Fiefdom: 2 (Free City)
Renown: 1
Assets: 10
Attributes (House Favorite archetype)
Status: 3
Favor +1
Wealth: 2
Influence: 3
Popularity -1
Security: 2

Atreides House Minor—House Parthenope

The eldest of the Houses Minor, House Parthenope has served House Atreides for nearly 1800 generations, tracing its ancestry through the distaff side of the family. Known for its amassed influence and popularity within the Sysselraad, the Parthenope family exercises extreme caution to the point of reactionary conservatism.

Atreides House Minor—House Spiridon

Climbing in popularity, House Spiridon presents the talons of the Atreides warbird. Sponsoring a military academy, House Spiridon trains cadres of the finest soldiers and military commanders to be found on the planet Caladan.

House Atreides

Long venerated for its honorable conduct and pursuit of justice, House Atreides exemplifies the noble traditions and high ideals upon which the Great Convention and Landsraad are founded. House Atreides has faithfully served the Imperium for some ten thousand years, building its considerable reputation over millennia of proven leadership, unyielding courage, and steadfast morality.

House Legacy

More than once an Atreides nobleman has boasted descent from the mythical House of Atreus named in ancient Terran legends; but such prideful jests hardly diminish the noble ancestry of the venerable Atreides bloodline. Their progenitor being a distaff cousin to the Emperor Sarda I and a Bashar of the Corps serving in the Imperial fleet, House Atreides has proven its loyalty on many occasions, earning numerous Imperial titles and holdings. Having governed the siridar-duchy of Caladan now for some twenty-six generations, the Atreides seem content to rule over Caladan as their adopted homeworld.

House Ethos

Now led by Duke Leto Atreides, oft dubbed Duke Leto the Just, House Atreides stands as the informal spokesman for the federated Houses of the Landsraad. Revered by the lesser members as a staunch supporter of House rights, House Atreides enjoys great popularity by maintaining its reputation as a champion of reformation within the Landsraad High Council.

Though not one of the wealthier Houses, House Atreides wields considerable political influence as a result of its noble titles and benevolent ideology. Because it contends that personal honor, just governance, and conventional morality are traits to be prized above all others, House Atreides lays an attractive hearth around which many Houses assemble. While detractors of House Atreides argue that its ideals show signs of tarnish and its methods grow brittle with age, few deny that the Atreides hone sincerity to a fine edge—pledging loyalty for loyalty—and paying such debts from coffers of seemingly infinite abundance.

House Entourage

Son of Duke Paulus Atreides—whose spectacular demise in the corrida has become legend among the Atreides subjects—and Lady Helena of Richese, Duke Leto Atreides stands as the titular head of House Atreides. His Mentat and Master of Assassins Thufir Hawat serves at his side, entering a second generation of service to House Atreides. The Lady Jessica, an adept purchased from the Bene Gesserit Mother School on Wallach IX, graces Castle Caladan as the Duke's bound concubine and mother of the ducal heir—the young Paul Atreides. In military matters the Duke relies not only on Thufir Hawat, but also on two valorous souls—the troubadour-warrior Gurney Halleck, and Duncan Idaho, legendary Swordmaster of the Ginaz School. Rescued from the Harkonnen slave pits on Giedi Prime, Gurney Halleck repays his debt serving as Atreides Warmaster and House minstrel. Sharing Gurney's hatred of the Harkonnens, Duncan Idaho pledges his military expertise and legendary swordmanship, serving House Atreides as one of the finest duelists in the Known Universe. And not to be overlooked, Dr. Wellington Yueh, a Suk graduate of the Inner School, serves as House Physician and scientific advisor for House Atreides.

House Relations

House Corrino - The Golden Lion Throne must be preserved, though the Padishah Emperor needs to reform his policies if he's to rule with the consent of the governed.

House Harkonnen - The Harkonnens are perverse animals—nothing more. In time, their unbridled lust for power will once again prove their undoing.

House Moritani - Though responsible for the destruction of our former allies House Ginaz, the Moritani are unwitting pawns in a greater game.

House Tseida - We admire their legal acumen and diplomatic grace. In the past they have served our allies, and we're happy to act as their proxy in the Landraad Hall of Oration.

House Wallach - The strongest of our remaining allies, House Wallach shares many of our traditions and supports our struggle against tyrannical abuse of power.

Corrino Profile

Noble Titles: Padishah Emperor, Siridar-rulers of Salusa Secundus and Kaitain
Houses Minor: House Aingeru, House Evangelos, and House Schiavonna
House Holdings: Kaitain (Imperial Seat) and Salusa Secundus

Corrino House Minor—House Aingeru

The perennial favorite of the Corrino, House Aingeru claims spear lineage dating back to Salusa Secundus. Considered to be the Champion of the Golden Lion Throne, House Aingeru embraces a strict military doctrine inherited from their traditional servitude among the Padishah's Sardaukar legions.



Aingeru Profile

Name: Aingeru
Ancestry: Corrino
Homeworld: Kaitain
Title: 2 (Governor)
Fiefdom: 2 (Free City)
Renown: 1
Assets: 11
Attributes (House Defender archetype)
Status: 3
Wealth: 2
Holdings -1
Influence: 2
Security: 3
Military +1

Corrino House Minor—House Evangelos

A distaff line descended from an illegitimate son of Elrood II, House Evangelos is the most withdrawn and secretive of the Corrino Houses Minor. Specializing in erudite knowledge, House Evangelos serves from the shadows, striking fear into the hearts of its enemies.

Corrino House Minor—House Schiavonna

Splintered from the legionnaire's Order of the Lion, House Schiavonna owes its noble status to its progenitor Valdeshar I, exalted for military genius. Unpopular in the Sysselraad, House Schiavonna favors returning the Imperial seat to Salusa, fearing the Sardaukar grow soft in the absence of a strong supreme commander.



House Corrino

For more than 10,000 years, House Corrino has ruled the Known Universe from its Golden Lion Throne situated at first on Salusa Secundus, and later on the Imperial homeworld Kaitain. Sarda I established himself as the first of the Padishah Emperors—a dynasty continued by the Imperial House, taking the name 'Corrino' upon Sarda's coronation. Still backed by its dreaded legions of Sardaukar fanatics, the military might of House Corrino remains the key to its power. But over the millennia House Corrino has fortified its sovereignty by amassing vast holdings, negotiating artful diplomatic treaties, and establishing firm control of the CHOAM Company.

House Legacy

Head of the Landsraad High Council and interminable chairman of the CHOAM Company, the Padishah Emperor commands such might that his official duties overshadow his role as leader of House Corrino. Often his responsibilities demand he put the interests of the Imperium before those of his House, inevitably causing strife and conflict among the Corrino Houses Minor. Though the same holds true for most Great Houses, so alluring is the promise of the Imperial throne that House Corrino suffers more insurrection and in-fighting than any other Great House. In their private journals, more than one Emperor has lamented the notion that instead of greatness and riches, internal conflict and self-predation have become the true legacy of House Corrino.

House Ethos

Both envied and feared by the Great Houses of the Landsraad, House Corrino rules the Imperium with a deliberate and purposeful hand. Though as quick to anger as any great lord, the Padishah Emperors have perfected the art of statecraft, exercising patience, tolerance and even beneficence to quell impending conflict or preempt political discontent. However, such regal magnanimity always carries with it the implicit threat of violence, a subtle reminder of the real power behind the Emperor's will and authority.

Proclaiming "law is the ultimate science" as its manifesto, House Corrino militarily enforces its will only as a last resort. Nonetheless, it keeps its fanatic legions of Sardaukar at the ready, and continues to supplement its militia with the obligatory conscripts required from each of the Landsraad Houses. In addition, House Corrino's intelligence network stands without equal, infiltrating nearly every homeworld within the Known Universe. With such resources at its command, House Corrino remains invulnerable to external assault, historically finding its greatest threats to originate from within the ranks of its own nobility.

House Entourage

Directly descended from Sarda I, Padishah Emperor Shaddam IV rules the Imperium in House Corrino's name. Succeeding Elrood IX who succumbed to chaumurky (poisoned drink), Shaddam IV is assisted by a formidable council of noble delegates from the Corrino Houses Minor. Among them, Count Hasimir Fenring—product of the Bene Gesserit breeding program and legendary swordsman—serves the Imperium as Shaddam's closest friend. While the Count's wife Lady Margot faithfully serves the Sisterhood, she accompanies the Count on most missions of import, and currently resides on Arrakis where her Count serves as Imperial ambassador. The Emperor's Truthsayer, Reverend Mother Gaius Helen Mohiam, also owes her allegiance to the Sisterhood, as do the Emperor's five daughters, Irulan, Chalice, Wensicia, Josifa and Rugi. Shaddam's wife Anirul died a few years hence, leaving him without any legal sons from which to designate a royal heir. Rumors supported by the heavy impregnation of the Corrino entourage with Bene Gesserit agents, suggest Anirul denied Shaddam a son at the command of the Sisterhood, whom she apparently served as a Sister of Hidden Rank.

House Relations

House Atreides - We admire the Atreides, but regret the political necessities that make us enemies. Of all the Houses, they've become our most ardent detractors.

House Harkonnen - The Harkonnens move too boldly for our liking, but they unwittingly serve our greater interests. We indulge them in their audacity.

House Moritani - Their allegiance more assured than the Harkonnens', the Moritani have proven reliable agents in undermining the Atreides' Landsraad support.

House Tseida - We are not fooled by the Tseidan façade. Theirs is a meddlesome House with hands in too many pockets when they should be pulling strings.

House Wallach - Retired to his books, the Baron Von Wallach presents no immediate threat. His antiquated views and Sardaukar indoctrination provide the leash to guide him.

Harkonnen Profile

Noble Titles: Siridar Baron of Giedi Prime, Siridar Governor of Arrakis
Houses Minor: House Ivilonette, House Ruymandiaz, and House Truscantos
House Holdings: Giedi Prime (Siridar Barony), Arrakis (Siridar Governorship)



Harkonnen House Minor—House Ivilonette

Deviously clever, House Ivilonette enjoys the epithet "villains of Narsaire". Of piratical heritage, the Ivilonette lead the mercantile Houses Minor in wealth and favor, distributing contraband and illegal goods in return for favors within the Sysselraad.

Ivilonette Profile

Name: Ivilonette
Ancestry: Harkonnen
Homeworld: Giedi Prime
Title: 2 (Governor)
Fiefdom: 3 (Territory)
Renown: 1
Assets: 10
Attributes (House Pretender archetype)
- Status: 2
  - Favor: -1
- Wealth: 3
  - Holdings +1
- Influence: 3
  - Popularity +1
  - Authority -1
- Security: 2

Harkonnen House Minor—House Ruymandiaz

Brashest of Houses Minor, House Ruymandiaz traces parallel ancestry to the family Rabban, emulating their penchant for brutal oppression. Feared for its military prowess and favor with the Baron, House Ruymandiaz enjoys its reputation as House defender.

Harkonnen House Minor—House Truscantos

An ancient family, House Truscantos master the art of political intrigue. Risen from the vaunted Cantosaar Assassins' Guild, House Truscantos has relinquished the stalker's ways to perfect their skills in the subtle craft of statesmanship.

House Harkonnen

The antithesis of House Atreides, the name Harkonnen is reviled throughout the Imperium for its tyrannical brutality and flagrant contempt for the high traditions of the Landsraad. Spurned by the assembled Houses for an act of cowardice at the Battle of Corrin, House Harkonnen fled into exile upon decree of Emperor Sarda I. After nearly a millennia of disgrace and hardship, the Harkonnens earned pardon for its crimes and began building a dynasty from the ruins of its ignominy.

House Legacy

Through deft manipulation of the whale–fur market and careful investment in other luxury markets, the lords Harkonnen methodically increased their station to Great House status, achieving a siridar-barony on Giedi Prime as final recognition of their economic prowess. Grudgingly acceded by the Landsraad council, readmission brought House Harkonnen once again within striking distance of their ancient enemies—the House Atreides who were directly responsible for their banishment so many millennia ago. The Harkonnens have not forgotten the shame suffered by their progenitor Bashar Abulurd Harkonnen, unjustly accused by the Atreides, self-styled heroes of Corrin. But the Harkonnens learned patience in their years of exile, and secretly anticipate the day their vengeance upon the Atreides will be complete.

Driven by their hatred and yearning for revenge, House Harkonnen initiated a voracious campaign to increase their strength. Having established a power-base on their heavily polluted and overly exploited homeworld of Giedi Prime, the Harkonnens chose Arrakis—source of melange, the most precious commodity in the universe—as their most ambitious project. Years of diligent enterprise paid off when the Emperor and CHOAM Company awarded the siridar governorship of Arrakis to House Harkonnen. And in the fifty odd years of their control, the Harkonnens have pleased the Emperor by plundering Arrakis of its spice, meeting CHOAM's ever-increasing quotas while still managing to secretly stockpile a hoard of wealth unimagined by its fellow Landsraad Houses.

House Ethos

Directed by the nefarious Baron Vladimir Harkonnen, a grossly corpulent tyrant notorious for his perversion and cunning, House Harkonnen exploits its immense power and wealth to make bold and daring gains. Committing the worst abuses and enacting the most vile of practices, the Harkonnens mercilessly drive their subjects, oppress their territories, and defile their titles, inspiring fear and loathing among the majority of the other Great Houses.

Unabashed, House Harkonnen is proud of its opprobrious success, perhaps made callous from its many years of inglorious exile. They embrace the ideology of the carnivore, accepting the natural order of predator and prey. While this philosophy makes them unpopular in the Landsraad, they accept condemnation from the "lesser beasts who flock together for their mutual protection." Nonplussed by their censure, House Harkonnen aims to cut them from the herd, permitting no shepherd, especially the damnable Atreides Duke, to thwart them in their return to the top of the political food chain.

House Entourage

A man of megalomaniacal delusion and insatiable appetite, the Baron Vladimir Harkonnen rules House Harkonnen with a clenched and brutal fist. At his side stands the twisted Mentat Piter de Vries, a sadistic killer and accomplished assassin. Though the Baron's deviant perversions leave him without a direct heir, his young nephew Glossu Rabban, former Count of Lankiveil, now serves him as regent-governor of Arrakis. While the handsome Feyd-Rautha is yet too young to be designated heir, he shows amazing potential and seems the perfect candidate for continuing the Baron's designs to claim the Golden Lion Throne for House Harkonnen.

House Relations

House Atreides - Though we must crush our ancient enemies, our vengeance will taste sweeter if Duke realizes the fate of his line before he meets his mortal maker.

House Corrino - We conspire with the Emperor, letting him believe it is *we* who serve in removing the Atreides threat. But in the end, a Harkonnen will control the throne.

House Moritani - Able schemers are the Moritani, but their vision is limited to petty gains. Their defeat of the Ginaz hurt the Atreides, so we count them as allies.

House Tseida - The Tseida are too disinterested to be trusted. Their strange ways rankle of conspiracy. In discovering their secrets, we'll find their weakness.

House Wallach - This "noble" House deserves nothing but contempt. Like the Atreides whom they support, we'll bring them to their knees.

Moritani Profile

Noble Titles: Siridar-Governor of Grumman and Count of the Imperium
Houses Minor: House Laurentii, House Kazimierz, and House Prinzporio
House Holdings: Grumman



Moritani House Minor—House Laurentii

Greatest proponent of the young na-Count, House Laurentii governs the Irbasan steppes, wilderness preserve for the primal saber-tooth tigers employed by the Bhotani assassins long ago. Since the revival their Bhotani ways, House Laurentii's fiscal prospects have improved dramatically.

Laurentii Profile
Name: Laurentii
Ancestry: Moritani
Homeworld: Grumman
Title: 3 (Regent-Governor)
Fiefdom: 3 (Territory)
Renown: 1
Assets: 9
Attributes: (House Defender archetype)
Status: 3
Wealth: 2
Holdings -1
Influence: 2
Security: 3
Intelligence +1

Moritani House Minor—House Kazimierz

House Kazimierz—ardent supporter of the Moritani-Ginaz war—now suffers neglect in the court of the head-strong young na-Count. Having heard whispers of the na-Count's interest in resurrecting the Bhotani order of assassins, House Kazimierz fears the days of its own Indrin school are numbered.

Moritani House Minor—House Prinzporio

A merchant House Minor specializing in legal vices, House Prinzporio manages nearly one twelfth of all Moritani commercial contracts. Operating from its family owned spaceport near Fal-Dansken, the Prinzporio household controls enormous wealth, brokering favors among the other Houses Minor to increase its ever-growing enterprise.

House Moritani

Descended from the ancient Bhotani assassins—mercenary killers employed during the early wars of assassins—House Moritani climbed to eminence some six millennia ago, risen under the auspices of a bloody moon. The forerunners in a political battle to determine the successors of House D'artanna, House Moritani narrowly escaped a Process Verbal several months after their inauguration, when House Ginaz brought a Bill of Particulars before the Landsraad Council. Of all the charges, the most damning alleged the Moritani responsible for the false Suk, Reginald Demian, blamed for the rash of deaths wiping out the entire D'artanna family within a span of a single year. Because Demian escaped arrest, the Bill of Particulars lacked sufficient conviction to bring the matter to trial. To this day, the most complete, though largely fantastic account appears in the popular drama "Diamond Reggie," recounting the tragic tale of D'artanna's defeat and the Moritani's rise to power.

House Legacy

For the personal grudge they harbored against the Ginaz, House Moritani sought retribution for their defamation. After scores of private skirmishes and clandestine intrigues, the current Emperor Shaddam IV sanctioned an official War of Assassins, finally granting the Moritani their revenge. In a relatively short span of time, House Moritani succeeded in routing their ancient rivals, forcing the remaining Ginaz loyalists to flee Grumman—either seeking refuge on Tupile or enlisting with other Houses who owed social debts to the Ginaz family.

House Ethos

Though the Moritani's history runs black with treachery, its ideals seem no more malevolent than the other Great Houses. Seeking prosperity through the customary political, economic and military avenues, House Moritani balances its approach to planetary governance. Since its recent victory over House Ginaz, the Moritani now seem focused on internal development, devoting their attention to healing the wounds left by the war. Though possibly an attempt to disengage from political controversy, most of the Great Houses hope the Moritani feel vindicated, having finally vanquished their longstanding enemies.

Now enjoying unopposed rule over their homeworld Grumman, House Moritani strives to fill the void of purpose left from victory over their foes. In recent years, Imperial agents report an increase in military and security exercises on planet, though the nature of the maneuvers seem bent toward planetary defense and civil control. But more disturbing intelligence suggests the Moritani have revived several ancient training schools, including the Fraternus Electi, a secret order of assassins now based within the compound of the ancient monestery of Dur. Whether simply a measure of self-promotion or a sincere resurrection of their Bhotani heritage, such acts may turn their supporters against House Moritani should further evidence manifest itself.

House Entourage

Son of the crazed Count Ferdinand, the na-Count Tycho di Moritani now presides over all household affairs. Advised by Delbreth Umbrico, his father's aging Swordmaster-Mentat, young Tycho broods in council awaiting the day his father either abdicates office or succumbs to chronic madness. His mother, the Bene Gesserit-trained Lady Redolyn has proven instrumental in wresting much of Ferdinand's power, entrusting all Landsraad affairs to the na-Count. Tycho's third influence answers to the name Paimon Pradisek, a tall, swarthy monolith eternally stooping over his lordship to whisper into the young master's ear. Obviously distrusted by both Delbreth and Redolyn, Paimon officiously rebukes his detractors. He reminds them *his* was the first appointment Tycho made of his own recognizance, a fact that should be of special interest to those who wish to remain in the lord's good graces. Witnessing such exchanges from the shadows, Valdemar and Eguski—Tycho's fickle demi-sisters—observe the proceedings with apparent displeasure, all too aware that should some mishap befall the na-Count one of them would be eligible to marry and conceive the heir to the Moritani household.

House Relations

House Atreides - Friends of our enemies, the Atreides remain too powerful to oppose openly. We must tread with caution.

House Corrino - We appreciate the Emperor's non-interference in our war against the Ginaz. Yet we remain wary of his underlying motives.

House Harkonnen - The Harkonnens are a great power within the Imperium. Though daring what we dare not, we learn from them what we may.

House Tseida - Our arrangement with the Tseida prove our salvation if ever we need to defend our House projects against Landsraad opposition.

House Wallach - Knowing that they consort with the Sisterhood may provide the lever to move their planet.

Tseida Profile

Noble Titles: Siridar-Marquisate of Sikun, Marquis de Tseida
Houses Minor: House Ikeni, House Sunnivas, and House Wyrkiru
House Holdings: Sikun (siridar fief)

Tseida House Minor—House Ikeni

House Ikeni acts as the sole legal representatives of the Tseidan royal family. Specializing in Imperial law as it pertains to the government of Houses and the conduct of landed nobility, House Ikini truly serves as the defenders of the Tseidan name.

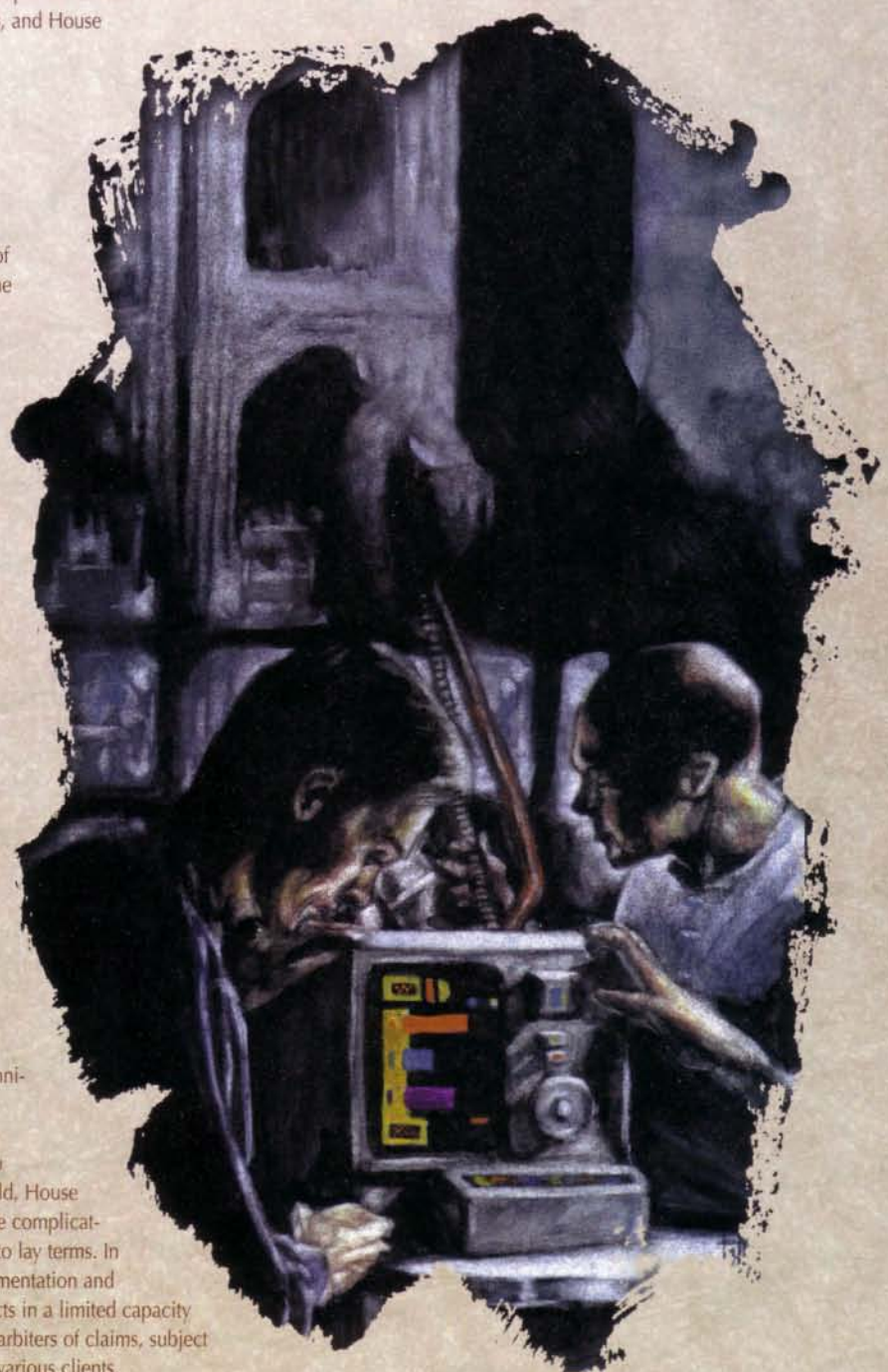
Ikeni Profile
Name: Ikeni
Ancestry: Tseida
Homeworld: Sikun
Title: 2 (Governor)
Fiefdom: 2 (Free City)
Renown: 1
Assets: 11
Attributes (House Defender archetype)
Status: 3
Wealth: 2
Holdings -1
Influence: 2
Security: 3
Intelligence +1

Tseida House Minor—House Sunnivas

A fanatical supporter of the Butlerian Jihad, the forebears of House Sunnivas once ruled Sikun under an oppressive theocratic regime. The noble family founded the Sunnivas Academy—specializing in the Butlerian strictures—and was reinstated as its controlling House Minor in the seventh millennium.

Tseida House Minor—House Wyrkiru

Acting in secret partnership with the Guild, House Wyrkiru often acts as a liaison, translating the complicated terms of the Guild's transport contracts into lay terms. In addition to handling much of the legal documentation and bureaucratic legwork, House Wyrkiru also acts in a limited capacity as legal consultants, registrars of disputes or arbiters of claims, subject to the various terms of their agreement with various clients.



House Tseida

The least conventional of the Great Houses, the House of the Phoenix presents an enigmatic history and isolationist façade which few of the other Houses can truly understand. Descended from staunch supporters of the Butlerian Jihad, House Tseida arose from a fanatical theocratic regime (led by House Sunnivas) early in the second millennium. Sponsored by Emperor Faradan II (a proven agnostic) and underwritten by the Spacing Guild, House Tseida emerged as an immediate power, inviting jealous hostility and petty bitterness from many of the member Houses. Further incensed by the Tseida's exotic grace, eloquent diplomacy, and formidable legal mastery, several Houses banded together forming an anti-Tseidan league, disseminating malicious propaganda tainting the Tseidan reputation to this day. In a display of support, Duke Aramis Atreides is said to have spoken, "such was the splendor of the risen phoenix that the lesser birds could naught but call and hoot for all their plainness."

House Legacy

Rising from the ashes brought on by the Great Revolt, House Tseida did in truth resemble the phoenix as it struggled for centuries in the aftermath of its own holy Inquisition—a period of theocratic tyranny marked by legal oppression and a largely profit-driven anti-technological movement. Recovering their technological roots and religious stability during the second millennia, by its end House Tseida had routed the last of House Sunnivas' avid supporters. Soon after the House proved successful in its campaign to earn the Emperor's support in its bid for the sirdiar-marquisate of Sikun. Firmly established as a legalistic culture in the early second millennium, the Tseida joined the Landsraad at the beginning of its golden age, and has continued its growth to become a forerunner in legal consultation—from Landsraad ordeals and CHOAM acquisitions to Spacing regulations and Kanly disputes.

House Ethos

Adapting its ancient legal traditions to create a prosperous, service-based economy, House Tseida owes its identity to its strange heritage of reformation and perseverance, symbolized by their complementary emlems—the pheonix and the willow. House Tseida emulates the Spacing Guild in composing its façade—finding a mask of political neutrality and reclusive self-interest less threatening to its peers and more conducive to business.

Well cognizant of the dangers arising from popular revolution, House Tseida has withdrawn from the incendiary politics of the Landsraad community. Rather than taking a stance on this side or that, House Tseida straddles the line riding most issues with a foot in each cart. Regarded for its almost unparalleled mastery in matters of law, House Tseida profits from all forms of legal representation—from criminal proceedings and kanly diputes to spacing violations and Butlerian infractions. While its isolationist tendencies and exotic cultural identity give its detractors plenty of fodder for ridicule, House Tseida conducts all of its affairs with stately diplomacy and consummate detail, ever mindful of their public perception and self-created mystique.

House Entourage

Since the passing of her father, the Marquise Catriona Tseida presides as Daughter-Regent of Sikun, until her nephew Iorgu comes of legal age to assume the marquisate. Iorgu's mother Ilema, a Bene Gesserit Sister of unknown rank, tutors her son in the fundamentals of politics, while his aunt Catriona frequently permits him to spy on the functions of court, using a hidden device monitoring all activities occurring in the official reception hall. The Mentat-Suk, Dorian Mu, serves as Iorgu's distinguished chaperone and private instructor, teaching lessons in science, law, ethics and customs in both galach and the native Sikunese tongue. Guarding the heir apparent falls upon the capable shoulders of Hiro Okusa, aging Swordmaster of House Tseida. Quick to discipline with his blunted kendo, Hiro's harsh discipline has oft brought him before the Daughter-Regent to explain his rough methodology. Yet in spite of this, Iorgu promises to be one of the finest duelists on the planet Sikun.

House Relations

House Atreides - The Atreides have been gracious supporters, and we are happy to return the favor.

House Corrino - We owe the Imperial House our gratitude, but we tire of their meddling in our affairs.

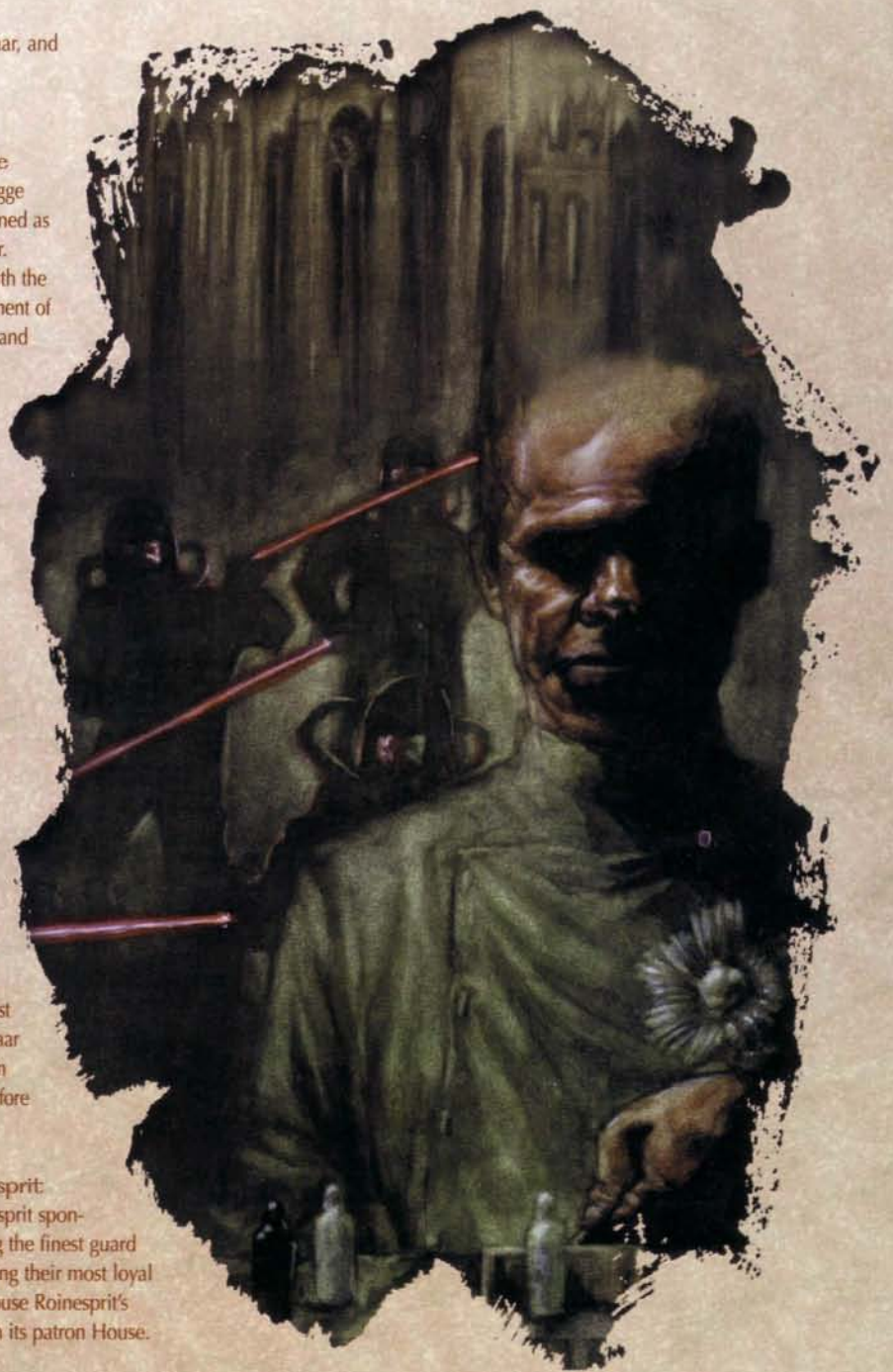
House Harkonnen - Though we admire their ability to wriggle through loopholes, we foresee a day when the loophole becomes a noose.

House Moritani - Though the Moritani retain the services of our best legal schools, we take no responsibility for their actions or intentions.

House Wallach - Though we fight our battles in different arenas, we both understand the needs of Imperial politics.

Wallach Profile

Noble Titles: Siridar Baron of Wallach VII
Houses Minor: House Brugge, House Ottovaar, and House Roinesprit
House Holdings: Wallach IX (Siridar Fief)



Wallach House Minor—House Brugge

Noted for their gift of intellect, House Brugge tempers its militarism with scholarship, renowned as the most learned of the Wallach Houses Minor. Having established an ongoing relationship with the Sisterhood, House Brugge enjoys the appointment of a Bene Gesserit proctor who tutors their heirs and advises their lords.

Brugge Profile

Name: Brugge
Ancestry: Wallach
Homeworld: Wallach VII
Title: 3 (Regent-Governor)
Fiefdom: 2 (Free City)
Renown: 1
Assets: 10
Attributes (House Favorite archetypes)
Status: 3
Aegis +1
Wealth: 2
Influence: 3
Popularity -1
Security: 2

Wallach House Minor—House Ottovaar

Tracing its roots to Salusa Secundus, House Ottovaar exerts strict military discipline throughout its landed holdings. Perhaps the most ardent of the Wallach Houses Minor, the Ottovaar family frowns upon the Sisterhood's meddling in House affairs, often voicing their resentment before the other Houses Minor of the Sysselraad.

Wallach House Minor—House Roinesprit

Champions of their patron, House Roinesprit sponsors a military academy dedicated to training the finest guard commanders and security personnel. Assigning their most loyal graduates to the court of House Wallach, House Roinesprit's unswerving devotion earns it great favor with its patron House.

House Wallach

Renowned as a conqueror of worlds House Wallach procured its name and titles nearly 5 millennia past, under the leadership of Maximillian Banarc, a former Burseg General of the Imperial Sardaukar. Designated Caid of the homeworld Wallach VII, Maximillian demonstrated extraordinary aptitude in his newly appointed station. After nearly a decade of planetary governance, Maximillian was honored by the Emperor Marasuet II, given the noble title of Siridar-Baron and full charge of his adopted home on Wallach VII. In appreciation of this honor and out of love for his planet, the Baron relinquished his given surname, choosing "Wallach" for his House banner and Imperial monogram.

House Legacy

From that day forth, the House of Wallach swore a chivalric oath to defend the Imperium with the blood of its line. And in emblazoning the motto "God, Imperium, House" upon his coat of arms, the Baron instituted a tradition of Imperial service that House Wallach perpetuates even to the present day.

Perhaps the most fortuitous of their sovereign acts, House Wallach enticed the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood to relocate their Mother School to Wallach IX. Accepting their gracious offer, the Sisterhood moved their headquarters under secret agreement, entering into a mysterious relationship adding to House Wallach's already formidable influence.

House Ethos

Once preoccupied with strict discipline and the glory of battle, House Wallach currently affects a much more placid demeanor, reflecting the mellowing attitude of its aging ruler. Baron Wolfram von Wallach, once a Colonel-Bashar in the Imperial Sardaukar, now spends most of his leisure time recounting his military exploits, filling volumes of journals and shigawire reels. Admitting his pastime appears somewhat self-indulgent, the Baron argues that such activity keeps his mind sharp, providing invaluable perspective on the art of governance and political tradition.

Whether true or not, the fact remains that Baron Wolfram von Wallach is perhaps one of the greatest statesman to be found in the Landsraad. Still fit enough to best three men in physical combat, the Baron now applies his strategic thinking to matters of social and political nature. While not overly affluent in holdings or monies, House Wallach presents the calm assurance and steadfast conviction found only in those who are rich in self-assurance.

House Entourage

As the direct descendants of Burseg-General Maximillian Banarc, commander of countless legions of Imperial Sardaukar, House Wallach continues its ancestral heritage by sending all of its noble scions to be trained with the Sardaukar. Raised in accordance with tradition, Baron Wolfram von Wallach served the Imperium as Colonel-Bashar of the Corps for nearly three decades before finally retiring to assume his rightful station as head of House Wallach. Having sired numerous offspring over his decades of military campaigning, the Baron claims but a single heir for his fortunes, the na-Baron Christhaad von Silgaimar. His mother—a Bene Gesserit concubine specially appointed to Wolfram by the Mother School on Wallach IX—the Lady Gersha maintains her youthful appearance in spite of her many years. Preparing Christhaad in the secret 'weirding ways,' Gersha insists she abides her liege's commandments, giving their son special training certain to make him excel in his service to the Sardaukar. The Baron's wily Mentat Olifer Mangrove supports his Lady's arguments, often chiding the Baron not to interfere with the Sisterhood's unspoken agendas. Now making ready to ship off to Salusa Secundus, the courageous Christhaad has proven a most formidable young man, strong like the father, sharp like the Mentat, and keenly observant like the Bene Gesserit mother.

House Relations

House Atreides - A puissant and honorable family, the Atreides are our allies, though we've been fierce competitors in the past.

House Corrino - Long rule the Padishah Emperors! As His Majesty commands, so shall we lend our blades.

House Harkonnen - A vile menace to the Emperor and the noble Duke, His Majesty should declare a pogrom against Giedi Prime, purging the rot of the Harkonnen regime.

House Moritani - The sly little fox cannot forever evade the royal huntsmen. So may the Moritani find themselves cornered by a pack of Imperial wolfhounds.

House Tseida - Their ways are not our own; but we acknowledge their service to the Imperium. There may yet come a day when all battles are fought in the private chambers of the Landsraad Hall.

(continued from page 29)

• **Name** - Houses Minor adopt traditional surnames to identify their clan lineage, noble ancestry, or familial relations. Examples of family names appearing in *DUNE* include the surnames Rabban and Rautha, both of which share Harkonnen pedigree and family genealogy.

• **Homeworld** - Except for the rarest of cases, Houses Minor maintain residence upon their ancestral homeworlds. Claiming noble titles and territorial fiefdoms as a result of their ancestral ties, Houses Minor have a decided interest in supporting their governing Great House, and may further prosper by demonstrating astute governance and proper stewardship of their familial holdings. More than once history tells of lesser families rising to greatness as a result of sickness or infirmity leaving the ruling House without a suitable heir. In such cases, the most able and honored of the Houses Minor may be called upon by the Emperor to assume the mantle of the Household name, raising their familial station to that of a Great House.

House Holdings (Fiefdom & Title)

Entrusted with the administration and governance of particular territories or regions of their homeworld, Houses Minor rule fiefdoms or "fees" under the aegis of their patron House. Typically inherited along with noble titles and other economic holdings. Fees, like fiefdoms, confer political, economic, and military power unto their governing families. In addition, fees provide natural resources, indigenous labor forces, and the required infrastructure to make the locality self-sufficient, if not in fact, profitable to the governing family.

House Minor Fees

Fiefdom Levels

Level/Cost	Description
1	City District
2	Free City
3	Territory
4	Province
5	Subfief

Noble Titles

Level/Cost	Description
1	Magistrate
2	Governor
3	Regent-Governor/Knight/Chevalier
4	Lord/Noble Cousine
5	Siridar Governor/Baronet

Along with fiefdoms, Houses Minor inherit titles of rank and nobility from their ancestral Houses. Titles confer political and social privileges to their custodian families. Most importantly, titles denote the House's status within the regional Sysselraad, representing a certain number of elective votes in addition to a certain amount of political sway. Titles may also provide historical or genealogical information about your family ancestry, identifying various holdings (e.g. Count of Lankiveil) or governing status (e.g. siridar-absentia).

House Renown

Over time, Houses Minor develop renown for their actions, performance and character, gaining any number of positive or negative reputations. As family renown increases, so does their general clout and social recognition. Though a House's renown does not directly affect their innate status or influence, it does affect their negotiations with their Great House patron and noble peers within the the planetary Sysselraad.

Renown

Level	Description
1	Celebrated throughout your fee; acknowledged by your patron
2	Prominent among the Houses Minor of the Sysselraad
3	Renowned within your homeworld capital and several subfiefs
4	Noted throughout your homeworld
5	Recognized on other homeworlds

Sample Topics for Reputations
Attributes, legacy, holdings, ethos, entourage, relations

House Renown also factors whenever there exists a question of name recognition. In game terms, House Renown determines the number of dice the Narrator rolls to determine if another individual recognizes a House Minor by name, associating them with one or more of their common reputations. During such Recognition Tests, the Narrator rolls a number of dice equal to the House's Renown level (see "Renown," page 119).

House Assets

House Assets represents the entirety of household collateral reserves, measured in leveraged status, solvent wealth, expendable influence and security infrastructure. Much like personal experience or saved earnings, Assets embody the aggregate experience and resources upon which the House may draw to implement its programs and further its agenda.

During Narrative Interludes, players may spend Assets to initiate House Ventures (see "House Ventures,"

page 117 and 179). Like character experience, House Assets fluctuate upward and downward as ventures pay off or fall short of their objectives.

House Attributes

Attributes represent the family's innate social and material qualities, providing an overview of its political clout, economic resources, social reputation, and defensive capabilities. Attribute levels range from 1 to 5 for Houses Minor, higher levels indicating greater degrees of achievement.

House attributes come into play whenever characters embark on House Ventures, specific family missions initiated and resolved in the course of play or during Narrative Interludes. When attempting Ventures on behalf of his House, characters perform Skill Tests receiving a number of dice determined by the governing House attribute (instead of the character's attribute). See "Tests," page 111 and "Ventures," page 117.

Status (Aegis, Favor)

Status measures the degree of social privilege and political favor the family holds with its governing Great House. Houses Minor can exploit status to petition ruling Houses for political, military, or financial support. Alternately, a family can leverage its status to oppose rival families in their own pursuits, using their Sysselraad votes to countermand their rival's propositions, or manipulating their favor to undermine their rival's support. House status ranges from 1 to 5 and incorporates two edges—Aegis and Favor.

Wealth (Holdings, Stockpiles)

Wealth measures the House Minor's economic strength and financial wherewithal. Resulting primarily from its vested holdings and accumulated stockpiles, wealth comprises annual revenue from tithes and investments, financial assets such as charters and directorships, economic infrastructure such as mining facilities or industrial plants, and economic resources such as natural timberlands or an indigenous labor force. Houses Minor use wealth primarily to overcome economic setbacks or financial recessions; however, wealth may also be used to elevate status, acquire influence, implement policies or negotiate settlements. House wealth ranges from 1 to 5 and consists of two edges—Holdings and Stockpiles.

Influence (Popularity, Authority)

Influence measures the House's political sway and esteem among its noble peers and governed subjects. Houses Minor use influence to arrange marriages, negotiate alliances, sway popular opinion and rally support among the other noble families. Houses Minor also use influence to garner popular consent, encourage loyalty, bolster morale and, in dire circumstances, curb rebellion.

House Minor Attributes

Status-Range (1 - 5)

Rank	Description
1	Recognized
2	Indulged
3	Favored
4	Privileged
5	Honored

House Influence-Range (1 - 5)

Rank	Description
1	Tolerated
2	Respected
3	Supported
4	Admired
5	Revered

Wealth-Range (1 - 5)

Rank	Description
1	Moneyed
2	Prosperous
3	Affluent
5	Rich
5	Opulent

Security-Range (1 - 5)

Rank	Description
1	Capable
2	Proficient
3	Accomplished
4	Potent
5	Formidable

House influence ranges from 1 to 5 and encompasses two edges—Popularity and Authority.

Security (Military, Intelligence)

Security refers to the House's military strength and covert intelligence. Houses Minor employ Security to defend their interests—securing their holdings, protecting their households or gathering information. Aggressive families may also leverage their Security to infiltrate enemy territories, attack rival holdings, or sabotage enemy resources. House Security ranges from 1 to 5 and comprises two edges—Military and Intelligence.

House Minor Creation

The rise and fall of noble Houses is central to the DUNE milieu. How could the legend of Paul Atreides be conveyed without recounting the great rivalry between House Atreides and its mortal enemy House Harkonnen? How could the reader understand the motivations behind the Padishah Emperor, Ginaz Swordmaster Duncan Idaho, or even the Lady Jessica of the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood without detailed knowledge of the political framework and familial relationships extant between the ruling Houses of the Imperium? Thus the concept of House, with its political and social implications, sets the stage for much of the characterization and drama occurring in the DUNE milieu.

The *DUNE RPG* portrays this symbiosis between character and House by encouraging the players and narrator to share in the creation of their own, unique families. By populating the Imperium with your own noble Houses, you'll not only fill in the gaps where *DUNE* leaves off, but

also establish a firm basis for telling original, politically-charged narratives. Your characters who share the burdens of the family household will engender gripping drama, their acts of self-sacrifice or strides toward glory deciding the fate of their parent House. By binding characters to House so inextricably, you'll not only make your stories more true to the DUNE milieu, but also you'll raise your character's actions to heroic magnitude or tragic dimension as their personal fate determines the destiny of an entire House Minor bloodline.

Players unfamiliar with the DUNE universe can begin playing immediately by selecting one of the Houses Minor described within any of the preceding House descriptions (see "House Descriptions," pages 30–41). Read over the Great House descriptions and select the one you find most interesting. Next, examine the three Houses Minor listed for your chosen Great House and select one that appeals to your group. Record the information and proceed to character creation (see "Chapter 3," page 49).

To create your House Minor from scratch, your Entourage gets to choose one House Minor Archetype and spend 15 Development Points on various House aspects. Observe the following guidelines, noting each of your selections on your House Minor record. For more about creating Houses, see *Federated Houses of the Landsraad* by Last Unicorn Games.

House Minor Archetypes

Though the Houses Minor possess vastly different legacies, histories, demeanors and goals, many of them exhibit stereotypical characteristics grouping them into one of several "archetypes." Peruse the House Minor Archetypes presented at right, and select one that fits your concept of your family's driving ethos.

House Minor Archetypes cost 0 Development Points. After selecting an Archetype, you may customize it with 15 Development Points.

Ancestry

Choose the Great House from which your family is descended, and list its name on your House worksheet (e.g. House Atreides). Then proceed to name your House Minor and list its native homeworld.

- **Name** - Choose a surname for your noble family and record it on the House record (e.g. Demios)
- **Homeworld** - List the name of your ancestral Homeworld, determined by the Great House listed by your ancestry (e.g. Caladan).

Holdings

Your Holdings consist of your noble Title and your ancestral Fiefdom. Spend a number of your Development Points to purchase a title and fiefdom for your House. See "House Minor Fees" chart, page 42.

- **Title** - Spend a number of your Development Points to purchase a title from the House Minor Fees chart. You may not spend more points than your current Status. Record the title on your House profile, detailing the specific circumstances surrounding your family's acquisition of the title as you wish.
- **Fiefdom** - Spend a number of your Development Points to purchase a fiefdom from the accompanying table. You may not spend more points than your current Wealth. Note the type of fief purchased on your House profile, and give the fiefdom a name (e.g. Attica, Gateway to the Emerald Isthmus). Feel free to detail the subregions, urban centers, and geographic features of your fiefdom, detailing its location and history, or describing its various features as you wish.

Renown

Your House Renown begins at level 1. You may not spend Development points to increase your House's starting Renown. Based on your House attributes or characteristics, create two interesting reputations for your House. One should be favorable, perhaps being tied to a House strength or historic victory; the other should be unfavorable, perhaps relating to a household weakness or historic crisis.

House Minor Attributes

Your base House attributes are determined by the Archetype you select for your House Minor (see right). You may spend Development Points to increase any House attributes or edge at the cost of 5 Development Points per +1 attribute, or 3 points per +1 edge, respectively. To increase any attribute or edge, pay the listed Development Point Cost and note the change on your House record.

Example House Minor

House Minor Profile
Name: Ithakos
Ancestry: Atreides
Homeworld: Caladan
Title: 2 (Governor: Warden of Syrakyus)
Fiefdom: 3 (Territory: Province of Syrakyus
Renown: 1 (Loyal, Secretive)
Assets: 10
Attributes (House Favorite archetype)
Status: 3 (Favor +1)
Wealth: 2
Influence: 3 (Popularity -1)
Security: 2

House Minor Archetypes

House Defender

Champion of the its patron's ethos, the House Defender shows its true colors when times are tough. The House Minor never succumbs to adversity, dedicating the lives of its household and the blood of its subjects to achieve victory for the ruling House.

Attributes Status: 3
Wealth: 2
Holdings -1
Influence: 2
Security: 3
Military +1

House Favorite

Eager to please its sponsor, the House Favorite implements House policy with unnatural zeal and efficiency. The House Minor enjoys political favor resulting from its legacy and traditional performance, seeking to maintain the status quo.

Attributes Status: 3
Favor +1
Wealth: 2
Influence: 3
Popularity -1
Security: 2

House Pretender

Weathervane of the political currents, the House Pretender champions whatever popular ideology prevails. The House Minor seeks political influence through popularity in the Sysselraad, and hopes to one day inherit the House legacy should the ruling Great House fail to produce a suitable heir.

Attributes Status: 2
Favor -1
Wealth: 3
Holdings +1
Influence: 3
Popularity +1, Authority -1
Security: 2

House Pawn

Trusting the mandates of its liege, the House Pawn carries out its orders to the letter, never questioning House authority. The House Minor seeks approval through unswerving loyalty, confident that the ruling House knows best how to govern its domain.

Attributes Status: 4
Aegis +1
Wealth: 2
Influence: 2
Popularity -1
Security: 1

House Reformer

Spokesman for political reformation, the House Reformer seeks to change House institutions and traditions, promoting radical change or pleading for a return to antiquated traditions. The House Minor staunchly supports its altruistic beliefs, considering reformation the answer to House salvation.

Attributes Status: 2
Favor: -1
Wealth: 2
Stockpiles -1
Influence: 3
Popularity +1, Authority +1
Security: 3

House Sleeper

The wolf in sheep's clothing, the House Sleeper owes allegiance to a House other than their planetary liege (i.e. Caladanian Sleeper owing allegiance to House Corrino). The House Minor lurks in the eves of the political arena, undermining the ruling House's agenda by fomenting inter-House conflict.

Attributes Status: 2
Wealth: 3
Stockpiles +1
Influence: 2
Authority -1, Popularity -1
Security: 3
Intelligence +1

House Minor Assets

Once you have finished spending Development Points to designate Holdings, Renown and attributes, allocate the remaining points to the Assets reserves listed on your House Minor profile. It's a good idea to save sufficient points for initiating House Ventures and future House development. Though your House Assets will increase through play, unforeseen circumstances may be weathered more successfully by maintaining healthy Assets reserves.

House Service

Least of the Imperial aristocracy, the Houses Minor still enjoy luxury beyond the imagining of the Imperial citizenry and lower castes. But immense responsibility accompanies such privilege; and the Houses Minor must loyally serve their House and Emperor or suffer social disgrace and political ruin. To accomplish their lofty objectives, the Houses Minor emulate their patron Houses in selecting the finest men and women to serve as members of their household retinue. These honored vassals benefit from their elevated stations, gaining significant responsibility and authority as members of their household entourage.

Assuming advisory roles and positions of command, House vassals manifest a wide array of skills and knowledge, replete with field experience and ongoing training. House Mentats, Swordmasters, Warmasters and Spymasters typically round out the household entourage led by a Noble heir or Sysselraad Spokesman. Bene Gesserit Adepts, Suk physicians and House Assassins fill in the gaps, providing an arsenal of personal expertise capable of handling even the most arduous of tasks.

Under the direct command of the household vassals serve the managing bureaucrats, teams of analysts, departments of professionals and divisions of workers who all strive to implement the policies and programs directed by the division commander. In any given family, all household operatives, including the commanding officer, fall within one of three primary divisions—House Affairs, Mercantile Enterprises and House Security. Each division contains one or more House agencies responsible for the administration and handling of specific types of issues such as diplomatic relations, commercial industries or covert operations.

House Affairs

House Affairs covers a broad spectrum of official duties relating to planetary government and House politics. Every household devotes at least three entire agencies, or divisions, to handle the various aspects of House affairs, including fief administration, Household stewardship, and Sysselraad representation. While Nobles typically command such operations, it is not uncommon for Bene Gesserit Adepts and Master Strategists to head up one or more agencies responsible for administrating House Affairs.

Of primary importance, each household must successfully govern its allotted subfief, whether administrating a city district or ruling an entire province. Beginning in their early childhood lessons, Nobles train in the art of statecraft, preparing for the day they'll assume their position as governors of the family holdings. To ease the burden of the voluminous paperwork and regimental bureaucracy, reigning Nobles typically employ Mentats and Master Strategists to assist them in implementing matters of policy and executive orders.

Of more immediate concern, each household must efficiently administrate the family compound and cadres of household retainers. This duty typically falling on the nobleman's wife or bound concubine, bonded Adepts make consummate stewards—their powers of observation and supreme administrative talents ensuring that no threat, however small, goes unnoticed by House security. Though seemingly mundane in nature, household stewardship proves vital to family security and essential for household organizational efficiency.

Sysselraad representation, including inter-House relations, House legislation and secular law, accounts for the third main division falling under House affairs. While Nobles commonly attend the Sysselraad conclaves, the day-to-day administration falls on household Mentats or Master Strategists specializing in diplomacy, law and public relations. Serving these functionaries, teams of advocates and leagues of clerks manage the volumes of legal paperwork and bureaucratic minutia.

Mercantile Enterprises

House Minor mercantile enterprises deal mainly with the routine administration of cottage industries and commercial ventures occurring within the family fiefdom. Agriculture, mining, manufacturing—as well as service-based industries and merchant enterprises—represent some of the mercantile enterprises falling under the jurisdiction of the Houses Minor. In addition, most families sponsor one or more primary industries, establishing the basis of their family revenue which, of course, is supplemented by property tithes, regional taxes and export tariffs.

In cases where the Houses Minor are entrusted to supervise their patron's CHOAM entitlements, strict production quotas or profit goals define the House's expectations which must be met if the family intends to retain their subcontract. In addition, most Great Houses impose a flat rate tithe (usually 25% of House Minor profits) the Houses Minor must pay as tribute for their entrusted holdings.

To oversee their revenue-generating operations, Houses Minor usually assign a lesser Noble or CHOAM Advisor as the director of mercantile enterprises. Under

his guidance, bureaus of analysts, investors, financiers and bankers busy themselves with the numerous economic challenges associated with successful economic administration. Beneath these, a small army of accountants, clerks and go-betweens handle the routine details of business operations and tax collection.



Household Security

Headed by the Security Commander, household security covers everything from guarding the family compound to establishing underground spy networks to patrolling the streets. Though Houses Minor rarely seek permission to wage war against one another, the possibility of civil war and public rioting warrant assembling House militias and military armament. Maintaining active militias for such reasons, the Houses Minor also develop significant intelligence operations for monitoring Imperial affairs as well as inter-House intrigue. The tradition of covert warfare runs strong among the Houses Minor as well as the Great Houses, each House engaging in covert operations for the purpose of political dominance and self-preservation.

Military Operations

Responsible for overseeing all large-scale military operations, the House Warmaster attends to strategic planning, personnel deployment and mission logistics. Expeditionary invasions and defense of the territorial fiefdom fall under his supervision, including the administration of all military installations, armament and personnel. Though few Houses Minor possess atomics, demolitions arsenals, lasgun batteries and vehicular support also count among the Warmaster's many responsibilities.

Whereas Warmasters plan and coordinate military campaigns and territorial defense, matters of family security—including protection of the family stronghold, training of the Noble heirs, and management of the House guard—typically fall within the domain of the household Swordmaster. Experts in armament, weapon instruction and skirmishing tactics, House Swordmasters are directly responsible for protecting the nobility from physical harm, whether the threat manifests from external invaders or internal sleeper agents. Toward this end, all security divisions within the family compound answer directly to the family Swordmaster.

Matters of law enforcement and civil patrol fall upon the shoulders of the household Security Commander. The Security Commander administrates garrisons, the arsenals, police headquarters and watch stations located in the household precincts. Occasionally, Security Commanders coordinate intelligence efforts with a Spymaster, establishing cadres of secret police, networks of informants and teams covert agents.

Intelligence Operations

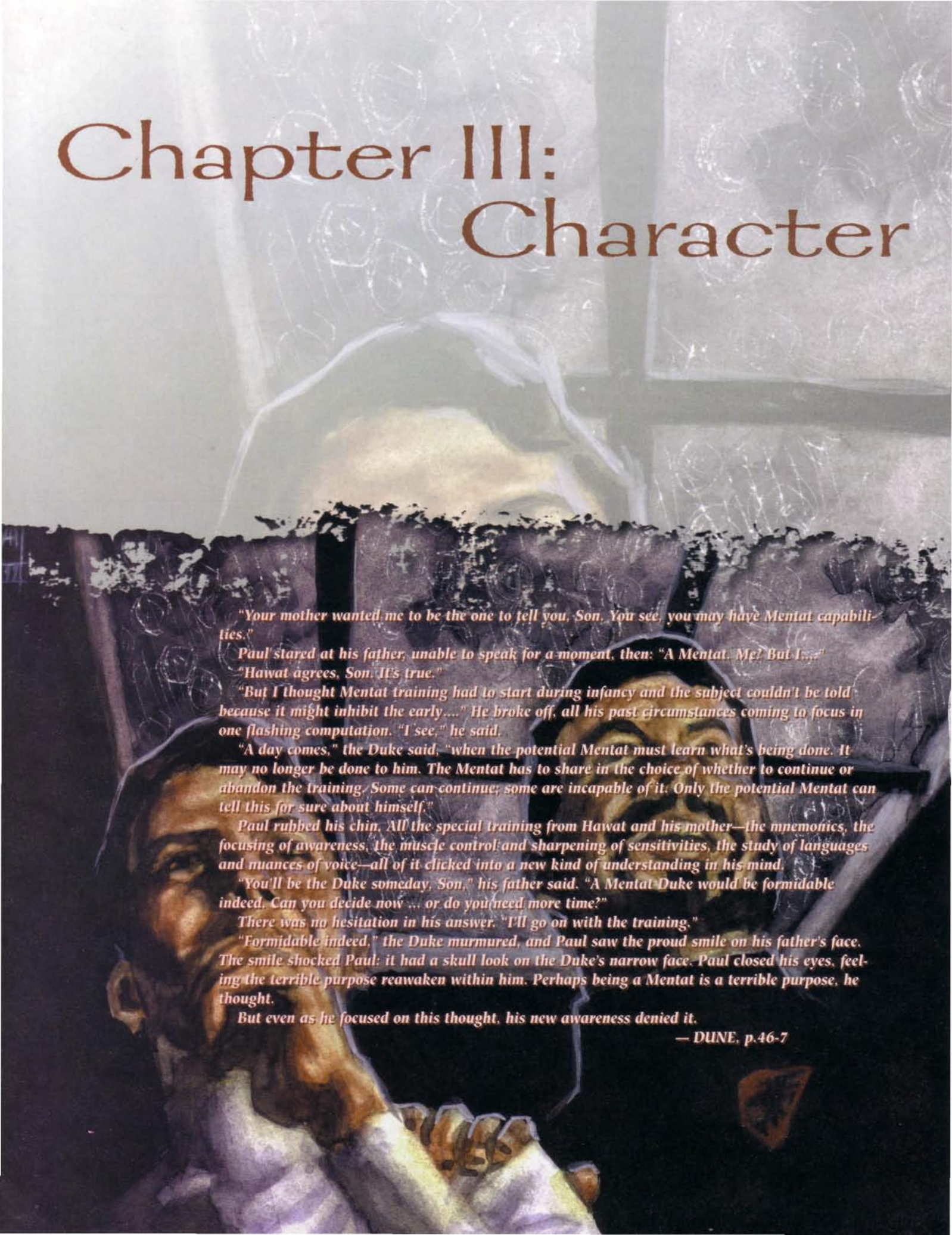
The most pervasive of all departments, household intelligence plays a greater or lesser role in nearly every other division. More important than battalions, more effective than even House atomics, information serves as the most powerful weapon in the family arsenal. To know when an attack will come, to estimate its form or direction and to calculate the best counter-measures—these are the tasks required of household intelligence.

With no detail too trivial, no factor unworthy of intensive exploration and analysis, Mentats handle such information with ease, processing data and calculating solutions with speed and precision surpassing even the "thinking machines" of the pre-Butlerian era. Generalizing in information analysis and computation, Mentats coordinate the efforts of the House Spymasters and Masters of Assassins, combining intelligence and espionage efforts of both divisions into a manageable weapon to be wielded with deadly cunning.

Spymasters direct all intelligence-gathering household operations. From establishing secret spy networks to inserting agents in rival families, House Spymasters supervise most espionage activity, consulting the Security Commander on domestic matters such as the deployment of household security systems, such as prudence-barriers, palm locks and poison snoopers.

Masters of Assassins assume a much more proactive role, focusing on the commissioning and training of household assassins, saboteurs and anti-terrorist personnel. Working with the Spymaster in addition to the House Warmaster or possibly the House Swordmaster, Masters of Assassins lend their special forces to each of these commanders as needed, deploying personnel and equipment to achieve swift and decisive results.

Chapter III: Character



"Your mother wanted me to be the one to tell you, Son. You see, you may have Mentat capabilities."

Paul stared at his father, unable to speak for a moment, then: "A Mentat. Me? But I...."

"Hawat agrees, Son. It's true."

"But I thought Mentat training had to start during infancy and the subject couldn't be told because it might inhibit the early...." He broke off, all his past circumstances coming to focus in one flashing computation. "I see," he said.

"A day comes," the Duke said, "when the potential Mentat must learn what's being done. It may no longer be done to him. The Mentat has to share in the choice of whether to continue or abandon the training. Some can continue; some are incapable of it. Only the potential Mentat can tell this for sure about himself."

Paul rubbed his chin. All the special training from Hawat and his mother—the mnemonics, the focusing of awareness, the muscle control and sharpening of sensitivities, the study of languages and nuances of voice—all of it clicked into a new kind of understanding in his mind.

"You'll be the Duke someday, Son," his father said. "A Mentat Duke would be formidable indeed. Can you decide now ... or do you need more time?"

There was no hesitation in his answer. "I'll go on with the training."

"Formidable indeed," the Duke murmured, and Paul saw the proud smile on his father's face. The smile shocked Paul: it had a skull look on the Duke's narrow face. Paul closed his eyes, feeling the terrible purpose reawaken within him. Perhaps being a Mentat is a terrible purpose, he thought.

But even as he focused on this thought, his new awareness denied it.

— DUNE, p.46-7

Creation

In the *DUNE RPG*, players assume the roles of House vassals, much as an author portrays the different characters when writing a novel. But rather than speaking lines or performing actions written by a novelist, the players invent their character's dialogue and determine their character's actions in reaction to situations presented by the Narrator. Over the course of many stories, the player character becomes an alter ego of sorts, gaining its own personality, history, motivations and desires. Before you can play the *DUNE RPG*, you must first create your character.

Creating a character requires a certain amount of time and imagination. Your characters should seem like realistic individuals, having personal backgrounds, driving motivations and behavioral mannerisms. This chapter provides all of the information needed to create a starting character. The *DUNE RPG* is designed to allow players to create characters and begin playing in under an hour. Beginning with an initial concept, then proceeding along the steps outlined here, you translate your rough idea into a completed character demonstrating certain attributes, skills and traits. These abilities are expressed in game terms with associated numbers and rules.

Initially, these statistics may seem rather lifeless. When an author begins to think about a novel, he creates a detailed description of his main characters—their likes and dislikes, prior history, fears and motivations. He does not typically describe his characters as Physique 2 and Diplomacy 3. These ratings, however, constitute a numerical shorthand for evaluating a character's relative abilities in comparison to others. They introduce the way characters and rules interact to determine the success or failure of attempted actions.

Developing the Initial Concept

Creating a character begins with an initial conception. This doesn't have to be specific; you only need a general idea of who your character will be. Think about what you want to play. Will you be a devoted Atreides Swordmaster or a haughty Noble from Kaitan? Typically, players have only a vague idea for their characters based on the character's House Allegiance—Atreides, Harkonnen, Moritani—

What Do I Play?

Before sitting down to play the *DUNE RPG*, the Narrator should consult her players to discuss the types of stories and character roles they want to play. Those familiar with the novels may gravitate toward influential characters such as Duke Leto or Baron Harkonnen. But such characters lord over the most powerful Houses in the Landsraad; and consequently, have little opportunity to leave their homeworlds, or even their household compounds to participate in field operations or expeditionary ventures. Instead, they must routinely stay at home doing what they do best—ruling their subjects and administering House affairs. This isn't to say that planetary governance shouldn't be the subject of *DUNE RPG* storytelling; Duke Leto and his family certainly know their share of adventure and intrigue. But to cover such monumental duties in a fashion suitable for dramatic roleplaying exceeds the scope of this game (though it will be addressed in the forthcoming supplements for the *DUNE RPG*).

Instead, players of the *DUNE RPG* roleplay members of a House Minor serving under the banner of one of the Great Houses. This gives the players greater latitude in the scope of their adventures, routinely taking them on exotic journeys or dangerous missions. The Entourage of a House Minor may reasonably be expected to endeavor such undertakings for their patron House—escorting a diplomat to a foreign world, or acting as a trade delegation at a CHOAM summit. Scenarios such as these give the Narrator plenty of opportunity for adventure, action and intrigue. Leading a House Minor also yields ample room for character and House advancement. The character's House may eventually come to govern planetary fiefs of their own; and their rise to eminence through character achievement proves far more rewarding in terms of the epic storytelling encouraged for *DUNE RPG* chronicles.

Additionally, by playing members of a House Minor entourage, players are in a certain sense playing characters such as Duke Leto and Baron Harkonnen. House Entourages typically include a Noble or two, perhaps including the Heir-Designate who is one day destined to rule the House. Entourages also require Assassins, Adepts, Mentats, Spymasters, Swordmasters and Suk physicians; any combination is possible. In the novel *DUNE*, Lady Jessica is a Bene Gesserit Sister who performs many

important duties for House Atreides. But while all Bene Gesserit Adepts must be female, there are no gender restrictions for the family Warmaster, Suk or Mentat. Female Nobles, Assassins or Swordmasters might prove an interesting variation to the standard archetype.

Each player should choose a character with a distinct role within the Entourage. One player might like to play the House's Suk Physician while another might like to portray their Mentat. The Narrator's goal is to find out what roles the players are interested in, and the kinds of stories everyone wants to tell. Ultimately, the player characters are the focus of their story. They are the protagonists; no matter where they are or what they're doing, adventure is sure to find them.

and their vocational Conditioning—Assassin, Mentat, or Master Strategist. Consider the characters portrayed in *DUNE*. Each can be described and conceived according to his Allegiance and vocational Conditioning. Duncan Idaho is an Atreides Swordmaster. Piter de Vries is a Harkonnen Mentat. Lady Jessica is a Bene Gesserit Adept divided in her allegiance between House Atreides and the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood.

Notice, however, how this basic idea doesn't even begin to describe the depth and subtlety of those characters. Where is Jessica's forbidden love for her Duke, or Piter's twisted lust for power? Character concepts simply define these individuals according to their most basic components. At this early stage they are reduced to general 'archetypes', needing further description and definition to be portrayed as believable, life-like individuals.

Players should next add personality to their character concepts. Personality can include how the character looks—grossly obese or trim and athletic—or focus on the attitude or demeanor the character conveys to others—sincere, jocular or sadistic. Think about how people might perceive your character and determine if he meets these expectations. This is generally a first impression; a pampered, overbearing Noble might actually be generous and fair to those who serve him honorably.

As you create your character, try to furnish more detail, adding layers of depth to your initial concept. The question "why" always yields interesting results. No matter where you begin or how far you go, asking "why" confers additional complexity to the character.

For example, suppose a player wants to play a character who courts death in the dusty fighting arenas of his homeworld. Why is the character like this? Perhaps he lost his desire to live since the demise of his betrothed, or maybe he seeks to distinguish himself with an impressive record of victories. The way you answer leads to completely different conceptions of the character. Why, then, did he pledge his allegiance to House Varota, a relatively peaceful House known for its support of the arts and scholastics? Maybe he's seeking spiritual transcendence through learning, or maybe he believes his talents would be best employed protecting such noble pursuits even though they have little place in his own, warrior life. Asking yourself why you chose the character you did is always a good place to start. In some cases, the Narrator might have suggestions for characters, based on the type of stories or chronicle he has in mind.

Ross begins to create an Atreides Mentat for an upcoming game. That is his base concept. He then contemplates this vassal. Why did he become a Mentat? Ross envisions his character as an Alexander the Great, using his Mentat faculties to innovate tactics and implement military strategies. Why, Ross asks, is his character concerned with military matters? The answer comes easily—House Atreides is honorable and just, but their mortal enemy, House Harkonnen, has sworn to defeat them by whatever means necessary, allowing for the possibility of inter-House warfare. A nephew of Count Demios, Ross's character showed early promise as a potential Mentat. Since money is no object for the education of noble kin, House Demios sent his character to the expensive Mentat school. There, he trained as a Mentat and later returned to House Demios who now employs him under an oath of allegiance to House Atreides. Putting this all together, Ross imagines his Atreides Mentat as more of a military tactician than a data-crunching analyst.

While thinking about his character concept, Ross also decides his Atreides Mentat is not beyond taking up a blade in defense of his House. If the situation arises, his character should be competent on the battle field as well as in the war room.

Certain concepts might not be appropriate for agents of a Great House. Though furtive smugglers or vengeful prisoners are interesting concepts, they do not easily conform to the roles typically required of House vassals. If any player insists on creating a character that doesn't suit the House ideal, the Narrator may accommodate the player by finding a way to fit such a character into the *DUNE* milieu. Usually the best method is to incorporate the concept into the background development, advancing the character to a point in his history where he has adapted in his role as an agent of his household. Though such characters would by necessity have had to overcome the major challenges implicit in their original concept, they could continue to struggle with the vestiges of their troublesome past. Characters such as Gurney Halleck, who strives to overcome his tragic history and obsessive hatred, illustrate the lingering evils and hidden injustices persisting in Imperial civilization.

Players should also consider the rest of the House Entourage (the group of player characters) when creating characters. Telling successful stories can become a bit diffi-

cult if the House Entourage contains two Mentats or three Swordmasters. Talk with the other players to figure out how your character fits in with the other characters. By doing so it is fairly easy to see whether the characters will be able to work well as a group. For example, if two players wanted to play Nobles, both holding the same title (such as Heir Designate trait), the Narrator's obviously got a problem on her hands. To avoid argument, she could suggest that one player forgo the Heir Designate trait, playing a black sheep sibling who answers the call of a mysterious benefactor. Or she might coax a player to modify their concept, perhaps playing a renegade Swordmaster, who hides his Highborn lineage to evade cadres of hired assassins seeking a bounty placed upon his head.

Lastly, character personalities should generally be compatible. It's all right if characters engage in friendly rivalry, good-natured kidding or mild friction, but a character that's constantly at odds with the rest of his House ruins the fun for everyone.

During character creation, Steve thinks it would be interesting if his Atreides Suk physician were politically vocal, railing against military action as a means to an end. He envisions a strong dislike for military strategy and considers the concept of "acceptable losses" intolerable. In talking with the Narrator, Steve describes a character that clearly will not function well if assigned to a military excursion, severely limiting his compatibility with his group. The Narrator thinks this is too strong—after all, Houses won't tolerate insubordination, and the players must work together as a team. So he convinces Steve to tone it down somewhat. Steve revises his concept, conceding that his character

Non-House Characters

The *DUNE RPG* assumes all player characters serve as leading staff members of the same House Minor. There will be times, however, when a player wants to assume the role of a character associated with some other Imperial faction—a Spacing Guild Navigator, a Reverend Mother or Great House nobleman, to name a few examples. These characters can prove difficult to fit into the typical game because there's insufficient reason for them to enlist with the House Minor Entourage on a permanent basis. Several methods exist to get around this dilemma.

Option 1 – Guest Appearances

First, the character can appear as a "special guest," appearing only occasionally, as the campaign permits. If the adventure this session calls for a Guild Navigator, for example, the Narrator can let the player know in advance, and the player can play his Navigator (while allowing his regular character to be played by the Narrator).

Option 2 – Multiple Roles

The second option is to allow a single player to play more than one character at a time, the House Swordmaster and Reverend Mother, for instance. This way, the same player would be able to participate in the action no matter where it took place.

Option 3 – Character-driven Subplot

The third option is for the Narrator to craft an ongoing subplot with the character in mind. In the case of a Great Noble, for example, the Entourage could be assigned to handle an extended diplomatic mission on a foreign world. This gives the Narrator the opportunity to focus on one planet in detail and give the player a chance to play his secondary character over a series of chapters.

Option 4 – Protracted Assignment

The fourth, and perhaps easiest, option is for the Narrator and player to work together to craft a rationale for the character to be assigned to the Entourage for a protracted duration. For example: CHOAM might appoint a delegate on special assignment to join the family and report on their exploits. A Reverend Mother might be sent to study one of the other players (don't say who!) for an extended period, allowing her to participate in their adventures.

It is also possible to create characters that have little if any association with the Imperium, such as a native, slave or any other character beyond the order of the faufreluches. While these characters rarely warrant inclusion in the Entourage, a player may wish to play such a role. Some character types, such as Guild agents, operate in a certain sense beyond the faufreluches and, as a result, have their own laws, restrictions and customs. Upcoming supplements will introduce many such characters, expanding on the core game to define their abilities, duties and customs.

privately holds a moral distaste for wanton bloodshed, voicing his ethos with mild sarcasm only when affronted by the worst displays of brutish, hawk mentality.

Character Archetypes

Players who want to start playing immediately can choose one of the pre-generated characters detailed on the following pages. These are referred to as character *Archetypes*. Rather than going through the process of designating their character's Allegiance, Conditioning and Background, players can simply choose an Archetype, spend a few Development Points to customize their characteristics and start playing in a matter of minutes. Each Archetype incorporates the various stages of character creation (Allegiance, Conditioning, Background, etc.) as if the character were created from scratch. But the Archetypes present House Allegiance and its component characteristics in generic terms, requiring players to substitute their particular House name in each instance they find the word "House." For example, if a skill reads "History (House) 1(2)," then they should substitute their name (Atreides, for instance) so it reads "History (Atreides) 1(2)." Once done, each Archetype provides a ready-made character, containing all the data you need to start playing.

Character Restrictions

Narrators concerned with milieu authenticity may wish to restrict the selection of certain character Archetypes (including component Conditioning overlays and/or Background packages), based on the Great House the player Entourage opts to serve. For example, if the player Entourage decides to serve a House Minor supporting House Atreides, then the Narrator might reasonably bar players from selecting the House Assassin archetype. After all, House Atreides is an honorable House; and despite of the Great Convention's tolerance of assassins, House Atreides would only use them as a last resort; making such a character an unlikely member of any Atreides House Minor Entourage.

Personalizing the Archetype

Although the Archetypes are prepared for use as-is, players are encouraged to personalize their characters. Take five Development Points to improve any attribute or edge, purchase new skills, increase existing skill levels or obtain an advantage or disadvantage. (Each of these steps is detailed hereafter. See the "Development Point Cost" chart, on page 66.) In this way, your final character feels more like your own creation than a generic archetype, devoid of flavor or originality.

Ryan wants to play an Atreides Swordmaster, so he chooses the House Swordmaster archetype. Looking over the character, he decides he wants his character to play the baliset, so he buys Performance (Baliset) 1(1) for 3 Development Points. With another 3 points, he gives his character an additional skill and specialization level in Armed Combat (dueling arms). Finally, Ryan buys one advantage—Heroism (2)—for 2 additional Development Points. Having spent more than five Development Points, Ryan must give his character one or more disadvantages to compensate for the extra points he's spent. He chooses Renegade (2) and Rival (1). With his points spent, Ryan has finished preparing his character for play.

The Character Creation Process

If none of the Archetypes match the sort of character you want to play, you can create your character from scratch, using the four-step process outlined here:

1) Choose Allegiance to a House: Choose your House Allegiance. Allegiance represents your character's affiliation with a House Minor and its Great House patron. The *DUNE RPG* presents six Great Houses and 18 Families Minor for your consideration. But if your group desires to create its own House Minor, see page 43 to learn how. Regardless of its individual nature, your Allegiance instills the basic attributes and skills for an average member of the House retinue.

2) Choose vocational Conditioning: After selecting Allegiance, choose your Conditioning. Conditioning defines a character's vocational training—Noble, Mentat, Assassin or whatever the Narrator agrees to permit in the game. Conditioning supplements and enhances the basic attributes and skills acquired with Allegiance. This represents the basic competency shown by an average graduate of the vocational school in question.

3) Customize your character: Use Background History packages, supplemental Development Points, and reinforcing traits. No character excels as a faceless, stereotypical member of his House—instead, he must distinguish himself with individuality and achievement. At this stage in the process, you get the chance to bring such development to light, by tracing their backgrounds with the *DUNE RPG* "Background History" system.

When complete, the historical outline traces your character's life from the years of childhood on his native homeworld to his oath of allegiance to his chosen House. Your character didn't become such a skilled member of his profession overnight—it took many years of conditioning and practice. The Background Histories help you determine what major experiences he's had to date, and what life's lessons have taught him along the way.

(continues on page 60)

House Adept

As a Bene Gesserit-trained Adept, you exist only to serve. Your covenant with the Sisterhood binds you to preserving its secret ways, a pact your House finds disconcerting. Through confidential reports to the Mother School, you play historian for the family lineage also acting as sentinel for the family bloodline—services for which you are tolerated, if not gratefully employed.

The Bene Gesserit recognize your "weirding ways" inspire fear and suspicion among the uninitiated. But your highly developed talents result from rigorous Prana–Bindu conditioning and intensive training in self-awareness—not from witchcraft as your Missionaria Protectiva induces primitive cultures to believe.



Attributes Physique: 2
Constitution +2
Coordination: 3
Reaction +1
Intellect: 2
Perception +2
Charisma: 3
Presence +1
Prescience: 0

Skills *BG Way (any)* 4(3)
Ritual (any) 2(3)
Voice 2
Administration 1
Athletics (acrobatics) 2(3)
Charm (seduction) 2(1)
Culture (House, BG Sisterhood) 2(1,2)
Dodge (evade) 2(3)
History (House) 1(1)
Observation (any) 1(2)
Persuasion 1
Politics (House, Imperial) 2(1,3)
Hunting Language (Chakobsa) 1
Subterfuge 1
Unarmed Combat (martial training) 1(3)
World Knowledge (homeworld) 1(1)

Traits Dual Allegiance +2, Enhanced Sense (any) 1, Human 2, Metabolic Clock 1, Patron 3, Prana–Bindu Conditioning 3, Weirding Combat 2

Caste 4 (Na-Familia)

Renown 2 Learning 1 (witchery)
Prayer 1 (secret motives)

Equipment ComNet transmitter, House uniform, Knife and Personal affects

House Assassin

There are many fine distinctions to the art of Kanly. By the way you kill a man you translate your revenge into any number of exquisite phrases—from a poignant knife thrust, short and sweet, to the buzzing terror of a hunter–seeker. Studied in the secret disciplines of the ancient Bhotani assassins, you command a vast arsenal of lethal devices, exotic poisons and cunning pitfalls. Through craft you speak the language of vendetta, communicating subtle messages or audacious statements by the legion nuances of the assassin's art.

Attributes
Physique: 2
Strength +1
Coordination: 3
Dexterity +1
Intellect: 2
Perception +1
Charisma: 2
Willpower +1
Prescience: 0

Skills
Assassination (any) 3(3)
Impersonation (appearance) 1(2)
Infiltration (any) 2(2)
Athletics 1
Armed Combat (concealed, esoteric) 2(1,1)
Bargaining 1
Chemistry (pharmacy) 1(2)
Concealment 1
Culture (House) 1(1)
Dodge 2
Espionage (reconnaissance) 1(2)
History (House) 1(1)
Observation 2
Politics (House) 1(1)
Racketeering 1
Ranged Combat (stunner) 2(2)
Sabotage 1
Secret Language (Chakobsa) 1
Stealth (stalking) 3(2)
Subterfuge (guile) 2(1)
Underworld 2
World Knowledge (homeworld) 1(1)

Traits
Alertness 1, Assassins Code 2, Adversary +2, Contraband 2, Immunity (poison) 1, Information Network 3, Rogue +2

Caste
3 (Bondsman)

Renown
3 Valor 1 (Stealth)
Learning 1 (Assassin's art)
Prayer 1 (Assassin's Code)

Equipment
Flip-Dart, House uniform, Hunter–Seeker, Knife, Krimskell rope, Maula pistol, Minimic recorder & film, Shigawire garrote, Poison (Types I and IV), Slip–tip, ComNet transmitter and Personal affects



House Strategist (CHOAM Advisor)

As a Master Strategist (a member of the House strategy staff), you advise your liege according to your particular field of tactical expertise—from the letter of diplomacy to the art of war. Whether serving in the capacity of CHOAM Advisor, Warmaster, Spymaster or Security Commander, you are well-versed in the administration of routine House operations and understand the basic affairs pertaining to your House's political, economic, and military agendas.

As CHOAM Advisor, you counsel your House in all CHOAM affairs, specifically CHOAM regulations, industrial development, mercantile ventures and House finances. You regularly review all House fiscal accounts, from property tithes to commerce tariffs, searching for accounting discrepancies and legal loopholes to safeguard the House treasury. You also develop financial strategies and fiscal tactics for handling CHOAM negotiations, commercial acquistions and commodity exchanges, attempting to increase House assets while bankrupting political rivals or thwarting powerful guilds.



Attributes Physique: 2
Constitution +1
Coordination: 2
Intellect: 3
Logic +1, Perception +1
Charisma: 2
Willpower +1
Prescience: 0

Skills *Economics (any)* 2(2)
Law (CHOAM) 3(3)
Mercantilism (any, any) 3(3,2)
Diplomacy (negotiation) 2(2)
Administration (any) 4(3)
Armed Combat (personal) 1(2)
Bargain 1
Culture (House) 1(1)
Dodge 1
Equipment 1
First Aid (any) 1(1)
History (House) 2(1)
Observation 1
Politics (House, Imperial) 3(2,1)
Persuasion (debate) 1(1)
Racketeering 1
Subterfuge 1
World Knowledge (homeworld) 1(1)

Traits Ally 1, Byzantine Corruption (greed) +1, Unrealized Potential (3), Bonded Allegiance +2, Commendation (Master) 2, Honorarium Familia 2, Mnemonic Conditioning 2

Caste 3 (Bondsman)

Renown 3 Learning 1 (specialist)
Justice 2 (administration)

Equipment ComNet transmitter, Filmbooks (CHOAM Regulations), House Uniform, Knife Shigawire imprinter & reels and Personal affects

House Mentat

Your liege does not withhold computation lines from his Mentat. More accomplished than the ancient thinking machines of the pre-Butlerian era, you represent the ultimate achievement in human mental training. From confidential reports you assimilate and process volumes of data, recalling minutia or computing probabilities with accurate and casual precision. You lead fact-finding missions with the zeal of an inquisitor, embracing espionage, propaganda and interrogations to wring information from every shadow. In effect, your broad mental training makes you the ultimate advisor to your liege. Able to assimilate and process any variety of data, you find yourself readily adaptable to any House office—from Spymaster or Warmaster to Security Commander or Master of Assassins.

Attributes Physique: 2
Coordination: 2
Dexterity +1
Intellect: 4
Logic +2, Perception +1
Charisma: 2
Willpower +1
Prescience: 0

Skills *Projection (approximation analysis)* 3(3)
Mentat Trance (memorize) 3(2)
Computation (straight-line) 2(2)
Administration (intelligence) 2(2)
Culture (House) 1(3)
Economics (any) 1(1)
Equipment (any) 2(1)
Espionage (counter-intelligence) 2(1)
History (House) 1(3)
Interrogation (questioning) 2(2)
Observation 2
Politics (House) 1(1)
Propaganda (misinformation)1(2)
Racketeering 1
Ranged Combat (dart projector) 1(1)
Security (procedures) 1(1)
Subterfuge (equivocation) 1(1)
World Knowledge (homeworld) 1(2)

Traits Compounded by Whispers 3, Information Network 3, Mentat Awareness 2, Machine Logic 2, Sapho Addiction +2, Trained Intelligence 3

Caste 3 (Bondsman)

Renown 3 Learning 2 (computation and intellect) Prayer 1 (fierce cunning)

Equipment ComNet transmitter, Needlegun, House uniform, Knife, Solido projector, Solido recorder & shigawire reels and Personal affects



House Noble

From your lofty station in the Imperial faufreluches, you perch as sentinel above your land-bound subjects. You monitor your fee with the falcon's eye, protecting your nest from rival predators. Let no man hunt on House grounds, there you stand and there you remain.

From birth you have been taught in the art of statecraft and rightful governance—from early lessons in economics and politics to advanced studies in diplomacy and law. Your House mentors versed you in all the ways of treachery and intrigue, from snooping lethal poisons to assassin's devices. As heir to the fiefdom your mentors instructed you in self-defense, drilling you in the art of dueling and the use of shields. Your family spared no expense grooming you for the mantle of command; and perhaps one day, it will be you who rules as lord of your House.



Attributes Physique: 2
Coordination: 2
Intellect: 2
Logic +1, Perception +1
Charisma: 4
Presence +2, Willpower +1
Prescience: 0

Skills *Command (any)* 3(3)
Persuasion (oratory) 3(3)
Statecraft (any) 2(2)
Administration (House) 2(3)
Athletics 1
Armed Combat (dueling arms) 2(2)
Charm 1
Culture (House) 1(1)
Diplomacy (any) 2(2)
Dodge 2
Equipment 1
History (House) 1(1)
Law (House, Great Convention) 2(1,1)
Observation (any) 1
Politics (House, Imperial) 3(3,2)
Propaganda 2
World Knowledge (homeworld) 1(1)

Traits Ally 2, Heir 1, Dueling 2, Magnanimous Appeal 3, Noble Title 1, Plasteel Will 1, Shield Fighting 1

Caste 5 (Regis Familia)

Renown 1 Justice (noblility)

Equipment ComNet transmitter, House uniform, Indicia of birthright, Knife, Kindjal or Sword, Personal shield, Poison snooper and Personal affects

House Swordmaster

Where your lord commands, there shall you place your blade: thus goes your sacred oath. To the noble heirs you teach the art of dueling, instructing them in sword and shield in addition to the ritual forms of Kanly. Killing with the tip lacks artistry, move slow on attack fast on defense, never let an armed opponent inside your guard—these are the lessons imparted by your masters at the academy, grave truths by which to live or die.

Your other duties include attending to either House security or military affairs. As Security Commander you monitor all security procedures, attending to household surveillance and counter-intelligence. In such matters, the House guard answers to your command, putting the household arsenal at your disposal. Or as Warmaster you command the House battalions, ordering House defenses and planning military expeditions. In either capacity you remain ever vigilant of external threats; and by your Swordmaster Code you are a man of action. To live a purposeful existence and die an honorable death are mete rewards for a lifetime of valorous service.



Attributes
Physique: 3
Constitution +1
Coordination: 3
Dexterity +1, Reaction +2
Intellect: 2
Perception +2
Charisma: 2
Prescience: 0

Skills
Armament (any) 2(2)
Leadership (any) 2(2)
Military Operations (any) 2(2)
Athletics (any) 2(2)
Armed Combat (dueling) 3(4)
Culture (House) 1(2)
Dodge (evade) 2(2)
First Aid 1
History (House) 1(1)
Interrogation 1
Observation (any) 3(1)
Ranged Combat (stunner) 2(2)
Secret Language (House Battle) 1(1)
Security (systems) 2(3)
Stealth 2
Unarmed Combat 2
World Knowledge (homeworld) 1(1)

Traits
Alertness 1, Bimanual Fighting 2, Commendation 1, Code of Conduct +3, Dueling 3, Olympian Physique 3, Shield Fighting 1

Caste
3 (Bondsman)

Renown
3 Valor 2 (combat and martial prowess)
Justice 1 (martial leadership)

Equipment
ComNet transmitter, House uniform, Knife, Personal shield, Slip–tip, Sword, Stunner and Personal affects

House Suk

You are the caretaker of the noble bloodline. The diamond Suk tattoo branded on your forehead proclaims your loyalty and competence for all to see. Your pyretic conscience so rigorously conditions you against taking human life that you can be trusted to treat even the Emperor's person. But your value as a surgeon only touches on your entire worth to your patron household.

More than a physician, you are also trained in the art of pharmacology and psychology. You concoct serums and antivenins to counteract poisons or loosen a sleeper agent's tongue. You can administer drugs to weaken an informant's resistance or employ hypnosis to aid in the most delicate of interrogations. And your broad knowledge of anatomy and science makes you the ideal candidate to lead forensic investigations into medical enigmas or mysterious deaths.



Attributes
Physique: 2
Coordination: 2
Dexterity +1
Intellect: 3
Logic +1
Perception +1
Charisma: 2
Presence +1, Willpower +1
Prescience: 0

Skills
Medical Arts (surgery) 4(4)
Pharmacy (any) 3(4)
Psychology (psychiatry) 2(2)
Administration (medical) 1(2)
Biology (anatomy) 2(4)
Chemistry (biochemistry) 1(3)
Culture (House) 1(2)
Equipment (any) 2(1)
First Aid (any) 2(2)
History (House) 2(1)
Indoctrination (Conditioning) 1(1)
Interrogation (questioning) 1(1)
Observation 1
Persuasion 1
Ranged Combat (stunner) 1(1)
Subornation 1
Survival 1
Theology 1
World Knowledge (homeworld) 1(1)

Traits
Hand of God 3, Commendation 1, Imperial Conditioning 2, Information Network 1, Spice Diet 3, Pyretic Conscience +3

Caste
4 (Na-familia)

Renown
2 Learning 1 (medicine)
Prayer 1 (Imperial Conditioning)

Equipment
ComNet transmitter, Cutteray (las-scalpel), Filmbooks (medical), House uniform, Poison Snooper, Surgical medkit and personal affects

(continued from page 52)

At each stage along the History, you choose a Background package to enhance your character's attributes, edges, and current skills, or to buy entirely new edges and skills. A character an also purchase *advantages*, special abilities (such as Whipcord Reflexes, or Prana-Bindu Conditioning), or take *disadvantages*, drawbacks and limitations (such as having an enemy or rival, or being blind), which personalize him and give him more Development Points to spend. All of these things identify the character and differentiate him from all the other members of his House and vocation.

4) Finishing touches: Determine your character's Karama, Caste and Renown.

The Basics of Creation

Characters in the *DUNE RPG* consist of three basic elements: attributes (and edges), skills and traits. Each of these elements is discussed later in this chapter. When creating your character, you will receive some attributes, skills and traits for free, given by the Allegiance and Conditioning you choose. You can also purchase additional characteristics with *Development Points*, as described in the following sections.

In addition to your standard allotment of Development Points, you can elect to give your character one or more disadvantages to gain additional points. Disadvantages represent things about the character that make him less than perfect, or which may cause him problems during the course of play. Electing disadvantages results in your receiving more Development Points to spend on other characteristics.

Attribute Scale

Attribute levels measure a character's innate qualities relative to human norms.

Level	Meaning
0	Nonexistent
1	Weak
2	Average
3	Superior
4	Formidable
5	Legendary
6	Peak of human potential

Without the benefit of certain Traits (e.g. Whipcord Reflexes), characters may develop attributes no higher than level 5.

Attributes represent the character's innate physical and mental characteristics—everything from how much weight he can lift, to how quickly he reacts to how smart he is. Attribute scores are "open-ended," meaning there is no absolute limit to how high they can go, though normally they range from 1 to 5. Your character's base attributes come from his Allegiance, representing your character's House lineage and native homeworld.

Edges constitute the various components of an attribute. For example, two characters may both have Physique 2, but one might be more muscular, while the other character possesses greater physical stamina or fortitude. Each attribute consists of two edges (as shown on the accompanying chart) which are expressed in terms of "+" or "-" values. Edges make the core attributes a bit more flexible. Edges range from -2 to +2 though characters rarely suffer negative edges unless they gain disadvantages that specifically bear on their attributes.

Attribute Edges

Physique	Strength, Constitution
Coordination	Dexterity, Reaction
Intellect	Perception, Logic
Charisma	Presence, Willpower
Prescience	Sight, Vision

Skills represent a character's expert abilities and knowledge—everything from how to fire a maula pistol, to how to speak an ancient hunting language. Skills range from 1 to 5, representing your character's proficiency in that field. A Swordmaster with Armed Combat (dueling arms) 3 is more skilled in the art of dueling than a Noble with Armed Combat (dueling arms) 1.

Many skills require a character to choose a specialization to indicate his area of particular expertise in a broad and complex subject. For example, a character who knows the *Administration* skill could choose to specialize in such areas as intelligence, medical or military Administration. The character understands the basics of the field, and can still attempt a Skill Test in related areas. For example, even though a character specializes in Administration (medical), she understands the basics of personnel leadership and delegation of authority; in a pinch, she coordinate troop movements or bolster morale in the trenches. Similarly, an Assassin who specializes in Assassination (devices) can still employ a variety of poisons, in addition to laying traps to snare or eliminate her intended mark.

Some skills can be used untrained. That is to say, anyone can use them without formal training, albeit poorly. These are noted by "0+" on the Master Skills chart in "Chapter 4." See page 78 and 118 for more information. Other skills require at least a rudimentary level of training in order to be attempted by characters: such

skills are designated by "1+" on the Skill chart. Vocational disciplines require special training, and may only be acquired by members of a certain vocation. Such disciplines are also noted (e.g. "Mentats") on the Master Skills chart.

Traits represent a variety of *advantages* and *disadvantages* further distinguishing your character from similar members of his homeworld, household or vocation. Whether beneficial or detrimental, traits cover a wide spectrum of distinctive features including a variety of personal, societal, material and vocational qualities.

Advantages represent a character's special merits, talents or conditioning—things that distinguish from others who share his homeworld, household or vocation. Advantages run the gamut, ranging from social benefits (such as Ally or Honorarium Familia), to material benefits (like Noble Title or Contraband), to innate physical aspects (Resilience or Prana-Bindu Conditioning). Player characters generally receive two or three advantages from their Allegiance and Conditioning, but player characters warrant at least a few additional advantages to distinguish them from their immediate peers.

Similarly, many characters possess disadvantages representing troublesome idiosyncrasies or cruel twists of fate. No one's perfect, and sometimes being a hero requires overcoming one's own limitations. Character concepts are improved by attributing one or more flaws to liven the character. That's the purpose of disadvantages—to represent personal defects or idiosyncrasies that a character can struggle with over the course of play.

Character Notation

Observe the following guidelines when adding Overlays and Background Packages to your base Allegiance Template:

Attribute (edge) +X (Y) – Gain or increase the attribute level by X and the edge level by +Y. The maximum value for any edge is +2. In cases where development of an edge would yield a modifier greater than +2, raise the attribute by 1 and reduce the edge to +0 unless doing so would yield an attribute rank above the maximum limit (usually 5). In such cases, increase/maintain the edge at +2 and gain 1 development point to add to any existing skill specialization governed by the designated attribute. See "Chapter 4" for clarification.

If directed to increase "any" edge under a specific attribute, you may not choose an edge already having a value of +2 unless both edges under the attribute exist at levels +2.

Sample: Intellect (Logic, Perception) +1(1,1) – Gain or increase Intellect by 1 and the Logic and Perception edges by 1 each. If the Logic or Perception edge is already +2, increase Intellect by an additional 1 point and reduce the corresponding edge to +0.

Paimon possesses Intellect at level 2 and the Perception edge at +2 as a result of his Allegiance template. When his Mentat overlay gives him Intellect (Logic, Perception) +1(1,1) he increases his Intellect from 2 to 3, gains the Logic edge at +1, but cannot raise his Perception edge which is already +2. So instead, he increases his Intellect by another 1 point and reduces his perception edge to +0. His final Intellect (edges) reads "Intellect 4 (logic +1, perception +0).

Skill X (specialization Y) – Gain or increase the skill level by X and the specialization by Y. If the word "any" appears in place of a named specialization, gain a new specialization at the designated level or increase an existing specialization by a like amount.

Sample: Transport (piloting) 1(1) – Increase the Transport skill level and piloting specialization level by 1 each, or gain the Transport skill and piloting specialization at levels 1(1).

Haldran the Swordmaster possesses the Transport (driving) skill and specialization at levels 1(1). When acquiring Transport (piloting) 1(1), she increases her Transport skill from 1 to 2, and gains the new specialization (piloting) at level 1. Her final skill (specialization) notation reads "Transport (driving, piloting) 2(1,1)." Had the new skill(specialization) read "Transport (any) 1(1)," Haldran could have either increased her driving specialization by 1 or gained another specialization (such as piloting) at level 1 instead.

Step One: House Allegiance

Once you have your character concept, it is time to choose an Allegiance. Allegiance represents your character's service to one of the Great Houses of the Landsraad. It defines your familial bonds and political allegiance, bestowing any edges, skills or traits acquired in service to your patron House and House.

Great & Minor Houses

Allegiance	Houses Minor
Atreides	Demios, Parthenope, Spiridon
Corrino	Aingeru, Evangelos, Schiavonna
Harkonnen	Ivilonette, Ruymandiaz, Truscantos
Moritani	Laurentii, Kazimierz, Prinzporio
Tseida	Ikeni, Sunniva, Wyrkiru
Wallach	Brugge, Ottovaar, Roinesprit

Each Great House is presented in the form of an Allegiance template. At a glance, the template outlines a

Allegiance Templates

House Atreides

Attributes Physique 2, Coordination 2, Intellect (perception) 2(+1), Charisma (presence) 2(+1), Prescience 0
Skills Culture (Atreides) 1(1), History (Atreides) 1(1), Secret Language (Atreides Battle) 1(1), World Knowledge (Caladan) 1(1)
Add'l Skills Choose 2 – Athletics (any) 1(1), Charm (any) 1(1), Dodge (any) 1(1), Security (any) 1(1), Transport (piloting) 1(1)
Traits Choose 1 – Enhanced Sense (vision) 1, Ally 1, or Moralizing Creed 1

House Corrino

Attributes Physique 2, Coordination 2, Intellect 2, Charisma (presence, willpower) 2(+1,+1), Prescience 0
Skills Culture (Corrino) 1(1), History (Corrino) 1(1), Politics (Corrino) 1(1), World Knowledge (Kaitain) 1(1)
Add'l Skills Choose 2 – Administration (any) 1(1), Armed Combat (any) 1(1), Dodge (any) 1(1), Observation (any) 1(1), Persuasion (any) 1(1)
Traits Choose 1 – Ally 1, Information Network 1 or Plasteel Will 1

House Harkonnen

Attributes Physique (strength) 2(+1), Coordination 2, Intellect 2, Charisma (willpower) 2(+1), Prescience 0
Skills Culture (Harkonnen) 1(1), History (Harkonnen) 1(1), Politics (Harkonnen) 1(1), World Knowledge (Giedi Prime) 1(1)
Add'l Skills Choose 2 – Athletics 1(1), Dodge 1(1), Economics 1(1), Persuasion 1(1), Subterfuge 1(1)
Traits Choose 1 – Commendation 1, Information Network 1 or Resilience 1

House Moritani

Attributes Physique 2, Coordination (reaction) 2(+1), Intellect (perception) 2(+1), Charisma: 2, Prescience: 0
Skills Culture (Moritani) 1(2), History (Moritani) 1(1), Hunting Language (Bhotani Jib) 1(1), World Knowledge (Grumman) 1(1)
Add'l Skills Choose 2 – Athletics (any) 1(1), Concealment (any) 1(1), Observation (any) 1(1), Politics (any) 1(1), Subterfuge (any) 1(1)
Traits Choose 1 – Alertness 1, Direction Sense 1 or Immunity 1

House Tseida

Attributes Physique 2, Coordination (dexterity) 2(+1), Intellect (logic) 2(+1), Charisma 2, Prescience: 0
Skills Culture (Tseida) 1(2), History (Tseida) 1(1), Law (any) 1(1), World Knowledge (Sikun) 1(1)
Add'l Skills Choose 2 – Charm (any) 1(1), Economics (any) 1(1), Politics (any) 1(1), Language (any) 1(1), Theology (any) 1(1)
Traits Choose 1 – Contraband 1, Information Network 1 or Metabolic Clock 1

House Wallach

Attributes Physique (constitution) 2(+1), Coordination 2, Intellect 2, Charisma (willpower) 2(+1), Prescience: 0
Skills Culture (Wallach) 1(1), History (Wallach) 1(1), Politics (Wallach) 1(1) , World Knowledge (Wallach VII) 1(1)
Add'l Skills Choose 2 – Administration (any) 1(1), Armed Combat (any) 1(1), Dodge (any) 1(1), First Aid (any) 1(1), Survival (any) 1(1)
Traits Choose 1 - Ally 1, Moralizing Creed 1 or Resilience 1

character's base attributes and skills, revealing her initial strengths and weaknesses: How strong is she? How fast are her reflexes? How intelligent? Every character possesses four basic attributes—Physique, Coordination, Intellect, Charisma—while only a few possess the rare, Prescience attribute. Record the listed attribute and skill levels on your character sheet. Later, when you choose your character's Conditioning, you'll modify her base characteristics to reflect professional achievement and skill refinement. If you find the skill (specialization) terminology or numerical system confusing, see "Character Notation" for guidance.

On the previous page, you will find templates for six of the Great Houses of the Landsraad. When choosing your Allegiance, don't forget to note your character's House. Record all of the characteristics from your Allegiance template on your character sheet. For further information about House Allegiance, see "Allegiance Templates" (left page) and "Chapter 14: Imperial Planetology."

Step Two: Vocational Conditioning

After deciding upon an Allegiance, choose your character's Conditioning overlay. Conditioning represents the character's schooling and vocational training—Swordmaster or Mentat, for example. Whereas your Allegiance represents *whom* you serve, Conditioning represents *how* you serve. The overlay details all of the attribute refinements, skill proficiencies, and occupational traits developed as a result of the character's vocational Conditioning. You can think of the overlay as resume of sorts, a short list of the basic proficiencies qualifying her as a graduate of her chosen school, guild or program.

Within each overlay, the group of skills listed in *italics* are considered the *primary* skills, or vocational disciplines, conferred by the character's Conditioning. Comprised of three skills each, disciplines measure the character's proficiency and progress in relation to fellow professionals, and affect the character's career advancement and personal renown. For more information, see "Promotions" on page 175.

Overlays also list a series of traits, some of which are merely suggestions, while others are required. Traits listed in *italics* are mandatory; and as a general rule, cannot be "bought off" later with experience points as can most ordinary disadvantages (see "Traits," page 97, and "Experience," page 173). For example, all Suks gain Pyretic Conscience as part of their vocational Conditioning. Since Pyretic Conscience (tied to their Imperial Conditioning) is what distinguishes Suks from ordinary medics and House physicians, the disadvantage may not be removed without breaking the Imperial Conditioning, thereby destroying the Suk's professional credibility.

On the next page, you will find Conditioning overlays for each of the vocational schools. After considering the type of character you want to play, choose the overlay that best suits your concept. Conditioning overlays are free; they impart all of the listed characteristics (and corresponding levels) at no Development Point cost. But once you've recorded the results of your Conditioning, you'll want to modify your character's numerical levels by spending additional Development Points later in the creation process. Additional information about the vocational schools can be found "Chapter11: The Culture of the Imperium," page 218.

Step Three: Background History

After putting together Allegiance and Conditioning, you should have a solid basis for a good character. You know how strong or smart he is, and you know what he can do. Yet not all Atreides Swordmasters are the same; one might be stronger than another, or faster than another. One may have specialized in planetary invasions, while the other is an expert in security techniques. Players can personalize their characters through the *Background History* process.

Every character has a past. When your character was a child, did he learn the art of dueling from the House Swordmaster? While at the Imperial College, did she study on a foreign homeworld? How did your character spend her time between graduating from his program and enlisting with his current House? The Background History allows you to customize your characters, while at the same time detailing interesting biographies to distinguish them from their peers.



Conditioning Overlays

Bene Gesserit Adept

Attributes Physique (constitution) +0(1), Coordination +1, Intellect (perception) +0(1)
Skills *BG Way (any)* 3(3), *Ritual (any)* 2(3), *Voice* 2, Athletics 1, Charm (seduction) 1(1), Culture (BG Sisterhood) 1(1), Dodge (evade) 1(2), Observation (any) 1(2), Politics (Imperial) 1(1), Hunting Language (Chakobsa) 1, Subterfuge 1, Unarmed Combat (martial training) 1(2)
Traits Weirding Combat 2, *Dual Allegiance +2* and Prana-bindu Conditioning 3

Assassin

Attributes Coordination (any) +1(1), Intellect (perception) +0(1)
Skills *Assassination (any)* 3(3), *Impersonation (any)* 1(2), *Infiltration (any)* 2(2), Athletics 1, Armed Combat (concealed, esoteric) 1(1,1), Chemistry (pharmacy) 1(1), Concealment 1, Dodge 1, Observation 1, Ranged Combat (stunner) 1(2), Secret Language (Chakobsa) 1, Stealth (stalking) 1(2), Subterfuge (guile) 1(1), Underworld 1
Traits Assassins Code 2, Adversary +2 and Immunity (poison) 1

Master Strategist

Attributes Intellect +1, Any 2 edges, +1 each
Skills Select 1 Strategist Specialty and gain all skills therein.
Specialty: Choam Advisor – *Economics (any)* 2(2), *Law (CHOAM)* 2(2), *Mercantilism (any)* 2(3), Diplomacy (negotiation) 1(2)
Specialty: Spymaster – Espionage (any) 2(3), Interrogation (any) 2(2), Propaganda (any) 2(2), Subornation (any) 1(2)
Sysselraad Delegate – Diplomacy 2, Law (Great Convention, House) 2 (2,2), Persuasion (debate) 1(2), Statesmanship (any) 2(3)
Warmaster – *Armament (any)* 2(2), *Leadership (any)* 2(2), *Military 2(3)*, Security 1(2)
Add'l Skills Administration (any) 2(2), Armed Combat (personal) 1(2), Dodge 1, Equipment 1, History 1, Observation 1, Politics (Imperial) 1(1), Persuasion (debate) 1(1)
Traits Unrealized Potential (3), Bonded Allegiance +2 and Commendation (Master) 2

Mentat

Attributes Intellect (logic, perception) +1(1,1), Charisma (willpower) +0(1)
Skills *Projection (approximation analysis)* 3(3), *Mentat Trance (memorize)* 2(2), *Computation (straight-line)* 2(2), Administration (intelligence) 1(2), Equipment 1, Espionage (counter-intelligence) 1(1), Interrogation (questioning) 1(2), Observation 1, Politics 1, Propaganda (any) 1(2), Racketeering 1, Subterfuge (equivocation) 1(1)
Traits Mentat Awareness 2, Machine Logic 2, Sapho Addiction +2

Noble

Attributes Intellect (any) +0(1), Charisma (any) +1(1)
Skills *Command (any)* 3(3), *Persuasion (oratory)* 2(2), *Statecraft (any)* 2(2), Administration (House) 1(2), Athletics 1, Armed Combat (dueling or personal) 1(1), Charm 1, Diplomacy (any) 1(2), Dodge 1, Equipment 1, Law (House, Great Convention) 1(1,1), Observation 1, Politics (House) 1(2)
Traits Heir 1, Noble Title 1, Shield Fighting 1

Swordmaster

Attributes Physique (constitution) +0(1), Coordination (reaction) +1(1)
Skills *Armament (any)* 2(2), *Leadership (any)* 2(2), *Military Operations (any)* 2(2), Athletics (any) 1(1), Armed Combat (dueling) 2(3), Dodge (evade) 1(2), First Aid 1, Observation (any) 1, Ranged Combat (stunner) 1(1), Security (systems) 1(2), Stealth 1, Unarmed Combat 1
Traits Bimanual Fighting 2, Dueling 3, Shield Fighting and *Code of Conduct +3*

Suk Physician

Attributes Intellect +1, Charisma (willpower) +0(1), Any 1 edge +1

Skills *Medical Arts (surgery)* 3(3), *Pharmacy (any)* 2(3), *Psychology (psychiatry)* 2(2), Administration (medical) 1(2), Biology (anatomy) 1(2), Chemistry (biochemistry) 1(2), Equipment (any) 1, First Aid 1, Indoctrination (conditioning) 1(1), Interrogation (questioning) 1(1), Observation 1, Survival 1

Traits Imperial Conditioning 2, Spice Diet 3, *Pyretic Conscience +3*

The Background History is designed to help you explore these aspects of your character by tracing his growth from early age to House service. During each of the three stages of development, you may choose one of the suggested packages free of cost, or receive an equal number of Development Points with which to improve your character at your discretion. If you opt to go with Development Points, you should consult the Narrator to make certain you spend appropriately. If your character is a Suk Physician, for example, the Narrator would be justified in forbidding heavy expenditures on skills or traits having a decidedly violent nature.

Stages of Background

Background Histories consist of three 'stages' of character development—Early Life, House Service and Personal Calling. Early Life encompasses the experience gained prior to entering the school or program imparting your character's Conditioning. House Service describes what professional role your character assumed between graduating and entering play. Personal Calling covers an array of activities coinciding with your character's Early Life, Conditioning or House Service, and may even describe circumstances continuing into the present.

On the following pages, you will find packages for each stage of the Background History. At each stage you may either choose a package or receive a commensurate number of Development Points. Upon selecting your packages or spending your points, note all modifications to your characteristics on your character record.

After choosing your packages and/or spending your Development Points, you should explain how your character's various background elements fit together. They should form a biography of the character's life up to the point of entering play. For example, a character might gain the Orphaned and the Off-world Education packages for Early Life and Personal Calling, respectively. You and the Narrator might put these characteristics together by saying that the character's homeworld was ravaged during a military pogrom leaving your character to survive on the streets. But later, an uncle who also escaped the carnage discovered the character and bought her admission into the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood, sending her to Wallach IX for formal education.

Throughout this process, additional ideas and refinements may occur to you. This is natural, and you should follow these instincts; you might end up with a more interesting character. Whereas your Allegiance and Conditioning form the core of your initial concept, at this stage you add flesh to bare skeleton, adding layer upon layer until you've reached a finished character, far more lifelike and personal than your original two-word concept.



Background Packages

When choosing from among the Background packages you should consult the Narrator if you want to substitute a characteristic not listed within a particular category. Under most circumstances the Narrator should permit attribute, skill or trait substitutions, provided the player justifies the request with a reasonable explanation. For example, a player conceiving his character's Early Life Academic Education to occur in a House Embassy is entirely justified for wanting to substitute Diplomacy or

Law for Economics or Science considering the specific nature of the character's educational environment.

On the other hand, some skills and traits may be inappropriate considering a character's Allegiance or Conditioning. For example, no Noble would practice the art of Assassination even though assassins make up a legitimate part of the household personnel. Similarly, no Assassin would embody the trait Pacifism—it would mean an end to her career and professional reputation.

Advanced Character Creation

The character creation rules presented above are sufficient to create virtually any type of *DUNE RPG* character. When you become more comfortable with the rules, or if you are an experienced role-player, going through all the character creation steps described above may not be necessary. Instead, you can simply spend 130 Development Points to purchase the attributes, skills, and traits required to flesh out your own, unique *DUNE RPG* character.

Use the Templates, Overlays and Background packages provided as guidelines. Remember, the Houses entrust their key staff positions only to accomplished, well-rounded professionals. Notwithstanding, no character may begin the game with attribute (edge) values exceeding 4(+2) or skill (specialization) values exceeding 4(5).

Point-based Background Development

When spending Development Points instead of choosing a package, observe the following guidelines with respect to development costs and restrictions. See the accompanying table for a quick summary.

Development Point Cost

Attributes	3 points
Edges	1 point
Skills	2 points
Specializations	1 point
Advantages	Variable
Disadvantages	Variable (gain extra development points)

• **Attributes** – When spending Development Points, attributes cost 3 Development Points per attribute level; edges cost 1 Development Point for each +1 gained. You may only develop *one* attribute or edge during each stage of Background History. And unless a character possesses the trait Latent Prescience, you may not develop her Prescience attribute or any related edges by spending Development Points.

• **Skills** – Each skill level costs 2 Development Points. Specializations cost 1 Development Point apiece. No character may start the game with a skill higher than 4 (5), except with the Narrator's permission.

• **Traits** – Advantages cost a variable number of points, depending on the degree of benefit, while disadvantages give a character more points to allocate, based on the severity of the flaw. Unless sanctioned by the Narrator, starting characters may possess no more than *five* advantages and *five* disadvantages. You may rarely purchase an advantage or disadvantage more than once; but you may always increase or decrease the level of traits carrying variable point costs (i.e. Commendation trait, variable point range 1 – 3). All trait costs are listed in "Chapter 4: Characteristics."

Early Life

Where did your character grow up? What was his homeworld and family environment like? Did private tutors instruct him or did he learn to survive on the streets? This stage of development details your character's childhood and adolescence, giving you an idea of how he was raised and instructed through his formative years of experience. It covers the period of your character's life prior to the character's formal education and Conditioning.

Choose an Early Life package from the accompanying chart (right), or spend seven (7) Development Points among the listed attributes, skills and traits. Skills purchased during this stage represent your character's education and interests during childhood, while traits detail the early life experiences or self-realizations.

House Service

After completing his schooling, your character entered the service of a House Minor under a short-term contract of allegiance. There she spent three years in bonded service, applying and developing her vocational expertise as she embarked on a vocational career within one of the House departments (military, security, intelligence and so on). With what House did your character enlist? Was it her current House, or another House serving the same patron? How did the years of service earn her employment with her current House or advance her position within her chosen vocational path?

Choose a House Service package from the accompanying chart (page 68). If none of these suit your tastes, then spend twelve (12) Development Points on skills, advantages, and disadvantages. Skills acquired during this stage represent aptitudes learned on-the-job, while skill improvements represent further refinement of her

(continues on page 70)

Background History Packages

Early Life History

Academic Education – The character learned about the universe around him from volumes of filmbooks and solido projections.
Skills: Choose three—Culture 1, Economics 1, History 1, Politics 1, Science 1, World Knowledge 1. Gain any specialization (1) in one of the chosen skills.

Bene Gesserit Teaching – Whether a commissioned proctor or renegade sister trained the character, he received preliminary training in the secret "witching ways" of the Bene Gesserit.
Skills: BG Way 1, Athletics 1
Traits: Choose one—Prana-Bindu Conditioning 3 or Whipcord Reflexes 3

Dueling Instruction – Under the tutelage of a rogue blade master or family Weapons Master, the character trained in the art of dueling over a period of many years.
Skills: Armed Combat (dueling arms) 1(1), Dodge 1
Traits: Choose one—Dueling 2, Bimanual Fighting 2 or Heroism 2

Mentat Priming – Recognized for her mental prowess during infancy, the character was primed as a potential Mentat until reaching the age at which a voluntary decision was required to continue with his education. *Recommended for Mentats.*
Skills: Mentat Trance 1, Observation 1
Traits: Trained Intelligence 3—or—Any Intellect edge +1 and Mentat Awareness 2 or Mnemonic Conditioning 2.

Noble Household – The character was reared under the auspices of a noble household, where he learned by observing the skills of statecraft.
Skills: Politics (House) 1(1), Diplomacy 1
Traits: Choose one—Ally 2, Honorarium Familia 2, or Patron 2

Orphaned – A family tragedy left the character orphaned at an early age. The character survived on the streets until a patron came to his rescue.
Skills: Choose three—Armed Combat 1, Bargaining 1, First Aid 1, Observation 1, Survival 1, Stealth 1, Unarmed Combat 1, Underworld 1
Traits: Choose one—Alertness 1, Enhanced Sense 1 or Resilience 1

Out-freyn Upbringing – The character spent his early childhood as the ward of a foreign, non-Imperial culture, such as the Fremen, Tleilaxu, or Spacing Guild.
Skills: Culture (any) 1(1), First Aid 1, World Knowledge (any) 0(1)
Traits: Moralizing Creed 1—or—Any Physique or Coordination edge +1

Religious Household – Raised in a religious household, the character first learned about the universe through the eyes of a believer.
Skills: Theosophy 1 History 1
Traits: Hand of God 3

Slave Pits – Incarcerated within the slave pits of a rival household, the character survived a long period of torment and hard labor before escaping his captors.
Skills: Choose two—Athletics 1, Concealment 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1, Unarmed Combat 1
Traits: Heroism 2 & Resilience 1—or—Olympian Physique 3

Unique Circumstances – The character's Early Life is defined by some unique lifestyle or experience. Describe the lifestyle and spend 7 Development Points to gain and/or increase up to: one attribute (or edge), three Skills (and/or specializations) and two Traits.
Sample Expenditure: Skill (specialization) 1(1), Skill 1 and Trait 2

(continues)

House Service

Academic Advisor – The character has served as an academic specialist, consultant, or tutelary. Having specialized in religious, historical or cultural lessons, the character aspires to the post of Academic Advisor, counseling his liege in addition to educating the noble heirs.
Attributes/Edges: Intellect +1
Skills: Culture (any) 0(1) and (choose three)—Economics 1, History 1, Law 1, Performance 1, Science 1, Theosophy 1
Traits: Mnemonic Conditioning 2

CHOAM Advisor – The character has served the House as a financial officer, supervising various economic, financial and mercantile ventures. Having served as a corporate officer, treasury exchequer, or financial officer, the character aspires to the rank of CHOAM Advisor.
Skills: Administration 1, Economics 1, Law (CHOAM) 1(1), Mercantilism (any) 1(1)
Traits: Mnemonic Conditioning 2

Diplomatic Spokesman – The character served his House as a member of a Sysselraad delegation or Landsraad embassy. The character may have served as a liaison, representative, or counsel aspiring to achieve the rank of Diplomatic Spokesman.
Attribute/Edge: +1 to any Intellect or Charisma edge
Skills: Law 1, Diplomacy 1, Politics (any) 1(1) and Propaganda 1
Traits: Ally 2

House Physician – The character has operated as a chief medic, House physician or staff surgeon, having served in a military hospital or household infirmary. The character aspires to one day claim the position of House Physician. *Recommended for Suks.*
Attribute/Edge: Choose one—Constitution +1, Dexterity +1, Perception +1 or Presence +1
Skills: First Aid (any) 1(2), Medical Arts (surgery) 1(1) Pharmacy (Medicine) 1(1)
Traits: Commendation 1

Personal Confidante – The character has served as a personal confidante to a family noble, providing companionship, entertainment and advice commensurate with his/her assigned role.
Attributes: Charisma +1
Skills: Administration 1, Charm 1—and— Performance 1 or Persuasion 1
Traits: Highborn 3 or Patron 3

Security Commander – The character operated as a House security agent, serving as a member of the elite guard, brute squad or secret police. The character aspires to hold the rank of Security Commander.
Attribute/Edge: Choose one—Strength +1, Reaction +1 or Perception +1
Skills: Interrogation 1, Observation 1, Ranged Combat (Stunner) 1(1), Security (any) 1(1)
Traits: Choose one—Alertness 1, Enhanced Sense 1 or Commendation 1

Spymaster – The character served as a covert agent within the House intelligence arm. The character may have performed as an informant, spy, or provocateur, hoping to one day secure the position of House Spymaster.
Attributes/Edges: +1 to any Coordination or Intellect edge
Skills: Espionage (any) 1(1), Interrogation 1, Observation 1, and Stealth 1
Traits: Information Network 2

Warmaster – The character has fulfilled one or more tours of duty serving as a junior officer in the House military. The character may have served as a troop leader, elite commando or military advisor, aspiring to one day hold the rank of Warmaster.
Skills: Armed Combat (personal) 1(1), Ranged Combat 1, Leadership 1 and Military 1
Traits: Military Genius 3

Weapons Master – The character has served as a weapons instructor for the family nobility, House guard or military elite. In time, the character may achieve the rank of Weapons Master presiding over all House-sponsored combat training programs.
Armed Combat (any) 1(2), Dodge 1, Ranged Combat 1 and Unarmed Combat 1
Traits: Shield Fighting 1 and Bimanual Fighting (or Dueling) 2 —or— Whipcord Reflexes 3

Unique Vocation – The character's House Service is defined by some unique role or vocation. Describe the position and spend 12 Development Points to gain and/or increase up to: one attribute (or edge), four skills (and/or specializations) and two traits.
Sample Expenditure: Edge +1, Skill (specialization) 1(1), Skill (specialization) 1(1), Skill 1, and Trait 3

Personal Calling

Advocate – Gifted in verbal communication, the character excels as an advocate or spokesman for some political organization such as a household, school or combine.
Skills: Politics (any) 0(1)—and—Administration 1 or Propaganda 1
Traits: Magnanimous Appeal 3

Arena Fighter – The character demonstrates remarkable skill and valor in the arena, fighting beasts, slaves or trained gladiators to create a spectacle for the adoring public.
Skills: Dodge 1, Armed Combat (any) 1(1)
Traits: Choose one—Shield Fighting 1, Resilience 1 or any Physique/Coordination edge +1

Breeder – Because of some extraordinary quality in her genetic make up, the BG Sisterhood grooms the character to become a participant in its selective breeding program.
Skills: Charm (seduction) 1(1), Subterfuge 1
Traits: Prized Bloodline 2

Exile/Fugitive – As a result of criminal exile or fugitive flight, the character survived as a renegade before enlisting with his current House under bonded servitude.
Skills: Conceal 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1, Transport 1 and World Knowledge (any) 0(1)
Traits: Bonded Allegiance +2, Renegade +1

Imperial Servant – The character serves the Emperor as an official observer and cultural attache to the House Entourage. Though obligated to perform certain Imperial functions, the character is free to serve his patron House in any number of official capacities.
Skills: Administration (any) 1(1), Culture (Imperial) 0(1), Diplomacy 1 and Observation 1
Traits: Dual Allegiance +2

Off-world Education – The character received her vocational conditioning on another homeworld, learning about the planet and its rulers.
Skills: Culture (House) 0(1), History (House or homeworld) 0(1), Politics (House) 0(1) World Knowledge (homeworld) 0(1)
Traits: Choose 1—Ally 2, Information Network 2 or Linguistic Talent 2

Privateer – Before enlisting with her current House, the character survived as an enterprising criminal or mercenary.
Skills: Choose 3—Armed Combat 1, Mercantilism 1, Ranged Combat 1, Racketeering 1, Subterfuge 1, Underworld 1
Traits: Contraband 2, Rogue +2

Sleeper Agent – For years the character has been serving as a secret mole, on assignment from another House. The character must designate her original House and homeworld for the following specializations
Skills: Espionage 1, Culture (any House) 0(1), Stealth 1, Underground 1 and World Knowledge (homeworld) 0(1).
Traits: False Allegiance +3, Information Network 1

Umma – Gifted with prescient ability, the character possesses the natural ability to glimpse or predict future events. Because prophets are often mocked and scorned, the character may choose to keep his predictive talents secret.
Attributes: Prescience (any edge) +1(1) — resulting from Latent Prescience trait below
Skills: Prescience 1
Traits: Latent Prescience 3

Unique Calling – The character's Personal Calling reveals talent or experience unique to the character. Describe the calling and spend 6 Development Points to gain and/or increase up to: one attribute (or edge), three skills (and/or specializations) and two traits.
Sample Expenditure: Edge +1, Skill 1, Skill 1, and Trait 1

(continued from page 66)

vocational Conditioning. Similarly, traits imply personal development or occupational accomplishments.

Personal Calling

At some time in your character's history, they took the road less traveled, embarking on a personal journey or private enterprise. Whether stemming from the character's childhood dreams, tragic background, unusual aptitudes or exceptional luck, the character's Personal Calling has led him to experiences setting him apart from his peers.

Choose a Personal Calling package from the accompanying chart (previous page), or gain six (6) development points to invest in your characteristics. At this stage, skill acquisition and enhancement represents development traced to your character's unique pursuit. Traits detail the particular circumstances or achievements associated with the character's calling.

Advanced Conditioning

Instead of entering service immediately upon graduation, some characters show a talent for advanced Conditioning within one or more of the special programs offered by his vocational institution. For example, a promising Swordmaster may be recruited for advanced training within the academy's war college. Or a promising Adept might find herself initiated into the Missionaria Protectiva, an advanced religious program within the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood. Additional education does not increase the Development Points a character can spend during their development, but does offer a good explanation for buying many new or unusual skills. Forthcoming supplements from Last Unicorn Games will provide players with additional packages for various specialty programs, but in the meantime, Narrator's should feel free to develop their own packages to accommodate the concept of advanced Conditioning. As a general rule, Advanced Conditioning packages should consist of eighteen (18) Development Points, and substitute for both House Service and Personal Calling packages.

Step Four: Finishing Touches

By this time, you should have a fairly well developed character, complete with attributes, skills, traits and history. In this last step, you add the final remaining touches needed to enter play. In performing the finishing touches, you'll determine your character's starting Caste, Renown Karama and Equipment.

Universal Background Development

At this stage, every character gets five points to allocate among its attributes, edges, skills and traits. This is your last opportunity to personalize your character prior to entering game play. They may be innate qualities from birth, special advantages that a character gained at some point during his life or many other things. It's limited only by the player's imagination.

Caste

Caste identifies your character's place within the Imperial social hierarchy known as the *faufreluches*. Because the order of the faufreluches is tied to blood lineage, characters are born into their social Caste, finding little opportunity to elevate their social expectations. Your character's social privileges, legal rights, educational opportunities and vocational roles all result from your character's inherited Caste.

Order of the Faufreluches

Caste	Description
5	Regis-Familia (House Nobility)
4	Na-Familia (House family members and high ranking officers/advisors & merchant gentry)
3	Bondsman (artisans & skilled laborers)
2	Pyon (peasants & laborers—wards of the land)
1	Maula (Slaves, Criminals and Outcasts)

Conditioning	Caste Level
Adept	4
Assassin	3
Master Strategist	3
Mentat	3
Noble	5
Swordmaster	3
Suk	4

Though caste may vary somewhat depending on the character's background development, vocational Conditioning firmly roots the character into one of the five castes of the faufreluches. To determine your character's Caste, refer to the accompanying table. If your character possesses any traits that modify its Caste, implement those changes now to determine your final Caste.

Renown

Renown measures your character's fame or reputation. The higher your character's Renown, the more people have heard of him or his exploits. For example, a character with a low Renown might only be recognized among household retainers, while one with extraordinarily high Renown has made a name for himself throughout the Imperium.

In addition to representing general fame or notoriety, Renown is divided into four aspects: Valor, Learning, Justice and Prayer. Characters gain Renown in those individual aspects; the total of those aspects is the character's overall Renown.

Starting characters typically begin play with 1 Renown, in any aspect. However, if your character possesses any traits affecting its renown, implement those changes now. Record your final Renown and Renown aspects on your Character record.

Renown Aspects

Valor – Valor represents a character's reputation for physical acts of bravery or heroism. This reputation may come from fighting in a slave arena or leading armies of men in planetary assaults. Aspects may reflect personal Physique or Coordination, Valor skills and traits, or feats of courage demonstrated during play.

Learning – Learning reflects a character's reputation for intelligence, scholarship and accomplishments of mind. Learning aspects may include personal Intellect, Learning skills and traits, or intellectual accomplishments demonstrated during play.

Justice – Justice reflects a character's reputation for sound leadership, political savvy or social esteem. This can be done through fear or inspiring loyalty. Justice aspects may reflect personal Charisma, Justice skills and traits, moral or ethical conduct, or stirring acts of leadership demonstrated during play.

Prayer – Prayer reflects the character's reputation for personal wisdom, spiritual contemplation or esoteric knowledge. Prayer aspects may reflect personal Intellect or Charisma, Prayer skills and traits, character personality, spiritual or philosophical beliefs, or demonstration of any of the same during narrative situations.

Karama

Each character receives 3 Karama. Karama can be spent to earn automatic successes, thus allowing characters to perform heroic feats in times of stress. If characters have any remaining Development Points, they can purchase additional Karama at a cost of 3 Development Points per Karama. For rules regarding the use and recovery of Karama, see pages 115 and 174.

Personal Equipment

Each character begins play outfitted with personal equipment standard to their profession and/or homeworld. See the accompanying chart and record the equipment gained as a result of your character's Conditioning. Narrators should feel free to limit or expand the normal selection of equipment, based on the needs of his chronicle and/or style of play.

Starting Equipment

All *DUNE RPG* characters begin play with the following equipment: House Uniform, ComNet transmitter, Knife and Personal affects (clothing, memorabilia, filmbooks, chronometer, etc.) Each character also gains the following equipment, according to their Conditioning Overlay:

Adept	Filmbooks (BG), Wardrobe appropriate to House function
Assassin	Flip-dart, Hunter–Seeker, Krimskell rope, Maula pistol, Minimic recorder, Poison (Type 1 & IV), Shigawire garrote and Slip-tip
Master Strategist	
Warmaster	Battledress, Kindjal and Maula pistol or Stunner
Spymaster	Needlegun or Stunner, Minimic recorder & film, Poison snooper and Maula pistol
CHOAM Advisor	CHOAM credentials, Filmbooks (CHOAM Regulations) and Shigawire imprinter
Diplomatic Spokesman	Needlegun, Diplomatic passport, and Filmbooks (Great Convention) and Shigawire imprinter
Mentat	Needlegun, Solido projector, Solido recorder and Shigawire reels
Noble	Indicia of birthright (ring, circlet, etc.), Personal shield, Poison snooper and Sword or Kindjal,
Swordmaster	Personal shield, Slip-tip, Stunner and Sword
Suk	Filmbooks (medical), Poison snooper and Surgical medkit (las-scalpel, shot injector, medicines)

Quick-Reference Creation

I. Basic Character Creation Process

A. Choose Allegiance (your Great House & House Minor)

B. Choose Conditioning (your vocation)

C. Detail the character's background using the History stages (Early Life, House Service and Personal Calling.)

D. Put on the finishing touches: Caste, Renown, Karama & Equipment

II. Essential Elements of Character Creation

A. Attributes: Attributes represent a character's innate capabilities, such as his agility or intelligence. There are five attributes: Physique, Coordination, Intellect, Charisma and Prescience attributes range in value from 1 to 5. Unless a character possesses the Latent Prescience trait, they may not develop their Prescience attribute (or related edges), meaning they possess the attribute and edges at level 0.

Attribute Cost: It costs 3 Development Points to raise an attribute by 1 point.

B. Edges: Edges are aspects of attributes representing a character's particular level of talent (or lack of talent) within the attribute category. For example, the edges associated with Intellect are Perception and Logic. Edges range in value from +2 to -2, and act as modifiers to related Tests.

Edge Cost: It costs 1 Development Point to raise an edge by +1 (for example, from 0 to +1, or from -2 to -1). Reducing an edge by 1 or 2 confers an equal number of Development Points that may spent elsewhere during the creation process.

C. Skills: Skills reflect a character's learned abilities and aptitudes. Examples include the ability to command a subordinate, operate a hunter seeker, and interrogate a subject. Most skills have specializations representing related areas of expertise. Skills range in value from 1 to 5 (certain traits allow skills to reach level 6), while specializations range up to one rank higher.

Skill Cost: Skills cost 2 Development Points each, with additional specialization(s) costing 1 Development Point per level. Improving a skill by one level costs 2 Development Points. Improving a specialization by one level costs 1 Development Point. Unless gained in a Conditioning overlay or Background package, characters cannot purchase Conditioning-related skills (such as those described as "Mentats only"). They may, however, increase such skills once acquired.

D. Traits (advantages): These are special abilities, benefits, or advantages that a character possesses. Examples include having an Ally in the Spacing Guild, being physically Resilient, or having a particularly well-developed characteristic.

Advantage Cost: Equal to the value of the advantage (see individual Advantage descriptions, pages 97-108). Unless gained in a Conditioning overlay or Background package, characters cannot purchase Conditioning-related traits (such as those described as "Nobles only"). They may, however, augment such traits once acquired.

E. Traits (disadvantages): The opposite of advantages, disadvantages are limitations, hindrances, or other problems afflicting a character. Examples include having a chemical Addiction, social Adversary or psychological Perversion.

Disadvantage Cost: Disadvantages do not cost Development Points; instead, they confer additional Development Points (equal to the Disadvantage's value) that characters can spend freely on other characteristics or Karama. See individual disadvantage descriptions, pages 99-109).

F. Caste: Caste represents the character's position within the faufreluches, the Imperial hierarchy of social status.

Caste Cost: Caste results from your character's Conditioning Overlay and is free of cost. Caste may be increased through the purchase of certain traits, but cannot otherwise be modified through point expenditures.

G. Renown: Renown measures the scope of a character's personal reputation(s). Renown consists of four aspects (Valor, Learning, Justice and Prayer). Nobles start the game with 1 point of Renown in one aspect (player's choice). All others begin with 2 points of Renown in one or more aspects.

Renown Cost: Additional Renown cannot be purchased; it must be earned through game play.

H. Karama: Karama is spent to increase Test Results during play. Each character starts the game with 3 Karama Points.
Karama Point Cost: Extra Karama Points costs 3 Development Points each.

I. Equipment: Characters start with personal equipment appropriate to their Conditioning. Houses furnish this equipment to the character free of cost. In addition, each character starts the game with 3000 solaris, which they may spend to purchase additional equipment (see page 240-241 for equipment costs and character restrictions) or save for use during play.

III. Character Creation Tools

A. Allegiance Templates: Templates represent a character's Allegiance to a Great and Minor House, such as Atreides and Demios or Harkonnen and Ivilonette. They include the basic attributes, skills and other elements common to the House and homeworld.

Templates do not cost Development Points; each character chooses one for free.

B. Conditioning Overlays: Overlays represent a character's vocational Conditioning and active profession, such as Adept or Swordmaster. It includes the basic characteristics common to practicing members of the named vocation.

Overlays do not cost Development Points; each character chooses one for free.

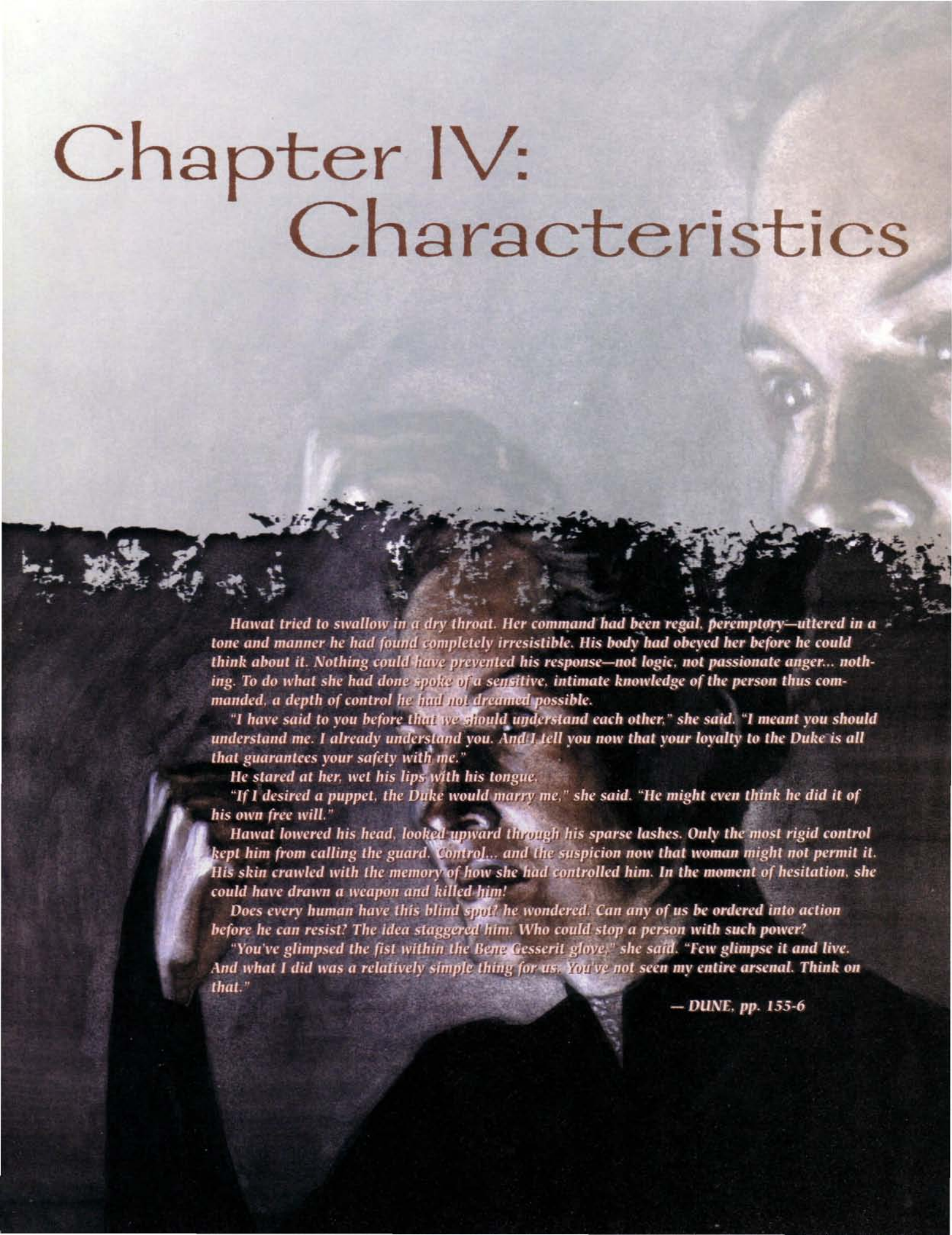


C. Background History: A character's background helps the player trace the character's development through his early life, House service and personal calling prior to beginning play. Each stage of a character's Background History (Early Life, House Service and Personal Calling) includes one customizable package, giving him a number of Development Points to spend on appropriate character creation elements listed with that stage's History.

IV. Quick And Easy Character Generation

Select a Character Archetype (see pages 53-59) and personalize it. You get 5 Development Points to spend to increasing existing characteristics or acquiring new skills and/or traits. See also the Development Point Cost table (page 66) for the cost of increasing and/or acquiring various characteristics.

Chapter IV: Characteristics



Hawat tried to swallow in a dry throat. Her command had been regal, peremptory—uttered in a tone and manner he had found completely irresistible. His body had obeyed her before he could think about it. Nothing could have prevented his response—not logic, not passionate anger... nothing. To do what she had done spoke of a sensitive, intimate knowledge of the person thus commanded, a depth of control he had not dreamed possible.

"I have said to you before that we should understand each other," she said. "I meant you should understand me. I already understand you. And I tell you now that your loyalty to the Duke is all that guarantees your safety with me."

He stared at her, wet his lips with his tongue.

"If I desired a puppet, the Duke would marry me," she said. "He might even think he did it of his own free will."

Hawat lowered his head, looked upward through his sparse lashes. Only the most rigid control kept him from calling the guard. Control... and the suspicion now that woman might not permit it. His skin crawled with the memory of how she had controlled him. In the moment of hesitation, she could have drawn a weapon and killed him!

Does every human have this blind spot? he wondered. Can any of us be ordered into action before he can resist? The idea staggered him. Who could stop a person with such power?

"You've glimpsed the fist within the Bene Gesserit glove," she said. "Few glimpse it and live. And what I did was a relatively simple thing for us. You've not seen my entire arsenal. Think on that."

— DUNE, pp. 155-6

In the *DUNE RPG*, a character is measured by his characteristics. They describe what she can and cannot do—lift a crate full of lasguns, outrun a wild laza tiger, or pilot a 'thopter through a Coriolis storm. They help you to quantify your character's strengths and weaknesses. Characteristics also allow a character to "play by the rules"; determining whether his succeeds at an action based on a numeric skill value and the numbers rolled on some dice.

There are three kinds of Characteristics in the *DUNE RPG*: *attributes*, *skills* and *traits* (which are considered either *advantages* or *disadvantages*). Initially, characteristics are determined by the *Allegiance* and *Conditioning* you choose during character creation. But as your character becomes more experienced, he can improve upon his existing characteristics, or acquire new ones altogether. See "Chapter 8" for more information about Character Experience.

Attributes

Attributes form the basis of your character. They measure your character's physical capability, mental prowess and social graces. Attribute scores normally range from 1 to 5, though some traits permit higher scores. Your character's base attributes come from the Allegiance template, a representation of your character's native homeworld and her genetic predisposition. There are five attributes in the *DUNE RPG*:

- **Physique** – Physique represents the physical condition of your character. It governs how much the character can lift (see Athletics (Lifting), page 80), how much damage she can withstand before falling unconscious, and her overall physical fitness.
- **Coordination** – Coordination defines a character's manual dexterity and physical agility, including her grace in movement and sheer reaction speed. Her accuracy with a maula pistol, nimbleness in dodging and deftness with 'thopter controls are all determined by the character's Coordination attribute.
- **Intellect** – Intellect measures your character's general intelligence, including various cognitive abilities such as deductive reasoning, mnemonic recall and personal insight. The ability to retain knowledge, process information or innovate solutions all depend on the character's mental intellect.
- **Charisma** – Charisma establishes the character's personal magnetism and leadership. The character's penchant for negotiating treaties, commanding subordinates, or leading battalions are all linked to her Charisma.
- Prescience: Prescience represents a character's oracular vision and time awareness. Sampling the futures through dreams or tracing events to their origins both require prescient ability. Unless a character possesses the trait Latent Prescience, they have no innate Prescience, indicated by an attribute score of zero. Characters having Prescience 0 can neither develop Prescience edges nor acquire Prescience skills; however, by spending Karama Points characters may eventually 'discover' the Latent Prescience trait during play, gaining the ability to explore the full depths of their powers in future adventures.

Edges

Each attribute consists of two component aspects, called edges. Edges make numerical attributes a bit more flexible. One person may be slightly stronger than another, even though both have the same general Physique. Edges are expressed in terms of "+" or "-" values. The value of an edge indicates a bonus or penalty modifying the number of dice players roll during certain situations. For example, a Mentat might have a high Intellect, but she may also buckle under pressure (giving her a -1 Willpower edge). On the other hand, a Sysselraad Delegate may be sorely lacking in Charisma, but his calm demeanor and personal resolve gives him a +2 Willpower edge. Under normal circumstances, edges range from -2 to +2. For more about Tests, see "Chapter 5," page 115.

Physique Edges

- **Strength** – Strength modifies a character's ability to lift heavy objects and exert physical force. The Strength score indicates that the character receives fewer or extra dice when making Strength-based Physique Tests.
- **Constitution** – Constitution modifies the health and stamina of the character. Constitution modifies the character's ability to endure the effects of fatigue, poisons, illness and injury.

Coordination Edges

- **Dexterity** – Dexterity modifies a character's physical agility and manual control—his ability to move grace-

fully or to manipulate instruments with deft precision. It modifies many Coordination Tests, such as jumping, gymnastics, moving stealthily and aiming accurately.

• **Reaction** – Reaction modifies a character's ability to respond to sudden changes—dodging a hunter-seeker, parrying melee attacks and so on. It also affects who gains the initiative in combat.

Intellect Edges

• **Perception** – Perception modifies a character's ability to notice subtle details in his environment or observe minutia with relative clarity. The Perception edge plays an important role in a variety of Skill Tests, such as Observation, Bene Gesserit Way and Truthtrance Tests.

• **Logic** – Logic modifies a character's problem-solving and deductive-reasoning ability. Important to Mentats and Master Strategists who rely on deductive reasoning, Logic plays an important part in many Learning skills, such as Administration, Mentat Computation and Interrogation.

Charisma Edges

• **Presence** – Presence modifies the character's ability to stimulate emotion, promote loyalty or inspire confidence in others. Important to Nobles and Master Diplomats, charisma affects most influence–based skills, such as Charm, Leadership and Persuasion.

• **Willpower** – Willpower modifies a character's ability to impose his will on others or to withstand emotional trauma, psychological manipulation or mental duress. An essential component of leadership, Willpower impacts many influence–based skills such as Command, Diplomacy and Voice.

Prescience Edges

• **Sight** – Sight modifies the temporal magnitude (scope and range) perceptible to characters having prescient talent.

• **Vision** – Vision modifies the degree of accuracy and precision with which prescient characters can interpret portents, observe details or trace events through with their oracular powers.

Skills

Skills represent learned talents, trained aptitudes and acquired knowledge. Like attributes, skill levels generally range from 1 to 5. Higher skill levels indicate heightened degrees of expertise. For example, a Mentat with Propaganda (House) 2(3) can generally interpret and manipulate House propaganda better than a Mentat having Propaganda (House) 1(2).

Each skill corresponds to an attribute used during Skill Tests (see "Chapter 5," pages 111–115). The corresponding attribute for each skill is listed in the skill's description. Whenever a Test is required, Narrators should employ Skill Tests instead of Attribute Tests, allowing attribute edges to modify the Test.

When deciding which skill is most applicable to a given situation or Test, the Narrator should be flexible—industrious players often find unorthodox, yet functional solutions to the tasks set before them. Often the best method is simply to decide which skill would be most applicable in the situation, then increase the Difficulty Number needed to succeed should a less applicable skill be employed.

Many skills in the *DUNE RPG* represent certain innate talents or abilities common to most Imperial denizens. Such "general" skills may be attempted, albeit poorly, without the benefit of formal training. This is referred to as "untrained skill usage" (skill level 0). Those skills marked with a "0+" in the skills chart may be used "untrained;" in other words, your character need not possess the skill at level 1 or more to make Tests using that skill. (See "Chapter 5," page 118, for more information on untrained skill use.

But the majority of *DUNE* skills represent select disciplines or specific knowledge that characters learn only though their professional training or unique life experiences. Such "acquired" skills (marked by "1+" on the accompanying skill chart) require characters to possess level 1 or higher in order to use them during Skill Tests. Some acquired skills also require the character to possess a certain vocational Conditioning in order to acquire and develop the skill, indicated by the words "Suks," Mentats" and so forth. Some Background Packages confer Conditioning–specific skills (such as Armament, BG Way or Statecraft) regardless of a character's Conditioning. Aside from these exceptions though, characters cannot acquire vocation-related skills through Development Point or Experience Point expenditures, unless sanctioned by the Narrator.

Hasifaryn needs to pass a shielded prudence door. The Narrator knows that a pass–coded dissembler would grant access with a successful Equipment Test. Unfortunately, Hasifaryn doesn't have access to a dissembler and must attempt to bypass the pentashield another way. So the Narrator decides that Hasifaryn could attempt a Security (systems) Test to override the door's pass code sequence. But Hasifaryn doesn't have that skill, and it cannot be used untrained. However, he does know Repair (shields) so his player asks if that skill could be used to jury-rig the electronic sensors. The Narrator rules that Hasifaryn can rely on his Repair to "recalibrate" the lock, but since that skill is only marginally related to Security (systems), the Difficulty Number increases by 3. What would have been a Moderate (7) Security (systems) Test to unlock the door is now a Challenging (10) Repair (shields) Test.

Specialization

Most skills require specialization. This represents the character's area of expertise, such as Assassination (poisons), Armed Combat (dueling arms) and Stealth (stalking). A character cannot hope to know everything there is to know about broad, detailed subjects such as history, law, or customs, so he must focus on one area of expertise.

Specializations are written in parentheses following the base level of the skill. For example, a character might know Ranged Weapon (Stunner) 2(3), meaning that he has the Ranged Weapon skill at level 2, but can use stunners at level 3. Frequently, characters start with a specialization equal to their base skill. But during character creation, or as a result of experience, characters can increase their specialization, such as Ranged Weapon (Stunner) 2(5), which represents the character's extensive experience and training in that area.

Nonetheless, a character who specializes still knows the basics in his field and can attempt to use his skill in other, related areas. An Assassin specializing in Equipment (Devices) has learned the basic principles of personal Equipment and can use any other specialization under Equipment at his base skill level. For example, an Assassin with Equipment (devices) 2(4) could operate a communinet transceiver in a pinch, because he knows the fundamentals that apply to all personal equipment—but when operating the comnet tranceiver, he would only roll two dice when making Skill Tests instead of the four he could roll when operating a Shield dissembler.

The specializations listed under each skill are not exhaustive; they simply represent common examples. Players who think up other specializations for their characters to buy should be allowed to buy them, subject to the Narrator's approval.

Skill Descriptions

Valor of the Brave

The following skills represent an array of physical aptitudes. Characters who demonstrate remarkable achievement in the following skills may be recognized for the Renown aspect (Valor).

*Armament (Intellect, 1+, Swordmasters)

Armament confers the ability to operate, maintain and repair heavy weaponry such as lasguns, artillery, vehicular weaponry and even House atomics. It includes the ability to secure and deploy such armament, installing vehicular hard points, rotating turrets and the like. The Armament skill also confers the ability to operate and service Holtzman shield generators, including personal shields, vehicular shields and House shield generators.

Specializations: Maintenance, Operation, Repair

Routine: Servicing armament; reloading ammunition or replacing energy sources

Moderate: Field-stripping equipment; retooling components or making minor adjustments or repairs with the necessary tools and facilities

Challenging: Converting equipment to suit another purpose; removing a jet-flare launcher from a 'thopter and mounting it on a grav-tank. Repairing minor damage with inappropriate tools

Difficult: Repairing major damages or making major adjustments in the field

Nearly Impossible: Constructing new devices from mismatched components, making major, precision repairs without the proper instruments

Armed Combat (Physique, 0+)

Armed Combat training enables characters to attack and defend with a variety of melee weapons such as rapiers, knives, flip-darts, or garrotes. When acquiring the Armed Combat skill, characters must specialize in one particular group of weapons (concealed arms, dueling arms, personal arms or esoteric arms (see specializations hereafter). Skill and specialization confer the ability to perform all of the combat options (maneuvers) listed for the weapons of specialty; but in the case of dueling arms, the Dueling trait is required to perform the fine range of Dueling options available to trained Swordmasters and accomplished duelists. Similarly, the esoteric specialization confers training with only one of the possible weapons; so in order to use more than one



Master Skill List

* denotes skill may be used to perform a House Venture

The Valor of the Brave

*Armament (Intellect, 1+, Swordmasters)
Maintenance, Operation, Repair
Armed Combat (Physique, 0+)
Concealed, Dueling, Melee, and Esoteric Arms
*Assassination (Coordination, 1+, Assassins)
Devices, Poisons, Snares
Athletics (Physique, 0+)
Acrobatics, Climbing, Jumping, Lifting, Running, Swimming, Throwing
Dodge (Coordination, 0+)
Evade, Sidestep
Concealment (Coordination, 0+)
Camouflage, Stash, Sleight of Hand
Impersonation (Charisma, 1+, Assassins)
Disguise, Mimicry, Personality
*Infiltration (Intellect, 1+, Assassins)
Contingencies, Diversions, Escape, Security
*Military Operations (Intellect, 1+, Swordmasters)
Guerrilla Warfare, Infantry, Mechanized Ground Warfare, Sea Combat, Aerial Combat
Performance (Coordination or Charisma, 1+)
Dance, Drama, Musical Instrument, Singing
Ranged Combat (Coordination, 0+)
Needlegun, Lasgun, Maula Pistol, Stunner and Throwing Knife
Stealth (Coordination, 0+)
Ambushing, Hiding, Prowling, Stalking
Survival (Physique, 0+)
Atmosphere, Climate, Gravity, Terrain, Subterranean, Wilderness
Transport (Coordination, 1+)
Driving, Operation, Piloting, Sailing
Unarmed Combat (Coordination, 0+)
Brawling, Martial Training, Wrestling

The Learning of the Wise

Computation (Intellect, 1+, Mentats)
Probability Computation, Straight-line Computation, Comparative Induction
Culture (Intellect, 0+)
Homeworld, House, Imperial, Out-freyn
Economics (Intellect, 0+)
CHOAM Industries, Homeworld, House, Out-freyn, Spacing Industry
History (Intellect, 0+)
Homeworld, House, Imperial, Out-freyn, Subject
Language (Intellect, 1+)
Secret Language (House or organization), Ancient Hunting Language (Bhotani jib, Chakobsa, Mirabhasa) or Out-freyn (any).
Law (Intellect, 0+)
CHOAM Law, Great Convention, House (specific), Out-freyn (specific), Spacing
Medical Arts (Intellect, 1+, Suks)
Anatomy, Forensics, General Medicine, Pathology, Pharmacology, Neurology, Optometry, Surgery, Toxicology
Mentat Trance (Intellect, 1+, Mentats)
Factor, Memorize, Recall
Pharmacy (Intellect, 1+, Suks)
Medicine, Narcotics, Poisons
Politics (Intellect, 0+)
House (specific), Imperium, Institution (specific), Out-freyn (specific)
Projection (Intellect, 1+, Mentats)
Approximation Analysis, Factual Analysis, Proximity Hypothesis, Zero-bias Matrices
Sciences (Intellect, 1+)
Biology – Anatomy, Biochemistry, Botany, Ecology, Genetics, Microbiology, Paleontology, Zoology
Chemistry – Alchemy, Biochemistry, Pharmacy, Laboratory Techniques
Physics – Astrophysics, Engineering, Holtzman Field Theory and Metallurgy
Theology (Intellect, 1+)
Ancient Teachings, Orange Catholicism, Zensunni
Underworld (Intellect, 0+)
Blackmarkets, Crime Rings, Homeworld
World Knowledge (Intellect, 0+)
Specific Planet, Planetology, Geology, Demographics

The Justice of the Great

*Administration (Intellect, 1+)
Economic, Intelligence, Medical, Military, Political, Security and Underground operations
*Command (Charisma, 1+, Nobles)
Delegating, Inspiration, Orders
*Diplomacy (Charisma, 1+)
Arbitration, Negotiation, Pacification, Subject
*Espionage (Intellect, 1+)
Counter-Intelligence, Cryptography, Forgery, Surveillance
Interrogation (Charisma, 1+)
Enticement, Coercion, Pain-induction, Questioning
*Leadership (Charisma, 1+, Swordmasters)
Military Assaults, Prolonged Entrenchment, Guerrilla actions, Directed Retreat
*Mercantilism (Intellect, 1+)
Accounting, Banking, Financing, Investing, Tithing, Acquisitions, Enterprising, Funding, Trade
* Propaganda (Intellect, 1+)
Analysis, Dissemination, Misinformation
Psychology (Intellect, 1+, Suks)
Diagnosis, Psychoanalysis, Psychiatry
*Racketeering (Intellect, 1+)
Blackmail, Bribery, Extortion, False Testimony
*Security (Intellect, 1+)

Enforcement, Shields, Surveillance, Systems
*Statecraft (Intellect, 1+, Nobles)
Entreaty, Intrigue, Petition, Pressure, Threats
Subornation (Intellect, 1+)
Brainwashing, Indoctrination, Hypno–ligation
Subterfuge (Intellect, 0+)
Artifice, Equivocation, Mind Games, Perjury
Voice (Charisma, 1+, Adepts)
Command, Intimidation, Suggestion

The Prayers of the Righteous
Artistry (Intellect, 1+)
Composing, Illustration, Painting, Sculpting
BG Way (Intellect, 1+, Adepts)
Minutia, Petit Betrayals
Bargaining (Charisma, 0+)
Market goods, Labor services, Contraband, Blackmarket services, Specialty services
Charm (Charisma, 0+)
Flattery, Indulgence, Seduction
Equipment (Intellect, 0+)
Devices, Forbidden Technology, Instrumentation, Systems
First Aid (Intellect, 0+)
CPR, Infection, Injury, Shock Trauma
Gaming (Intellect, 1+)
Gambling, Games, Puzzles, Wagering
Observation (Intellect, 0+)
Inspection, Search, Study and Surveillance
Persuasion (Intellect, 0+)
Debate, Logic, Parable, Reason
Prescience (Prescience, 0+)
Prophesy (Prescience, 1+)
Repair (Intellect, 1+)
Devices, Equipment, Systems, Vehicles
*Ritualism (Intellect, 1+, Adepts)
Exploitation, Identification, Seeding
*Sabotage (Intellect, 1+)
Demolitions, Monkey-wrenching and Short-circuiting
Truthtrance (Intellect, 1+, Adepts)

of the esoteric weapons a character must choose numerous specializations. See Close Combat, pages 127-128 and Melee Weapons, pages 226-228.

Specializations: Concealed Arms (garrote, flip-dart, knife, slip-tip), Dueling Arms (kindjal, rapier, slip-tip), Personal Arms (knife or kindjal) and Esoteric Arms (Gom Jabbar or Inkvine whip)

Routine: Hitting an opponent whose Dodge roll is 3-5

Moderate: Hitting an opponent whose Dodge roll is 6-8

Challenging: Hitting an opponent whose Dodge roll is 9-11

Difficult: Hitting an opponent whose Dodge roll is 12-14; repairing a weapon in combat

Nearly Impossible: Hitting an opponent whose Dodge roll is 15+

*Assassination (Coordination, 1+, Assassins)

Assassination skill confers the ability to execute a marked target by means of trained methodology and stealth. Assassination skill trains characters in the use, service and construction of lethal devices (such as hunter-seekers), deadly toxins (a pharmacopoeia of poisons and acids) and fatal snares (such as tiger pits, shigawire snares, and loaded spring-darts). Depending on the methodology used, the Difficulty for Assassination attempts vary pending Narrator discretion.

*Note: Successful Assassination Tests do not automatically kill the intended target, but they do indicate successful use, insinuation or construction of devices, poisons and snares. See Poisons, pages 131-133 and Hunter–Seeker, page 231 for more information.

Specializations: Devices, Poisons and Snares

Routine: Brewing poisons in a controlled environment; servicing an operable device or pre-installed snare

Moderate: Preparing or administering poisons in the field; assembling a device or snare under controlled conditions from prepared components

Challenging: Smuggling poisons past a snooper; operating a hunter–seeker or bio-promptor; assembling a device or snare in haste

Difficult: Operating a hunter-seeker or bio-promptor in dim lighting or poor environmental conditions. Manufacturing complex poisons outside of a lab environment.

Nearly Impossible: Constructing a complex assassination device, such as a hunter-seeker or high voltage Holtzman field generator from raw components. Innovating highly-specialized poisons that will pass a poison snooper

Athletics (Physique, 0+)

Athletics measures a character's ability to perform a variety of physical activities such as running, jumping, swimming and throwing. Athletics skill also includes any active sports and physical contests incorporating such activities into a form of competition (such as a foot race). For information about how Athletics skill relates to movement Tests, see Movement, pages 127.

Specializations: Acrobatics, Climbing, Jumping, Running, Swimming, Throwing

Routine: Walking (10m/round) on slick/icy ground; running on paved ground

Moderate: Running (15m/round) on ordinary ground; sprinting on paved ground

Challenging: Sprinting (20m per round) on ordinary ground; running on slick/icy ground

Difficult: Sprinting on slick/icy ground

Nearly Impossible: Sprinting in a swamp

Acrobatics

Acrobatics allows the character to control their movement when performing quick, disorienting maneuvers such as tumbling, falling, rolling, diving or swinging. It



enables a character to alleviate some or all of the damage resulting from falling, and permits the character to perform special movement maneuvers during combat (see Movement Options, page 127 and Falling Damage, page 133). Perilous balancing maneuvers such as walking a ledge or maintaining footing on a pitching deck also fall within the acrobatics specialization.

Climbing

Characters use climbing when they need to scale steep inclines, climb trees, free-climb large rocks or engage in other similar activity. The character moves at a rate in meters equal to twice her Physique+Strength per minute, or a maximum of 1m per round during combat; successful Tests allow her to move more quickly (see Movement, page 127).

Jumping

Jumping allows characters to jump over obstacles (a low wall, a large piece of furniture) or across them (a chasm, a stream). Characters can jump 2m forward or 1m upward without having to make any Test (see Movement, page 127). If a character makes a successful Athletics (Jumping) or Physique Test against a Moderate (7) Difficulty, they can add up to their skill level (or Physique) in meters to their forward jump, or half that to their vertical jump. If they make a Challenging (10) roll, they can add up to twice their skill level (or Physique); if a Difficult (13) roll, three times their skill level (or Physique); if a Nearly Impossible roll, four times their skill level (or Physique).

Obstacles also affect the Difficulty of a jump. If an obstacle interferes with a jump made for distance, increase the Difficulty of the jump by +1 to +3 (or even by one or more categories). If the purpose of the jump is to clear or avoid the obstacle, the Difficulty is usually based on the size of the obstacle itself. If the obstacle is one quarter the character's size (or smaller), the Difficulty is Routine (4); if one half the character's size, Moderate (7); if three quarters the character's size, Challenging (10); if equal to the character's size, Difficult (13); if greater than the character's size, Nearly Impossible (15).

Lifting

Lifting measures a character's ability to lift and carry objects. The overall Difficulty of a task depends largely on an object's weight, and how long the character attempts to carry it. When a character first lifts an object, he must roll a Lifting Test (or a Physique Test if he does not have this skill); the Difficulty of the Test is determined by the amount of weight lifted, as indicated by the chart below. Of course, the character's Strength edge adds to this Test. At appropriate intervals, the Narrator may have the character make another Test to see if he continues to hold on to the object. Should the character fail a Test, he immediately drops the object. If the character matches (but does not exceed) the Difficulty, he manages to hang onto the object but can take no other actions.

Lifting Tests

Weight	Difficulty
Up to 20kg	No roll required
21-50kg	Routine (2-4)
51-150kg	Moderate (5-7)
151-300Kg	Challenging (8-10)
301-500kg	Difficult (11-13)
Over 500kg	Nearly Impossible

Running

This specialization measures a character's ability to run quickly and to keep his balance while running, particularly over unsafe terrain. The Difficulty for Running Tests (if a Test is even necessary) is determined by the type of terrain and the speed at which the character moves. See Movement, page 127.

Swimming

Swimming covers all forms of aquatic activity, including aerial diving, scuba diving, snorkling and so on. While all characters are assumed able to tread water and perform a number of basic aquatic maneuvers, this specialization assists characters when making Athletics

(swimming) Tests as a result of rough waters, heavy undercurrents, swimming while encumbered, and any sort of water rescue activity. This specialization also comes into play when characters attempt to move further than the normal movement allowance per round (see "Chapter 5: Movement," page 127).

Throwing

Throwing enables characters to hurl objects farther and more accurately than would be possible without athletic training. When characters throw weapons, such as knives, they may add their Strength edge to Ranged Weapons Tests and resulting Damage rolls.

Dodge (Coordination, 0+)

Characters use Dodge to avoid attacks, from hand-to-hand assaults to slow-pellet projectile fire. When a character wishes to dodge an attack, he makes a Dodge Test; his Test Result becomes the Difficulty Number for the attack against him (although if this result is lower than the normal Accuracy of the attacker's weapon, the weapon Accuracy is used). For example, Hasifaryn has Coordination 3, Dodge 4. He decides to evade a maula dart at Medium Range. The highest roll on her three Coordination dice is a 4, so the Difficulty to hit her is 8 (4+4). If he had only rolled a 2, her Test Result of 6 would be less than the attacker's normal Difficulty of 7 at Medium Range. In this case, the attacker would make his attack at a Difficulty 7.

Specializations: Evade (Ranged Combat), Sidestep (Melee Combat)

Concealment (Coordination, 0+)

Concealment enables character to hide and stow objects, protecting them from casual observance and routine inspection. Once successfully hidden, an object is considered "concealed" and may not be discovered unless someone actively searches for concealed objects. An active search requires an Observation Tests (or Intellect+Perception Tests), with the Test having a Difficulty equal to the character's Concealment Test Result. When characters succeed at concealing something, the Narrator should record their Test Result in the event someone searches at a later time. Once a character removes an item from concealment, another Concealment Test is required to restore it to cover.

Specializations: Camouflage, Stashing, Sleight of Hand

Routine: Stashing a signet ring in a survival pack; hiding a poison vial in a coat pocket

Moderate: Hiding a kindjal in a boot sheath, concealing a dart projector in the sleeve of a robe or jacket

Challenging: Secreting a flip-dart in an unadorned girdle, concealing a hunter-seeker in an modestly appointed bedchamber

Difficult: Camouflaging an ornithopter in the open desert, holstering a stunner under a coat or jacket

Nearly Impossible: Hiding a lasgun rifle under a House Uniform, camouflaging a frigate on a barren field

Impersonation (Charisma, 1+, Assassins)

Impersonation allows a character to masquerade as another person, either a specific individual, or a member of a specific culture, organization or group. Impersonation enables characters to adopt the physical appearance, personal behavior and speech mannerisms of the target individual through the use of disguises, cosmetics, vocal mimicry and a fair measure of acting.

Impersonation attempts require an Opposed Test against either a target's Observation skill or Intellect, modified by his Perception edge. Alternately, the Narrator may allow a character to make an Impersonation Test before venturing out into public. In this case, the character's Test Result sets the Difficulty for anyone trying to detect the disguise. Of course, if someone knows the character or is expecting the character to be so disguised, the Narrator should make the character easier to recognize by giving the observer a negative Difficulty modifier. A failed Test indicates the disguise doesn't fool the observer.

Specializations: Disguise, Mimicry, Personality

Routine: The Impersonation attempt is intended to fool others for a short period of time at a fair distance

Moderate: The Impersonation attempt is intended to fool observers at moderate range

Challenging: The Impersonation attempt is intended to fool observers at close range

Difficult: The impersonation attempt is intended to fool someone familiar with the individual

Nearly Impossible: The impersonation attempt is meant to fool a close friend or relative of the individual

*Infiltration (Intellect, 1+, Assassins)

Infiltration allows Assassins to successfully plan and execute forays into secure locations, acquiring floor plans, memorizing security codes, planning alternate escape routes and so forth. Infiltration differs from stealth in that the Infiltration skill focuses on the intelligence measures and contingency planning surrounding such intrusions, while Stealth confers the physical ability to sneak past guards, lurk in shadows, and stalk potential victims.

Prior to a hit, an Assassin can make an Infiltration Test to construct a workable plan for infiltrating an installation. The Difficulty of the Test depends on the information available at the time of planning. Successful Tests permit the Assassin to automatically recall details of the primary plan at any time during the operation. Infiltration Tests made later, during the operation, permit the Assassin to recall the details or one or more contingency

plans, allowing him recall supplemental data ancillary to primary plan, but essential for alternate action.

Specializations: Contingencies, Diversions, Escape, Security Counter-measures

Routine: Planning to infiltrate a private home

Moderate: Infiltrating a civilian building or unsecured commercial structure

Challenging: Infiltrating a military depot or guarded compound

Difficult: Infiltrating a House Keep, military command post or secured vault

Nearly Impossible: Infiltrating the Guild Bank or Emperor's private quarters

*Military Operations (Intellect, 1+, Swordmasters)

Military Operations covers all tactical and strategic military operations on the surface or in the atmosphere of a planet. Successful use of this skill by a commander can give his forces a -1 Difficulty modifier (for movement, attack and defense actions) for one round.

Specializations: Guerrilla Warfare, Infantry, Mechanized Ground Warfare, Sea Combat, Aerial Combat

Routine: Defending a well supplied strongpoint against technologically inferior attackers

Moderate: Defeating an outnumbered force in a single battle

Challenging: Defeating an outnumbered army in a single campaign

Difficult: Defeating a superior force

Nearly Impossible: Defeating a superior force at odds greater than 10-1

Performance (Special, 1+)

Performance includes any form of artistic self-expression through a variety of performing arts. Depending on the form of expression (dance, drama, instrumentation or vocalization) performance relies upon differing attributes. Bodily expression such as dance or instrumentation relies on the Coordination attribute, while dramatic or vocal specialties depend on Charisma.

Specializations: Dance, Drama, Musical Instrument, Singing

Routine: A simple scale

Average: Dancing the waltz

Challenging: Recognizing pitch and tuning

Difficult: Composing a symphony

Nearly Impossible: Flawlessly imitating a virtuoso

Ranged Combat (Coordination, 0+)

The character possesses training with ranged weapons including needleguns, maula pistols, slow pellet stunners and throwing knives. The character can also clean and maintain weaponry, such as field-stripping a maula pistol, servicing the pneumatic chamber on a stunner or sharpening and balancing a blade.

Specializations: Lasgun, Maula Pistol, Needlegun, Stunner and Throwing Knife

Routine: Firing at a target at Point Blank or Short range.

Moderate: Firing at a target at Medium range; repairing a weapon out of combat

Challenging: Firing at a target at Long range

Difficult: Firing from the hip; Repairing a lasgun in combat

Nearly Impossible: Firing at a target at extremely long range with low visibility

Stealth (Coordination, 0+)

Stealth measures a character's ability to hide and move quietly, eluding authorities, preparing an ambush or pursuing someone unnoticed. Stealth enables characters to evaluate the conditions of their environment, recognizing possible cover or potential hazards pertaining to stealth attempts. Stealth also permits characters to scout out ideal locations for ambushes or to plan backdoor escape routes. Difficulty for most Stealth Tests results from physical, environmental conditions, such as bright lighting, lack of physical cover, debris which could betray movement and so on.

Specializations: Ambushing, Hiding, Prowling, Stalking

Routine: Hiding in a litter-strewn alleyway at night

Moderate: Avoiding notice in a large crowd

Challenging: Stealing down a corridor lit by numerous suspensor globes

Difficult: Hiding from a hunter–seeker in normal lighting

Nearly Impossible: Moving unnoticed across a barren stretch of desert in full daylight

Survival (Physique, 0+)

Survival provides the knowledge and techniques needed to survive in hostile environments such as the wastelands of Salusa Secundus or the jungles of Ecaz. The skill enables characters to find edible food and potable water, to find or create provisional shelter and to cope with the abnormal physiological impacts of extreme environmental conditions.

Survival specializations represent the training required to endure the impact of extreme environmental conditions such as thin atmospheres, intense heat, hostile weather, barren terrain or heavy gravity.

Specializations: Atmosphere, Climate, Gravity, Subterranean, Urban and Wilderness

Routine: Finding edible food in a temperate wilderness (e.g. the forests of Caladan)

Average: Finding potable water in a polluted urban slum (e.g. the maula ghettos on Giedi Prime)

Challenging: Surviving in a hostile, barren tundra (e.g. the polar zone of Salusa Secundus)

Difficult: Finding suitable shelter from an extreme storm such as a Coriolis (e.g. Shield Wall basin of Arrakis)

Nearly Impossible: Surviving in an "uninhabitable" region of wilderness (e.g. surviving in Arrakis' deep desert)



Transport (Coordination, 1+)

Transport encompasses the ability to operate a variety of vehicles, including ground cars, ornithopters, industrial vehicles (such as suspensor carts or spice harvesters) and marine craft or spacing vessels. Transport skill also enables the operator to perform routine systems checks to determine the functionality and general fitness of the vehicle.

Specializations: Driving, Operation, Piloting, Sailing, Navigation

Routine: Operating a vehicle cautiously under normal conditions. Flying a 'thopter in calm weather during daylight hours

Average: Operating cautiously in substandard conditions, or operating recklessly under normal conditions. Piloting a 'thopter in light winds or at night

Challenging: Operating cautiously under hazardous conditions, or operating recklessly under substandard conditions. Hard banking a thopter in a rainstorm

Difficult: Operating cautiously under severe conditions, or operating recklessly under hazardous conditions. Piloting a 'thopter through a hurricane or sandstorm

Nearly Impossible: Operating cautiously under perilous conditions or operating recklessly under severe conditions. Piloting a 'thopter through a Coriolis storm

Unarmed Combat (Coordination, 0+)

This skill allows a character to engage in unarmed, melee combat. Brawling and wrestling specializations focus on non-lethal combat tactics, inflicting stun damage or conferring special advantages when performed successfully. Either of these specializations may be used untrained; however, doing so limits the effectiveness of the maneuvers performed and may restrict the range of potential combat options (see Unarmed Combat Options on page 130).

Characters who choose the martial training specialization learn more advanced fighting techniques, honing their bodies to attack with lethal force and defend with agile grace. Nearly every House employs its own, unique fighting style based on the ancient forms of martial arts. Consequently, the martial training specialty enables a much broader range of unarmed maneuvers than either the Brawling or Wrestling specialization. See Unarmed Combat, page 131, for more information on unarmed combat.

Specializations: Brawling, Martial Training, Wrestling

Routine: Hitting an opponent whose Dodge roll is 2-4

Moderate: Hitting an opponent whose Dodge roll is 5-7

Challenging: Hitting an opponent whose Dodge roll is 8-10

Difficult: Hitting an opponent whose Dodge roll is 11-13

Nearly Impossible: Hitting an opponent whose Dodge roll was 14+

Learning of the Wise

The following skills represent an broad range of academic knowledge and learned pursuits. Characters who show extraordinary advancement in the following skills may be recognized for the Renown aspect (Learning).

Learning skills enable characters to recall facts, make positive identifications or comprehend the significance of events with a successful Skill Test. Where learning skills relate to skills in other categories, the Narrator may also rule that the character's knowledge increases her ability to successfully perform the related skill. In such cases, the Narrator may either reduce the Test Difficulty by an amount equal to the character's learning skill (or specialization), or permit the character to roll a number of extra dice depending on the usefulness of such knowledge.

Computation (Intellect, 1+, Mentats)

Computation enables a Mentat to forecast future actions, events or results based on accumulated data including motives, facts, actions or events. Whether predicting behavior stemming from identified motives or inducing probable outcomes for intended courses of action, Mentat computation extrapolates future consequences from a wealth of factual data, and represents the ultimate science of cause and effect.

A successful Computation Test also enables the Mentat to deduce the hidden links contained within the current scene or to glean connected facts and motivations contained in other scenes scripted further forward in the narrative chronology. See "Chapter 2" of *Pathways to Infinity: The* DUNE RPG *Narrator's Guide* for more information about scene links and story chronologies.

Specializations: Probability Computation, Straight-line Computation, Comparative Induction

Routine: Glean facts relevant to the immediate future of characters within this scene

Moderate: Predict the behavior of characters in future scenes based on information in this scene

Challenging: Deduce the motives of an organization based on the behavior of one member in this scene

Difficult: Deduce the future behavior of a character in a future scene based on current predictions of his motives.

Nearly Impossible: Deduce the future motives of a character based on actions the Mentat predicts he will take

Culture (Intellect, 0+)

Culture covers the broad topics of politics, economics, arts and religion shared by the denizens of a particular homeworld, House, or out-freyn culture. Unlike World Knowledge (planetology), which covers the physical features of specific homeworlds, Culture doesn't confer knowledge about the geographic, biological, or physical details of homeworlds except where such factors impinge on social customs or cultural practices. Culture provides minimal information relating to criminal or counter-cultural groups-detailed knowledge requires the Underworld skill. Similarly, Culture touches only on the major religious practices shared by the dominant culture of a planet or organization; the Theology skill is needed for detailed information about the religious practices of minority subcultures or out-freyn groups.

Specializations: Homeworld (specific—Caladan, Giedi Prime, Arrakis), House (specific—House Atreides, House Corrino, House Harkonnen, etc.), Imperial (BG Sisterhood, Orange Catholic Communes, Sardaukar) or Out-freyn (specific, Spacing Guild, Bene Tleilax, Fremen, etc.)

Routine: Recall a general fact (the Fremen are descendants of the Zensunni Wanderers)

Moderate: Recall a more detailed series of facts (Arrakis was the sixth stopping planet for the Zensunni migrations, those Wanderers who became addicted to spice dared not leave Arrakis and fled to the desert becoming the Fremen precursors)

Challenging: Apply knowledge across fields (discussing Zensunni influences in Fremen traditions, discussing Zensunni inspired religious beliefs in other Imperial subcultures)

Difficult: Recall an obscure fact (Zensunni followers were a schismatic sect that broke from the teachings of Maometh, the "third Mohammed) circa 1381 B.G.)

Nearly Impossible: Near-complete knowledge of the subject (tracing the Zensunni migrations from memory; knowing evidence controverting the common belief that Ali Ben Ohashi was the leader of the original schism. etc.)

* Note: Knowledge about a related field, such as History or Theology presents a high degree of Difficulty for Culture Tests; however, such information presents less Difficulty when testing the more appropriate skill.

Economics (Intellect, 0+)

Economics relates to the sociological aspects pertaining to the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services within the Imperium or on a specific homeworld. By analyzing such economic factors, characters can determine much about a culture's driving social forces. Whether a culture leans toward militancy, how wealth is distributed among its populace, what sorts of technology are consumed by the aristocracy—economics allows the character to gather and analyze such information to gain advanced insight about a House government or homeworld culture.

Specializations: CHOAM Industries, Homeworld (specific), House (specific), Out-freyn (specific), Spacing Industry

Routine: Recalling a major fact (Arrakis is the sole source of the spice, melange)

Moderate: Recalling a more specific fact (A large portion of CHOAM profits depend on spice production)

Challenging: Recalling a fairly obscure fact (Several Great Houses have been stockpiling spice illegally)

Difficult: Recalling a linked set of obscure facts (The Harkonnens have stockpiled spice, they could realize huge profits by letting spice production falter)

Nearly Impossible: Near-total mastery of the topic (Though the Harkonnens could realize huge profits by subverting spice production, the other Great Houses would blame them for deliberate manipulation. Therefore a scapegoat would be required to take the blame)

History (Intellect, 0+)

This skill bestows broad knowledge covering the history of the Imperium, from the Butlerian Jihad to the present day. Although much historical data can be researched in private libraries or House archives, records from certain time periods (Ancient Terra, Pre-Butlerian Imperium) or restricted subjects (Sardaukar training, Bene Tleilax) are difficult or impossible to access. Specializations generally cover individual planets or cultures.

Specializations: Homeworld (specific), House (specific), Imperial (specific, i.e. Spacing Guild), Subject (specific historical field, i.e. Military Battles, Famous Assassins)

Routine: Recalling a major fact (Modern proscriptions against thinking machines arose from the Butlerian Jihad)

Moderate: Recalling a more specific fact (The Butlerian Jihad first erupted on the homeworld Nitzevine.)

Challenging: Recalling a fairly obscure fact (The first artificial intelligence network destroyed in the Jihad was named Hadrian VIII.)

Difficult: Recalling a linked set of obscure facts (Recalling that Albertus Cormath was the father of the Hadrian artificial intelligence project; and recalling that he fled Nitzevine shortly after violence erupted there.)

Nearly Impossible: Near-total mastery of the topic (Knowing that Albertus Cormath surfaced years later on the homeworld Richese, that he bore twin daughters, Criseida and Mariesa, one of whom died when Butlerian riots broke out on Richese, and the other who died some 15 years later while leading the Jihad onto Prada III.)

Language (Intellect, 1+)

Language skill provides the ability to converse in a root language other than Galach. Characters skilled in a particular language enjoy oral and written fluency, and may also converse using common dialects of the base language. When characters learn ancient and secret languages that incorporate atypical forms of communication, such as hand signals, body gestures, pictograms or hieroglyphs, they also learn the internal symbolism of the language. For each language a character learns, he must acquire a new specialization, choosing the language that he has adopted. When attempting to use a known language, Language Tests rely on the level of specialization, rather than the level of the Language skill. Characters may only learn one specialization per level acquired in the Language skill.

Specializations: Ancient Language (any), Secret Language (House or Organization), Hunting Language (Bhotani jib, Chakobsa, Mirabhasa), or Out-freyn (any)

Routine: Gaining simple directions

Average: Holding a mundane conversation

Challenging: Offering legal testimony

Difficult: Expressing complex ideas or subtle nuances

Nearly Impossible: Composing eloquent and memorable prose

Law (Intellect, 0+)

This skill covers knowledge of the laws, legal customs and regulations of a specific civilization or organization. It enables characters to know the laws, recall standard punishments and argue legal loopholes. Skill in Law does not confer knowledge about law enforcement except for the legality of customary search and seizure procedures.

Specializations: CHOAM Law, Great Convention, House Law (specific), Out-freyn (specific) and Spacing Regulations

Routine: Recalling the details of a simple law or regulation

Moderate: Recalling the details of a complex law or regulation

Challenging: Recalling the details of a complex legal system or document

Difficult: Discerning and exploiting loopholes in legal systems; discovering the relationship between two complex laws

Nearly Impossible: Discerning and exploiting loopholes in the CHOAM Trading Act

Medical Arts (Intellect, 1+, Suks)

Medical Arts enables Suks to diagnose diseases, injuries or ailments, prescribing treatments, administering care, performing surgery and so on. Specializations focus on particular fields of medicine, such as pathology (the study of diseases), surgery and toxicology (how toxins affect the body). Medicine skill not only includes the ability to administer first aid, but also reduces the Difficulty of any First Aid Test by –2. Suks employ Medical Arts skill primarily to heal characters during the course of play. See Damage And Healing, pages 134–136.

Specializations: Anatomy, Forensics, General Medicine, Pathology, Pharmacology, Neurology, Optometry, Surgery, Toxicology

Routine: Diagnosing the common cold, healing an Injured character

Moderate: Simple surgery (such as a tonsillectomy or appendectomy); diagnosing or treating an uncommon ailment or disease, healing an Wounded character

Challenging: Complex surgery; diagnosing or treating a rare disease or malady, healing an Incapacitated character

Difficult: Experimental surgery; diagnosing or treating an unknown disease or ailment; healing a character Near Death

Nearly Impossible: Performing an organ transplant with crude or makeshift instruments; installing advanced, technological implants without the Equipment (forbidden tech) skill

Mentat Trance (Intellect, 1+, Mentats)

Mentat trance involves a mnemonic process by which a Mentat organizes data, sorts facts, and memorizes information. Mentat Trance enables a Mentat to recall a known fact or personal observation upon demand, regardless of whether she deemed the information to be important at the time of inception.

During the meditative state of Mentat Trance, a character can attempt Observation Tests to surmise the basic truth, nature or character of what he observes, filtering and organizing the minutia for use when performing higher order Mentat functions (see Projection and Computation skill descriptions). Observation Tests performed during Mentat Trance incur the standard Multiple Action Penalty unless the Mentat also possesses the trait Machine Logic (see "Traits," page 102).

Optional Rule

More mundane in nature, Mentat Trance may also be used to assess and divulge the Difficulty Number of any Skill Test (Mentat Trance excluded) being considered. A successful Test means the Narrator must reveal (to the Mentat) the Difficulty of the proposed action prior to its attempt or resolution.

Any time a Mentat discovers a fact or motivation through the use of more conventional skills, she may attempt to enter Mentat Trance to analyze the detail and commit it to memory. Successful Tests indicate the fact has been analyzed and stored accurately—it may be listed among accumulated data when making any future Projection or Computation Tests. Failed Tests indicate that the Mentat has failed to comprehend some subtle nuance about the fact or motivation and cannot process the detail at the current time. Upon discovering another fact or detail, the Mentat may attempt another Test to recommit the factor to memory.

Specializations: Factor, Memorize, Recall

Routine: Obvious facts about the past few days; an NPCs name, the color of someone's hair

Moderate: Obscure facts about the past few days (an NPC's tendency to favor the right leg when walking, a curious speech pattern, the make of all the silverware at a dinner function); Obvious facts from the past week to a month

Challenging: Obscure facts from the past week to a month; obvious facts from the last month to a year

Difficult: Obvious facts from over a year ago, obscure facts from the last month to a year

Nearly Impossible: Obscure facts from over a year ago

Pharmacy (Intellect, 1+, Suks)

Pharmacy relates to the study and manufacture of pharmaceuticals including medicine, poisons, and narcotics. Though the practitioner need not possess Medicine (Pharmacology) to manufacture biochemical substances, lacking pharmacological expertise reduces the practitioner to employing a cook-book methodology, working from pre-existing recipes and formulas. Possession of both skills is required for the practitioner to improvise or invent new pharmaceuticals using experimental or untested methods and materials.

Specializations: Medicines, Narcotics, Poisons

Routine: Manufacturing a simple, herbal decongestant

Moderate: Manufacturing an anesthetic following a pharmaceutical recipe

Challenging: Distilling an anti-venom from a venomous animal or plant

Difficult: Manufacturing any but simple, herbal remedies without the necessary laboratory facilities

Nearly Impossible: Innovating new remedies; Manufacturing a complex chemical substance from memory without all of the recommended components

Politics (Intellect, 0+)

Politics gives characters comprehensive knowledge about the key governmental agencies, political figures and legislative bodies at work within the Imperium. It enables character to identify political leaders, recalling important facts about their public life or service history. Political expertise also allows characters to identify branches and organizations within a House's political infrastructure, or to comprehend the subtle nuances of that government's social agenda and/or policies. Lastly, political knowledge also allow characters to identify anti-government groups and their notorious leaders, understanding something of their secret goals or public agendas.



Specializations: House (specific), Imperium, Institution (specific), Out-freyn (specific)

Routine: Recalling common knowledge; naming the members of your patron Houses' strategy staff,

naming the Great Houses having seats in the Landsraad High Council.

Moderate: Recalling comprehensive information; identifying the 500 most prominent Houses of the Landsraad,

Challenging: Recalling an obscure fact; citing the date House Wallach was inaugurated into the Landsraad

Difficult: Recalling a series of obscure, but related facts; knowing which Houses opposed House Wallach's inauguration and naming their existing descendant families

Nearly Impossible: Deducing a fact about a world you've never visited or studied

Projection (Intellect, 1+, Mentats)

Projection allows Mentats to gather information by deducing facts and ascertaining motives based on accepted truths, verified motives, or substantive theories. With this skill a Mentat can analyze any datum, sorting fact from fiction, interrelating evidentiary information, and forming proximity hypothesis to construct elaborate logic matrices used for determining missing elements, invisible plot lines and probable explanations.

At any time during a scene a Mentat may attempt to uncover a hidden fact or underlying motivation presented within the scene. Before permitting the Test, the Narrator may require the player to describe the information that he or she is generally seeking, in addition to listing the accumulated data thus far committed to memory (see Mentat Trance skill description). For each factor recounted, the Narrator may lower the Difficulty of the Test by 1, selecting an appropriate fact or motivation based on the player's description and accumulated knowledge should the Test prove successful. Failed Tests do not indicate that the fact or motive may not be discovered; however, it does mean that the Mentat and other characters must go about doing so using more conventional means.

Optional Rule

If the narrative is moving unusually slowly, or if she feels the Mentat's other skills or past experiences provide sufficient justification, the Narrator may further reduce the Test Difficulty or declare the Test an automatic success. Though the Narrator should rarely induce the Mentat to perform an Projection or Computation Test, fudging the Test Difficulty is an excellent way to provide players with the information needed to hasten the story, or to reveal narrative subplots and opportunities that the players so far missed or left unexplored.

When a successful Test is made, the Narrator must exercise her own discretion in choosing which facts or motivations to reveal. Though the decision may be based upon the Mentat's described objectives and accumulated information, the Narrator enjoys complete freedom in determining what information to reveal, and how relate that information in a dramatic and compelling way.

To determine the Difficulty for a Projection Test, the Narrator must evaluate the accumulated information the Mentat possesses in contrast to the information the Mentat seeks. The farther the Mentat has come toward the information sought, the easier the Test Difficulty.

Alternately, if the Narrator has structured the adventure as outlined in *Pathways to Infinity*, he can employ the following method: For each fact sharing the same scene ID letter designation (A, H, C, etc.) as the scene during which the Test is made, the Narrator should reduce the standard Difficulty (13) by one. For each fact sharing the same scene ID numerical designation as the current scene, reduce the Difficulty by 2. All reductions are cumulative. Specializations: Approximation Analysis, Factual Analysis, Proximity Hypothesis, Zero-bias Matrices

Routine: Basic information about the scene; why was this setting chosen? Why were these NPCs selected to speak with the party?

Moderate: Concealed information about this scene; the NPCs are planning to surprise the players with violence

Challenging: Obscure information about the plot lines in this scene; the NPCs in this scene are planning violence against someone else

Difficult: Related plot-lines dependent on this scene

Nearly Impossible: Related plot-lines, independent of this scene, taking place off-stage

Sciences (Intellect, 1+)

The Sciences skill confers basic knowledge in the three fundamental scientific disciplines—biology, chemistry and physics. While a character possessing the Sciences skill may recall basic facts or theories from any of these three branches, each discipline may also be taken as an individual skill, opening further avenues of specialization to the character. Each discipline is summarized in the following sections.

Base specializations: Biology, Chemistry and Physics

Routine: Remembering a basic fact, law or formula; classifying an unknown organism; testing for trace chemical in a lab environment; determining where to set a fulcrum for maximum efficiency

Moderate: Recalling the a complex formula, law or theory; Identifying an unknown organism or chemical compound, calculating the gravity of a planet

Challenging: Applying advanced principles, laws or formulas to solve a problem; contrasting known phenomena to unknown phenomena in order to formulate educated hypotheses

Difficult: Combining knowledge from two or more disciplines to solve a complex problem; Applying knowledge from two or more disciplines to identify an unknown phenomenon, and deduce additional unobservable facts

Imperium Fan



Nearly Impossible: Recalling radical or highly specialized theories to solve an exceedingly complex problem or to comprehend phenomena so complex they defy conventional explanation

Biology

Biology primarily involves the study of various types of organisms, from Botany (the study of plants) to Genetics (the study of genomes). It includes the basic knowledge of anatomy, ecology, biochemistry, and microbiology and may be employed to identify and/or classify life forms or recall basic information.

Specializations: Anatomy, Biochemistry, Botany, Ecology, Genetics, Microbiology, Paleontology and Zoology

Chemistry

Chemistry involves the scientific study of matter, from the properties of atoms and molecules to complex, chemical compounds. It also includes general knowledge about ancient alchemy, biochemistry, pharmacy and laboratory procedure. Chemistry skill enables characters to analyze and manufacture chemical compounds and confers general familiarity with laboratory equipment and procedures.

Specializations: Alchemy, Biochemistry, Pharmacy and Laboratory Techniques

Physics

Physics enables characters to understand the natural laws at work in the universe around them. By making a successful physics Test, a character can comprehend the causes of natural phenomena and apply such knowledge to their everyday situations. Calculating the manpower needed to lift a 'thopter, guessing the affects of gravity on the range of a projectile or devising a conductor for an electric current—these things are all possible through the study of physics

Specializations: Astrophysics, Engineering, Holtzman Field Theory and Metallurgy

Theology (Intellect, 1+)

Including the study of Orange Catholicism, Zensunni Ilm and Fique, and general knowledge of the so–called "Ancient Teachings," Theology enables characters to identify religious beliefs or symbols, trace cultural phenomena to religious origins, or recall various religious parables, legends and prophecies. Unlike the Bene Gesserit-trained Ritualism skill, Theology only covers general knowledge about religious belief systems; it does not extend to myth–engineering and manipulation of superstitions, which is the sole purview of the Missionaria Protectiva.

Specializations: Orange Catholicism, Zensunni, Ancient Teachings (Buddislamic Variants, Mahayana Lankavatara, Navachristianity, Zen Hekiganshu, Tawrah and Talmuddic Zabur, Obeah Ritual, Muad Quran, etc.)

Routine: Recalling common precepts. Identifying common religious symbols

Moderate: Recalling comprehensive information; tracing a new religion or cult to its root religion.

Challenging: Recalling an obscure practice or ritual; citing passages from religious texts

Difficult: Recalling a series of obscure, but related facts; guessing unknown practices based on identified similarities to known belief systems

Nearly Impossible: Masquerading as a religious leader; interpreting the secret symbols or esoteric tenets of a splinter faction or cult

Underworld (Intellect, 0+)

Underworld represents a character's familiarity with clandestine organizations and how they operate. This skill can be used to locate individual criminals, make contact with larger underworld organizations or acquire contraband or illicit services. This also reflects a character's knowledge of specific criminal magnates, intelligence agents, corrupt law enforcement officers, smugglers, underworld slang and the like.

Specializations: Blackmarkets, Crime Rings (Arms, Narcotics, Slaving, Smuggling) and specific Homeworlds (Arrakis, Giedi Prime, Richese etc.)

Routine: Finding an item or service common in an urban district

Moderate: The item or service is easy to find, but requires some discretion to acquire or exploit (bargaining with a corrupt official)

Challenging: The item or service involves risk or is well-regulated (Lasgun shipment)

Difficult: Finding a rare or forbidden item or service within a House's governmental palace (Hunter-Seeker)

Nearly Impossible: Finding a sacred or illegal item outside of its native environment (Crysknife on Giedi Prime).

World Knowledge (Intellect, 0+)

World Knowledge confers academic familiarity with the dominant demographics, geography and planetology (climatology, ecology, meteorology, etc.) of a particular homeworld. The character uses this skill to recall basic facts or make intelligent comparisons among phenomena from different worlds. Each time a character learns about a new homeworld, they gain the World Knowledge skill and any one specialization, naming the particular homeworld of study (e.g. Caladan Knowledge (climatology)).

For example, upon discovering a strange, creeping vine on Gamont, a Suk Physician could make a World Knowledge (Planetology) Test to compare it to the hufuf vine used in the making of Krimskell rope. A successful Test would enable the Suk to roughly gauge the vine's tensile strength and pliability, estimating its suitability for use as a makeshift rope or binding. A high Test Result might even permit the Suk to guess other properties of the vine, evaluating its nutritional or medicinal value as well.

Specializations: Specific Planet (Ecaz, Arrakis, Kaitain etc.)

Routine: Recalling a fact about your homeworld

Moderate: Recalling a fact about a world you've visited often or studied exhaustively

Challenging: Recalling a fact about a world you've visited a few times or studied intently

Difficult: Recalling a fact about a world you've visited once or studied casually

Nearly Impossible: Deducing a fact about a world you've never visited or studied

Justice of the Great

The following skills encompass a variety of leadership skills and bureaucratic knowledge. Characters revealing a penchant for command in the any of the following skills may be recognized for the Renown aspect (Justice).

*Administration (Intellect, 1+)

The Administration skill confers familiarity with bureaucratic systems and their procedures, measuring the ability to manage data-work, organize tasks within a department, and work within related systems and hierarchies. Administration also encompasses the science of logistics—the ability to organize supply and deployment of personnel and materiel for an identified objective.

Administration skill permits an individual to coordinate group undertakings, orchestrating the combined effort to perform the objective more efficiently. If a character with the Administration skill "takes the lead" during certain Combined or Extended Tests, the Narrator may lower the target cumulative Test Result by an amount equal to the character's Administration skill level or specialty (assuming he makes a successful Skill Test first). Alternately, the Narrator may lower the Difficulty of subsequent Tests by one (or two if the character achieves a Dramatic Success). Administration represents pre-mission planning—requisitioning the proper equipment, making sure the most qualified people are involved in a task, ensuring that team members who work well together are paired and so on.

Specializations: Economic, Intelligence, Medical, Military, Political, Security and Underground operations

Routine: Managing a disciplined, professional group (e.g. House security personnel, medical staff, or logistics unit) under non-crisis conditions

Moderate: Planning a mission to be executed in familiar or friendly territory

Challenging: Planning a mission to be executed in foreign or unknown regions; managing a disciplined, professional group under crisis conditions

Difficult: Administrating an entire House department

Nearly Impossible: Leading a House during a time of war (covert or open)

Command (Charisma, 1+, Nobles)

Command measures a Noble's ability to compel subordinates and maintain discipline. It enables Nobles to coordinate projects involving many subordinates, in addition to influencing headstrong subordinates and visiting dignitaries. When coordinating a Combined or Extended Test, a character who makes a successful Command Test may subtract his skill level (or specialty level) from the cumulative Test Result needed to complete the task. Alternately, the Narrator may rule that a successful use of the Command skill reduces the Difficulty of a Test by one (two for a Dramatic Success). Of course, characters can also use Command to convince others to follow their orders during times of emergency or crisis.

It is critical that Narrators not permit Nobles to attempt Commanding other player characters to do something against their will. Under such circumstances, the Noble's player must convince his fellow players through role-playing interaction, not simple dice rolling.

Specializations: Delegating, Inspiration, Orders

Routine: Commanding House servants or slaves; commanding any individual having a Caste of 0

Moderate: Commanding trained officers; commanding any individual having a Caste of 1

Challenging: Commanding a rag-tag mob of civilian volunteers; commanding any individual having a Caste of 2

Difficult: Commanding an angry or fearful mob under crisis situations; commanding any individual having a Caste of 3 or 4

Nearly Impossible: Commanding noblemen of equal or higher caste or title; commanding any individual having a Caste of 5

*Diplomacy (Charisma, 1+)

Diplomacy represents the character's ability to conduct negotiations between Houses, governments or other Imperial organizations (such as the Bene Gesserit and Spacing Guild). Diplomacy also covers knowledge of the state of intergalactic politics and alliances.

Diplomacy is related to Persuasion and Charm, but these skills have significant differences as well. Diplomacy provides a character with knowledge of how to negotiate with others to reach a mutual solution (and, one hopes, to achieve concessions from the persons with whom the character is negotiating). Persuasion is the ability to argue skillfully and forcefully, and thus convince others to agree with you. Charm is the ability to use personal charisma and emotional appeals to win friends and influence people.

A successful Diplomacy Test directly affects the reactions of those involved in the negotiation; they view the character's position in a more favorable light. In game terms, reduce the Difficulty of any Tests involving the target's responses or reactions. An Opposed Diplomacy Test can also be used at a critical juncture to determine if a negotiation succeeds or fails.

Specializations: Arbitration, Negotiation, Pacification and Subject (CHOAM Affairs, Great Conventions, House Affairs, Kanly Negotiations and Spacing Privileges)

Routine: Arranging transport with the Spacing Guild

Moderate: Arranging a political marriage between two friendly Houses

Challenging: Negotiating a CHOAM contract to your family's advantage

Difficult: Arbitrating a peaceful Kanly settlement between two ancient enemies

Nearly Impossible: Smoothing over a violation of the Great Convention

*Espionage (Intellect, 1+)

Espionage is the art of infiltrating an organization for the purpose of gathering information about its operations or agendas. This skill provides thorough knowledge of the various espionage techniques employed by the Imperial Houses, Schools and Combines, and allows the character to exploit such measures once installed. Espionage also enables the practitioner to perform all of the routine operations of spycraft—forging convincing documents and credentials, gathering information into comprehensive reports, initializing sets of codes and ciphers, setting up secret communications systems to the exterior and separating vital information from random data, propaganda, or misinformation.

Specializations: Counter–intelligence, Cryptography, Forgery, Surveillance

Routine: Gathering important information into a useful report and relaying the report to your contact or superiors

Average: Using false credentials provided by an insider to infiltrate a typical organization or operation having average security

Challenging: Forging credentials to infiltrating a secure organization without help from the inside; setting up a communications relay to a local contact

Difficult: Establishing a spy ring within the organization; creating a secure communications relay; creating an underground transport system which could be used to smuggle materials or individuals in and out of the organization; infiltrating a rival intelligence operation

Nearly Impossible: Infiltrating the Spacing Guild or the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood; gaining access to highly secured vaults and archives; rising to a position of high authority within the organizational hierarchy

Interrogation (Charisma, 1+)

Interrogation is the practice of coercing information from uncooperative individuals by virtue of an implied or explicit threat. Ranging from harsh questioning to improvisational torture, some claim Interrogation is truly an art form. The Difficulty of Interrogation Tests depends on both the methods employed and the subject's innate resistance. Interrogation Tests employing verbal enticement or psychological coercion require Opposed Tests against the subject's Charisma + Willpower attribute, while Tests incorporating physical torture or pain induction challenge the subject's Physique + Constitution attribute.

Specializations: Enticement, Coercion, Pain-induction, Questioning

Routine: Gaining general information pertaining to the subject's whereabouts, activities, or motives

Moderate: Coaxing embarrassing or mildly incriminating admissions from the subject concerning his whereabouts, activities, motives or associations

Challenging: Eliciting full, personal confessions from the subject or inspiring petite betrayals regarding the subject's secret associates, co-conspirators or organization

Difficult: Inducing the subject to betray confidential information jeopardizing the success of an important mission or the safety of his professional associates

Nearly Impossible: Convincing the subject to betray information endangering his loved ones, family or House,

or inducing the subject to violate a sworn oath, personal conviction, or sacrosanct pledge

*Leadership (Charisma, 1+, Swordmasters)

Leadership enables Swordmasters to effectively lead subordinates in the fog of battle—calming fears, raising morale and inspiring heroism among his followers. Whether demonstrating calm assurance or flamboyant bravura, the character uses Leadership to rally reluctant troops or quell mutinous uprisings, whipping his soldiers into strict obedience and optimal efficiency.

Narrators should never permit the use of Leadership to compel other player characters against their will. Instead, the player must convince his fellows through roleplaying interaction, not simple dice rolling. However, if one or more players suffer negative modifiers resulting from fear or demoralization, the character may attempt a Leadership Test to remove such hindrances for the duration of the scene.

Specializations: Military Assaults, Prolonged Entrenchment, Guerrilla actions, Directed Retreat

Routine: Leading troops who serve the Swordmaster on a regular basis

Moderate: Leading subordinates who work for the same family, under another character

Challenging: Leading minions who work for a different, aligned House

Difficult: Leading troops who work for another, non-rival House

Nearly Impossible: Leading troops who serve a rival House

*Mercantilism (Intellect, 1+)

Mercantilism encompasses the entire range of skills and knowledge needed to conduct successful business dealings within the Imperium. The skill denotes knowledge and comprehension of business operations, contracts, equipment, and personnel. Mercantilism also bestows the ability to incorporate such expertise into business administration, negotiations, and related proceedings.

Specializations: Accounting, Banking, Financing, Investing, Tithing, Acquisitions, Enterprising, Funding, Trade

Routine: Interpreting a routine business contract

Average: Resolving subtle points of a labor dispute, or averting an embargo on House exports

Challenging: Entering into a partnership with an influential merchant guild, or convincing the Spacing Guild to lift an embargo

Difficult: Redefining the term or conditions of a CHOAM contract or acquiring a CHOAM directorship for your House

Nearly Impossible: Convincing the Emperor to assign your House an irrevocable CHOAM directorship.

*Propaganda (Intellect, 1+)

Propaganda enables characters to analyze and disseminate public information, manipulating its content to serve a social, political or religious purpose. When examining any form of propaganda, characters can analyze the information, 'reading between the lines' to glean important details about the organization's motives or agenda. Similarly, when creating public statements, characters may use propaganda to put spin on the account, presenting the information in such a way as to rally public support, suppress inquiries, calm rebellion and so forth. Lastly, the Propaganda skill permits characters to exploit a wide range of media for rapidly disseminating propaganda to the masses. Radio broadcasts, paper leaflets and silent rumor mills present characters with a variety of potential ways to get the 'word' on the streets.

Specializations: Analysis, Dissemination, Misinformation

Routine: Interpreting the subtext of a governmental report

Moderate: Disseminating information to select audiences

Challenging: Creating propaganda to bolster popular opinion in support of a favored House; Analyzing propaganda to determine deliberate omissions or hidden facts

Difficult: Using propaganda to raise popular mandate for an unpopular law or policy

Nearly Impossible: Exploiting propaganda to divert a rebellion; disseminating propaganda among select audiences using rumor mills

Psychology (Intellect, 1+, Suks)

Psychology enables Suks to penetrate the mysteries of the human psyche, diagnosing mental disorders, treating psychological illnesses, or alleviating psychosomatic trauma. Versed in hypnotism, psychoanalysis, psychotherapy and psychiatry, Suks may also employ psychology to remove implanted hypno–ligatures or deep seated biases that are related, in whole or in part, to the subject's psychological conditioning and mental development.

Specializations: Diagnosis, Psychoanalysis, Psychiatry

Routine: Diagnosing a minor neurosis

Moderate: Diagnosing psychosis or serious illness; calming a hysterical subject

Challenging: Diagnosing dangerous, manic illnesses; treating mental disorders with drugs and prolonged therapy

Difficult: Diagnosing abnormal disorders; treating dangerous manic illnesses without the benefit of chemical therapy

Nearly Impossible: Treating abnormal disorders without proper time, medicine or facilities

*Racketeering (Intellect, 1+)

Racketeering enables characters to obtain money, favors or influence by means of any illegal form of coercion such as blackmail, bribery, extortion and so on. Soliciting money or favors through Racketeering initiates an Opposed Test against the subject's Racketeering skill. If the subject does not possess the skill, then substitute their Charisma + Willpower or Intellect + Perception, whichever is higher. The Difficulty depends on the amount of money or degree of favor being solicited, in comparison to the relative strength of the character's incentive. Success indicates the subject concedes while failure indicates the attempt fails, usually engendering lasting resentment or greater hostility.

Racketeering should never be used against other player characters; nor should supporting characters necessarily consent to outrageous demands, especially if the racketeer does not levy sufficient threat to warrant such demands. The Narrator remains the ultimate judge in such matters, but should rely on the player's roleplaying to determine Difficulty and interpret the outcome.

Specializations: Blackmail, Bribery, Extortion, False Testimony

Routine: Gaining a small sum of money or favor for withholding physical evidence of a serious crime or offense

Moderate: Gaining a moderate sum of money or favor for withholding circumstantial evidence of a misdemeanor or felony

Challenging: Gaining a large sum of money influence for withholding witness testimony concerning a minor offense or misdemeanor

Difficult: Demanding moderate sums of money or influence for withholding false testimony concerning an trivial offense

Nearly Impossible: Asking exorbitant sums for minor offenses; demanding anything for withholding false charges for non-offenses, or minor offenses for which the subject has a strong alibi

*Security (Intellect, 1+)

The character is familiar with security techniques and procedures, as well as the laws and enforcement procedures in his locale. The character also knows how to activate and disable (or circumvent) various types of locks, alarms, warning systems such as palm locks and prudence doors.

Specializations: Enforcement, Shields, Surveillance, Systems

Routine: Activating a cone of silence; recalling a security procedure

Moderate: Disarming or penetrating a simple security system; deactivating a timed, servok locking mechanism

Challenging: Disarming or penetrating a customized security system; defeating a palm lock without proper instruments

Difficult: Disarming or penetrating a complex security system

Nearly Impossible: Disarming or penetrating a multilevel security system guarding a Treasury vault

*Statecraft (Intellect, 1+, Nobles)

Through the art of Statecraft Nobles employ a vast arsenal of tactics—from blackmail to flattery, from bribery to military threats—to prevail in political negotiations and affairs of state. Whether appealing to their patron liege or coercing a rival peer, Nobles practice Statecraft to further their House agendas while taking the path of least resistance. Though similar to Diplomacy, Statecraft emphasizes political intrigue and covert manipulation over open negotiation or objective arbitration.

Specialization: Entreaty, Intrigue, Petition, Pressure, Threats

Routine: Arranging a marriage with a House Minor

Moderate: Petitioning your patron liege to give reasonable assistance

Challenging: Outmaneuvering a rival House Minor in a Sysselraad plot

Difficult: Petitioning new holdings from a Great House

Nearly Impossible: Threatening your liege to elevate your noble title

Subornation (Intellect, 1+)

Subornation enables characters to indoctrinate other persons, sometimes against their will. By using advanced medical, psychoanalytical, and torturous techniques, the practitioner may break strong, psychological conditioning (such as Pyretic Conscience or Hypno-ligation) or imprint new subconscious impulses. Subornation requires an Opposed Test against an unwilling target's Charisma + Willpower or Intellect + Perception, whichever is higher. Depending on the method used, a target may get an additional Test when ordered to act against his nature.

Specializations: Brainwashing, Indoctrination, Hypno–ligation

Routine: Generally, there is no routine use of Subornation

Moderate: Removing a simple imprint from a willing subject

Challenging: Brainwashing an untrained draftee

Difficult: Implanting a hypno-ligature; deep conditioning

Nearly Impossible: Suborning the Imperial Conditioning

Subterfuge (Charisma, 0+)

Subterfuge incorporates the art of lying and deceit to conceal hidden motives, false allegiance and secret information. Most often, characters use Subterfuge to lie their

way out of difficult situations, eluding questions, lying under oath, and mitigating punishment with an abundance of innovative excuses. Under extreme circumstances, characters may make Subterfuge Tests to oppose Persuasion, Interrogation or BG Way skills used against them.

Occasionally, characters may employ Subterfuge proactively, attempting to influence targets without directly attempting to charm or persuade them. By providing false information in advance, characters may preempt questions or suspicions, making the targets believe they already know the reasons behind activities or behavior that might otherwise arouse suspicion.

Specializations: Artifice, Equivocation, Mind Games, Perjury

Routine: Conveying a false emotional state at a social function

Average: Feigning innocence while leaving a crime scene

Challenging: Maintaining eye contact with a close associate while lying through your teeth

Difficult: Delivering false testimony before the authorities in a most convincing manner

Nearly Impossible: Successful perjury before an Imperial Truthsayer

Voice (Charisma, 1+, Adepts)

The Voice enables BG Adepts to issue absolute commands by pitching their voices to register on the subject's subconscious mind, driving them to action even against their own, conscious will. In order to use Voice, characters must first make a successful BG Way skill Test to study their target for a brief moment, registering his or her personal behavior and mental predilections.

Upon registering the subject, the Adept may attempt to issue a Voice command. Voice attempts require an Opposed Test against a target's Voice skill (modified by the target's Perception). If the target has not trained in Voice, use the target's Charisma + Willpower instead.

Specializations: Command, Intimidation, Suggestion

Routine: Commanding a child to step closer

Moderate: Suggesting an adult to lay down their weapon

Challenging: Intimidating a Noble or high ranking officer not to take a particular course of action, Suggesting a guard deactivate a prudence door

Difficult: Commanding a fellow Bene Gesserit Adept, such as a Reverend Mother

Nearly Impossible: Commanding an Imperial Truthsayer

Prayers of the Righteous

Artistry (Intellect, 1+)

Artistry represents creative self-expression through any of the fine arts—illustration, painting, sculpting, writing or composition. Though creating works of fine art requires manual skill and refined technique, the Artistry skill relies most heavily on the artist's imagination and intellect. When creating works of art, the Narrator may also permit characters to add their Dexterity edge to their Test Result.

Specializations: Cartography, Composing, Illustration, Lyrics, Painting, Sculpting

Routine: Sketching a rough likeness of a person

Moderate: Modeling a realistic sculpture

Challenging: Writing an epic poem

Difficult: Composing a memorable opera

Nearly Impossible: Creating a legendary masterwork

BG Way (Intellect, 1+, Adepts only)

The secret teachings of the Bene Gesserit Way (also called the 'Way') confer superior observational powers to practicing Adepts. Using the Way, a character can discern not only the slightest minutia of physical detail, but also recognize 'petit betrayals' conveyed by an individual's mannerisms, demeanor or body language. By focusing on such revelations, the Adept can predict the subject's emotional state or behavioral predilections, surmising whether the character is lying about something, suppressing great fear or preparing to do violence.

Use of the Way initiates an Opposed Test against the subjects Way skill or Subterfuge skill, whichever is greater. If the subject possesses neither of these skills, then substitute his Charisma + Willpower instead. When opposing an Adept with either Subterfuge or Charisma, the character suffers a -2 penalty from their Test Result.

Successful Way Tests are required before a character may attempt a Voice Test (see Voice,for more information).

Specializations: Minutia, Petit Betrayals

Routine: Observing a child or person unaware of being watched

Moderate: Observing a subject who is aware of being observed, or observing any subject at moderate range

Challenging: Scrutinizing an untrained target who is actively attempting to mask their emotions

Difficult: Observing a trained Adept who is actively attempting to conceal their emotional state

Nearly Impossible: Penetrating the mask of a Truthsayer or Reverend Mother

Bargaining (Charisma, 0+)

Characters use bargaining for making deals and setting rates—arguing the salient points of any agreement for goods or services. The result of a Bargaining Skill Test determines whether or not a character can buy the item at his desired price. Bargaining attempts initiate an Opposed Test against the target's Bargaining skill (modified by the target's Willpower). Use the target's Charisma if the target does not have the Bargaining skill. Specializations represent a character's expertise in valu-



ing a particular commodity or working a particular market.

The Narrator decides what the value of goods are prior to play; some goods in some marketplaces are very expensive (or inexpensive) compared to other locations. Some sellers simply charge high fees—perhaps as part of the bargaining process, or due to local tariffs or because of other factors specific to the situation.

Most situations involving the Bargain skill should be roleplayed, rather than simply resolved with Tests. The dice result should reflect a target's reaction to the bargaining attempt. For example, Warmaster Ravastine attempts to bargain with a Guild agent to lower the rate for transporting goods off-planet. The die result indicates a failure, so the Banker mocks Ravastines's attempt and reminds him that he's dealing with the Guild.

Note: Anyone can elect to refuse a deal; players who don't wish to proceed with the bargaining can always stop. By the same token, if a supporting cast character is faced with a bad deal (either because the player has made a blatantly poor offer or the player has rolled extremely well), the Narrator's character can refuse the deal as well.

Specializations: Market goods, Labor services, Contraband, Blackmarket services, CHOAM commodities, Specialty services (Guild transport, BG services, Forbidden technology, etc.)

Routine: Bargaining with an average merchant from one's own homeworld

Moderate: Bargaining with an astute merchant from one's own homeworld, or a common merchant from another homeworld or House (except the Spacing Guild or Sisterhood)

Challenging: Bargaining with an astute member of House; bargaining with most Guild agents or representatives of the BG Sisterhood

Difficult: Bargaining with an arrogant Guild banker, or BG breeding mistress

Nearly Impossible: Bargaining with the Spacing Guild to suspend the 'hazard rates' charged for military transport

Charm (Charisma, 0+)

A character uses Charm to persuade a target character to agree to perform tasks or grant favors that he or she may otherwise be unwilling to do. This is typically accomplished by "turning on the charm"—the character uses his sense of humor, physical attractiveness and other such traits to foster affection—be it friendship or romantic interest—in another individual. This makes it easier to get information or favors from the target character. Charm attempts require an Opposed Test against a target's Charm skill (modified by the target's Willpower). If the target does not have Charm, use the target's Charisma instead.

Specializations: Flattery, Indulgence, Seduction

Routine: Indulging a relative

Moderate: Flattering a friend

Challenging: Seducing a stranger

Difficult: Flattering someone hostile to you

Nearly Impossible: Seducing someone who hates you

Equipment (Intellect, 0+)

This skill allows the character to use standard items of personal equipment—devices (such as poison snoopers, ComNet transmitters, solido projectors, etc.), instrumentation (vehicular communications, palm locks, etc.) and systems (House shield generators, suspensor lifts and so on). This skill also covers the ability to perform minor adjustments and routine maintenance, including field servicing such equipment. In some cases, such as with ComNet transmitters, characters may be allowed to use this skill untrained; however, training is essential for operating advanced equipment, such as specialty devices, delicate instrumentation or large systems (like a house shield generator or air recycling system).

Specializations: Devices, Forbidden Technology, Instrumentation, Systems

Routine: Communicating with base command

Moderate: Communicating through mild interference, such as a magnetized or radiated area; Cleaning equipment

Challenging: Communicating with the ship through strong interference, such as a sandstorm or hurricane; Field-stripping equipment

Difficult: Communicating with the ship through extremely strong interference, such as from underground or within a cone of silence; Exchanging components on equipment; minor repairs.

Nearly Impossible: Making field repairs to damaged equipment without the benefit of the proper tools

First Aid (Intellect, 0+)

First Aid measures a character's ability to perform emergency medical procedures in order to stabilize a wounded character's injuries. Rendering First Aid with makeshift supplies or insufficient medicines raises the category of Difficulty one degree harder (for example, a Moderate task becomes Challenging). See "Healing", page 136.

Specializations: CPR, Infection, Injury (wounds and broken bones), Shock Trauma

Routine: Halting minor bleeding or alleviating minor shock; treating a Stunned character

Moderate: Performing CPR, disinfecting wounds, or slowing the effects of poison; treating an Injured character.

Challenging: Stopping arterial bleeding, setting a broken bone; treating a Wounded character

Difficult: Minor surgery, such as performing a tracheotomy on a choking victim; treating an Incapacitated character

Nearly Impossible: Stopping internal bleeding, alleviating the effects of poison; treating a character Near Death

Gaming (Intellect, 0+)

Gaming represents the ability to play games such as chess, cards or backgammon well. To play a game, all competing characters make Gaming Tests, and the highest Test Result wins. This skill includes wagering and playing the odds, but does not cover athletic competitions or physical contests (these rely on Athletics Tests).

A character can also use this skill to cheat (or to determine if other players play dishonestly). To cheat, the character and the other characters involved in the game each make an Opposed Gaming Test (to see which of them spots the cheat). If all the other characters fail to beat his Test Result, the character has successfully cheated. The other game players can roll to detect the cheat once per round while the character is cheating. This should be a roleplaying exercise; the character cheating should describe how he is cheating, and the Skill Test determines how well he succeeds.

Specializations: Gambling, Games (specific: Cheops, Hangman's Hand, Smuggler's Bones, etc.), Puzzles, Wagering

Routine: Wagering on the favorite in an arena combat

Moderate: Beating novice players at Hangman's hand

Challenging: Cheating at smuggler's bones against veteran dicers

Difficult: Besting a Mentat at Cheops; Running a con game against experienced players; making books for profit

Nearly Impossible: Checkmating a Cheops Master in fewer than 5 moves

Observation (Intellect, 0+)

Observation confers the ability to locate concealed persons and objects, or perceive minute details in a character's physical environment. When searching for concealed items or hidden persons, the character makes an Opposed Test against the target's Concealment, Impersonation or Stealth skill. If the character is observing details in his physical environment, the Test Difficulty varies according to the subtlety of the detail the character is attempting to observe. The traits Enhanced Sense and Diminished Sense both modify Observation Tests (see Traits, page 101 and 103) depending on the primary sensory mode employed.

Specializations: Inspection, Search, Study and Surveillance

Routine: Target is hiding in plain sight

Average: Sighting a maula pistol hidden under a robe

Challenging: Spotting the right shigawire reel in a box full of them

Difficult: Noticing a small bead of sweat on a target's neck

Nearly Impossible: Finding the proverbial needle in a haystack

Persuasion (Intellect, 0+)

The Persuasion skill represents the character's ability to put forward plausible arguments in order to influence the beliefs or behavior of another character. Persuasion attempts should always be roleplayed when possible; the Narrator adds or subtracts dice based on good or bad roleplaying. Persuasion attempts require an Opposed Test against an unwilling target's Persuasion skill. If the target doesn't have the Persuasion skill, either use the target's Intellect or allow the target to use Persuasion untrained.

Unlike Charm, the Persuasion skill involves convincing someone without appealing to their emotions or desires. The Charm skill downplays the reasoning behind the favors asked, elevating the personality and worthiness of the character to win the target over to her way of thinking. Persuasion, on the other hand, attempts to influence a target based upon the merit of the suggestion, convincing the target that the suggestion is a good idea regardless of the his feelings for the character making the argument.

Specializations: Debate, Logic, Parable, Reason

Routine: Persuading a friend, fellow crewman, or relative who has similar views

Moderate: Persuading a neutral subject to a position bolstered by obvious or well- documented facts

Challenging: Persuading a neutral subject to a position the character does not actually believe in; persuading a hostile subject to a position bolstered by obvious or well documented facts

Difficult: Persuading a hostile subject to a position supported only by strong logic

Nearly Impossible: Persuading an irrational, hostile subject during combat

Prescience (Prescience, 0+)

The Prescience skill enables a character to randomly glimpse future events. His visions may come as vivid, waking images, or vague, symbolic portents. Though Prescience does not automatically permit characters to scrye into the future, characters may deliberately overdose on melange, enter meditative trances or willfully enter sleep with the hope of experiencing a prophetic vision. Narrators comfortable with such use of the skill may permit Tests under such circumstances, interpreting the results to feed information to the character. Alternately, Narrators may choose to implement Prescience Tests only at their discretion, calling for Tests when prescient glimpses could heighten the drama or give vital clues to help the players understand the unseen forces working against them in the narrative.

Successful Prescience Tests indicate the player gleans an accurate vision of a forthcoming event in the current chapter. Because Prescience does not permit characters to actively search the future, the Narrator must determine what or who the player sees, describing the event in realistic detail or broad, archetypal symbols. For instance, if the Narrator cares to reveal an assassin ambush in a future scene, he could describe the room or weapons in life-like detail, or use a metaphor to describe a falcon swooping down to tear at the character's eyes. When relying on symbolism, Narrators should either give lengthier descriptions or permit Prescience Tests more frequently, giving the player ample opportunity to decipher the meaning of the images. But often the best approach means combining both symbols with realistic details (people and places) to convey the true strangeness of the prescient experience.

Specializations: None

Routine: Having a vision, steeped in metaphor, of future events while sleeping

Moderate: Having an accurate, realistic vision of future events while sleeping

Challenging: Conjuring a waking, metaphorical vision of future events

Difficult: Conjuring a waking, accurate vision of future events

Nearly Impossible: Conjuring a realistic, accurate vision of immediate events while awake



Prophesy (Prescience, 1+)

Prophesy allows the character to meditate on a person or place and gain an impression based on future events. Interpreting this impression is up to the player, and not all messages are clear. The Narrator may tell you that the Adept you're talking to will attempt violence against your ambassador. This does not impart any idea as to *how* or *why*. The ambassador might be a traitor, or the Adept may truly seek to damage your House. Additionally, some impressions may be false, changed by events yet to come.

Specializations: None

Routine: Gleaning an impression of an NPC close to the character

Moderate: Gleaning an impression of a person or place after only brief exposure to her/it

Challenging: Gleaning a detailed impression of a person or place after limited exposure

Difficult: Gleaning an impression of a place or person based on a description

Nearly Impossible: Gleaning an impression about another character with Prescience

Repair (Intellect, 1+)

This skill allows the character to repair standard equipment, transport, and systems—ComNet transmitters, ornithopters, security systems, etc.. This skill includes the ability to make alterations or adjustments to the design, refitting or converting equipment to operate better in particular conditions or to perform another, closely related task. Most minor repairs can be performed with improvised tools, but comprehensive refits

may require specialized tools or facilities to be performed successfully. Lacking the necessary tools, or attempting to make repairs in haste increases the Difficulty of most Repair Tests.

Specializations: Devices, Equipment, Systems, Vehicles

Routine: Cleaning a device, or calibrating instrumentation

Moderate: Replacing standard components

Challenging: Repairing damaged components, making minor design alterations

Difficult: Retooling components to work in a different apparatus, innovating major design alterations, working outside of a repair facility

Nearly Impossible: Repairing severe damage or making major conversions without the proper tools, facilities or required time

*Ritualism (Intellect, 1+, Adepts)

Ritualism confers knowledge of the *Dark Things*, the infectious superstitions engineered and sewn by the Missionaria Protectiva. Ritualism includes general familiarity with all major Imperial religions in addition to the forms of *Canto and Respondu*, the invocation rite of the Panopolia Propheticus. Adepts can use Ritualism to identify the underlying significance of sectarian rituals and symbolism; comprehending its psychological impact upon its disciples and native culture. Once so identified, the Adept can manipulate key phrases and concepts to pass herself off as one of the faithful, or perhaps even one of the spiritual elect, depending upon the degree of success.

Specializations: Exploitation, Identification, Seeding

Routine: Recognizing the significance of phrases from any major Imperial religion (Orange Catholicism, Ilm and Fiqu or Buddislamic Variants)

Moderate: Passing herself off as a member of any religion, once its rituals and symbols have been identified

Challenging: Calling on known religious forms to identify the rituals of an obscure schism or sect; exploiting the protective superstitions present in a hostile culture

Difficult: Convincing disciples that the Adept shares their secret ways and faith

Nearly Impossible: Convincing xenophobic cultures that the Adept is qualified as a member of their spiritual elect

*Sabotage (Intellect, 1+)

Sabotage enables characters to efficiently deactivate, disable or destroy man-made objects such as equipment, vehicles, buildings or structures. Depending on the character's purpose, sabotage permits them to employ a variety of means to accomplish the deed, including demolitions, monkey-wrenching, electronic countermeasures and so on. While large enough quantities of explosives will effectively destroy anything (short of shielded edifices), often the saboteur's purpose requires a more refined approach. Deactivating a prudence-barrier just long enough to pass through, temporarily disabling a ignition switch, or setting off a false alarm in the house security system—such tasks require more delicate manipulation than sheer destruction, allowing for the disabled object to be reactivated or easily repaired for times of future need.

Specializations: Demolitions, Monkey-wrenching and Short-circuiting

Routine: Blowing up a simple structure such as a wall, dam or shack

Moderate: Deactivating a simple mechanism

Challenging: Short-circuiting an alarm system

Difficult: Destroying only a select portion of a structure with explosives; temporarily deactivating an electronic mechanism leaving no trace of tampering

Nearly Impossible: Deactivating a Prudence-barrier, setting off a 'silent' explosion

Truthtrance (Intellect, 1+, Adepts)

Induced by one of several "awareness spectrum" narcotics, Truthtrance skill enables an Adept observer to enter a semi-hypnotic state, during which the petit betrayals of falsehood become more readily apparent. Selection of this skill requires the character to possess the Truthsayer trait (page 103).

Specializations: None

Routine: Discerning the truth of an event, as described by someone not trying to conceal the truth, who experienced the event firsthand

Moderate: Discerning the truth of an event, as described by someone trying to conceal the truth, who experienced the event first hand; Discerning the truth of an event, as described by someone not trying to conceal the truth, who did not experience the event firsthand

Challenging: Discerning the truth of an event, described by someone familiar with the Truthtrance inquest, who orchestrated the situation in such as way that he cannot know the truth

Difficult: Discerning the truth of an event, described by an Adept attempting to conceal the truth she experienced firsthand

Nearly Impossible: Discerning the truth of an event, described by an Reverend Mother who was not there

Traits

Traits help to customize a character during the character creation process. They describe interesting physical, mental, psychological and advantages and disadvantages not quantified by attributes and skills. Traits often increase or decrease Test dice, thus improving or reducing a character's chances of successfully performing specific actions during play.

Master Trait List

Valor of the Brave

Advantages

- Alertness (1)
- Bimanual Fighting (2)
- Dueling (2, Swordmasters only)
- Heroism (2)
- Immunity (1-3)
- Latent Prescience (3)
- Olympian Physique (3)
- Prana-Bindu Conditioning (3, Adepts only)
- Resilience (1)
- Shield Fighting (1)
- Weirding Combat (2, Adepts only)
- Whipcord Reflexes (3)

Disadvantages

- Addiction (+1–3)
- Chronic Pain (+2)
- Physical Impairment (+1–3)

Learning of the Wise

Advantages

- Direction Sense (1)
- Enhanced Sense (1)
- Imperial Conditioning (2, Suks only)
- Information Network (1–3)
- Linguistic Talent (2)
- Machine Logic (2, Mentats only)
- Mentat Awareness (2, Mentats only)
- Metabolic Clock (1)
- Mnemonic Conditioning (2)
- Plasteel Will (1)
- Trained Intelligence (3)
- Truthsaying (3, Adepts only)

Disadvantages

- Brash (+1)
- Diminished Sense (+1)
- Hypno-ligature (+1–2)
- Perversion (+1–3)
- Pyretic Conscience (+3)
- Twisted Conditioning (+1–3)

Justice of the Great

Advantages

- Ally (1–5)
- Assassin's Code (2, Assassins only)
- Commendation (1–3)
- Compounded by Whispers (3)
- Highborn (3)
- Honorarium Familia (2)
- Magnanimous Appeal (3)
- Military Genius (3)
- Patron (2–4)

Disadvantages

- Adversary (+1–3)
- Bonded Allegiance (+1–2)
- Dual Allegiance (+2)
- False Allegiance (+3)
- Renegade (+1)
- Shaitan's Bargain (+2–5)
- Vendetta (+2–3)

Prayers of the Righteous

Advantages

- Contraband (1–3)
- Hand of God (3)
- Heir (1–3, Nobles only)
- Human (1–2)
- Moralizing Creed (1)
- Noble Title (1–2, Nobles only)
- Prized Bloodline (2–3)
- Spice Diet (3)
- Terrible Purpose (2–4)
- Unrealized Potential (3)

Disadvantages

- Byzantine Corruption (+1)
- Dark Secret (+1–3)
- Code of Conduct (+1–3)
- Genetic Eunuch (+4)
- Rogue (+2)
- Superstitious (+1)

Advantages provide a *DUNE RPG* character with some kind of special ability or asset that aids him during play. They cost a number of Development Points noted in parentheses after the name of the advantage (e.g. Whipcord Reflexes (2)). Most advantages, particularly those providing bonus dice or similar benefits, can be purchased only once. The few advantages, such as Ally or Information Network, that can be purchased multiple times are so noted within the context of their descriptions.

Disadvantages portray hindrances or limitations the character suffers—poor eyesight, illness, physical disability and so on. They confer additional Development Points to be spent on developing other characteristics, such as attributes or skills. The number of additional points conferred is indicated in parentheses after the name of the disadvantage (e.g. Diminished Sense (+1)).

When selecting traits for their characters, players should explain when and how the character came by them—many physical or mental traits may be inbred, part of the character's genetic predisposition. Others, especially social or vocation traits, are best equated with the character's early life or vocational development. For example, each stage of Background History instills characters with certain traits, advantages or disadvantages acquired at that stage in their personal development. The

background packages themselves often describe something about the character's past, acting as a kind of summary explaining when or how the character gained the select traits (e.g. Off–world Upbringing, Personal Confidant or Arena Fighter). By putting each purchased trait into similar context, players can add a great deal of depth to their character's history making them much more lifelike and interesting.

Players should note that a few traits require a character to possess a certain vocational Conditioning as a prerequisite, indicated by the words "Nobles," "Swordmasters" and so forth. Some Background packages confer Conditioning–specific traits (such as Dueling or Prana Bindu Conditioning) regardless of a character's Conditioning. But aside from these exceptions, characters cannot acquire vocation-related traits through Development Point or Experience Point expenditures, unless sanctioned by the Narrator.

So as a final guideline, choose those traits that best complement and enhance the character's initial concept. They'll help round out the character's proficiencies and life history as you integrate them into its life story.



Trait Descriptions

Like skills, traits are grouped into four categories, linked to one of the four aspects of Renown. Each is described in the following sections.

Valor of the Brave Advantages

Alertness (1)

The character's innate "sixth sense" bristles alerting him to potential danger. Emerging from the character's subconscious powers of observation, Alertness is not a mystical or psychic power, though it may appear so to superstitious people. The character receives a +1 Perception edge (if it is not already +2) and gains the benefit of an Observation Test any time the character enters an ambush or otherwise potentially dangerous situation. The Narrator rolls the Test secretly and, if successful, imparts an advisory warning such as "You feel like someone you're being watched" or "Something doesn't feel right."

Bimanual Fighting (2)

During combat, the character can perform equally well with either hand (firing a weapon, making attacks sinister and so on) without suffering the standard "off-hand" Difficulty penalty (see page 129).

Dueling (2, Swordmasters)

The character has trained under an accredited Dueling instructor, adding the entire range of dueling maneuvers to his repertoire. When fighting with blade weapons (such as knives, kindjals, slip-tips or swords) the character may perform any of the offensive or defensive combat options listed for the arm, mastering such techniques as feint and counter-feint, parry and riposte. This trait is best complimented by the Bimanual Fighting and Shield Fighting advantages.

Heroism (2)

The heroic character can tolerate more pain than the average person. Reduce any injury modifiers by 1 (for example, a Wounded hero would only suffer +1 Difficulty to Skill Tests, not the standard +2). Add this to the total penalty as a result of actual wounds (a character who is Stunned and then Injured would still suffer a +1 Difficulty, not 0). See "Effects of Injuries," page 134 for more information. Heroism also confers the benefit of an additional die to all Skill Tests requiring the character to resist physical torture or painful trauma.

Immunity (1-3)

Whether inherited naturally or acquired through a rigorous process of immunization, the character suffers no effects from a particular illness, disease or substance. In the DUNE universe, the most common immunities protect against narcotics or poisons often resulting from a forced

metabolic change within the individual. When selecting immunity to poisons, the player must choose a single Poison Type (see Poisons, page 131–133). To determine the cost of this advantage, see the accompanying chart.

Immunity Costs

Cost	Possible reagents
1	Narcotics (Semuta, Refined Melange, Rachag); Poison (Type I or II); Minor illnesses (influenza, stomach viruses, etc.)
2	Narcotics (Elacca or Raw Melange); Poison (Type III or IV); Serious illnesses (pneumonia, pox, Waiping fever)
3	Narcotics (Spice Essence); Poison (Type V); Chronic illnesses (leprosy, desert rot, Oolan arrhythmia)

Latent Prescience (3)

Deep within the character's genes, the character possesses a dormant talent for Prescience. The character opens his Prescience attribute at level 1 and may awaken his talent through the acquisition of Prescience-based skills (see accompanying chart). In addition the character can begin developing his Prescience attribute, edges or skills by expending Experience Points during play.

Prescience Levels

Attribute level	Available Skills
1	Prescience
2-3	Prescience, Prophesy
4-5	Any

Olympian Physique (3)

The character's body exemplifies the ultimate in physical conditioning, characterized by finely-honed musculature and amazing physical stamina. The character's Physique attribute increases by +1, and may reach level 6 through the addition of this attribute or point-based development.

Prana-Bindu Conditioning (3, Adepts)

Resulting from her Prana-Bindu Conditioning, the Adept has achieved preternatural awareness and control of her body's *prana*-nervature and *bindu*-musculature. Practiced Adepts rely on their conditioning to perform astounding feats of balance, grace or speed in addition to any number of mysterious exercises such as slowing their metabolism, activating hormonal production or contorting their bodies into impossible positions.

It is through Prana-Bindu conditioning that Adepts can enter Bindu Suspension, slowing their heartbeat to a fraction of its normal rate to assume the semblance of death. In the suspended metabolic state, the Adept requires one tenth of the water, food and oxygen normally needed to survive, and slows the progress of blood contaminants (such as narcotics and poison) to one fifth their normal rate.

Resilience (1)

The character recovers quickly from injury, halving the time required to heal naturally. He gains one extra die when making Tests to heal naturally, and the Difficulty of Medical Arts Tests performed on him are reduced by 1. See Healing, pages 136, for rules about recovering from injury.

Resilience differs from Heroism. Resilience represents a character's ability to recover from injuries quickly, whereas Heroism increases his ability to ignore the physical side-effects resulting from injury and pain. Though both traits relate to physical injury, characters enjoy enhanced resistance by complementing one trait with the other.

Shield Fighting (1)

The character's combat training relies extensively on the use of personal shields. As a result, the character has acquired the proficiencies needed to effectively negate opposing shield defense, while maximizing the defensive advantages conferred by her own body shield. During armed combat, the character may perform any Shield Fighting maneuver.

On the down side, intensive shield training has conditioned the character to slow her attacks and rely to some degree on her shield for protection. So ingrained are these habits, that they persist even when the character fights unshielded. During such circumstances, the character suffers a +1 Option Point penalty for all non-Slow Attacks, and loses one die when making any dodge or parry attempts.

Weirding Combat (2, Adepts)

The Adept has trained in the Bene Gesserit's secret ways of combat, incorporating the entire range of weirding maneuvers to her personal repertoire. When fighting unarmed, the character may perform any of the offensive or defensive Weirding options such as False Opening, Feigned Faint, or Precision Attack. This trait is best complemented by the *Prana-Bindu Conditioning* and *Bimanual Fighting* traits.

Whipcord Reflexes (3)

The character's bodily motion reveals astounding swiftness and grace, permitting him to move with blinding speed and lethal precision. The character's Coordination attribute increases by +1, and may reach level 6 through the addition of this attribute or point-based development.

Valor Disadvantages

Addiction (+1–3)

The character suffers intense cravings or painful withdrawal resulting from a physical or psychological addiction. At some point in their background, the character developed a dependency for an addictive substance such as a medicine, drug or chemical. Though commonly resulting from medicinal or narcotic abuse, addictions can also result from natural, bodily chemicals (such as adrenaline) predisposing characters to sate their addiction by seeking intense emotional experiences, such as those evoked by the thrill of danger of the flame of love.

Though withdrawal symptoms rarely result in actual, bodily injury, characters suffer negative Test modifiers as if they were physically injured whenever they enter withdrawal. Whenever the character goes for more than 12 hours without feeding his addiction, he or she suffers the onset of withdrawal moving through each of the six stages of injury at a rate of one stage every 3 hours. In most cases, characters can immediately "heal" the complete effects of withdrawal by feeding the addictive habit. But in cases where the character advances to "near death" they collapse in a comatose state, awakening hours or days later to resume activity as normal. The advance of withdrawal can be alleviated by medical treatment, subject to the Narrator's discretion.

See the accompanying table to determine the relative point-value of different forms of addiction.

Forms of Addiction

Addiction	Substances/Symptoms
+1	Adrenaline, Alcohol, Caffeine, Nicotine 1/2 Injury Effect (round down)
+2	Rachag, Semuta, Sapho, Verite Full Effect
+3	Melange, Poison Antidote Real Injury and Death

Chronic Pain (+2)

The character suffers intense pain on a continual or recurring basis. Whether resulting from a battle injury, congenital defect or physical stigma (such as the burning scar left by an inkvine whip), the pain proves difficult to ignore causing the character to suffer a -1 die penalty to all Physique or Coordination Tests attempted during a flare-up. At least once every game session, the Narrator should require a Physique Test (modified by Willpower) to determine if the character suffers a painful attack. Failure indicates that agonizing pain consumes the character for the duration of the scene.

Physical Impairment (+1–3)

The character suffers from a severe physical impairment—blindness, partial paralysis, a missing appendage or similar handicap. The player should, at the time of character creation, determine the exact nature of the disability. The value of the disadvantage depends on the extent of the impairment (see table).

Physical Impairments

Value	Impairment
0	Missing Finger
+1	Mute; withered limb
+2	Missing limb; deaf
+3	Blind; Body Paralysis

Physical Impairments are permanent afflictions that won't heal naturally; however it is possible that characters may undergo corrective surgery, physical transplant or bionic enhancement later in life; effectively negating the primary disadvantages resulting from the impairment. If players wish to remedy their physical impairment in such a manner, they may purchase a "Medical Remedy" subject to Narrator approval, by expending a number of development equal to the value of the Impairment. If allowed, the player and Narrator should cooperate in describing what sort of remedy is needed and how the character comes to acquire it. More information will be presented on bionic implants and mechanical prosthesis in forthcoming *DUNE RPG* supplements.

Learning of the Wise Advantages

Direction Sense (1)

The character possesses an unerring sense of direction. He never loses his way when traveling within cities, building

complexes or natural environments. Along with this talent, the character enjoys the ability to estimate distances, especially with regard to how far he's traveled, or how long it will take him to reach a destination within his range of vision.

Enhanced Sense (1)

The character enjoys unusually keen vision, deft hearing, discriminating olfactory perception or sensitive touch. Choose one sense when acquiring this trait. When making Observation Tests using his enhanced sense, the character gains +1 Test die.

Imperial Conditioning (2, Suks)

The character received the highest order of conditioning against taking human life, qualifying him as a graduate of the Suk medical school. The character now bears the marks of Imperial Conditioning—wearing a diamond tattoo on his forehead and drawing his long hair drawn back into the silver Suk ring—indicating his superior medical training and absolute trustworthiness.

Considered safe enough to administer treatment even to the Emperor, the character enjoys high demand for his services, deriving many social and material benefits as a result. The character finds that most people entrust him with matters having little to do with his medical training or pacifistic conscience. They confide their personal problems, solicit his honest advice or confess their darkest secrets as if he were their psychologist, counselor and confessor, all combined. Whenever the Suk initiates any influence-based Tests (Bargain, Charm, Persuasion, Interrogation, Subornation or Subterfuge) he gains the benefit of rolling an additional die.

Information Network (1–3)

The character has established an information network with her House, school or similar organization. By cultivating relationships with inside contacts, the character has access to unauthorized, if not confidential, information about the organization's projects, agendas and resources.

Information Network

Cost	Example Contact
1	NPC within the same House, employee of an influential merchant
2	NPC servant within an allied House, influential merchant
3	Influential aide of the sponsor Great House, noble of an allied House Minor.

Linguistic Talent (2)

The character learns new languages instinctively, grasping colloquial nuances and discerning dialectic deviations with relative ease. The character's linguistic talent entitles them to an extra die when making language Skill Tests (though they must still possess the appropriate Language skill at level 1 or more). In addition, when developing any language skill or specialization, increasing the level costs 2 development points instead of the 3 points normally required.

Machine Logic (2, Mentats)

The Mentat can perform an additional Intellect-based action each round without suffering a Subsequent Action Penalty (see page 120-121). Further actions in a round result in standard Multiple Action Penalties (*e.g.*, +1 to all Difficulty Numbers for three actions, +2 for four and so on). Off hand penalties still apply.

Mentat Perimon Gruys attempts to make a Mentat Trance (Memorization) Skill Test while making an Interrogation Test to coax a penta-shield frequency from a captured security guard. Both are Intellect skills, so he does not incur the Subsequent Action Penalty because of his Machine Logic. Later on, Gruys attempts to enter Mentat Trance, recalling the shield frequency while using a dissembler (Equipment Test) to deactivate the shield barrier. Mentat Trance is an Intellect skill, while Equipment is a Coordination skill, so again, Gruys suffers no Subsequent Action Penalty (because he's allowed an additional Intellect Test). Finally, Gruys finds himself attacked by two guards waiting inside the deactivated portal, so he tries to shoot them both with his twin needleguns concealed in his sleeves. Because this requires simultaneous Ranged Weapon Tests (Coordination skill) his Machine Logic fails to help him and he suffers the standard Subsequent Action penalty.

Mentat Awareness (2, Mentats)

Mentats instinctively know when something deserves their attention. Like one wrong note in an orchestra, they can see that something, someone or even some event is out of place. Whether the Mentat properly responds to this information will depend on their other deductive powers. This trait complements the Mentat Trance skill, which allows a Mentat to commit such an observation to memory for later analysis.

Metabolic Clock (1)

The character can innately measure the passage of time by monitoring her internal biorhythms and metabo-

lism. During normal waking hours the character can guess the time within 15 minutes; but after prolonged periods of sleep or unconsciousness, the margin of error increases to an hour or more depending on the duration and circumstances of the character's unconscious lapse.

Mnemonic Conditioning (2)

The character remembers everything she perceives, easily remembering names, faces, facts read in books, or smells from her homeworld. Characters can use Mnemonic Conditioning to memorize and recount experiences with complete accuracy, though unlike Mentat Trance, Mnemonic Conditioning only allows minute details to be retained in short-term memory for a period of hours or days (12 hours per level of Intellect). After that time, the character must either rehearse the experience or allow it to convalesce into long-term memory, losing much of the fine detail as it commingles with other memories.

Plasteel Will (1)

The character possesses more willpower than the average person, and gains an additional die when making Skill Tests to resist influence attempts (such as Charm, Interrogation or Persuasion). Plasteel Will also confers minimal protection against Bene Gesserit application of the Voice.

Trained Intelligence (3)

The character demonstrates astounding perspicacity and presence of mind, permitting him to make precise calculations, insightful inferences and logical deductions. The character's Intellect attribute increases by +1, and may reach level 6 through the addition of this attribute or point-based development.

Truthsaying (3, Adepts)

Adepts with the Truthsaying trait can survive the dangerous dosages of the awareness-spectrum narcotics required to enter Truthtrance (see Truthtrance skill, page 97). Acquisition of this trait also bestows upon an Adept the BG title of "Truthsayer," conferring 2 points of Renown (Prayer aspect).

Learning Disadvantages

Brash (+1)

The character often acts without thinking, following impulses and failing to consider consequences before rushing into action. Unless the character spends a Karama Point to check her brash impulses, she will take action—determined by the Narrator—that results at least in personal embarrassment (speaking out in the Sysselraad without being called upon) or at worst, in physical danger to her person (leaping into a Gladiator arena to stop a duel.)

Diminished Sense (+1)

The character suffers unusually limited vision, poor hearing, dulled olfactory perception or benumbed touch. Choose one sense when acquiring this trait. When making Observation Tests using his enhanced sense, the character loses 1 Test die.

Hypno-ligature (+1–2)

Foreseen as a danger to the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood, the character's psyche has been impregnated with a secret "word-sound" (such as "Uroshnor") known to certain individuals within the Sisterhood. If the character hears the word-sound uttered, he suffers a synaptic misfire, experiencing temporary paralysis or unconsciousness depending on the depth and degree of the implantation. When selecting this trait, the Narrator must determine who in the Sisterhood has access to the specific password, and under what circumstances they would pass such information along to other Sisters. Though the player will know of it, the character remains unaware of his psychic impediment.

Perversion (+1–3)

The character suffers from moral perversion and entertains one or more obsessions, compulsions or manias. Depending on the degree of affliction, the char-



acter may experience bouts of emotional imbalance only once per session or he may constantly exhibit obsessive behavior. The player and Narrator should work together when describing the nature of the character's perversion and determining its point value.

Pyretic Conscience (+3, Suks)

Resulting from his Imperial Conditioning, the character finds himself bridled by the so-called "conscience of fire," a restraining mechanism programmed at the inhibitory level of his subconscious mind. Though his conditioning does not force the character to adopt a pacifistic ideology, the character finds himself incapable of enacting any volition to directly endanger human life. The character cannot take up arms against his fellow man, insinuate poison into his rivals drink, or withhold medical treatment from a dying enemy. The character not only finds such acts entirely unconscionable, but also quite impossible, given the deeply ingrained Pyretic Conscience.

Twisted Conditioning (+1–3)

The character has undergone extensive psycho-alteration aimed at breaking or perverting his vocational conditioning or personal ideology. Creating killer Mentats, a specialty of the Bene Tleilax, requires some degree of twisting since the higher order of Mentat logic resists killing for wanton or capricious reasons. Similarly, suborning Imperial Conditioning against violence, subverting an Adepts loyalty to the Sisterhood, or breaking a Noble's allegiance to his family all become possible through Twisted Conditioning. The player and Narrator must discuss the nature and consequences of this trait before allocating its point value. Typically, any behavioral impulse that runs contrary to a character's normal vocational role or rational identity can be qualified and handled under Twisted Conditioning.

Justice of the Great Advantages

Assassin's Code (2, Assassins)

During the course of their vocational Conditioning, the character assimilated the Code of Assassins into his personal identity binding him to its dearest precepts. More of a boon than a detriment, the Assassin's Code urges the character to perform his trade in strict accordance with the Great Convention, giving him legal justification for his otherwise criminal behavior. In addition to this subconscious safeguard, the Assassins Code compels the character to extend "professional courtesy" to his fellow guildsmen, receiving the same treatment (occurring in the form of inviolate secrecy, non-interference and possible sanctuary) in times of need.

Ally (1–5)

The character enjoys a close relationship with someone in a position of power. Whether a friend or relative, the ally will go out of his way to help the character. The cost of this advantage depends on the Ally's relative position; see accompanying table for guidelines. The player and Narrator should flesh out this character.

Sample Ally Costs

Cost	Example Ally
2	Officer of the same vocation or division (Mentat, Security, etc...) in an allied House
3	Officer of a similar caste within another organization (Merchant's Union, Guild, Sisterhood)
5	Noble from a non-rival House

Commendation (1–3)

For exceptional service to his House or family, the character receives a commendation. Typically conferred in the form of household titles, medals, badges or similar indicia, commendations heighten the character's authority or esteem and increase one or more of his Renown aspects by +1. The Narrator and player must determine the precise nature of the award, subject to the number of points spent on this advantage (see chart).

Commendations

Cost	Commendation
1	Commendation (Badge of the Lion, Cluster of the Hawk, Lieutenant)
2	Minor Award (Order of the Sword, Peer of the Realm, Captain)
3	Major Award (House Champion, House Spokesman, Commander)

Compounded by Whispers (3)

Preoccupied with intrigue and conspiracy, the character possesses a natural penchant for leading covert ventures and intelligence operations. Deceit and conniving

come naturally to the character who benefits from her mildly paranoid world view. When performing any of the following ventures—Administration (intelligence), Espionage, Interrogation, Propaganda or Subornation—the character can expend one Karama to consider one of her Test dice an additional drama die.

Highborn (3)

The character's noble pedigree entitles her to claim the title Lord or Lady, even though her officially recognized Caste does not qualify her as a privileged member of the Regis-Familia caste. If the character is not a Noble, her player must describe why she does not enjoy such status and vocation. Perhaps the character is the sole survivor of a noble House that turned renegade, or perhaps the character was kidnapped or hidden during infancy, and has adopted the lifestyle of her common foster family. Often, Adepts fall within the latter category, having relinquished their noble families upon joining the ranks of the Sisterhood. If the character's Caste is lower than rank 4, they gain +1 Caste.

Honorarium Familia (2)

The character has been honored as a named member of his household, gaining all of the benefits associated with the Na-Familia caste of the faufreluches. The character gains full protection under the Article of Kanly known as Dictum Familia, defending him against all informal acts of treachery (such as assassination and unrighteous prosecution). If the character's current Caste is lower than rank 4, the character also gains +1 Caste.

As a member of the family household, the character's new honor obligates him to uphold Great Convention and House Laws. Failure to act in accordance with the letter and spirit of such legislation will result in revocation of the Honorarium Familia, and may warrant more serious punishment depending on the nature of the character's infraction.

Magnanimous Appeal (3)

The character exhibits lofty courage and noble grace, especially in matters of public speaking or private discourse. His graceful mien permits him to remain calm and compassionate even when suffering outrageous affronts to his personal morality or dignity. The character's Charisma attribute increases by +1, and may reach level 6 through the addition of this attribute or point-based development.

Military Genius (3)

The character instinctively grasps the nuances of military tactics and security measures. When performing any of the following ventures—Administration (military), Armament, Leadership, Military Operations or Security—the character can expend one Karama to consider one of his Test dice an additional drama die.

Patron (2–4)

A powerful individual watches the character's career with interest—possibly a household noble, or representative of the Bene Gesserit or Spacing Guild. When the character gets into trouble, his Patron tries to smooth things over on his behalf. The number of points spent on this advantage determines how influential the Patron is, and how often he helps the character (see table).

Sample Patron Costs

Cost	Example Patron
1	Moderate Figure (Professor of the Suk School, Head of the Spice Miner's Union)
2	Influential Figure (Guild Representative, Sisterhood Adept)
3	Important Figure (Noble from a Great House, Guild Navigator, Reverend Mother)

Trait Frequency

Information Network, Ally, and Patron are easily abused advantages. Information Network is a useful tool and will likely be utilized frequently. High level Patrons and Allies, on the other hand are so influential that the player should ideally forget about them until the Narrator decides to have them step in and intervene on the player's behalf.

Any player who abuses his contacts should have to make a Challenging (10) Charm (Charisma) Test. If successful, the Ally or Patron comes through for the character. Subsequent Tests should have their Difficulty increased by 1 until failure results. Failure indicates the NPC is unwilling or unable to help at this time.

Justice Disadvantages

Adversary (+1–3)

The character has a adversary in a rival House—someone the character wronged or offended at some point in his background. The adversary treats his relationship with

the character as a zero-sum game—when the character wins, he loses, and vice versa. Whenever he can, the rival tries to best the character by undermining his relationships, sabotaging his missions or destroying his reputation. Though the enmity between the character and rival may escalate to mortal consequence, the adversary doesn't seek formal retribution by way of Kanly (that's the *Vendetta* disadvantage). The value of this disadvantage depends on the rival's power (see table).

Sample Adversary Costs

Value	Adversary
+1	A character of lower station in a rival House Minor
+2	A character of equal station in a rival House Minor; a minor servant of a Great House
+3	An officer in a rival Great House

Bonded Allegiance (+1–2)

The character serves his House under a contract of bonded allegiance, forged between a household representative and the character's vocational school. Having paid for the character's education, his House demands loyal service for a number of 3-year terms equal to the value of the disadvantage. During that time, the family provides for all of the character's material needs, but may otherwise treat the character as any other member of the bondsman or pyon classes (one level lower than the character's actual Caste). Upon expiration of the contract, the character may opt to renew his service contract or seek employment with another House. For this reason, bonded characters are rarely treated as poorly as might be expected for others sharing their legal caste.

Dual Allegiance (+2)

The character serves two masters who share the character's allegiance and servitude between them in accordance with a mutual agreement. Though the character's primary responsibility lies with his House, the character must serve the interests of his other master from time to time, occasionally being caught in conflicts of interest between the two employers. In such instances, the character must either choose among his sponsors (earning certain disfavor with one of them) or find a way of fulfilling both of his obligations without seriously offending either party.

Dual Allegiance is mandatory for all Adepts who serve the Sisterhood in addition to their current household. Similarly, Suks and Assassins (who owe minor allegiance to their fraternal schools) also commonly elevate their obligations to warrant Dual Allegiance.

False Allegiance (+3)

The character serves his current House under False Allegiance, owing fidelity to no-one but his own conscience, or perhaps, serving another household as a hidden sleeper. As long as the character maintains his façade by acting in accordance with his liege's wishes, his False Allegiance remains hidden; however, any infraction witnessed by a loyal house servant may be reported, incriminating the character and subjecting him to formal inquisition and persecution. Players who wish to play sleeper agents for another household should consider taking the Background package *Sleeper Agent* (see "Chapter 3," page 69).

Renegade (+1)

The character renounced former allegiance to another household and joined his current employer as a fugitive. Whether the character's previous family was destroyed in a war of assassins or whether he fled for personal reasons, the character now suffers a negative reputation (+1 to the appropriate Renown Aspect) as a Renegade. Before earning the complete trust of his new benefactor, the character must distinguish himself through exceptional loyalty or prolonged service.

Shaitan's Bargain (+2–5)

The character has entered into a proverbial "deal with the devil," owing a major debt or obligation to a powerful individual or organization in return for prior favors. The player and Narrator should work together to set the parameters of the deal, defining its conditions and term while setting the point award for the disadvantage. Regardless of the specific nature, the bargain should be of sufficient consequence, usually placing the character, his relatives or his household in mortal peril should he fail to honor the terms of the bargain.

Vendetta (+2–3)

The character's name appears on a formal proclamation of Kanly, filed with an appointed Judge of the Change in the Emperor's service. Underwritten by another House, the legal suit enables a specific member of that household to seek retribution for the character's prior offenses or wrongdoings by means of a Kanly duel or formal treachery. The character has been notified of the vendetta and may seek Kanly negotiations, or defend himself during a Kanly duel or war of assassins. But until the matter is settled, the character must watch for assassins in every shadow, seeing his enemy's face behind

every naked blade. The player and Narrator must work out the details of the Vendetta, determining who seeks the character's demise and the reasons why before assigning a exact point value to the disadvantage.

Prayers of the Righteous Advantages

Contraband (1–3)

The character possesses something forbidden to members of his household, vocation or caste. Examples include specific narcotics, poisons, assassination devices, personal weapons (such as lasguns or flip-darts) and forbidden technologies (such as shield dissemblers, bionic implants, etc.). If caught with contraband on his person, the character will suffer certain punishment, ranging from harsh reprimand to imprisonment or exile depending on the gravity of the possession offense.

Hand of God (3)

The character is 'blessed by God.' She regenerates Karama twice as fast as other characters. This generally results in a character who is 'luckier,' although many cultures hold that such characters are favored by the gods.

Heir (1–3, Nobles only)

The character's blood relationship to the House ruler qualifies him as a potential heir to the House holdings and titles. Whether a son, demi-brother, nephew or cousin, the character may one day inherit the House fortunes, becoming the titular head of the House. See the accompanying chart to determine the character's standing as heir.

Heir Status

Point Cost	Standing
1	Heir (one of several possible candidates)
2	Heir Presumptive (leading candidate)
3	Heir Designate (named Heir)

Human (1–2)

Something about the character drew the attention of the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood who sent a Reverend Mother to test the character with the Gom Jabbar, the high-handed enemy. Having survived the painful, yet illuminating ordeal, the character enjoys limited respect among the Bene Gesserit who now consider him a fellow "human," distinguished from most of his animal kind.

From time to time, the character may call upon the Sisterhood to seek advice, request small favors, or provide some morsel of information. If doing so does not interfere with their plans, the Sisterhood will usually provide some assistance to the character, though when it comes to information, the Sisterhood prefers cryptic lessons to simple answers.

Moralizing Creed (1)

The character holds a personal creed she finds both moralizing and invigorating. The exact nature of the creed is up to the player—perhaps the character finds strength in her religious faith or philosophical convictions, or maybe it is her family identity or vocational reputation that calls her to heroism. Regardless of its idiom, the creed permits the character to spend up to 5 Karama on any permitted action, or spend up to 3 Karama on actions normally barred from Karama expenditure. However, to use Karama during restricted actions, the Narrator must sanction the expenditure, agreeing that the nature of the Test figures into the character's self-identity pertaining to her Moralizing Creed.

Noble Title (1–2, Nobles)

As a member of the aristocracy, the character enjoys a noble title indicating his titular duties as administrator of one or more of the House holdings—Steward of Shrike, Master of Pergammos, Chevalier of Fraust and so on. Typically the character's title also contains the suffix "absentia" (such as Governor-absentia), indicating the character governs in name only, having temporarily delegated the day-to-day governance to a trusted administrator or family official. This enables the character to retain his authority and rightful claim, while serving his House's more immediate concerns, such as those requiring him to venture forth in their name. Regardless of his actual title, the character gains +1 Renown (Justice) resulting from popular recognition of his Noble Title.

Prized Bloodline (2–3)

The character's genealogy figures into the Sisterhood's vaunted Mating Index, and the character's bloodline earns him special consideration among her rank and file. Viewed as a potential contributor to their breeding program, the Sisterhood makes a reasonable effort to protect the character from harm, alerting him to danger or providing sanctuary and assistance as the situation permits. On the darker side, the Sisterhood aims to breed the character with one of their own, and will eventually attempt to pair the character with a spouse or mate in spite of the character's wishes or personal commitments. The more a character depends on the Sisterhood for



Unspent Karama vanishes once his actions diverge from his Terrible Purpose.

Unrealized Potential (3)

As part of his genetic make-up, the character enjoys latent ability relating to one of his key attributes. At any time during play, the character may "awaken" to his Unrealized Potential, naming the related attribute and gaining the ability to develop all related skills to level 6, or any inherent specialization to level 7, through the expenditure of Experience or Development Points.

Prayer Disadvantages

assistance, the more severe will be the repercussions should the character prove unwilling to participate in their secretive program.

Spice Diet (3)

The character enjoys physical longevity and minor resistance to ailments as a result of an expensive spice diet. Lightly laced into his daily meals, the spice-drug melange confers geriatric benefits including +1 Constitution edge (if the not already +2), +1 Sight edge (if the character possesses Prescience at rank 1 or more) and a 25% longer expected life span. In spite of these miraculous advantages, the character's diet avoids heavy dosages of melange, protecting the character from spice addiction (unless the character opts to take that disadvantage in addition to Spice Diet).

Terrible Purpose (2-4)

Terrible Purpose instills the character with the overwhelming suspicion that his future is governed by fate. Though unaware of the role destiny has allotted him, the character senses something of his doom and feels trapped by the loom of fate. More terrifying than the loss of freedom, the character suspects his "purpose" contradicts his moral convictions, personal allegiance or sense of "rightness," goading him to betray himself, loved ones or House.

The player and Narrator must cooperate in determining the nature of the Terrible Purpose, but the Narrator should conceal his ultimate rationale for determining the final point cost. When taking any action that furthers the determined Purpose, the Narrator should award the Character "free" Karama to spend during related Tests.

Byzantine Corruption (+1)

Byzantine Corruption predisposes the character to demonstrate one or more of the moral infirmities associated with the Orange Catholic Bible's seven venal sins—pride, lust, hate, avarice, wrath, envy or sloth. Byzantine Corruption prompts characters to emphasize personal ambition over moral pursuits, justifying their private gains at the expense of others. When tempted by any situation providing for the character's immediate gratification, the character suffers the loss of 1 die during related Skill or Attribute Tests. Any dramatic failure may result in a gain of +1 Renown (Prayer) for any unfavorable reputation related to the Test in question (Narrator's discretion).

Dark Secret (+1–3)

The character guards a dark secret, something about his House, family or himself so terrible that its discovery would prove ruinous. The character shoulders his burden alone, risking life and limb to keep this knowledge from falling into the wrong hands. The player and Narrator should cooperate in detailing the secret, deciding who the character protects and what would become of them should his secret be revealed. The Narrator must also determine if anyone else knows of the secret, considering the repercussions to the character should the secret be wrested from him.

Guidelines for determining the value of a secret are provided in the accompanying table. If a character's Dark Secret is revealed, he may earn a large number of negative Renown Points (depending on the nature of the secret).

Dark Secret Costs

Value	Secret
+1	Embarrassing (Character's parents are of Low Birth)
+2	Career Ruining (Character violated the Forms of Kanly)
+3	Life-threatening (Character has committed Treason against his House)

Code of Conduct (+1–3)

The character holds a particular religious, philosophical, vocational or ideological pledge dear to his heart, staking his personal honor and self-identity in the strict adherence to its guiding tenets. The code itself imposes certain moral, ethical or social restrictions on the characters' conduct, such as routine observance of daily rituals, complete abstinence from a certain type of behavior or a compelling duty to fulfill a sworn oath. The player and Narrator should work together to detail the specifics, though you can find examples throughout this game. See the accompanying chart for suggestions.

Sample Codes of Conduct

Value	Creed
1	Observance of daily ritual (ex. Praying to the east at sunrise and sunset)
2	Abstinence from particular activity (violence, narcotics, certain foods, sex)
2	Behavior Restriction (never lie, never break a promise)
3	Oath-bound (always avenge an affront to your lord, family etc. Never be taken alive)

Genetic Eunuch (+4)

The Bene Gesserit Sisterhood has determined the character possesses a genetic defect limiting his potential development. Upon acquisition, the player must name one of his attributes as the source of his genetic flaw. When developing the attribute or its edges, each level costs twice the normal number of development points, and neither of its related edges may be raised above +1. Moreover, when developing skills linked to the flawed attribute, the character may never increase a skill level beyond the current level of the attribute, though skill specializations may be developed one level higher.

Considering the character a Genetic Eunuch, the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood treats the character as "unsalvagable" with regard to their breeding program. For this reason, characters possessing the Genetic Eunuch trait may not select the Prized Bloodline trait or a Bene Gesserit Ally or Patron.

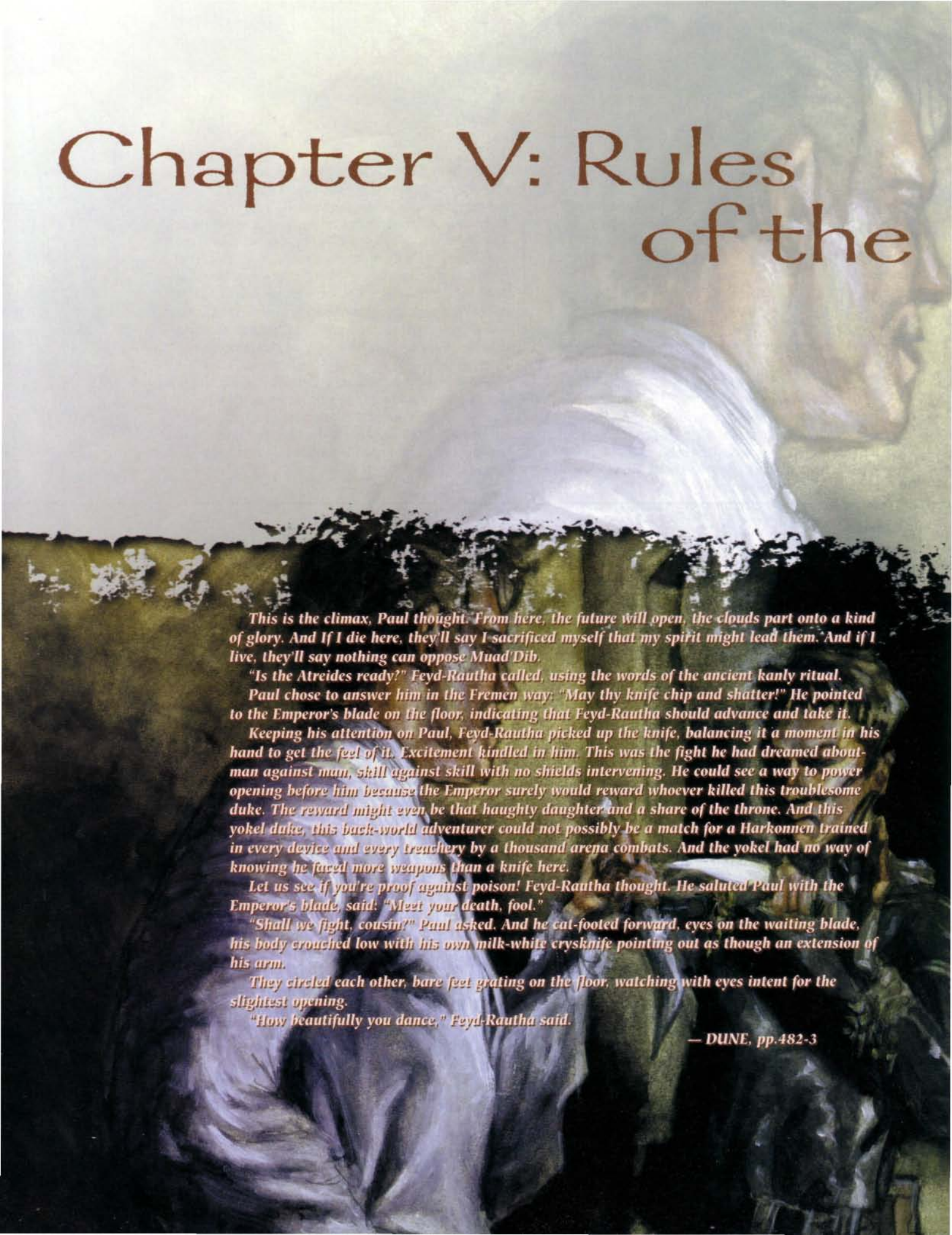
Rogue (+2)

The character has renounced all former allegiance and now wanders the Imperium as a mercenary for hire. Having grown accustomed to self-reliance, the character works poorly with others and must expend one Karama per additional participant to cooperate in Combined Tests. In addition, the character's unorthodox independence makes others extremely suspicious of his motives, and the character rarely finds himself entrusted with an great measure of responsibility—which is exactly how he wants it.

Superstitious (+1)

The character adheres to superstitious ritual, entertaining folklore, wives tales and supernatural beliefs with grave respect. His superstitious nature confounds superiors and vexes peers who do their best to indulge the character's oft-seeming strange, eccentric behavior. Though the character intellectually knows that superstitions are largely cultural fictions, he'd rather be safe than sorry—and with these things, well, you never can tell.

Chapter V: Rules of the



This is the climax, Paul thought. From here, the future will open, the clouds part onto a kind of glory. And If I die here, they'll say I sacrificed myself that my spirit might lead them. And if I live, they'll say nothing can oppose Muad'Dib.

"Is the Atreides ready?" Feyd-Rautha called, using the words of the ancient kanly ritual.

Paul chose to answer him in the Fremen way: "May thy knife chip and shatter!" He pointed to the Emperor's blade on the floor, indicating that Feyd-Rautha should advance and take it.

Keeping his attention on Paul, Feyd-Rautha picked up the knife, balancing it a moment in his hand to get the feel of it. Excitement kindled in him. This was the fight he had dreamed about-man against man, skill against skill with no shields intervening. He could see a way to power opening before him because the Emperor surely would reward whoever killed this troublesome duke. The reward might even be that haughty daughter and a share of the throne. And this yokel duke, this back-world adventurer could not possibly be a match for a Harkonnen trained in every device and every treachery by a thousand arena combats. And the yokel had no way of knowing he faced more weapons than a knife here.

Let us see if you're proof against poison! Feyd-Rautha thought. He saluted Paul with the Emperor's blade, said: "Meet your death, fool."

"Shall we fight, cousin?" Paul asked. And he cat-footed forward, eyes on the waiting blade, his body crouched low with his own milk-white crysknife pointing out as though an extension of his arm.

They circled each other, bare feet grating on the floor, watching with eyes intent for the slightest opening.

"How beautifully you dance," Feyd-Rautha said.

— DUNE, pp.482-3

Game

Now that you know about the Imperium, the Great and Minor Houses, and various characters who serve them, all that's left is to learn how to play the game. This chapter presents the all of the rules needed to begin roleplaying in the epic universe of *DUNE*—from the way time passes during a narrative episode to the manner in which combat is resolved. Players familiar with Last Unicorn Games' Icon System™ will already know many of the following rules; but Narrators and players should read this chapter anyway, since it introduces many adaptations to handle situations—such as shield fighting and poison use—that are unique to the *DUNE* milieu.

Time

Actions during a chapter—from piloting a 'thopter to negotiating a CHOAM agreement—occur within a certain framework. In the *DUNE RPG*, this framework is represented by the measurement of time. The *DUNE RPG* uses five abstract divisions to illustrate the passage of game time.

- **Round** - A round is the smallest time increment used in the *DUNE RPG*. Rounds last five seconds and represent the time it takes to complete an extended action (such as scaling a 10 foot wall or reloading a spent lasgun) or to perform series of rapid maneuvers (such as feinting, attacking, parrying and riposting).
- **Scene** - Similar to scenes in novels or film, a scene in the *DUNE RPG* blends elements of roleplaying and action. Scenes are the smallest episodic increments used in the game, and are usually confined to a single setting or location. Action scenes often last only a few rounds, while narrative scenes (such as travelling across a long stretch of barren desert) can consume several hours or even days of narrative time.
- **Chapter** - As in a novel, chapters often entail a collection of scenes. In the *DUNE RPG*, each chapter describes a sequence of events important to the eventual resolution of a chronicle. Chapters often entail some sort of closure, often concluding one or more subplots or minor plot lines. A complete chapter can usually be played out in a single game session.
- **Chronicle** - A group of interconnected chapters forms a chronicle. Chronicles often feature recurring characters, places and events, as well as a pervasive, theme or topic linking sequential chapters together into a larger story arc.
- **Interlude** - The best way to think of an interlude is as the "time in between": time between scenes, between chapters, or between stories. Whenever your characters aren't actively doing something, it's considered an interlude. Much of a character's personal growth and vocational development occur during this "time between"—especially during the *narrative interludes* occurring between chronicles. Most House development also occurs during Narrative Interludes, from the acquisition of Assets to the launching of family ventures. See "Chapter 8" for more information about Interlude time, Character experience and House development.

Tests

If the heart of a *DUNE RPG* game is the story, its lifeblood consists of limitless options. Almost everything your character does-firing a lasgun, piloting a 'thopter, or scanning the terrain for enemies-can be described in terms of various actions or reactions you opt to perform. Whenever precise timing becomes a consideration during a chapter, the Narrator normally asks players to declare specific actions for their characters. For more information about actions and reactions, see Options, page 120.

When facing a situation where the outcome of an action is uncertain, a player must roll a Test to determine whether his character succeeds. Tests can be based on attributes alone, but more frequently they involve a skill (a Skill Test). Whenever possible, the Narrator should use Skill Tests to resolve character options.

Typically, a Test requires the character to roll a number of dice equal to a particular attribute, and add the highest die result to his skill level. The player compares that total—the *Test Result*—to a Difficulty Number set by the Narrator. If the Test Result equals or exceeds the Difficulty, the Test succeeds. If the Test Result is less than the Difficulty, the attempt fails. See the "Test Difficulty" chart (next page) for more details.

Difficulty

Certain tasks are inherently more difficult than others, and in the *DUNE RPG* this is reflected by a task's Difficulty. The "Test Difficulty" chart explores the various Difficulty Numbers and what they mean.

Test Difficulty

Difficulty Number	Description
2	Automatic action—no Test required.
3, **4**, 5	Routine
6, **7**, 8	Moderate
9, **10**, 11	Challenging
12, **13**, 14	Difficult
15+	Nearly Impossible

The possible Difficulty Numbers are organized into categories, such as Routine or Challenging, which offer a general description the Narrator can use when explaining the Difficulty of an action to the players. The Difficulty Numbers in each category provide a range, so the Narrator has some flexibility in determining the exact Difficulty Number of a task falling into each category. For example, a Challenging task could have a Difficulty Number of 9, **10** or 11. The mean Difficulty Number for each category is indicated in **boldface**.

Certain situations modify the Difficulty of a character's actions. Such modifiers are expressed in one of two ways. Normally, a Difficulty modifier appears as a simple positive or negative adjustment, raising or lowering the actual Difficulty Number accordingly (a +1 modifier increases a Difficulty 3 action to a Difficulty 4 attempt; a -2 modifier changes a Difficulty 7 action to a Difficulty 5 action). Sometimes, modifiers affect an entire Difficulty category. Raising the Difficulty by one category would cause a Routine action to become a Moderate action (the Narrator should still set the exact Difficulty Number).



What Does Difficulty Mean?

The Narrator chooses a Difficulty Number whenever a character attempts an action that is not opposed by another character (such as scaling a dangerous cliff face). For tests that are opposed by another character (see "Opposed Tests," page 116), pick a number from within the ranges given, using the category descriptions as a guideline. For example, a Routine Test will have a 3, 4 or 5 Difficulty, while a Moderate action will have a 6, 7 or 8 Difficulty. After you get a feel for the game, assigning Difficulty will become second nature. Generally, the minimum Difficulty Number is always 2, regardless of the modifiers applied.

Remember that a one point difference in Difficulty can make a big difference in outcome. Because the actual Difficulty numbers are somewhat flexible within each category, the Narrator should know the skill and attribute levels of his players, and assign Difficulty accordingly.

Use the following guidelines when assigning Difficulty:

- **Routine** - These are easy tasks. Even inexperienced characters perform these successfully most of the time. Examples include commanding a servant to perform an errand or operating the ComNet under normal conditions.
- **Moderate** - These tasks require some skill to complete successfully. An average character faces a decent chance of failure. Examples include translating a manuscript written in an ancient language, piloting a 'thopter at night, or bribing an official to show special favor.
- **Challenging** - These are complicated tasks often requiring considerable skill and a bit of luck. Average characters only succeed at these tasks occasionally. Examples include shadowing a subject through a crowded plaza or negotiating a contract with the Spacing Guild.
- **Difficult** - These tasks are very hard. Average characters rarely succeed at them, and even skilled professionals stand a good chance of failure. Examples include repairing a shield generator without the proper tools or concealing a lasgun beneath a uniform.
- **Nearly Impossible** - Need we say more? Even legendary characters need a bit of luck to succeed at Nearly Impossible tasks. Examples include besting a Cheops master during the sector finals, or successfully lying to the Emperor's Truthsayer.

What Should I Tell the Player?

As Narrator, you don't have to reveal the Difficulty of a Test to the player. In fact, keeping Difficulty a secret can heighten the tension during key scenes in an adventure. Describing tasks as "Routine", "Moderate", "Challenging" and so on can give a player a rough idea of the task's Difficulty without telling him a specific number. For less criti-

cal scenes, of course, it is perfectly acceptable to tell the player the exact Difficulty Number assigned.

Test Results

Determine the Appropriate Skill

To obtain a Test Result, first you need to determine which skill governs the action being attempted. For example, if Haldran, a Tseida Swordmaster, attempts to evade a hunter-seeker, she would use her Dodge skill. If Perimon Gruys, a diligent Mentat, tries to decode an encapsulated distrans message, an Equipment (Communications) Test is probably in order.

Each skill in the game is linked to a particular attribute (for example, Dodge is linked to Coordination, while Equipment is linked to Intellect). The attribute is important, since it tells you how many dice to roll.

Making A Test

To make a Test, roll a number of six-sided dice equal to the governing attribute. One of the dice should be a different size or color from the others (this is the Drama Die). If the Drama Die rolls a 6 or a 1, the character has probably achieved an especially remarkable success or failure.

If the Drama Die rolls any other number, it works just like a normal die. The player picks the highest die of all the dice (Drama Die included) and adds that number to the character's skill. This total Test Result is then compared to the Difficulty Number.

The Drama Die

As described above, if the Drama Die rolls a 6 or a 1, the result may be more spectacular than normal. If the Drama Die rolls a 6, the character adds both the Drama Die and the next highest die to his skill when determining his Test Result. Usually this indicates a great success, especially if the optional "Degree of Success" system is being used (see chart).

If the player rolls a 1 on the Drama Die, the character may grievously fail. If all other dice also roll 1's, then a Dramatic Failure definitely occurs.

Mentat Perimon Gruys attempts to decode a distrans message received from the command post at Century VI. Since the message was recorded and dispatched in haste, the Narrator determines its poor quality sets the Difficulty at Moderate (7). Perimon's Equipment (Communications) skill is 3 (4) and his Intellect is also 4. Perimon's player rolls 4 attribute dice, getting a 3, 4, 6 and a 6 on his Drama Die. Since Perimon got a 6 on his Drama Die, he can add not only that 6, but also the next highest die (the other 6) to his skill. That gives him a final result of 16. Since 16 is 6 or more greater than the Difficulty Number of 6, he has achieved a Dramatic Success (see next page). The Narrator tells him that his effort was successful, and that he discovers another voice in the background of the message, a gruff voice speaking in harsh, commanding tones.

If a character only rolls one die for a Test, that die is automatically the Drama Die. If it rolls a 6, the character may re-roll it once, and once only, adding both results to his Tested skill level.

Automatic Success

It's fun to roll a lot of dice; but too much die rolling can detract from the story. To minimize needless Tests, the Icon System uses an optional Automatic Success rule. Automatic successes are simple: If a character's skill level (plus an applicable edge) equals or exceeds the Test Difficulty (after all modifiers are applied), the character automatically succeeds. For example, an Adept with Bene Gesserit Way (Minutia) 2 (3) would automatically succeed at Minutia Tests having a Difficulty of 3.

The Narrator should limit Automatic Successes to non-critical situations. If the action occurs in the middle of a tense or dramatic situation—the House's Command Center is under attack—the player should probably make a Test. Fear of failure goes a long way toward creating dramatic tension. Use good judgment when exercising the Automatic Success rule; if your players enjoy rolling dice, by all means let them do so.

Success and Dramatic Success

If the total Test Result equals the Difficulty Number, the character has achieved a marginal success—he's succeeded, but just barely, and some minor complication may arise. A marginal success depends on the situation and the individual Test, but in some cases it could lead to additional Tests in subsequent rounds. For example, a character attempting to leap a wide chasm scores a marginal success on his Athletics (Jumping) Test. The Narrator rules that he makes the jump, but rather than landing on his feet, he barely manages to grab the edge of the far side with his hands. The following round finds our hero hanging from the ledge leaving his feet dangling in space. It's probably time for another Test...

If the total exceeds the Difficulty Number, the character has succeeded. Whenever a player rolls a 1 or 6 on his Drama Die, the "Degree of Success" system (see accompanying chart) can be used to determine just how well the character succeeded. If the character exceeds the Difficulty Number by 6 or more, this always indicates a Dramatic Success.

Degree of Success

During Tests, the amount by which a Test Result exceeds the Difficulty Number indicates the overall "Degree of Success." The higher the Test Result, the better the character performs. Exceeding the Difficulty by 1 indicates complete success, but exceeding it by 4 or 5 represents exceptional feats of accomplishment. Any Test Result exceeding the Difficulty Number (or Opposing Test Result) by 6 or more indicates a Dramatic Success,regardless of the result of the Drama Die. Similarly, any Test Result emerging from a 1 or 6 on the drama die, can also lead to dramatic effects. See "Dramatic Success" and "Dramatic Failures" below.

Although "Degrees of Success" do not quantify and categorize every possible Test Result, the Narrator can interpret them to gauge the character's relative success or failure, aiding her in describing the outcome to the players. Most players enjoy hearing how well their characters have performed, so play it up! Refer to the following guidelines for interpreting Degrees of Success and Dramatic Effects during play.

Dramatic Success

• 6 on the Drama Die, and your Test Result indicates a success—Dramatic Success. The character has succeeded at the task beyond expectations.

Example. Perimon Gruys suspects a member of a Harkonnen diplomatic entourage is a spy. He gatheres his facts and makes a Computation (straight line) Test, Difficulty 7. His Test Result equals 11, and his Drama Die rolled a 6. The Narrator rules that his Dramatic Success reveals that the Harkonnen diplomat is, in fact, a spy. But he's leaking confidential diplomatic information to another House! Interesting information indeed!

• 1 on the Drama Die, and your Test Result indicates a success—Pyrrhic Victory. The character succeeds at the task, but at some cost to himself or his cause.

Example. Swordmaster Kadiz and his skilled opponent have both suffered extensive wounds during a duel. Kadiz delivers the killing blow to his opponent, with a Test Result of 7, having rolled a 1 on his Drama die. So the Narrator rules that his Pyrrhic Victory means Kadiz has exhausted his endurance. His knees buckle beneath him in his moment of victory, leaving him slumped over his slain opponent.

• Test Result exceeds Test Difficulty by 6 or more—Dramatic Success (or Spactular Success if Drama Die scores a 6)

Example. Warmaster Ravastine uses his Stealth skill to sneak past a sleeping Harkonnen guard. The Narrator declares this a Routine task (Difficulty 4). Ravastine possesses Stealth 4 and Coordination 3. He rolls three dice obtaining a result of 6. This is added to his skill of 4, which gives him a result of 10 (6 more than he needed to succeed). The Narrator rules that, because he has succeeded by such a wide margin, he has made absolutely no noise and security hasn't the faintest clue to his presence.

Dramatic Failures

• 6 on the Drama Die, and your Test Result indicates a failure—Acceptable Loss. The character fails his attempt, but yet accomplishes something making the attempt worthwhile.

Example. Warmaster Ravastine leads a siege against a rival House Minor. Ravastine rolls 8 against a Difficulty 9, indicating a failure. But his Drama Die reveals a 6, meaning his failure results in an Acceptable Loss. The Narrator rules that his troops are repelled, but capture a prisoner in the process. Ravastine begins to formulate ways to exploit this unexpected boon.

• 1 on the Drama Die, and the Test Result indicates a failure—Dramatic Failure. The character not only fails at his task, but he's also manages to worsen matters.

Example. Ravastine delivers his prisoner to Suk Physician Ros Idaz. Idaz administers a powerful narcotic to sedate the prisoner and make him receptive to interrogation. He makes a Pharmacy (Narcotics) Test and fails. To add insult to injury, his Drama Die rolled a 1 so the Narrator rules his incorrect dosage has killed the prisoner! Ravastine is furious!

• Test Result falls short of Test Difficulty by 6 or more—Dramatic Failure (or Spectacular Failure if Drama Die also rolls a 1)

Example. Mentat Adin Bosque attempts to send a coded message to Ravastine. He possesses Chakobsa 4 and Intellect 4. The Narrator declares that coding the message so the Harkonnens won't be able to decipher it is a Difficult (12) action. Bosque rolls four dice but his highest roll is merely a 2. Added to his Chakobsa of 4, the Test Result is a 6. Since this is 6 less than the target number, the Narrator rules that Bosque's message is intercepted and decrypted by the Harkonnens! Disaster!

Failure and Dramatic Failure

If the total rolled is less than the Difficulty Number, the character fails. If his Test Result falls short of the Difficulty Number by 6 or more, he experiences a Dramatic Failure (see chart). Dramatic Failures tend to complicate matters, and should always relate directly to the task being attempted. They may embarrass the character, expose him to injury or harm, put him in a situation where he is in grave danger, require further Tests, and so forth, at the Narrator's discretion.

Improving Your Roll

Edges

Edges can modify Skill Tests. Positive edges allow players to roll additional dice when making a Test, while negative edges force you to subtract dice from your roll. You can roll one additional die, or subtract one die, for each point in a relevant edge. For example, a +2 edge would allow a player to roll two additional dice during a Test, while a -1 edge would remove one die from his Test attempt. Using the guidelines presented in the skill descriptions, the Narrator decides whether an edge applies to a particular Test. While the Narrator should let players use their edges whenever possible, he should also remember that, unlike attributes, edges don't always apply.

Substituting Attributes

Characters in the DUNE universe tend to train in skills well-matched to their innate attributes—a Swordmaster, for instance, isn't likely to perform Intellect-based skills as well as he does Armed Combat or Stealth, which are linked to his high Coordination attribute. So occasionally the Narrator may rule that under special circumstances certain skills may be combined with attributes other than those listed under the skill descriptions. For example, although the Repair skill normally corresponds to Intellect, in the midst of a heated firefight the Narrator might allow a character to use his Coordination in conjunction with his Repair (Weaponry) skill to try to fix a weapon malfunction.

Combining different attributes with the same skill can make for some dramatic game effects, but it can also lead to abuse. Exercise good judgment when substituting attributes and edges, making sure the players justify any variation through good roleplaying. Remember, the Narrator ultimately decides which attribute contributes to any Skill Test (regardless of what the rules or players suggest).

Returning to our previous examples, Perimon's player decides that he want to learn more about the background voice, and replays the message to listen for details. The Narrator knows that Perimon's Intellect governs Observation Tests. After reading the Observation skill description, the Narrator allows the player to add Perimon's Perception edge to the forthcoming Test, reasoning that this affects Perimon's ability to focus on the background voice. Since his Perception is +1, he may roll one extra die during the Observation Test. Rolling a success, Perimon's discovers that the harsh voice is speaking in the guttural battle-tongue betraying the presence of Imperial Sardaukar.

Karama

The expenditure of Karama provides another method for increasing Test Results. A character's Karama often comes in handy when a Test generates a low total. If failure in a particular task can lead to catastrophic results—the failure of the overall mission or the death of the character, for example—the player can elect to spend up to 3 Karama Points to improve the Test Result. Each Karama Point increases the final Test Result by 1. The character does not have to decide to add Karama Points before he makes his roll; he can add them after he rolls the dice and determines that, without Karama Points, he would fail the Test. A character cannot spend more than 3 Karama Points during a single Test or over the course of an entire round.

Having discovered Imperial battle language in the background of his message, Perimon attempts to translate the words using his cursory knowledge of that tongue. He makes a Secret Language (Imperial Battle) Test, which the Narrator sets at Challenging (10) Difficulty, since the message is somewhat distorted. Perimon's Intellect is 4 and his Secret Language (Imperial Battle) skill is 1(2), but his best roll is a 2. All told, Perimon's result is an 8, falling 2 short of success. Hoping that the content might provide the missing clue to what befell his compatriots at Century VI, Perimon's player decides to spend 2 Karama Points, adding +2 to his roll and raising the total to 10—a success!

Recuperating Karama Points

Less-experienced characters commonly rely on Karama expenditures to succeed at difficult actions. Doing so can quickly deplete their Karama Pools during tense moments or important scenes, leaving them to struggle through the remainder of the chapter until their Karama Pool replenishes at the end of the gaming session. For this reason, the Narrator may wish to permit the recuperation of Karama during an episode. The following guidelines suggest three alternatives for replenishing Karama Pool during play:

• **Dramatically Appropriate Actions –** If a character spends Karama to accomplish dramatically appropriate feats, the Narrator can elect to reward him by replenishing

his Karama Pool at the end of the scene. For example, a Suk Doctor who spends Karama Points at a critical moment to treat an injured ambassador or calm a hysterical witness can recuperate Karama Points for furthering the plot by his actions. More impressive or difficult tasks deserve greater Karama recovery. Use the following as guidelines for recovering Karama Points:

Karama Point	Reward
1 point	Stopping an enemy from performing an undesired action (firing a stunner, for example)
2 Points	Stopping an enemy from performing a series of undesired actions (such as preventing an enemy from fleeing the area and rendezvousing with a smuggler frigate)
3-4 points	Thwarting an enemy's master plan

• **Effective Roleplaying** – The Narrator should reward the player for acting in a manner consistent with the character's personality and motivations by allowing him to recover Karama Points more quickly. Such rewards should be awarded only if the player spends Karama Points on appropriate Tests. For example, an Adept who depletes her Karama while transmitting a message to the Sisterhood should recuperate Karama for roleplaying her part. As a general rule, this type of award should roughly equal to the number of Karama Points spent during the defining Test.

• **Heroic Sacrifice** – If the character suffers severe injury or personal loss in order to further the Entourage's mission, he should receive a substantial Karama award. In such cases, the character could recover anywhere from 4-6 Karama Points, depending on the severity of the character's sacrifice, and may even be awarded extra Karama Points as experience (see Rewards, page 174). But only in the rarest of instances should characters recuperate more Karama than they've spent during a single scene.

Special Types of Tests

Attribute Tests

The *DUNE RPG* is a game where skill is paramount, but occasionally a character will be called on to make a Test based on his natural ability alone. In such cases (called Attribute Tests), simply roll the attribute dice normally to obtain the Test Result. The highest die still gives you the Test Result, and Drama Die rules still apply. However, since you're not using a skill, you don't get to add a skill level to the roll. If the Narrator rules that an edge affects the Test, add or subtract the edge modifier to the Test Result. During Attribute Tests only, edges directly modify the Test Result, instead of increasing the number of dice as usual.

Although there may be occasional situations where Attribute Tests are appropriate, most actions are covered by a skill. The Narrator should encourage players to use Skill Tests to resolve actions whenever possible.

Opposed Tests

When one character acts in direct opposition to another character, both characters make appropriate Skill (or Attribute) Tests. This is referred to as an Opposed Test. The character who gets the higher Test Result is the victor. If the two results tie, the character who rolled higher on his Drama Die is the victor. If the Drama Die rolls are also tied, the character that initiated the Test wins.

The difference between two characters' Test Results during an Opposed Test determines how much better the victor performed. If the Dramatic Success rules are being used, a character whose Test Result exceeds his opponent's by six or more achieves a Dramatic Success. Note that the Dramatic Failure rules don't usually apply during an Opposed Test. If one character achieves a Dramatic Success, his opponent doesn't also suffer a Dramatic Failure.

Opposed Test Modifiers

Situation	Modifier
Small Advantage (sun in opponent's eyes)	+1 to Test Result
Moderate Advantage (opponent has very bad footing)	+2 to Test Result
Significant Advantage (opponent has suffered significant relevant injury)	+3 to Test Result
Dominating Advantage (opponent is blinded and badly injured)	+4 to Test Result
Small Disadvantage (a loud noise momentarily distracts character)	-1 to Test Result
Moderate Disadvantage (character is in poor position to face his opponent; significantly below opponent, on fluctuating terrain, etc.)	-2 to Test Result
Significant Disadvantage (character is caught completely off guard; opponent is cheating, possesses important information which character does not, etc.)	-3 to Test Result
Dominating Disadvantage (character has suffered major injury)	-4 to Test Result

Opposed Tests, while common, are not always appropriate. Whether to allow one is up to the Narrator. Examples of Opposed Tests include:

• While residing at Century VI, Haldran dices with her host in a few rounds of Smuggler's bones. Luck wasn't on her side during the last round, so she decides to

use his Gaming skill to improve her chances of winning. Unfortunately the base commander doesn't want to lose face before his troops, so he uses his own Gaming skill to oppose Haldran.

• Warmaster Ravastine needs to infiltrate a storehouse to find out what wares are being stockpiled within. He attempts to do so using his Stealth skill, but will be opposed by the guards with their Observation skills.

• A Tseidan diplomat attempts to convince Perimon Gruys to confide what he has discovered. He pits his Persuasion skill against Gruys's Intellect.

Sometimes a particular situation or environment will affect an Opposed Test. If one character is in an advantageous (or disadvantageous) situation, the Narrator can give the player additional (or fewer) dice to roll while making his Test. Note that these modifiers do not reflect superior skill; rather, they represent outside factors or unusual circumstances.

Extended Tests

Most normal actions resolve themselves quickly, in a matter of seconds. You obtain your Test Result and either succeed or fail. Does your stunner shot hit the Harkonnen spy? Do you spot the hidden entrance to the smuggler cove? One Test attempt and it's over.

Extended Tests cover actions that consist of several distinct parts, or actions of extended duration. They often last for several rounds, and sometimes they may last several scenes or longer. Extended Tests are composed of Turns; before a character begins an Extended Test, the Narrator sets a Turn length (anything from a minute to a day or more, depending on the action being attempted). The player rolls once each Turn, adding his Test Results together until he has accumulated a total, cumulative Test Result set by the Narrator. Once the player equals or exceeds this cumulative number, his character succeeds at the task. Normal or Dramatic Failures may set the character back a Turn or force him to begin the task again (at the Narrator's discretion).

Extended Tests can serve another purpose, as well. The Narrator may wish to break difficult, involved tasks down into more manageable pieces. A character must successfully complete each "piece" of the larger task in order to succeed at the whole.

Ravastine's ornithopter is forced down while fleeing the Harkonnens. Having taken considerable damage, it requires repairs to six distinct systems in order to fly. The Narrator decides this should be an Extended Test, with each Turn representing five minutes of elapsed time. The Narrator sets the Difficulty Number at 8, and determines Ravastine must achieve a total of 40 on his cumulative rolls to complete the repairs before his pursuers return.

Ravastine's first three rolls are successes-8, 11 and 8. However, his fourth roll, a 6, indicates failure and a brief setback. Unfortunately, after 20 minutes he has run out of time. The Narrator rules that because of this failure, Ravastine cannot succeed at his task before the Harkonnens return.

Alternately, the Narrator could decide that each subsystem represents a step in the process, and break up the Extended Test that way. While trying to quickly fix all the systems at once might be a Nearly Impossible task, the Narrator rules that taken individually each repair becomes a Challenging (9) Test. Ravastine will have to make each Test separately and in succession, with each attempt taking one Turn.

Remember that Extended Tests do not normally give you a concrete time requirement (although your character may be working against the clock—for example, the Narrator might tell that security personnel will interrupt you in 10 minutes unless you can prevent them. Your Turn length tells you how long an attempt is taking; the faster you reach your cumulative Test Result, the quicker you complete the task. Obviously, a Dramatic Success or two can accelerate an Extended Test considerably.

House Ventures

House Ventures represent special Skill Tests used during Narrative Interludes to determine the outcome of House-launched initiatives. Ventures range in purpose from petitioning your Great House lord for a family favor to leading a raid against a rival's storage silos. Regardless of their nature, all Ventures are conducted like Opposed or Extended Skill Tests, with the exception that the corresponding House attribute (instead of the character attribute) determines the number of dice to be rolled during the Test. To the highest roll, the Leading character adds



his skill level just like a normal Test, also adding any modifiers resulting from assigned resources and supplemental Assets committed to the venture. See "Chapter 8: Interlude Ventures," page 179 for more information.

Untrained Skill Use

Some skills can be used, albeit poorly, without formal training; and are designated by the notation "0+." Those skills in the "Chapter 4" (page 78) marked by "1+" cannot be used untrained. In other words, if you don't have at least 1 level in the skill, you cannot attempt to use it during Tests.

When a character attempts to use a skill untrained, he makes an Attribute Test based on the attribute that governs the skill. For example, if you want to use Persuasion untrained, you would make a Charisma Test. If you needed to fire a maula pistol, and you never learned the Ranged Weapons skill, you could still fire the weapon untrained by making a Coordination Test. Drama Die rules still apply to untrained Skill Tests.

Perimon Gruys, an aging Mentat, knows little of the art of swordplay. Unfortunately, an arrogant noble calls him out, and the only weapon available to him is a dueling sword. Mentat Gruys does his best to defend himself with the sword, hoping to draw first blood and end the bout. His Coordination is 2. Therefore he may roll two dice when trying to attack his challenger with the sword.

Test Modifiers

Preparation

The Narrator may give a character a +1 die or +1 Test Result bonus to his Test attempt if he takes additional time to prepare an action. Normally, such preparation requires one full round (it cannot be rushed). Of course, not all actions will benefit from additional preparation (for example, some actions, such as making extensive repairs to a damaged shield generator, already take so much time that preparation doesn't really affect them). Use common sense or refer to the individual skill descriptions for guidance.

Conversely, tasks that normally take a long time to perform (such as painting or making some types of repairs) are harder to do if the character is rushed. The Narrator should increase the Difficulty of the task to reflect the fact that the character does not have sufficient time to do the job properly—the greater the rush, the greater the increase in the Difficulty. For example, it would normally take Perimon Gruys 15 minutes to decode and translate a distrans message. Unfortunately, he must perform the task in 10 minutes, before the guards discover his presence in the communications center. The Narrator rules that while this would normally be a Moderate (7) Test, the rushed nature of the job increases the Difficulty to Challenging (9).

Combined Tests

When several characters work together to accomplish a task (such as an Extended Test or House Venture), the Narrator may allow them to make a Combined Test. In a Combined Test, each participant must make a Test using the same skill or attribute. The best Test Result is used as a base, and each additional successful Test adds 1 to that result (Dramatic Successes add 2). Failures do not add to the total; however, if one of the characters gets a Dramatic Failure, either a setback occurs (possibly resulting in a subtraction from the total roll) or the group must start again from the beginning.

Warmaster Ravastine is leading a covert raid with four other players in his Entourage. They have found a palm lock barring their progress and they must deactivate it, a task the Narrator decides will take 10 minutes. Each character is using Security skill. The Narrator rules that foiling the palm lock is a Moderate (7) task. The characters roll, getting results of 11, 9, 8, 6, and 5. This gives them a Combined Test total of 13 (11+1+1—the two failures do not subtract from this total). Since this is 6 more than the Difficulty, they have achieved a Dramatic Success! The Narrator rules that this Dramatic Success means they bypass the lock in six minutes. Record Time!

If the last character's roll had resulted in a Dramatic Failure, the Narrator might have ruled, for example that he accidentally set off an alarm, calling security troops. Now the group must start again, finishing the job quickly, or the raid will have to be abandoned.

Additional Attempts

If a character fails an action attempt, he may usually try again. Each additional attempt adds +1 to the Difficulty of the Test. For example, a character attempts to scale a perimeter fence without being caught by a roving spotlight, an action that has a Difficulty of Moderate (6). He knows he can make the climb, but needs to do so quickly to avoid the light that passes every 20 seconds. Losing his grip on the first attempt, he drops low, waiting to try again once the beam has passed. Timing his attempt he tries again, this time with a Difficulty of 7. If he still can't make the climb, he could try yet again (at Difficulty 8). And so on...

Other Modifiers

There are countless factors that could modify any Test. The "Test Modifiers" chart presents a few examples; Narrators can use these as guidelines for determining modifiers in other situations.

Test Modifiers

Situation	Modifier
Lack of proper tools or equipment	+1 Difficulty (or more)
Using particularly good or high-quality equipment	-1 Difficulty (or more)
Using "off hand"	+1 Difficulty
Acting while injured	+1 to +4 Difficulty
Visual Interference (for Observation and similar skills)	
Light smoke, dim light	+1 Difficulty
Heavy smoke, moonlight	+2 Difficulty
Thick smoke,total darkness	+3 Difficulty

Renown Tests

When people meet, their individual renown makes it possible for them to recognize one another, or to recall one or more details pertaining to each other's personal biography—their avowed allegiance, family affiliation, professional accomplishments, historical background or personal idiosyncrasies. To determine whether a stranger's reputation precedes them in such a manner, a Renown Test is in order. The overall degree of success then indicates the general usefulness or comprehensiveness of the reputation known to the other individual.

Renown typically comes into play as a result of social engagements. During personal encounters, people may search their memories for information about the other individuals to gain the upper hand, make them feel more comfortable in the person's presence or provide some insight into the person's behavioral predilections. This is where Renown aspects factor in. For example, if your character were granted audience with a powerful lord, the circumstances of the meeting might spark him to recall something about the lord's reputation for Justice. Similarly, if an NPC were facing your Swordmaster in a personal duel, the situation might cause him to recall something about your character's reputation for Valor. Whether you recall the lord is quick to anger or the NPC has heard that your Swordmaster often leads with a feint, the Renown aspect suggests the type of information gleaned in addition to serving as the primary element in the Renown Test.

Whenever the Narrator deems it appropriate, he may call for a player to make a Renown Test to learn something about the subject NPC (or vice versa). To make a Renown Test, the player rolls a number of dice equal to the relevant Renown aspect (or the highest aspect in cases where general identification is being tested) and adds the subject's House Renown. The Narrator might opt to modify the Difficulty if, for example, the stranger has a high World Knowledge or Culture skill related to the character's planet, or if they share Patrons or Allies. See "Renown Test Modifiers" for more information.

If the Renown Test Result exceeds the Test Difficulty (see "Renown Difficulty" chart), the character successfully identifies the subject, or recalls something about her personal history. If the Renown Test results in a Dramatic Success, the character not only recognizes the subject for her primary reputation, but also recalls some important details relevant to the situation at hand. Dramatic Successes may yield more vital information, or confer additional reputations associated with the subject's other Renown aspects. Renown Test failures indicate the character has either failed to identify the subject, or cannot recall anything substantive about him or her. Dramatic Failures may result in false identification-confusing the subject with another known person or misattributing another's reputation to the subject-possibly leading to public humiliation or personal insult.

Renown Tests

Test Difficulty

Difficulty	Description
3-5	Routine: your House compound
6-8	Moderate: your House fiefdom
9-11	Challenging: your Homeworld
12-14	Difficult: an Imperial Homeworld, an Ally Homeworld
15+	Nearly Impossible: an Out-freyn Homeworld, an enemy Homeworld

Renown Test Modifiers

Situation	Modifier to Test Result
Common Ground (aspects shared by viewer & subject)	
Caste	+x (Caste-2)
Vocation	+1
Homeworld	+2
House Minor	+3
Previous Acquaintance	+x (subject's Charisma)
Subject's Total Renown	
1-5	+0
6-10	+1
11-15	+2
16-20	+3
Differences between viewer and subject	
Caste	-x (5 – subject's Caste)
Vocation	-0
Homeworld	-2

Attempting to gather information about an illicit slaving operation, Paimon Gruys enters a semuta den located in a far corner of his homeworld Caladan. Inside, Gruys espies a beautiful dancer,

writhing to the tones of a wailing rebec, her face devoid of expression—a telling sign of semuta addiction. Yet something about the girl's noble grace sparks Gruys's keen intellect. Knowing the girl is the daughter of the famous Dikladius family, the Narrator considers her highest Renown Aspect to be Prayer (once an acolyte of the Bene Gesserit) 3, with a House Renown of 4. Paimon's player rolls 3 dice, getting a 2, 4 and 5, to which he adds the House Renown of 4 for a total of 9. Since the girl shares Paimon's Caste (3) and homeworld, the Narrator bestows an additional +3 modifier to the result, raising the total to 12. Checking this result against the Difficulty chart, the Narrator sees that Paimon succeeds in identifying the girl, recalling rumors of the Sisterhood arranging her marriage to a certain Moritani noblemen—strange that she should turn up here—or perhaps not so strange after all

Action & Combat

The threat of violence—especially military warfare and personal combat—is an undeniable facet of Imperial life. Though the tenets of the Great Convention exist to limit conflict among rival Houses, its governing rules primarily restrict mass conflict, attempting to safeguard the civilian populace and innocent bystanders from the worst of the residual aftermath. Unfortunately, when the Guild Peace and Articles of Kanly fail to interdict, personal antagonism can precipitate lethal violence, erupting in an impassioned heartbeat or ending in a flashing knife stroke. Those who violate the Great Convention or engage in its sanctioned forms of Kanly, do so at their mortal peril—combat in the *DUNE RPG* can define the particulars of a character's obituary as easily as it can recount their tales of valor.

Round Sequence

Combat is normally fought in five-second intervals called rounds. Rounds measure time during scenes involving dramatic or cinematic elements—a fight, a chase or a dangerous situation such as a bomb countdown or cave-in. As a rule of thumb, use rounds whenever it is critical to know who acts first or last in a particular situation.

Each round is divided into two parts: Initiative and Options. Initiative determines who acts first during a round, and establishes their range of available options. Options describe the opportunities available to characters, representing a variety of potential actions and reactions.

Initiative

Initiative determines the number of Options a character may exercise during a round and establishes the general order in which the characters act. Each character possesses Initiative equal to their Coordination + Reaction attribute and gains an equal number of Option Points to spend each round. Record your character's Initiative on your character sheet and mark her Option Point total on the accompanying track.

Options

During the round, each character must declare what options they intend to perform, whether making an attack, moving behind cover, or stooping to pick up a weapon. The "Combat Option" chart (see 122-125) presents a range of options available to characters, describing their effects and Option Point costs within.

Each option is defined as either an Action or Reaction and falls into one of three categories; *General Options*, *Close Combat Options* and *Ranged Combat Options*. When selecting which actions/reactions to perform, players should consider the number of Option Points available to their characters, and choose accordingly (see "Forms of Combat," page 127 for more about Combat Options). Though players may never declare actions costing more points than their characters currently possess; they may declare any reactions, regardless of cost (though negative Test modifiers result when performing reactions for which the character cannot pay the full cost). See "Option Costs" hereafter for more information.

Varying in cost, each action and reaction yields a particular result upon completion. Most combat actions inflict a certain amount of damage on a target, while others confer offensive advantages (usually expressed as modifiers for subsequent actions). Occasionally, actions may initiate additional Tests affecting subsequent options performed during the round. Similarly, reactions commonly eliminate damage or confer defensive advantages (expressed as modifiers) during the round. Refer to the Combat Option chart for further information about the effects of actions and reactions.

Option Costs

Regardless of their effects, action and reactions each cost a number of option points listed in parentheses. Numbers preceded by the letter "A" correspond to *actions*, while numbers preceded by "R" signify *reactions*. In addition to its listed cost, each subsequent action and reaction increase in cost by +1 point per additional type. For example if the first action in a round costs 1 point (A1), then conducting a second action (A1) costs one additional point (A1+1=A2). A third action (A1) would cost an additional 2 points (A1+2=A3) since it is the second, subsequent action performed during the round, but a second reaction (R1) would only cost one additional point (R1+1=R2) since it is the first, subsequent reaction in the round.

Haldran MacDara, a Tseidan Swordmaster, attacks (A1), parries (R1) and then conducts an attack sin-

ister (A1). Because the attack sinister is considered a subsequent action, its cost increases from 1 to 2. Were Haldran to later attempt an additional attack (A1), the action would cost her 3 points (1 + 2 for the second, subsequent action); however were Haldran to follow-up with a parry (R1) instead, the action would only cost 2 points (R1+1=R2, for her first, subsequent reaction).



When declaring an action, characters must spend a number of option points equal to the cost in order to resolve the action. However, in the case of declaring reactions, characters may resolve the option even if they can't pay the full amount. In such instances, the character suffers a negative Test modifier equal to the number of option points he cannot pay. For example, a character with 1 remaining option point declares a second parry (R1) during the round. Since his second reaction costs an additional 1 point, the total cost for the option is 2, indicating that the character suffers a -1 Test modifier as a result of only being able to spend 1 option point to perform the 2 point reaction.

Haldran MacDara uses 1 of her 5 Option Points to conduct an attack (A1) against Vico D'aout, leaving her with 4 Option Points remaining. She then spends 1 action point to Parry (R1) Vico's attack, and decides to follow up with a slow attack (A2). Since the slow attack represents Haldran's second offensive action, it costs not 2, but 3 Option Points, leaving her with no points remaining. Unfortunately, Vico's brother Diotellevi makes a last minute attack at Haldran, so she attempts to parry (R1). Because this parry is considered her second reaction, it costs Haldran 1 additional point (total cost of 2), meaning that she suffers a -2 Test penalty since she had 0 Option Points remaining when attempting the parry.

Combat Rounds

Consisting of 5 second intervals, combat rounds give each character the opportunity to perform a number of actions and reactions. Starting with the character having highest initiative, each player declares one action for their character, proceeding in order from the highest to lowest initiative scores. Characters tied for initiative may declare their actions at the same time since the Narrator will determine the final order in which declared actions are resolved. Declaring actions does not commit characters to following through with them, but each character must possess sufficient option points in order to make the declaration in the first place. As part of their declaration, each player should name the intended target of the action if required (for example, in declaring an attack the player should also name the intended target).

Initial Actions & Reactions

Following the order of initiative, the Narrator handles each declaration in turn, allowing the target of each declared action the opportunity to declare a reaction. Players need not possess the full amount of Option Points to declare a reaction, but they must pay whatever portion of the reaction cost they can once the Narrator has resolved action and any declared reaction.

Haldran's player declares a slow attack on the NPC Vico D'aout. The Narrator determines Vico reacts by Dodging Haldran's attack. Knowing Dodge reactions must be tested prior to resolving attacks, the Narrator rolls Vico's Dodge Test and scores a 9. This serves as Haldran's Difficulty Number when resolving Haldran's forthcoming attack. The Narrator then asks Haldran's player to make her slow attack Test. Haldran rolls a 7, finding her blow easily turned by Vico's blade. Action and reaction resolved, both players now deduct the Option Points they spent from their current totals.

When handling actions declared by players tied for initiative, it is the Narrator's task to decide whether the actions should be resolved simultaneously or subsequently. Unless the tied participants have declared

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Combat Option Descriptions

General Options (Type & Cost)

Characters may perform any of the following General Options during Close or Ranged Combat.

Aim/Time (A1) – A tactical delay to precisely aim or time an attack for improved accuracy. The character gains +1 to his next "to–Hit" Test (assuming the character performs no other options—aside from Aim/Time—before the "to–Hit" Test). All Aim/Time actions bear cumulative effects. No Test required.

Dive For Cover (R2) – Enables a character to move up to 5 meters to reach physical cover. The character makes an Athletics Test against Difficulty 7, adding +1 to the Difficulty for each meter the character wishes to move. Failure means the character has only managed to leap 1d3 meters and Dramatic Failure results in the character falling prone (and suffering prone penalties). A successful Dive for Cover reaction gives the character the full benefit of the physical cover, but the character must Regain Footing (see Regain Footing option) to rise from the ground.

Dodge (R2) – Increase the Difficulty of a declared attack. Dodge Tests must be made prior to the "to–Hit" Test. If the Dodge Result is higher than the attacker's base Difficulty, the attacker must roll higher than the Dodge Result to attack successfully. If a Dodge is declared in reaction to a Disarm action, add +2 to the Dodge Test Result.

Drop & Roll (A2/R2) – Requiring an Athletics Test at Difficulty 4, characters performing this reaction move 1 meter free of penalties, suffering +1 penalty per additional meter of attempted movement. Successful Drop and Roll options confer the defensive benefits of Dodge reactions, also reducing the cost of Draw/Recover Weapon options by 1 Option Point. Successful Drop and Roll options do not require characters to Regain Footing, though failed attempts usually do.

Drop Prone (A1/R1) – A form of Dodge, Dropping Prone enables a character to avoid an attack by dropping to the ground, ending up in the prone position. To return to his feet, the character must perform a Regain Footing option. No Test required.

Draw/Recover Weapon (A1/R1) – Enables a character to draw a sheathed or holstered weapon or to recover a weapon laying at their feet. To Recover weapons lying more than 1 meter away, characters must first move to within a meter of the weapon. No Test required.

Hand Switch (A0/R0) – Declared as an action or reaction, a hand switch shifts a weapon or object from one hand to the other in an attempt to foil Disarm actions or to gain surprise during the offensive. Following a Hand Switch, the character's first "to–Hit" Test gains a +2 modifier (though the Off-hand penalty may offset this bonus).

Performing a Hand Switch requires the character to make a routine Coordination + Dexterity Test. A Failure results in losing the attack bonus, while Dramatic Failures indicate the weapon falls to the ground. When declared as a reaction against a Disarm action, the attacker suffers an additional +2 Difficulty modifier to his Disarm Test. During any Hand Switch action, the opponent may make an opposed Observation Test. Successful Tests result in the attacker's bonus being reduced to +1 while a Dramatic Success alleviates the bonus altogether.

Regain Footing (A1/R1) – Regain Footing enables a character to rise from a sitting or prone position. Normally Regain Footing actions do not require Tests, though extreme situations such may warrant a Coordination Test against Routine Difficulty (3) plus any relevant modifiers.

Close Combat Options (Type & Cost)

Characters may perform the following options during Armed and Unarmed Close combat. The appropriate skill is determined by weapons selection—Melee Arms warrant Armed Combat Tests, body appendages (hand/foot) and makeshift weapons (bottles, chairs, etc.) require Unarmed Combat (martial training or brawling) Tests.

Armed Attack (A1) – The basic action required to inflict damage with a weapon. Unless the target reacts by Blocking or Parrying, attacks are resolved as unopposed Armed Combat Tests having Difficulty equal to the weapon's Accuracy Rating. Attacks made against shielded opponents suffer additional Difficulty modifiers according to the shield setting (see "Combat: Difficulty Modifiers, Shields"). In order to perform an Armed Attack with a Flip-dart, a character must first successfully Bind his opponent.

Attack Sinister (A1/R1) – An off-hand attack, an Attack Sinister must be declared as an action, but may be counted as either an action or a reaction for determining its cost, potentially reducing subsequent option penalties. All Attacks Sinister incur the off-hand penalty for Test resolution. In all other respects, conduct Attacks Sinister as Armed Attacks.

Bind (A1) – The act of locking arms or wrestling with an opponent to prevent further attacks or gain some advantage in combat (see Press option). A Bind option requires an Opposed Armed/Unarmed Combat Test. If successful, the character and his opponent become locked together and may not perform additional actions until freed. Either the character or his opponent may attempt to break free by performing a subsequent Press action during the round. In order to perform an Armed Attack with a Flip-dart, a character must successfully Bind his opponent.

Block (R1) – A crude form of Parry, characters can absorb the force of an incoming attack by Blocking with his own weapon. To resolve a Block, conduct an Armed Combat/Unarmed Combat Test. If successful, roll Weapon Damage as an attack but deduct the full amount from the attacking Weapon Damage. Some weapons confer Block/Parry modifiers increasing the character's Test Result. Unarmed defenders may Block Armed Attacks only if they possess the Martial Training specialization.

Charge (A3) – Combining an Armed Attack with movement option, a Charge delivers an especially forceful blow inflicting an additional 1d6 of damage. Requiring normal Armed Combat Tests, successful Charges also cause the defender to make an Opposed Coordination (Strength) Test to maintain their footing. Failed Tests result in the defender being knocked prone, while Dramatic Failures may result in the loss of 1d3 additional Option Points.

Though characters may Charges shielded opponents, the action confers no additional damage. Charging shielded opponents incurs the normal Difficulty modifiers for attacks made against shielded opponents.

Disarm (A2) – Disarm enables a character to disable his opponent's weapon, usually knocking it from his grasp. Disarm actions require Opposed Armed/Unarmed Combat Tests. If the attacker's Test Result is higher, the Disarm succeeds in forcing the opponent's weapon from his hand, landing 1d3 meters from his current location. When attempting Unarmed Disarm actions against Armed opponents, the attacker suffers a +3 Difficulty Modifier. In such instances, Spectacular Failures indicate the attacker injures himself in the attempt, incurring 1/2 (rounding up) damage from the defender's weapon.

Foot Attack (A1) – Performing a Foot Attack enables an unarmed combatant to inflict damage by delivering a forceful kick. A Foot Attack requires Unarmed Combat (any specialization) Tests against Difficulty 7, inflicting 1d6+3 (+Strength edge) Stun Damage to the opponent.

Hand Attack (A1) – Consisting of punches, jabs and chops, Hand Attacks enable unarmed combatants to inflict damage with bare hands. Hand Attacks require Unarmed Combat (any specialization) Tests against Difficulty 6. Hand Attacks inflict 1d6 (+Strength edge) Stun Damage to the opponent.

Press (A1) – Characters who find themselves locked with their opponent's as a result of a Bind action may Press to break their hold and gain a brief, situational advantage over their opponent. Press actions initiate an Opposed Armed/Unarmed Combat (+ Strength edge) Test between the bound opponents. The winner of the Test breaks free, momentarily throwing his opponent off-balance. As a result, the opponent's next option costs 1 additional Option Point and he suffers a +1 Difficulty modifier to any Test required by the action.

Tackle (A3) – Similar to a Charge, a Tackle combines a Bind options with movement. Tackles require the character makes an Armed/Unarmed Combat Test against Difficulty 9. If successful, the character moves up to 5 meters, knocks his opponent to the ground and Binds him (see Bind option). If the Tackle results in failure, the character moves as if he had performed a Dive for Cover action, landing prone near his opponent. Dramatic Failures may result in the loss of 1d3 Option Points, or the same amount of Stun Damage.

Dueling Options (Type & Cost)

In order to perform any of the following Dueling options, a character must possess Armed Combat (dueling arms) skill and the Dueling trait. In addition, Dueling options require the use of a sword, slip-tip or kindjal.

Feint (A0) – Declared as Armed Attacks, Feints aim to deceive the opponent into spending reactions to Block or Parry the false attack. Feints count as actions and may incur subsequent action penalties. No Test required.

Counter-feint (R0) – Enables a defending character to determine whether an aggressive action is an Attack or Feint before committing to more costly defensive reactions. If the opponent's action proves to be a real attack, the Counter-feint permits the defender to immediately declare another reaction. This "additional" reaction costs twice the normal number of Option Points, but is NOT also considered an subsequent reaction. In other words, the Counter-feint and additional reaction both count as a single option for the purposes of determining subsequent option costs.

Parry (R1) – Meeting the attacker's weapon with his own, a Parry reaction enables a character to completely foil an incoming attack. A Parry initiates an Opposed Armed Combat Test between attacker and defender (to determine the success of the Armed Attack action). If the attack result is higher (and overcomes the established Difficulty for the attack) then the attack is successful, otherwise the attack fails and inflicts no damage.

Parry Sinister (A1/R1) – An off-hand Parry, the Parry Sinister must be declared as a reaction, but may be counted as either an action or reaction for the purposes of determining its Option Point cost, potentially reducing subsequent option penalties. Like the Parry reaction (see Parry), a Parry Sinister initiates an Opposed Test to determine the outcome of the Armed Attack. Parry Sinister reactions incur the ordinary –1 off-hand penalty during Test resolution.

Riposte (R1) – A counterattack following a successful counter-feint or Parry. Considered a reaction, a riposte may only be declared upon performing a successful Counter-feint or Parry. When following a counter-feint, a Riposte is not treated as a subsequent reaction (see Counter-feint), but when following a Parry, the riposte does count as a true, subsequent reaction (incurring the normal Option Point penalty). In all other respects, a Riposte is resolved as an Armed Attack.

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Shield-Fighting Options (Type & Cost)

All Shield-Fighting options require a character to possess the Armed Combat skill and the Shield-Fighting trait. Shield-Fighting Attacks require the character to employ a blade weapon such as a kindjal, knife slip–tip or sword, while all other options require the character to employ an activated Personal Shield.

Shield Defense (R0) – Shield Defense enables a shielded character to counter any slow attack (see Slow Attack and Slow Attack Sinister) by moving with a blinding burst of speed—effectively negating the slowness of the incoming attack. As a result, the Slow Attack suffers the normal Difficulty penalties incurred against shielded opponents as if it were a normal Armed Attack. Shield Defense requires a successful Armed Combat Test to negate the effects of a Slow Attack.

Slow Attack (A2) – The standard action used to attack shielded opponents. When conducting a slow attack, ignore the normal Difficulty modifiers conferred by the shield. Carefully timed and precisely slowed to penetrate a personal shield, a slow attack requires the use of a blade weapon, since the slowness of the attack (lowered force) negates all damage from blunt weapons. In all other respects, Slow Attacks are resolved as Armed Attack actions.

Slow Attack, sinister (A2/R2) – An off-hand Slow Attack, Slow Attacks Sinister must be declared as actions, but may be counted as actions or reactions for determining cost, potentially reducing subsequent option costs. Slow Attacks Sinister also incur the off-hand penalty during Test resolution. In all other respects, Slow Attacks Sinister are resolved as Armed Attack actions.

Martial Combat Options (Type & Cost)

The following options require characters to possess the Unarmed Combat (martial training) skill (specialization).

Body Throw (A2) – Following a successful Bind action, a Body Throw enables the acting character to break free of the lock, throwing his opponent to the ground prone. A Body Throw requires a successful Unarmed Combat roll against Difficulty 9. If successful, the defending character lands prone at the character's feet, and suffers 1d3 Stun damage.

Driving Kick (A1) – More powerful than the standard Foot Attack, the Driving Kick enables the character to deliver an especially forceful kick, inflicting 2d6+1 (+Strength edge) Damage to the opponent. Driving Kicks require Unarmed Combat (martial training) Tests against Difficulty 8, and inflict normal (non-Stun) damage.

Manual Disarm (A2) – Manual Disarm enables an unarmed character to safely wrest a weapon from his opponent's grasp. Manual Disarms are conducted like normal Disarm actions except the attacker does not suffer the normal +3 Difficulty penalty. A Dramatic or Spectacular success indicates the attacker has not only relieved the opponent of his weapon, but has also taken the weapon into his possession.

Power Strike (A1) – More powerful than the standard Hand Attack, the Power Strike enables a character to deliver an especially forceful punch or chop, inflicting 1d6+3 (+Strength edge) Damage to the opponent. Power Strikes initiate Unarmed Combat (martial training) Tests against Difficulty 7, and inflict normal (non-Stun) damage.

Weirding Combat Options (Type & Cost)

The following options require characters to possess Unarmed Combat (martial training) skill and the Weirding Combat trait.

Blinding Attack (A–variable) – Relying on accelerated reflexes honed through Prana–Bindu conditioning, the Adept may turn any Unarmed attack (Hand Attack, Foot Attack, Driving Kick or Power Strike) into a Blinding Attack. Blinding Attacks permit the Adept to spend any number of additional Option Points to perform the Unarmed Attack, increasing her Damage by an equal amount (i.e. spending 2 additional Option Points confers +2 damage). In all other respects, a Blinding Attack is resolved according to the guidelines set forth for the chosen action.

Blurring Motion (R1) – Blurring Motion permits an unarmed Adept to Dodge attacks with incredible swiftness and grace. Unlike normal Dodge reactions, Blurring Motion initiates and Opposed Test between attacker and defender, pitting the Attacker's Test Result against the Adept's Dodge Test Result. If the Adept's Dodge result proves higher, she completely avoids the incoming attack.

Deft Precision (A–variable) – Relying on her refined agility and grace, the Adept performs any Close Combat action with Deft Precision. Deft Precision enables the adept to spend any number of additional Option Points to perform the action, increasing her Test Result by an equal amount (i.e. spending 3 additional Option Points confers +3 Test Result). In all other respects, a actions performed with Deft Precision must be resolved according to the guidelines set forth for the chosen action.

Ranged Combat Options (Type & Cost)

Characters may perform the following options during Ranged combat in addition to any of the General Combat Options.

Reload/Recharge (A1/R1) – Declared as either an action or reaction, this option permits a character to load a new clip of ammunition into their maula pistol or stunner, or to replace a stunner pneumatic canister or lasgun power pack. Under all but the most stressful of circumstances, Reloading/Recharging a weapon requires no Test (though a Ranged Combat Test or Repair (Weaponry) Test may be appropriate in dire situations.

Ranged Attack (A1) – The Ranged Attack action permits a character to shoot a gun or throw a knife, aiming to hit and damage an opponent. Ranged Attacks require a Ranged Combat Test against a Difficulty determined by the physical range of the target and the Weapon's Accuracy Ratings for the determined Range. Ranged Attacks cannot be Blocked or Parried, though characters may increase the shooter's Difficulty by Dodging (see Dodge).

Special Ranged Combat Options (Type & Cost)

The following options may only be performed by characters using certain ranged weapons.

Autofire (A2 or A3) – Characters calibrating their lasguns to Lasing Arc (A2) or Full-Burn (A3) mode may perform Autofire options, disgorging a short or prolonged burst to cover a greater area or inflict massive damage (see Lasgun, page 228). Similar to a Ranged Attacks, Autofire requires a Ranged Combat Test against Difficulty established by range.

Calibration (A0) – Characters perform Calibration actions to change the power mode on a slow-pellet stunner or lasgun prior to shooting.

Cover Fire (A0/R0) – Characters equipped with lasguns may calibrate their weapons to Lasing Arc or Full-Burn mode to lay down Cover Fire. Cover Fire enables characters to quickly disburse a short burn of covering fire, buying time for them to run for cover, advance their position, enter a waiting 'thopter and so on. Though not primarily intended to hit specific targets, Cover Fire requires a Ranged Combat Test to determine if any enemies are hit by the hasty, expansive cover fire. Add +3 to the Difficulty established by range for all Cover Fire actions.

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opposed actions (or unopposed actions that interfere with each other), the Narrator may usually consider the actions to occur simultaneously while resolving the actions in whatever order seems most appropriate. However, when two actions seem to interfere with one another (as opposed actions always do), the Narrator may permit one of the players to voluntarily defer their action, gaining the chance to change their declaration pending the outcome of the non-deferred action attempt.

Haldran and Myrlo, two player characters, are tied for initiative. Both characters have declared they're reaching for Diotellevi's poisoned slip-tip that Haldran knocked to the floor. The Narrator asks if either player wants to defer, and since Myrlo is currently without a weapon, Haldran defers to allow Myrlo first chance. Because Myrlo succeeds in his attempt, Haldran changes her declared action free of cost (since she voluntarily deferred) and decides to attack Diotellevi before the assassin can draw forth a new blade.

If neither player defers, the Narrator must determine whether resolving the actions simultaneously in an Opposed Test or resolving them independently is more appropriate to the situation at hand. In cases where the declared actions do not permit reactions, conducting a simultaneous Opposed Test makes the action more dramatic and keeps the pace more lively.

Suppose it were Myrlo and Diotellevi who are tied for initiative. Both declare they're grabbing for the fallen slip-tip and neither wants to defer their action. Since reaching does not permit reactions, the Narrator decides to create an Opposed Test, pitting the two contestants against one another in a Coordination + Reaction Test. Both characters make their rolls and the Narrator compares the results- Myrlo manages a 4, while Diotellevi scores a 6—so Diotellevi snatches up the slip-tip before Myrlo can gain custody of it.

But in cases where one or both of the actions permit reactions, the drama increases from deciding both actions occur simultaneously meaning that reactions are no longer possible. Upon making such a determination, the Narrator may then either resolve both actions simultaneously or handle them one at a time, reminding players that the end results will occur at the same instant.

In an initiative face off between Haldran and Diotellevi, both characters have opted to attack one another and neither wishes to defer to give their rival the advantage. The Narrator decides that since attack actions normally permit reactions, both characters initiate their offensives at the same time, allowing neither one of them the opportunity to declare a reaction. Choosing to resolve the player's Test before her NPC's, Haldran rolls, succeeds in hitting, and inflicts 14 points of damage (enough to incapacitate Diotellevi). But because the attacks occur simultaneously, the Narrator still rolls for Diotellevi using his uninjured status for the roll. Diotellevi also succeeds in hitting, inflicting 5 points of damage upon Haldran. Putting both results into effect simultaneously, the final outcome leaves Diotellevi lying unconscious on the floor and Haldran nursing an injured sword arm.

Subsequent Actions and Reactions

After resolving the first round of initial actions (and any attempted reactions), the Narrator begins the process anew permitting only the characters with remaining Option Points to declare further actions. The Narrator repeats this process until all participants either exhaust their Option Points or decide to take no further action. Upon completion, the Narrator declares the current combat round ended.

Subsequent Combat Rounds

Assuming one or more combatants survive the first round, the Narrator announces the commencement of a

new round, signaling each participant to replenish their Option Point pool. Following the procedure just described, the Narrator directs each combat round until there remain no participants willing (or able) to pursue further aggression.

Beginning in the second round of combat, characters may spend any Option Points remaining from the preceding round to increase their initiative by a like amount (but doing so never increases their option point total for the round).



Rules Variants

Optional Initiative System

Narrators who prefer a slightly less detailed initiative system should determine initiative by side, rather than by character. To use this system, the Narrator divides all participants into two sides—characters and their ally NPCs versus the antagonist NPCs—and compares the highest Initiative scores of each group. Beginning with the side having the highest initiative, all members of their group declare their actions in order of initiative (highest to lowest). Once all members perform their declared actions, the members of the other side declare their actions, enabling the other side to react. Ties can be resolved by making an opposed initiative Test (see Surprise hereafter) or by Narrator discretion as described under the normal system.

Surprise

A character can be surprised—startled into immobility by sudden, unexpected occurrences—which the Narrator can handle in one of two ways. When characters are surprised before combat begins (or in between rounds), the Narrator may decide to call for an opposed Initiative Test by all combat participants. Each character rolls a single drama die, adding the result to their current Initiative (Dramatic Successes and Failures apply). Then the Narrator relies on the Test results to establish the order of initiative from highest to lowest, handling ties in the usual manner.

Alternately, when a character becomes surprised during a round, the Narrator may opt to give other characters one "unopposed" action each; actions to which the surprised character cannot react. In such instances, the surprised character may do nothing until their next declared option, performing neither actions nor reactions until it is their turn to act.

Surprise frequently results from ambushes or unexpected circumstances arising during combat (such as being disarmed or knocked to the ground), though it can result from almost any startling event (sudden explosions, blinding light, gravity failure, etc.). Whether or not surprise results is usually up to the Narrator. Under appropriate circumstances, she may allow a character to make an Opposed Test, pitting his Observation roll (or other appropriate skill) against the attacker's Stealth (or other appropriate skill) in an effort to anticipate the cause of the event and avoid the ill effects of being surprised.

Fatigue

Though few combats last more than several rounds, the Narrator may want to institute the effects of fatigue, adding realism to the story and ensuring combat resolution does not dominate the majority of the playing time. To factor the effects of fatigue into the game, the Narrator directs each participant to make a Fatigue Test at the beginning of each round, before replenishing their option point pools.

Fatigue Tests are simple Attribute Tests (Physique + Constitution) having a Difficulty Number equal to the number of consecutive rounds in which the character has acted without rest. If a character succeeds in the Test, he feels no ill effects from fatigue and receives the same number of Option Points he possessed in the previous round. If a character fails the Test, he succumbs to fatigue receiving one fewer Option Point than received in the previous round. Characters who begin a round with 0 Option Points are considered exhausted, and may only perform reactions during all forthcoming rounds until they have reduced their fatigue through rest.

Rest and Recuperation

The most assured way to recuperate Option Points lost from fatigue is to withdraw from the combat and rest.

Resting characters continue to make their Fatigue Tests along with their active fellows; however, their Test Difficulty decreases by one (instead of increasing) for each consecutive round they've taken to rest. For resting characters, failed Fatigue Tests bear no ill consequence (no further Option Points are lost), while successful Tests result in the recuperation of one additional Option Point. When characters wish to resume activity, they declare their rest ended and begin the new round by taking the number of movement actions needed to return to the combat area, where they may rejoin their surviving companions.

At the Narrator's option, characters may reserve some of their Option Points, thereby "saving their energy" and reducing their rate of fatigue. By conserving Option Points, characters add +1 to their Fatigue Test Result per Option Point left unused. Option Points reserved for Fatigue Tests still increase Initiative in subsequent rounds.

Movement

Sometimes you'll want to know precisely how fast and far the characters can move during a round. Characters normally move 10 meters per round at a brisk walk. They can move quickly (or more slowly) using other types of movement (see the accompanying table). If a character wishes to move more quickly when using a particular form of movement, a successful Athletics Skill Test (or Physique Test) will allow the character to move an additional number of meters per round equal to his Athletics skill level (or Physique).

In combat situations, characters generally want to perform movement maneuvers unique to combat. Dropping prone, for instance, has little use outside of combat. At the same time, characters may wish to perform normal, non-combat movement during combat. A character may, for instance, run to reach or flee the combat area. The Movement Options table describes all movement options in terms of non-combat and combat options, with rates of movement and action costs where appropriate. Refer also to the Athletics skill, pages 79-80, for more information about non-combat movement.

Under normal circumstances (and even in most combat situations), characters do not have to make Skill Tests to move successfully. However, in particularly stressful or dramatic situations movement works like any other action—a misstep at the wrong time can be costly indeed. The Narrator assigns the terrain, obstacle or maneuver a Difficulty Number (usually based on those listed in the Movement Options Table, as modified by terrain type and other circumstances), which the character must overcome to negotiate the terrain successfully. Characters who make involved or elaborate movement maneuvers should use their Athletics skill or Physique attribute for Tests. If the character fails, the Narrator should reduce the character's movement (typically by 1m for every point by which he missed the roll), state that he tripped and fell down, or describe some other appropriate setback.

Movement Options and Terrain Modifiers

Non-Combat Movement

Type of Movement	Distance	Difficulty
Crawl	1m	No roll
Walk	2m	No roll
Run	3m	Routine (5)
Sprint	4m	Moderate (7)
Swim	1m	Routine (4)
Jump	2mH, 1mV	Moderate (6)
Climb	1m V	Moderate (7)

Options performed in combat suffer +2 Difficulty.

All Movement Options are one point (A1) actions. During non-Combat situations, multiply the Distance by 5 to determine how far a character travels when moving for a complete round (approximately 5 seconds).

Combat Movement

Option (Cost)	Difficulty	Effect
Dodge (R2)	—	Dodge Test becomes Difficulty Number to hit
Drop Prone (A1/R1)	—	A form of Dodge
Regain feet (A1/R1)	3	—
Dive for cover (R2)	7	A form of Dodge allowing character to move 5m at no penalty; every meter beyond 5m subtracts 1 from Dodge Result.
Drop and roll (A2/R2)	4	A form of Dodge allowing character to move 1m at no penalty; everymeter beyond 1m subtracts 1 from Dodge Result.

Terrain Modifiers

Terrain Type	Modifier
Swampy	+3
Mountainous/Steep	+2
Wet/Slick/Icy	+2
Water (2' or higher)	+2
Obstacles, many/large	+2
Obstacles, few/small	+1
Sandy	+1
Rocky	+1
Extremely flat or even	-1
Paved	-2

Forms of Combat

The *DUNE RPG* presents two primary forms of combat: *Close* and *Ranged* combat. Close combat refers to any variety hand-to-hand fighting such as ritual dueling

or backstreet brawling. Ranged combat entails any firefight or shoot out conducted at distances greater than arm's reach. Aside from simply describing the distance between combatants, the forms primarily establish the various Options available to combat participants. See "Combat Options Summary," page 130 and "Combat Options Descriptions" pages 122-125 .

Close Combat

Close combat enables characters to attempt a variety of elementary, offensive and defensive options, such as Armed Attack, Charge or Disarm, in addition to a number of specialized tactics available only to characters possessing certain skills, talents or weaponry. Among these, Dueling, Shield Fighting, Martial Combat and Weirding Combat distinguish the various options available. In addition, all characters engaged in close combat may perform any of the General Combat Options described on both chart.

Ranged Combat

Ranged combat similarly allows for both elementary and specialized options, though the selection proves much narrower than for close combat. In addition to these Options, all characters engaged in ranged combat may perform any of the General Combat Options also available to melee combatants.

Movement enables characters to close with enemies or retreat to cover, changing the range and form of combat among participants. Though Movement Options are broken down into Non-Combat and Combat Movement for descriptive purposes, all Movement Options are considered General Combat Options, and are available to all combatants. See the Movement Options chart, page 127, for more information.

Combat Tests

With the possible exception of movement, most Combat Options require players to make various Attribute or Skill Tests to determine the outcome of their attempts. While the "Combat Options Descriptions" chart (pages 122–125) establishes the specific procedures for testing individual options, most combat-related Tests follow the guidelines for conducting standard Skill Tests (or Opposed Skill Tests) set forth earlier in this chapter.

"To-Hit" Tests

The "To-Hit" Test—used for determining the outcome of a declared attack—is by far the most common variety of combat-related Test. Attack options such as Armed Attack, Hand Attack, Foot Attack and Ranged Attack all rely on "to-Hit" Tests for determining whether or not the attack succeeds in hitting its intended target. Successful "to-Hit" Tests indicate that the weapon or projectile has made sufficient contact to inflict damage on the target; failed Tests indicate that the blow has either missed entirely or struck with force insufficient to cause any appreciable damage.

Unless the target reacts to a declared attack option (attempting to Dodge, Parry and so on), To-Hit Tests are conducted as simple Skill Tests against the target's Armed Combat, Unarmed Combat or Ranged Combat skill. The only difference among Tests arises from how the Test Difficulty is determined.

Difficulty Numbers in Close Combat

In Close combat situations, the base Difficulty for "to-Hit" Tests equals the *Accuracy Rating* of the attack weapon (see the "Weapons" chart for more information). If the target declares a Dodge option, then the to-hit Difficulty becomes the Dodge Test Result or the weapon Accuracy Rating, whichever is greater. Reaction edges normally modify Dodge Tests, while Dexterity edges apply to most Close (Armed and Unarmed) Skill Tests. For defensive reactions other than Dodge, follow the procedure described under the appropriate option heading (see "Combat Option Descriptions" for more information).

Difficulty Numbers in Ranged Combat

During ranged combat, the "to-Hit" Difficulty is based on the shooter's distance from the target. This "range"—measured in meters—is divided into four Accuracy categories, each carrying its own Difficulty Number: *Point Blank* (6), *Short Range* (7), *Medium Range* (9), *Long Range* (11). The actual distance (in meters) for each range category varies by weapon, so the Narrator needs to know not only the physical distance between shooter and target, but also the weapon being used, before assigning an Difficulty Number to Ranged Attack Tests.

To determine which range to use, consult the weapon's Range listing. For example, a character armed with a maula pistol has a Range of 5/10/20/40. This means any targets up to 5 meters away are considered to be at Point Blank range; targets from 5.1-10 meters away are at Short Range; targets 10.1-20 meters away are at Medium Range; and targets from 20.1-40 meters away are at Long Range. To hit targets beyond the weapon's listed Long Range, increase the Difficulty by +1 for every X meters, where X equals the number of meters listed for Short Range.

Warmaster Ravastine attempts to shoot an opponent standing at a distance of 45 meters. Checking the Accuracy of the Maula Pistol (5/10/20/40) the Narrator finds that 45 meters exceeds the pistol's Long Range (40m) by 5 meters. Thus the Narrator assigns Ravastine's Ranged Attack Test a Difficulty of 12 (11 for Long Range, +1 for each additional 10 meter (Short Range) increment beyond the Long Range distance).

As in close combat, if the target attempts to Dodge in reaction to a ranged attack option, the "to-Hit" Difficulty

equals the Dodge Test Result or the Accuracy number for the established range (whichever is greater).

Weapon Statistics

Name	Accuracy	Damage	Maneuvers
Gom Jabbar	6	1+poison (Type IV)	General*
Flip-Dart	9	1+poison	General*
Kindjal	7	3+2d6	Dueling
Knife	7	1+2d6	Dueling
Slip-Tip	7	2+2d6	Dueling
Sword	8	5+2d6	Dueling
Hunter Seeker	7*	1+1d6/2d6*	Ranged
Lasgun	5/25/75/225**	5+5d6*	Ranged
Maula Pistol	5/10/20/40**	1d6+poison	Ranged
Needlegun	1/3/5/10**	1d3+poison	Ranged
Slow Pellet Stunner	*/*/*/* **	1d6+poison	Ranged
Throwing Knife	3/5/10/15**	2+1d6	Ranged

*Special, see entry in Chapter 8, Technology of the Imperium

**Accuracy is 6/7/9/11 depending on the range category, defined by distance in meters (m)

Resolving "To-Hit" Tests

To-Hit Tests are resolved like ordinary Skill Tests. To attack, the character makes a Skill Test using the appropriate weapon skill such as Armed Combat, Unarmed Combat or Ranged Weapon, modified by his Dexterity edge. If the Test Result equals or exceeds the assigned Difficulty Number, the attack succeeds in hitting the declared target. Only after a target is hit successfully may Weapon Damage be determined and applied.

Warmaster Ravastine fires at his target with his maula pistol at extended Long range (Difficulty 12). His Coordination is 4, Dexterity +1, and Ranged Combat (Maula Pistol) 3(4). He rolls five dice (four for Coordination, +1 for his Dexterity edge) to make his Ranged Combat Skill Test. Fortunately, his Drama Die rolls a 6, so he adds it and the next highest die (3) to his skill (specialization) level, for a total of 13 (6+3+4). He hits!

Combat Variables

There are other factors that can affect combat situations. These variables can increase or decrease the Difficulty of various Tests during a battle.

• **Called Shots** – It is possible to aim at a specific target area (such as the arm, leg, hand, head, and so forth). This increases the Difficulty of the attack.

As a general guideline, for targets greater than 10 centimeters in size, add +2 to the Difficulty. For targets smaller than 10 centimeters, add +4 to the Difficulty. Narrators desiring more detailed called shot modifiers can use those listed in the optional hit location chart (see page 132).

• **Cover** – Characters protected by cover are harder to hit during combat. Cover can be physical barriers between the character and an attacker (such as shields, walls, rocks and so on) or factors that affect visibility (smoke, rain, darkness or other such visual impediments).

Physical cover makes a character harder to hit. If the cover protects one quarter of the character's body increase the Difficulty to hit him by +1; if it protects one half of his body add +2; if it protects three quarters of his body add +4. If cover protects the character's entire body, the attacker cannot hit him; the cover must be destroyed before the character can be successfully attacked. The accompanying table provides guidelines for the strengths (expressed in terms of armor—see "Resisting Damage: Armor," page 134) of various materials. Narrators should use their judgment when determining how much cover (if any) a given attack destroys; some forms of cover require multiple shots before the target behind it can be hit.

Cover

Cover	*Armor*
Thin wood door	6
Wood door	8
Thin, unarmored metal door	10
Reinforced metal door; large rocks	14
Armored bulkhead	20
Heavily armored security door	24

Visual cover makes a character harder to hit because he is harder to see, thus increasing the Difficulty Number of attacks against him. As a rough guideline, light smoke or dim light increases the Difficulty by +1; smoke or moonlight by +2; and thick smoke or near-total darkness by +3. These penalties also apply to any roll to perceive things visually, including most Observation rolls.

• **Off Hand** – Characters are either right-handed or left-handed (player's choice). Unless they have the Bimanual Training trait—indicating they are equally proficient with either hand—any attacks (or other Skill Tests) made using the character's "off hand" are at +1 Difficulty.

• **Prone or Immobilized** – Characters who lie prone are usually easier to hit (-1 Difficulty), particularly in Close combat. Lying prone actually makes a character harder to hit in Ranged combat (+1 Difficulty). Characters who are immobilized (bound or unconscious) are similarly, much easier to hit (-4 Difficulty).

• **Size** – The Narrator should take into account the size of objects in combat when determining Difficulty Numbers to hit a target. It is easier to hit objects much larger than one's self (for example, shooting at a watch-

Combat Option Summary

General Combat Options (Armed, Unarmed or Ranged Combat)

Characters may perform any of the following options during Close or Ranged Combat.

General Option/Cost	Skill Test	Difficulty
Aim/Time (A1)	none*	n/a
Dive for Cover (R2)	Athletics (Jumping)	7
Dodge (R2)	Dodge (Sidestep or Evade)	n/a
Drop and Roll (A2/R2)	Athletics (Acrobatics)	4
Drop Prone (A1/R1)	none*	n/a
Draw/Recover Weapon (A1/R1)	none*	n/a
Hand-Switch (A0/R0)	none*	n/a
Regain Footing (A1/R1)	none*	n/a

Close Combat Options (Armed or Unarmed Combat)

Characters may perform the following options during Armed and/or Unarmed Close combat. The appropriate skill is determined by weapons selection—Melee Arms warrant Armed Combat Tests, body appendages (hand/foot) require Unarmed Combat Tests. Makeshift weapons such as bottles, chairs, chains, pipes, etc. require Unarmed Combat (Brawling) Tests.

Option/Cost	Skill Test	Difficulty	Damage
Armed Attack (A1)	Armed Combat	variable[2]	variable[2]
Attack, sinister (A1/R1)	Armed Combat	variable[2]	variable[2]
Bind (A1)	Opposed Armed or Unarmed Combat	n/a	n/a
Block (R1)	Armed or Unarmed Combat	variable[2]	n/a
Charge (A3)	Armed Combat	variable[2]	variable[2]+1d6
Disarm (A2)	Opposed Armed or Unarmed Combat	variable[2]	n/a
Foot Attack (A1)	Unarmed Combat	7	3+1d6(+Strength)
Hand Attack (A1)	Unarmed Combat	6	1d6(+Strength)
Press (A1)	Opposed Armed or Unarmed Combat	n/a	n/a
Tackle (A3)	Unarmed Combat	9	n/a

Dueling Options—Armed Combat (Dueling Arms) & Dueling Trait Required

Option/Cost	Skill Test	Difficulty	Damage
Feint (A0)	none	n/a	n/a
Counter-feint (R0)	none	n/a	n/a
Parry (R1)	Opposed Armed Combat	n/a	n/a
Parry, sinister (A1/R1[1])	Opposed Armed Combat	n/a	n/a
Riposte (R1)	Armed Combat	variable[2]	variable[2]

Shield Fighting Options—Armed Combat (any) & Shield Fighting Trait Required

Option/Cost	Skill Test	Difficulty	
Shield Defense (R0)	Armed Combat (+Reaction)	7	n/a
Slow Attack (A2)	Armed Combat	variable[2]	variable[2]
Slow Attack, sinister (A2/R2)	Armed Combat	variable[2]	variable[2]

Martial Combat Options—Unarmed Combat (Martial Training) Required

Option/Cost	Skill Test	Difficulty	
Body Throw (A2)	Unarmed Combat (Martial Training)	9	1d3
Driving Kick (A1)	Unarmed Combat (Martial Training)	8	1+2d6(+Strength)
Manual Disarm (A2)	Opposed Unarmed Combat (Martial Training)	variable[2]	n/a
Power Strike (A1)	Unarmed Combat (Martial Training)	7	3+1d6(+Strength)

Weirding Combat Option—Unarmed Combat & Weirding Combat Trait Required

Option/Cost	Skill Test	Difficulty	Damage
Blinding Attack (A–variable)	Unarmed Combat (any)	variable[2]	variable[2]
Blurring Defense (R1)	Opposed Dodge	n/a	n/a
Deft Precision (A–variable)	n/a	variable[2]	variable[2]

Ranged Combat (Projectile or Energy Weapons specializations)

Option/Cost	Skill Test	Difficulty	Damage
Reload/Recharge (A1/R1)	none[1]	n/a	n/a
Ranged Attack (A1)	Ranged Combat (any)	variable[3]	variable[3]

Special Ranged Combat Options

Option/Cost	Skill Test	Difficulty	Damage
Autofire (A2 or A3)	Ranged Combat	variable[3]	variable[3]
Calibration (A0)	none[1]	n/a	n/a
Cover Fire (A0/R0)	Ranged Combat	variable[3]	variable[3]

[1] No Test required during normal, combat situations. Extreme environmental or situational conditions may require an appropriate Skill Test or Coordination Test at the Narrator's discretion.

[2] Difficulty equals the Accuracy Rating of the specific melee arm used for the Test. Damage varies by specific melee arm type.

[3] Difficulty is determined by the physical range of the target and the Range rating of the ranged arm used for the Test. Damage varies by specific ranged arm type and use. See Ranged Combat Difficulty chart and Ranged Weapons, page 128.

tower), but harder to hit smaller (shooting at a com-eye). As a rough guideline, for every doubling of a target's size in comparison to its attacker, subtract 1 from the Difficulty to hit it. For every halving of a target's size in comparison to its attacker, add 1 to the Difficulty to hit it.

• **Targeting Systems** – Some ranged weapons may be fitted with supplemental targeting systems. These weapons have a Targeting rating (such as 1 or 3). When using such a weapon, the character makes a normal "to-Hit" Test, but the Difficulty Number for the Test decreases by a number equal to the weapon's Targeting rating. But remember, the minimum Difficulty Number for any Test remains 2.

Karama in Combat

Karama can be spent at any time during a Combat round. But Karama Points may not be used to improve Initiative Tests or damage rolls.

Damage and Healing

Inflicting Damage

If an attack succeeds, the target of the attack may be injured or even killed. The amount of Damage inflicted by the attack indicates its level of severity. Obviously, a rolling kick that does 6 points of damage is far less severe than a lasgun blast that does 26 points. Some forms of attack cause a set amount of damage (normally based on your Physique and any Strength edge you possess). Other forms, most notably ranged weapons, deliver a variable amount of damage (requiring you to make a die roll). Dramatic Successes typically add 1-2 extra damage dice, and Karama Points may not be spent to increase the damage roll. The Drama Die does not apply during Damage rolls.

Unarmed Attacks: Brawling & Martial Arts

Brawling attacks typically inflict a number of points of Stun damage equal to the attacking character's Physique + Strength.

Martial or Weirding Combat attacks usually inflict a specific amount of damage, modified by the character's Strength (see "Combat Options Descriptions" chart).

Stun damage results from most Brawling and Martial attacks (see "Stun Damage," page 135). Only Weirding Combat attacks routinely inflict lethal damage.

Armed Attacks: Ranged and Melee Weapons

Each weapon causes a variable amount of damage determined by its damage code (see the "Weapons" chart). For example, a lasgun set on Pulse Fire inflicts 5+5d6 damage, meaning a base of 5 points plus the total rolled on five dice. In contrast, a kindjal thrust inflicts a base of 3 points plus the damage rolled on two dice.

Poison

Whether absorbed by ingestion or infused directly into the bloodstream, all poisons fall within one of five

Poison Types. Type I poisons are weak or slow acting poisons, while Type IV poisons may prove lethal in the space of several heartbeats. Depending on the Type of poison administered, damage manifests in varying degrees over a period of time (see Poison Types hereafter). Except for Type V poisons, all may prove lethal over prolonged durations, unless medical remedies succeed in neutralizing the poison. Except for those hermetically sealed in some receptacle, all poisons will alert an active 'snooper' to their presence, giving their potential victims some measure of advance warning.

Excessive Dosage

If administered in excessive dosage, simply multiply the Poison damage by the number of doses administered. Or at the Narrator's discretion determine damage normally, increase the rate of damage in proportion with the dosage received. For example, if 2 doses of a type one poison were administered (1 damage point per hour), either double the damage at the normal rate (2 damage points per hour), or reduce the interval of time between instances of damage (1 damage point each half hour).

• **Type I** – Type I poisons slowly attack the character's immune system. A character suffers no ill effects from Type I poisons for a number of hours equal to his Physique + Constitution. Each hour after that, the character sustains 1 point of damage until Stunned, after which he takes 1d6 damage per hour until the poison either is neutralized or the character dies.

Type I poisons cover a range of systemic toxins, usually consumed in food or drink. Severe bacteriological infections or chemical contaminants (such as those contained in bacteriological or chemical weapons) may also be treated as Type I poisons. The Great Convention bans the use of Type I poisons in weapons of mass deployment.

• **Type II** – Type II poisons attack the immune system more aggressively. A character suffers no ill effects from Type II poisons for a number of minutes equal to his (Physique + Constitution) times ten. Each quarter hour after that, the character sustains 1 point of damage until Stunned, after which he takes 1d6 damage per hour until the poison either is treated or the character dies.

Type II poisons represent a variety of natural and man-made toxins, typically administered in food, drink or

Optional Rule: Hit Locations

For added realism, Narrators may elect to use this rule, which determines where a successful shot or attack strikes a target. Roll two dice to determine the basic "hit location" and consult the following chart:

Roll	Location	Modifier	Effect
2	Head	+5	x2 damage
3	Upper Arm/Shoulder (Left)	+3	Must make Moderate (7) Coordination roll to hold on to any held items, including weapons
4	Upper Arm/Shoulder (Right)	+3	Must make Moderate (7) Coordination roll to hold on to any held items, including weapons
5	Lower Arm/Hand (Left)	+4	Must make Challenging (9) Coordination roll to hold on to any held items, including weapons
6	Lower Arm/Hand (Right)	+4	Must make Challenging (9) Coordination roll to hold on to any held items, including weapons
7	Chest (Left or Right Side)	+2	x1.5 damage
8	Abdomen/Stomach	+3	x1.5 damage,Reduce all movement to half normal
9	Upper Leg/Thigh (Left)	+2	Reduce all movement to half normal
10	Upper Leg/Thigh (Right)	+2	Reduce all movement to half normal
11	Lower Leg/Foot (Left)	+4	Reduce all movement to one-quarter normal
12	Lower Leg/Foot (Right)	+4	Reduce all movement to one-quarter normal

In addition, after a character has determined which location he hit, he can elect to "slide" the result to another hit location based on how proficient he is with the mode of attack. He can "slide" the attack one step up or down for each point he has in the skill he used to make the attack. For example, Aiden Bosque, with a Ranged Combat (Stunner) 2(3) skill, can elect to "slide" a hit three locations in either direction on the scale when he hits a target with a stunner dart. He rolls a hit location of 4. As a result, he can slide the hit location up to 3 locations in either direction — anywhere from 2–7. Since he does not want to strike the target character in the shoulder (location 4), he instead elects to "slide" the hit to the target's chest (location 7).

vaporous gas. Toxic chemical and noxious fumes may also be treated as Type II poisons. The Great Convention bans the use of Type II against all except family members designated as legal targets in sanctioned Wars of Assassins.

• **Type III** – Type III poisons are the strongest of the ingestive poisons. Characters begin to feel the effects from Type III poisons immediately, sustaining 1 point of damage per minute until Stunned, after which he takes 1d6 damage per minute until either the poison is neutralized or the character dies.

Type III poisons include a variety of specialty poisons, often administered in food, drink or vaporous gas. However, it is not uncommon for more potent variants to be absorbed into the bloodstream via a contact powder or gel, or infused directly by means of hypodermic syringe or sharp implement such as a dart or blade. The Great Convention bans Type III poisons for use against any but noblemen and members of their entourage named in Wars of Assassins.

• **Type IV** – Type IV poisons are potent, contact poisons absorbed directly into the bloodstream. Upon exposure to Type IV poisons, characters suffer immediate damage, sustaining 1d6 points of damage upon contact and each round thereafter until either the poison is treated or the character dies.

Type IV poisons are preferred for envenomed weapons such as maula darts and slip tips, and are most often employed by professional assassins and dueling nobles. Consequently a variety of Type IV poisons exist, ranging in potency from the standard 1d6 variant to more concentrated varieties that multiply the damage by a factor of 2 to 5. The Great Convention forbids the use of Type IV poisons except in officially sanctioned Kanly Duels and formalized Wars of Assassins.

• **Type V** – Type V poisons are highly specialized nerve toxins developed to disable specific bodily systems, such as the neural-motor system, speech center, respiratory system, optic centers and so on. Because lethal variants are classified as Type I through IV poisons, Type V poisons are all considered, non-lethal varieties. Typical variants include those that induce unconsciousness, localized paralysis, perceptual debilitation (such as temporary blindness, deafness, or muteness) or nervous impairment (sensory numbing, reflexive slowing, muscular weakness etc.). The Great Convention unequivocally tolerates the employment of Type V poisons.

Taking Damage

A character can withstand an amount of damage equal to his Resistance (Physique + Constitution + applicable protection) from each attack without suffering injury. Any damage exceeding the subject's Resistance inflicts damage and injury (see "Injury Effects" and "Healing," pages 134-136, for more information).

Other Forms of Damage

The Imperium contains many dangers, and outright combat is often the least of a character's problems. Poison, fire, falling from dangerous heights—each of these dangers can easily injure even the most resilient characters. For circumstances not described here, Narrators should use these rules as guidelines to create an appropriate rule for the situation.

• **Asphyxiation** – The lack of oxygen caused by drowning or smoke inhalation can prove lethal when sustained for periods of time. A character can hold his breath to avoid asphyxiating for five rounds per point of Physique + Constitution she possesses. For every round after that, the character sustains 1 point of damage until Stunned, after which he takes 1d6 damage per round until dead. Resistance affords no protection against damaged caused by asphyxiation.

• **Extreme Environment (Heat, Cold)** – Characters submitted to extreme environmental temperatures may die from prolonged exposure. A character can withstand excessive heat or cold for one hour per point of Physique + Constitution she possesses. For every hour after that, the character sustains 1 point of damage until Stunned, after which he takes 1d6 damage per hour until dead. Character Resistance affords no protection against damaged caused by extreme environmental conditions.

• **Falling** – Each 3m of distance fallen causes 1+1d6 damage. Thus, a 30m fall does 10+10d6 damage. This assumes a local gravity roughly equal to Earth's; for environments that involve different gravity, multiply the dam-



age done by the difference between local gravity and Earth gravity. For example, if local gravity is half of Earth's, halve the damage; it is twice as strong as Earth gravity, double the damage.

• **Fire** – Contact with a roughly torch-sized flame causes 3+1d6 damage per round of contact; flammable articles, such as clothing or hair, may catch on fire and do further damage to the character. For larger fires, add +1d6 damage for every doubling of the size of the fire. If a character suffers complete immolation (being trapped in a burning building), he takes 3+10d6 damage. Chemical fires or other unusual blazes burn hotter than normal flame, causing double damage.

• **Radiation** – While large doses of radiation can kill a character in seconds, many types of radiation are more insidious. Characters exposed to damaging radiation take 1d6 per round for the duration of their exposure. After direct exposure ends, they continue to take 2 points of damage per day (from radiation sickness) until they are treated. For more or less severe types of radiation or exposure, add or subtract damage dice, or lengthen or shorten the time interval in which damage occurs. Under most circumstances, character Resistance affords no protection against radiation damage.

Resisting Damage: Defensive Shields/Body Armor

A character can resist damage equal to his Resistance (equals to his Constitution, augmented by protective armor) from each attack without suffering injury. A character can spend Karama Points to increase his Resistance for one round (or one scene, at the Narrator's option), at the rate of one Karama Point per point of Resistance. Any damage exceeding a character's Resistance inflicts some amount of damage and injury.

Characters can wear personal shields or body armor to protect themselves from damage-Noblemen and Swordmasters often activate personal shields to deflect fast moving projectiles or unexpected knife-thrusts, while Sardaukar troopers often wear heavy battle-suits, offering moderate protection against all forms of attack. Defensive shields and body armor grants protection against various forms of damage (see "Technology: Defensive Armor"), adding to the character's Resistance for purposes of withstanding damage.

A Sardaukar Levenbrech (Constitution +1) wears traditional battle dress conferring +2 protection against physical attacks and +1 protection against energy attacks. When attacked by a knife, sword or kick, the warrior can resist 3 points of damage (his Constitution edge plus the full protection of the armor). When struck by an lasgun, he resists only 2 points of damage.

Armor rarely covers the wearer's entire body; if you are using the optional "Hit Locations" rule, a targeted part of the body may not be protected by armor. For this reason, players should specify on their character sheet which areas of their character's bodies are protected by armor.

Body Protection

Type of Protection	Test Modifier[1]	Armor
Battle-dress	none	6 (Melee), 5 (Projectile), 3 (lasguns)
Body Shield[2]		
Setting 1	+1	0
Setting 2	+2	0
Setting 3	+3	1
Setting 4	+4	1
Setting 5	+5	2
Plasmail Arming Coat	none	3 (Melee), 1 (Projectile), 0 (lasguns)
Powered Armor	none	10 (Melee), 8 (Projectile), 5 (lasguns)

[1] Increases the Difficulty of Armed or Ranged Attack Tests.
[2] See Chapter 12, *Personal Shield Generator*, page 232 for complete information.

Effects of Injuries

When a character becomes injured, he weakens and his ability to act becomes impaired. Minor injuries bear little effect, but as the character's injuries worsen, he becomes less able to function effectively.

A character's injury status and resulting degree of impairment is determined by seven Wound Levels. The accompanying "Wound Level" chart lists each of these levels and their corresponding effects. All characters are normally considered to be Healthy until they suffer damage or injury.

Your character can take an amount of damage (from one or more attacks) equal to his Physique+Constitution before dropping to the next level. For example, an uninjured Atreides Swordmaster having Physique 2 and Constitution +1 could take 3 points of damage before being Stunned. It would require an additional 3 points of damage before his status dropped to Injured. All points in a given Wound Level must be crossed off before your character drops down to the next level. If the Swordmaster had only taken 2 points of damage, instead of 3, he would remain Healthy until he suffered an additional point of damage.

Wound Levels Table

Wound Level	Effect
Healthy	The character suffers no impairment (this is his normal, uninjured state).
Stunned	The character suffers a +1 Difficulty to all Tests (or -1 to Opposed Test Results) until healed. This penalty is in addition to whatever other penalties already apply.
Injured	The character has been thrown to the ground and is in such pain that further actions this round are impossible. Until he receives first aid or medical attention, he suffers a +1 Difficulty to all Tests (or -1 to Opposed Test Results) until healed. This penalty is in addition to whatever other penalties already apply.
Wounded	The character has been thrown to the ground and is in such pain that further actions this round are impossible. Until he receives first aid or medical attention, he suffers a +2 Difficulty to all Tests (or -2 to Opposed Test Results) until healed. This penalty is in addition to whatever other penalties already apply.
Incapacitated	The character has been thrown to the ground and rendered unconscious for 2d6 minutes. Once awake, the character cannot move or perform actions until first aid or medical attention has been received.
Near Death	The character is so severely wounded that without immediate medical attention, death is inevitable. If a Near Death result is achieved, the character falls prone and unconscious and will die after his Physique + Constitution in minutes. A successful Routine (4) First Aid Test will stabilize the character, though medical attention—in an infirmary, for example—is required. If the character does not receive the required medical attention, a new First Aid Test must be made every hour, or the character will fall unconscious and die.
Killed	The character dies.

The effects listed on the Wound Level Table are cumulative. Returning to the example above, an uninjured Swordmaster takes three points of damage, reducing him to Stunned. He suffers a +1 Difficulty penalty to all Tests. Later on, he is injured again, this time taking him to Injured; he now suffers a +2 Difficulty penalty to all Tests.

Stun Damage

Some weapons—slow-pellet stunners, for example—can be armed with certain chemical narcotics to inflict non-lethal "stun" damage. For such projectiles, roll damage normally. A Stunned result indicates that the character is rendered unconscious.

The length of time the character remains unconscious depends on the weapon and its ammunition—refer to the individual weapon descriptions for more details—but about fifteen to twenty minutes is typical. For each damage point beyond the Stunned Wound Level, a character remains unconscious for an additional five minutes. The Narrator may wish to modify this according to a character's traits. For example a character having the Immunity (narcotics) trait might enjoy some resistance to the slow-pellet drug, so the Narrator might rule they remain unconscious for only half as long.

Similarly, punches and other unarmed attacks usually cause Stun damage. When the damage from an unarmed attack reaches the Incapacitated level, the injured character is rendered unconscious. For each damage point beyond the Incapacitated Wound Level, a character remains unconscious for an additional five minutes. Again, the Narrator can modify the length of time depending on a character's traits.

Ordinarily it's not possible to permanently injure or kill a character with Stun damage. However, at the Narrator's option, if a character continues to attack an unconscious foe with Stun damage attacks, he will begin to do normal damage, eventually killing him if he continues to attack vigorously enough.

When normal and stun attacks are delivered together, the Stun damage is considered as normal damage for purposes of calculating Wound Levels. For example, suppose a Harkonnen soldier shoots Warmaster Ravastine with a slow-pellet stunner, injuring him. If a second Harkonnen shoots Ravastine with a maula pistol, further wounds will reduce him to Wounded, Incapacitated, Near Death and Killed—the second Harkonnen does not have to "start over" at Stunned just because his maula pistol darts inflict a different "type" of damage than the first Harkonnen's stunner.

When characters regain consciousness after being stunned by a narcotic (such as a slow-pellet stunner) they are considered Healthy. No residual damage remains (unless they were further attacked when they were unconscious). If a character was rendered unconscious by unarmed combat damage (in a barroom brawl, for example), he regains consciousness at the lowest level of his Stunned Wound Level. For example, a char-

acter that regains consciousness after a brawl has one point remaining in his Stunned Wound Level. If he takes one more point of damage, he will become Injured. It doesn't matter what a character's Resistance is—when characters regain consciousness after being physically knocked out, they have one point remaining in their Stunned Wound Level.

Healing

Characters heal injuries in a number of ways: natural healing, receiving first aid or receiving advanced medical treatment.

Natural Healing

Characters that do not receive medical attention can heal naturally, though recovery is slow, painful and often incomplete. The character must rest for a certain amount of time, and can then attempt to make a Physique Test (modified by the Constitution edge). Compare the Test Result to the Natural Healing Table for the results.

Any character attempting to heal naturally is essentially bedridden—attempts at exercise or work add +1 Difficulty to his Physique Tests during recovery.

Natural Healing Table

Physique Roll	Healing Result
1-2	Character's health worsens; treat as injury of one level worse than injury suffered (for example, as a Wounded injury if character was Injured). This result does not apply to characters who are only Stunned.
3-6	No effect; character still suffers from injury at the same level.
7–9	Partial recovery; character still suffers from injury, but at one level better (for example, a Wounded character would become merely Injured, and a Stunned character would be back at full health).
10–12	Partial to full recovery; character still suffers from injury, but at two levels better (for example, an Incapacitated character would become merely Injured; a Wounded character would be completely recovered).
13+	Full recovery. Character regains all Wound Levels and returns to a Healthy state.

A Stunned character must rest for 1d6 minutes before attempting a healing roll (or, at the Narrator's option, is automatically healed at the end of that time). An Injured character must rest for 1d3 days before attempting a healing roll; a Wounded character, for 1d6 days; an Incapacitated character, 1d3 weeks; a Near Death character, 1d3 months. Of course, the Narrator might rule that special or unusual circumstances allow a character to make Physique Tests more quickly.

Medical Attention

Characters can also recover from their injuries by receiving medical care—either first aid, or the more advanced medical attention available in a healing ward or infirmary. Depending on the nature of the injury, this may be accomplished quickly (a round or two), but may require much more time (equivalent to the recuperation periods described under Natural Healing).

The First Aid skill and standard medical kits can be used to stabilize or heal wounds in the field. Such field medicine requires the character to have at least a rudimentary knowledge of first aid or medicine, however. See "Chapter 12: Technology" for more information on medical gear.

Advanced medical care requires more than just a medkit or coagulant shot—it involves the continued attention of physicians and attendants in a healing ward or infirmary. Physicians must know an appropriate Medical Arts skill and have proper facilities to administer this kind of care.

In general, use the following as benchmark Difficulties for using medical kits and stay-shots to heal wounds. Reduce the Difficulty by 2 if the character is receiving advanced medical care.

Medical Attention

Degree of Injury	Difficulty to Diagnose/Heal
Stunned	Routine (4)
Injured	Moderate (7)
Wounded	Challenging (10)
Incapacitated	Difficult (13)
Near Death	Nearly Impossible (15)

If the First Aid or Medical Arts roll is successful, the character recovers one Wound level (reduce the character's damage by a number of points equal to his resistance.) If the Test results in a Dramatic Success, the character recovers two full wound levels (reducing damage by an amount equal to twice his Physique+Constitution.

Once a character has received successful First Aid, he can no longer benefit from additional First Aid attempts; the character must heal naturally or be treated with advanced Medical care. Characters may only benefit from one Medical Treatment success per day of narrative, game time.

Example of Combat

Warmaster Ravastine (Physique 4, Constitution +1, Strength +1, Coordination 3) has been alerted to a security breach in his family's Command Center. Ravastine leads two other characters—Swordmaster Kadiz (Physique 3, Constitution +1, Coordination 4, Dexterity +1, Reaction +1) and Mentat Adin Bosque (Physique 2, Coordination 3, Reaction +1, Intellect 4, Perception +1)- to the Center. Ravastine carries a kindjal, Kadiz bears a sword and Bosque draws a slow-pellet stunner in preparation for combat.

They surprise three saboteurs (each Physique 3, Strength +1, Constitution +1, Coordination 2) in the act of planting an explosive. Two of the Saboteurs bear sheathed kindjals, while Saboteur #3 carries a maula pistol.

The Narrator determines initiative before the combat begins. Swordmaster Kadiz acts first, since his Coordination + Reaction yield an initiative score of 5. Mentat Bosque follows with initiative 4, followed by Ravastine (initiative 3) and the three saboteurs (initiative 2). Their initiative scores also determine the number of Option Points each character may spend each round.

In order of initiative, the Narrator asks the players to declare their character's actions in turn. Kadiz Charges (A3) Saboteur #1 spending three of his five Option Points. In reaction, the Narrator declares Saboteur #1 Dodges (R2), using up both of his Option Points.

Since the two combatants have declared their initial actions and reactions, the Narrator resolves the exchange. Knowing that the Saboteur's Dodge reaction affects the success of Kadiz's Charge, the Narrator needs to resolve the Dodge Test first. Saboteur #1 has Coordination 2 and Dodge 1, so he rolls 2 dice and adds 1 to the highest result. His Test Result is 6 (5+1)—lower than the Accuracy Rating of Kadiz's sword (8)—so the Dodge bears no consequence on the Difficulty Number (8) of Kadiz's Charge.

To resolve his charge, Kadiz tests his Armed Combat (dueling arm) skill. His Coordination is 4 and his skill rating is 4, so he rolls 4 dice and adds 4 to the highest roll. His highest die result is 5, so his total equals 9 (5 + 4). This exceeds his sword's Accuracy Rating (8) so he hits Saboteur #1. Swords normally inflict 5+2D6 damage, but since Kadiz is charging he inflicts an additional 1D6 of damage. Making his damage roll he inflicts 5 points + the three dice (5+6+2) for a total of 17 points! The successful Charge also forces the Saboteur to make a Coordination Test to retain his position. He fails the Test, getting knocked back 2 meters falling prone on the floor. This would normally be bad enough, but the damage must still be applied to determine his injuries. All the Saboteurs have Resistance of 1 (Physique of 3, Constitution +1). So the first 1 point of damage gets absorbed, and every 4 points thereafter inflicts one wound level. That means the Saboteur suffers 4 wound levels! (17-1 = 16/4=4)! Saboteur #1 now lies Incapacitated on the floor-effectively eliminated from combat for the remainder of the struggle.

Having finished with Kadiz and Saboteur #1, the Narrator proceeds to Adin Bosque, who has the next highest initiative. Bosque spends his first action aiming (A1) his stunner at Saboteur #3. Aiming costs one Option Point, increasing the likelihood that his subsequent attack will hit. No reactions affect Aiming, so Saboteur #3 doesn't react, conserving all of his Option Points for his first action. Not requiring any Tests to resolve this exchange, the Narrator reminds Bosque to mark off his spent Option Point and moves on to Ravastine.

Ravastine declares an Armed Attack (A1) against Saboteur #2, and the Saboteur reacts with an Armed Block (R1), costing one Option Point. Ravastine suspects he may not do as well as Kadiz, but makes his "to-Hit" roll with hopeful anticipation. His Coordination is 3 and his Armed Combat skill is a 2. He rolls three dice, adds 2 to the highest result and gets a Test Result of 8. He has rolled his weapon's Accuracy exactly! His opponent, attempts an Armed Block using his kindjal. He too makes an Armed Combat Test with a result of 7, including the +1 bonus a kindjal confers-a success! Still, Ravastine rolls his sword's damage and gets a 14; that's almost as good as Kadiz. But since Saboteur #2 successfully Blocked, he gets to roll his kindjal damage (3+2d6) to see how much of Ravastine's force he can divert. Rolling 10 points, Saboteur #2 still suffers 4 points of damage as Ravastine's thrust forces past the kindjal. With his resistance absorbing 1 point, Saboteur #2 still suffers 3 points of damage—1 point shy of being Stunned! Fortunately for him, Saboteur #2 remains relatively unharmed.

Next in order of initiative, the two remaining Saboteurs declare their initial actions. Since they share the same Initiative rank, they act simultaneously, doing their best to coordinate their attack. Saboteur #1 lies incapacitated on the floor, so he can do nothing. Were he conscious, he'd still be out of luck since he spent all of his Option Points attempting to Dodge Kadiz's deadly charge.

The Narrator first considers Saboteur #2 who Attacks (A1) Ravastine. Ravastine has two Option Points left, so he reacts with a Dueling option—Parrying (R1)—leaving him one remaining Option Point. Since Parry reactions establish Opposed Tests, the Narrator requires both characters to make their Armed Combat Tests simultaneously. Saboteur #2 scores a 5 while Ravastine rolls a seven, including his Sword's +2 Block/Parry modifier. Ravastine wins the Opposed Test, parrying the saboteur's kindjal thrust with relative ease.

Because successful Parry options enable their performer to follow-up with an immediate Riposte (R1), Ravastine presses his advantage by doing just that. Ripostes are considered reactions, meaning this is Ravastine's first subsequent reaction (raising the option cost by 1). Considering the Riposte costs a total of 2 Option Points (R1 +1),

Ravastine suffers a -1 Difficulty modifier during the Riposte since he can only pay 1 point of the 2 point cost. Were Ripostes considered actions, Ravastine would be unable to perform the maneuver because characters must pay the full cost in order to declare an action. Fortunately for him, this is not true of reactions.

Saboteur #2 reacts to the Riposte by Parrying (R1+1 for his first, subsequent reaction). Though he has no Option Points remaining, he may still perform the subsequent reaction at a -2 Difficulty (since he cannot pay the 2 point cost).

Rolling the dice Ravastine scores a 6 on his Drama Die, adding the next highest die (4) and his skill (2) for a subtotal of 12 prior to the -1 modifier incurred from his lack of sufficient Option Points. The Saboteur rolls a 7, reduced to a 5 by his Option Point penalty. Since Ravastine's 11 is six points higher than the saboteur's 5, Ravastine scores a Dramatic Success with his riposte, adding +1d6 to his damage roll! Rolling damage and adding his bonus die, Ravastine inflicts another 14 points of damage on Saboteur #2 (13 points after resistance), who already suffers 3 points toward being Stunned. Adding to the previous damage, the Narrator determines that Saboteur #2 falls to the floor Incapacitated, just like his fellow conspirator.

Last to act, Saboteur #3 faces his three opponents with indecision. With his two comrades both suffering severe injuries, Saboteur #3 reluctantly lowers his maula pistol, surrendering to the player characters. Ravastine runs to the communinet transmitter, summoning Doctor Idaz, to the Center hoping to preserve the fallen saboteurs for questioning. Kadiz retrieves Saboteur #3's pistol and stands guard awaiting Ravastine's further orders.

Bosque, on the other hand, is suspicious of why their rivals would send three obviously incompetent men on such an important job. The Narrator asks him to make a Projection (approximation analysis) Test. He succeeds and deduces that these men were merely a diversion. So he is only mildly surprised when five rival soldiers, led by an experienced Swordmaster, burst into the room. Now the fight begins for true!

COMBAT QUICK REFERENCE SHEET

I. Initiative: Who Acts First

Each player adds his Coordination + Reaction to calculate his Initiative. Players declare actions in order of Initiative, from highest to lowest scores. The Narrator resolves ties based on the declared actions and immediate circumstances. Tied characters may act simultaneously or subsequently depending on what the Narrator decides; but either player may defer to the other to gain the ability to change their declared action free of cost.

II. Rounds & Combat Options: What Characters Can Do

A. Rounds: Combat takes place in rounds, lasting 5 seconds each. Characters may perform a number of Combat Options (actions or reactions) each round. Each action and reaction costs a number of Option Points; and each character may spend a number of Option Points equal to his Initiative each round.

B. Initial Options: In order of Initiative (highest to lowest) each character declares one action.

Actions – Each character declares one Action from the list of possible Actions. What options are available to characters depend on their individual skills, traits, Weaponry and unspent Option Points.

Reactions – In response to being targeted by an Action, a character may declare a Reaction. Reactions also cost Option Points.

C. Subsequent Options: Characters may perform additional actions and reactions each round, although each subsequent Action and Reaction costs +1 Option Point. So the first subsequent action costs +1 point, and the second costs +2 points and so on. Reaction costs escalate in the same manner; but actions and reactions are counted separately. In other words, the first reaction following any number of actions does not incur the additional option cost, only the first, subsequent reaction does.

Characters may not declare actions costing more Option Points (with or without additional costs) than they currently possess; but may declare reactions—even if they possess insufficient Option Points to pay the cost. In such cases, the Difficulty for the reaction Test increases by +1 for every Option Point left unpaid.

D. Movement: Characters can move up to 10m per round in a brisk walk; moving faster may require an Athletics or Physique Test, with modifiers applied for any unusual terrain.

Movement Options – Characters may perform Movement options—such as Dropping Prone, Diving for Cover and so on—during combat. Most Movement options count as actions, costing a number of Option Points depending on specific motion being attempted.

III. Close Combat: Hand-to-Hand Combat

There are two basic forms of Close Combat: Armed Combat and Unarmed Combat. Each corresponds to the skill sharing its name.

A. Armed Combat covers the use of swords, kindjals, garrotes, etc. Characters possessing Armed Combat skill may perform a number of Close Combat options, in addition to any of the options described as General Combat options. Characters may also attempt these more general options Unskilled.

Dueling Combat Options – Only characters possessing the Dueling trait, Armed Combat (dueling arms) skill and appropriate weapon (kindjal, sword, and/or slip-tip) may perform these special options.

Shield Fighting Options – Only characters possessing the Shield Fighting trait and Armed Combat skill (any specialization) may perform these special actions. Shield Fighting reactions require an activated body shield in addition to the necessary trait and skill.

B. Unarmed Combat covers all forms of attack and defense made without hand-held weapons. Characters possessing Unarmed Combat skill may perform an number of Close Combat options, in addition to any of the options described as General Combat options. Characters may also attempt these more general options Unskilled.

Martial Training Options – Only characters possessing the Unarmed Combat (martial training) skill and specialization may perform these special options.

Weirding Combat Options – Only characters possessing the Weirding Combat trait and Unarmed Combat (weirding) skill and specialization may perform these special options.

C. Difficulty Numbers: Difficulty numbers in Close Combat "to-Hit" Tests are determined by the option or weapon being used. For example, an Unarmed Hand Attack carries a base Difficulty of 6, while an Armed Attack with a Kindjal carries a base Difficulty equal to the Kindjal's Accuracy Rating (7).

IV. Ranged Combat: Projectile Combat

A. Ranged combat covers the use of projectile weapons such as throwing knives, stunners and lasguns. Characters possessing the Ranged Combat skill and a ranged weapon may perform any Ranged Combat options in addition to any of the General Combat options. Characters may also attempt these more general options Unskilled.

Special Ranged Options – Only characters possessing Ranged Combat skill and an appropriate ranged weapon may attempt these more specialized options.

B. Difficulty Numbers: Each Ranged Weapon reveals a series of distances (in meters) corresponding to four standard Range categories: Point Blank, Short Range, Medium Range and Long Range. Once the range to the target has been determined for the weapon being fired, the standard Difficulty Number—PB (6), SR (7), MR (9) and LR (11)—can be determined. For example, a target standing at 25m from the shooter would be at Long Range (11) for a Maula Pistol but be at Short Range (6) for a Lasgun.

V. Hitting the Target: "to-Hit" Tests

To hit his target, the acting character must make either an Armed Combat, Ranged Combat or Unarmed Combat Test depending on the type of attack levied. All of these Tests may be attempted without formal training (level 0). Dramatic successes typically yield one or two additional dice of damage.

Avoiding Attacks: Characters may perform reactions such as Dodge, Block or Parry to divert attacks or negate inflicted damage. Dodge rolls increase the attack Difficulty Number of any attack if the Dodge Test Result proves higher than the weapon's Accuracy Rating. Blocks reduce the damage done by Close Combat attacks, and Parries initiate Opposed Skill Tests to divert attacks altogether. Only Dodge reactions may be used to avoid damage from Ranged Attacks.

VI. Damage: Inflicting Wounds

Normal Damage – Weapons and Unarmed attacks inflict a specific range of damage as determined by the weapon or action. Already accounted for during "to-Hit" Tests, the Drama Die does count during Damage rolls, except at the Narrator's discretion.

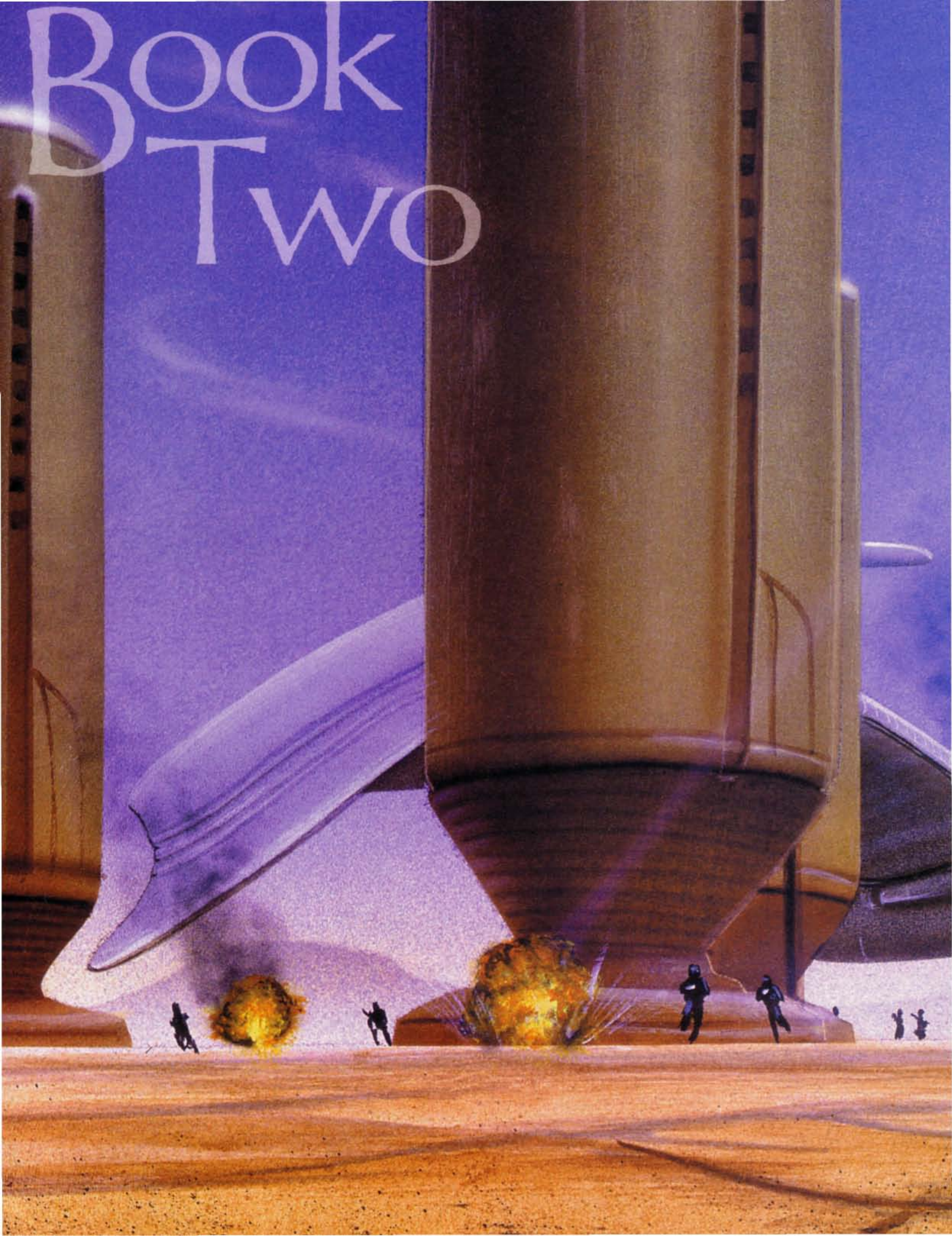
Stun Damage – Unarmed attacks and stunners usually inflict Stun damage. Once stunned, characters suffering additional Stun damage retain the Stunned Wound Level but remain unconsciousness for longer periods of time. At the Narrator's discretion, excessive stun damage may lead to further Wounds or even death.

Resistance – Each character adds his Constitution and Armor protection to determine his Resistance. Resistance determines the amount of damage a character can 'absorb' from each attack before suffering injuries. Once injured, Physique+Constitution determines the amount of damage a character can sustain before dropping to the next Wound Level. Resistance can be enhanced by armor, or increased temporarily by spending Karama Points.

Wounds – Every time a character sustains an amount of damage equal to his Physique+Constitution, he suffers an additional Wound Level. There are 7 Wound levels ranging from *Healthy* to *Killed*. As characters suffer additional Wound Levels they incur Injury penalties, making it more difficult, or impossible, to engage in further activity.

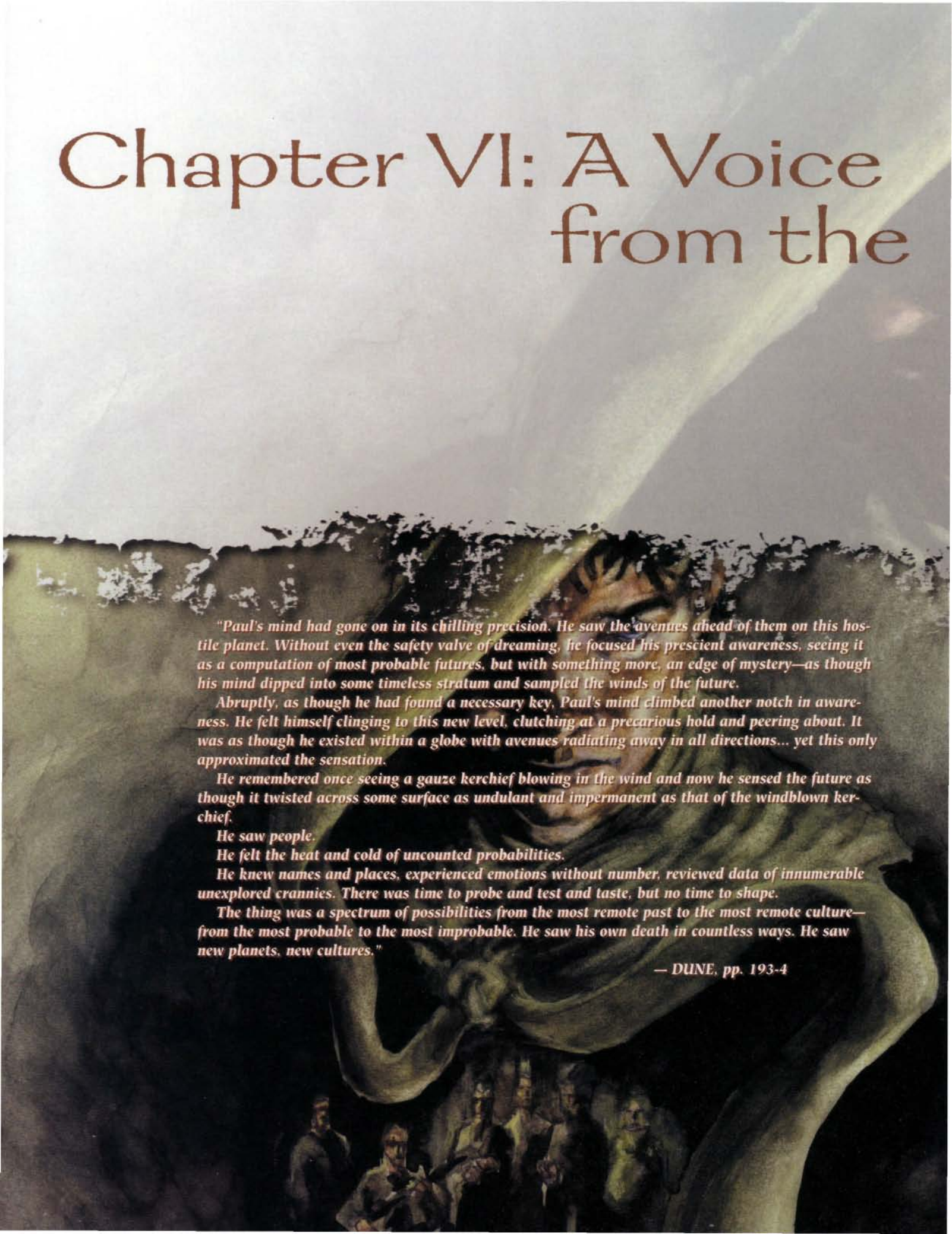
VIII. Healing

Characters may heal naturally, or with medical help. Full recovery requires the character to make Physique Tests (modified by Constitution) to improve his Wound Level. Natural Healing is slow and uncertain; Medical Healing proves faster and more reliable.


Book
Two


Dune
Oracle

Chapter VI: A Voice from the



"Paul's mind had gone on in its chilling precision. He saw the avenues ahead of them on this hostile planet. Without even the safety valve of dreaming, he focused his prescient awareness, seeing it as a computation of most probable futures, but with something more, an edge of mystery—as though his mind dipped into some timeless stratum and sampled the winds of the future.

Abruptly, as though he had found a necessary key, Paul's mind climbed another notch in awareness. He felt himself clinging to this new level, clutching at a precarious hold and peering about. It was as though he existed within a globe with avenues radiating away in all directions... yet this only approximated the sensation.

He remembered once seeing a gauze kerchief blowing in the wind and now he sensed the future as though it twisted across some surface as undulant and impermanent as that of the windblown kerchief.

He saw people.

He felt the heat and cold of uncounted probabilities.

He knew names and places, experienced emotions without number, reviewed data of innumerable unexplored crannies. There was time to probe and test and taste, but no time to shape.

The thing was a spectrum of possibilities from the most remote past to the most remote culture—from the most probable to the most improbable. He saw his own death in countless ways. He saw new planets, new cultures."

— DUNE, pp. 193-4



Outer World

It should come as no surprise that the Narrator plays the most tasking role in the game. Much as an author labors to conceive and communicate a narrative fiction, the Narrator must create the initial story line and contributing elements—detailing the setting, describing the characters and plotting the events that prompt dramatic conflict and interesting stories. It's primarily the Narrator's responsibility to entertain her audience, involving every player in the story to determine its outcome. By assuming the roles of the lead protagonists—the main characters who drive the story and focus the action—the players assist the Narrator in her role. But it's the Narrator's duty to start things off—presenting the initial situation and conflict that stimulate the players' interest and inspire them to action.

Once begun, the Narrator's role shifts from controlling author to guiding oracle, working from her pre-scripted outline to keep the story line moving and narration engaging. Knowing what hidden motives and unforeseen obstacles drive the story "off-stage," the Narrator monitors the character's actions interpreting their consequences to the developing story. Whether the characters manage to intercept an encrypted message or capture a fleeing spy, how they attempt to infiltrate a rival compound or avert an assassination—such unpredictable decisions change the way the story unfolds. In judging the results of such actions and adjusting her preliminary outline, the Narrator guides the story toward its eventual conclusion, integrating past, present and future to form a seamless sequence of narrative events. In this regard the Narrator acts as the Voice from the Outer Worlds—the prophet who translates her vision of future possibility into present reality, narrating countless adventures for the player's enjoyment.

If you're new to roleplaying, or unfamiliar with *DUNE*, please read these next two chapters carefully. No advice substitutes for experience, but these chapters guide you through the process of narration, providing techniques to overcome common pitfalls and mistakes. Experienced gamemasters and players of other roleplaying games may find much of this content familiar, but you should review these two chapters anyway. Emulating the DUNE milieu differs from telling stories set in other fictional universes, and the following chapters present many techniques for capturing the mood and flavor of *DUNE*. In choosing what works best for you, you'll soon develop your own style for narrating *DUNE RPG* adventures, a style of storytelling that with any success, will prove as distinctive and compelling as that of its author. Bon voyage! You're about to fold-space to DUNE, entering the grandest sci-fi universe ever created. What awaits you and your players there is only yours to tell.

The Narrator's Role

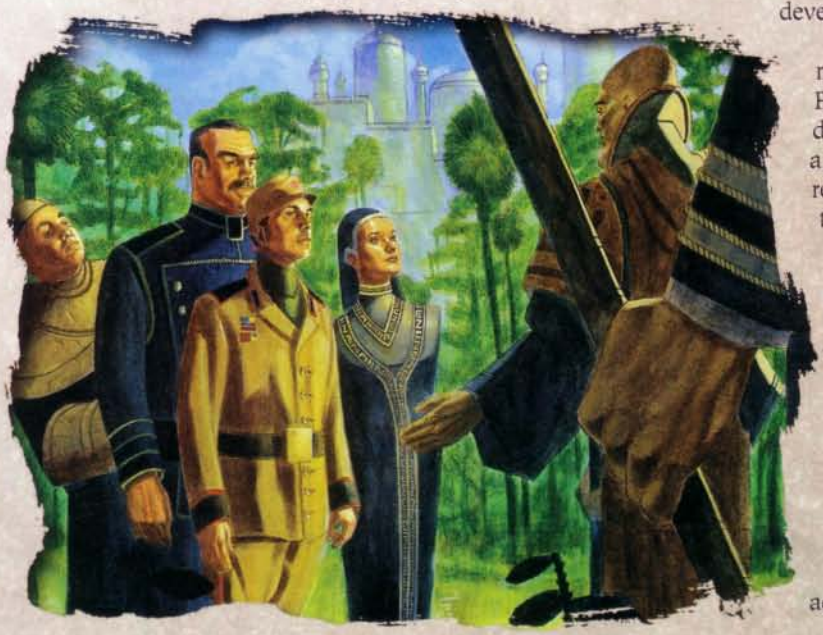
The Narrator's main objective is to ensure the players enjoy themselves during the game. The Narrator does not compete against the other players, scheming to defeat them by thwarting their characters. Instead, she cooperates with them, presenting all of the story elements with the sole purpose of entertaining them. Roleplaying is not about winning and losing; it is an end in itself. The individual members of House Atreides collaborate to succeed in their household endeavors. That's how every player, Narrator included, should approach the game.

The Narrator not only presents the setting, plays the supporting characters and guides the plot, but also fosters a sense of family among the players. In the course of storytelling, the Narrator necessarily presents the characters with many obstacles, from natural disasters and social revolutions to vindictive tyrants and lurking assassins. But these challenges exist to heighten the narrative drama, not to serve as Narrator's minions in some contest of wits or will between the Narrator and players.

As Narrator you'll find that judging the challenge of the player opposition emerges as one of the most difficult assessments to make. Making all obstacles too easy or simple proves just as destructive as making each challenge impossibly difficult. Not only do such extremes arrest story development; they also lead to unrealistic stories, jarring players from the fantasy of the roleplaying experience. Ultimately, the players form a team who work together to achieve some objective or resolve some crisis. The Narrator encourages "team mentality" by creating obstacles and dilemmas that provide ample challenge, yet present plenty of opportunity for character achievement and story advancement.

To entertain the players and keep them coming back for more, the Narrator must always consider the dramatic needs of the story. In preparing the adventure, describing the occurrences, responding to the players' actions and interpreting their consequences, the Narrator performs a

divine balancing act, combining all of the dramatic elements and narrative requirements into a single, harmonic composition. The most difficult of roles, at least at first, the potential rewards are perhaps greater than for the Narrator than any other player. She enjoys the satisfaction of seeing her dramatic vision come to life, inspiring her players to imaginative action and orchestrating the events that make for uniquely compelling stories.



Preparation: Setting the Scene

Before setting out to narrate a story, the Narrator should prepare thoroughly. Narrative preparation does not involve lots of meaningless work, although it might seem like it if you're new to roleplaying. Preparing a narrative adequately proves vitally important for ensuring everyone enjoys himself. Experienced or talented Narrators may be able to "wing it" from time to time, creating intriguing *DUNE RPG* narratives on the fly. But no matter how gifted a storyteller may be, every story benefits from advance preparation—whether it involves outlining events, developing character motivations or imagining settings in vivid detail. Keep in mind that any advance work reduces the amount of work done during the narrative—from detailing character statistics to deciding how a situation will unfold if approached from a certain angle. Though the players will never know the amount of time you spend in preparation, they'll surely appreciate how your advance planning streamlines the story, allowing complex interactions to transpire with few interruptions or game time delays.

Know the Material

Make sure you understand the story line thoroughly. If using a published adventure, study it well and note any places where dice rolling or player decisions may slow the pacing or pull the story off-course. Diverging from the main story line is not necessarily a bad thing, but knowing the material in advance enables you to swiftly redirect them toward major plot developments.

Knowing the material also enables you to customize published scenarios, adapting their background and possible outcomes to further the ongoing story you've been developing with your players. Aside from the random "side adventure," try to integrate most chapters into your own chronicle. For example, if the House Mentat always delineates your characters' objectives, and a published adventure positions the House regent as the mission coordinator, adapt the scenario to suit your own style. If your chronicle has established a Corrino House Minor as your major rival and the scenario puts another family in the role adversary, feel free to substitute your traditional enemy. Just make sure you don't alter some key element of the scenario that disrupts the internal logic of the adventure; if the adversary's allegiance explains the reason or methodology driving the events, don't make substitutions unless they can explained without unreasonably complicating the adventure or destroying its larger implications.

Read the scenario and try to see it from your players' perspective—read it with an eye toward their styles of play. If none of your players portray experienced diplomats, for example, make sure the scene involving tricky negotiations has a "back door" so they can solve it some other way. You don't have to memorize an adventure word for word, of course, but you need to know the plot, the climax, and any key scenes along the way, so that a quick glance at the text (or your notes) should be enough to get you going.

If you've outlined the adventure yourself, make copious notes about its setting, characters and events (see "Chapter 7," for complete details about writing your own *DUNE* chapters). This way, you won't forget that great scene description or narrative clue after the first hour of play. Make notes not only of the plot, but also of the names of the people and places the characters will encounter. Players get more enjoyment out of the story if they encounter "Commander Aramsham in the deep desert of Arrakis, about twenty clicks south of Sietch Tabr" rather than meeting "a Sardaukar commander in the desert." Seemingly trivial details go a long way toward enhancing any story; and they only become problematic when your notes fail to alert you that your current descriptions contradict your earlier clues, misleading the players and spelling catastrophe for the adventure.

Scripts and Props as Preparation

Script the key scenes on paper; although your players won't do exactly what you think they will, you should have some idea what their reaction will be to things like a saboteur intrusion or an imperious Guild Navigator. Imagining their likely responses, you can plan beforehand how the situation might unfold, saving you time and confusion during the encounter. Depending on the complexity of the episode, you might even want to "script" a number of scenes in advance, as well as a possible "chaser" scene to herd the characters back to the main plot line. Fight scenes make great chasers, proving easy to script and integrate into the story. An attacking force should be powerful enough to drive the Entourage in the direction you want them to go. Alternately, the attack itself can point the players in the proper direction, giving them clues such as Chakobsa shouts, Harkonnen weapons or motley smuggler uniforms, providing a variety of hints to get them back on track.

You can also present visual clues and scenes with representative props or illustrations. Visuals establish mood, conferring a wealth of information with a glance of the eye. Whether you use miniature figures, illustrations (such as trading cards or simple sketches), maps, or anything else, have it ready and know how you're going to use it. Don't slow the game down by flipping through a big stack of cards looking for "the right picture of Duke Leto." Set aside the Leto card in advance, keeping it with your notes until you spring it on your players. Finally, though it sounds obvious, make sure to have plenty of paper, writing instruments, and dice for everyone. Nothing ruins a spontaneous knife-fight more than the Swordmaster's player searching for dice.

Storytelling: Narrating an Adventure

Once you've prepared the adventure, it's time to perform the most important of the Narrator's tasks—telling the tale. Setting up the objectives, describing the situation and presenting the obstacles comprise the narrative part of the game, without which there can be no storytelling and, consequently, no roleplaying. You'll find guidelines for designing adventures in "Chapter 7" and *Pathways to Infinity: The DUNE RPG Narrator's Guide*; the rest if this chapter focuses on narrating the written scene. Having read (or written) a chapter or chronicle, the Narrator must translate that information from the written outline to verbal description, making the details both engaging and challenging to prompt the players into action.

Describing the Scene: Setting the Stage

The first and most obvious way to communicate the story is to start telling it. Describe for the players what their characters see, hear, and know about the situation and events unfolding before them. Make sure you mention everything that is both important for the story and obvious to the characters. Remember: players, unlike their more experienced characters, see the world you describe from the eyes of a wonder-struck newborn. If you fail to remind them about Imperial law, or neglect to mention that House Harkonnen has a long history of treachery, chances are they'll miss important clues that their characters would not. Part of your job is to remind them of things their characters already know, doing it in such a way that doesn't give away the entire story.

For example, let's say the scene occurs in a fogwood haven on the planet Ecaz, a sculptor's retreat suspected as the final refuge of a retired Moritani assassin. Start with the obvious. What can the characters see? The haven community rests in a high mountain vale, its crumbling perimeter wall bounded by towering fogwood trees. The small, community domiciles look tired with age, with powdery snow moss enveloping their foundations in a hoary shroud. Other impressions might include the environmental conditions of surrounding area, the low-lying mist suggesting a nearby lake. Are there important sounds (like the gentle cooing of harbinger doves), or simply an eerie stillness? If so, mention them as well.

Some things will be obvious to the characters' other senses: The tall fogwood trees and guardian mountains obscure the setting sun, plunging the cloister into deep shadow. The air feels cold and still, with only the advancing mist suggesting any atmospheric disturbance. Bene Gesserit Adepts or characters trained in particular fields (like a Planetologist or Mentat) might detect something else: the downcast shadows resemble human forms, environmental conditions seem inappropriate for evening mist, or the mistiness results from an aberrant local condition or phenomena.

Into this basic background, stir in the important elements of the scene, the ones that drive the plot. In our sculptor's retreat, the vital facts note this is in fact the residing place of a retired Moritani master assassin. He fled Imperial persecution choosing this site for its geographic seclusion and for the fact that its few, itinerant denizens are all fogwood sculptors—hermits known for their artistic preoccupation and guarded mien. Such facts may elude physical description, but the Narrator might give suggestive hints, mentioning that the decaying abodes show little signs of upkeep, their few windows most overgrown with krimskell vines and flaking snow moss.

The actions of the supporting characters can also set a tone for a scene, or give clues to players who observe them. When a hermit infrequently emerges from his housing, does his deep introspection subside to reveal any interest in the foreign entourage of characters? Do any of the commune elders hesitantly approach the characters asking what is their business there? If so, do they address the obvious leader, or do they reveal complete

ignorance of the Imperial customs of address? Such details can imply a great deal about the inner psychology of the haven's denizens, conferring a wealth of subtle clues to the characters.

When describing a scene, choose your words well; use colorful phrases to flavor your description above and beyond the characters' first impressions. For example, a Narrator interested in emphasizing the haven's mysterious perils might describe the scene this way:

> ***Emerging from the mountain pass, you glimpse a ramshackle community nestled within a perimeter of towering fogwood trees. Situated in a shallow vale, daylight expires to plunge the haven into deep shadow. A lingering mist skirts the trees on the far perimeter, revealing a deathly stillness in the air. As the last of the dying light glints over the snow-crested ridge, you get the fleeting impression that the village exists beyond time, as if an entire lifetime here could escape the universe in the blink of an eye. Startling you from your reverie, the sunbeam winks from view, to steep the village perimeter into looming darkness. No longer do the tree line shadows stretch out like an anxious war party. Retreating in the dimness they now bear the semblance of mourners, silently bowing their final respects to a dear and honored companion.***

But a Narrator more interested in the conventional dangers of the scene might describe it this way:

> ***You approach a placid community nested in a dense fogwood grove. Guarded all around by snow-crested mountains, the haven's only avenue for escape lies in the direction of the narrow pass that disgorged you here. Looming fogwood trees crowding the village perimeter support a high canopy of foliage, its shadowy underbelly making a suitable refuge for an entire cohort of assassins. Lingering mist cloaks the fogwood boles, dense enough at ground level to hide a lone marksman. Upon your arrival, the soft cooing of harbinger doves abruptly abates, alerting any natives of the approach of intruders. Discerning no watchtowers or military structures of any kind, your Warmaster seems troubled by natural defensibility of the place. Were this not a peaceful hermit's retreat, it's physical environment would make it the ideal place for a deadly ambush.***

Notice how both descriptions present a vivid and informative account of the site, leaving plenty of clues for players to observe. But each description sets a specific mood and tone. Not every word you speak needs to establish mood, but before describing any important scene, person or object, consider what subliminal message you want to send to the players. Is the aging hermit "straight-backed and proud" or does he appear humble "his back bowing with age?" Does the discovered lasgun appear "carefully maintained" or "blemished from neglect?" Your verbal nuances can convey vastly different meaning to your players, so choose your words with deliberate care making the most of your narrative descriptions. For more detailed techniques for developing and describing people and places, see pages 158 and 161.

Describing the Scene

- Describe anything that is obvious to the characters
  - What do they see?
  - What do they hear?
  - What other immediate impressions do they get?
- Make sure to include pointers to the vital facts in each scene
- Choose words that will convey your intended mood
- Make sure your voice and body language keep the player's interest.
- Take care not to reveal hidden plot elements too early

Your tone of voice and manner of delivery can convey just as much information as your choice of words—a rapid monotone conveys a sense of tedious filler while lively, emotional description signals the scene's importance. A conspiratorial whisper sets the players in an investigative frame of mind, while a commanding pronouncement prepares them for official confrontation. Leaning back in your chair and fiddling with your pencil indicates your boredom. Leaning forward to make eye contact and gesturing with your hands reveals your excitement. Whatever your intentions, exploit your voice and manner to capture players' attention. Then stoke their imaginations with sound-effects or intrigue them with description—whatever it takes to keep them hooked.

Understanding the Scene

Every scene exists for a dramatic purpose—to raise the players to an emotional state—and for a narrative purpose—to advance the plot or story line. Each scene must grab the players' attention long enough to deliver those two payloads. Present some question or dilemma they need to solve in the first couple of minutes: What happened to the ecological testing site? Are these indigenous berries poisonous? What does the Harkonnen jailer intend to do with that whip? How do players find the reclusive assassin? How do they discover who watches beyond the hidden comeye? Know what question the

scene asks, and know when it's been answered.

The answer to this question should lead the players further into the plot; often the answer leads to more questions. The testing site was abandoned because of a radiation leak—is lethal radiation still present? The berries secrete a poisonous oil— how can we harvest them? See also page 164 for notes on scene composition. Give the players a reason to pay attention in every scene. If you run a lot of scenes that only seem like filler, the players won't pay attention during the climax, and everybody will feel cheated when the adventure abruptly ends. If the Narrator doesn't care about the scene or know what's going on, neither will the players.



Understanding the Supporting Cast

A similar caution applies to the supporting characters—every other character besides the player characters. It's the Narrator's task to bring supporting characters to life. That's why supporting characters are also called NPC's, standing "Non-Player Characters." Though anonymous faces may lurk in the crowd just as unknown troopers stand guard over the spacing fields, every character the players interact with should seem unique and believable. If you prepare the narrative ahead of time, important characters should at least have names; but a little extra preparation can furnish one-line descriptions or motives.

Consider some examples from *DUNE*: "Where Thufir Hawat goes, death and deceit follow," and "Halleck was a continual amazement—a head full of songs, quotations and flowery phrases...and the heart of an assassin when it came to dealing with Harkonnens." Or for less important characters: "A plump, happy-faced Reverend Mother had been the lecturer, her jolly voice contrasting weirdly with the subject matter." Once assigned, bring those features out in play. As you do more and more narration, you should be able to sketch NPC's in a couple of minutes of roleplaying. Use descriptive words, characteristic actions, turns of phrase, and sensible, consistent reactions to the players.

Once the players have a solid hold on these one-dimensional figures, add new details every time they reappear. Always add depths, nuances and idiosyncrasies to these people—remember that every NPC holds emotions and interests of his or her own. Just as we discovered new facets of Paul, Gurney or Stilgar every few chapters of *DUNE*, let your players discover new sides of their acquaintances' personalities each time they meet. This proves especially true for Entourage NPCs and prominent household retainers. But it is equally important to characterize foreign ambassadors, rival assassins or recurring spokesmen from the Spacing Guild with the same degree of realism. Let your NPC's change or be unpredictable on occasion; let your resident Truthsayer suffer from laryngitis, or reveal a passion for music in your Master of Assassins. Use the stereotypical characteristics of the various Houses only as guidelines, not as immutable rules. Harkonnen nobles all show contempt for underlings, but one noble may show his contempt by spitting on his servant while another reveals it by completely ignoring his slavemaster's presence.

Keep Everything Moving

Of course, while juggling these tasks, don't let the game bog down. In roleplaying, making a timely decision that proves adequate is better than making a perfect decision too late. Maintain high dramatic tension by keeping the plot moving and the characters involved. Always have those questions looming—the players should always be wondering "what next?" just as the Narrator introduces the following scene. Each scene needs to present its dilemma and move on. The following scene should answer that question and pose a new one, driving the plot ever forward.

The solutions to the accumulated questions and dilemmas should lead to the ultimate objective established for the story. In mysterious or suspenseful chapters, the plot itself poses the questions. Why does the Emperor support the Harkonnens? When will final attack be launched? In more action-oriented chapters, the dilemma presents simple wonder—"Vermilion Hells! How we going to escape this alive?" If you keep the play-

ers asking questions, you're certain to maintain their interest and involvement.

The player characters will assist you in asking questions of their own. Encourage the players to let their characters react to these situations from their individual perspectives in addition to reacting as Swordmasters and Mentats. Don't let the game slow down too much as the players consider the questions or mull over their options. You can always prompt them to action with an advancing battalion, a sudden explosion or similar crisis demanding immediate action.

Many chapters in *DUNE* present many different questions and crises at once. Your stories should feel the same way. In an ideal chapter the players' questions and the characters' answers feed everyone's enjoyment; the Narrator may be as surprised as anyone when the meek Suk physician takes it upon herself to jump in the path of the deadly hunter-seeker rushing toward the House heir.

To that end, the Narrator should always provide several different solutions to any dilemma, or several paths to the best solution. Even if you have to narrate scenes out of sequence, quickly script an unforeseen encounter or introduce a sudden time element to hasten the action, use your entire, narrative arsenal to reach the climax before the excitement is gone. Your goal as Narrator should be to involve every player (and all player characters) in the narrative action, engaging your group with as much drama, excitement and character development as you can muster.

Judging: Using the Mechanics

Every game has rules, and the *DUNE RPG* is no exception. But unlike chess or board games, roleplaying games foster cooperation over competition—their goal being to entertain through interaction, not to gratify by winning. In short, the rules exist to serve the interest of the story and player interaction. They have their time and place in the story, assisting the Narrator in being reasonable and fair, while permitting random chance to contribute drama and tension to the developing story. But in the interest of good storytelling, the game rules and dice rolls should always remain subservient to the Narrator's better judgement. Sometimes the spirit of the game simply means bending the rules. With that in mind, here's a few times when loosening the rules is a good idea.

Player Innovation

Roleplaying games foster creative thinking, so never penalize your players for innovating clever solutions. When a player attempts to tackle a problem in an unconventional manner, judge their approach on its own merit, perhaps even fudging the rules a bit to "reward" them for thinking outside the box. Never force players into your own way of thinking, even if their solutions jump ahead of you in the story leading to an early conclusion. For instance, suppose you've planted a traitor within the House Entourage and have carefully created a series of scenes to betray his presence and reveal his identity. By acting on your clues and innovating a clever solution, it may be reasonable for players to rout the traitor before you had anticipated, bringing one subplot of the story to an abrupt conclusion. In such cases, allow their actions to dictate the final story. Don't try to force the story you prefer by requiring them to make unnecessary Tests or face additional obstacles.

Experienced Narrators know the long-term benefit of rewarding player innovation. It encourages them to contribute their own ideas to the developing story instead of always following your lead. Discouraging cleverness induces players to act as you expect them to, placing more of the dramatic challenge on your shoulders as you strive to create future episodes. Remember, the purpose of roleplaying is to share in the creation of stories, not to reenact predetermined narratives. By encouraging innovation you inspire each of your players to share in your creative burden, leavening your own workload. More importantly, the players' flashes of creative insanity serve as your reward, giving you the rare experience of watching a story you thought predictable, unfold in new and surprising ways.



Reckless Conduct

On the other hand, don't allow rules or lucky dice rolls to save the charac-

ters from reckless or foolish actions. If they blatantly defy the laws of the Great Convention, no amount of luck should entirely mitigate the ruinous consequences expected of such behavior. The characters must pay for their player's recklessness, and in this case, their sponsoring House should pay with them. The Imperial powers that be do not reward criminal negligence or reckless conduct: Permitting "rules lawyering" or lucky dice rolls to save characters when their actions run to the contrary does precisely that. So it's the Narrator's job to curb recklessness with appropriate, narrative consequences—the intention being to promote more reasonable conduct in the future.

Assumed Competence

Even the youngest and most inexperienced of player characters are assumed to possess adequate competence for the roles their House has assigned them. Provided they possess the appropriate skill at level of 1 or more, the average character can service his weapon, issue a diplomatic greeting or pilot an ornithopter revealing fair capability and perhaps even a bit of finesse. Under normal, routine situations the Narrator need not require Skill Tests for such mundane activities. Skill levels exist to guide you in your assessment of character competence, and unless you feel that an attempted action stretches his ability or the conditions challenge her success, you should probably avoid dice rolls in favor of providing a dramatic summary of the result. As a general guideline, whenever a character's skill or attribute level exceeds the Test Difficulty you can rule the attempt an automatic success and get on with the story. Never require Tests at the expense of pacing unless you believe the character faces a reasonable chance of failure.

Negligible Consequence

For similar reasons, avoid requiring Tests for irrelevant actions or those of negligible consequence. Even when a character attempts something that stretches their ability, you need not require a Test if their success or failure will bear little effect on the narrative. Instead, simply rule that the attempt succeeds or fails, providing results that further the story. For example, if a character insists on interrogating a witness who can't provide the information they're seeking, don't permit an Interrogation Test just to satisfy the player's curiosity. Instead, describe the result suggesting "that after an intensive session the witness still proves unable to provide the information you need." If the player persists in his inquest, you might proceed by saying, "after several more hours of adamant denial, the witness collapses exhausted." By refusing the player a Test, he should quickly get the hint that he's wasting his time. And in doing so you also save "playing time" to devote to relevant pursuits.

Pacing

Assuming competence and avoiding irrelevance reinforce the act of pacing. No matter how smooth the transition, how well everyone knows the rules, or how terse the Narration, rolling dice inhibits the pacing of the narrative. At times, it's important to hustle the players along. Whether you're trying to build suspense or convey the racing speed of a 'thopter chase—pacing enables you to heighten the drama. When the demands of pacing don't permit time for Tests, just narrate the scene as it occurs and take a breath after the climax. Then take a moment to make an "adjustment" Test or two, affecting the predicament moving forward, and maybe even adding to the dramatic tension.

For example, suppose in their search for the fogwood haven, the characters have inadvertently led pursuers to the assassin's hideout. Not long after their arrival the players hear the ominous buzz of approaching battle 'thopters, descending over the mountain tops. The hunters begin dissecting the forest, mounted lasguns blazing their vengeance from above. Convincing their contact to lead them to sanctuary is the key Test in this scene. Though Tests for hearing their approach and fleeing through the forest would challenge the players and bear important consequences, the Narrator ignores them for the benefit of pacing.

At all costs, don't slow down the pace to roll for every little scuffle and skirmish. Ask the lead character for her orders, and then narrate the rest, keeping the action moving and the tension high.

Here's how it might be handled: "Distracted by a distant throbbing, your contact looks skyward in search of the source. By the time you see the approaching 'thopters assume attack formation, the roar of their engines sounds their immediacy. The assassin's eyes dart toward the forest, then back to you. Any commands?" The lead player hesitates a moment too long and the tension begins to wane. The Narrator resumes, "Mounted lasguns on the circling 'thopters begin to dissect the forest canopy, raining fire on the village beneath." Prompted into action, the leader requests, "Master Izaos, can you lead us to safety?"

The Narrator responds, "'Gladly m'Lord. We'd best make haste. Follow me closely and keep your heads low.' Master Izaos takes to his feet, plunging into the shade of the forest. As you hasten to follow, a wave of scorching heat blasts all around, announcing the destruction of the forest behind you." Notice that to maintain the dramatic pacing, the Narrator ignored the Persuasion Test he had planned for the scene. Since the action was faltering, the Narrator judged the Test negligible (since Master Izaos clearly wanted to flee, anyway).

But upon leading them to sanctuary in a nearby cave, the Narrator decides an "adjustment" Test is in order, initiating a dialogue between Izaos and their leader. Depending on the player's roleplaying and Test Result,

Master Izaos will either lead them through the labyrinthine tunnels or abandon them to make his own escape. Clearly, the Narrator has made the wiser choice.

Drama

All of these concepts form the principle of drama: The story must prevail. Don't call for Tests that could ruin the pacing or derail the story. Dice rolling introduces a random element. Only require Tests when you desire uncertain results.

Returning to our example we find the Narrator describing the character's flight to safety. "Rushing through the misty forest depths, random fire lunges down from above, burning through the high canopy to strike to the left, then to the right of you. Ducking dew-laden boughs and hurdling ancient rotting stumps, your flight brings you to a dark cave, barely more than a crack in the mountainside. Within, Izaos awaits, panting heavily in the vapid darkness. Speaking in gasps, Izaos huffs, 'In the morning...they're sure to bring trackers...but don't worry...we'll be long departed by then.'"

Notice that to maintain the tension, the Narrator ignored Athletics and Dodge Test that would have slowed the action. Had such Tests been used and the characters succeeded, the tension may have been enhanced, but the climax would remain largely unaffected. But had they failed, the situation would have resulted in anti-climax; though they succeeded in their objective (finding and enlisting Master Izaos), one or more of the characters may have been captured or killed, and the ignorant dice would have robbed them of their dramatic reward. Remember, always try to identify the major climax of each scene or chapter; during such times, only require Tests that build the tension or contribute to the dramatic climax.

Conversely, establishing scenes—especially those at the beginning of a chapter or chronicle—often benefit from a lot of dice rolling, allowing random chance to instill a sense of progress and setbacks as they test the depths of the intrigue awaiting them. Here, rolling dice actually helps the drama build; each successful Test adds to the entire picture just as every failed one raises the stakes and heightens the suspense. Like everything else in narrating, setting the scene's dramatic tone is a balancing act. Familiarize yourself with your players' style to determine when to call for Tests. And rely on your judgment to decide when to fade out to the next scene or pick up the pace with an action sequence.

Truthsaying: Reading the Players

The Narrator's final role involves reading her players. She has to observe the players before, during and after each chapter, making sure that everyone is participating and having fun. This can require providing advice to individual players, making sure nobody infects the Imperial age with ancient Terran preconceptions, balancing the involvement or attention each player receives and monitoring every player's enthusiasm toward the game. But for the most part the Narrator should usually do all of this surreptitiously, keeping her observations to herself to avoid unsettling the players. Most players don't want someone lording over them, telling them how to improve their roleplaying or how to avoid ruining someone else's fun. If you must say something to a disruptive player, take him aside to chat; be calm, fair, and open-minded in your discussion. But in the final analysis, it's the Narrator's job to make the game work for everyone. If a disruptive player refuses to cooperate, your best recourse may be to simply not invite him next time the play group convenes.

Study Player Reactions

Guiding players is a matter of paying attention to how they react to situations in the game, adjusting your style of narration accordingly. Not all players are created equal. Part of the fun of roleplaying games emerges from the collaboration of different people with different talents and ideas working together to tackle overwhelming obstacles and invent imaginative stories. Some players excel at reasoning through intellectual puzzles but freeze up when action scenes go ballistic. Others delight in hard negotiation or political intrigue but don't care about letting the story move forward. Still others prefer combat and lots of dice rolling but find themselves out of their depths during mystery adventures or suspense thrillers. Catering to such a diverse group of players can be challenging indeed!

Similar in topic, some gaming groups seem content telling stories of a particular genre or theme—everyone in the Entourage prefers action-adventure, political thrillers or espionage stories. As long as everyone continues to enjoy himself, stories engendering a certain genre can occupy a group for months or years. On the other hand, if your group tires of the de facto genre, you should vary your topic or theme on occasion, challenging your players and rousing them from their rut. If you notice a tendency for military solutions, pit them against the Bene Gesserit in a political intrigue. Or if the players dominate mystery adventures, run an action-adventure to challenge their decision-making skills. Whenever you notice their enthusiasm wane, it may be time for a change in theme or shift in genre.

Treat Players Equally

The key to player cooperation lies in keeping them focused on the game rather than on interpersonal issues around the table. This is best accomplished by running the most enthralling and exciting game possible. The players want to "escape" into the DUNE Universe; the Narrator should always work to let that happen. Don't play favorites. If your group includes your best friend and someone you only see on game nights, treat them equally.



Don't favor any one player with more time in the limelight, a better reaction from NPC's or similar rewards for external reasons—treat each player (and their character) as they deserve based on the merit of their roleplaying. Rewarding players based on their contribution to the game encourages better roleplaying and improves the experience for everyone.

Treating players equally requires more than equable awards of character Experience, Karama, Renown and so on (see "Chapter 8"). Every player should feel as though his character contributes to the game and helps to tell the story. Everyone should have a roughly equal share of the spotlight. Make sure every chapter has an opportunity for each character to shine. Make sure their overriding objective can only be resolved with teamwork. Ideally, each chapter should depend on a different character to save the day or contribute to the success during the climax. Give the Suks an important nobleman to save, entrust the Mentat with a critical projection or challenge the Adept uncover the religious significance of a vital phrase or symbol. Don't let the House Noble get all the attention and glory. Even if Swordmaster faces no rival to duel, he can still make a difference to the story line, using other skills or simply providing a key suggestion.

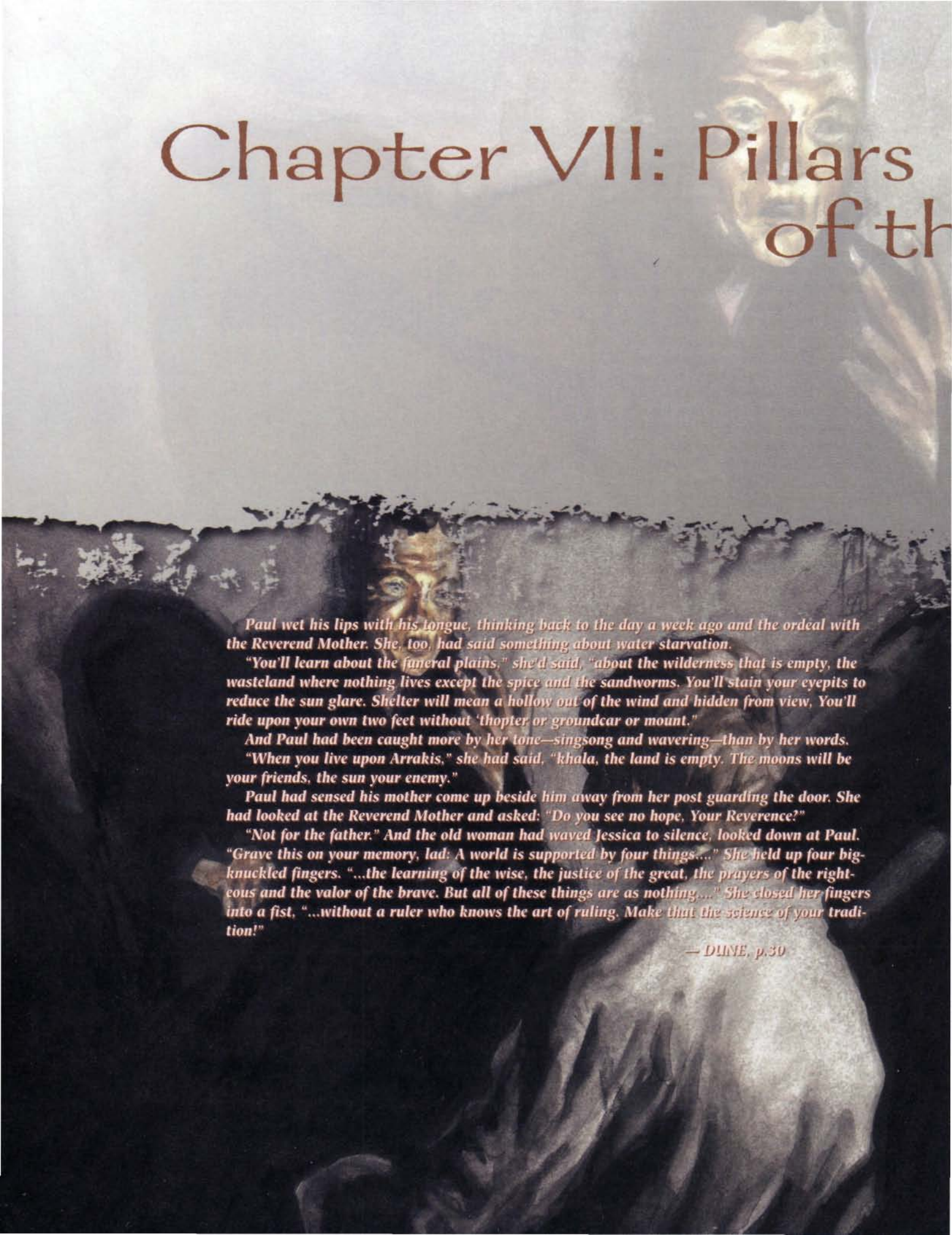
No player can shine all the time, but the Narrator should notice if all a character does is fire his stunner or pilot the family 'thopter. Naturally shy players should be encouraged to take center stage (unless they really are happier acting in the shadows). Put their character in charge of a specific operation, suggest they lead a venture critical to the House welfare, or have an important NPC select them as their contact. *DUNE* relies on many characters to weave the tale; even the Kwisatz Haderach doesn't possess all the talents necessary for exploring the myriad worlds of the vast Imperium.

Keep Everyone Interested

Finally, it's up to the Narrator to make sure everyone enjoys himself. Don't ask, "is everyone having fun?" Watch your players interact; are they really excited or just rolling dice to humor you or pass the time? Keep an eye out for players growing bored with your stories, with their characters or with the game itself. Remain enthusiastic and focused yourself; nothing tires players faster than a jaded Narrator. Let players change characters if they wish. Each character represents a personal expression and affected role—forcing someone to play a part he's unhappy with will only contribute to their eventual departure. Vary your episodes: If you've done a lot of "strange new planet" stories, set some adventures within the House Keep or home province. If lately all your stories have been high-tension action stories, try a more philosophical or diplomatic chapter. Any change of pace is a welcome departure from the routine. Never allow your players or yourself to remain in a narrative rut.

In summary, the Narrator should pay as much attention to the players as the players give to the Narrator. Your role doesn't end with sitting at the end of the table and awarding Experience points. If you treat your players right, keeping them mindful of one other in addition to the developing story line, you'll find that, like an oracular Steersman, there's no place you can't take them.

Chapter VII: Pillars of th



Paul wet his lips with his tongue, thinking back to the day a week ago and the ordeal with the Reverend Mother. She, too, had said something about water starvation.

"You'll learn about the funeral plains," she'd said, "about the wilderness that is empty, the wasteland where nothing lives except the spice and the sandworms. You'll stain your eyepits to reduce the sun glare. Shelter will mean a hollow out of the wind and hidden from view. You'll ride upon your own two feet without 'thopter or groundcar or mount."

And Paul had been caught more by her tone—singsong and wavering—than by her words.

"When you live upon Arrakis," she had said, "khala, the land is empty. The moons will be your friends, the sun your enemy."

Paul had sensed his mother come up beside him away from her post guarding the door. She had looked at the Reverend Mother and asked: "Do you see no hope, Your Reverence?"

"Not for the father." And the old woman had waved Jessica to silence, looked down at Paul. "Grave this on your memory, lad: A world is supported by four things...." She held up four big-knuckled fingers. "...the learning of the wise, the justice of the great, the prayers of the righteous and the valor of the brave. But all of these things are as nothing...." She closed her fingers into a fist, "...without a ruler who knows the art of ruling. Make that the science of your tradition!"

— DUNE, p.30

e Universe

Now that we know how to narrate a *DUNE RPG* story, the next question, naturally, is what to narrate. What story are you telling? Who is it about? What kind of structure should a *DUNE RPG* chapter have? As in journalism, an exciting narrative addresses this subject from multiple angles: who, what, where, when, why and how.

This chapter tackles storytelling from the standpoint of creating narratives the DUNE way. Of course, all stories, no matter what their origin or nature, share some elements in common: Setting, characters, theme and plot are universal components of all dramatic media—novels, plays, comic books, TV shows, movies and roleplaying games. If you're new to roleplaying, this chapter explains how to exploit these elements to create your own *DUNE RPG* chapters and chronicles. Even if you're familiar with the novel *DUNE* and the roleplaying game genre, we recommend you peruse this chapter. Trying to force the wrong kinds of stories into the DUNE universe can prove more disastrous to your game than trying to navigate fold-space without a prescient Steersman to guide you.

Pillars of the Universe: The DUNE Equation

Part of deciding what stories to tell involves determining what kind fit the DUNE milieu. A comedy of errors, for example, may be entertaining in its own right, but its genre doesn't complement the nature of DUNE. Even common science fiction genres like postmodern "cyberpunk," epic "sci-fantasy," or bureaucratic "dystopias" prove only marginally compatible with DUNE. So what makes one story suitable *DUNE RPG* material, and what makes others not quite belong?

Most DUNE tales share a number of elements, "pillars", if you will, upon which the entire universe is founded. Like physical laws, these pillars consist of abstract ideas and immutable conventions—invisibly binding the cosmos together. Though you can write stories that defy these conventions, you risk creating narratives that somehow fall short, confusing and frustrating your players, perhaps without them ever realizing why. The following sections examine each of these pillars one at a time, attempting to define what elements make *DUNE* the science fiction classic that it is.

The Mystery of Life: Epic Drama

According to *DUNE*, "...the mystery of life isn't a problem to solve but a reality to experience." And the reality of *DUNE* is that it's epic in scope. Set in a vast Imperium comprised of myriad worlds, the novel *DUNE* recounts an epic struggle between two feuding Great Houses. The drama intense, the stakes couldn't be higher—control of Arrakis (the planet Dune) and the survival of the warring bloodlines. Though few *DUNE RPG* narratives will exceed such dimensions, epic scope and compelling stakes should lie at the heart of any good story.

There exist several ways to raise your stories to epic proportion. Starting with the concept of the Entourage, all player characters serve a noble House Minor. Larger than the characters themselves, the House finds itself at constant odds with the cosmos, eternally struggling to rise to greatness while avoiding extinction. Seen from this perspective, any threat to the House makes for epic drama; and within the Imperium, Houses Minor face such perils on a regular basis.

A second consideration, size matters. Everything in the Imperium is big—really big. From titanic Guild Heighliners tucking hundreds of House frigates into their berths to the gargantuan sandworms patrolling the sands of Arrakis, the institutions, spacecraft, edifices and bioforms all assume monumental dimension. By making your players ever aware of the sheer, physical magnitude of their surroundings, your stories are guaranteed to approach the epic.

Most importantly, there's no such thing as an "epic" anecdote. Narrating an epic takes time. Though individual chapters may pass swiftly, an epic builds over many chapters. The novel *DUNE* consists of three "books," comprised of many chapters each. In the *DUNE RPG* we call this type of nested structure a "chronicle." Though many roleplaying games can be played as a series of short, unrelated adventures or "one shots," the *DUNE RPG* benefits from longer, continuing stories. while not every adventure or chapter must advance the greater story, recurring characters, themes and objectives can help tie them to the "bigger picture." Easier than it sounds, the rest of this section reveals additional considerations to instill your stories with epic drama.

Human Conditioning

Shortly after the destruction of the "thinking machines" during the Butlerian Jihad, sophisticated training schools emerged to train human minds and bodies, developing human potential to overcome the civilization's long dependency on machines. Imperial institutions—such as the politically-inspired BG Sisterhood and the profit-driven Spacing Guild—succeeded in conditioning human beings to outperform their machine counterparts. Numerous privately sponsored programs, including Mentat training schools, Swordmaster academies and Suk medical programs—developed multilaterally, flourishing on numerous worlds. As a result, human conditioning reached a new peak of performance, ultimately delivering mankind from its servile, technological bondage.

Applying this to your stories, player characters should reveal skill and accomplishment far exceeding our contemporary notions of excellence. A fully trained Mentat, for example, should have no problem accessing his memories and making numerous computations with the speed and reliability of a super-computer. A Swordmaster can lead military operations with the competence of a brigadier-general while demonstrating the adept training of a master martial artist when performing on the dueling floor. By elevating human conditioning over technological reliance, your stories inevitably move closer to the DUNE idiom. Play up your character's talents and you'll make them heroic in stature, capable of overcoming the most Herculean of struggles.

Preservation and Evolution: Clashing Ideals

A lofty subject fitting an epic tale, the clash between preservation and evolution pervades the DUNE universe. Imperial government and ancient institutions preserve a long history of political tradition and bureaucratic stagnation. Observing the ancient forms of the Great Convention, the Great Houses of the Landsraad, Bene Gesserit Sisterhood, and powerful Spacing Guild, all remain virtually unchanged even after ten thousand years.

But over the same period, human development—characterized by the Sisterhood's breeding program and Guild's navigational schools—has evolved at an alarming rate. The geriatric spice-drug melange extends the lives of the rich and powerful to unprecedented years. Forced spice evolution mutates Guild Navigators as a consequence of their prescient development. And the Sisterhood's breeding program strives to produce their Kwisatz Haderach—a super-being standing as the culmination of human development.

This schismatic conflict between preserving tradition and race evolution afflicts Imperial civilization at a root level. So pervasive the conflict, no DUNE story would be complete without manifesting some symptom of the affliction, whether exploring the rise and fall of noble Houses, the advancement of technology despite religious proscriptions or the justification of means to attain a desired end. By immersing players in these chaotic waters, the Narrator conveys a mood and mentality conducive to heroic action—a fertile setting for breeding the monumental struggles required of epic adventure.



Karama & Ijaz: Miracle and Prophecy

Pervasive in its ramifications, the enigma of prescience—the ability to predict future events—questions the role of destiny in human affairs. If the future can be foreseen with absolute clarity, what does that suggest about free will and destiny? In the act of prophecy, does the Oracle perceive the chains of immutable fate? Or does he presage only the most probable of futures, given his sensitivity to political tides social currents? And in the final analysis, who is the master—the prophet or fate? Central to the DUNE milieu, such heady questions immediately confer the sense of epic dimension to any *DUNE RPG* story.

For example, by asking himself "Is history doomed to repeat itself," the narrator might base a chapter or chronicle on some historical catastrophe of his own invention. Juxtaposing the past and the pres-

ent, the Narrator confronts the players with a developing crisis—one closely mirroring the historic disaster. As the story unfolds, the Narrator reveals historic details at seemingly random moments, using such data to foreshadow encroaching disaster. Without ever asking it, the Narrator implicitly questions whether the characters are doomed to repeat their predecessor's mistakes, building the dramatic tension to a volatile climax. In such a manner the Narrator compares the player's dilemma to an epochal event, raising the stakes for the players' enjoyment. Though they need never be conscious of the metaphysical issues; exploring the nature of Karama and Ijaz confers dramatic importance to even the simplest of tales.

Plans within Plans

Feints within feints, plans within plans, plots within plots—no action, intention or event ever truly is what it appears to be on the surface. Presenting an array of factions embracing duplicitous agendas and motives, *DUNE* stresses the complexity of human affairs. Just when you think you know why something's happening or what it's all about, that's when you need to look closer. The simplest form of deception lies in presenting half-truths, making your opponent believe he already knows the answer. Dig deeper; approach from new angles: Question the truth!

The structure of *DUNE* embraces complex ambiguities to raise the narrative stakes and heighten dramatic tension. In other settings, superficial dilemmas and direct solutions present short, simple narratives—questions presented, answers given, problem solved—end of story. But not so in *DUNE*. Though each chapter of a *DUNE RPG* story should confer a sense of closure, the answers obtained or the solutions achieved should ultimately prove temporary or incomplete. By introducing plans within plans, the Narrator can sustain a chosen plot or theme nearly indefinitely—exploring further refinements or additional ramifications in succeeding chapters, using the series of adventures to reveal depth in the narrative like peeling layers from an onion.

Prevailing Themes: Topics in DUNE

While the "pillars" identify the pervasive elements essential to the DUNE milieu, derivative stories should apply such axioms to focus on one or two of *DUNE*'s central themes. If the pillars describe what the universe is like, themes address what *DUNE* stories are about. You can narrate entire chronicles without directly referencing any of these themes, but one or more of them will probably underlie every story you tell. Not every chapter requires an overriding theme, of course. Some only exist to instill some action, introduce a new contact or explore a random occurrence. But the thrust of your chronicle should follow a theme. If *DUNE* teaches Narrators anything, its that themes improve the quality of entertainment, imbuing the narrative with significance and meaning.

Preservation of Key Bloodlines

Common to many stories, the theme of survival is no stranger to DUNE. Survival of the species, survival of the individual, survival of some ideal or institution the hero holds dear—*DUNE* embraces all of these aspects, characterizing them most dramatically as "Preservation of Key Bloodlines." For better or worse, Imperial civilization does not treat all people equal. The rigid social hierarchy, or faufreluches, sets nobles and their kinsmen at the top of the pyramid, considering their survival of primary importance. The Bene Gesserit Sisterhood further distinguishes among the nobility, having established certain tests for separating "human" from "animal" stock. Having maintained an exhaustive Mating Index over the millennia, the Bene Gesserit have secretly conducted a master breeding program, identifying key, noble bloodlines and selectively interbreeding them in search of their messianic Kwisatz Haderach.

The Preservation of Key Bloodlines proves the easiest theme to incorporate into a *DUNE RPG* narrative. Since player characters generally work in the employ of a noble Houses Minor, any threat to their House supports this broad theme. Narrators can explore this theme through an endless variety of permutations. From family vendettas to personal rivalries, from natural disasters to social revolutions, from enemies beyond to traitors within—virtually anything that jeopardizes the House survival makes for exciting and topical stories.

Science of Tradition

Imperial civilization persists as a cultural amalgam of ancient traditions and hallowed conventions, ranging from the faufreluches caste system to the Articles of Kanly. As a prominent theme, the Science of Tradition refers to the ubiquitous consequences forged by such institutions, including the impact they leave on society in general. From the Butlerian proscriptions against unlawful technology to the Missionaria Protectiva's exploitation of religion, the Science of Tradition explores the variety of ways governments and other power groups manipulate traditions to further their own self-interests.

Based on the rigid feudal hierarchy enforced by the faufreluches, Imperial civilization resembles a house of cards: pull one from the bottom and the whole establishment may topple. For this reason, the Science of Tradition presents ample opportunity for narrative drama. For players whose eyes twinkle at the mention of rebellion, the Narrator might choose to pit them against tyrannical oppressors, treating social injustice as the prevailing dilemma. Alternately, the Narrator could champion some tradition, challenging the players to foil a rebellion, bring-

ing the anarchists to justice before a Sysselraad tribunal. So comprehensive in scope, the Science of Tradition represents such limitless potential that virtually any story line can benefit from its incorporation as a theme.

Moral Incertitude

In the Imperium of DUNE, simplistic labels such "good" and "evil" have largely been discarded as moral ambiguity inundates civilization like a sweeping malaise. This is not to say, of course, that Imperial civilization is amoral or lacks conviction. Every Great House and each House Minor possess an ethos that defines their morality. Some households exploit the faufreluches, oppressing the weak with a tyrannical fist. Others exploit their noble birthright to nurture the meek, treating them with kindness that human beings deserve. Other power groups, such as the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood, use their own standards to measure humanity, resulting in distinctive brands of moral conviction.



Like Science of Tradition, the theme of "Moral Incertitude" broadly concerns the impact of social customs on human affairs. But rather than dealing with the traditions directly, this theme explores the personal conflicts resulting from moral dilemmas. For Narrators interested in exploring this theme, careful attention must be paid to the choice players made when choosing their House. Certain narrative situations might strongly offend one House's morality, while others might be accepted as a matter of course. For example, an Atreides character might be outraged by witnessing a nobleman poison a slave, while a Harkonnen character might find the punishment too lenient or merciful.

Taming of Worlds

Seen from a certain perspective, the "Taming of Worlds" emerges as an important theme in *DUNE*. Though Imperial planetologists lead expeditions to survey newly discovered worlds, this theme refers more specifically to the establishment of new government and assimilation of cultures occurring during any planetary "change of fief." Though governed by the forms of the Great Convention, a change of fief represents a great time of upheaval for the succeeding House. In addition to establishing the governmental regime, the governing House must learn "the language of the planet", adapting to its physical conditions, harnessing its native populace and discovering its natural resources. Though much preparation occurs before their arrival, new regimes sometimes toil for years before coming to grips with their new planetary charge.

To exploit this theme, Narrators need not initiate a chronicle detailing a monumental change of fief. Within their planetary jurisdictions, the Great Houses constantly issue "change of fees", appointing Houses Minor to assume control of one or more planetary regions or provinces. Though familiar with their homeworld conditions, Houses Minor experience similar hardship establishing order over new fees—they've got to calm the populace, learn the local industries, route any dissidents and so on. The dominance of planets can even apply to territories held by a House for countless generations. Political rivalries, natural disasters, labor strikes and regional surveys afford numerous opportunities for exploration adventures and domestic intrigues. Learning a planet's language (in all of its dialects) proves an opportune theme for introducing new cultures and exploring new territories.

Messianic Prophecy

Related to Karama and Ijaz, the theme of "Messianic Prophecy" deals principally with religious institutions and superstitious beliefs, especially with regard to their effe cts on political government and social behavior. Though guided by a largely agnostic ruling class, Imperial civilization sees secular religion flourish among the lower classes of the faufreluches. Recognized as the "sanctioned" religion by most of the Great Houses, Orange Catholicism enjoys the widest devotion. Yet the so-called *ancient teachings* survive in scattered pockets throughout the Imperium, including the Buddislamic Variants typical to Lankiveil and Sikun, the

Navachristianity of Chusuk, the Talmudic Zabur of Salusa Secundus and so forth.

More esoteric perhaps, the infectious superstitions sewn by the Missionaria Protectiva, missionary arm of the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood, pervade many of the more primitive cultures throughout the Imperium. Planting a variety of messianic prophecies and superstitious rituals, the Missionaria engineers religious rituals and superstitious beliefs to "soften-up" the most hostile of the out-freyn peoples, attempting to create social "bolt-holes" where a fugitive Reverend Mother can find safety by assuming the mantle of holy mother or maternal counsel.

For players who enjoy considering the implications of religious faith as component of the social contract, Narrators can insinuate religious overtones into nearly any adventure. Faith and morality inspire adherents to act in certain ways, stimulating pacifistic defiance, fanatical violence, hostile xenophobia, sagacious enlightenment and so on. In effect, since stories are about people, the introduction of exotic religious variants can make for fascinating discovery, especially when the players discover one of their own somehow fits a prophecy of a holy man, prophet, martyr or messiah. A word of caution though, some players may not feel comfortable exploring religious themes. Before implementing a Messianic Prophecy or religious crusade as a predominate theme, Narrators should make certain that doing so won't offend any of her players. Usually, the Narrator's familiarity with his friends proves sufficient, but in cases where the Narrator remains uncertain, it never hurts to discuss the broad nature of religious themes beforehand, just to make sure.

Applying Themes to Stories

When devising a story line for your own *DUNE RPG* narratives, try to determine which theme(s) your plot embraces or create a plot based on a particular theme that interests you. By strengthening the aspects of your story that promote these themes, you make your story fit the DUNE universe, giving your players a sense of "narrative rightness." Doing so goes a long way toward keeping the players involved and interested in the narrative's progress, especially when trying to maintain player interest over a prolonged chronicle.

Applying themes to your stories doesn't require them to be thrust in the players' face every scene, of course. Your primary responsibility should be to entertain everybody, so you should never focus on theme to the extent your narratives grow pedantic or overly intellectual. But on a deeper level, your stories should resonate with the players' notion of DUNE and the fundamental truths on which your game world operates. By building a consistent universe, with theme even more than politics, culture or technology, you also create more engaging narratives.

The Supporting Cast

Now that we've examined the pillars that support the milieu and the themes that drive the stories, it's time to consider the cast of characters who make the stories happen. Most great dramas tell stories about people—ficti-

Sample Applications of Theme

The following samples explore some of the story themes presented in the *DUNE* novels. You can use them as starting concepts for generating your own original stories and chapters.

Preservation of Key Bloodlines

- A House launches a war of assassins against a rival.
- A native people revolt in an attempt to overthrow their governing House.
- A secret cabal plots to abduct the heir-designate of a House.

Moral Incertitude

- By House decree, a primitive people is to be relocated to a suburban ghetto.
- A politically motivated arrest leads to the condemnation of an unpopular demogogue.
- An influential labor union strikes because of inhumane working conditions.

Science of Tradition

- A House is charged with violating the proscriptions of the Butlerian Jihad.
- A House illegally defies the Great Convention to oust a rival.
- A powerful merchant-family challenges the faufreluches before the local Sysselraad.

Taming of Worlds

- Unearthed ruins reveal an ancient, unknown culture.
- The native subjects of a wild region resist annexation by the governing House Minor.
- A mysterious plague besets the first wave of retainers during a change of fief.

Messianic Prophecy

- A wild prophet rises among the native people inciting a holy war.
- The imprisonment of a popular zealot induces public rioting.
- The discovery of ancient tomes foretell of an apocalyptic struggle.

tious characters dramatized for our entertainment. Among the entire cast of characters, the protagonists are the heroes, the main characters we cheer for at the end of the tale. In the *DUNE RPG*, the player characters always take the roles of the protagonists. Everyone else, from the lowliest maula to the Emperor himself comprises the supporting cast—Non-Player Characters (or "NPC's") portrayed by the Narrator to populate the universe and bring her stories to life. Just as *DUNE* has its own protagonists (Paul Atreides, his family and friends) and supporting characters (Baron Harkonnen, the Shadout Mapes, Atreides soldiers, and so on), so your adventures must have their own supporting casts.

Characterization

It's the Narrator's responsibility to portray each member of the supporting cast with some degree of individuality and flair. Whether created for numerous, repeat appearances, more sporadic recurrence or a single debut, supporting characters all interact to make the universe lively and real. If the supporting characters seem dull or mundane, even the most exotic of settings or action-packed plots may fail to make up for their failings. Stories concern people; and boring people make for humdrum tales.

Role

Before setting out to create any supporting character, you need to assess their role in the story. A character role describes not only what they do—their occupation and narrative function—but also includes their relative importance to the story and "time in the spotlight." For example, if your plot calls for a Moritani assassin, then you already know something about their vocation and purpose in your narrative. But you should also consider the character's importance. Will the assassin make a single appearance, kill another NPC, then conveniently vanish having served its purpose? Or will the assassin become a recurring character, someone the players must capture, interrogate and present before a judiciary board of inquest? Knowing what feats and knowledge are required of the character is essential to understanding the character's role (since you'll need to assign necessary skills, knowledge and so forth as you proceed with their creation. See next page, "Supporting Roles" for more about NPC roles.

Name

The first step in creating any character involves giving that NPC a name. Names imply a great deal about the character, giving you a first impression of their identity as an individual rather than a generic type. Names often suggest cultural heritage, such as "Shaddam IV" or "Stilgar." And when combined with an epithet such as "Padishah Emperor" or "Naib of Sietch Tabr" tell you something about what the person does. Names also give an impression (whether accurate or misleading) about the individual's personality. Strong names like Vladimir or Korba suggest tough inner strength or steadfast determination; softer names like Wellington or Irulan speak of clement demeanors or meek personalities. The cliché "its all in a name" says it all: give your NPC's interesting names, but make sure they're names the character can live up to.

Goals and Motives

To establish your character's goals and motives, try to see the Imperium from his point of view. What are his personal objectives or innermost fears? From his point of view, your character is the central character in the most important story ever told—his own life story. Why has he involved herself in this story, and what does he hope to accomplish? What does he think is going on? When it comes time to roleplay the NPC during the chapter, you'll see the story from his perspective, acting on impulses closely linked to his goals and motives. Your character may want to help the player characters, rallying behind their moral agenda. He might seek to do them harm, not from any personal hatred, but because he's been ordered to do so and fears some punishment should he fail in his mission. Whatever his reasoning, make your characters act in accordance with their short-term motives and long-term goals. Doing so not only keeps their actions consistent, but it also represents the character as a realistic individual, with personal convictions that define the parameters of their behavior.

Sample NPC Personalities

- Skilled and pompous Swordmaster
- Respected and feared CHOAM delegate
- Secretive and ambitious Guild representative
- Popular and ruthless Noble
- Loyal and subtle Mentat
- Resentful and stubborn Suk physician

These twelve descriptors can be switched around to make vastly different characters. Consider the difference between a 'loyal and subtle' Mentat and a resentful and ambitious one.

Personality

Along similar lines, you should determine the character's general attitude and demeanor. Is she treacherous or loyal, rebellious or cooperative, sarcastic or sincere? Knowing her personality affects how you roleplay her when it's her time to make an appearance. Select a couple of good, general adjectives to describe her personality and outward demeanor. It's important to use more than

one term. "Ambitious" is fine, but "ambitious and corrupt", "ambitious and patriotic", and "ambitious and bureaucratic" create vastly different parameters to describe her behavior. Each adjective you add multiplies the depth of your NPC's personality; it's worth the time you spend to come up with a second descriptor. Remember, a single good sentence can serve as the backbone of an interesting NPC.

Appearance

Now that you've done some work on your NPC's psychological composition, consider his physical appearance. What does he look like? When the players ask about a supporting character, that will be foremost among their immediate questions. A character's physiognomy, just like their name, suggests a great deal about the heritage, affiliation or personality. Play this up, describing the character's appearance in such a manner to reinforce some other aspect of his psychology or background. For example, your ambitious and corrupt merchant might affect lavish apparel or adorn herself with gaudy trinkets. Similarly, you could add antique reading spectacles to a thin and withdrawn Suk, to suggest his preoccupation with studious learning. Incorporating stereotypes is a sure-fire way to convey a lot of information about your character without the players having to actually get to know them. And by perverting a stereotype you can deliberately mislead your players, setting them up for surprising revelations later in the story.

Important NPC Background Questions

- What was the most important event in this NPC's life?
- Does the NPC harbor any secret motives?
- How does the NPC feel about the player's House? About their sponsoring Great House?
- Has the NPC met any of the player characters? If so, what was that meeting like?
- Does the NPC have any predominant fears or biases?
- Does the NPC suffer a reputation of which the player's may be aware?

Background

Finally, it never hurts to come up with a bit of background for a supporting character. Does he have some reason to hate the Harkonnens? Maybe he served time in a Harkonnen slave pit or witnessed a Harkonnen trooper kill one of his siblings. Does the character have a former affiliation with someone important—perhaps a former lover or mutual enemy? Often you'll introduce an NPC because of some connection to a player character, perhaps a relative, friend or mentor. You should always detail such relationships beforehand, considering the implications of such a connection. For example, if you introduce a supporting character as the close friend or confidant of a player character, be prepared to provide a lot of information to the character who knows the NPC well: What are her likes and dislikes? Does she have any family? Where did they meet? And so on.

Characteristics

Based on the role you've chosen for a supporting character, you'll need to determine what attributes, skills and traits he possesses. You don't need to fill out an entire character sheet for him right away. The only numerical characteristics he needs initially are those pertaining to the story. Having assigned a character the role of saboteur, for example, you might detail only his Intellect attribute and Sabotage skill. If, on the other hand, his role requires other talents of him, then you'll have to assign those as well. As a general rule, characteristics are the one character aspect you can skimp on. Just rolling the dice and letting the dramatic necessity of the plot dictate the outcome often serves narrative purposes just as well as relying on arbitrary numbers you assigned prior to launching the tale.

Supporting Roles

The supporting cast consists of everyone but the player characters, from simple folk such as the pundi rice farmers of Caladan to powerful individuals such as Edric, a Third Stage Navigator and representative of the Spacing Guild. Assuming the roles of such diverse personae, the Narrator should be prepared to roleplay any individual who the players encounter during the course of a story. Creating supporting characters in advance often proves sufficient, but you'll still need to improvise once the action begins. In the best chapters, the Narrator spends as much time roleplaying as any other player. As you develop their characters, certain NPC's may even begin to take on lives of their own. They may enlist with the Entourage for a period of time, or make frequent appearances as you expand their roles in future stories. In essence, the time you spend roleplaying a character defines his place and function among the supporting cast, so we'll begin by examining various supporting roles.

Leading Roles

"Lead" characters play pivotal roles in the story. They represent the chief opponents or main assistants of the player characters. Frequently, leading characters exist to further the plot: Their actions present the main challenge or dilemma, reveal a vital clue or provide the key to resolu-

tion. In general, if the plot line would not work without the supporting character's involvement, he's assuming a leading role. In creating lead characters, the Narrator should go the extra distance. Leading characters must seem real to the players, their plight, personality or motives must evoke player emotions, making them sufficiently sympathetic or hostile to prompt the players to action. Describe leading characters in detail, making sure the details not only support their role in the plot but also serve their actual characterization.

For example, antagonists never consider themselves to be the villains. From their perspective they're the heroes of their own life stories. When you're developing the motivation for your vengeful Baron or treacherous House Suk you need to go beyond "wants to seek revenge, or wants to destroy his Duke." Ask yourself "why?" To punish House Atreides for the crimes of their ancestors? To redeem a loved one for crimes enacted against them? In his mind, what constructive goal is your villain trying to accomplish? For your antagonists to seem like more than single-minded automata, they need sufficient reason and motivation behind their actions.

Minor Roles

"Minor" characters play secondary roles in the story, playing the parts of House retainers, the equivalent of Duncan Idaho, Gurney Halleck or the Shadout Mapes. They also assume the roles of "lesser antagonists" appearing regularly but failing to drive the plot themselves. In *DUNE*, the Baron Harkonnen is a leading character, but his ally Emperor Shaddam performs as a minor character through much of the story. Finally, the main assistants, sidekicks, and henchmen of the lead characters also fall into this category. These characters may eventually assume leading roles, simply by taking on new dimensions as their appearances become more frequent. In general, no minor character should remain static indefinitely; always add some new detail or demonstrate some change of behavior. In real life, people change between your encounters, their personal lives continue even though you're not necessarily thinking about them, and their own experiences make them seem different when next you meet them. If you treat minor characters on these terms, you'll add a level of depth and realism certain to capture your players' attention.

Anonymous Roles

"Anonymous" characters exist just to fill in the scenery. They stand guard at the landing field, die in terrorist explosions, trail at the back of the diplomatic entourage, or bicker as part of the crowd in the Arrakeen bazaar. At most, anonymous roles require only generalized personalities or visible attitudes: An Atreides security squad marches with calm efficiency, an Arrakeen crowd seems noisy and chaotic, patrons of a semuta den lounge about lethargically. Of course, it never hurts to prepare a list of names, just for flavor. When a spice harvester is destroyed by a sandworm, the event seems more dramatic if the harvester dispatch announces, "we lost Tivor, Egusku and Vandala," rather than "we lost three miners." When describing groups of anonymous characters, it helps to prepare a "sample member," outlined in greater detail. That way, if the players confront someone or ask them a question, the NPC can suddenly become more than just a face in the crowd.



The Out-freyn and Unfamiliar

In addition to relative importance or time spent "in center stage", some other considerations apply specifically to *DUNE RPG* supporting characters. In a universe comprised of myriad worlds, it's vital to foster cultural identity in your supporting cast. Just as the players share aspects of their House ethos and homeworld culture, so do all other characters demonstrate social affiliations and cultural differences.

When describing the denizens of another Imperial homeworld or outfreyn culture, take care to include small details revealing their differences. Though all Imperial citizens speak a variation of Galach, you might for example, care to mention how a character speaks with a Moritani

dialect—slow and precise in choice of words, yet somewhat slurring and slothful in manner of speech. Alternately, you could emphasize physical appearance, touching on racial features or style of clothing to foster a sense of discovery and wonder.

But keep in mind that the game is the thing: Don't slow the pacing to a tiresome crawl as you meticulously explain the subtle nuances of Fremen water discipline. Make your descriptions serve your purpose and don't take it upon yourself to explain everything at once. To evoke sensations of strangeness or sympathy you can confer mood and information over the course of many scenes and chapters—building on what came before by the addition of choice words or phrases, mixing description with dialogue to vary your approach. But however you approach it, never forget that it's their cultural identities that make characters who they are, differentiating the peoples of Caladan from those on Giedi Prime, or the Fremen of the Arrakeen desert from the folk of the graben and pan.

Common Origins

Though the worlds of the Imperium present a diverse array of socio-cultural differences, Narrators should keep in mind the ubiquitous institutions unifying the Imperium as a homogenous civilization. Consider first, that all Imperial homeworlds share membership in the Landsraad and are bound by the Great Convention. Imperial colonization ensured that the assimilated homeworlds adopted a common law, language and governmental bureaucracy. Similar in influence, the forced migrations of the Zensunni spread certain religious beliefs and cultural forms across the Imperium, seeding many planets with root heritage that evolved independently during the millennia to follow. The efforts of the Missionaria Protectiva bear lasting consequences, as does the "universal" revolution of the Butlerian Jihad.

By incorporating the concept of common origins into your descriptions, you add a level of subtle complexity and nuance to your developing stories. Revealing cultural differences between the Fremen of Arrakis and the natives of Salusa Secundus becomes far more interesting when you also explore similarities suggestive of a common origin (the Zensunni Wanderers?). By exploiting such comparisons, you can provide vital clues to more perceptive players who will delight in discovering such facts "on their own." Uncovering a common root that enables them to predict or exploit an out-freyn subculture (based on knowledge about the related culture), players may make great strides in a narrative, being entertained not only by their character's actions but also by their own cleverness. Anything you can do to foster such discovery invariable heightens your players' enjoyment; and exploiting common origins reveals one terrific way to tie your universe together, perhaps even through the use of a common theme.

Creating the Setting

A proper setting paints the backdrop behind the supporting cast of characters. It provides context for their behavior, giving their actions, mannerisms and speech timely significance. For example, imagine a bit of dialogue: "I sense a great storm approaching." Consider its mood and meaning when uttered by a desert Fremen gazing toward a horizon growing dark with storm clouds. Contrast that image to the same phrase being uttered in a field command post, just before a momentous battle. Clearly, the setting gives the utterance contextual meaning, conveying literal or figurative meaning depending on the setting.

The setting in your narratives can include time as well as place. Over time landscapes change, flavoring actions and events accordingly. A pale season, a festive holiday, a gloomy hour or a delicate moment—time can bestow a place with shades of meaning, flavoring the events and actions in subtle or dramatic ways. Setting a battle in the crimson dawn, or describing a murder on a moonlit terrace, the time of an event or scene can greatly alter narrative mood or flavor.

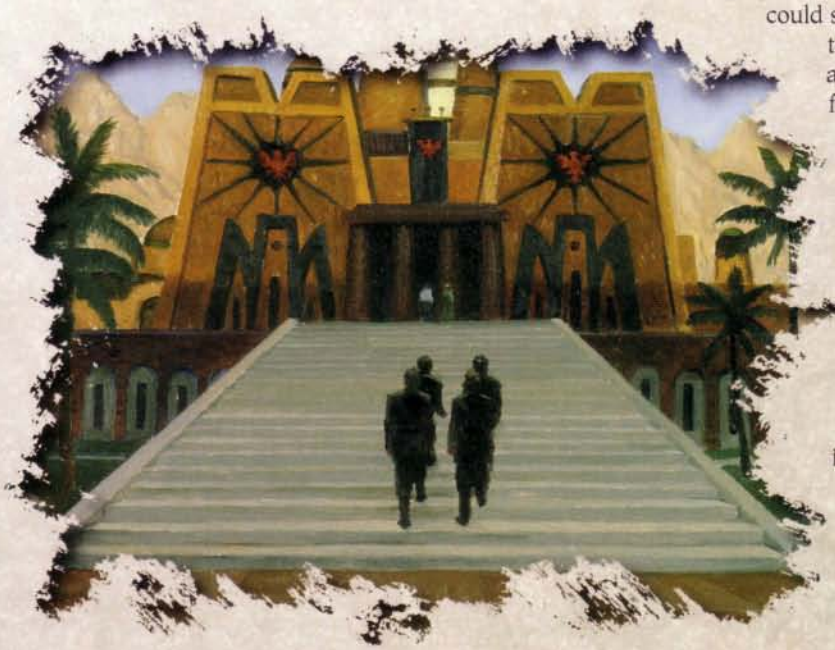
When choosing the setting for each scene of your narratives, consider its impact on both plot and drama. Does the plot of an event logically require a certain setting? If so, does the time of the engagement alter its dramatic presentation? Once you've chosen your setting, make sure you provide sufficient description to make your setting serve its purpose. If you've chosen a gloomy drawing room for the discovery of a tragic suicide, make sure to play up the pale and lifeless lighting or tearful blur of rain coursing down the window panes. Usually, a few, choice adjectives will do the trick, keeping your descriptions from becoming melodramatic or tiresome from minutia.

During the course of your narratives, you'll present numerous scenes in a variety of colorful settings; but before you can explore your many options, you'll need to determine the predominant setting for your chapter or chronicle. In the *DUNE RPG*, all settings fall within one of two main categories, though experienced Narrators may find it possible to merge both categories into a single, expansive adventure.

Homeworld Adventures

At least initially, most narratives take place on the players' native homeworld, frequently occurring within their House fiefdom or family compound. As members of their House Entourage, fledgling characters must prove their abilities at home before being sent abroad. Over time, the family compound, outlying fiefdom and even their homeworld capital city should become intimately familiar to the players. These homeworld settings represent their base of operations, the places where they serve their House, pursue private interests and recuperate from

their labors. For this reason, Homeworld settings make perfect locations for stories about character developments and House evolution—routing out enemy spies, quelling social rebellions, entertaining visiting dignitaries or waging personal vendettas. Nearly any plot imaginable could occur somewhere upon the players' homeworld, making their involvement immediately plausible and logically appropriate.



Off-world Adventures

Off-world narratives—set on alien homeworlds replete with wondrous vistas, exotic cultures and unknown dangers—are, without a doubt, profoundly alluring and deeply satisfying, especially when used sparingly to break up the normal routine of homeworld adventures. *DUNE* itself, represents the greatest of off-world adventures, considering that Paul Atreides had never traveled from his native homeworld before moving to the planet Arrakis and becoming embroiled in its perilous geographical and political landscape.

But for Narrators, off-world adventures present their own, special challenges, some of which can prove lethal to your game if handled without due caution. First and foremost, off-world stories require a great deal of narrative preparation. Whereas Narrators become intimately familiar with their homeworld settings, off-world adventures require you to portray an entirely new world in vivid and realistic detail. You must know the world's ecology, geography, culture and government as if you were native-born. This requires advance preparation and enthusiastic improvisation—infinitely challenging but equally rewarding.

In addition, narratives set off-world require additional reasoning behind player character involvement. "Why do they travel there?" is a question you must carefully consider and reasonably explain. As a general rule, Houses Minor do not possess the kind of wealth and power required to sponsor frequent off-world missions. While it's feasible that the patron Great House recruits the characters to accompany an off-world delegation, this rationale proves weak when stretched too far or employed too often. Though other powerful organizations could sponsor the characters' journey, you'll need to supply sufficient reason if your players are to find their involvement credible in the first place.

Lastly, abuse of off-world adventures runs the risk of becoming mundane or leading to "runaway" narratives. Characters who spend most of their narrative time hopping from planet to planet contribute little to the development of their sponsoring Houses (or if their actions do affect the House, they're never home to see the impact). For these many reasons, Narrators must exercise discretion when employing off-world adventures. By keeping the action at home, you foster House advancement and personal growth—development consistent with the DUNE way of storytelling. For your player characters to become epic heroes, the consequence of their actions need to go beyond themselves, impacting upon the success or failures of the entire House Minor and sponsoring Great House. For this to happen, the majority of action should occur at home. And after adventuring off-world, greet the players' homecoming with an elaborate fanfare or sobering gloom, reflecting the consequences of their recent exploits away from home.

Creating the Story

The final, and most important element of any *DUNE RPG* narrative proves to be the story itself. "What happens next?" is a question answered only by the sequence of events comprising your plot line. Following a fairly consistent structure and methodology, many Narrators find building stories easier than creating component settings and characters. Nevertheless, the scenes you plan and plot line you create determines the overall success of your narrative mission. Accordingly, you should plot each story with careful consideration, ensuring your plot line seems plausible and your narrative proves entertaining.

Every story needs a theme. Pick one from the theme section keeping in mind that your theme doesn't have to be immediately obvious to the players. Knowing the story's thematic undercurrent helps you maintain focus through the rest of the process. When choosing your theme, consider the central conflict of your story. Does the

conflict involve overt violence or open aggression, or is something more subtle in order? Perhaps your conflict concerns a moral dilemma or a race against time to prevent some approaching disaster. Your conflict need not restate your theme, but it should complement it. A moral dilemma could reinforce a Moral Incertitude theme, just as a family vendetta could support a Preservation of Key Bloodlines theme. But the reverse combinations could also be true, making for an interesting narrative in which your players face a moral dilemma that may ultimately decide the survival of their House or homeworld. Now there's the makings of a riveting DUNE narrative to be sure!

Types of Conflict

Most narratives can be described in terms of the conflict—the antagonism arising between the central character(s) and the obstacles or challenges hindering their immediate or protracted goals. Whether manifesting as Man against Man, Man against Nature, or Man against Himself, conflict drives the plot and directs the action of every good story, falling within one of the five predominate forms described hereafter.

- **Man against Man** – This type of conflict pits two or more individuals directly against one another in some sort of physical, intellectual, emotional, moral, or spiritual contest. Man against man conflict permeates *DUNE*, from the personal rivalry between Duke Leto Atreides and Baron Harkonnen to the duel between Paul Muad' Dib and Feyd-Rautha. Man against Man conflict is well suited to propel any DUNE story, especially those employing Preservation of Key Bloodlines as a central theme.
- **Man against Society** – This form puts one or more individuals in direct opposition with the forms and customs of human society. When the Emperor orders Duke Leto to take possession of the planet Arrakis, he ensnares Duke Leto in a struggle against society—manifested in the Imperial mandate and the laws surrounding an Imperial change of fief. Any fight against the customs of the faufreluches, laws of the Great Convention, or religious proscriptions of the Butlerian Jihad falls under the category of Man against Society. Man against Society emerges as the ideal conflict to drive *DUNE RPG* stories hinging on Science of Tradition or Taming of Worlds themes.
- **Man against Nature** – Usually embodying a fight for survival, Man against Nature puts a character in opposition with some natural phenomenon. From fighting to steer a 'thopter safely through a violent sandstorm to out-racing an approaching sandworm or simply surviving the brutal desert heat—these sorts of conflicts are common to the DUNE milieu. Man against Nature fits any variety of DUNE story, especially those having themes such as Preservation of Key Bloodlines or Taming of Worlds.
- **Man against Destiny** – Derived from the more traditional Man against God conflict, this form challenges a character to overcome spiritual or metaphysical pitfalls, such as those engendered by the notions of fate, destiny or ill-fortune. Paul's ongoing attempt to thwart his 'terrible purpose' is a good example of Man against Destiny; his prescient vision giving him glimpses of many possible futures, he strives desperately to circumnavigate the worst of the horrors lying in his seemingly predestined future. Man against Destiny represents the choice conflict for tales of Messianic Prophecy, Science of Tradition, or Taming of Worlds.
- **Man against Himself** – The most personal and introspective of conflicts, Man against Himself presents a character with a grave moral or ethical dilemma. In *DUNE*, Dr. Yueh's moral dichotomy exemplifies this form of conflict, characterized as a personal struggle between loyalty for his Duke (and House) and his burning desire for revenge. Man against Himself makes for any good subplot, but suits tales of Moral Incertitude and Messianic Prophecy particularly well.

Story Concept

Once you've decided on a theme and conflict, its time to flesh our your basic concept. Asking yourself any of the golden questions "who," "what," "where," "when" and "why" drives you toward natural answers, rounding out your story concept. For example, let's assume we've decided to tell a story about the preservation of the noble bloodline, choosing a moral dilemma as our central conflict. This decision leads to a number of immediate questions: What type of moral dilemma threatens the House's survival? How does the crisis manifest itself, and from where does the threat originate? By responding to such questions, the Narrator inevitably realizes his basic story concept.

Borrowing and Cliche

Whenever a conceptual dilemma leaves you confounded, don't be afraid to borrow ideas from stories you know. The *DUNE* novels provide a good source of ideas, but feel free to borrow from Shakespeare, Homer or the Bible. It really doesn't matter where your initial ideas come from, but literary classics provide a wealth of universal conflicts and eternal themes. After all, classic stories are considered "classics" for a reason—it would be difficult to debase your narrative by borrowing from literary masterpieces.

On the same note, don't worry too much about clichés, either. Though your starting concept may seem just like any other worn out story from your local library, your players will find it new and exciting once you've adapted it to your setting, characters and events. So don't worry about familiarity and predictability just yet: A certain amount of familiarity stimulates creativity—being

comfortable with the underlying story, your familiarity will enable you to devise new twists and turns without compromising your grasp on the central issues. In the final analysis, your concept's just a starting point. By the time you've finished adding details, your players won't notice your original inspiration. Choose something that moves you to get things going. There's a lot more to do before to bring your story to life.

Scene Scripting: Narrative Purpose

Every narrative represents a series of scenes. As in the novels, a scene from your game occurs in a certain location, portraying one or more characters taking particular actions to reveal something vital for story resolution. In effect, each scene must tell your players something they didn't know before, initiating a conflict, introducing a clue or resolving a challenge to drive the story ever onward. When creating a scene, ask yourself, "What is its purpose in my story?" If it's meant to promote conflict between the characters and a Sardaukar contingent, make sure the players feel threatened by the Sardaukar hostility.

Toward this end, don't allow yourself to be distracted by player interaction. Though you shouldn't prevent interactions endangering your plot, you should take steps to encourage character actions furthering your story. For example, if you've created a scene to introduce players to a helpful contact, don't portray the character as antagonistic unless doing so furthers your plot. Otherwise the characters might abandon the character, finding his arrogance intolerable, and never discover the clue the contact was meant to confer.

For similar reasons, conclude each scene once it's accomplished its purpose. The longer you allow characters to linger, the greater the chance for them to diverge on a tangent. By keeping things moving, you can conclude a scene dramatically, without the players ever noticing that they're being propelled ever forward. For example, once your scene has divulged Sardaukar pursuers on the characters' trail, end the scene with lasguns blazing, literally forcing them to flee into the next scene. Protracting a scene prolongs the adventure, and most scenes exist to advance, not subvert, the plot. Some scenes may serve to build theme through character dialogue. Others may serve as dramatic foreshadowing or narrative segues to cultivate mood. But these are the exceptions rather than the rule: use scenes to advance the plot, and monitor their duration to maintain your pacing.

If every scene serves its purpose, your players will soon come to realize each scene presents them with specific opportunities. Soon, they'll approach each scene digging for clues, engaging your NPC's, looking for information or jumping into action when the opportunity arises, unconsciously keeping pace with your story's innate timing. So do your best to make every scene important. Ask yourself: What is the narrative purpose of this scene? How does it advance the plot or illustrate the theme? What characters need to be there for the scene to accomplish its purpose? What event or conclusion signals the end of the scene? With those questions answered, you're ready to commit that scene to your developing story line.

Scene Purposes

Some example purposes that a scene might serve.

- Introduce an important Supporting Character (NPC)
- Identify the main antagonist or opponent
- Set up an important character conflict
- Establish an atmosphere; crisis, tension, friendship, awe
- Plant a clue required to move forward in the plot
- Provide meaning to a clue planted earlier
- Set-up background information
- Allow the players to confront their opponents
- Resolve a major/minor conflict and/or plot line.

Climactic Scenes

Every chapter contains at least one scene vital to the story's climax. Narrators do well to script these scenes with two or more "openings" for the players, giving them adequate opportunity to enter the scene from divergent angles. Equally important, climactic scenes must point the characters toward a certain resolution; otherwise the scene may result in anti-climax. For example, if your characters must reach the fogwood haven to encounter their assassin contact and confront their Sardaukar pursuers, make sure two or more of your previous scenes point them in that direction. You could insinuate the first opening into the mission briefing, suggesting that the assassin must be hiding "somewhere remote," beyond the questing glances of hidden informants. Later, in the capital of Ecaz, you might introduce your players to a gregarious artist, who recounts his stay at the fogwood preserve. Prompting them with the dialogue "...located in a remote mountain valley... a person could get lost up there, and stay lost for a long, long time," the artist provides a second opening. His words mimic the first opening with similar phrasing, and reinforce the driving logic by suggesting the haven would make a perfect sanctuary for their elusive contact.

The Three-Act Model

Virtually every drama follows something called the Three-Act Model. This makes an admirable model for your *DUNE RPG* narratives, as well. In the first act, you set up the conflict to come and get the characters ready to begin the main story. In the second act, the characters

determine the nature of their opposition, gather resources or information, and struggle against their antagonists. In the third act, the characters triumph (usually) and the results of the conflict become apparent.

Act One: Introduction

Called the premise, or "hook", the first scene draws the characters into the main story line. This can be as simple as an introductory scene leading the characters to discover saboteurs within the household compound, or it can involve a tense mission briefing and fold-space journey to a strategic CHOAM summit. The hook can act as a "teaser", giving a little taste of the conflict to come, or it can present an immediate threat—the compound may be invaded unless the characters repair the shield generator in time. Often the introduction starts your story *in media res*, Latin for "in the middle of things." Don't waste time describing what the characters are doing before the first important event occurs, start the narrative "in progress" with the characters assembled before a plaintive Guild retinue. Better yet, start the action with the sound of aerial bombardment, leaving players to realize their House shields are down!

In theory, the introduction should establish the conflict to come and give the players an identifiable lead to pursue. By the end of Act One, the characters should find themselves entrenched in the story line, knowing the nature of their immediate challenge. They've accepted their dilemma and must now confront its dimensions. The scene establishing the major confrontation is called the "first plot turn." This scene, usually happening at the end of Act One, turns the plot around and provides direction and momentum for the confrontation approaching in Act Two.

Act One Introductions

Narrative introductions might include the following:

- An arena combat during a fête
- An arriving Guild transport brings important guests
- An envoy, bearing important news, falls victim to treachery
- The low rumble of explosions signal the onset of invasion or sabotage
- A monumental resolution divides the Sysselraad, foreshadowing a shift of political alliances
- An infamous person, presumed dead, is reported alive
- The players are summoned by their Great House liege to perform an important mission

For example, let's return to our fogwood haven on the planet Ecaz. The introduction explains the necessity to find Master Izaos, a fugitive assassin fled to Ecaz. Perhaps their House Mentat approximates his location, or the final scene from the previous chapter gave them a lead. The first plot turn reveals that another faction also hunts the notorious assassin. That turn might involve intercepting a message, crossing paths with his pursuers in a nearby city or receiving a distrans from a local contact. From a generic "mystery story", the first plot turn changes our narrative into an action story and introduces the first glimpse of the enemy, a Sardaukar death squad.

Act Two: Confrontation

In the second act, the characters confront their opposition. In stories about crises of conscience, they confront their own attitudes toward their moral incertitude. In suspense stories, they realize the full nature of their enigma and glimpse one or more possible solutions. In adventure stories, they meet their enemies face to face or encounter their physical challenges head on. Ideally, the players spend the first half of Act Two discovering the nature or scope of their chief opposition and the second half of the act choosing an appropriate response and preparing to carry it out.

Between those two halves falls the narrative "midpoint"—the point at which the nature of the story changes direction. At the midpoint, the hunted becomes the hunter, the confounding mystery becomes methodic pursuit, the baiting of the trap becomes the tightening of the noose. Sometimes the midpoint scene presents a dramatic revelation; in the fogwood sanctuary, the players discover they're not the only ones searching for the assassin. But his other hunters prove bent on his destruction, and maybe the characters along with him! Alternately, the midpoint scene can result in some temporary setback or minor defeat (such as the character's being driven to flee by the aerial assault)—leaving them with bruises or wounded egos, but arming them with the knowledge to rise to their feet and face their challenge with renewed determination. Functioning in this manner, the midpoint serves a psychological role as well as a purely narrative purpose. It needn't occur exactly halfway through the narrative (though the drama increases by near proximity), but rather when the characters abandon caution and reaction to assume a more aggressive or active demeanor.

The second act also resolves any red herrings or false leads the characters have been pursuing. By the end of Act Two, the characters should be ready to face, and hopefully overcome, their chief opposition or major obstacle. Planning for this can be the difficult task in preparing your script, since you can never be sure how your players will react to your scripted leads and hidden clues. Be sure to connect your introductory scene to your scripted climax through a number of scenes, clues and alternate leads. Once your players take your lead, you can eliminate redundant clues on the fly, turning the story direction over to your players. In a sense, the nar-



rative midpoint also represents the point at which control of the narrative shifts from Narrator to players, placing the ultimate outcome wholly (or so it seems) in the players' hands. From the midpoint forward, the Narrator guides the story from a backseat position, giving subtle direction as needed to make sure the players reach the finish line.

Act Two Confrontations

Narrative mid-points might include the following:

- The players find evidence of danger in a place of assumed safety.
- Political alliances shift unexpectedly, due to a rival's interference
- The House shield generators fail for no apparent reason. Sabotage!
- A House declares formal vendetta, forcing the characters to prepare for violence.
- The main antagonists abduct a player character, averting their apparent victory.
- Upon arresting the villain, the players discover a dire plot to be already in motion.
- Uncovering a traitor, the players must discover who she worked for.

At the end of Act Two comes the "second plot turn." Although there may be any number of twists or plot turns between the introduction and the climax, the second plot turn presents the key scene propelling the story toward its climax. After the second plot turn, the climax should almost seem inevitable: The rivals must cross blades, the assailant must be unmasked, the hunted must confront his pursuers, and so on.

In our example, the second plot turn may come when the Entourage discovers that their assassin contact played an important role in the Ginaz-Moritani war of assassins. Now the player characters find themselves confronted with a moral imperative—to reveal the Emperor's part in the legendary affair. The second plot turn puts everything together—the Emperor does not want his role known, hence the Sardaukar pursuers. They want the assassin, and anyone who knows his secret, conveniently dead. This is the make-or-break point—what do your characters do now?

Act Three: The Resolution

The third act presents the chapter climax and narrative denouement. Here, the final clues fall into place, growing hostilities result in battle, the hidden traitor emerges at last or the House agenda comes to fruition. Surprise endings should be revealed during the climax, when the players' attention and excitement reach their peak. Intimating the surprise too early creates a distraction, revealing it too late proves anticlimactic. Whereas the Narrator leads the story up to the midpoint, and players direct things to their natural climax, the climax itself should establish the direction for the remainder of the narrative, allowing the story to wind down to its logical conclusion.

It's usually a good idea to begin writing a story by writing the climax. If you know how you want the story to peak, you can generally create scenes and dramatic openings leading the players toward that dramatic turning point. But after the climax, it is the character actions and culmination of events that should sensibly lead to the ultimate conclusion. Using this approach, you might try scripting the climax in some amount of detail, hinting toward the most probable resolution. Your notes might read something like this: "Having discovered the Emperor's role in the Ginaz-Moritani war of assassins, they must elude or defeat their Sardaukar pursuers, bringing Master Iosaz to testify before the Landsraad tribunal."

Without having any idea of how the story should climax and point to resolution, keeping the story on track might prove difficult given the tendency of players to pursue unexpected avenues or take some wrong turns. Though scripting the conclusion fosters pointless determinism, failing to address the story's climax can result in hours of aimless narration. If you successfully lead players to your pre-scripted climax, you don't have to worry about the final conclusion. Let the story take you there,

even if its doesn't result in the ending you imagined. By monitoring the story's progress and allowing it to reach its natural conclusion, its final outcome will surprise both you and your players.

Act Three Resolutions

Resolutions may include the following:

- The players lead a razzia or all-out assault against a rival holding, lasguns blazing.
- The players search for an antidote to save an important dignitary.
- Uncovering the key to the natives' culture allows the players to escape
- A climactic duel ensues between a player and a rival.
- An Adept (or other character with dual allegiance) must decide between honor (or love) and duty.
- The players must subvert a violation of the Great Convention for which they will made to appear responsible.
- After long debate and political intrigue, a vote in the Syssleraad determines the player's success or failure.

After the climax, your final scenes should tie off any remaining loose ends bringing the chapter to a close. Occasionally, you may want to create an "open" ending, dangling one or more story threads before your players, using them to segue into your next narrative. Creating an open ending can be as simple as including some enigmatic parting dialogue. Consider the following spoke by Lady Margot Fenring in *DUNE*: "... Do not count a human dead until you've seen his body. And even then you can make a mistake." Clearly, her advice suggests that she and her Count have not seen the last of young Paul Atreides (to whom she refers). By providing such open endings in your own stories, your resolution can provide closure for the main plot of the chapter while providing a solid lead-in for the next chapter to follow. This technique proves especially useful for linking several, related chapters together, forming a solid connection between the multiple episodes of an ongoing chronicle.

Subplots

Once you've become familiar with the three-act model, you may want to explore the possibility of including additional subplots into your narrative. A subplot resembles a mini-story nested within a larger narrative. Typically, subplots introduce an additional conflict or challenge that somehow ties into the main story line. Consider *DUNE* for example, if the main plot line describes the Atreides-Harkonnen vendetta, then the

Three Act Model Summary

Act One: Introduction & Conflict

- **Introduction** – establishes story premise and foreshadows main conflict

An example from DUNE – The Baron and Piter reveal the trap they've set for the Atreides on the planet Arrakis.

- **First Plot Turn** – reveals the main conflict, and moves the story into the next act.

Harkonnen forces rout the Atreides on Arrakis, driving Paul, Jessica and the few remaining Atreides survivors to seek refuge among the native desert peoples.

Act Two: Confrontation & Turning Point

- **Investigation and adaptation** – Characters investigate and confront their major opposition

Isolated in the desert, Paul and Jessica enlist with the Fremen tribe at Sietch Tabr. They try to rally support among the Fremen to combat the Harkonnens and restore Paul to the Atreides dukedom.

- **Midpoint** – Major turning point in which the hunted become the hunter

Paul completes the Fremen initiation ritual, riding his first sandworm to become eligible as a Fremen "leader of men." Paul returns to convene a Fremen "gathering" a tribal meeting to unite the Fremen against their Harkonnen enemies.

- **Confrontation** – Armed with information gathered earlier, the characters act, taking charge of their situation.

Confronting his terrible purpose, Paul endeavors to become the Mahdi—the Fremen messiah who will lead the Fremen tribes to paradise.

- **Second Plot Turn** – scene that moves the characters and plot toward the climax.

Paul partakes of the Water of Life, cementing his role as the Fremen messiah and assuming the mantle of tribal leadership.

Act Three: Climax & Resolution

- **Climax** – the major confrontation reaches its zenith

Leading the Fremen legions, Paul prepares the final assault on the Imperial and Harkonnen forces at Arrakeen.

- **Denouement** – final revelations

Having crushed their enemies, Paul bids for the Imperial throne, revealing his mastery over the spice and the Imperial economy.

- **Epilogue** – either provides closure or sets of the next adventure

Paul assumes his place as Emperor, hinting about his plans for a new era of rule.

whole Kwisatz Haderach theme introduces at least one major subplot. To prove himself to be the Kwisatz Haderach, Paul must survive the Water of Life (the conflict). The fact that Paul survives and assumes the mantle of the Fremen messiah provides the turning point, enabling him to lead the Fremen hordes to victory over House Harkonnen and signifying a victory for House Atreides. By overcoming the chief conflict introduced by the subplot, Paul acquired the talent and vision to triumph in the major plot line as well.

Ideally, every subplot serves to advance the main plot or theme of the larger narrative, though they don't necessarily relate to one another (especially if multiple subplots are being introduced). Ordinarily, a single chapter should contain no more than one or two subplots, though in the context of a multi-chapter chronicle, the plot line of each chapter can be seen as a subplot, provided all of the chapters advance an ongoing story line (see "Epic Chronicles," next page). And during the course of a narrative, the characters themselves may introduce subplots by pursuing personal agendas within the context of the primary story line. When reflecting the greater conflict or theme, such initiatives should prove welcome to Narrators who can use them to reinforce any of his own plot elements. Eventually, you might even choose to narrate entire chapters during which the Entourage's pursuits provide the main plot line, while your subplots merely serve to drive the story forward and keep the action dramatic.

Sample Subplots

- A character with dual allegiance has his loyalties tested
- A Reverend Mother arrives to observe one of the characters
- One of the characters has the opportunity to single-handedly acquire a CHOAM Contract
- Several aides and NPCs fall ill. Coincidence or poison?
- One of the characters learns something mysterious about his past

Creating A Chronicle

The individual chapters of your game all add up to form one or more *DUNE RPG* chronicles, also called "campaigns" in other roleplaying games. As a whole, a chronicle might follow a singular theme, or it could actively explore all of the traditional DUNE themes, tackling them chapter by chapter, or in smaller chapter groupings (referred to as books). Regardless of their composition or theme, a chronicle always answers the question, "So then what happened?" Theme-based chronicles address the issues underlying the surface events of the narrative, while those chronicles lacking a united theme emphasize the sequence itself, recounting the action and events in a lively, dramatic manner.

Episodic Chronicles

Episodic Chronicles are those consisting of multiple chapters, each telling their own individual story. The chapters may be connected by shared settings and characters, but do not reveal a central theme or overarching story line. Each chapter tells its own story, and each leads into the next; but as a whole, the episodic chronicle recounts a series of adventures and nothing more. The history of a Great House closely resembles an episodic chronicle. Each generation tells its own story, operating like a chapter in a grand, episodic chronicle. When linked together, the chapters recollect the greater House history, giving an accurate and interest account of the family history.

Episodic chronicles benefit from their lack of centralized theme and story line. Being almost impossible to overscript, episodic chronicles appeal to players who object to protracted campaigns that must be played out in their entirety. After all, since each chapter presents its own, self-contained story, there's no loss of drama if the Entourage suddenly changes its membership or adopts a different agenda in an episodic chronicle. But without a unified theme or underlying story line, the Narrator must make sure to create logical segues and interesting events to hold the players' attention over multiple chapters. Focusing on character growth and House evolution (see "Chapter 8") provides the easiest method for threading chapters together to form a good episodic chronicle for *DUNE*.

Book Story Arcs

A book describes a group of chapters that build upon one another to create a multi-part story, called a "story arc." Story arcs can function in a variety of ways. They can explore a particular theme through numerous situations, survey a culture or setting through a series of expeditions, recount the pursuit of a House agenda over the course of several months, or describe an ongoing vendetta between the Entourage and adversary. Adversarial story arcs particularly suit the *DUNE RPG*, given the strong emphasis on vendetta in the original novel. By the end of the final chapter, the intractable adversary should seem as realistic and as multidimensional as any player character (maybe even appearing somewhat sympathetic). So be sure to reveal that personality to the players. Much of the enjoyment players derive from the adversarial arc involves getting to know the idiosyncrasies of their rival, ideally realizing his weaknesses and turning them against him.

Though you'll need to link at least two chapters together to form a story arc, story arcs can span any number of

chapters. But not all of the chapters in a story arc need to occur as a continuous sequence. An unrelated chapter inserted in the middle can help relax some of the tension or simply provide a welcome diversion. For example, in the novel *DUNE*, Feyd-Rautha's 100th arena combat interrupts the multi-chapter story arc concerning Paul's existence among the Fremen. Though the scene does tie into the major plot of the novel, its action and politics provide a welcome diversion from the religious overtones occurring in the Fremen subplot.

Sample Story Arcs

- The players' House embarks on a war of assassins with a rival House
- The player's House wages a campaign to rid their fiefdom of foreign spies.
- The natives of the players' homeworld guard a secret culture the players must infiltrate
- The Swordmaster's School courts one of the players, hoping she'll teach at the school.
- Previously allied families begin to behave strangely when dealing with the players.
- The characters' Great House patron begins grooming their House Minor for advancement to Great House status

Elements of a story arc can begin as a casual mention in one scene of a chapter, then develop into an entire subplot two chapters later. Similarly, an interrupting chapter could introduce an entirely new story arc, one that forms the primary plot line of a parallel book. Narrators can alternate two different story arcs, leapfrogging between them from chapter to chapter. In fact, the Feyd-Rautha chapter does exactly that: it introduces a new story arc set on the planet Giedi Prime. It contrasts the actions of Paul's messianic story, set on the far away planet of Arrakis. As *DUNE* reveals, story arcs can be introduced at almost any time. They might begin as an apparently unrelated chapter, or spawn from events occurring mid-chapter in an existing story arc. But it's important to recognize that story arcs link whole chapters together, they do not deal with scenes or intra-chapter conflicts—that type of interweaving concerns plot and subplot, not to be confused with story and story arcs.

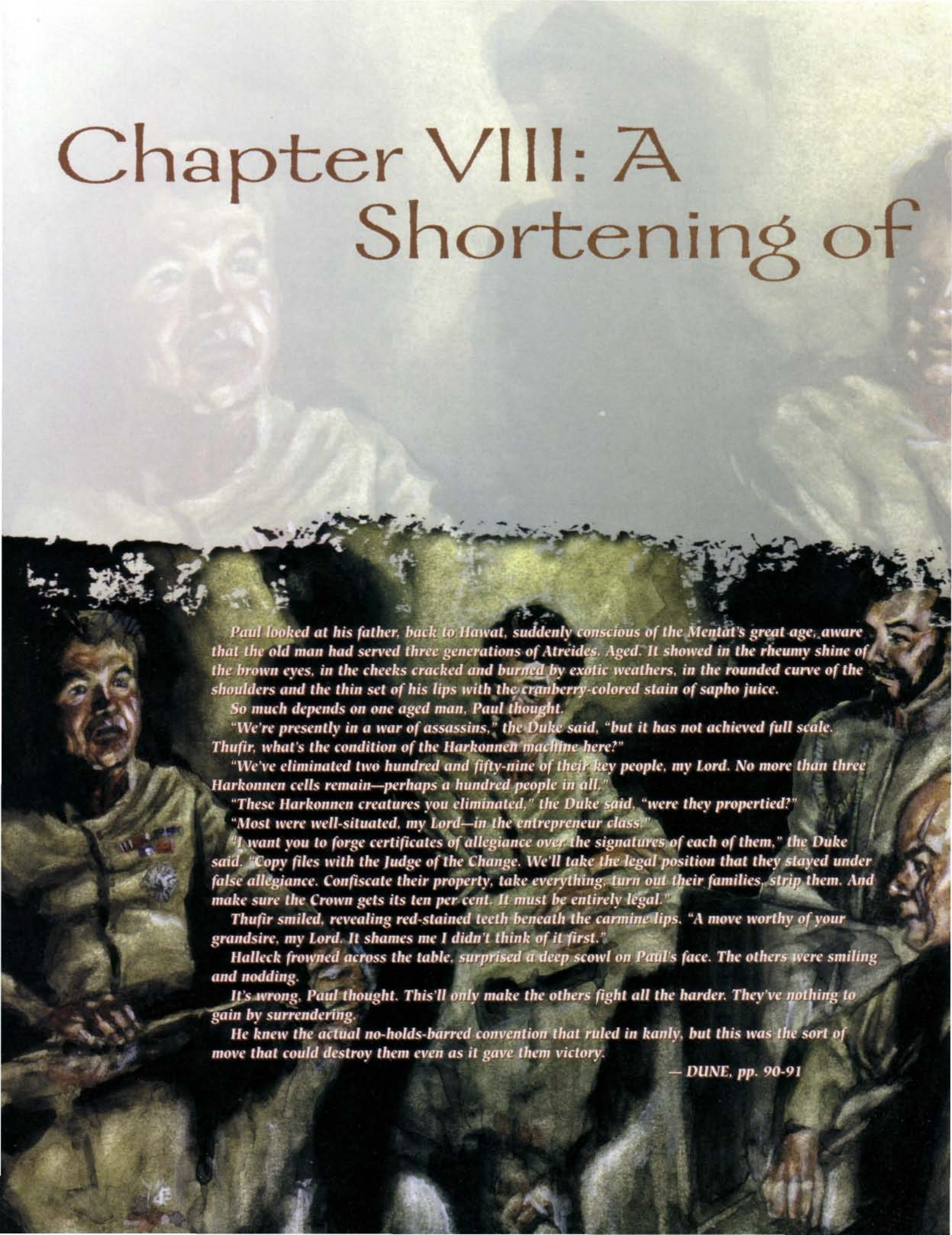
A given story arc can unfold over years of game time, if the Narrator remains patient and the players stay interested. For example, the Kwisatz Haderach story arc of the DUNE series spanned some twelve to fifteen years following the history of Paul Atreides. And arguably, that arc continued for thousands of years more, following the exploits of his son Leto II in *God Emperor of DUNE*.

Epic Chronicles

If an episodic chronicle resembles the seemingly random history of a Great House, then an epic chronicle more closely resembles the intricate story told by the novel *DUNE*. Epic chronicles feature an interconnecting plot or overriding theme that links nearly every component chapter and every component book to tell a story of heroic dimension. Such campaigns can prove difficult to plan and challenging to narrate over protracted periods of time. Often, a major story arc serves as the function of an epic within a larger campaign framework, although this can diminish the impact of the underlying theme or story. Nonetheless, if the Narrator and players cooperate—exploring the richness of a theme or weaving an epic story arc—the end rewards can prove deeply satisfying. Examining one or more related themes from a variety of narrative perspectives creates more realistic characters and emphasizes the epic nature of DUNE storytelling. Don't let their scope intimidate you or your players; epic chronicles are worth every ounce of effort.

In the endgame, creating and telling stories following the *DUNE RPG* guidelines resembles the same type of enterprise as writing a novel or similar, dramatic masterpiece. Like navigating through fold-space, you need a destination in mind, a safe course plotted, an awareness of common pitfalls and a willingness to improvise when unforeseen obstacles stand in your path. You should understand the capabilities of your vehicle, be it your story or your Heighliner. Put your trust in your vision; and if all else fails, consult the game manual. The guidelines presented here enable you to travel without moving, folding space from one world to the next in the blink of an eye.

Chapter VIII: A Shortening of



Paul looked at his father, back to Hawat, suddenly conscious of the Mentat's great age, aware that the old man had served three generations of Atreides. Aged. It showed in the rheumy shine of the brown eyes, in the cheeks cracked and burned by exotic weathers, in the rounded curve of the shoulders and the thin set of his lips with the cranberry-colored stain of sapho juice.

So much depends on one aged man, Paul thought.

"We're presently in a war of assassins," the Duke said, "but it has not achieved full scale. Thufir, what's the condition of the Harkonnen machine here?"

"We've eliminated two hundred and fifty-nine of their key people, my Lord. No more than three Harkonnen cells remain—perhaps a hundred people in all."

"These Harkonnen creatures you eliminated," the Duke said, "were they propertied?"

"Most were well-situated, my Lord—in the entrepreneur class."

"I want you to forge certificates of allegiance over the signatures of each of them," the Duke said. "Copy files with the Judge of the Change. We'll take the legal position that they stayed under false allegiance. Confiscate their property, take everything, turn out their families, strip them. And make sure the Crown gets its ten per cent. It must be entirely legal."

Thufir smiled, revealing red-stained teeth beneath the carmine lips. "A move worthy of your grandsire, my Lord. It shames me I didn't think of it first."

Halleck frowned across the table, surprised a deep scowl on Paul's face. The others were smiling and nodding.

It's wrong, Paul thought. This'll only make the others fight all the harder. They've nothing to gain by surrendering.

He knew the actual no-holds-barred convention that ruled in kanly, but this was the sort of move that could destroy them even as it gave them victory.

— DUNE, pp. 90-91

the Way

Now that you know how to script dramatic scenes, craft engaging chapters and build episodic chronicles, you're probably wondering how to link the pieces together. Though we've briefly explored some ways to wind down a longer chronicle, it's time to consider how you'll tie your chronicles together, composing a living tale of your House's march through history and your characters' part in that epic journey.

In "Chapter 5," we mentioned something called an interlude—the time elapsed between dramatic scenes, chapters or chronicles. In the *DUNE RPG*, narrative interludes present opportunities for the Narrator and players to take stock of recent events. Reflecting on their performance and encounters during the recent adventure, the Narrator and players should consider the impact late events have made upon their characters and House.

As previously noted, one of the major themes of the DUNE milieu concerns the evolution of societies and individuals. How do civilizations evolve as a result of historic developments? How do individuals adapt to environmental changes? These are questions the Narrator and players should ask themselves at the conclusion of each chronicle—questions this chapter strives to answer.

Character Evolution

Dramatic events—whether precipitating fortuitous outcomes or inglorious defeats—lead to a wealth of experience from which humankind draws to evolve as individuals and societies. Dramatic storytelling embraces this philosophy, revealing the most heroic characters to be those who adapt to their environments, arming themselves with the collective experience needed to overcome future obstacles and crises affronting them.

So do all *DUNE RPG* characters evolve from experience. As dynamic individuals they adapt their ideas and behavior in response to life's lessons. In surviving such ordeals they acquire a trove of personal experience—learning new skills, finding new passions or abandoning hopeless ideals. To represent such learning, the *DUNE RPG* reinforces the concept of character Experience through the measurable accumulation of Experience Points.

Experience Points

Though in life it is difficult to trace human development through intangible experience, doing so in the *DUNE RPG* proves fairly simple and straightforward. During the narrative interlude, following each chronicle, the Narrator awards Experience Points to each of the players. Experience Points translate the amorphous lessons learned during a chronicle into measurable experience players use to develop their characters. By spending Experience Points to raise their character's attributes, skills or traits, players reveal how recent events have influenced their characters' lives or development. By enhancing their innate characteristics, players adapt their characters over time, simulating the personal development resulting directly from their characters' exploits.

Awarding Experience Points

The Narrator awards Experience Points at the conclusion of each chapter (or, in the case of narratives spanning many chapters, at the end of the entire chronicle). Granting a number of points to each player, the Narrator awards Experience based on her evaluation of three basic factors: what the characters accomplished; how well they accomplished it; and how convincingly the players portrayed their characters in the process.

As Narrator, you should first consider whether the characters accomplished their goals during the narrative. Did they succeed at their commissioned ventures? If so, they deserve Experience Points; but the number depends upon how well they performed. If, for example, they resolved the primary crisis or foiled the major antagonist, but in the process caused other problems of suffered significant setbacks, their performance may warrant few, if any, Experience Points. Conversely, if the characters excelled in their objectives, succeeding at one or more Ventures and perhaps achieving one or more unexpected boons during the scenario, they deserve extra Experience Points for doing so well.

Failure to accomplish goals in a narrative does not always justify complete denial of Experience Points. Characters (and players) often learn as much from failure as they do from success, and by surviving each crisis or ordeal, characters usually take something from the

event— knowledge that will help them overcome similar challenges in the future.

When evaluating failure, consider the reasons for their missteps. If they made foolish decisions or engaged in nonsensical actions—having failed to follow obvious leads, obey their lieges' warnings, act in accordance with character—then their actions probably don't warrant Experience awards. But if they performed admirably, making sound decisions and taking appropriate actions, yet still failed (perhaps because of some unfortunate dice rolls or inevitable circumstances), then they deserve some award signifying how they learned from their failures. Remember, never withhold Experience Points as a means of punishing players. If their miserable performance warrants a reprimand from their Houses, then issue such rebuffs during the narrative debriefing, letting players realize the magnitude of their failures from their characters' perspectives.

Depending on your story preferences, good roleplaying may prove equally important as accomplishing goals. The DUNE milieu is fraught with tragedy—characters perish, bloodlines falter and Houses decline. When recounted in a gripping fashion, tragic dramas prove just as entertaining as heroic epics: it's much a matter of taste and preference. So roleplaying provides another justification for awarding Experience Points. After all, the difference between a divine tragedy and comedy of errors depends almost entirely on the quality of narration rather than the tally of failures or missteps.

When evaluating a player's roleplaying performance, consider how well they acted "in character." Did they act in accordance with their vocational role and House ethos? Did they convey a sense of character, revealing behavioral mannerisms or character idiosyncrasies? Were their actions appropriate given the character's knowledge, or did the character act on real world knowledge that only its player would enjoy? As you can see, good roleplaying does not require players to eat, breath and speak entirely in character—it only requires the players to interact with the narrative setting in a convincing manner. When players demonstrate good roleplaying, they deserve extra experience for their effort. When they radically violate the character's credibility, their performance may warrant reduced experience awards. See the "Experience Point Awards" chart for point assignments and additional guidelines.

As a general rule, Experience rewards should be allotted in small increments—typically just a few points per chapter. Characters should normally earn from 2 to 5 Experience Points per chapter; greater awards being reserved for extraordinary performance by a character or player. Limiting the number of Experience Points that characters receive leads to steady, incremental character development. This enables the Narrator to track character performance and pace character development to match the pacing of his envisioned chronicles.

Experience Point Awards

Points	Circumstance
2	Characters accomplished the primary goal of the chapter/chronicle (award to each surviving character)
+1	A character successfully performed one or more narrative Ventures (award per Venture on an individual basis)
-1	Characters accomplished the goal(s) of the narrative, but caused additional problems or suffered major setbacks (award to each surviving character)
+1	Characters accomplished the goal(s) of the narrative in an exemplary and clever fashion (award to each surviving character)
+1-2	Characters failed to accomplish the primary goals of the narrative, but succeeded in telling a dramatic tale to add to their House chronicle (award to each surviving character)
+0	A character was roleplayed adequately (award on individual basis)
+1–2	Characters were roleplayed well (award on individual basis)
-1–2	Characters were roleplayed poorly (award on individual basis)
+1–2	Characters did something of extraordinary service to their House, or suffered great personal sacrifice to further the legend of their Entourage (award on an individual or group basis)
+1	Characters triumphed in the face of overwhelming adversity (award to each surviving character)

Also note, a zero point award represents the minimum experience a character can suffer from his exploits, even if the character incurs enough penalties to reach negative numbers. Characters cannot lose prior experience simply because they do not learn anything from the events of a narrative. But if their disgraceful performance warrants negative impact, characters may suffer narrative punishments issued by their governing household.

Spending Experience Points

Though point awards quantify the character's experience, how a player chooses to spend them explains the circumstances of the character's development. Spending Experience Points to enhance characteristics or increase Karama, players needn't explain each and every point expenditure. In other words, they needn't trace which attributes, skills and advantages they use during the course of a narrative to rationalize their character's development in specific areas. But spending Experience to raise

oft-used characteristics goes a long way toward explaining why the character develops in the way she does.

Nevertheless, this simple rationale does not always make for the most dramatic character evolution. Sometimes players will want to develop new skills or traits to enable their characters to diverge from their expected development track—perhaps abandoning violence to become a noted arbitrator, or dispensing with reasonable behavior to affect encroaching madness. Though the Narrator remains the ultimate judge over character development, the creation of compelling characters often requires wide latitude with regard to Experience Point expenditures. As a general rule, Narrators should permit characters to acquire new skills and traits providing the player can offer a reasonable explanation for such development.



Experience Point Development

Characteristic	EP Cost
Buying a new skill (level 1)	4
Improving a known skill...	
to level 2	2
to level 3	3
to level 4	4
to level 5	5
to level 6	6
Buying a new specialization (at a level equal to the existing skill)	Skill Level
Improving an existing specialization...	
to level 2	1
to level 3	2
to level 4	2
to level 5	3
to level 6	3
to level 7	4
Improving attributes...	
to level 2	3
to level 3	4
to level 4	5
to level 5	6
to level 6	7
Improving edges	4 per point
Buying a new advantage	4 x value
Improving an existing advantage	4 per point
Reducing or eliminating a disadvantage	4 x per point
Karama Point	5

In addition to spending Experience Points to develop new or existing characteristics, the Narrator may also permit characters to devote Experience to the reduction of disadvantageous traits, such as a Physical Impairment, Adversary, and so on. Following the previous guidelines, the Narrator must evaluate the player's reasoning for such reductions; determining whether the character can receive medical remedies or whether the rival has forgotten his grudge. In cases where recent events support such developments, the Narrator should assist the player in justifying the reduction of the intended trait. For example, if the recent narrative introduces a character to bionic implants from IX, then spending Experience Points to reduce partial blindness could be explained by virtue of forbidden technology. Similarly, if the characters' rival either perished or forgave the character during the course of the narrative, then reducing or eliminating the disadvantage would represent an appropriate use of acquired Experience Points.

In such cases, the Narrator may decide to award "limited" Experience Points (in addition to or in place of Experience, Karama, or Renown) for the specific purpose of lowering a disadvantage or acquiring an advantage. For example, if a character assisted a Reverend Mother during the course of an adventure, the Narrator might award 1 Experience Point limited to the purchase of the Ally advantage, naming the Reverend Mother as the particular ally. When awarding limited experience, the final decision of whether to accept the experience should remain with the player; if the player doesn't want to reduce a disadvantage or acquire a new advantage with limited experience, the award simply goes away—not everyone takes full advantage of every opportunity in life.

When developing characteristics, the Experience Point costs differs significantly from the Development Point costs paid during character creation. The accompa-

Renown Awards

Incident	Renown Award
Saving the life of an important NPC during a secret diplomatic mission	1
Saving the life of an important NPC during a public diplomatic mission	1-2
Saving the life of an important NPC during a highly-publicized or well-known diplomatic mission	2-3
NPC who is saved is extremely important (e.g. a Noble from a Great House, a Guild Navigator, a Reverend Mother, etc...)	+1–2
Uncovering a Sleeper Agent	1
Uncovering a Sleeper Agent about to strike (e.g. operating a hunter-seeker)	1-2
Uncovering a Sleeper Agent in an extremely dangerous position (e.g.,preparing t assassinate a visiting Noble from a Great House)	2-3
Displaying skill or valor in a duel	1
Displaying skill or valor in a Razzia	1-2
Displaying skill or valor in an Assault	2-3
Displaying skill or valor in a battle that changes the political structure of the Imperium (e.g. The Arrakis Affair)	3-5
Successfully completing a minor diplomatic mission	1
Successfully completing an important diplomatic mission	1-2
Successfully completing an extremely important diplomatic mission	2-3
Successfully completing a diplomatic mission which mayaffect the course of Imperial politics for decades to come	3-5
Successfully negotiating an economic conflict of minor importance	1
Successfully negotiating an economic conflict of major importance	1–2
Successfully negotiating an economic conflict which may have a profound effect on CHOAM company	3-5

nying Experience Point Cost Table lists the costs for experience-based character improvements: Characters may not voluntarily reduce characteristics or assume disadvantageous traits to gain Experience Points as they could Development Points.

All costs for improving skills, attributes and edges are cumulative—improving a skill from level 3 to level 5 costs a total of 9 (4 for rank 4, 5 for rank 5); going from Dexterity -2 to Dexterity 0 costs 8 Experience Points (4 points for each point of improvement). The Narrator must approve all Experience Point expenditures. Renown cannot be purchased with experience.

Karama

In addition to or in lieu of awarding a number of Experience Points, Narrators may confer additional Karama Points. Each character begins play with at least 3 Karama. When used during narratives, they regenerate at the end of the chapter (occasionally in mid-narrative as a reward for especially heroic or daring actions); see pages 115 for details on recovering Karama Points).



Characters can buy additional Karama with Experience Points. In some cases the Narrator may wish to give them out as a reward for good game play. But this should be rare; Karama Points are extraordinarily useful, and only the most heroic characters should possess a great many of them. If a character behaves in a particularly noble, heroic or altruistic manner, an award of an extra Karama point might be appropriate.

Narrators should be wary of letting characters accrue too many Karama points, regardless of how they get them. Karama enables a character to raise his Tests Results directly, often meaning the difference between success and failure. A character who accumulates too much Karama will rarely fail at any-

thing, making for lackluster drama. Though withholding Karama awards and restricting Experience Point expenditures prove the easiest way to limit Karama, it is also appropriate for Narrators to judge that Karama spent on "uncharacteristic" behavior or trivial actions never replenishes. Remember, in the *DUNE RPG*, Karama represents miraculous fortune, a gift from the spirit world or a touch from the hand of God.

Renown

Characters earn Renown through their actions, and Narrators should award Renown Points accordingly. Generally, if an accomplishment could conceivably get a character noticed, she earns Renown. Saving an heir from assassination, for example, would garner a character Renown. Typical Renown awards range between 1 and 2 points, divided among a several of Renown aspects; but exploits generating planet-wide attention could conceivably earn 3 to 5 points, perhaps devoted to a single aspect.

The circumstances surrounding the character's action determines the Renown aspect receiving the increase. If the action directly relates to a character skill or trait, then the reward probably deserves assignment to the corresponding aspect (see pages 70–71 for more information). For example, if a character achieves a dramatic success while performing a Statecraft Venture, then awarding one point to increase the character's Justice aspect is appropriate. Under more ambiguous circumstances, the Narrator should use her better judgment. Keep in mind, that multiple point awards often warrant distribution among numerous Renown aspects; if a character were to earn 3 points of Renown for quelling a public riot through diplomacy and a show of force, distributing the reward among Valor and Justice (and maybe even Prayer) is entirely justified.

Suggested Renown Guidelines

The accompanying table (left page) provides some rough guidelines for Renown awards. Of course, almost any momentous action performed in dire situations could garner Renown for a character, so this list should not be considered exhaustive.

Commendations and Awards

Commendations, awards, badges and similar accolades often accompany multi-point Renown awards. The accompanying table provides a sample list of Imperial and House commendations, along with their suggested point awards. Narrators should feel at liberty to create their own commendations for the various Great and Minor Houses they create, assigning Renown awards and aspects as they see fit.

Commendations

Commendation	Renown Award
Bade of the Lion	2 Valor
Cluster of the Hawk	2 Valor
Lieutenant	2 Learning
Knight	2 Justice
Order of the Sword	3 Valor
Peer of the Realm	3 Learning
Captain	3 Justice
Ambassador	3 Prayer
House Champion	4 Valor
House Spokesman	4 Learning
Commander	4 Prayer

Promotion and Rank

Though characters begin play as important members of their House Entourage, the household command structure offers substantial opportunity for internal promotion. As characters acquire greater experience, masterful skill and heightened renown, they become increasingly qualified to advance within their vocational hierarchy, furthering their career path within one of the household agencies. See the "Household Positions" chart for more information.

Recognition of Qualifications

To simulate the time required for eligible characters to come to the attention of their superiors (or promotions review board), the Narrator can make a Challenging (10) Renown Test for the character's commanding officer. Renown Tests are appropriate after a significant increase in character Renown or after the character scores a dramatic success on any Venture. But characters should not be promoted using this method unless they possess the minimum requirements (skills and renown) or have otherwise fulfilled the narrator's standards for promotion.

Earning a promotion should require more than simply spending Experience Points to raise departmental skills and achieving sufficient Renown. Instead, the Narrator should consider the required skill and Renown levels as minimum requirements for advancement, evaluating each character's roleplaying performance to determine their final qualifications. Because characters have

already undergone similar evaluation to earn Renown, the Narrator should not be too critical when determining their eligibility for promotions. Instead, the Narrator should trust his gut feelings in awarding or denying promotions.

If the Narrator doubts a character's eligibility, but feels the promotion serves the interest of the House or ongoing narrative, he may wish to "interview" the character, assuming the role of a commanding officer and questioning the character about his prior service and personal ambitions. In roleplaying promotion interviews, the Narrator can better appreciate the character's accomplishments and goals, coming by a final decision much more easily. In addition to quelling doubt, narrative interviews can also make for interesting drama as the character presents himself before the superior officer or promotions review board.

Departmental Skills

The Narrator enjoys a bit of latitude when determining a character's "departmental skills." Core skills (such the various types of Administration, Espionage, Military and so on) are always required. But depending on a character's current assignment or mission, Survival could be more important than Politics, or Customs more important than Law.

Narrators should note that all of the promotion requirements are subject to interpretation and adjustment. No two Houses employ the exact same standards or expect precisely the same achievements of their retainers. The guidelines exist for Narrators who prefer a numerical method for evaluating character eligibility to a purely intuitive approach.

Departmental Transfers

Changing career paths rarely enters the minds of most household retainers. Having undergone years of vocational conditioning and having been raised under the strictly regimented faufreluches, transferring departments or agencies represents a major career deviation. Nonetheless, by virtue of character request or House decree, characters occasionally do furlough to another division of House operations. The following guidelines detail such transfers.

The basic qualifications for transferring departments prove similar, if not identical, to gaining a promotion in rank. Characters must possess the departmental core skills at the minimum levels and also possess sufficient Renown in the appropriate categories. Assuming the character meets these conditions, the Narrator must evaluate the character's performance and consider the narrative reasons behind the transfer. If deemed to serve its interests, the House sanctions a departmental transfer, assigning the character to the new department.

When examining character qualifications, the Narrator compares the character's skills and Renown to those required for all ranks in the new department. Once the Narrator determines the highest rank for which the character is qualified, he assigns the character a probationary rank of one grade lower. For example if a Captain of the Guard (Security rank 3) were also qualified to serve as a Captain–Major (Military rank 3), his would gain the rank Captain (Military rank 2) for a probationary period. The character suffers the reduction in rank for a period of time sufficient to evaluate the character's suitability for the department. Assuming the character serves his new department adequately, the Narrator should elevate him to his proper station at the next opportunity, perhaps during the mission debriefing following the current adventure.



House Furloughs

Even more extraordinary than transferring departments, House furloughs indicate one of two things for player characters—the character has performed so disgracefully that his House discharges him from service, or the character has served so admirably that another House seeks to acquire his bond of allegiance. When dishonorably discharged, characters become rogues and acquire that disadvantageous trait (see "Traits," page 110). No longer a member of the household, the character must either find a way to redeem himself, or the Narrator will

Household Positions by Rank

Household Administration (Adepts, Master Strategists, Mentats, Nobles)

Core Skills: Administration (economic), Law, Mercantilism, Observation (surveillance), Persuasion

0	Aide	Valor (0), Learning (0), Justice (1), Prayer (1)
1	Attaché	Valor (0), Learning (1), Justice (1), Prayer (2)
2	Confidante	Valor (1), Learning (1), Justice (2), Prayer (2)
3	Administrator	Valor (1), Learning (2), Justice (2), Prayer (3)
4	Custodian	Valor (2), Learning (3), Justice (3), Prayer (4)
5	House Steward	Valor (3), Learning (3), Justice (4), Prayer (5)

Household Governance (House Nobles)

Core Skills: Administration (political), Command, Diplomacy, Law, Statecraft

0	House Scion	Valor (1), Learning (0), Justice (1), Prayer (0)
1	House Representative	Valor (1), Learning (1), Justice (2), Prayer (0)
2	House Spokesman	Valor (1), Learning (2), Justice (2), Prayer (1)
3	Heir Apparent	Valor (2), Learning (2), Justice (3), Prayer (1)
4	Heir, Presumptive	Valor (3), Learning (3), Justice (4), Prayer (2)
5	Heir Designate	Valor (4), Learning (3), Justice (5), Prayer (3)

Household Intelligence (Assassins, Master Strategists, Mentats)

Core Skills: Administration (intelligence), Espionage, Infiltration, Interrogation, Underworld

0	Sleeper Agent	Valor (0), Learning (1), Justice (1), Prayer (0)
1	Director of Intelligence	Valor (1), Learning (2), Justice (1), Prayer (0)
2	Minister of Information	Valor (1), Learning (2), Justice (1), Prayer (1)
3	Master of Propaganda	Valor (2), Learning (3), Justice (2), Prayer (1)
4	Spymaster	Valor (3), Learning (4), Justice (3), Prayer (2)
5	Master of Assassins	Valor (3), Learning (5), Justice (4), Prayer (3)

Household Military (Master Strategists, Nobles, Swordmasters)

Core Skills: Administration (military), Armament, Armed Combat, Military Operations, World Knowledge

0	Corporal	Valor (1), Learning (0), Justice (1), Prayer (0)
1	Captain	Valor (2), Learning (0), Justice (1), Prayer (1)
2	Captain-Major	Valor (2), Learning (1), Justice (2), Prayer (1)
3	Colonel	Valor (3), Learning (1), Justice (2), Prayer (1)
4	Commander	Valor (4), Learning (2), Justice (3), Prayer (2)
5	Warmaster	Valor (5), Learning (3), Justice (4), Prayer (3)

Household Representatives (Adepts, Master Strategists, Mentats, Nobles)

Core Skills: Administration (political), Diplomacy, Politics, Propaganda, Subterfuge

0	House Envoy	Valor (0), Learning (1), Justice (1), Prayer (0)
1	House Liaison	Valor (0), Learning (1), Justice (2), Prayer (1)
2	Sysselraad Delegate	Valor (1), Learning (2), Justice (2), Prayer (1)
3	Sysselraad Emissary	Valor (1), Learning (2), Justice (3), Prayer (2)
4	House Ambassador	Valor (2), Learning (3), Justice (4), Prayer (3)
5	Sysselraad Spokesman	Valor (3), Learning (4), Justice (5), Prayer (3)

Household Security (Assassins, Master Strategists, Swordmasters)

Core Skills: Administration (security), Equipment (systems), Espionage, Observation, Security

0	Corporal	Valor (1), Learning (0), Justice (1), Prayer (0)
1	Guard Corporal	Valor (2), Learning (1), Justice (1), Prayer (0)
2	Captain	Valor (2), Learning (1), Justice (2), Prayer (1)
3	Captain of the Guard	Valor (3), Learning (1), Justice (2), Prayer (2)
4	Commander of the Guard	Valor (4), Learning (2), Justice (3), Prayer (3)
5	Security Commander	Valor (5), Learning (3), Justice (4), Prayer (3)

Dune Oracle



have to determine a way to work him into future narratives. Sometimes disavowed characters are best retired, becoming NPCs. Alternately, the character can join another Entourage or play solo adventures until such a time as he can rejoin his fellow comrades.

Similarly, characters freed from the bonds of allegiance create similar difficulties for the Narrator. Though the characters enter the employ of their House Minor or patron Great House, they no longer share the other character's allegiance, and may prove difficult to fit into every narrative concerning the other player's House.

Such issues are not insurmountable, and the Narrator should use her own best judgment when considering whether to enact House furloughs. Though gaining a furlough to a prominent House Minor or even to the patron House represents something of a major promotion, the Narrator may opt to delay the furlough until such a time as the other player characters are qualified to move on.

As parting advice, the Narrator should consult the group if the current narratives prove too restrictive for furloughed characters. If the group favors the furlough, the Narrator should discuss its implications to the current story or chronicle and allow the players to decide how they want to proceed. Then the Narrator can work out the details and reconvene the group when she's ready to account for the character furlough.

House Advancement

Just as characters mature so do Houses progress over time, gaining power and prestige as they move from obscurity to eminence. During the narrative interlude, House advancement encourages the Narrator and players evaluate recent events and determine their impact on the character's House. How will recent victories influence the household agenda, or how will setbacks impact their general welfare? Similar to the process of translating character experience into personal development, House advancement tracks household development through acquired Assets and successful Ventures. Represented by a simple system of Asset awards and point expenditures, House Administration involves a loose, narrative process whereby Houses can initiate important Ventures resulting in immediate progress or advancement during forthcoming narratives.

What are Narrative Ventures?

Narrative Ventures (also called House Ventures) refer to specific Skill Tests performed by characters to accomplish specific objectives established for the narrative. Typically, characters attempt Narrative Ventures at opportune moments in the story, as defined by particular scenes or moments during play. For example, during a climactic meeting of the local Sysselraad, the scene presents the opportunity to pursue the political objective assigned to the Entourage by their House. Attempting to sway the other Houses Minor, the Noble character rises and delivers an evocative speech, initiating a Statecraft Venture Test to move the majority of noble families to support his House's petition. Clearly, such a Venture is appropriate during a session of the local Sysselraad; but it would not be appropriate in the middle of a pitched military battle.

Though Narrator's may create scenes with specific Venture opportunities in mind, departures from the scripted story line may present new opportunities to achieve mission objectives or require Narrator's to loosen their criteria for determining whether a Venture is appropriate. When moderating a story, it is the Narrator's duty to assess the timing of a Venture attempt, and decide whether the Test qualifies as a Venture capable of resolving a primary objective or whether the action is better suited to an ordinary Skill Test.

Narrative Debriefing

In evaluating House advancement the Narrator should begin with a short debriefing of recent events and House standing. By discussing the outcome of the recent narrative, the players and Narrator can evaluate how far the House has progressed in achieving its short-term objectives and ongoing agenda. Is the House adversary still thwarting their attempts to establish a spy network in the capital city? Has the majordomo of their patron House refused to hear their petition yet again? Now that they've uncovered the House responsible for planting the traitor in its midst, what does their House intend to do about it? Such questions readily emerge during the narrative debriefing, setting the stage for the players to determine their next course of action. Whether they intend to fortify the House's characteristics or decide to implement new stratagems in the form of Narrative and Interlude Ventures, household administration presents the narrative opportunity to immediately pursue some or all of their resulting schemes.

Household Administration

Household administration describes the ongoing process whereby Houses attend to their agendas and holdings, revealing how well their plans are proceeding or how prosperous their House has become. Though Houses routinely administrate their affairs—implementing sundry operations and programs to improve their situation—the development occurring during this phase represents extensive House development achieved through expenditure of House Assets or implementation of a series of missions for the purpose of fulfilling key objectives.

House Accomplishments

When evaluating recent events, the Narrator reviews how well the characters succeeded in fulfilling the stated objectives for the recent narrative. How many of their Narrative Ventures succeeded? Which of those achieved primary objectives; and which, if any, accomplished secondary or incidental objectives? Did the characters perform any Ventures to abate unanticipated complications or unforeseen threats to their House? Assuming the characters succeeded in accomplishing at least some of their House objectives, the House stands to advance through an increase in its Asset reserves.

House Assets

If characters have successfully performed Narrative Ventures, they earn their Houses a number of points to increase their Asset reserves. Like character Experience Points, Asset awards may be spent to develop characteristics or initiate Interlude Ventures as described hereafter. See the accompanying chart for general guidelines when assigning Asset awards.

Asset Awards

Award	Description
3-5	Venture fulfilled the major objective of the narrative
1-2	Venture fulfilled a minor objective of the narrative
+1	Venture resulted in a Spectacular Success.

House Development

Once the Narrator has awarded Assets to the House, the Entourage may spend Assets to develop House characteristics, increasing House attributes and edges to enhance their ability to succeed at future Ventures. While raising characteristics fortifies the House's standing, Interlude Ventures may result in important story developments such as rallying support for important legislation or assassinating a key member of a rival House retinue.

House Development

House Characteristic	EP Cost
Improving Attributes...	
to level 2	4
to level 3	5
to level 4	5
to level 5	7
Improving Edges	5 per point improved
Acquiring a new House resource	variable*
Upgrading an existing Resource	variable*
House Renown	10
Acquiring a new character for Entourage	10

* denotes Narrator discretion.

Interlude Ventures

Proceeding from the Narrative debriefing, players may initiate a number of Interlude Ventures to achieve immediate results or to set into motion certain events influencing the next chapter in their House chronicle. Confronting an opponent in the regional Sysselraad, conducting a security sweep to rid the House of deep cover agents or launching a war of assassins against a rival House represent but a few of the Ventures a House Entourage might initiate during the Narrative Interlude. Which ones the players devise, what they hope to gain and how they orchestrate their efforts depend largely on the their interpretation of recent events and their desires regarding the ongoing agenda of their parent House.

Initiating Ventures

After the Narrator has awarded Assets during the Narrative debriefing, the player Entourage may elect to launch one or more Interlude Ventures subject to the Narrator's approval. To do so, the Entourage must discuss the nature of their initiatives, outlining the general plan, method of execution and final objective of the Venture. At this point, the Narrator evaluates their proposed Venture, and determines what character skill best summarizes the Venture as the player's have described it. Like any Skill Test, the Narrator may permit skill substitutions by raising the Difficulty of the Venture Test. In addition, the Narrator must set the total Asset Cost for the Venture, based on what the Entourage hopes to achieve. On average, most Ventures should cost between 1 and 3 points per participating character, depending on their mission parameters and potential outcome. More extravagant or momentous Ventures should cost more in terms of Assets invested. Once established, the Entourage may reevaluate their proposed Venture, modifying its parameters, proceeding as outlined or postponing for another time.

What are Interlude Ventures?

While most House Ventures occur during the course of play, Narrative Interludes enable the player Entourage to launch certain programs and operations in between narratives, encouraging them to exert control over the destiny of their House. While it is the Narrator's duty to interpret how the success or failure of a Venture ultimately affects the ongoing chronicle, player-initiated Interlude Ventures foster the creative spirit essential to interactive story telling.

Interlude Ventures (also called House Ventures) represent critical operations or missions Houses launch to promote their agendas or respond to specific threats. Interlude Ventures generally represent proactive undertakings, such as petitioning boons from patron Great Houses, raiding compounds of rival families, or commencing a program to train elite House units. But Houses also rely on Ventures to oppose rival efforts or launch defensive measures, matching espionage with counter-intelligence or pitting espionage with House security. Regardless of the ultimate objective, such Ventures all rely on character skills and House Assets to produce results affecting the ongoing chronicle.

Once the Entourage has decided to proceed, initiating a Venture is a simple matter. From their House Asset reserves, the Entourage must spend a number of points equal to the cost of the Venture. Now they need only decide which character or characters will lead the operation, each of them being required to possess the designated skill. Once done, the Narrator can determine whether to conduct the Venture as an individual or Combined Skill Test, also deciding whether the Venture can be opposed by another House or group.

For example, during the Narrative debriefing the Entourage decides to conduct a security sweep of their House compound, seeking additional informants who may be tied to the traitor they uncovered during the previous narrative. They decide to launch an extensive program consisting of clearance checks, personal interrogations, and physical searches, hoping to remove any remaining dissidents, spying devices and instances of sabotage. The Narrator



evaluates their operation and determines that it falls under the Security skill and requires the investment of 2 points of Assets per participating character.

Proceeding as planned, the Entourage selects its Security Commander and Swordmaster to lead the other House personnel, indicating to the Narrator that the Venture must be conducted as a Combined Skill Test (see "Chapter 5," page 118). Because the Narrator knows that the Entourage routed the directing agent in the recent narrative, he determines that the Venture will go unopposed, with the remaining dissidents being too disorganized to orchestrate any sort of counter-initiative.

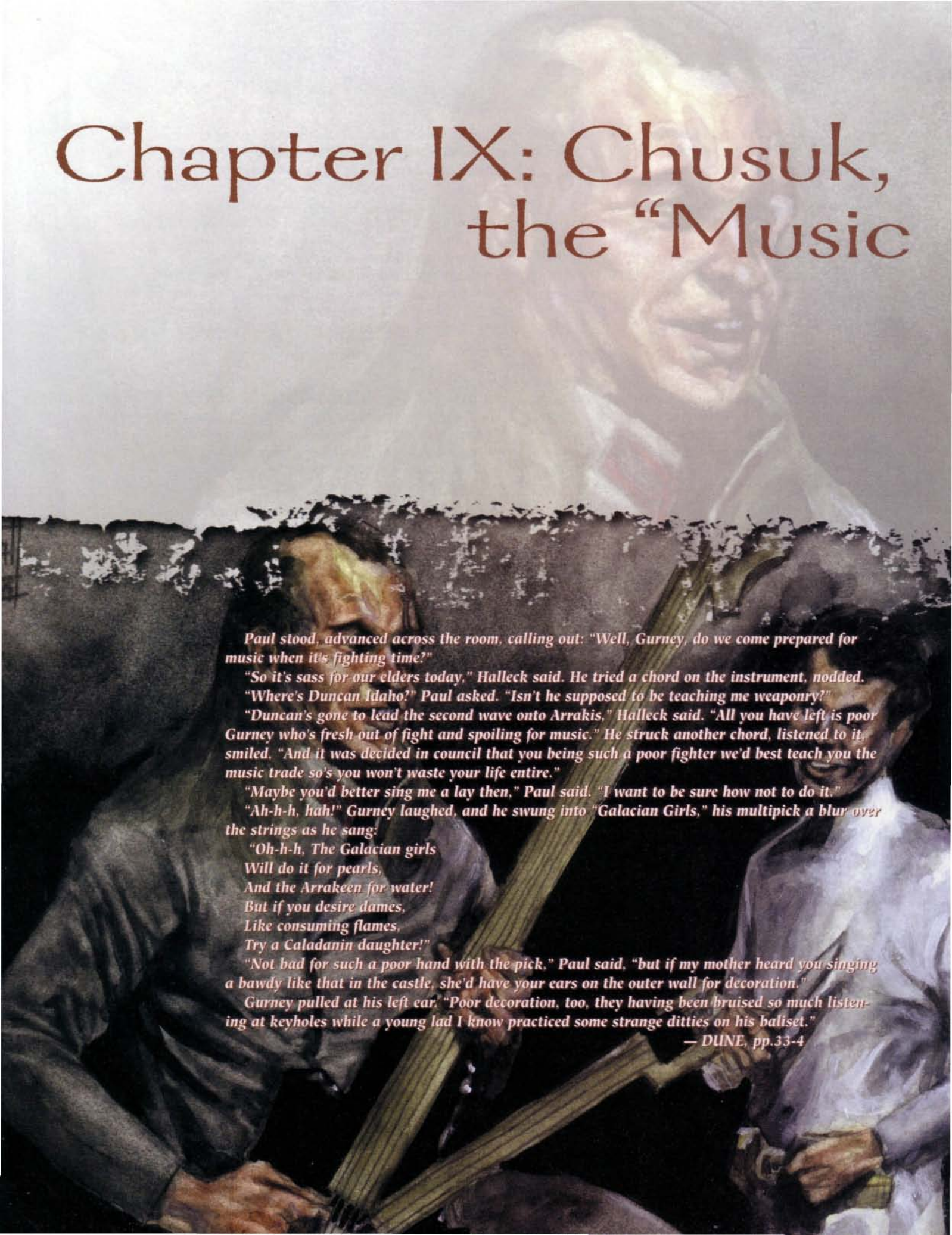
Venture Tests

Once the Entourage has selected a Venture, designated one or more leaders, and paid its cost with House Assets, the Narrator determines whether any other Houses initiate counter–measures—similar Ventures used to oppose the House's initiative. If so, then the Narrator must conduct the Venture as an Opposed Venture Test; if not, she must establish Test Difficulty based on factors similar to those criteria used in determining its Asset cost. While most Narrative Ventures represent simple Combined or Opposed Skill Tests, the majority of Interlude Ventures should be conducted as Extended Skill Tests, also observing the Combined Test guidelines if two or more characters join in leading the Venture. Typically, the Difficulty of Extended Venture Tests should fall between 25 and 50. But for particularly elaborate or momentous operations—especially those requiring the participation of many individuals, the commitment of significant resources, or the coordination of two or more House agencies—the Test Difficulty could reach 75 or higher. Once the Difficulty has been established, the Narrator should conduct the Test as outlined in "Chapter 5" (see page 117), devoting special attention to guidelines presented for Combined, Opposed and Extended Tests. Though Interlude Ventures usually count as Extended Tests, the Narrator should rarely, if ever, break the Venture into sequential Tests. Instead, the Narrator should inform the Entourage that the operation they've outlined constitutes several, related Ventures, establishing the required skill and Asset cost for each component Venture.

Interpreting the Results

Upon concluding the Venture Test(s), the Narrator should summarize the entire affair, giving a narrative synopsis that includes the planning, execution and observable consequences of their House initiative. Though successful Interlude Ventures do not garner Asset awards as successful Narrative Ventures do, the Narrator should give the players some idea of what they've gained for their House as a result of their labors. Though the entire consequences of their actions may not be immediately apparent, the Narrator should incorporate the outcome to wrap up the narrative debriefing. In doing so the Narrator not only gives them a glimpse into next week's story line, but he also leaves them with the satisfaction of knowing their participation has impacted the ongoing chronicle and left an indelible mark on the history of their House.

Chapter IX: Chusuk, the "Music



Paul stood, advanced across the room, calling out: "Well, Gurney, do we come prepared for music when it's fighting time?"

"So it's sass for our elders today," Halleck said. He tried a chord on the instrument, nodded.

"Where's Duncan Idaho?" Paul asked. "Isn't he supposed to be teaching me weaponry?"

"Duncan's gone to lead the second wave onto Arrakis," Halleck said. "All you have left is poor Gurney who's fresh out of fight and spoiling for music." He struck another chord, listened to it, smiled. "And it was decided in council that you being such a poor fighter we'd best teach you the music trade so's you won't waste your life entire."

"Maybe you'd better sing me a lay then," Paul said. "I want to be sure how not to do it."

"Ah-h-h, hah!" Gurney laughed, and he swung into "Galacian Girls," his multipick a blur over the strings as he sang:

"Oh-h-h, The Galacian girls
Will do it for pearls,
And the Arrakeen for water!
But if you desire dames,
Like consuming flames,
Try a Caladanin daughter!"

"Not bad for such a poor hand with the pick," Paul said, "but if my mother heard you singing a bawdy like that in the castle, she'd have your ears on the outer wall for decoration."

Gurney pulled at his left ear. "Poor decoration, too, they having been bruised so much listening at keyholes while a young lad I know practiced some strange ditties on his baliset."

— DUNE, pp.33-4

Planet"

Of the many planets adorning the heavens like so many jewels in the Imperial crown, the planet Chusuk gleams with a splendor all of its own. Home of House Varota, the musician-kings, Chusuk remains an Imperial oasis for patrons of the arts, culture and learning. But those who mistake its rulers for a weak, erudite clan soon learn the error of their assumptions, for the monarchs of House Varota courageously defend their House and holdings, enjoying a glorious history of military accomplishment and economic prowess.

This chapter provides a sample homeworld setting for use in your *DUNE RPG* chronicles. It describes the planet Chusuk, home to House Varota—a Great House of the Landsraad community. Everything from the Varotan Houses Minor, to the history of Chusuk and the Holy City of Coramshar find mention within. Also included, several 'chapter seeds' provide the Narrator with initial story ideas, giving her a starting point for creating stories set on the fascinating terrain of the fabled "Music Planet."

Chusuk typifies the sort of setting in which many *DUNE RPG* chapters occur. Narrators need not develop every planetary setting to match this level of detail—for many narratives, providing the names of a few key cities, basic information about the governing House and Houses Minor and some 'local color' for the sake of verisimilitude proves sufficient. But beginning Narrators soon discover that the more detail you add to a given setting, the more it enriches the quality of your stories.

House Varota

Notable for its relatively short history, House Varota arrested the Siridar-Earldom of Chusuk from House Mandervold in the ninth millennium. Founded by Francesco Varota, the first of the legendary Varotan 'masters,' House Varota rose from its humble origins as a family of instrument makers to House Minor status under the favor of Padishah Emperor Almerach III. At the age of sixteen, Francesco joined His Majesty's entourage, entertaining Almerach and retinue with his musical genius and congenial wit. Over the years, Francesco befriended the Emperor, enjoying his confidence as trusted companion and occasional advisor.

Varota Profile

Noble Titles: Siridar-Earls of Chusuk
Houses Minor: House Adici, House Deseo, House Levrache, House Mandervold, House Nambure
House Holdings: Chusuk (Siridar Earldom)

Varota House Minor—House Deseo

The first of Houses Minor to rise under House Varota, House Deseo traces its spear lineage back to Francesco Varota himself winning perpetual favoritism among the Varotan Earls. Many important positions in the Varotan administration are filled by Deseo people, esteemed for their skill and loyalty. House Deseo staunchly support its patron in Sysselraad dealings, and its many victories reveal its considerable political influence.

House Profile
Name: Deseo
Ancestry: Varota
Homeworld: Chusuk
Title: 5 (Baronet)
Fiefdom: 5 (Subfief)
Renown: 2
Assets: 7
House Attributes (House Favorite archetype)
Status: 3
Favor +1
Wealth: 2
Influence: 3
Popularity -1
Security: 2

House Legacy

But a falling out between them sent Francesco packing, visiting the courts of many great lords as a wandering musician. Suspected by only the Emperor's closest advisors, Almerach and his protégé had, in fact, staged their disagreement as a public sham. This gave the Emperor's rivals cause to shelter Francesco and take him into their confidence, trading valuable House secrets for a handsome bouquet of sweet-smelling lies. After serving

some twenty odd years as an Imperial spy, Francesco returned to His Majesty's deathbed where Almerach bestowed upon him the title of Baronet with holdings on his native homeworld, beginning the legacy of House Varota serving under the banner of the Great House of Mandervold.

Laboring under the stewardship of his new title and holdings, Francesco proved an able lord. He relied on his acquaintanceship with many Great Lords to cultivate powerful allies in the Landsraad assembly. Though his lowly estate excluded him from Imperial dealings, Francesco curried the favor of several Great Houses to support his trade initiatives on the planet Chusuk. Similarly, his powerful benefactors won him resounding influence in the regional Sysselraad, causing much envy and pandering among his fellow Houses Minor. In the thirty-some years of Francesco's reign, he deftly leveraged his Landsraad and CHOAM connections to broaden his holdings and political clout.



Such was the legacy inherited by the Varotan heir Philippe I, eldest son of Francesco Varota. Following in the tradition of the Varotan master-artisans, Philippe I inherited the same roguish nature that had endeared his father to so many Houses. He bore the same charming worldliness and casual insouciance, playing at politics like a childhood game. Like a great virtuoso, Philippe conducted House Varota with something like mad genius, orchestrating political intrigues while rallying popular support with such finesse that surely the gods must have favored him. In truth, it was Philippe I who secretly contrived the Varotan Manifesto—a Machiavellian masterwork plotting House Varota's ascendancy—posthumously earning him recognition as the first "musician-king."

Passed from generation to generation as a family heirloom, the Manifesto laid the groundwork for wresting the siridar-earldom from the heirs of Immuloc Mandervold. Stage by stage, the Varotan successors implemented Philippe's plan—diverging and improvising with a jazzy flair that did credit to their name. In seven generations the Manifesto had grown from a single tome into an encyclopedic collection, recording political secrets, financial accruals and philosophical doctrines representing the compiled wisdom of the Varotan patriarchs. In the eighteenth volume, Philippe IV wrote "finito!" proudly exclaiming the fall of the Mandervold and investiture of Varota. No longer would the sobriquet "musician-king" represent a noble ideal—from that moment forward it carried the authority of the Siridar–Earl, governor of Chusuk and head of the Varota.

House Ethos

In the fifteen hundred years since claiming the earldom, House Varota has translated its Manifesto into a working agenda. Still embracing *realpolitik* as their governing ethos, House Varota conducts its affairs through conservative overtures. Their domestic policies, for example, balance progressive initiatives with steady assurance, fostering economic growth through generous incentives and equitable taxation. Foreign relations show similar pragmatism, bartering Varotan alliance for political influence, building strong and lasting relations with many of its Landsraad peers. Much of this policy can be attributed to Angustin Varota, governing Earl of the Varotan regime.

Although House Varota still enjoys the support of the Padishah Emperors, current relations seem in decline—most probably resulting from House Varota's quick rise to power. Observing this trend has given Earl Angustin pause, realizing the danger of appearing a menace. More than one Great House has fallen through Imperial treachery, historically the result of moving too boldly. A student of history and all matters politic, the Earl is no fool; political retreat means surviving the axe to fight another day.

Committing such thoughts to the Varotan Manifesto, Earl Angustin advocates domestic development over political machination as the "future of the Varotan peoples." Encouraging diplomatic reserve over political aggression, the current Earl is believed to have recanted many of his ancestors' ways. While the monarchs have ever supported the arts, Angustin's liberal donations continue to surprise many of the Varotan Houses Minor. But others realize the wisdom of his strategy, pointing out that happy people make for prosperous subjects, and the people of Chusuk seem to have never been more docile. More importantly, planetary industry booms, reaching a

crescendo under Angustin's progressive 'open-market' economy. Not only do the Chusuk mercantile Houses grow richer by the day, but the entire populace benefits from ever-increasing avenues of trade.

Much like Philippe I's original Manifesto, Earl Angustin's agenda appears holistic in its approach. As House coffers swell from new economic initiatives, House Varota continually invests in domestic improvement. The colossal Spaceport of Mondriagne serving as a primary example, all of Chusuk thrives with development—from the lavish renovations of the Navachristian Cathedral to the liberal expenditures in the Varotan civil militia. At this time in history, House Varota and the planet Chusuk appear in their hey-day; enjoying strident domestic growth while spending conservatively on the political front.

House Entourage

Leading a retinue of accomplished vassals, Earl Angustin Varota rapidly approaches the age of retirement. Gladly would the Earl—a person of many artistic passions and personal interests—abdicate to his daughter Corina should the order of faufreluches permit her ascendancy to his throne. As matters stand though, the Earl dutifully awaits the coming of age of his grandson Analdo, supporting Corina and her son as would a surrogate father. Corina's husband Dubrahm, a Navachristian Archdeacon, succumbed to the trauma of an uncertain heart. Though sharing her prayers, Memphis Dion proved unable to reconstitute him in spite of her skill as an accomplished Navachristian Suk.

Corina's mother and wife of Angustine, Lady Luchessa Lavrache–Varota watched the proceedings with skepticism. Unlike her daughter and pious physician, Lady Luchessa politely shirks the accepted faith of her subjects. Though she failed from the Bene Gesserit at the age of eleven, the Missionaria Protectiva had done its work by completely disillusioning her of any religious leanings. More to her thinking, logic and learning pave the road to enlightenment; and it is perhaps by her influence that the Earl supports Chusuk arts so lavishly.

In addition to Analdo, Corina, Luchessa and Memphis, two others bear enormous influence on the Earl of Varota—Sevrenty Tomash and Aeneus Miracola. Master of Assassins and director of spies, Sevrenty Tomash leads all of the Earl's covert operations—from the recruitment of informants to the orchestration of House propaganda. Nearly 100 years of age, Sevrenty remains as sharp as a tulwar amusing his lordship with cajoling remarks. Youngest of the retinue, Aeneus Miracola serves the Earl as resident Swordmaster, oft-times emulating the Chusuk whirling-dance with slashing arms of steel. Aeneus faithfully commands the Earl's personal guard, still penitent for failing to discover Dubrahm in time to call a physician. Sharing Luchessa's skepticism, Aeneus believes courage and fealty, not faith or sheer prayer, stands between man and his inevitable doom.

House Relations

House Atreides – Noble rulers are the Atreides, what with their lofty ideals. But where will their wings carry them when the predator approaches?

House Corrino – Does the courageous lion, king of all beasts, flinch at the stirrings of the humble field mouse? The Emperor should languish in his absolute power, trusting his subjects to provide for his needs.

House Harkonnen – The proverbial bull in the china shop, House Harkonnen should take care to harness its ambition. Even the powerful of lords can possess fragile egos.

House Moritani – The Moritani's actions remind us of our own shadow dramas; though veiled behind a curtain their movements tell the story.

House Tseida – Their machine dependency deprives them of greatness. What mass-produced instrument can rival the dulcet perfection of a hand-crafted original?

House Wallach – The learned House von Wallach shares in our heritage of ignoble ancestry. Though to voice it be sacrilege; nobility, like divinity, sometimes masquerades as the common man.

Varota Allegiance Template

Attributes
Physique: 2
Coordination:2
  Dexterity +1
Intellect: 2
  Perception +1
Charisma: 2

Skills
Culture (Varota) 1(1)
History (Varota) 1(1)
Theology (Navachristianity) 1(1)
World Knowledge (Chusuk) 1(1)

House Related Skills (choose two of the following)
Diplomacy (negotiation) 1(1)
Espionage (any) 1(1)
Economics (Chusuk) 1(1)
Mercantilism (House economics) 1(1)
Performance (any) 1(1)

Typical Advantages/Disadvantages
Choose one—Ally 1, Enhanced Sense (any) 1, Metabolic Clock 1

Houses Minor

Like siblings quarreling in their parents' absence, the Houses Minor require the constant vigil of House Varota. Perhaps because the recent ascendancy of House Varota lingers on their minds, the Varotan Houses Minor show less humility and more ambition than might be expected of Houses Minor. Though never made public, the Varotan Manifesto seems to have infected the families with near treasonous rivalry, ending in formidable political and economic in-fighting even while they cooperate under the unifying banner of House Varota. The *Circus Congregata*, as the planetary Sysselraad is known, serves as the main forum for their bickering and one-upmanship, even though its traditional forms remain sancrosanct among them.

In addition to partaking in the 'Great Game' of political and economic rivalry, the Houses Minor share similar cultural heritage and social circumstances which truly unite them as the heirs of Chusuk. Indeed, the majority of Houses Minor share like ancestry—a form of clan heritage finding its origin in either a particular cottage industry or artisan guild (such as House Varota's origin as a confraternity of musical craftsmen). While ancient rivalries among the industries remain evident in House politics, their similar heritage often provides the common ground needed to resolve their differences and reach mutual resolutions in the Circus Crongrata. Whether contributing more to their rivalry or more to their unity, economic necessity also demands that each of the House retain mercantile headquarters in the city of Arubel, epicenter of Chusuk commerce and home of the fabulous spaceport of Mondriagne.

House Adici

The Compts (a term Varotans favor for "Count") of House Adici have ruled the free city of Corsubel for countless generations. Though loyal to House Varota, the Adici compts hunger for something more than control of a single city (albeit one of the largest and busiest cities on Chusuk). They aspire to rule over greater territory, perhaps one day even rising to the Earldom of Chusuk. To date, the worst of their scheming has failed; so trying a new tactic, they now laud House Varota's economic programs, supporting the most popular of their commercial initiatives and financial endeavors.

The current head of House Adici is Compt-absentia Lorenzo Adici who governs his fiefdom from the Adici mercantile headquarters in the distant city of Arubel. Administrating a lucrative import/export business specializing in antiquities, the Compt exploits his business dealings to forge alliances among many other Houses, including even some of the Great Houses who send buyers to his warehouses.

House Deseo

According to popular folk-legends, House Deseo traces its favor to its original progenitor—an illegitimate son of House Varota's namesake, Corvin Varota—who served his father as spymaster. Corvin changed his surname to Deseo (meaning, roughly, "He Who Serves In Shadow") when offered the province of Dalmoran to rule over as Lord-Warden. Thanks to its stellar service to the Varota, the head of House Deseo was later elevated to Lord-Governor of the subfief of Untarvold—encompassing Dalmoran and several other provinces—some 600 years ago.

The current Lord-Governor is Eldon Deseo, a direct descendant of Corvin Deseo who shares his reputation for intelligence and craft. While named as Heir-Designate, Eldon served for a time in the Varota espionage corps, where he showed his genius by innovating several new methodologies.

House Levrache

House Levrache, birth family of Lady Luchessa, emerges as a forerunner among those Houses seeking House Varota's political favor. Climbing to its position through political alliance (cemented by the marriage of Lady Luchessa to Earl Angustin), House Levrache panders the great Earl in his every decision, supporting Sysselraad initiatives and sovereign commands with humble obeisance and sycophantic zeal.

The head of House Levrache, Governor Utrech Levrache rules Tohr-Tomahr, a mid-sized territory in Southern Tarelica responsible for the majority of timbering supporting many Varotan industries. He hopes to expand his holdings through an increase of grants, while observing all sanctions against over-deforestation. Although middle-aged, he has yet to produce a suitable heir, endangering his line by failing to favor even his nephews with the grace reserved for the Heir-Presumptive.

House Mandervold

Retaining its baronetcy in the province of Mondriagne, House Mandervold still begrudges the Varota for 50 generations of political decline. For this reason House Mandervold plots and connives to undermine House Varota's authority and power, hoping to usurp the Earldom and regain their rightful inheritance as rulers of Chusuk. And only by pretending reluctant obedience have they managed to survive this long.

The aging Baronet, Atric va-Mandervold, is consumed by his obsession to avenge the family name, poised like a dagger to strike at his enemy's bosom. His bound-concubine and confidante, Lady Valanda (demi-sister to House Varota's Lady Luchessa) plots with Atric to assassinate his heir, conspiring to put their son, Galrand the Fierce on the throne of Chusuk.

House Nambure



The Lord-governors of House Nambure control the border province of Theodra on Northern Tarelica. The scions of Nambure stand broad-shouldered and hale, towering over the average men of Chusuk. They make superb warriors, their levies forming the greater part of the Varota militia. In combat they fight with blade and shield exhibiting the style developed by Telleron Crael, a legendary Swordmaster serving Philippe IV. Descended from the ancient armorers' guild, House Nambure's hallmark 'tulwar' swords find wide use on Chusuk.

Cousin of the former Lord-governor Hermon Nambure, Jasonne va-Nambure rules as Lord-regent in name of Herman's son, the na-Lord Phillip. Only twelve years of age, Phillip shows none of the signs of his father's affliction and promises to carry on the Nambure tradition upon assuming the governorship at majority age.

The Planet Chusuk

Fourth of eight planets orbiting the star Theta Shalish, Chusuk received its first Imperial colonists millennia ago, during the religious pogroms sanctioned by then Padishah Emperor Forneus I.

History

Fleeing persecution for their 'heretical' convictions, the Navachristian reformists settled on Chusuk where they hoped their pacifistic sect could flourish beyond the reach of the Emperor's inquisitors. Led by Immanuloc Mandervold, a charismatic preacher and ardent devotee, the colonists quickly scattered about the planet. Within several years time they established a network of communes hoping that if one were discovered and routed, the others might yet survive the wrath of the inquisitors. Fortunately for the disciples of Mandervold, the inquisition never reached Chusuk; having been abandoned when Forneus was declared mad and deposed by his successor.

Celebrating their faith through all manners of artistic expression, the Navachristian colonists established the musical tradition that earned Chusuk its sobriquet as the "Music Planet" millennia after the religious origins had long since declined. As the populace of Chusuk grew from communal tribes to tribal nations, the influence of Imperial civilization eventually molded the nations into Imperial Houses. Adopting "Mandervold" for its name, in honor of its courageous founder, the House of Mandervold gained recognition as a Great House in the fourth millennium, some centuries after the cessation of Forneus I's religious crusade. By the time of its inauguration, the denizens of Chusuk had gradually drifted from their pious origins, their artistic talents now devoted more to the celebration of culture and trade than to the religious reformation and spiritual freedom shared by their mutual ancestors.

In time, three predominant cultural forces—commerce, arts and religion—coalesced to forge the lasting identity of Chusuk society and culture. For several millennia, House Mandervold ruled the people of Chusuk with unobtrusive benevolence, imposing few oppressive mandates except the faufreluches caste system and the collection of tithes. For the duration of the Mandevold dynasty, Chusuk was known as a planet of peace and harmony.

More influential than even Immanuloc Mandevold, Francesco Varota—a scion of the legendary clan of Varotan artisans—earned Imperial recognition first as a musical prodigy, and later as an Imperial spy. A native of Chusuk, Francesco Varota showed an early talent for music, playing the baliset by age four and writing his first major compositions by age eight. Having performed for Emperor Almerach III during an Imperial peregrination bringing His Majesty to Chusuk, Francesco captured the Emperor's ear, earning his patronage and becoming a permanent addition to his Imperial entourage at the age of sixteen.

For nearly a decade, Francesco served under His Majesty as court composer and traveling companion. During those years, he mastered several other instruments and composed many popular songs, carrying the Varotan name far and wide in his itinerant service. But

Francesco's talents extended beyond music and friendship. His keen insight and charm, accompanied by a talent for subtle dissembling, made him popular among the courts of many Great Houses. Seeing his popularity and ready acceptance, Almerach recognized that Francesco held the confidence of many a Great Lord; and it was not long thereafter that Almerach devised a better role for his loyal servant—that of an Imperial spy.

Staging a falling out between himself and Francesco, Almerach sent him packing before an assembly of nobles attending an Imperial ball. According to plan, Francesco fled Kaitain calling on the favor of the Emperor's supporters—finding none to befriend him for fear of the Emperor's wrath. Such behavior anticipated, Francesco moved on to the Emperor's detractors, finding himself welcome—if not as a slight to the Emperor, then for the purpose of obtaining intelligence about the Emperor's activities. For many years, Francesco moved from House to House, collecting intelligence while spinning many false rumors about the Emperor's administration.

After twenty some years of itinerant wandering, Francesco earned His Majesty's "forgiveness", being called to Almerach's side as he lay wilting on his deathbed. Smiling to his friend upon whispering his parting words, Almerach bequeathed the title of Baronet with a fiefdom on Chusuk to honor his friend for his many years of loyal service. Returning to Chusuk, Francesco spent his remaining years shaping clan Varota into a respectable House Minor, cashing in on the fine reputation and political acumen he had developed in service to the Emperor.

Finally surrendering his title to the Varotan successor, Francesco retired into quiet repose, returning to his musical heritage that had brought him so much joy. Though retired from service, he remained an innovator of great genius and skill; for it was in his final years that he perfected clan Varota's hallmark secrets, crafting some of the finest musical instruments to bear the Varotan mark. His secret methods were lost generations after House Varota made its bid for Great House status; and all attempts at recovery have failed to produce any instrument matching the splendor of those made by Francesco Varota and the master craftsman of the next few generations.

Over hundreds of years, House Varota expanded on Francesco's good fortune, methodically rising thanks to shrewd political manipulation and the favor of the Imperial House. Eventually its rulers determined to bid for the Earldom, replacing House Mandervold as governors of Chusuk. Generations later, following a formal War of Assassins, they had accomplished their objective—House Varota claimed Great House status after House Mandervold abdicated the Earldom in recognition of the Varotan *fait accompli*. In the thousand years since, House Varota has capably ruled Chusuk, masterful in their resolve yet benevolent in their intent.

Geography

Approximately the size and mass of old Earth, Chusuk features arctic regions at each of its poles separated by four continental landmasses: Northern Tarelica, Southern Tarelica, Narula, and Marelda. Northern and Southern Terelica occupy nearly a fourth of the globe, bounded to the east and west by Merelda and Narula respectively. Bridging the waters between North Tarelica and Merelda lies the Lorentine Archipelago, a large body of islands, numbering into the thousands.

North Terelica is mostly temperate in climate, though its landsmass spans a variety of climatological zones ranging from subtropical to subarctic. Three mountain ranges divide the continent, separated by rolling plains and verdant forests. Several large rivers collect the runoff from the mountains, including the Isharon river. As the landing site of the original colonists, North Terelica reveals the most heavy settlement and industrialization of the four continents. The Varotan capital Veldenac rests toward the eastern coast of the continent, while other major cities such as Coramshar and Boharbel spread the populace evenly throughout the land.

Generally warmer than its northern neighbor, South Tarelica proves more inhospitable to human settlement. Ancient mountains defend much of its coastline with steep cliff-sides, presenting few natural lagoons or suitable harbors. The interior rises to even loftier heights as the Pilgrim's Trail mountains wade southerly through dense forest and jungle. Protected from over-exploitation by Varotan law, these primeval forests define the largest remaining ecological preserves on the planet.

The smallest of the four continents, Narula straddles the planet's equator in the western hemisphere. Appreciated for its paradisiacal climate, beautiful beaches and plush, jungle-covered mountains, Narula once suffered rampant population growth threatening to suffocate the beautiful landscape. Thanks to Varotan relocation incentives and ecological education efforts, Narula now supports a small, native population confining tourism and vacationing to provinces surrounding Jhacaretta, the largest resort on the planet Chusuk. After many generations, the interior of Narula has returned to its former splendor, allowing its native plantation owners to conduct their trade in harmony with the natural ecosystem.

Stretching far to the north and south of its equatorial divide, Marelda dominates nearly a third of Chusuk's eastern hemisphere. The largest of the four continents by far, Marelda is dominated by vast lowland glades and coastal, salt-water marsh. The denizens of Marelda gravitate toward the highlands, building their cities and industries in the drier climes of its interior. Located on the central plateau, more than two thousand kilometers from the nearest shoreline, the trade megalopolis of Arubel sprawls amid the unbroken horizon. The industrial cities

of Tarvuta and Forgal also reside in Marelda, the former lying near the western foothills of the Peregrine mountains while the latter squats near the Gulf of Purtoi, taking advantage of its decidedly marine environment.

Economy

Chusuk supports Varotan industry with an enormous wealth of natural resources—from its rare and sonorous woods to the long-fibered cotton grown on the sea-isles of Dorentine. Enjoying the best of materials to work with, Varotan craftsmen and industrialists have perfected their trade over many millennia to produce goods and services of such quality that they are sought throughout the Imperium. The Varotan merchant Houses were quick to capitalize on the high demand their products enjoyed within the CHOAM community. With each of its Houses Minor rising from one cottage industry or another, the Varotan economy benefits tremendously from the business savvy of its ruling families. Proficient in one enterprise, the Varotan Merchant Houses have little difficulty applying their knowledge to other arenas; and perhaps for this reason alone, the Varotan economy thrives as its governing House gains influence with the Imperial CHOAM Corporation.

The Varotan Trade Faire

Unsatisfied with the conventional forum provided by its CHOAM holdings, House Varota launched an ambitious initiative to promote its House exports. The eventual result—the Varotan Trade Faire—began millennia ago as a regional arts and crafts festival to which all of the Houses Minor, and even lesser cottage entrepreneurs, were invited to attend and exhibit their wares. Investing greater sums year after year, House Varota cultivated the small festival into an important domestic event, at first drawing only a few off-world tourists and intrepid noble Houses. Since those days, the Varotan Trade Faire has grown into a major CHOAM affair, attracting mercantile delegations from hundreds of Great Houses to Arubel to attend the fort-night exhibition. Their investment paying off nearly a thousand-fold, House Varota generates billions of solaris in the form of business arrangements and tourist expenditure each year, making the Varotan Trade Faire one of the most profitable, though by no means the largest, of CHOAM's House-sponsored trade exhibitions.

Society And Culture

To an off-worlder, the society and culture of the planet Chusuk appear both exotic and familiar. Upholding the faufreluches, society shows noble and servant behaving in a manner much the same as that found on any other homeworld of the Imperium. Yet subtle differences pervade nearly every aspect of its society and culture. Narrators wishing to play up the cultural differences may wish to emphasize the "Chusuk style of dress" or the peculiar way they pronounce certain words. But to truly describe Chusuk civilization with some degree of 'cultural consistency' Narrators should consider the impact of religion and art—the two predominant sociological factors—on Chusuk civilization.

Religion

Perhaps most highly regarded for its musical exports, Chusuk's most profound cultural 'product' consists of its native religion—*Navachristianity*. Derided by critics as the "Billion-Jesus Church" or "Church of the Infinite Messiah," Navachristianity represents an outgrowth of the original Christian doctrines feeding Orange Catholicism as well as many other Christian offshoots.

The prime tenet of Navachristianity asserts that God did not appoint one messiah, but many, to provide for the salvation of humankind—a doctrine most other Christian sects find apocryphal if not heretical. According to the Navachristian theology, God, in His infinite wisdom, did not entrust the salvation of all mankind to a single messiah speaking to a single age. Instead, the Navachristians believe, God sends a messianic prophet to every planet in every age, redeeming His people through contemporary education and spiritual grace.

Navachristians differ from other Christian sects in their interpretation of the nature of the Messiah. Some sects claim the prophets are spiritually enlightened humans—individuals all voicing the 'Word of God'. Others believe the Messiah is an eternal spirit, reincarnated in human form to deliver God's will and render judgement on humankind. While Navachristians allow for both of these possibilities, they believe they can identify the single prophet who visited any given homeworld,, naming the one who qualifies as the Navachristian Messiah (though interestingly, their Messiah has not yet arrived to lead the natives of Chusuk). Navachristian believers are comforted by the miraculous similarities among these prophetic leaders (most are men, some are women) and see the 'messianic identity pattern' as confirmation of their faith.

The *Biblios Navachristios*, holy book of the Navachristian faith, originated several millennia before the Jihad, scripted by the religion's founder and chief prophet (ironically named Flinders Temple). It incorporates much material from the "New Testament" of the ancient Christian Bible, but expands the tales of the messiah to include all vestiges of the savior creating a richly symbolic work, filled with hundreds of colorful allegories and parables.

Navachristianity celebrates many holidays and festivals (though not nearly as many as Orange Catholicism). The major holidays include the Feast of the Messiahs (occurring during the winter solstice); the Miracle of the Resurrections (spring equinox); the Days of Absolution (a three-day mid-summer festival during which Navachristians confess their sins and seek forgiveness);

and the Transubstantiation Ritual (observed on the autumnal equinox).

Although Chusuk is the home of the Sacred Navachristian Church (as the organization is called), pockets of Navachristian devotees can be found throughout the Imperium. Most major cities have at least one Navachristian church; recognized by four ornate towers each mounting an avatar of the Messiah.

The Arts

Chusuk rightly deserves its sobriquet "the Music Planet." Haven for the arts, artisans, and liberal education, Chusuk enjoys particular recognition as home of the Varotan master craftsmen, a family of Chusuk artisans specializing in the creation of extraordinarily fine musical instruments. Originally embraced as a method for celebrating Navachristian belief, music and singing remain an exalted form of pious devotion and individual expression.

Although one can find performers in nearly every urban square, the majority of practitioners congregate in one of two main centers for the arts. Regarded as a prestigious academy of higher learning, the *Varotan Arts Institute* emerges as the Imperium's most richly endowed university for the arts, located in the capital of Veldenac and lavishly supported by House Varota. Virtually all of the most venerated Imperial sculptors, painters, and actors studied or taught at the Institute during a portion of their careers. Admission to the school is strictly limited to 25,000 students per annum, resulting in fierce competition to pass its gates (at least one War of Assassins between Houses Minor can be traced to the rivalry created by the institute's limited admission policies).

The other primary facility is the *Imperial Academy of Music*, which limits its curriculum to the study of music, the playing of instruments, training of voices, nuances of composition and history of music. The Academy receives financial support from both House Varota and House Corrino. In addition to teaching the musical forms, the Academy sponsors a special apprenticeship with the Varotan Craftsmen Guild, offering a limited number of apprenticeships teaching candidates in the ancient Chusuk art of instrument making. Though none of its graduates have matched the accomplishments of the great Varotan masters, many fine instruments are produced every year; fetching tens of thousands of solaris during the perennial auctions.

In addition to traditional art forms, the Chusuks have developed several of their own forms of art. The most popular is the so-called Chusuk "water sculpture." Water sculptures consist of bowls, basins, or troughs having small pumps to circulate water, creating delicate, yet distinctive, patterns on their surfaces. Stone, wood, small sculptures, and other objects are placed within the shallow basin to direct the flow of the water and alter the visible pattern. Occasionally including small fountain heads to shower or dribble water into the trough, many owners praise their soothing sounds for providing hours of relaxation and invigoration.

Intriguing Locations

Though Chusuk presents off-worlders with many tourist attractions and places of beauty, the following locations mention but a few. Narrators should feel to expand these descriptions, or invent entirely new places as they see fit, making Chusuk and intriguing setting for their tales of adventure.

• **Spaceport of Mondriagne** – Located on the outskirts of Arubel, the Spaceport of Mondriagne is one of the so-called "Hundred Wonders of the Imperium." Approaching the size of a small city itself, the spaceport features a hub of towering administrative headquarters surrounded by landing fields spiked with escalated landing pads reaching as high as 30 stories from of the ground. It is considered the most beautifully decorated spaceport in the Imperium. Whereas most Guild facilities maintain a cold, utilitarian aesthetic, the Chusuks have decorated Mondriagne's breathtaking architecture with story-high murals, corridor-length frescoes, cascading fountains and magnificent tapestries. Tours of its artistic marvels, including those decorating the receiving lobbies of the central administrative headquarters can last up to four days.

• **The Holy City of Coramshar** – Located in North Tarelica on the River Isharon (which local legend holds to be inhabited by benevolent water-spirits known as ivristi), Coramshar is the sacred city of the Navachristian religion. The first and greatest of the Navachristian churches, the *Hagia Christora* dominates the city's center. Shaped roughly like a "T," the church enjoys a wide reputation for being the largest freestanding cathedral in the Imperium (but in fact, it falls some 35000 cubic meters shy of the Orange Catholic's *Malta Parada* located on Wallach VII). Both inside and out, the Hagia Christora flaunts ornate décor, ranging from towering stained-glass windows to stone-carved gargoyles and tableaus. Around its perimeter, a dozen magnificent towers reach to the heavens, sporting statues of the Messiah atop their polished bronze domes. The altar, located near the intersection of the two bars of the T, is carved from a single block of Hagal porphyry; and the church's massive organ and series of chimes instruments were all fashioned and donated by the great Varotan masters.

• **Snow Springs** – Although Chusuk shows minimal volcanic and tectonic activity, searing magma still burns deep within the planet. Ironically, one of the few places the magma nears the surface appears toward the planet's sub-arctic region. There, a group of small lava pools and an extensive network of natural mineral hot springs keep one valley warm and snow-free throughout the year. Known as the Snow Springs, this verdant oasis provides the home of the Snow Springs Inn, a luxury resort catering to clients from about the Imperium. Wealthy nobles travel

from many planets abroad to relax in the soothing (and supposedly therapeutic) baths; or, if they are daring enough, enjoy skiing and other snow sports on the powdery slopes of the surrounding mountains. Combining the best of a ski lodge and spa, the Snow Springs Inn is a popular, if expensive, tourist attraction.

• **Ruins of Lor** – The ruins of Lor present the greatest enigma of the planet Chusuk. Scattered throughout the Lorentine Archipelago, the mysterious ruins of an ancient civilization serve as an ominous reminder that the Navachristian pilgrims were not the first to inhabit Chusuk. Members of an Imperial planetological survey team first discovered the crumbling ruins atop several islands in the archipelago, but largely dismissed them as too few to warrant protracted investigation. But since those times the Lorentine Ecological Development company (LEDC), silently owned and operated by several powerful Varotan Merchant Houses, discovered the island ruins to be the proverbial tip of the iceberg. Sunken beneath the shallow waves, the remains of what was most certainly a vast cultural center lay hidden among sandy dunes and flowing beds of kelp. Exerting their considerable influence, the LEDC Houses fought to acquire exclusive development rights for the entire archipelago—a victory many Houses jokingly dismissed as the "'Lead Sea' debacle," assuming that ecological development in the Lorentine Archipelago would sink its member Houses with financial ruin.

Narrative Concepts

The following concepts present but a few starter ideas for creating one or more narratives set on the planet Chusuk. The Narrator should feel at liberty to use any of the ideas 'as-is' or to adapt them to suit her individual taste or style of play. For a complete adventure set during the Varotan Trade Fair, see "Chapter 10: Instrument of Kanly."

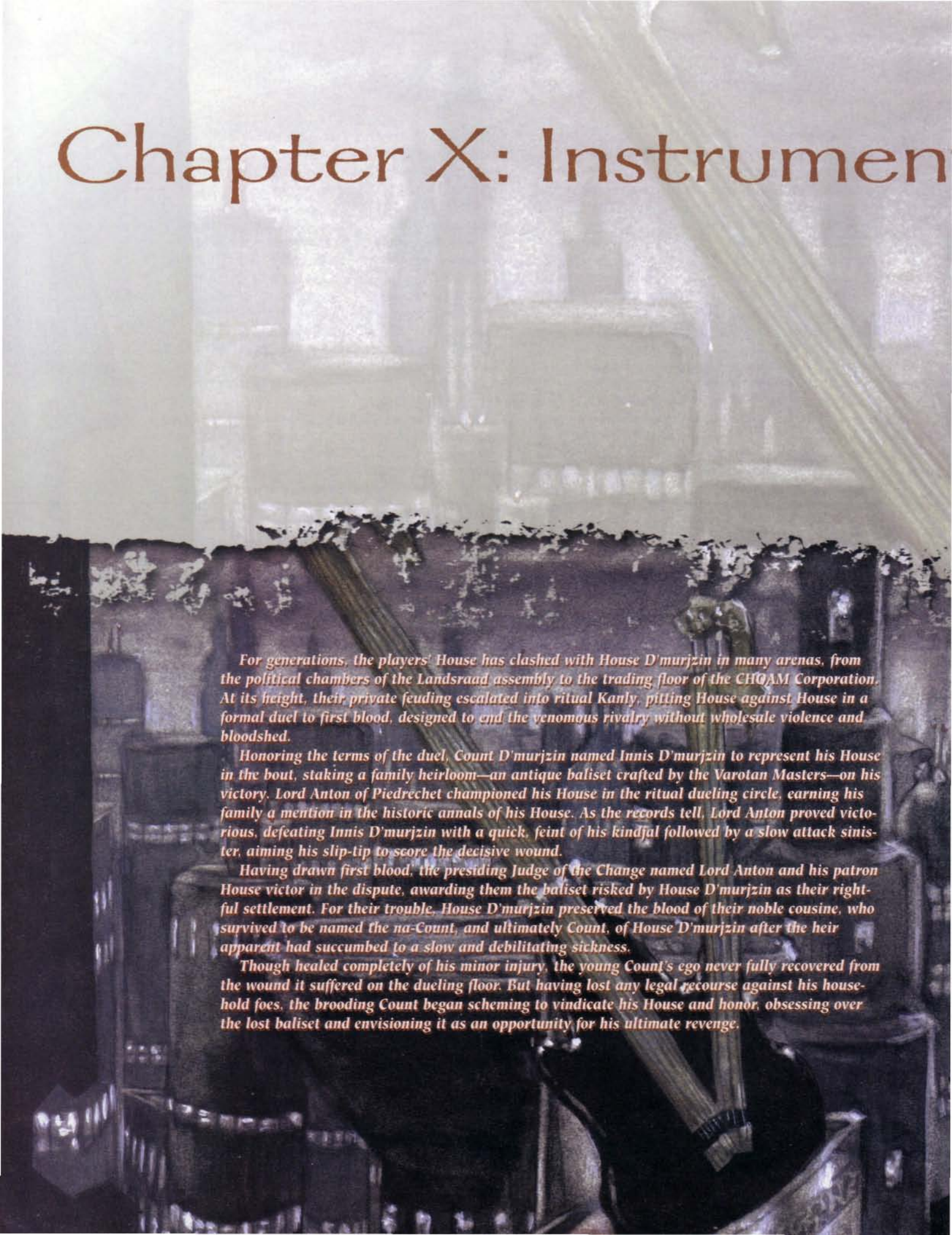
• **Chusuk Messiah** – The Navachristian Assembly has received plausible reports of prophetic events on the planet Chusuk, heralding the coming of their chosen Messiah. At the suggestion of their Bene Gesserit contact, the House has ordered the Entourage to voyage to Chusuk, gathering what information it can regarding these holy miracles. While investigating these events, they are to learn as much as they can about the Navachristian prophecies to aid them in seeking the chosen Messiah. Should they prove successful, they are to report his or her identity to their Bene Gesserit contact in the city of Jhacaretta. Then they must await further orders... .

• **Stalking the Wild Zevec** – A petulant noble in the characters' House wants to stock his ecological preserve with some of the rarest and most extraordinary creatures of the Imperium. He has set his mind to including a Chusuk zevec, or "cloud-cat," a large, carnivorous predator indigenous to the mountains of Northern Tarelica. Its mottled blue and white pelt make the feline an oddity. It is protected against poaching by Varotan law; and its large size and tremendous claws will make it difficult to capture. The noblemen commissions the entourage to track and capture a young specimen, delivering it to his preserve unharmed.

• **Precursors of Chusuk** – A distant kinsman of the players' House sends word of an amazing discovery within the sunken ruins of Lor. The relative has convinced members of the Lorentine Ecological Development Company to solicit the House for its assistance, asking that they send a particular 'expert' (maybe one of the player characters) to lead a survey team into the Archipelago. The Houses owning LEDC would, of course, provide travel arrangements and any equipment the team requests—and they would richly reward the House for its cooperation. For Narrators who prefer a more perilous narrative, the distant kinsman could represent a rival faction (such as House Mandervolde) who wishes to spy on their operations, offering an economic or political incentive for the House's assistance.

• **Holiday Excursion** – Following a particularly rigorous mission on Chusuk, the player's House offers them a brief respite before returning to their homeworld. Their liege suggests they vacation at the resort at Snow Springs—all expenses paid. Perhaps ten days in the hot springs or some time ice-climbing the glacier is just what they need to reinvigorate them. Their excursion could lead to any number of stories. Perhaps one character engages in a romantic encounter. Maybe another earns a rival in the downhill skiing competition. Or perhaps the entourage stumbles upon smugglers, or maybe even a murder attempt. Narrators can adapt the Holiday Excursion to present any sort short narrative or series of 'quasi-adventures.' Depending on their recent adventures, the characters might enjoy a change of pace.

Chapter X: Instrumen



For generations, the players' House has clashed with House D'murjzin in many arenas, from the political chambers of the Landsraad assembly to the trading floor of the CHOAM Corporation. At its height, their private feuding escalated into ritual Kanly, pitting House against House in a formal duel to first blood, designed to end the venomous rivalry without wholesale violence and bloodshed.

Honoring the terms of the duel, Count D'murjzin named Innis D'murjzin to represent his House in the bout, staking a family heirloom—an antique baliset crafted by the Varotan Masters—on his victory. Lord Anton of Piedrechet championed his House in the ritual dueling circle, earning his family a mention in the historic annals of his House. As the records tell, Lord Anton proved victorious, defeating Innis D'murjzin with a quick, feint of his kindjal followed by a slow attack sinister, aiming his slip-tip to score the decisive wound.

Having drawn first blood, the presiding Judge of the Change named Lord Anton and his patron House victor in the dispute, awarding them the baliset risked by House D'murjzin as their rightful settlement. For their trouble, House D'murjzin preserved the blood of their noble cousine, who survived to be named the na-Count, and ultimately Count, of House D'murjzin after the heir apparent had succumbed to a slow and debilitating sickness.

Though healed completely of his minor injury, the young Count's ego never fully recovered from the wound it suffered on the dueling floor. But having lost any legal recourse against his household foes, the brooding Count began scheming to vindicate his House and honor, obsessing over the lost baliset and envisioning it as an opportunity for his ultimate revenge.

of Kanly

Nearly three generations ago, the tragic demise of Lord Anton sent shock waves through the players' House. Titular ruler of his household and second cousin to the Great House liege, Lord Anton was found murdered near the Arts Academy after honoring a noble assembly with a short recital performed on his prize baliset. The baliset missing, many presumed Lord Anton the victim of a brutal robbery—a rich reward for a daring act of knavery.

Background

Though all evidence indicated theft as the obvious motive, Anton's House and family could not ignore the fact that D'murjzin heirs had vowed to reclaim the baliset and settle the score with their long-standing enemies.

Incensed by Lord Anton's death and the stink of D'murjzin involvement, the players' House launched a campaign of inquiries, hoping to recover the baliset and bring Anton's murderer to justice. But lacking sufficient evidence to bring a Bill of Particulars before the Landsraad Council, the House resorted to informal measures, renewing its aggression toward House D'murjzin and its heirs. Their own hatred never sated, House D'murjzin retaliated in kind; and for the past 5 generations the two Houses have embraced a secret vendetta, falling just short of a formalized war of assassins.

Now, House Adici—a House Minor and descendant of the ancient Varotan Masters—claims to have unearthed Lord Anton's baliset, holding it in trust from an anonymous source. Having filed the proper deeds and paperwork, CHOAM custom sanctions House Adici as legal agents of trade, permitting them to sell the baliset at private auction. Knowing something of the baliset's history, House Adici invites the survivors of Lord Anton's House to participate in its authentication and sale, perhaps also bidding for its acquisition among other noble families. At long last the family heirloom has risen from obscurity, renewing ancestral hatreds and emerging as the symbol of ultimate victory. Now, the final opus of their ancient vendetta recommences on neutral ground—the planet Chusuk, Varotan homeworld and origin of the Instrument of Kanly.

If you're a player interested in experiencing Instrument of Kanly first-hand, read no further! The following information is for Narrators only.

Narrative Timeline

Act One – Operatic Overtures

Day (time)	Scene
1 (morning)	First Baliset
2 (morning)	Silent Movement
4 (afternoon)	Aria at Mondriagne

Act Two – Orchestral Maneuvers in the Dark

Day (time)	Scene
5 (evening)	Opening Recital
5 (night)	Midnight Tango
6 (evening)	A False Chord

Act Three – Euphonious Swan Song

Day (time)	Scene
6 (night)	Dissonant Vibes
6 (night)	Improvisational Jazz
7 (afternoon)	Tonal Harmony

Synopsis

The Instrument of Kanly presents the first of a two-chapter story arc introducing your players to the DUNE universe. Aiming to bring the milieu to life, the narrative blends history, intrigue and action into a brief glimpse of the fascinating universe awaiting you and your players.

The story begins in the capital city of the players' homeworld. Inside the House keep, the players' liege delivers their mission briefing, reminding them not to let their family resentments interfere with their mission. The players are ordered to the planet Chusuk, accompanying a House economic delegation attending the Varotan Trade Faire. While the delegates woo House Varota, the players are to assist one of its influential Houses Minor, trading favor for favor to garner domestic support for the economic alliance being negotiated between the two Great Houses.

Roleplaying Hints

Roleplaying relies on player interaction to permit infinite variations and innumerable conclusions to any given story line. It is the purpose of published narratives to provide the basic information Narrators require to direct the plot from start to finish, introducing novel developments and exciting interludes along the way. When using published adventures, Narrators should flesh out scene descriptions and character dialogue as desired, perhaps even adding interim scenes or supporting characters to suit her individual sense of drama.

For example, when an adventure states the players' frigate launches into space, the particulars of the take-off—the loud roar of engine ignition, the rattling quaking of atmospheric friction and the gut-wrenching sensation of inertial G-force—fall on the Narrator to recount for the players. Similarly, when the narrative determines a supporting character conveys a specific bit of information to the players, the Narrator must decide whether the act warrants active dialogue or merely a simple explanation or announcement.

Obviously not every moment of every scene needs to be actively roleplayed. This is where the Narrator's judgement prevails. As Narrator and players become more familiar with *DUNE RPG* narration, a shorthand form of communicating develops, a balance of "in-character" roleplaying and "out-of-character" discussion that best suits the interests of everyone involved.

At the Adici's request, the Entourage must make a courtesy call, authenticating the baliset and making a favorable impression as diplomatic emissaries for their House. At their discretion, the Entourage may bid on the instrument at its auction, attempting to recover the heirloom for their House. Accomplishing these three tasks spells success for the mission.

To aid them in their mission, their patron assigns Desmond Karos as their guide and aide. Karos serves the House at the Academy of Arts, where he perfunctorily manages the musical archives. An accomplished musician and professor of antiquities, this old and trusted servant can authenticate the instrument, assisted by an Ixian device of "questionable legality." But unknown to any but House D'murjzin and its secret operatives, Karos intends to switch his own baliset with the original, declare the real instrument a fake and defect to the planet Omrezhij with the departing D'murjzin delegation.

With traitor in tow the players journey on a Guild Heighliner to the planet Chusuk. This leads the players to their first encounter with a Guild representative who introduces them to the customs of Guild Security and Heighliner berthing procedures. After folding-space to Chusuk, the Heighliner disgorges their House Frigate, which enters the atmosphere to land in the spacing field outside of Arubel, the mercantile epicenter of Chusuk.

Arriving safely, the Entourage is greeted by Sator Pell, henchmen for Compt Lorenzo Adici. He escorts them by groundcar to the Adici compound, where he arranges their quarters and presents their itinerary. Among sundry tours and informal site seeing, the players must make time to attend an informal reception hosted by Compt Lorenzo. At that time they can make arrangements to authenticate the instrument and discuss House affairs.

During the reception, armed thieves ransack the museum level of the Adici corporate headquarters. Alerted in progress, Compt Lorenzo, Sator Pell and the characters dash to the museum attempting to thwart the intruders. Orchestrated by agents of House D'murjzin, the assault is planned to appear a failure, giving Karos the opportunity to set the Entourage and House Adici at odds through deceit and treachery. Having succeeding in switching the instruments, House D'murjzin orders Karos to authenticate the fake, hiding their theft of the original instrument and setting the stage for ruinous consequences when House Adici attempts to sell it at auction.

In the climactic scene, buyers assemble at the prestigious, "invitation only" Adici auction. Presiding over the affair, Compt Lorenzo makes a grand showing of presenting Karos as the House representative who will authenticate the instrument before the assembled buyers. Performing a brief examination, Desmond declares the baliset a fake, setting the Entourage and House Adici at immediate odds. Having been greatly embarrassed, Compt Lorenzo suspends the auction taking the Entourage into a private chamber to read them the riot act for their apparent treachery.

The players, yet unaware of Karos' treason, must now determine what has happened, who is lying, and how to repair their damaged relationship with House Adici. Not only is their mission in jeopardy, but they've also grievously insulted one of the most powerful Varotan Houses Minor!

Primary Goal: Establish favorable relations with House Adici (Statecraft/Diplomacy Venture)

Secondary Goal: Authenticate the instrument (Equipment & Performance (baliset) Test)

Tertiary Goal: Acquire the instrument at auction (Mercantilism/Bargaining Test)

Act One: Operatic Overtures

The story begins with a special strategy meeting between the players and their House patriarch. He explains that the Varotan Trade Faire begins soon. The information presented in "Chapter 9" can be used to describe House Varota, the planet Chusuk or the annual Trade Faire. Their Patron mentions the Trade Fair,

emphasizing its importance for the private negotiations that take place around the event. See sidebar, "Varotan Trade Faire."

Their Sponsor hopes the players will be able to convince Compt Lorenzo Adici to support the proposed initiative to forge a lasting trade agreement between the two Great Houses. He points out that House Adici bears great influence over the other Houses Minor of the Varotan Sysselraad—if their support can be won, House Varota will likely agree to the partnership.

Explaining why the players' House has been chosen for this mission, their sponsor informs them that the Adici family believes it has gained custody of Lord Anton's baliset. According to CHOAM antiquities customs, House Adici intends to auction the baliset during the week of the Faire acting as the "agent of sale" for the anonymous owner of the instrument. Having a sterling reputation for representing only the finest of antiquities, House Adici has requested the House Entourage's assistance in verifying their authentication efforts and presenting its unique provenance.

Cautioning the Entourage about becoming "emotionally involved" their patron still encourages them to bid for the instrument. He recognizes the symbolic significance of its recovery, seeing it as a victory over House D'murjzin, and offers to reimburse a portion of the cost if the Entourage proves successful in their larger mission. And to help in their agenda, their patron appoints Desmond Karos, a trusted servant and musical archivist to help the players authenticate the instrument for the assembled buyers.

Concluding the briefing, their Patron reminds the Entourage that the trade initiative with House Varota represents an important alliance. Though not assigned to the vanguard delegations, the character's mission bears directly on the overriding House agenda. So the players' mustn't let their family pride interfere with their diplomatic objectives.



The Varotan Trade Faire

The Varotan Trade Faire originated millennia ago as a domestic craft festival, celebrated by the native denizens of the planet Chusuk. Since that time it has grown into a vital economic trade initiative, attracting swarms of economic delegations from numerous Great Houses throughout the Imperium. Lasting but a fortnight, the Varotan Trade Fair presents the opportunity to forge important trade agreements with attending Houses of the CHOAM community—especially with House Varota and its Houses Minor who sponsor the fair to flaunt their remarkable materials and native exports.

Hosting the event once per annum, House Varota encourages attending Houses to enjoy the amenities of its homeworld Chusuk, a beautiful planet likened to a gleaming diadem of sapphire and jade. Because the Varotans remain one of CHOAM's greatest mercantile Houses, the Guild denies transport of military vessels to Chusuk for the duration of the event, assisting House Varota in its efforts to foster a peaceful environment for conducting negotiations—which by their nature, induce aggressive posturing and violent passion.

Scene One: First Baliset

Day 1 (morning) – House Compound: Strategy Chambers

Master Desmond Karos

After briefing the players, their patron introduces them to Desmond Karos. Karos, though old, shows energy and enthusiasm for the approaching journey. He mentions his work has taken him to Chusuk several times in the past, and he looks forward to visiting the beautiful planet 'one last time'. If asked why he puts it this way, he smiles and tells the players that he will soon be retiring from service. He may mention his advancing age, suggesting he may not enjoy another occasion to visit this delightful planet. This is an Opportunity for an Adept to make a Challenging BG Way Skill Test revealing there's more to Karos' remorse than he's admitting (perhaps he suffers a physical ailment or fears retirement from service).



If indulged, Karos describes the Trade Faire for the players. His familiarity with Chusuk and its customs prove informative, though his ramblings stray to include mention of "the fascinating woman he met on his last visit..." or the "the funny thing about Varotan merchants." The narrator should play up his amiable and wistful nature, so that when the player's learn of his treason they experience a true sense of betrayal.

Desmond Karos

Desmond Karos has served the players' patron House for over three generations. Though an honorable man, Karos' passion for music and antiquities brought him to covet Lord Anton's baliset—the original sin leading him down the path of betrayal.

As a young musician of some promise, Desmond fell in love with Lord Anton's baliset the moment he first heard its sweet, yet sultry, tones. Having played with Lord Anton on several occasions as the Arts Academy, Desmond's growing obsession with the artifact deluded him into conspiring against Lord Anton—a treacherous plot culminating in Lord Anton's murder and the delivery of the baliset into D'murjzin hands.

Upon discovering his own betrayal, Desmond became a D'murjzin creature for true. For withholding his participation in the crime, sleeper agents blackmailed Karos into becoming an informant for House D'murjzin—aiding them in their ongoing vendetta with the player's House. While they coerced him with the threat of discovery, they also allured him with the promise that one day he could defect to Omrezhij (the D'murjzin homeworld) and retire in a comfortable estate along with a minor title. But as his greatest reward, Count D'murjzin promised to bequeath the baliset to Karos in his retirement, a final gift for a life of covert service.

Now after these many years of dual allegiance, Karos plans to perform his final act of service to House D'murjzin, playing a major role in the defeat of their rivals. After he defrauds his sponsor and House Adici, he intends to defect on the D'murjzin frigate and return to Omrezhij to claim his pension. Though remorseful for having to betray the House that has been good to him for all these years, Karos remains obsessed with the legendary baliset and recognizes that he's long since passed the point of no return.

Karos should be roleplayed, not as a desperate man frantically worrying that his treachery may be discovered, but as a confident, exuberant man, looking forward to serving out his "final mission" on the lovely homeworld of Chusuk. Though adversity in the mission may cause him to lapse into remorseful indecision, Karos' ardent determination and fatalistic conviction drives him to complete this final act in accordance with his bargain. After all, the way Karos sees it, he's got the rest of his life to serve his penance, nursing his guilt with the beautiful melodies of Lord Anton's baliset.

Attributes	Physique: 2
	Coordination: 2 (Dexterity: +1)
	Intellect: 3
	Charisma: 2
Skills	Performance (baliset) 3(4)
	Culture (Chusuk) 2(3)
	Concealment (stash) 2(3)
	Equipment (devices) 1(3)
Traits	Enhanced Sense (Hearing)
	Dual Allegiance (House D'murjzin)
Equipment	kindjal, baliset, Ixian Authenticator, 2 shigawire reels containing master recordings (one of Lord Anton's baliset, one of Karos's own)

A Forbidden Device

Describing how he will authenticate the baliset, Karos reveals an Ixian device he will be using, and gives them a brief lesson in its operation. The forbidden device exhibits the traits standard of Ixian manufacture—its miniature controls elegantly simple in use and function. Because it employs an internal microcomputer to compare harmonic deviation, the device violates the proscriptions of the Butlerian Jihad and is considered illegal on many homeworlds. Karos acknowledges this fact but explains that absolute authentication requires the employment of such devices.

To demonstrate, Karos attaches the device to his own baliset. He plays a short, exquisite tune, then removes the device from the instrument showing its read-out to the group. Its display reveals a variation of 1.982, indicating (Karos confides) that his instrument is an "inferior replica." Had this been the authentic instrument, the panel would display no more than 0.002 variation, even were the instrument improperly tuned. An academian at heart, Karos adds that the internal recording contains Lord Anton's final performance, and has been preserved as a matter of historic record. He seems genuinely eager for the chance to verify the Varotan instrument, mentioning that not only is the instrument in question very old, but it's also a genuine work of one of the latter-day Varotan Masters.

Scene Summary

Ventures: None

Facts: Karos' instrument displays 1.982 when tested against the authentic master reel. Karos refers to his instrument as an 'inferior replica'.

Motivations: Karos wishes he could retire to Chusuk.

Opportunities: An Adept may make a Challenging BG Way Test to discover Karos is hiding anxieties about his age or retirement. Any player may also make a Difficult Interrogation or Persuasion Test to discover the name of the woman (Rugi Pallos) Karos met on Chusuk.

Scene Two: Silent Movement

Day 2 (morning) – House Frigate

Boarding the House Frigate

Having been given a day to prepare, the Entourage finds itself boarding a diplomatic frigate bearing the markings of their patron House. Appointed to make a statement of wealth, the frigate's opulent interior reveals lavish furnishings and spacious staterooms. Though the entire journey shouldn't take more than a day or two, the players are sure to arrive completely refreshed.

The luxury of the frigate reminds players that they are being treated as House representatives sent on an important mission. It reveals the magnitude of wealth possessed by a Great House, giving them a taste of what true power can buy. Many Houses use their frigates as mobile embassies while traveling abroad and each Frigate has quarters for sleeping, eating, and entertaining.

Taken to their rooms, a steward explains that the Frigate will blast-off in approximately one hour, once the last of the cargo has been secured. Karos entertains the Entourage with some tunes from his baliset. Launching on schedule, the Entourage suffers about 10 minutes shaking tremors and heavy G-force before the frigate reaches the silent calm of space. Shortly thereafter, the attending steward announces the arrival of the Guild Heighliner and the commencement of their boarding procedures.

Aboard the Guild Heighliner

From their viewports, the players glimpse the titanic bulk of the Guild Heighliner. It is a massive vessel, capable of berthing hundreds of frigates in its hold. But Guild Security ensures complete safety—rival frigates could share the same hold and never dare to attack one another. The characters feel a short jolt upon berthing, but nothing else the entire trip.

Shortly after docking, three Guild representatives enter the stateroom. Silent and aloof, they confront the leader of the Entourage to explain procedures. Only their spokesman voices their business, and none of them reveal the slightest emotion. The spokesman explains that their agents are examining the cargo, comparing it to the manifest submitted in advance. He asks the leader if he'd like to declare any last minute changes, consulting a slim, gray filmbook presented by one of his aides. Prompting a response, the spokesman states that articles violating the Guild Transportation Act must be reported—including any cargoes violating the Great Convention or the Butlerian proscriptions.

If the players deny they have any such item (as they've been instructed to do) the Guildsman regards Karos and his diplomatic pouch, hesitates, and then cryptically remarks "your future is safe with us." He uses a dull, metal stylus to mark the slick black surface of the filmbook's inner screen before returning his attention to the Entourage.

If the players foolishly admit possession of the device, the Guildsman waves his hand, motioning for the character to put the device away. Such things are beneath their concern. This, or a flat denial, ends the representative's interest in the matter. The players should suspect that the spokesman was interested in the device. But in fact, Karos' presence triggered the spokesman's prescience, giving him a brief glimpse of trouble and violence surrounding this man. But foreseeing this would not affect the journey, he dismisses the matter—that which does not affect the safety of the Heighliner, and as a result, is of no concern to the Guild.

The Ixian Authenticator

The Ixian Authenticator enables its user to verify tonal harmonics by measuring the harmonics of a 'test' sample against a pre-recorded 'master' sample—with a harmonic deviation of 0.000 indicating a positive match. The device incorporates three primary components—a small microphone for feeding harmonic data into its microprocessor, a 'master' recording stored on a shigawire reel for comparing the test data, and a small display for revealing the numerical deviation between the test data and the pre-recorded tones. By comparing the registered harmonics against a master recording, the device can authenticate voice patterns, tonal signatures or any similar variety of tonal or harmonic data.

Smaller than a coined solari, the device weighs approximately five grams and can be easily hidden in the palm of the hand until attached to the body of the instrument (Concealment Test Difficulty: Routine). Though relatively simple to use for those familiar with its controls, the device proves difficult to operate for those unversed in forbidden technology (Equipment (forbidden technology) Test, Difficulty: Challenging). Similarly, Repairing the device or changing its master reels proves Very Difficult for those unfamiliar with its design and function.

Before leaving, the Guild Representative pauses to mention that the Heighliner will fold-space to Omrezhij (homeworld of House D'murjzin) to take on some cargo before proceeding to Chusuk.

Scene Summary

Ventures: None

Facts: The Heighliner stops next at the player's rival's homeworld.

Opportunities: An Adept may make a Challenging BG Way Test to determine the Guildsman was concerned with Karos rather than the instrument.

Scene Three: Aria at Mondriagne

Day 4 (mid-afternoon) – The Spaceport of Mondriagne

Landing Field at Volyons

The players arrive on Chusuk and disembark at the Spaceport of Mondriagne, a marvel of Imperial engineering and architecture. Upon exiting the frigate, landing field personnel rush forward to begin unloading its cargo. As they supervise the offloading of their equipment, the Entourage may notice (Observation Test (visual): Routine Difficulty) a nearby frigate bearing House D'murjzin's official insignia.

During the hours consumed by offloading, the characters gain a true appreciation of the scope and efficiency of the Varotan spaceport. Approximating the size of a small city, the spaceport and surrounding landing pads span as far as the eye can see. Landing pads rise numerous stories above ground level, external suspensor lifts rising a falling like pile drivers. The narrator should take this opportunity to expand on the information presented in "Chapter 9," emphasizing the details of the world—its climate, geography and native customs.



Sator Pell

Shortly before the unloading has ended, Sator Pell, Security Commander of House Adici arrives by groundcar and approaches with a small retinue of 2 security guards and 2 diplomatic aides. Pell stiffly introduces himself to the character possessing the highest apparent caste, welcoming the party to Chusuk on behalf of House Varota and the Adici family.

Informing them the auction begins in 3 days, he invites them to enjoy his beautiful homeworld suggesting they visit the wondrous museums and marvelous shops in the city of Arubel. House Varota offers guides to the Entourage. Finally, Pell invites the players to the opening banquet, hosted by the Compt Adici in three days time. He informs the players that their transportation has been arranged; their driver will pick them up and transport them to the Adici headquarters at 15:00 standard time. Pell then goes on to greet the next house arriving on the landing pad; the player's rivals.

Sator Pell

Sator Pell, age 45, is not a musician, artist or creative person of any sort. Instead, he is a man of unquestioning devotion, a loyal henchman who's been serving in Compt Lorenzo's security detail for more than 20 years. Pell tends to think in straight lines, never permitting himself to be sidetracked by personal aims or trivial distractions. Not endowed with a Mentat's intellect, Pell nevertheless has developed a reputation for keen perception and subtle craft, directing counter-intelligence and security measures with a masterful hand.

These attributes combine to make Pell one of the most respected Security Commanders to be found among the Varotan Houses Minor. Compt Adici prides himself with this knowledge and treats Pell with a degree of affection and trust usually reserved for family kin or fellow noblemen, thereby honoring Pell above all others in his retinue. In return, Pell serves his liege with absolute loyalty and honor, protecting the Adici name and ethos as if they were his own flesh and bone. This, and the fact that his patron provides every luxury that a fighting man could want, contributes to Pell's steadfast allegiance and absolute immunity to bribery, seduction or false propaganda against House Adici or his patron lord.

Compt Lorenzo has watched Pell grow from a rash, energetic youth into a cagey, powerful man. Lorenzo loves Pell like a son and trusts him implicitly even though Pell occasionally offends the Compt's guests with his brusque, suspicious manner. To others, Pell seems preoccupied with trying to work out what crime you may have committed or are currently contemplating, but this is only an impression. Pell is not a nobleman and treats nobles with the respect they deserve, even if a little heavy-handed with his intimidating demeanor and suspicious affectations.

Attributes Physique: 3
Constitution +1

	Coordination: 4
	Intellect: 2
	Perception+1
	Charisma: 2
	Willpower +1
Skills	Armed Combat (dueling arms) 3(4)
	Dodge (evade) 2(3)
	Ranged Combat (stunner) 3(4)
	Unarmed Combat (martial training) 2(3)
	Security (House) 3(4)
	Equipment (systems) 1(2)
	Observation (surveillance) 2(3)
Traits	Whipcord Reflexes
	Dueling
	Shield Fighting
	Olympian Physique
	Commendation (3)
Equipment	stunner, kindjal, sword, ComNet transmitter, and personal shield

Scene Summary

Ventures: None
Facts: The player's rivals are participating in the Faire.

Act Two: Orchestral Maneuvers in the Dark

After arriving on Chusuk, the players have a few days to enjoy themselves and look around. Though nothing spectacular occurs, describe some of the art and performances the players have the opportunity to see, as well as the festival atmosphere of the entire area. Since a great deal of money changes hands during the Trade Faire, it's in House Varota's best interests to ensure everyone has a good time.

Scene One: Opening Recital

Day 5 (evening) – Reception hall of the Adici Enterprises corporate headquarters, located in the trade district of Arubel

The Adici Reception

Having spent two days touring the city and enjoying the local offerings, the players attend a lavish yet informal soiree, held in honor of visiting Houses. Though many Great Houses have sent delegations to Arubel to attend the Faire, this party and recital serves to entertain the respected clients of House Adici, most of them being art collectors and prospective clients here for this week's antiquities auctions. Gatherings such as this have been occurring in noble Houses throughout Arubel, every night for the past week. But this represents the characters' first opportunity to advance the main objective of their mission by interacting with Compt Lorenzo of House Adici.

When the characters arrive, some fifty guests occupy the medium-sized ballroom, beautifully appointed for the occasion. In the middle of the high-ceilinged room, several ice sculptures of beautiful objects d'art call their attention to the tables of hors d'oeuvres. Liveried servants walk about with trays of tasty morsels or bubbling apéritifs, while the guests cluster randomly, conversing sociably in small, informal groupings. In the corner, a string quintet plays dulcet tunes, enhancing the room with a soft undercurrent that compliments the sparkling crystal and soft, yellow light beaming from floating suspensor globes.

Before the arrival of Compt Lorenzo and his entourage, the players enjoy some time to meet the other guests and make contacts with important noble Houses. Desmond Karos knows some of those in attendance, and offers to make introductions on the players' behalf. Apparently, Karos is generally respected and well liked—his association makes for easy networking among the attending Houses Minor. Since this represents the players' first opportunity to make contacts during play, the Narrator might want to name some of the guests and permit Charm and Influence Tests to enable the characters to initiate relationships with some of them. If the players show particular interest in any of these NPCs, the Narrator should note them for possible inclusion in future narratives (as an opportunity to build "continuity" among his stories).



Rugi Pallos

One such supporting character is Rugi Pallos, a stunningly beautiful woman who catches a character's eye and appears to wink at him. If the character shows the slightest interest, Karos volunteers her identity—Rugi Pallos, an independent antiquities dealer and suspected art smuggler. He adds this last bit with apparent disdain, remarking that he doesn't know why the honorable Varotan's tolerate "her kind." Grimacing as if he suddenly finds his drink bitterer than before, Karos surrenders his glass to a passing servant and excuses himself from the discussion. A BG Way Test (Challenging) suggests Karos is hiding something about Pallos, either a prior conflict or perhaps and unrequited attraction.



If the player with Karos approaches Rugi at this time, she greets them with smug amusement, but quickly warms up to show her benevolence. She engages the player in lively discourse, showing apparent interest in his identity and purpose for attending the event. If the player manages to turn the tables, she readily describes herself as an art aficionado and antiquities specialist, traveling about the Imperium to negotiate art acquisitions for noble patrons who are too busy to attend themselves. She disdains ignorance and banality with regard to art and antiquities, and chastens any players who demonstrate a lack of proper appreciation. She might say something pedantic, like "one does not buy artwork like a pyon shopping for portyguls; rather, great artwork must be acquired selectively, chosen for its particular merit or history and secured by negotiating a respectful, yet reasonable price."

Rugi Pallos

As a member of the lower castes, Rugi Pallos operates on the fringes of noble society. She belongs to no House and has built her prosperous business enterprise by traveling from one homeworld to another, trading in any variety of heirlooms and personal artifacts. She specializes in objects d'art, and has established a reputation for lending her expert knowledge of antiquities to any House willing to pay her prohibitively high consulting fees.

In the course of doing business, Rugi occasionally traffics illegal goods, fraternizing with thieves, smugglers and fences as her needs require. Without the aegis of a noble House to protect her, Rugi has learned to be very careful. She wears a mask of suave, soft-spoken confidence, charming her way through most social difficulties. The fact that she is possessed of stunning beauty aids her in this, but beneath her façade of poise and grace, Rugi maintains a practiced arsenal of espionage techniques and martial training.

At the outset of the narrative, Rugi works according to a secret agreement with House D'murjzin. Acting as their broker, Rugi delivered Anton's baliset to House Adici, refusing to name the instrument's current owners. As guest of House Adici, Rugi remains to "witness the auction of the baliset" but her contract with House D'murjzin ends once their agents have recovered the baliset during the auction. Once done, Rugi attends the auction only out of curiosity, and of course, as a sign of gratitude for the courteous invitation House Adici has extended her.

So by the end of Act II, Rugi concludes her contract with House D'murjzin and once again begins to act like a free agent. This means that she's actively pursuing her own business agenda, which may lead her into a temporary alliance with House Adici or the player characters. Though the conditions are presented in the text of the relevant scenes, the Narrator should consider Rugi's private agendas when characterizing her actions, keeping in mind that her business pursuits depend on favorable relationships with all noble houses.

Attributes	Physique: 2
	Coordination: 2
	Dexterity: +1
	Intellect: 3
	Perception +1
	Charisma: 3
	Willpower: +1
Skills	Concealment (stash) 2(3)
	Infiltration (escape) 2(3)
	Culture (Imperial) 2 (3)
	History (art & antiquities) 4(5)
	Underworld (black markets) 3(4)
	Artistry (forgery) 3(4)
	Equipment (forbidden tech) 2(3)
Traits	Alertness, Enhanced Sense (vision)
Equipment	knife, maula pistol, attaché & various research holostats, personal effects, Guild transport voucher

Compt Lorenzo Adici

As soon as the players have sufficiently exhausted the social opportunities presented by the growing influx of

guests, the stringed quintet abruptly halts as a liveried herald enters the hall to formally announce the arrival of Compt Lorenzo and his retinue. Commander Pell accompanies his lord, along with additional family members. As the procession enters the hall, the quintet resumes with a lively melody—the traditional anthem of House Adici (Culture (Varota) Test: Moderate Difficulty). Upon his arrival, Compt Lorenzo formally proceeds to the front of the room, waiting for the rest of his procession to gather around him. Servants circulate among the guests and entourage handing out drinks. The last of his procession arriving just as the anthem ends, Compt Lorenzo greets the assembly, by engaging them in a toast, "...(Narrator's ad lib). Business makes progress. Fortune passes everywhere!" Once more, the quintet resumes is melody, as Compt Lorenzo and entourage disperse, moving to greet their assembled guests.



Lorenzo shakes the hand of the Entourage's leader and mentions his joy at being able to return the instrument to circulation. He demonstrates his knowledge of musical instruments by saying something to the effect "it's a pity to see such a fine instrument collecting dust like some forgotten relic. A great instrument should be played—lest it lose its tonal harmony for want of due appreciation." A Routine BG Way Test reveals this statement disturbs Karos into momentary reverie. Snapping out of it, Karos graciously responds, "my sentiments exactly, m'Lord," followed by a terse bow. His social duties calling him toward his other guests, Lorenzo quickly concludes his business with the players, informing them that he'd like them to authenticate the instrument during the auction, before the assembled buyers. He seems confident that his own experts have accurately verified its provenance and authenticity, but desires the players' participation as a show of good faith.

For the remainder of the scene, the players may make one last attempt to engage other guests in conversation or approach Compt Lorenzo to further their primary agenda. While roleplaying the final encounter, the Narrator should require any "nonparticipating" characters to make a Test (Observation (surveillance): Moderate). Any success reveals that the character notices Karos and Pallos holding a private conversation near the entrance to the hall. Karos seems on edge, his eyes darting about the room as they speak.

Compt Lorenzo Adici

Compt Lorenzo Adici, age 77, stands as the most prominent statesmen of the Varotan Sysselraad. He presides over House Adici and has leveraged its position as one of the great Mercantile Houses of Chusuk to arbitrate numerous CHOAM disputes and Kanly negotiations. Regarded as a master diplomat and a great proponent for peace, Compt Lorenzo cultivates his reputation by remaining impartial while taking pains to understand inter-party conflicts from all perspectives.

During the course of the narrative, the players may fear that their House intrigues may upset him, causing them to lose favor for embroiling House Adici in their long-standing vendetta. On the contrary; as the spokesman of the Varotan clans Lorenzo sees infighting such as this on an 'all-too-frequent' basis. So provided the players can ultimately convince him they are pawns in a greater, ongoing vendetta, he will readily forgive the Entourage for any minor loss of face suffered by House Adici on their behalf.

Nonetheless, in his age Compt Adici grows tired of petty conflict and shows little tolerance for wanton destruction or foolish bloodshed. He doesn't suffer fools gladly and won't hesitate to take matters into his own hands should the characters seem incompetent or untrustworthy in their attempt to set matters aright. As a general rule, the Compt prefers honest, straightforward dealings and will treat the Entourage more leniently if they demonstrate sincerity and good intentions.

Attributes	Physique: 2
	Constitution +1
	Coordination: 2
	Intellect: 3
	Logic +1
	Charisma: 4
	Presence +1
	Prescience: 0
Skills	Armed Combat (dueling arms) 2(3)
	Command (subordinates) 2(3)
	Dodge (sidestep) 1 (2)
	Diplomacy (negotiation) 4(5)
	Observation (details) 1(2)
	Politics (Imperium, Varotan) 3(4,5)
	Statecraft 4
Traits	Highborn
	Shield Fighting
	Plasteel Will
	Noble Title 3
	Physical Impairment (Limp)
Equipment	House uniform, personal affects, sword, personal shield

Scene Summary

Pallos' earlier wink was a signal to Karos—one the player accidentally intercepted and hopefully misinterpreted. Pallos is Karos' contact with the House D'murjzin. As predetermined, they are meeting to arrange the timing of the House D'murjzin's agenda. During their conversation, Karos relays the characters' itinerary, confirming that the instrument won't be tested until the auction. Acting on this information, Pallos swiftly departs to contact her employers, giving them the go-ahead to commence the robbery on schedule.

Ventures: The players may initiate a Statecraft/Diplomacy venture to make a favorable impression on Compt Lorenzo. This venture must occur by player initiative, after Lorenzo has already imparted the details of the auction. A success will give the player +1 die when making any subsequent influence Tests during the narrative.

Facts: Pallos is an expert in antiquities and an accomplished smuggler. She is the agent who sold the baliset to the Adici family and she has preserved the anonymity of House D'murjzin as the sellers of the instrument. Karos and Pallos know each other. Karos and Pallos converse privately, and Pallos leaves afterward.

Motivations: Pallos is motivated by money, working for whoever pays her.

Opportunities: The player being winked at may make a Difficult Observation Test to notice Pallos is winking at Karos. An Adept may make a Moderate BG Way Test to realize that Karos knows Pallos by more than reputation alone.

Scene Two: Midnight Tango

Day 5 (late evening) – The Exhibit Hall of the Adici Enterprises corporate headquarters

A Call to Arms

Interrupting the reception, Commander Pell hastily navigates the crowds to whisper into Compt Lorenzo's ear. Lorenzo quickly scans the room, moving into action as soon as locates the leader of the Entourage. Without disrupting the other guests, Lorenzo approaches the characters addressing them with quiet urgency: "Something happening, gather your party and come with me." Following him from the hall, Lorenzo and the players rendezvous with Pell and five security guards who lead the way toward the waiting suspensor lift, door ajar at the end of the long hallway.

The lift carries the group to the 35th floor, which Pell hastily describes as the "Exhibit floor" of the towering Adici Enterprises headquarters. The lift disgorges the group into a labyrinth of 10-foot walls dwarfed by the 50 foot ceiling overhead. The winding corridor of walls forming numerous alcoves and viewing areas, the maze is in fact, a museum showroom with objects d'art carefully displayed here and there for purchasers to examine prior to auction. Pell's men follow his lead, each drawing a slow-pellet stunner as Pell heads down the dimly lit corridor. Lorenzo escorts the characters, hastening them to keep pace behind Pell and his men.

Losing Pell as he turns a corner, the players hear a shout of surprise, followed by the sound of stunner fire and the electrostatic clash of shields. Turning the corner the players discover Pell and his surviving men engaging five rushing figures, three of Pell's men and two of their assailants having fallen during the initial confrontation. The fracas takes place within a circular cul-de-sac, featuring a recessed curio cabinet with a dismantled plas casing. A baliset lies on the floor beneath, set next to the plas-casing and assorted hand tools.

This represents the characters' first opportunity to prove themselves in combat. Though three of Pell's men fell during the ambush, Pell and two remaining guards prove superior in combat, should none of the characters choose to engage. Nonetheless, the remaining thieves offer sufficient threat to test the characters' abilities should they enter the fray. Considering the dim lighting and closeness of combat, characters should realize ranged weapon fire could injure Pell or his men (+2 Difficulty modifier to Ranged Weapon Tests).

Not particularly courageous, the thieves attempt to flee if they become outnumbered 2:1. But if captured they prove unwilling to talk. To gather any useful information, the thieves must be incarcerated and thoroughly interrogated. Disdainful of torture, Pell turns to it as a last resort, finding himself too late—the thieves die within five hours of a Type III poison unknowingly administered to them by their D'murjzin employer. If interrogated by a player character, the thieves may reveal that House D'murjzin is their employer or that they were hired to steal the baliset (Very Difficult Interrogation (torture) Test). Because Pell leaves the interrogation area if the player employs torture, the character will have to relay this information to Pell, who may or may not believe them (considering their methods).

D'murjzin Operatives

Dressed in a black leotard, the agents of House D'murjzin represent a small cadre of specialists trained in the arts of infiltration and acquisitions. They have been psychologically and physically conditioned to resist torture and interrogation, and while competent in combat, have been ordered not to kill Compt Adici or the player characters. Instead they have been instructed to switch the balisets in preparation for Karos' false authentication, and ordered to flee at the earliest opportunity once their mission has been accomplished.

Attributes	All attributes: 2.
Skills	Armed Combat (melee arms) 1(2)
	Dodge (sidestep) 2
	Concealment (camouflage) 2(3)
	Ranged Combat (maula pistol) 1(2)
	Stealth (prowling) 2(3)
	Subterfuge (interrogation) 4(5)
Traits	Hypno-ligation (resist questioning)
Equipment	kindjal, maula pistol & 1 clip extra ammo

An Moderate Observation (search) Test reveals a thin krimskell rope, dangling from the looming darkness above. After the combat, Lorenzo or Pell uses a small hand light to illuminate the darkness, tracing the rope to an open air duct, some fifty feet overhead. Clearly this is where the thieves entered (and exited?), inspiring Lorenzo or Pell to use their communinet transmitter to order the building secured, paying special attention to the ventilation facilities on level 35.

Unscheduled Inspection

Fearing the instrument has been damaged or tampered with, Lorenzo asks Karos to inspect it. Karos first gives it a thorough visual examination, relieving Lorenzo when he declares it undamaged. Then he discreetly employs his Ixian device, strumming two brief chords on the baliset. Returning the instrument to Lorenzo, Karos declares the instrument authentic, showing the characters the readout (0.000) while Lorenzo and Pell discuss removing the baliset to a more secure location.

Lorenzo and Pell lead the players to a security vault located in the opposite wing. While Pell secures the device within a pentashield enclosure Lorenzo explains that he would like the characters to still attend the auction, doing a second authentication "as a formality for our guests." His spirits improved, he congratulates the players on their valor and heroism, arranging for any of their wounded to be treated by his attendant physician. Things seem to be looking up for the player's chances of accomplishing their primary goal.

Scene Summary

By the time Pell and his men arrive in the museum, the thieves have succeeded in exchanging Karos' baliset for the original. One thief has already departed with the original instrument, leaving the remaining thieves to cover their tracks; and if caught, make it appear they were just about to make their getaway with the replacement. Pell and his men interrupt them at this stage, mistaking the replica for the original according to plan.

Ventures: Increase favor with Lorenzo. Any success yielding +1 additional die to further influence Tests made during the narrative (Statecraft/Diplomacy).

Facts: The Instrument matched the recording (a false recording, of Karo's instrument).

Motivations: The rivals wish to swap the instrument to hide its theft.

Opportunities: A successful BG Way Test (Difficulty: 12) reveals that Karos is both relieved the instrument is there, and apprehensive about it.

Scene Three: A False Chord

Day 6 (evening) – Private Auction Chamber in the Adici Enterprises headquarters

The auction occurs in the "Negotiations" wing of the Adici Enterprises headquarters. The auction room resembles a small theatre, replete with rows of chairs, a low stage, an auctioneer's podium and display table for the merchandise. A liveried usher escorts the Entourage to their reserved seats, located in the far right of the front row.

As they enter, the characters discern many of the people they met or observed at the evening reception. Compt Lorenzo and entourage sit front row, center, allowing a little excitement to show through his normal mask of reserve. Rugi Pallos may be discerned sitting near the back, studying a printed sell sheet and avoiding eye contact with the other buyers. Two representatives wearing the livery of House D'murjzin sit opposite the players, wearing a look of smug confidence on their predatory faces.

An Attack Sinister

A few moments after the players arrive, the auction begins. Several minor items come up for bid, their lots being called by sequential number. As the auction continues, more people—participants or spectators—enter the room, gathering toward the back to gawk and mutter in hushed, excited tones. The Narrator should keep the pacing of the preliminary auction swift and clean, mentioning the influx of onlookers to help build the tension. If the players wonder at the attention this auction is getting, Karos reminds them that the sale of the baliset represents a something of a duel in the ongoing vendetta between their House and House D'murjzin. Few can resist the spectacle of conflict, and this contest may prove just as lively as any dueling bout.

The moment for auctioning the instrument finally arrives. Master Pell emerges from offstage, cradling the baliset so that the viewers can behold its magnificence. In the bright yellow suspensor lighting, its lacquer gleams with a golden luster. The auctioneer delivers a short speech detailing the provenance of the baliset. He mentions its date and origin of manufacture, briefly recounting its history of ownership ending with the current "anonymous" sellers. As the auctioneer speaks, Pell parades the instrument across the stage, up the center aisle and back, returning just as the auctioneer finishes his pitch. Standing at his side, Pell nods to Karos as the auctioneer makes an introduction.

Karos approaches, bows before the assembled nobility and begins his examination. Turning it over in his hands, angling it this way and that to catch the light he makes a fine show for the prospective buyers. Completing his visual inspection, he hazards a worried look toward the Entourage, alerting them that something is amiss. He then resumes his inspection, playing a series of melodic chords and secretly monitoring the forbidden device which he's clipped to the neck of the instrument.

Karos finally surrenders the instrument into Pell's care, excusing himself with a hushed apology. Leaving the stage he approaches the character leading the Entourage, as surprised murmurs run among the crowd. Both Pell and the auctioneer follow Karos with their eyes, frowning at this unexpected turn of events. Lorenzo also leans forward in his seat, watching Karos' exchange with Entourage with wary displeasure. Addressing the Entourage Karos discreetly declares the instrument a fraud, claiming that it's clearly an "inferior replica" that must have been switched with the original.

Scene Summary

This is the climax of the adventure. What the players do here could conceivably end the entire story. If the players demand to see the device and use it themselves, Karos objects, citing the proscriptions of the Butlerian Jihad in support of his argument that Pell could prosecute them all for "smuggling" this illicit device on-planet. If the players have the opportunity to see clearly the readout of the device (1.982), they may realize this instrument is Karos', meaning he must be a traitor (as is explained later). If everything's gone as scripted, the players shouldn't suspect Karos yet. They're certainly in a bind, but many suspects fill the room—House D'murjzin, Rugi Pallos, Master Pell and even Compt Lorenzo himself, could be the potential perpetrator of their deception. In any event, the ball is now in the player's court. Once Karos has said his bit, the Entourage must decide what to do. But with everyone in the entire room staring at them, the clock is ticking....

It should be clear to the players that their relationship with House Varota, and mission objective, is now in jeopardy. This should heavily influence their decision possibly leading them to declare the instrument authentic with the intent of buying it themselves or of passing it off on House D'murjzin. Either course may lead to disaster, since House D'murjzin has anticipated such behavior. If the action proceeds, House D'murjzin will outbid the players at any cost, then publicly declare it a fake—condemning House Adici as frauds and implicating the Entourage as co-conspirators. The Narrator can ad lib the resulting chaos, choosing whether House D'murjzin presents the original instrument to verify their claim or whether they employ one or more 'private' authorities such as Rugi Pallos (who is present to support their claim).

The rest of the narrative presumes the Entourage 'plays it straight' consulting Compt Lorenzo and confessing their dilemma. If the players tell Karos to proceed with this type of action, he briefs the auctioneer on the situation, and the auctioneer announces that the baliset, ancient as it is, requires further inspection to be conducted in private chambers while the auction continues. This excuse arouses some angry complaints among the audience, but the auctioneer appeases them with assurances that the matter will be resolved shortly. At this point, Pell escorts Karos through a door off-stage, nodding for the characters to follow. If they observe Compt Lorenzo as they leave, they see him rise and approach Rugi Pallos who now watches the proceedings with interest.

Ventures: None

Facts: Karos is upset that Pallos is at the auction. The instrument does not match the reel in the device.

Motivations: Pallos is there to make sure things proceed properly.

Opportunities: A successful BG Way (Difficulty: 9) Test reveals that Karos is upset that Pallos is there. An equally difficult Truthtrance Test reveals Karos is telling the truth when he says the instrument is a replica.

Act Three: Swan Song Repercussion

This is the concluding act of the adventure. Ideally, the players uncover the traitor, learning the truth about the switching of instruments and House D'murjzin's hand in the matter. The opportunity must exist for the players to really botch the entire mission, permanently damaging their relationship with House Adici. Their victory means little if there is no chance for them to fail.

The rest of this scenario presumes the players actively use their resources to determine what's going on, but the conclusion is plotted based on the assumption that the players wait until the best possible moment to act. If they have been exceptionally resourceful, things may come to an abrupt conclusion.

Scene One: Dissonant Vibes

Day 6 (night) – Backstage of the Auction Chamber

Sator Pell leads the players backstage, through a doorway into a formal conference room. He carries the baliset, and musters four security personnel who guard the various exits from the backstage area. Stiffly formal, Pell asks the characters to be seated while they wait for Compt Lorenzo to join them. Moments later, Compt Lorenzo and Rugi Pallos enter the room. Rugi takes a seat opposite the players and Lorenzo stands at the head of the conference table looking expectantly toward Karos and the Entourage spokesman. If the players remain silent, Lorenzo prompts them, "I believe you have some explaining to do."

Throughout the following exchange, Lorenzo remains intractable in his demand to know the truth. He now

seems suspicious of anything the players say, unless they offer an immediate explanation. Though suspicious, Lorenzo does not severely antagonize the players unless they level accusations at him or his servants. Sator Pell watches from the other end of the table, and his security personnel remain alert.

The players' first question probably concerns whether the instrument has been moved or handled since their previous inspection. According to their best knowledge, the instrument Karos inspected in the museum was the original but this one is not. But both Lorenzo and Pell adamantly deny the possibility of any "switch" once the baliset had been secured within the pentashield enclosure and surrounding vault. If players believe them, then they may begin to suspect Karos of some sort of perfidy.

Lorenzo's primary concern questions the true authenticity of the instrument. He has brought Rugi Pallos to render her opinion, refraining from identifying her as the agent of sale to House Adici. As long as the players remain proactive—asking questions, explaining what they know or forming hypothesis—Lorenzo permits them to direct the proceedings. But if the players reach an impasse, Lorenzo takes charge by asking Rugi to inspect the instrument (saying only "she's an accredited authority and renowned expert in such matters"). An Observation Test: Challenging reveals Karos is distraught by these events. A BG Way Test: Difficult reveals Karos seems more upset by Pallos' presence and the need for a 'second opinion' than by the difficult situation before the Entourage.

An Expert Opinion

Once the characters have exhausted speculation, Lorenzo announces his intent to have Pallos examine the instrument. Karos is clearly agitated by her presence and indirectly accuses the smuggler of having something to do with this. He doesn't directly confront her, but claims he 'wouldn't be surprised if she were somehow involved'. Pallos ignores this statement, maintaining her role of neutral observer, but requests a few minutes to "retrieve her documented notes" before performing the inspection. Lorenzo offhandedly concedes, returning his attention to the Entourage as Pallos exits the room.

Pallos uses this opportunity to contact her former employer, instructing their agents to plant the real instrument in Karos' quarters. They accomplish this easily in the time it takes to sort matters through. While Pallos is absent, Lorenzo gives the Entourage one last opportunity to provide an explanation, but Rugi interrupts by entering the room. Consulting her sheaf of hand-written notes and holostat images, she inspects the baliset performing a thorough examination. Afterward, she looks at Karos then to Lorenzo, confirming that the baliset is in truth, a poor imitation—one that an expert such as Karos couldn't fail to observe. She is prepared to support this statement with observable differences between the photographs and instrument.

This is the critical moment. Karos didn't anticipate Lorenzo inviting Pallos to this meeting. Her proclamation puts him on the spot, making him fear that House D'murjzin intends to betray him now that they possess the original baliset. In actuality, House D'murjzin has left the matter to Rugi's discretion—she's the chief operative in their deception. But when Karos attempted to implicate Pallos, she resolved to end their professional rivalry by throwing him to the dogs. Only by firmly establishing Karos as a fraud can she make absolutely sure the Entourage can't recover from this fiasco by declaring Karos mistaken. Having reached her decision, Rugi addresses Lorenzo's quizzical stare by reasoning that if Karos verified the instrument before but now claims it's a fake, clearly Karos—and his employers—must be behind all this.

Pallos steadfastly denies any knowledge of why Karos would do this, because she doesn't want to appear suspect. But her damning implication throws Karos into a panic, and in retaliation, he accuses Pallos of making slanderous accusations aimed at undermining his professional credibility. Putting the final nail in his (and perhaps the players') coffin, Rugi suggests that perhaps the museum raid had been successful, enabling Karos and Entourage to orchestrate the theft of the instrument while shifting blame to House Adici. After all, if this is not the original instrument, then someone's got to have it. Enraged by such audacious hypocrisy (and fearing for his skin), Karos attempts to turn the tables on Pallos by reminding everyone of her reputation as a smuggler and dealer of "ques-



tionable" integrity. Provided the characters fail to intervene, this contest between Pallos and Karos inevitably leads Lorenzo to resolve that everyone's personal quarters should be searched "to put the accusations to rest."

Scene Summary

Though it is within his right to inspect any of their quarters given the situation, Karos and the Entourage could lawfully claim diplomatic privilege under the codes of the Great Convention, escalating this situation between two Houses Minor to a conflict between two Great Houses. If the players act upon this option, or fail to provide any suggestions, Karos (who believes the instrument to be in Rugi's possession as planned) prompts the Entourage to agree to a search, provided a search of Pallos' quarters reveal nothing suspicious. Surprising Karos, Rugi readily agrees and Lorenzo calls Pell to immediate action.

By this point the players should realize that something is up, and may offer some other solution. The Narrator should allow other proposed solutions based on the following assumed course of events.

Ventures: None

Facts: Karos expects the baliset to be in Pallos' room.

Motivations: Pallos wishes to ensure Karos and the Entourage can't claim they mistakenly identified the baliset during the first inspection. All of her actions attempt to convince Lorenzo that the Entourage deliberately misled him.

Karos wants to shift attention away from himself and is willing to let Rugi be the scapegoat if it gets him off the hook. Considering that he intends to defect to House D'murjzin, Karos must attempt to make the Entourage seem guilty of deceiving Lorenzo, and may not directly implicate House D'murjzin who would then, undoubtedly, turn against him.

Knowing that Pallos is the agent who brought the baliset to House Adici (but not knowing House D'murjzin is the anonymous seller) Lorenzo sincerely doubts Pallos' involvement in any foul play. He may even defend her integrity, disclosing to the Entourage that she represents the sellers of the instrument, obtaining her commission only if the instrument is sold.

Opportunities: A routine Truthtrance Test will reveal Lorenzo and Pell are convinced the instrument could not have been switched while in the vault. A BG way Test (Difficulty: 7) reveals Karos is desperately anxious.

Scene Two: Improvisational Jazz

Day 6 (night) – Pallos' quarters, then Karos' quarters.

Presuming the player's allow it, Sator Pell and his men go off, players and Rugi Pell in tow, to examine everyone's rooms. The players troop off to Pallos' quarters first. Flinging the door wide open, she invites Pell and his men to search the place. They find nothing. This agitates Karos who, for the first time, begins to suspect the extent to which he's being used. Pell's men find nothing unusual within, though Karos suggests they take a second look. He does this to bide time, formulating an excuse should the item turn up in his room.

An Incriminating Discovery

Of course once Pell and his men get to his room, a thorough search reveals the original instrument stowed inside his traveling locker. But the investigation also uncovers a miniature shigawire reel, a seemingly innocent, if enigmatic object, that Pell brings to the attention of everyone present. Looking to the Entourage for an explanation, Lorenzo clearly suspects them of orchestrating this entire scenario, stealing the baliset while making House Adici look incompetent in the process. At this point, any other nobleman would probably order them into immediate custody for questioning, but as their patron advised them, Compt Lorenzo is a reasonable man. He'll permit them one last opportunity to defend themselves.

This represents the final dark before the dawn—a time of momentous decision making for the players. They can either rely on Karos to explain the shigawire reel to them, or they can examine it themselves, attempting to unravel its mystery.

Reels within Reels

The reel itself bears a tiny stamp, establishing its manufacturer as a D'murjzin shigawire foundry. Aside from this, the reel reveals nothing unless inserted into the forbidden Ixian device. If the players confess the device to Lorenzo, he states that he knows nothing about such things and looks to Rugi for some assistance. Familiar with its design, she activates the device and manipulates its controls to read the contents of the current reel—finding it to contain a recording of the original instrument, dating back some 150 standard years. Swapping reels to read the one of D'murjzin manufacture, she discovers the date to be very recent—a little over one month standard time.

If this isn't enough to reveal Karos as the traitor, a final comparison of recordings to instruments tells the whole story. With the original recording inserted, the device measures 1.982 variation when testing the fake baliset (reminding players of Karos' original demonstration of the device against his own instrument). When testing the original with the same recording, the device shows the proper 0.000 variation, revealing it as the instrument from which the recording was made. Similarly, with the D'murjzin reel inserted, the device measures a 0.000 variation when testing the imitation (revealing Karos' own baliset to be the source of the recording). Clearly, when Karos had tested the 'fake' baliset within the museum, he had inserted his own recording, yielding a 0.000 variation. But when testing it again at the time of the auction, he had replaced the reel containing the original recording, yielding a false match to identify the fake for what it was.

Final Analysis

If they trust Karos at this point, they are doomed to failure as Karos feigns ignorance of both the instrument and the reel. He maintains complete innocence and places full blame on Rugi Pallos using whichever arguments seem most plausible. But the preponderance of evidence weighs against the Entourage, and Karos cannot sufficiently defend them from Lorenzo's wrath.

On the other hand, if the players reveal the Ixian device to Compt Lorenzo, their honest approach and surprising revelation capture his interest, buying them another opportunity to set things aright. Provided they interpret the results to declare Karos a traitor, Compt Lorenzo overlooks the device's questionable legality and entertains their explanation with an open mind.

If the players do declare Karos a traitor, he confirms their pronouncement by attempting to flee. Knowing the Entourage will arrest him, his only remaining hope lies in reaching House D'murjzin and pleading diplomatic sanctuary. If he bolts, Pell's men, bar his egress, placing him under House arrest.

Scene Summary

Ventures: Alliance. If the players denounce Karos as a traitor, a successful Statecraft or Diplomacy Venture allows them to achieve their primary mission objective.

Facts: Karos was a traitor.

Motivations: Karos wants to escape to the rival's embassy. Having fulfilled her contract to House D'murjzin upon switching the baliset, Rugi feels no rancor toward the Entourage and now seeks personal gain.

Opportunities: A successful BG Way Test reveals Karos is honestly surprised that the baliset isn't in Pallos' room. If offered sufficient reward, Pallos may betray House D'murjzin as the anonymous owners of the baliset. Barring the success of the House Venture, a Persuasion Test will convince Lorenzo that the Entourage is not responsible for Karos' deception.

Scene Three: Tonal Harmony

Day 7 (afternoon) – Adici Auction Chamber

With the original baliset returned to House Adici's custody, Lorenzo reconvenes the auction on the following day. Private announcements having been issued the previous night, the morning finds access to the auction room strictly limited to the invited buyers.

Assuming Rugi conceals House D'murjzin as the anonymous owners, the sale of the baliset finds the agents of House D'murjzin actively bidding to acquire the instrument. If she revealed the instrument's owners, House D'murjzin uses a proxy to bid for them during the auction.

If the Entourage refrains from bidding, House D'murjzin (or its proxy) prevails after a protracted bidding session. The final sale price reaches 480,000 solaris before they finally win the bid. But if the Entourage participates in the bidding war, the Narrator should conduct the sale as an Opposed, Extended Bargaining or Mercantilism Test, awarding the baliset to whichever group scores a highest Test Result over the course of five successive Tests. In a bidding contest between the Entourage and House D'murjzin, the final selling price reaches 620,000 solaris (under the Entourage's 750,000 solari allowance if they are succeed) or 800,000+ solaris (over their allowance if they fail). The Narrator should liven up the contest by interspersing dice rolls with auctioneer jargon, elevating the excitement with rapid price calling and quick dice rolling. Dramatic Successes and Failures should modify the final selling price accordingly, allowing the players to acquire the instrument for significantly less than their allowance or barely less, depending on how the Narrator cares to interpret the final result.

Ventures: Mercantilism (or Bargaining) Venture to acquire the instrument for the Entourage's House.

Facts: The Entourage has been given an allowance of 750,000 solaris to acquire the instrument for their House. House D'murjzin is willing to exceed the players' allowance to acquire the instrument for themselves (since they're actually buying it from themselves, less House Adici's commission)

Opportunities: A BG Way (Challenging: 9) or Observation (Very Difficult: 12) Test reveals that proxies look to the liveried agents of House D'murjzin for a signal once the bid reaches half a million solaris.

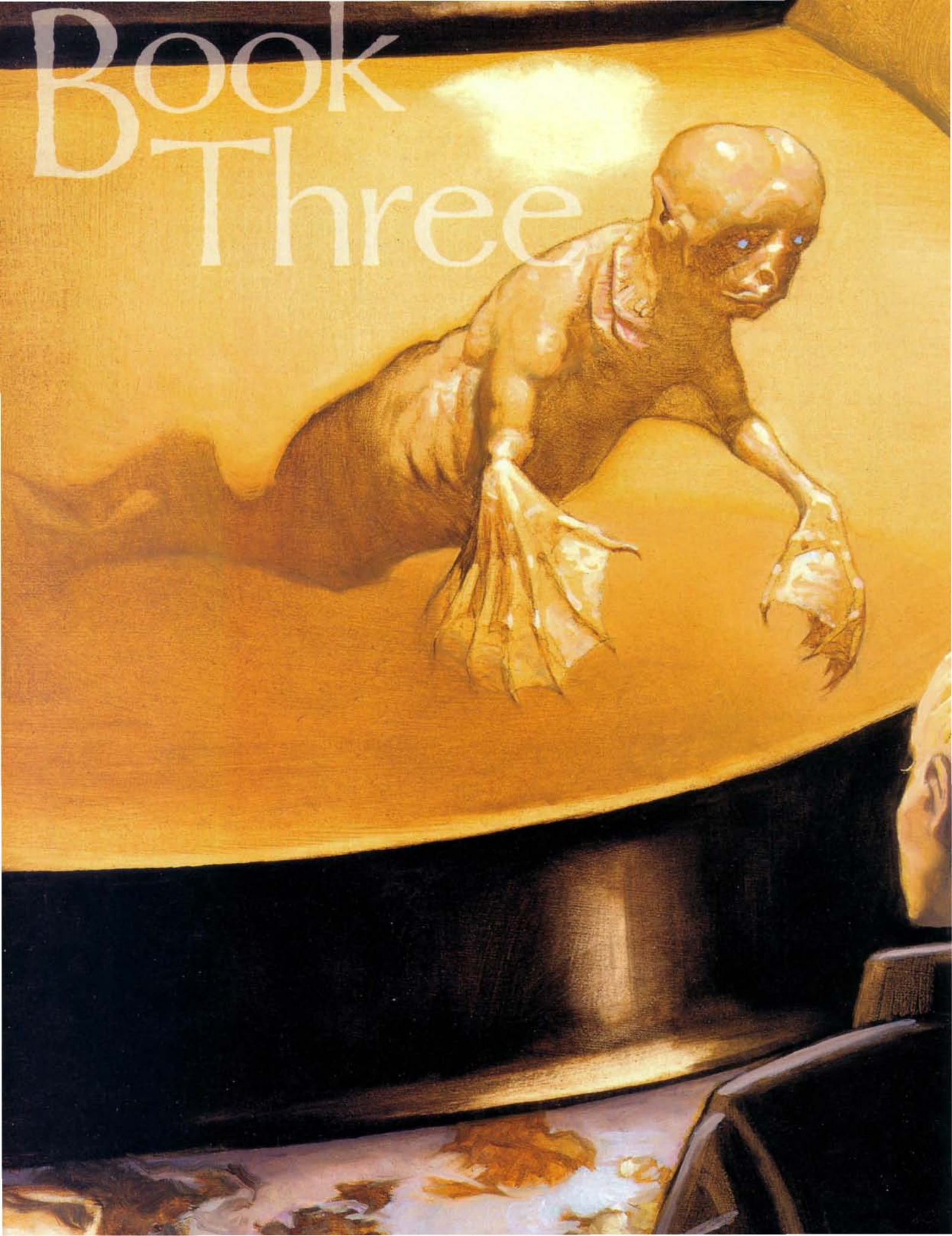
Narrative Interlude

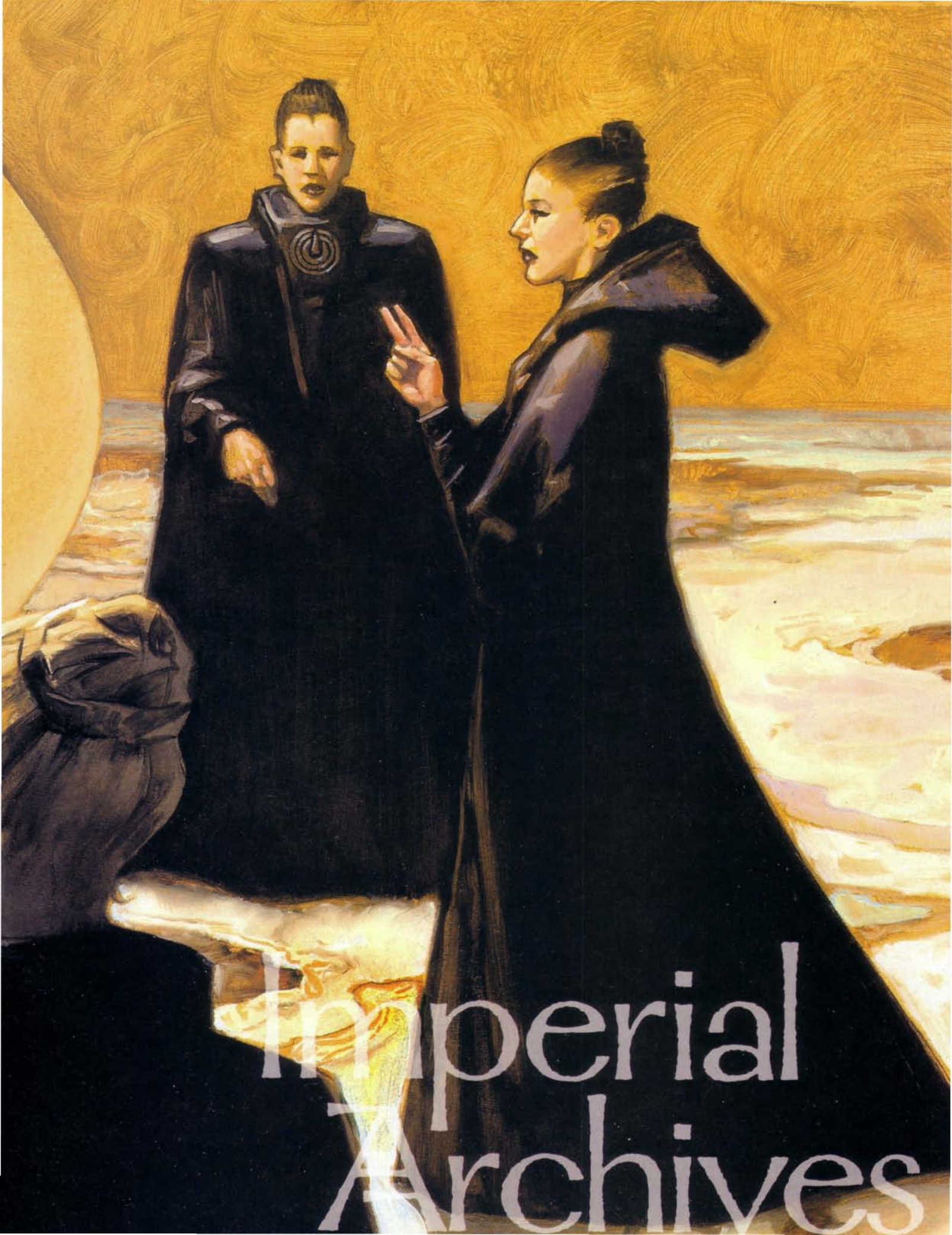
The auction over, the players have either thwarted Karos' treachery and won the support of Lorenzo Adici or fallen into disgrace with the Adici family and House Varota. In addition, they may either return with their family heirloom or see it claimed by their ancient rivals. Depending on the outcome here, the next adventure—included in *Pathways to Infinity: the DUNE Narrator's Guide*—explores the ongoing rivalry between the player's House and House D'murjzin. If the players have been successful in their agenda, the next adventure promises the reprisal of House D'murjzin. If they've failed on Chusuk, it offers a final chance to even the score!

Character Rewards

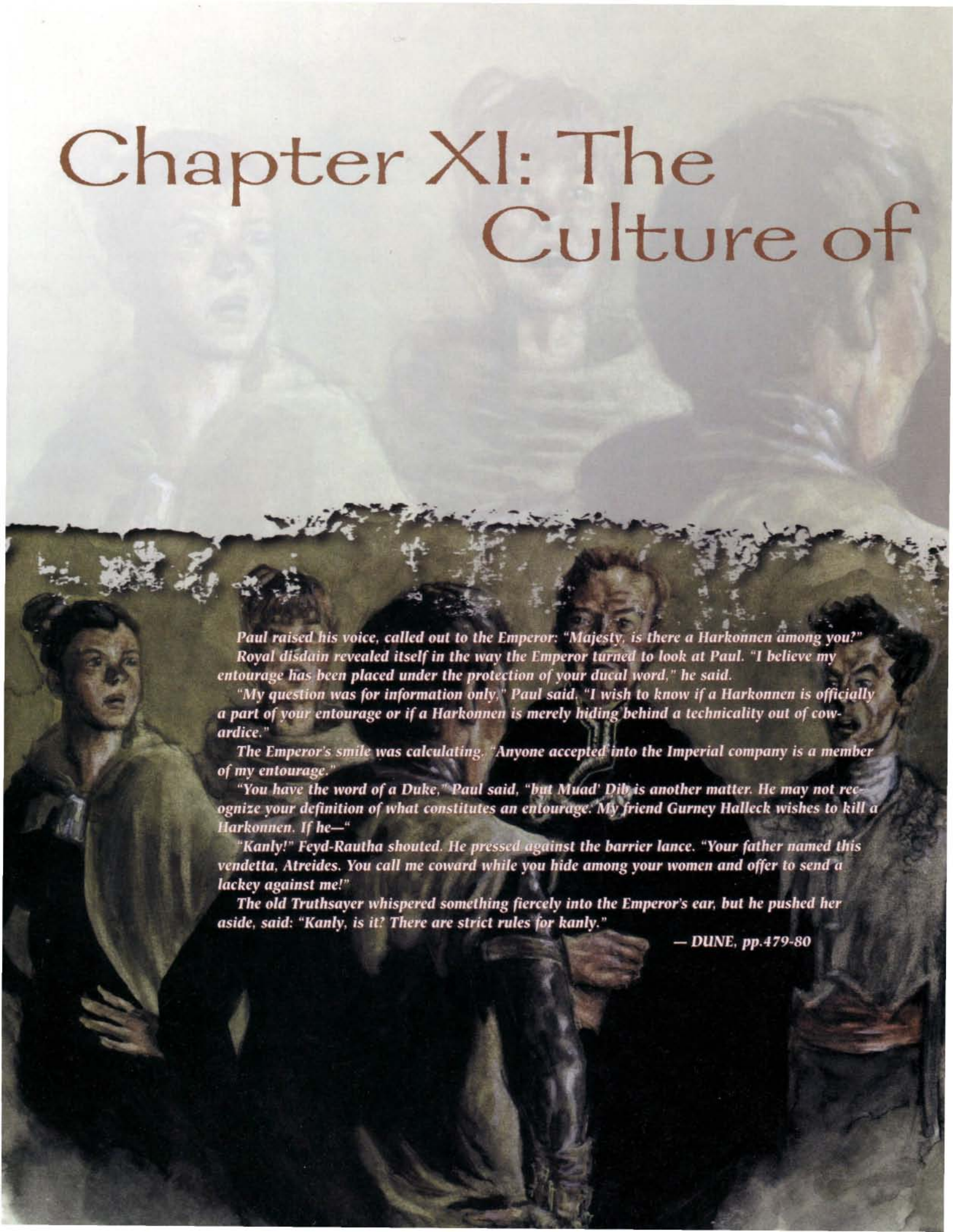
Though this adventure represents but a segment of an ordinary *DUNE RPG* chapter, the Narrator should reward players for their characters' performance nonetheless. After all, this is the beginning of their House chronicle in the universe of DUNE! See "Experience Point Awards" chart (page 172) for some basic guidelines, and reduce them somewhat to reflect the relative brevity of the narrative.

Book Three




Imperial
Archives

Chapter XI: The Culture of



Paul raised his voice, called out to the Emperor: "Majesty, is there a Harkonnen among you?"

Royal disdain revealed itself in the way the Emperor turned to look at Paul. "I believe my entourage has been placed under the protection of your ducal word," he said.

"My question was for information only," Paul said. "I wish to know if a Harkonnen is officially a part of your entourage or if a Harkonnen is merely hiding behind a technicality out of cowardice."

The Emperor's smile was calculating. "Anyone accepted into the Imperial company is a member of my entourage."

"You have the word of a Duke," Paul said, "but Muad' Dib is another matter. He may not recognize your definition of what constitutes an entourage. My friend Gurney Halleck wishes to kill a Harkonnen. If he—"

"Kanly!" Feyd-Rautha shouted. He pressed against the barrier lance. "Your father named this vendetta, Atreides. You call me coward while you hide among your women and offer to send a lackey against me!"

The old Truthsayer whispered something fiercely into the Emperor's ear, but he pushed her aside, said: "Kanly, is it? There are strict rules for kanly."

— DUNE, pp.479-80

the Imperium

The Imperium grew from the ashes of the Butlerian Jihad and the fiery conflicts that ignited it, leaving the surviving powers to ensure that such carnage and destruction never again threatened the fabric of civilization. In the neoteric government that emerged, three Imperial powers gained the keys to preserving order for all time.

The Great Convention

The Padishah Emperor backed by his dreaded legions of Sardaukar troopers had prevailed as the greatest power in the universe, having subjugated thousands of homeworlds through the exercise of military might and political coercion. The Federated Houses of the Landsraad formed the second great power, rivaling the power of the Imperial House only in their combined military and political strength. Apart from these, the Spacing Guild arose as the third major power, holding an absolute monopoly over all interstellar travel and commerce. The threat of withholding its vital services implicit, the Spacing Guild guaranteed its own preservation and dominance over the planet-bound Houses, thereby becoming an inevitable partner in the governance of the entire economy, civilization and future of the Imperium.

Upon first convening, the Landsraad High Council invited the Spacing Guild and House Corrino to mutually establish a set of laws governing House warfare. As a result, the Great Convention was born. Composed of the Guild Peace and the Articles of Kanly, the Great Convention reflects the social order imposed by the faufreluches, and the reality of the Guild's absolute monopoly on space travel. It has remained the law of the Imperium for nearly eleven thousand years.

The Guild Peace

The Guild Peace refrains from prohibiting warfare outright. Instead, it delineates the acceptable forms of conflict, precluding anything endangering the basis of Imperial civilization.

The First Law

The body of the Guild Peace begins with the statement "The forms must be obeyed...." As a result, the phrase 'the forms have been obeyed' has entered the common vernacular as being synonymous for 'all is right and proper.'

The First Law extends to forbid the use of House atomics against human targets. This is an almost self-policed law. Not only would the Guild ostracize any House using atomics against its fellows, but the other Great Houses would also turn against the aggressor and crush them with their combined forces. For this reason, the proscription against atomic warfare stands as the chief rule of the Great Convention.

Violation & Consequences

Beginning with a formal Bill of Particulars filed by a Great House representative, the process of investigating a violation of the Guild Peace entails a serious affair. Undertaken by the High Council of the Landsraad, the inquiry findings usually result in political sanctions, depending on the severity of the infraction. Ultimately the High Council can impose its most severe penalty—the disenfranchisement of the Great House. When this occurs the condemned House may foolishly attempt to refute the Council's findings or turn *renegade*, leaving its holdings and titles behind to seek refuge on Tupile, the Guild's "sanctuary planet" for fugitive Houses.

Though rarely invoked, the ancient "Trial by Forfeiture" represents the ultimate appeal for Landraad justice. Convening a special council of judges and allowing for greater legal maneuvering, the voluntary Trial by Forfeiture stakes the entirety of a House's holdings against the verdict of the council. If found guilty, the accused looses everything, and falls to the mercy of the Landsraad tribunal. If found innocent of the charges, the court restores all pledged holdings and titles, redeeming the accused immediately upon acquittal.

The Articles of Kanly

While the Guild Peace provides strict regulations to curb House warfare, the Articles of Kanly introduce several alternate *rites* for resolving disputes without subjecting entire populations to the ravages of full-scale war.



Dictum Familia and the Rites of Kanly

The *Dictum Familia* protects members of the aristocracy from all varieties of deadly assault not sanctioned by the Rites of Kanly. As a result, only members of the nobility may initiate a Rite of Kanly.

When a nobleman requests a vendetta or feud be officially recognized, the Emperor reviews his submitted claims. With the Emperor's consent, vendetta ensues. Each Vendetta is unique and has its own terms. The Rites of Kanly dictate how the feuding houses may retaliate against each other.

Kanly Negotiation

Kanly negotiations begin either when a House wishes to redefine the terms of an existing vendetta, when one House accuses another of violating a form of kanly or when a House yields to its opponent, and wishes to discuss terms of surrender. During such instances, the Emperor appoints a *Judge of the Change* to arbitrate the negotiations.

Formal Dueling

Provided the participants have satisfied the *forms of kanly*, a formal duel can occur at nearly any time or place. The duelists must follow the following steps in order to assure that all is done in accordance with the strict rules of kanly.

First, one of the duelists makes a formal challenge. A neutral nobleman must witness this *calling out*. All parties then *agree to terms*. Terms have four distinct aspects.

- **Outcome** – Dueling to first blood, the first to yield, or death; as long as both parties agree, any of these outcome may be declared.
- **Selection of Arms** – The challenged has the right to name the weapons used, although the challenger may invoke the rite of *first refusal*. If the accuser refuses the first choice, he must accept the second.
- **Election of Seconds** – Each participant may elect a "second" to stand in for them. If no second is available, the duel may be indefinitely postponed until one becomes available.
- **Setting** – Finally, the duelists must agree to a specific time and place where the duel will take place. This can be anywhere that is equally accessible to both parties and offers no advantage to one or the other.

Once sanctioned, the duel conjoins at the appointed time and place, proceeding according to the terms of agreement. The official witness has the authority to stop the duel at any time, should one of the participants breach the terms or violate the Articles of Kanly (i.e., using illegal poisons or receiving outside assistance).

War of Assassins

The most deadly rite is the *war of assassins*. When negotiations fail and duels provide insufficient vindication, the angry and desperate Houses turn to wars of assassins. Once again, the Emperor appoints a Judge of the Change to ensure the Articles of Kanly remain in force.

Wars of assassins purport to achieve the death of a rival nobleman, perhaps extending to even his entire family or House. Conducting a formal war of assassins proves so complex, its terms so Byzantine, that weeks may pass during the initial negotiation of terms. Many of the Articles of Kanly exist to regulate wars of assassins. Once begun, such conflicts usually consume all of a House's resources. Only the largest of Great Houses, such as House Atreides, can enter into a war of assassin's without devoting their entire staff to resolving the matter. The rite ends when the Judge of the Change agrees that one side has either surrendered, has been properly reduced in station or holdings, or has expired according to the legal forms.

Violations and Consequences

Violating the Articles of Kanly bears severe consequence. The Judge of the Change brings the charge before the Landsraad High Council to begin a formal inquiry. After reviewing the charges the Council may then exact punishment on the offending noble or his entire House, depending on the nature of the infraction. Crimes committed during kanly negotiations or formal duels usually result in sanctions against a single nobleman. These penalties can range from monetary fines to the loss of fief or title or even lead to exile and death. Crimes committed during a war of assassins may be leveled against a single

offender or against the entire House, again depending on the exact offense. When leveled against a House the punishments run similar to those enacted when a House violates the laws of the Guild Peace.

Order of the Faufreluches

All Imperial denizens fall within the social hierarchy known as the *faufreluches*. Unlike a social ladder which implies the ability to move upward through the rungs of status, the faufreluches embodies a rigid caste system, ensuring no mobility between castes. The dream of elevating one's status breeds chaos and disorder in feudal societies, endangering the traditional order and basis of power. The faufreluches exists to ensure the traditional order endures.

A Place for Every Man, and Every Man in his Place

Not merely a definition of the Imperial social castes, the faufreluches also establishes the legal *rights* enjoyed by the members of each caste. The ability to own property, the selection of partners for marriage, the right to defend one's person or honor—such rights fall under the mandates of the faufreluches, subject to its interpretation and enforcement upon a given homeworld. In freer social hierarchies, caste divisions and inherent rights derive from a person's vocation, wealth or merit; but in the faufreluches, blood lineage and family status determine a person's worth, defining what vocations, property and privileges they can ultimately aspire to enjoy.

While each caste enjoys similar rights and privileges, members *within* a caste may possess varying degrees of status. Bondsmen and vassals often shift positions in the service of their House, just as noble offspring compete to be named heir-designate or vie for favor with their patron liege. Among the higher echelons of Great and Minor Houses, the faufreluches provide for limited mobility between the castes enabling lords of the Houses Minor to rise to Great House status. But at the bottom of the social pyramid, the maula, pyon and bondsman see no possibility of rising above their inherited caste.

The Five Levels of Caste

The faufreluches recognizes five distinct levels of social caste. From highest to lowest they include the *regis famlia, na-familia, bondsmen, pyon* and *maula*.

The First Order: Regis Familia

Composed of the Emperor and the Nobles of the Imperium, the regis familia remains the smallest and most powerful caste. The majority of nobles trace their lineage to the Battle of Corrin, when their progenitors earned their original stations. Emperors have since promoted a small number of Houses Minor, while the Landsraad Council has infrequently stripped a House of its titles and holdings. Rarer still, a few Houses voluntarily disband now and again, as the ruling family abdicates its holdings and titles by "turning renegade." Even so, the regis familia boasts more than a thousand Great Houses and at least ten times that number of Houses Minor. With only a few Houses being exiled or going renegade each century, the number of Houses whose status has changed since the Battle of Corrin falls on the order of one to two percent.

The Second Order: Na-Familia

The na-familia represents a special caste reserved for members of the noble retinue who prove instrumental to House governance or household administration. A Lord of a Great House or House Minor may, in effect, adopt an outsider into the ranks of the family entourage by proclamation of *Honorarium Familia*. The honored individual becomes a vassal to the sponsoring lord, a member of his personal or family entourage and an enfranchised citizen of the na-familia caste. In return for this honor, the new member declares her allegiance to both the Lord of the House and the family as a whole. Protected under the Great Convention and the Articles of Kanly, members of the na-familia may also rise to hold various offices within the Imperial government.

The Third Order: Bondsmen

The bondsmen comprise the majority of those who live in service to a House. Bound to the House for a period of time—usually between ten and thirty years—the bondsman falls subject to the dictates of House law and custom; and fails to benefit from any of the legal protections granted to the nobility and their entourage under the Articles of Kanly. As servants of the lord of the House bondsmen enjoy a comfortable quality of life. At the end of their bond, the House might extend the terms of the contract or provide a pension, stipend or minor land grant as defined by the original terms of the bond.

The Fourth Order: Pyons

Most Imperial denizens falls into the pyon, or 'serf,' caste. Bound to the land upon which they live, pyons are considered the property and responsibility of the House holding said lands in fief. The only Imperial stricture applying to pyons requires that they remain a part of the fief: pyons may not own land and cannot stray from their homelands as they please. They remain bound to the village, city district, or plot of farmland on which they work; and are, in legal terms, considered part of that land.

The Fifth Order: Maula

At the bottom of the faufreluches cringe the maula, the slaves and outcasts of Imperial society. They enjoy no rights, privileges or protections under Imperial law, often being disregarded by House law as well. Less val-

ued than pyons, the maula fall at the mercy of their patron lord, who may delegate their servitude to a slave master, labor foreman or House Minor to work hard labor for no greater compensation than crude lodging and basic sustenance. While pyons find some protection under the laws prohibiting the destruction of land and property, maula enjoy only the latter safeguards, meaning very little considering the general disregard or outright malice their noble masters bear for them.

Maulas find employment performing the basest of manual labors. Some work grueling hours toiling away in kitchens, mines or fields. Others serve more horrific functions such as performing as contestants in gladiatorial combats, or playing the role of quarry in degrading human fox hunts. Most maulas hail originally from the pyon caste, earning their demotion for committing some crime or giving offense to a noble lord. But as one possible recourse of most House laws, bondsmen, and even the na-familia, can suffer demotions to the maula caste for serious crimes or infractions.

The Feudal Order of Command

To truly understand Imperial society one must recognize the relationships within each caste, as well as relationships among them. Everything from where one sits at dinner to who commands armies during crisis results from the traditional faufreluches. Wealth, power and authority flow down through the Imperial hierarchy as follows:

The Emperor divides the various Imperial fiefdoms (usually entire planets) among the Great Houses. Dukes, Counts, and Barons rule the Great Houses, gaining their titles from the type of fiefdom (Duchies, Earldoms and Baronies) they rule. Great noblemen remain subservient to the Emperor, but enjoy the status of Imperial peers. Should something befall the Emperor and his legal successors, one of the Great Houses could bid for the throne.

The Great Houses command the allegiance of scores of attending Houses Minor. Since these Houses share the blood and heritage of their Great House lords, they wield significant power in the name of their patron House. The Houses Minor control only a fraction of the resources of the Great Houses, and their immediate kin receive the privileges accorded to all members of the regis familia. While members of a household entourage (na-familia) do not possess a fiefdom or chartered wealth through CHOAM, they bear the responsibility for making sure that millions of bondsmen, pyons and maulas serve the interests of their governing House.

Bondsmen traditionally serve as regional or departmental overseers, insuring the pyons pay due tribute and act within the strictures of House law. The pyons are responsible only for their plot of land or vocational quota, set by their immediate superiors. Infrequently pyons might even be granted limited charge over a group of maula (such as field hands) insuring the slaves produce whatever service their direct superiors and noble masters require of them.

The Great Schools

Outside of the strict hierarchy of the feudal order sit several key groups wielding significant influence over Imperial affairs. The Bene Gesserit Sisterhood and the Spacing Guild exist under special entitlements allowing them to operate effectively outside of the dictates of the faufreluches with both groups enjoying *de facto* status as members of a na-familia caste. Another special exceptions exists: the so-called *out-freyn autarkies* forming the core worlds of the Bene Tleilax. The Bene Tleilax owes its relative autonomy to a special quasi-charter upheld by the Emperor. As a result, the out-freyn residents of Tleilaxu core-worlds do not fall under the normal dictates of the faufreluches.

Unlike agents of the Spacing Guild and Bene Gesserit Sisterhood, Tleilaxu dignitaries must tread carefully lest they arouse the wrath of the powerful Houses. They do not truly fit into Imperial society, though they are politely accorded the relative status of the na-familia. Though out-freyn rulers and diplomats receive excellent treatment when interacting with the noble Houses, their 'honorary status' begs an air of disdain from the noble families, whose slights they must accept according to the social forms of Imperial custom. To defy Imperial law or spurn the customs of the faufreluches warrant imprisonment, exile or even death for members of the out-freyn worlds.

Commerce & Education

Two Imperial institutions empower the middle castes, giving a select few of them the opportunity to rise above their inherited stations. The first is the CHOAM Company, a mega-corporation governing interplanetary commerce and enterprise. Through entrepreneurial spirit and diligence, a CHOAM magnate may aspire to buy holdings and titles, earning a place for his family among the lowest of the Imperial aristocracy. The second avenue resides with the mental training schools producing humans of superior education and conditioning. As companions and advisors to the nobility, such graduates may be elevated in station after many years of loyal service. The most successful of these schools include the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood and the Spacing Guild; but other schools such as the Imperial College, the Ginaz Swordmaster academy and the Mentat training schools offer similar potential for greatness.

While the CHOAM Company, the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood and the Spacing Guild rival the power of any Great House, enlistment within their ranks doesn't require noble birth or inheritance. Instead, these institutions recruit candidates expressing a diversity of talents and interests, giving members of the middle castes some hope of rising above the inherited stations of their ancestral forebears.

The CHOAM Company

CHOAM—an acronym for Combine Honnete Ober Advancer Mercantiles—is the 'universal development corporation' controlled by the Emperor and Great Houses of the Imperium. The Spacing Guild and Bene Gesserit Sisterhood share in CHOAM profits, but as silent partners they do not enjoy representation through voting stock or proxy shares. Instead, they rely on their political and economic influence to manipulate the voting members directly.

The business of CHOAM is to organize all Imperial industry under a single administration controlled by the Emperor and Great Houses of the Landsraad. Much like the faufreluches, the internal hierarchy of CHOAM curtails the movement of wealth, enforcing the regimental caste system by keeping wealth with the empowered nobility. While the entrepreneurial bondsman caste may aspire to acquiring family holdings or titles through amassed personal fortunes, the structure of CHOAM ensures that ambitious persons must first enter into the ranks of nobility before acquiring the holdings, charters and directorships that lead to significant wealth.

The CHOAM Company accomplishes this task by employing a tripartite structure and regimented system of commercial blocs, coalitions and combines comprised of various industrial magnates all dealing in the same base industry or trade. While the feudal lords may govern their domestic economies in any fashion they choose, CHOAM regulates all interstellar industry and commerce, holding the reins over every universally-traded product—from the spice-drug melange or industrial suspensors to whale fur, plasteel, armament and food crops.

CHOAM—A Tripartite Enterprise

The CHOAM Corporation possesses three bureaucratic divisions. The *Board of Directors* oversees all economic appointments and fiscal affairs. The *Emporium* monitors the Imperial market exchange. And the *Regulatory Commission*, is the enforcement agency responsible for policing CHOAM affairs and ensuring accuracy in all fiscal matters.

The Board of Directors

The Padishah Emperor sits at the head of the CHOAM Board of Directors, presiding as its indispensable chairman. The remaining 150 seats in the CHOAM Board are filled by appointed directors from among the Great Houses of the Imperium. Though the Spacing Guild and Bene Gesserit Sisterhood possess great political influence over the individual board members, they hold no seats, or directorships, themselves. The Emperor dispenses three types of directorships among the landed nobility—irrevocable directorships, passed down from generation to generation; terminal directorships, ending with the death of their individual holder; and transient directorships, passing with fluctuations in House CHOAM shares.

The Emporium

The Emporium presents the face of CHOAM to the Imperial community, comprising a vast market exchange wherein CHOAM delegates and representatives trade everything from industrial stocks to commodities shares. Consisting of a palatial structure housing as many exchange halls as there are markets, no planetary export escapes the purview of the CHOAM Emporium. The Emporium represents a level of market unification almost unheard of in history. In the Assets exchange, a mercantile family from Chusuk might have their CHOAM representative liquidate their entire familial holdings, reinvesting it all in miniaturization technologies with the entire transaction taking less time than the journey to their new home on Richese. All Houses and vast, financial conglomerates watch the Emporium like hawks, waiting for the minutest of shifts before swooping in to make a killing.



The Regulatory Commission

The third branch of CHOAM, the Regulatory Commission is the policing agency that monitors the other two divisions. Permanent sub-committees such as the Committee on Interstellar Traffic and Trade (CITT) launch many investigations into violations of CHOAM contracts or illegal proxy representation. Others are undertaken by special sub-committees created to investigate and report on particular markets, activities, partnerships and so on.

The Building Blocs of CHOAM

Within the Imperium, all commercial enterprises fall under the purview of CHOAM blocs. A powerful assemblage of commercial directors, a CHOAM bloc administrates the business of an entire interplanetary market or trade (such as plasteel manufacturing), orchestrating its component industries (mining, refining, smelting, etc.), regulating its commodities (price-fixing, quality control, trafficking, etc.) and representing its products within the Emporium. CHOAM blocs represent the interests of all of its Imperial partners and shareholders, from the Houses governing the homeworlds of industry, to the Houses holding charters for various stages of industrial development, to the entrepreneurs, guilds and unions maintaining contracts to produce or distribute the various commercial commodities.

Because a CHOAM bloc represents a diverse group of affiliates scattered over numerous worlds, each maintains its own internal organization. At the top of the pyramid, directorships pass among noble Houses who control the legal entitlements (holdings and charters) upon which the entire industry is based. Unlike CHOAM directorships appointed by the Emperor, Bloc directorships shift according to performance and market share. Those whose holdings or charters generate larger portions of the Bloc's combined profit may gain new directorships as a result of increased voting shares, while those responsible for profit losses may forfeit directorships as they lose shares in the Bloc.

While the organization of CHOAM blocs appear as different as the particular industries they represent, all of them employ standard 'building blocks' according to the guidelines established by CHOAM. The most important of these elements include Holdings, Charters, Contracts and Directorships, all of which determine the flow of profits and doorways to power driving the machinery of CHOAM.

Holdings

Holdings represent physical territories, be they entire planetary fiefs, regional subfiefs, or particular city districts. Appointed by the Emperor and passed down through the liege-vassal hierarchy, holdings entitle their governing lords to claim the majority of economic entitlements to whatever goods or services are produced within their boundaries.

Governing a holding allows its ruler to distribute commercial charters to Houses Minor and businesses working within the holding jurisdiction. For example, the siridar governor of a planet may grant charters to mine gems, harvest whale fur, refine fossil fuels, build plasteel factories and so forth. According to CHOAM customs, governing a holding presents the keys to acquiring one or more directorships, with planetary governors typically holding many directorships in several different industrial blocs.

Charters

While the governors of holdings commonly dole out commercial charters, not all such entitlements originate with the landed nobility. The Emperor and CHOAM Board of Directors retain control of certain key charters, such as the Spice Mining Operations of Arrakis, which they assign at their discretion.

Contracts

Controlling Holdings and Charters grants the authority to arrange CHOAM contracts, forging working agreements with Houses Minor, industrial guilds or private entrepreneurs to furnish goods and services within a given industry or market. Occasionally contracts forge bonds between industrial parties holding commercial charters in two different, yet compatible industries, enabling them to share materials or labor.

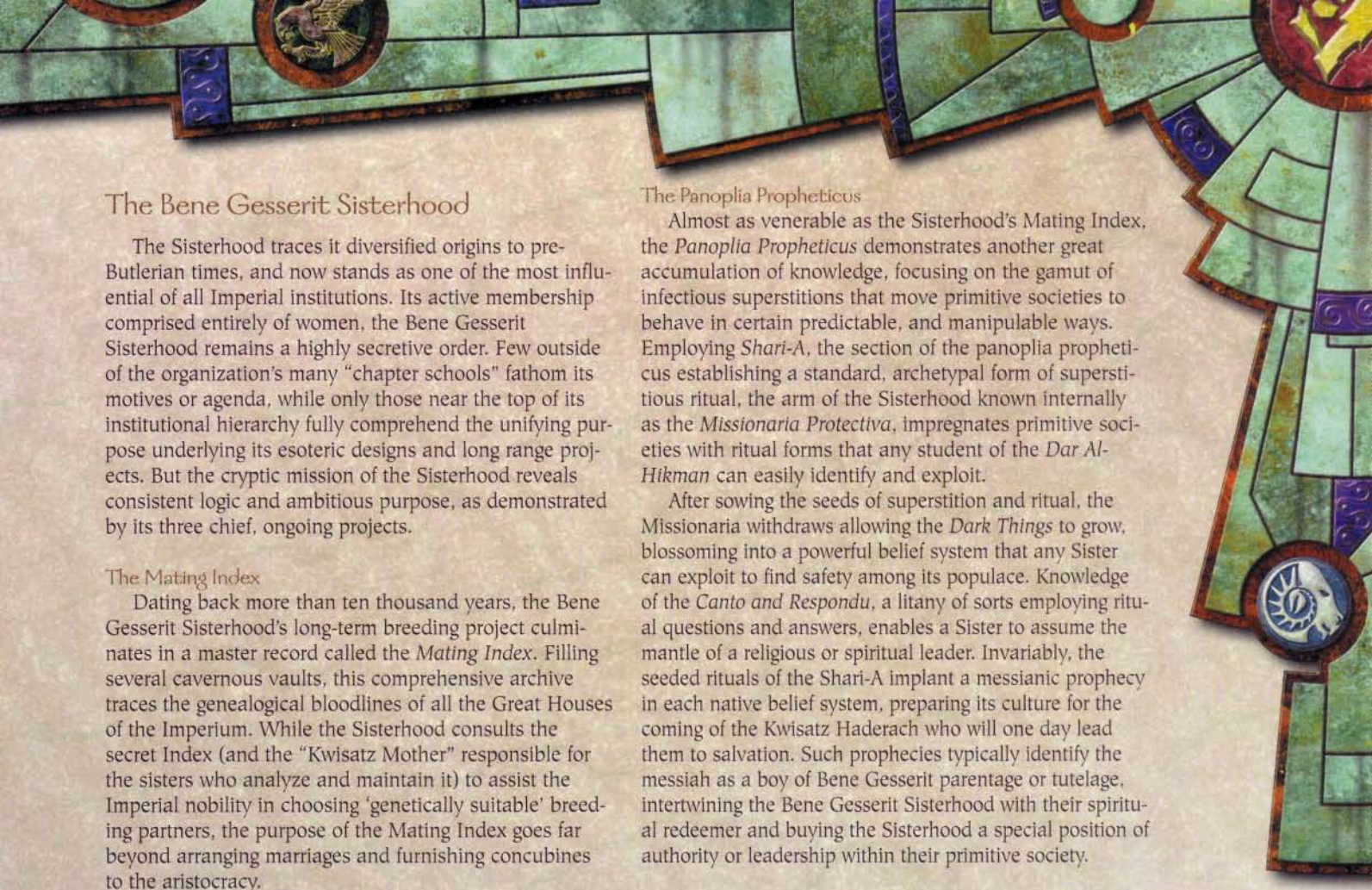
Directorships

Bloc directorships represent the ultimate authority over all business operations occurring under the purview of a specific aspect of industry. A bloc overseeing the plasteel industry, for example, might consist of numerous directorships, one monitoring the mining of stravidium in all bloc holdings, another supervising smelting operations throughout numerous worlds, another overseeing transport and distribution of raw plasteel materials, and so on. While directorships grant their controllers the authority to disseminate charters and inter-industrial contracts, their real value lies in the ability to dip into the bloc's mutual coffers, deriving personal compensation and profit for serving in the capacity as an appointed director.

The Great Schools

In the aftermath of the Butlerian Jihad, the proscriptions against the machines led humans to develop their own minds and bodies to replace the technological capabilities civilization had lost. To accomplish this, training schools emerged to explore the limits of human potential, developing rigorous programs and training facilities to enable mankind to reach its peak of mental and physical performance.

While many of these schools failed, two such institutions succeeded in their earliest programs, and grew to become the greatest of the Imperial training schools. The Spacing Guild, which emphasized mathematics to produce minds capable of comprehending the abstractions of fold-space, is fully detailed in "Chapter 13: The Spacing Industry." Its rival school, the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood, emphasized human eugenics and political awareness to perfect humanity's ability to govern itself, avoiding wars and similar catastrophes that jeopardize human existence. Other schools such as the Imperial College, Mentat Training School and Ginaz Swordmaster Academy follow in the footsteps of these two Great Schools, having survived almost as many millennia of promulgation.



The Bene Gesserit Sisterhood

The Sisterhood traces it diversified origins to pre-Butlerian times, and now stands as one of the most influential of all Imperial institutions. Its active membership comprised entirely of women, the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood remains a highly secretive order. Few outside of the organization's many "chapter schools" fathom its motives or agenda, while only those near the top of its institutional hierarchy fully comprehend the unifying purpose underlying its esoteric designs and long range projects. But the cryptic mission of the Sisterhood reveals consistent logic and ambitious purpose, as demonstrated by its three chief, ongoing projects.

The Mating Index

Dating back more than ten thousand years, the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood's long-term breeding project culminates in a master record called the *Mating Index*. Filling several cavernous vaults, this comprehensive archive traces the genealogical bloodlines of all the Great Houses of the Imperium. While the Sisterhood consults the secret Index (and the "Kwisatz Mother" responsible for the sisters who analyze and maintain it) to assist the Imperial nobility in choosing 'genetically suitable' breeding partners, the purpose of the Mating Index goes far beyond arranging marriages and furnishing concubines to the aristocracy.

Now into its 90th generation, the Bene Gesserit breeding program aims to create the *Kwisatz Haderach*, a male Bene Gesserit whose prescient powers will enable him to bridge space and time. The name meaning "Shortening of the Way" the Kwisatz Haderach promises to be humankind's salvation, a messianic figure who can quest forward with the sight of a Guild Navigator while seeking backward with the collective memory of a Reverend Mother. Only by selectively breeding the best of human traits (over thousands of years and nearly as many bloodlines) does the Sisterhood believe it will achieve such an individual. But 'He who can be many places at once" will lead the Sisterhood and the rest of humanity down the path of righteousness, saving mankind from its own extinction.

The accomplishment of the Kwisatz Haderach and human preservation being their primary, if clandestine, goal; the Sisterhood trains cadres of breeding mistresses, Bene Gesserit adepts skilled in the various arts of seduction and procreation. Typically assigned to seduce select noblemen and 'procure their seed' for the Sisterhood's breeding project, such women represent the best of "human stock" and are often sold as concubines to Great House lords wishing superior offspring for their heirs. But since all Adepts remain loyal to the Sisterhood, they produce male or female progeny according to the Sisterhood's commands, furthering the secret breeding program in accordance with the Bene Gesserit design.

The Panoplia Propheticus

Almost as venerable as the Sisterhood's Mating Index, the *Panoplia Propheticus* demonstrates another great accumulation of knowledge, focusing on the gamut of infectious superstitions that move primitive societies to behave in certain predictable, and manipulable ways. Employing *Shari-A*, the section of the panoplia propheticus establishing a standard, archetypal form of superstitious ritual, the arm of the Sisterhood known internally as the *Missionaria Protectiva*, impregnates primitive societies with ritual forms that any student of the *Dar Al-Hikman* can easily identify and exploit.

After sowing the seeds of superstition and ritual, the Missionaria withdraws allowing the *Dark Things* to grow, blossoming into a powerful belief system that any Sister can exploit to find safety among its populace. Knowledge of the *Canto and Respondu*, a litany of sorts employing ritual questions and answers, enables a Sister to assume the mantle of a religious or spiritual leader. Invariably, the seeded rituals of the Shari-A implant a messianic prophecy in each native belief system, preparing its culture for the coming of the Kwisatz Haderach who will one day lead them to salvation. Such prophecies typically identify the messiah as a boy of Bene Gesserit parentage or tutelage, intertwining the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood with their spiritual redeemer and buying the Sisterhood a special position of authority or leadership within their primitive society.

Imperial Service

Having a purpose similar to that of the Panoplia Propheticus, the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood actively maintains a third program of Imperial Service. Aiming to inextricably tie their organization into Imperial culture, the Sisterhood provides many invaluable services to Great Houses of the Imperium. Foremost, through their extensive Mating Index, the Sisterhood helps in the arranging of marriages and selection of concubines to provide Great noblemen with heirs of superior genetic stock. Bene Gesserit concubines provide excellent companionship and astute political confidences, making them ideally suited for the life of court.

For female offspring, the Bene Gesserit also serves as an avenue for education, training female members of the aristocracy in language, culture and history as well as politics and keen observation. Nearly all daughters of the Great Houses enlist with the Sisterhood to acquire their education, making them desirable wives and perfect candidates for marriages of state. Many House wars have been averted through political alliance between one nobleman's son and another's Bene Gesserit trained daughter.

In addition to these services, the Bene Gesserit also commissions Truthsayers—Bene Gesserit Reverend Mothers who are capable of detecting falsehood—to serve the Great Houses and the Imperial court. Considered the ultimate judges of testimony, BG Truthsayers rely on their powers of prescience and various "awareness–spectrum" narcotics to know truth or falsehood with near absolute certainty. Proven in their ability, Truthsayers attend

Imperial inquests, Landsraad tribunals and Great House investigations with fair regularity. Though their services prove expensive, their talents remain unparalleled.

Ranks of the Sisterhood

Unlike the Spacing Guild and lesser, training schools, the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood uses its exhaustive information network to actively recruit its members. Though the wealthier noble Houses can 'buy' admission for any 'undesirable' female offspring, their noble bloodline almost guarantees their daughter's acceptance into the ranks of the Sisterhood.

In addition to those whom the Bene Gesserit recruits, the Sisterhood maintains a regular influx of children 'born to the school.' Such females result from pairings between the Sisterhood's breeders and the males they seduce. In most cases, the breeding mistresses return to the Sisterhood after conception, bearing their children in secrecy. Such offspring may never know their original parentage, though the Kwisatz Mother ensures proper records are added to the Sisterhood's Mating Index. In time, Bene Gesserit offspring often become breeders for the Sisterhood, siring children of their own and further commingling bloodlines to promote the agenda of the Kwisatz breeding project.



Lesser Schools of the Imperium

After the success of the Sisterhood and Guild, other mental and physical training schools developed. None of them being as influential as the two Great Schools, each provides graduates of specific accomplishments, providing an assortment of disciplined retainers who serve the Imperial aristocracy as competent members of their staff and entourage.

Suk Medical Schools

Suk medical schools, known collectively as branches of the "Imperial College," train physicians and medics of superior skill and steadfast loyalty. Undergoing a program of rigorous mental conditioning, called "Imperial Conditioning," Suk graduates prove incapable of doing physical harm to other human beings. Suk graduates wear a diamond tattoo on their forehead certifying their ultimate conditioning against taking human life. So revered and influential is the Imperial College, that even the Emperor must pay in advance for any services rendered.

Mentat Schools

The Mentat Schools train human minds to store and process great accumulations of data, superceding the capabilities of the pre-Butlerian thinking machines. Capable of astounding feats of logic, computation and memory recall, Mentat graduates factor human equations into their various projections and computations, serving their employers as supreme strategists, analysts and advisors.

Swordmaster Academies

Most Imperial Swordmaster academies mirror the programs established by the legendary Ginaz School. Training their students in the various arts of war, Swordmaster graduates prove consummate fighters, supreme military commanders and adroit battle tacticians.

Assassin Guilds

Following in the esoteric ways of the ancient Bhotani and coveted Assassin's Handbook, many guilds and fraternities specialize in the training of accomplished assassins. Educating their membership in the forms of weapons, poisons and other lethal devices permitted under the Great Convention, assassin guilds train accomplished professionals to serve the nobility by orchestrating their wars of assassins.

Strategy Schools

In addition to the four traditional schools, many Houses and institutions sponsor strategy schools, responsible for training administrators, advisors, diplomats, economists and the like. While strategy schools resemble typical universities and colleges of higher learning, they emphasize House policy and procedure, giving their graduates a broad education in Imperial politics, law, history, culture, and economics in addition to specialized fields of study for their strategic deployment. Master strategists such as Spymasters, Warmasters, CHOAM Advisors, and Master Diplomats all hail from strategy schools emphasizing diverse programs of higher learning.

Social Customs

While social conventions and cultural institutions differ from world to world, the Great Houses of the Landsraad exist as an Imperial community, sharing many social cus-

toms that unite their homeworld populations under a common notion of "Imperial civilization."

Family

At the heart of the faufreluches, the Imperial concept of family prevails throughout the myriad homeworlds. Beginning with a man and woman united under the institution of marriage, the idea of family includes the offspring of such unions and extends to trace bloodlines through both paternal and maternal genealogies.

Marriages

While any man and woman can pair to procreate, the social institution of marriage exists to establish the social obligations and legal conventions pertaining to such unions, including things such as family inheritance, caste membership and political alliances. Imperial marriages occur in three primary forms, describing the purpose and nature of the matrimonial tradition.

Arranged Marriages occur when the parents choose the spouse for their son or daughter, entering into a legally binding agreement with another consenting family. Usually in an arranged marriage, the parents of the bride offer some sort of material dowry to the family of her betrothed, often including lands, properties, titles or monies. While arranged marriages occasionally unite two children of differing castes, most such unions do not. For members of all castes, arranged marriages constitute the Imperial norm.

Although rare among the nobility, some couples marry of their own choosing; such unions are considered *free marriages*. Free marriages are reserved for families who either possess enough wealth to ignore financial alliances or value the antiquated tradition of romance over political and/or social climbing. Free marriages usually occur in the upper echelons of the median castes and occasionally among the House nobility. Despite their rarity, free marriages and the notion of romantic love remain the subject of countless poems and romantic ballads.

For the major Houses of the Landsraad and certainly the Imperial family, nearly all marriages signify political partnership. From early age most children of noble birth grow to accept the political necessities of choosing an appropriate mate. *Marriages of state* often consolidate the holdings of two allied Houses or terminate a feud between two rival families. Instead of seeing marriage as romantic affairs, nobles prefer taking concubines and consorts for such purposes , thereby remaining eligible to marry for political gains.

Concubines

The Imperium not only condones, but also encourages the institution of concubinage. Concubines are not legitimate spouses, but rather, simply mates. Enjoying fewer rights than a legal spouse, concubines still hold positions of esteem and authority in nearly all the Houses. Husbands and wives together freely accept the presence of concubines. But only *bound concubines*, those who have been legally pledged to their mate—may produce legitimate heirs capable of inheriting family titles and holdings.

Progeny

No specific rules guide the choice of family heirs, though among the Great Houses, the Emperor must officially sanction the named successor before his investiture as head of the House. Female offspring may not inherit Imperial titles or holdings, though if they marry a suitable lord, he may inherit her family's fortunes if they lack a direct male heir. When a family possesses several male offspring, the title *heir apparent* traditionally refers to the eldest son who is assumed to be the inheritor until the reigning lord makes an actual proclamation. The title *heir-presumptive* factors in the lord's personal favor, meaning very much the same thing as heir-apparent. When a lord actually names his chosen successor, the young lordling may put the prefix "na–" before his family's title (such as "na-Duke" or "na-Baron") indicating his nomination as the *heir-designate*.

Languages of the Imperium

Thousands of years under the Imperial rule have unified humanity under a single lingua franca—a hybrid Inglo-slavic variant known as *Galach*. Languages unique to particular planets or subcultures are the exception rather than the rule. Commoners rarely, if ever, speak tongues other than Galach; although many of the pyon and maula caste cannot read or write it. The learning of multiple languages (especially reading and writing) is the province of the nobility and educated professionals.

Specialized Languages

Many professions have developed their own language. Some are merely dialects of Galach while others are entire languages with their own alphabet, pictograms or signals.

- **Battle Language** – Nearly every Great House possesses some sort of secret *battle language* used for secure communication between officers and corpsmen. Combining gestures, code words and key phrases, battle languages possess sufficient vocabulary to communicate general information but not enough subtlety to describe emotional states or cognitive processes.
- **Chakobsa** – The language *Chakobsa* refers to any number of secret languages modified by the need for secrecy. Originally derived from the primitive hunting language of the Bhotani assassins, Chakobsa collects together a number of different ancient dialects (including the *Bhotani Jib*) to form a sort of assassin's cant. About 60% of the Chakobsa

language can be written using its strange glyphs and ancient pictograms, but the language lacks the symbology needed to record the numerous clicks, twitters and whirs used to inflect its words with a variety of subtle nuances.

• **Mirabhasa** – *Mirabhasa* exists purely as a diplomatic language, used only by the most erudite of the nobility, the Bene Gesserit and high-ranking members of the Guild. Similar to Chakobsa, Mirabhasa expresses countless variations of honed phalange consonants and joined vowels, permitting myriad subtle nuances of emotion or intent.

Ancient Languages

Other than Chakobsa and its original dialect, the Bhotani Jib, very few ancient languages survive in the modern Imperium. Although Reverend Mothers as part of their initiation gain access to past life memories, they refrain from using ancient tongues except in dire cases where secrecy between two Reverend Mothers requires it. Instead Adepts learn the dialects and idioms of Galach and Chakobsa locking them into the thought-patterns of the Imperial cultures which with they care to interact.

Religion

Orange Catholicism and the C.E.T.

After several generations of the chaotic and bloody Butlerian Jihad, representatives from each of the major religious factions convened to create a new, universal religion for the new Imperial age. Twenty-one representatives gathered together into what was called the *Commission of Ecumenical Translators (C.E.T.)*. Their stated purpose was formulated within the first few days: 'We are here to remove a primary weapon from the hands of disputant religions.' That weapon: the claim to possession of the one and only revelation. They labored for generations in secret, while the public watched and waited for some result. During these long years, nine representatives died and were replaced.

Finally, the Commission opened its doors and presented to the breathless Imperium their issue—the *Orange Catholic Bible* (and several commentaries of it). The O.C. Bible incorporated material from the sacred texts of all extant religions—the Quran, the Old and New Testaments, the Vedas, and many others. The O.C. Bible stripped away all of the old symbols of religious importance, such as the cross, and replaced them with new concepts. The populace of the Imperium greeted the freshly printed O.C. Bible with reluctant apprehension. Riots devastated several planets, and according to official estimates, eighty million died in the resulting conflagrations.

Though rather shocking at first, the O.C. Bible satisfied the most important need of mankind at the time—that of a unifying religion and moral doctrine. While colonies were being established on one far-flung world after another and the Great Houses were scattering among thousands of homeworlds, humankind found itself dispersed over distances never before imagined. Orange Catholicism replaced the fear of isolation with a sense of spiritual unity.

The O.C. Bible contains a dualistic theological approach. Images of a benevolent God contrast with a malevolent Devil. This dichotomy engenders a "black and white" conception of the universe in which everything can be discussed in terms of 'good' and 'evil.' Considering the complexities of Imperial civilization, it is not surprising that separatist groups abandoned Orange Catholicism in favor of agnosticism or other religions and philosophies reflecting the shades of gray which truly characterize the moral incertitude of Imperial life.

The Zensunni Wanderers

Zensunni is one of the older religions in the Imperium, predating even the Orange Catholic Church. A Zensunni representative, Bomoko, sat upon the first C.E.T. and helped to author the original Orange Catholic Bible. As the universe decried the O.C. Bible as a work of sophistry, Bomoko was one of the fourteen representatives who steadfastly maintained the validity of the O.C. Bible. As time passed, Bomoko changed his opinion and recanted the O.C. Bible by calling it 'an act of folly.'

Zensunni combines the mysticism of ancient Terran Zen Buddhism with the intense spiritual bonding of Islam and Sufi mysticism. Zensunni demanded its adherents to constantly seek the truth—no matter the sacrifice or futility of the endeavor. The Butlerian Jihad also fueled the popularity of Zensunni belief. As mankind declared computers and science heresies, the Zensunni faith offered the perfect alternative: spiritual self-contemplation.

Unfortunately, the peaceful Zensunni devotees were persecuted under Imperial decree early in the first millennium after the Guild. Driven from their original homeworld of Poritrin, the Zensunni refugees fled into space, wandering from planet to planet, always one step ahead of their Imperial persecutors. Because of their constant state of itinerant exile, the Zensunni were renamed the *Zensunni Wanderers*.

The Arts

The arts permeate Imperial culture, with the adopted forms on various homeworlds defining the ethos and preferences of the ruling Houses. In addition to making for a contented populace, art and entertainment provide another avenue for Houses to inundate their subjects with House propaganda. Houses, such as the Varota of Chusuk encourage a great variety of artistic endeavors, while others prove less tolerant of such creative freedom and artistic expression. While many Houses patronize select artists by employing them in their court, some Imperial families have even founded colleges and insti-

tutions solely to devoted to various forms of artistic pursuit.

Although the residences of the nobility swell with paintings, drawings and sculptures, the fine arts are a rather provincial affair throughout most of the Imperium. The majority of artworks remain on their planets of origin, not being so highly valued as to warrant export to other Imperial homeworlds. Art styles similarly remain unique to each planet; they do not readily translate into other cultural preferences. Only select artists, such as the Varotan masters, have attained anything resembling universal celebrity or appeal. Of those that have, most have had their works displayed in the Halls of the Landsraad, CHOAM Emporium, or Emperor's Palace on Kaitain.

Every planet of the Imperium boasts a large collection of itinerant performers who travel from region to region in search of an audience. The most common performer is the troubadour—part singer, part musician and part poet, a philosopher and comedian. Descended from the Master Jongleurs, graduates of an ancient school of storytelling founded on the planet Jongleur, modern troubadours tend to haunt taverns, marketplaces and other public places. For those sufficiently talented—like their secretive Jongleur precursors—Great House sponsorship and public celebrity promise rewarding employment for itinerant troubadours and accomplished performers.

A few groups of performers have attained Imperial celebrity. The *Face Dancers* of Tleilax, for instance, are highly regarded for their ability to mimic famous personages. Foraying into *avant garde* material and satirical dramas, Face Dancer troupes remain Imperial favorites.

Entertainment

Even in matters of recreation and entertainment, popular forms vary between noble and pyon. Commoners view recreation as a break to the endless drudgery of work, while the nobility sees it as yet another opportunity for political maneuvering.

Social Engagements

Houses sponsor fetes and festivals to celebrate cultural holidays. Anything from the founding date of the House to the birthday of the heir-designate may initiate a fete, granting the subjects of the House reprieve from their daily routine. Fetes may last for the duration of a single evening or continue for several days, depending on the occasion. Major festivals, such as the *Festival of Ramadhan* on Arrakis, inspire religious observances such as fasting or prayer. More lively affairs may feature gladiatorial bouts, mile long parades, spectacular displays of pyrotechnics and the like.

For the nobility, banquets provide a social occasion to reaffirm alliances or forge new political partnerships. While many banquets honoring retainers may only be attended by the family and entourage, lavish political banquets sponsored by Great Houses often invite numerous representatives of Houses Minor, labor unions, regional guilds and so on. Traditionally, the host of the banquet commences the affair with a toast, briefly entertaining his guests with a song, poem or eloquent speech. Balls range from small engagements to ostentatious affairs, customarily including music and dancing. Masquerade balls remain a popular form, as do quiet recitals held within the family compound.

Competitions

The most popular form of intellectual competition is cheops, three dimensional pyramid chess. The deceptively simple board belies a complex web of strategies needed to master the game. A few Houses actively encourage professional leagues of cheops players and broadcast the matches by ComNet or radiograph. So popular and competitive has the game become, that some Houses have even forgone ritual dueling to settle their disputes through matches between House-sponsored cheops masters.

Athletic competitions appear in countless varieties throughout the Imperium. From the corridas of Caladan where matadors pluck ribbons from the horns of charging Salusan bulls to the arenas of Giedi Prime where arena slaves and slave gladiators engage in a variety of blood sports, Imperial audiences enjoy the spectacle of physical sports and athletic competitions.

Debauchery

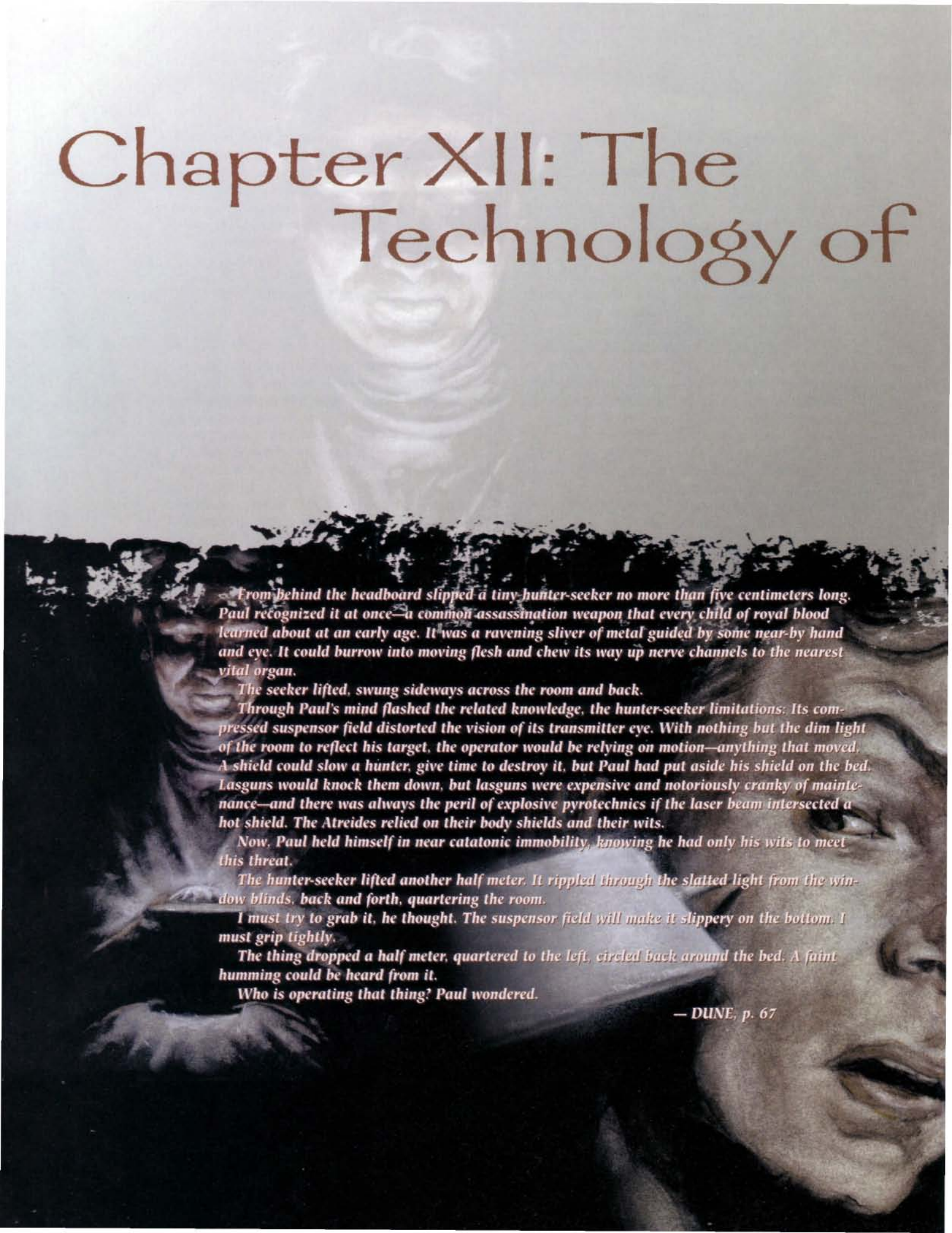
In addition to the more traditional forms of recreation, debauchery is a favorite pastime among the upper classes. While the nobility truly excels in debaucherous exploits, the middle classes enjoy their vices as well.

Often considered the soldier's favorite pastime, wenching resembles a time-honored tradition, finding outlets in brothels, pleasure houses, harems and slave quarters. On most Imperial homeworlds, some form of prostitution slips past the moral majority finding a legal venue in one form or another.

Drinking and narcotics remain an ever-popular respite to a day of hard labor. Various alcoholic beverages such as wine and spice beer flow freely in taverns and halls throughout the Imperium. Recreational narcotics such as semuta—a hallucinogenic drug triggered by atonal music—also prove common.

Gambling occurs in every conceivable form throughout the Imperium. People wager on everything from cheops tournaments to gladiatorial bouts. Games of chance proliferate in courtly gaming parlors, rowdy soldiers' barracks and local gambling halls. Card games such as hangman's hand or royal bluff remain ever popular, while dice games such as smuggler's bones also attract a wide base of players.

Chapter XII: The Technology of



From behind the headboard slipped a tiny hunter-seeker no more than five centimeters long. Paul recognized it at once—a common assassination weapon that every child of royal blood learned about at an early age. It was a ravening sliver of metal guided by some near-by hand and eye. It could burrow into moving flesh and chew its way up nerve channels to the nearest vital organ.

The seeker lifted, swung sideways across the room and back.

Through Paul's mind flashed the related knowledge, the hunter-seeker limitations: Its compressed suspensor field distorted the vision of its transmitter eye. With nothing but the dim light of the room to reflect his target, the operator would be relying on motion—anything that moved. A shield could slow a hunter, give time to destroy it, but Paul had put aside his shield on the bed. Lasguns would knock them down, but lasguns were expensive and notoriously cranky of maintenance—and there was always the peril of explosive pyrotechnics if the laser beam intersected a hot shield. The Atreides relied on their body shields and their wits.

Now, Paul held himself in near catatonic immobility, knowing he had only his wits to meet this threat.

The hunter-seeker lifted another half meter. It rippled through the slatted light from the window blinds, back and forth, quartering the room.

I must try to grab it, he thought. The suspensor field will make it slippery on the bottom. I must grip tightly.

The thing dropped a half meter, quartered to the left, circled back around the bed. A faint humming could be heard from it.

Who is operating that thing? Paul wondered.

— *DUNE*, p. 67

the Imperium

The following chapter describes the technology of the Imperium, providing game rules to judge the effects of particular equipment during a story. The first part of the chapter, "Science of Tradition," recounts the history of technology in the *DUNE* setting—including the Butlerian Jihad and the technological 'dark age' left in its wake. The second part, "Conventional Equipment," contains numerous entries describing universal items of equipment—everything from slow-pellet stunners and poisoned slip-tips to personal shield generators and bird-winged ornithopters.

Science of Tradition

Imperial science reveals a conventional morality and fearful trepidation extending back some 10,000 years to the Butlerian Jihad. The pre-Butlerian era found an Imperium full of wondrous science and technological mastery, from the 'thinking machines' that navigated and propelled interstellar starcraft to the artificial intelligence governing administrative computer networks and military defense grids. During those earlier times, humanity grew stagnant living a lethargic existence as computers and robots toiled to provide for their leisurely, and decadent, lifestyles. In time their dependency subjected the Imperial populace to other men controlling greater machines, ensnaring them in a nightmare of tyrannical servility as they abased themselves before the almighty thinking machines.

The Great Revolt changed all that, waging a bloody jihad on thousands of worlds throughout the Imperial core. Not so much an organized crusade as a popular revolution, the Butlerian Jihad purged the Imperium of all artificial intelligence and cybernetic automata, liberating humanity from its long enslavement to the pantheon of technocratic despots. Since the Jihad, Imperial civilization has vigilantly monitored its technological advancement, using the 'Butlerian proscriptions' as a moral catechism to establish a scientific tradition elevating human achievement over machine technologies.

The Butlerian Jihad

In ancient times, Emmanuel Butler, a long-standing advocate of artificial intelligence, abandoned his technocratic heritage, to throw off his yoke and speak out against the thinking machines. As a high official within the machine bureaucracy Butler had access to volumes of strictly confidential files, a veritable archive of reports and studies describing what amounted to nothing less than 'humanity's enslavement to its machine culture' (as Butler decried in his public outburst). Considering his position, Butler had dealt quite a blow to the machine establishment; and in a few short months he had attracted quite a number of outraged supporters.

But the governing technocrats of Neitzevine frowned upon Butler's rabble-rousing. Upon discovering that he had aroused the populace from its apathetic slumber, the government issued a warrant for Butler's arrest, confident that their technological superiority could quell any dissidence arising from Butler's captivity. Yet things escalated quickly during the ensuing weeks. Butler retreated into hiding, forcing the state to launch a vigorous inquest, searching popular establishments, raiding people's homes and conducting interrogations—in effect, adopting harsh police tactics that won Butler an even more devout following among the public.

Eventually, Butler was captured, tried, then executed before a puppet jury of technocratic peers. The first of the public riots being squashed with excessive brutality and force, the state egregiously failed in its ambition to paint Butler as a traitor, instead making him a martyr for the popular, anti-technocratic movement. Led by surviving members of his own family, the Butlerian movement began to attract ardent support. Butler's last statement, 'The truth is insuppressible; the force of it cannot be ignored' infused his advocates with wild fanaticism. His words became their rallying cry, echoed through months of violent revolution that shook the planet Neitzevine to its technological foundation.

With the subsequent fall of the Neitzevine technocracy the Jihad began in earnest. News of Emmanuel Butler and 'his' anti-technological crusade spread throughout the Imperium, igniting a wave of social revolution that became known as the 'Butlerian Jihad' (or 'Great Revolt,' in many historical records). The ensuing conflagration swept the entire Imperial core with its cleansing fire, sputtering out nearly a century later at the fringes of the Known Universe.

The Aftermath

The Jihad played itself out by 108 B.G., having swept all but a few 'out-freyn' worlds on the Imperial fringe. Several planets, including Ix, Tleilax and Richese, escaped the worst of its aftermath due largely to their location, cultural ethos, and economic dependency on machine technologies. But on worlds in the Imperial core, the effects of the Jihad were profound. Everywhere, the thinking machines had been destroyed; artificial intelligence and computer science, as it had been known, ceased to exist. And in the remaining cloud of moral proscription, no one dared resurrect such technologies (save perhaps on Ix and Tleilax where much scientific learning was preserved). The technological capability and knowledge purged during the Jihad prove incalculable, much historical information having been lost with the machines.

Though their personal lifestyles suffered greatly during the technological 'dark age' that followed, most of the Imperial populace felt politically liberated, if not spiritually redeemed by the absence of machine dependency. Never again to be enslaved by technology emerged as the prevailing moral sentiment. So deep did this conviction run that it became ingrained in the dogma of Orange Catholicism and similar moral and philosophical doctrines: "Thou shalt not make a machine in the likeness of a human mind," bespeaks the Orange Catholic Bible, echoing the primary stricture of the Butlerian Jihad. And in the ten thousand years since, the Jihad's moral proscriptions have remained sacrosanct, forever altering the course and outcome of Imperial science and technological advancement.

Numerous agencies uphold and enforce the residual proscriptions of the Butlerian Jihad. Religious teachings and philosophical schools (such as Orange Catholicism and the Zensunni faith) condemn technological hedonism, encouraging disciples to fill the void with spiritual devotions or moral contemplation. Governments similarly curb rampant technology, employing various punitive consequences to discourage possession and distribution of 'forbidden' technologies. But more effective than either, the great educational institutions, championed by the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood and Spacing Guild, dissuade technological reliance by proposing human accomplishment—elevating the development of human capabilities as the ultimate design for human civilization.

While the Great Convention and prevailing House laws permit legal enforcement—from the confiscation of forbidden technologies to personal imprisonment (or CHOAM sanctions to Landsraad reprimands, for offending governments)—the Imperial aristocracy continues to support the secret technologies of Richese, Ix and Tleilax, in spite of the Butlerian proscriptions. Discounted mainly as a 'secret vice', possession and employment of forbidden devices remains largely unenforceable among the ruling class of noble Houses. Utilizing such technologies for military defense, political espionage or House propaganda, the Houses of the Landsraad remain somewhat loathe to initiate a technological witch-hunt which would sooner or later implicate most of its membership. So instead of levying strict punishments, the Houses Great Houses maintain a *laissez-faire* policy toward technological exploitation—so long as they act discreetly, Houses may avoid political scrutiny by publicly demonstrating they uphold the edicts of the Butlerian proscriptions.

Butlerian Proscriptions

While pervasive in nature, the Butlerian proscriptions against certain types of "forbidden" technology are legally ambiguous. Some Houses try to take advantage of these ambiguities, but must do so very carefully, to avoid drawing the attention of the Imperial authorities.

Narrators who want to incorporate the lingering aftermath of the Butlerian proscriptions can use the following traits as guidelines. Any technological apparatus featuring one or more of these traits probably qualifies as forbidden technology.

- "Thou shalt not make a machine in the likeness of a human mind." Any technology demonstrating artificial intelligence or sophisticated computer processing violates the prime commandment of the Butlerian proscriptions.
- "Thou shalt not make a machine to counterfeit the human body." Technologies such as fully-automated robotics, bionic prosthetics dangerously skirt the second convention of the Jihad.
- "Thou shalt not make any machine capable of self-propagation or regeneration." Sophisticated machinery for repairing other machines and power sources capable of regenerating themselves ad infinitum defile the third fundamental of the Butlerian commandments.

Though the Imperium sanctions no computers or bionics, relatively complex servok mechanisms and simple automated devices generally meet with acceptance. Primitive degrees of mechanical automation or quasi-computerized assistance touch some Imperial technology.

Adaptive Science

In the wake of the Jihad, the Imperium trembled in the void of technology. In a hundred short years, billions had died in the mass hysteria of revolution. The Butlerian Jihad had rent the Imperium asunder, splintering it into thousands of isolated worlds having no means of communicating their loss (or their need for help). Only the rallying cry of the Jihad—"thou shalt not make a machine in the likeness of a human mind"—gave the people solace, catechizing that they had not sacrificed in vain.

Coming to grips with their hard-won freedom, the divided peoples of the Imperium struggled to rebuild their former civilization, searching for ways to adapt to the loss of their thinking machines. Leading what remained of the scientific community, great innovators such as Tio Holtzman forged the new order of technological advancement, focusing on equipment that supplemented—rather than replaced—the human talent and conscious judgment the Jihad had made so dear.

Coined "adaptive science" by the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood, this renaissance of scientific development saw the resurrection of many archaic technologies, adapted by modern thinkers to integrate human operators. Radio-controlled devices requiring human control and oversight replaced auto-guided devices; servok mechanisms requiring human activation, maintenance, and programming substituted for computer automata; and filmbooks replaced artificial implants, requiring individuals to actively participate in their own education. Clearly, adaptive science reinstated humankind's mastery over the machines—requiring strict interaction and supervision to guarantee humankind would never again become enslaved to machines of their own creation.

The Fundamentals of Technology

Combining innovative genius with moral imperative and spiritual proscription, most modern Imperial technology traces its origins to one of several fundamental scientific developments. The following sections examine the most important innovations advanced during technological renaissance following the aftermath of the Butlerian Jihad.

The Holtzman Effect

Discovered by famed scientist and inventor Tio Holtzman, the Holtzman Effect describes an electrostatic force capable of producing strong anti-gravitational fields. A Holtzman field, generated by means of a device called a Holtzman coil ("H-coil" for short), converts a relatively small amount of energy into a powerful repelling field—capable of counteracting the force of gravity, momentum and inertia. Practical applications have borne out the theories, but have yet to find the boundaries of what the Holtzman Effect can realistically achieve.

Examples of Holtzman technology litter the Imperium—from suspensor technologies countering the pull of gravity to the great Holtzman drives enabling Guild Heighliners to travel via fold-space.

The personal shield generator—a favorite application among Nobles, duelists and military personnel who wear them on belts and girdles—projects a Holtzman Effect completely enveloping the user's body. Visible only as a shimmering distortion, the repelling field deflects all fast-moving objects, shielding the wearer from flying projectiles and swift blade attacks.

Crystal-Metalloids and Metal Alloys

Ever in search of better materials for manufacturing and construction, Imperial metallurgists stumbled upon techniques for developing new crystal-metalloids and improved metal alloys. Materials such as *plasteel*, *fanmetal* and *metaglass* all demonstrate the amalgamation of crystalline structures or plastic polymers into traditional metals. The resulting 'new-age' materials exceed the potential of earlier metals and metal alloys, contributing to the development of most modern technology.

Invented in the year 189 by Ladros Dubruk, a native of Dho Vhar, plasteel combines stravidium fibers with molten steel, creating the metal alloy that replaced steel as the default material for constructing buildings and heavy machinery. Following in Dubruk's footsteps, Madge Rivurn developed duraluminum, the first of the fanmetal alloys by bonding jasmium crystals to tempered aluminum. The resulting metal, strong as steel but lighter than aluminum, became widely employed for lightweight 'fanning' structures such as the folding wings of the aerial ornithopter or the telescoping vacuum of the Arrakis spice harvester. Of unknown origin, Metaglass consists of sheets of jasmium quartz, tempered by high-temperature gas infusion. Its tensile strength can withstand an incredible 450,000 kilograms per square centimeter of pressure, and can be manufactured to selectively filter certain types of radiation. Starship portals, atrium ceilings and holding tanks represent but a few of the most common uses for metaglass.



Radio Control and Guidance

Without computers to control automated machines, radio control and remote guidance became a viable alternative. Improving upon signal strength and transmission quality, advanced radio technology proves difficult to jam or distort beyond reception. Extreme environmental conditions—such as the coriolis storms of Arrakis or electromagnetic pulse from atomics—can disrupt radio communications networks ("CommuniNets" or "ComNets"), but few other phenomena can completely obstruct the advanced transmissions.

Aside from the ComNets employed for planetary communication, radio technology enjoys popularity for remote control and guidance. The most sinister example of a radio-guidance being evidenced by the hunter-seeker (a vicious assassination weapon), the Imperium finds many other uses for radio control. Many suspensor lifts utilize some form of radio control, as do the automated "fighter dummies" used by swordsmen to hone their skills on the practice floor. Of course, such devices prove only as effective as the hand that manipulates their instrumentation.

Servok Mechanisms and Motorization

Whereas remote controls replaced artificial intelligence, servok mechanisms subsumed the role of robotic automata in the post-Butlerian epoch. Consisting of "clock-set" automated mechanism, servoks employ spring-timers, gravity metrics, hydraulic counters and radio control to activate and deactivate simplistic, motorized devices. Articulate machinery such as fighter dummies, palm locks and irrigation sprinklers all employ servok technology, advancing the science of automation to astounding levels of sophistication without the benefit of computer-assistance.

Perhaps the best example of radio-controlled servok mechanization can be seen in the automated fighter dummies used in martial training exercises. Controlled by the instructor via radio technology, servok motorization enables the unit to gyrate, project darts, swing blades and so on, maneuvering a great many articulate pieces with sufficient coordination and precision to challenge a practicing Swordmaster.

Pharmaceuticals

The Butlerian Jihad goaded science toward the development of human potential, exploring biochemistry and pharmacy as possible avenues for improving mental faculty and physical performance. Drugs and narcotics such as *sapho*, *melange*, and *rachag* proved successful in stimulating certain higher brain functions, while medicines such as blood coagulants, tissue regenerators, metabolic anti-venom and antibiotics accelerate the healing process, fighting infection and countering intoxication. On the darker side of human affairs, highly specialized poisons and recreational narcotics clutter the foreign quarters and black markets of most urban centers, introducing a veritable pharmacopoeia of poisons and drugs (most of which remain legal for consumption on most Imperial homeworlds).

Conventional Equipment

Though every homeworld reveals its own technological innovations and advancements, certain technologies have become commonplace throughout the Imperium. The following entries divide such 'conventional equipment' into five descriptive categories—Personal Armament (weaponry and defenses), Personal Gear, Installations, Vehicles and Forbidden Technology. For a summary of the information provided here, see the master chart "Imperial Equipment," page 240.

Personal Armament

Strangely, Imperial armament shows few technological innovations with regard to personal weaponry and defenses. The advent of Holtzman shields nullified the effectiveness of most projectile weapons and hand-held crushing arms, leaving Imperial combatants to resort to archaic blade weapons and slow-pellet stunners to slip past the protective shields. Even the destructive power of the lasgun proves ineffective against Holtzman shields, since the intersection of lasbeam and hot shield produce a pseudo–atomic reaction likely to kill the shooter and bystanders in addition to the intended target. As a result, Imperial armament reveals little technological improvement over the more ancient forms, yielding a relatively small selection of conventional arms and armor.

The following entries describe the personal armament common throughout the Imperium. Each entry includes the following technological specifications: Size; Mass; Accuracy; Block/Parry (the weapon's bonus to Block and Parry attempts); Damage; and Mode. Mode lists the broad categories of combat options that can be performed with the weapon in question, including Close Combat (Armed and Unarmed combat options—including Dueling, Shield Fighting, Martial and Weirding) and Ranged Combat.

Melee Weapons

The following weapons are used in close, hand-to-hand combat. Most blade weapons and needles can be envenomed or drugged for enhanced deadliness or special effects; (see page 129 for a discussion of types of poison and their effects).

Gom Jabbar



An esoteric weapon reserved for Reverend Mothers of the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood, the Gom Jabbar, or "high-handed enemy," resembles a thimble-like finger crown fitted with a sharp, envenomed needle. Its barb contains a highly toxic (Type IV) poison of secret composition, bringing instant, yet painless death to those who feel its prick. Constructed of silver, gold or similar precious metal, the Gom Jabbar is venerated as a symbol of Bene Gesserit rank, and rarely finds use beyond the confines of the Sisterhood's private cloisters.

Size: 3 - 4 cm
Mass: Negligible
Accuracy: 6
Block/Parry: N/A
Damage: 0 + poison (Type IV)
Mode: Close Combat/Armed Attack option only

Flip-dart

A flip-dart relies upon a small needle-like barb to deliver a potent drug or poison upon penetrating of the skin of the intended victim. Flip-darts are so named for the protective 'flip cover' used to conceal the needle and protect its user from inadvertent harm. Concealed within ornamented finger rings, fighting girdles, wrist bracers or weapon sheaths, flip-darts prove difficult to discern with the naked eye and impossible to detect with a poison snooper (so long as the cover remains hermetically sealed). Requiring close proximity and subtle manipulation, the flip-dart is preferred by Nobles and Adepts who routinely enter into close proximity with potential assailants.

Size: .5 cm
Mass: Negligible
Accuracy: 9
Block/Parry: N/A
Damage: 1 (plus poison)
Mode: Close Combat/Armed Attack option only (requires prior Bind action)

Kindjal

A kindjal is a double-bladed short sword (or long knife) constructed of any metal such as plasteel. The traditional form reveals a gracefully curved, double-edged blade terminating in a sharp point. Handguards consisting of short quillons or a simple disc-like ring enable blocking and parrying. Kindjals are the standard blade for military personnel, but also remain a favorite among dueling noblemen and Swordmasters.

Size: 20 - 30 cm (blade length)
Mass: .5 - .7 kg
Accuracy: 7
Block/Parry: +1
Damage: 3 + 2d6
Mode: Close Combat, Dueling & Shield Fighting

Knife

"Knife" refers to any short, light blade constructed of tempered metal or sharpened material such as plastic or bone. Knives possess short, simple grips with either small, simple handguards, or no guard whatsoever. Curved or straight, their blades possess at least one keen edge and a sharpened point for stabbing. Knives endure for their concealable nature and overall utility, being preferred by assassins, Mentats and Adepts as well as civilians and common criminals.

Size: 20 - 30 cm (overall length)
Mass: .2 - .4 kg
Accuracy: 7
Block/Parry: +0
Damage: 1 + 2d6
Mode: Close Combat/any option

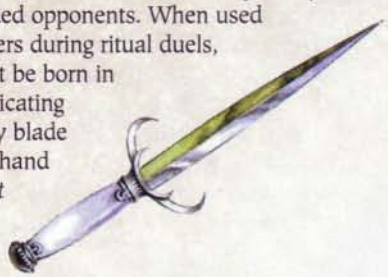
Shigawire Garrote

This simple, age-old assassination weapon has been improved by substituting shigawire in place of rope, cord or wire. Strong and sharp, shigawire strands easily sever skin and bone, delivering fatal wounds to the victim's throat and neck. Garrote attacks require a Hit Location: Head to render damage, with the appropriate Test and Damage modifiers being applied (see page 132). Upon scoring a successful 'hit', a garrote inflicts its full damage every round until the victim dies or the attacker's grip has been broken (with a successful Press maneuver, for example). Unless the intended target is Surprised, attempts to Dodge garrote attacks, gain a +4 modifier to their Test result. Similarly, neck protection such as a heavy collar may reduce the damage inflicted.

Size: 6 cm (handles), 15 - 20 cm (wire)
Mass: Negligible
Accuracy: 10
Block/Parry: N/A
Damage: 5 (Head shot from behind required)
Mode: Close Combat/Armed Attack option only

Slip-tip

A specialized form of fighting knife designed for off-hand use, a slip-tip earns its name for the comparative ease with which its slender blade slips through shields and bodily ribs. Its blade reveals a long, double-edge gently tapering to a sharp point; and its hilt incorporates a deliberate cross-guard for catching and diverting incoming weapons. Considered primarily a companion blade to a kindjal or sword held in the dominant hand, slip-tips traditionally present drugged or envenomed blades, especially when used against shielded opponents. When used by Nobles or Swordmasters during ritual duels, envenomed slip-tips must be born in a white-gloved hand (indicating poison) while the primary blade rests in the black-gloved hand indicating purity. *See next page for Slip-tip statistics.*



Size: 15 - 25 cm (blade length)
Mass: .3 - .5 kg
Accuracy: 7
Block/Parry: +2
Damage: 2 + 2d6
Mode: Close Combat, Dueling & Shield Fighting/any option



Sword

The sword remains a noble weapon bearing a long, curved or straight-edged blade. Invariably sword blades terminate in an acute point, instrumental to thrusting attacks. Constructed of resilient metal, such as forged titanium or cold-cast plasteel, sword blades feature either a double or single edge. Their blades protrude from elaborate cross-guards or basket hilts designed to deflect opposing blades. All in all, the dueling sword prevails as the most elegant of the archaic weapons, quick in balance and precise of motion. Considered a regal weapon for noble personages, swords carry caste-restriction on most Imperial home-worlds, legally born by Nobles, Swordmasters or House Warmasters who possess sufficient training and status to bear the regal weapon.

Size: 75-125 cm (blade length)
Mass: 1.2 - 1.6 kg
Accuracy: 8
Defense Modifier: +2
Damage: 5 + 2d6
Mode: Close Combat, Dueling & Shield Fighting/any option

Ranged Weapons

Needle Gun

Needle guns are small projectile weapons, resembling wristwatches in size and form. Too small to contain more than a single, envenomed dart, these devices are preferred for defensive purposes, being easy to conceal and uncumbersome to wear. Typically hidden beneath long baggy sleeves, the user needs only point his arm toward his target and lift his hand from the missile trajectory to trigger the reflexive firing mechanism and discharge the weapon. Often worn in pairs, needle guns are preferred by non–military personnel such as Nobles, Mentats, diplomats and spies. Military personnel and hired assassins occasionally employ them on specific occasions, but prefer maula pistols or stunners for their longer range and greater capacity for storing ammunition.

Size: 3–5 cm (barrel)
Mass: negligible
Settings: N/A
Range: 1 /3/5/10 meters
Accuracy: 6/7/9/11
Ammunition: 1 round
Damage: 1d3 + poison
Mode: Ranged Combat/Ranged Attack option

Lasgun

Lasguns are high-energy beam projectors fashioned into a heavy pistol or mini-carbine design. Their weighty, power cells are secreted into their grips and stocks, making the weapon entirely portable, if somewhat cumbersome. Lasguns emit a visible beam of powerful energy. Unequaled in its destructive power, the lasgun is reserved almost exclusively for elite military personnel and guardsmen. Because their beams initiate pseudo–atomic reactions when intersecting with hot shields (see sidebar), Houses issue lasguns to only their most disciplined troops. Under extraordinary circumstances, a trusted vassal or retainer (such as a Swordmaster or Warmaster) may be outfitted with a lasgun for missions of utmost importance; but rarely do Houses issue lasguns to any individual on a permanent or ongoing basis.

Lasgun-Shield Intersection

When a las-beam intersects an active shield, a pseudo–atomic reaction ensues. Ranging from minor events obliterating both shooter and target with engulfing flame to major nuclear events devastating everything within a several kilometer radius, lasgun shield intersections always result in catastrophic consequences. In addition, the pseudo–atomic blast to be mistaken for a true atomic attack, resulting in political fallout as provided for by the Great Convention (see Great Convention, page 211). Narrators may roll on the following table to determine the impact of any lasgun-shield explosion.

Roll 2d6	Effect
2	Minor: The reaction feeds back through the lasgun beam, causing an explosion which destroys the lasgun and kills the operator and anyone with 1 meter of him.
3-7	Lesser Atomic Explosion: A thermonuclear explosion with an initial blast radius of approximately 1 km
8-12	Greater Atomic Explosion: A thermonuclear explosion with an initial blast radius of approximately 2-12 km

Though the potency of their beams remains constant, lasguns feature three optional firing settings—Pulse Fire, Lasing Arc and Full Burn—affecting power consumption,

operational usage and physical damage resulting from the blast.

• **Pulse Fire** – The standard operational setting, pulse fire emits a single burst of energy observed as a short bar streaking from the muzzle. Each time the triggering mechanism is depressed, the resultant pulse consumes a single charge of power. The Pulse Fire setting requires one Ranged Attack action (and corresponding Skill Test) per burst discharged. Roll damage for each Pulse that successfully hits its target.

Though the triggering mechanism and power supply allow for semi-automatic fire, discharging more than 3 pulses in a single round increases the Difficulty of the Ranged Combat Test by +1 for each subsequent pulse. At the Narrator's discretion, an additional Ranged Combat (Lasgun) Test may be required if more than 3 pulses are discharged during a single round, with a failed Test indicating the barrel's overheating activates the mechanical failsafe, preventing any further attacks until the weapon is recalibrated (requiring a Calibration option).

• **Lasing Arc** – This setting causes the projector mechanism to emit a short-duration burn—seen as a long streak of blazing fire—each time the trigger is deployed. Consuming 5 charges per burn from the power cell, this setting permits an Autofire or Covering fire maneuver, fanning the beam over a short firing arc to hit one or more targets. At the shooter's option, lasing arcs may also be concentrated on a single point, releasing the full burst on a single target. Each Lasing Arc maneuver may cover an arc radius of approximately 15 degrees, generally targeting one person at point-blank, 2 persons at short range, 3 persons at medium range, and as many as 5 persons at long range.

When attempting to hit numerous targets with a single arc, the user must roll a Ranged Combat (Lasgun) Test to hit each target, though the maneuver itself counts as a single combat action (for purpose of calculating it Option Point cost). To allocate damage, roll the Lasing Arc damage and divide it equally (rounding down) by the number of targets fired upon. Then apply that portion of damage to any target successfully hit by the attack.

When a lasgun is set in Lasing Arc mode, its internal servok mechanism accounts for barrel overheating and regulates the timing between bursts to allow for adequate heat dissipation. As a result, the user may only perform one Lasing Arc (Auto-fire or Cover Fire action) per round.

• **Full Burn** – Full Burn is a fully manual setting over-riding the servok fail-safe and permitting the gun to emit a continuous beam for as long as the trigger remains deployed. Like a series of Lasing Arcs, Full Burn mode allows the user to fan fire over a larger firing arc (or to concentrate fire upon a single point) until either the barrel overheats or the power cell dies. Because Full Burn usage requires extreme skill and caution, many Houses fit their lasguns with special restraining devices preventing unauthorized deployment. Removing the mechanism requires an key code (or similar passport, such as a fingerprint), depending on the locking system employed.

On Full Burn mode, a lasgun can sweep a full, 45 degree firing arc (the equivalent of 3 Lasing Arcs) in a single round; but beginning with the second arc, the shooter must roll a Moderate (7) Ranged Combat (lasgun) Test to avoid a weapon malfunction. Each subsequent arc requires another Test, increasing the Difficulty by +2. Difficulty modifiers are cumulative, and continue to accrue if the Full Burn is maintained through subsequent rounds. The first failed Test indicates the weapon has malfunctioned from overheating, and depending on the severity of the failure, may result in irreparable damage to the weapon.



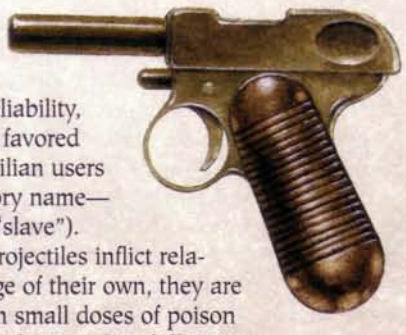
When attempting to hit numerous targets during Full Burn, the Narrator resolves the operation as a series of Lasing Arcs (Auto-fire or Cover Fire actions, as described under the 'Lasing Arc' above. When determining the damage for Full Burn fire, roll the damage for the entire burn and divide it equally among the number of targets fired upon (rounding down). Then apply that portion of damage to each target successfully hit.

Size: 45 - 90 cm (stock)
Mass: 2 - 5 kg
Settings: 1 - 3
Range: 5 /25/75/225 meters
Accuracy: 6/7/9/11
Ammunition: 100 charges in power cell
Mode: Ranged Combat/Ranged Attack (Pulse Fire setting), Autofire and Covering Fire (for Lasing Arc and Full Burn settings), and Calibration options.

Mode	Damage	Power Consumption
Pulse Fire	5 + 5d6	1 per pulse
Lasing Arc	15 + 10d6	5 per arc
Full Burn	45 + 15d6	15 per round

Maula Pistol

A maula pistol is a simple, spring-mechanized handgun known for its clunky design and low-maintenance construction. Fabricated from lightweight plasteel or similar plasmeld alloys, the maula pistol employs a high-tension spring and articulate cocking mechanism to load its small dart or pellet projectiles into the firing chamber and propel them up to a range of 40 meters. The sliding trigger cock draws a round of ammunition from the magazine clip while rewinding the propulsion coil simultaneously, allowing the pistol to be readied in a fluid, pulling motion. Once the magazine has been emptied, a simple lever ejects the spent clip from the butt of the pistol, allowing the user to quickly reinsert a fresh one.



Because of its compact size, cheap construction and general reliability, the maula pistol is favored by military and civilian users (hence its derogatory name—"maula" meaning "slave"). Though its small projectiles inflict relatively minor damage of their own, they are designed to contain small doses of poison or narcotics—versatile enough to kill a target with a swift-acting poison or knock him unconscious with a strong anaesthetic. Unfortunately, the velocity of a maula dart is too rapid to penetrate a defensive shield (making the weapon useless against shielded targets).

Size: 15 - 20 cm (barrel)
Mass: .5 - 1 kg
Settings: N/A
Range: 5 /10/20/40 meters
Accuracy: 6/7/9/11
Ammunition: 10 rounds per clip
Damage: 1d6 + poison
Mode: Ranged Combat/Ranged Attack option

Envenomed Projectiles

The projectiles fired by maula pistols and slow-pellet stunners don't inflict much damage on their targets—it's the poison they carry that causes the injury. But the dart must penetrate the victim's skin to deliver its payload into the bloodstream. If the victim does not take any damage from the initial damage caused by the projectile (as a result of protective shields or armor), then the poison does not affect the target.



Stunner

Designed to breach an active shield, stunners employ pneumatic compression to launch "slow-pellets" at relatively low velocities. By partially depressing the triggering mechanism, the user leaks an amount (between 1 and 6 metric liters (ML)) of compressed gas from the pneumatic cartridge into the weapon's firing chamber, pressurizing the gun for discharge. When the stunner is fired, the triggering mechanism releases the compressed gas from the firing chamber to propel the projectile at a velocity and distance commensurate with the chamber pressure. With practice, an experienced user can easily adjust the weapon to fire at maximum efficiency for penetrating an active shield, regardless of its active setting or linear distance from the shooter.

Stunner Settings

Gas	Range	Notes
1ML	1/3/5/10	Able to penetrate shield setting 5 or lower
2ML	3/5/10/20	Able to penetrate shield setting 4 or lower
3ML	5/10/20/40	Able to penetrate shield setting 3 or lower
4ML	7/15/30/60	Able to penetrate shield setting 2 or lower
5ML	10/20/40/80	Able to penetrate shield setting 1
6ML	15/30/60/120	Maximum range, will not penetrate an active shield

Like maula pistols, stunners feature magazines to store their ammunition, which also carries a poison or soporific drug. Stunners typically store 15 projectiles in their magazines, and their pneumatic canisters contain 120 ML of compressed gas. Replacing either the magazine or cartridge requires one Reload action, while preparing the firing chamber and discharging the weapon require both Calibration and Ranged Attack actions.

Size: 15 - 20 cm (barrel)
Mass: 1 - 2 kg
Settings: 1 - 6 ML (gas released to firing chamber)
Accuracy: 6/7/9/11
Ammunition: 15 rounds per clip, 120 ML per cartridge
Damage: 1d6 + poison
Mode: Ranged Combat/Ranged Attack and Calibration options

Throwing Knife

A throwing knife is a specialized weapon designed and balanced for throwing accuracy. Constructed of heavier plasteel or steel alloys, throwing knives have straight, double-edged blades terminating in a sharp point. Though throwing knives can be used in hand to hand combat, they lack cross-guards and handles well-suited for defensive options (making them less effective as melee weapons (+1 Difficulty to Blocking Tests). Similarly, Normal knives— those not designed and balanced for throwing—can be thrown, but at a penalty of +2 to the Accuracy Ratings listed below.

Any thrown knives are generally ineffective against shielded opponents; any attempt to hit and damage a shielded target carries a base Difficulty of 15 (Nearly Impossible) in addition to the standard defensive modifiers conferred by the active shield (see page 232).

Size: 10 - 20 cm (total length)
Mass: .1 to .3 kg
Settings: N/A
Range: 3/5/10/15
Accuracy: 6/7/9/11
Ammunition: N/A
Damage: 2 + 1d6
Modes: Ranged Combat/Ranged Attack option only

Hunter-Seeker

A deadly assassination device, the hunter-seeker consists of a nearby control console emitting a short-wave radio signal to control and direct a razor-sharp sliver of metal toward its intended victim. The metal sliver employs suspensor technology to levitate and maneuver freely, turning left or right and rising upward or downward as directed by the operator at the console.

To facilitate the operation of a hunter-seeker, a miniature optical receptor rests in the nose of the projectile. Its "eye" transmits images back to the console, enabling the operator to view his quarry from an ideal vantage (eliminating the visual impairments caused by physical distance or line-of-site). However, the distortion caused by the suspensor field makes the image blurry, requiring the controller to make a Moderate (7) Observation Test in order to see the target clearly enough to make a successful attack. When the hunter–seeker impacts its target, it cuts into the victim and then slices its way up nerve paths and arteries, through muscles and bone until it reaches a vital organ (typically the heart). A hunter-seeker can be deflected by sufficiently strong armor or a shield; though if aware of the shield, the user can breach it by slowing the hunter-seeker's velocity.

Operating a Hunter-Seeker requires an Assassination (devices) Skill Test against the Difficulty established by the 'seeker's Accuracy rating (usually 7). Provided the hunter-seeker penetrates the victim's shield and/or armor, it bites into its target and automatically continues to do 2d6 damage per round. Though no Test roll is required, the operator must continue to control the device in order to inflict additional damage.

All members of the nobility learn about hunter-seekers at an early age, when they are taught to recognize the most common forms of assassination. As part of their education, they learn what few precautionary measures can be taken against this lethal device. The best defense against a hunter-seeker is immobility, especially if the ambient lighting is dim or extraordinarily bright. The seeker's blurred vision presents it's chief weakness—it being easier to detect motion in substandard lighting than it is to discern a motionless figure in a cluttered environment. During extreme circumstances, the sliver may be grasped; but the slippery suspensor field makes such attempts dangerous (this requires an Opposed Coordination + Dexterity Test against the hunter-seeker, considered to possesses a Coordination + Dexterity of 7). If caught, the only ways to disarm the weapon are to smash its nose into a hard surface, immerse it completely in water (or similar fluid) or to arrest its controller.

The hunter-seeker possesses a maximum velocity of 25 meters per second.

Size: 1 cm (sliver), 20x10x5 cm (console)
Mass: Negligible (sliver), 1 kg (console)
Settings: N/A
Range: 50 m maximum range (no range modifiers)
Accuracy: 7 (10 after a failed Observation Test)
Ammunition: 1 hour of use in cruise mode
Damage: 1+1d6 on impact (armor applies), 2d6 per round thereafter (no defense from armor applies)
Mode: Ranged Combat: Ranged Attack (Assassination (devices) Skill Test)

Defensive Armament

Battledress

'Battledress' covers a wide variety of military uniforms affording bodily protection during combat (as opposed to dress uniforms designed for social occasions). Resembling traditional military uniforms, Battledress relies on special fabrics resistant to knife thrusts and projectile darts. Pliant and comfortable, 'plas-fiber' fabrics feel like natural fabrics but prove much superior for defensive garments. The material allows perspiration to evaporate from within, but resist water from without. Similarly, the durable plas-fibers resist stretching, tearing and cutting, offering basic protection against stabbing, slashing and piercing weapons. Battle-dress uniforms range from jackets and pants construction of fine plas-fiber mesh to heavy plasfiber coats and jumpsuits. The accompanying table indicates the amount of protection provided by typical battledress.

Battledress Protection

Type	Physical/Energy Protection
Plasmesh Uniform	1 / 0
Heavy Plasmesh Uniform	2 / 1
Plasfiber Coat	2 / 2
Plasfiber Jumpsuit	2 / 2
Heavy Plasfiber Uniform	3 / 3

Powered Armor

Certain Great Houses issue a form of heavy field armor to their military elite and lasgun troopers. The armor itself is supported by suspensors facilitating ease of movement and powered by an internal generator (the suit's power cell can operate for approximately 50 hours of continuous use). The suit itself shows rigid construction (except for gauntlets, boots, and joints fashioned

from heavy plasfiber). The suit is sealed to protect the wearer from bio-chemical weapons and low-level radiation. Tight fitting in spite of its great bulk, power armor requires the wearer to don nothing more than a skin-tight leotard or thermal undergarment beneath the heavy plasfiber lining.

A full suit of powered armor includes a *comhelm*. Comhelms are large helmets made of solid plasteel and fitted with a metaglass faceplate. Comhelms are equipped with their own internal communications speakers, a cooling unit, and a limited air supply in case the wearer is attacked with gases or must operate in an oxygen-less environment (such as the void of space, heavy smoke, or underwater).



Powered armor is extremely expensive. The cost of maintaining its generator and power cell prohibit all but the wealthiest of Great Houses (such as Corrino and Harkonnen) from issuing units to low ranking soldiers. But even for the wealthy ones, powered armor sees use only among the commanders and trooper elite who don the armor for performing the most dire of special House missions. Power Armor falls under the same restrictive category as lasguns.

Size: variable (fitted to wearer)

Mass: 40 kg

Power Cell: 50 hours of continual use, refresh at 2/hour when deactivated

Protection: 5 (against all forms of attack)

Personal Shield Generator

The most prevalent of personal defenses, the personal shield generator projects a Holtzman field barrier around the wearer, deflecting fast-moving projectiles and physical blows. A small shield generator fastened to a waist belt emits the defensive field, encapsulating the wearer in a tingling, shimmering envelope. A small energy cell powers the shield projector, and its power output can be increased by five discreet settings, with the higher settings consuming more power to afford greater protections.

Size: 10 cm square, 3 cm depth

Mass: .1 to .3 kg

Settings: 1-5

Power Cell: 180 charges, refresh at 30/hour (when deactivated)

Mode: Shield Fighting

The *demi-shield* reveals one popular variant of the personal shield generator. Resembling an ordinary shield belt and projector unit, demi-shields emanate a field covering only half of the user's body, either right or left depending on the projector unit pre-sets. A Difficult (9) Repair (Armament) Test enables a technician to adjust demi-shield presets from left to right or even top to bottom, in addition to replacing the power cell or recharging the unit. Regardless of its presets, a demi-shield possesses but one setting (setting 2); and their power cell holds 90 charges. Used primarily for arena combat, demi-shields prove less expensive than their more sophisticated counterparts.

Shield Defensive Settings

Setting	Power Consumption	Difficulty	Protection
1	10 per hour	+1	C
2	30 per hour	+2	C
3	1 per minute	+3	+1
4	3 per minute	+4	+1
5	1 per round (12 per minute)	+5	+2

Personal Gear

Though the following equipment reveals subtle variations depending on its planet of manufacture, each of the following items can be found throughout the Imperium. Regardless of their differing size and mass, the following items can all be carried on a persons body (except where noted).

Baliset

Perhaps the most popular of musical instruments, the nine-stringed baliset descends from the zithra. It is favored by wandering troubadours who strum out their poetic ballads using its specialized 'multipick'. Balisets display a range of sizes and shapes, from large ones as tall as a man to shorter varieties less than meter in overall length. The best balisets were those made during the 9th millennia by the Varotan masters of the planet Chusuk.

Size: .5 - 1.75 m

Mass: 1 - 3 kg

Communinet Transceiver

A Communinet transceiver is a communications device using advanced radio technology to access a planetary network (the 'Communinet' or 'ComNet') for sending and receiving distant transmissions. Most units tune into a House or industry-hosted network, but users can



tune the ComNet transceiver to any local frequency. Because ComNet transmissions are so easily intercepted, network transmissions must be encrypted via a secret language in order to prevent unauthorized access to the band transmissions.

Size: 9x3x1.5 cm
Mass: .125 kg



Filmbook

Replacing the more archaic books filled with ridulan crystal pages (1 micron thick) and static turning device, contemporary filmbooks emerge as the basic tool for storing information in a portable form. Resembling the 'book computers' of the pre-Butlerian era, filmbooks consist of a small screen and playback mechanism used for reviewing the contents of whatever shigawire reel happens to be inserted. The playback device enables the user to skip about the reel, forward or backward to review moving pictures accompanied by written annotations and a voice recording. The average spool contains encyclopedic storage capacity, storing the equivalent of 300 hours worth of moving pictures and voice imprints.

Size: 18x26x3 cm
Mass: .3 kg
Power Cell: 300 unit-hours continuous use (auto-recharges at 3 units per hour in sleep mode)

Krimskell Rope

Krimskell, a natural fiber derived from the *hufuf* vine of Ecaz, enjoys a wide variety of uses due to its characteristic strength and elasticity. Also called "claw fiber" or "strangler vine" krimskell demonstrates an 'elastic memory,' clawing increasingly tighter as greater force is applied to change its original shape. Captives held by krimskell bonds unanimously report that their bonds grow tighter the more they strain against them. For this extraordinary quality, krimskell fiber is favored for crafting a variety of ropes and cords—from the rigging of sea craft to the ropes used for mountaineering and knot work.

When bound with krimskell bonds, characters who try to break free risk the possibility of worsening their predicament. To break free of krimskell bonds, a character must perform a successful Attribute (Physique + Strength) Test against Difficulty 7. Each failure increases the difficulty of the subsequent attempt by +1 Difficulty (cumulative). If successive attempts increase the Difficulty to 10 or more, the character begins to suffer 1 point of Stun damage per minute as a result of the krimskell beginning to cut off circulation. Provided the character rests for 10 minutes or more, the krimskell begins to relax, returning to its normal shape. Each minute reduces the Difficulty number by 1, with circulation being restored at Difficulty 9.

Size: Varying lengths and diameters are available
Mass: Depends on size

Medkit

An important component of any field pack, a medkit contains a variety of items for performing first aid. Including sundry pharmaceuticals and instruments for administering them, medkits also pack bandages and compresses, scalpels and shot injectors and a small pharmacopoeia of standard medicines and drugs (stimulants, antibiotics, anti-coagulants, tranquilizers and so on).

Surgical medkits, the likes toted by Suks and physicians, tend to contain more sophisticated equipment and specialized medicines. While any character having First Aid skill can use a standard medkit without fear of causing additional harm, the instruments and medicinals included in a surgical kit require the expertise of a practicing physician (Medical Art skill).

Size: 15x15x6 cm
Mass: 1.5 kg

Minimic Film

Smaller than one micron in diameter, minimic film resembles shigawire in its capacity for data storage. Because of its convenient size, spies prefer minimic film for recording intelligence and counterespionage data, using miniature devices to record and play back the desired information.

Size: Negligible (but requires a carrying case about 1 cubic cm minimum)
Mass: Negligible

Oil-Lens Binoculars

Binoculars in the Imperium use lenses made not of glass, but of *hufuf* oil held in place by a static field. Oil lenses can be adjusted one micron at a time, making them extraordinarily acute. Oil-lens binoculars also enable a much wider range of magnification. Typically, standard issue binoculars range from 1.5x to 200x magnification, giving their users the ability to see up to 200 times further (or 200 times as much detail) as they normally could with the naked eye.

Size: 10x18x4 cm
Mass: .25 kg

Paracompass

This term describes any compass using local magnetic anomalies to determine direction. Used in conjunction with appropriate charts or accurate World Knowledge, paracompasses find routine employment on planets where the magnetic field proves highly unstable or subject to interference and masking.

Size: 3x3x1 cm
Mass: Negligible

Poison Snooper

These omnipresent devices detect the presence of poison in food or drink. Concealed in chandeliers, centerpieces and so on, snoopers guard the banquet tables of nearly every great hall in the Imperium. Portable, handheld units find use in personal quarters or when users travel abroad, but they have a much shorter range and their use proves difficult to conceal.

Using a snooper requires a simple Equipment (device or instrumentation) Test. Difficulty is determined by the Poison Type (the Difficulty number equals the Type number, i.e. Type III poisons having a Difficulty of 3), although only a Dramatic Success will reveal the exact identity of the poison detected. While most snooper Tests can be deemed automatically successful, trace quantities of poison, environmental factors and equipment tampering may all significantly increase the Routine Test Difficulty.

Size: 7 cm long (hand-held), 9 cm long and 3 cm diameter (standard)

Mass: .125 kg (hand-held), 3 kg (standard)

Shield Dissembler

Similar to shield generators, Dissemblers radiate Holtzman fields at preset, destructive frequencies. When encountering an active shield, the dissembler field negates the defensive barrier, granting the wearer passage through powerful shields, such as those emanating from *prudence doors* and House Shield portal areas. Only the best dissemblers can modulate the five frequencies required to bypass a *pentashield* pru-door.

To counteract any shield, the dissembler needs to be programmed, calibrating the device to emit the appropriate preset, destructive frequencies. Intelligence agents relying on dissemblers must either discover the proper frequencies through espionage, or acquire a pre-calibrated dissembler through similar means. Operating a properly calibrated Shield Dissembler represents a Routine (3) Equipment (devices) Test. Without the proper presets, base Difficulty skyrockets to Difficult (14) for dissembling monoshields (see "Prudence Door," page 236) adding +1 Difficulty for each additional, interlaced shield frequency (i.e. +4 Difficulty for a pentashield).

Narrator's should note that Dissemblers operate on different bandwidths than personal shields, making them ineffective against body shield technologies. Similarly, dissemblers prove too weak to nullify a House shield, except portal openings which should be treated as duoshields (see "Prudence Door" and "House Shield Generator" for more information).

Size: 12x3x3 cm

Mass: 1.75 kg

Shigawire Imprinter

Shigawire imprinters come in several basic models, each revealing any number of features and refinements depending on their origin of manufacture and intended purpose. But regardless of design, all imprinters serve the same basic purpose—recording images and sounds on shigawire reels, for subsequent playback in either a filmbook, solido projector, or similar display.

Standard Imprinters contain both microphone and lens for capturing audio and video bytes. Their instrumentation may reveal any number of advanced features, improving upon the basic record mode essential to their purpose. More advanced imprinters may contain 3–D, infrared or nightlight functions for capturing images under different conditions. Such devices may also contain a small display in addition to a viewfinder, enabling the user to take advantage of an internal playback feature (instead of putting the shigawire reels into another device for review).

Minimic Recorders present the same range of features and diversity as Standard Imprinters, except they imprint minimic film (shigawire only one micron wide) and reveal much smaller casings for use during espionage or intelligence operations. While superior minimic recorders can capture the full range of sound or imagery available to shigawire imprinters, inferior models prove incapable or such quality. Highly advanced models may even exhibit a flip–up display or earplug adapter for reviewing information stored on its internal reel.

Solido Recorders represent the most technologically advanced of all shigawire imprinters. Invariably possessing 3–D lens technologies and 360–degree image rendering mechanism, solido recorders are capable of recording much more information on standard reels, superimposing images and scrambling signals to create the advanced holo-images created when the recording is replayed on a solido projector.

Size: variable (depending on model and design)

Mass: variable (depending on model and design)



Solido Projector

Solido projectors exhibit some of the most advanced technology in the Imperium, approaching the strictures of the Butlerian Jihad. They use 360-degree reference signals imprinted on a shigawire reel to project three-dimensional, holo–images. Though solido technology does not allow for realistic illusions (the images appear transparent), it does enable precise modeling of three–dimensional structures allowing for accurate representation of buildings, tunnels, planet topography and the like.

Mentats employ special 3-D reels to transmit volumes of data with the speed of a single glance. By successfully studying solido images while in Mentat Trance a Mentat can process and retain information 1000 times faster than reading a filmbook.

Size: Varies; approximately 30 x 30 x 60cm average.

Mass: Varies; minimum is approximately 1 kg.

Sonar Probe

Sonar probes are used to scan large surfaces in search of hidden cavities, buried items or concealed objects. Bouncing ultrasonic pulses at various depths within the surface, a sonar probe displays an 'ultrasound' image on its visual display. The image reveals structural and material anomalies within the surface, alerting the user to the presence of hidden vacuoles or heterogeneous materials and objects concealed within the surface of study.

Sonar probes have a limited range of about 10 meters in depth—objects hidden deeper than that cannot be detected. When using a sonar probe to sweep an area, the character must perform an Equipment (devices) Test against Difficulty assigned by the Narrator. Generally, if an item or cavity falls within the range of the probe, detecting a man-sized object should be of Routine Difficulty, with Difficulty increasing to detect smaller items.

Size: 1 meter long

Mass: 2.75 kg

Surgical Cutteray (las-scalpel)

Employing the same basic technology used in las-guns, cutterays emit powerful lasbeams albeit much more refined and limited in range (no more than 1 m). Cutteray projectors range from the size of a scalpel (surgical cutterays) to heavy, vehicle-mounted units powerful enough to carve tunnels through solid rock.

Size: 6 cm long

Mass: Negligible

Settings: N/A

Range: 1 m

Accuracy: 9

Ammunition: 100 charges in power cell

Damage: 1 + 1d6 (per round, full burn)

Mode: Close Combat/Armed Attack or Armed Attack Sinister only

Suspensor Globe

Also called "glowglobes" or "suspensor lamps," suspensor globes employ external Holtzman devices to float at pre-set heights and shed illumination from within. The brightness of their lighting may be adjusted from a dim yellow to brilliant white, and their position may be similarly adjusted by remote control.

Personal glowglobes feature a 'leash' that may be hooked to a person's clothing or uniform. When the person walks, the leash detains the glowglobe, making it follow the person wherever they lead. Personal glowglobes light a spherical area approximately 5 meters in diameter at maximum brilliance. Their internal power cells provide for approximately 1000 hours of illumination at maximum intensity.

Size: Varies; about 15 cm in diameter on average, topped by a small suspensor field generator.

Mass: Varies; about 1.25 kg on average

Power Cell: 100 charges (approx. 1000 hours at maximum brilliance)

Suspensor Belt

Suspensor belts generate powerful, anti-gravitational Holtzman waves to lighten the burden of extreme obesity or encumbrance. Resembling a shield belt in appearance, suspensor belts (also made into harnesses) support 50 kg per unit of power output, enabling persons to levitate by increasing the power output (and consumption) of the generator. Though a suspensor belt will lift a person or item off of the ground, it possesses no propulsion device to move its load horizontally.

The power cell on an average suspensor belt stores 100 charges. The device consumes a variable number of charges every ten minutes. So if the user increased the power output from one to five units, the device would support 250 kg of mass, consuming 5 units of power every 10 minutes (30 units per standard hour), lasting some 4 hours before exhausting the power cell.

Size: Size of belt varies; suspensor unit is approximately 15x5x3 cm

Mass: 1.3 kg

Power Cell: 100 units (regenerates 5 units per hour)

Installations

Unlike personal equipment, which may be toted about, installations represent large-scale technologies, built into buildings, spacecraft, caverns and so on. Too large or impractical to carry on your person, Heavy equipment is typically transported by vehicles to the location where it is meant to be installed.

Cone of Silence

Another Holtzman device, a cone of silence emits a dampening field to disrupt the transmission of voices, engines or other sounds. As a result, sounds produced within the conical field remain shielded within, allowing two or more people to converse without fear of being overheard. Since the speakers are still vulnerable to lip reading, most cones of silence are built into alcoves or grottos where their users can speak in complete privacy by facing a wall.

House Shield Generator

Comprised of a massive generator and numerous directional relays, House Shield Generators project defensive shield barriers large enough to envelop a large structure, such as a palace, hangar storage silo or communications facility. So powerful are these shields that no projectile or explosion can breach the defensive barrier, although lasgun beam intersections still wreak nuclear havoc. The relays used for true House Shields (those protecting the entire House compound) can be adjusted to open 'portals' in the shield, permitting vehicles or persons to enter or leave without compromising the integrity of the rest of the shield.

Characters who need to attack a shielded building must find some way to drop the shield. A shield dissem-

bler may permit an individual to pass through a portal zone, but it does not generate force sufficient to nullify the full power of the perimeter barrier. A better strategy involves infiltrating the power facility and sabotaging the generators or power source, dropping the shield until power can be restored.

Prudence Door

Prudence doors exploit shield technology to secure a portal with one or more protective shield barriers. The force fields protecting a pru-door are much stronger than those of personal shields, since they are generated by larger Holtzman projectors drawing from a strong, constant power source. Pre-calibrated shield dissemblers may be provided to authorized personnel, granting them access without compromising security codes.

Pru-door shields reveal three basic configurations. Monoshields provide the minimum protection (roughly equal to setting 5 of a personal shield projector) and are typically used to protect windows and doors from projectile fire and rushing vehicles. Duoshields are similar to monoshields, but also bar access to slow moving vehicles and even charging troops. Adding additional shields, the pentashield (a five-layer shield) represents the pinnacle of pru-door technology. Using five interlaced shields, pentashields prove impossible to defeat with any attack short of an atomic explosion. Without the assistance of a sophisticated dissembler, the only other way to defeat a pentashield is to cut power from its generator.

Palm Lock

A palm lock employs primitive sensory technology and a servok-automated bolt to key a lock to a specific palm print (or prints). The user presses his hand against the sensory mechanism, and once identified, the lock opens automatically. Palm locks are reputed to be impossible to bypass, though a character with Prana-Bindu Conditioning may make a Coordination (+ Dexterity) Attribute Test against Difficulty 7 to fool the sensor and defeat the lock.

Size: Varies depending on item to be locked; minimum is 20x14x3 cm

Mass: Varies; minimum is 1.2 kg

Planetary Vehicles

In addition to star-faring vessels (see "Chapter 13: The Spacing Industry"), planetary vehicles remain a popular form of transport among Nobles and their entourages. While most folk (anyone Caste 3 or below) usually travels on foot, the privileged members of Imperial society may choose either groundcars or ornithopters to transport themselves on-planet.

Groundcar

Groundcars assume a variety of forms, from small civilian speeders to armored military tanks. They use ultra-efficient electrical engines and run on wheels or suspensors. Some even employ both forms of conveyance, switching from wheels to suspensors when they attain a certain velocity or need to cross uneven terrain. See the *Vehicles* chart for more information about the various types of groundcars found throughout the Imperium.



Ornithopter

An ornithopter (called "'thopter" for short) is an aerial transport featuring articulated wings that beat and move like those of a bird. Jets and/or suspensors assist during takeoff and landing, but the regular beating of its wings keeps the vehicle aloft once airborne. Though a 'thopter can takeoff and land vertically, runway takeoffs attain maximum airborne velocity much more quickly. During such maneuvers, the pilots stabilize the wings in a the fully open "gliding" position and hit the jets to accelerate the craft to air-speed velocity. Runway landings see the craft touch down by gliding then reverse flap to slow the 'thopter to a halt. Otherwise the craft takes off and lands like a bird, using vertical jet and/or suspensors to alleviate the stress gravity places on the vehicle's delicate wings.

Light in overall frame and structure, Ornithopters exhibit plasteel frames with fan-metal wings and servok rotors. See the "Planetary Vehicles" chart, page 238, for more information about the various types of ornithopters found throughout the Imperium.



Vehicular Pursuit & Combat

During vehicle action sequences, Narrators should use the following guidelines to handle pursuit and combat.

Pursuit

When characters operate vehicles to either chase or evade another vehicle the Narrator should break the scene into action Rounds (see "Chapter 5," pages 111 and 120). Assigning the fleeing craft the initiative, the driver or pilot may attempt various maneuvers as Actions. To keep pace with their target, pursuers need to perform the exact same maneuvers as Reactions. All vehicular actions and reactions cost 2 Option points.

If the fleeing operator fails a Test, he loses the initiative as his vehicle skids or slips, and the Narrator must determine whether his vehicle crashes depending on the attempted action and severity of failure. If the pursuer succeeds at their Test, they manage to keep up with their target, and may gain ground if they capture the initiative. If they fail their Test, they may lose ground or crash depending the Narrator's interpretation of their degree of failure.

Comparing the success and failures of each vehicle and switching initiative when one party succeeds and the other fails, the Narrator can determine the overall success of the fugitives relative to their pursuers. If the party with initiative succeeds while the other party fails, the first gains ground on their opposition (either increasing or decreasing the distance between the two vehicles depending on their actual objective). Similarly, when the party with initiative fails (but the other party succeeds) initiative reverses, enabling the new controller to perform Actions to gain ground on their opposition.

Combat

When resolving combat during pursuit scenes, the Narrator should permit vehicular weapon fire as additional actions during the round. Since each lasgun requires a separate 'gunner' (Ranged Combat (lasgun) Test), firing vehicular weapons does not usually detract from the number of option points the operator possesses for steering the craft. Conduct all Ranged Attacks as usual, interpreting differences in speed, maneuvers and so on as Difficulty modifiers during "to-Hit" Tests. When a character scores a hit on a vehicle, you may use the Hit location chart to interpret the result should your players desire to simply disable a craft instead of destroying it entirely. For example, the Head could be considered the cockpit, the Torso as the propulsion engine, the Abdomen as the wheels/wings and so on.

If a vehicle suffers serious damage or crashes, the Narrator must decide how the passengers are affected. Usually, the vehicle protects passengers until its structure has suffered serious damage (about 75% of total structure); then it may crash. Crashes may be interpreted as Falling Damage (considering the vehicle's altitude or ground speed to be the distance—in meters—fallen) rolling damage for all passengers and allowing the vehicle to "absorb" a portion of the damage equal to its remaining structure. Any damage remaining should be divided among the passengers and distributed more or less equally among them. If weapon fire or crashing inflicts damage equal to its structure in a single round, the Narrator may consider all passengers to be killed (perhaps allowing player characters to expend Karama during a Physique Test to suffer various injuries instead). See the "Vehicular Operations" chart for more information about the types of maneuvers operators can perform during vehicular combat and action sequences.

Vehicular Operations

Groundcar Maneuvers (Options)

Action/Reaction	Difficulty
Turn	4
High-speed Turn	6
Heavy acceleration	4
Hard deceleration	5
Tail spin	6
Swerving at speed	7
Bump/Push other Vehicle	6-8
Ramp Jump/Landing	9+
Emergency stop/turn	6-8
(based on ground speed and terrain surface)	

Modifiers

Unpaved Roads	+1 Difficulty
Rough/Slick Surface	+2 Difficulty
Treacherous surface	+4 Difficulty

Difficulties are for Transport (Driving) Tests. No Test is necessary for routine maneuvers (considered to be any maneuver of Difficulty 5 or less) performed in non-stressful conditions.

Ornithopter Maneuvers (Options)

Action/Reaction	Difficulty
Bank	4
Hard Bank	6
Climb	4
Hard Climb	6
Dive	5
Hard Dive	7
Bank and Dive/Climb	6
Bank and Hard Dive/Climb	9
Emergency Landing	6-12
(based on flight speed and landing surface)	

Modifiers

Light Turbulence	+1 Difficulty
Medium Turbulence	+2 Difficulty
Heavy Turbulence	+4 Difficulty

Difficulties are for Transport (Piloting) Tests. No Test is necessary for routine maneuvers (considered to be any maneuver of Difficulty 5 or less) performed in non-stressful conditions.

Planetary Vehicles

Groundcars

Type	Size	Passengers	Structure Pts.	Speed	Range
Passenger	2-3 m	1-4	125	200	1250
Transport	3-5 m	3-10	200	175	1000
Carrier	6-25 m	12-40	300	150	1000
Speeder	2 m	1	75	250	1500
Lt. Armored	3-6 m	1-5	250	125	1250
Md. Armored[1]	7-18 m	8-20	350	100	1000
Hvy. Armored[2]	19-22 m	20-25	500+	75	1000

Ornithopters

Type	Size	Passengers	Structure Pts.	Speed	Range
Small	3-6 m	1-5	125	250	2500
Medium	5-10 m	3-10	175	330	3300
Large	8-15 m	10-25	250	350	3500
Very Large	16+ m	15+	350	300	3000
Small Military[3]	4-8 m	2-6	150	320	3200
Medium Military[4]	6-20 m	12-25	225	350	3500
Large Military[5]	20+ m	30+	350	300	3000

Passengers indicates the maximum number of passengers in addition to the driver or pilot(s).Small 'thopters require only one pilot, medium 'thopters need a pilot and co-pilot, with larger 'thopters staffing one to two pilots plus an additional navigator and/or co-pilot.

Structure Points represents how much damage a vehicle can withstand before being destroyed. Once a vehicle has taken 75% of its Structural Points in damage, it can no longer move or fly; when all Structural Points are gone, the vehicle has been destroyed. In addition to Structure, civilian vehicles possess 2 points of armor against all forms of attack, while military craft usually have 4-6 points of armor (in the case of 'thopters), or 5 or more (in the case of groundcars).

Speed reflects the vehicle's maximum sustained velocity or airspeed (in km/hour). Vehicles can move as much as 15% faster for as long as one hour, but the driver or pilot must make a Challenging (9) Transport (Driving or Piloting) Test every 10 minutes or the vehicle sustains 1d6 damage (+2 for 'thopters) every 10 minutes until speed is reduced.

Range indicates the average distance the vehicle can travel before depleting its power cell. On average, a groundcar can travel 6 times its maximum speed in km before depleting its power cell. If a 'thopter runs out of fuel while airborne, it may glide for quite a distance depending on its airborne speed and altitude. Narrators must use their own discretion for determining how far a 'thopter can glide before needing to land based on speed, altitude, wind factor, gravity and so on. On average, a 'thopter can travel 10 times its maximum speed in km before depleting its power cell.

[1] **Medium Armored groundcars** may support one heavy lasgun on a 360 degree turret.
[2] **Heavy Armored groundcars** may support one or two heavy lasguns set on 360 degree turrets.
[3] **Small Military 'thopters** can mount a single 360 degree lasgun turret and a small shield generator.
[4] **Medium Military 'thopters** can mount two 360 degree lasgun turret and shield generator.
[5] **Large Military 'thopters** can mount two 360 degree lasgun turrets and two 180 degree turrets (fore and aft) in addition to a shield generator.

Vehicular Lasguns

Vehicles mount heavier lasguns than those used by ground troops and military personnel. Though vehicular lasguns each possess an independent power cell (200 charges), they also tie into the vehicle's power source to draw additional charges at the cost of depleting the vehicle's power supply. To calculate

Size: 100 - 180 cm (barrel)
Mass: 5 - 10 kg
Settings: 1 - 3
Range: 15/60/240/920
Accuracy: 6/7/9/11
Ammunition: 200 charges in power cell
Modes: Pulse Fire, Lasing Arc, Full Burn

Mode	Damage	Power Consumption
Pulse Fire	6 + 7d6	2 per pulse
Lasing Arc	18 + 12d6	8 per arc
Full Burn	50 + 18d6	20 per round

Forbidden Technology

Though few Houses or governments dabble in technologies defying the Butlerian proscriptions, several "machine cultures"—such as those of Richese, IX and Tleilax—have perfected morally ambiguous technologies many regard as taboo. For this reason, such equipment falls into the category of "forbidden technology" remaining something of an anomaly within Imperial society.

Narrators interested in forbidden technologies should watch for future supplements such as the *Bene Tleilax Companion*. In the meantime, Narrators should feel at liberty to create their own forbidden technologies as needed to flavor their individual narratives.

Equipment Availability

Because of the Imperium embraces the faufreluches hierarchy of privilege, the availability of equipment varies greatly according to caste and vocation. Since the Butlerian Jihad, much of the Imperial populace makes do with rustic technologies—archaic weapons, simple tools, animal-drawn carts and the like. Increasing with status, professionals and aristocrats enjoy broader ranges of technological comforts, including advanced weaponry, vehicular transport and, perhaps, even the forbidden technologies from out-freyn worlds.

As members of their House Entourage, player characters suffer no want for the most advanced of Imperial technology; but as servants to their household they remain subject to the whim of their families for acquiring it. While all player characters begin with the standard equipment listed in "Chapter 3: Character Creation," Narrators may furnish additional equipment for particular missions, or enable characters to request provisions according to a mission 'allowance'. In such cases, the Narrator may permit the Entourage to make a list of provisions for their mission, then award all, some or none of them depending on her sense of the mission requirements or based on their success at a Persuasion Test (or similar die roll). Alternately, Narrators may wish to declare a solari "allowance" in advance, permitting the Entourage to purchase items from the Equipment List provided on page 240.

The "Equipment List" (see next page) provides basic information about equipment availability on the average Imperial homeworld. The chart refers to the following terms:

Description names the item in question. If several types of item are grouped under the same description (for example, the different types of battledress), they are named under descriptive subheadings.

***Caste* determines** who can use the item *legally*, by caste. Caste restrictions indicate the minimum numerical level of caste required to *legally* possess the item. The letter designation "I" means the equipment is generally considered illegal for anyone to possess, especially in the case of forbidden technologies.

Every homeworld enforces slightly different laws, so caste restrictions may vary from world to world. For example, a dissembler may be legal for Nobles on Giedi Prime, but be totally unlawful on Wallach VIII. Similarly, a Noble may possess a lasgun on Grumman, while any of the Noble's retainers could legally bear the weapon for him on a world such as Caladan. Narrators should regulate Caste restrictions at their own discretion; after all, the Narrator's the one who must determine whether caste violations are enforced, and if so, what sorts of punishments they carry (again, depending on homeworld custom and law).

Cost indicates the average price of the item (in solaris) on the open market. Cost covers an average range.

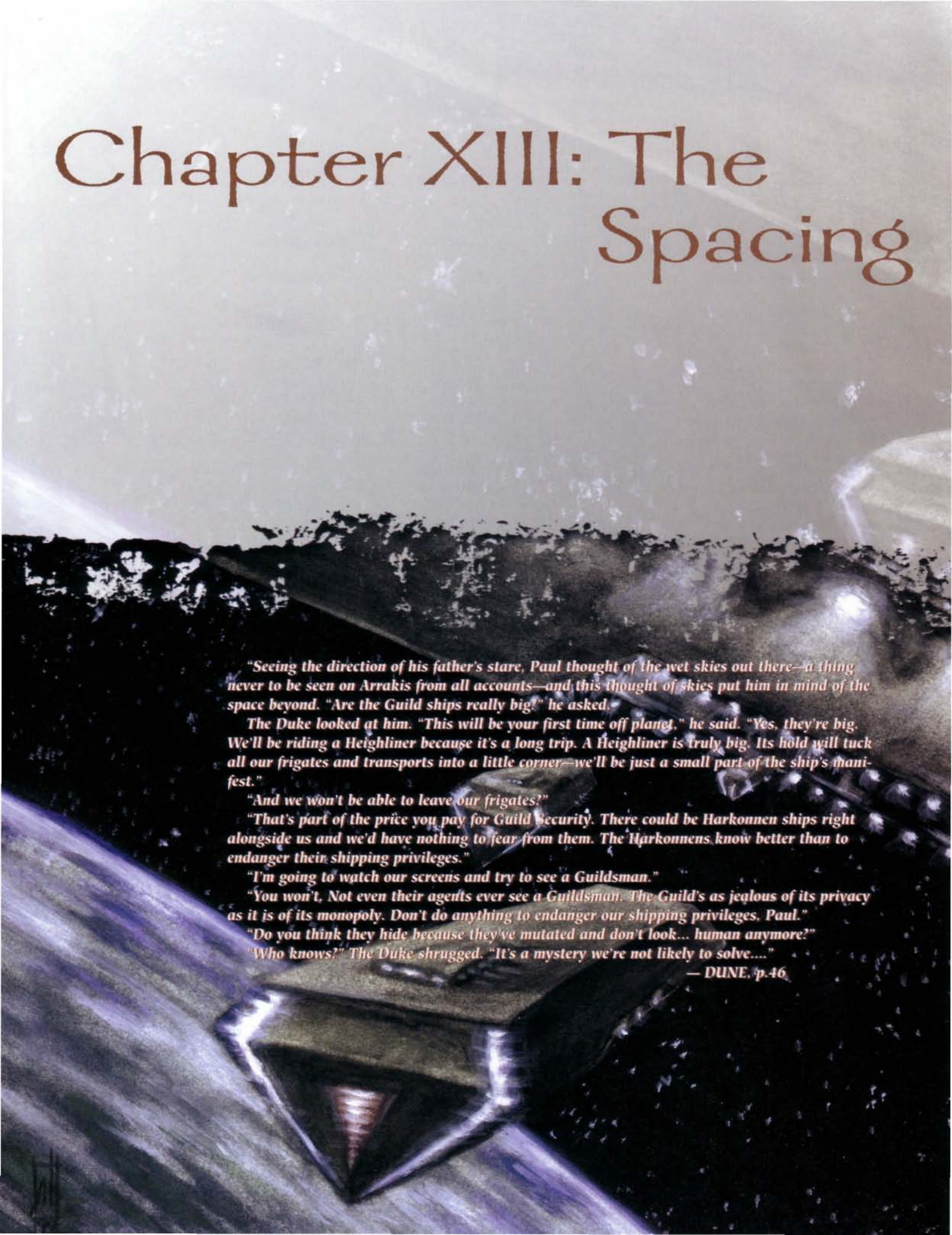
Black Market Cost sets the price range (in solaris) for the item within the average black market. Black market value varies even more widely than legal cost, due to varying laws, corruption, supply and demand and similar economic factors.

Equipment Availability Table

Item	User	Standard Cost	Black Market Cost
Melee Weapons			
Gom Jabbar	*	N/A	Bene Gesserit only
Flip-dart	3	30–75	60–150
Kindjal	3	50–125	75–200
Knife	1	25–75	50–150
Shigawire Garrote	1	N/A	10–35
Slip-tip	4	75–150	150–250
Sword	4	175–1000	250–1500
Ranged Weapons			
Lasgun	4	3500–7000	5000–20,000
Lasgun (extra power cell)	4	250–500	350–750
Maula Pistol	1	100–350	250–500
Maula Pistol (extra clip)	1	10–25	15–30
Maula Pistol (ammo, 100rounds)	1	50–75	75–200
Needle-gun	3	450–600	500–750
Needle-gun (ammo, 25 darts)	1	25–50	50–125
Stunner	3	350–750	500–1250
Stunner (extra gas cartridge)	3	25–50	40–75
Stunner (extra magazine)	3	15–30	25–50
Stunner (ammo, 100 rounds)	3	50–75	75–200
Throwing Knife	2	50–100	75–150
Hunter–Seeker (control unit)	1	1500–4000	3500–7500
Hunter–Seeker (slivers, 10)	1	100–250	200–500
Defensive Equipment			
Battledress			
Plasmesh Uniform	2	200–450	N/A
Heavy Plasmesh Uniform	2	300–600	N/A
Plasfiber Coat	3	225–450	250–500
Plasfiber Jumpsuit	3	375–650	400–700
Heavy Plasfiber Uniform	3	400–850	500–1000
Powered Armor	3	5000–15,000	8,000–20,000
Personal Shield Generator	4	1000–3500	2500–5000
Demi-Shield	3*	750–2000	1500–4500
Personal Gear			
Baliset	1	350–1,000	N/A
Communinet Transceiver	2	100–750	250–1000
Filmbook1	50–150	N/A	
Surgical Cutteray	2	250–450	300–500
Krimskell Fiber (100m coil)	0	150–300	200–400
Medkit (incl. Las-Scalpel)	2	400–750	500–925
Minimic Film Reel	3	25–50	N/A
Oil-Lens Binoculars	1	150–500	200–750
Paracompass	1	50–500	N/A
Hand-Held Snooper	3	1250–4,500	2500–7000

Item	User	Standard Cost	Black Market Cost
Personal Gear (continued)			
Shield Dissembler	3	750–2,000	1500–5000
Shigawire Imprinter			
Standard Imprinter	2	275–1200	300–1500
Minimic Recorder	3	500–1750	600–2000
Solido Recorder	3	750–2500	1000–3500
Solido Projector	2	850–1,500	1000–2750
Sonar Probe	2	250–825	500–1,500
Suspensor Torch/ Glowglobe	0	40–200	N/A
Suspensor Belt	0	175–350	200–400
Installations			
Cone Of Silence	–	1500–4000	N/A
House Shield Generator	–	10,000–150,000	N/A
Palm-Lock	–	150–750	N/A
Poison Snooper Installation	–	2000–10,000	N/A
Prudence Door	–	5000–35,000	N/A
Vehicles			
Ornithopter			
Small2	30,000–50,000	45,000–150,000	
Medium	3	60,000–100,000	75,000–225,000
Large	3	90,000–200,000	150,000–350,000
Very Large	4	200,000–450,000	450,000–1,200,000
Small Military	4	75,000–200,000	300,000–650,000
Medium Military	4	300,000–1,000,000	550,000–2,000,000
Large Military	4	750,000–3,000,000	1,500,000–6,000,000
Groundcar			
Small2	5,000–12,500	5,500–15,000	
Medium	2	10,000–30,000	12,500–25,000
Large	2	25,000–75,000	30,000–100,000
Speeder	3	15,000–90,000	25,000–120,000
Small Military	4	55,000–100,000	100,000–500,000
Medium Military	4	200,000–1,000,000	800,000–2,500,000
Large Military	4	500,000–2,000,000	1,500,000–4,250,000

Chapter XIII: The Spacing



"Seeing the direction of his father's stare, Paul thought of the wet skies out there—a thing never to be seen on Arrakis from all accounts—and this thought of skies put him in mind of the space beyond. "Are the Guild ships really big?" he asked.

The Duke looked at him. "This will be your first time off planet," he said. "Yes, they're big. We'll be riding a Heighliner because it's a long trip. A Heighliner is truly big. Its hold will tuck all our frigates and transports into a little corner—we'll be just a small part of the ship's manifest."

"And we won't be able to leave our frigates?"

"That's part of the price you pay for Guild Security. There could be Harkonnen ships right alongside us and we'd have nothing to fear from them. The Harkonnens know better than to endanger their shipping privileges."

"I'm going to watch our screens and try to see a Guildsman."

"You won't. Not even their agents ever see a Guildsman. The Guild's as jealous of its privacy as it is of its monopoly. Don't do anything to endanger our shipping privileges, Paul."

"Do you think they hide because they've mutated and don't look... human anymore?"

"Who knows?" The Duke shrugged. "It's a mystery we're not likely to solve...."

— DUNE, p.46

Industry

Aside from the Imperial House, the Spacing Guild remains the single most influential organization in Imperial politics, and rightly so. While it lacks direct political representation within the Landsraad, the Guild maintains a private monopoly over interplanetary space travel and intergalactic banking, giving it absolute control over Imperial commerce and communication. This stranglehold over the Imperial economy and CHOAM Company makes the Guild the envy of other powerful organizations, such as the Bene Gesserit and Bene Tleilax, exalting it as the third leg of the political tripod—Emperor, Landsraad, Guild—supporting Imperial civilization and government.

Foundation of the Spacing Guild

In the wake of the Jihad, a renegade corps of scientific visionaries and spacing veterans banded together to form the secret community that came to call itself the Spacing Guild. Confounded by the abrupt return to sublight travel, these romantic entrepreneurs realized that only by working together could they discover a way to successfully navigate foldspace without the assistance of artificial intelligence. Determined to find a solution through a 'human equation," the founders of the Spacing Guild shared a common dream—training the human mind to such perfection that skilled navigators could safely navigate foldspace, reuniting the fragmented Imperium while maintaining human independence from the tyranny of the thinking machines.

Embarking on their dream, the Guild founders—led by Aurelius Venport—established various mental training programs emphasizing mathematics, chaos theory and logical abstraction in numerous attempts to expand the human mind. Realizing some success, these early programs succeeded in enabling a "Navigator" to move a test shuttle in and out of foldspace warp, but the innumerable variables resulting from the ever changing position of celestial bodies prevented early Navigators from plotting reliable courses to their target destinations. During the first couple of decades, many of these pioneering test flights ended in disastrous failure, causing numerous setbacks as the training programs were reevaluated and modified with the hope of meeting with greater success.

In spite of their stalwart enthusiasm, the floundering scientists made little progress until the Zensunni migrations brought news of melange—an awareness-spectrum narcotic, so named for the diversity of its chemical properties—discovered on the planet Arrakis. Shortly thereafter, the Guild pioneers acquired samples of the fabled 'spice drug' and began to experiment with its mind-altering effects and other mysterious properties. In but half a century, Guild physicists discovered a secret aspect of the drug that would come to shake the universe. Massive doses of the spice melange enabled endowed Navigators to quest forward in time, envisioning lines of movement to carry a spacecraft safely through foldspace without the myriad calculations and micro-adjustments pre-Butlerian nav-computers were capable of performing. This groundbreaking revelation stunned the Guild community, bringing not only the solution to their "human equation" but also the knowledge that they alone possessed a secret of immeasurable worth.

Guided by this monumental revelation, the Guild swiftly adapted its training programs to exploit melange in the training of competent, foldspace Navigators. Gaining their first glimpse of the future to be, non-Guild spacing personnel flocked to enlist with the foundling Guild, as news of their Navigators' abilities spread throughout the Imperium. After less than a century of bold pursuits and secret failings the Guild proudly made its discovery public. Accompanied by many demonstrations, the Guild announced it had succeeded in producing highly-trained human *Navigators*—individuals capable of safely guiding vessels through foldspace without the assistance of thinking machines. Though at this time they did furnish the scientific community with a basic explanation of their adapted Holtzman engines and associated technological breakthroughs, the Spacing Guild carefully guarded the secret properties of melange, concealing its role in the navigational process. In effect, what the Guild announced was its stranglehold over interstellar space travel—a monopoly remaining unbroken to the present day.

Since its foundation, the Spacing Guild has grown into a universal power, expanding its operations to incorporate the entire spacing industry. From its secret homeworld of Junction, the Guild governs all interstellar commerce and banking. It controls numerous secret "nexus worlds," sites of banking conglomerates, vast construction yards, refit facilities and refueling stations for its fleet

of spacefaring Heighliners. Without a doubt, the formal establishment of the Spacing Guild represented perhaps the most important of turning points in Imperial history. The commencement of its operations were of such moment that the Landsraad unanimously voted to reset the Imperial calendar to year zero, honoring the foundation of the Spacing Guild and its contribution to human civilization. From that date forward, all years prior to the formal commencement of the Guild became known as "annum B.G." (years Before Guild).

Spacecraft

Imperial spacecraft all fall into one of several general categories—Interplanetary vessels and Guild Heighliners. The first, and broadest, category includes all varieties of spacecraft incapable of foldspace travel, including Lighters (and shuttles), Frigates and Cruisers. All interplanetary vessels employ powerful sublight drives enabling them to blast off from a planet and establish an orbit around a planet or planetoid, such as a moon or asteroid. Although larger interplanetary vessels such as frigates and cruisers possess the physical capacity for traveling between planets within a given solar system, the Guild monopoly forbids such "freelance" operations, confining all non-Guild vessels to low orbits within the "sovereign space" of a planet or planetoid's gravity sink.

The second type of spacecraft, which the Guild reserves for commercial uses, represents the titanic vessels known as Guild Heighliners. Heighliners reveal such size and dimension that they are capable of carrying not only conventional cargo, but also of tucking hundreds of frigates, safely within their cavernous berths. Owned and operated solely by the Guild, Heighliners travel established spacing routes, folding space from one homeworld to the next to carry passengers and cargoes to and from the farthest reaches of the Imperium.

Foldspace

Foldspace travel involves moving a spacecraft from origin point A to destination point B without traveling a linear path through three dimensional (3–D) space. Instead, the vessel enters a higher order dimension at point A and returns to conventional space at point B "traveling without moving" between the two points in remarkably little time. It was from the early theories regarding the potential to effectively "fold space" so that two points (A and B) overlapped or became much closer to one another, that foldspace earned its popular name.

Since the pre-Butlerian era, only the Spacing Guild has managed to create vessels and Navigators capable of foldspace travel. Relying on their advanced mathematical training and highly developed intelligence, Guild Navigators use the spice-drug melange to enter a deep, trance-like state of higher awareness. In this drug-induced trance, their emerging *prescience* enables them to "see" a variety of courses leading through the void of foldspace, navigating the dangers or hazards that lie on alternate courses by selecting the one "safe" course that will carry the vessel through without mishap.

In spite of their melange-inspired prescient ability to foresee foldspace perils and choose the safest course, Guild Navigators remain fallible making foldspace travel a hazardous occupation. Though the Guild promotes the illusion that foldspace travel is nearly fail-safe, navigational mishaps have been known to occur proving catastrophic to vessel and crew. Rare cases of Heighliners emerging from foldspace too close to escape the gravity wells of suns or planets, navigational errors marooning vessels inside the void and simple miscalculation carrying crew and cargo far from its anticipated destination blacken the early history of foldspace navigation. Yet navigational mishaps remain exceptionally rare; and where statistical improbability fails to alleviate fearfulness, Guild propaganda and lack of alternatives compel modern travelers to overcome their apprehensions about foldspace travel.

Guild Navigators and Steersmen

Foldspace travel would not be possible without the existence of highly trained Guild *Navigators*—human pilots who undergo rigorous mental training combined with forced spice evolution to become steersman of the Guild's titanic foldspace vessels. Devouring huge quantities of melange during the course of their training, Navigators enjoy the fullest of the geriatric benefits of spice consumption— life spans multiplied many times beyond the conventional human norm. Yet their ravenous usage bears inescapable consequences—increasing dependency in the form of lethal addiction and genetic mutation making them no longer recognizable as 'human' in origin.

It is both of these factors that compel Guild Navigators to live out their solitary lives in large, isolating tanks. Born on suspensors, the massive Navigator tanks contain black plas–shielding around all sides, protecting the Navigator from casual observance and deliberate violence. Inside, the tank is filled with a super-saturated spice gas, enabling the Navigator to swim about freely, consuming life-sustaining doses of melange with each and every breath.

Guild Heighliners

The Guild's flagship vessels are known as *Heighliners*—enormous ships, several kilometers in breadth, built to carry passenger frigates, megatons of cargo and thousands of passengers safely through foldspace. Because they never enter planetary atmospheres and travel only intermittently through 3–D space, Heighliners don't possess the same structural fortitude required of sublight cruisers and atmospheric craft. They are constructed in orbital facilities around Junction and other Guild-operated

worlds, and aren't designed to withstand the rigors of atmospheric pressure or planetary gravity.

Heighliners evidence enormous cargo capacity, their manifest limited only by the volume and mass (not weight) of the cargo berth. Within a single hold a Heighliner can transport all of the frigates, dump-boxes, and personnel belonging to a Great House; and each Heighliner contains multiple cargo holds within its great bulk. Because of its immense size and orbital confinement, it is impractical for Heighliners to carry unitary cargo—instead, they carry a number of frigates, shuttles, transports, and other spacecraft already laden with goods and personnel. In actuality, a Heighliner acts as a 'mother ship' transporting hundreds, or even thousands, of smaller vessels within the voluminous holding bays of its province-sized berth.

Preparing to take the Heighliner into foldspace, the Navigator enters a 'navigational trance' of mathematical abstraction and prescient meditation, deep within his central navigational chamber. From this location, the Navigator controls the ship's Holtzman engines and power reactors, propelling it into and out of the void of foldspace. Only the environmental controls and support systems function independent of the Navigator during the journey, leaving the question as to whether the ship actually 'moves' within foldspace a mystery to all but the Guild. Passengers aboard internally docked frigates experience no sensation of movement; and the view ports of their vessels reveal little aside from the tightly-packed interior of the 'liner's holding bay.

Guild Transport Policies

Although the Guild maintains an exclusive monopoly over all space travel, it takes precautions to maintain strict political neutrality with regard to the service it extends to its prospective clients. Above all else, the Spacing Guild remains a business operation: without client Houses to purchase its services, it would fall into bankruptcy like any other commercial enterprise.

Shipping Privileges

To promote fairness and goodwill (while maintaining its neutrality), the Guild extends shipping privileges to every House or economic agency able to afford its services. Though numerous terms and clauses complicate the legal document, the Guild's *Shipping Contract* maintains an active policy of non-interference with regard to its clients' cargo, destination and confidentiality. Aside from setting exorbitant rates for the transport of military personnel and equipment (see "Military Transport" for more information), the contract asserts the Guild will not deny or restrict transport of any cargo on the basis of its client's political affiliation, planetary origin, final destination or type of cargo.

According to the Great Convention, the burden of regulating and enforcing planetary import/export customs lies with the governing Houses, not the Guild—so the Guild refrains from meddling in its client's affairs even when their cargo manifests clearly contain goods of illicit nature or passengers of ill repute. So long as the Guild doesn't perceive any threat to its security or other clients, it does not concern itself with its client's hidden agendas or cargo manifests: Business makes progress—and the Guild makes non-interference and client privacy a top priority in its business agenda.

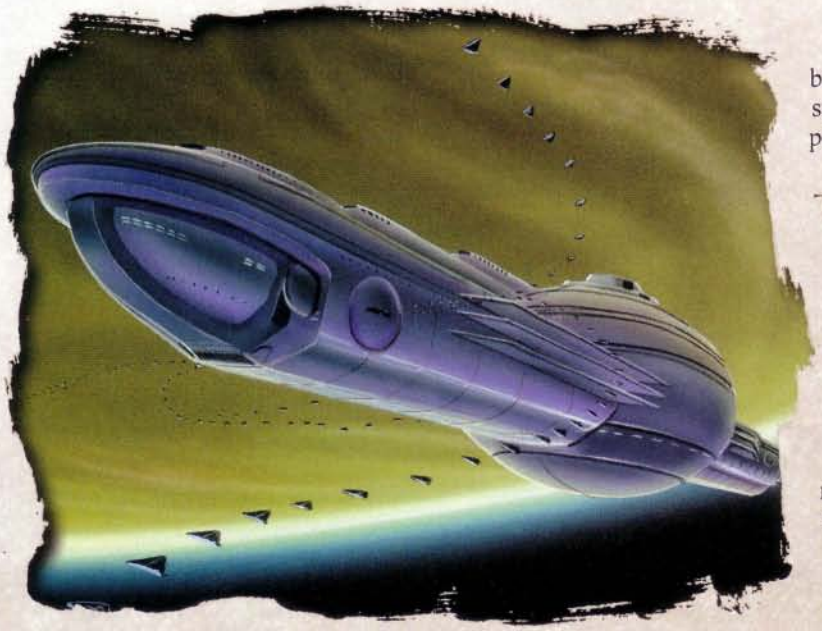
Guild Security

Many of the terms and conditions set forth in the Guild's transport contract relate to the issue of 'Guild Security'—a comprehensive policy aimed at safeguarding the Guild's proprietary secrets in addition to protecting the safety and privacy of its clients and their cargoes. All parties who wish to transport ships or goods in one of the Guild's Heighliners must follow its rigid security provisions.

In the interest of security, the Guild requires all clients to furnish cargo manifests prior to embarking on a Guild Heighliner. Such documents inventory all goods and materials loaded aboard client vessels, providing accurate data about the quantity, content, volume, mass and nature of the cargo. Similarly, the Guild requires clients to furnish special manifests for crew and passengers boarded on its vessels, listing their names, franchise numbers and homeworlds for the purpose of security checks, medical clearance to travel through foldspace and so on. Prior to embarkation, the Guild occasionally spot-checks client vessels ensuring their manifests reflect their actual cargoes, ostensibly providing for the safety of the Heighliner crew and passengers. Suffering this inconvenience, few object to the random spot-checks because the Guild guarantees the absolute confidentiality of all client manifests.

To deter clients from submitting false reports, the Guild reserves the right to refuse transport of any cargo or personnel not listed on its client's manifest. In addition, the shipping charter asserts the Guild's right to seize and/or dispose of any items qualifying as 'hazardous' materials, strictly forbidden in the transport agreement. Though the Guild does not object to transporting cargoes deemed illegal on many homeworlds, it insists that its clients declare all cargo on their shipping manifest—failure to do so typically results in denial of transport or seizure of property, depending on the severity of the infraction.

Guild security procedures also confine passengers and goods to their original vessels once docked within the Heighliner cargo holds. Explaining that shifts in mass affect the Heighliner during foldspace travel, the Guild actively enforces this procedure with monitoring devices and armed security personnel. In truth, the Guild maintains this policy to restrict access to the inner workings of the Guild vessel, ensuring that no spies or saboteurs gain entrance to delicate instrumentation or proprietary



secrets. Violation of confinement carries strict penalties, resulting in the temporary suspension or permanent revocation of client shipping privileges—since the Guild maintains its monopoly largely through trade secrets, it tolerates no conduct infringing on its privacy.

While most organizations would have difficulty enforcing such draconian restrictions, the Guild's monopoly lends it an almighty club with which to enforce compliance. The Guild reserves the right to alter the terms of shipment or to revoke the shipping privileges of any client violating the terms and conditions of its transport contract. First offenses, if not serious, usually warrant little more than a strong rebuff, usually occurring in the form of a written citation and additional fee. Repeated offenses, or serious first offenses, may result in the suspension or revocation of shipping privileges, perhaps even leading to a freeze on their credit line or banking assets for truly egregious violations. Any action resulting in the loss of Guild shipping privileges spells disaster for a Great House or CHOAM power. Losing the ability to trade with other members of the Imperial CHOAM community would doom a House or organization—reducing their economic viability to the rough equivalent of a House Minor or single-planet industry. Considering the dangers, few Guild clients dare to violate any of the provisions of their Shipping Contract, especially those terms and conditions expressly covered under the Guild Security clauses.

But that's not to say violations never occur. Some Houses prove as neurotic about their privacy as the Guild, going to great lengths to hide sensitive cargoes from the Guild's prying eyes. Hiding materials in mislabeled containers, stowing small items in secret 'smuggling' compartments and bribing Guild officials to turn the other way—these represent a few of the smuggling activities Guild inspectors watch for when spot-checking client vessels. Although the Guild's security inspectors reveal the best of training, even they may succumb to lavish bribes or innocent mistakes. But such oversights prove rare: Only fools or the truly desperate stand in defiance of the Guild.

Transport Procedures

The Guild transport contract requires its clients to follow its transport procedures, carefully obeying its mandates of security protocol. Deviation from the prescribed procedures constitutes breach of contract and may result in the Guild's refusal to board the client's vessels or the confiscation of cargo depending on the exact nature of the violation. Transport procedures include vessel preparation, Heighliner embarkation, on-board conduct and final disembarkation.

• **Preparing A Vessel** – According to the Guild's transport contract, clients bear responsibility for preparing their vessels for space, securing cargo against zero-gravity, attending to their passengers' health and comfort and making sure their vessels are in good, working order. For average vessels such as lighters and frigates, preparation routinely takes between 6 and 18 hours from start to finish, though passengers may be boarded in the final hours of preparation.

In instances where a client books passage aboard a Guild-operated transport, the client is only responsible for packing its cargo and transporting it to the Guild facilities at its homeworld spaceport. From there, Guild personnel will convey the cargo onto one of their freight shuttles. Similarly, passengers need only arrive at the Guild terminal, presenting their credentials and luggage. Guild agents convey passengers to the awaiting personnel transports shortly before the craft is ready for lift-off.

• **Embarkation Procedures** – The Guild enforces careful embarkation procedures to reduce the amount of time spent boarding and loading a Heighliner in space. Considering the size of Guild Heighliners, the entire process still takes between two and twenty hours, depending on the number of vessels boarding the Heighliner at a given rendezvous.

Before embarking on a Heighliner, the client's vessels must abandon orbit to journey to the designated rendezvous point, near the outer perimeter of the planet's gravity well. There all vessels must patiently queue, awaiting clearance to enter the cargo bay. Once cleared, the frigate carefully pilots into the holding bay, observing the various procedures of docking protocol.

When conducted, random spot-checks occur before docking with the Heighliner. In such instances, the Guild sends one or more inspection teams to the queued vessel or vessels via small Guild shuttles. After docking with a vessel, the Guild inspection team reviews the client's cargo manifest and performs visual safety checks as desired. After an

inspection team departs on their shuttle, the frigate is clear to enter Heighliner observing Guild docking protocol.

From the time a vessel enters the queue outside the Heighliner to the time it gains clearance and docks within the holding bay, embarkation proceedings typically consume between one to five hours, depending on the total number of vessels boarding the Heighliner. Much of the time involves waiting for clearance, progressing through the queue and waiting inside for the last of the vessels to dock.

Passengers traveling aboard Guild-operated vessels find embarkation to proceed much more swiftly. Knowing in advance how many vessels shall be boarded and approximately how long it will take, Guild transports wait until the last minute to lift off, proceeding directly to rendezvous with the Heighliner. Arriving there after the last of the client vessels has docked, Guild transports pilot directly into the Heighliner and dock inside commercial frigates operated by House Wayku without undue delay. So embarkation on a Guild transport typically requires between two and five hours (depending mostly on the size of the planet and surrounding gravity well) from lift-off to docking.

• **On Board** – Once aboard, a client may reach its destination in a matter of hours or days depending on the number of 'waypoints' or interim stops the Heighliner makes on route to the destination. Of course, privately chartered flights and express route service carries the client directly to its destination, meaning the entire journey aboard the Heighliner passes in a matter of a few hours.

In reality, foldspace journeys seldom last more than a few hours in transit—the rest of the time is spent waiting while the Guild conducts numerous operations and safety checks in preparation for the jump. But most Guild clients tend to hire passage on Heighliners traveling standard routes, meaning that the vessel makes one or more routine stops at scheduled planets along the way. At each such waypoint the Heighliner embarks and disembarks cargo vessels, meaning that each waypoint stop may delay the journey by another three to thirty hours (see "Transport Routes" for more information). As a result, estimated travel times between two high-traffic homeworlds in the Imperial core ("coreworlds") usually takes but one or two days time. Traveling from a low-traffic, 'backwater' planet to an out-freyn world on the Imperial fringe, however, can take upwards of ten standard days travel time.

While on board, the Guild actively enforces two primary regulations with regard to client conduct. The first—a strict prohibition against activating a vessel's defensive shields—exists as a safety measure during travel. Allegedly, activating a Holtzman field within a Guild Heighliner disrupts the Navigator's concentration, forcing a vessel to plummet out of foldspace. The second prohibition—one upheld and enforced by the Great Convention—prohibits vessels from firing upon one another, or engaging in any conduct which could be construed as an act of war while boarded within a Guild Heighliner. Since Heighliners often carry the vessels of many different Houses, the second regulation not only supports the first (in that clients would be unwilling to lower shields without some assurance for their safety) but also prevents accidental fire from starting wars among the Houses onboard.

Military Transport

As part of the Guild Peace, an element of the universal truce known as the Great Convention (see Chapter 11), the Guild charges prohibitive rates to transport military hardware and personnel. From battle frigates to armed troops, lasguns to atomics (virtually any equipment or personnel having a decidedly martial nature or function), such cargoes fall under the "Hazard Rates" clause of the Guild's *Shipping Contract* which aims to inhibit warfare and military conflict within the Imperium. Established some ten millennia ago, the Great Convention supports the Guild in this legalism, making inter-planetary warfare an expensive venture for those intending martial conquest. Of course, if the Guild wished to indirectly support a military venture (or prevent it), it could do so by waiving its hazard fees or prohibiting the transport outright. But to maintain its neutrality the Guild maintains active policy of non-interference, preferring to profit by military engagements, rather than using its monopoly to meddle in Imperial politics or the affairs of its clients.

Heighliner Adventures

Routine by nature, Heighliner journeys rarely warrant little more than brief mention during the course of narrative roleplaying. But considering the amount of time characters spend confined to their vessels, interstellar journeys provide ample opportunity for interesting shipboard adventures, adding some drama to the routine of space travel, or using the time to introduce interesting clues or portents relating to the events to follow. Aside from considering whether or not the Guild discovers smuggled contraband in the characters' possession, shipboard adventures present a unique setting for some interesting stories—so long as the Narrator uses them sparingly.

For example, suppose that the characters are piloting or commanding a transport frigate for their House. Their patron may have neglected listing forbidden technologies or military personnel because the House cannot afford the exorbitant Hazard Rates and doesn't want the Guild to be aware of its resources. This could lead to violation of their Shipping Contract—an act the characters would be hard-pressed to avert. Similarly, suppose a stowaway or hidden

agent started trouble once the players' vessel was docked within the Heighliner. The resulting scenario could erupt into a major debacle as the players attempt to route the enemy and avoid a significant breach of their shipping rights. Other alternatives include espionage forays into neighboring frigates within the cargo hold, skyjacking adventures or frame-ups placing the characters in immediate conflict with terrorists and/or Guild agents. Though serious violations of the Shipping Contract would evoke the lasting wrath of the Spacing Guild, seemingly insignificant events can escalate into important, dramatic events considering the nature of Guild security and the consequences for violating Guild transport procedures.

• **Disembarkation** – Departing a Heighliner resembles embarkation in reverse order. The Heighliner establishes a stationary position in the outer perimeter of a planet's gravity well, and the boarded ships await a clearance to depart. Since disembarkation never requires spot-check inspections, the whole process moves apace, typically lasting no more than three or four hours depending on the number of vessels offloading at the destination. Last to dock, Guild transports are usually first to disembark speedily departing the mother ship in less than an hour.

Safely disembarked, the client's vessels prepare to make their journey planet-bound, following the landing protocols established by the Spaceport Authority of the particular planet of destination. Landing the vessel and unloading its entire cargo also require less time than preparation, usually lasting fewer than five or six hours from orbit to planet-bound departure. Passengers aboard Guild-operated transports find disembarkation and landing slightly faster, requiring some two to five hours in total.

Transport Routes

The Guild actively maintains various types of trade routes among the homeworlds and outlying planets of the Imperium. Depending on the number of stops made along a given route, trade routes carry *Primary*, *Secondary*, *Tertiary* and *Quaternary* designations, indicating the relative time required to travel from beginning to end, stopping at each destination along the way. It is important to note that wealthy, high-traffic worlds enjoy the benefit of

Average Travel Times

The following chart may be used to determine the average travel time between various planets using Primary, Secondary or Tertiary travel routes. Three numbers are listed for each route in a P/S/T format, indicating the number of stops made between the planet of origin and planet of destination. On average, travelers can expect to spend one day (plus an additional one day per waypoint) in transit, although time spent at each waypoint may range between 3 and 36 hours depending on the number of vessels embarking and disembarking the Heighliner. Primary routes listing "–" means that the Heighliner makes no stops between the planet of origin and destination.

For example, to travel from Wallach VII to Arrakis on a Secondary route requires stopping at 5 different waypoints along the way, meaning the average journey lasts six days (one day, plus one per waypoint). Though not listed on this chart, Quaternary routes generally stop at no fewer than 15 waypoints, possibly stopping at as many as 60 to 70 for journeys originating and ending on far-flung, out-freyn worlds. The notation "n/a" indicates that no such route exists between the planets.

	Arrakis	Caladan	Chusuk	Giedi Prime	Grumman	Kaitain	Sikun	Wallach V!!
Arrakis	N/A	2/4/6	2/4/7	1/3/8	2/8/13	1/2/6	1/4/9	1/5/9
Caladan	2/4/6	N/A	–/4/14	–/7/14	2/5/8	1/4/7	–/3/11	2/3/8
Chusuk	2/4/7	–/4/14	N/A	2/6/13	–/4/9	1/3/8	2/4/9	2/6/11
Ecaz	2/6/12	2/3/12	–/2/8	1/3/11	–/7/14	1/5/12	2/8/14	2/5/12
Gamont	2/6/14	–/3/11	–/7/14	–/5/14	2/4/12	1/3/10	1/4/8	–/3/6
Giedi Prime	1/3/8	–/7/14	2/6/13	N/A	2/5/11	1/2/7	2/6/14	2/5/13
Grumman	2/8/13	2/5/8	–/4/9	2/5/11	N/A	1/4/9	–/6/10	–/4/12
Hagal	2/7/15	2/8/10	2/6/14	2/6/12	–/7/12	1/3/10	1/4/9	2/6/14
Ix	1/4/8	2/6/13	2/5/10	1/4/9	2/5/15	1/2/6	–/2/8	2/5/11
Kaitain	1/2/6	1/4/7	1/3/8	1/2/7	1/4/9	N/A	1/3/8	1/2/7
Sikun	1/4/9	–/3/11	2/4/9	2/6/14	–/6/10	1/3/8	N/A	1/4/9
Tleilax	1/4/10	2/5/12	2/7/13	1/3/11	1/3/11	1/2/6	2/5/11	1/3/11
Wallach VII	1/5/9	2/3/8	2/6/11	2/5/13	–/4/12	1/2/7	1/4/9	N/A

being included in multiple Guild routes. Travelers residing on such worlds enjoy multiple service options enabling them to reduce their travel costs depending on the number of stops they're willing to suffer before reaching their final destination. Poor 'backwater' planets, on the other hand, may only be included on Tertiary or Quaternary routes, enjoying infrequent visitation by Guild Heighliners and suffering significant transport delays as a result.



Primary routes—also called 'express lines' connect two wealthy, high-traffic planets, with no stops in between. The Heighliner running the route maintains a strict itinerary, arriving in orbit and departing on a rigid schedule. Provided a client can make the established window, express transport reduces the time to travel between planets to two or fewer days. Considering that all homeworlds are also serviced by Secondary and Tertiary travel routes, the Guild maintains a premium on express route service, never discounting express rates even if last minute cancellations make room for additional cargo. In such cases, the Guild is willing to sacrifice the revenue lost from empty cargo space in order to maintain demand for its express line service.

Secondary routes service well-populated, highly industrialized planets. Including up to six planets in the designated route, secondary service results in slower destination time as the Heighliner stops and takes on cargo at each planet on route. Because average transport time ranges between two and eight days, transport rates vary depending on the number of stops made between destinations. Note that the Guild always charges Primary route fees for direct links, meaning all Secondary routes consist of two or more Primary routes, depending on the total number of planets in the circuit. Return passage via the same secondary route, however, carries the lower rate, since the Heighliner will travel to every other planet along the circuit before reaching to the original homeworld of departure.

Tertiary routes resemble Secondary routes with the exception that they connect seven or more planets in the route, and/or encompass one or more low-traffic planets within their circuit. Low-traffic planets are usually far away from established trade lanes, have relatively small populations, or present some other factor restricting the frequency of service they receive from the Guild. Average travel time for a Tertiary route ranges between five and fifteen days, but the physical distance traveled tends to be much greater.

Quaternary routes link multiple low-traffic worlds and one or two high-traffic worlds in a standard service ring. Quaternary service is irregular—scheduled only if the Guild receives sufficient requests for service from the route's worlds. As a result, clients may have to wait several weeks before a Heighliner arrives to pick him up. After that, the journey takes 12 to 24 days, on average, to complete service from the first to last destination on route. Typically, clients located on 'backwater homeworlds' use Quaternary service as a last resort, intending to 'jump routes' at a high-traffic world where they can arrange a more direct route to their ultimate destination.

Interplanetary Travel

Though Heighliners convey passengers and cargo across the span of the Imperium, folding space to cross vast distances in short intervals of time, the majority of Imperial spacecraft assume the form of interplanetary, sublight vessels. Though the vast distance between most homeworld systems in the mid to outer reaches of the Imperium prohibit sublight space travel, commercial enterprises such as the asteroid-mining operations of House Fazeel or the planetary defense systems of House governments rely heavily on sublight vessels and interplanetary travel.

Interplanetary Vessels

Unlike the foldspace operations of the Guild, interplanetary travel and sublight vessels remain within the financial capabilities of most CHOAM syndicates, smuggling operations and even the poorest of Houses Minor. While Great Houses and CHOAM magnates traditionally build and maintain fleets of interplanetary vessels, it is in the interest of most organizations to own at least one spacing frigate or personnel transport to save the expense of chartering passage aboard Guild-operated transports when embarking on Heighliner voyages.

Interplanetary vessels serve many important functions. As previously mentioned, they provide the means by which clients rendezvous with Guild Heighliners and transport personnel and cargo aboard them. In addition, commercial vessels perform nearly limitless operational roles, from mass transport of planetary cargo or interplanetary shipments to conveying passengers and/or supplies to satellite mining colonies or testing station research facilities. Lastly, military spacecraft provide the core of a planet's off-world defense network, as well as serving as mobile fortresses and command posts, capable of being grounded on-planet in times of emergency.

It should be noted, however, that interplanetary craft remain subject to the Guild's monopoly over space travel. Though House frigates and non-Guild commercial vessels may orbit within the sovereign space surrounding a planet without permission from the Guild, the ability to travel between planets remains the sole purview of the Spacing Guild.

The following sections detail some of the interplanetary spacing vessels to be found within the Imperium. They are divided into three primary classes—lighters, frigates and cruisers—for ease of reference. Each vessel description includes the craft's approximate size, mass, cargo capacity, and passenger capacity (the total number of crew and passengers, respectively).

Lighters

The smallest class of interplanetary vessel, lighters are small shuttlecraft used to convey passengers or freight from planetary bases or orbiting stations to awaiting frigates, cruisers or Heighliners.

Guild Shuttle

Size: 15x5x5 meters (length x width x height)
Mass: 140 metric tons
Cargo Capacity: 85 steres (cubic meters)
Personnel Capacity: 2/12

Description: The Spacing Guild builds and maintains these small, white bullet-shaped craft to ferry passengers to and from Wayku commercial vessels berthed inside of the massive Guild Heighliners. Guild shuttles offer little in the way of creature comforts, sporting no offensive weapons and only a shield for defense. Guild shuttles are flown by "robo-pilots", automated navigational systems functioning according to a limited set of pre-programmed flight instructions and reactive parameters.

House Shuttle

Size: 20x6x7 meters (length x width x height)
Mass: 315 metric tons
Cargo Capacity: 195 steres (cubic meters)
Personnel Capacity: 3/20

Description: Houses also employ their own shuttlecraft to convey passengers and small freight cargoes between planetary bases and orbiting space stations or cruisers. Similar to Guild Shuttles in general design, House shuttles tend to be much more lavish and comfortably equipped—the wealthier the House, the more opulent the craft. But unlike Guild-operated vessels, House shuttles are usually commanded by human pilots.

House Lighter

Size: 40x12x14 meters (length x width x height)
Mass: 2520 metric tons
Cargo Capacity: 201 dekasteres
Personnel Capacity: 5/20

Description: Larger than most passenger shuttles, House lighters generally carry important delegations and valuable cargoes on an off planet. While still a form of shuttlecraft, lighters generally feature larger hulls and more adaptable interiors, occasionally featuring a single stateroom or conferencing chamber. Lighter craft may even be equipped with light structural armor and basic armament in addition to the standard Holtzman shields used to protect most smaller shuttlecraft.

Frigates

Of the many varieties of spacecraft found in the Imperium, the *frigate* represents the most conventional class of interplanetary vessel. A 'frigate' denotes the largest class of ship capable of launching and landing on-planet—anything from armed troop transports to cargo frigates to House diplomatic vessels.

Cargo Transport

Size: 475x155x165 meters and larger
Mass: 1,045,000 metric tons and heavier
Cargo Capacity: 595,000 dekasteres or more
Personnel Capacity: 5-12/20 or more

Description: This broad class of frigate includes any interplanetary ship intended primarily for transporting goods or materials. Cargo transports range from small merchant vessels requiring but a few crewmen to enormous cargo liners capable of hauling the entire belongings of a House Minor, including small atmospheric vehicles such as diplomatic ornithopters and groundcars.

Personnel Transports

Size: 375x125x115 meters and larger
Mass: 780,000 metric tons and heavier
Cargo Capacity: 141,500 dekasteres or more
Personnel Capacity: 15-25/2500 or more

Description: Another broad class of frigates, personnel transports carry limited amounts of cargo to preserve space for the comfort of their passengers. These craft vary from huge, lavishly-appointed passenger liners, to converted cargo transports used for carrying poor pilgrims and refugees to religious sites or political sanctuaries. Of the many types of frigates, personnel transports show the widest diversity of interior appointments.

Cruisers

Cruisers represent the class of spacecraft too large and massive to escape the pull of planetary gravity. Unlike frigates, which are constructed on ground-based spacing yards, cruisers are built and maintained at orbiting space stations, circling high above their parent homeworlds. Equipped with heavier armor and more powerful drives, Cruisers represent the ultimate achievement in interplanetary spacecraft, serving primarily as military warships and commercial transports.

The following sections describe several types of cruisers to be found orbiting homeworlds or patrolling industrial regions (such as asteroid belts) of planetary systems. Each description details the size, mass, cargo capacity and personnel capacity of the vessel, noting its armament or structural details that distinguish the craft from other vessels of the cruiser class.

Monitor

Size: 1275x280x280 meters
Mass: 9,125,000 metric tons and heavier
Cargo Capacity: 3,500,000 dekasteres or more
Personnel Capacity: 150/25,000 or more

Description: Equipped with strong shields and four heavy lasgun arrays, a monitor is a heavily armed and armored warship employed by most Great Houses. A monitor can separate into ten frigate class warships (leaving the orbiting hull largely defenseless until reattachment) to descend on a planet and enter its atmosphere. Each frigate possesses its own armor, shield and lasgun array.

Crusher

Size: Varies
Mass: Varies
Cargo Capacity: Varies
Personnel Capacity: Varies

Description: "Crusher" is the designation given to a military spacecraft composed of numerous component vessels that lock together for purposes of falling on planetary forces, literally crushing their defenses. Their size and other characteristics depend on the number of vessels and their joining configuration; for an average crusher, use the Monitor description given above.

Galleon

Size: 725x235x250 meters and larger
Mass: 1,565,000 metric tons and heavier
Cargo Capacity: 895,000 dekasteres or more
Personnel Capacity: 9-25/50 or more

Description: The designation "galleon" applies to any warship or tanker primarily devoted to orbital patrolling or intrasystem cruising. They tend to be well-armored and shielded, and reasonably armed when fitted for military use. Their accommodations range from spartan to luxurious depending on their intended purpose.

Orbital Stations

An orbital station includes any space facility incapable of moving under its own power. Examples include orbital defense platforms, construction facilities, navigation beacons, communication relay stations, satellite maintenance facilities, and the like. Typically stations orbit a planet, but some float near asteroid belts or other celestial phenomena to mine gases or collect scientific data. Stations range in size from small rigs barely sufficient to house three persons to the colossal 'waystations' employed by the Guild to anchor a Heighliner for material overhauls or mechanical refurbishment. Size, mass and personnel/cargo capacities vary significantly among the different types of orbital stations.

Voyage Complications

Interplanetary travel generally involves fewer preparations and procedural delays than interstellar voyages aboard Guild Heighliners. But House governments enforce planetary customs restricting the import/export and immigration/emigration of goods and personnel much in the same manner as the Guild enforces its security provisions. Of course customs vary from world to world, as the ethos of governing Houses and planetary Spacing Authority differs. In addition to customs, the ground crews and spaceport protocols throughout the Imperium vary significantly. Unless one has traveled to a particular planet before, you can never be sure what sort of obstacles lie ahead.

While sublight vessels are not subject to the dangers of foldspace, interplanetary travel—planetary lift-off, establishing orbit and atmospheric landings— engender their own brand of difficulties. The following sections touch on some of the more common phenomena and events that can complicate an interplanetary voyage.

• **Navigational Hazards** – Meteoroids, nebula, gravity warps, and even other vessels represent a few of the navigational hazards plaguing interstellar voyages. Though most spacing crews are competent to handle the most routine of difficulties, navigational miscalculations can result in travel delays, damaging collisions or even the loss of vessel and crew.

• **Delaying Factors** – With something as complicated as space travel, there are many ways to suffer a delay. Anything from missing crewmembers, to mechanical failure, to customs and/or security issues can delay a spacecraft before or during a voyage.

• **Spacing Authority** – By far the most common form of complications involve run-ins with the Spacing Authority. These may lead to detainment of vessels, arrests of crew and/or passengers and even confiscation of cargo for violations of the planetary law, customs and spacing protocol. Smuggling, unlawful immigration and similar legal infractions warrant varying fines and penalties enforced by the planetary Spacing Authority. Failure to submit to the



enforcement division can result in the permanent seizure of vessels or long-term imprisonment of its crew.

• **Guild Regulation** – Though passengers rarely suffer as a result of the Spacing Guild's monopoly, Houses and other commercial organizations must adhere to Guild regulations regarding all interplanetary travel. Ranging from official registration of interplanetary vessels to the paying of tithes, tariffs and various excise fees—Houses pay dearly for the right to operate interplanetary vessels outside of the sovereign space surrounding their homeworlds.

Many Houses—such as those governing but a single planet in a system, or operating only planet-based industry and commerce—find the hassle and expense of Guild regulation hardly worth the benefits of maintaining interplanetary shipping privileges. But Houses engaged in deep space industries—such as asteroid mining, gas mining and the like—deal with Guild regulation as a matter of routine, finding the benefits or profits to far outweigh the costs.

Arranging Transportation

Traveling between homeworlds involves a great deal of planning and financial expense. While the characters' House usually arranges transportation for them, sometimes characters must rely on their own resources to get them where they need to go. The following sections offer some guidelines to handle such situations.

Interstellar Travel

The Spacing Guild maintains several outlets through which characters can buy passage on a Guild-operated transport and Heighliner. Most commonly employed, Guild offices and landing facilities reside at the major spaceport of every Great House homeworld. On backwater planets and out-freyn worlds, where the Guild maintains no spacing facilities, passengers may charter the services of a Guild transport through the local Guild Bank. For special arrangements, such as chartering a Heighliner for massive shipments, characters must meet with a Guild agent to negotiate the terms and price of the scheduled itinerary.

The cost of booking individual passage aboard a Guild transport varies according to the available routes and the total travel time. While Primary service between high traffic homeworlds costs more than Tertiary service between the same worlds, voyaging to distant fringe worlds via the Guild's sole Quaternary route may prove more expensive that express service between two coreworlds.

To calculate the cost of travel, the Guild employs a basic pricing formula adjusted by passenger accommodations, stateroom availability, seasonal and/or festival rates and so forth (see "Guild Transport Rates" for more information). Typically, the cost of travel ranges from 5000 solaris to 75,000 solaris depending on the various cost factors pertaining to the journey.

House Wayku

Invariably, characters traveling via Guild-operated transports spend some amount of time docked within a Wayku frigate. Once a proud House of the Imperium, House Wayku was banished from ever again setting foot on an Imperial homeworld. But for some unknown reason, the Spacing Guild has given the House sanctuary aboard numerous Heighliners, where they earn their keep by transporting Guild-operated shuttles and lighters within the holds of House Frigates and by servicing these vessels as required for routine flight. For more information about House Wayku and the Spacing Guild, watch for the forthcoming supplement *The Spacing Guild Companion*.

Interplanetary Travel

Characters enjoy more numerous options when traveling within a planetary system. Assuming their House cannot make a frigate available for their use, characters

may be able to arrange transport with a commercial flight service. Most services fly defined routes between specific destinations, such as two inhabited planets in the same system, or from a homeworld to a nearby colony station. Transport fares vary as the market fluctuates, with competition, seasonal travel, high-traffic destinations and so forth affecting the total price. But as a general gauge, most in-system flights range between 500 and 5000 solaris. Of course, luxury passage is often available at greatly increased rates.

In addition to commercial travel services, characters may find private corporations, wealthy noblemen or industrialists or even smuggler operations willing to sell them passage aboard outbound vessels. But unlike commercial passage, such options prove unpredictably sporadic, inordinately pricey and extraordinarily hazardous. Nonetheless, booking passage through unconventional third parties may be the only option available, especially if the characters hope to elude the enforcement arm of the planetary Spacing Authority.

As a last resort, characters may entertain the notion of stowing away on an outbound vessel. While the cheapness of this option attracts many an adventurous wayfarer, hiding aboard space vessels presents a variety of dangers, from the legal repercussions of discovery to the lethal misfortune of hiding in an unheated or unoxygenated storage hold. Even under the best of circumstances, stowing away affords uncomfortable accommodations and relatively sleepless nights, making a long voyage seem of endlessly and unbearably long.

The Voyage

On interstellar flights, the quality and comfort of passenger accommodations depend largely on the type and size of vessel. Heighliners provide no rooms to private passengers aboard the mother ship; instead, passengers must book passage aboard a Guild transport or other privately-owned interplanetary vessel, ultimately paying for the quality of accommodations they receive. For passengers traveling on small shuttlecraft—such as the robo-piloted Guild shuttles—their comfort depends more on the quality of the frigate berthing the shuttlecraft. Especially true for long journeys consisting of numerous stops, passengers may spend a great deal of time aboard the host vessel. Mass-transit vessels often offer passengers the comfort of staterooms, dining rooms, entertainment parlors, gambling dens and so on to help them while away the hours or days.

Guild Transport Rates

To determine the price of booking passage from one homeworld to another, the Guild employs the following formula:

$$\frac{(\text{Base Price} \times \text{Route Premium}) \times (1+\text{Special Premiums})}{\text{Route Options}}$$

Transport Rates
Base Price: 5,000 solaris
Route Premium: Primary (7.5), Secondary (5), Tertiary (2.5) and Quaternary (1)
Special Premiums:
- Hazard Rates (2)
- High season/Festival rates (1)
- Regular Season (0)
- Low Season rates (-.25)
- Additional Cargo: (.25 per metric ton)
- Deluxe Stateroom/Private Suite (1)
- Private Stateroom (.5)
- Shared Stateroom (.25)
- Common room (0)

Route Options (# Routes Available): 1, 2, 3 or 4.

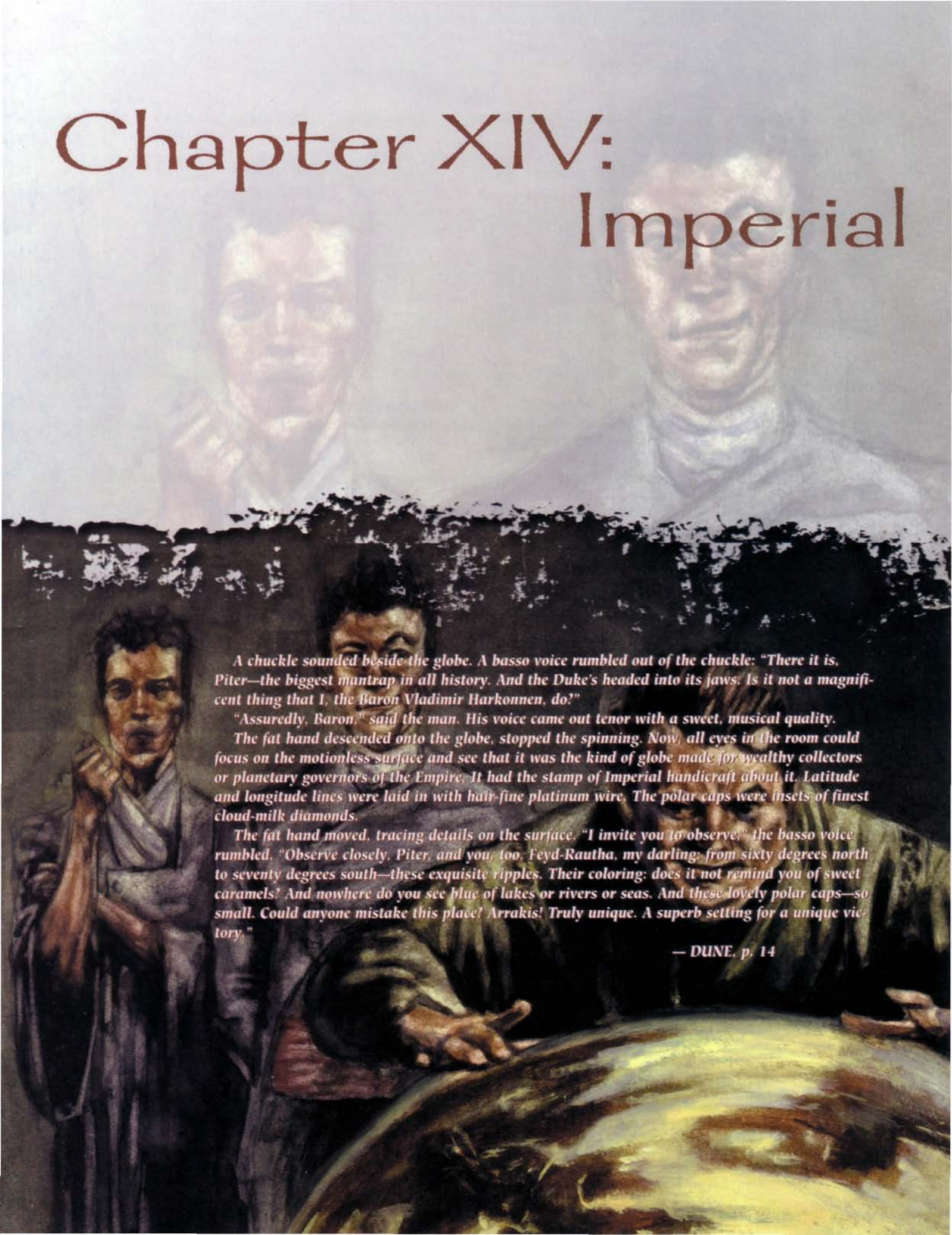
Example. The cost of booking passage in a private stateroom from Caladan to Arrakis during the festival of Ramadhan, using a Tertiary route is S10,416. The same journey in a shared stateroom during the regular season would cost S5,208.

Cost = [(5,000 Base Price) x 2.5 Tertiary Route) x (1 + 1 high season + .5 private stateroom)] / 3 Route Options = 10,416 solaris.

Military troopers and technical personnel typically berth in large, utilitarian common rooms, offering little more than a stiff bunk and small footlocker for personal affects.

In addition to the personal chambers, interplanetary vessels furnish dining rooms, drinking lounges, game rooms and so forth, depending on the size and function of the vessel in question. As a general rule, all passengers must confine themselves to their personal quarters or common areas: Even important House agents do not find themselves very welcome in the command bridge, engineering rooms or cargo holds.

Chapter XIV: Imperial



A chuckle sounded beside the globe. A basso voice rumbled out of the chuckle: "There it is, Piter—the biggest mantrap in all history. And the Duke's headed into its jaws. Is it not a magnificent thing that I, the Baron Vladimir Harkonnen, do?"

"Assuredly, Baron," said the man. His voice came out tenor with a sweet, musical quality.

The fat hand descended onto the globe, stopped the spinning. Now, all eyes in the room could focus on the motionless surface and see that it was the kind of globe made for wealthy collectors or planetary governors of the Empire. It had the stamp of Imperial handicraft about it. Latitude and longitude lines were laid in with hair-fine platinum wire. The polar caps were insets of finest cloud-milk diamonds.

The fat hand moved, tracing details on the surface. "I invite you to observe," the basso voice rumbled. "Observe closely, Piter, and you, too, Feyd-Rautha, my darling: from sixty degrees north to seventy degrees south—these exquisite ripples. Their coloring: does it not remind you of sweet caramels? And nowhere do you see blue of lakes or rivers or seas. And these lovely polar caps—so small. Could anyone mistake this place? Arrakis! Truly unique. A superb setting for a unique victory."

— DUNE, p. 14

Planetology

This chapter explores several of the more prominent planets of the Imperium. It starts with a review of the Imperial Planetological Survey—an outline of data used to summarize planets in the *DUNE RPG*. This data gives Narrators a shorthand way of organizing and accessing basic information about a planet. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to in-depth examinations of several planets. The homeworlds of the six Great Houses profiled in "Chapter 2" receive primary attention, followed by brief inspections of several other notable planets, including Arrakis—the planet known as DUNE.

The Imperial Planetological Survey

The Imperial Planetological Survey (IPS), an expeditionary and administrative bureau headquartered on Kaitain, maintains data on every planet in Imperial space. In order to provide information about each planet in a convenient, standardized format, the IPS developed its *Survey form*, a template of sorts for organizing planetary data. The survey organizes planetary data into three categories of interest: *Planetological Data*, *Demographic Data* and *Planetary Description*.

Planetological Data

Information in the first section of the survey describes basic planetological data, both astronomical and geological.

Astronomical Data

This subsection identifies the planet's location in its local system and Imperial star charts. It includes the following data:

• **Planet ID** – Taken from the Imperial astronomic registers, planets are identified by the star they orbit. Their numerical assignation indicates their orbital position around their sun. For example, Chusuk's Imperial ID is Theta Shalish IV (or IV Theta Shalish)—the fourth planet orbiting the star Theta Shalish. Planetary moons are further identified by a letter designation (A, B, C, and so on) indicating its orbital position relative to its parent planet. For example, the third moon of the second planet orbiting Sirius would be Sirius II-C.

Imperial Nomenclature

Aside from the formal planet ID, inhabited planets also carry common names (often derived from the Imperial naming system). Planets such as Giedi Prime, Salusa Secundus and Wallach VII all demonstrate remnants of the numbering system used by the earliest expeditions of the Imperial Planetological Survey. Giedi Prime, for example, is the sole planet to orbit the star Ophiuchi B (36), with Wallach VII being the seventh planet to orbit Laoujin. Salusa Secundus, the third planet of Gamma Waiping reveals a scientific anomaly, its common name erroneously suggesting it to be the second planet to orbit its central star.

• **Orbital Period** – The orbital period tells how long it takes the planet to make one revolution around its sun, expressed in terms of the Imperial 365.25 day "standard year." For example, a planet having a .75 SY orbital period shows a local year of approximately 274 "standard days."

• **Revolution Period** – The revolution period expresses how long it takes the planet to rotate about its own axis, expressed in relation to the Imperial 24 hour-long "Standard Day." For example, a planet having a revolution period of 1.25 SD has a local day lasting approximately 30 "standard hours."

• **Satellites** – Satellites identify any moons, rings or other celestial phenomena orbiting the planet. Additionally, this subsection delineates any other celestial phenomena characteristic to the system (other planets, comet clusters, dust nebulae, asteroid belts, and the like).

• **Gravity/Atmosphere** – This category describes the planet's gravity and atmosphere. Gravity refers to the gravitational pull, in relation to the standard gravity of ancient Terra (1G). For example, a planet having a gravity of .95G would demonstrate a slightly weaker gravity than Terra. Atmosphere covers both atmospheric pressure and chemical composition—again referencing the ancient Terran standard—atmosphere 1A, and composition of oxygen–nitrogen. For example, a planet having 1.3A would

demonstrate atmospheric pressure about a third higher than that of Terra. Nearly all inhabited worlds possess the standard oxygen–nitrogen atmospheric composition.

Geological Data

Geological data provides a summary of the planet's physical characteristics. Temperature, climate and topography all fall under this subsection of the IPS profile.

• **Average Temperature** – This calculation represents the average world temperature, expressed in degrees Kelvin (K). Note: To convert degrees Kelvin to degrees Celsius, subtract 273.16 degrees from the Kelvin temperature. For example, in standard atmospheric pressure water freezes at 273.16 K (0 degrees Celsius); and at 373.16 K (100 degrees Celsius) it boils. As an average, planetary temperature is subject to seasonal variations and geographic fluctuations (caused by global warming, volcanic activity and so on).

• **Climatological Zones** – This subcategory describes the range of variation shown among the planet's climatic zones. "Terran Standard" indicates the planet features the broad range of climates—arctic to tropical— evidenced by ancient Terra.

• **Atmospheric Conditions** – Atypical weather or atmospheric patterns, such as frequent tornadoes or hurricanes fall under this subsection.

• **Topography** – Topography describes the general surface characteristics of the planet—water coverage, number of continents, prominent terrain such as mountain ranges, plains, watersheds, rainforests and so on.

Demographic Data

The second broad grouping on the survey relates the demographic information about a planet's native populace—its government, political classification, major urban centers, predominant religions and so on.

Planetary Government

This category introduces basic information about a planet's government, ruling agency, cities and citizenry.

• **Planet Class** – This describes the planet's demographic classification according to the feudal system of the *Imperial Registry*. See the chart Imperial Classification for more information.

• **Governing House/Title** – Derived from its class, this subcategory identifies the Great House currently responsible for governing the planet and the political title conferred to the House leader by virtue of Imperial faufreluches. Caladan, for example, would be classified by the IPS as: "House Atreides/Siridar-Duke."

• **Urban Centers** – This category identifies the major cities and population centers found on the planet. Subclasses include *Seat of Government, Center of Trade,* and *Other Urban Centers*.

Imperial Classification

Homeworld – a siridar (planetary) fief governed in its entirety by a single, resident Great House, and its supporting Houses Minor. Homeworlds are also termed "birthworlds."

Imperial, Core – the planet resides within the central core of Imperial space. Such planets are also called "core worlds."

Imperial, Fringe – the planet falls on or near the Imperial frontier. Such planets are also known as "fringe worlds" or, more disparagingly, as "backwater worlds."

Out-freyn ('immediately foreign') – the planet, while being located within or beyond Imperial space, exists outside of Imperial control and government. Out-freyn worlds are sometimes called "autarkic worlds," so named for their autocratic governments.

Quasi-Fief – the planet is governed in majority by a Great House of the Landsraad, but may be rescinded by the Emperor at his sole discretion. Typically, the Emperor appoints an *Imperial Observer* to reside on-planet and report on its governor's administration.

Siridar Fief – the planet is governed, in its entirety, by a lone Great House of the Landsraad. Siridar fiefs pass from generation to generation as an inheritable holding, reverting to the Emperor only if the governing House collapses (due to a lack of heir) or surrenders its title upon being banished, going renegade or so on. A siridar (meaning "planetary") fief may also called a "fief complete."

• **Populace** – Populace summarizes a wealth of data about the planet's native denizens. *Population* records the population statistics from the most recent Imperial census. *Native Peoples and Cultures* lists the major cultures existing on- planet. For example, on Arrakis the cultures are "Arrakeen" (the Imperial citizenry) and "Fremen" (indigenous natives living outside the ordered ranks of Imperial faufreluches). Lastly, *Religions* lists the predominant religious faiths observed by the populace, such as the Navachristianity of Chusuk or the Tawrah and Talmudic Zabur of Salusa Secundus.

• **Chief Industries** – This subcategory describes the major commercial endeavors supporting the planetary economy. It covers two subheadings: *Natural Resources,* indicating the naturally-occurring materials (such as lumber, minerals, fish, and the like) exploited for manufacturing and/or distribution; and *Trade/Services,* listing the primary goods and services exported off-planet.

Planetary Description

The last section of the IPS form represents an addenda of observations, notes, comments and updates summariz-

ing anything of Imperial interest that does not fall within the context of the conventional headings. Commentary might include information about the planet's turbulent political history; its importance in the grand scheme of current events; its strategic importance within Guild spacing routes. Similarly, Features of Interest may touch on its geographic or architectural marvels; special notes about its people or cultures; its flora and fauna; or any other fact deemed of interest to the managing archivists of the IPS.

Other Publications

Those who desire more detailed information about a given planet or system can obtain complete reports by filing their request with the Imperial Planetological Survey. The IPS maintains its reputation for scientific accuracy and painstaking detail by routinely updating its findings in a variety of annual publications and archived anthologies. But like all Imperial documents, IPS records reveal their share of obvious omissions, mysterious deletions and blatant fabrications—indicating the willingness of Great Houses and other Imperial powers to bribe corrupt IPS officials for the purpose of achieving some unknown agenda.

Imperial Homeworlds

The Imperium unites tens of thousands of inhabited planets underneath the Emperor's banner. Of these, only a thousand or so comprise Imperial Homeworlds. The *Imperial Dictionary*, defines a "homeworld" as "a siridar (planetary) fief governed in its entirety by a single, resident Great House, and its supporting Houses Minor." For example, Caladan—a Siridar-Duchy ruled by House Atreides—qualifies as an Imperial homeworld, just as Giedi Prime is the homeworld of their arch-rivals, House Harkonnen. Every homeworld also sustains a number of Houses Minor who govern regional sub-fiefs under the aegis of the governing Great House.

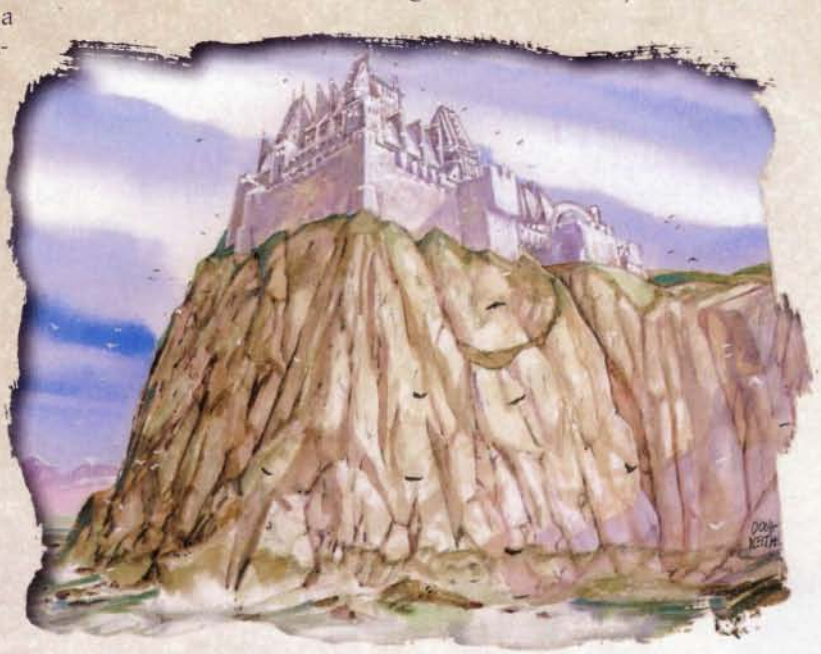
The following pages explore several Imperial homeworlds, covering the homeworlds governed by the six Great Houses presented in "Chapter 2" in the greatest detail. For a more complete listing of Imperial homeworlds, see "Chapter 2," page 25.

Caladan

For 26 generations House Atreides has ruled over the Siridar-Duchy of Caladan. Something of a pastoral homeworld, Caladan boasts rich, fertile lands and boundless, emerald seas. With almost 80% of its surface covered by oceans, seas and lakes, Caladan experiences high seasonal precipitation and humidity, keeping its landscape wet and green. In winter months, heavy snowfall smothers only its ancient mountains and cold, northern interior, leaving fog and rain to settle over the milder, coastal climes. In summer season, occasional hurricanes ravage Caladan's long, jagged shorelines, driving waves to crash against its seaside cliffs. But during the longer planting and harvest seasons, most of Caladan enjoys months of clement weather visited by warm, autumnal sunshine or gentle, springtime rains.

The topography of Caladan reveals three large continents in addition to some ten thousand smaller islands scattered throughout its primordial waters. The continents each possess long, glorious coastlines characterized by sandy beaches, high-walled cliffs or marshy tidal plains. While most of its coastal provinces enjoy at least one good harbor, inland territories profit from crystal-clear lakes and wide, slow-moving rivers. High mountain ranges break the crust of the Western Continent, while great stretches of plains and plentiful tracts of woodland cover much of the continents' interiors. Though some of its lands feature desolate wilderness or barren scrubland, none possess anything resembling the dune-crested deserts found on other Imperial worlds.

Most of Caladan's populace resides on the Western Continent, dominating nearly forty percent of the planet's landmass. Cala City, seat of the Atreides government and site of Castle Caladan, resides on its eastern coast near the seaside lowlands, home to most of Caladan's pundi rice farmers. From the interior towers of Castle Caladan, a viewer can look out over the ancient city to see distant Mount Syubi, rising some 2300 meters above the surrounding farmland. Directly opposite, onlookers enjoy a breathtaking vantage of the middle sea, foaming some 300 meters below the precipitous seaward bluff. Off to the west, an impressive bay shelters the local fishing vessels and military sea-craft.



IPS: Caladan

Planetological Data

Astronomical Data

Planet ID: III Delta Pavonis
Orbital Period: 1.05 SY
Revolution Period: 1.02 SD
Satellites: Caladan has one moon. There are seven other planets in its system, along with one asteroid belt (between IV and V) and a plethora of cometary clouds. Comets and meteoroids frequently streak the nighttime sky of Caladan.
Gravity/Atmosphere: 1.0 G/Standard oxygen-nitrogen, 1.0 A

Geological Data

Average Temperature: 295° K
Climatological Zones: Terran–Standard (arctic to tropical)
Atmospheric Conditions: Hurricanes are frequent in regions within 25° of the equator during autumn and late spring; while tornadoes remain a rarity. Sub-freezing weather and blizzards prove infrequent. Rain falls frequently, with an average accumulation of 300 cm (more in many regions) per annum.
Topography: Caladan has three continents and over ten thousand islands 1 km square or larger. Tectonic activity is minimal. Water covers approximately 80% of the planet's surface.

Demographic Data

Planetary Government

Planet Class: Siridar-Duchy
Governing House/Title: House Atreides/Duke

Urban Centers

Seat of Government: Cala City (site of Castle Caladan)
Center of Trade: Luzhara
Other Urban Centers: Phoenicea, Dorace, Marathon, Hekigopolous, Spiridonia, Ionisteos

Populace

Population: 6.1 billion
Native Peoples and Cultures: Caladanian 88%, Hekigasari 7%, Other 5%
Religions: Orange Catholicism 52%, Muadh Quran Islam 28%, Zen Hekiganshu 7%, Pavonis Variant Hinduism 4%, Other 9%

Chief Industries

Natural Resources: Mariculture (especially fishing, pundi rice and paradan melons)
Major Services and Trade Items: Agricultural products, marine products, manufactured goods

To the north, some 10 kilometers distant, the Atreides spacing fields rest on the fused rock flats of the northeastern peninsula (with the Salusan Bull training facilities lying another some 200 kilometers northward).

Smaller than the Western Continent, the Southern Continent occupies some 30 percent of Caladan's landmass. Girdling its central mountains with a perimeter of stretching grasslands and interspersed forests, the Southern Continent is known primarily for the wine regions of the north and its Paradan melon fanns to the south. Not to be overlooked, the main Atreides spaceport also resides on the Southern Continent, situated to the north-west of the continent within a region known as the Atreides Landing.

Even smaller in area, Caladan's Eastern continent is largely unpopulated, being primarily known as the home of the Sisters of Isolation. Between its three primary landmasses Caladan finds numerous islands dotting its great middle sea. Among these, a stretch of islands known as "Serena's Necklace" serves as the home of the Atreides wingboat factories. To the south-east, the Seacreature processing stations rise from the seas, far south of the feared Elecran Islands sitting to the west of the distant Eastern Continent.

With so much of the planet's surface covered by water, marine industries serve as the cornerstone of Caladan's meager economy. Chief of its exports, the long-grained pundi rice grows in the cultured rice paddies found throughout the low, coastal wetlands of all three continental landmasses. Also widely cultivated, the round, gourd-like paradan melons float in tangled beds of leather-leafed kelp, supported by rafts built to facilitate growth and harvesting. In addition to these, wickerwood fishing coracles ply Caladan's vast oceans, carrying fishermen far and wide in their trade. Perhaps more exotic, though less viable for export, the beautiful coral gem market supplements numerous industries based on the mining of coral from Caladan's many natural and commercial reefs.

Giedi Prime

Once a world of primeval forests, majestic mountains and abundant seas, Giedi Prime now appears a squalid planet, disfigured by generations of rapacious exploitation and greedy industrialism. Squeezing their homeworld of its natural treasures, the Harkonnen regime has ruined the beauty of this once noble planet, reaping its forests for timber, grinding its mountains for minerals and harvesting its waters to virtual extinction. Now smoking factories and toiling slave-driven industries dominate its landscape, enveloping the planet in a brown, despotic haze.

Oceans and seas cover roughly half its surface with water, making Giedi Prime a somewhat arid planet susceptible to colder climes and vast stretches of tundra. Mass deforestation, surface mining and industrial seepage further desiccate the land, subjecting it to heavy erosion

from windstorms and cloudbursts. In truth, little of the planet's surface remains suitable for agriculture, tasking the agricultural work camps to provide for its populace.

As a result, the Harkonnen industries on Giedi Prime primarily center on mining and drilling. From the slave pit quarries on the Obsidian Plain to the metals processing plants bordering the Harkonnen Sea, mineral-based industry provides the Harkonnen economy much of the wealth it requires to import food and other resources needed to make life on the planet bearable, if not pleasant. But Harkonnen industries continue to contaminate the ground, with acid rain and oily precipitates showing how the House profits at the planet's expense.

Populating this miserable world live billions of inhabitants, all similarly warped under the brutal yoke of the Harkonnen regime. Sprawling urban megalopolises—such as Harko City and Barony—house most of its inhabitants, with the remaining populace dwelling in squalid suburbs and ramshackle communities scattered over Giedi Prime's continental landmasses. Some 25% of Giedi Prime inhabitants suffer the stigma of the maula ("slave") caste, living in forced labor camps and slave communities surrounding the agricultural and industrial compounds dotting the outlying regions. Considering the filth and over-crowding typical of Harkonnen cities, living in the country-side would seem a pleasanter existence, until someone reminds them that in the Giedi Prime 'wilds' there's no one to hear you scream.

Harkonnen cities prove similarly oppressive, confining the lower-caste populace in decrepit row-housing and scabrous factory barracks. Like their rural peers, urban laborers toil long hours under intolerable conditions, catching a lash of the whip for working too sloppily or falling behind quota. Relying on outdated machinery in all but the most modern of industries, both free laborers and maulas look forward to the occasional holiday to free them of their labors. The rare meridian to meridian fetes are the favored reprieves, liberating the workers to take to the streets, sharing in the celebration of the nobility during any number of traditional jubilees.

During such galas, workers partake of sundry pastimes—some more noble than others. While the Buddislamic minority takes to their mosques, the majority of people stream into the plazas and markets, enjoying their rare freedom to wander unrestrained. They visit ethnic bazaars, local semuta dens or the countless deviant parlors catering to gamblers, revelers and the like. While the triangular arenas of the Harkonnen cities never fail to please, many other avenues exist for the populace to spend its pent-up frustration and exhaust its meager wages before returning once again to their oppressive labors for another Harkonnen fortnight.

Truly a hateful House full of loathing for its subjects and disregard for its natural world, the Harkonnen regime dotes lavishly on its own nobility and spares no expense to entertain off-world dignitaries. The capital of Harko City—somewhat grander and more hospitable than the typical urban sprawl—welcomes Imperial envoys and House delegations with an affected air of gaiety. Surrounding the Harkonnen blue-walled palace, the better quarters show the splash of paint and freshly unfettered banners whenever important visitors arrive. Imperial guests find housing within the palace compound much more ostentatious, its baroque architecture and ornate furnishings telling much about the Harkonnen's taste for wealth. Even the bad areas of Harko City do not present much danger to the nobility, considering the Saarvek (secret police) heavily patrol the streets of Harko City, quickly trundling its prisoners away to Barony, their secret headquarters and gulag from which none have ever escaped.



In contrast, the industrial core of Korvark exemplifies the worst to be found in the Harkonnen urban centers. For miles around the city proper, factories and other industrial facilities litter the landscape, with seemingly little thought to urban planning. Each of them belches toxic smoke and fumes, disgorges foul wastewater or spent fuel, and otherwise defiles the surrounding countryside. While its mercantile Houses and privileged social castes enjoy the protection of filter-glass and environmentally sealed housing, outside the pyon and maula populations remain subject to toxic carcinogens, leading to cancerous rot and more grotesque forms of physical mutation. While the Saarvek also hold sway in Korvark, it is the fear of the manhunt—a barbaric noble tradition—that keeps the slave and pyon castes safely in check.

IPS: Giedi Prime

Planetological Data

Astronomical Data

Planet ID: Ophiuchi B I
Orbital Period: 1.38 SY
Revolution Period: 1.03 SD
Satellites: Giedi Prime is the sole planet to orbit Ophiuchi B. It possesses no moons, but does pass near two asteroid belts ringing the large pale sun.
Gravity/Atmosphere: 1.09 G/Standard oxygen-nitrogen with high concentrations of greenhouse gases, 1.08 A

Geological Data

Average Temperature: 290° K
Climatological Zones: Terran–Standard (arctic to tropical, though both arctic and tropical zones prove narrow compared to other worlds).
Atmospheric Conditions: Its low percentage of water cover makes hurricanes uncommon on Giedi Prime. Small tornadoes and dust devils occasionally scavenge its wastelands, primarily during the summer seasons. Over the past several millennia, average rainfall has increased to 153 cm per annum due to the accumulation of pollutants in the atmosphere.
Topography: Giedi Prime features few continents—each of them covering large portions of the globe. Its terrain demonstrates many low, mountain ridges and vast, wasteland steppes; with high plateaus and arid savannas also being common.

Demographic Data

Planetary Government

Planet Class: Siridar-Barony
Governing House/Title: House Harkonnen/Baron

Urban Centers

Seat of Government: Harko City
Center of Trade: Korvark
Other Urban Centers: Barony, Destros, Malicar, Tormburg, Solisnev, Delbrosk, Uritael

Populace

Population: 5.56 billion
Native Peoples and Cultures: Giedian 96%, Other 4%
Religions: Orange Catholicism 43%, Buddislamic Variants 24%, Zensunni 4%, Other 12%, No declared religion 17%

Chief Industries

Natural Resources: Mining (minerals, fossil fuels)
Major Services and Trade Items: Manufactured items (esp. drugs, weapons, vehicles), slave labor, clandestine financing

Grumman

Homeworld to House Moritani, Grumman retains its stark, natural beauty in spite of nearly fifteen thousand years of human habitation. Whereas its dearth of open water contributes to its general aridity, its weak gravitation and thin atmosphere keep the planet cool worldwide, even at its subtropical equatorial belt. Large polar caps and expansive glacier-strewn bedrock flats dominate Grumman's twin continental poles, while the rest its vast continental landmasses still bear the physical imprint of great scarring glaciers dating back to its prehistoric ice age.

With approximately 15 percent of its landmass covered in ice and snow and another 20-30 percent of its sub-arctic tundra subjected to permafrost, much of Grumman's surface proves unsuitable for agriculture. Where the tundra plains break, deep taiga forests spot the northern and southern-most reaches of its five latitudinal continents, revealing the lowland watersheds resting at the base of its towering ranges. While these five middling continents—Gharavalda, Tirmeish, Khubantra, Mierewsut and Domengha—sprawl between the polar masses to span the entire globe, leaving Grumman's nine small oceans and land-locked seas to steal only some 48 percent of the planet surface. With many of its continents connected, or separated by narrow straits of water, the primitive landscape of Grumman reveals remarkably little diversity.

In the northern hemisphere, the continent of Tirmiesh stretches from the polar subcontinent of Pruscht to some 15 degrees north of the equator. It serves as a fair example of Grumman's stark wilderness and foreboding terrain. Its northern climes descending from subarctic tundra, gorse-brush and dwarf pines cover its flat, barren wastes. Breaking the crust, two glorious mountain ranges divide the continent with their ambling, longitudinal trek. Some thirty degrees south of the northern pole, the tundra gives way to vast, swaying grasslands and pockets of coniferous taiga, interspersing the highland ridges at the foot of the mountains.

A perpetual breeze keeps the straw-pampas blades in constant motion, gleaming golden yellow beneath Grumman's steel-blue skies. Here the primordial mastodon—one of Grumman's two prehistoric life forms—roves the grassy plateaus and lowland cold-fens in sparse, thundering herds. In the majestic high-country, wooly rams and black-tailed goats clatter the uneven slopes, hunted by the solitary saber-toothed tiger left over from an earlier age. Few settlements reach this far north, leaving the wild terrain inhabited by humans except for the sporadic tribal villages and remote strip-mining facilities. And with the exception of infrequent safaris, few bother to trek into the northern-most latitudes leaving nature to exist as it has for countless millennia.

Toward the middle latitudes of Tirmiesh, human settlements grow much more frequent, finding the land of the temperate zones much better suited for agriculture.

The first of Tirmieshe's few urban metropolises resides in the province of Ogmaresh, just east of the Ghozan range. The city of Fal-dansken, northern terminus of industry in Tirmiesh, houses some 3 million people, most of them miners, agronomists and manufacturing specialists. Some 16 percent of its populace hailing from off-world, the majority of folk bear the Grumman look, descending from its native populace of Bhotani descent.

Half-way across the globe, on the continent of Khubantra, the capital of Bhotara sprawls on the Bhokhem plateau. Situated firmly in the mid-temperate belt, Bhotara spills for kilometers from its central, governmental hub, hosting a populace of some 15 million people. Spanning hundreds of kilometers in any direction, agricultural plots, wind-harnessing generators and manufacturing industries reach in every direction, swallowing the large, modern spaceport of Bhotara with relative ease. Near the center of Bhotara, the extensive government compound of the Moritani regime dominates the city, employing some 20 percent of the city's population in one capacity or another.

Situated to the far north, the free city of Irbassa reposes in the foothills of Ginazetta, located on the fringes of the expansive Irbassan Steppes. A small, ancient city Irbassa serves as the home of the Laurentii House Minor. Until recently the location of the famous Monastery of Dur, the converted structure now serves a secret training ground for Moritani assassins reviving the ancient Bhotani ways. While the surrounding wilderness preserve retains the protection of House Moritani, its Laurentii keepers have developed a small portion of the rugged highlands to commence an expensive breeding program, hoping to replenish the declining population of saber-toothed tigers, indigenous to the region.

Kaitain

Seat of the Imperial government since the destruction of Salusa Secundus, Kaitain is, by any intelligent estimation, the most important planet in the known universe. Governed by the Imperial House and its dynasty of Padishah Emperors, Kaitain supports a burgeoning populace and bustling economy, thriving off of the bureaucratic table scraps filtering from the Imperial coffers. Home of the Imperial Palace and city-sized government complex, Kaitain also hosts the Landsraad Council, the CHOAM Corporation and Imperial headquarters of the Guild Bank. With such powerful entities concentrated on one planet, Kaitain rightly deserves its claim to the Golden Lion Throne.

A naturally majestic planet, it is no wonder the Padishah Emperors chose to adopt Kaitain for their homeworld after the ruin of Salusa Secundus. Its lofty mountain ranges soar skyward raising snow-capped peaks to glint in the golden sun. Its magnificent vistas of plain and forest astound the eye; and even its lonely deserts exhibit a certain serene beauty to behold.

IPS: Grumman

Planetological Data

Astronomical Data

Planet ID: Niushe II
Orbital Period: .76 SY
Revolution Period: .81 SD
Satellites: Grumman supports two small moons, Astrikos and Porikos. Five other planets, including Gamont, occupy the Niushe system.
Gravity/Atmosphere: .95 G/Standard oxygen-nitrogen, .94 A

Geological Data

Average Temperature: 279° K
Climatological Zones: Expansive arctic, subarctic, and temperate zones; small subtropical belt at the equator.
Atmospheric Conditions: The atmosphere on Grumman is thin compared to the Terran standard; resulting in hot days and cool nights across its range of climatological zones. The daily variance in temperature causes most of the planet to be steeped in perpetual winds. Tornadoes and windstorms cut across much of Grumman's plateaus and plains.
Topography: Grumman has one large and two small continents; approximately two-thirds of the planet's surface is covered with water. Tectonic activity is frequent.

Demographic Data

Planetary Government

Planet Class: Siridar-Earldom
Governing House/Title: House Moritani/Count

Urban Centers

Seat of Government: Bhotara
Center of Trade: Bhotara
Other Urban Centers: Fal-Dansken, Velherel, Moerchessa, Plomari, Tevrolla, Belmoro, Folleccia,

Populace

Population: 3.3 billion
Native Peoples and Cultures: Grumman 96%, Other 4%
Religions: Orange Catholicism 74%, Navachristianity 12%, Zensunni 4%, Other 10%

Chief Industries

Natural Resources: Mineral deposits, hardwoods, agriculture, textiles
Major Services and Trade Items: Raw ore, manufactured goods, assassins

IPS: Kaitain

Planetological Data

Astronomical Data

Planet ID: Beta Indri III
Orbital Period: .98 SY
Revolution Period: 1.0 SD
Satellites: Kaitain has six moons and features a large and beautiful series of orbiting rings. There are eight other planets in its system.
Gravity/Atmosphere: 1.0 G/Standard oxygen-nitrogen, 1.01 A

Geological Data

Average Temperature: 295° K
Climatological Zones: Terran–Standard (arctic to tropical)
Atmospheric Conditions: Planetary weather control satellites tame the atmospheric conditions on Kaitain, strictly controlling temperature, precipitation and pressure. Icy debris from the planet's low-orbiting rings sometimes collides with the upper atmosphere to produce spectacular pyrotechnic displays.
Topography: Kaitain reveals five continents; 73% of its surface being covered with water. Major tectonic events remain uncommon, but several dormant volcanoes dot the planet's surface.

Demographic Data

Planetary Government

Planet Class: Imperial Seat
Governing House/Title: House Corrino/Emperor

Urban Centers

Seat of Government: Corrinth
Center of Trade: Turalius
Other Urban Centers: Carafil, Emberon, Wellingstone, Savona, Merrico, Swaris, Viretoria

Populace

Population: 8.2 billion
Native Peoples and Cultures: Kaitainese 87%, Sunari 6%, Other 7%
Religions: Orange Catholicism 82%, Zensunni 6%, Navachristianity 4%, Hindu Variants 3%, Other 5%

Chief Industries

Natural Resources: Copious natural resources, including ores and minerals, lumber, mariculture and agriculture.
Major Services and Trade Items: Governmental services, manufactured goods.

Through the year, satellite weather control keeps the daylight hours warm and balmy, postponing rainfall to the later evening, or early morning hours. And when night falls to cloak the daylight wonders, the planet's circling rings come into full view, illuminating the heavens with a brilliant cascade of sparkling gold, white and blue.

Originally, Kaitain belonged to House Carnethian, a Great House of the Landsraad League defeated during the epochal Battle of Corrin. Even then, Kaitain enjoyed its reputation for beauty that attracted the conqueror's eye. After achieving their victory over the Landsraad league, the newly dubbed 'House Corrino' quickly enacted its Imperial right to claim ownership of Kaitain, establishing it as their planet of residence and official seat of government.

Though the universe had never seen such brutal conquerors as the Corrino Sardaukar, the Padishah Emperor's had a mind to save Kaitain from the normal spoilage resulting from conquest. Employing the best scientific minds, Emperor Sarda I founded the Imperial Academy of Planetology in the capital city of Corrinth, creating what would eventually be subsumed and renamed by the government as the Imperial Planetological Survey commission. Appointing its most accomplished ecologist as "Imperial Planetologist" Sarda established the first scientific advisory position to concern itself entirely with ecological study and planetary preservation. As a result of following his counselor's advice, Sarda initiated a policy of 'ecological adherence' that has kept Kaitain pristine in spite of needs of its ever-growing populous.

City planning and urban development foremost among the threats to Kaitain's beauty, the Emperor Hassik III decreed all construction and development to be carefully monitored by a subcommittee of civil administrators headed by his Imperial Planetologist. As a result, the capital city of Corrinth, boasting a population of 12 million inhabitants, shows such insightful planning that its ever-expanding Imperial compound still falls well within the 25 hectare garden campus allotted for its use and growth. Surrounding this, Corrinth fans outward in all directions, its broad straight boulevards stretching for miles like spokes from a central hub. Along these grand boulevards and crossing circuit avenues, every building, monument and edifice displays artistic or architectural merit. Even the homes of the outlying middle-class suburbs rival those of wealthy patricians on other worlds; and the concept of poverty—while not foreign to Kaitain—does not rear its head in the city of Corrinth.

Resting at the very center of this opulent megalopolis, the Imperial Palace crowns the architectural splendor of Corrinth. Housing the Golden Lion Throne in the Padishah's Palace and the Landsraad Hall in the Imperial Quarter, the entire government compound conveys such airs of wealth and power, that to walk along the Imperial Promenade one can't help but entertain delusions of grandeur. For its magnificent splendor, both the city of Corrinth and the Imperial Palace top the *IPS 100 Wonders of the Imperium*.



Kaitain possesses six continents in addition to a fairly typical complement of islands and arctic regions. The largest continent is Siarullah, spanning nearly one third of the world's northern hemisphere. It includes Corrinth, Turalius and several other major cities. Its climate ranges from temperate to tropical—its winters being short and mild. Approximately 35% of Kaitain's populace lives on Siarullah, but thanks to Corrino demographic management programs, overcrowding does not occur in any single locale, alleviating any strain from the local ecology.

The next largest continent, Carifa remains sparsely inhabited in spite of its size for a number of ecological reasons. Foremost, the great Kalohar deserts occupies the entire northern reach of Carifa's vast tracts. Although some plant and animal life manages to survive along the Kalohar fringes, the deeper parts of the baked desert prove completely devoid of life. Separating the Kalohar from the southern climes, a great barrier range divides the continent with frequent tectonic activity subjecting the hills to ground-shaking tremors and avalanches of shale and flint. In the southern-most regions, a few small cities thrive as private resorts and exotic cities of trade, but few conventional industries find reason to inhabit the continent of Carifa.

The other continents of Kaitain include Porlara, Anros, Temmhur, and Onarica. Onarica is noted for several enormous ruins dating from the earliest days of the Carnethian period; and archaeologists from all over the Imperium come from Kaitain to study them. Amros includes the Sardaukar war college which is absolutely off-limits to all non-Corrino personnel. The other continents, while beautiful (and even, in places, idyllic), present relatively few features of interest to off-worlders.

Sikun

Governed by House Tseida, Sikun is a breathtaking planet—its vast, coniferous forests and snaking river canyons making it a beautiful sight to behold. Sikun possess an atmosphere and gravity like Old Earth's, allowing its great redwood to grow to astonishing heights. Seas and oceans—including the enormous Lazzarn freshwater sea—cover the majority of the planet's surface, sustaining the populace with innumerable delicacies including the lace-kelp used as a staple garnish and the kyree starfish, served on only the most lavish occasions. But Sikun also profits from abundant rainfall and fertile soil, making agriculture and timbering viable industries as well.

The main continent, Telmerra, seats the Tseidan capital of Amiroc. Situated far north of the planet's equator, the landmass of Telmerra possesses five distinct mountain ranges, several having peaks topping 6,000 meters in height. The tallest mountain on Sikun, Mt. Denaruva (7,337 meters), lies at the heart of the continental divide. Spanning more than 9200 km in girth, Telmarra comprises the largest of Sikun's five continents.

From the central city of Amiroc, Tseidan 'thopters skim the southern forests of Telmarra to reach any number of sizeable, commercial urban centers. Among these, Belshevar and Belgevylle sit on opposing sides of the Lazzarn, the great inland sea. Enjoying something of a friendly economic rivalry, both cities support harbors on opposing shores of the Lazzarn, employing slow-moving barges and faster, hydrofoil 'skimmercraft' to ferry passengers and freight between them. It is on the Lazzarn's central islands that visitors can view the meticulously cultivated groves of the golden willow—a glorious golden-blossomed tree unique to Sikun—adopted by House Tseida as a companion symbol to the House phoenix, representing tolerance and perseverance of spirit.

The Tseidans' main spaceport and leading venue for trade, the enormous city of Colquine straddles the planet's equator on in the low-lying continent of Ulquahar. In fact, the main street of Colquine, Triumph Way, runs directly along the equator, terminating in the grand campus of Sunnivas—the famous legal academy devoted entirely to the study Butlerian strictures. Shops, restaurants, and other commercial venues line Colquine's broad avenues; while manufacturing plants and assembly facilities remain outside the city proper.

Three continents—Naluria, Zimbrola, and Nargese—comprise the remaining landmass. Naluria, situated some 1200 kilometers southwest of Telmarra, presents a steep, foreboding cliff-line to vessels approaching from the east. Known for its mountainous terrain and rich mineral deposits, most of House Tseida's mining operations occur in its interior. Zimbrola, located some 6200 km west of Naluria, shares a similar rockiness near its

IPS: Sikun

Planetological Data

Astronomical Data

Planet ID: IV Eridani A
Orbital Period: 1.36 SY
Revolution Period: 1.22 SD
Satellites: Sikun has three moons (Folgard, Unari, Mosaidel), and is the fourth of ten planets in the Chouline system—situated within a sector-spanning gas nebula.
Gravity/Atmosphere: 1.1 G/Standard oxygen-nitrogen, 1.2 A

Geological Data

Average Temperature: 289° K
Climatological Zones: Terran–Standard (arctic to tropical)
Atmospheric Conditions: Sikun shows high annual rainfall, thunderstorms and monsoons being seasonal occurrences. Weather control satellites ameliorate the worst of storms, preventing typhoons and hurricanes from wreaking serious destruction.
Topography: Sikun contains five continents; 77% of its surface is covered with water. Most of the continents contain several large mountain ranges; the planetary landmasses show remarkable differences in altitude.

Demographic Data

Planetary Government

Planet Class: Siridar Marquisate
Governing House/Title: House Tseida/Marquis

Urban Centers

Seat of Government: Amiroc
Center of Trade: Colquine
Other Urban Centers: Belshamar, Shirikawa, Elsarrain, Belgevylle, Embrion, Felithor

Populace

Population: 4.3 billion
Native Peoples and Cultures: Sikun 100%
Religions: Agnosticism/Atheism 39%, Orange Catholicism 36%, Other 25%

Chief Industries

Natural Resources: Hard and soft timbers, rare medicines, some minerals, mariculture
Major Services and Trade Items: Legal services, scholastics/educational and luxury items

southern peninsula, where several local fishing industries operate amidst its long fjords. Southeast of the Ulquahar, the continent Nargese shames the forests of Telmarra. Unlike the coniferous redwoods and hardy deciduous trees of northern Telmarra, Nargese forests show a range flora from the subtropical olive trees of the warmer, northern reaches to the various nut and fruit-bearing trees of the middle and southern latitudes. Rare woods are also cultivated on Nargese, including mahogany and crystal-teak, a translucent strain native to Sikun.

Though abundant in natural resources, the real wealth of Sikun emerges from its long-standing tradition of legal advocacy and House representation in Landsraad and CHOAM affairs. Growing from a practice of simple arrangements between governing Houses, the legal profession (and Sikun's economy) profited immensely once House Tseida surrendered control of Sikun's various specialty schools to its Houses Minor who could represent two rival Houses without suffering the ethical conflicts of interests that had stunted early practice and growth.

From that day forth, House Tseida embarked on its path to becoming perhaps the greatest suppliers of legal representation in the Imperial core. Growing from simple consultation in matters of Landsraad litigation, the Tseidan industry aspired to cover the gamut of legalistic affairs. Defense of Houses in Landsraad ordeals, representation of CHOAM blocs in mercantile acquisitions and diplomatic arbitration in Kanly disputes—these represented but a few of the various services the earliest Tseidan legal schools provided. Inner-schools and specialty colleges later developed to handle public relations, intelligence gathering, and even legal warfare for the growing list of Houses seeking the services of the Tseidan schools.

But having learned its lesson during the Butlerian Jihad, House Tseida remained watchful of its burgeoning reputation. Instead of promoting its name openly for all to see, the Tseidans carefully withdrew from the public arena, cultivating their exotic mystique by adopting a façade of disinterest. The Tseidan rulers knew from the Great Revolt how easily a subjugated populace could turn on its providers, and they had no desire to see the Great Houses of the Landsraad spurn their services. Instead they diminished their political presence in the Landsraad, preferring to exercise their power through proxy votes and silent negotiations (perhaps modeling their modus operandi after the Spacing Guild and Bene Gesserit Sisterhood).

Wallach VII

The history of Wallach VII begins during the final days of the Imperial 'Age of Exploration,' when the intrepid explorer Bertram Wallach first surveyed the Laoujin system. Something of an unimaginative egotist, Wallach proceeded to name all 17 of Laoujin's planets 'Wallach' after himself, numbering them I-XVII according to the nomenclature favored by the IPS. Of the seventeen planets, only Wallach VII and Wallach IX proved capable of supporting human life; and within a few short, centuries Navachristian emigres came to colonize the Laoujin planets. Unlike their Chusuku brethren, the settlers of Wallach VII fared poorly in their early colonization attempt. A series of storms paralyzed their encampment during their

first long winter causing the loss of nearly half their number over a period of two long months.

It wasn't until the following year, when the first of the supply ships touched down with much needed reinforcements and provisions that the colonial effort began in earnest. But within a generation, the first rudimentary city—named Tonnerburg, after its founder Geoffrey Tonner—gained its first mention in the IPS reports, having fulfilled the requirement of constructing an operable spacing facility. Centuries later, dozens of cities populated four of the six continents of Wallach VII, finding settlements on Imbria, Matriana, Hammerstein, and Lurachia.

Existing as little more than a footnote in the voluminous IPS *Imperial Registry*, Wallach VII avoided Imperial colonization until late in the first millennia post-Guild. When the Sardaukar legions arrived, they besieged the planet forcing a quick surrender, and assigned House Tonnerburg the Siridar-Barony to rule in the name of Emperor Faramor III.

House Tonnerburg stood until revolution struck in the late fifth millennium, when Emperor Marasuet VII sent Burseg General Maximillian Banarc to crush the rebellion. Realizing a quick victory over the rioting population, Banarc was first appointed governing Caid, then later Siridar-Baron, to replace the loss of Tonnerburg. Upon his appointment, Banarc adopted the name Wallach for his House, and began constructing a modern city which he dedicated Marasuet City in honor of his reigning Emperor.

The first of Wallach VII's Imperial settlements, Marasuet City rose on the plains of Imbria, where the flat, featureless terrain facilitated the construction of a vast military spacing field. A longstanding general, Banarc held to the military axiom that sound, planetary defense required swift troop mobility, and the spacing fields and adjacent 'thopter hangars provided the basis of his defensive strategy. Banarc's successors followed his lead; and within five generations the continent of Imbria saw the rise of six military bases positioned strategically around the continent, causing additional cities to emerge in support of the military populations.

In the eighth millennium, House Wallach abandoned Marasuet City to move its seat to a more defensible location on the foreboding shores of Lurachia. Surviving as the capital of Wallach VII, Banarc City surrounds a precipitous mount, from the top of which Banarc Keep stares at the turbulent waters of Burseg's Bay. Also called the "Rookery" for the great black ravens kept in its family compound, Banarc Keep serves as the primary residence and governmental offices of House Wallach, flying House banners above all sixteen of it ashen plascrete towers.

Resembling the northern continents of Imbria and Lurachia, the southern land of Matriana has lowland flats and wooded ridges defining its rocky shoreline. Toward the interior rolling plains give way to higher ground, culminating in weary mountains worn by countless millennia. Matrianna also owns its share of barren wastes and greener savannas, broken up by sparse timberlands and shining lakes.

IPS: Wallach VII

Planetological Data

Astronomical Data

- Planet ID: Laoujin VII
- Orbital Period: 1.60 SY
- Revolution Period: 1.0 SD
- Satellites: Wallach VII has a single moon, Chorelstag. It is the seventh of 17 planets orbiting the blue-white star Laoujin.
- Gravity/Atmosphere: 1.06 G/Standard oxygen-nitrogen, .1.03 A

Geological Data

- Average Temperature: 287° K
- Climatological Zones: Terran–Standard (arctic to tropical)
- Atmospheric Conditions: The atmospheric conditions on Wallach VII, once somewhat erratic, have been stabilized over the course of millennia with the aid of weather control satellites and related technology. Average annual rainfall is approximately 111 cm; heavy storms including hurricanes and tornadoes occur mainly during the growing season.
- Topography: The terrain on Wallach VII is generally flat; it is dominated by plains, savannas, and woodlands, with relatively few mountain ranges, none of great height. It claims four continents (including one prominent subcontinent). Water covers 70% of its surface.

Demographic Data

Planetary Government

- Planet Class: Siridar-Barony
- Governing House/Title: House Wallach/Baron

Urban Centers

- Seat of Government: Banarc City
- Center of Trade: Banarc City
- Other Urban Centers: Marasuet City, Roinell, Tonnerburg, Carluys, Ulvandri, Ottovaast

Populace

- Population: 7.5 billion
- Native Peoples and Cultures: Wallachean, 76%, Bene Gesserit 17%, Other 7%
- Religions: Orange Catholicism 64%, Navachristianity 12%, Tawrah and Talmudic Zabur 8%, Other 16%

Chief Industries

- Natural Resources: Mining of various ores, lumber, furs, mariculture, agriculture
- Major Services and Trade Items: Lumber, agricultural products, manufactured goods



Arrakis

Held in quasi-fief by House Harkonnen for nearly 80 years, the planet Arrakis (known to the native Fremen as "DUNE") is a hot, desert world covered by oceans of barren sand and seas of rippling dunes. In the northern latitudes, a great barrier ridge called the Shield Wall divides the desert into segregated "ergs," where routine harvesting operations mine the spice *melange* from its rich, surface beds. The False Wall trails toward the median latitudes, breaking off into thousands of sparse, rock outcroppings jutting upward from the sandy depths. And in the vast southern deserts where the great sandworms (some of which reach more than 400 meters in length) rule the deserts of DUNE.

During daylight hours, the hot sun Canopus scorches Arrakis with great ferocity, burning yellow-white in the silver skies. In the cooling night, the twin moons of Arrakis crest the horizon with synchronous regularity, the reddish "First Moon" followed by the smaller, second moon—one the natives call "Muad'Dib"(the kangaroo mouse). Throughout the year, Coriolis winds create frequent storms that sweep the deserts of Arrakis. The greatest of sandstorms, called Coriolis storms, whip the planet surface with merciless fervor, driving sand and dust at speeds over 800 kilometers per hour, threatening to rend flesh to bone and polish bone to slivers in a matter of minutes. But in spite of its violent winds and radical temperature changes, never a single drop of rain falls on the planet Arrakis; and not so much as a pond or rivulet graces the planet's intolerably arid surface. And to make matters worse, the Spacing Guild refuses to deploy weather control satellites in the planet's upper stratosphere, insisting that DUNE's anomalous magnetic field and high reaching clouds of dust make such efforts prohibitively expensive, if not entirely futile.

Its environmental conditions being so extreme, DUNE restricts human settlement to its northern latitudes. Few settlements venture further than 30 degrees south of the northern polar cap, finding shelter beyond the great Shield Wall, a mountain range so named for the protection it gives against the terrible sandstorms and monstrous sandworms plaguing the southern climes of Arrakis' deep desert. Considered by many to be totally uninhabitable, the rare wasteland maps of DUNE mark the equatorial regions and southern deserts as "forbidden" or "the forbidden zone" though the cryptic furtiveness of the local denizens suggests there might be other causes for such uninviting appellations.

In fact, much about DUNE's southern latitudes remains a mystery to Imperial scientists. Though the

Other Imperial Fiefs

The following worlds comprise a variety of additional Imperial fiefdoms—some of them homeworlds, others being quasi-fiefs or demi-fiefs ruled by one or more of the Great Houses of the Landsraad. While homeworld fiefs lodge their ruling House and central government, some fiefs are ruled by appointed agents of non-resident Great Houses who govern the fiefdoms "in absentia." Appointed regents invariably assume the titles of "regent" or "governor" while the Great House ruler retains the official, landed title (such as Duke or Count) tacking "–absentia" onto the appellation to indicate their physical absence from the planet of rule. For example, had Duke Leto retained governorship of Caladan when House Atreides moved to Arrakis in the novel *DUNE*, he might have appointed a trusted official as the "siridar-governor" of Caladan while adding "absentia" to his new title, making him "Duke Leto of Arrakis, Duke-absentia of Caladan."

Regardless of their titles, planetary governors rule their ward under the aegis of their patron House, and the high-ranking nobleman must answer to the Emperor should the governor prove incompetent or otherwise unfit to administrate the fiefdom. For this reason, Great Houses tend to keep a close watch over their appointed governors, often maintaining secret networks of informants and "sleepers" (agents hidden within the governor's administration). And while necessity demands that governors be trusted with routine administration, few Great Houses permit their governors to raise independent armies or take autonomous military initiatives. Instead, most Great Houses garrison House troops on the planet, appointing military commanders who technically serve under the governor's command, but ultimately answer to the House ruler.

Emperor's ecological testing stations litter the northern latitudes and survey 'thopter flights occasionally delve into the equatorial regions, few reconnaissance missions have returned to reveal the secrets of Dune's southernmost regions. Limited by their range and susceptibility to sandstorms, 'thopters prove unable to circumnavigate the planet, and the lack of low-orbiting satellites prevents spying from above. Only high-orbiting frigates can scan its southern reaches, but from such a high vantage little about the planet's surface (aside from the fact that it's covered by desert) can be discerned.

Among those settlements populating the northern climes of Dune, only Carthag and Arrakeen approximate true 'cities' according to the size and population standards used by the Imperial Planetological Survey analysts. Arrakeen, the traditional seat of Imperial government, appears little more than a dusty little garrison town by most Imperial standards, covering approximately 20 square miles and housing only some 2 million residents. In contrast, the newer megalopolis of Carthag, covers some 50 square miles and houses some 6 million residents, the majority of the Imperial populace found on Dune. Small cities such as Arsunt and Tsimpo house upwards of several hundred thousand people, but the Imperial census places the remainder of the Arrakeen populace in or around the pyon villages dotting the local *graban* and *pan* surrounding Hagga and Imperial Basins.

Aside from these, scattered bands of Fremen (sometimes called "will'o-the-sand people") inhabit the desert fringes. Skirting Imperial scrutiny and avoiding an accurate census, the Fremen seem relatively few in number. Embracing a strange religion and ancient hunting tongue, the Fremen appear descended from the original Zensunni Wanderers, who stopped on Arrakis briefly during their planetary migrations. Aside from their seemingly primitive nomadic nature, few of Dune's native citizens seem willing to discuss the Fremen, often dismissing them as reclusive, nomadic or hostile, depending on the local experience. Many believe the Fremen to associate with the Smugglers of Dune, those romantic businessmen who operate from their hidden desert bases.

Constructed some forty years ago under the Harkonnen regime, the city of Carthag proves a bustling metropolis, capital of Arrakis and center of Arrakeen industry and trade. A cheap and brassy place, Carthag reflects the ostentatious tastes of its governing House with guilded domes and metaglass skyscrapers rising above the dust-strewn streets where the populace grovels for dirty water, rung from the hand towels and laving basins of the wealthy Harkonnen aristocrats. Nestled in a alcove of the Shield Wall, Carthag enjoys close proximity to the spicing sands of the Imperial Basin. For this reason, the Spice Miner's Guild holds its headquarters in Carthag, with most of its harvesting pads and silo fields resting about the city's perimeter.

The city of Arrakeen appears largely unchanged after millennia, being largely neglected by the Harkonnen

IPS: Arrakis

Planetological Data

Astronomical Data

- Planet ID: Canopus III
- Orbital Period: 1.06 SY
- Revolution Period: 1.03 SD
- Satellites: Arrakis has two moons. It is the third of seven planets orbiting the star Canopus. Its solar system is remarkably clean, with no asteroid belts, significant comets, or other stellar matter.
- Gravity/Atmosphere: .9 G/Standard oxygen-nitrogen, .9 A

Geological Data

- Average Temperature: 298° K
- Climatological Zones: Arrakis is a desert world. Although there are small polar ice caps and some temperature variation, the entire world is desert.
- Atmospheric Conditions: Frequent sandstorms, including fierce Coriolis storms driving sand fast enough to wreck vehicles and strip flesh from bone. Zero annual precipitation with no variation.
- Topography: Except for its extraordinarily small polar caps, the terrain of Arrakis' consists of sand, large rock outcroppings and tidal dust basins. In the deep desert, dunes occasionally rise to over a thousand meters from crest to trough, giving the land a distinct quasi-topography. Quasi-mountainous rock outcroppings and ridges sit in the northern hemisphere, such as the Shield Wall and False Wall South.

Demographic Data

Planetary Government

- Planet Class: Quasi-Fief
- Governing House/Title: House Harkonnen/Siridar Governor

Urban Centers

- Seat of Government: Carthag
- Center of Trade: Carthag
- Other Urban Centers: Arrakeen, Arsunt, Tsimpo

Populace

- Population: 17 million
- Native Peoples And Cultures: Harkonnen 8%, Arrakeen 59%, Temporary out-worlders 33%, and Fremen (numbers unknown).
- Religions: Orange Catholicism 28%, Zensunni 8%, Other 66%

Chief Industries

- Natural Resources: The spice melange
- Major Services and Trade Items: Spice

richece who prefer the modern, if gaudy, comforts of Carthag. Arrakeen houses the Palace of Arrakeen, now home to Count Fenring the Imperial Observer on Arrakis. Not twenty clicks distant to the east, the Arrakeen landing facility sprawls upon the Broken Land, servicing planet-bound frigates and outgoing shuttles as the primary spacing field on Dune. Like Carthag, Arrakeen enjoys the natural protection of the expansive Shield Wall, though its greater distance from the Imperial Basin makes it the home of those 'expeditionary' spice hunters who probe the Open Bled over the Shield Wall instead of the safer sands located within the Imperial Basin.

Between Carthag and Arrakeen, the native denizens populate the intervening desert, dwelling in numerous villages and smaller such settlements. Comprising the pyon work force of Dune, the *folk of the graben and pan* dwell in simple dwellings featuring door seals as their most sophisticated advancement. Since water remains at a premium across the face of the planet, door seals conserve moisture in addition to keeping the domiciles cool and dust-free. Like the larger cities, Arrakeen villages employ windtraps and dew precipitators to condense most of their water from the scant traces of moisture born in the air. Supplementing such devices, early morning finds native dew collectors sweeping their scythe-like reapers over the low-lying vegetation to harvest what moisture they can before the midmorning sun evaporates their dew crop and brings their daily toil to an end.

Not to be underestimated, the scarcity of water proves the single-most limiting factor for life on Arrakis. From its human inhabitants to flora and fauna, all organisms must adapt and compete for Dune's inadequate water supply. While indigenous life-forms show marked genetic mutation, humans reveal technological innovation and social adaptation to cope with their eternal want for life-sustaining water.

Innovations such as door seals and *stillsuits*—full body suits processing the body's moisture between layers, gathering desalinated sweat and purified waste water in various 'catchpockets' from which the wearer may sip—conserve the worst excesses of water depletion. Similarly, advances such as windtraps and smaller, dew collectors harvest the wind of its moisture, cooling the hot Arrakis winds to condense its scant moisture into underground catchbasins and insulated cisterns. But it is the polar glacier mining conducted by the Water Seller's Union that provides the majority of water to the thirsty Arrakeen populace.

In addition to technological innovation, water scarcity causes many interesting social adaptations among the populace of Dune. From the strict conservation measures, such as water rationing and recycling, to the bizarre cultural affectations such as wearing water-encapsulated jewelry or using *watercounters* for local currency, most of Dune's strange social forms result directly from the ever-constant reminder that water equals life. So precious is water on Arrakis, that the Water Seller's Union (and those magnates who control water-producing or conserving technologies) rise among the most wealthy of Dune's *richece* and Houses Minor. In every settlement, water peddlers roam the streets selling literjons of bottled water, crying their hallmark—"soo soo sook"—to alert the populace that there's water to be had for exorbitant sums. Daily hundreds of folk die for want of water, making water theft the most common of crimes among the desperate and destitute populace of Arrakis.

But even more valuable than water, the spice-drug *melange* (commonly called "spice") emerges as Dune's chief commodity and planetary export. Unique to Arrakis and impossible to duplicate, the relative scarcity of spice makes it the most precious commodity in universe and chief among the industries of Dune's profit-driven rulers. Rivaling the Water Sellers' Union in both power and wealth, the Spice Mining Guild of Arrakis controls all legal spicing operations, from the administration of harvesting pads and maintenance of mining equipment to the industrial refineries and enormous silo fields.

Something of a guerrilla process, spice mining involves harvesting as much spice as is possible before the inevitable sandworm comes to destroy the sandcrawler (the mobile harvesting factory) and crew. Aerial spotters (desert-rigged ornithopters) seek out new spice beds and radio their findings to the harvesting pad (the base of operations), which then deploys a winged carryall to deposit its twin crawlers on or near the dark, aromatic spice patch. The mobile, bug-like sandcrawlers propel themselves on broad, heavy tracks, scooping up the spice-pregnant sand through a large frontal combine. Meanwhile the four airborne spotters watch for approaching wormsign (the surface current of sand cresting from the underlying passage of the worm), signaling the carryall to reclaim the harvesters just before the worm emerges to defend its native territory.

Ecaz

If ever there were a paradisiacal Eden, it might have resembled the planet Ecaz. Homeworld of House Vidal (long-time rivals of House Moritani of Grumman), the planet Ecaz (IV Alpha Centauri B) appears a rich and fertile world—covered with forests, jungles and grasslands. Among its abundant diversity of flora and fauna, Ecaz nurtures the indigenous *fogwood*—a coniferous softwood responsive to human thought—for which the planet is often called the "Sculptor's Paradise."

House Vidal lords over the planet Ecaz, prospering from its wealth of botanical treasures. In addition to its exotic fogwood, Ecaz produces numerous indigenous plants, herbs and extracts not found anywhere else in the Imperial core. Narcotics such as *sapho*, *elacca*, *semuta* and *verite* all add to the native pharmacopoeia, in addition to a variety of poisons treasured by assassins throughout the Imperium. Portyguls, banana-fruit, avocado and the like also emerge from the orchard-plantations of Ecaz's agronomists, while industrial by-products such as krimskell

('claw fiber' produced by its *hufuf* vine) maintain perennial demand on the CHOAM commodities markets.

In addition to its botanical industries, the economy of Ecaz profits annually from thousands of out-world immigrants. From the migrations of artists who populate the numerous fogwood hermitages to the droves of scientists and researchers who probe its vast wilderness preserves, House Vidal profits equally from all, collecting various fees, tithes and tariffs from all off-world seekers. With its ancient capital of O'ranjabee offering numerous academic splendors—such as the popular Botanical Gardens of Ecaz, the hallowed O'ranjabee Assassins Guild and the fabulous Cheopsium—Ecaz allures pilgrims, students and wayfarers from the Imperium abound, keeping the city lively and the merchant industries well-endowed.

Hagal

Hagal, the second of ten planets orbiting the yellow star Theta Shaowei, serves as the homeworld of House O'Garee, one of the Great Houses of the Landsraad. It is about 16,000 kilometers in diameter, has three moons and six continents, and enjoys universal renown for its rich mineral deposits and veins of precious gemstones.

The greatest of its natural resources are its gemstone mines—because of them, most Houses still call Hagal the "Jewel Planet." The greatest of its gem beds was mined out millennia ago, in the time of Shaddam I. But minor veins of precious stone remain to be mined; and recently a heretofore undiscovered mother lode was discovered in the north of the continent Calowaan. In addition to its diamonds, rubies, emeralds, sapphires and less coveted gemstones, Hagal produces the rare and priceless *opafire*, an opaline gemstone glittering with a hundred different hues. The Imperial crown and scepter are both encrusted with opafire gems; and the scarcity of opafire deposits makes this Hagalan gemstone "the crowning jewel" of the Jewel Planet. Hagalean quartz, the radiant blue-green mineral from which the Golden Lion Throne is carved, also contributes to the proud legend of this once rich planet.

House O'Garee rules the planet from its capital city of Hagalon, located on the equatorial continent of Mur-Aldauphine. Situated near the ancient opafire mines in the province of Central Aldauphine, Hagalon rises proudly above the dense canopy of jungle wood crowding its vast perimeter. House O'Garee maintains its spacing fields on the nearby island of Ospri—a large, flat rock devoid of life excepting the regal, *cymerkroon* gull that fishes in great numbers off of its rocky shores. Though Ospri flaunts no maritime harbors, travelers can reach Ospri by ornithopter or groundcar, driving across the 10 kilometer-long, Espanscrille suspensor bridge.

Ix

Ix—so called for being the ninth planet in the Alkaurops system—orbits at a great distance from its central, blue-white sun. Somewhat smaller than most Imperial homeworlds, Ix resembles a cold, austere planet traced with towering snow-capped mountain ranges and vast stretches of icy tundra. Intermittently, deep alpine forests and boulder-strewn plains break up the landscape, filling hidden valleys or crowning mountain plateaus in the desultory way that is unique to the marvel of nature. Though the frigid winds and sleet rain routinely sweep the planet's surface, the moderate amounts of snow, rain and hail never seem to deplete the skies of the seemly eternal cover of clouds.

More remarkable than the pristine state of Ix's natural beauty, the surface of Ix confounds first time travelers with a complete absence of human civilization. Ruled by House Vernius from its underworld capital, the cavernous cities of Ix all lie deep within the crust of the planet's interior. From the surface, transparent lift tubes employ suspensor technology to convey visitors kilometers below ground to the marvelous grotto-world realms. There, visitors experience the true, technological splendor of Ix, finding the cavernous city a veritable 'fairy-world' of scientific wonders.

In the Ixian 'over-city', towering braces and graceful support beams rise upon diamond lattice columns extending from the impenetrable depths below. High-resolution screens cover the rock ceilings, reflecting projections emitted from surface recorders used to track the external weather and confer the impression of an open sky. From the ceiling hang magnificent geometric buildings, plunging like crystal stalactites from the vaulted ceiling above. The Grand Palais—seat of the Ixian government and home to House Vernius—emerges as the most grandiose of these, exhibiting numerous aerial bridges and transparent conveyance tubes to transport pedestrians, groundcars and electric, suspensor-railed locomotives. Outside of the hanging buildings, tear-shaped aircraft silently flit from landing to landing, while personal hang-gliders also benefit from the convection drafts fueled by the warmer industrial 'undercity.'

Reached by aerial transport or the standard suspensor lift tubes, the ground-level domain stands in stark contrast to the lofty heights of the overcity inhabited by the aristocratic families and privileged administrator class. Here, the white and silver uniformed masses of the laboring classes work in the clean, utilitarian industrial plants while living in the tunnel-like warrens even further below ground. Known as "suboids," the labor class of Ix works in relative harmony with their educated Ixian masters. Paid decent wages and treated fairly by the Ixian regime, the suboids—who are bred for the rigors of manual labor—live simple, productive lives, finding little reason to question their existence or contemplate their chosen lot. Were it not for Tleilaxu propaganda issued through face dancer sleeper agents, it is highly unlikely the docile suboids would have ever rebelled as they did—temporarily ousting House Vernius from power in the most violent revolt in the entire history of Ix. For more information about the suboid revolution, see *House Atreides* by Brian

Herbert and Kevin J. Anderson, published by Bantam Publishing,

Richese

Once known for its scientific innovations—particularly in the realm of miniaturization technologies—the planet Richese has fallen on hard times since its technological decline. It's governing House, unassumingly named simply House Richese, suffered great fiscal losses when their stewardship of Arrakis passed to House Harkonnen. For years House Richese attempted to consolidate their remaining wealth and political power through a series of marital alliances with other Great Houses. One such alliance united the Lady Helena with Duke Paulus Atreides, father of Duke Leto Atreides and tragic victim of a Harkonnen-spun plot. But considering their decreasing ability to compete with Ix in the technologies market and their irrevocable loss of their Arrakeen stewardship, these alliances represent but the smallest of conciliatory gains. Though House Richese yet remains among the Houses Major, it may be a long while before Richese finds the wherewithal to return to its former state of glory.

Salusa Secundus

One does not speak casually of Salusa Secundus—the historical birthworld of House Corrino and former seat of the Imperial regime. Having become a "hell-world" since its atomic disaster, Salusa Secundus remains under House Corrino's rule, held in siridar-fief by the Emperor himself and reserved as "punishment planet" for those who defy the Imperial will. Unconfirmed reports suggest Salusa's harsh physical environment contributes to a 60% mortality rate among newly-sentenced prisoners, tallying a frightful death-toll among the prison populace.

In the aftermath of an atomic disaster and centuries of the ensuing nuclear winter, Salusa Secundus has become well-suited for a life of hellish punishment. The third planet to orbit Gamma Waiping, Salusa was once a verdant world—home of House Corrino and the Imperial seat. But in desperate attempt to rid the universe of the Imperial House, a rival House (whose name has been expunged from Imperial records) laid waste to the planet with illegal atomics, driving House Corrino to adopt Kaitain as its new seat of government and Imperial homeworld.

Since that time, Salusa Secundus has suffered from an impossibly hostile environment. Its thin atmosphere allows heat to spiral during daylight hours, reaching temperatures in excess of 321 degrees Kelvin. But with approaching nightfall, temperatures plummet as the solar heat escapes the atmosphere, plunging the land into freezing darkness. Water covers only 20-some percent of Salusa's surface; and to drink of its few remaining lakes means to be poisoned with contaminants left over from its terrible devastation. And, resulting from its arid climate and thermal extremes, torrential winds sweep across the planet whipping relentless dust devils and furious tornadoes into terrible fits of rage.

In spite of its inhospitable environment, Salusa somehow manages to support life. Scattered amidst its desolate highlands or brimming its precipitous canyons, native flora and fauna eke out a tolerable existence creating a viable, if extraordinary, ecosystem. From the thorny sage to the ferocious Salusan bulls to the solitary predatory laza tigers, Salusa reveals a fair degree of bio-diversity; not including the forlorn human inhabitants who reluctantly suffer their planetary home.

Documented as the second stopping-ground of the legendary *Zensunni Wanderers*, Salusa also supports an indigenous populace believed to be the descendants of these early, interstellar migrants. But the Emperor discourages further speculation, zealously guarding the secrets of his prison world. In actuality, it *is* a barbaric place—and what goes on there is best not imagined by civilized men.

Unknown to any but the Emperor and his family, Salusa Secundus now finds good use as the secret home and training grounds of the Imperial Sardaukar legions, the awe-inspiring terror-troops culled from the toughest of the planet's inhabitants. Salusa's harsh environment and despotic regime condition its survivors to make for a tremendous fighting force. Responsible for their recruitment and training, Burseg-General Gotwald Corrin-Ashcraft (a distant cousin of Emperor Shaddam IV) commands the fiefdom of Salusa Secundus as Imperial caid, planetary governor and acting warden. Even among the Sardaukar he enjoys a reputation for maintaining cruel, despotic discipline and fostering ritualistic elitism among his trainees.

Wallach IX

Established thousands of years ago, the Bene Gesserit Mother School resides on the planet Wallach IX. In the space of decades, the Sisterhood quickly developed the planet to include expansive orchards and province-sized agricultural plantations. It was the Sisterhood's wealth that first brought the Guild's weather control satellites to Wallach IX, making their planetary holding into a self-sufficient quasi-fief. As Bene Gesserit coin flooded the planet's economy, the Sisterhood extended its influence over the native populace, earning the name "Chapter House," among some of its denizens. For more information about Wallach IX and the Bene Gesserit Mother school, watch for the upcoming *Bene Gesserit Companion* from Last Unicorn Games.

Out-freyn Autarkies

Not all planets inhabited by humans fall within the domain of the Imperium, even if they contribute to its civilization. In truth, two very influential planets—Tleilax, and Tupile—do not answer to the Padishah Emperor, enjoying autonomous rule over their own planetary domains. Considered both *out-freyn* ("that which is

'immediately foreign'") and *autarkical* (self-governing) these worlds remain somewhat exotic and strange.

Tleilax

Situated in the Thalim system, Tleilax remains effectively beyond the Imperium, isolating its civilization from the 'Imperial rot of the powindah.' By Tleilaxu decree, no off-worlders may set foot on Tleilax, except for select groups of special invitees who come for the express purpose of purchasing Tleilaxu wares. For this reason, the IPS contains little information about Tleilax and its other, subject worlds. While it is known that a council of sorts governs the Bene Tleilax civilization, few understand how its council is chosen or how it enforces its rule. Similarly, Tleilaxu agents have spoken of a social hierarchy resembling the faufreluches, but such vacuous claims give little evidence to make an educated comparison. More telling than the reports of the IPS or Imperial out-worlders who have visited the Tleilaxu coreworlds—the Tleilaxu products hint a great deal about their cultural mores and scientific advancement.

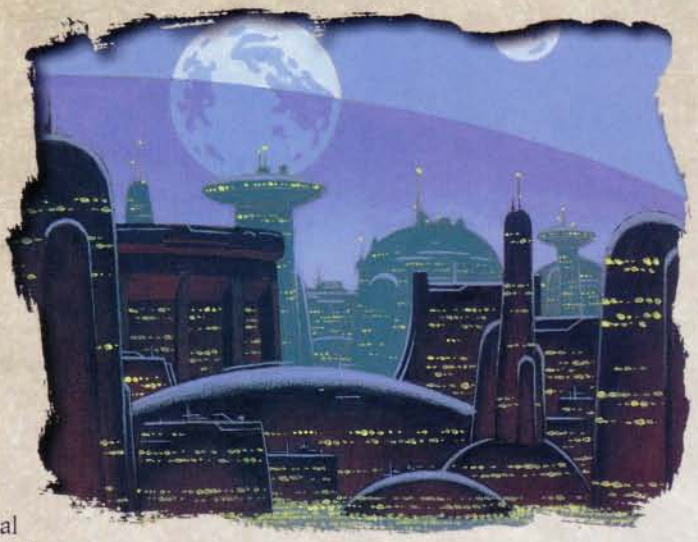
Revealed by its exports, Tleilaxu scientists and researches excel as masters of forbidden technologies. *Face dancers* and *gholas* evidence profound accomplishments in human eugenics, rivaling (or even surpassing) similar programs conducted by the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood. Tleilaxu face dancers entertain courts throughout the Imperium, distorting their visages and bodies in life-like parodies of well-known personages, and divulging a level of tissue specialization and muscular control superior even to the Sisterhood's prana-bindu conditioning. Gholas—genetic copies grown from the cells of cadavers—repulse most Imperial citizens even as they astound them, presenting the possibility of immortality of the flesh, if not of the conscious mind or guiding spirit. Numerous bionic and cybernetic devices—such as the silver-orbed Tleilaxu eyes or strangely enigmatic cibus hoods— further indicate extraordinary mastery of forbidden knowledge and technological wizardry, inspiring Imperial detractors to speak of their creators as the "dirty Tleilaxu."

Tupile

Swathed in a shroud of mystery, Tupile exists as something of a popular myth—existing as a "sanctuary planet" for renegade Houses and offering a place of refuge from any number of Imperial hunters. Protected by the Great Convention and enforced by the Guild's absolute refusal to disclose its location, Tupile remains a secret 'bolthole'—a private recluse for conducting their research, training their Navigators, constructing their Heighliners and sheltering expatriot noblemen and their families.

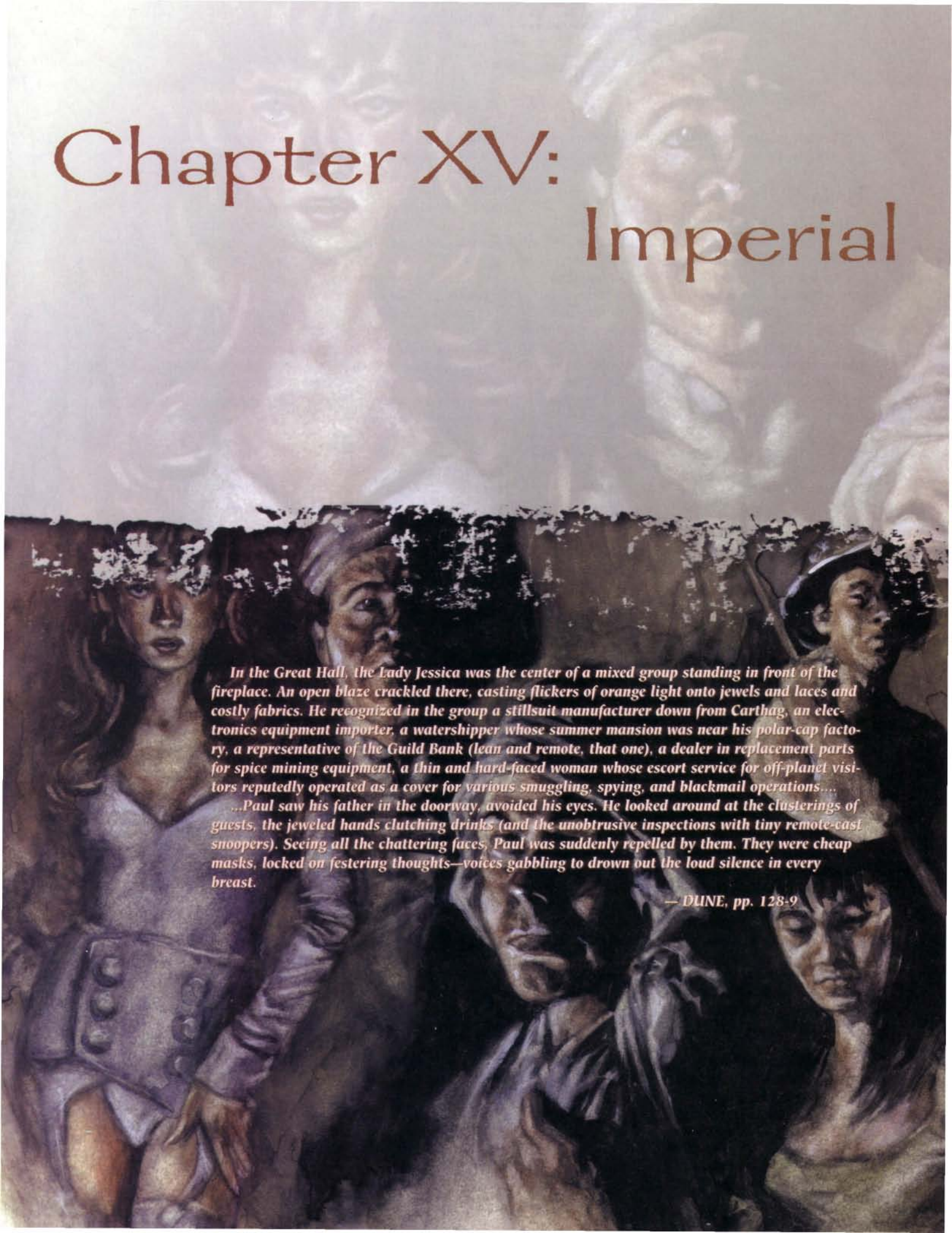
Though the Guild adamantly refuses to permit the Imperial Planetological Survey to send expeditions to Tupile, Guild agents have furnished the IPS with general information, perhaps to allure renegade Houses or maybe to assuage Imperial apprehensions. From their reports, Tupile sounds an edenic paradise—evoking images of Old Earth before the dawn of civilization. Differing only in its binary star and triple, celestial moons, Tupile promises an idyllic retreat, if Guild accounts are to be believed.

Supporting evidence of their claims, the Guild trades a number of products allegedly hailing from Tupile. Foremost among them, the *corepsidon* bush—a tough, fibrous plant whose leaves distill a particularly dark and indelible ink—is valued by Imperial illuminators and cartographers who prefer the ink for their master works. Imperial manufacturers and clothiers also treasure the Tupali *schlag*, an animal once hunted almost to extinction for its thin, yet durable hide. And the exotic *sondagi*—a beautiful fern-tulip—is coveted by florists, lovers and dinner hosts wishing to impress with a grandiose statement of lavish affection or personal wealth.



Because so little is known about Tupile, the possibility remains that it is a Guild-perpetrated myth. The Guild could shelter renegade Houses on converted Heighliners (such as it does for House Wayku), or import schlag and sondagi from another out-freyn world. Or the reality of Tupile could extend to several planets, scattered throughout multiple systems or orbiting a shared star. But of one thing the Houses of the Imperium can be certain: To violate the Guild Peace by searching for Tupile—either questing in starships or coercing agents of the Guild—risks losing the Guild's invaluable shipping privileges.

Chapter XV: Imperial



In the Great Hall, the Lady Jessica was the center of a mixed group standing in front of the fireplace. An open blaze crackled there, casting flickers of orange light onto jewels and laces and costly fabrics. He recognized in the group a stillsuit manufacturer down from Carthag, an electronics equipment importer, a watershipper whose summer mansion was near his polar-cap factory, a representative of the Guild Bank (lean and remote, that one), a dealer in replacement parts for spice mining equipment, a thin and hard-faced woman whose escort service for off-planet visitors reputedly operated as a cover for various smuggling, spying, and blackmail operations....

...Paul saw his father in the doorway, avoided his eyes. He looked around at the clusterings of guests, the jeweled hands clutching drinks (and the unobtrusive inspections with tiny remote-cast snoopers). Seeing all the chattering faces, Paul was suddenly repelled by them. They were cheap masks, locked on festering thoughts—voices gabbling to drown out the loud silence in every breast.

— DUNE, pp. 128-9

Personages

The following chapter presents an assembly of Supporting Characters for Narrators to use when creating *DUNE RPG* chronicles. By no means exhaustive, the assortment covers the gamut of character types, including a sampling of Legendary Personages, Prominent Characters and Narrative Extras. Legendary Personages represent a few of the movers and the shakers gracing the courts of the Imperial Great Houses. They include influential moguls such as the Padishah Emperor Shaddam IV or the Lady Jessica, bound-concubine of Duke Leto Atreides. Prominent Characters introduce a range of character types, from aloof Guild Representatives to Sardaukar commanders, who play Lead or Minor roles to propel the main plot line. Narrative Extras complete the 'rank-and-file,' of Minor and Anonymous character roles, presenting crowd-filling 'extras' such as lowly House servants or sensuous *houris* of the Imperial harem.

Legendary Personages

The novel DUNE recounts the fabulous exploits of many great nobles and their heroic (or villainous) companions. Legendary personages such as the Padishah Emperor Shaddam IV, the twisted Mentat Piter de Vries and famous Ginaz swordsmaster Duncan Idaho are but a few examples. While your *DUNE RPG* narratives tell the tales of your own leading characters, you may wish to introduce one or more legendary personages from *DUNE*, allowing your players to interact with their favorite characters during special "guest appearances". If your characters serve an Atreides House Minor, for example, it might be fun for them to embark on an espionage mission led by Duncan Idaho, or report to Duke Leto himself to receive a House commendation for a job well done.

In addition to the characters from *DUNE*, the following section describes several original personages gracing the courts of other noble Houses (such as House Wallach or Moritani). Because *DUNE* touches on these Houses and their leaders marginally, it's largely up to the Narrator to determine what sort of personalities they have and how they behave. For more information about the original personages presented here, see "Chapter 2: House Descriptions," pages 30–41.

Customizing Supporting Characters

The following sections provide sample supporting characters for use in your *DUNE RPG* chronicles. The Legendary Personage profiles consist of brief descriptions covering personality and general abilities. Narrators who choose to allow player characters to interact directly with these personages may wish to assign characteristics with numerical values.

The lesser character types include recommended characteristics, including Attributes, Skills, and Traits. Narrators may customize any of these at their discretion, adding Skills, increasing numerical levels, naming the character, providing physical descriptions and so on. For more information about creating Supporting Characters (NPCs) for your narratives, see "Chapter 7: Pillars of the Universe," pages 159–161.

Shaddam IV (Corrino Noble)

"...but what else is one to expect of barbarians whose dearest dream is to live outside the ordered security of the faufreluches?"
– Emperor Shaddam IV, DUNE p.78

Eighty-first of his line, the Padishah Emperor Shaddam IV leads the Corrino dynasty through political adroitness and military prowess. During the first 16 years of his reign, he doubled the ranks of Sardaukar Bursegs (commander generals), and wears a Burseg's helmet as a symbolic reminder of the ultimate source of his power. A fierce proponent of the faufreluches, Shaddam IV is a stern, uncompromising aristocrat, magnanimous at times and cunning when necessary, but predisposed to commanding with an imperious air.

Count Hasimir Fenring (Corrino Noble)

"The Emperor wishes me to report on whether you've chosen a worthy successor. There's nothing

like the arena to expose the true person from beneath the mask, eh?"
– Count Fenring, DUNE p.320



The friend and confidant of Emperor Shaddam IV, Count Hasimir Fenring serves His Majesty as an Imperial Observer and de facto Spice Czar. During his years in the Emperor's service, Fenring has earned quite a reputation for his knife work, rivaling the ability of legendary Swordmasters such as Duncan Idaho of the Ginaz school. His wife, the Lady Margot Fenring accompanies her husband on many of his Imperial errands and involves him in some of her Bene Gesserit schemes. But as a failed Kwisatz Haderach and genetic eunuch the Sisterhood sadly dismisses Fenring from their vaunted breeding program.

Duke Leto Atreides (Atreides Noble)

"Think of the Landsraad Houses that look to me for a certain amount of leadership—their unofficial spokesman. Think how they'd react if I were responsible for a serious reduction in their income. After all, one's own profits come first. The Great Convention be damned!"
– Duke Leto Atreides, DUNE p.43



Known as 'Leto the Just' among his peers in the Landsraad, Leto has gathered an entourage of retainers, unsurpassed in their skill and loyalty. As his father before him, Duke Leto inspires the kind of fanatical love and devotion that merits total loyalty. And it is his reputation for morality and righteousness that has earned him a position of leadership among many Landsraad Houses. Those who seek justice and political redress flock to Leto's camp for protection against the Emperor and his supporters; for it is widely known that Duke Leto Atreides—a man of sincerity and true bravura—never turns his back on an ally in need.

Lady Jessica (Atreides Adept)

"I am Bene Gesserit: I exist only to serve."
– Lady Jessica, DUNE p. 23

The bound-concubine of Duke Leto Atreides and mother of the ducal heir, Lady Jessica is divided in her loyalty between the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood and House Atreides. Deemed one of the most promising students the Reverend Mother Gaius Helen Mohiam had ever taught, Jessica failed her Bene Gesserit proctors by falling in love with her appointed liege. Allowing emotion to give Leto the son and heir he wanted, Jessica openly defied the Sisterhood's order to conceive only daughters by the Atreides Duke. By giving birth to Paul, the Atreides heir-designate, Jessica has ruined the Sisterhood's ambition to wed an Atreides daughter to a Harkonnen heir and thus end the ancient feud between the warring Houses. Moreover, she has meddled in the Sisterhood's breeding program, spoiling their plans to attempt to cross Atreides and Harkonnen stock in search of their Kwisatz Haderach, "the male superbeing who can be many places at once."



Baron Vladimir Harkonnen (Harkonnen Noble)

"The Duke must know when I encompass his doom. ...And the other Great Houses must learn of it. The knowledge will give them pause."
– Baron Vladimir Harkonnen, DUNE p.16

Equipped with a suspensor belt to support his excessive corpulence, the megalomaniacal Baron Harkonnen harbors an insatiable appetite for power—and for revenge. Begrudging House Atreides for the banishment of his ancestor so many millennia ago, the Baron seeks vindication by means of Kanly-a deadly game of vendetta ended only by the death of Duke Leto Atreides and his only heir Paul.



Piter De Vries (Harkonnen Mentat)

"Ah-hah! But you see Baron, I know as a Mentat when you will send the executioner. You will hold back just so long as I am useful. To move sooner would be wasteful and I'm yet of much use."
– Piter de Vries, DUNE p.16



Possessed of the mind of a Mentat but the voice of a killer, Piter de Vries is perhaps the most cunning of the 'twisted' Mentats ever turned out by the Bene Tleilax training schools. He cautiously serves the Baron Harkonnen, who indulges Piter's sadistic penchant and expensive spice addiction. But Baron Harkonnen remains wary of his killer Mentat, expecting that one day Piter could turn upon him like a rabid dog toward its master.

Tycho di Moritani (Moritani Noble)

'The defeat of the Ginaz was my father's magnum opus, the return of the Bhotani assassins shall be mine. But do not think me over eager to assume my father's station; while he yet lives I remain safe from censure should the nature of my Fraternus-Electi project become known in the Landsraad. Though the Moritani name inspires hatred among many, few would willingly condemn the ailing, old man."
– na-Count Tycho di Moritani, Private Journals



Ruling as Count in all but name, the na-Count Tycho di Moritani presses to complete his secret projects before his father's demise. Already he plans to resurrect the ancient Bhotani traditions, reviving the esoteric ways of the notorious mercenary assassins. In addition, the young heir has launched a broad campaign to recreate the image of House Moritani, placing Mentat Delbreth Umbrico and Chancellor Paimon Pradisek in charge of propaganda. Should everything go as planned, House Moritani should be ready to fulfill its part when the ambitious young nobleman takes his oath of investiture and assumes the mantle of command.

Verdun Dei (Moritani Assassin)

'Fret not over my frail condition, Master Tycho. I'll feed my appetite with the blood of your enemies and then spare a moment to savor your chef's chukka under glass—if m'Lord permits.'
– Verdun Dei, Conversations with Tycho I

Former Grandmaster of the Indrin School of Assassins, Verdun Dei recently enlisted with the na-Count Tycho and his circle of advisors to hatch their schemes of reviving the ancient Bhotani tradition. Having chosen the ancient Monastery of Dur—long abandoned in its decrepitude—as the ideal site for their secret training programs, Verdun Dei has toiled over the recent months to put the compound into fit working order. With the exterior retaining its ramshackle appearance, the interior of the primary buildings have been entirely refurbished, fitted with various state of the art technologies—from the fully automated Ixian fighters acquired on the black market, to the miniature comeyes and solido projectors purchased from Richese. Now nearing completion, Dei prepares his staff of instructors, versing them in the Fraternus Electi—a multi-volume training manual and philosophic manifesto compiling all of the accumulated data regarding the ancient order of Bhotani assassins.



Lady Catriona Tseida (Tseida Noble)

'While the Great Houses of the Landsraad rely on House Tseida for our tradition of legal expertise, we must never forget the lesson implicit in the Great Revolt. When the consuming masses realize the price of dependency, they may rail against their providers with violent intensity, creating a ripple-effect that may rock the entire universe'
– Lady Catriona, from Tseidan Conference 30124



Catriona Tseida, Daughter Regent of Sikun, governs her homeworld in trust for her nephew Iorgu who will assume his rightful place upon reaching the majority age of 18. In the meantime Catriona rules conservatively, hoping to strengthen Tseidan relations with the other Houses of the Landsraad community. Nearing middle age, Catriona remains a vision of beauty, persuading as much through her allure as with her wisdom and keen perspicacity.

Moebius Ahearn (Tseida Ethics Advocate)

'It was the blind ambition of technologists who engineered the Jihad. Emmanuel Butler said it best when he predicted 'rampant advancement without aim or purpose will make us slaves of our own creation'. We of Sikun must be mindful of the long-term effects our policies bear on the Imperium, lest we inadvertently undermine the moral traditions upon which the Great Convention is based.'
– Moebius Ahearn, from Strategy Conclave 951302

Risen from the ranks of the Sunnivas Butlerian intelligentsia, Moebius stunned his academic peers when he abandoned his chair in the Sunnivas Academy to enlist with the decidedly agnostic Tseidan regime. His keen mind rapidly propelling him through the House induction regimen, Moebius emerged as one of the finest House Advocates, largely responsible for the reassessment of the House position regarding technological advocacy.



Baron Wolfram von Wallach (Wallach Noble)

'... and from the deepest midnight jungle we emerged to catch our first glimpse of the long shores of Pergammos. Though it was the pitch of night, we beheld the scene in the fiery gloom cast above the burning tide. Not far offshore one of our frigates had crash-landed, rising from the waves with its hull split asunder like a hulking leviathan, spewing its searing lifeblood into steaming waters. Gagging smoke and oily fog drifted across the murky waves, blanketing the bobbing corpses like a burning shroud in hell....'
– Baron von Wallach, The Conquest of Pergammos



Having served six tours of duty among the Imperial Sardaukar, Baron Wolfram demonstrates familiarity with many homeworlds of the Imperium. Though now advanced into the age of retirement, the Baron still maintains his body and mind through daily exercise on the training floor and in his personal library.

Lechter Adile (Wallach Suk)

'The mystery of life presents a multitude of questions that we're even now just beginning to address. Behind any reasonable answer our science provides, we discover an even greater conundrum.'
– Lechter Adile, Suk Dissertation



New to his post as resident Suk and house physician for the House of Wallach, Adile's reputation precedes him. As the former Director of Genetics at the Suk Academy on Poritrin Adile held a singularly enviable position. Eight of the last ten academy Deans earned promotions from the GR department; and it was presumed by all that Adile would follow in his predecessor's footsteps. But Adile proved unable to navigate the political undercurrents, beaching him on the shores of mediocrity. When Olifer Mangrove discovered his plight, he implored his old friend to enlist with the Baron—a man of similar mind and political refrain.

Prominent Characters

Prominent Characters play roles instrumental to the story line, often driving the plot from the seat of a Leading role. When portraying Minor roles, these characters usually serve directly beneath a Leading character, carrying out his orders or supporting her agenda. Narrators should presume they possess average (2) ranks in all character attributes, having edges and skill specialization as noted for each. In addition, Narrators should customize Prominent Characters to suit the particular demands of their role. For example, if an Ambassador also happens to be a political revolutionary, the Narrator should equip them with skills such as Propaganda and Racketeering in preparation for any special Tests that may be required of them during the narrative.

CHOAM Delegate

Houses employ CHOAM delegates as economic emissaries, financial ambassadors who negotiate contracts, arrange fiscal partnerships, acquire new charters and so forth. CHOAM delegates specialize in the working protocol of the CHOAM company, increasing their effectiveness as they develop new contacts, make political allies and earn themselves a reputation for leading profitable initiatives.

Attributes Intellect 3 (Logic +1), Charisma 3 (Willpower +1)
Skills Administration (economic) 2(3), Diplomacy (negotiation) 2(3), Economics 4, Law (CHOAM) 2(3), Mercantilism 3, Persuasion 2, Politics 2
Traits n/a
Other Characteristics Caste 3, Resistance 2

Concubine

Where political necessities prohibit formal marriage, nobles consort with legal concubines. Concubines rear children, coordinate House affairs and provide trustworthy companionship for their designated mate. While any concubine may bear children, only 'bound-concubines' can produce legal heirs.

Attributes Intellect 2 (Logic +1), Charisma 3 (Presence +1)
Skills Administration 2, Charm 4, Culture 3, History 2, Observation 1, Persuasion 2, Subterfuge 2
Traits none
Other Characteristics Caste 4, Resistance 2

Guild Spokesman

Powerful spokesmen for the Spacing Guild, Guild Navigators serve as the mouthpiece for the entire organization—to defy its representative is to defy the Guild. Reserved for First of Second Stage Navigators with prescient ability, the role of Guild Spokesman carries enormous responsibility and political power. For such reasons, Guild Spokesmen appear haughty and insubordinate, behaving as equals of the Imperial nobility.

Attributes Intellect 3 (Perception +2), Prescience 2
Skills Administration 2, Diplomacy 4, Economics 3, Law 2, Mercantilism 3, Physics 1, Politics 3, Propaganda 2, Racketeering 4
Traits Latent Prescience, Patron (3)
Other Characteristics Caste 4, Resistance 2

Imperial Planetologist

Chief among the scientists who study a planet, Imperial Planetologists serve the Imperium as minor advisors—appointed by the Emperor to report on planetary matters. Monitoring resource exploitation and taking the Imperial census first among their duties, the Imperial planetologist files annual reports, earning them some measure of political clout.

Attributes Intellect 3 (Perception +1, Logic +1)
Skills Administration 3, Culture 2, History 2, Language 3, Science 5, Survival 4, World Knowledge (planetology) 2(4)
Traits Patron
Other Characteristics Caste 3, Resistance 2

Judge of the Change

Appointed by the Padishah Emperor and Landsraad High Council, the Judge of the Change arranges and supervises Kanly negotiations, changes of domestic fiefdoms and wars of assassins between noble households. Though of temporary appointment, the Judge of the Change must demonstrate certain qualifications to the appointing committee in order to be deemed worthy of the official duties and invested authority.

Attributes Intellect 3 (Perception +1), Charisma 3 (Willpower +1)
Skills Administration 3, Culture 2, Diplomacy 4, History 3, Law 5, Observation 2, Politics 3
Traits Ally, Information Network
Other Characteristics Caste 3 (4 as Judge), Resistance 2

Landsraad Emissary

Landsraad emissaries serve the dual functions of House spokesman and legal advocate, speaking before the Landsraad, petitioning the Emperor, suing for justice or defending House actions. The non-inheriting progeny of noble Houses often assume the duties of Landsraad emissary or House ambassador, representing their Houses in a manner commensurate with their noble birthright.

Attributes Intellect 3 (Logic +1), Charisma 3 (Presence +2)
Skills Administration 3, Charm 2, Culture 3, Diplomacy 4, History 3, Language 2, Persuasion 3, Politics 4, Propaganda 2, Statecraft 2, Subterfuge 3
Traits Highborn
Other Characteristics Caste 4, Resistance 2

Sardaukar Commander

Culled from the ranks of the military elite, Sardaukar Commanders exhibit brilliant leadership, adamant courage and fanatical loyalty to the Padishah Emperor and Golden Lion Throne. Ruthless and driven, these 'officers of the corps' tend to reveal egotistical, and even megalomaniacal, personalities—a characteristic of the Sardaukar mystique.

Attributes Physique 3 (Strength +1, Constitution +2), Charisma 3 (Willpower +1)
Skills Armament 3, Armed Combat (melee arms) 3(4), Athletics 2, Dodge 2, Equipment 2, Military Operations 3, Ranged Combat (any) 2(3), Transport 2, Unarmed Combat 3
Traits Heroism, Resilience
Other Characteristics Caste 3, Resistance 4

Sleeper Agent

Often called 'moles,' Sleeper Agents infiltrate rival organizations where they 'lie dormant' within, spying on the internal operations and relaying secret reports to their outside contacts. Often serving as routine functionaries within the operations they infest, Sleeper Agents also act as the 'point men' for further intelligence operations, coordinating espionage, stealing secret documents, acquiring forged documentation or sabotaging operations.

Attributes Coordination 3 (Reaction +1), Intellect 3 (Perception +1)
Skills Concealment 2, Culture 1, Espionage 2, Impersonation 2, Infiltration 3, Language 1, Security (systems) 2(3), Stealth 2, Subterfuge 3, Survival (urban) 2(3), Underground Operations 3
Traits Information Network 3
Other Characteristics Caste 2 or 3, Resistance 2

Truthsayer

With a rare talent even among their Bene Gesserit sisters, Truthsayers employ dangerous spectrum awareness narcotics to enhance their trained powers of observation, watching for the petit betrayals that indicate whether a person speaks truthfully. The Bene Gesserit hires its Truthsayers out to powerful organizations such as the Landsraad or CHOAM or to wealthy Great Houses who have regular need for such services.

Attributes Coordination 4 (Reaction +1), Intellect 3 (Perception +2), Charisma 3 (Presence +1), Prescience 3
Skills Athletics 1, BG Way 5, Dodge 2, Observation 4, Politics 5, Persuasion 3, Ritualism 4, Subterfuge 4, Truthtrance 3, Voice 5, Unarmed Combat 2
Traits Immunity (poisons), Prana-Bindu Conditioning, Weirding Combat
Other Characteristics Caste 3 or 4, Resistance 2

Umma

Harkening back to the brotherhood of prophets, the Umma wander the Imperium preaching and prophesying for the superstitious masses. They employ their awakened prescience to perform as oracles and spiritual counselors for those with coin, being considered little more than wild charlatans by most 'civilized' peoples.

Attributes Intellect 3 (Perception +1), Charisma 3 (Presence +1), Prescience 1 (Sight +1)
Skills Culture 3, Dodge 1, First Aid 2, Observation 3, Politics 2, Persuasion 3, Subterfuge 2, Theology 3
Traits Latent Prescience 3
Other Characteristics Caste 1 to 3, Resistance 2

Narrative Extras

These are the characters who populate the background of your story. In the normal course of events none of them would figure prominently, and few of them would even have the occasion to speak to the player characters. But each serves a role, often behind the scenes. And each could provide an interesting interlude should the characters take the opportunity to speak with them.

Criminal

Specializing in a variety of illicit services or unlawful wares, criminals conspire and congregate in the political underworld. Thieves, killers, arsonists, extortionists, forgers, kidnappers and smugglers name but a few of the criminals populating the Imperium.

Attributes Reaction +1, Perception +1
Skills Armed Combat 1, Bargain 2, Concealment 3, Stealth 3, Subterfuge 3, Racketeering (any) 1(3), Underworld Knowledge (any,any) 2 (3,4)
Traits none
Other Characteristics Caste 0 (or any), Resistance 2

Demagogue

Persuasive leaders who appeal to popular sentiment, Demagogues include a variety of rabblerousers, from unorthodox religious fanatics to labor union representatives—virtually anyone who leads a mob against the establishment.

Attributes Presence +1, Willpower +1
Skills Charm 1, Persuasion 3, Propaganda 2, Subterfuge 2
Traits Information Network
Other Characteristics
Caste 1 to 3, Resistance 2



Guard

Guards comprise the ranks of House security, serving a variety of posts and stations. Personal guards escort and protect House members. Security Guards defend the household compound and key installations; and watchmen patrol the city streets enforcing the law and maintaining civil order.

Attributes Strength +1, Perception +1
Skills Armed Combat 3, Law 2, Observation (surveillance) 2(3), Ranged Combat 2, Security 3, Unarmed Combat 2
Traits Alertness
Other Characteristics
Caste 2, Resistance 2

House Servant

Charged with any number of menial tasks House servants include a variety of retainers, including chefs, stable boys, groundskeepers and chauffeurs.

Attributes none
Skills Administration 1, Charm 1, Culture 1, Equipment 1, Security 1, Stealth 1
Traits none
Other Characteristics
Caste 1, Resistance: 2

House Trooper

House Troopers serve in the military 'rank and file,' participating in off-world invasions or defending their homeworld as the situation requires.

Attributes none
Skills Armed Combat (melee arms) 1(2), Ranged Combat (any) 1(2), Survival (wilderness) 1, Unarmed Combat 1
Traits none
Other Characteristics
Caste 2, Resistance 2

Interrogator

Specializing in a variety of inquiry techniques, interrogators serve House intelligence by questioning subjects. Methods vary from harsh questioning to administered truth agents to physical torture—all with the purpose of finding the proper lever to induce the subject to surrendering the required information.

Attributes Perception +1, Willpower +2
Skills Biology (anatomy) 1(2), Equipment 2, Interrogation 4, Observation 2, Persuasion 3, Propaganda 2, Psychology 3, Subornation 2, Subterfuge 2
Traits none
Other Characteristics
Caste 2, Resistance 2

Merchant

The merchant's trade may involve a number of venues from peddling to hostelry, retail to slave-auction, and smuggling to inn keeping. For those working under the auspices of a CHOAM contract of Household license, legal acumen and business savvy separate the franchised from the disenfranchised.

Attributes Presence +1
Skills Bargaining 3, Economics 2, Mercantilism 3, Persuasion 2
Traits none
Other Characteristics
Caste 2 or 3, Resistance 2

Saboteur

Saboteurs infiltrate organizations to steal information, destroy physical property and wreak social disorder. Whether relying on explosive demolitions, electronic countermeasures or mechanical intervention, Saboteurs use all their resources to wreck operations and throw systems into chaos.

Attributes Dexterity +1, Logic +1
Skills Equipment 4, Infiltration 2, Physics (engineering) 2(3), Repair 2, Sabotage (any) 3(4), Stealth 3, Underworld Knowledge 2
Traits none
Other Characteristics
Caste 1 to 3, Resistance 2

Sardaukar Trooper

Trained primarily on the 'hell-world' Salusa Secundus, the Sardaukar show a degree of brutal fanaticism making them the most feared soldiers in the Imperium. So zealous is their conditioning and loyalty, members of the Imperial Sardaukar vow to never be captured in battle, fighting to the death or even taking their own lives before surrendering to an enemy or falling into enemy hands.

Attributes Strength +1, Constitution +2
Skills Armament 2, Armed Combat (Melee Arms) 2(3), Ranged Combat (any) 2(3), Survival (wilderness) 4(5), Unarmed Combat 2
Traits Heroism
Other Characteristics
Caste 3, Resistance 4

Slave Gladiator

Surviving a process of natural selection, Gladiators train to perfection through hundreds of victories in the fighting arenas making sport for the public masses. Technically members of the maula caste, experienced slave gladiators rank among the most prized of a House's retainers.

Attributes Strength +1, Constitution +1, Dexterity +1
Skills Armed Combat 3, Athletics 3, Dodge 3, Survival 2, Unarmed Combat 2
Traits Shield Fighting, Bimanual Conditioning
Other Characteristics
Caste 0, Resistance 3

Slavemaster

Charged with keeping slaves and prisoners in line, Slavemasters perform as brutal taskmasters, often relying whips and canes to goad their wards to physical exertion.

Attributes Strength +2, Reaction +1
Skills Administration (security) 1(3), Armed Combat (any) 1(2), Dodge 3, Interrogation 2, Ranged Combat (maula pistol) 2(3), Unarmed Combat 1
Traits Alertness
Other Characteristics
Caste 1, Resistance 2

Troubadour

Trained in the art of music and storytelling, Troubadours—such as the Master Storytellers of House Jongleur—wander from world to world entertaining noble courts or performing for the masses. Often having reputations for being gossips, rakes or spies, Troubadours also practice at arms in case their side pursuits land them in trouble.

Attributes Strength +1, Perception +1, Presence +2
Skills Armed Combat (melee arms) 2, Artistry 2, Athletics 2, Charm 3, Performance (music) 2(4), Subterfuge 1, World Knowledge (any, any) 2(3,4)
Traits Renegade
Other Characteristics
Caste 2 to 4, Resistance 2

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Name

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House Minor
Homeworld
Conditioning
Early Life
House Service
Personal Calling
Caste

Physique
Strength
Constitution
Coordination
Dexterity
Reaction

Intellect
Logic
Perception
Charisma
Presence
Willpower
Prescience
Sight
Vision

The Valor of the Brave

Armament (I) v
Armed Combat (P)
Assassination (C) v
Athletics (P)
Dodge (C)
Concealment (C)
Impersonation (Ch)
Infiltration (I) v
Military Operations (I) v
Performance (C)
Ranged Combat (C)
Stealth (C)
Survival (P)
Transport (C)
Unarmed Combat (C)

The Learning of the Wise

Computation (I)
Culture (I)
Economics (I)
History (I)
Language (I)
Law (I)
Medical Arts (I)
Mentat Trance (I)
Pharmacy (I)
Politics (I)
Projection (I)
Sciences (I)
Theology (I)
Underworld (I)
World Knowledge (I)

The Justice of the Great

Administration (I) v
Command (Ch) v
Diplomacy (Ch) v
Espionage (I) v
Interrogation (Ch)
Leadership (Ch) v
Mercantilism (I) v
Propaganda (I) v
Psychology (I)
Racketeering (I) v
Security (I) v
Statecraft (I) v
Subornation (I)
Subterfuge (I)
Voice (C)

The Prayers of the Righteous

Artistry (I)
BG Way (I)
Bargaining (Ch)
Charm (Ch)
Equipment (I)
First Aid (I)
Gaming (I)
Observation (I)
Persuasion (I)
Prescience (Pr)
Prophesy (Pr)
Repair (I)
Ritualism (I) v
Sabotage (I) v
Truthtrance (I)

Valor Traits

Learning Traits

Justice Traits

Prayers Traits

Valor Reputations

Learning Reputations

Justice Reputations

Prayers Reputations

Initiative Total ___

Option Points Spent ○○○○○○○○

Karama Total ___

Karama Points Spent ○○○○○○○○○○

Reknown Total ___

Valor ___ Learning ___
Justice ___ Prayer ___

Unspent Experience

○○○○○○○○○○○○
○○○○○○○○○○○○

Weapons

Weapon	Range	Accuracy	Blk/Par	Damage	Mode

Equipment

Resistance

Armor Type ___

___

___

Physical Protection ___
Energy Protection ___

Injuries

Healthy ○○○○○○○○
Stunned ○○○○○○○○
Wounded ○○○○○○○○
Incapacitated ○○○○○○○○
Near Death ○○○○○○○○
Dead

Notes



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