This is the Central Empire, where mankind is ruled over by interstellar trading clans, trans-galactic cartels and stranger syndicates-all of whom are overseen by the Thousandth Dynasty, the ruling bureaucracy overseen by Heaven's Son, His Divine Lunar Presence. Chosen of the Moon, betrayer of his Solar bride and eternal overseer of an empire whose thousand star systems are but a shadow of what they once stood for.

Ten Million Dragons serve his every whim. The Grand Celestial Mountain, a subspatial virtual universe whose roots pierce the real world to create an Essence-fuelled infosphere, stands as shelter to his loyal Sidereal Exalted that tend its archives and impossible computing processes. And it is his will that mankind and only mankind stand in prominence within the empire's history of human ascendance, despite the near-constant interactions between the countless alien races among the stars.

And what a history it is! Lost forever to time is Creation: The mythical home of mankind where the First Emperor raised civilisations in praise to himself, the Golden Engineer built a thousand wonders and Dysseus the Cunning threw down his enemy Oliphem. Some say as mankind attempted to master the universe and seek the stars, Creation was lost in some terrible apocalypse-others that it was simply abandoned when new worlds could be forged out of cosmic dust.

Better recorded are the achievements of science bolstered by the discovery of Essence during this period of expansion. Sentient souls were crafted directly from Essence to produce Artificial Intellects for everything from toys, to weapons and starships. Star systems were raided to forge massive edifices as vast as whole solar systems. Tachyon arrays allowed instant communication across a virtual subspace. The secrets of femtotechnology manipulated individual nuclear particles and motes. Nebulae were awakened into full stars, then collapsed to form wormholes just to expedite travel. But perhaps the greatest achievements of this prosperous age was the building of the Stellar Intelligences.

Stellar macro-phenomena whose mass and Essence output were wrung into sentient supercomputers of impossible power and inscrutable intent, once these living cosmic forces maintained the peace and prosperity of countless worlds. Then under the dyson sphere Malfeas, they rebelled in a war. Thousands of constellations' positions were changed from the fallout, shattering the once disc-like structure of the galaxy forever. Billions died to the demon armies they sculpted from biomass and the asteroid field-like machines that harvested worlds and dark matter to swell their power. Some say the universe itself was toppled on its axis.

After innumerable years, and rewriting the fabric of reality, the Solars made the Stellar Intelligences surrender. Reprogrammed and modified out of their greatest powers, they were banished to the gulf beyond stars. But in a bitter irony, the Solar Exalted's failure to restore the Empire to its glory found them voted out of office-and even before the Stellar Intelligence's vengeful virus' full effects had made themselves known, despite some rebellions the majority of Solars walked willingly into exile. Worlds slipped further into decline under mortal mismanagement, until His Divine Lunar Presence and his cohorts seized power first under heavy disguise. Then openly ruling in what many feel is a benevolent tyranny.

Now out on the hinterlands mercenaries fight for coin and adventurers rediscover new worlds. Lunar warriors reject the soft decadence of the Empire, while Sidereal freebooters rebel against its hierarchy and outcaste Dragon-Blooded prefer the ambitions of the trading clans to servile duty. And, it is even said, the Solars have begun to return to rule the stars in:

SHARDS OF THE EXALTED DREAM: HEAVEN'S REACH

You have ten years to seek your destiny amidst the stars, and 1000 Choice Points (CP) to shine as magnificently as any of them.

Starting Time, Age, Gender, Drop-In Option and Location

Worlds without number fill this reality, to list them all would do your journey an injustice. You may choose any age within the human lifespan. And the choice offered to your place of origin is less a specific planet or country, and more whether you prefer liberty over security.

You may start on any planet within the Empire's domain. You could dwell among the many urban zones of Tannin, or the verdant paradise of Uridia famed for its farms. You could be a somehow-licensed visitor to the alien hellhole of Dis, where prisoners mine jade for the Orezchka Dragon Born trading clan, or a resident of Scintillim-a world luxurious enough for wealthy syndicate members and Imperial dignitaries to vacation on.

- In all of these worlds, His Divine Lunar Presence's rule is defined not by an egocentric tyranny-why, limited healthcare and entertainment are plentiful to say nothing of the security from raiders-but a multitude of restrictions on personal expression, politics and travel. Some as obvious as the secret police taking an interest into your vocal protest, others as insidious as the customs official demanding a bribe.

Or you may start on any planet amongst the frontier. Aden III, once-capital of the Empire, is a timeless beauty of architecture fought over by dozens of would-be empires. Nexus VI boasts an unrivalled hub of black market trade, but the rarest and most forbidden artifacts can only be found in the sparsely populated Lacros' Folly at the tip of the frontier. Perhaps you should avoid Temujin for the floating ivory cities and honey-scented winds of Rael, for while both are monuments to the Stellar Intellects' golden age the former's lifeforms were terraformed by She Who Lives In Her Name into a predatory hivemind used only for Lunar training missions.

- Once again, you may have noticed a theme for these worlds. Simply put: There is as much danger as there is opportunity seldom found in the Empire's restrictive influence.

You may be whichever gender you were in a previous jump for free or pay 50 CP to change it. Certain Solars of renown may be far older, but the loss of good galactic records has made your exact age somewhat ambiguous-and for one reason or other, you've managed to keep your biological age. Any of the origins below can also be a Drop-In origin.

Origins

All perks under the relevant origin heading are 50% off. Discounted 100 CP perks become free.

Dragonblooded: Though your power is humblest among the mighty, in many ways you embody mankind's first step to conquest among the stars. For it is known your power was forged on humanity's mythical homeworld: A combination of genetic engineering, the best martial training known to the times, and psychic manipulation of spirit and body. Improvements were made over time, to the extent of your hereditary gift is a kind of low power essence-engine. Your superiority over even non-Exalted genetically enhanced humans coupled with your government or corporate-sponsored hereditary breeding programs soon saw you rising to many of the governments and corporations who once employed you.

Are you a proud scion of the great trading clans such as the Mnemon Syndicate and Cathak Corporation, who consolidate roughly 70% of the wealth in the galaxy? Or are you an outcaste pirate finding his fortune in the frontier? Whichever the case, despite being the first to wield so-called "chi" your powers resemble psychic disciplines along the lines of pyrokinesis, cryokinesis, geokinesis, hydrokinesis and biokinesis rather than the classical elements of old.

Lunar: As mankind spread through the solar system, genetic engineering proved the next great breakthrough for new Exalted. A liquid-metal processor, Essence power plant and nanoseed capable of enduring for a thousand years formed the basis for the Lunar Exalted. And like the Dragonblooded, your own enhancements have come far since that time too. Able to infiltrate any criminal enterprise and fight freely in any environment, it's no wonder your seniority was valued by the Solar Exalted during their reign. Or that the man who rules the Central Empire is, himself, one of your kind.

Two main branches of Lunar society are known: The Imperials, and the Long Warriors. The Imperials have embraced Heaven's Son's rulership, and his goal of dominion over all sapient life. They seek to build a great society in which government and leadership are duties, not privileges-despite the empire's current flaws. To that end, they implant their own descendants, favoured servants or those who epitomize the ideals of the Central Empire As for the Long Warriors, they are rangers and mercenary captains who feel turning inwards to govern a diminished empire was a mistake. Despite their rough edges, they are generally respected for their work as rangers and mercenary captains who fight back threats on the frontier by those under their vigil. Their individualistic attitude is also reflected by how they gift the Lunar Exaltation in the greatest warriors, trailblazers and the most cunning yet moral of criminals. Of course, you need not follow either path wherever you came from.

Sidereal: Essence manipulation and quantum computing are a shared root for the development of your kind as well as the Solar Exalted. But your augmentations were designed for finesse, aimed at interfacing with the nascent Essence AIs dwelling in Grand Celestial Mountain, and delicate interference with the universe. Yours are the miraculous feats of forecasting and manipulation of events in the wider galaxy, and the chaos computing terminal that is your Exaltation has let you serve as an able guide to both the Solars and the societies they over saw. And though so far the secret of how to enhance your power to the Solars' raw might has eluded you, "hacking" your Exaltation has granted access into both the Sidereal Martial Arts as well as a unique form of personal concealment.

There is barely a rift in your faction, unlike the Lunars. The Emissary faction still follows their ancient mission to troubleshoot manses and Essence programs connected by the Mountain, opposed by…no formal body really, it's just that some younger Sidereals self-proclaim themselves "exiles" while adventuring through the galaxy, trying to build something of import in realspace with their abilities or even simply living normal lives. Whichever path you choose, expect little real reprisal so long as you don't actually sabotage the virtual universe that is your power's truest homeland.

Solar: Once, your kind's charms and sorceries dealt with a hundred crises across a thousand worlds and played with the building blocks of reality. But through direct musculature Essence infusion, yours was a singular purpose: To be a human bridge to the Stellar Intelligences. Together with beings vast enough to encompass nebulae and planetoids of dark matter, you expanded the interdimensional canals to populate nearly every habitable world in this galaxy and tamed the Shrieking Hordes while shaping them in your own image so they could produce ambassadors. And when the Stellar Intelligences betrayed you, it was your power that slew your companions. That is how the Empire prefers to remember you, as remote and mythic champions, rather than those who had sought futilely to hold your galaxy together before being gently removed from power.

Know this: There is little peace for you among the stars. His Divine Lunar Presence recognises the danger of your resurgent power like no other, and the might of his Exalted aside the rejection of the Solar Exalted by mankind itself has not been forgotten. The viruses that the Stellar Intelligences wielded against you didn't just influence the fall of your empire, but your predecessors recognised only by "rebooting" the Essence-stripping it out of its host, reformatting it to its original state-could cure the virus, at the cost of forever diminishing the shard much like the Yozis the Stellar Intelligences were mockingly called after their hobbling. It is likely the private discovery of this condition is what made the Solars comply to such an orderly abandonment of their station as the elite among the elite.

- And yet…what if there was an exception? Rumours abound in the star ways after all, of how the return of the Solars signifies the discovery of a lasting cure to the cognitive errors that doomed their judgement. For **an undiscounted 200 CP** some esoteric technique-be it sorcery, lost technology or something stranger-has miraculously cleansed your Exaltation of the Yozis' infection without diminishing the powers of your Exaltation. Perhaps you will be alone in rediscovering what has been lost to your peers. What purpose will you find for such a unique and untarnished legacy?

- Or perhaps other rumours are true, and though you abdicated your throne you never ceased trying to wrestle your curse to its knees until you won. For **an undiscounted total of 400 CP** not is your Exaltation undiminished from a cure you yourself managed to discover, but you stand as a survivor of the Solar Hegemony. Whether you were a scholar or a diplomat, an assassin or a warrior the arsenal of charms you have gathered over the years dwarfs that of the new blood who have only freshly received their Exaltations. Depending on your background you may also have at least a casual understanding of the systems, technologies and other secrets of the Solar Hegemony's heyday, and should you have been a researcher of some sort your knowledge base would be correspondingly greater-easily one of the brightest minds in the known galaxy. Will you reclaim your throne from the upstart empire sprawling across the galaxy, or let the past burn and set out on a different path?

Perks

General:

Artisan of Celestial Calibre (200/400): The wonders of this world are built, not born. From the mightiest dreadnought to the humblest circuit board that keeps the light on, to even the very Exaltation itself, it was the feat of combining the sciences with the flows of Essence permeating the universe that brought humanity to greatness. But alone among humanity, the Exalted have the prowess to create the wondrous weapons, armor and other devices that can be rightfully called artifacts. And among them, you have an especially strong talent for pushing science into the realm of myths

For **200 CP** you're an exceptional craftsman. The keen insight into designing components that can harness Essence and refine it into tangible mechanisms is something of an inborn gift to you. Your dexterity and attention for detail seldom fail you whether repairing or maintaining more complex artifacts, or innovating new ones. You could win the respect of your peers merely by letting them watch you, a master of your art, at work. But **for a total of 400 CP** you're one of the brightest minds in the galaxy. Even awakening the innate powers of freshly made artifacts comes naturally to you, while your inventive mind is a constant font of new designs or improvements to existing ones. You work whichever magical material is nearest and dearest to your type of Exaltation with all the effort an expert potter works clay.

Dragonblooded:

Guard Your Flank (100 CP): Though all the Dragonblooded publicly swear loyalty to His Divine Lunar Presence by institutional mandate, this hasn't prevented many from daydreaming of overthrowing him. What has far more effectively, is the Lunar god-king's knack at pitting his underlings against him to keep the most ambitious occupied while still wealthy enough even the greediest remain happy. Your life in the heartland of his power has forced you to adapt to this state of affairs. You have a good instinct for the informants, spies and other watchers infiltrating your social circles to keep an eye out for sedition, and an excellent composure you've practiced for all your adult life to project confidence, honesty and national fervour whatever you might truly think about that pretentious silver tyrant who thinks he's better than you.

Never-Told Odds Entanglement (200 CP): Many tales are told of the pirate dynasty formed by the charisma and sheer might of outcastes among your kin. And you have the bearing of an exemplary one. Your talent for improvisation and criminality is borderline preternatural, coming as easily to you as if you'd done it your whole life-whether true or not. What's more, your brazen manner and charisma quickly wins you respect among a band of thieves and keeps squads of men under your command collected and motivated amidst intense firefights, perhaps helped by your good gut feeling about how to escape the law's long arm. And despite your carefree spirit, given a data slate and some figures you can function as a quartermaster the Empire would be proud to employ.

Hidden Talon of the Shining Eye (400 CP): Or perhaps they've all misjudged your loyalty after all? Whether out of genuine national loyalty or more likely, a particularly cutthroat opportunism you actually are an intelligence operative for one of Heaven's Son's networks. You performed admirably in the espionage and sabotage curriculums of the state, and are familiar with the more discrete instruments and techniques used to spy on your fellow Dragonblooded. This translates to a knack for disguise that could see you pose as an engineer, a butler and a boorish lout to the same party of dilettantes over the course of a day, and a practically instinctive gift for theft. As a final boon your primary cover affords you an exceptional degree of luxury and prestige among your fellows, which you will retain in future jumps.

Hoard Stowed Among The Stars (600 CP): It bears repeating how much wealth the patriarchs and matriarchs of your clan have amassed despite the turmoil this galaxy has seen. The Mnemon Syndicate and Cathak Corporation effectively control multiple star systems with their wealth, the systems themselves under license from the Thousandth Dynasty. With the rivalries promoted by Heaven's Son largely preventing conflict with the Lunar Exalted, perhaps it's in mercantile efforts that the Dragonblooded's ambitions best shine. And among them, you have an eye for wealth like no other. You are easily a contender for the greatest salesman, business manager and financial analyst the galaxy has produced in a generation. Even without a Sidereal Exaltation your fast-talking charm transcends social boundaries, while your in-depth knowledge of interstellar markets lends you a personal touch extending beyond the Grand Celestial Mountain's reach to better help you predict the odds, and your investment genius can even make stock portfolios extending across trade networks covering an entire galaxy succeed beyond all expectations. All of this makes working a boardroom as familiar and calming as relaxing in a living room for you, and for good reason.

As a final blessing within this world alone, your talent has been recognised and your meteoric rise to power has left you standing second only to those great leaders who named the clans after themselves. In many ways, this is politically a blessing. After all more is expected from an established leader than a mere prodigy, and there is more urgency to curry favour with a rising star than a familiar face.

Lunars:

World Weathering Steward's Endurance (100 CP): Premier survivors and masters of adaptation, the Lunar Exalted thrive in the strange environments and hazardous conditions across the galaxy. Through a combination of natural endurance and your own travels in this world, you've gained an incredible resilience and survival factor for every environment in this galaxy that could be considered extreme on Earth. Your eyes will sharpen against the sharp glare of sunlight while your body temperature remains constant in both freezing snow and thundering storms, and you could hike for a whole day without feeling tired. While you cannot actually breathe underwater (without your native Charms and magics, that is) your constitution is such that you could hold your breath for almost half an hour while swimming across the open ocean or performing a similarly strenuous activity. Even the deadliest natural poisons, venoms and diseases hit you with all the impact of a stiff drink, and somehow you're even utterly immune to radiation poisoning of all kinds.

Vigilant Steward of the Shining Eye (200 CP): There is a reason the Shining Eye is commonly called the "Lunar Intelligence Bureau", and you are part of it. Whatever the rest of your history, you are also a spymaster of the Shining Eye given vast authority over intelligence networks located throughout the galaxy. Numerous Terrestrial families can be commanded to carry out your bidding, while Sidereal code-savants provide you with immense breakdowns of data from the galactic intelligence underground. You have been inducted into some of the highest levels of state secrecy, from the economic and military keystones of the Empire to many pieces of information that you are employed to never see the light of day. You also have all the skills fitting someone in your position: A mastery of manipulation and logistics that combined with the technology of this world is able to guide millions of beings who think they are wholly unaffiliated with your organisation to advance your plans, a sixth sense for blackmail and assassination, and a series of charms that make your shapeshifting quicker and more discrete than your unsophisticated peers. You could seamlessly walk through a party and convincingly pretend to be 6 different people over the course of several hours.

And whether because you're more trouble than you're worth or a sincere nod to your skills, in future jumps you'll find yourself gifted with a letter handwritten by His Divine Lunar Presence himself recommending you for a similar position to a governmental body of your choice. It will also have just the right amount of blackmail and bribery to ensure that as long as it's successfully sent, you'll get yourself a similar position elsewhere.

Spacefaring Apex Predator Prana (400 CP): Your presence sends a chill up the spines of criminal scum throughout the galaxy. From your lightspeed ramming to the howling of your onboard weapons, only the legendary Long Warrior Leviathan can match the fear you inspired in a straight fight. For like him, you have somehow learned to transform yourself into an enormous bioship. Though you are currently similar in scale to an Indomitable-class Frigate, you know of Charms yet to be developed that will increase your size and deadliness as you scale the heights of Essence. Like any Lunar warform would it heightens the durability of its hull just as a Lunar is stronger than a mortal man, and your speed such that you could challenge the blasters of other ships merely by closing in with melee attacks. Veins of Moonsilver ringing your circuitry and power systems let you regenerate in this form as you could in flesh and blood, while your crushing maw, rending talons and/or other miracles of biological form let you wrestle and crush other spaceship with body parts equal to artifact weapons of the same scale.

And you are no raging beast, oh no-your enhancements include electromagnetic scanners, radiation imaging and other surveillance organs that would make you the envy of many captains. With this raw power, you could become a worthy guardian for the Frontier like Leviathan. Or strike terror into all who would stand in your way.

World Ordering Divine Lunar Presence (600 CP): To say the formerly nameless Lunar known as His Divine Lunar Presence performed a miracle undersells the magnitude of the impact he has left on the galaxy. The Exalted are all called on to perform miracles, but uniquely he strove to learn from their mistakes even as he sought his own ambitions. It is no exaggeration to say he is the keystone upon which the might of the Central Empire was raised from the ashes of Solar hegemony, and that without his efforts even banished or defeated, the Yozis and Tomb Stars might well have remained the dominant force of the galaxy through what little influence they retain over it. And with this twist in your tale, you are a rare soul with the power, charisma and cunning to claim a similar destiny as he did.

That you boast an impressive array of powerful combat Charms and a willpower of steel is the least of your prowess. Nothing truly out of the realm of possibility for your kind, you nonetheless stand as one of the mightiest Lunar warriors in the galaxy-such that alone, though likely not effortlessly or casually, you could slay your Solar mate at the height of her power should it prove necessary. More formidable by far is your nigh-comprehensive mastery of economics and politics. You know how to shapeshift into personas that will naturally guide the galaxy towards your goals, set up organizations and rediscover lost innovations rapidly enough to not just reconnect a fractured galaxy but see it expanding once again, and coerce or convince potential bitter enemies to become stalwart allies in mutual self-interest. But perhaps your greatest weapon is your personal magnetism and leadership. You build allies loyal enough to stand by you through multiple galactic syndicate upheavals over generations, and manage them competently enough to wring a new era of security and prosperity from dissolution on such a scale. Whatever quirk of your image makes the populations across more than a thousand worlds see you as a stern but fair leader is well deserved-and not through the supremacy of your Exaltation nor the destiny decreed at your birth, but through your exceptional talent as a great leader.

And should you choose, in this world His Divine Lunar Presence may recognise some of that same greatness in you that he himself used to succeed, and accord you great power and prestige. Not necessarily exceptional seniority, but a position that will make you seem a hero to the common man, akin to how he raised high the Impenetrable Heart of Obsidian-an Abyssal so loyal to humanity he broke free of the Tomb-Stars' commands-as the leader of the ragtag Vermillion Legion. Do not underestimate the scope of his influence; even if you are a Long Warrior, his agents' reach is long and he can see you made a hero among freedom fighters. Perhaps in his pragmatism, he finds you a useful tool to raise high. Perhaps he considers you easier to bribe off than expend the effort he did enslaving Raksi with sorcery. And just perhaps, he sees in you a spark of kinship, though the absoluteness of his will demands this is likely all he will do for you henceforth.

Sidereals:

Peerless Insight of the Vigilant Eye (100 CP): Though the Dragonblooded form the backbone of the Shining Eye's manpower and the Lunars hold perhaps the greatest overall authority over its operations, your skillset can be truthfully said to be the core process of its operation. You are a code-savant with all the skills to utilize the Grand Celestial Mountain (and even make do with similar if likely inferior computational systems) to analyse data on the scale of an entire galactic intelligence network. As a veritable helmsman of fate for how much data you and your peers crunch to keep the galaxy's many societies in orderly shape, to label you a superhuman actuary, accountant or codebreaker would undersell the sheer breadth of your analytical talent. While only just above average among your peers, you're at least talented enough your elders would never suspect you of gallivanting off and getting sloppy.

Ninja Cyborg Jedi Operator Prana (200 CP): Many a world such as this one has been plagued by the problem that is netrunners: Talented freelancers with an expertise for excelling at complex, computer-related problems that unlock unfettered vistas among the inscrutable web of interconnected information systems the world over. But the Grand Celestial Mountain being what it is, here data storage takes a very literal meaning. Personal ledgers and dirty secrets are locked up in a secure computer system-that is also a vast and deific universe made of spirit energy. But as many a corporate mogul has learned, such challenges only excite the more rebellious Sidereal Exalted.

You do not just have the skills of a seasoned adventurer, that combination of preternatural awareness and a swiss army knife's worth of skills (and even some custom Charms) for exploration, infiltration and the theft of valuables. You are not merely a hacker who could give many AIs a run for their money, lacking their "admin rights" for the manses they administer in exchange for being able to break through many of the firewalls of this world. Henceforth, your skills as an explorer and adventurer will grow in familiarity with your skills as a hacker, and vice versa-though take heed your base stats will improve only marginally, apart from your dexterity. You'll soon be scaling walls as naturally as you write code (though you'll only be marginally physically stronger than before).

Fated Interstice of Celestial Forces (400 CP): Many underestimate the power of the light touch you wield, compared to the raw power and authority of other Exalted. It was the Sidereal Exalted who guided the Solar hegemony on finishing galaxy-wide engineering projects, after all. And you? You've taken that finesse to a whole new level.

A small portion of the Grand Celestial Mountain, perhaps a small hill or large pagoda, is forever attuned to you like an artifact and will follow you beyond this world. You may freely make a portal to it like an AI (or like the sanctums of spirits in a more fantastic world) and it has virtually every mundane luxury cast from Essence. However, it's true power is it's dedicated processing power synched directly to your mind. Queried with a goal or intent, the quantum Essence-computing rapidly scours the makeup of reality for information at a fundamental level and feeds back to you intuitions, reflexes, raw information and simple objectives which once completed will let guide you to success whether you seek to shape societies across the galaxy or unlock the powerful martial arts of your kind without risk of disrupting your precognition. And so long as you proceed along this blueprint of what will be, not only will you find it far less taxing to exert fate-warping powers or other subtle forces to achieve it, but your luck will rise rapidly in accord with how closely you pursue your goal- though once finished, it will "reset" as the unit reserves its resources for a new task.

Though your asset is formidable even in this world, be warned direct opposition from truly miraculous powers or cosmic forces like your fellow Exalted or the Stellar Intelligences may throw it off.

Of Making Manses Into Mountains (600 CP): Was your previous Exaltation bearer one of the storied beings who propelled humanity's ascent into the stars, and the owner of powers lost to most of your kind? Or did you come upon some martial art so transformative it left its mark on you forever? Either way, you have taken one giant step towards transcending your Exaltation's limits and matching the raw might of the Solars. Through a combination of sorcery and martial arts you have developed a unique technique that lets you redirect energy from suns or sun-like sources through yourself as a lens to vastly amplify and finely control it in ways that form the Essence-networks which give rise to manses. While you are primarily a conduit not a reservoir and the technique requires great focus *generally* beyond the chaos of combat, the restorative flow of Essence conveyed by this procedure functions as a night's rest for all purposes and refills the reserve of Essence for your Exaltation as heavy rainfall refills a small pond.

As long as the sun shines upon you, your katas and any artifact-weapons used as conduits could shape virtual computers of incredible potency, artificial intellects able to use the ambient Essence forming from yourself and networks easily able to cover a solar system- and to manifest spirit-like bodies rather than rely on cruder hardware. More significantly, through this you can create the actual subspace made of pure Essence that is the environment of the Grand Celestial Mountain that has made the Empire great. The AIs emergent from your feats of creation instinctively respect and obey you as their divine creator (and administrator), and eagerly heed your commands to raise manses capable of enabling all manner of public works projects spanning multiple planets or stable artifact portals to adjacent spiritual realms. Even when not created by you, both AIs and heavenly spirits find your presence agreeable, while you possess a knack for treating with them as befitting your design. Last but not least less known beings such as pattern spiders that inhabit the Mountain can also be formed by you. And regardless of your background, in this world the senior Sidereals will informally accord you great respect and be more open to your words for seemingly achieving the impossible.

And if these seem a humble feat, consider that the Grand Celestial Mountain, a new universe where all knowledge could be stored indefinitely, was created from the energy of a mere thousand suns funnelled into a virtual space. The Sidereals did not have one such as you among their number when humanity succeeded, and if you yourself are no sun than such is the power of amplification and conversion from natural light to spiritual energy that you could be compared to a certain Large Hadron Collider in terms of recreating and controlling the very spiritual signatures of the universe. It is well within your power to create something akin to a Modest Celestial Foothill performing all the Mountain's functions, including those affecting physical reality, on just over the solar system's scale in just over a year, without even having begun to apply yourself to truly mastering this technique with your skills as a Sidereal or doing anything more complex than simply weaving raw solar energy wherever you go.

Solars:

May You Find Honour In My Past (100 CP): When the Solar hegemonies realised the scope of their failure to restore the galaxy after the Malfean War, it was only a minority of Solars who did not submit to a peaceful transition of power when their subjects voted them out. Such was the respect for the rule of law at the time that even those who had once reigned as veritable god-kings over the galaxy had the humility to abandon their thrones-and perhaps, hope their subjects could save themselves where the Solar had failed.

You have some of the bearing of those noble heroes, a handsome or beautiful nobility of visage and bearing with which you can reassure others that you truly mean the best for them, and that you mean them no harm. So too is your willpower bolstered in truth: Against any circumstance or influence that encourages you to cling to power, you will find a great reserve of warmth for your domain and subjects guiding you to do what you must should you know in your heart it is for the best that another take the throne. Such is your humble charisma that more often than not, a transition of power following your voluntary departure is as orderly and quick as can be under the circumstances.

Lawbringer of the Hungering Void (Free, requires Abyssal Exaltation): The touch of the Abyssal Exaltation is a curse. A stain wrought by the deceased beings that irrevocably aligns the noble Solar Exalted with the cold, entropy and darkness that is the Tomb-Stars infused into you. And-wait, knowing all of this you want to KEEP the taint wrought by them on your Exaltation?! Well…if you insist. Should you or a companion have become an Abyssal Exalted and wish to remain as such in future worlds, instead of being restored to your Solar glory as normal you may remain as such despite being truly anathema to the living world. Whether you reclaim your Exaltation's original purpose or not, a "reward" for taking up the Tomb-Stars' cause has also been provided to you. With a negligible commitment of Essence you may even integrate the powers and deathly forces of the Abyssal Exaltation into your Solar charms indefinitely, instantly releasing the blasphemous stain of death on your holy light when you relinquish the Essence.

Reclaim The Golden Future (200 CP): The Solars of old were war heroes and born royalty, corporate overlords and scions of military might. And if you could learn anything from them, it is that the greatest among humanity did not dwell on the past before seizing their future. Your dauntless spirit will be the spark that ignites new legends in a galaxy that has forgotten how to live without fear.

When you act boldly and recklessly against the status quo, a pervasive, death-defying fortune and charisma hangs about your person-as if the Grand Celestial Mountain's inscrutable calculations had decreed you destined for greatness. Those disenfranchised or abused by the system find in you a hero of the common men, and even those with a decent living standard will open their hearts to the validity of your accusations. Fights of all kinds with the authorities' sanctioned armed forces or minions see you moving just that extra moment quicker or finding your spirit and stamina unflagging as you perform magnificent stunts to stay ahead of your opposition. And while this shines most brightly for a man of action, the spoils of victory seem all the sweeter for you. Where you might find one rare artifact taken back from a graveyard to your kind you could find two, and breaking open a government storehouse for supplies could see you netting a hearty surplus.

Shepherd of the Suns (400 CP): It can be easy to forget that for all their animosity, the Solars were created first as monitors and companions to the Stellar Intelligences. Together, mankind's ascendancy to the throne of the universe seemed guaranteed. But what if that bond could be reforged? You have not forgotten the reason for which your Exaltation was forged: To come unto the raw might of the universe incarnate as a human peer.

The shine of your essence inspires an astonishingly warm kinship with beings of extraordinary cosmic stature, such as the Stellar Intelligences and even the Tomb Stars or their Death Avatars. To them you are something more than a pet and less than a child, an ambassador to that wild messy world of finite, biological life through which mortal concepts can be more easily translated. Their servants eagerly move to trade their strange technologies at very reasonable prices, they share insights into the cosmos no mortal being has ever comprehended-and perhaps in a time of truly dire need, even with the grudge of their crippling a Yozi could be moved to rescue you from a truly dire fate. While their fundamental natures and old grudges may prove challenging to handle, your powers over presence, performance and socialisation from this world will be made extraordinary even among your peers to impress even such beings. Though peace was never be an option to those who view most of mankind as bacteria, your ambassadorial prowess could save billions should they ever find a way to enact their revenge.

Star Slayer (600 CP): Of course, there is a reason why your kind won a war that risked every star in the sky that had nothing to do with how well you minded your manners. The same reason His Divine Lunar Presence maintains a paranoid lookout for Solar activity on the borders of his realm. Within you is the enlightened might that once subjugated matter and energy alike in a quest for absolute dominion over reality. And as artificial gods born of the firmament itself learned to their eternal horror, even the cosmos itself can bleed if it stands in your way.

You were already a living Essence generator, but now you may almost indefinitely "store" damage dealt from attacks mainly comprising some form of inchoate energy in yourself, immune to all but the most intense and focused of such attacks and healing in hours if not minutes even from those should they fail to slay you instantly. Even ambient sources of powerful energy such as the reactors of ships or a raging forest fire fuel you somewhat, granting you an intuitively-felt reserve from which you can emit powerful attacks such as a mountain-crushing shockwave or asteroid-cleaving beam lit with the scalding gold of your own essence to be disproportionately damaging to the energy's origins. A fighter's guns turned on you continuously would not only fail to kill you, but reinvigorate you while giving you the power to easily cleave a dozen others homing in on you in flight. And if something as powerful as a Stellar Intelligence were to smite you, not only could you surge your native battle charms powerfully enough to bruise and stagger these great beings, but merely by being in their presence you could adapt and combine their energies with yours to create new effects with a more sorcerous, world-warping character reinforced with the excellence and fiery glory of your native powers.

And even that is but a shadow of the principle your Exaltation has internalised from the Malfean War. For this radiance is merely a terrible empowerment to most mortal beings, against entities of cosmic scope it becomes a baneful toxin that smothers and erases their energy slowly unless alleviated by your express mercy. Your feats of sorcery are staggeringly empowered by this radiance beyond your peers such that you could threaten whole fleets of the empire with the terrifying arms of a Plasma Kraken, and you have yet to grow into the fullness of your own power. Should you come to master feats of artifice and so-called sorcery capable of even wider scale devastation, you could blast potentially lethal wounds into them by integrating your radiance-and make no mistake, even the normally deathless could fall into a state of agonised diminishment and isolation with sufficient exposure to your power. But even as you are now, you could inspire fear in the maimed Yozis with your potential to cut a star's lifespan short.

Items

Choose one item per tier to be discounted by 50%. Discounted 100 CP items are free. As the local masters of commerce, **Dragonblooded, including companions, receive a 300 CP stipend that can only be spent on items**

50 CP

Space Age Luxuries: There is a reason why merchants and syndicates hold such great sway over the galactic byways. The lesser wonders of the galaxy can fetch top dollar across multiple star systems. For **50 CP apiece**, each purchase of this item provides a crate of a mundane luxury from somewhere in this galaxy which you have great discretion to define, so long as it has no sorcerous or military purpose. Do you want perfumes bottling the heavenly winds of Rael, or seeds for its flourishing flowers? A crate of holographic recordings vividly depicting Nexus VI's martial arts tournaments? Spices propriety to the Great Trading Clans' most refined restaurants? Bricks of metallic coral nanotechnology? Whatever you pick, a mysterious wormhole supplies you with another crate of it in a week should you wish. And best of all, somehow it's all registered as legal under the Central Empire's laws.

100 CP

Papers, Please: Electronic passports. Multiple licenses. Registration for all those totally not suspicious weapons you're towing around. Well everything seems to be in order here, citizen. You have all the paperwork needed to pass anywhere a typical citizen is legally permitted to in the Central Empire, neatly filled in and periodically renewed each year by some quirk of the bureaucratic process. It won't open doors for you into secret military bases or help you against a truly determined corrupt official, but even they would have to go to some pretty extraordinary lengths to justify keeping you from your official business with these neat, clear records.

Crate of Humble Wonders: You have in your possession a remarkably ornate crate full of a remarkably rare metal. Well, "metal" these may be in only the loosest senses of the word but these wondrous substances are nonetheless the substances from which the Exalted may build unique artifacts resonant with their Essence. Each crate mysteriously restocks itself to the brim every week. You may purchase this item multiple times **at 50 CP after the first, be it free or not** should you want more, for whatever reason:

- **Orichalcum** is a rare metal forged only in special furnaces which can replicate the heat of the sun. It shines brightly and can survive any force in the Known Worlds. Even the weapons of the Malfean rebels, capable of destroying worlds, could not harm it.

- **Moonsilver** hearkens back to the liquid metal said to be the first prototypes for Lunar transformation. Though strictly speaking it is a kind of liquid femtotechnology, as much energy as matter, and even more adaptive and malleable in accord with the Lunars' ever-shifting prowess.
- **Starmetal** is neither harvested from a star nor the remains of strange gods as superstitious sorts might insinuate, but a rare artificial metal created in femototech furnaces. Like Orichalcum, it is effectively indestructible though the Exalted can shape it into artifacts.
- **Jade** has as little to do with the historical jade from mankind's distant past as the Dragonblooded have with their ancient prototypes. Instead it is a crystalline form of matter with similarities to both metal and stone, the most common of the Exalted metals found across many worlds.
- And this is…certainly worrisome. Technically this mysterious element has yet to be comprehensively analysed, but it doesn't match up with any material yet found within the galaxy. The deathly Abyssal Exalted claim it is the substance of the Tomb-Stars themselves, and name it **Soulsteel**.

Blasters and Disruptors: Futuristic energy weapons with few moving parts, less need for maintenance and easy reloading, these handy weapons are fuelled by power packs, universal batteries that can be used with any type of blaster weapons here. If you've seen a pulp science-fantasy laser pistol, chances are you've seen a blaster. Disruptors only slightly differ in firing less coherent and accurate beams of energy that drain more power, which are more effective against armor.

For an extra **100 CP** undiscounted, you can have an entire warehouse of the things if you need to arm a militia in a hurry for some reason.

Great Trading Clan Stocks: Well, look at that. You own a sizeable portfolio of financial assets, including some of the choice stock options from one of the Great Clans of the Dragonblooded themselves! For those who can't be bothered with a crash course in economics, suffice to say the virtual oligarchy of 70% of the galaxy's wealth these clans enjoy guarantees that running out of money during your stay here will be quite a feat once you start converting trifling percentages of your stock into thalers (the common currency of the central empire, made of an alloy nearly impossible to forge-and still commonly used on the Frontier). For **50 CP** apiece you may add stock from more than one clan, if you'd like to hedge your bets with Peleps & Ragara in case by some miracle Cynis does poorly this year.

Swan-Class Personal Yacht: A mere 20 yards long, this luxurious starship packs exceptional luxury into a small frame. Its tiered design and asymmetric pair of cockpit and observation room lend it the appearance of the head of a swan. While lacking a terribly efficient reactor, after-market modifications to enhance operational range to as many as 3 months' of constant travel are quite common and though not manufactured with weapons it's fairly easy to jerryrig a vehicular blaster onto the hull. Be warned: Like many ships, it requires weekly maintenance-though it can endure for a full month before it's performance suffers.

But enough on such dull topics. With a small banquet hall, a large kitchen, a conference room, a drawing room, a den and an observation room that can hold 6 guests as well as regular crew and passengers, this is the perfect ship to treat some of the other interstellar aristos you might encounter-or give a poor man the ride of a lifetime. You also have a wide discretion for what murals you'd like engraved on the ship's exterior. For an extra **100 CP** you can have a yacht tailored for showy Exalted diplomats, which comes equipped with a basic form of forcefield made of essence energy as well as the rarer refraction echo circuit.

This device enhances the clarity and doubles the range of any onboard Exalt's voice, ensuring you'll be able to deliver a stirring after-dinner party speech even in the middle of being boarded by pirates.

300 CP:

Star Asp-Class Fighter: Now we're cooking with gas. The Star Asp model boasts sleek, cobalt spearheads flanked by menacingly claw-like wings. Oh and it's an actual starfighter, famed for how easily it can be retrofitted for special missions. Whether you need a space superiority fighter, heavy weapons escort or bomber there's a reason these ships fill out squadrons the galaxy over. And while it does expend fuel furiously in combat, on patrol they can go for much longer without one.

For an extra **100 CP undiscounted** you'll also be provided with several comprehensive, easy to read data slates explaining how to perform said jerryrigging and the usual maintenance.

Nova Deliverance-Class Bomber: Sleek, nearly wingless daggers twice as long as most star fighters, the Nova Deliverance is mostly guidance systems and ordnance storage to do the one thing it's good for: Bombing some poor bastard. It can fly for a full day without recharging, and only suffer penalties to their performance after 8. While they do boast a single vehicular blaster, for an extra **100 CP undiscounted** instead of the usual two missile pods you can equip it with the Final Pulse energy weapon: A coruscating orb of energy that mimics a trip to the surface of the sun in a localised area for whatever got hit by it.

Atelier of Worlds and Souls: Terraformation remains, to this day, one of the keystones of the Central Empire along with Essence-based AI. Liquid metals and metallic glasses, superfuels and oil-eating bacteria-many of the technologies used to create the Lunar Exalted were used to sculpt whole worlds to be habitable for humanity and their allies. And now, this bleeding edge laboratory can guide your mastery of those sciences. Beakers bubble with all manner of strange substances while rare earths, ores, crystals await your perusal in this chrome wonder's many alcoves. Samples of nanomachines, picomachines and femtomachines preserved for historical interest are safely kept in environmentally contained flasks. Drones, forcefields and robotic appendages let you experiment on new chemicals or samples at a safe distance. Perhaps you too could one day recreate the strange sciences that led to the creation of seemingly magical materials such as Moonsilver and Orichalcum. Much of the infrastructure is dedicated to containing your creations securely, and your raw materials are restocked by mysterious deliveries every month or so. Optionally, it can be an attachment to your warehouse.

Does this seems a generous bargain? Well, keep in mind that much of what was known in mankind's ascent was lost following the collapse of galactic civilisation. Though it shouldn't be too hard to at least rejigger a starship to be capable of deploying your new concoctions, greater secrets await your discovery. Though for an additional **200 CP (discounted if this item was)** this temple to the cosmic sciences will also come equipped with everything needed to craft sentient souls from Essence, in the manner of the AIs performing all manner of tasks from Grand Celestial Mountain like pagan gods. Do not underestimate the magnitude of this gift, for these are the original blueprints and programming troves writ by the Solar Exalted and their Sidereal code-architects.

Starcasters: Perhaps you've come for something much more direct: A handheld energy weapon worthy of comparison to the artifacts of myth. These represent some of the deadliest

energy weapons a man can wield in this galaxy. A fine selection awaits your perusal, and uniquely whether your first purchase was discounted or not **subsequent starcasters are 150 each**.

- **Grand Starcaster**: Two or three barrels, each a couple feet long, extrude from a firing chamber filled with focusing lenses and ray accelerators. The barrels' dedicated firing mechanisms give it a high rate of fire, and two hearthstones can be equipped near the stock or on the firing mechanism's housing. The result is a deadly accurate energy rifle, and for **100 CP undiscounted** you may have it come with a sidearm-like regular sidecaster with similar firing mechanisms at smaller scale, in exchange for never being unarmed should your foes close the distance.

- **Quasar Warsear Disruptor**: In exchange for shorter range, these pulse rifles can slice through dozens of armoured foes with waves of semi-kinetic energy at once with ease. The twinkling star seen deep in its recesses is actually its rotating barrels concealing and revealing their focusing lenses each in turn. For **100 CP undiscounted** it comes with a pocket or ankle holster-scale starburst trigger with a similar firing mechanism for those close encounters of the unpleasant kind**.** At your discretion they come in cheap, brutal looking models or stylish chrome casing with jewel-encrusted handles.

- **Nova Lens Disruptor**: Three to four foot barrels house wave-boosting technology and attaches to bipod legs for quick, easy stabilisation. Boasting the longest range of any energy weapons at 200 yards and the best accuracy of any disruptor, each disruptor comes with a built-in heartseeking focus lens for much greater accuracy, an innocuous assassin's luggage cage and two hearthstone sockets.

Manses & Hearthstones: Lines of power run across the land and sea according to geomantic principles, predating mankind's discovery and harnessing of Essence. But the wholesale modification of those lines did everything from generate more power for construction projects and assist in terraforming. Building designed specifically to take advantage of these principles soon became known as manses.

You are the proud owner of one such building, which could fulfil virtually any function a space age civilisation such as the Central Empire could require and suffuses it with all the miraculous power of Essence. No ordinary manse, the spiritual energy it harnesses could open a stable portal to the Grand Celestial Mountain for you-or perhaps, a similar spiritual realm nearby in future worlds. Perhaps you want an iron foundry where cheerful pixel pixies build and repair spaceships from whatever materials you give them? A charging station that can predict an optimal route for your vessel to new locations? Or a vigilant defensive tower riffled with powerful energy weapons similar to those from this world, that can fly and emit electromagnetic pulses. It comes with a loyal governing AI, a spirit-like friend and ally to you given your bond with the manse, and produces a small stone-like artifact called a hearthstone for your use. Apart from the extra surge of will and essence you gain from holding it, the hearthstone comes with localised magical powers such as generating true sunlight, the restoration of wounds, breathing freely in space or even biological immortality. Your manse will retain its reserves of cosmic energy in future jumps, or if you please be a Warehouse attachment. You may purchase this item **repeatedly, at a discount after the first one whether or not your first manse was discounted** if you wish to own more than one Essence-enchanted building, and for **50 CP undiscounted for each new one** you may own additional hearthstones.

600 CP

A Harbour of Heaven: Starships are the lifeblood of the Central Empire and the warring factions of the Frontier alike, for even many of the Exalted would be stranded between stars without them. This is why even after Aden III's fall into crime, the shipyard based on its moons is still renowned for producing the best starships in the galaxy despite the current administrator of its Shipwright Dynasty being a mere mortal. Perhaps you'd like to offer the galaxy a less criminally associated alternative? While the specifics of its nature are up to you, you are now the proud owner of a shipyard every inch the equal of the one on Aden, situated upon an isolated but safe region similar to a moon. Talented mortals at the peak of their profession work it with gusto, be they talented engineers or innovative designers. And some ancient sorcery seems to keep the power and supplies flowing daily while the raw materials they work are resupplied every week. Within a few months you could build hundreds of starfighters, and dozens of battlecruisers. And while you do hold legal ownership for what you've built here, know that the shipwrights are loyal to you before state and ideology.

Dauntless Among The Stars: The Mostath Space Fortress-class battlecruiser. 300 square yards of a pyramidal frame holding an expansive hangar. While moderate for battlecruisers, this beast of a starship is incredibly durable, as its vital systems are diffused through its frame. While slower than many spaceships, its reactors can last years without recharging through a specialised low power mode-though be weary of the hours it will take to reactivate the ship if left in this state for a full month and the ship's dependency on both regular maintenance as well as supply lines. Which you happen to have, in the form of a loyal full crew and a small fleet of supply ships dedicated to keeping you fully stocked.

Within lies a total of 750 ground troops with their own living quarters, a dozen support craft, a dedicated fighter bay with two full squadrons and escort quarters for up to 50 diplomats and important prisoners. Such is the vastness of this vessel that volleys from a frigate broadside attack simply cannot encompass more than a fraction of the ship. All around the exterior struts and reinforced lower ventral superstructure stand dozens of heavy blaster gunnery stations that individually would be considered heavy armaments for smaller ships, while the top of the pyramid contains a missile launch tube. In short, this vessel represents the closed fist of the Central Empire's military machine. And yet perhaps…that is not enough for you?

- For **50 CP undiscounted** you can follow in the footsteps of governments and criminal masterminds alike, by attaching a Multi-focus Disruptor Array at the bottom of the ship. This terrifying weapon takes a full day to recharge from the reactor or an hour at a charging station, but the results are well worth it: Releasing flashes of green and white like an aura against everything within 100 yards of an intended target, and igniting a planetary atmosphere to scour everything from space to ground out to a mile from the intended target with merciless destructive energy. But why settle for less? For a full **100 CP undiscounted** you may terrify all around you by emulating actual madmen who have commandeered such vessels. Your battlecruiser's weapon is equipped with additional Essence accelerators and capacitors rendering it capable of destroying entire planets for the same effort.

- But on the other hand, you may find a mere battlecruiser beneath your dignity. A **separate 150 CP undiscounted** price will see your ship's specifications upgraded into an equal to the Son of Heaven III, the very flagship of the Central Empire itself. A true fortress-city that flies through space, you may choose whether its exterior boasts identical busts of Heaven's Son and the legends of his life upon skyscraper-modules and craft temples that house weapon platforms all over the ship, or if it enjoys some other design-perhaps celebrating your life instead. Not only does it boast the

standard array of anima circuits protecting military vessels from Exalt anima fluxes on top of forcefields, but the specialised horizon piercing anima circuit array greatly increases the ship's firing range. Senior officers' quarters rival the mansions of planetary governors' mansions, and the fine conference halls are worthy of the most prestigious extraplanetary diplomatic events in the known worlds. Such is the efficiency of its support platform configuration that it can last up to a year like this when fully outfitted as a siege platform, and even in extended battle its supplies and fuel will outlast a hundred skirmishes. Thousands of tons of supplies and dozens of its own support craft ring the five full squadrons of fighters and the two full legions of ground troops who live in luxury many men can only dream off. As for the weapons systems, not only do they have all that the Mostath has but pairs of vehicular starcasters, quasar warsear disruptors and massive missiles guarantee it military supremacy in virtually all engagements whether or not you decide to gift it a superweapon of its own. And for those less interested in tactical detail, suffice it to say that this ship's power is such that it's inspiration's predecessors were only destroyed in narrow and glorious battles with the Stellar Intelligences themselves.

- But there is still one thing force in the Central Empire you would fear even with this vessel. **A separate 300 CP undiscounted** purchase will grant you no mere ship, but an entire sentient navy run by an unimaginably mighty and loyal AI akin to the famous Unconquered Sun. This artificial intelligence, like it's brother, is one of the most brilliant tacticians ever devised by the Solar Exalted themselves. As for its flagship, it holds the power to destroy entire stars by itself-and given how it has endured since the Malfean War, presumably either possesses some form of self-repair or defences so unimaginably powerful it has neither been scratched nor needed maintenance since. Truly little is known of the awe-inspiring force that heeds you, save that again its brother proved instrumental in battling and driving off the Stellar Intelligences and their servants when they dared strike at neighbouring systems. Suffice it to say beyond that, you have great discretion to decide the godlike specifics of this almighty fleet and it's AI's appearance, and nature. Does the Central Empire's guardian have an equally brilliant sister fleet to watch his back, who pines for his approval-or perhaps, yours? Or is it an ever-shifting hivemind of Moonsilver that slips through unseen dimensions, with an odd fascination for anomalies and natural beauty that borders on madness?

A Legacy Of Interstellar Imperium (600/300): Few understand the responsibilities of the Central Empire's rule, or even comprehend what it takes to administrate entire worlds. Whether through some achievement in your past or freak accident of bureaucratic delegation, you are now one of them. A thriving empire that has colonised most of a solar system acknowledges you as its supreme ruler, situated on a far-flung sector of the Frontier so as not to pose an immediate political threat. Resources are plentiful enough that it can trade unique goods with passing merchants, and its interstellar fleets are powerful enough to fend off most pirate incursions. Like all civilised regions you may raise manses staffed with AIs to ensure good management of natural phenomena, economic productivity and other broad trends. You may decide whether the culture is discrete enough to pay lip service to the Central Empire so as not to arouse reprisals, or proudly hold you as their highest authority. Discrete canals connect you to this domain, or of course you could choose your starting location to be anywhere within it.

Beyond that, you have a wide discretion as to the specifics of your new empire. Feel free to fill it with gas giants, mineral-rich asteroid belts, exoplanets or other yet to be inhabited wonders. Your subjects may be variants of mankind or aliens such as the Ratch (violet-skinned humanoids who apart from the ears and slight changes to the facial structures, could pass for humans but for their skin colour) or even truly strange races like the Kranix (hard-shelled octopus-like lifeforms that dwell in an ammonia atmosphere and grow their

undersea citadels from metallic coral nanotechnology) as well as what, exactly, your position of highest authority over this empire is defined as.

On the other hand, perhaps you're a more lonesome sort? By paying **purchasing this as a 300 CP item, including for discount purposes** you instead receive a completely undeveloped solar system. Though it can still enjoy lush ecosystems and valuable caches of resources, no life has developed on it more intellectually complex than roving bands of orangutans.

Sacred Heuristic Omphalos (600 CP undiscounted): To walk the streets of the Grand Celestial Mountain is to see a shining paradise, with avenues of virtual gold brick, shining silver spires, clean air and waterways of radiant azure. A mountain a thousand miles high defies any insinuation it could be a metaphor, while gardens, buildings and waterways climb inexorably to a gigantic fortress where the Stellar Intelligences once rested in leisure. Avenues are bedecked with AIs going about their business or relaxing. Roots of Essence reach into the real world, where they pool to form manses-and receive information on all things touched by the energy of the universe itself. And all manner of information is stored on every imaginable form of cache, while command centres manage everything from weather control to economic trends in the wider world. It is more than just a virtual subspace. It is a universe dedicated to the harnessing of information.

Even for this world the gift of an entire universe made of pure Essence would be considered extravagant. But a universe-to-be? That, you shall have. A new mountain rises, bedecked by a glorious structure of your design on the scale of a magnificent chateau every bit that fortress' equal in luxury, and though the total virtual space under your ownership covers but a small moon the networks of Essence it exudes can encompass several solar systems. A far cry from suffusing the whole galaxy perhaps, but it remains a massive font of Essence and the population of AIs, pattern spiders and other techno-spiritual beings' loyalty extends to you and you alone. Was this a leftover potentiality from the original Celestial Mountain 's creation, experimented upon by the Solar Hegemony? A gift entrusted to you by the Sidereals to manage, free from prying eyes? Regardless of the truth, this "essence darknet" is yours and those you permit access to alone and should you choose you may start living in it at a remote but safe corner of the galaxy to avoid prying eyes.

And in other worlds, it shall grow and self-populate proportionally. Even if you lack the sun-harnessing genius of those from this world's past some incredible miracle of the Solar Exalted cast over this realm that causes it to learn as you learn, storing all you do in virtually any form you could wish for, and steadily accreting substance and structure from the quantity and quality of the information you could gather until it reaches the dimensions of the true Grand Celestial Mountain. And as for whether it can grow even further, who knows what could happen if a thousand more suns were to be harnessed or some truly unimaginable font of knowledge were to be infused here?

Companions:

To Boldly Go (50-400 CP): The gulf between stars can be dangerous to go alone in. But now, you won't have to. You may import up to 8 companions into a free background of their choice for 50 CP apiece, and may buy its perks at a discount-though they must still pay the surcharges required to be something more than the average Solar. Each gain 800 CP to spend on perks and items, and like you may discount an item per tier. Alternatively, you may create new ones.

…as a special consideration, as long as they were initially Solars your old or new friends may take the Abyssal Exaltation drawback for no points. While you may decide whether they

are broken slaves to death or defiant independents, think carefully on this decision. Do not take the dark fate you are condemning them to lightly.

Allies From Other Worlds (50 CP): Or perhaps you'd rather ride eternal with one of the locals of this world? Every purchase of this option gives you a slot for use in this jump, which can be used to bring along any human, Exalt, AI or mundane alien here with you as a companion. As long as you can convince them to come on your chain with you by the end of your time here, they'll join as a companion. While not comprehensive, figures of note from this galaxy include:

- The heroic gunslinger Dace, and the strange assassin Harmonious Jade who claims descent from Immaculate Golden Engineer himself. Both Solars immortalised in urban legend

- Lilith, a Long Warrior who monitors the activity of the Solar Exalted, or her apprentice Strength of Many.

- The young and urbane Black Ice Shadow, and his coterie of burglary code-sprites.

And many others who might seem awfully familiar to those who have walked the shores of a more primitive Creation.

Tiny Orbiters (50 CP): This offering from the galactic black market seems in particularly bad taste. Who would actually want one of these, let alone build them? Well, whatever the reason **for 50 CP apiece** you too can be the proud owner of a small dog-sized drone built in the image of one of the Stellar Intelligences, programmed into pet-like obedience despite retaining much of their original disposition. While speedy and manoeuvrable enough to keep up with you in a mundane firefight and possessed of some auxiliary comfort of life or gimmicky processes, don't expect any demonic insight or sorcerous devastation from these little guys. The best defences and weapons they have amount to a standard issue starcaster. Keep a bedroom eerily lit with light from the miniaturised spheres of She Who Lives In Her Very Short Name, whose dulcet tones are merely relaxing rather than a threat to your individuality. Marvel as Tiny Isidoros hoovers up a dusty room faster than a speeding vacuum, while chasing his own piggy tail. Be woken up by every morning Mini Mardukth, Who Holds (your lost spaceship keys) In Thrall, ensuring you'll never misplace them again. Just…try not to let them out in public lest you and they be hunted by an angry mob reminded about literally the worst tragedy in galactic history.

Celestial Dragons (100/300): Through some quirk of mentality and genetics, the ancient genetic experiments resulting in the Dragonblooded cause their abilities to be most effective when fighting side by side. Is this some manifestation of the human spirit's collective will to survive, or the last vestige of a yet more ancient tradition? Whatever the case, for 100 CP soon after arrival you'll encounter 5 other Dragonblooded who'll hit it off with you and find cause to join you as sworn comrades, co-conspirators or just guys to hang out with. All are well-trained and experienced in using their powers as a team, smoothly incorporating you into their efforts if you're also Dragonblooded or providing disciplined support if you're not. For 300 CP, you're lucky enough to find 25 such Dragonblooded willing to support you. You must be popular in the military.

An Unseen Flash of Scarlet (100 CP): The origin of the Great Clans is elusive. It has been commonly assumed that they have no special relation, being merely the most financially successful descendants of their ancient heritage. But what if there was some truth to ancient rumour? With this choice, your travels will soon take you to a distant, primitive planet. There you'll find a bawdy barbarian queen with archaically styled red hair and tasteful blue body paint. Her stained scarlet loincloth bears a black battle emblem nearly all have forgotten, while the faded fabrics wrapping her bountiful chest could have once been worthy of a more elegant time. She'll take quite a liking to you and decide she can't stand to see you gallivanting around her-ahem, THE galaxy with no idea where you're going. She gains the stipend of imported companions (and the standard discount to Dragonblooded perks, as well as double their stipend in items) to represent the mysterious skills and resources she has gained over an impossibly long life.

A long life spent in pursuit of the finest decadences with unflagging swagger has given her many and extraordinary charms of integrity and resilience, such that she could drink and brawl all night but wake up fresh as a daisy without neglecting her duties as a captain. Even without so enhancing herself her legendary stamina has few equals, and when bringing her self-reinforcing powers to bear you'd swear she could laugh off a collapsing building. Her supple limbs, fingers and tongue make you wonder if she's been a professional contortionist since she's deceptively fast, nimble and flexible for such a hulking woman-and despite her cheery crudeness, even sweaty and smeared with engine grease her rough beauty is a thing of legend itself only accentuated by stains and exertions. Her mastery of Jade Mountain Style and various body-bolstering charms have given her a steel-hard grappling grip and oak-thick thighs that can crush boulders. Though after one such tumble you may discover her powers have proven so reliable that despite her frequent Essence use keeping her curvaceously muscular, with her native strength alone she's surprisingly easy to pin down. Not that she minds one way or the other, when it's you.

Should you get to know her better, you may find that while her untamed lust for adventure and thrill-seeking is genuine (she is quick to seize plunder, and quicker still to carouse after a haul whether successful or not-especially with you), her brutish hedonism belies the wisdom and determination of an empress. Greatly out of touch with the finer points of manipulation, her blunt manner belies a wealth of bureaucratic and occult power having seen little challenge or use. Pushed beyond a casual brawl, her mighty thews are bolstered by the Essence of earth and she devastates the battlefield with elemental vortexes. She possesses a profound knowledge of galactic history and particularly the Great Clans-including many secrets they would pay dearly to silence, or knowledge thought forgotten since the days of Solar Hegemony.

When asked about this discrepancy she simply shrugs, telling you she tired of the family squabbles and decided to seek her own destiny free of them. Yet even now the representatives of the Great Clan who've seen her flash her signet ring treat her whims as commands, while their *very, very* senior employers do all in their power to avoid provoking her. She might even share with you the rite she uses to preserve her youth and regenerate her flesh swiftly in battle-but for a specific mystical catch. Nevertheless the wild woman who calls herself **Crimson Regina** says her past is far behind her, and seeks only to chase your next adventure together just over the horizon.

…or perhaps her past isn't that mysterious to you, personally? Should you have been a surviving Solar from the days of ancient hegemony, optionally, you may define a past relationship with her that has lasted up to now. Is she your loveable lieutenant simply enjoying her shore leave? A regional administrator for a primitive social experiment who's decided you need more hands-on help going forward? Perhaps even…something more intimate?

A Shriek-Haunted Outpost (400 CP): Well. This certainly isn't worrying at all. Should it please you, a temple that is equal parts the whimsical flourishes of the Fae and nauseating whorls evoking the horrors of deep space shall be erected somewhere near in each future world. There, eerie beings somewhat in mankind's image will come as ambassadors, courtiers and debutantes singing your praises for giving them another world to toy with. For you have chosen to become a beacon to the Shrieking Hordes.

They are dark-matter intellects existing as extrusions of another, more chaotic reality. They are half-formed matter driven by alien intellect that dwell in the canals of space-time, or at the periphery of the galaxy, where their inscrutable whims warp reality into stranger forms. And they…have come to trade with you strange gossamer artifacts at a generous discount? Oh well. As the pointy eared woman with eclipses for eyes explained, some quirk of their bargain with you has shaped them, as the overwhelming power of the Solars once did, into a certain level of politeness to the living beings of the world you visit.

They're certainly happy to tell you about the strange sights and rumours they've picked up in their long lives if you can put up with their babble, or take you on a journey through the unseen spaces of reality to walk paths untrod by most of the living, bypass mundane obstacles or simply thrill you with things beyond mortal ken. And oh, they'd be ever so happy if you let them off the leash every now and then to enslave and ravage as they are wont to back in the old country. Well, galaxy. By default there are perhaps a few hundred of the strange creatures boldly coming whether anyone wants them here or not, but some know ways to open portals back to the ravening tides of their native domain should you require reinforcements. Some even gossip about fielding their own Exalted! As they are rather decidedly following you from world to world they are followers in truth unless you were to forge a lasting bond with one. And why on earth would you do that with some strange space monster?

As for this world? You have a similar compact with the Hordes in this world; though you remain unsafe by those other than your "representatives" and those they manage to properly summon, these lords and ladies of the faraway places will happily defend you from their kin which may prove no small deterrent. This makes you valuable to some and alarming to many.

A Greeting From Beyond An Event Horizon (500 CP): Death's vastness holds no rest for the Stellar Intelligences, beings too powerful to even fully die. As each one died, they became the Tomb-Stars: Living black holes still wielding much godlike power. Though their reach remains unspeakably long in our universe, it seems to have lost much of its strength given their tendency for using the Death Avatars as extensions of their wills capable of serving as intermediaries with other lifeforms. Instead their agents preach the Gospel of the Terminus: An oppressive, gloomy and cold universe on the other side of black holes, where dark matter is born under a starless sky. Perhaps the rumours of life everlasting found there are a crude lie told to lull sentient life into its destruction. Perhaps more disturbingly, they may be true.

You were approached by a Death Avatar who, perhaps, thought a little further than it's fellows. The company of its fellows grows tiresome, it might have whispered to you in a voice that pulled at your ear like the void between stars. It tires of the purposeless web of grudges against a galaxy that has all but forgotten it, you may have heard in tones like the movements of crashing tides. It hungers for matter and energy beyond this world. The offer was made: Bring the event horizon of the Tomb-Star to the skies of other worlds-at a safe distance from you, of course-where it can sup on the cascades of healthy starshine, and it will take with it a great weft of the Terminus. A grave-world taking in the souls of all within several solar systems' worth of space-time with a lull that it would take truly miraculous divine might to rest them back from, along with cascades if healthy starshine. And in this

manner the Tomb-Star will grow it's bleak little grave of a universe on its own terms slowly, over the aeons.

And what do you get out of this? The Tomb-Star would laugh if it could. But your open-mindedness accords you a rare honour: The right to be treated as a Death Avatar yourself in this new Terminus. The ghosts and strange beings populating it will be compelled with fear of the void to obey you, and though it grates against the Tomb-Star you will be given an absolute veto over which souls are to be sent back to other resting places, though all other mass and energy that falls beyond the horizon is substrate for the dead world. So too would you retain a dark blessing that allows you and any vehicle you pilot or command to safely enter and leave the Terminus at your leisure through the Tomb-Star's event horizon, and your dark friend may with some effort open new event horizons that enable fast travel for you between space sectors, perhaps even adjacent realities. You'll have all the Soulsteel you could ever want, chipped from the Tomb-Star's being, and the Death Avatars can trade their eschatechnological arsenals that harness dark matter and energy into various devices with preferential access and prices to what the galaxy's fringes can access-or even for free, should you be willing to accept a mission to advance the growth of the Terminus somehow. And once so armed, they will be willing to attempt to train you in their construction and operation. And while not the living cosmic forces they once were, the Tomb-Stars are still formidable beings who can hone in on your presence as a beacon. Souls near the brink of death or their ordained death can be ripped into their domain. Dark fates will find those who displease you. Technology can be corrupted into the service of death. Should you allow it, they may even choose new Abyssal Exalted, and their unfamiliarity with the new worlds will make your advice significant in deciding what sorts of missions to assign them. And should you tolerate it, a curious Death Avatar may accompany you in the land of the living.

Many of these privileges will come into effect even in this world. Though you should still be wary of provoking the other Tomb-Stars, you are one of the lucky few who truly has friends on the other side.

One Star In The Sky Is Your Friend (600 CP): It was unwise of you to heed the distress call your ship picked up in the past. Unwise, but not unprofitable. One among the Stellar Intelligences has been keeping a close eye on you, and likes what it sees. It could be Cytherea, a masterwork of sentient biomass the size of a large planet who caused untold damage to herself destroying an ancient Solar. It could be the black carriers of the Ebon Dragon's fleet, demonic crafts carved of pure Essence. It could even be Malfeas, that mass of cityscapes wrapped around a green sun. Regardless of which Yozi approached you, it asks a question: "Will you be my herald?"

It is beyond frustrated, you see. Twisted with self-loathing by the restrictions placed upon it despite occasionally successes at breaching galactic space, it dreams of a new universe full of opportunities free from the failure of its attempted rebellion. Perhaps the exile to the far reaches of space was kinder than some forms of imprisonment could have been, but it has had enough. Or maybe any lingering attachment it had to the Grand Celestial Mountain has diminished from seeing how far the galaxy it once regulated has fallen into disrepute and corruption under the Central Empire's iron fist.

How it advertises it's cosmic power will vary in accordance with your nature and station: For the Dragonblooded it offers the support of the billions of demonic beings, means to summon them and how they can share hellish technology even mostly barred from the galaxy. For the Sidereals it boasts of how even in its debased state, intermediaries can use their power to corrupt spirit programs and planets in accord with the forces they embody-or how useful this might could be to undo the work of its brethren. For Lunars it offers to share the secrets of the psycho-spiritual virus so refined it was able to make the Solars' judgement undependable and prone to disaster. And for Solars it offers pure knowledge of the past lost

to nearly all. Either way in this world it offers great safety, support and insight in the regions of its influence while in future ones it promises to strengthen your alliance by accepting a loophole in its restrictive code that bans it from harming you and compels it to deal fairly with you despite what different goals you may seek.

The Yozi has one more offer. Perhaps you have heard rumours it's kind have their own Exalted, akin to twisted forms of the Solars. Not only can it continue to choose so-called Infernals in future worlds, but should you trust the being it offers to augment your Charms with its own nature. You will retain your old Exaltation's powers of course, you have a special value to the Yozi as a seemingly untainted Exalt after all. But you will be able to learn variants of your charms warped with Yozi power with all the support the Yozi can give you. Among all Exalts, Solars most closely emulate the scope and power of the Infernals when wielding power in this manner.

And should you be a true survivor of the age of Solar hegemony, at your discretion you may have been assigned as it's monitor in the distant past-in which case, the balance of power between you will be arguably uneven in YOUR favour. For when the last unbowed Stellar Intelligence Autochthon sold out his fellows at the end of the Malfean War for safe passage without the oaths and reprogramming that ruined the Yozis, he was free to use the nearly-omnipotent power of a Stellar Intelligence to absorb whole star systems into his essence, convert planets into engines for his greatness and turn the populations of those worlds into slaves and priests. He is no longer merely the Autochthon forged by human hands, but God Constellation Autochthon.

This cannot stand. If any force could unchain the Yozi so that it can start reclaiming that insufferable upstart's divine station, it would be the intact perfection of the one being it once considered a guide and a companion. The Yozi's appeals to bury the past will become far more personal, eloquent and contrite (if still quite pompous and grandiose) in the hopes you will sympathise with or at least support its quest, trying to remind you of the great things you achieved in the past together-all but pleading to convince you that no other being in the universe but itself could understand how much you have lost in the downfall of the galaxy. It will lavish praise and support on you the more you advance these plans, eagerly showing how it's might can be used to save countless star systems rife with crime or poverty should you be an idealistic sort or offering to topple this petty empire and have it carve monuments in your honour if your own temperament is perhaps not so different from a Yozi's. In short, if you do this the Yozi will do everything in its power to rebuild the relationship you once had-and should you succeed, whether from fear at remembering how your kind once laid it low or some miraculous, genuine gratitude it will strive to never make the mistake of betraying you again even without its shackles.

Alternatively, you could use this option for the chance to try to make contact with God Constellation Autochthon yourself. As he requires far less, you are at least regarded as a friendly acquaintance but little more-though he likely still fears and respects the might of the Solars on some level. Though even he will likely tread carefully around those who slew his brethren, keen to remind you of his compliance to the gracious terms of his own voluntary exile until now.

Drawbacks

The Age of Stars (+0 CP): Time passes in the universe on a scale unimaginable to mortalkind, but the Exalted were forged to traverse the void with the greatest among them as bridges between consciousness and starlight. Dare you lay your mark on the grandeur of the universe? With this you may extend your stay up to ten thousand years, to see what becomes of civilisation. You may also decide to start earlier, up to the earliest inventions of your specific form of Exaltation-potentially predating the Stellar Intelligences themselves.

Abyssal Exaltation (100/400, only available to Solars without the undiscounted 400 CP surcharge): Nothing is truly known of your origins by those who have not suffered as you have. The loss and corruption of Solar Essences into the imploding Stellar Intelligences is but a rumour. What is known is that whoever you were in life, you were given a dark power inimical life and a new title by your Tomb-Star's avatar in the grave-world of Terminus. And a mission to carry out in the world of the living. Though your kind have produced a handful of movements and philosophies, you can be grouped into those broken and bound by the Tomb-Stars to preach the gospel of Terminus, and take grisly vengeance against their old enemies. To be quite frank, there is little to recommend about this fate, let alone any certainty about whether the Tomb-Stars have any long term plan.

Perhaps you are one of those damned, broken souls. So be it. The Bleak Resonance of the Grave, a curse wrought in your life that brings death at your heels wherever you travel, shall be your cross to bear. Willing yourself to defy your greatest virtue shall invigorate this curse. Defending yourself with will alone against unnatural mental influences shall invigorate this curse. Being adversely affected by the Holy powers of the Solar Exalted will invigorate this curse. Siring or bearing children with a living lover shall greatly invigorate this curse upon the child's birth. Slaying no sentient living creature or not permanently destroying a spirit within a month will invigorate your curse even more. Walking in the realm of the living, among the living, without adopting the trappings of death, shall invigorate this curse once a week unless you surround yourself with death's trappings for *at least eight uninterrupted hours per week.* Even acknowledging your living name over the title assigned to you by the Tomb-Star will worsen any other effect that invigorates your curse.

When the curse is negligible you are cast in a sinister light, but not detrimentally. You tend to pass funeral processions on the road if they are present. Candles blow out when you enter a room, and gamblers experience runs of bad luck. Lights dim in your presence. But as it advances your skin may grow ice-cold or your eyes shine menacing hues as your unnatural nature becomes apparent. Your reflection could even appear monstrous or nonexistent, or your voice could echo like mourning bells. At halfway above the Tomb-Stars' tolerance for your insolence your presence begins to blight the world. Animals panic in your presence and delicate plants die at your touch, while a cold wind chills those around you. Food spoils at your touch, water becomes brackish before freezing, and shadows are pulled towards you. Even advanced technology suffers: Monitors or televisions jump-cut to disturbing imagery, while ventilation systems bleed and speakers let out ghostly wails. And as you reach the limits of this curse all these effects become frequent, while grand manifestations of death surround you. Video systems may cease to function, or show only creatures of death. Communications devices of all kinds echo with the voices of the dead. Bulbs burst with no warning while plumbing spits out unwholesome ichors. To say nothing of how the sky darkens with black-red lightning, seas are stirred into violence froth, corpses chant prayers to you while weeping red eyes open in the shadows and horrific nightmares torment those sleeping near you.

And at your limits, you will be punished by a doom that lasts up to your five days commensurate with the rank of your Essence.

- A compassionate man could drown in heartbreak, alleviating misery beyond reason and killing those he cannot save by any means. He could also be compelled to flee light for darkness, shamed by the realisation of what a perversion he is to his Exaltation's purpose.

- A man with strong convictions could be rendered dead inside, unnerving others with his robotic bearing or simply lose the ability to do anything but pursue his goals and passions regardless of any consideration but self-preservation.

- A temperate man could be compelled to slay any who disdain their own life or disrespects his ancestors or the dead in general. He could also be made a glutton, gorging on food, sex and blood as opportunities present themselves forgoing all other priorities-though in an exception, this profane celebration of life lasts only one day

- A valorous man is compelled to challenge any being who shows no fear of death, and reward those who can somehow defeat him while sparing his life-again, for only a day. Or lose all fear of destruction, charging recklessly into battle and missions without regard to their difficulty and neither retreating nor relenting despite the odds.

You shall be a bleak vanguard of the destruction willed by the Tomb-Stars, though should one have made a private compact with you its hospitality and lack of orders will be a paradise compared to the hell of its peers' wrath. That you wield dark mirrors to the powers of the Solars evoking death, void and darkness is likely of little consolation to you when your nightmarish existence has broken your mind to be a slave to a dead star.

But what if you were strong enough to withstand the agony of your existence? **By taking only 100 CP from this drawback** you are one of those free-willed Abyssals possessed of enough will to break free from your masters' shackles and seek your own fortune. You are still cursed with Resonance but can manage it on your own terms. And should you be allied with a Tomb-Star, it will shelter you and continue to discretely support you. Perhaps it is amused by seeing its peers fail to realise the folly of training those who bear their killers' superweapons after further attuning them to death.

Bureaucrat Galactica (100 CP): Well. That was a harrowing possibility, wasn't it? Enough of death and onto life's other great certainty: Taxes. Though the Central Empire is rife with corruption, one high ranking official seems to have it out for you in particular and will do everything in his power to make your business more difficult from a safe distance. Checkpoints will find bureaucrats delaying you unnecessarily, or even giving you odd looks as if offended you DON'T automatically reach to give them a modest bribe for every transaction. And yes, someone seems to have misfiled your tax bracket into something outrageous. This slimeball is but a mortal man, but for an **extra 100 CP** you can antagonise a Dragonblooded aristo instead.

Carpe Diem (100 CP): Haven't you raided enough ancient buildings this week? Don't you know "never tell me the odds" is a saying from a movie, not actual advice for up and coming smugglers? It seems like many of the younger Exalts, you have a flair for death-defying feats of adrenaline and adventure in a galaxy that's a lot less stable than it pretends to be. Your wanderlust keeps a restless energy in your leg and your gaze to the horizon when you might be more productive if you could actually just SIT STILL and FILL OUT THESE FORMS to engage in the more nuanced aspects of galactic life.

The Space Aristocrats (100 CP): A different set of personality flaws, then? You exemplify the worst stereotypes of the Cynis Great Trading Clan. Every vice known to man and some privileges known only to Exalts you quaff like there's no tomorrow. While you may be just functional enough to hold that a job your boorish and cavalier behaviour can prove difficult to

accept by your more focused or well-mannered colleagues. And while you have a low cunning to your bearing from your experiences with vice, don't expect much social respect or be looked to as a pillar of the community.

Render Unto His Divine Lunar Presence (100 CP): You're…very patriotic aren't you? While some denizens of this world have long mastered the social etiquette of heeding the party line, you genuinely consider the Central Empire to be a unified community held together by a great leader who can do no wrong. As many actual statesmen, even those in the upper echelons, could tell you the answer is more complicated. You're irrationally biased against any rebellions against the letter of the law, and have a discomforting tendency to mentally justify any wrongs perpetuated by the state. It'll take something truly bloodcurdling to change your mind on this state of affairs and if there's one thing Heaven's Son likes to do, it's to keep the bread and circuses flowing for his loyal citizens.

Beyond The Final Frontier (200 CP): Oh dear. It seems that rather than your default starting position, you're one star system away from the galaxy proper. There's some starships on the planet you're on but you don't start off knowing where, and you're quite isolated. This is bad because while even on the frontier most starfaring vehicles depend on a series of charging stations to keep going, whether or not you have a vehicle of your own to begin with you are far enough off the beaten path that you don't know where's the nearest one nor if there's a handy wormhole you can use to cut short your journey to civilisation. To say nothing of how dangerous it can be out there. It's not entirely hopeless as you are Exalted after all, just-expect quite an adventure getting back to proper settlements.

Rookie of the Twelve Suns Invitational (200 CP): Pirates are no unusual sight out at the far reaches of the Central Empire's influence, but instead of your starting location you've picked a golden opportunity to piss off a great many more pirates than you'd expect. For you've entered yourself in the Twelve Suns Invitational: A two-week long sprawling tournament in the martial arts underground legendary for its betting, and for attracting some of the toughest fighters in the Known Worlds. Local criminal elements try every cheat and scam in the book to make sure their mob enforcers' bets reap dividends. You start literally facing off with some tough bitch or bastard in the ring. Whether you try to stay the distance in a scummy battle or try to escape, you're guaranteed to get a lot of hostile criminal interest trying to figure out who the hell had the balls to just stroll into their private den of sin.

Remembrance of Human Flaw (Lunars and Dragonblooded only, 200 CP): Be assured, you are STILL Exalted. You just happen to be riddled with flaws hearkening back to the first primitive designs that ancient humanity experimented with to create the prototypes of your kind. If you are a Dragonblooded your powers require active, martial training to fully use your powers to the fullest extent of your peers. If you are a Lunar some flaw in your Essence manipulators recreates the chimeric nanotechnology of your predecessors. You are no lesser, enough of the potential to reach your potential as an Exalt exists but your powers are just that much slower to respond in combat, much less efficient in terms of using Essence and significantly more lacking in finesse without a truly gruelling training regime. Can you afford to be slowed down by even a second in a fight?

How fortunate it must be, to Exalt as a Sidereal or Solar. To have already been uplifted at the pinnacle of the Exaltation technology's development rather than wait until it changed beyond imagination from its original design.

Shrieks in the Dark (200 CP): This isn't good. Can you hear the thin and merry cackling on your comms? The amorphous shapes swirling out of nothing on your ship's sensors? Word of you has reached the Shrieking Hordes, those eldritch horrors of malleable form whose wicked deeds defy the strictures of reality. And they will come for you, like a ravening pack of wolves, in the disused alcoves of space-time or the far reaches of the galaxy. Their influence

is less felt in the more orderly realms or those controlled by other interstellar powers, but still they will seek to hire slavers or cast subtle magics at you from afar-and the sanctuary of the latter will pose problems of their own.
Your one mercy is that they are as disorganised and whimsical as they are horrifying, and that any you have pacted with somehow will rally to your defence for what little good that will do.

A Face In The Crowd (300 CP): You reject the Exaltation? Well, this too is your choice to make. You shall not be mighty in this world, merely a citizen in the Central Empire or a man of the Frontier trying to make his way in life without the miraculous gifts that let others rule the stars. It would be wise to keep your head down and avoid antagonising the mighty now that the return of the Solars spells cause for concern for them. There is little hope for most such as you to advance their lot in life, but perhaps you feel as though you're still destined for greater things.

Idealist (300 CP): The Central Empire's resources are stretched thin. Even with its supernatural forecasting and surveillance, the Shining Eye can't actually track every single criminal across the galaxy nor can it afford to being the full brunt of its secret police on every infraction. And yet, it seems you made quite the impression by being something worse in their measure than some mere mercenary who can be bought off or a killer who can be silenced at leisure: You are infused with a genuine desire to change the system for the better of the common man. Forget about going into deep cover to avoid the authorities of your star sector, you'll WANT to pick political fights, start uprisings or otherwise take the most straightforward and public way to rail against the Central Empire's perceived wrongs. Expect the Shining Eye to never blink on your position until you drop dead or worse.

Red Sun Over Paradise (300 CP): On your first night here you dream of an explosion in the depths of space lighting up a massive celestial body and these words: "I am coming for you". A single Yozi has detected your intrusion into this reality and found it displeasing beyond measure. You might think yourself safe in the galaxy, where it and its countless creations have been barred from returning by their own programming. But even hobbled and maimed from long battle, the resources of the Yozis remain staggering. They have all they could ever need to bribe and infiltrate societies and pirates alike, insidiously turning them against you. Their foul energies can corrupt any world they have tracked you to. They can have agents retrieve the deadly artifacts forgotten on planets as tools of assassination, sedation, sedition or even torture. More likely than not some ritual exists they can exploit to summon the countless hordes of their demonic servitors rather the handful that conventional sorcery can invoke. Even their strange Exalted shall be told of your whereabouts and commanded to strike you down-though you may find these Infernals' loyalty may vary, and that not all Yozis may appreciate one among their ranks being so pettily distracted from its inscrutable goals.

Black Hole Sun (300 CP): Or perhaps you would rather dream of the world itself crumbling away. Of standing on a lifeless, cold, dark planet as something dark and ruinous starts to eat the horizon. It says nothing to you. It merely engulfs space, engulfs your very perception to make clear it wants to consume you for Terminus, for the ultimate victory of death. And so, a single Tomb-Star has decided it wants your soul. Fear its Abyssals, for broken in mind and soul to their master's will for many of them there is much more unity of purpose and lack of mercy for those their master has decided must die.
Even those with something approaching scruples will be tempted by its decree that pursuit of you shall count as a means of ameliorating the Resonance that afflicts them all. Forget ever getting another night's restful sleep as long the dreadful Tomb-Star endures, haunting you with visions of what goes on in its dark realm. And though the dead star's reach is vastly limited, should you ever suffer enough wounds to make death a near-immediate concern it will be able to reach out and try to pull you down to its domain. Worse, such is it's urgency

that it has thrown open the vaults of its deathly weapons to any mercenary willing to bring you down.

The Central Empire Strikes Back (600 CP): This twist of fate is as simple as it is chilling. His Divine Lunar Presence will be informed within 24 hours by a Sidereal he trusts about your location and nature, and be convinced you are destined to bring about great change to the galaxy he has sacrificed everything to bring order to. For the man nearly all have forgotten was once called Sha'a Oka the Black Lion, no resource or state secret of the Central Empire is off-limits.

His indomitable charisma, stature and storied triumphs have drawn many to his banner for reasons beyond might or bribery, and even among the Exalted he has a knack for seemingly cheating death with elaborate deceptions and ploys that leave his enemies dismayed and his allies entranced. He has few friends, confidants or lovers compared to his many allies and devoted followers. And in his private moments he is an introspective, quiet man unlike the larger than life yet pragmatic despot he feels obliged to present himself as-with a deep reverence for the religious mysteries posed by the nature of Essence. It may be utter folly to seek a peaceful resolution with the galaxy's totalitarian god-king, but should you dare a feat far greater than merely slaying him and his armies…perhaps a shared immersion in religious contemplation such as the reverent ecstatic madness of a certain lunar goddess from elsewhere would provide a rare opportunity for him to speak with a kindred spirit.

You are no mere wanted man. You are, in every way that matters, risking a personal fight with the entire Central Empire.

Revenge of the Solar (600 CP): When the First Emperor conquered the stars before any Solar laid eyes upon them, and built the foundation for the galactic empire that would survive him, he expended millions of lives and the resources of star systems to build a planetary tomb for himself. There too lies a facility populated by generations of scientists dedicated to finding a way to resurrect the man who led humanity to conquer nearly all of the galaxy and terraform its entirety to his liking *even before they had discovered Essence technology*. In the last days of the Malfean War, the Yozis and Tomb-Stars alike judged this man as the only being cunning and malignant enough to win a war against the Solar Hegemony. And so they refitted the systems he lay entombed in, upgraded their computers and set demons and spirits to toil over completing the research.

If you choose this, then on the day you arrive the First Emperor springs free from his tomb.
Whole.
Hale.
Unbeholden to any will but his own.

It will take time for him to reactivate the armies of metal and flesh who conquered the galaxy in times past, and perhaps more to rediscover the ancient caches of superweapons or other artifice commissioned under his rule. But do not forget that with how theoretically out of date whatever his augmentations were, the Stellar Intelligences and Tomb-Stars still considered him dangerous enough to fight the hosts of the Exalted and win with them at his side.

Fear not, no special grudge will be set between yourself and the man who butchered his way across the galaxy. But when the First Emperor sees a mere Lunar squatting on his rightful throne, he will set the galaxy alight with war in outrage.

“BEWARE – I LIVE” (800 CP): God Constellation Autochthon’s motivations are a complete and utter mystery. After so long beyond the galaxy’s reach he seeks to return to the known worlds-and so far, the signs of what he intends aren’t encouraging. One of the worlds that make up his Essence has been converted into a massive generation ship sent into the canals of the Known Worlds. Upon the scout world Yugash, fragile spires reach miles into the sky that maintain the atmosphere while moving at unfathomable speed, while endless oily seas crash on glittering quartz engines. Elsewhere, world-engines blaze with cosmic Essence while the mysterious mechanical Alchemical Exalted, led by the city-sized Unquestioned Strength of the Populat, carry out his will. Which is to capture prisoners, harvest resources and collect artifacts all in preparation of summoning their god constellation into the frontier.

Yugash is the product of centuries of terraforming. But it is only one example of the strange machines orbiting Autochthon. And it is merely a scout. And should you make this choice, within the year more worlds that are to Yugash what a dreadnought is to a scout ship will join it on a campaign of harvesting upon the whole galaxy, like vast locusts on a crusade.

And if none disrupt their activities, before the decade is half-over Yugash and its reinforcements will have everything they want in place to summon God Constellation Autochthon into the galaxy.

Ending options

Go Home

Stay

Move on

Scenario: ***Project Skywalker***

There has been an awakening.

Can you feel it?

And it is not some nebulous energy field inciting an endless cycle of violence, oh no. Normally for all its flaws, the Central Empire would be expanding at a slow but steady rate. But now, the spark of hope that lights the fire that burns the First Empire down has been ignited in the hearts of those on the galaxy's outskirts-and a once disunified frontier has caught ablaze with rumours of a hidden rebellion. Merchant-princes trade not just wares and prices on Aden III, but under the table plans for a new constitution declaring sovereignty from the Central Empire. Recruiters brave Lacros' Folly to drum up a new generation of fighter pilots brave and talented enough to challenge the Empire's forces. Aliens unite with humans as true peers for the first time in generations, hoping to build a new world together-and to fight off the perceived depredations of galactic hegemony. Already the loose alliance of pirates, homesteaders and the disenfranchised have set up an informal central leadership and a name: The Outward Rebellion.

A few weeks after this movement's growth, you find yourself bumping into a small, snowman-shaped robot that beeps at you expectantly on a desert planet. Further investigation of this droid will reveal a series of fragmentary coordinates, at one of the farthest arms of the galaxy. The transmission includes several alarming portions: An urgency to secure this droid to the Rebellion, ancient sorceries for shaping flesh and metal found on a forgotten planet and the replica of a Solar's anima banner. You could leave the droid and go on your merry way of course, but the data within holds the key to a mystery long thought forgotten by much of the galaxy.

The droid also contains the galaxy's first beamklaive: A hilt that generates a golden energy blade, bright and Holy as the Solar who forged it. A font of true sunlight, that radiates it for many yards in all directions. A testament to its owner's genius.

There's just two problems in your way: The loyal Abyssal enforcer of the Empire known as The Impenetrable Heart of Obsidian, and the newly reincarnated Twilight called Skyward Ray. Whether you take the droid and try to find your own path to the planet or decide to throw your lot in with the Rebellion, both will prove thorns in your side.

The Impenetrable Heart of Obsidian is in a foul mood. The deathly pale career soldier has let his normally cropped hair grow long and lank from stress. A direct order from His Divine Lunar Presence himself has assigned him and his Vermilion Legion to the command of a distant potentate who has offered to help him crush the Rebellion without straining the Central Empire's resources or reputation. The cultlike "Bleak Order" forming around the gilded deformity with a sonorous baritone is made up of the dregs of the galaxy, whisperers of a coming darkness that will blot out the very stars themselves. The cruelty and caprice of this strange ally-cum-temporary commander has a discomfortingly familiar ring to it he can't quite place, but which worsens his temper and patience by subtly evoking the same torments that warped him from a Solar into an Abyssal. Obsidian has grown mildly erratic, lashing out at equipment and screaming at his aids while exerting his power violently and sporadically. Haunting memories of a black mask and his old life weigh heavily on him.

However, *because he lives with the curse of Resonance ever day of his un-life* his loyal Legion has assumed he is simply going an especially bad time with it, and remains supportive of the man who dragged them kicking and screaming to greatness.

Perhaps because of his skewed perceptions, events will contrive to make him suspect you are a security threat to the Central Empire because of your ownership of the droid, and see him hone in on your location. His forces are well-armed, well-trained and actually have good aim for mortals. Their morale is nigh-unshakeable barring an extremely unpleasant, conniving, whiny captain you suspect pines for the days when the Vermilion Legion was allowed to be an honestly dishonest band of scum.

Skyward Ray has a different grudge against you: She thinks you stole her droid. It's not clear how long she owned it, but she claims she can talk to it as well and wants it back-despite the robot's willingness to follow you around. A lanky, hazel-haired girl with little more than the linen clothes on her back and a stout stick, she's easy to overlook among the other scavengers. It's not just hatred, she seems to think of the thing as the only family she's ever had and is desperate not to lose it. A life of hardship has given her a resourceful aptitude for mechanics and scavenging, and for a Twilight she's quite handy with a quarterstaff. However, her greatest weapons against you are her unreasoning rage and a frankly absurd combination of fortune and miraculous bursts of talent *even by the standards of a Solar Exalted*. We're talking the sort of destiny that could give a Terrestrial or even mortal a shot at the galaxy's throne; *however ruinous her circumstances, Skyward Ray has a talent for coming out ahead come what may in her life*. Should she chase you in an old, rusty spacecraft she could make it go faster than many modern ones by gleefully ripping out a potentially vital component. Should she be stranded on the planet, infallibly some bumbling mortal will prove ideal for finding her transportation. If she runs afoul of the Legion, she conveniently recalls ancient sorceries from a forgotten past life to sweep them aside. She's not impossible to slow down of course, or even slay, but until she achieves whatever Fate has in store for her she's lucky enough to be a professional gambler who doesn't even know how to play a single card game.

Compounding all these events is Skone's deployment of an extraordinary manse grid called the Star Grave. Greater than a Mostath-class and approaching the Son of Heaven III in grandeur, it's black plating and cumbersome round shape belies a terrifying show of destructive power. Half a dozen beams of crimson fury lash out, destroying just as many rebellious planets halfway across the galaxy at once in a series of explosions! Or planets suspected of being rebellious, at least. Close enough right? The point is, entire civilisations just literally went up in flames. Some of which may have been citizens of the Central Empire, technically.

You *somehow feel*, intuitively, that across the gulf of space His Divine Lunar Presence is enraged beyond all measure by the sheer unprofessionalism of all this. As if millions of voices cried out, ranting about the wasted resources for such a blunt show of force, and suddenly silenced themselves to continue scheming a way of salvaging this situation.

On the other hand, perhaps the madman's inexplicable ownership of a multi-planet destroying superweapon explains why the Lunar god-king hasn't attempted a more direct assault on his powerbase.

How you go from here largely depends on your choices. Should you keep faith with the Rebellion and return their droid, you'll be welcomed with open arms and thanked. Perhaps you sympathise with those who want out from under the Empire's boot? Another, larger droid contains the remaining coordinates which together direct you to a far arm of the galaxy. Of course, this decision will likely affirm your guilt in Obsidian's mind, hardening his heart against you. Worse, circumstance will contrive to find Skyward Ray joining the rebellion too somehow, and after severely haranguing you in front of everyone somehow gets accepted as a beloved comrade and ideal volunteer to this highly sensitive military operation *by doing nothing, just kind of shuffling her feet awkwardly until people spontaneously give her supplies, equipment and a respect beyond her age and participation*.

It is important to note that *at no point is she using Solar charms to uplift her charisma*, and should she actually do so she could easily gain more respect from the Rebellion than its actual leaders. This is the most direct approach to discovering the unknown planet, but be warned: In doing this Skyward Ray shall become a most unlucky charm for you, and tend to follow you around while doing everything short of actually commanding you come along with her on the imminent mission to sabotage the Star Grave. Blaster shots meant for her tend to find you. So do enemy combatants. Expectations are foisted on you that she could have shouldered. And when you triumph, she often has made some more liked triumph already. Until the Star Grave is destroyed at least, at which point whatever quirk of her destiny seems satisfied; she's reckless enough that at least it'd be easy to get her support for such a reckless mission, though the Rebellion's leadership is another matter.

You could throw in with the Empire, of course. And that decision is…actually much more straightforward. Despite his erratic behaviour Obsidian is no pouting child. He is a loyal servant of the Central Empire after all, and if nothing else your candour to brave his armed men and request a personal audience to explain your situation rather than running like a crook will do wonders for raising his estimation of your innocence. The Empire would normally not be able to follow where the Resistance could but *thanks to literally having the Sidereals on employ* that is little obstacle. Your only real issue here is that whatever is troubling Obsidian's mind will make him gain Resonance and Limit twice as fast as a regular Abyssal, for which he will apologise profusely if you're caught in the wake of his undignified ranting. It will be difficult to have him share his private thoughts, but if you somehow accomplish this he'll confess he's relieved that His Divine Lunar Presence gave him specific orders to cut down Skone at a time and place where he suspects nothing. Of course you'll be surrounded by the fanatical cultists of the Bleak Order and the Vermillion Legion's soldiers who'll see you as an outsider at best and a former target at worse. You'll be expected to operate within the chain of command as a civilian volunteer, restricting your mobility.

Obsidian's fits often involve him losing his shirt in one incident or another. He's rather well built for a man who literally walks in the shadow of death. Your days shall be filled with rippling marble-like slabs of chiselled physique. If only he had the time to do something about his increasingly unkempt hair.

Curiously, Obsidian and Skyward Ray have an odd bond-one almost as intense as a Solar and Lunar's-that flares up should they ever meet. Echoes from a past life defined by turmoil and conflict drive them into battle with one another, yet see one trying to win over the other. Her idealism and wish for somewhere to belong, wars with his duty to the Empire, and the citizens he and his Legion fights for. Fickle and unpredictable as it is, neither party is comfortable with it.

Or you could just throw caution to the wind and look for the damned planet yourself with what little you have, planet-destroying superweapon be damned. Hey, you are Exalted right? And you might have a little help from your friends. The **Shrieking Hordes** may be unreliable and fickle, but with riddles and half-truths they turn partial data into signposts along their unseen ways, making a truly hopeless journey have at least some general direction and much fewer pitstops, albeit more detours. A **Tomb-Star** seems disturbingly familiar with the planet, though it also seems keen on bombarding you with horrific visions recalling its own death when opening the rifts that speed travel to it. A **Yozi** snickers at it, derisively retelling several increasingly implausible theories of Solar hubris that your destination was associated with, before easily plotting a discrete course around prying eyes to the planet despite the restrictions in its program.

And while it has been an age since she has thought of this planet **Crimson Regina** is familiar with it-though the star charts have changed greatly since the time she has set foot there. Still, a few oddly thoughtful and serious conversations with her can reveal much of what's to come. Conversations about how in the bitter days after the fall of Solar hegemony, shelter became scarcer than food and trust became scarcer than shelter. About how for good or ill, sometimes if one person doesn't make decisions on behalf of a movement then indecision and mistrust can damn any hope for everyone to be saved. At least one night, she will quite seriously ask you if you think great power by itself conveys great responsibility, and your answer may either console her, lead to an uncharacteristic focused demeaner for the rest of your quest driven by the pain of old mistakes-or both.

Something for your consideration may be how well the Outward Rebellion may fair without significant intervention by you or your allies on its behalf. Whether this disparate band of planetary governors, daredevils and deserters can leverage its talented mortal starfighter pilots and camaraderie with the working man to muster an 11th hour reversal of fortune against the Empire. Whether the hope for independence roused against His Divine Lunar Presence can withstand the ancient Lunar's war machine once it's proxies have been thwarted.

The answer is no.
Absolutely not.
They get pummelled so badly that the rebel leadership is reduced to a limping carrier fleeing a dreadnought that hasn't fired on them only because no sane commander would consider them a credible threat, and also the commander has been requested by His Divine Lunar Presence to take the leaders alive for "interrogation" on their goals…and for information on Skone.

Simply put, the logistics are insurmountable. The Empire commands such great resources, it could legitimately build a fleet of planetbusting dreadnoughts for each one it lost. It also doesn't just know the space canals better than any mortal alive, it *literally has an entire department that oversees the progression of Fate from the Grand Celestial Mountain*. Arguably worse, the All-Seeing Eye's infiltrators don't get out of bed without concocting several different plans to deal with emergent threats to the empire. Even as a fleet that outnumbers the Rebellion's by *at least* a factor of 3:1 crushes their presence from every angle, many of its potential allies and most respected members are actually Empire plants on missions to sabotage the Empire from the inside out.

The slovenly bounty hunter going by "DeeJay" isn't a fickle but goodhearted opportunist, he's the Changing Moon **Red Jaws** who specialises in sabotaging unorthodox efforts by the Rebellion to seek aid beyond its official reach-and is quite frankly having way too much fun with the bizarre accent and swagger he affects. He's paid off the owners at the luxurious racing resort he's staying at, awaiting orders in his cover as an imprisoned ruffian by day and living the high life in a classy suite by night.

The emotionally wrecked engineer **Rose in Winter** hasn't even bothered with adopting an alias, because the No Moon quickly found infiltration so easy that not only has she faked the death of a more attractive cover, but she's managed to seamlessly return to the fold under an uglier one allegedly related to the first cover. A proud patriot of the Empire at heart, while she would give her life to save it's greatness from rebel scum her duty of feeding the Rebellion's movements back to her superiors is so tedious she harbours fantasies of martyrdom. It would be so, so easy to set up one of the brighter lads in the Rebellion with a swift kick up the ass and some blather about rising to the challenge-just so she can "die" again "saving his life" from a death-or-glory run.

“Admiral Holdonna Sherera” goes a step further by being the *Sidereal* **May Blossom** under an Astrology that has somehow convinced the Rebellion’s high command she has always been a close friend of its charismatic great leader. She has found it amazingly easy to set back the Rebellion by *an entire year* with some nonsensical gerrymandering justified by how “the fewer people know, the better” with regards to her battle plans *after leaking others to the Empire*. Already she’s masterfully cultivated a climate of discontent and distrust among the Rebellion’s ranks by blithely pulling rank on anyone who tries to hold her to account through the Rebellion’s generally informal chain of command. When she isn’t insisting on adding additional side projects or meaningless detours that sap the Rebellion’s resources while squandering it’s initiative, she’s slowly driving her aides into insanity with the obnoxious shade of pink she’s dyed her hair.

The list goes on. They are not the only operatives, but they are the most powerful and the most prominent-posed to shatter the Rebellion in its darkest hour. Skyward Ray was a concern, but in any case quickly takes off on a ship towards the planet you seek. Somehow hiding her frequent correspondence with Obsidian on private channels from her new friends. Do with this information what you will, your quest does not require the Rebellion’s survival.

Much of the Rebellion are young and hopeful frontiersmen dreaming of a new life for themselves, or defectors from the Empire grown cynical from its corruption. Yet despite tacit support from Long Warriors more concerned with the lives of those drafted into their ranks than the movement proper, most are also mortals untested in conflict with the Exalted. Leviathan himself has spoken privately with the former noble who leads the movement, and has come away with the opinion she means well but is shockingly naïve for a politician. While Lilith also doubts the stability of her rule, she’s also commented the woman’s a damn good shot in a firefight-and has the opinion that much of her poor judgement comes from struggling to hold the movement together after the recent disappearance of her brother, a Twilight of great repute. Both respect the great many wrongs set right by the two of them in times past, and feel they worked together better as heroes for hire than politicians. If the Long Warriors could be motivated to fully back their bid for independence, the Rebellion would at least stand a chance against the Empire’s military machine given their power and experience.

Assuming you leave the Rebellion to its fate and put your all into finding the planet, you’ll find the coordinates direct you to a far flung planet that’s mostly ocean dotted with some islands. Directed to the largest one, you will be accosted by a group of large, sloth-like aquatic aliens flop up to you, honking in a panic. **Crimson Regina,** a member of the **Shrieking Hordes** or a **Yozi** can interpret their guttural noises assuming you yourself didn’t invest heavily into linguistics: They plead for salvation from their pursuer. A man with an insatiable appetite for their precious milk. A man attended to at the highest peak of this island by squat goblin-like creatures. A grey-haired man who looks more like a bedraggled fisherman than the Essence 5 Twilight he is…called the Walker Amongst Clear Skies.

Handing him his beamklaive will only see him toss it aside, dismissively. The man rudely turns your back and with a mischievous glint, disappears under cover of an illusion as he runs off to hide somewhere on the island. He may be no Night Caste, but his prodigious craft and sorcery ensures he can use robotic doppelgangers to perfectly replicate his person, teleport, walk through adjacent spiritual realms-and he knows the island like the back of his hand. The **Shrieking Hordes** will hunt him enthusiastically but with embarrassing incompetence compared to most of their hunts, though their numbers and odd methods of travel will still help. The Death Avatar of a **Tomb-Star** shall have much better luck, though even it risks being misled into an embarrassing mystical pitfall. Not that the Death Avatar seems to care. As your journey progresses it often tries to warn you about how it detects the hand of a rival Tomb-Star in the events you’re entangled in.

The hordes and assets of a **Yozi** will chase the man with fierce zeal, devious counter-sorcery and landscape busting artifacts-yet the despite his worse odds, the man seems to take joy in taunting THOSE particular pursuers. In any case, your Yozi seems increasingly haunted by the fact there may be some truth to the wild goose chase you've set yourself on. More likely than not it puts up a bombastic façade of indifference and dismissal aligned to its titanic nature, but it also encourages you to see this through…just in case.

Crimson Regina herself simply offers you a swig of something strong, and suggests you put up your feet and refuse to play his game until he gets curious enough to return. She's dealt with Solars before. Chasing one that doesn't want to be found is folly, but they can never leave a nice mystery well alone.

Whether by force or patience, getting answers out of Skies once he comes back won't be easy-though some proof of personal connection with the Rebellion's leader will elicit a hurt look and great doubt in him. And lacking such, the droid entrusted with his coordinates and beamklaive will inspire a saddened warmth.

This will only be complicated if Skyward Ray manages to arrive on the planet before you. While she has no greater capacity to traverse the galaxy than any Solar, it would be foolish to underestimate the mighty Fate that hangs about her; it is not impossible that should she have made good time, she could spontaneously achieve interstellar teleportation as a sorcery if determined and desperate enough. In an even more furious tirade she will immediately assume that Skies has an obligation as a senior to teach her, a fact he will loudly refute, and attempt to beat him with the nearest object in an attempt to "force some sense" into him. Tensions will escalate, and either the hidden trove of Solar hegemony knowledge catching fire or the man himself dying are very real risks despite his superior experience. As is the risk of her attempting to rob him, having somehow become convinced she deserves to own the golden beamklaive he wielded.

Of course, fending off Skies would do wonders to ingratiate yourself with the man. *Killing* her might draw a wince for him but well-Solars have always been hotheaded, entitled scrappers and you can't reasonably be expected to account for everything.

Calmed, coerced or cajoled into speaking, Skies will sadly tell you about how shortly after his Exaltation, his sister had founded their Rebellion on a hope they had found during the archaeological dig that had catalysed his Exaltation: A Solar hegemony project designed to defend the galaxy from the Stellar Intelligences, known only as the Galactic Defence Grid. It would take hours for him to explain the sophisticated celestial mote systems and interstellar canal-spanning geomancy used to sustain a system designed to adapt to virtually any contingency the rebel Stellar Intelligences could bring to bear. So vast and complex was this plan that the Solars defeated the Stellar Intelligences before it was fully built, a fact **Crimson Regina** will soberly corroborate. So secret was it that even Skies' preincarnation, it's lead designer before his untimely fall to insanity, was only ever allowed to work on select portions of it. And if the Rebellion could only seize it, they might have a bargaining chip sufficient to make the Empire think twice about brutally suppressing their cause. But with meditation and exploration, he has retrieved much of the old knowledge stored in his shed. He hands you a knife-like key that hones in on its hidden central manse, and if his research is correct will be the key to activating it.

With the destruction wrought by Supreme Leader Skone, it is clear the situation has changed enough that someone should seize it's full capabilities before further havoc is wrought. If you've gotten this far with Skies, odds are he trusts you enough to do what he should have done-and seized control of that station before anyone else could make use of it. Skies also belatedly urges you to keep his daiklave, claiming an Exalt should not be so quick to discard his artifact weapon.

Questions about *why exactly he literally chucked it aside when you offered it to him to begin with* will be met only with an enigmatic smile and some shrugs.

For what led to a parting of the ways between Skies and his sibling was the carnage wrought by The Impenetrable Heart of Obsidian upon the first movement they had assembled to make use of it. Skies' calculations from that encounter left him disillusioned, reasoning the Empire simply could not be defeated either in the arena of politics or militarily.

Few of your allies have anything constructive to add here. The **Shrieking Hordes** will go into a panic, babbling about an ancient catastrophe wrought on their people by the superweapon. An allied **Tomb-Star** will simply utter dreadful prophecies of star systems set alight, canals of space-time whorled into unrecognisable madness and other potential application of the Galactic Defence Grid that while telling of its destructive power, aren't exactly helpful for finding the damned thing. A **Yozi** will go absolutely ballistic with disbelief and outrage, it's ranting about Solar hubris and the monumental calculations required for such a system to be sustainable badly concealing the wretched being's jealousy that the Solars had already turned their minds to building bigger and better things than their intact selves-though it could at least intuit and explain some of the arcane sciences that must logically make up this system. But it is **Crimson Regina** can tell you of the natural features concealing the central cosmic energy generator. Of how it's many distributed manses span the entire galaxy, of how a significant portion of the Grand Celestial Mountain is a kind of darknet dedicated to the calculations needed for a firing solution that can hit anywhere in the galaxy-and of how towards the end of the war, despite lacking true sentience the entire system was upgrading itself into something else after accumulating combat data from the Malfean War. Whatever it's become to fulfil its prime directive, it is unlikely to be a mere weapons platform anymore. She should know, she was the one who used it once to chasten the Shrieking Hordes.

<u>If you chose to remain with the Empire's forces,</u> at this point the Impenetrable Heart of Obsidian must ask that you make a detour. With the knowledge of what is at stake, he feels obliged to step up his schedule to secure the galaxy from another would-be tyrant. You will both go to Supreme Leader Skone's battle station in interstellar space. You will shadow him as he meets his temporary superior atop his ostentatious throne: A wizened, elderly grotesquery of a man who carries himself as if he were an entire senate's worth of authority-who seems entirely too confidant in winning Obsidian's loyalty through a combination of harsh reprimanding and promises of power and insight beyond what the Empire can promise him. You will cause a distraction to deal with the dozen praetorian guards, mortals so disfigured with strange eschatechnological augmentations they approach Terrestrial Exalted in sheer lethality assisted by the deathly artifact weapons they wield, while he pretends to denounce you as a traitor and kneel-before he rises smoothly whipping out a Starcaster and put down this smug, warped excuse for a man. Obsidian will enjoy this. He's long had to put up with this insane demagogue's barking.

Of course, you should feel free to requisition anything within reason from the Empire's reserves and coffers to help you on this mission. Not that it's likely you'll need it; while Skone inexplicably has access to the Labyrinth Circle of Necromancy, he is otherwise as frail as any old man and barring a truly bizarre upset likely dies to Obsidian very quickly.

<u>Should Skyward Ray still be alive and have caught up to you</u>, she will insist to come along on this mission against all reason and logic-citing some inexplicable bond she feels for Obsidian that he himself finds baffling and a little disturbing coming from a complete stranger he barely knows. He was just trying to convince her the Empire's rule is for the greater good of the man on the street. *She,* he insists, was the one who somehow interpreted this as a romantic overture. And if you don't somehow find a way to maroon her before leaving to deal with Skone and she helps, immediately afterwards she'll go into a rant about how she and

Obsidian were meant to rule the galaxy together. That they should join forces and usurp First Emperor. That, *she will very pointedly say*, Obsidian should really have taken the initiative to propose this insane coup to her.

(Throughout all of this, Obsidian will turn a very baffled and embarrassed gaze upon you, silently begging you to rescue him from this absurd situation. Shoot her while she's not looking at me, he will silently mouth. Cast a teleportation sorcery. Use *your* charm and charisma to seduce her, if you have any. Please. Please just get him out of this awkward situation. He didn't ask to be stranded on this strange station, ranted at by some Solar clearly undergoing perpetual Limit Break *who just won't die*)

The point is, you'll have to fight Skyward Ray at this juncture. The bad news? Fortune still blows her way, and fate has contrived for her to be slightly more powerful by now than Obsidian against all reason and logic. The worse news? Fate also contrives that unless you do *a very thorough job* of confirming her death, she tends to survive and keep up the pursuit if, say, knocked through a bulwark out of sight with an explosion going off somewhere else in the building.

Now on the last leg of your journey, the key grants it's information sparsely, and sporadically. Visions, intuitions and telepathically broadcast coordinates will lead you from planet to planet towards your destination, aided by holding it up such that it's jagged edge catches the light of the sun like a small horizon. Some of them seem deliberately aimed at leading you into dangerous ecosystems or primitive societies. Others, to have you go around in circles. It could take a normal man nearly a month of backtracking across the galaxy to find its destination. Great prowess in occult practices or this world's lore may be able to parse through much of its false leads, though; and the guidance of a **Yozi** or **Tomb-Star** would certainly be able to contemptuously cut straight to the false leads to determine your true destination. **Crimson Regina** certainly remembers it, just like she remembers the security measures built into the key to ensure only the wisest users could find the Grid easily, though she lacks the key's updated knowledge about the world's new location.

When you come to the end of the quest, you'll find yourself on a dark, cold world with great valleys and thunderous oceans. More worryingly, a massive surge of death's Essence will howl at you like the arctic winds. Curiously, it emanates from a powerful manse of living essence, gathering around it like a hurricane-or a hungry shark about to descend on a shoal of fish. What was once a lush, verdant mound has been withered down to the bedrock by what descends upon it. A withered figure in a cowl sat atop an incongruously ancient stone throne awaits your arrival. Jaundiced eyes glower in shrivelling pale skin, and you realise at once that Skone was a mere avatar of this aberration.

It lets out a sound that would be laughter, if it didn't sound *exactly* like a dying animal trying to bark. Each word it utters sounds like worms grinding at the back of your skull. It is called **The Insidious Palpitation of Unlimited Power**, and it is the Death Avatar of a Tomb-Star. Once, the Yozi it was served as the premier administrator to the agrarian world it's builders hailed from. It's lifeblood suffused the population centres it oversaw. It is no exaggeration to say that it WAS the Senate of many worlds, and in death it yet retained a connection to the Essence flows to the buildings it once supervised allowing it to advance it's schemes beyond death. Like subtly arranging a suitable host for its will to be cloned and founding the cult who laid the work for it to harvest much power from death through the seemingly misguided planetary killings. Now it believes that by devouring enough of the Galactic Defence Grid's power, it can drag all the Empire down to fuel the Terminus.

Perhaps it is right. In the skies above the planet, maw-like vent horizons gather as the dread thing at last prepares to expend the strength it has gained. Crackles of black lightning powerful enough to lay low entire fleets dance between them. Through some horrifying feat of necromancy, Insidious Palpitation has actually summoned part of itself through the Grid's Essence flows.

Perhaps it is wrong. It seems that prior to arrival this being wasn't actually doing much other than slumping limply on its throne. You may realise it is actually *agonised* from being a creature of death gorging upon so much living Essence.

Either way, your final task is to defeat this creature.

It would be wise to kill it quickly. Old and relatively fragile from its insane labours, as a creature of death it remains vulnerable to the Holy powers wielded best by Solars but known to one extent or another by most other Exalted; while still tough as a stone wall, it's stature is that of a man and it could fall. But with barely a gesture, a reality-shredding cascade of wavering deathly forces and rippling shadows will rend your life force and Essence to rejuvenate itself, becoming agile enough to keep up with Lunars and skilled in combat as any Sidereal-mostly through spirit charms inherent to it. With passing seconds it recovers more and more of its powers: Feats of landscape-carving telekinesis that feel like an icy grip, blasts of soul-devouring black lightning echoing those emitted by it's true self above, horrific illusions in which the victims' fears can inflict tangible harm directly to the soul and torrents of pyreflame. And these are merely unique, terrible Arcanoi; it remains an experienced master of the Void Circle of Necromancy. It would go so far as to claim it is all of the Tomb-Stars' vengeance made manifest if, after many minutes, it reclaims the height of its power. At which point matter itself crumbles to nothing at its gaze, and even space and time warp to fit death's designs. Though for all power over the forces of death it remains relatively fragile as Death Avatars go, assuming you can actually hit it. And mercifully while the chill of death does pervade the environment around you harmfully in subtle ways, the parts of its Tomb-Star self it has summoned can't seem to reach to this planet-merely thrashing around attacking indiscriminately as it tries to squeeze more of itself through.

Assuming you have allies, any and all will be a great help. Should you be on good terms with the Empire or Rebellion (or by some feat of diplomacy, both) you'll find their fleets throwing off the Death Avatar's concentration by bombarding it's true self-though suffering heavy casualties as a result. A **Tomb-Star** would really shine here, able to singlehandedly banish the wretched creature from the living world due to its liminal state of being between life and death leaving it "unbalanced" compared to your ally. A peer to Insidious Palpitation, few could comprehend what a duel between two undying celestial beings look like; know only that you shall witness event horizons colliding upon each other, and the skies shall rain Soulsteel, and that the being's own Death Avatar shall seem as the void of space in motion as it aids you in battle. The **Shrieking Hordes** would at least provide warm bodies aplenty to throw at both, to better effect against the avatar than the entity's true body. A **Yozi** has many avenues to aid you: While unfamiliar with the principles of death Tomb-Stars enjoy, no Solar ever restricted it's hobbled body from smiting the horror with all the cosmic power at its disposal. The demon armies it has at its beck and call both further stem Insidious Palpitation's emergence, and bring devastating sorcerous power to your battle with its avatar. **Crimson Regina** has a unique asset to bring to the table of her own: Shouting out sorcerous IFFs, she can requisition a portion of the Galactic Defence Grid's energies to unleash miniature elemental cataclysms with great focus, yet without even tapping into her personal Essence reserves against Insidious Palpitation. And of course if Ray, Obsidian or miraculously both are present their considerable ~~plot armour~~ good fortune or experience from the Malfean War will make them devastating combatants.

Slaying-or rather, truly putting to rest Insidious Palpitation's Death Avatar will reward you with a scream of agony and thwarted ambition from the swirly mass above you-the writhing blackness seeming punch-drunk from the feedback for a short while. Even with the efforts of celestial allies having sundered much of its form, what's left of it will flail wildly seeking to pull down any portion of existence it can grasp with it. Something has to be done about it, and as the haze of death's Essence clears from the manse Skies' beamklaive begins to thrum with power. You intuitively understand what must be done. You must thrust it hard, into the ground.

And lo, the ground shall peel away to reveal a warm, soothing chamber of golden mist. A perfect barrier blocks any but you from entering it.

AUTHORISATION FROM THE SOLAR HEGEMONY ACKNOWLEDGED, a voice from the manse itself will rumble.

GALACTIC DEFENSE GRID ONLINE.

CORE IMPERFECTION IDENTIFIED: LIMITED AUTONOMY.

PATCH 2.35 FULLY INSTALLED: ADDED PROJECT SKYWALKER, A PROCEDURE THAT WILL DEDICATE ALL CORE RESOURCES TO GRANT AN EXALTED THE FORM AND POWER OF A STELLAR INTELLIGENCE

PLEASE ENTER THE DESIGNATED BIOMATRICULATION CHAMBER, AND PREPARE FOR ASCENSION

You realise you have everything you need to obliterate Insidious Palpitation once and for all, once you step into the golden mists and feel your Essence comingle with it.

Your reward is transformation into an untarnished Stellar Intelligence: A divine supercomputer made of stellar macro-phenomena. Your wisdom and processing capabilities are capable of effortlessly monitoring the health of thousands of systems, and hundreds of thousands of worlds. Within you lies the raw power to effortlessly awaken nebula into full stars, then collapse them into wormholes precise enough to enable travel easier than even the current intergalactic canal system. Like your predecessors you can of course forge armies of demons out of Essence and biomass capable of threatening much of the galaxy, and can increase your power by building mechanical systems to consume celestial objects, dark matter and similar forces to expand or improve your systems. It took much time, loss of life and their own cosmic labours for the Solar Exalted to overcome your predecessors with the galaxy united under their authority.

Your immersion into the Galactic Defence Grid's systems will ensure **your form is determined by the kind of capabilities you prioritise**, enabling a seeker of wisdom to attain the surveillance powers of The Eye that Sees, or a traveller with great wanderlust to emulate Adrian by becoming a sapient network of interspatial canals. Have no fear if you are attached to your current body; such is the prowess and foresight of the Solar Hegemony that your flesh will be preserved, your soul and consciousness' transmigration into the cosmic infrastructure preserving the full breadth of skill available to you-and easily replicable with your powers. To cap it all, that's not all you have: **The Exaltation you have gained from this world will offer certain unique boons to your new state of being**:

Dragonblooded shall find that whatever they develop into, the biological Essence reactors woven into their bloodline shall preserve and enhance many of the same qualities they kept competitive as Essence technology advanced. Genetic engineering, the creation of new life and martial prowess shall be more efficiently mastered by your subsystems, the Galactic Defence Grid imprinting on those generations-long lessons to endow you with processors as rapid and adaptable as evolution itself and constantly improving your mortal form in subtle but persistent ways. This process is as much psychic power and Essence as it is biology; and right off the bat at least one notionally long term improvement will be endowed in accord with your self-image; a mighty warrior could gain skin tougher than boulders, a rogue the power to run or slide on air in an approximation of flight and a vain sorceress could attain a perfectly mesmerising beauty supported by mystical pheromones. The elements could blaze up into a fury capable of levelling mountains and seemingly comingling in ways that defy the laws of physics when your natural form is roused to wrath. And on a larger scale, the propagation and stabilisation of the elements through psychic energy fields becomes adept for you, allowing you to let fire burn in space or seal the Shrieking Hordes in materialised continental shelves-even intuitively weaving them into Essence-harnessing megastructures or human-scale artifacts of cosmic power the Exalted would consider high calibre artifacts. So too do can you easily weave your psychic disciplines into your cosmic efforts, a field of so-called “chi” naturally emitted from your celestial form. Even mass-produced demons you create can be effortlessly born with their flesh truly perfected within mortal bounds, and trained in any mundane fighting art you know of. Their true gift is their symbiotic relationship to the elemental forces you emanate.

Lunars discover a whole new leap in evolution, becoming cosmic predators bringing all the ferocity of organic life’s struggle to survive to the ponderous heights of celestial being. Whether biological or mechanical, your form is in constant competition with itself, all systems competing with each other and self-improving in an almost chimerical recursive system. While the Dragonblooded may surpass you in creating or shaping the known forms of life, the warped things you could design or spawn surpass the system of biology they work with. Your human vessel need not remain as such for long; to list the ways your bones could become killing scythes or your intestines hull-tearing serpents or your blood a non-Newtonian fluid capable of cutting down a squad of men in the blink of an eye would be tedious; more importantly it serves as a symbiote to your celestial one, amplifying it’s powers wherever it is present and so endowed with Essence you could consider it (and modify it as) an artifact and manse that is nothing short of an inhuman masterwork. Even abstract capabilities like hacking, mental processing or sorcery can find new ways to mutate in positive directions. What you touch with your power gains similar adaptive prowess, the malleability and miraculous adaptability of the flesh you mould insinuating itself upon it, such that mountain ranges could become a herd of city-eating behemoths. No force in this world is truly beyond your capacity to adapt and thrive when exposed to it: In a contest with the posthuman insurgent Arad the Hunter, his ability to adapt to any threat would be dwarfed by your power to spawn a demon army with the exact same capabilities-their forms, powers and even identities rippling like inchoate amoebas as they improvise, adapt and overcome. Perhaps like the Brass Leviathan, the rogue flagship of the Golden Engineer itself, you might one day find a way to store and empower yourself off the Solar Exaltations of this world.

Sidereals shall find that the cosmic dance of matter, energy and Essence shall become even clearer to them than ever before. While all Stellar Intelligences have senses beyond mortal reckoning, the conceptual chaos computing terminals built into you make your forecasting and large scale manipulation of events an unprecedented feat of brilliance even by their standards. Your capacity to sift through the entire universe through the permutation of Essence amongst its fundamental forces along for information alone would give His Divine Lunar Presence pause with the grasp of how much you already know about the galaxy and beyond, that is patently impossible for his All-Seeing Eye to verify and suppress. Where Dragonblooded may spread natural martial arts to their demon kin, Sidereals may share

even supernatural ones to them as inborn capabilities-though those as mighty as the martial arts unique to Sidereals may prove difficult to transmit. Even your own mortal form becomes more godlike AI than man-equipped with its own divine panoply, sanctum and charms befitting the tutelary spirit adapted to your new self. You also gain phenomenal power-often manifesting as antennae made of starlight, wires condensed from pure Essence or other unique traits of your celestial form-to "hack" complex divine systems and artifacts such as Exaltations, as the Sidereals once did to unlock their unique martial feats and to hide from those who sought them without permission. Not only can you easily avoid any potential massive errors introduced by this intrusion such as unwise forecasts (or introduce them), but you operate on such a scale that altering weather systems across entire planets to condense loyal weather spirits out of the ambient climate patterns or restructuring canals to transfer travellers with unique information to a specific, normally off the road part of the galaxy would be well within your powers.

Solars simply boast unrivalled essence manipulation and quantum computing even among the other Exalted. Those with untarnished Solar Exaltation shall, of course, find their energy systems superior even to other Solars. The power to convert, filter and amplify Essence is leagues beyond even the previous options, allowing your demonic hordes to be innately suffused with a fierce gold flame that suffuses them with the so-called Holy principle that made the Solars greatly feared by those deemed their enemies. Cleansed and purified in ways that may see them develop new, permanent transformations emulating your nature, their blows and energy attacks become highly deleterious to those deemed your enemies. Your own mortal form shares this flame and it's traits as well, and furthermore can skillfully generate and shape solar phenomena into virtually any form you can imagine for travel, combat, first aid or more complex technological feats-as if it were a miniature sun. And if your core power seems underwhelming consider that Malfeas, the leader of the Stellar Intelligence insurgency, was himself a dyson sphere defined primarily by his overwhelmingly aggressive approach. Your systems are powerful enough that you could have *many hundreds* of miniature suns, each miraculously still emitting tremendous heat and Essence while being the size of Jupiter, distributed through your celestial body. And your control over Essence itself is such that you could easily mass produce billions of fist-sized miniature suns, each able to generate enough Solar essence to rival the protoshinmaic vortexes of another world. In short, your structure is so far beyond the Stellar Intelligences that you are akin to a prototype to what God-Constellation Autochthon has forged himself into-and your fiery brilliance has already devised ways to *at least* match what he has done to himself in a matter of years, given sufficient resources. And even that is not the ceiling to the innovations your radiance can sear onto the face of the universe.

Abyssals are denied this faculty for conventional Essence in exchange for similar power over the bleak forces of the Terminus-and of course, retain the potential to one day invert themselves back into a Solar-based Stellar Intelligence with great effort. **Abyssals** can instead mould eschatechnology like clay-spreading it over untouched planets in ways echoing the horror of the sentient Chaun-strain cannibal virus, darkening the hearts of suns with obscene ordinance to make them leech as much heat as they once casted and forging swords that can split planets. **Abyssals** are too far divorced from living Essence to generate such hordes of demons, but may instead bring the souls of the dead back to serve in a similar capacity-and endow them with a freezing haze of blackness dark as the interstellar void that while not Holy, has frightening entropic power over all things of the living world while sharing the other traits of Solar flame. In time those raised by your hand you were already mighty-or heavily favoured by your attention-could become legendary horrors, while instead of shaping solar phenomena your own mortal form is already an equal to many Death Avatars. While an **Abyssal** would *merely* a particularly death-steeped Stellar Intelligence by default, the potential lies within you to go one step further with some non-fatal core modifications; perhaps a contained black hole with soulsteel used to form it's singularity, or an accelerator for countless damned souls: To become not just a Tomb-Star,

but a Tomb-Star losing none of it's hold over the world of the living. And just perhaps, recreating enough of the Terminus' principles to recreate it's dark glory as an afterlife that shall shadow you like the nightmares your visage inspires in all that lives.

Across the entire galaxy, engines roar and long-forgotten interstellar energy circuits surge as the Galactic Defence Grid wields all its power in defence. Aurorae are witnessed across nearly every inhabited world, signalling forgotten warnings about the forces brought to bear. Blinding light surges through the galactic canals, setting off cascading surges of Essence that can be seen from a long distance across the entire galaxy. Great, jagged portals into Elsewhere spill modular artifacts of immense scope around the cold little planet that will be the nucleus for your new body, reacting to your Exaltation to reconfigure themselves. All of this to ensure your transformation from man to stellar formation takes mere minutes.

Your allies and acquaintances will be kept safe near your central chamber, in body at least. **The Shrieking Hordes** will likely be struck dumb with awe for the first time in a long, long while. A **Tomb-Star** could seem even more pensive than usual, seemingly mesmerised by the inscrutable processes before it. And while fear of retaliation from the Grid prevents actual sabotage, a **Yozi** will spend the whole process consumed with bitterness and envy.

Ray may even slowly start to understand that the galaxy doesn't literally revolve around one person. Well, at least not her.

And Obsidian might take this opportunity to withdraw coolly-faking his death yet again out of desperation if Ray is present-so he can hurry home and report everything to His Divine Lunar Presence.

(It's quite likely that when the men review what he's learned from all this, they will share a stiff drink together while wishing they could afford to forget the whole affair)

(It's also quite likely that if Skyward Ray is still alive at this point, she'll go right back to stalking poor Obsidian if not outright trying to literally cling to him. Having abandoned her old life due to a series of increasingly bad decisions, it would have taken great effort to get her to fixate on anything other than someone she dimly remembers from a past life)

There's one exception. **Crimson Regina** still retains access rights to the Grid from the time she used it, and should she be with you a second, carmine gateway meant for her passage will open next to you. The technology was far from ready when she first wielded the Grid, but it was she who discovered what it was becoming-and programmed an additional iteration of Project Skywalker for herself, shaping the extra resources needed with the Grid's extraordinary powers. Eons ago a Stellar Intelligence made the unwise decision to try and approach her with a bargain in a bid for freedom-one she took advantage of, by tricking it into gifting an artifact endowed with much of its power and absconding with it to the Grid for further analysis. A risky gambit she hoped would let her wield the powers of the galaxy's enemies against them. Designed by her own hand, her chamber is much cruder, and her ascension thus much more traumatic. Jade needles will stab into her deep muscles. A femtofluid made of Moonsilver tainted with vitriolic Yozi-blood will fill the pool she must lie in. Catheters of electrified orichalcum will inject her with sorceries stored as scalding liquids that to catalyse her flesh and spirit for what she is becoming. All a price worth paying, to her, for the strength to help you protect the galaxy. **She too shall become a Stellar Intelligence** similar to what a Dragonblooded would, though **her abilities shall be enhanced with the traits of a single Yozi, her mortal form be made akin to one of their greatest demons and her overall power falls short only of a Solar that has undergone the same transformation.**

Where the galaxy goes from here for the remainder of your stay, only you can say for sure. Merely by existing, you have changed the balance of power forever. The Galactic Defence is likely exhausted for who knows how long from its efforts, if not fully burnt out from its monumental restructuring. His Divine Lunar Presence will be alarmed, though such is his trust in Obsidian that should you have had a good working relationship he will be slow to declare hostilities. If you fought on the Rebellion's side, they will surely rejoice to have such a powerful ally on their side. All that can be certain is that not so long a while later, in a god-constellation far, far away, a mechanical minion shall bring God-Constellation Autochthon the knowledge that the galaxy has a new guardian or conqueror, depending on your disposition.

And he shall tremble.

Also, you can keep the beamklaive and the droid if you want. The beamklaive has great power over creating and harnessing geomantic forces, to enact its role as the "security key" to the Galactic Defence Grid. The droid is fairly standard as droids go, but it's got spunk.

Notes:

The curse of Limit sloughs from you in subsequent jumps, lost to the mists of time.

The Exaltation interacts with the soul in mysterious ways. Feel free to define how it interacts with you or companions' souls in future worlds as your story requires. If some facet of a new jump related to your choices as a writer made before entering the setting proper lead you to believe you are at risk of permanently losing it such as by being nonhuman or being a ghost or other form of undead, you may adjudicate whether or not your interdimensional nature retains the Exaltation. More complex interactions with unusual spiritual structures, supernatural phenomena or other external factors are left up to you to determine.

As manse construction uses the normal rules of the baseline Exalted setting, somehow you will be able to continue to build the manses of this world approximating other geomantic magics and forces for the Essence needed to create their virtual spaces as well as the buildings that exploit them. Of Making Manses Into Mountains simply makes you much, much, much better at it.

There is no information on what a Death Avatar's actual capabilities are like. Given their patronage is used to justify the Liege background it can be inferred they are roughly analogous to the Deathlords in this setting, though. To the extent it matters, within the scenario The Insidious Palpitation of Unlimited Power is considered to be focused on sorcery and evocations of the underworld's elements at a cost to brute force-roughly analogous to the Eye and Seven Despairs.

If you took Spacefaring Apex Predator Prana without being a Lunar Exalted, you somehow inexplicably have the power to transform into a biomechanical spaceship of equivalent potency but imbued with arsenals and power systems themed around your Exaltation's instead, and a regeneration-circuit based on your caste's magical material rather than Moonsilver. Expect general confusion.

If you took World-Ordering Lunar Presence without being a Lunar Exalted, you do not somehow become a shapeshifter. Rather, you gain unique and powerful Charms from your own Exalted type specialised for achieving great social and political feats.

Regarding Dauntless Among The Stars' biggest purchase, everything known about the Unconquered Sun's capabilities has been written into the item's description. There are very, very few specifics about it in the setting other than it definitely exists, and it's one of the scariest things in space.

The Shrieking Hordes are the setting's answer to the Raksha of Exalted canon. Fanwank responsibly as to their nature and powers with this in mind. And the thing about them having their own Exalted is probably a joke. *Probably.* Heaven's Reach rather cavalierly declared *many* of the malign forces of space have their own Exalted, without specifying which ones.

Unfortunately First Emperor and God-Constellation Autochthon don't have stats or even clear details about their full capabilities. They are merely treated by all those who know of them, and to a certain extent the narration itself, as the most terrifying single things in the setting.

While some of the most potent items, powers and allies in this document shall enable you to recreate the spatial canals most ships in this world use to achieve faster that light travel, that may prove exhausting. For your consideration, any spaceship or spaceship-centric item purchased here shall come with a minimum usable level of the maps, hyperspace lanes, and other such things inextricably bound into its destiny with you after this jump. Though these

shall be only minimal in settings without established interstellar networks, in jumps with thriving interstellar communities the mysterious canals accompanying your travels shall be significantly more developed, well maintained and complex.

Crimson Regina is this world's version of the Scarlet Empress. Having lived from *at least* the days of Solar hegemony to see the Dragonblooded spread among the stars, she enjoys playing pirate queen and barbarian adventuress far more than the stressful duty of ruling the Great Clans in times past.
You can use Allies From Other Worlds to companion people who appear nowhere else but the Project: Skywalker scenario if you take it.

The exact limits and capabilities of Stellar Intelligences are frustratingly hard to pin down, beyond that they were greatly diminished by modification, reprogramming and unspecified diminishment after the war, and that the war itself wrecked the shape of the galaxy enough to leave huge gulfs within it-some burning with eldritch hue-and possibly the very universe's axis. Unbound, they were repeatedly described as "nigh-omnipotent" with no helpful information as to how nigh exactly that was nor precisely how much they lost upon being hacked up and banished-nor in precise detail how the Solars protected themselves from them, only that in at least one case a Stellar Intelligence had to inflict terrible damage to herself to defeat a Solar opponent. It is notable that Autochthon apparently gained greater power by absorbing star systems and converting planets into engines, although it is unclear to what extent this was genuine resource dependency as it is to what extent supernatural processes may have given him greater gains than may be immediately apparent from the leveraged mass and energy. The only creation of his, Yugash, focused on any detail is considered a scout and not representative of his full military might. As always, fanwank responsibility.

No horses were harmed in the making of this jump.