

# TRAVELLER

## SECRETS OF THE ANCIENTS HANDOUTS

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# HANDOUTS

## HANDOUT 1

### UNCLE VLEN BACKETT

Some people are only at home when travelling, and Vlen is one of these restless souls. He might visit his homeworld of Alell (in the Regina subsector of the Spinward Marches) for a few weeks or even a month or two, delighting friends and family with tales of distant planets and exotic cultures, but then the wanderlust would take hold once more and he'd be off again. He was a charming old rogue – more staid relatives might disapprove of him and his questionable, unreliable ways, but he was every child's favourite uncle.

No-one was ever sure what Uncle Vlen did, or if he was just a drifter amid the stars. Sometimes, he worked on tramp traders or signed on as a deckhand on freighters, yet he also dabbled in archaeology and journalism and... well, he never liked to talk about it, but Vlen had quite a collection of firearms and could handle himself in a fight. He also had a lot of strange friends – mostly other space voyagers, but he also received irregular communications from scientists, naval officers, corporate oligarchs, even high nobility. On at least one occasion, Vargr from outside the Imperium travelled hundreds of parsecs to consult with Vlen Backett.

## HANDOUT 2

**From:** Pallod Norrim, Chief Inspector, Regina Public Order Commission

**Subject:** Chattels and corpus of Vlen Backett (deceased)

It is my sad duty to inform you of the death of citizen Vlen Backett, late of Regina/Alell, who died in Credo City, Regina. Before his passing, Backett had left instructions on file with the Public Order Commission that you should be considered his next of kin for the purposes of resolving his outstanding affairs on Regina, for taking possession of his belongings, and for the transport of his remains back to Alell. A sum of money has been deposited with the First Ducal Bank to cover any expenses.

In the name of his grace the Duke and in accordance with the Public Order Act of 527 (Amended), I hereby require and enjoin you to travel to Regina with all due haste to deal with the affairs and estate of Vlen Backett. In the event that you are unable to do so, you must reply to this message at soon as possible so that alternate arrangements may be made.

I wish to extend my personal condolences on the death of Vlen Backett. His body is being stored in a cryogenic facility in Credo City and will be transferred to your possession as soon as possible.

Given certain irregularities with Vlen Backett's affairs, it is vitally important that you contact the Public Order Commission upon arrival.

Sealed this day, 127 Standard, in the 1105<sup>th</sup> year of the Third Imperium.

Pallod Norum

## HANDOUT 3

**To:** Vlen Backett, care of the Regina Down TAS Hostel

**From:** Professor Iaros Ujinka, Department of History, University of Regina

**Subject:** Meeting

Dear Vlen,

I have returned from Beck's World, and am now available for that meeting we discussed at your convenience. If you would care to visit me at my home on Dancado, I shall be delighted to receive you and discuss topics of mutual interest.

Yours,

Professor Ujinka

## HANDOUT 4

**X-From:** Captain Gand Holcess, ISS Alahir

**X-To:** Alell Starport Control

**X-Priority:** Gold

**X-Encrypt:** Meson Secure-8

**ASPC:** Transferring you to the administrator now, sir. Full encryption activated.

**ASPC:** This is Alell Actual, go ahead.

**ALAHIR:** Administrator, this is Captain Gand Holcess of the Alahir. I need to appraise you of an ongoing operation within your airspace.

**ASPC:** Is this part of the Scout Service, or is it military? We're reading your identity beacon as a scoutship, but -

**ALAHIR:** I'm afraid it's classified, administrator, but yes, we're armed and there may be weapons fire.

**ASPC:** Are we under attack?

**ALAHIR:** No, this is effectively a police action.

**ASPC:** A police action... with potential naval weapons discharge?

**ALAHIR:** I'm afraid so.

**ASPC:** What do you need from us, Captain Holcess?

**ALAHIR:** We have an agent en route to you via shuttle. We need you to facilitate her passage through the starport, and provide her with documentation. There's also a security detachment – they'll need a briefing on the area around Vaca Goya, and their movements are to be kept off the record.

**ASPC:** Anything else?

**ALAHIR:** We may need you to shut down all travel and keep all ships grounded if the targets attempt to escape.

**ASPC:** I'll make the arrangements.

**ALAHIR:** Do you have a ship called Star Hunter berthed at the moment?

**ASPC:** Checking... no. She's been here before, and she's registered to Alell, but she's not in the port right now. Last docking was... fifteen months ago.

**ALAHIR:** Never mind. Holcess out.

**X-From:** Captain Gand Holcess, ISS Alahir

**X-To:** Team Rapier

**X-Priority:** Gold

**X-Encrypt:** Tightbeam Laser Secure-8

**ALAHIR:** Rapier, sitrep?

**RAPIER:** Rapier One, sir. Targets have located a structure. Scanning with d-meters – picking up a large natural cavern directly below, plus a metal object. Big enough to be a ship.

**ALAHIR:** Give me a firing solution for that ship.

**RAPIER:** Sir, targeting data is being problematic because of the auroras.

**ALAHIR:** All right, we'll pick them up as they break atmo if they get past you.

**RAPIER:** Acknowledged, Alahir.

**ALAHIR:** Wait for the signal, then secure the structure. Non-lethal weapons only, please.

**RAPIER:** Sir.

**ALAHIR:** Holcess out.

## HANDOUT 5

Your head blazes with pain, and you lose all feeling in your limbs. You feel like your body is too big, too watery. Your back itches... and then your vision dims and you lose consciousness.

You find yourself looking at a complex equation, and you understand it. It describes a universe, a space pinched off by science – and it is both impossibly advanced and childlike in its simplicity. The universe contains three stars. Trapped in the centre of this universe, thrashing like a fly in a spider's web, is a familiar but horrific shape. The robot body of the Ancient Seven is trapped in the pocket universe you fled... you made... your head burns.

The pocket universe is shrinking. Rate of collapse uneven; estimated time to singularity is less than three months. You dream of Seven being annihilated as the walls of reality crush it to nothingness...

Gain INT +1, and gain one level in any three Science or Engineer skills.

## HANDOUT 6

The strange pain overtakes you again, and you black out.

This time, it is like the telepathic flashbacks you experienced in Grandfather's realm. You feel like images are spooling out into your brain.

You saw Seven die in the pocket universe. You saw the ancient cybernetic monstrosity be completely and utterly destroyed... and yet you know that somewhere, machines are resurrecting it. A Family Archive, that is what it is called. The instant Seven was destroyed... will be destroyed... a telepathic signal activates the Archive. Seven's machine body is rebuilt, its personality reactivated from backups.

And then the nightmare begins.

Seven's wrath is no longer counterbalanced by the threat of other Ancients. The galaxy belongs to the monster machine. You see bizarre ships in the skies over Regina, over Rhylanor, over Capitol. The alien ships rain down destruction like the thunderbolts of a jealous and judgemental god. Humanity is wiped out by the child of its benefactor...

If Seven is destroyed in Grandfather's pocket universe, a new version of Seven will be built by its Family Archive...

... and if Seven lives, the galaxy dies.

Gain INT +1, and gain one level in any three Science or Engineer skills.

If you already have the PSI characteristic, increase it by +4 and gain any three Psionic talents. If you do not have the PSI characteristic, roll 2D+4 to determine your PSI and gain any three Psionic talents.

## HANDOUT 7

In this vision, you are back in the pocket universe, on Grandfather's space station.

Seven looms above you, terrible and invincible. The space station fires a beam of shimmering nameless energy, but there is no effect on the dark metal star-god...

... or is there? In the vision, you travel along the beam, your consciousness encoded in a pattern of erupting anti-mesons. You are suddenly inside Seven, inside the machine mind. It is a nightmare place, a hallucinatory realm of cold hatred, of overwhelming loathing for all other life. Seven dreams of a universe where all other living beings are subservient to it, to never-ending conquest. It dreams of a galaxy of self-replicating warships, all enslaved to its mind. A host of warships, quadrillions strong, hurl themselves across the void to conquer other galaxies, tear holes in reality and slip sideways to parallel universes... always conquering, always growing, immortal, invincible, divine... an infinite of universes where there is nothing but subservience to the one true god, Seven...

You flit through the machine's fever-dreams in search of your prize. As Seven's weapons incinerate Grandfather cell by cell, the machine god roars with pleasure, and it ripples through this psychic landscape like a red tsunami of bloody joy. There, a memory, a single closely-guarded memory exposed only in Seven's moment of triumph over Grandfather. You dart in and seize it.

A world. A garden world, Earth-like, shimmering oceans, green forests. Atmospheric composition includes an unusually high amount of neon. Gas giant, three moons, one of which is a captured iceball. Vargr, enslaving a minor race of amphibious sea-slugs. Uthe subsector, only a short distance. Deep beneath the crust, a hidden fortress. Seven's base. Seven's Family Archive.

Find that world. Find it before Seven escapes the pocket universe.

Gain INT +1, and gain one level in Astrogation, Engineer (j-drive), and Pilot (spacecraft). Lose END-2.