

TIME RAIDER



The original servitor species of the synliroi—evil psions with near godlike power—the kuran'zoi liberated themselves during the First Psychic War. In the centuries since, they built their own culture and civilization as nomads of the timescape. The exonym “time raiders” was given to them by denizens of the lower worlds who, seeing the advanced technology the kuran'zoi wield, concluded they must be from the future.

Extraordinarily rare in Orden, time raiders thrive on the Sea of Stars, the Sea Between Worlds, where the winds of limbo roar.

In place of eyes, kuran'zoi possess crystalline ocular sensors that grant them high-spectral vision and which are hardened against the extreme radiations encountered in the Sea of Stars, permitting them to operate freely outside their vessels with only their portable rebreathers. Time raiders also have two sets of arms, allowing them to wield melee weapons at the same time as ranged weapons. A single well-trained kuran'zoi is like a squad unto themselves.

On Time Raiders

“You will tell me the location of the ship you came here in.” Taxiarch Lycaon paced outside the ruined stone church. The four-armed woman with crystal eyes and flaming pink hair in a strip down the center of her shaved head sneered at him. She was chained to the ruin of a stone column outside the church.

“Is it that your brain is so small you must *talk* in order to *think*?” The woman’s smile was a sneer.

Lycaon strode toward the alien, grabbed a length of chain around her waist and yanked on it, pulling it taut so the chain around her neck tightened. “You are going to die in any event,” he said. “If you wish to deny me the pleasure of hearing you howl and scream for mercy, tell me what I want to know now and my dogs will kill you quickly.”

Up close, she could see the fine stitching along Lycaon’s cheeks and forehead, the very slight differences in skin tone that showed his skin was not his own.

“You seem to be made of *bits*,” the alien said as she peered at Lycaon, her crystalline eyes catching and reflecting prismatic light. “And not the best bits. Leftovers? Is that what you are? A walking assemblage of cast-off *scraps*? Hahah, I thought the proteans were hideous. Someone should let them know! There are creatures even more foul-seeming and *useless* in the timescape.”

The taxiarch smiled to himself, nodded with respect at the woman’s epithets. He placed his foot on a low piece of rubble, once part of the wall of the stone church, and leaned his arm on his knee. He was not dressed as the other war dogs. No black leather for him. He wore a gold breastplate with the embossed head of a ram molded into it, a white cape over his back. Gold greaves and red leather boots and gloves. The other war dogs only had patches of hair but his was long and blond.

He struck a casual, jaunty pose. “Where is your worldship?” he said in a more reasonable voice. “Or came you here in a single-seater *starskimmer*?” At this, the alien’s crystal eyes went wide, betraying surprise. “You see?” the taxiarch said, impressed with himself. “I am not a primitive like these peasants, who hounded you because you are alien.” He nodded at the folk of the small town watching from the stables some distance away. “I am Ajax’s elite. Better than his chosen. I was *made* for victory.” Indeed, Taxiarch Lycaon looked almost fully human. Handsome and fit like a statue from Phaedros, which his model had almost certainly been inspired by. Unless you looked closely, there was no sign he was a product of the Body Banks. “If you agree to *lead me* to your vessel, I will let you go free.”

The alien sighed. “Blaap blaa blaa,” she said. “You should hear yourself. Like barking *thrazz*, you sound to me. Who holds your leash I wonder? For surely a microbrain such as you could not command any more than these rabble.” She nodded her head at the other twenty or so war dogs.

Her taunts worked. Lycaon hauled back and punched the alien in the jaw. Her head smashed into the ruined column. She was dazed but she shook it off and laughed.

"Look how easily this one is goaded!" she said. She spat out dark-blue blood and turned to the peasants gathered. "You people! Why do you let yourselves be cowed by these ... *bits*? Bits of people kludged together? Even the least of you is worth more than these."

"Perhaps from the air," Flight Captain Lyria offered, and she stroked the feathers of her giant hawk mount to calm it. "I could scout the forest around the ..."

"No!" Taxiarch Lycaon pointed a finger at the Hawklord and strode toward her. "You are the elite of Ajax's winged harriers, *I* am his chosen brigade commander. We are not scavengers! This one ..." he stabbed a gloved finger at the alien, "... will come to heel, or I will give her to my war dogs." He turned to face the chained alien, who yawned. Lycaon seethed.

"They may pull you apart," he said to her, and at this his squadron of soldiers, all in black leather and golden pauldrons, started making barking sounds. Then they laughed at each other.

"Or I may let my crucibite melt the skin from your bones." At that, a war dog clad in leather from head to foot wearing a heavy mask with glass circles where the eyes should be and some kind of canister over his mouth stepped forward. The long thin brass tube in his hands connected to a large metal tank on his back.

"Shall I let you choose?" the taxiarch said, and drew a dagger from his belt. "I will cut off one finger. If you cry out, *I* kill you. If not, another finger. And if you cry out *then* ..."

Slowly everyone assembled could make out the sounds of a conversation, quiet with a metallic ring to it. The voices got louder until eventually they could be heard.

"... should be ready for anything," one voice said, deep, commanding, and images started to form around and between the war dogs, the Hawklord, and the taxiarch. Like faded images in a manuscript they seemed, gaining pigment and clarity and, eventually, depth as their voices grew louder and clearer.

"Oh, thank you for the brilliant tactical advice," another voice, high pitched, piped up.

Suddenly, the images became three dimensional, solid, and seven heroes stood among them. A human in working battle plate. A dwarf with his battle-staff tipped with an hourglass. An orc with a huge battleaxe casually resting on her shoulder. A polder with twin rapiers in his hands. A tall willowy high elf with night-black skin and golden hair. An unarmed hakaan towering over everyone. And a dragon knight. Of all the motley band, it was the dragon knight who caused the people of the town to gasp. Even at a distance, even with the war dogs between them, they recognized the device of Good King Omund on the knight's shield.

The war dogs scrambled. For a moment, it seemed they might flee at this sudden intrusion, but the taxiarch bellowed "Hold fast!" and they held their ground, uncertainty over the unknown threat of a band of heroes battling in each of them against the certain fear of their commander.

The hakaan looked around and saw a clump of villagers watching the scene from a distance, gathered around what looked like some stables. He waved. "Hello!" he said, smiling.

One of the villagers waved back before being shushed.

John looked at the taxiarch and immediately read the situation. It was a clear enough picture.

There was something about the war dogs. They loved Ajax's cruelty—reveled in it. John had crossed swords with other commanders in Ajax's army before. Ground Commander Vordokov was a professional—could be reasoned with, but he was an orc.

Not the war dogs—they were fanatics.

"What's this?" the taxiarch called out with a hungry grin. "Allies of the alien?" He was projecting confidence. Trying to muster his wary soldiers.

"Allies of all those who suffer, and seek justice," the dwarf announced.

Sir John ignored the war dog, tilted his head toward the alien. "Embers?"

"A kuran'zoi," the high elf said, and the alien held her head up with pride. "A time raider from the upper worlds. What the truth is I cannot say, and no people are all one thing. But by reputation? They're intractable, ungovernable, they loathe authority, hate tyranny and are totally, utterly without fear."

John watched the alien. They sneered their approval at Ember's summary. That was enough for Sir John, they could work out the details later. After everything they'd been through before, he trusted Embers explicitly.

He could see the shape of the next moments play out. All he had to do was take the initiative. If he was right, the whole thing would be over in seconds. There was no time to communicate. No time to plan, and everyone, everyone had to play their part.

John knew what came next, but he wasn't an assassin. He had his own part to play. He took a step forward, away from his teammates, and noted the taxiarch didn't react. That spoke volumes. He locked eyes with his enemy.

"She goes free," John commanded, his voice steel, "or you die here." He could feel the muscles tightening in his comrades, the whole company like a steel spring wound tight.

Lycaon cocked his head at Sir John and took a few foolish steps toward the tactician. He was just out of reach. But close enough.

"I see you are a man, like Ajax. Why do you lower yourself with these ... creatures?" The war dog taxiarch looked at the elf, giant, polder, dwarf, and dragon knight. "Little more than slimy things crawled out of the sea? Join us. Join me. Join Ajax. It'll be nice for you ..."—his voice lowered almost to a whisper—"... to be on the winning side for a change."

Sir John took a deep breath, his body language changed and that was enough. Several things then happened at once, so quickly no one would later be able to say who acted first.

Ember's eyes flashed into a starfield. The time raider's chains dissolved into starspace and reappeared around Flight Captain Lyria pinning her arms to her side. She was giving the hawklord an excuse to sit this one out. Gods, John was glad she was with them.

The time raider's right upper hand shot out, as though she'd been waiting for the void mage to do exactly what she just did, and her meson blaster leapt out of the hands of the war dog who'd chained her. The pistol made of glass and bronze slammed into her hand and its tip flared with prismatic light.

John felt his skin tighten as Dazar warded him, and from the sun's shadow cast by Taxiarch Lycaon the polder Jackson Bootblack emerged, a rapier in each hand, and no one saw him move from where he'd been a moment before.

The hakaan burst into action and sped past him like a blur.

At the same instant, a call—a horn. From directly behind John a blast of sound like a chord played by a dozen trumpets, and hope sang in his heart—the clarion call of the last Storm Knight!

At the sound, the orc dashed forward into a knot of war dog commandos, her axe already hewing about her.

John hadn't hesitated, he'd already drawn his sword and falchion. "All right, you patchwork son of a bitch." He charged Lycaon who fumbled with the shortsword on his belt.

"Draw steel!"

Time Raider Traits

Time raider heroes have access to the following traits.

Signature Trait: Psychic Scar

Your mind is a formidable layer of defense. You have psychic immunity equal to your level.

Purchased Time Raider Traits

You have 3 ancestry points to spend on the following traits. (*Quick Build*: Beyondsight, Psionic Gift with Psionic Bolt.)

BEYONDSIGHT (1 POINT)

As a maneuver, you can adjust your vision to allow you to see through mundane obstructions that are 1 square thick or less. While your vision is adjusted this way, you can't see the area within 1 square of you and you don't have line of effect to any creature or object in that area. You can restore your usual vision as a maneuver.

FORESIGHT (1 POINT)

Your senses extend past mundane obscurity and the veil of the future alike. You automatically know the location of any creature with concealment who isn't hidden from you within 20, and you negate the usual bane on strikes against such creatures. Additionally, whenever you are targeted by a strike, you can use a triggered action to impose a bane on the power roll.

FOUR-ARMED ATHLETICS (1 POINT)

Your unique physiology enhances your movement. You gain an edge on tests that use the Climb, Gymnastics, or Swim skills when you can use all your arms in the attempt.

FOUR-ARMED MARTIAL ARTS (2 POINTS)

Your multiple arms let you take on multiple tasks at the same time. Whenever you use the Grab or Knockback maneuver against an adjacent creature, you can target one additional adjacent creature, using the same power roll for both targets. Additionally, you can have up to two creatures grabbed at a time.

PSIONIC GIFT (2 POINTS)

Choose one signature ability from the following options. Signature abilities can be used at will.

Concussive Slam
You slam an invisible force down upon the target.

Psionic, Ranged, Strike
Ranged 10

Main action
One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason, Intuition, or Presence:

≤11

2 + **R**, **I**, or **P** damage;

12-16

5 + **R**, **I**, or **P** damage; push 1

17+

7 + **R**, **I**, or **P** damage; push 2; **M<STRONG**, prone

Psionic Bolt
You shoot forth a purple beam of psychic force that moves your target.

Psionic, Ranged, Strike
Ranged 10

Main action
One creature or object

Power Roll + Reason, Intuition, or Presence:

≤11

2 + **R**, **I**, or **P** psychic damage; slide 1

12-16

5 + **R**, **I**, or **P** psychic damage; slide 2

17+

7 + **R**, **I**, or **P** psychic damage; slide 3

Minor Acceleration
You fill yourself or an ally with a burst of speed.

Psionic, Melee
Melee 1

Maneuver
Self or one ally

Effect: The target gains a bonus to speed equal to your Reason, Intuition, or Presence score (your choice) until the start of your next turn.

UNSTOPPABLE MIND (2 POINTS)

Your mind allows you to maintain your focus in any situation. You can't be made dazed.