

DRAGONSTAR™

STARFARER'S HANDBOOK



d20
system™

Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook,
Third Edition, published by Wizards of the Coast®

WELCOME TO DRAGONSTAR

So there I was, recruit: John Caspian, prince to a deposed and murdered king, working to someday exact my revenge on those who had betrayed my father and stolen my birthright. I wandered far and wide across my world, learning what I could as I went, making friends and gathering my power for an eventual assault to retake my homeland.

As a prince in exile, little better than a landless thief, I determined to make both my living and my name with the edge of my blade. I fought for money, for honor—even for love. Time after time, I vanquished those who dared to stand before me. Evil men, orcs, unnamable beasts—my friends and I defeated them all and many more threats besides.

In little time, bards were composing songs of our amazing exploits. As our legend grew, brave soldiers from my father's kingdom flocked to my side, swearing fealty to my name and my cause: the liberation of my homeland from the evil that had consumed it. I knew I wasn't ready then to confront the darkness that shrouded my ancestral lands, but I was confident that someday the time would come. In my heart, I didn't think it would have to wait long.

I had no idea how wrong I was.

SAILORS FROM THE SEA OF STARS

I remember exactly where I was when I first heard of the offworlders. That's funny: Throughout the early part of my life, I didn't think of my world as *a world*—I thought of it as *the world*. The only things that came from beyond were outsiders, and I always thought of them as legends. Even in my time as an adventurer and sellsword, I rarely traveled more than a few hundred miles from my homeland.

In those days, I thought I was pretty cosmopolitan, and I suppose that was true compared to most of my people. Leaving the land of my birth, I wandered and explored, learning new tongues, eating foods with previously unimaginable tastes and smells, and meeting people and creatures both wonderful and strange.

I was coming out of a tavern in Verilus, the largest city on the planet, as I was to later learn. As the seat of the Taravan Empire, this wasn't much of a surprise, but back in those days I hadn't even heard of terms like

“demographics” or “population density,” much less given the issue any thought. To me, Verilus was just *big*. Since then, of course, I've seen places that make Verilus—the height of civilization on my homeworld—seem like the back-end of the galaxy. And to most people in the Empire, I suppose that's true.

But when that first starship came hurtling down out of the midnight sky, I thought it was the end of the world.

And in a way, it was.

That great, steely, blood-hued beast came screaming down into the night above Verilus like some ancient dragon hell-bent on destroying the entire city. But this dragon didn't unleash blasts of fire from its belly. The bombs and missiles it rained on the city were almost invisible until they immolated their targets below, and the beams of brilliant light the beast spat forth looked unlike anything I'd ever seen. For long minutes, I simply stood and watched as explosions lit up the horizon. My mind simply couldn't grasp—couldn't categorize—what I was seeing.

The attack was as destructive as it was unprovoked. Within minutes, half of the city had been flattened and the rest was ablaze. The survivors panicked, trampling each other into the dirt in a desperate effort to escape the assault from above.

Only the Imperial Palace escaped the bombs unscathed.

This probably would have seemed strange at the time, but most people were too busy running for their lives to care. While I was gathering my friends about me in an attempt to find some safe way out of the carnage, my friend Günter stopped dead in his tracks and, with a hoarse shout, pointed a stubby finger up into the sky. Looking up, I saw Sir Dench—the captain of the Emperor's Guard—leading a full flight of his Sky Legion into the smoky night, the beating wings of their glorious steeds underlit by the flares of the explosions in the city below.

As we watched, lances of light speared out from the starship overhead. One by one, the pegasi tumbled from the hellish heavens, tossing their riders to their deaths as they went. Before long, only Sir Dench himself was left.

The greatest knight of the realm brought his fantastic steed Albion about, gave the beast his heels, and charged directly at the flying craft of scarlet steel. I thought for sure that he would be lanced out of the air, like an arrow through a mallard's heart. But instead, a beam reached out from the front of the ship, ensnaring both pegasus and rider like flies in some glittering, airy amber.

We could see Albion struggling valiantly, beating his wings like a hummingbird as he and his master were drawn inextricably into the ship's brightly lit maw. With all the destruction around us—the city filled with both

The contents of this chapter are designated as closed content.



flames and the screams of the doomed and the dying—it seemed as if the gods had decided to take Sir Dench and his mighty steed to sit beside them in their mythic home.

Looking back now, that seems so foolish, so parochial, but at the time it was the only way I could make sense of what I was seeing. I didn't have any other frame of reference. None of us did. We weren't stupid—just far more ignorant than we could have guessed.

We were in for the education of a lifetime.

THE TRANSFER OF POWER

I found out later why the invaders—who had all but destroyed Verilus—left the Imperial Palace unscathed. The creatures behind this terrifying show of force had done this kind of thing before. Ours was not the first population to be cowed in such a manner.

The invaders had learned something in the course of their many battles. If you wanted a leader to surrender his nation to you, then you needed to leave the leader alive. There are a lot of caveats to that rule, of course. In our case, Emperor Kendrick wasn't willing to capitulate so easily to anyone, fantastic weapons or not. When he first met with the invaders, he told them exactly that.

They shot him dead on the spot.

While the emperor's body was still cooling, the leader of the invaders—a cold-hearted creature by the name of Captain Malizrek—was already demanding to see the next person in the line of succession. This was, of course, Princess Kendra.

Without so much as a “Congratulations, Empress,” Malizrek pointed his weapon at young Kendra and demanded the immediate and unconditional surrender of her empire. The startled young woman, standing there with her father’s still-warm corpse at her feet, did what she thought she must. She bent her knee to the grinning bastard and gave him the empire.

Meanwhile, the rest of the people of Verilus—oblivious to the transfer of power that had just taken place—were busy digging themselves out from under the rubble, giving aid to the wounded and the dying, and struggling to put out the fires that raged through the streets.

It wasn't until the next day that we learned what had happened. While some cursed Kendra's name as a coward for not standing up to the invaders, I only had to look around at the ruins of that once-proud city to realize that she'd done the only thing she could. Anyhow, I was too busy lighting candles to curse the darkness. There'd be plenty of time for that later.

The next night and all throughout the rest of the week, we saw the first of the other ships—flying starcraft,



- Plains: Any fairly flat area that is not a desert, marsh, or forest; grasslands.
- Underground: Subterranean areas.

Pathfinder: At 1st level, a ranger gains the ability to make a Wilderness Lore check to locate or blaze a trail through trackless terrain while traveling overland (PHB 143). The DC of the check depends on the pace at which the ranger is traveling.

PATHFINDING

Pace	DC
Walk	20
Hustle	25

If the ranger is walking, he need only make the check once per eight-hour period of travel. The ranger must make the check every hour that he hustles.

If the check is successful and the ranger is traveling alone, his overland movement rate increases by two steps, from trackless to highway. If the ranger is leading a group, the improvement is only one step, from trackless to road (trail).

ROGUE

The rogues of the Dragon Empire are thieves, pirates, covert operatives, smugglers, scouts, gangsters, and freelancers. Of all the core classes, rogues are perhaps the most versatile and adaptable, and they thrive in the star-spanning civilization of the Empire.

While they aren't technicians or engineers, imperial rogues are proficient with technology. They know how to hack into computers, deactivate alarms and security systems, and bypass electronic locks and safeguards.

Rogues have also taken advantage of developments in weapons technology. Few rogues can match the might and fortitude of an Outlands warrior. Armed with a blaster, though, the rogue's steady hands and careful aim are the equal of most any soldier's.

Game Rule Information

The following new rules apply to rogues.

New Class Skills

The rogue's new class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Cryptography (Int), Demolitions (Int),

Freefall (Dex), Navigate (Int), Pilot (Dex), Urban Lore (Wis), and Use Device (Int).

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: If a rogue takes the Technical Proficiency feat, she automatically becomes proficient with the holdout pistol, holdout laser, light autopistol, heavy autopistol, laser pistol, and blaster pistol. Rogues who are Medium-size or larger are also proficient with all Medium-size simple firearms. Rogues are proficient with all high-tech light armor.

Sneak Attack: This ability does work on soulmechs, as long as the rogue has the Technical Proficiency feat. Soulmechs are subject to critical hits, so they are not immune to a rogue's bonus damage for sneak attack.

Crippling Strike: This ability does not work on soulmechs or other robots.

SORCERER

Sorcerers are viewed with fear and suspicion on some Outlands worlds, but in the Dragon Empire, their natural affinity for magic grants them special status. Sorcerers are commonly thought to be related to the great dragons themselves, though no scientific evidence has ever been presented in support of this belief. Whether fact or fiction, sorcerers wield arcane magic like the dragons do, and this affords them a privileged position in imperial society.

Game Rule Information

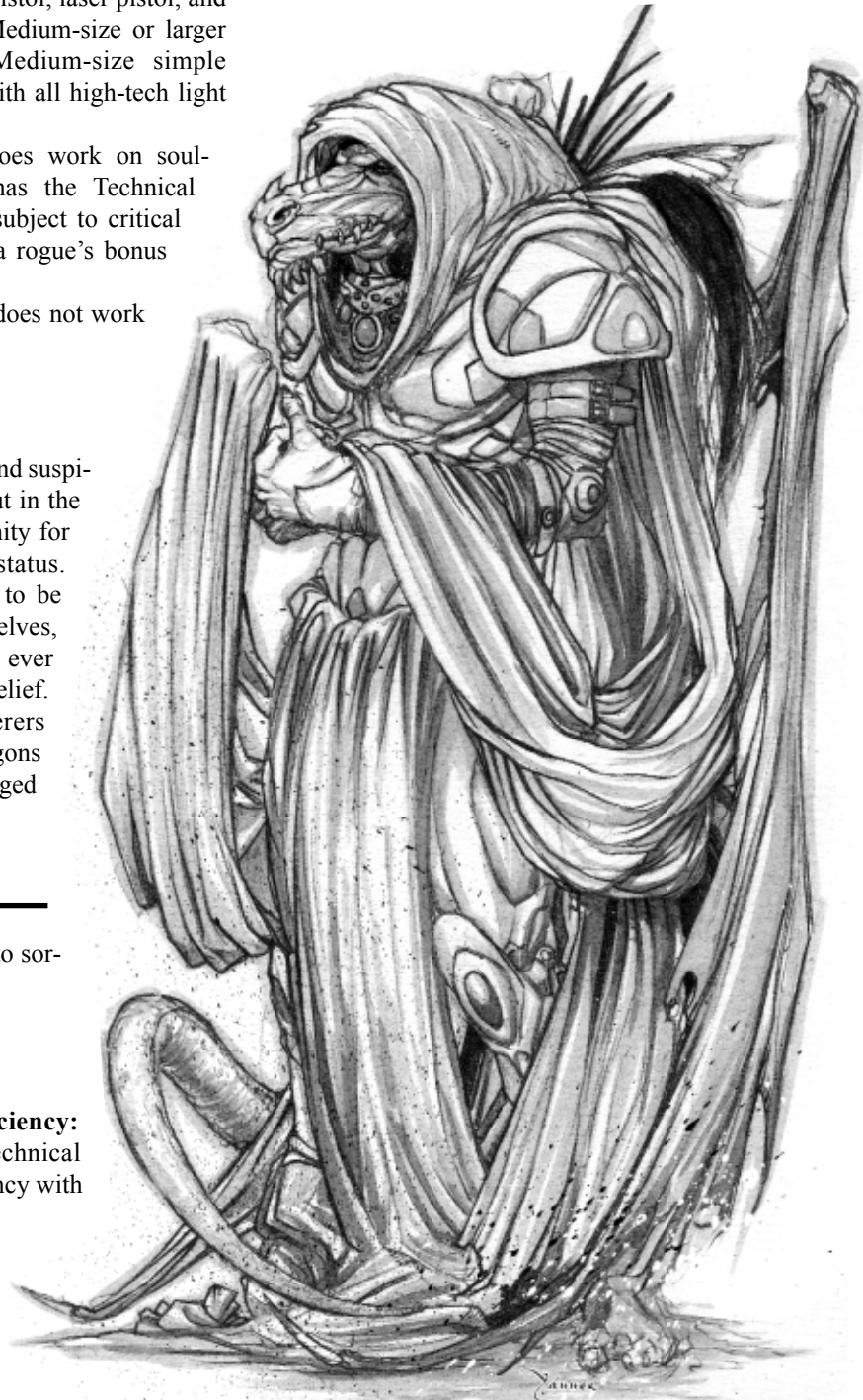
The following new rules apply to sorcerers.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: When a sorcerer takes the Technical Proficiency feat, he gains proficiency with all high-tech simple firearms.

Bonus Language: A sorcerer can substitute Draconic for one of the racial bonus languages he receives. Most sorcerers are raised among the aristocracy of the Empire.

Familiar: Familiars have a protected and privileged position in imperial society. Legally, that position is somewhere between a common animal's and a citizen's. In effect, a familiar in the company of his master is considered an extension of the master. Familiars are allowed in any area open to passengers on a starship and in most public places in cities. They are allowed on any planet under imperial rule, and the lengthy quarantines



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