

WARHAMMER  
40,000

ROLEPLAY

# WRATH & GLORY™

SETTING BOOK  
**THE VARONIUS FLOTILLA**

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# WELCOME TO THE 41<sup>ST</sup> MILLENNIUM

The galaxy burns in the fires of thousands of unrelenting wars. Battlefields scream as ancient war engines clash with sorcerous daemons. Untold trillions of warriors die every day in the bloody maelstrom of ceaseless conflict, and Humanity faces what might be its darkest hour.

**‘IN THE GRIM  
DARK FUTURE  
THERE IS  
ONLY WAR’**

The God-Emperor of Mankind once led crusades to conquer the galaxy, but for more than a hundred centuries He has sat immobile on the Golden Throne of Holy Terra. His vast interstellar empire, the Imperium, is beset on all sides. Monstrous alien species ravage Human systems, raiding for supplies, expanding their xenos empires, or simply satiating their hellish hunger for bloodshed. Worse still, the Dark Gods of Chaos corrupt Humanity from within, mutating mind and body into grotesque forms bent on destroying all of reality itself.

Hope is a long forgotten dream in this nightmarish future, but Humanity fights on defiantly — not out of bravery, but for survival, united in faith that the God-Emperor of Mankind protects, and that His Imperium will prevail. There is no peace amongst the stars, for in the grim darkness of the far future, there is only war.

# THE IMPERIUM

The Imperium is the greatest interstellar empire in Human history, said to span over a million worlds across the breadth of the galaxy, with ancient Terra at its heart. Untold trillions toil in the Emperor's name, ensuring that His war machine has had the soldiers and resources needed to protect the Imperium through millennia of ceaseless conflict. Their duties have become all the more fraught since the Cicatrix Maledictum cut the Imperium in two. The Emperor of Mankind watches over the Imperium from Holy Terra, the ancient birthplace of Humanity. Silent atop the Golden Throne, his light illuminates the Imperium Sanctus. Faith in the Imperial Cult is the sole mote of hope in the lives of countless billions.

Life is harsh on almost every world, marked by endless toil and untold suffering. But it is necessary, for only by the ceaseless diligence of the Imperium's many citizens can humanity hope to endure. Still, not all bear the burden of labour equally. An aristocratic class rules most worlds, deriving their authority from the High Lords of Terra, and thereby from the Emperor Himself. The best among them live lives of solemn duty, bearing the burden of their authority with dignity and a steel resolve. The worst pay little heed to the needs and struggles of those beneath them, enjoying lives of luxury and excess that border on the debauched. Menial workers toil endlessly across vast Manufactorums, though most lack the perspective to understand their contributions.

As ancient technologies slowly falter and decay, the methods of their manufacture and maintenance lost to the ages, it is human effort, and human suffering, that endures.

A life of comfortless servitude is the lot of most, and those who are lucky enough to escape it do so only to serve in the vast armies of the Imperium, their blood the price paid to keep the xeno, the heretic, and the traitor at bay.

## RELIGION

Faith holds the Imperium together in the face of annihilation. The Imperial Cult, the sanctioned religion of the Imperium, holds the belief that the Emperor is the God of Humanity above all else. Anyone that denies the truth of their strictures is a heretic that must be purged.

The Imperial Cult is utterly dogmatic, though over the vastness of Imperium and over the long millennia since the Emperor's ascension to the Golden Throne that dogma has been interpreted in many strikingly different ways.

Still, the doctrine that the Emperor is a divine being, and that only by his sacrifice does the Imperium endure, is all but universally accepted. Those who stray from this path are mercilessly persecuted by the Adeptus Ministorum. Those who have erred are subject to horrific rehabilitation, paying the price for their heresy in pain and blood, or purged ruthlessly and without remorse.

WELCOME

FLEET POLITICS

SHIPS OF THE FLEET

PORTS OF CALL

ADVENTURES



Faith permeates every part of Imperial life. Labourers work backbreaking shifts in time to emphatic hymns in factories or fields, given time off only for the most essential of human requirements and to give praise to the Emperor — indeed most see these as one and the same.

Such fervent belief is necessary in the bleak reality of the 41st millennium. Humans from opposite ends of the galaxy raised in entirely different cultures can work together, unified by their shared indoctrination to the Imperial Cult. Zealous warriors can mount a bayonet charge against horrific daemons, pushed beyond fear through raw zeal. Every individual must be willing to die so that the Imperium may survive — the martyr's grave is the keystone of the Imperium.

## TECHNOLOGY

The Imperium has lost a great deal of technological knowledge over the long millennia, and many devices are poorly understood, their use steeped in superstition. Ancient secrets and arcane devices passed down from long forgotten generations. Few understand the principles that underlie any machine, and such knowledge is jealously guarded by the Adeptus Mechanicus, a machine cult who worship the Omnissiah — a figure they see embodied in the Emperor. The Cult of the Machine is the only other sanctioned religious practice in the Imperium — a necessary concession to the necessity of maintaining

its technology. Even among the Tech-Preises of the Mechanicus machines are barely understood, and religious litanies and rote libations to machine spirits are an essential part of maintaining any device.

## THE WARP

Beyond the material realm is an alternate dimension composed entirely of psychic energy, known as the Empyrean, or more simply as the Warp. It is a realm of roiling chaos, a dark reflection of the material universe populated by Daemonic entities whose very presence instills terror in most mortals. It is also, regrettably, the means by which humanity navigates the vast gulf between stars. Protected by arcane Geller Fields that create a tiny bubble of reality to keep the daemons at bay, ships enter the warp guided by Navigators. These are a strange but tolerated mutant clade of humanity capable of guiding a ship through the horrors of the Immaterium with some hope of success, though the process of doing so strains their minds terribly.

The Warp is key to the existence of the Imperium, for without it humanity would be little more than scattered worlds isolated by centuries of travel from their nearest neighbour. It is also home to humanity's most dire threat, though the exact nature and scale of that threat is carefully hidden from the masses of humanity, lest their despair feed the very Dark Gods that would destroy them.



# THE GILEAD SYSTEM

The Gilead System is a collection of six semi-habitable planets orbiting a yellow dwarf star, several moons, and a pair of rogue planets thrust into the system by the whims of the Cicatrix Maledictum. It is located to the galactic North of Holy Terra.

## Avachrus, the Forge World

A barren rock of vast mineral wealth wreathed in storms of toxic clouds and corrosive acid rain, Avachrus is locked in close orbit of the Gilead star. The force of gravity keeps one side of Avachrus facing the system's sun, its blazing heat reducing simple metals to slag in seconds, while the other side is bound in perpetual night.

Billions toil for the Adeptus Mechanicus beneath the surface of Avachrus in vast factory cities, each subterranean metropolis utterly dedicated to the production and maintenance of holy machinery.

## Nethreus, the Knight World

Nethreus is a tectonic nightmare of a world. Volcanoes spit fire and ash into the sky with unrelenting fury and earthquakes ripple across the broken surface of the second planet from the Gilead star. Temperatures burn hot, but humanity survives on the surface of this hostile rock. Megafauna fly, stalk, and burrow across Nethreus like nightmare beasts risen from the mythologies of Old Earth.

This planet was gifted to the Knight House Acasta, a noble family that can trace its lineage back through the millenia and charged with operating the enormous walking engines of war known as "Knights". Though powerful weapons of war, the Knights are almost all deployed to defend Imperial bastions on Nethreus from the grotesque native creatures and hellish xenos invaders.

## Ostia, the Agri World

A verdant green jewel in the void, the abundant surface of Ostia is given over entirely to farmland, capable of producing tonnes of edible goods per day. Varied biomes provide bountiful crops and stunning vistas, but the majority of the uneducated population

have little time to enjoy them, as Ostia is ruled by the ruthless efficiency of the Administratum who ensure that no moment the populace could be labouring to provide food for their betters is wasted.

## Enoch, the Shrine World

Claimed by the Ecclesiarchy during the Gilead Crusade, Enoch was transformed by the Imperial Cult from an impoverished, heretic planet to a shining beacon of faith in the Emperor. Land suitable for building has been covered in skyscraping cathedrals, and the very cliffs of the land have been carved into colossal likenesses of saints.

As the centre of worship in the Gilead System, Enoch is a wealthy world, frequently a major destination for pilgrimage. The priests trained here have powerful say over local politics.

## Gilead Primus, the Hive World

The capital planet of the Gilead System is a spent and irradiated rock, utterly scoured for resources over millennia of toxin-producing industry. Its population of sixteen-billion or more is spread across nine colossal hives separated by exhausted wasteland. Each hive is a towering urban construction of several cities packed one on top of the other, stretching thousands of metres into the sky.

Lord-Militant Tyleria Fylamon rules Gilead Primus

## Charybdion, the Ocean World

More than 90% of Charybdion's surface is covered by frigid, roiling oceans. Like Gilead Primus it is a hive world, with titanic city spires claiming what little land is available while others plunge deep into the ocean to plunder its riches. Charybdion exists in the shadow of its sister hive world,

## GILEAD HISTORY

The Gilead System is thought to have been colonised during the Great Crusade, when the Emperor Himself led Humanity across the stars to claim His domain. As His mighty armies swept over the small backwater system and continued in their glorious path, it was marked simply as SKN-71-L-009. The scourge of the Horus Heresy left this minor location mostly forgotten, as with many in the Age of Darkness.

