

ROGUE TRADER



ROLEPLAYING IN THE GRIM
DARKNESS OF THE 4¹ST MILLENNIUM

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FOREWORD

A little over two decades ago, Games Workshop published a strange and wonderful set of science fiction tabletop miniatures rules with an unwieldy and awkward title. This largely unheralded gaming manual was to launch an amazing dystopian universe; a grim dark future wherein mankind's fate, was under constant threat from an array of warmongering alien



racés, monsters, mutants, daemons and treachery. The game and the incredible range of associated gaming miniatures published by Games Workshop proved to be incredibly popular, and quickly became the stuff of legends. This was, of course, the release of the 'Warhammer 40,000 Rogue Trader' book—an event that changed the course of modern tabletop wargaming and the destiny of the Games Workshop company forever.

The origins of this game, and its unlikely sobriquet, reach back almost to the very start of Games Workshop and the creation of Citadel Miniatures at the end of the 1970's. Citadel was established to manufacture fantasy miniatures for the burgeoning roleplaying market arising in the wake of the successful Dungeons & Dragons game. However, it was still a young market, so alongside the fantasy orcs, elves, wizards, and warriors that were rapidly becoming Citadel's forte, the company also produced a plethora of models to service a wide range of other subjects and interests. Believing that not all of the fantasy models being sold were being used by roleplayers, in 1983 Citadel launched its own unique take on the fantasy game—a tabletop wargame called 'Warhammer'—so its customers could enjoy a game featuring entire armies of fantasy models in battle.

The resulting success prompted speculative design work on other projects seeking to link Citadel's miniatures to wargame rules. Sadly, most of these efforts proved stillborn, but one idea kept resurfacing. This idea was to create a spaceship combat game; tentative rules were written and playtested, a background universe sketched, and a name chosen. The only drawback was we didn't have a range of spaceship models to sell! Undaunted by this minor detail—and convinced the Games Workshop/Citadel design staff would rise to the challenge—an advert was placed in 'The First Citadel Compendium' (also 1983) for "Citadel's SF Role Play System ROGUE TRADER." Clearly things had taken a new turn!

Not content with a game restricted to a handful of spaceship models (that didn't exist), we decided to expand the idea to embrace the sf models starting to appear in Citadel's expansive model ranges.

A certain Rick Priestley was set to work on

the project, and immediately redirected it back towards being a tabletop miniatures game rather than a roleplaying game.

In 1987—finally—the new book and a relatively modest selection of associated new miniatures were ready for launch. However, science fiction was still considered to be something of a gamble compared to fantasy in the world of hobby games. 'Warhammer' had gone from strength to strength and been joined by the much loved 'Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay' (WFRP for short). After no small amount of debate and discussion, we decided to rename the sf game 'Warhammer 40,000' (a cool reference to the background of the game and a nice big number to boot). This created a clear link to the parent brand and gave the sf game something of a helping hand. Rather than allow the old working title to die, a last minute call added it as a subtitle to the main logo and 'Warhammer 40,000 Rogue Trader' was born.

Over the last twenty of so years the Warhammer 40,000 tabletop miniatures game may have lost its subtitle, but it has grown into an international gaming phenomenon. Each year Games Workshop publishes hundreds of new miniatures, plastic kits, books, and magazines devoted to the game. It has also spawned a wide range of associated products and it is now possible to buy novels, computer games, comic books, card games, roleplaying games and board games taking place within the universe of 'Warhammer 40,000.' This book is the second in what is hoped will become an entire series of roleplaying games set within that universe and is a more than worthy companion to the first such volume, **DARK HERESY**. That this book carries the illustrious title '**ROGUE TRADER**' ensures that it will receive more than its share of scrutiny and attention from the long term fans of that original game. I don't think they will be disappointed, since this tome shares not only the name but also the spirit of adventure and imagination of its legendary forebear. All credit to the good folks at Fantasy Flight Games for that, and the thanks of all at Games Workshop for treating our old friend with the love and respect that is evident in this work.

May all your endeavours bear profit!

Alan Merrett,
Games Workshop

