

THE WARS OF ROCKAWING



CATALYST
game labs

THE WARS OF REAVING

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THE WARS OF REAVING

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WISDOM IS THE POWER.

UNBROKEN BY THE FUTURE.

STAINED BY THE PAST.

IT IS THE WAY TO NEED.

THOSE WHO FAIL FIND.

THEIR FLAME EXTINGUISHED.

INTRODUCTION



As ordered by the Council of the Six Clans, I have compiled the scattered information collected by Clan Diamond Shark over the last seventeen years. My analysts have constructed a summary-style report that uses every bit of intelligence we have gathered. Additional sources have been included to highlight specific events through the personal words or reports from various individuals. I have included my own observations where appropriate, using my nearly forty years of experience as Loremaster and head of the Diamond Shark Watch.

What you will find within will shock you to your core.

This report should be retained as required reading for all khans going forward, if only to remind us of how far we have come.

Semi Kalasa

Clan Diamond Shark Loremaster Semi Kalasa

Incl: *Addendum 01013084, Addendum Supplemental 30013087*

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The Wars of Reaving is a sourcebook for BattleTech players that details the mysterious events occurring within the Clans during the time of the Word of Blake Jihad. Each chapter deals with a period of time, broken down into the actions of various Clans and other factions. Also included in this report is a rundown of various notable players, technology, and factions that make their appearance during these troubled times.

This sourcebook begins with *Trials of Position*, a brief rundown of crucial events that affected the Clans before December 3067. The next sections, *Trials of Possession*, *Trials of Reaving*, *Chalcas*, *Trials of Annihilation*, and *Surkairade*, detail the time period between 3067 and 3075. *Founder's Future* is an in-game update, providing

a ten-year summary of the surviving Clans as well as an in-depth look at various major and minor players in the Clans from 3067 through 3086. The *Rules Annex* provides a look at several new weapon systems, ProtoMechs, and OmniMechs that made their debut during the Wars of Reaving and includes game statistics for use with the *Total Warfare* and *A Time of War RPG* systems. The *Campaign* section is a customizable *Chaos Campaign* ruleset specifically designed for Clan missions and adventures set during the Wars of Reaving.

Record sheets for the various units described in this sourcebook will be made available in the *Wars of Reaving PDF Supplemental*, which can be purchased through the BattleShop at www.battlecorps.com/catalog.



WAY OF THE WARRIOR



WISDOM IS THE POWER.



UNBROKEN BY THE FUTURE.



STAINED BY THE PAST.



IT IS THE WAY TO DEED.



THOSE WHO FAIL FIND



THEIR FLAME EXTINGUISHED.



THE WARS OF REAVING

WAY OF THE WARRIOR

Svoboda Zemylya
Strana Mechty
Kerensky Cluster
4 December 3071

Akule Wolf withdrew his *Grendel's* giant metal fist from the *Hellion's* cockpit. Bits of shattered structural supports clung to the *Grendel's* fist. A greasy smear was barely visible on the giant knuckles. The young Coyote—*Wolf!*—shook his head at his opponent's end and closed his eyes, swallowing the bile that tickled his throat.

"Think you won that duel," came the voice of his Starmate, Jana. "Of course, it was only an Ice Hellion."

"Ha, ha," muttered Akule. He wasn't in the mood for Jana's sarcasm. He scanned his secondary monitors and then peered out his cockpit's armored screen. *Nobody...*

"Still having issues?" Jana asked. "Of course you are. You're such a wound-up tightwad, Akule."

"Language," he snapped back. *Did she have no honor?* "You realize where we are, what we are doing?"

Her *Shadow Cat* appeared in his forward view, its hunched form gliding across the broken ferrocrete, side-stepping ruined statues. In the low light of dusk, the rubble 'Mech statues looked more like battlefield carnage than simple marble and stone artwork. He watched Jana as she stopped and turned her OmniMech toward him. The 'Mech's right arm gestured to the west.

"Aff, Akule. I know we're here at the sacred Kerensky Blood Chapel. I know we're on the hallowed ground of our new Clan. And I know we need to keep moving."

Jana was right, of course. The attacks were coming more frequently now, including from the air. One of their Starmates had already been destroyed by a streaking Steel Viper *Sabutai*.

He moved gingerly across the rubble-strewn portico, falling in step behind and to the left of Jana's *Shadow Cat*. The two warriors strode in silence, watching their sensor panels and occasionally checking the distant wall that marked the boundary of the chapel complex. A flash to the north caught their attention, and both Wolf 'Mechs slowed. Akule keyed the Galaxy's comm band and asked for a situation report.

"Steel Viper challenge to Star Captain Lisa, warrior. It's handled." Akule recognized the raspy voice of their commander, Star Colonel Ramil Kerensky. He twitched at the callous language from his superior. Was the lack of decorum from too much exposure to the Inner Sphere, as the Grand Council had claimed only two days ago?

"Acknowledged," replied Akule. The heat of battle was not the best time to challenge over such miniscule infractions.

Akule positioned the *Grendel* near a mostly-intact outbuilding. The twenty-meter edifice would provide some cover as he stopped to rest. The mission was already sixteen hours old; Akule had been in his cockpit for nearly

twenty. The inbound DropShip ride had been rough, but offered the best insertion angles for their mission.

Their mission.

The young MechWarrior shook his head again. He could still hardly believe they were going through with this.

"You okay?" Jana sounded genuinely concerned for him. No surprise; they had looked after each other ever since they could remember. Raised in the Coyote-held wilds of Tamaron, the two were the only survivors of their sibko's demanding training regimen. They'd taken an oath long ago to always watch out for the other for as long as they were alive.

"Aff." He grabbed a ration bar from under the cockpit seat and tore off the wrapper. It was bland, but it did halt the hunger gnawing at his gut.

Jana's *Shadow Cat* hunkered down next to his machine. "It's this whole situation, isn't it?"

He shrugged inside his cockpit, the harness digging into his tired shoulders. "Probably," he mumbled around a mouthful of stale crumbs. Akule was suddenly aware of how aromatic his cockpit had gotten. It was not the scent of Tamaron cactus flower, either. *Scent de Akule.*

Jana's voice softened. "Look, Akule..." She paused.

"We are certainly a long way from Tamaron," he said.

"No one said the Wolves were sticklers for the finer points of Clan etiquette."

That was the crux of the matter, Akule realized. He wasn't concerned about the mission. A bold stance to defend the Kerensky genetic line? Taking on all Clan warriors, daring them to take the Founders' legacies away from the Wolves? It was a mission worthy of a warrior. The sheer tenacity of the mission fueled Akule's warrior spirit.

But...

"How can they carry out such an audacious mission and yet be so callous in their language, like you? Failing to acknowledge these warrior duels? Discarding our traditions of *zellbrigen* and *safcon*?" The code of battle had been beaten into them since their decanting. It was unheard of for a proper warrior to simply ignore these tenets of Clan battle. *Unless...*

"They're not tainted, Akule." Jana knew where his thinking was going. She always did. She had a knack for completing his thoughts, his sentences. He'd heard that twins sometimes had such a bond.

"Despite what the ilKhan said, there is no such taint among the Clans," she continued. "Just because some Clans are looser in their language or tactics does not mean some sort of flaw exists. Look at the Hellions and their weird use of *zellbrigen*. Or the Scorpions and their roulette with necrosia. They are quirks, not some poisonous disease."

"Aff. You are right, of course." He smiled. "Even if you use such freeborn language."

"That right there should tell you something. I'm not tainted, and I have definitely not been to the Inner Sphere." He could hear her smiling through the comm. It was comforting.

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"I guess it is more culture shock than anything," he surmised. "I mean, listen to them on the band. They use nicknames, not proper warrior code. Contractions everywhere. It is like watching one of those Spheroid trivid battle movies."

"The Solaris feeds we watched when we were little. Or that idiotic cartoon about the Jade Falcons." She was chuckling out loud now. "Can you imagine if our Khans talked like that? 'You will pay for your treachery, Adam Steiner,'" she screeched.

A sudden beep stopped Akule from joining in. There was a new contact near the wall due north of their position. They were the closest Wolves. He flipped comm channels.

"Incoming hostiles, grid four by twelve," he shouted into the Galaxy's command network. He didn't wait for an acknowledgement before heaving his *Grendel* from behind the building. The Star Colonel had been clear; report hostile contacts and engage. Assistance couldn't be relied upon.

Besides, they were warriors of Clan Wolf.

A low, reedy voice echoed through Akule's cockpit. "This is Star Captain Ross Boques of Clan Blood Spirit. I challenge the *Grendel* to a proper warrior duel. May death be our judge."

Akule grinned. Stepping from a stretch of wall that had been smashed to rubble was a Blood Spirit *Kit Fox*. He noted that Jana remained in position behind the building. She understood what needed done.

"I admire your fearlessness, Star Captain Boques of the Blood Spirits," Akule responded. "I accept your challenge. May our combat be pure and our honor sated."

"Well bargained and done," Boques responded. The two 'Mechs squared off and, for a moment, everything stood still.

Then the duel began.

4 December 3071

"It's going as well as I expected, MechWarrior Akule," responded Star Colonel Ramil Kerensky. "We have definitely caught their attention." He gestured to the blown-out window, inviting Akule to step forward and look himself.

Ignoring the shattered glass crunching under his boots, Akule approached the ruins of the window and gazed down into the carnage below. The past seventeen hours had not brought an end to the siege; it had only intensified. Akule had fought three other duels after downing Boques' *Kit Fox*, though the last had finally put an end to his *Grendel*. Fortunately, he had managed one last salvo, blowing the Snow Raven *Stormcrow's* gyro through its back. The Raven—Bernard Crow—refused to acknowledge the win—but he'd died when his falling 'Mech flopped onto its cockpit.

The grounds of the Kerensky Bloodname Chapel were vastly different than the last time Akule had seen them. That had been through his *Grendel's* sensors. The pristine pathways, bountiful greensward and elegantly carved statues were now blasted, burnt twisted craters of rubble. Even the Bloodname Chapel itself hadn't been immune,

the jagged glass and numerous blast holes a mute testimony to the savage combat of the last several hours.

He felt rather than heard Kerensky step up alongside him. Akule could only attribute his near-silent approach to the man's Watch background. Or his own personal exhaustion.

The Star Colonel pointed to the west. A greasy pillar of smoke smudged the afternoon sky. The fire was well beyond the walls of the Chapel.

"Is that...?"

Kerensky finished Akule's thought. "Yes. It's the Winsong Bloodname Chapel. The Binary we dropped yesterday was successful in its mission."

Akule could only stare, not fully comprehending the Star Colonel's statement. "You mean—?"

"We burned the Winsong Bloodname Chapel to the ground? Yes. Do not despair; your former Clan retains several copies of her illustrious heritage for their own. Our Khan made the arrangements as part of the deal that netted us you and your fellow warriors."

The young warrior could only gaze outward, his thoughts a jumble of admiration, disgust, anger, despair and exhaustion. A flicker of motion caught his eye. He turned to watch a Point of Wolf Elementals jump from their positions amongst the ruins of an outbuilding—the same one he had been behind last night—and head for a Fire Mandrill *Linebacker* that had just jumped over the crumbled perimeter wall. The two forces engaged, puffs of smoke trailing from the Elementals' missile launchers. Akule felt the measured steps of similar armor behind him.

"Star Colonel, our mission was successful." The voice whispered from the massive Elemental battle suit that just entered the room. Scratches and dents adorned the dull gray armor, and Akule could see no less than three laser scars along the warrior's armored torso. A faint wisp of smoke wafted upward from the missile launchers over the rounded shoulders. An armorweave bag was pinched between the battle claw's sharpened graspers.

Kerensky simply nodded, his chin cupped in his hands as he continued to stare out the opening. The wind rustled through the room, bringing with it the scent of rain.

Akule looked from Kerensky to the Elemental. Something in the air changed.

An explosion from below broke the silence. The Mandrill *Linebacker* had fallen, its back awash in flames and smoke. Akule could make out the tiny figure of at least one Elemental lying nearby. The warrior was not moving.

"Akule, do you believe in fate?"

The question from his superior caught him off guard. "Fate, sir?"

"Destiny. Predisposition. That one's future is assured and designed by an outside force before birth. That your path in life is already set; you only need to move along the road."

Akule understood. "Ah, aff, sir. The Coyote vision quest could be seen in such a manner."

Kerensky smiled a little, his eyes catching Akule's. "You did not answer my question, warrior."

"I did not, sir," he shrugged. *We are debating philosophy? Here? As our enemies close in? Madness.*



WAY OF THE WARRIOR

"Answer me." It was not a question.

Akule clenched his fists, forcing his growing anger down. "No, sir, I do not believe in fate. I do not believe in petty superstitions." His anger built, began to flow. He faced the impassive Star Colonel. "I do not believe in a suicide mission, meant to solely piss off the rest of the Clans because some Wolf leader took umbrage at a properly executed Abjuration! I do not believe in holding hostage the very legacy of the Founders simply to prove some masochistic point! I, *sir*, do *not* believe in such dishonorable behavior from a Clan once so known for its honorable conduct and valor that the Founder himself chose them as his own!"

He was a seething mess. His adrenaline kicked in, burning the tiredness from his body. His soul was alive. He felt unburdened. *Free*.

He had also chastised a superior officer. Akule felt his face flush. His mouth opened, shut again.

Kerensky was looking at him with narrowed eyes. The Elemental in the back of the room hadn't moved.

Akule cast about, trying to remember the words for *sukairede*. He blanked.

A booming laugh erupted from the Elemental. "Seems you picked the right warrior, Star Colonel."

A broad grin blossomed across the Star Colonel's craggy face. "I believe I did." He gestured for Akule to follow him and made for the room's exit. Kerensky stopped and took the bag from the Elemental, who bowed slightly. Ramil held the satchel almost reverently. Stunned and bewildered, Akule's training took over. He followed the Star Colonel out the door, but the Elemental remained behind.

The pair entered what had been an office, possibly one of the head administrators of the building. Kerensky levered himself behind the massive oaken desk and pointed Akule to a chair opposite him. The young warrior obeyed.

"Akule, you are aware that this is a Watch operation, *quiff*?" Akule nodded. "Simply put, there is more going on here than your young warrior mind understands." The older man paused as several staccato booms echoed nearby. A string of dust fell from the ceiling, piling onto the desk between them.

"Despite your assertions, this is not a suicide mission. We are not on some Hellion-like tantrum to stick it to the Clans. Khan Ward and I sorted this operation out months ago. It is Clan Wolf's contingency plan.

"The whys and wherefores are not necessary. Politics, all of it. What I do know is that we are securing the future of Clan Wolf, not destroying it. Out there, this Clan is Abjured. *Dezgra*. Less than Clan. To them, to all of those warriors out there under a different banner, we are worth nothing because we decided to stand for our principles."

He paused and looked Akule in the eyes.

"Our Founder's principles."

The Star Colonel stood and paced. The booming clangs from the unseen battle reverberated around them, punctuating each of the officer's steps.

"Akule, we are taking the Founders home."

Home? Isn't that Strana Mechty? That makes no sense. Unless the Wolves— Akule's eyes widened as he suddenly understood.

It seemed an eternity before either warrior spoke. Akule broke the silence. "Sir, what does this have to do with me?"

Kerensky nodded once, accepting Akule's understanding of the situation.

"You and your fellow Coyotes—now Wolves—" Kerensky smiled at his correction, "are our youngest. My Watch warriors are old. We desire the death that is inevitable here. But you, you young ones are the future of the Clans. Our Clan. And out of all of our recent *abtakha*, you are the one I believe will succeed in the true objective of this mission."

He stooped and picked up the gray bag, placed it solemnly on the table. "Before you are the *giftakes* of Nicholas and Andery Kerensky. Founders of the Clans."

Akule sat up as if electrocuted.

His superior forestalled Akule's coming question with an upraised hand. "This came directly from the Master Genetic Repository in Katyusha. It is, right now, the only copy left.

"As most of you were fending off the challenges and attacks by our erstwhile opponents, my Watch has been carrying out their own orders. Suffice to say, our honor is stained by our actions, but we would repeat them again if necessary."

Instantly, Akule knew what Kerensky meant. Knew. The absence of any lower caste staff wasn't because they had evacuated. They had been eliminated. He looked up at his superior with new understanding. The lines etched on his face, the hunch of his shoulders—not from exhaustion. From shame. Personal dishonor.

But their very act would save Clan Wolf, would save the core of the Clans.

Akule's spine straightened, new respect blooming for his crusty old commander.

Kerensky must have sensed the change. He smiled at the younger warrior. Almost seemed to admire him for grasping what was a delicate situation.

"Sir, how will we get this to the Clan? We are trapped here. Once the other Clans realize what we have done, what we possess, they will hunt us down, tear us to shreds." He almost reached out to touch the nondescript bag, forced himself to settle back into the hard chair.

Another ripple of explosions shook the office. Akule heard more glass breaking nearby, another loud crash as something else within the building gave way.

"That's where we come in. We are your distraction. When I give the order, you are to leave your position, take this satchel and make your way into Katyusha." Kerensky appeared unperturbed by the noise. He dug into his gray jumpsuit and tossed Akule a small chip. "On there is your contact information. When you get to the DropPort, locate the merchant and vessel listed therein. Show him the chip when asked. He will take care of you.

"Once you lift, you are to make all haste to the Wolf Occupation Zone and the Khans. The chip contains your Watch authorizations; simply show them to whatever Wolf officers cross your path and they will assist you."

Akule examined the plain chip. It was the size of his thumb, with no markings to betray its contents. He slipped

WAY OF THE WARRIOR

it into the inner lining of his chest pocket. He glanced up to see Kerensky looking at.

"Yes, sir?"

"Akule, understand this: I chose you. Not because of your skill, your brains, or even your looks." Kerensky's voice turned hard, intense. "I chose you because you have the warrior's heart." He looked down to the floor, pausing. Akule waited. There was more, he was sure of it.

"I chose you because in you lies the Way of the Clans."

5 December 3071

Another salvo of missiles slammed into the Chapel's edifice, showering them with stone and shrapnel. Akule squirmed even more into the debris pile but couldn't avoid a hot piece of metal nicking his knee.

He barely noticed it.

For what seemed the billionth time he tapped his chest pocket, feeling the hard edge of the chip within. His left hand reached down to feel the small satchel still attached to his waist. Jana laughed, the sound jarring amid the explosions and gunfire from beyond his position.

"What?" he asked irritably. He hadn't slept more than two continuous hours since his meeting with the Star Colonel. The night behind them lit up again as another explosion vomited noise, smoke and debris across the shattered portico. The rubble pile in front of them resembled the outbuilding from two days ago in only the vaguest sense. It seemed two years ago.

The roar of an aerospace fighter overwhelmed them. Glancing up, he only caught the afterimage of the Cloud Cobra symbol as the fighter unloaded on an unseen target to their right.

"You're very superstitious all of a sudden," Jana shouted. Her words were loud in the abrupt silence. "I find it amusing and intriguing, coming from one so stuck on honor it formed your spine."

He shook his head. He hadn't shared his new mission with her, afraid what it would mean.

Abandonment.

The thought of it churned his acidic stomach. He could not—*would not!*—leave her here. But his orders—

Orders be damned, he thought for the millionth time.

The fighting had become more intense, as the Star Colonel had predicted. Most of the Clans simply abandoned any pretense of honorable combat after the first day of fighting. They then came on in small groups, seeking to put down the Wolves once and for all.

One of the Wolf Watch MechWarriors had caught part of a broadcast from the ilKhan. It seemed that whichever Clan claimed victory over the Wolves would be the new Clan of the Founders' legacies. That pronouncement had spurred the Clans to new heights.

It also spread more chaos across the once-sacred grounds of Svoboda Zemylya.

Eager to stake their claim and win honor for their Clan, the attacking warriors began assaulting each other. Clan

rivalries burst open. Suddenly, the Wolves weren't the only enemy; every other Clan was as well. Akule heard rumors of Clan warriors declaring Trials of Possession over access points in the wall. Grievances fought over "wrongful kills."

It was disappointing.

Taking advantage of the brief pause in their area, Akule and Jana darted forward again, their assault rifles primed and ready. They would not do much against BattleMechs or even battle armor, but they were devastating against the few Ebon Keshik infantry and unseated MechWarriors wandering the grounds. Akule and Jana had been sent to their old fire zone to flush out a small group of police guardsmen spotted near the main wall breach.

The main wall was a joke, mostly rubble marble and granite. The heaps of broken BattleMechs and the occasional aerospace fighter formed a second barrier, creating a navigation hazard for the unsuspecting. The Wolf warriors, what few remained, had taken to piling the battlefield junk along the perimeter. Whether an act of defiance or simply defense, Akule didn't know. Or care.

The two Wolves slid into a small crevasse between the horizontal legs of a fallen *Fire Moth*. Akule scanned the debris field through his night vision scope, hunting for movement. Jana squeezed down beside him, covering their backs.

He'd just spotted a potential target when his earpiece crackled. "The light has fallen. Repeat again, the light has fallen." Akule felt his heart drop into his stomach.

Jana looked at him. "What in Tamaron was that all about?"

Akule shrugged, closing his eyes. It was the agreed-upon go signal. The Star Colonel was insistent that Akule move immediately upon hearing it.

"Jana, come with me."

She pulled her face from the rifle scope. "What? I've got a bead. No need to move now."

Akule grabbed her arm, pulled the rifle down. "Jana, you have to trust me. Come with me. Now!"

A bullet spanged off the armored thigh above them.

She nodded, her face determined. She would not question, not now.

Akule patted her leg, then the satchel at his waist, then tapped his chest pocket. Nodding to himself, he raised the rifle and sighted, pulling into the trigger. A scream punctuated the end of the rifle's burst.

Taking one last look at Jana, at the smoking, ruined Blood Chapel behind them, he stepped around the wreckage and raced for the nearest opening in the perimeter.

"Akule, wait! Slow down, there's no one behind us!" Jana's voice bled exhaustion.

The pair had run at a fast pace from the Chapel grounds for several minutes. The police guards had briefly followed them. Seeing the two were fleeing the area, the guards had instead shouted several insults and turned back to the Chapel.



WAY OF THE WARRIOR

He paused, spinning into the doorframe of a small office building. They were nearly out of Svoboda Zemylya. A high-speed rail station was close by, giving them access to Katyusha. And freedom.

The two of them stood in the doorway, panting. It was a warm night, though many of the street lights were out. Two of the power stations had been caught in a crossfire the day before; Katyusha technicians had yet to repair them. In the distance, the rumble of autocannon fire and shrieks of missiles masqueraded as a distant summer storm.

"Akule, tell me what this is about. I know you've not come down with the case of the cowards. What in the sands of Tameron is going on?"

And there it was. The question lay on the table. It was time for Akule to choose his path.

He took a deep breath.

Looking up into her eyes, he faltered. It was the eyes of his fellow Clansman. The eyes of his sibkin.

The eyes of the only family he had ever known. The eyes of his Clan.

He told her everything.

They made the rail station without incident but found it another victim of the violence slowly rolling from the center of Svoboda Zemylya. Akule wandered the surrounding buildings, looking for some mode of transportation. If they had to they would walk the five kilometers to Katyusha.

Jana had taken the information in stride. She pledged to remain by his side; they would complete the mission together. It was the Way of the Clans, to support one another in their endeavors of honor. This would be her contribution.

The ground shook. A cacophony assaulted them from the north. Akule turned in time to see a great column of fire and smoke exhaust itself against the night sky, unfolding in the mushroom shape of a major explosion.

The finale.

Jana touched his shoulder, squeezing it. "That was the Star Colonel, wasn't it?"

"Aff."

"Then he did it. The Chapel is destroyed."

"Aff." Akule's hands gripped the satchel at his side. He could feel the ornate box within, mentally traced the red-dish-gold Wolf's head on the lid. "At this point, the Clans will believe that—" he stopped, staring down the street.

"—that the Kerensky legacy is no more. Or will believe so once they discover what happened at the Repository." She looked behind them, pointed. "Akule, there's a technician's van over there."

"Jana," Akule whispered. The ground shook again, smaller tremors. A slow cadence, like that of an approaching BattleMech. He pushed Jana to their left, dodging into an alley. She froze against him. He hoped the MechWarrior hadn't seen them.

The *Grendel* flashed on its searchlight. "In the name of Clan Hell's Horses, halt!" a female voice boomed from the 'Mech's external outputs. "Come out where you can be seen."

Akule looked at his twin. "Jana," he whispered fiercely, "take the box and the chip. Go to Katyusha. Fulfill the Clan's mission." He shoved the box into her hands, the chip into her pocket.

She stared at him. "No," she shot back. "They'll ignore us. We're not dressed like MechWarriors."

"Think," he retorted. "We are out past curfew. With the explosion, all of them will be on edge. If I distract her, you can get away—"

The MechWarrior's voice boomed again, the searchlight panning across the street. A flurry of gunfire tore up the building across the street. "You have exactly ten seconds to show yourself or I will tear this place apart!"

Jana shook her head violently. "No, Akule! I go with you, not without!" She looked into his face, was surprised to see him smiling back at her.

"Destiny, Jana," he said softly.

She frowned.

The sound of a laser snapped over their heads, setting an office roof aflame. "Five seconds," the voice demanded.

"It is something a wise warrior once told me," said Akule. "That our lives have meaning, a purpose. A way, a path laid out before us."

She put a finger to his lips. "And yours is the way of the warrior." A tear cut through the grime on her cheek. "And a warrior you are, Akule. A warrior of the Clans."

He gripped her fiercely and his smile widened. She knew. She understood. She would complete the task.

They were Wolves.

No, he amended. *They were* Clan.

He stepped out from the alley into the light and the noise.

Jana ran.

TRIALS OF POSITION



WISDOM IS THE POWER

UNBROKEN BY THE FUTURE

STAINED BY THE PAST

IT IS THE WAY TO HED

THOSE WHO FAIL FIND

THE WARS OF REAVING

TRIALS OF POSITION



The old Terran maxim claims, “those who neglect the past are in turn doomed to repeat it.” While the horrors of 3071 to 3075 were definitely not a repeat of the Clans’ history from 3061 through 3067, the events of that era ended up being keystones and catalysts for what was to come. So I have included a general review of that time, liberally strung with observations and notations made by various Loremasters during the Grand Council’s *Field Manual* project in 3067. It is a good place to start, as that project was the last to delineate where the Clans were as a whole.

Once the foundations are understood, the depth of the Homeworld depravity after 3071 becomes much more clear.

—Clan Diamond Shark Loremaster Semi Kalasa, *Addendum 01013084*

WHAT CAME BEFORE

The Annihilation of Clan Smoke Jaguar at the hands of the Second Star League prompted a number of somewhat unexpected effects on the Clans as a whole. The most obvious was the upswing of petty squabbles and miniature wars that broke out between those who fought to seize control of the now-dead Clan’s holdings. During this time, Clan Nova Cat found itself Abjured, tossed from the Homeworlds and forced to find refuge within the Inner Sphere, all while under the guns of those Clans who cared not for the Cats’ actions. Even as the Cats scrambled to react, several Clans jockeyed for position to seize Nova Cat holdings, often conducting preemptive strikes to ensure they would retain control once the Cats were gone.

Conversely, the departure of Clan Ghost Bear from most of Homeworld space was accomplished in near-complete secrecy, a massive undertaking that consisted of several mass convoys and an orderly transition of their enclaves to their allies. The Bears, by the end of the 3060s, were located only on Arcadia and Strana Mechty; the rest of their holdings were given as gifts to their allies and those who had assisted them in their endeavors. Clans Snow Raven and Diamond Shark were the biggest beneficiaries of the Bear’s relocation program.

With the vacancies of these three Clans—Smoke Jaguar, Nova Cat, Ghost Bear—a vacuum of sorts remained. The clambering to fill that space sparked off several rounds of bloody Trials and political machinations. These conflicts slowly escalated as the decade closed, masking other, deeper issues that would end up bursting upon the Homeworlds in the next several years.

ARMED POLITICS

As conflict began to unravel in the Homeworlds, Clan Steel Viper—still holding several worlds in the Inner Sphere alongside the Jade Falcon OZ—attempted to punish their

Falcon rivals. Khan Perigard Zalman hoped to punish the Falcons for allowing freebirth warriors into their touman by taking over their worlds in the occupation zone. [*That the action would also allow the Vipers to make the Falcons pay for every grievance between the two Clans, as well as win honor for ejecting an Invading Clan from its conquests, was a bonus.*—SK]

The Vipers began their assault by invading thirteen Falcon worlds in April 3061. Flush with almost-immediate success after driving the Falcons from those worlds with minimal losses, the Vipers pushed into a second wave and hit seven more worlds. It was there they hit a stalwart Falcon defense.

Led by Khan Marthe Pryde, the Falcons launched their own counteroffensive that slowly spread through the occupation zone and ended when Khan Zalman was defeated on the field of battle by a freeborn Falcon warrior, Diana Pryde. [*The double-disgrace of losing to a freeborn who had won a Bloodname was something that almost cost Zalman his khanship. He fought off several challenges during his return to New Kent.*—SK] Stunned by the loss, the Vipers quickly accepted the Falcons’ offer of *hegira*. Zalman and the Vipers then abandoned all of their Inner Sphere holdings, leaving them to the weakened but victorious Clan Jade Falcon.

The Viper-Falcon conflict was the only major action within the Inner Sphere occupation zones. Clan Wolf remained neutral in the fight, content with allowing the two combatants to tear each other apart. The Wolves also lacked sufficient strength to execute a war of their own, especially when across their other border were the strengthening Ghost Bears. With almost all of the Bears’ touman relocated to their Inner Sphere holdings, the Wolves knew they needed to prepare for a possible assault from their stronger neighbor.

Instead, the Wolves opted to follow the political route to maintain the Wolf-Bear border. In response to a Bear attack in 3060, Khan Vladimir Ward invited Clan Hell’s