

RUST HULKS

*a role-playing game
by Sam Sorensen*

Rust Hulks

©2020 by Sam Sorensen

Heavily based on Vincent and Meguey Baker's *Apocalypse World*, along with lots of tidbits from Hamish Cameron's *The Sprawl*, Jason Morningstar's *Night Witches*, and Andrew Medeiros and Mark Diaz Truman's *Urban Shadows*.

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Many thanks to everyone who backed this game on Kickstarter.

Typefaces: **EUROSTILE BLACK**, Revolution Gothic.

Made using the Adobe Creative Suite.

a goat's head game

RUST HULKS

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ORIENTATION

IF YOU'VE PLAYED *RUST HULKS* BEFORE AND ARE ITCHING TO GO:

Don't let me stand in your way—print out some sheets and go.

IF YOU'VE NEVER PLAYED A ROLEPLAYING GAME BEFORE:

Welcome! Read on, straight to the next page. If it seems intimidating to start with, don't worry; the heart of the game is telling stories with your friends, and everything else is gravy. The rules are here to support and guide you, not bind your every move.

IF YOU'VE PLAYED SOME RPGs IN YOUR TIME:

Read on. This game is going to play and feel a little different, both from more traditional roleplaying games and from some other indie fare. Pay close attention to the relationship between players' desires, the dice, and the outcomes; similarly, the scope of what's possible in a single roll of the dice is significantly different from many games. Don't worry, though. You'll figure it all out.

IF YOU'VE PLAYED A BUNCH OF “POWERED BY THE APOCALYPSE” GAMES BEFORE:

Things here will feel pretty familiar. You're going to want to focus on the rules for ships, the role of the Captain, and on the way chains and helping interact with each other.

WHAT IS THIS?

This is a game that you'll play with some friends. You'll make some characters and a ship, you'll roll some dice, and in general you'll work together to tell a story. As you go, the rules will guide the flow of the story; they add drama and danger and structure to the beats of it all.

On its face, *Rust Hulks* is pretty simple: you and your crew get a job, you fly to wherever that job takes you, and then finish the job and get paid. Afterwards, you pick up a new job, and start the cycle anew. You will play as the crew and captain of the ship, and will do everything you can to finish the job, stay alive, and keep the ship in one piece.

In reality, though, the game isn't really about the jobs. One some level it is, sure, but it's more about desperation, about urgency, about keeping as many plates spinning for as long as you can. The game will often force you into situations where you don't have quite enough, where you need to make hard decisions, and where you only make it through on faith and luck. As you push through it, you will find the relationships with your fellow crewmembers tested. If they survive, they'll be all the stronger for it; but if they don't, things will get ugly, and fast.

The game shines in moments of brazen, daring heroism hemmed in by dire, critical issues. It is a game where playing the odds is always necessary, where the risky choice is often the only choice. Sometimes, you will lose: your job fails, your ship crashes, and your character dies. Sometimes, though, you will win. And you will do it with the assurance that it was not idle luck or happenstance that propelled you to success, but your own raw grit, tenacity, and cunning.

The rules of this game are based on Vincent and Meguey Baker's *Apocalypse World*, as well as its many hacks and variations—John Harper's *Blades in the Dark*, Hamish Cameron's *the Sprawl*, Jason Morningstar's *Night Witches*, and many others. If you've played any of these games before, you'll be right at home out among the hulks.

CONTENT WARNINGS

Rust Hulks is a game about a crew of desperate people trying to survive at the fringes of a callous, capitalist solar system. The game itself can be charming and fun, but also will have its serious, emotional moments.

In terms of explicit content, there is a fair amount of violence, some strong language is scattered throughout, references to alcohol and drugs, and lots of authoritarian capitalists running around. It's M-rated. I would recommend your group use *lines & veils*, *the X-Card*, or both. Look them up.

Also, this RPG, like all other RPGs and all other art, is inherently political. Anyone who says otherwise is either a fool or lying to you.

YOU WILL NEED

For a session of *Rust Hulks*, you need:

- Six-sided dice, about two per player
- Printed playbooks and basic moves
- Pencils and a sharpener
- 3-5 other friends; one of you all is the MC
- 3-4 hours, ish; sometimes more, rarely less

TOUCHSTONES

Movies: *Serenity*, *Alien*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and *Star Wars* (mostly *Rogue One* and the original).

TV: *Firefly*, *Star Wars: Rebels*, and *The Expanse*.

Games: *FTL: Faster Than Light*, *Elite: Dangerous*, *Kerbal Space Program*, and *Alien: Isolation*.

Theme Song: “Breakers Roar” by Sturgill Simpson.

THE BASICS

THE WORLD

It's a few hundred years in the future. There was, for a while there, something along the lines of a golden age, where the planets were settled and humans spread out to the fringes of the system, but it didn't last.

Now, the system is controlled by the Authority, the sole governing body based on the Core—what used to be called Earth. Near the Core, on Venus and Mercury and Mars, their grip is tight. Past the Belt, in what's sometimes called the frontier, things get looser. Way out in the deeps, past Uranus, things get real strange.

In the past centuries, some planets have been terraformed, with air you can breathe and soil you can walk on, but a lot of them haven't. On the planets that haven't been terraformed, hubs and outposts—big and small settlements, basically—have to take special precautions to ensure that their inhabitants can live.

With the Authority controlling the last few natural resources, everyone else is forced into reusing old shit, stuff that's long since out of date but still works. Every piece of tech and gear is on the verge of breaking, held together with weld lines, shoestrings, and luck.

This is where you come in. You're the crew of a big rusty spaceship, and you're desperately trying to stay afloat, bouncing from job to job and world to world.

Good luck.

CONVERSATION

Roleplaying, at its core, is basically just a conversation. All of the players sit around a table and talk, bouncing from listening to commenting to reacting to monologuing to old-fashioned free-for-alls.

Unlike in a normal conversation, however, most of the conversation at a role-playing game's table is concerned with the fictional events of the world. The players describe what their characters do or say, somebody responds, someone else responds to that, maybe some dice are rolled or some rules are consulted, and the conversation continues. All of that talking over each other and holding forth and general conversational messiness? All fine.

Throughout the conversation, crewmembers will be created, conflicts will emerge, tension will rise, and things will come to a head. One way or another, the conflict will resolve, and the conversation will go on. In this way, more or less, story is created. Nobody at the table knows exactly how it's gonna go, and that's a good thing; stories in roleplaying games are created collaboratively—to try otherwise is foolishness.

As the players work their way through the conversation (and thus the story), the rules will come into effect. Not all the time and not in all situations, but they will come into effect, one way or another. When they do, embrace them; the rules are meant to add and build tension, to make the game and your story better, juicier, more dramatic.

Roleplaying is a conversation; sometimes there are rules. Let the conversation happen and let the rules happen. Simple, yeah?

MOVES

Remember those dice I mentioned? In this game, those dice come into play through things called moves. A move is a rule, or a set of rules; they are constrained in some areas and flexible in others. Generally, a move works like this:

A player does something, usually something with an uncertain outcome, that triggers the move. Dice are rolled, and the move is consulted. On a good roll, the player gets what they want; on a bad one, they don't. On a medium roll, they get what they want, but at a cost: they will be forced into an ugly outcome, to make a tough choice, or to accept a hard bargain.

Moves are all actionable. Things like ***fast-talk***, ***analyze something***, and ***scrape a hulk*** are all moves. They're verbs, or at least verb-y.

All moves in this game (and thus all dice rolls) work the same way: roll two six-sided dice and add them together, sometimes adding another stat or value to the roll. If that total is a 10 or higher (usually called a 10+), the move is a success, and the player gets what they want. If the total is a 7, 8, or 9 (usually written as 7-9), they get that middling success, where they achieve their goal but suffer cost for it. If the total is a 6 or lower—what's called a miss—the move fails, so the player suffers serious cost for no benefit.

For when to trigger a move, the rule is as follows, pulled straight from the pages of *Apocalypse World*: “to do it, do it.”

This goes both ways: if you, the player, want to ***threaten someone***, you must literally threaten them to do it, by saying how your crewmember pulls out a shotgun and points it in someone's face. You can't ***threaten someone*** (the move) and not actually threaten someone.

The flipside to this is that you, can't just pull a shotgun, point it in someone's face, and demand they do what you want or else without making the move to ***threaten someone***. You can't just threaten someone without ***threatening someone***.

To do it, do it.

That said, this is a game that allows for some retraction. If a crewmember pulls a shotgun and points it in someone's face, the MC is in their rights to make that player roll to **threaten someone**—at which point the player is allowed to then realize that, wait no, they don't actually want to roll that, so they didn't pull their shotgun out. That kind of rewinding and backtracking is all fine. Players should commit and be committed to their moves, and everyone being on the same page is a key part of that committal.

[This is also a good time to mention that I, Sam the designer, will sometimes shift the grammatical tenses of the moves to better suit the flow of the sentence itself; see **scrape a hulk** vs **scraping a hulk**. They all mean the same move. Don't sweat it.]

Moves make up the core of the game. Everyone gets access to the basic moves, and then every playbook gets its own, unique moves. Jockeys get jockey moves, bruisers get bruiser moves, and so on. As crewmembers advance, they will have the opportunity to take moves from other playbooks, if they so wish.

HOLD, FORWARD, AND ONGOING:

Several moves state that a crewmember should “hold” some number between 1 and 3, and then later “spend” that hold. Essentially, this gives you a number of charges, points, or tokens to spend—that's the hold. When you spend that hold, your total hold goes down by 1. Simple, yeah?

Sometimes, a move will specify that a crewmember has “+1 forward.” This means that the next roll they make, sometimes under specific parameters, automatically adds +1 to the roll.

Very rarely, a move will say that a crewmember gets “+1 ongoing.” This means that every roll they make while the specified effect is ongoing gets +1 added to the roll. Very good, and very rare.

If a move specifies -1 forward or -1 ongoing, it's the exact same, but subtract instead of add.

STATS

Remember how I said that sometimes you add a stat to a roll when you make a move? This is that.

Stats, short for statistics, are the basic attributes, traits, and qualities that describe a crewmember. Stats are added to moves: when rolling those two six-sided dice, add the stat to the mix as well. Stats usually range from about -2 to +3: -2 is very bad, +3 is very good. Both are rare; -1 to +2 is a pretty normal range for stats to fall. When a move says, for example, “roll+brain,” that means you roll your two six-sided dice and then add your brain stat to the total; if your stat’s negative, subtract it instead.

The stats in *Rust Hulks* are:

Brain: a crewmember’s wits, theoretical understanding, and bulk knowledge

Face: a crewmember’s charm, personal sway, and social graces

Spine: a crewmember’s toughness, grit, and ability to dish and take damage

Gut: a crewmember’s intuition, quick reactions, and perceptiveness

Junk: a crewmember’s ingenuity, resourcefulness, and practical knowledge

It’s important to note that, unlike some other roleplaying games, these stats are not meant to represent anything “in real life.” A crewmember’s brain does not and should not correlate to their IQ, high school grades, or “intelligence;” likewise, a crewmember with good spine doesn’t need to be physically strong, imposing, or even healthy.

Stats are all qualitative, rather than quantitative. It’s easier to understand if you put in a sentence: “Oh yeah, she’s super brainy” or “He always goes with his gut” or “Watch out, she’s got some real spine.” You see? You know what all of those mean, and don’t need to try to assign them to literal numerical descriptors. Stats are meant to be figurative—embrace it.

PLAYBOOKS

In this game, most of the stuff the players deal with comes in what's called a "playbook." It's a two-sided sheet of paper that is part character sheet (so the players can write down their stats and look and stuff) and part reference sheet, in that it contains all of the info a player needs to play their specific crewmember.

Playbooks have names like the bruiser, the junker, and the sawbones. Each has a bunch of mechanics attached to it, in the form of special moves and unique gear and other stuff; playbooks also carry a level of narrative attachment. The sawbones, the ship's doctor, will always form bonds and connections with those they heal. The greaser, the ship's engineer, will always be able to fix the ship when others can't. The mechanics come from the narrative, and the narrative from the mechanics.

Playbooks also contain a broad choice of options for choosing how to create a character: options for stats, looks, gear, names, background info, and all kinds of stuff. Generally, a player should stick to what's on their playbook for these options; if they want to go off-book, take a second to think about it first. There's a solid chance it'll be fine, especially for their looks or name, but it's good hygiene to weight these decisions a smidge before approving anything too drastic.

Playbooks also contain a "dedicated room:" this is a room that is automatically added to the ship, from the crewmember in question. Each player should work with you and the crew to figure how and why that room came to be on the ship, and why that crewmember has a unique bond to it.

You should print all nine playbooks out when you play, and set them up for the first session.

CHAINS & HEAT

As crewmembers work with each other, they will form bonds and connections. These relationships, the relationships formed between crewmembers, are called chains. Every crewmember has a chain with every other crewmember; the game will refer to “your chain with that crewmember” or “the chain between two crewmembers,” so get used to it.

Chains have two values: tightness and heat. Tightness is the general feelings of the relationship; heat is the intensity of those feelings.

Tightness comes in three levels: slack, taut, and choking. A slack chain is a good chain; it’s a friendly, caring relationship: friends or lovers or family. A taut chain is a good chain with issues; it’s a once-friendly relationship souring: friends with qualms, lovers on the rocks, family with grudges. A choking chain is a bad relationship; one that may’ve been good (or not) but now has gone very bad: harsh rivals, despised enemies, or staunch antagonists.

Chains will move from slack to taut to choking and back again. Generally, chains only move one level at a time. If a move calls for a crewmember to loosen their chain, it means to move taut to slack, or choking to taut; it means make it one better. If a move calls for a crewmember to tighten their chain, it means the opposite: slack moves to taut, or taut moves to choking; it means make it one worse. Very rarely, a move will call to tighten a chain all the way to choking or loosen a chain all the way to slack, but this is uncommon.

Heat comes in four levels, tracked from +0 to +3; you can assign names to these (cold, cool, warm, hot) if it helps, but it’s not necessary. A chain with +0 heat is a relationship with no strong feelings; it’s very casual, very relaxed, very uncaring. No matter what the tightness of the chain is, the intensity is always low: casual acquaintances at best and mild nuisances at worst.

By contrast, a chain with +3 heat is all strong feelings; it's passionate, fiery, and full of emotion. A slack chain with +3 heat is closest family, dearest friends, and profound love. Flip that over, and a choking chain with +3 heat is the most hated rivals, the most loathed detractors, and the most bitter of broken hearts. Like tightness, the heat of a chain will go up and down as the relationship heats and cools; crewmembers that once were close might drift apart, and crewmembers that started as strangers become well-known.

The important detail to chains is that heat and tightness move independent of each other. It's entirely possible that a chain with +3 heat will go all the way from slack to choking with no change in heat; likewise, a taut chain can go from +0 heat up to +3 heat with no change in how tight the chain is.

It's easier for lovers to turn to rivals, just as it's unlikely faint annoyances become deepest friends instantly. The feelings of the relationship and the intensity of the relationship move independent of each other, and that should be embraced.

Chains and their heat are the main source of mechanical interplay between characters. On long, boring hauls through the system, chains will still be heating and cooling and tightening and loosening, and that will spark drama. It will often get messy and uncomfortable, but you should encourage your players to get involved in that messiness. *Rust Hulks* is about things going awry and evolving over time: that extends to relationships, too.

THE SHIP

In addition to the crew, every player in *Rust Hulks* belongs to a ship! Players are the crew of the ship, hence why they are crewmembers.

Ships are big and rusty and always falling apart. They're cobbled together from a dozen other ships, mixed in with spare parts and scrap metal. Everything is held together with duct tape, shoestrings, and welded sheets.

Ships are not a single contiguous body; rather, they're a loose chassis with a collection of rooms filling in the actual ship. The rooms are what make up the actual ship: the engine, the helm, the systems, the hull, and so on. Each room is individual, and should feel that way.

The ship gets its own playbook, where the players will choose what rooms their ship, what it looks like, and how it feels. The ship is where crewmembers will spend most of their time, and it's where most of the game takes place. It's the crew's workhorse, warship, and home.

DRAWING THE SHIP:

Players will also draw the ship. This is not optional: they must draw their ship, and every player must contribute at least a little bit to it. As the ship changes, so too will the drawing.

They should change the drawing of the ship when any of these happens:

- *A new room is added to the ship*
- *A room increases in size*
- *A room is destroyed*
- *A room is repaired after being destroyed*
- *Something dramatically changes the appearance of the ship*

How much the drawing of the ship changes and what those changes are is up to them; some players go all-out and draw every tiny detail, some players just draw some vague shapes and call it a day. All are fine; exceptional artistry is by no means required.

ROOMS

As mentioned, ships are made up of rooms. A room is not always a literal room; sometimes it is, but it also might be a whole bunch of machines and parts all chugging away with a little space for a crewmember to stand and work on it. Either way is fine. Point is, ships are divided into separate, segmented parts, which act semi-independently of each other, and we call these parts rooms.

Rooms come in a whole bunch of flavors, like the engine and the boarding dock and the cargo hold. Every room has its own special room move, which functions exactly regular move, except that it requires a crewmember to be in that room when the move is made. The boarding dock, for example, can open a passageway from one ship to another—that's its room move.

Every room has two essential values: first is its size, how big (and thus how good at its job) the room is. Size ranges from +0 to +3, going from tiny (size+0) to small (size+1) to medium (size+2) to large (size+3); whenever a room move says to roll+size, you roll and add that particular room's size to the roll. In some science fiction, things get sleeker and smaller as tech improves, but not here. In *Rust Hulks*, bigger is always better.

The second value every room has is its personality: a room might be gentle or rough, flashy or subtle, stubborn or neurotic—whatever it is, the room's got personality. It's up to all of the players at the table to make sure that a given room's personality is felt. Rooms' personalities have no direct, specific mechanical effect, but will have an impact on the game, regardless.

You should change a room's personality whenever that room's drawing changes: when the room is expanded, expand the personality; when the room is destroyed, destroy the personality; when the room is repaired, repair the personality.

Each playbook adds a dedicated room: either a new room, or an upgrade to an existing one. The player who added that room is responsible for that room's personality and drawing, from the beginning to the end.

JOBS

Jobs are what crews do. They're undertakings that involve travel across the system, usually going to collect or bringing along something or someone, and they have a payout at the end.

There are five kinds of jobs:

- **the Haul:** *hauling a shipment of cargo*
- **the Ferry:** *ferrying passengers to their destination*
- **the Escort:** *escorting a ship that needs protection*
- **the Hit:** *destroying or killing a target*
- **the Fetch:** *going to retrieve something or someone and bringing it or them elsewhere*

All jobs are dangerous, yes, but: Hauls and Ferries are relatively safe, Escorts get more risky, and Hits and Fetches are the most dangerous by far. As jobs get more dangerous, they pay more.

Of each of those five, there are legal and illegal variants. Legal jobs are less likely to attract the attention of the Authority, and thus pay smaller amounts. Illegal jobs risk bringing the Authority down on the crew's heads (not to mention more criminal elements), but thus pay heftier dividends.

What kind of job the crew takes and which side of the law it crosses is up to the Captain. They've got the moves for it, and while the crew can and should offer input and suggestions, it's the Captain's call.

THE CAPTAIN

Every crew needs a Captain.

In *Rust Hulks*, the crew of characters chooses their own Captain when everyone is making their characters and the ship is being made. The process should be unanimous: if one person is against another being Captain, deals will have to be cut: credits, decision-making, or other favors will play in to the process.

Once the Captain is selected, they get access to all of the Captain Moves (page 93), and they are the ones that choose which jobs the crew takes. Exactly what obligation to the Captain the crew has varies, but the Captain is in charge.

If the crew wants a different Captain, they have two main methods: they can force the Captain to step down, though there is no firm path for this and the Captain always might resist, or they can murder their Captain. Mutiny is a bloody, dangerous business.

Mechanically, the only hard-and-fast rules concerning the succession of Captains are that the Captain can step down whenever they please, and that there must always be a Captain. As soon as the old one dies or steps down, elect a new one. This should take precedence over more or less all jobs.

If a Captain steps down, they lose all of their benefits: bonus stat, Captaincy moves, and any other perks they might've accumulated along the way.

HARM

Harm is damage, pain, destruction. It's the catch-all term for the results of violence.

All weapons have a harm value, ranging from 1-harm to 10-harm. 1-harm is fists, 3-harm is a powerful gun, 6-harm is a ship-mounted cannon, and 10-harm is a souped-up thermo-torpedo that can punch a hole in a mountain. Most weapons people can carry deal harm between 1 and 4; most weapons ships can carry deal harm between 5 and 8.

When a crewmember suffers harm, they check off boxes equal to the harm they took, suffering the listed consequences, be they mechanical or otherwise. Most crewmembers can take 5-harm; when they reach 5-harm, they don't immediately die, but instead consult the Death move (page 104) for next moves.

NPCs are more fragile. 1-harm will wound an NPC, 2-harm will have them sprawled out on the verge of death, and 3-harm or more will kill them outright.

Both crewmembers and NPCs can wear armor; clothing and bare skin provides 0-armor, a bulletproof vest or tough leather jacket provides 1-armor, and a full-body gear and metal plate provide 2-armor. Armor subtracts from harm taken; if I'm wearing 1-armor and get with 3-harm, I only take 2-harm total. Simple, yeah?

SHIPS AND HARM

Ships don't take harm, exactly; instead, each room takes harm individually. A room can take harm equal to its size plus one before it's destroyed. A tiny (size+0) room can only take 1-harm before getting destroyed, while a large (size+3) room can take 4-harm before being destroyed. As each room is destroyed, the ship loses the functionality associated with that room. When a room is destroyed, it's important to note that it's not strictly blown away to smithereens—rather, it's just broken so much that it's stopped functioning.

Chunks might be in smithereens, but the whole affair can still be at least partially salvaged.

Ships don't have armor; instead, they have hull. Hull functions more or less identically to armor, except that it applies to all rooms equally, and it ranges all the way to +10. A ship with hull+4 negates 4-harm from any oncoming harm, just like armor. Most ships have dramatically more hull than people have armor, and thus are more or less immune to small arms fire.

That said, hull only applies to harm coming from the outside, so if boarders can breach a ship, they can do all sorts of damage, even with just their bare hands. Ships are held together with duct tape and silly string, remember?

EXPERIENCE

As they complete jobs, crewmembers will earn experience, or XP. XP comes from a variety of sources: rolling a miss, completing jobs, specific moves, and a few other places. After marking 6 XP, a crewmember can take an improvement, getting new moves or new stat increases. When they mark an improvement, a crewmember resets their XP back to 0, erasing all boxes.

After marking 8 improvements, crewmembers can mark improvements from a new section, which allows them to swap playbooks, get powerful upgrades, get a new ship or character, or retire their character to safety.

As they play, player should mark XP any time a move tells them; whenever they hit 6 XP, they gain the benefits of they improvement immediately afterwards. Doesn't matter when or where, they get those benefits right now.

XP, like a lot of other things in this game, is more figurative and metaphorical than it is strictly literal. Some games interpret XP as a direct increase in knowledge or know-how or physical capability, but this isn't one of those games.

In some senses, yes, XP is literal experience that characters accrue due to failure and learning, but it's other stuff, too. It might be a boost to their morale or ego; it might be achieving a goal of theirs; it might be connecting to other people or things.

It's sort of mystical, in that sense; take it or leave it.

CREDIT, FUEL, AND SUPPLIES

Every ship needs fuel. Every crew needs supplies.

Both of these, along with everything else in the game, cost credit. The credit is the standard unit of currency in the system, backed by the Authority and everyone else. 1-credit's pretty valuable, worth a weapon or a repair job or a bunch of food and water.

Credit comes in three basic kinds:

Sticks, or credsticks, which are bits of plastic with fiat value attached

Goods, which are physical things or stuff that you can sell for value

Scrap, which is raw materials and metal used to build things

1-credit in each is worth the same: that is, 1-credit in sticks is worth 1-credit in goods is worth 1-credit in scrap. The main difference between the three is that scrap is used by some crewmembers to build things, and that goods can be legal or illegal—which affects how you interact with the Authority.

Both fuel and supplies are purchased on a per-span basis: that is, crews buy a span's worth of fuel, or a span's worth of supplies. Any quantities smaller than that are irrelevant, like a day or two spent at a station or something.

Supplies for a crew for one span cost 1-credit.

Fuel for one span costs credits equal to the largest size room on the ship. If, say, every room on a ship is size+1, fuel costs 1-credit for a span; if that ship had all rooms at size+1 but a single room at size+3, it would cost 3-credit for a span's worth of fuel.

To fly a span, a crew needs at least that one span's worth of fuel and supplies. Without it, they can't fly. At bare minimum, this means that every span the crew flies costs them 2-credit, often more.

GEAR

Gear is anything that a crewmember would use while aboard their ship. Weapons, armor, and consumables are the most common kinds of gear, but there are others.

Weapons have tags; descriptors that modify how they operate. See the chapter on gear (page 181) for a complete list of what those tags do. Armor reduces oncoming harm, as already explained; space suits allow the wearer to breathe and move in space. Consumables come in two varieties: medpacks, which immediately restore 1-harm, and repair kits, which either immediately repair 1-harm done to a room or can entirely repair one piece of gear.

Gear being broken is fairly common; when this happens, it needs to be repaired, either by using a repair kit or else by repairing something. When a piece of gear is broken, it's entirely unusable.

Almost all gear is worth 1-credit, and can be purchased pretty much anywhere. Repairs for a piece of gear cost 1-credit; repairs for a ship room cost 1-credit per 1-harm repaired.

Gear matters a lot out in the hulks. A lot of it's passive, sort of just sitting in the background providing generally benefit, but players will really notice when it's gone. There's a reason that "break something" is a consequence that shows up on nearly every move in the game: it hurts. *Rust Hulks* is a game that, while not necessarily materialist in ideals, tries to acknowledge the value and necessity of the material. Tie that into your game; make stuff matter. As players get attached and then lose their gear to time or damage, they'll feel it all the more.

WHY PLAY

Here's why you should play *Rust Hulks*:

First, because the characters are more than just scrap. You'll play people with real, engaging problems, ones that demand luck and tenacity to prevail. You will work together to scrape by, to just barely make it through on the skin of your teeth. You will be forced to hang together, and will live on the constant edge of desperation. That's good action.

Second, because the relationships you forge will be more than empty husks. You and your fellow crewmembers will go through joys, doldrums, and hell itself together, and it will force your relationships to change and evolve. The tension and clashes you face will be full and complicated, full of messy history and uncomfortable moments. That's good drama.

Third, because this world is our world. *Rust Hulks* is not a particularly speculative game in the traditional "hard" sci-fi sense, but it does take place in a possible vision of our future. The game's setting is that of the capitalist hellscape, where huge authoritarian organizations control all capital, and everyone else is left fighting for the scraps. That's bad shit, but it's important to face, even in a heavily-altered game.

Try it. See what meaning you can find, out in the hulks.

THE PLAY- BOOKS



THE BRUISER

Rough and tumble, big and strong: the virtues of the bruiser may be simple, but their raw tenacity should never be underestimated.

The bruiser can rip people to shreds, fully arm and equip the crew, threaten people, interrogate prisoners, and stand fully head and shoulders above all other crewmembers in terms of raw combat ability.

If you want to be the absolute toughest fucker on the block, play a bruiser.

MAKING A BRUISER

To make a bruiser, choose a name, stat array, look, hometown, history, moves, and gear.

NAME

Hog, Scar, Krieger, Slapjaw, Slick, T, Cobb, Rath, Kee-ler, Flank, Charlie, Hambone, or Legger

A meaty name, a roughshod name, a combative name, a slangy name

STATS

The Sarge:

[Brain +1, Face +0, Spine +1, Gut +1, Junk -1]

The Grunt:

[Brain +0, Face +0, Spine +1, Gut +1, Junk +0]

The Muscle:

[Brain -1, Face -1, Spine +2, Gut +0, Junk +1]

The Enforcer:

[Brain -1, Face +1, Spine +2, Gut +0, Junk -1]

LOOK

Scrapyard armor, Authority armor, scrounged armor, spacewalker armor, ancient armor, painted armor, or homemade armor

Bruised face, painted face, broad face, bony face, crusty face, ridged face, scarred face, misshapen face, or tattooed face

Crazy eyes, hard eyes, calculating eyes, watery eyes, hawkish eyes, beady eyes, swollen eyes, shifty eyes, or shadowed eyes

Massive body, built body, sharp body, fleshy body, broken body, gnarled body, scarred body, stringy body, square body, or tattooed body

HOMETOWN

Mercury, Venus, the Core, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto

Luna, Deimos, Phobos, Io, Ganymede, Europa, Callisto, Enceladus, Titan, Miranda, Titania, Umbriel, Oberon, Ariel, Triton, or Charon

The Belt, a station, or a ship

HISTORY

Academia, Authority, colonies, drifting, labor, mercenary, merchant, piracy, underworld, or upper-crust

MOVES

You get all the basic moves. You get **contacts**, and then choose 3 bruiser moves.

When you get the chance, look up **get in a fight**, **hold firm**, and **act fast**.

GEAR

You start with a sidearm, two serious weapons, and a big fuck-off gun (*cf.* armory), plus armor suited to your look worth 2-armor, pullover space gear, and sticks worth 2-credit.

DEDICATED ROOM

The the ship gets a small armory (size+1), fully stocked. You should decide what most of the weapons in the armory are ahead of time.

CAPTAINCY

If you are chosen to be the ship's Captain, you immediately take +1 to any stat of your choice, to a maximum of +3. You immediately get all the Captain moves, plus **mess with them**, **mess with me**. You decide which jobs the ship takes, how the pay gets divided, and have command of the crew.

Everyone immediately heats their chain with you.

❑ **Mess with them, mess with me.** At the start of a job, roll+gut. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7-9, hold 2. At any point, if someone on your crew's in trouble (or is about to be), spend your hold and you are there, ready to go. On a miss, you still hold 1, but your crew—not you—gets to decide when and where it is you show up.

BRUISER MOVES

BRAIN

❑ **Tough as nails.** You get +1 spine (max+3).

FACE

❑ **Not on my turf.** When you take or deal harm to or from a person and are on or around the ship, take -1 harm and deal +1 harm ongoing.

SPINE

❑ **Gloves come off.** When you *threaten someone*, roll+spine instead of +face.

❑ **You were saying?** When you're present when the Captain *gets a job*, give them +1 on the roll. When the Captain rolls to *get paid*, you know how and when each thing that goes wrong will go wrong. If you're the Captain, this move applies to yourself.

GUT

❑ **Kneecapper.** When you capture someone and interrogate them for information, you get +1 hold for *contacts*.

❑ **Black ops.** All of your weapons lose *loud* or *messy* if they have them, and gain *no-air*. This applies to your armory weapons, too. Your armory also gains three sets of pullover space suits.

JUNK

❑ **Comrades in arms.** When you fight shoulder-to-shoulder with another crew member, you both take +1 armor ongoing. Afterwards, loosen your chain with them, or you both heat your chain (your call).

❑ **Bloodbath.** When you *get in a fight* with or *threaten* one of your fellow crew members, you can roll+heat instead of +spine or +face.

CONTACTS

At the start of a job, hold 1. At any time throughout the job, when you need someone with specific skills or connections, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, and there'll be somebody who fits the bill right there, or at least nearby: roll+face. On a 10+, they're friendly and will gladly help for a good price. On a 7-9, they're around, yeah, but they'll bring trouble, too. On a miss, they'll help you, but there'll be hell to pay afterwards.

Your contacts might be people like:

- Ridgeback, a mercenary captain
- Wester, a bounty fixer
- Cleft, a demolitions expert
- Dox, an everyman ship mechanic
- Cricket, a scavenged weapons dealer
- Richter, a dirty Authority medic

EXPERIENCE

□□□□□□

when you roll a miss, mark XP

At the end of a job, mark XP for each of these that you did; if you did them more than once, mark XP twice.

- you addressed a challenge with violence, threats, or destruction
- you were influenced by your hometown or history
- one of your chains went from slack to choking, or choking to slack
- you made a room's personality felt
- you made a decision for the whole crew, with or without their input

OTHER MOVES

NAME:

HOMETOWN:

HISTORY:

LOOK:

CHAINS

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

HARM

☐ 1-harm: shaken, scraped, or bruised

☐ 2-harm: cracked, slashed, or burned

☐ 3-harm: bloodied, scorched, or shattered

☐ 4-harm: unconscious or out of action

☐ 5-harm: dead

IMPROVEMENT

after marking 6 XP, reset and improve

☐ get +1 spine (max+3)

☐ get +1 gut (max+3)

☐ get +1 gut (max+3)

☐ get +1 junk (max+2)

☐☐☐ get another bruiser move

☐☐☐ get a move from another playbook

after improving 8 times, you can choose from this list as well:

☐ get +1 to any stat (max+3)

☐ change to a new playbook

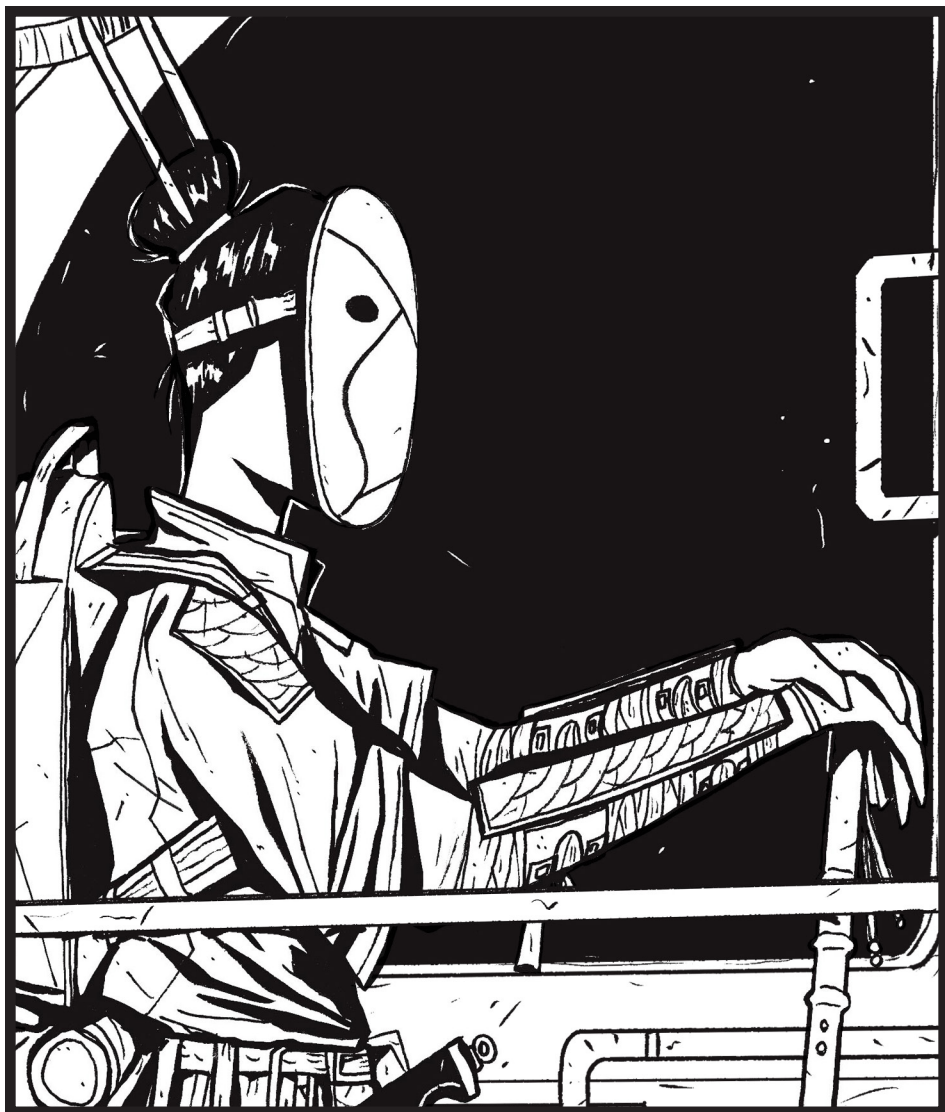
☐ make a piece of gear unbreakable

☐ create a second character

☐ get a second ship chassis

☐ retire to safety and wealth

NOTES & GEAR



THE ENVOY

Charming and elegant, the envoy fits in just about anywhere, be it high society parties or lowlife street corners—after all, a silver tongue is useful everywhere.

The envoy can make and break peace deals, call in friends and allies, fool marks, pass by Authority operatives, and sidestep myriad social problems.

If you want to be smooth, sly, and above all, wicked social—play an envoy.

MAKING AN ENVOY

To make an envoy, choose a name, stat array, look, hometown, history, moves, and gear.

NAME

Nix, Shand, Echo, Delta, Belacqua, Villanelle, Graves, Bantam, Siena, Shiver, Issa, Jacoby, Daud, Cross, or Vestra

an elegant name, a romantic name, a commanding name, a gentle name

STATS

The Negotiator:

[Brain +0, Face +1, Spine +1, Gut +1, Junk -1]

The Fixer:

[Brain +1, Face +1, Spine -1, Gut +0, Junk +1]

The Tactician:

[Brain +1, Face +2, Spine +1, Gut -1, Junk -2]

The Diplomat:

[Brain +0, Face +2, Spine -2, Gut +1, Junk +0]

LOOK

Authority fashion, offworld fashion, patchwork fashion, gaudy fashion, off-the-shelf fashion, or scavenged fashion

Serene face, impassive face, expressive face, stern face, wide face, shiftY face, scrubbed face, or made-up face

Blinking eyes, glassy eyes, warm eyes, soft eyes, worn eyes, piercing eyes, crinkled eyes, or shadowed eyes

Spare body, attractive body, chunky body, smooth body, stout body, waxy body, rough body, or tattooed body

HOMETOWN

Mercury, Venus, the Core, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto

Luna, Deimos, Phobos, Io, Ganymede, Europa, Callisto, Enceladus, Titan, Miranda, Titania, Umbriel, Oberon, Ariel, Triton, or Charon

The Belt, a station, or a ship

HISTORY

Academia, Authority, colonies, drifting, labor, mercenary, merchant, piracy, underworld, or upper-crust

MOVES

You get all the basic moves. You get **contacts**, and then choose 2 envoy moves.

When you get the chance, look up **fast-talk**, **threaten someone**, and **get a read**.

GEAR

You get fashion matching your look, and a covert weapon.

Covert weapon:

- derringer, 2-harm close loud reload
- wrist shotgun, 3-harm close messy reload
- syringe, s-harm intimate refill
- stiletto, 2-harm hand

You also get sticks worth 4-credit.

DEDICATED ROOM

The ship gets a small shuttle (size+1)—your shuttle—that's decked out with stuff you need: clothes, finery, a big desk, a safe, a little table and a couple of chairs for you to serve drinks, the works.

CAPTAINCY

If you are chosen to be the ship's Captain, you immediately take +1 to any stat of your choice, to a maximum of +3. You immediately get all the Captain moves, plus **expert negotiator**. You decide which jobs the ship takes, how the pay gets divided, and have command of the crew.

Everyone immediately heats their chain with you.

- ❑ **Expert negotiator.** When you **get paid**, you always choose one extra option.

BRAIN

FACE

SPINE

GUT

JUNK

ENVOY MOVES

- ❑ **Boundless grace.** You get +1 face (max+3).
- ❑ **Social butterfly.** At the start of a job, roll+face. On a 10+, hold 3; on a 7-9, hold 2; on a miss, hold 1 anyway. When one of your chains would tighten, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, to keep at as-is instead.
- ❑ **False surrender.** When you *get in a fight* with people using a weapon small enough to fit in one hand, roll+face instead of +spine. Any harm you deal like this counts as armor piercing (ap).
- ❑ **Diplomatic immunity.** If you're talking with someone and they start a fight (and it really does need to be them that starts it, it can't just be someone that isn't you), take +2 armor ongoing until the fight ends.
- ❑ **Peacemaker.** When you go to two people that have a strained or choking chain (which could include you) and make peace between them, roll+face. On a 10+, they both heat their chain and loosen their chain. On a 7-9, they still loosen their chain, but cool it instead. On a miss, they heat and tighten their chain, and each of their chains with you tighten, too.
- ❑ **Power beyond.** When you *threaten someone*, you can do it with some form of power that isn't yours, but you could bring to bear—like the Authority. If your hand is forced, you can retreat to summon that power: roll+face. On a 10+, they help you, it's good. On a 7-9, they'll help you, but there's a cost. On a miss, they won't help, and are real upset.
- ❑ **Isolation therapy.** When you *threaten* a crew member, you can threaten them with tightening one of their chains all the way to choking.
- ❑ **The human element.** When you *fast-talk* or *get a read* on another crew member, you can roll+heat instead of a +face or +gut.
- ❑ **Sanctioned and legitimate.** Whenever you deal with the Authority in a legitimate capacity, take +1 ongoing.

CONTACTS

At the start of a job, hold 3. At any time throughout the job, when you need someone with specific skills or connections, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, and there'll be somebody who fits the bill right there, or at least nearby: roll+face. On a 10+, they're friendly and will gladly help for a good price. On a 7-9, they're around, yeah, but they'll bring trouble, too. On a miss, they'll help you, but there'll be hell to pay afterwards.

Your contacts might be people like:

- Kell, an Authority hunter captain
- Grigsby, a retired spy
- Sharpe, a job fixer and middleman
- Waxer, a tailor and clothier
- Vin, a luxurious "hotelier"
- Fogg, a pawn shop dealer

EXPERIENCE

□□□□□□

when you roll a miss, mark XP

At the end of a job, mark XP for each of these that you did; if you did them more than once, mark XP twice.

- you addressed a challenge with charm, diplomacy, or deception
- you were influenced by your hometown or history
- one of your chains went from slack to choking, or choking to slack
- you made a room's personality felt
- you made a decision for the whole crew, with or without their input

OTHER MOVES

NAME:

HOMETOWN:

HISTORY:

LOOK:

CHAINS

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

HARM

☐ 1-harm: shaken, scraped, or bruised

☐ 2-harm: cracked, slashed, or burned

☐ 3-harm: bloodied, scorched, or shattered

☐ 4-harm: unconscious or out of action

☐ 5-harm: dead

IMPROVEMENT

after marking 6 XP, reset and improve

☐ get +1 face (max+3)

☐ get +1 brain (max+2)

☐ get +1 spine (max+2)

☐ get +1 gut (max gut+2)

☐☐ get another envoy move

☐☐ get a move from another playbook

after improving 8 times, you can choose from this list as well:

☐ get +1 to any stat (max+3)

☐ change to a new playbook

☐ make a piece of gear unbreakable

☐ create a second character

☐ get a second ship chassis

☐ retire to safety and wealth

NOTES & GEAR



THE GREASER

Smart and utilitarian, the greaser maintains the ship through thick and thin; any ship with a greaser aboard will find its engines hot and roaring, no matter the circumstances.

The greaser can eke power and juice out of the engine, fix all sorts of things, rig up defenses, and repair rooms on the fly.

If you want to hum with the engine and shudder with the ship, play a greaser.

MAKING A GREASER

To make a greaser, choose a name, stat array, look, hometown, history, moves, and gear.

NAME

Chaps, Spinner, Frye, Null, Cowl, Quipper, Wrack, Stickleback, Rho, Wedge, Kilo, Tonker, Clamps, Fritz, or Locke

A technical name, a simple name, an energetic name, or a choppy name

STATS

The Engine:

[Brain +1, Face -1, Spine +0, Gut +1, Junk +1]

The Architect:

[Brain +2, Face +1, Spine +0, Gut +0, Junk -2]

The Mechaniker:

[Brain +2, Face -1, Spine -1, Gut +0, Junk +1]

The Sapper:

[Brain +1, Face +0, Spine +1, Gut +1, Junk -1]

LOOK

Patchwork jumpsuit, scrounged jumpsuit, Authority jumpsuit, ancient jumpsuit, replaceable jumpsuit, or stained jumpsuit

Worn face, rough face, baby face, cool face, mischievous face, nervous face, stained face, or hot face

Focused eyes, tired eyes, bloodshot eyes, clear eyes, distant eyes, foggy eyes, discolored eyes, or swollen eyes

Chubby body, slight body, haggard body, young body, strained body, tattooed body, burned body, or spritely body

Calloused hands, cracked hands, greasy hands, filthy hands, clever hands, gnarled hands, tattooed hands, or cold hands

HOMETOWN

Mercury, Venus, the Core, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto

Luna, Deimos, Phobos, Io, Ganymede, Europa, Callisto, Enceladus, Titan, Miranda, Titania, Umbriel, Oberon, Ariel, Triton, or Charon

The Belt, a station, or a ship

HISTORY

Academia, Authority, colonies, drifting, labor, mercenary, merchant, piracy, underworld, or upper-crust

MOVES

You get all the basic moves. You also get ***machinist***, ***contacts***, then choose 2 greaser moves.

When you get the chance, look up ***repair something*** and ***make a patch***, plus the engine room move.

GEAR

You get a jumpsuit suitable to your look, a last-chance weapon, and a wrench (2-harm hand).

Last-chance weapons:

- icepick, 3-harm hand messy
- welding torch, 4-harm intimate messy refill
- buzz saw, 3-harm hand messy autofire
- nail gun, 2-harm close messy

You also start with scrap worth 2-credit and sticks worth 1-credit.

DEDICATED ROOM

The ship gets +2 hull.

Then, the engine gets +1 size (max size+3).

CAPTAINCY

If you are chosen to be the ship's Captain, you immediately take +1 to any stat of your choice, to a maximum of +3. You immediately get all the Captain moves, plus ***durable frameworks***. You decide which jobs the ship takes, how the pay gets divided, and have command of the crew.

Everyone immediately heats their chain with you.

- ❑ ***Durable frameworks.*** Each room in the ship counts as 1 size larger for the purpose of determining harm. A room with size+2, for example, could take 4-harm (rather than 3-harm) before being destroyed entirely.

BRAIN

FACE

SPINE

GUT

JUNK

GREASER MOVES

- ❑ **Machinist.** When you *repair something*, you can repair a ship's room like any other object. Spend 1-credit in scrap, then roll+brain. On a 7-9, you repair 1 point of harm; on a 10+, you repair 1 point of harm and get your 1-credit in scrap back, too. On a miss, the room suffers 1-harm (ap) and your scrap is blown.
- ❑ **Well-learned.** You get +1 brain (max+3).
- ❑ **Crazy Ivan.** You can *pull a stunt* from the engine, using the engine's size in place of the helm's, just like it was made from the helm
- ❑ **Idiot-proofing.** At the beginning of a job, roll+brain. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7-9, hold 2. Anytime somebody on the ship would fuck around with anything of yours, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, to immediately inflict 3-harm. If you choose, you can make them aware of this beforehand. On a miss, hold 1 anyway, but when you use your hold, the thing they were going for breaks anyway.
- ❑ **Expert engineering.** When you make an engine move or any move that requires you to be in the engine room, add your brain to the roll.
- ❑ **Navicom control frequency.** You can make engine moves anywhere on or around the ship. This applies to any of your moves that require you to be in the engine room, too.
- ❑ **System overclock.** When you pump power from the engine to another room, roll+brain. On a 10+, that room counts as having +1 size ongoing, until you stop pumping. On a 7-9, that room counts as having +1 size ongoing, but afterwards either you or that room take 1-harm (ap). On a miss, you and the room both take 1-harm (ap) for nothing.
- ❑ **Just forgot a repair.** When one of your chains would tighten, you can instead choose to retreat to the engine room for a long while. While you're there, you can't talk to anybody and nobody can talk to you.
- ❑ **A friend in need.** When a crew member comes to you to have something of theirs repaired, you can roll+heat instead of +brain. Either way, after you repair it, loosen your chain with them, or you both heat your chain (your call).

CONTACTS

At the start of a job, hold 1. At any time throughout the job, when you need someone with specific skills or connections, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, and there'll be somebody who fits the bill right there, or at least nearby: roll+brain. On a 10+, they're friendly and will gladly help for a good price. On a 7-9, they're around, yeah, but they'll bring trouble, too. On a miss, they'll help you, but there'll be hell to pay afterwards.

Your contacts might be people like:

- Shakes, a salvage-runner
- Rao, a scrapyard owner
- Tiptop, a demolitions expert
- Foxtrot, a Belt miner
- Hamish, a back-alley surgeon
- Ruckes, a station-master

EXPERIENCE

□□□□□□

when you roll a miss, mark XP

At the end of a job, mark XP for each of these that you did; if you did them more than once, mark XP twice.

- you addressed a challenge with repairs, wits, or the ship itself
- you were influenced by your hometown or history
- one of your chains went from slack to choking, or choking to slack
- you made a room's personality felt
- you made a decision for the whole crew, with or without their input

OTHER MOVES

NAME: _____

HOMETOWN: _____

HISTORY: _____

LOOK: _____

CHAINS

	NAME _____	SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING
	NAME _____	SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING
	NAME _____	SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING
	NAME _____	SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

HARM

- ☐ **1-harm:** shaken, scraped, or bruised
- ☐ **2-harm:** cracked, slashed, or burned
- ☐ **3-harm:** bloodied, scorched, or shattered
- ☐ **4-harm:** unconscious or out of action
- ☐ **5-harm:** dead

IMPROVEMENT

after marking 6 XP, reset and improve

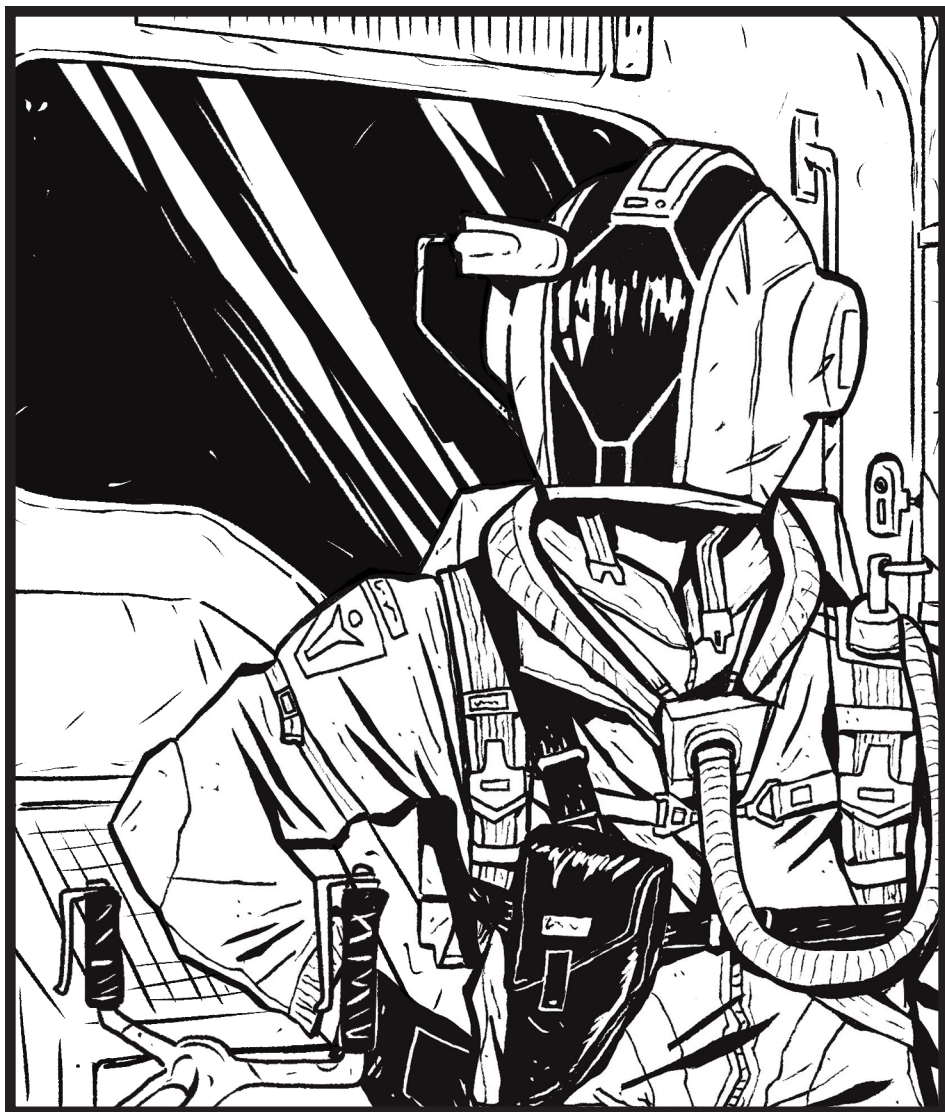
- ☐ get +1 brain (max+3)
- ☐ get +1 gut (max+2)
- ☐ get +1 junk (max+2)
- ☐ get +1 spine (max+2)
- ☐☐☐ get another greaser move
- ☐☐☐ get a move from another playbook

after improving 8 times, you can choose from this list as well:

- ☐ get +1 to any stat (max+3)
- ☐ change to a new playbook
- ☐ make a piece of gear unbreakable
- ☐ create a second character
- ☐ get a second ship chassis
- ☐ retire to safety and wealth

NOTES & GEAR

THE GREASER



THE JOCKEY

Daring ace, long hauler, resolute pilot. The jockey wears many hats, but they will always be found where they belong: at the helm, flying the ship, wherever it may go.

The jockey is an ace pilot, entirely without peer at the helm. They have solid intuition, a plan for every situation, good combat instincts, and can make sure the helm's always working, at least a bit.

If you adore the open sky and love being in control of your own fate, play the jockey.

MAKING A JOCKEY

To make a jockey, choose a name, stat array, look, hometown, history, moves, and gear.

NAME

Silver, Ringo, Ace, Isla, Rosie, K. T., Burns, Sparky, Bravo, Booker, McClellan, Fox, Danger, Yankee, Snips, Dusky, or Tango

A gallant name, a cheeky name, a good ol' name, a cute name

STATS

The Recon:

[Brain +0, Face -1, Spine +1, Gut +1, Junk +1]

The Driver:

[Brain -1, Face -1, Spine +0, Gut +2, Junk +1]

The Hot-Shot:

[Brain -1, Face +1, Spine +0, Gut +2, Junk -1]

The Aviator:

[Brain +1, Face +1, Spine -1, Gut +1, Junk +0]

LOOK

Patchwork duds, vintage leathers, scrapyard wear, decorated clothes, off-the-line jumpsuit, or Authority flightsuit

Pinched face, smooth face, windswept face, goofy face, dashing face, square face, gorgeous face, or wise face

Bright eyes, wild eyes, steely eyes, wide eyes, fiery eyes, frosty eyes, squinting eyes, crinkly eyes, deep eyes, or laughing eyes

Skinny body, rangy body, rough-hewn body, fleshy body, cute body, scuffed body, or smooth body

HOMETOWN

Mercury, Venus, the Core, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto

Luna, Deimos, Phobos, Io, Ganymede, Europa, Callisto, Enceladus, Titan, Miranda, Titania, Umbriel, Oberon, Ariel, Triton, or Charon

The Belt, a station, or a ship

HISTORY

Academia, Authority, colonies, drifting, labor, mercenary, merchant, piracy, underworld, or upper-crust

MOVES

You get all the basic moves. You get **contacts**, then choose 3 jockey moves.

When you get the chance, look up **get a read**, **act fast**, and **make a patch**.

GEAR

You get duds worth 1-armor suitable to your look, a sidearm, and sticks worth 2-credit.

Sidearms:

- big ugly jackknife, 2-harm hand
- handgun, 2-harm close loud
- sawnoff, 3-harm close messy reload
- stunner, s-harm close no-air

DEDICATED ROOM

The helm's size increases by 1, to a maximum of +3. Then, choose 1:

- the hull increases by +2
- the ship gains a small cargo hold (size+1)
- the ship gains small bunks (size+1)

CAPTAINCY

If you are chosen to be the ship's Captain, you immediately take +1 to any stat of your choice, to a maximum of +3. You immediately get all the Captain moves, plus **trader's routes**. You decide which jobs the ship takes, how the pay gets divided, and have command of the crew.

Everyone immediately heats their chain with you.

- ❑ **Trader's routes.** When you travel a span, you choose +1 option on a 10+ and choose -1 option on a miss.

JOCKEY MOVES

BRAIN

❑ **Daring-do.** You get +1 gut (max +3).

❑ **Keen eyed.** When you *get a read*, you always ask one extra question, and take +2 when you act on the MC's answers.

FACE

❑ **Dogfighter.** When someone gets into a fight against another ship and you're at the helm, on a 7-9, you decide where the enemy targets, instead of the MC.

❑ **Getaway driver.** At the start of a job, roll+gut. On a 10+, hold 2. On a 7-9, hold 1. At any point during the job while you're on the ship, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, to have the ship be where it needs to be, ready to go. On a miss, hold 1 anyway, but when you get there, you're caught there, stuck where you arrived.

SPINE

❑ **Loop-the-loop.** When you *pull a stunt*, you can add your gut to the roll. When the ship's in combat, you can *pull a stunt* to add your gut to the ship's hull, ongoing, so long as you're at the helm.

GUT

❑ **Autonav relay.** You can fly the ship and make helm moves from anywhere on or around the ship. This includes moves that require you to be at the helm.

❑ **Busy flying, don't bother me.** When one of your chains would tighten, you can instead choose to retreat to the helm for a long while. While you're there, you can't talk to anybody and nobody can talk to you.

JUNK

❑ **Old reliable.** The helm cannot be shut down by an EMP, or anything similar. If the helm is destroyed, successfully *making a patch* for it restores a single point of harm.

CONTACTS

At the start of a job, hold 1. At any time throughout the job, when you need someone with specific skills or connections, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, and there'll be somebody who fits the bill right there, or at least nearby: roll+face. On a 10+, they're friendly and will gladly help for a good price. On a 7-9, they're around, yeah, but they'll bring trouble, too. On a miss, they'll help you, but there'll be hell to pay afterwards.

Your contacts might be people like:

- *Joker, a fellow helmsperson*
- *Whippet, a wholesale trader*
- *Marszie, a station master*
- *Dawson, an Authority bookkeeper*
- *Vex, a black market fixer*
- *Shammy, a pirate captain*

EXPERIENCE

□□□□□□

when you roll a miss, mark XP

At the end of a job, mark XP for each of these that you did; if you did them more than once, mark XP twice.

- *you addressed a challenge with daring, talent, or wits*
- *you were influenced by your hometown or history*
- *one of your chains went from slack to choking, or choking to slack*
- *you made a room's personality felt*
- *you made a decision for the whole crew, with or without their input*

OTHER MOVES

NAME:

HOMETOWN:

HISTORY:

LOOK:

CHAINS

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

HARM

☐ 1-harm: shaken, scraped, or bruised

☐ 2-harm: cracked, slashed, or burned

☐ 3-harm: bloodied, scorched, or shattered

☐ 4-harm: unconscious or out of action

☐ 5-harm: dead

IMPROVEMENT

after marking 6 XP, reset and improve

☐ get +1 gut (max+3)

☐ get +1 face (max+2)

☐ get +1 spine (max+2)

☐ get +1 junk (max+2)

☐☐☐ get another jockey move

☐☐☐ get a move from another playbook

after improving 8 times, you can choose from this list as well:

☐ get +1 to any stat (max+3)

☐ change to a new playbook

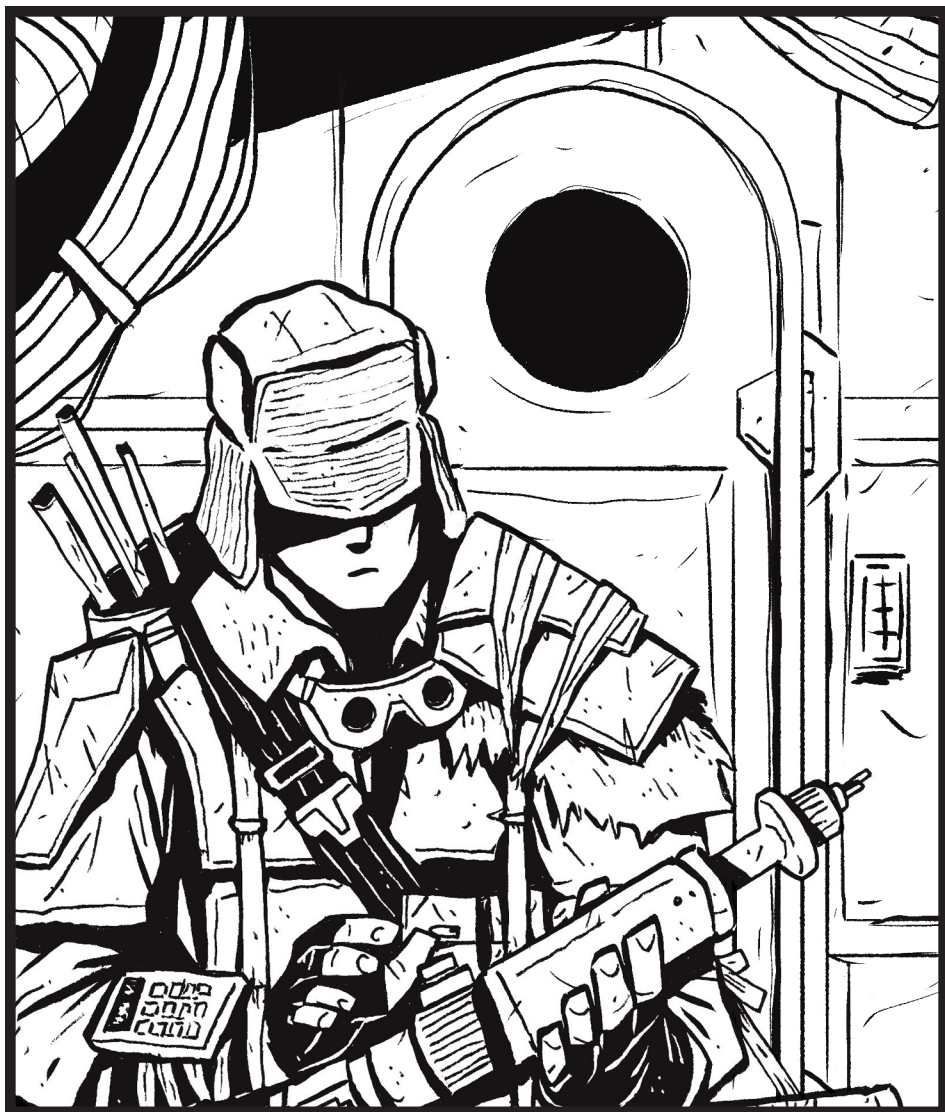
☐ make a piece of gear unbreakable

☐ create a second character

☐ get a second ship chassis

☐ retire to safety and wealth

NOTES & GEAR



THE JUNKER

Junkers are what the world has created: they are the only ones truly at home out among the hulks, where they transform one person's trash into something of value.

The junker is a scavenger and improviser, first and foremost. They can take apart anything and remake it into something new, beef up rooms in effectiveness, and find anything they need on a hulk.

If you want gear for every occasion and to be perpetually neck-deep in scrap, play a junker.

MAKING A JUNKER

To make a junker, choose a name, stat array, look, hometown, history, moves, and gear.

NAME

Grixie, Epsilon, Kai, Red, Knox, Thresh, Blue, Irwin, Clanker, Buzz, Sedgewick, November, Gray, Fudge, Chops, Whirr, or Zero

A crunchy name, a word-as-name, a colorful name, an industrial name

STATS

The Scav:

[Brain -1, Face -1, Spine +0, Gut +1, Junk +2]

The Scrapper:

[Brain +0, Face -1, Spine +1, Gut +1, Junk+1]

The Inventor:

[Brain +1, Face +1, Spine -1, Gut +0, Junk +1]

The Can Opener:

[Brain +1, Face +0, Spine +1, Gut -1, Junk +2]

LOOK

Patched wear, scrounged wear, industrial wear, home-made wear, looted wear, reinforced wear, or ancient wear

Sweaty face, sunken face, coarse face, grimy face, scruffy face, scabbed face, lined face, twisted face, or weathered face

Keen eyes, suspicious eyes, weak eyes, frosty eyes, shifty eyes, blinking eyes, puffy eyes, infected eyes, or heterochromatic eyes

Gawky body, flabby body, sinewy body, bouncy body, hardened body, frostbitten body, creaking body, worn body, narrow body, or tattooed body

HOMETOWN

Mercury, Venus, the Core, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto

Luna, Deimos, Phobos, Io, Ganymede, Europa, Callisto, Enceladus, Titan, Miranda, Titania, Umbriel, Oberon, Ariel, Triton, or Charon

The Belt, a station, or a ship

HISTORY

Academia, Authority, colonies, drifting, labor, mercenary, merchant, piracy, underworld, or upper-crust

MOVES

You get all the basic moves. You get **strip**, **melt**, **grind**, **smelt**, **contacts**, and then choose 1 junker move.

When you get the chance, look up **make a patch**, **scrape a hulk**, and **repair something**.

GEAR

You get wear suited to your look, an off-ship weapon you made yourself, a pullover space suit, and your junker's kit.

Off-ship weapons (that you made yourself):

- boarding axe or crowbar, 3-harm hand messy
- stunner, s-harm close reload no-air
- crossbow, 2-harm close reload slow no-air
- many many knives, 2-harm hand infinite

You also start with scrap worth 4-credit.

DEDICATED ROOM

Any two rooms of your choice on the ship get +1 size, each, to a maximum of size+2.

CAPTAINCY

If you are chosen to be the ship's Captain, you immediately take +1 to any stat of your choice, to a maximum of +3. You immediately get all the Captain moves, plus **ripper job**. You decide which jobs the ship takes, how the pay gets divided, and have command of the crew.

Everyone immediately heats their chain with you.

- ❑ **Ripper job.** When you come across a hulk with an intact room that you also have on your ship, you can add that room's mass to yours. Spend 5-credit in scrap and roll+junk. On a 10+, your room gains +1 size. On a 7-9, your room gains +1 size, but your room is destroyed in the process. On a miss, your room is completely destroyed and must be repaired for no benefit. Regardless of outcome, when you strip a room like this, no more rooms from that hulk can be stripped.

BRAIN

FACE

SPINE

GUT

JUNK

JUNKER MOVES

- ❑ **Strip, melt, grind, smelt.** When you take a piece of equipment and break it down for parts, roll+junk. On a 10+, you get its worth in scrap. On a 7-9, you get its worth in scrap, minus 1 (unless it was only worth 1-credit, then it's still worth only 1-credit). On a miss, something goes awry and it's just a pile of truly worthless trash.
- ❑ **Wrecker's arts.** You get +1 Junk (max+3).
- ❑ **Real scrappy.** When you *get in a fight* with a weapon you made yourself, roll+junk instead of +spine. If somebody else *gets in a fight* with a weapon you made and it does its job, loosen your chain or you both heat your chain (your call).
- ❑ **Go fish.** When you *scrape a hulk*, you can name something you need: something that you could find on the hulk, something specific and useful and expensive. On a 10+ on the roll, you find the thing instead of whatever you would've normally found; on a 7-9, you still find it, but it's got strings attached, as normal. On a miss, something even worse is going to be on that hulk.
- ❑ **Scrapyard buddies.** When you *scrape a hulk*, on a 10+, you gain 1 hold for **contacts**. On a 7-9, you can opt for whatever you normally find or you can gain 1 hold for **contacts**, but not both. On a miss, you get no extra benefit.
- ❑ **It always works, until it doesn't.** When something of yours would break, you can instead choose to have someone else's thing break instead. When someone else's thing breaks, you can choose to have something of yours break instead.
- ❑ **Mass production.** When you repair something, you can spend 1-credit in scrap to automatically count as having rolled a 10+.

CONTACTS

At the start of a job, hold 1. At any time throughout the job, when you need someone with specific skills or connections, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, and there'll be somebody who fits the bill right there, or at least nearby: roll+face. On a 10+, they're friendly and will gladly help for a good price. On a 7-9, they're around, yeah, but they'll bring trouble, too. On a miss, they'll help you, but there'll be hell to pay afterwards.

Your contacts might be people like:

- Snaggler, a thief and grifter
- Char, a professional "privateer"
- Tex, a used parts dealer
- Violet, a shipwrecker
- Wu, an Authority-tech smuggler
- Grimm, a mercenary captain

EXPERIENCE

□□□□□□

when you roll a miss, mark XP

At the end of a job, mark XP for each of these that you did; if you did them more than once, mark XP twice.

- you addressed a challenge with wits, creativity, or by making something
- you were influenced by your hometown or history
- one of your chains went from slack to choking, or choking to slack
- you made a room's personality felt
- you made a decision for the whole crew, with or without their input

OTHER MOVES

NAME:

HOMETOWN:

HISTORY:

LOOK:

CHAINS



NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING



NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING



NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING



NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

HARM

- ☐ **1-harm:** shaken, scraped, or bruised
- ☐ **2-harm:** cracked, slashed, or burned
- ☐ **3-harm:** bloodied, scorched, or shattered
- ☐ **4-harm:** unconscious or out of action
- ☐ **5-harm:** dead

IMPROVEMENT

after marking 6 XP, reset and improve

- ☐ get +1 junk (max+3)
- ☐ get +1 brain (max+2)
- ☐ get +1 spine (max+2)
- ☐ get +1 gut (max+2)
- ☐☐☐ get another junker move
- ☐☐☐ get a move from another playbook

after improving 8 times, you can choose from this list as well:

- ☐ get +1 to any stat (max+3)
- ☐ change to a new playbook
- ☐ make a piece of gear unbreakable
- ☐ create a second character
- ☐ get a second ship chassis
- ☐ retire to safety and wealth

JUNKER'S KIT

It's a giant-ass toolbox full—like, literally, just teeming—of random scrap, spare parts, raw junk, mechanical crap, stolen bits, salvaged components, endless nubbins and gubs, and a whole bunch of other useful, old, rusty shit.

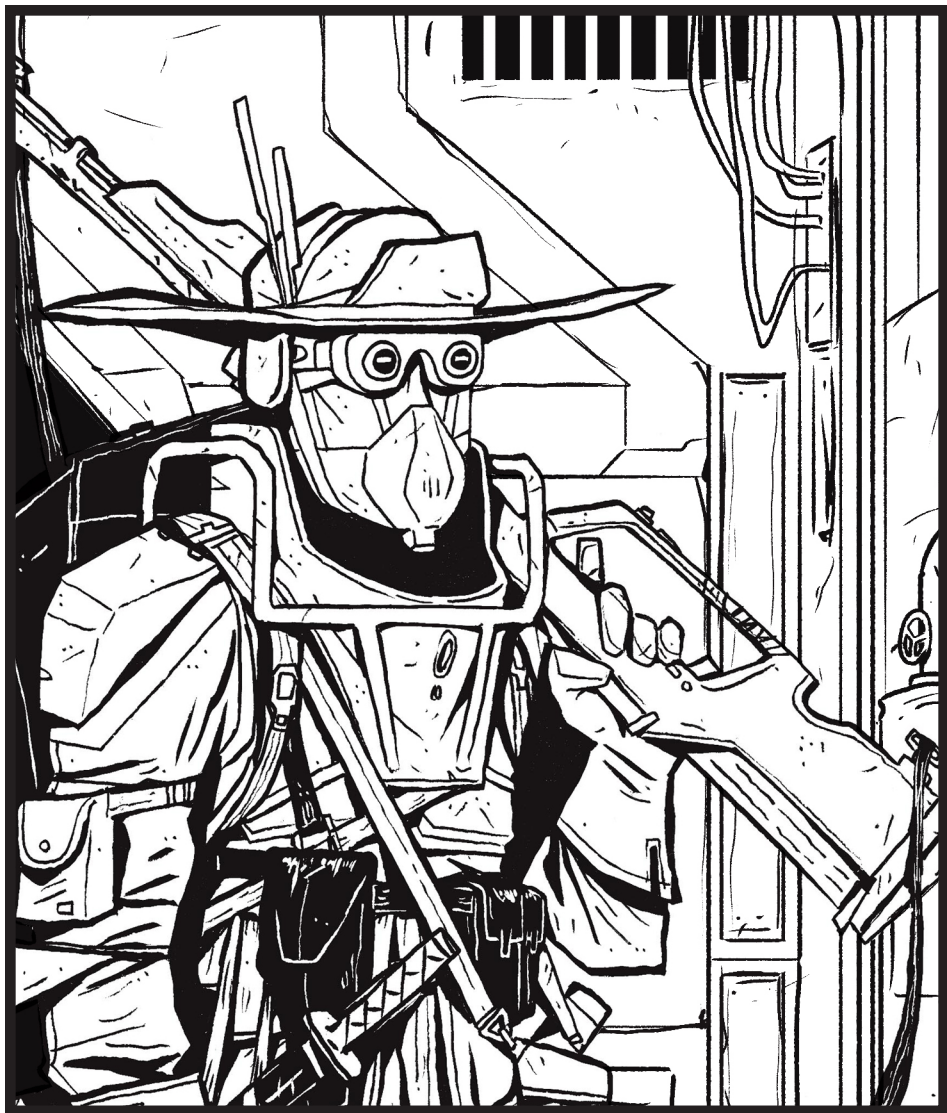
When you **build a common piece of gear from scrap**, name the gear and spend up to 1-credit in scrap, then roll+junk. On a 10+, you create the gear. On a 7-9, you make it, but it's broken right now and needs to be repaired. On a miss, you blow your scrap and get nothing.

When you **beef up a room**, spend up to 3-credit in scrap, then roll+scrap spent. On a 10+, that room counts as having +1 size and ongoing until it next takes harm. On a 7-9, it counts as one size larger, but when it next takes harm, it takes +1 harm. On a miss, you blow your scrap and get nothing.

When you **make a repair kit from scrap**, spend up to 3-credit in scrap, then roll+scrap spent. On a 10+, you get that repair kit, nice and shiny. On a 7-9, you get a repair kit, yeah, but something of yours breaks, and must be repaired. On a miss, you blow your scrap and get nothing.

OTHER GEAR

THE JUNKER



THE RUNNER

Ever the roguish scoundrel, runners are criminals in every sense of the word. They are thieves, smugglers, killers, bandits, and all-around bastards—and no true runner would have it any other way.

The runner is fast and nimble, they can carry all kinds of useful tools, they can be handy and quick on the draw in a fight, and is a master of illegality.

If you want to be a knave and have zero apologies about it, play a runner.

MAKING A RUNNER

To make a runner, choose a name, stat array, look, hometown, history, moves, and gear.

NAME

Brisk, Iota, Lance, Flint, Moon, Romeo, Smolder, Jackknife, Morgan, Steele, Ryker, Jez, Loafers, Thorn, Key, Pierce, or Juliet

A sexy name, an alias, a sharp name, a badass name

STATS

The Daredevil:

[Brain -2, Face +1, Spine +0, Gut +2, Junk +0]

The Footpad:

[Brain -1, Face +0, Spine +1, Gut +1, Junk +1]

The Viper:

[Brain +0, Face +1, Spine +1, Gut +1, Junk -1]

The Renegade:

[Brain -1, Face +0, Spine +1, Gut +2, Junk -1]

LOOK

Stylish clothing, leather clothing, shabby clothing, scrounged clothing, gaudy clothing, stolen clothing, criminal clothing, or inconspicuous clothing

Handsome face, narrow face, scarred face, bland face, pockmarked face, chiseled face, gorgeous face, or tattooed face

Frosty eyes, glazed eyes, wary eyes, shallow eyes, darting eyes, rich eyes, striking eyes, shadowy eyes, or laughing eyes

Hollow body, forgettable body, bony body, gorgeous body, flabby body, stringy body, designer body, or tattooed body

Dancing fingers, knuckled fingers, twitchy fingers, elegant fingers, missing fingers, manicured fingers, or tattooed fingers

HOMETOWN

Mercury, Venus, the Core, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto

Luna, Deimos, Phobos, Io, Ganymede, Europa, Callisto, Enceladus, Titan, Miranda, Titania, Umbriel, Oberon, Ariel, Triton, or Charon

The Belt, a station, or a ship

HISTORY

Academia, Authority, colonies, drifting, labor, mercenary, merchant, piracy, underworld, or upper-crust

MOVES

You get all the basic moves. You get **contacts**, then choose 3 runner moves.

When you get the chance, look up **act fast**, **get a read**, and **fast-talk**.

GEAR

You start with clothing suited to your look worth 1-armor, and a backup weapon of your choosing.

Backup weapons:

- many many knives, 2-harm hand infinite
- magnum, 3-harm close loud
- smg, 2-harm close autofire
- cleaver or machete, 3-harm hand

You also start with stolen goods worth 3-credit, and 1-credit in sticks.

DEDICATED ROOM

The ship gets a small (size+1) set of bolt-holes.

CAPTAINCY

If you are chosen to be the ship's Captain, you immediately take +1 to any stat of your choice, to a maximum of +3. You immediately get all the Captain moves, plus **underworld connections**. You decide which jobs the ship takes, how the pay gets divided, and have command of the crew.

Everyone immediately heats their chain with you.

- ❑ **Underworld connections.** If you take an illegal job (whether it starts that way or you just reach the point of no return), you immediately gain an extra 2 hold for **contacts**, and get +1 forward on all rolls you make for the move.

RUNNER MOVES

BRAIN

- ❑ **Cold-blooded.** You get +1 gut (max+3).
- ❑ **Cut and run.** Name your escape route and roll+gut. On a 10+, you're gone. On a 7-9, you're gone, but something you want or need breaks, and must be repaired. On a miss, you're caught, half-in and half-out.

FACE

- ❑ **Bob and weave, duck and cover.** When you **hold firm**, roll+gut instead of +spine.
- ❑ **Ask questions later.** When you're in a conversation overhung by the threat of violence, roll+gut. On a 10+, hold 2. On a 7-9, hold 1. If the moment arises and you need to waste somebody, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, to immediately inflict harm. On a miss, your opponent holds 1 against you.

SPINE

- ❑ **Born in the gutter.** When you deal with the Authority in an illegitimate capacity, take +1 ongoing.

GUT

- ❑ **Tucked away for later.** When somebody needs something badly, the kind of thing you could fit in a crate or fist or pocket, roll+gut. On a 10+, you've got it, right here and right now, good to go. On a 7-9, you've got it, but it's only good for now and will break soon. On a miss, you get something bad instead of what you wanted.

JUNK

- ❑ **Black-hearted.** When you call for help or go to help another crewmember, the other crewmember always suffers the consequences, regardless of your chain.

- ❑ **Notch in the armor.** When you **get in a fight** or **act fast** against another crewmember, you can roll+heat instead of +spine or +gut.

- ❑ **Turning tables, turning cloaks.** When a crewmember comes to you and asks for your help in doing something illegal, roll with +1 ongoing until it's done. Afterwards, either loosen your chain with them, or you each cool your chain (you call).

CONTACTS

At the start of a job, hold 1. At any time throughout the job, when you need someone with specific skills or connections, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, and there'll be somebody who fits the bill right there, or at least nearby: roll+face. On a 10+, they're friendly and will gladly help for a good price. On a 7-9, they're around, yeah, but they'll bring trouble, too. On a miss, they'll help you, but there'll be hell to pay afterwards.

Your contacts might be people like:

- Jephthah, an assassin
- Cato, an anarchist station master
- North, an Authority-grade arms dealer
- Soulsby, a spy for hire
- Wexler, a crime boss
- Arcy, your ex

EXPERIENCE

□□□□□□

when you roll a miss, mark XP

At the end of a job, mark XP for each of these that you did; if you did them more than once, mark XP twice.

- you addressed a challenge with wits, deception, or violence
- you were influenced by your hometown or history
- one of your chains went from slack to choking, or choking to slack
- you made a room's personality felt
- you made a decision for the whole crew, with or without their input

OTHER MOVES

NAME:

HOMETOWN:

HISTORY:

LOOK:

CHAINS

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

+3

+0

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NAME

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NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

HARM

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☐ 3-harm: bloodied, scorched, or shattered

☐ 4-harm: unconscious or out of action

☐ 5-harm: dead

IMPROVEMENT

after marking 6 XP, reset and improve

☐ get +1 gut (max+3)

☐ get +1 face (max+2)

☐ get +1 spine (max+2)

☐ get +1 junk (max+2)

☐☐☐ get another runner move

☐☐☐ get a move from another playbook

after improving 8 times, you can choose from this list as well:

☐ get +1 to any stat (max+3)

☐ change to a new playbook

☐ make a piece of gear unbreakable

☐ create a second character

☐ get a second ship chassis

☐ retire to safety and wealth

NOTES & GEAR

THE RUNNER

53



THE SAWBONES

Savvy and practical, the sawbones is a healer, a medic, a doctor. They keep the ship's infirmary, and it's their job to ensure that the crew stays alive.

The sawbones can gain special insight into crewmembers, save lives without tools, get up to interesting mischief when treating people, and make powerful ties through their life-saving skill.

If you're interested in healing people and all the trouble contained therein, play a sawbones.

MAKING A SAWBONES

To make a sawbones, choose a name, stat array, look, hometown, history, moves, and gear.

NAME

Briggs, Doc, Chaplain, Snapleg, Bones, Ripley, White, Gamma, Stockard, X-Ray, Skinner, Snips, or Fletch
a hardy name, a nickname, a sharp name, a title-as-name

STATS

The Street Doc:

[Brain +1, Face +0, Spine -1, Gut +1, Junk +1]

The Physician:

[Brain +2, Face +1, Spine -1, Gut +0, Junk -1]

The Field Medic:

[Brain +2, Face -2, Spine +0, Gut +1, Junk +0]

The Ship's Surgeon:

[Brain +1, Face +0, Spine +1, Gut -1, Junk +1]

LOOK

Scrounged medical wear, Authority medic wear, combat medic gear, clinical scrubs, ancient medical wear, or scrounged gear

Stern face, loose face, strained face, tranquil face, panicky face, grizzled face, curious face, or attractive face

Piercing eyes, scanning eyes, alert eyes, keen eyes, drained eyes, kind eyes, fatigued eyes, or kind eyes

Trim body, rangy body, marred body, fleshy body, lanky body, stocky body, pudgy body, or loose body

HOMETOWN

Mercury, Venus, the Core, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto

Luna, Deimos, Phobos, Io, Ganymede, Europa, Callisto, Enceladus, Titan, Miranda, Titania, Umbriel, Oberon, Ariel, Triton, or Charon

The Belt, a station, or a ship

HISTORY

Academia, Authority, colonies, drifting, labor, mercenary, merchant, piracy, underworld, or upper-crust

MOVES

You get all the basic moves. You get ***bound in blood***, ***contacts***, and then choose 2 sawbones moves.

When you get the chance, look up ***act fast***, ***analyze something***, and ***hold firm***.

GEAR

You get medical wear suited to your look, a medpack, a scalpel (2-harm intimate), and one trustworthy weapon.

Trusty weapons:

- handgun, 2-harm close loud
- bonesaw, 3-harm hand messy
- silenced pistol, 2-harm close
- stunner, s-harm close no-air
- syringe, s-harm intimate

You also get goods and sticks worth 4-credit together (your call on how it's split, but it should be mostly goods).

DEDICATED ROOM

The ship gets a small infirmary (1-size). You decide who belongs in it, and when.

CAPTAINCY

If you are chosen to be the ship's Captain, you immediately take +1 to any stat of your choice, to a maximum of +3. You immediately get all the Captain moves, plus ***guardian angel***. You decide which jobs the ship takes, how the pay gets divided, and have command of the crew.

Everyone immediately heats their chain with you.

- ❑ ***Guardian angel.*** At the start of a job, roll+brain: on a 7-9, hold 2; on a 10+, hold 2 and take +1 ongoing when you treat someone at 3-harm or more. On a miss, hold 1 anyway. During the job, when someone takes 5-harm and would die but instead chooses to live, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, to revive them to 4-harm instead, with no further consequences.

SAWBONES MOVES

BRAIN

- ❑ **Bound in blood.** Whenever you heal a crewmember for any amount of harm, they heat their chain with you. If they were unconscious or worse, they also loosen their chain with you.

FACE

- ❑ **Non-combatant.** When you're in middle of a scrap and are busy healing people instead of fighting, you get +1 armor.

SPINE

- ❑ **"Natural" remedies.** When you **scrape a hulk** successfully, the stuff you find can be 2-stock of medical supplies for the infirmary instead of whatever else it was going to be.

GUT

- ❑ **Red to red, white to white.** When someone is hurt and you try to patch them up as best you can without any gear, roll+brain. On a 10+, they immediately heal 1 harm and take +1 forward. On a 7-9, they heal 1 harm, but something of yours or theirs (your call) breaks, and must be repaired. On a miss, they immediately suffer 1 harm and take -1 forward.

JUNK

- ❑ **Practical surgery.** When you **get in a fight** with a hand- or intimate-ranged weapon, roll+brain instead of +spine.

- ❑ **Life debt.** When you save an NPC on the verge of death, you get +1 hold for **contacts**.

- ❑ **Unflinching eye.** When someone is under your care, you can **analyze something** with your patient as the thing in question.

- ❑ **Insurance policy.** At the beginning of a job, roll+spine. On a 10+, hold 3; on a 7-9, hold 2; on a miss, hold 1 anyway. When someone is under your care, spend 1 hold to plant an insurance policy on them. At any time, you can activate the insurance policy to instantly deal 3-harm (ap). At your option, your patient knows it's there before it goes off.

CONTACTS

At the start of a job, hold 1. At any time throughout the job, when you need someone with specific skills or connections, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, and there'll be somebody who fits the bill right there, or at least nearby: roll+brain. On a 10+, they're friendly and will gladly help for a good price. On a 7-9, they're around, yeah, but they'll bring trouble, too. On a miss, they'll help you, but there'll be hell to pay afterwards.

Your contacts might be people like:

- *Shark, a pirate captain*
- *Cleo, a black market drug runner*
- *Gripper, a used-arms dealer*
- *Jepson, an Authority quartermaster*
- *Tyrus, a librarian and researcher*
- *Stax, a smuggler of VIPs*

EXPERIENCE

□□□□□□

when you roll a miss, mark XP

At the end of a job, mark XP for each of these that you did; if you did them more than once, mark XP twice.

- *you addressed a challenge with patience, care, or knowledge*
- *you were influenced by your hometown or history*
- *one of your chains went from slack to choking, or choking to slack*
- *you made a room's personality felt*
- *you made a decision for the whole crew, with or without their input*

OTHER MOVES

NAME:

HOMETOWN:

HISTORY:

LOOK:

CHAINS

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

HARM

☐ 1-harm: shaken, scraped, or bruised

☐ 2-harm: cracked, slashed, or burned

☐ 3-harm: bloodied, scorched, or shattered

☐ 4-harm: unconscious or out of action

☐ 5-harm: dead

IMPROVEMENT

after marking 6 XP, reset and improve

☐ get +1 brain (max+3)

☐ get +1 brain (max+3)

☐ get +1 gut (max+2)

☐ get +1 spine (max+2)

☐☐☐ get another sawbones move

☐☐☐ get a move from another playbook

after improving 8 times, you can choose from this list as well:

☐ get +1 to any stat (max+3)

☐ change to a new playbook

☐ make a piece of gear unbreakable

☐ create a second character

☐ get a second ship chassis

☐ retire to safety and wealth

NOTES & GEAR



THE SMOKER

The big guns never tire, and so neither must their handler. The smoker is just like their weapons: tough, fierce, and relentless.

The smoker can wield the heaviest of guns, hold strong alongside their crew, and significantly alter their fellow crewmembers' weapons.

If you want to use the biggest guns and know every inch of them, play a smoker.

MAKING A SMOKER

To make a smoker, choose a name, stat array, look, hometown, history, moves, and gear.

NAME

Brixton, Kilgore, Colton, Sarge, Major, Whiskey, Lang, Quarren, Combs, Roscoe, Flax, Colonel, Sigma, Winslow, or Caine

A military name, a title-as-name, a rough name, an honorable name

STATS

The Big Boomer:

[Brain -1, Face -1, Spine +2, Gut +0, Junk +1]

The Artillerist:

[Brain +0, Face -1, Spine +1, Gut +1, Junk +1]

The Tinkerer:

[Brain +1, Face -2, Spine +1, Gut -1, Junk +2]

The Lieutenant:

[Brain +0, Face +1, Spine +1, Gut -1, Junk +1]

LOOK

Scrappy gear, mechanic's gear, Authority gear, home-made gear, looted gear, or ancient gear

Grim face, stormy face, marred face, unkempt face, strong face, lined face, scabbed-over face, or rough-hewn face

Wild eyes, fearsome eyes, mad eyes, chilled eyes, hateful eyes, cocky eyes, stern eyes, twinkling eyes, or watery eyes

Old body, disfigured body, muscular body, sweaty body, lanky body, pudgy body, scarred body, or voluminous body

HOMETOWN

Mercury, Venus, the Core, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto

Luna, Deimos, Phobos, Io, Ganymede, Europa, Callisto, Enceladus, Titan, Miranda, Titania, Umbriel, Oberon, Ariel, Triton, or Charon

The Belt, a station, or a ship

HISTORY

Academia, Authority, colonies, drifting, labor, mercenary, merchant, piracy, underworld, or upper-crust

MOVES

You get all the basic moves. You get **contacts**, then choose 2 smoker moves.

When you get the chance, look up **get in a fight, repair something**, and **make a patch**.

GEAR

You get gear worth 1-armor suited to your look, a boarding weapon, and your gunner's kit.

Boarding weapon:

- handgun, 2-harm close
- sawn-off, 3-harm close messy reload
- boarding axe, 3-harm hand messy
- smg, 2-harm close autofire loud

You also get sticks worth 1-credit, and scrap worth 2-credit.

DEDICATED ROOM

The ship gets a small (size+1) set of guns, fully armed.

CAPTAINCY

If you are chosen to be the ship's Captain, you immediately take +1 to any stat of your choice, to a maximum of +3. You immediately get all the Captain moves, plus **spotter's call**. You decide which jobs the ship takes, how the pay gets divided, and have command of the crew.

Everyone immediately heats their chain with you.

❑ **Spotter's call.** When anyone other than you mans the ship's guns and you spot them, roll+spine. On a 10+, everyone manning a gun other than you deals +1 harm and takes +1 ongoing until the fighting's done. On a 7-9, they all take one or the other, not both. On a miss, they all take -1 ongoing.

SMOKER MOVES

BRAIN

- ❑ **Rip & tear.** You inflict +1 harm to people and ships alike.
- ❑ **Artificer.** When you use your gunner's kit to improve a gun, when you would normally add or remove one tag of your choice, add or remove two instead.

FACE

- ❑ **Remote autotargetting.** You can fire any of the ship's guns from anywhere on or around the ship.
- ❑ **Overcharge.** When you spend time tinkering and getting to know a gun—any gun, ship's or otherwise—roll+junk. On a 10+, hold 2. On a 7-9, hold 1. Anyone using that gun can spend your hold, 1 for 1, to deal +2 harm. On a miss, hold 1 anyway, but the gun immediately breaks, and must be repaired. While a gun's overcharged, you can't overcharge it again.

SPINE

- ❑ **Tune up.** When you repair or improve a weapon that belongs to somebody else, loosen your chain, or both of you heat your chain (your call).
- ❑ **Knuckle down.** When someone near you needs to **hold firm** or **act fast** and you bellow at them to win and not fail, they count as having rolled a 10+, but tighten your chain afterwards.

GUT

- ❑ **Full-body harness.** You can detach a ship's gun (heavy or light, either) from the ship, and then carry it around and use it just like a regular gun.

JUNK

- ❑ **Failsafe triggers.** When someone's using a gun that you worked on at any point and you don't want them to be using it, that gun immediately breaks; alternatively, you can cause any gun you've worked on to instantly fire at any time, but then that gun breaks and must be repaired.
- ❑ **No bullshit.** When you **threaten** or **hold firm** against another crew member, you can roll+heat instead of +face or +spine.

CONTACTS

At the start of a job, hold 1. At any time throughout the job, when you need someone with specific skills or connections, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, and there'll be somebody who fits the bill right there, or at least nearby: roll+brain. On a 10+, they're friendly and will gladly help for a good price. On a 7-9, they're around, yeah, but they'll bring trouble, too. On a miss, they'll help you, but there'll be hell to pay afterwards.

Your contacts might be people like:

- *Skye, a ship's engineer-for-hire*
- *Fisk, a long-haul merchant*
- *Crank, a scrapyard trader*
- *Skov, a black market arms dealer*
- *Jax, an Authority weapons designer*
- *Leto, a bounty hunter*

EXPERIENCE

□□□□□□

when you roll a miss, mark XP

At the end of a job, mark XP for each of these that you did; if you did them more than once, mark XP twice.

- *you addressed a challenge with violence, threats, or strategy*
- *you were influenced by your hometown or history*
- *one of your chains went from slack to choking, or choking to slack*
- *you made a room's personality felt*
- *you made a decision for the whole crew, with or without their input*

OTHER MOVES

NAME:

HOMETOWN:

HISTORY:

LOOK:

CHAINS



NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING



NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING



NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING



NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

HARM

- ☐ **1-harm:** shaken, scraped, or bruised
- ☐ **2-harm:** cracked, slashed, or burned
- ☐ **3-harm:** bloodied, scorched, or shattered
- ☐ **4-harm:** unconscious or out of action
- ☐ **5-harm:** dead

IMPROVEMENT

after marking 6 XP, reset and improve

- ☐ ☐ get +1 spine (max+3)
- ☐ ☐ get +1 junk (max+3)
- ☐ ☐ ☐ get another smoker move
- ☐ ☐ ☐ get a move from another playbook

after improving 8 times, you can choose from this list as well:

- ☐ get +1 to any stat (max+3)
- ☐ change to a new playbook
- ☐ make a piece of gear unbreakable
- ☐ create a second character
- ☐ get a second ship chassis
- ☐ retire to safety and wealth

SMOKER'S KIT

You've got a kit, like a big backpack's worth, with all kinds of useful old bits and bobs for guns: sights, scopes, stocks, locks, barrels, coils, batteries, bullets, casings, gunpowder, wiring, lasers, plating, and fuel, plus a few handy tools and a bunch of other crap. You can use this to alter a gun (any gun, ship's- or person's-), to add useful stuff or fix its flaws.

When you **improve a gun by removing or adding tags**, spend 1-credit in scrap, then roll+junk. On a 10+, add or remove one tag of your choice. On a 7-9, if you remove a tag, the MC gets to remove one tag as well; if you want to add a tag, the MC gets to add one, too. On a miss, the MC gets to take away or add a tag of their choice.

some good tags:

- +1 harm
- *ap*
- *close/far*
- *far/extreme*
- *autofire*
- *no-air*

some bad tags:

- -1 harm
- *loud*
- *messy*
- *reload*
- *refill*
- *slow*

OTHER GEAR

THE SMOKER



THE TECH

Always the smartest one on the ship, the tech is the master of every part of the ship nobody else has any idea how to run: namely, all of its systems.

The tech can hack into other ships, run scans for information, work through complicated logic, and knows more than anybody else on the ship, Captain included.

If you want vast sums of knowledge and the skills to use it, play a tech.

MAKING A TECH

To make a tech, choose a name, stat array, look, hometown, history, moves, and gear.

NAME

Tinfoil, Ops, Billings, Theta, Locksley, White-Coat, Epsilon, Whateley, Keynote, Sierra, Specs, Omicron, Taggart, or Clips

A geeky name, a professional name, a slightly cruel nickname, a purpose-based name

STATS

The Analyst:

[Brain +2, Face -1, Spine -1, Gut +1, Junk +0]

The Guru:

[Brain +1, Face +1, Spine +0, Gut +1, Junk -1]

The Ship's Bosun:

[Brain +1, Face -1, Spine +1, Gut +0, Junk +1]

The PhD:

[Brain +2, Face +0, Spine -2, Gut +0, Junk +1]

LOOK

Laboratory coat, hazmat suit, home-made gear, scavenged coat, Authority gear, or ancient suit

Lined face, shiny face, sharp face, worried face, round face, puffy face, red face, narrow face, or sallow face

Wide eyes, glassy eyes, off-color eyes, puffy eyes, searching eyes, rheumy eyes, winking eyes, or beaming eyes

Chubby body, gaunt body, babyish body, crooked body, flat body, mediocre body, burned body, wiry body, or voluminous body

Wild hair, long hair, close-cropped hair, tied-back hair, balding hair, frizzy hair, dyed hair, curling hair, or none

HOMETOWN

Mercury, Venus, the Core, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto

Luna, Deimos, Phobos, Io, Ganymede, Europa, Callisto, Enceladus, Titan, Miranda, Titania, Umbriel, Oberon, Ariel, Triton, or Charon

The Belt, a station, or a ship

HISTORY

Academia, Authority, colonies, drifting, labor, mercenary, merchant, piracy, underworld, or upper-crust

MOVES

You get all the basic moves. You get **contacts**, then choose 3 tech moves.

When you get the chance, look up **analyze something** and **get a read**.

GEAR

You get wear suited to your look, an improvised weapon, and sticks worth 3-credit.

Improvised weapon:

- manual analysis probe, s-harm hand messy
- battery-surge clips, 3-harm intimate reload
- contiguous cryogenic applicator, 2-harm close refill
- proximal incendiary formative, 3-harm close area slow refill hot
- electromagnetic displacer, e-harm intimate

DEDICATED ROOM

The ship gets +2 hull.

Then, the systems get +1 size (max+3).

CAPTAINCY

If you are chosen to be the ship's Captain, you immediately take +1 to any stat of your choice, to a maximum of +3. You immediately get all the Captain moves, plus **hard return**. You decide which jobs the ship takes, how the pay gets divided, and have command of the crew.

Everyone immediately heats their chain with you.

- ❑ **Hard return.** At the beginning of a job, hold 1 for each of your crew, including yourself. At any point, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, to instantly return a crew member to the ship, regardless of where they are. If the crew member is unwilling, tighten your chain after they return. If you tag someone, you can use this move on them, too.

BRAIN

FACE

SPINE

GUT

JUNK

TECH MOVES

- ❑ **Too many books.** You get +1 brain (max+3).
- ❑ **Sharp eyes, sharper wit.** When you *analyze something* or *get a read*, you always get one additional hold.
- ❑ **Forced seclusion protocols.** When you're in the systems room, you can *lock down a room* on another ship within far range exactly as if it was your own.
- ❑ **Logical outcomes.** When you *threaten someone*, roll+brain instead of +face. If you're with the Captain when they *get a job*, they take +1 forward; if you're the captain, you take +1 forward.
- ❑ **Full ship scan.** When you use the systems to scan another ship, roll+brain, and then ask questions from the list below, to which the MC will answer honestly. On a 10+, ask 3; on a 7-9, ask 1:
 - *how many people are on board?*
 - *how much weaponry does the ship and crew have?*
 - *who does this ship work for?*
 - *what rooms does this ship have?*
- ❑ **Integral defenses.** When someone is in the systems room and you don't want them to be, take +1 ongoing to any rolls against them.
- ❑ **Discrete compu-functions.** You can make systems moves from anywhere on the ship, along with any moves that require you to be at the systems.
- ❑ **Old world knowledge.** When a crewmember comes to you for advice, tell them what you honestly think the best course of action is. If they do it, they take +1 ongoing, and you loosen your chain. If the plan works, you both heat your chain; if it doesn't, you both cool your chain.
- ❑ **Trace connections.** When you *get a read* on another crewmember or *analyze something* belonging to another crewmember, you can roll+heat instead of +gut or +brain.

CONTACTS

At the start of a job, hold 1. At any time throughout the job, when you need someone with specific skills or connections, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, and there'll be somebody who fits the bill right there, or at least nearby: roll+brain. On a 10+, they're friendly and will gladly help for a good price. On a 7-9, they're around, yeah, but they'll bring trouble, too. On a miss, they'll help you, but there'll be hell to pay afterwards.

Your contacts might be people like:

- *Zipp, a curio dealer*
- *Weylon, a station master*
- *Quigley, a computer hacker*
- *Byron, an Authority technician*
- *Tau, a travelling chemist*
- *Klaxon, a ship scavenger*

EXPERIENCE

□□□□□□

when you roll a miss, mark XP

At the end of a job, mark XP for each of these that you did; if you did them more than once, mark XP twice.

- *you addressed a challenge with reason, knowledge, or planning*
- *you were influenced by your hometown or history*
- *one of your chains went from slack to choking, or choking to slack*
- *you made a room's personality felt*
- *you made a decision for the whole crew, with or without their input*

OTHER MOVES

NAME:

HOMETOWN:

HISTORY:

LOOK:

CHAINS

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

+3

+0

+2

+1

NAME

SLACK - TAUT - CHOKING

HARM

☐ 1-harm: shaken, scraped, or bruised

☐ 2-harm: cracked, slashed, or burned

☐ 3-harm: bloodied, scorched, or shattered

☐ 4-harm: unconscious or out of action

☐ 5-harm: dead

IMPROVEMENT

after marking 6 XP, reset and improve

☐ get +1 brain (max+3)

☐ get +1 gut (max+2)

☐ get +1 junk (max+2)

☐ get +1 face (max+2)

☐☐☐ get another tech move

☐☐☐ get a move from another playbook

after improving 8 times, you can choose from this list as well:

☐ get +1 to any stat (max+3)

☐ change to a new playbook

☐ make a piece of gear unbreakable

☐ create a second character

☐ get a second ship chassis

☐ retire to safety and wealth

NOTES & GEAR

NAME:

To make a ship, choose the rooms your ship has, and then choose the ship's looks.

ROOMS

By default, the ship has a tiny (size+0) engine, a tiny (size+0) helm, a tiny (size+0) set of systems, and 0-armor hull. It's got enough scattered nooks for the crew to sleep and enough varied hideaways for fuel and supplies, but not much else.

To start, **choose 4:**

- ☐ the engine gets +1 size (max+2)
- ☐ the helm gets +1 size (max+2)
- ☐ the systems get +1 size (max+2)
- ☐ the hull gets +2 armor (max+6)
 - ☐ the ship gets a tiny (size+0) cargo hold
- ☐ the cargo hold gets +1 size (max+3)
 - ☐ the ship gets a tiny (size+0) set of bunks
- ☐ the bunks get +1 size (max+3)
 - ☐ the ship gets a tiny (size+0) armory
- ☐ the armory gets +1 size (max+3)

Then, **choose 2:**

- ☐ the ship gets a tiny (size+0) set of guns
- ☐ the ship gets a tiny (size+0) infirmary
- ☐ the infirmary gets +1 size (max+3)
 - ☐ the ship gets a tiny (size+0) shuttle
- ☐ the shuttle gets +1 size (max+3)
 - ☐ the ship gets a tiny (size+0) boarding dock
- ☐ the boarding dock gets +1 size (max+3)
 - ☐ the ship gets tiny (size+0) bolt-holes
- ☐ the bolt-holes get +1 size (max+3)

Finally, **choose 1:**

- ☐ the guns get +1 size (max+3)
 - ☐ the hull gets +3 armor (max+9)
- ☐ the engine gets +1 size (max+3)
- ☐ the helm gets +1 size (max+3)
- ☐ the systems get +1 size (max+3)

—IMPROVEMENT—

When you are in a hub or station of sufficient size, the crew can choose to purchase upgrades for your ship, chosen from the categories above.

- 1st category: 5 credits per option marked
- 2nd category: 10 credits per option marked
- 3rd category: 15 credits per option marked

LOOK

Choose 1-3 options for each.

HULL

Geometric, blocky, patchwork, (ex-)Authority, painted, scarred, scrapyard, ancient, greebled, industrial, layered, spiked, or corded

ENGINE

Roaring, fiery, humming, smoky, spinning, grinding, crackling, rumbling, hissing, pungent, or glowing

INTERIORS

Scrappy, cramped, greasy, disjointed, riveted, damp, kitschy, mass-produced, chilly, or humid

LIGHTING

Soft, flickering, hot, sparking, bare, colored, string, blinking, buzzing, tinny, gaseous, floor, or neon

QUIRKS

Grimy portholes, jutting pipes, weld lines, constant creaking, rattling walls, vermin infestation, stained floors, steaming vents, incessant warnings, leaky valves, lumpy bunks, no hot water, or foul odor

PERKS

Cozy bunks, padded furniture, quiet nooks, ship's cat, handmade decorations, ancient graffiti, real food, custom crew jackets, vintage music, movie nights, board games, or old library books

KNICK-KNACKS

Fuzzy dice, nuts & bolts, faded photos, a hula girl, empty bottles, air freshener, bumper stickers, a travel brochure, paper starmaps, dead batteries, an old ashtray, unfinished snacks, or audio tapes

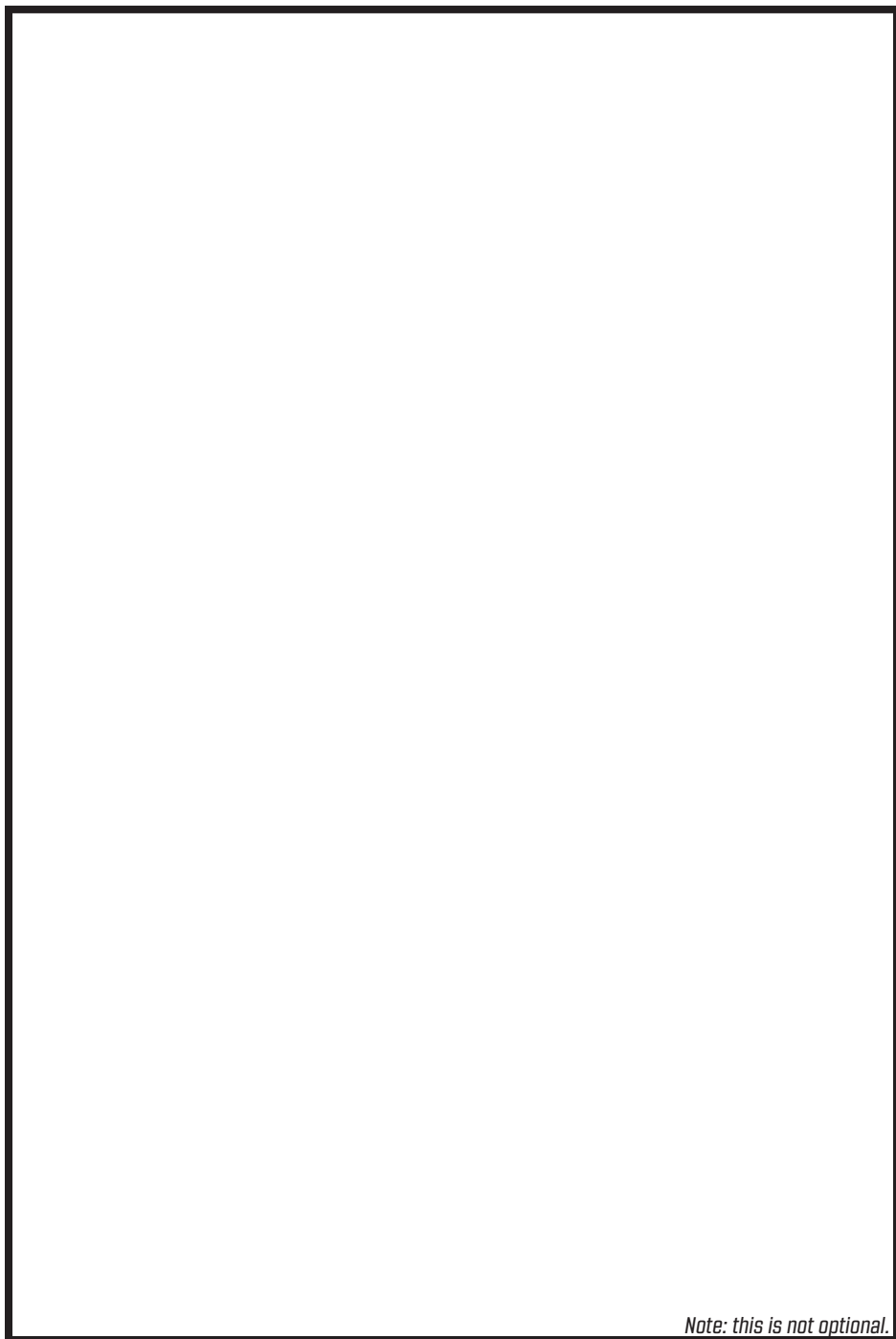
—DRAWING—

First, every crewmember draws their dedicated room, wherever and however they want.

Change the drawing of the ship when:

- A new room is added to the ship
- A room increases in size
- A room is destroyed
- A room is repaired after being destroyed
- The ship's appearance changes significantly

DRAW YOUR SHIP

A large, empty rectangular box with a thick black border, intended for a drawing of a ship.

Note: this is not optional.

ENGINE

PERSONALITY:

Size	Harm
□ □ □ □	⊕
+0 +1 +2 +3	

When you **outrun or overtake something**, roll+size. On a 10+, you outrun them or overtake them just fine. On a 7-9, you still do so, but choose one of the following:

- split 3-harm (ap) between you and the engine, however you choose
- you must **hold firm** or miss the roll entirely

On a miss, you don't outrun or overtake them; prepare for the worst.

HELM

PERSONALITY:

Size	Harm
□ □ □ □	⊕
+0 +1 +2 +3	

When you **pull a stunt** to get the ship to fly better than it has any right to, roll+size. On a 10+, you do it, just fine.

On a 7-9, you still do it, but choose one of the following:

- split 3-harm (ap) between you and the helm, however you want
- you must **hold firm**, or else miss the roll entirely

On a miss, you fail your stunt: prepare for the worst.

SYSTEMS

PERSONALITY:

Size	Harm
□ □ □ □	⊕
+0 +1 +2 +3	

When you **lock down a room** on the ship, roll+size. On a 7-9, choose 1 of the following to explicitly disallow the flow of into the room; on a 10+, choose 2:

- people and objects
- small arms fire
- air

On a miss, the MC chooses two against you in a room of their choosing.

CARGO HOLD

PERSONALITY:

Size	Harm
□ □ □ □	⊕
+0 +1 +2 +3	

When you **get a job** aiming to haul cargo, legal or otherwise, you can roll+size instead of +face. The larger the cargo hold, the more profitable the haul.

BUNKS

PERSONALITY:

Size	Harm
□ □ □ □	⊕
+0 +1 +2 +3	

When you **get a job** looking to ferry passengers, legal or otherwise, you can roll+size instead of +face. The larger the bunks, the more profitable the ferry.

SHUTTLE

PERSONALITY:

Size	Harm
□ □ □ □	⊕
+0 +1 +2 +3	

Shuttles can't fly spans, but they can **outrun or overtake something** and **pull a stunt** just like big ships, using the shuttle's size. Shuttles have hull equal to their size, and come with basic air and gravity.

INFIRMARY

PERSONALITY:

Size	Harm
□ □ □ □	⊕
+0 +1 +2 +3	

When you **heal someone**, roll+size. On a 10+, they heal 2-harm; on a 7-9, they heal 1-harm. On a miss, they heal nothing, and either you or they take 2-harm (ap).

FUEL: □□□□□□□□□□
SUPPLIES: □□□□□□□□□□

HULL

Hull works just like regular armor: it reduces any incoming harm by an amount equal to the hull.

This only works on attacks made from outside the ship.

Hull is always the same across the entire ship.



ARMORY

PERSONALITY:

Size	Harm
□ □ □ □	⊕
+0 +1 +2 +3	

At size+0, the armory has one set of 1-armor and three sidearms. For each additional +1 size, the armory gets three sidearms, two serious guns, a big fuck-off gun, two sets of 1-armor, and a single set of 2-armor.

When you **get a job** intending to fly escort or run a hit, you can roll+size instead of +face.

sidearms:

- pistol, 2-harm close
- magnum, 3-harm close loud
- sawn-off, 3-harm close messy reload
- lots of knives, 2-harm hand infinite
- crowbar, 2-harm hand messy
- stunner, 5-harm close reload no-air

serious guns:

- combat rifle, 3-harm close/far auto-fire
- shotgun, 3-harm close messy
- boarding axe, 3-harm close messy
- crossbow, 2-harm close no-air

big fuck-off guns:

- sniper's rifle, 4-harm far loud
- grenade launcher, 4-harm far area messy no-air
- flamethrower, 4-harm close area messy no-air refill
- lmg, 5-harm close/far autofire loud

GUNS

PERSONALITY:

Size	Harm
□ □ □ □	⊕
+0 +1 +2 +3	

At size+0, the turret has one light gun on it. For each additional +1 size, the turret has one additional light gun and one additional heavy gun on it.

When you man a ship's gun, you can **get in a fight** using that gun.

When you **get a job** wanting to fly escort or run a hit, you can roll+size instead of +face.

light guns:

- lmg, 5-harm close/far autofire
- grenade launcher, 4-harm far area reload
- rpg, 6-harm extreme reload
- missile launcher, 7-harm extreme reload

heavy guns:

- .70 caliber mg, 6-harm close/far hellfire
- torpedo launcher, 9-harm far/extreme reload
- plasma cannon, 7-harm far/extreme hellfire messy hot
- coilgun, 7-harm far/extreme
- emp, e-harm far/extreme

BOLT-HOLES

PERSONALITY:

Size	Harm
□ □ □ □	⊕
+0 +1 +2 +3	

When you hide something (or someone) for later, roll+size. On a 10+, you hide it, it's good, nobody will find it unless you want them to. On a 7-9, you hide it, but one person of your choosing and one of the MC's choosing knows it's hidden there. On a miss, everyone knows it's there, and someone wants it.

When you **get a job** attempting to run a fetch, you can roll+size instead of +face.

BOARDING DOCK

PERSONALITY:

Size	Harm
□ □ □ □	⊕
+0 +1 +2 +3	

At size+0, the ship's hulls must be touching to board; at size+1, you can board at close range; at size+2, you can board at far range. At size+3, you can board at extreme range.

When you **board a ship**, pick a room and roll+size. On a 10+, your dock makes it to that room and makes an entrance, no worries. On a 7-9, either it doesn't go to the room you want, or you stall and the other ship's crew can prepare for you. On a miss, prepare for the worst.

BASIC MOVES

ANALYZE SOMETHING

When you **analyze something for information**, roll+brain. On a 10+, hold 3; on a 7-9, hold 2. Now or later, spend your hold to ask questions and get answers; when you act on an answer, take +1 forward. If you want, you can give that +1 forward to a crewmember instead.

- What's something unusual or abnormal?
- What's a hidden feature?
- How much is it worth to the right person?
- Who touched or operated it most recently?
- Where did it come from, who made it originally?

On a miss, hold 1 anyway, but it breaks, and must be repaired.

Analyzing something takes all kinds of forms: it could be just eyeballing it, could be measuring it with various devices, could be taking it apart and putting it back together again, whatever. The point is, spend a chunk of time examining an object in detail to learn more about it. Players can analyze the same thing more than once, if they want more info—just be sure to remind the players of the risks if they miss the roll.

Generally speaking, you can analyze just about anything, as long as you can hold or touch it and it isn't a person. That means you can analyze a ship when it's docked, but not when it's flying in space a kilometer away.

This move has dual uses: for one thing, it's just a good way to get information. There will be times when you'll recover a piece of gear or scrap and not know what it is, and this move will help. The other neat trick of this move is that it's a great way for less up-front playbooks—like the Tech and the Sawbones—to beef up their rolls in non-specialist areas, and to help their teammates out in a pinch. If a player wants to stack their +1 forwards into a +2 or +3 forward, that's fine.

If players want to fiddle with the questions a bit, that's probably fine.

EXAMPLE:

Red the junker has just returned from picking over a stray hulk the ship's come across. She comes back with a long metal cylinder; on the top, there's a small numerical keypad and a lock, and on the bottom, there's a couple of electrical jacks. There's a red blinking light next to the keypad, and "C68.4" is stenciled on the side.

"What is this thing?" Red's player asks. "It's clearly valuable, but I've got no idea what it's for."

I turn to her. "Do you want to analyze something?"

"Sure," she says, and she picks up the dice. She rolls a 6 and a 3, and has +1 brain, for a total of 10.

"Great!" she says, "OK, first question: what's this thing used for?"

"This is a multi-cell giga-battery," I reply, "You plug it into something that needs power—like a gun, say, or an engine—and it gives it a burst."

Red's player nods, thinking to herself. "Neat. Next question: who made this?"

I think for a second. "Corporate make. Probably from one of the factories on Mars. They made a bunch of these a while ago, but not many recently."

Red grins. "OK, final question: how much is this worth to the right person?"

"To a Corporate type that needs a replacement, easily three or four credits. But, to some criminal folks, at this quality, it might be worth more."

With this information in hand, Red returns to her crew, and conveys what she's figured out. A little while later, the crew's greaser, Clams, is trying to repair their buzz saw; Red offers the battery as a potential power source, and decides to give Clams +1 forward on the roll to repair something. Clams has +2 brain, rolls a 4 and a 3, for a total of 9—but, because he has +1 forward from Red's analysis, brings the total up to 10.

REPAIR SOMETHING

*When you **repair something with your own two hands**, roll+brain. On a 10+, you spend a while and get it fixed. On a 7-9, you'll get it working, but the MC imposes one of the following:*

- *It'll hold for now, but will break again soon*
- *It'll take resources you don't want to spend*

On a miss, you break it even worse than it already was, and the MC will impose one of the above at minimum on top of whatever you get if you try to repair it again.

Stuff breaks all the time. There's no way around it. Usually, though, when something breaks, it's then worth repairing—and that's where this move comes in. The phrase “it breaks, and must be repaired” pops up all over the place in consequences for stuff, and this is the response.

One important technical rules-y bit here is that you very much cannot repair rooms or people with this move. Greasers can repair rooms, but that's their special thing; medpacks and sawbones can heal people, but that's also their special thing. This is just for stuff. Items. Gear. Cargo. The kind of things that can be picked up and moved around with.

It's also important to note that this move is slow. Making patches is fast, basically instantaneous, but making repairs takes a while. Whether that's minutes or hours or days is up to you, but the point is that a player can't go and repair their gun in the middle of a fight. (Or, I mean, they can, but that'll take a while and be a big risk.)

The two 7-9 consequences are worth elaborating a bit: the first means that yeah, you repair it for now, but it will break later. When it breaks is up to you, but I find it works best when you compound it with something else. Maybe they repair a gun, get into a fight, miss, and then in addition to taking fire, their gun breaks. Remember, turn up the heat.

Taking resources can come from two basic places: existing valuables they have on hand, like some cargo or scrap—something quantitative—or else from another intact piece of gear, like a weapon or tool—something qualitative. The first is just resource drain, the second actively requires them to destroy something else to repair this thing.

EXAMPLE:

Hambone, a bruiser, has just held one of the ship's door's shut to stop a pirate boarding, and in the process his armor, a big metal flak jacket with rivets and metal sewn in, tore open. Now that the pirates are dealt with, Hambone's player wants to fix his jacket.

"I'm going to spend a few hours to fix my armored jacket," his player says.

"OK," I say, "you're repairing something."

Hambone's player rolls, and gets a 5 and a 2. Hambone has a flat +0 brain, so that's an even 7. "Bummer," he says.

"Hmm," I say, thinking for a moment, "OK, Hambone, you can fix your jacket, but if want to get it back to where it was, it's going to take the metal plating from your pullover space suit."

Hambone's player rubs his chin. "And it'll be permanently useless then?"

"Yep!" I say, brightly.

"Fine," he says, and erases the suit from his sheet, but marks that his armor is now fixed.

FAST-TALK

*When you **fast-talk**—**bluff, swindle, coerce, mislead, cajole, stall, or straight-up lie to someone**—roll+face. When it's an NPC, on a 10+, they buy it, whatever it is you're selling them on. On a 7-9, they'll buy it, but the MC adds one more thing first:*

- *They need some concrete proof of what you're saying*
- *They want something extra on top of what you've already got*
- *They're uncertain, not ready to go one way or the other*

When it's a crewmember, on a 7-9, choose 1; on a 10+, choose both:

- *If they do what you want, they mark experience*
- *If they don't do what you want, they tighten your chain*

On a miss, either way, they see through your shit, and aren't happy.

This is the main social move. If a player wants to convince someone to do something, or needs a favor, or just wants to get their way, this is the move.

For NPCs, this move works as exactly as described. On a 7-9, you should choose the option that fits best with the NPC that the player is trying to convince. It's also important to note that if you opt for the third option, that can't just mean that the player needs to **fast-talk** again—each of those options means that something else, something that's not just another face roll, is required. What that requirement is varies, so let the PCs figure it out.

For PCs fast-talking other PCs, this is a little more complicated. Basically, the PC trying to fast-talk another PC has two potential incentives, a carrot and a stick: they can either offer them inspiration (the carrot), or they can tighten their chain (the stick). On a 7-9, they get to apply one or the other; on a 10+, they get both. The targeted PC never must agree with the PC making the roll, but they're definitely incentivized to do so.

The stick there, the tightening of the chain, is also a little tricky. Since chains are shared, a chain tightening is bad for both parties. This plays into the threat a little more deeply: if the target refuses to go along with the PC rolling, then on some level, it's their fault when the relationship sours. It's a manipulation tactic, but one that can be highly effective.

EXAMPLE:

Jacobi, an envoy, is talking to Tonkers, the ship's tech; they've just found a new handgun, Authority make, shiny and valuable.

*"Tonkers," Jacobi's player says in Jacobi's elegant voice, "why don't you let me hang on to that handgun? You're so rarely in a fight as-is." Jacobi's player then looks to me. "I want to **fast-talk** Tonkers into letting me keep it."*

"Sure," I say, "roll the dice." Jacobi's player rolls, and gets a 4 and a 5, which, when added with Jacobi's +2 face, comes out to an 11. "Nice!" Jacobi's player exclaims. "If you don't let me keep it, Tonkers is out a free experience, and our chain will tighten."

Tonkers' player thinks to herself. She turns to me: "My and Jacobi's chain is slack right now. What does taut mean, again?"

*"Nothing immediately, it doesn't change the way helping works or anything," I explain, "but it does mean that you're one step closer to choking. So if anything else gets worse between you two, it'll come to **the choke**."*

Tonkers' player mulls this over. "Fine," she eventually accedes, "Jacobi, you get the handgun." She marks experience, and Jacobi gets the gun.

*Later, Jacobi is talking to an Authority officer, trying to wriggle out of an inspection. "Oh, please, Officer," Jacobi croons, "we just made it out of the Belt, and we're exhausted. Can't we do this another time?" Jacobi's player looks at me: "I'm **fast-talking** him."*

"Roll," I say. Jacobi gets a 9 total.

"OK, the officer will do it, but he wants a bribe first. Say, 2-credit. He looks at you, and holds out a gloved-and-armored hand." I mime this.

"Ugh," Jacobi's player says. "Fine. 2-credit down." He marks the loss of credit on his sheet.

THREATEN SOMEONE

*When you **threaten someone to get them to do what you want**, roll+ face. On a 10+, they either have to do what you want, or suck up whatever you're threatening them with. On a 7-9, the target chooses one:*

- *They'll do what you want, but with some conditions*
- *They'll do what you want, but fight and kick and scream*
- *They run and protect themselves from your threat*

On a miss, they fight back, and will probably have the upper hand. If you threaten a fellow crewmember, they can choose to tighten your shared chain, regardless of outcome.

Threats are for when things are going south, but haven't gone all the way to shit quite yet. When fast-talking fails but the players aren't quite sure if they're willing to go all-in on a fight, this is the move for them.

The important mechanical maneuvering here is that the target—the person being threatened—still gets to decide whether or not they go along with the character making the move. If they don't, they'll get hurt, but if they think they can tough it, the target's free to do whatever they want after the blow.

PCs don't necessarily need to threaten someone with violence. That's the most common option for sure, but there are other options: being cut off from resources or pay is an option, as is exclusion from a social or physical space, or whatever else they come up with. As long as there's a tangible consequence at the end of the threat, that's fine.

The last line, the chain-tightening, is there for two related reasons: the first is to add some social weight to the whole thing, so that bruisers and smokers can't just go around bullying everyone willy-nilly. I mean, they can, sure, but they'll start taking big social hits for it, and fast.

The other reason is the reverse: when a crewmember's chains are already choking them, they've got no incentive *not* to threaten people constantly.

EXAMPLE:

Roscoe, a smoker, is in an argument with Iota, a runner. Roscoe wants to keep the broken-but-valuable coilgun the crew's just recovered, but Iota thinks it's too dangerous, and they should sell it off. Things are getting very heated.

*"Fuck it," Roscoe says, and his player grabs the dice. "I point my sawn-off at Iota's face. I'm **threatening someone!**"*

"Peachy," I say wryly, "make your roll."

Roscoe gets a double 5, but has -1 face, for 9 total.

"Hmm," Iota's player says. "Fine. We can keep the gun, but I have some conditions, first." Her player smiles at Roscoe's.

Roscoe's player grins, but Roscoe himself snarls. "What conditions?"

Iota thinks for a second. "We keep it in the ship until it's 100% fixed," she says, counting on her fingers, "we don't use it unless we absolutely have to, we don't bring it anywhere closer to the Core than the Belt, and I want an upgrade on my pistol."

Roscoe thinks for a second. "I guess that'll have to do," he says.

"Iota," I ask, "do you want to tighten your chain with Roscoe?"

"Nah," she says. "We're taut already, and I think this honestly didn't change much between them. Roscoe got heated, I came out on top. I wouldn't have it any other way."

GET IN A FIGHT

*When **shit hits the fan** and you get in a fight with something:*

...if it's a person, roll+spine:

- *On a 10+, you inflict harm on them*
- *On a 7-9, you inflict harm on each other*
- *On a miss, they inflict harm on you*

...if it's a ship, choose a room to target, then roll+spine:

- *On a 10+, you inflict harm on the room*
- *On a 7-9, you inflict harm on each other, but: you get to pick the room you target or the room they target, but not both; whichever you don't choose is the MC's call*
- *On a miss, they inflict harm on a room of the MC's choice*

Enemy ships respond with the same category of gun (light or heavy) you use on them.

This is the catch-all combat move. The mechanics here are all pretty basic: on a good roll, the attacker deals damage with no repercussions; on a bad roll, they take damage with no benefits. On a 7-9, they get something in between. (Remember that net harm inflicted is equal to the weapon's harm minus the armor of the target: a shotgun (3-harm) against a target with 1-armor would deal a net 2-harm.)

The trickiest thing here is the 7-9 roll on a ship vs ship fight. The detailed breakdown is as follows: both ships fire on each other. If the players want, they get to choose the room that they target aboard the enemy ship; alternatively, they can engage more defensively and choose the room the enemies will target on their own ship. They don't get both—if they were defensive and offensive at the same time, it would've been a 10+ roll.

Whichever they don't choose, you get to decide: hit them where it hurts.

If a player is fighting a ship without their own ship (by firing a shoulder-mounted rocket or something), on a 7-9 they can choose the room to target, and the ship will just fire right back at them. Remember that hull still applies, so most small arms will do jack squat against a ship.

Most NPC ships with guns have at least one light and heavy gun. If they lack one of those for some reason, make sure the players know, and then respond with whatever you've got.

EXAMPLE:

Slapjaw, a bruiser, has just failed at negotiations with a local black market dealer. Weapons are drawn, and things are about to go down.

*"Alright," Slapjaw shouts, and she starts firing. "I'm **getting in a fight!**" she yells, and rolls her dice. She gets a 2 and 3, but has a huge +3 spine, so ends up with an 8 total.*

"OK," I say, "you deal harm to the dealer, and they deal to harm to you. You've got an lmg for 5-harm, and they've got a sawn-off for 3-harm. Your 2-armor reduces the sawn-off down to 1-harm total."

Slapjaw's player grins.

"...and your lmg riddles the dealer with holes: they keel over, dead," I finish.

—

Later, Slapjaw is manning the ship's coilgun in a battle against a pirate ship near the Belt.

"I fire at the pirates, targetting their engines!" Slapjaw's player says. She grabs the dice to roll, and gets a double 2, for a total of 7. "Ugh," she spits.

"So," I ask, "either you can target the engines but those pirates will hit you wherever they want, or you can pick where they'll hit, but I decide where your shot lands."

Slapjaw's player thinks for a second. "They're gonna hit our systems if they can, which are almost fried. Fine. I want them to hit our bunks, which are empty and not very important. Where do I hit them?"

"Cargo bay," I say. "Not very important either, honestly."

HOLD FIRM

*When you **hold firm** to withstand pressure or react without flinching, roll+spine. On a 10+, you hold, it's fine for now. On a 7-9, you hold, but the MC chooses 1 of the following:*

- *You suffer harm from the force you're withstanding*
- *Something you're using breaks, and must be repaired*
- *You face tough choice, a hard bargain, or an ugly outcome*

On a miss, you crack, and things go bad.

Most moves in *Rust Hulks* have a very set function; they have a key set of inputs and outputs, and while those can be expanded and morphed to taste, they are generally quite specific. This, predictably, leaves a certain amount of “open space” in the rules: situations that can reasonably arise in the fiction of the game, ones that require adjudication by dice, but aren't covered.

This is where holding firm comes in. It's one of the two moves in *Rust Hulks*—along with **acting fast**—that can serve as a one-size-fits-all (or, you know, two-sizes-fit-all) set of rules for most other situations and scenarios that your players can get into.

Holding firm is for situations where toughness, endurance, resilience, and grit matter. Keeping in control of a failing room, kicking in an enemy hatchway, holding cargo in place to stop it getting crushed—all are good examples of holding firm. The consequences on a miss vary a bit, but you're allowed to make just about as hard a move as you please.

Both **hold firm** and **act fast** are more reactive moves; rather than have a player say “I would like to hold firm to keep the door held shut,” it's much more likely that a player will want to hold a door shut, and then you'll say “OK, that's **holding firm**, so grab your dice.” **Holding firm** is your tool to make players go all in, to force them to commit to what they're doing. This will make sense once you've seen it in action a couple of times, trust me.

Remember that despite being a more reactive move on the part of the players, you shouldn't (often) just force them to make a roll. If they want to hold

the door shut and you tell them it'll take a roll, they're well within their rights to just let the door fly open. You should avoid ever just straight-up demanding a roll without an option for the players.

EXAMPLE:

McClellan, a jockey, has fled to her helm during a ship boarding. Authority soldiers on the far side are trying to break down the door, and McClellan's doing her best to keep it closed.

"The Authority soldiers are hitting the door—wham, wham, wham—with a slow rhythm," I explain, "You can feel it shudder with each blow."

"I slam my shoulder against the door," McClellan's player says, "just, you know, doing everything I can to keep it shut."

*"Sounds like you're **holding firm**, yeah?" I confirm.*

"Yeah, I guess I am," says McClellan's player, and she rolls. She gets a 6 and a 3, but only has +0 spine, for 9 total.

"Hmm," I say aloud, "OK, here's the deal: you can keep the door closed, but the ship's going to start to veer off-course, heading towards an asteroid. It won't hit immediately, you've got a little bit of time, but it's a collision course for sure. Or, you can leave the door and jump on the ship controls to get out of the way. But then the Authority will be inside."

McClellan's rubs at her eyes. "So either we veer towards an asteroid and the Authority's out of my helm, or we're safe from the asteroid but the Authority's inside?"

"Yep."

"I hate you," she says, with a dry chuckle, "but I keep the door closed. The Authority's worse than an asteroid any day of the week."

ACT FAST

When you **act fast to avoid danger or rush to a goal**, roll+gut. On a 10+, you pull it off just fine. On a 7-9, you make it work, but the MC imposes one of the following:

- You suffer harm in the rush to make it in time
- Something you're using breaks, and must be repaired
- You face a tough choice, a hard bargain, or an ugly outcome

On a miss, you don't make it, and things go bad.

Acting fast is the quick and nimble corollary to **holding firm**. They fit into the same general space, being used to fill in the cracks and gaps between the rest of the moves, but where **holding firm** is tough and unmoving, **acting fast** is breezy and quick.

When a character wants to do something that involves speed, agility, nimbleness, or quick reactions, **acting fast** is the move for it. Gut, the stat used for act fast, measures a character's ability to act on instinct and intuition alone, which is where **acting fast** comes in as a move. Leaping across two ships, darting out of the way of an exploding engine, dashing behind an Authority officer's back—all are things that a crewmember has to **act fast** to do successfully.

Just like **holding firm**, **acting fast** is a more reactive kind of move. Typically, you'll impose on a player that wants to do something risky or potentially dangerous, rather than have a player decide to do the move themselves. Just remember the basic mantra of moves: to do it, do it.

While I don't think it's wildly relevant most of the time, this is also the move that you use for most, like stealthy-sneaky-stabby type things. If a player wants to sneak onto an Authority base, slip past some criminal bodyguards, or filch a weapon from a merchant's stall, they're probably **acting fast**. Like I said, stealth doesn't really come up all that often, but it's the kind of thing players like to ask about, so it's good to have something prepped for them.

EXAMPLE:

Clams the greaser is in the engine room when the ship's systems are hit. Gravity and air both start to cut out, and everything starts to drift.

"Shit-shit-shit!" yells Clams. "I want to get to the systems as quick as I can," his player tells me.

*"OK. Sounds like you're trying to **act fast**?"*

Clams' player grimaces at his -1 gut. "Yeah," he says, "I guess I am." He rolls, and ends up with a 4 and a 6, for 9 total—a good roll, all things considered.

"Not too bad," he says. "What am I in for?"

"I think, in your rush to get up to the systems, you pretty quickly cycle all the air in the engine room and in the hallways."

"OK—what does that actually mean?"

"3-harm, I'd say," I tell him.

"Oof, you're killing me, man," Clams says, huffing.

"Nah," I reply, "you're not even unconscious. You're fine."

"I hate you, MC," Clams' player says.

"Love you, too," I tell him with a smile.

GET A READ

When you **get a read during a moment of tension or strain**, roll+gut. On a 10+, hold 2; on a 7-9, hold 1. Throughout this moment, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, to ask the MC the following questions, to which they answer truthfully. If you act on the MC's answers, take +1 forward.

- What's hidden, obscured, or unclear?
- How can I exploit a weakness, vulnerability, or opportunity?
- What's the largest uncounted threat, variable, danger?
- What's the best way I could _____?

On a miss, hold 1 anyway, but prepare for the worst.

Getting a read is the other basic “I need information” move that players have, along with **analyzing something**. In theory, these moves look similar: both involve a roll, getting some holds, and then spending those holds for answers and +1 forward.

The difference lies in the details: while the questions themselves are flexible, all of **analyze something's** questions are about the object in question, and lean towards theoretical. **Getting a read** has questions that are active and pressing: they're whats and wheres, not hows or whys.

On top of this, the conditions for activating are different: **getting a read** requires the character to be in a moment of tension or strain. If they're just sitting around or idly talking, they can't **get a read**. There needs to be conflict, danger, tension—situations that demand action, and fast. Analysis is slow and methodical; reading is fast and intuitive.

Finally, while both moves give +1 forward, **getting a read** is solely for the crewmember making the move. That player is the only one that gets +1 forward, they can't share it around. Consider the difference between crewmembers with high brain—techs, sawbones, and greasers—as opposed to crewmembers with high gut, like runners or jockeys. The former is interested in maintaining and supporting the ship and crew; the latter are action heroes. Which do you think is more likely to share their info?

EXAMPLE:

Tonkers, a junker, has just landed on a drifting hulk, a ways off from her ship. It's an ex-Authority ship, ripped and torn from weapon fire and damage, but some of its defensive systems might still be online. Tonkers is nervous.

*"Can I **get a read**?" her player asks.*

"Would you call this a moment of tension or strain?" I reply.

"Yeah," she says, after a second, "this hulk is sketchy as hell. There might be, like, robots or turrets or wreckers or something here."

"Sure, then," I say, "roll."

Tonkers has +1 gut, and rolls a 6 and a 4, for 11 total. "OK," she says, "first question: what's the largest uncounted danger here?"

I think for a second. "This hulk is coming apart, but some areas of the thrusters are still intact. If you spend too long here, you risk triggering those thrusters, and you'll be sent hurtling into space."

"Fantastic," she says. "Second question, since I got a 10+: what's hidden here?"

"Scanning around, you can tell by the pipework that the fuel for this particular ship is a kind of liquid helium-based fluid. Very, very valuable if you can siphon it properly."

*"OK," Tonkers' player says, "I want to **scrape a hulk**, here, trying to get at that nitrogen fuel."*

"Roll," I say, "and take +1 forward."

*Tonkers' player rolls, getting a 3 and a 4, but her +2 junk and +1 forward from **getting a read** bring her to a 10 total.*

MAKE A PATCH

*When **you've got no time and can only afford to make a patch**, roll+junk. On a 10+, the thing is back to working, and will hold for the time being. On a 7-9, it's working now, but something else will break, or it's not quite as effective as it was. On a miss, the thing is just broken to shit.*

There will be moments where something really important break at an incredibly bad time, and your players will rush to fix it. At this point, it's important to remind that **repairing something** takes time—time they often won't have. This is where **making a patch** is suddenly very important.

The most important thing about **making a patch** is time: patches are both very quick to make, sometimes taking only a few seconds, but are always temporary. At some point, every patch will break. They can patch it again and again and again, sure, but they'll have to live with knowing that they're always one bad moment away from a breakdown.

Generally speaking, you should have patches fail at bad times. Remember, one of your principles is to turn up the heat: having temporary fixes suddenly break down is a fantastic way to do that.

The second-most important thing about patches is that they work on just about everything. Gear, obviously, but also rooms, other mechanisms, maybe even people. It's flexible because it's bad; patches are temporary, but can be applied to anything.

If a player misses the roll on making a patch, break the thing even worse than it was; stack on extra problems, deal some damage to something else, or have them attract unwanted attention for it. Unlike **repairing something**, where you can go slow and take your time, failing to **make a patch** usually makes things even worse than before.

What exactly “broken to shit” means is up to you, really. Whatever you choose, be sure it's uncomfortable and nasty for the crew.

EXAMPLE:

*Locksley, a tech, is working in their systems when the pirate ship the crew is fighting strikes the engines, destroying them. The ship is left adrift, and so Locksley goes to investigate. She can't just repair it—since **repair something** doesn't apply to rooms—and she doesn't have the time anyway, so she'll have to **make a patch**.*

*“OK,” Locksley's player says, “I'm **making a patch** for the engines, something to get us moving while we fend off these pirates.”*

“Sure,” I say, “Make your roll.”

Locksley's player rolls a double 4, with Locksley's +0 junk, for an 8 total.

“Hm, alright,” I say, thinking aloud, “the engines are back online, they're working for now, but there's an issue. I'd say that, given the damage, they're at -1 forward for all rolls. Both for stunts and for spans. Seem reasonable?”

Locksley's player is frustrated, but nods anyway.

“Great!” I say.

SCRAPE A HULK

*When you **scrape a hulk for valuables**, roll+junk. On a 10+, you find useful or valuable or both. On a 7-9, you get something, but it's broken or incomplete or has strings attached. On a miss, you find nothing good, and very likely something bad.*

Out in the hulks, there are all kinds of strange things to be found, tucked away in forgotten corners and rusted-shut safes. Naturally, being able to rummage through these—to have the good sense of where to look and what to leave well alone—is a valued skill.

Any wreck counts as a hulk. A smashed fragment they stumble on, a ship they blow to pieces themselves, a ruined building they're hiding from the Authority in: all fine. Pretty much anytime they want to go hunting for valuables, let them. Part of what the junk stat determines is a crewmember's ability to find useful shit, or at least find something useful in shit.

What you give them is up to you, and up to the circumstances they find themselves in. There are a couple of moves that will let the players decide what they find, but it's usually in your hands. This is where you can flex a little: if you're feeling generous, give them exactly what they need, be that repair kits or medpacks or just high-value scrap. If you're feeling a bit less benevolent, give them something that would've been valuable a session ago instead.

If they succeed, you always have to give them something. Because of that, it's a mistake to explicitly plan what any hulk has on it beforehand; add what you need if it's called for, but otherwise let sleeping dogs lie. Sometimes, they might **analyze something** or **get a read** to determine what a hulk has ahead of time, in which you have to stich with what you told them, but otherwise, what's aon a hulk is pretty variable up to the momen ththey have it in their hands.

Generally speaking, they can't scrape the same hulk more than once, really, unless something significant changes about it.

EXAMPLE:

Clams, a greaser, is in need of medical attention. The ship's passing by a nearby hulk, so Clams decides this might be a good moment to go fishing for medicine.

*"Alright," says Clams' player, "I want to **scrape a hulk**, see if I can't drum up some medpacks."*

"Sure," I say, "you throw on a space suit and glide out to the hulk. Make your move."

Clams' player rolls a 6 and a 1, plus Clams +1 junk, for 8 total.

I decide to be generous to Clams, given how badly he was hurt due to oxygen deprivation. "As you approach, Clams, you can tell this hulk still has a mostly-intact infirmary attached."

"Nice!" says Clams.

"But," I continue, "some previous squatter has gotten to it first. The entire infirmary's been rigged with explosives: one false move, and the whole thing will detonate." Not all that generous, really.

"Fuck you, MC," Clams' player says, half-serious half-laughing, "I just don't want to die, come on!"

I shrug at him, smirking.

*"Fine," he says, "I'll try to grab the supplies anyway. I take it I'm **acting fast** yet again?"*

"Yep!" I say brightly.

CAPTAIN & PERI- PHERAL MOVES

THE ROLE OF CAPTAIN

Every crew needs a Captain.

There are many reasons why this statement is true, and honestly, many more why it probably isn't.

In *Rust Hulks*, the Captain exists for two purposes: first it's a way to have some fun, interesting powerful moves—the ones covered in this chapter—but have them be not-quite-universal for all the players. Each playbook gets their own special Captaincy move, too, so there's extra spice. It's the kind of thing that hooks players in, the desire to have this unusual, special experience in an RPG.

The Captain is also in the game because it's a good tool for examining power dynamics. Most RPGs are quite, if democratic, then at least decentralized. Players are assumed to be of roughly equal status and power, and thus decisions happen within the group as a whole.

Not so in *Rust Hulks*.

Part of what makes the juice, the drama of the game, come out is how players treat the Captain. Yes, Captains do have access to a couple more moves and have slightly better stats, but really, they can't do all that much that's special. Really, the power of the Captain is what the players make of it.

On some crews, everyone defers to the Captain for everything; in others, the Captain is expected to have to force on everyone else to be obeyed. Figuring this dynamic out is key to the interpersonal drama of the game, messy as it might be.

Every Captain gets access to all of the Captain moves, plus their playbook's special Captaincy move.

REPUTATION

When you meet somebody important (your call), roll+face. On a 10+, they've heard of you and your ship, you decide what they've heard. On a 7-9, they've heard of you, and so they'll want something from you. On a miss, the MC decides what they've heard.

This lets Captains have some sway, build up some clout across the system, and make sure that when you walk into a room, people know who you are.

How exactly NPCs respond to what the Captain names as their reputation is up to you. If a Captain decides their reputation to be benevolent and kind, have similar NPCs respond well and bullying or callous NPCs respond mockingly. On the flipside, if a Captain makes their reputation be fearsome and intimidating, then have weak NPCs be fearful, but confident NPCs be aggressive. Play off what they give you.

In general, this move is meant to compound in others; it might open some doors on its own, certainly, but typically this is used to set the scene for other moves to then come into effect more greatly.

In the case of a 7-9, the effect is almost too good. Their reputation precedes them to the degree that the important person has now decided to want something from the Captain: often a favor, but potentially some kind of tribute or acknowledgement. It's a fun kind of reversal of the role: people in the area definitely have still heard of the Captain, but it comes with cost.

On a miss, set the scene badly. Tell the Captain what people think of them, and don't go easy. This can ruin deals, summon the Authority, piss off criminals, and all other sorts of shenanigans. When this happens, make sure that the Captain knows what the NPCs think of them: you can say it directly, you can have NPCs mention it in-character, or you can think of some other method. Whatever you do, make sure the Captain knows it; to simply be hated and not know why is awful.

ALPHA DOG

When one of the crew misses a roll you can force someone else to help them, whether they ask or not. Choose another crewmember, then roll+spine. On a 10+, it's cool, it's fine, they help. On a 7-9, after they've helped, your chain with the forced crew member tightens. On a miss, your chain with the forced crew member tightens, and that forced crew member also chooses one of your other chains to tighten, too.

This is the “enforcer” move for Captains. It lets them push and bully their crew when they need to or want to. A Captain can't use it to force their crew to fail a roll, but it can definitely push more rolls into successes, or at least into the 7-9 range.

On a mechanical level, this move functions similarly to **threatening someone**—on a good roll, they do what you want, on a middling one they do it with some conditions, and on a bad one they don't. The difference here is that it's only for helping someone, nothing else, and the consequences solely affect chains, and nothing else.

Essentially, the Captain risks their relationships deteriorating in order to make sure that the shit they need done gets done. If this move really goes wrong, it can be devastating for the Captain: make sure they know it before they start flinging this move around. If it goes right, however, it lets them execute long and complicated plans with more-or-less guaranteed success.

As with threatening someone, a Captain's that at choking with their whole crew can more or less bully them at will, since their relationships have soured as much as they ever can.

It's also worth mentioning that this is one of the few moves that really can compel a crewmember to do something their player doesn't want them to do. That can get snarly, if it gets out hand; if you have a Captain player that is abusing this move and it can't be solved in-game, don't be afraid to step in as the MC directly.

GET A JOB

When you put the word out and try to land a job, name the type of job you want and whether you want legal or illegal work, then roll+face. On a 10+, both are true; on a 7-9, choose one:

- *You get the type of job you want*
- *You get the legality you want*

On a miss, neither of these are going to be true.

Without a job, a ship's on the fast track to becoming a hulk. Captains can ensure otherwise.

It's important to note that a Captain can't literally fail to get a job. There's always work, it's just not work the Captain or the crew would like to do. It's also important to make clear that if a Captain turns down a job, they have to travel to find a job—at least a span, maybe more if you're feeling less generous. If the crew lacks the funds to do so, then, well, they can either start stripping the ship for scrap or turn to petty crime, neither of which is a good option.

Remember the five types of jobs: the Haul, the Ferry, the Escort, the Fetch, and the Hit. If the Captain doesn't remember all five, remind them, and make sure they know the basic strokes and common pay grade of each. You can find detailed breakdowns of each on page 159.

Legality really only determines if the work is on the right or wrong side of the Authority. A legal job will mean that what you're doing is less likely to attract their attention and will be less of an issue if you do; an illegal job means there's a higher chance they'll take interest, and there will be severe consequences for doing so. Still, illegal jobs nearly always pay better than legal ones, so it would do a Captain well to weigh their options before embarking.

Once the move's been made, fill the Captain in on the specifics of this job, give them a chance to make a move or two with the employer if the Captain would like to change their terms a bit, and then tell the Captain to decide if they take the job or not.

GET PAID

When you finally finish the job and are coming in to get paid by your employer, roll+gut. On a 10+, choose 2 of the following. On a 7-9, choose 1:

- You'll be paid in full, as agreed (otherwise, you'll get shorted)*
- They won't try to screw you at some point (otherwise, things will get ugly)*
- Nobody will hear about this deal (otherwise, word will get around about it)*

On a miss, none of these things are going to be true.

When the job's done and the ship's coming in to seal the deal, it's the Captain's job to scope things out. Jobs are never perfectly clean.

The first is simple; if the Captain doesn't take this option, their pay will get docked. Maybe it's a little, maybe it's a lot. Maybe the employer has good reasons for being low on cash, but they're probably just greedy. Those details are up to you: the point is, the pay's getting slashed.

The second is also pretty simple; things getting ugly means that at some point, someone will pull a gun or knife or grenade on someone else. A fight doesn't necessarily break out, but the chances of that happening skyrocket. How that ugliness emerges and plays out will vary, but it will happen.

The third is more complicated. Not picking this option rarely has immediate consequences, instead showing its true colors later on. Maybe it's pirates hearing that the Captain's crew has just gotten paid; maybe it's the Authority coming in to crack down on illegal jobs; maybe it's just some other employer getting offended that you didn't choose them.

For each point not chosen, the players should hurt for it. But! It's not like each of these happens in a purely mechanical vacuum. For each case, you should make sure that the Captain and the crew have a chance to rectify the situation. These are problems that the players can and should deal with, not things happening in the ether.

PERIPHERAL MOVES

The peripheral moves, as they're called, are four moves that only come into effect in special ways. They're different than most moves, either because they're triggered at unusual times or they call for unusual mechanical effects or because they work in mechanically different ways than normal.

The three moves are:

- ***The Choke***, when a relationship between crewmembers bombs.
- ***Contacts***, when one crewmember calls in a friend (or “friend”).
- ***Help***, when one crewmember helps another, with some cost.
- ***Death***, when a crewmember would die but may not.

All crewmembers are affected by all four of these moves.

Some playbook moves will make reference to these peripheral moves; treat them as you would any other basic move or Captain move.

When they come into effect, take special care to explain to your players how and why they do; sometimes things may seem unclear at first glance, but it should all start to fit together after playing through each a couple of times.

THE CHOKE

*When one of your **chains tightens to choking** and you weren't the **cause of it**, roll+heat. On a miss, you sizzle and simmer but don't pop, at least for now. On a 7-9, keep doing whatever you're doing, but the next moment you've got time, you go and confront them about it. On a 10+, drop whatever it is you're doing and go confront them about it—right here, right now.*

Any time a chain tightens, one party, one of the two people the chain connects, is the cause of it. Maybe it was intentional, maybe it wasn't, but either way: someone did something, and now the chain has tightened. If that tightening brings the chain to choking, the other party—the one that didn't tighten the chain—rolls this move.

As always, +heat refers to that person's heat on the chain in question.

This move is the only one in the game where having a high roll is the less-optimal outcome: heat is the raw strength of your feelings, so a high heat leads to more intense feelings and a low heat leads to less intense ones.

What “confrontation” means here is up to your players, and up to the nature of their relationship. The classic example is two friends that each feel the other has betrayed them: this leads to strong words, blood running hot, and possible violence. Whatever the relationship is, as it sours and the chain tightens, there will be some core conflict, and that is where the confrontation arises most strongly.

The main upside of a 7-9 as opposed to a 10+ is timing; chains tighten most often in dire situations, and so being able to let the confrontation lie dormant can be a huge boon. Without it, on a 10+, the two characters will likely be indisposed for some time instead of dealing with more pressing matters.

As MC, play this up. Remind them of why their chain tightened to begin with. Spark some trouble if you need to: this is the consequence for having heat, make sure they feel those flames.

CONTACTS

At the start of a job, hold [X]. At any time throughout the job, when you need someone with specific skills or connections, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, and there'll be somebody who fits the bill right there, or at least nearby: roll+[stat]. On a 10+, they're friendly and will gladly help for a good price. On a 7-9, they're around, yeah, but they'll bring trouble, too. On a miss, they'll help you, but there'll be hell to pay afterwards.

Every playbook gets this, but it's got slight variations. Most only get 1 hold, but a few get more. The stat they roll varies, too: the more social-y playbooks add their face, but the geekier ones add their brain.

Regardless of the amount of hold and the stat used, this move always works the same way: a good roll gets somebody friendly, who'll help for cheap. A middling result get somebody good, sure, but they usually bring more trouble with them. A miss is big trouble. The key thing here is that this move always works; it might not always be a good deal, it might bring trouble with it, but it always works.

Players tend to use this in two ways: the first is the “solve this esoteric problem we're having.” They're tracking someone who's gone to ground, they're trying to sell unusual goods, they're on the run from somebody strange, that kind of thing. The second is the “oh god, oh fuck, please help.” They're stranded and out of fuel, they're outgunned, they're on the run from the Authority, whatever. Point is, they need help, and they'll pay whatever they need to get it.

Both are valid.

The key thing for you to think about is the cost; generally, this should match the ask being made of the contact. If it's a big one, like hiding from the Authority, you can impose a high cost; if it's a small, like fencing grey-market goods, it's a cheap ask. Remember that costs can be in all sorts of forms: credits, obviously, but also favors, tasks, or even small jobs.

HELP

When you make a roll and don't like the result, you can call for help: one crewmember who isn't doing anything right now can come to help you. Once a crewmember's helping you, they decide how many +1s they want to add to the roll. For each +1 added, the crewmember helping chooses one consequence:

- *The crewmember take 1-harm (ap)*
- *The room you're in takes 1-harm (ap)*
- *Something important breaks, and must be repaired*
- *The crewmember heats their chain with the other*
- *The chain between the two crewmembers tightens*

If you and the helping crewmember have a slack or taut chain:

- *The helping crewmember suffers the consequences for each +1*
- *Add the lower of the two heats between the crewmembers to the roll being helped*

If you and the helping crewmember have a choking chain:

- *You suffer the consequences for each +1*
- *Subtract the higher of the two heats between the crewmembers to the roll being helped*

This is the most complicated move in the entire game, so I'm going to give a brief summary, and then break everything down blow by blow.

A roll that you don't like means just that: a roll you don't like. Obviously, this covers all misses, but if a player desperately wants a 10+, they can ask for help for that, too. Don't restrict what they call for help on.

Generally, a crewmember can only help if they aren't doing anything else particularly important. This means they can't be in the midst of some other activity, like fighting, piloting, repairing, or whatever else they might be doing. It's important to have a sense of the temporal; players should have to commit to what they're doing at the expense of all else (at least sometimes).

After they've been summoned, the helper gets to decide how much they want to increase the roll by. Suggestions are fine, but it's helper's call.

Then there's a list of consequences; for every +1 added to the roll, a consequence is suffered (though who suffers it varies). Part of the question to this move is whether the consequences of helping are worth the increase in result. Turning a 6 into a 7 is almost certainly worth it, but a 4 to a 10 is iffier.

It's important that consequences happen after a move is complete. If a crewmember asks for help fighting and the shotgun they're using breaks, that break doesn't happen until the full move is done.

So, now for the hardest part: the differences in helping based on chains. This is harder in theory than it is in practice—the narrative behind it is simple, but can be tricky to properly grok. Worry not, though; you'll get it.

If the crewmember being helped and the helper have a slack or strained chain, the helper eats the consequences. On top of that, the original roll automatically gets free +1s added equal to the lower heat of the two chains. If the crewmember has +1 heat and the helper has +3, the roll gets +1 for free.

This encourages parity in heat between crewmembers, and it also encourages those crewmembers with the highest heat and slack chains to help each other more often. They like each other more, and so help each other more often, and are better at it because they like each other.

If the crewmember being helped and the helper have a choking chain, it's the original crewmember that eats the consequences. Added to that, the crewmember suffers extra consequences equal to the higher of the two heat. If the crewmember has +1 heat and the helper has +3, the crewmember suffers an extra three consequences, plus whatever they suffer for adding on +1s.

This is the risk of heat: having a high heat means that, with slack chains, helping is all fun and games forever. With a choking chain, however, a high heat means that being helped will automatically incur huge penalties, and should only be done in times of dire need. Remember the helper decides how many +1s to add and which consequences to inflict: they hold the power.

Helping is where the game is at its most interlocked, and its most intense. Very hot chains carry high risk and high reward—that's good drama.

DEATH

*When you **reach 5-harm and would die**, you have a choice: you can die, or you can barely scrape by.*

If you choose the latter, you heal 1-harm to unconscious, and the rest of the crew decides as a group which of the following occurs:

- *Deal 5-harm (ap) to the room you're currently in; any excess damage gets dealt to other rooms of the MC's choice.*
- *Change all of your chains to choking, heat all of your chains, and everyone heats their chain with you. If all of your chains are already choking, this option is not available.*
- *If the crew is currently on a job, that job is a failure: you all forfeit, bail, or pull out, and there's no way to get this job back.*

If you are the Captain, when you reach 5-harm, you do not get the choice to die or not: your crew decides for you instead.

At some point, things will go so sideways and so awry that a crewmember will die. It happens. Don't sweat it.

When they would die, the crewmember has a choice: they can die, or they can live, but at high cost. After they choose, the rest of the crew get to decide which cost to incur—they know their friend needs saving, but how?

The first option is just raw damage: it'll ruin the current room and likely one or two others. Depending on where the crewmember died, this could either be disastrous or merely an inconvenience. Where the rest of the damage goes is up to you: be sure to make it sting. Narratively, when the crew picks this option, describe how the ensuing damage barely threw the nearly-dead crewmember free, but sparked a destructive chain reaction in the process.

The second option is social: it makes the nearly-dead crewmember's life hell for a while, as their near-death experience changes them for the worse. Be a bit sensitive with this option; it's a popular choice among certain players, but for players that lean heavily into their relationships, it can leave them raw and vulnerable. For the first group, ham it up; for the second, let them cool off for a bit if they need it.

The third option is commercial: it throws away the profit the crew would've gotten, and wastes any resources they've already committed. Depending on how deep the crew is and how big a job they're on, this ranges in consequence; a small job or a job they've just started is not a big deal, while a big job they're a ways into will be a huge loss. In describing how this all plays out, focus on how, to save this crewmember's life, the crew had to give up their chance on this job, be that through burning all their fuel, enlisting the help of the Authority, or whatever else fits.

Captains that almost die face a reckoning: if they were a good Captain, they'll be fine. But, if they mistreated their crew, that crew can now simply choose to let them bleed out and walk away. This also means that if a crew decides to blow away their Captain, their Captain doesn't get to sit up, and in doing so cause the crew further harm.

Whichever option is chosen, explain it in the fiction: as the crewmember stumbles and nearly dies, the fiction of the world changes. As with all things, these decisions do not exist in a mechanical vacuum, and you should work to reflect players' choices onto the world of the game.

Be cautious with all of these. Death always makes players tense, so be tactful and conscious of the table when playing through this scenario.

SHIP ROOMS & MOVES

ROOMS

Every ship is made up of rooms, and each of those rooms has its own distinct, independent functions. This chapter covers each of those rooms, what their basic functions are, what their specific room moves are, and how those rooms fit into the broader ship as a whole.

Room moves follow the same mantra as ordinary moves: to do it, do it. And, just with ordinary moves, that goes both ways: if you do it, you're doing it, so get out your dice.

Rooms have two key differences from ordinary moves: the first is that a room move must always be made from that room (unless a crewmember's got a specific move that lets them do otherwise): a crewmember can't pull a stunt from the armory, for example. The second is that in order to make a room move, the room has to be intact; it can be damaged, but it can't have filled its harm all the way.

Rooms also use a specific stat for nearly all of their moves: their size, ranging from tiny (size+0) to large (size+3). If a room move ever says to "roll+size," that refers to that room's size.

If a room is damaged, it's size isn't reduced; it's still functioning, and so still rolls with its normal size. (This does encourage ships to fly around with a bunch of almost-destroyed rooms, since crews are skimpy—but that sort of feels on-brand, doesn't it?)

HULL

Hull works just like regular armor: it reduces any incoming harm by an amount equal to the hull.

This only works on attacks made from outside the ship.

Hull is always the same across the entire ship.

The hull is the layer of armor and plating that covers the outside of the ship. The hull isn't a room, not really, but it's effectively as such. It's got no moves and no active function other than just existing. The hull can't be damaged or worsened; sure, it'll take some beating and bruising, but that's just rolled into the damage the rest of the rooms take.

Hull works just like regular armor, by reducing harm taken by the hull's rating; that is, if a 7-harm cannon is firing at hull with 5-armor, the total comes out to 2-harm. Hull's always the same across the entire ship; there's no extra armor in the front or back or whatever, it's equal across the board.

This, critically, only works on attacks coming from outside the ship. If a boarder storms into the infirmary and starts blasting away, the hull will do nothing to nullify that harm whatsoever. Very useful for ship combat, not so helpful otherwise.

Not that this has many strict mechanical effects, but the hull of a ship is also the first that thing an observer of that ship sees. How that ship looks can definitely affect their perceptions: Authority ships are sleek, shiny, and dark; merchant ships are bulky, dull, and labeled; pirate ships are patched, spiky, and painted; freighter ships are anywhere in between.

ENGINE

*When you **outrun or overtake something**, roll+size. On a 10+, you outrun them or overtake them just fine. On a 7-9, you still do so, but choose one of the following:*

- *split 3-harm (ap) between you and the engine, your call how*
- *you must **hold firm** or else miss the roll entirely*

On a miss, you don't outrun or overtake them; prepare for the worst.

The engine room holds the engine; the engine is what makes the ship move. Every single ship that moves has an engine: if a ship doesn't have an engine, it's either a station or a hulk.

If the engine's destroyed, the ship can't move. It can maybe turn and wiggle and twitch a little bit—running off the helm's control and whatever fumes are left—but it can't go anywhere. A ship with a destroyed engine's little more than a hulk with the lights still on.

The engine room move is pretty straightforward: when the crew wants to outrun something, usually meaning they escape or evade someone, or when they want to overtake something, meaning they catch up to or pass by someone, they roll+size. It's the catch-all “go fast” move..

On a 7-9, whoever's at the engine has two choices: they can either eat a bunch of harm across themselves and the engine—probably as it sparks and flares and spits out slag—or they can make another move, hold firm, which puts off the damage further. If they've got a good spine, they'll probably for the latter, but if they don't (and few greasers or junkers do) they might just opt to suffer the harm, and pray they don't suffer any worse.

The key for you, the MC, to remember is to play up the scale. If the crew's got a dinky little engine, make sure they feel that: describe other ships' roaring fires and hefty rotors. By contrast, if they've got a good engine, make sure to mark how much larger the crew's is by comparison, how their ship engines dwarf all others. Big engines are always better; more power, more fuel, more juice. Play that up.

HELM

*When you **pull a stunt** to get the ship to fly better than it has any right to, roll+gut. On a 10+, you do it, just fine.*

On a 7-9, you still do it, but choose one of the following:

- *split 3-harm (ap) between you and the helm, however you want*
- *you must **hold firm** or else miss the roll entirely*

On a miss, you fail your stunt: prepare for the worst.

The helm is the counterpart to the engine; the engine is power, the helm is control. Every ship has helm: a ship without a helm is a station, or a hulk.

If the helm's destroyed, the ship can't be controlled. A ship without a helm can only go straight forward; makes it really just the system's biggest manned torpedo—dangerous, sure, but not actually useful.

The helm's move is also pretty straightforward: when the crew needs to do something dangerous or daring, they roll to pull a stunt. Fancy loops, tight squeezes, evasive maneuvers, rough landings—all stunts.

On a 7-9, they've got the same choice as the engine: they can either eat a boatload of harm, or they can gamble further. Jockeys and runners will sometimes have some spine, but not always, and so they're forced into gambling a bit more. It's a dicey, dangerous proposition: as the crew and ship get more and more battered, they're forced into taking bigger risks.

When you're describing how the helm operates, contrast is key. The size of the helm is shown not so much in the literal space of the cockpit, but rather in the size and strength of the ship's controls, and how well the helm is connected to everything else.

A big helm, a helm with a lot of wiring and connections and mechanisms under the hood, will feel smooth and easy and tight. A small helm, one that's basically just a steering wheel strapped onto an axle from the engine, will feel rough and janky and awkward. Selling that difference, especially as the crew improves their ship, will sell the whole experience.

SYSTEMS

*When you **lock down a room** on the ship, roll+size. On a 7-9, choose 1 of the following to explicitly disallow the flow of into the room; on a 10+, choose 2:*

- *air*
- *small arms fire*
- *people and objects*

On a miss, the MC chooses 2 against you in a room of their choice.

The systems are the last essential component to a ship, along with the helm and engine. The systems provide air and gravity, first and foremost, but also allow a greater measure of control over the ship's individual rooms.

If the systems are destroyed, the artificial gravity on the ship will cut out, meaning everyone and everything will start floating—and the air will cut out, meaning everyone will start suffocating and be dead in minutes. As you might imagine, if a ship doesn't have systems, it's a hulk.

The systems room move essentially locks down a room aboard the ship, blocking a combination of: air flow, gunshots, or physical objects. A high roll cuts out two, which can deal with more or less all threats, while a midrange roll only cuts out one, leaving some open. On a miss, some room somewhere on the ship is going to end up in a bad way, though how bad is up to you.

A bigger systems room doesn't necessarily mean that the physical space the crew walks around in is bigger. Instead, it means that the underlying power of the systems—its computers and scanners and monitors and switchboards—is much stronger, fueled by bigger and badder arrays of technology. There still might only be a single seat at a single console, but the computer under that console will reflect the size of the room.

The systems are, in effect, all of the “other” functions aboard the ship rolled into one. You know what I'm talking about; when a tech is in their systems, they're the one that yells things like “Captain! Ship approaching: pirates, heavily armed!” while they sit and clack at a console. That's the systems.

CARGO HOLD

*When you **get a job** aiming to haul cargo, legal or otherwise, you can roll+size instead of +face. The larger the cargo hold, the more profitable the haul.*

The cargo hold is where the crew can store things. It's a big empty room aboard the ship, often with rings and bolts and straps on the floor and walls, so cargo can be strapped down. A crew doesn't necessarily need a cargo hold to transport goods, but a cargo hold makes it much easier, both for having a dedicated space to store things and for the raw cubic footage of the room itself. If the cargo hold is destroyed, any goods within it are destroyed as well; repairing the cargo hold does not bring the goods back.

Bigger cargo holds are always better. More space, stronger frame, easier modes of attachments, the works.

Having a bigger cargo hold adds on additional profits to a haul, at a rate of a +2 credits per size, per span (page 163). On top of that, a Captain can use the cargo hold's size in place of their own face stat for securing hauls. Even when dealing with a crude and inept Captain, employers can recognize the value of an enormous cargo hold, both for profits and for security.

When it's not filled with cargo, a cargo hold also serves as the central hub for most crews. It's a big empty space, which has all kinds of uses. Some crews set out tables and eat dinner as a group; some use it for training in firearms and weapons; still others lay out mats and sleep in the hold, when they don't have proper bunks.

Despite not every ship having a cargo hold, it is often taken as ubiquitous among crews; to not have a cargo hold is the exception among independent freighters, rather than the rule.

BUNKS

*When you **get a job** looking to ferry passengers, legal or otherwise, you can roll+size instead of+face. The larger the bunks, the more profitable the ferry.*

Technically speaking, people can sleep anywhere on a ship; there are always more nooks, crannies, alcoves, and hideaways to find somewhere to curl up with a blanket. There's no guarantee those places will be warm, dry, or comfortable, but somebody could theoretically sleep there. Bunks solve those issues, providing space specifically for individuals to sleep and recuperate.

Having a bigger set of bunks adds on profits for ferries at a rate of +2 credits per size, per span (page 166). The crew can take on more passengers, and those passengers will pay better for wherever it is they're going. A Captain can use the size of their bunkroom in place of their face; passengers know a good ship to buy passage on, even when the Captain might be less than perfectly couth.

A bigger set of bunks doesn't necessarily mean that there are literally more beds, or that a ferry job brings on more passengers. It very well might, but it could just as easily mean that the existing bunks are nicer, more spacious, and have fun amenities: adjustable lighting, separate washrooms, extra furniture, that sort of thing.

Among independent crews, bunks are often taken as a kind of badge of status. If a crew can afford to actually have proper mattresses, pillows, and sleeping space, it means that they aren't spending every last credit on supplies and repairs—which means they're doing reasonably well.

SHUTTLE

*Shuttles can't **fly spans**, but they can **outrun or overtake something** and **pull a stunt** just like big ships, using the shuttle's size. Shuttles have hull equal to their size, and come with basic air and gravity.*

The shuttle is a smaller, independent ship that's attached to the main body of a ship. It's got enough fuel for a half day or so, and can fly independently. Shuttles can be used for combat, diplomacy, transport, escape, or anything else the crew can think of.

Shuttles aren't capable of reaching the speeds necessary to fly whole spans, but they can still **outrun or overtake something** and **pull stunts**, for which they use their own size in place of the engine's or helm's. These moves both require someone piloting the shuttle, as normal. A bigger shuttle is tougher, faster, and handles better; it still needs a dock or platform or claw-crane somewhere on the main ship, but bigger is better.

When a shuttle is destroyed, it can't do anything useful in the slightest. The crew can still bolt it on to the side of their ship to bring it to be repaired, but it has no function otherwise. If the shuttle gets destroyed and the main ship is nowhere near, that shuttle could very well be lost forever.

Among different crews, shuttles have all kinds of different functions. Some of them are for hauling certain cargo, some are to ferry sensitive passengers, some are used for scouting, some are for combat flanking, and some are there as a relic of some previous hulk the ship was made from.

This versatility, if used correctly, pays in spades. Clever crews know to eke every ounce of utility they can out of their shuttles; out in the hulks, they often need it, too.

GUNS

*At size+0, the turret has one light gun on it. For each additional +1 size, the turret has one additional light gun and one additional heavy gun on it. When you man a ship's gun, you can **get in a fight** using that gun. When you **get a job** wanting to fly escort or run a hit, you can roll+size instead of +face.*

The guns are exactly what they sound like: big, loud, and highly dangerous. While a ship's hull might be able to shrug off heavy fire, even a heavily armored ordinary person will be shredded by a ship's gun.

The guns function a little differently than most other rooms; rather than have specific moves, the guns instead gain new weapons as they increase in size, all mounted on the same turret. The guns don't literally have to all be stuck on the exact same room, but they're all connected to the same internal system: if the guns room is dead, every gun goes down and can't be used.

Each gun can be fired by one crewmember; that crewmember can **get in a fight**, just like normal, using the ship's gun instead of whatever weapons they might ordinarily have. On top of that, when the Captain goes looking to fly an escort or run a hit, they can use the guns' size in place of their face. Size does, in fact, matter.

Remember that each gun counts as its own object, and thus can be wrecked and need repairs; the room itself can be intact, but all guns destroyed. This would be an unusual situation for sure, but might happen—especially if the crew gets greedy about repairs.

ARMORY

*At size+0, the armory has one set of 1-armor and three sidearms. For each additional +1 size, the armory gets three sidearms, two serious guns, a big fuck-off gun, two sets of 1-armor, and a single set of 2-armor. When you **get a job** intending to fly escort or run a hit, you can roll+size instead of +face.*

The armory, like the guns, is more about what the room contains, rather than what the room itself does. Most independent crews only have what weapons they can carry, and rarely anything bigger than a shotgun. The armory changes that; a tiny armory is little more than a locker with a few pistols, but a larger one has full body armor, heavy firepower, and enough weapons and ammo to supply the crew twice over.

Generally, only the Captain and the ship's bruiser will have keys to the armory; this isn't always the case, but most crews aren't fond of leaving all of their weapons and armor available to just anyone that comes onto the ship. If a runner or somebody wants to pry their way into the armory, you should probably let them, but make them roll for it.

Just like the ship's guns, a Captain can flex the size and power of their armory when they're looking for a job where that's relevant. As MC, you should always respect this rule, but you can definitely have some fun with it. Who they get the job from matters: Authority clients will likely respect a huge batch of guns, but merchant or criminal clients might be more grudging about it. In some cases, it's possible that the size-as-face could almost be taken as a threat: "Give us this job, or else."

LIGHT GUNS: (cf. *Smoker, Guns*)

- *lmg, 5-harm close/far autofire*
- *grenade launcher, 4-harm far area reload*
- *rpg, 6-harm extreme reload*
- *missile launcher, 7-harm extreme slow reload*

HEAVY GUNS: (cf. *Smoker, Guns*)

- *.70 caliber mg, 6-harm close/far hellfire*
- *torpedo launcher, 9-harm far/extreme reload*
- *plasma cannon, 7-harm far/extreme hellfire messy hot*
- *coilgun, 7-harm far/extreme*
- *emp, e-harm far/extreme*

SIDEARMS: (cf. *Bruiser, Armory*)

- *pistol, 2-harm close*
- *magnum, 3-harm close loud*
- *sawn-off, 3-harm close messy reload*
- *lots of knives, 2-harm hand infinite*
- *crowbar, 2-harm hand messy*
- *stunner, s-harm close reload no-air*

SERIOUS GUNS: (cf. *Bruiser, Armory*)

- *combat rifle, 3-harm close/far autofire*
- *shotgun, 3-harm close messy*
- *boarding axe, 3-harm close messy*
- *crossbow, 2-harm close no-air*

BIG FUCK-OFF GUNS: (cf. *Bruiser, Armory*)

- *sniper's rifle, 4-harm far loud*
- *grenade launcher, 4-harm far area messy no-air*
- *flamethrower, 4-harm close area messy no-air refill*
- *lmg, 5-harm close/far autofire loud*

BOARDING DOCK

At size+0, the ship's hulls must be touching to board; at size+1, you can board at close range; at size+2, you can board at far range. At size+3, you can board at extreme range.

*When you **board a ship**, pick a room and roll+size. On a 10+, your dock makes it to that room and makes an entrance, no worries. On a 7-9, either it doesn't go to the room you want, or you stall and the other crew can prepare for you. On a miss, prepare for the worst.*

The boarding dock is the long passageway that bursts out from the crew's ship, attaches onto another ship, and then allows the crews from either ship to cross onto the other one. Like the shuttle, it can be used for a variety of different purposes, but it's most commonly used to allow boarders from one ship to storm onto another.

The boarding dock's size has two purposes: the first is its reach. A tiny (size+0) boarding dock is really just a doorway; to use it, the two ships have to be rubbing hulls. As the boarding dock increases in size, it can reach further, with a large (size+3) boarding dock able to reach extreme range.

It's worth noting that, like pretty much all tech, how exactly the boarding dock operates shouldn't be a cause of too much concern. At shorter ranges it's easy to be the typical metal-jetway type thing, but as it gets longer it could be almost anything: a small pod that fires outward, a long zipline the crew zooms along, some kind of short-range teleporter, whatever. The exact fictional details can be a lot of fun to work out, but don't stress the realism.

The second use for a boarding dock's size is its efficacy in boarding ships; a big high-powered boarding dock will be accurate and fast, while a cheaper smaller one will be significantly less effective. In a lot of ways, the dock can be thought of like a ship's gun, but rather than simply spitting hot lead, the dock punches a hole and passageway through the enemy ship.

INFIRMARY

*When you **heal someone**, roll+size. On a 10+, they heal 2-harm; on a 7-9, they heal 2-harm, but you, they, or the room must take 1-harm [ap]. On a miss, they heal nothing, and you must split 3-harm between you, them, and the infirmary.*

Every crew will eventually get hurt. It might take some time, but it will always happen eventually. When it does, the infirmary is the crew's friend. It's a big room full of medical supplies: painkillers, antibiotics, gauze, casts, surgical tools, prosthetics, prescription drugs, and more. It's also got at least one medical bed, and probably more, depending on the size.

The mechanical twist here is that a 7-9 can be pretty flexible in its penalties: the simplest and most direct route is to just knock the 2-harm healed down to 1-harm, but that's not always the case. Maybe the healed crewmember needs a blood transfusion, or a graft of materials hard to find, or something else entirely.

The infirmary doesn't track individual medical supplies. If the supplies are really that limited, it's not a proper infirmary, it's just a bunch of medpacks that've been stuck together in a big room. That said, as the infirmary takes damage, it's pretty easy to express that as supplies being exhausted, rather than strict damage—especially on the room move. Failing to heal somebody might just that a crewmember stabbed with them the first needle they saw, and then frantically opened every bottle in the room. Not like, physical damage to the room's objects themselves, but harmful nonetheless.

Among many crews, infirmaries are seen as the end-goal. Most ships carry a few medpacks, but to have enough supplies and equipment to have a proper room dedicated to healing is, perhaps not a luxury, but certainly a highly-coveted commodity. It's a sign of rank, really, to be able to afford to keep all of your crewmembers in healthy shape. It shouldn't be, not in a just system, but it is.

BOLT-HOLES

*When you **hide something (or someone) for later**, roll+size. On a 10+, you hide it, it's good, nobody will find it unless you want them to. On a 7-9, you hide it, but one person of your choosing and one of the MC's choosing knows it's hidden there. On a miss, everyone knows it's there, and someone wants it.*

*When you **get a job** attempting to run a fetch, you can roll+size instead of +face.*

Bolt-holes are the criminal's alternative to cargo holds or bunkrooms. They're smaller, typically, but they're also hidden out of the way, where prying eyes are less likely to find them. Lockers hidden behind false walls, bunks tucked under floor plates, safes buried in piping, rooms that don't appear on ship blueprints, wherever a spare few feet can be found.

Generally speaking, nobody can find a bolt-hole unless they know it's there. Sure, a squad of Authority investigators equipped with the latest tech could probably scour a ship and find one, but ordinary troopers, criminals, or merchants' bodyguards have no chance.

The bolt-hole move is pretty straightforward: a crewmember rolls to hide something. The better their roll, the fewer people know about whatever's hidden there. A good roll means nobody knows it's there, a bad roll means everyone knows it's there. Most bolt-holes aren't tightly secured, as big ugly locks tend to draw attention—but it does make them easy to bust open.

The size of the bolt-holes here refers less to the literal size of the hidden compartments as much as it does how common they are on a ship: rolling+size is more about how quickly a crewmember can get to one of these hidden caches than it is how big or spacious they actually are.

On top of that, a Captain can use their bolt-holes in place of their face stat to secure fetch deals. Fetches demand that cargo can be carried—usually while being pursued—and a Captain being able to attest to the efficacy of their smuggler's caches is highly valuable.

FLY A SPAN

When you **fly a span** between two planets, roll. For every span's worth of fuel and supplies you burn, add +1 to the roll; you can do this up to a maximum of +3. On a 10+, choose one:

- every crew member chooses one chain to loosen
- every crew member heats or cools a chain
- you stumble on an abandoned hulk
- you come across a station

On a 7-9, choose two (which can repeat):

- you encounter an uncertain ship or an occupied hulk
- every crew member chooses one chain to tighten
- you encounter a spaceborne hazard or danger

On a miss, choose two (which cannot repeat):

- the Authority takes an interest in you
- you encounter a hostile ship
- the ship suffers 4-harm (ap), dealt to rooms of the MC's choice

This is not strictly a room move, but is lumped here because it's still a move that requires a ship. To **fly a span**, the ship pretty much needs to have an intact helm, engine, and systems. Everything else is secondary.

Because it takes at least one span's worth of fuel and supplies to fly a span, this move automatically gets +1 forward to the roll. If a crew's got extra resources to burn, they can do so to get smoother sailing, but it's costly.

Like every other move, **flying a span** is a gamble: the crew can spend more upfront for better chances, or chance it with lower rolls and risk worse consequences.

For you, the MC, **flying a span** also doubles as a "random encounter" move: it means that very rarely will nothing happen over the course of a span. The crew decides exactly what kind of nastiness they want to deal with, and all you have to do is give it to them.

PLAY- BOOK MOVES

BRUISER MOVES

The bruiser gets to pick three from this list:

Tough as nails. You get +1 spine (max+3).

Not on my turf. When you take or deal harm to or from a person and are on or around the ship, take -1 harm and deal +1 harm ongoing.

“Around the ship” means, like, doing a quick spacewalk for repairs, or standing on the gangplank at a dock, or zipping on wire back to the ship from a scavenge. Not aboard another ship, lost somewhere the streets of a hub, or flying somewhere specific on the shuttle.

Gloves come off. When you **threaten someone**, roll+spine instead of +face.

You were saying? When you’re present when the Captain **gets a job**, give them +1 on the roll. When the Captain rolls to **get paid**, you know how and when each thing that goes wrong will go wrong. If you’re the Captain, this move applies to yourself.

This is the “bodyguard” move. It lets them sit ominously behind the Captain at meetings, and then later advise them on how the employer’s going to try to shaft the crew. Don’t stiff the bruiser on this info; it’s up to that bruiser how much they share, but make sure they know everything.

Kneecapper. When you capture someone and interrogate them for information, you gain +1 hold for **contacts**.

This is the “interrogator” move. If the crew’s OK with the bruiser beating the snot out of someone for info, the bruiser gets extra **contacts**. There might be other info the captive reveals—that’s fine. The bruiser still gets extra **contacts**.

Black ops. All of your weapons lose loud or messy if they have them, and gain no-air. This applies to your armory weapons, too. Your armory also gains three sets of pullover space suits.

Exactly how bad having loud and messy is can be up for debate, depending.

Otherwise, though, this lets the crew as a whole do some sweet jump-off-your-ship-and-land-on-theirs maneuvers, as an alternative to a boarding dock. Remember that a gun that doesn't have no-air can't fire in space, normally, as guns need air to work.

Comrades in arms. When you fight shoulder-to-shoulder with another crew member, you both take +1 armor ongoing. Afterwards, loosen your chain with them, or you both heat your chain (your call).

This is the bruiser's main social ["social"] move. It's how they can easily loosen their chains if they need to, and how they can help people in a fight most easily. It also leads to scenarios where the bruiser will have a higher heat with those they fight alongside: once you've seen combat together, a bond is formed that can't be broken.

Bloodbath. When you **get in a fight** with or **threaten** one of your fellow crew members, you can roll+heat instead of +spine or +face.

Sometimes, raw passion can be more effective than spleen or force of personality. This is the move for that.

The bruiser's dedicated room is the armory, filled with guns and armor. It's a small (size+1) room, so it comes with about a half-dozen sidearms, two serious guns, a big fuck-off gun, one set of 2-armor, and three sets of 1-armor. If there's keys, only the bruiser and Captain have keys. Bear in mind that all of this is on top of what bruisers start with in terms of gear, so they get a lot of shit in total.

And here's what bruiser Captains get:

Mess with them, mess with me. At the start of a job, roll+gut. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7-9, hold 2. At any point, if someone on your crew's in trouble (or is about to be), spend your hold and you are there, ready to go. On a miss, you still hold 1, but your crew—not you—gets to decide when and where it is you show up.

This move has an explicit function and implicit bonus. The explicit function is simple: when the crew's in trouble, the bruiser can show up and save them, no where they are or what they're doing. Bruiser Captains are protective, and so they protect the crew. The implicit bonus is insurance for the crew, essentially. When crewmembers opt to tempt fate, they can know their Captain will have their back if push comes to shove.

ENVOY MOVES

The envoy grabs two off this list:

Boundless grace. You get +1 face (max+3).

Social butterfly. At the start of a job, roll+face. On a 10+, hold 3; on a 7-9, hold 2; on a miss, hold 1 anyway. When one of your chains would tighten, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, to keep at as-is instead.

It's this move that lets the envoy really go to work on other crewmembers. It means that if a crewmember tries to **fast-talk** the envoy into doing something, the envoy can ignore the consequences. It also means that the envoy can **threaten** another crewmember with more impunity, as the envoy can stop that crewmember from tightening their chains.

False surrender. When you **get in a fight** with people using a weapon small enough to fit in one hand, roll+face instead of +spine. Any harm you deal like this counts as armor piercing (ap).

Diplomatic immunity. If you're talking with someone and they start a fight (and it really does need to be them that starts it, it can't just be someone that isn't you), take +2 armor ongoing until the fight ends.

Insurance for envoys during negotiations. It also means it's much harder for bad guys to kill the messenger if the messenger is the envoy.

Peacemaker. When you go to two people that have a strained or choking chain (which could include you) and make peace between them, roll+face. On a 10+, they both heat their chain and loosen their chain. On a 7-9, they still loosen their chain, but cool it instead. On a miss, they heat and tighten their chain, and each of their chains with you tighten, too.

This is the bread-and-butter social move for the envoy: it's the one that means that the envoy can smooth over almost any difficulties inside a crew. Not every time and not always without cost, but usually close enough.

Power beyond. When you **threaten someone**, you can do it with some form of power that isn't yours, but you could bring to bear—like the Authority. If your hand is forced, you can retreat to summon that power: roll+face. On a 10+, they help you, it's good. On a 7-9, they'll help you, but there's a cost. On a miss, they won't help, and are real upset.

Players get squirrely about this one; be generous. The risk is built in: if the envoy really wants to **threaten somebody** with a powerful criminal syndicate, let them—it just means that when the envoy eventually misses the roll, they're mega-boned. It also means that on a 7-9, the cost associated will be higher; don't skimp.

Isolation therapy. When you **threaten** a crewmember, you can threaten them with tightening one of their chains all the way to choking; if they don't do what you want, you do it.

This is the flipside of **power beyond**; that one's big and flashy and NPC-centric, this is tight and personal and PC-centric. Note that this can be any chain of that crewmember's, not just one shared with the envoy.

The human element. When you **fast-talk** or **get a read** on another crew member, you can roll+heat instead of a +face or +gut.

Envoys are people's people; for the people they care about, doubly so.

Sanctioned and legitimate. Whenever you deal with the Authority in a legitimate capacity, take +1 ongoing.

"Legitimate" counts as basically anything that isn't actively shooting at them, hiding cargo from them, or smooth-talking your way past them.

The envoy add on a small (size+1) shuttle as their dedicated room. Shuttles are mostly as useful as the crew makes them, since they're not strictly all that powerful, but envoys are clever, usually. Usually.

And the envoy Captain move:

Expert negotiator. When you **get paid**, you always choose one extra option.

In short, envoy Captains always have things go the smoothest. This is the only way to ensure that they can get all three options on get paid, and it means that even when the Captain whiffs the roll, they're not completely screwed. It's a very powerful move, not to be under-estimated.

GREASER MOVES

First and foremost, the greaser gets ***machinist***:

Machinist. When you repair something, you can repair a ship's room like any other object. Spend 1-credit in scrap, then roll+brain. On a 7-9, you repair 1 point of harm; on a 10+, you repair 1 point of harm and get your 1-credit in scrap back, too. On a miss, the room suffers 1-harm (ap) and your scrap is blown. If you repair a room that was destroyed, change its drawing and personality accordingly.

Basically, the greaser spends a scrap, and then can fix rooms. This move is real good; it means that you can repair your ship on the fly, sometimes for free. It's not without risk, obviously, but it gives the ship a level of independence and reliability no other can compete with.

On top of ***machinist***, the greaser chooses two more:

Well-learned. You get +1 brain (max+3).

Crazy Ivan. You can ***pull a stunt*** from the engine, using the engine's size in place of the helm's, just like it was made from the helm.

This works exactly like it sounds: rather than use the helm size, use the engine size; rather than make the move from the helm, make it from the engine.

Idiot-proofing. At the beginning of a job, roll+brain. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7-9, hold 2. Anytime somebody on the ship would fuck around with anything of yours, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, to immediately inflict 3-harm. If you choose, you can make them aware of this beforehand. On a miss, hold 1 anyway, but when you use your hold, the thing they were going for breaks anyway.

The greaser's sole combat move, really. It works against NPCs and crewmembers alike, and it can go anywhere. Someone starts disassembling the engine? Idiot-proof. Someone uses the greaser's pistol against them? Idiot-proof. Someone steals the greaser's lunch? Idiot-proof.

Expert engineering. When you make an engine move or any move that requires you to be in the engine room, add your brain to the roll.

Navicom control frequency. You can make engine moves anywhere on or around the ship. This applies to any of your moves that require you to be in the engine room, too.

Both of these mainly apply to **outrun or overtake something**, but they apply to **crazy Ivan**, too.

System overclock. When you pump power from the engine to another room, roll+brain. On a 10+, that room counts as having +1 size ongoing. On a 7-9, that room counts as having +1 size ongoing, but afterwards either you or that room take 1-harm (ap). On a miss, you and the room both take 1-harm (ap) and gain no benefit.

Since crew can't help on room moves, this is essentially the only way to get a temporary boost on a room move that they really need to pull. It's a high-risk move, but when it goes off, it goes off big. Since this move requires the greaser to be in the engine room, **navicom control frequency** applies.

Just forgot a repair. When one of your chains would tighten, you can instead choose to retreat to the engine room for a long while. While you're there, you can't talk to anybody and nobody can talk to you.

In some ways, the greaser belongs more to ship than they do the crew, more at home among whirring machines than flesh-and-blood people. If the greaser opts to embrace this element, this move is their insurance, allowing them to retreat from the crew and lock themselves in the engine room when things go awry.

A friend in need. When a crew member comes to you to have something of theirs repaired, you can roll+heat instead of +brain. Either way, after you repair it, loosen your chain with them, or you both heat your chain (your call).

This is the greaser's sole social move. It lets them use whatever connections they've made to repair other people's things, firstly, but it also lets them make new allies through items. It means that the people who come to the greaser for help are more likely to become friends with them.

For their dedicated room, the greaser has two benefits: they add +1 hull to the ship, and they add +1 size to the engine. Neither of these are particularly exciting, but they are both highly reliable and highly useful—just like the greaser, in many ways. It also means that the engine is their responsibility to draw and update, which is fun.

And finally, greasers get their Captain move:

Durable frameworks. *Each room in the ship counts as 1 size larger for the purpose of determining harm. A room with size+2, for example, could take 4-harm (rather than 3-harm) before being destroyed entirely.*

That math looks wrong, I know, but remember that a size+0 room still needs to take 1-harm to be destroyed; with this move added on, it would need 2-harm to be destroyed. Basically, this move gives every room an extra point of health to use. It's a very passive effect, but very good for long jobs in between stations and hubs. A greaser Captain will ensure the ship is always working, or at least better than it would under any other Captain.

JOCKEY MOVES

The jockey gets to choose three of these:

Daring-do. You get +1 gut (max+3).

Keen-eyed. When you **get a read**, you always ask one extra question, and take +2 when you act on the MC's answers.

Dogfighter. When someone **gets in a fight** against another ship and you're at the helm, on a 7-9, you decide where the enemy targets, instead of the MC.

Remember: when someone **gets in a fight** from a ship and the shooter rolls a 7-9, they either get to pick where they hit on the enemy ship and you choose where the enemy hits their ship, or they get to pick where the enemy hits them but you decide where they hit hit them. Tit-for-tat. With this move, the gunner can have their cake and eat it, too: they can decide where they target the enemy, and the jockey decides where the enemy hits their ship.

Getaway driver. At the start of a job, roll+gut. On a 10+, hold 2. On a 7-9, hold 1. At any point during the job while you're on the ship, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, to have the ship be where it needs to be, ready to go. On a miss, hold 1 anyway, but when you get there, you're caught, stuck where you arrived.

This move is the jockey's get-out-of-jail-free ticket for the crew. So long as they're on the ship, the jockey can have the ship where it needs to be, no matter where it might be otherwise. Whatever trouble the crew gets into, the jockey can be there to bail them out. "Stuck where you arrived" is a free license for you to wreak whatever havoc your heart desires.

Loop-the-loop. When you **pull a stunt**, you can add your gut to the roll. When the ship's in combat, you can **pull a stunt** to add your gut to the ship's hull, ongoing.

The "ongoing" here means that the jockey can't really be doing anything other than actively using this move. If they pull a different stunt or have to run down to engine or something, that ongoing ends.

Autonav relay. You can fly the ship and make helm moves from anywhere on or around the ship. This includes moves that require you to be at the helm.

This is just like the greaser's **navicom control frequency**. It applies to **pull a stunt**, **dogfighter**, and **loop-the-loop**.

Busy flying, don't bother me. When one of your chains would tighten, you can instead choose to retreat to the helm for a long while. While you're there, you can't talk to anybody and nobody can talk to you.

Again, there's an analogue to the greaser; the jockey can also choose to withdraw and hide out in the helm, safe in their own little world.

Old reliable. The helm cannot be shut down by e-harm, or anything similar. If the helm is destroyed, successfully **making a patch** for it restores a single point of harm.

The helm is real tough, and can be fixed in dire straits, no matter what.

When there's a jockey aboard, they add +1 size to the helm as their dedicated room. On top of that, they get one of three options: a small (size+1) cargo hold, a small (size+1) set of bunks, or +1 hull. Basically, jockeys get to specialize, however they choose.

Jockey Captains get this move:

Trader's routes. When you **travel a span**, you choose +1 option on a 10+ and choose -1 option on a miss.

When the Captain is a jockey, flying spans is always easier. Remember that it's extra good options and fewer bad options, but it's still two choices on a 7-9.

JUNKER MOVES

First, the junker has their junker's kit, which comes with three functions:

*When you build a **common piece of gear from scrap**, name the gear and spend up to 1-credit in scrap, then roll+junk. On a 10+, you create the gear. On a 7-9, you make it, but it's broken right now and needs to be repaired. On a miss, you blow your scrap and get nothing.*

"Common gear" refers to pretty much any non-ship's-gun weapon, basic armor, or a pullover space suit. It doesn't include medpacks or repair kits.

*When you **beef up a room**, spend up to 3-credit in scrap, then roll+scrap spent. On a 10+, that room counts as having +1 size and ongoing until it next takes harm. On a 7-9, it counts as one size larger, but when it next takes harm, it takes +1 harm. On a miss, you blow your scrap and get nothing.*

Essentially, a room will work better until anything goes wrong for it. If the junker messes up, it will be even worse when it breaks down.

*When you make a **repair kit from spare parts**, spend up to 3-credit in scrap, then roll+junk. On a 10+, you get that repair kit, nice and shiny. On a 7-9, you get a repair kit, yeah, but something of yours breaks, and must be repaired. On a miss, you blow your scrap and get nothing.*

This works pretty much the same as the first function, only this one's specifically for repair kits. It's fun when the junker kit breaks making a repair kit.

On top of their kit, the junker also gets this move:

***Strip, melt, grind, smelt.** When you take a piece of equipment and break it down for parts, roll+junk. On a 10+, you get its worth in scrap, easy-peasy. On a 7-9, you get its worth in scrap, minus 1 (unless it was only worth 1-credit, then it's still worth only 1-credit). On a miss, something goes awry and it's just a pile of truly worthless trash.*

On its face, this isn't very helpful, but: junkers burn through scrap more or less constantly. Being able to turn all the crap you normally leave behind—spare weapons, bits and bobs, that sort of stuff—into scrap is suddenly invaluable. The junker, if they're good, will usually be picking through interaction they can for extra goodies.

After the kit and that move, the junker chooses one of these:

Wrecker's arts. *You get +1 junk (max+3).*

Real scrappy. *When you **get in a fight** with a weapon you made yourself, roll+junk instead of +spine. If somebody else **gets in a fight** with a weapon you made and it does its job, loosen your chain or you both heat your chain (your call).*

This is the main combat and social move for the junker. It makes sure they can be of at least some use in a fight, and also means that the junker will likely be buddy-buddy with crewmembers that can protect them.

Go fish. *When you **scrape a hulk**, you can name something you need: something that you could find on the hulk, something specific and useful and expensive. On a 10+ on the roll, you find the thing instead of whatever you would've normally found; on a 7-9, you still find it, but it's got strings attached, as normal. On a miss, something even worse is going to be on that hulk.*

Ordinarily, it's your call—the MC's call—on what exactly hulks hold within them. This move changes that. It adds another layer of risk, as the consequences get a bit more dire, but it ensures that a good junker can always find exactly what they need on a hulk.

Scrapyard buddies. *When you **scrape a hulk**, on a 10+, you gain 1 hold for contacts. On a 7-9, you can opt for whatever you normally find or you can gain 1 hold for contacts, but not both. On a miss, you get no extra benefit.*

Junkers have friends all over; if they've got useful scrap, those friends will be more plentiful.

It always works, until it doesn't. *When something of yours would break, you can instead choose to have someone else's thing break instead. When someone else's thing breaks, you can choose to have something of yours break instead.*

For friendly junkers, this lets them take it on the chin for a pal. For dickish junkers, this lets them screw over basically everyone on the crew.

Mass production. *When you **repair something**, you can spend 1-credit in scrap to automatically count as having rolled a 10+.*

Basically, they can do the same thing anyone can do in a station or outpost, but on the fly.

The junker doesn't have an explicit dedicated room. Instead they add +1 size to two rooms of their choice, up to a maximum of size+2. Which rooms the junker chooses is up to them; the crew may advise them, of course, but it's the junker's final call.

When the Captain is the junker, they also get this move:

Ripper job. *When you come across an abandoned hulk with an intact room (typically when you remove the crew of a ship without destroying it) that you also have on your ship, you can add that room's mass to yours. Spend 5-credit in scrap and roll+junk. On a 10+, you strip it for useful parts, and your room gains +1 size. On a 7-9, you strip it for parts and your room gains +1 size, but your room is destroyed in the process. On a miss, your room is completely destroyed and must be repaired for no benefit.*

Regardless of outcome, when you strip a room like this, no more rooms from that hulk can be stripped.

In short, if there's a hulk that has an intact room aboard, the Captain can make a roll and spend some scrap to upgrade a room's size by one. This is one of the most powerful Captain moves in the entire game, as the crew can upgrade their ship on the fly extremely cheaply. That said, it's high-risk: a 7-9 destroys the to-be-upgraded room, which can be disastrous when in the midst of a span. Likewise, the initial cost is high: 5-credit in scrap can be a lot for crews to just keep on hand, especially ones starting out. On top of all that, a botched roll will entirely destroy the crew's own room for no benefit.

This move is high-cost and high-risk, but can also reap some of the greatest benefits. It's up to you exactly how often a hulk will have an intact room aboard, but be generous; making the junker the Captain can be a risky move (as the junker tends to be low on face, spine, and gut, all quite useful for Captains), so be sure to reward them at least sometimes.

RUNNER MOVES

The runner choose three of these moves:

Cold-blooded. You get +1 gut (max+3).

Cut and run. Name your escape route and roll+gut. On a 10+, you're gone. On a 7-9, you're gone, but something you want or need breaks, and must be repaired. On a miss, you're caught, half-in and half-out.

Runners run; it's just what they do. "Caught, half-in and half-out" means you get to do basically whatever you want to the runner as consequence.

Bob and weave, duck and cover. When you hold firm, roll+gut instead of +spine.

Ask questions later. When you're in a conversation overhung by the threat of violence, roll+gut. On a 10+, hold 2. On a 7-9, hold 1. If the moment arises and you need to waste somebody, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, to immediately inflict harm. On a miss, your opponent holds 1 against you.

This is the "shoot first" move. It's up to you and the runner what constitutes a conversation overhung by threat of violence, but it probably involves two parties in a back alley or shady dock, some casual insinuations towards physical harm, and a possible reaching for weapons. However it goes down, the runner gets to shoot first (unless they hard-miss the roll, obviously).

Born in the gutter. When you deal with the Authority in an illegitimate capacity, take +1 ongoing.

"An illegitimate capacity" entails lying, smuggling, mocking, fighting, that kind of thing.

Tucked away for later. When somebody needs something badly, the kind of thing you could fit in a crate or fist or pocket, roll+gut. On a 10+, you've got it, right here and right now, good to go. On a 7-9,

you've got it, but it's only good for now and will run out or break soon. On a miss, you don't have what's needed, and actually have something bad.

The key distinction here is the size. The runner can't just whip out a whole shuttle or something, it's gotta be something that they could feasibly have hidden earlier. A long gun or hefty repair kit is generally the upper limit. This move is pretty darn good, so don't feel bad about punishing misses harshly.

Black-hearted. *When you call for help, the other person always suffers the consequences, regardless of your chain.*

If the runner wants to be a churlish prick, they absolutely can be. Gets them out clean, right?

Notch in the armor. *When you **get in a fight** or **act fast** against another crew member, you can roll+heat instead of +spine or +gut.*

Runners are dicks; they know everyone's weak spots.

Turning tables, turning cloaks. *When a crewmember comes to you and asks for your help in doing something illegal, roll with +1 ongoing until it's done. Afterwards, either loosen your chain with them, or you each cool your chain (your call).*

This is the runner's major social move; the key component here is that another crewmember has to come to the runner—the runner can't go to them. It's also worth noting that it cools the chain, rather than heating: anyone who spends a lot of time around a runner in their natural habitat should be feeling at least a little bit nervous.

On top of these, the runner also adds a small (size+1) set of bolt-holes as their dedicated room. Crime always demands stealth, and so being able to have some quick and easy hideaways is always helpful.

Runner Captains also get this move:

Underworld connections. *If you take an illegal job (whether it starts that way or you just reach the point of no return), you immediately gain an extra 2 hold for **contacts**, and get +1 forward on all rolls you make for the move.*

Basically, this means that, assuming the runner's Captain, illegal jobs always get a leg up on their legal counterparts. Runners have friends in the underworld everywhere; this lets them make use of them.

SAWBONES MOVES

To start, the sawbones gets this move:

Bound in blood. Whenever you heal a crewmember for any amount of harm, they heat their chain with you. If they were unconscious or worse, they also loosen their chain with you.

This the sawbones social move, and the sawbones always gets it. If it's a friend being healed, it reinforces that bond; if it's a rival, it makes it worse. That said, everyone recognizes that saving someone on death's door takes a level of genuine trust, one that is best taken into account.

Then, they choose two off of this list:

Non-combatant. When you're in a fight and healing people instead of fighting, you get +1 armor.

If, at some point, the sawbones opts to start shooting, they don't get +1 armor. When they go back to healing, that armor returns. No sweat.

"Natural" remedies. When you **scrape a hulk**, the stuff you find can be 2 medpacks instead of whatever else it would be.

If whatever that thing should've been had strings attached, so too do the medpacks.

Red to red, white to white. When someone is hurt and you try to patch them up as best you can without any gear, roll+brain. On a 10+, they immediately heal 1-harm and take +1 forward. On a 7-9, they heal 1 harm, but something of yours or theirs (your call) breaks, and must be repaired. On a miss, they immediately suffer 1 harm and take -1 forward.

The quandary here is whether the sawbones chooses to burn through their own meager equipment, or if they'd rather make use of their patient's.

Practical surgery. When you **get in a fight** with a hand- or intimate-ranged weapon, roll+brain instead of +spine.

Life debt. *If you save an NPC on the verge of death, you get +1 hold for **contacts**.*

This is the sawbones's main NPC move. It lets them get all kinds of friends in high places, and it encourages them to save NPCs, rather than murder them—which can make for juicy roleplay.

Unflinching eye. *When someone is under your care, you can **analyze something** with your patient as the thing.*

“Under your care” means the sawbones is healing them, or trying to.

Insurance policy. *At the beginning of a job, roll+spine. On a 10+, hold 3; on a 7-9, hold 2; on a miss, hold 1 anyway. When someone is under your care, spend 1 hold to plant an insurance policy on them. At any time, you can activate the insurance policy to instantly deal 3-harm (ap). At your option, your patient knows it's there before it goes off.*

Again, “under your care” means anytime the sawbones is healing someone. If things get real snarly, this is the sawbones's solution: sometimes you just gotta frag a fucker.

The sawbones's dedicated room is a small (size+1) infirmary. It's filled with whatever tools, medicine, drugs, equipment, and other crap that's necessary for healing, custom-tooled to fit the sawbones as they see fit.

When the sawbones assumes the mantle of Captain, they also get this move:

Guardian angel. *At the start of a job, roll+brain: on a 7-9, hold 2; on a 10+, hold 2 and take +1 ongoing when you treat someone at 3-harm or more. On a miss, hold 1 anyway. During the job, when someone takes 5-harm and would die but instead chooses to live, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, to revive them to 4-harm instead, with no further consequences.*

Normally, when a crewmember would die, they can choose to not die and instead suffer a whole boatload of bad consequences of some variety. In this case, the Captain can step in and prevent that from happening. The exact mechanics of this are up to the sawbones: maybe it's life-saving drugs, maybe it's some kind of auto-revival unit, maybe it's just pure dumb luck.

SMOKER MOVES

From the start, the smoker gets their kit, which does this:

*When you **improve a gun by removing or adding tags**, spend 1-cred-it in scrap, then roll+junk. On a 10+, add or remove one tag of your choice. On a 7-9, if you remove a tag, the MC gets to remove one tag as well; if you want to add a tag, the MC gets to add one, too. On a miss, the MC gets to take away or add a tag of their choice.*

The smoker is a gunner, and so naturally has to be able to modify and tweak their guns. Tags are covered in the Gear chapter (page 181), but some are good and some are bad. On the off-chance that you, the MC, need to remove a tag and there are no good tags to remove, feel free to add a bad tag.

After their kit, the smoker chooses two of these:

Rip & tear. *You inflict +1 harm to people and ships alike.*

Artificer. *When you use your gunner's kit to improve a gun, when you would normally add or remove one tag of your choice, add or remove two instead.*

Remote autotargetting. *You can fire any of the ship's guns from anywhere on or around the ship.*

Overcharge. *When you spend time tinkering and getting to know a gun—any gun, ship's or otherwise—roll+junk. On a 10+, hold 2. On a 7-9, hold 1. Anyone using that gun can spend your hold, 1 for 1, to deal +2 harm. On a miss, hold 1 anyway, but the gun immediately breaks, and must be repaired. While a gun's overcharged, you can't overcharge it again.*

Sometimes, you just need a bit more oomph to your guns. The smoker can tool up everyone's weapons, but not without risk.

Tune up. *When you repair or improve a weapon that belongs to somebody else, loosen your chain, or both of you heat your chain (your call).*

This is the smoker's main social move: they'll be friends with people who use their guns. **Overcharge** counts as "repairing or improving," too.

Knuckle down. *When someone near you needs to hold firm or act fast and you bellow at them to win and not fail, they count as having rolled a 10+, but tighten your chain afterwards.*

A smoker might also wear the hat of a drill sergeant: this is their move. When the crew is falling apart because they can't keep up, this is the move.

Full-body harness. *You can detach a ship's gun (heavy or light, either) from the ship, and then carry it around and use it just like a regular gun.*

For whatever reason, players seem to expect there to be a catch—there isn't. The smoker can just get a big fucking gun; it's re-attachable later, too.

Failsafe triggers. *If someone's using a gun that you worked on at any point and you don't want them to be using it, that gun immediately breaks; alternatively, you can cause any gun you've worked on to instantly fire at any time, but then that gun breaks and must be repaired.*

On the occasion the smoker wants to meddle, rather than face things head-on, this is their move. It works for PCs and NPCs both, so don't hold back.

No bullshit. *When you **threaten** or **hold firm** against another crew member, you can roll+heat instead of +face or +spine.*

Again, this is the drill sergeant coming through. Smokers don't have the time or resources to screw around, and that resentment can shine through.

On top of all this, the smoker also adds a small (size+1) set of guns to the ship: that comes out to two light guns and two heavy guns. These guns can be whatever the smoker wants, since it's their gig, after all.

If the smoker is also the Captain, they get this move, too:

Spotter's call. *When anyone other than you mans the ship's guns and you spot them, roll+spine. On a 10+, everyone manning a gun other than you deals +1 harm and takes +1 ongoing until the fighting's done. On a 7-9, they all take one or the other, not both. On a miss, they all take -1 ongoing.*

The smoker is a gunner, and now the rest of the crew can be, too.

TECH MOVES

The tech chooses three of these moves:

Tooo many books. You get +1 brain (max+3).

Sharp eyes, sharper wit. When you **analyze something** or **get a read**, you always get one additional hold.

Forced seclusion protocols. When you're in the systems room, you can **lock down a room** on another ship within far range exactly as if it was your own.

Normally, crewmembers can only **lock down a room** aboard their own ship; this makes it so that the tech can also do it to enemy ships, which can be very, very powerful in the right cases.

Logical outcomes. When you **threaten someone**, roll+brain instead of +face. When you're with the Captain when they get a job, they take +1 forward; if you're the Captain, you take +1 forward.

A small social buff; it keeps the tech active when the crew gets to talking, and it makes them useful to bring along to pick up jobs.

Full ship scan. When you use the systems to scan another ship, roll+brain, and then ask questions from the list below, to which the MC will answer honestly. On a 10+, ask 3; on a 7-9, ask 1:

- how many people are on board?
- how much weaponry does the ship and crew have?
- who does this ship work for?
- what rooms does this ship have?

On a miss, ask 1 anyway, but the systems immediately suffer 1-harm [ap].

Sometimes, **getting a read** isn't enough. The tech can answer questions the other crewmembers will have, and handily, too.

Integral defenses. When someone is in the systems room and you don't want them to be, take +1 ongoing to any rolls against them.

Discrete compu-functions. *You can make systems moves from anywhere on the ship, along with any moves that require you to be at the systems.*

This is just like the other remote moves. This one applies to when they **lock down a room**, obviously, but also to **forced seclusion protocols**, **full ship scan**, and **integral defenses**.

Audio-neural interlinks. *You and the entire crew can talk to each other, with or without speaking, from anywhere. If you tag someone, you can add them, too, and then remove them at any time.*

Tagging someone means the tech walks up to them and tags them with something, like a recording device or a skin implant.

Old world knowledge. *When a crewmember comes to you for advice, tell them what you honestly think the best course of action is. If they do it, they take +1 ongoing, and you loosen your chain. If the plan works, you both heat your chain; if it doesn't, you both cool your chain.*

This is the tech's main social move; the tech is a counselor, and so they can alter their relationships by giving council.

Trace connections. *When you **get a read** on another crew member or **analyze something** belonging to another crewmember, you can roll+heat instead of +gut or +brain.*

Techs aren't experts on people, but if they feel strongly about someone, they'll take the time to learn anyway.

The tech's dedicated room is real simple: the systems get +1 size. The systems are the undisputed home of the tech, and so they always add to them.

When the tech is Captain, they also get this move:

Hard return. *At the beginning of a job, hold 1 for each of your crew, including yourself. At any point, you can spend your hold, 1 for 1, to instantly return a crew member to the ship, regardless of where they are. If the crew member is unwilling, tighten your chain after they return. If you tag someone, you can use this move on them, too.*

Insurance, abduction, reins, preservation—this move does it all. It simply depends how the Captain uses it.

THE MASTER OF CERE- MONIES

It's you! You're the Master of Ceremonies, what this game calls its GM.

Congratulations! It's good to be the MC!

You play the world, the dangers, the NPCs, the Authority, and basically everything else that isn't the crew or their ship. You don't need to have all of the details ahead of time by any means—part of the fun of this game is coming up with stuff on the fly based on what tidbits the players give you—but it does mean you're on the hook for “lore.” This chapter and the chapter on the world (page 191) can definitely help with that, if that makes you nervous, but you shouldn't be. Whatever you make up is valid, I trust you.

You're also the adjudicator of rules and mechanics, which means that when there's uncertainty about what rule applies or when a move is used, it's your call. This means that a lot of what you do is make judgement calls; roleplaying games are about the relationship between structured rules and open narrative, and you're the go-between. This feels like a lot, but don't worry too much: read the moves closely, think about the “when you...” phrases of each, and then just go with your gut on whether or not it applies. Again, I trust you.

If you've never been the MC for a “Powered by the Apocalypse” game before, it's going to feel a little bit different. You have less control over the game; the players have far more volition. If you try to have a “plot” planned out ahead of time, this won't work. Part of what makes *Rust Hulks* tick is that nobody, including you, knows what's going to happen ahead of time.

As MC, you have three primary fields that apply to you: your agendas, which are your broad, overarching goals for the game; your principles, which guide you in how to best deal with situations as they come; and your moves, which are the things you can do moment-to-moment in the game. Learn these three and reference them often, and you'll do just fine.

Good luck!

AGENDAS

Your agendas are the broad goals you should be striving for over the course of the game; they're the overarching, all-encompassing objectives you have as the MC. If you can hit your agenda each session, you'll be fine.

Your agendas are as follows:

- ***Make the future feel used***
- ***Make the crew's lives not boring***
- ***Play to find out what happens***

Everything you do should be to accomplish these three. It's not, as an example, your agenda to fuck over the players, or to run a really complicated "storyline," or to build a giant in-depth world. If you're doing something that isn't in aid to one of these three, stop. Don't do it. Change whatever it is you're doing.

If you're used to other RPGs, this might feel weird. Trust me. If you try to run *Rust Hulks* like it's some other game, you'll fuck it up and it will all go bad.

Every chance you get, mention how rusty and overworked and worn-down everything is. Embrace the grimy, trashy, used-car-dealer tone the whole game has throughout. Make sure the players know that things were once great, but now have just gone to shit.

This is not a game about being world-saving space heroes, it's a game about people trying to scrape by in a capitalist hellscape. That said, you still need to do your best to make sure that the crew has interesting, evocative, engaging things to do. Make things dramatic, powerful, and momentous—but keep the scale small and personal.

Finally, you should play this game without knowing what the next scene is. "Play to find out what happens" has sort of taken on a life of its own on various RPG design forums, I know, but it's a good agenda regardless. Don't pre-plan the game, don't have a "plot" established, don't know what happens next before it happens. Let the game breathe; let your players have power.

PRINCIPLES

The principles are your guidelines, your rules. They should help determine your behaviors as MC, how you run things, and how engage the players. The agendas are your goal; the principles are your roadmap.

The principles are as follows:

- ***Address characters, not players***
- ***Make your move, but be subtle about it***
- ***Be a fan of the crew***
- ***Give them just enough rope to hang themselves***
- ***Turn up the heat instead of scorching them***
- ***Sometimes, disclaim decision-making***
- ***Act mostly in response***
- ***Keep them on the edge of desperation***
- ***Coat it all in grime and rust***

Address characters, not players. This is just good hygiene. Don't say "Jess, what is Tonkers doing about the engine?" Instead, say "Tonkers, what are you doing about the engine?" It shifts the focus from the players sitting around a table to the crew themselves, on their ship out among the hulks. When you need to describe or declare things, make them stuff that the characters would know: "The Authority guardsman looks up from his clipboard, stands a little straighter, and then turns and runs down the street. It's obvious he's got you made." That's obvious to the characters, so you can say it. Don't tell the players things the characters wouldn't know—and don't tell the players something that you should be telling the characters.

Make your move, but be subtle about it. You've got a bunch of moves; they in the next section. When you make a move—like, maybe "break something"—don't say "I use 'break something' to break your engine," say "The plasma slag has melted through the engine's rotary generator. There's no way the ship's flying with it in this state." You frame it, dress it up, put a little show on. It's still just a broken engine, sure, but now it's not you breaking the engine, it's got half-melted rotors stuck together. You see? You're not tricking them, you're just concealing how the sausage is made.

Be a fan of the crew. Look, this game gets nasty sometimes. When they're out of the frying pan and hop into the fire, you're the cook; when they're up shit creek without a paddle, you're the shit-piranha; when all hell breaks loose, you're the one that left hell's backdoor unlocked. You gotta root for the crew, and thus the players. If you don't, this game is just brutal and no fun for anybody. Take an interest in them; ask questions; support them throughout play.

Give them just enough rope to hang themselves. This game really shines when the players are weighing their options, considering the gamble they have in front of them. Do they scrape through that sketchy hulk or pass it by? Do they pay for an engine repair or push on without? Do they take the illegal job or opt for something safer? All good questions, all excellent opportunities for the players to get into trouble. Let them. Every time that things go to shit, the players should be able to trace it back to a call they made. You don't really need to cause trouble for them; they'll cause enough trouble for themselves.

Turn up the heat instead of scorching them. When something goes awry, don't just slam them with harm and misery. Give them something to worry about, a cause for concern, an encroaching problem. Sure, sometimes when they get smashed with a coilgun you just need death and destruction, but: more often it's better to just add on more needling problems. When the helm's cracked open and the guns are on fire and there are boarders storming the cargo hold, don't just blow up the engines. Instead, fizzle out the life support. Add more and more plates for the players to juggle, but don't shatter them unless you really mean it.

Sometimes, disclaim decision-making. Essentially, don't be afraid to hand off the reins sometimes. This applies to all kinds of things, and the decisions can come from all sorts of places. Rules adjudication, NPC behavior, lore tidbits—all of that and more you can just, you know, disclaim. Let somebody or something else decide. Dice, a friend, the players, “what the characters would do,” whatever. Don't feel like you need to arbitrate everything.

Makes moves mostly in response. *Rust Hulks* mostly runs itself, at least from the players' perspective. If they nailed every roll they made with a 10+,

it would require zero input from you. That means that, really, the moves you make are in response to players botching a roll. This isn't true 100% of the time—sometimes they need a little kick—but it's definitely true most of the time. Sit back, let them do what they're doing, and then come in once they roll that fat 4 with a +2 in the stat.

Keep them on the edge of desperation. Over the course of a session, the players are going to get stuff. Credits, scrap, jobs, whatever. Whenever they get something good, most of the time it shouldn't be quite enough. Everything should always be tinged by discomfort, by that gnawing anxiety that what they've got isn't going to cut it. Sometimes when they do really well and make it all work and the rolls go just right, then make sure they've got enough. But otherwise? Keep them on the edge.

Coat it all in grime and rust. Space is full of huge machines long since rusted solid. Everything should be mass-produced, used, worn, dirty and scrap-py. Things were once gleaming and spinning and hot, once, but now they're grimy and clunky and lukewarm. Everything should feel intense and brutal and industrial, and everything should always be rusted almost all the way through.

Abide by these principles, and your game will be all the better for it.

MOVES

Your moves, the MC moves, are a little different. You don't roll any dice for these. Instead, you just do them. When you want something to break, you break something; when you want to hurt someone, you deal harm; when you want to introduce danger, you introduce danger. There's no chance, you just do it.

However, this doesn't mean you can just do whatever you want! Most of the time, you should only be using these moves as counteraction to players, usually after they've missed a move. If you just start dumping problems and goodies on your players willy-nilly, it will take away all sense of control they have, your game will be ruined, and it will be all your fault. Restrain yourself.

The MC moves, the moves you can make, are as follows:

- ***Put someone in the hot seat***
- ***Inflict harm***
- ***Drain resources***
- ***Break something***
- ***Kick in some downsides***
- ***Explain the possible consequences, then ask***
- ***Offer a new opportunity***
- ***Introduce a new threat or danger***
- ***Turn their moves against them***

Put someone in the hot seat. Face a character with a tough choice, a hard bargain, a moment of tension, an encroaching problem. Take that PC and face them with challenge. This is the moment where that PC is now, more or less, in the spotlight. It might not be a good spotlight—in fact, it probably won't be—but this is their chance to shine bright and have big moments.

Inflict harm. This move is probably the simplest one here. Sometimes, you just slam some damage on something. Be it person, room, or something else, much of the time you will just hurt someone. This should vary in scale: little harm, like a stumble or a bruise or a close call, is 1- or maybe 2-harm; big harm, like a shotgun blast or a burning engine room or a machete

digging into you, is 3- or maybe 4-harm. There are really no times you should be dealing 5-harm with no forewarning. That will instantly kill an unarmored player, which is a very brutal thing to do.

Drain resources. Players love their stuff. Fuel, supplies, weapons, ammunition, contacts, gear, and whatever else they cook up. Sometimes, rather than just dishing out damage, it can be a good idea to drain away some of these resources. In some cases, this is literal: tick down their fuel gauge, burn their fancy ammo, that kind of thing. In others, it's putting them in a nasty situation where their best choice is to burn one of these resources—contacts are good for this. If they're stranded halfway between the Belt and Jupiter, it might be time to call a friend. Direct and indirect, slurping away at their valuable stuff can be fun.

Break something. This is the bite to downsides' bark. Sometimes, when something goes very seriously awry, don't just active a downside, but instead you can full-on break something. Usually, this is just an item, like a weapon or tool or something, but occasionally, if it's extremely dire, you can break something more serious, like a doorway or piece of cargo or a vital piece of a room. This is basically the alternative to harm: if you don't want to hurt the players, hurt their stuff instead.

Kick in some downsides. Everything out among the hulks is on the verge of breaking. Weapons are shoddy, hulls are patched, engines sputter, armor is cracked, and everything is unreliable and about to break down. Sometimes, when something goes awry, you should, rather than simply destroy something, make something's bad sides felt. A lot of the items in this game have traits and quirks and ups and downs, and this is the chance to make them known and show their impact. If you can, build on how the players have described those things previously; use what they give you, however you can.

† When a crewmember gets stuck between two different things and can only choose one, make sure they have a good sense of the consequences, then ask them. Give them the choice, and make sure they're informed; this is all good drama. If you don't cover the consequences, it feels coerced; if you don't ask them, then there's no choice at all. This is the move that sparks some of the best juice, trust me.

Offer a new opportunity. Out among the hulks, there are all sorts of chances. Chances for faster routes, bigger profits, and dangerous trouble. When these chances arrive, make sure the players know about them. You don't necessarily have to tell them every minor detail, but definitely cover the broad strokes, enough that they can make a legitimate decision. This ties into giving them rope for the gallows—there's nothing better than dangling them a new angle on a job, only to have it backfire on them because of some boneheaded decision they made earlier.

Introduce a new threat or danger. Change things up. They thought this was a simple hauling job from Titan to Mercury, but now that cargo turns out to be weapons contraband. They're scraping a hulk and find a person, someone who needs help as soon as they can get it. Those pirates are actually Authority hunters, pulling an illegal act of entrapment. Make things dicey. Keep the players on their toes.

Turn their moves against them. This doesn't mean that they roll a 10+ and it goes bad somehow anyway. Instead, it means that when they botch a roll, use whatever they just tried to do against them. They wanted to make a mad dash to their ship as it was pulling away? Have them fall off the docks. They wanted to fix their fancy new armor? Have it be shattered into a bunch of pieces. Tie the narrative of their move into the mechanics of their consequences. Mirror their choices, and make them real.

PREP

So, really, this bit shouldn't be called "prep." It's really "some guidelines to help you run NPCs and ships and stuff" but that doesn't fit nicely, so it's called "prep."

It covers some rough guidelines and suggestions to help you come up with the necessary content of the game, primarily NPCs and NPC ships. All of this is pretty malleable; if you need to shift or tweak or change some of it around to better suit your game, by all means, do it.

NPCs

NPCs, or non-player characters, are all of the other non-crewmember characters that the crew will meet and interact with over the course of the game.

NPCs are simple. They should have clear and specific goals, and they should do their best to reach them. NPCs come in four basic flavors: Authority, merchant, criminal, and ordinary. Each has their own common motivations

Authority NPCs work for the Authority. They're soldiers, officers, hunters, inspectors, cops, and whatever other nefarious figures you need them to be. They dress in dark uniforms; they hide their faces behind masks, helmets, and eyepieces; they wear sleek matching armor. Authority NPCs are jerks, basically: they want to enforce Authority rule, they want to keep their taskmasters happy, they want to flex their raw power, and they want to earn some credits along the way. They're enforcers, guard dogs, and bureaucrats.

Merchant NPCs work for corporate overlords, or are independent sales-people themselves. They either dress efficiently and cheaply, or they dress in gaudy, flaunted wealth. Merchant NPCs are out to make as many credits as they can; they also have reputations to uphold, wares to keep safe, and a desperate impulse to keep things running smoothly. They're friendly with crews because they can sell them something; as soon as a crew starts to be more trouble than they're worth, though, merchants will cut them loose. They're salespeople, corporate officers, and used car dealers.

Criminal NPCs are decidedly against the Authority; they run the gamut from pirates to gangsters to insurgents to warlords. They have no unified style, but they usually lean into images of destruction and power: spikes, war paint, ragged clothes, bristly weapons, wild tattoos, that kind of thing. First and foremost, they want to avoid being caught by the Authority (or other criminals), but they also want to settle old scores, improve their clout and standing in the criminal underworld, and make a boatload of credits in the process. They're thugs, smugglers, and godfathers.

Ordinary NPCs are, well, ordinary. Ordinary doesn't really exist in *Rust Hulks*, but these are people that are trying to get by on their own, without much allegiance to other masters. They dress in patched, worn clothing; they speak in a number of dialects and accents; some might have more credits than others, but none of them are rich. Ordinary folk, much like the crew, want to avoid the gaze of the Authority, cover for their friends and other loved ones, advance their own interests and goals, and try to make enough credit to stay afloat. They're workers, mainly; people just trying to make it all work.

In terms of armor and weapons and stuff, NPCs usually die if they take 3-harm. 1-harm has them hurt and shaken, 2-harm has them bloody and broken, and 3-harm kills them. A super-tough Authority bossman or some pirate warlord might take 4-harm, just as a weakling scavenger might die after 2-harm, but 3-harm is a good base.

Keep your NPCs simple. Don't let them overshadow the crew.

NPC SHIPS

NPC ships follow the same broad rules as the crew's ship: there are a bunch of rooms, they have different functions, and take damage separately. This might seem overwhelming, but it can be simplified.

First and foremost, every single ship needs a helm, an engine, and systems. A ship that doesn't have these is a hulk. If you need rooms (or if the crew needs rooms to target) these three will always be there. By and large, rooms on NPC ships are all the same size, typically with a minimum of small (size+1). If the ship's got a special room you can make it bigger—like maybe it's a big fat barge, so it's got a large (size+3) cargo hold, or something.

Almost every ship has a hull, too; ones that don't tend to go down quickly. For the purpose of simplicity, NPC ships generally have 3-hull (weak), 5-hull (standard), or 7-hull (tough as nails). This pretty effectively gates the kind of weapons you need, from people-sized guns to ship guns to very large and scary ship guns.

Almost all ships in the system have some kind of gun; it's just too dangerous not to. Dinky little ships, like shitty merchants or whatever, typically have one light gun. Midrange ships, like most serious merchants and most pirates, have one light gun and one heavy gun; it gives them good range, and is enough to scare off most things. Big honking ships, like hefty pirate ships or Authority hunters, can basically have as many guns as they want.

In terms of crew, crews come in three rough sizes: for small ships, they have 1-3 crew; for midrange ships, they have crews of 5-10; big ships have crews of 15 people or more. These numbers are pretty fudgeable; they mostly matter so the crew's bruiser and smoker can figure out exactly how many people they need to waste.

Finally, two pieces of advice on ships: first, use fancy rooms, like boarding docks and bolt-holes and shuttles, sparingly. They can turn things on their hand quickly, the kind of thing where players start to panic.

Second, always make Authority ships more powerful. Four times out of five, crews will try to talk or flee from the Authority, not fight them. Make that stick; don't be afraid to have them be imperious as hell.

HUBS, OUTPOSTS, AND STATIONS

The exact specifications of what separates these in terms of lore is covered in the world chapter (page 191), but the basic gist is thus: hubs are big cities, outposts are small towns, both are on planets; stations are free-standing space stations, usually in space.

When the crew lands on a moon or planet, figure out if they're more likely to land at a hub or outpost; not every planet and moon has both, so check the book if you're not sure. If they stumble on a station or would prefer not to make planetfall, let them.

If you need a name for a hub or outpost or station and can't think of one, do the following: take the planet or moon name, add a Greek letter to it, and then slap a hyphen and number on the end. "Neptune Epsilon-6," or "Io Rho-2." It sounds industrious and sci-fi, like humanity was expanding so fast it couldn't be bothered to come up with things as mundane as names.

Hubs have it all: Authority, gangs, merchants, people, and everything they can think of for sale. If they want a piece of gear or a ship upgrade or something in a hub, let them have it. Most hubs have most jobs

Outposts don't: they usually will have an Authority office, a handful of merchants, a local gang, and then some ordinary people. They have the basics for sale—medpacks, weapons, repair kits, armor, ship repairs—but probably don't have fancy stuff. If they're trying to find work in an outpost, it's going to be a little dicier, most of the time.

Stations vary. The big ones are the size of hubs, and sell everything accordingly. Small ones are more common, roughly in line with outposts. The very smallest stations are basically a single dock attached to a couple of studio apartments; these ones will have nothing for sale other than ship repairs.

Don't stress about these too much; generally, if a player wants something and there aren't wildly extenuating circumstances, let them have it.

JOBS

Jobs are the core of what players do in *Rust Hulks*. They're the crew's main source of income, the bulk of what they spend their time on, and are the source of nearly all things good and bad.

A job is defined thusly: the crew is hired by someone else to perform a task or service, in exchange for which the crew will receive some kind of payout. That's it. There are moves that reference the ending or beginning of a job, but don't sweat those. If the crew gets paid to do something, that's a job. Everything else is pretty much irrelevant.

Just like players and your other MC moves, jobs have their own specific moves. These are moves that, like MC moves, you can and should make when appropriate: you don't need to roll, just do them.

Each job has its own list of moves it can make; some are similar to other jobs' moves, but you shouldn't make moves from jobs outside the current one. That is, don't be bringing out haul moves when the crew's running a hit. When a job move says "push," like "push analyze something," it means that you should be a bit more active in prompting crewmembers to make that specific basic move.

There are five kinds of jobs: the Haul, the Ferry, the Escort, the Hit, and the Fetch. This chapter will cover each in detail, along with their moves. It'll also cover basic job structure, how to set up and end jobs, legality, and a handful of other useful things.

After the core chapter on MC'ing, this chapter is arguably the most important chapter for you in the entire game. Read it in detail. t

STRUCTURE

All jobs follow the same basic structure: the crew puts out a call for a job to get hired, they do the job, they come in and get paid.

Most of that is just ordinary gameplay. The parts that are a little snarlier, the beginning and the end, have special moves: ***get a job***, and ***get paid***.

Get a job is rolled when the crew needs a job. The Captain decides what kind of job they want, makes the roll, and then you tell them what job they landed. Have the Captain meet with their employer to set terms, let the Captain haggle or threaten or whatever, and then let them go.

Most jobs pay at least something up front, especially on long journeys. Don't have the employer offer this unless they're a friend of the Captain's, but once the Captain demands it, be easygoing. If you want to spice it up a bit, have the employer give them enough credits to cover, say, half the spans for the job, but leave the crew to their own devices to figure out the rest.

Once they have the job, it's just ordinary gameplay. Fly spans, see what happens, solve whatever problems come up.

Once the job's done, they'll come in to ***get paid***. Sometimes this is where they started, sometimes it's at the end, sometimes it's somewhere else entirely. Wherever it is, the Captain rolls to ***get paid*** only once the job's actually finished. They can keep their cargo or passengers hostage, if they really want to, but the job should be done.

Once the crew and Captain have dealt with ***getting paid***, turn them loose. They'll probably make some repairs and buy some upgrades, but then they'll be out of credits and looking for work. Rinse and repeat.

You should aim for about one job per session. Spans range in time, usually around half an hour, so you can figure out how big a job the crew can take on based on real-life time. That said, there's no hard binding on that, so feel free to take on a few short jobs or one big long job, if the urge strikes you.

LEGALITY

With the Authority's dominion over the solar system, the legality of individual jobs matters a great deal. Most independent ships—the kind your crew will fly—already operate on the fringes of legality, in grey-legal space, and so the law can never be taken for granted.

Broadly speaking, there are two modes of legality for jobs: legal jobs, and illegal jobs. Legal jobs include hauling cargo, ferrying passengers, escorting merchants, bounty hunting, and search-and-rescue operations. Illegal jobs include bootlegging contraband, smuggling wanted individuals, flying protection for smugglers, piracy, and scavenging operations.

Notice how those are basically the same jobs? The difference is whether or not you cross the Authority or not. There's no technical difference whether you're hauling cases of protein solids or cases of coke, it's just a question of whether the Authority allows it. Likewise, preying on merchant vessels and preying on pirate suppliers is effectively the same; one of those just has better PR.

Still, the law cannot be ignored, and thus the legality of a job matters. Illegal jobs always pay better than their legal counterparts, but carry greater risk. On a legal job, being stopped by the Authority is a hassle, something to be dealt with stoic silence. On an illegal job, being stopped by the Authority means risking heavy bribes, jail time, or a fight with a hunter ship—none of which spell good things for a crew that can barely keep their ship afloat.

When a crew embarks on a job, make sure that they're aware of its legality. Jobs can definitely shift from legal to illegal, but they should have some warning if that's about to happen. Tug them towards one side or the other, but make sure that it's their choice, in the end.

THE HAUL

The “haul” in haul refers to hauling cargo. Pulling a haul means shipping cargo from one place to another. It means the crew has to pick up some cargo, fly their ship somewhere else in the system, and then drop it off. It’s the simplest type of job, and the most common.

The important term in the haul is the cargo: it’s the stuff that is literally being hauled. When this section references cargo, it’s the thing the crew is carrying. This could range from textiles to weapons to cattle: it’s all cargo. The one exception to this is people; if the crew is hauling people, it’s not a haul but instead a ferry, with a whole other set of stuff.

Sometimes, the haul’s cargo is literally cargo: big crates of materials or goods, boxed up and stacked in the hold. Sometimes, though, a haul can be closer to a courier service: the crew might be delivering a message, or a sample, or a small parcel of something dangerous. These are still hauls; size often correlates to value, but not always—it also means crews with no cargo hold can still run hauls.

HAUL SETUP

Set up a haul like any other job. The employer is someone who needs something shipped long-distance. They aren’t doing it through ordinary means; maybe that’s because they’re desperate, maybe they’re far out of the way, maybe they’re shipping illicit cargo. Whether or not the employer tells the crew their reasons is up to the employer, but a good crew rarely asks questions—and a good employer volunteers fewer answers.

Typically, the cargo and the employer go hand in hand: one decides the other. If the employer is a mob boss, they’ll likely be shipping weapons or drugs; if the cargo is cattle or foodstuffs, the employer is likely an agri-worker of some kind. After a few hauls (and assuming they get any info whatsoever), the crew will likely be able to guess what their cargo or who their employer is, depending on whichever is unknown.

Remember that, if the Captain opts to do so, they can substitute the cargo hold's size in place of face for rolling to get a job. It's easier to find hauling work that pays well if you've got a ship clearly kitted out for it. Also keep in mind that if a crew literally cannot fit the cargo in their hold, they've likely lost a job—or at the bare minimum a good chunk of the profits.

Pickup is usually simple: it's just loading crates or barrels or bolts onto the ship. Sometimes it's harder, like with cattle, but unless there's good juice to be had in the pickup, feel free to breeze through it.

If there are any special conditions that the cargo needs to be treated with, such as careful handling or regular checkups, figure them out now. Depending on the employer, tell your crew now, too.

HAUL PAYOUT

Payout for a haul is simple, since the only real factor is distance. Generally, the payout for a haul looks like this:

- *By default, pay 5 credit per span flown.*
- *Add 2 credit per span per size of the cargo hold.*
- *Add 3 credits per span for illegal or illicit cargo.*

Since a mid-weight class ship suffering ordinary incidental costs runs about 4-5 credits per span, nearly all of the profit margins on hauls come from the size of the cargo hold. This is intentional. Pretty much any crew can pull hauls, but it's not a good way to make lots of cash long-term. The cheapest, dirtiest hauls will pay 5 to 10 credits.

That is, of course, assuming you're pulling strictly legal jobs. Once you factor in the potential risk of hauling contraband, the profit margins begin to increase rapidly. This is also intentional. For crews that aren't kitted out for long hauls, turning to less-legal cargo is an easy way to come out on top, at least a little but.

Of course, for crews that both have a heavy-duty cargo hauler and are willing to turn a blind eye to their cargo's lawfulness, well... the sky's the limit, really. The priciest, riskiest, most daring smuggler hauls can easily run upwards of 100 credits.

As always, make sure your players have a decent estimation of these numbers going into their job searches. They should know that having a big cargo hold will potentially double their payout, and hauling outside the law can easily do the same.

Likewise, feel free to adjust these numbers up and down a bit. A particularly simple short job might pay a bit less, while a longer job with volatile or dangerous or picky cargo might pay a bit more. Do what feels right; bonuses and docked pay are all part of the charm.

One other thing to consider: it's possible the crew's employer might be willing to offer payment in terms of raw cargo, rather than credits. This is called payment in kind, and is highly common in some parts of the system, particularly for more obscure and marginalized communities. In many cases, employers are willing to pay more if the crew take payment in kind, rather than in credit. Don't feel obligated to do this, but definitely keep it handy when you want it.

HAUL MOVES

Moves for the haul center around the cargo itself; it's the focal point of the job. Moves for the haul are:

- *Push **analyze something***
- *Threaten the cargo's safety*
- *Attract locals interested in the cargo*
- *Dangle using the cargo as a solution to a current problem*
- *Force a decision between the cargo and something else*
- *Hint at stealing the cargo*
- *Present another buyer for the cargo*
- *Reveal the cargo as something other than as described*

Again, the cargo varies wildly, so adapting each of these in turn can be tricky. Remember that it's better to turn up the heat than it is to just scorch them: rather than just blowing up the cargo, mention that it's awful fragile, and then put threats near it. The question that drives the haul is: what's the cargo worth, and how far is the crew willing to push to ensure its safety? Use it.

THE FERRY

The ferry refers to ferrying passengers. Pulling a ferry means that one or more persons has booked passage on their ship to go from one place to another. It means the crew has to pick up some passengers, fly them somewhere, and see them dropped off where they want to be. After hauls, ferries are the most common type of job. It's the kind of thing almost any ship can do, provided there's any spare space on a ship.

In most ways, a ferry is just like a haul, except that rather than shipping cargo, you're shipping people. As with a haul's cargo, the focus of a ferry is on the passengers. Who are they? Where are they going? Why are they going there? What have they done and what will they do?

Ferries also vary in their scale: sometimes, a lucrative ferry can mean that they've ferried a dozen people from one side of the system; sometimes, though, a lucrative ferry can mean that they've gotten a single VIP across a mere two spans. Anyone can pull ferries, the question is just how.

FERRY SETUP

Setting up a ferry follows the same pattern as a haul, but has a few more questions to answer from your end. Mainly, are the employers and the passengers the same people? Typically they are, but there can be all sorts of unusual scenarios where they aren't. In those cases, it's on you to come up with a reason why. Maybe the passenger is a friend or family member of the employer? Maybe the passenger is the operative or employee of a larger organization, the employer? Maybe the passenger is being ferried against their will, and the employer is their captor?

Whatever the reason, you should have at least some idea of what the passenger-employer dynamic is going to be like going into the job. If the passenger is paying their own way, thus serving as employer, consider the employer-crew dynamic there. Is the passenger just cargo, and thus has to follow the Captain's orders? Or is the passenger the crew's employer, and thus they are obligated to follow directions under contract?

Likewise, since the ferry is a job that very explicitly involves other people, it's a good idea to have put together at least the barebones of the NPCs the crew will be ferrying. If it's just one or two people, figure them out. If they're passage for a dozen people, then come up with a few choice personalities—ideally ones that are representative of the larger whole—and use those.

Once the Captain's settled on the job, you follow the same basic steps as a haul: pickup, the actual flying, drop-off. Check the rules on bunks: the Captain can roll to get a job using the bunks' size in place of their face, if they want. As with cargo, any ship can probably squeeze in one or two passengers somewhere (but it won't be pleasant), but anything bigger

As normal, the pickup and drop-off are usually simple, but can get messy. If the passenger is a criminal ringleader or an Authority officer, for example, both of those could get hot, and quickly.

FERRY PAYOUT

Just like hauls, ferries have simple payouts, as the main factor is distance. Generally, the payout for a ferry looks like this:

- *By default, pay 5 credits per span flown.*
- *Add 2 credits per size of the bunks per span.*
- *Add 3 credits per span flown for illegal or highly dangerous jobs.*

Ferries are in the same boat as hauls: pretty much any ship can pull them and they're easy to tack onto an existing job, but only the ships that are actually set up for them will make much money doing it. The cheapest, meastliest milk run ferries will likely pay out about 10 credits; the most dangerous, system-spanning, borderline-suicidal ferries will pay upwards of 100 credits, though those are extremely rare.

It's worth mentioning that you can set up ferry jobs that are only for one or two people, but you should still give the crew credits to account for the size of their bunks. A large set of bunks could hold potentially dozens of people, sure, but those one or two passengers will likely find some use for all that space, thus justifying the higher payout. Also, if your players invest in a certain kind of job and then they manage to land that job, don't shaft them for it.

As with all jobs, there's a decent chance the crew will need or want a chunk of the payout upfront. The twist on that for ferries is that, if the passenger is employer, the crew can potentially be paid by the span. It's not out of bounds to imagine a passenger-employer being willing to pay the crew as they complete each leg of their journey, but not before. If the passenger has all their credits on them, however, there's a chance that the crew might just put a slug in their brain, take the credits, and dump the body.

In terms of legality, ferries follow much the same guidelines as other jobs: illegal jobs are always more profitable, but are riskier. People with wanted bounties on their heads can be smuggled out secretly, but if word gets out they're escaping, hunters will likely pursue—thus putting the crew in a precarious position.

As always, make sure your players have a rough idea of the payout matrix for their ferry jobs, and understand the legality of the job they're taking on. Adjust the credit numbers up and down as befits the job, but make sure you're clear with your players on all of it.

FERRY MOVES

Ferry moves center on your passengers; they're the source of the job itself. Moves for the ferry are:

- *Push **fast-talk** and **threaten someone***
- *Expose a passenger to harm*
- *Reveal a secret about a passenger*
- *A passenger demands the ship take a detour*
- *A passenger demands to leave the ship*
- *Turn a passenger against the others, or against the crew*
- *Force a decision between a passenger and something else*
- *Hint at taking the passengers somewhere they'll be worth more*
- *Introduce a passenger that has history a crewmember.*

Passengers should be volatile. Nearly all of the ferry moves involve you using the passengers to put the crew in awkward, ugly scenarios. People always bring baggage with them, and when they take on passengers, they take on that baggage. Use it.

THE ESCORT

The escort is exactly what it sounds like: it's escorting another ship or ships from one place to another, likely fending off trouble along the way. The Authority's grip weakens significantly past the Belt, to the degree that any-one travelling further than Mars will often need protection. It's here that an escort is helpful: merchant clients are loath to hire crew and add weapons to their ship, as it's often cheaper to simply hire a mercenary or two for protection instead.

The escort departs significantly from ferries and hauls: there's another ship involved, the client, which further entails another Captain and another crew, and the job's goal is not to deliver something or someone to a place, but rather to ensure that another delivery happens without issue.

Likewise, a pricey escort can happen in multiple ways: maybe there are multiple ships to be escorted, maybe there's a long way to travel, or maybe the client being escorted is especially wanted (by the Authority or others).

ESCORT SETUP

The key element of an escort is the client, the ship (or ships) being escorted by the crew. Typically, it's just one ship, one that doesn't have much in the way of defenses. Come up with basic mockups for the Captain of that ship, and one or two key crewmembers; at some point, the crew will be talking with somebody aboard the client ship, and you need a face and a name for that.

In coming up with a client, you also need two pieces of information, which the crew will likely but not necessarily know: the first is the destination, where the client's headed. Most Captains will ask this, but a wily client might want zero leaks, and so will tell them nothing. The second is the reason the client needs an escort; usually this is just because they've got valuable cargo of some variety, but they might also be on the run, be carrying illegal contraband, or be fleeing some kind of pursuer. Whatever the case, coming up with these details ahead of time will ensure that when trouble eventually arises, you'll be prepared for it.

The vast majority of the time, the client—the person and ship being escorted—and the employer—the person or organization paying the crew—are going to be the same. Even in cases where the client is a member of a larger organization, such as a criminal syndicate or corporation, they will still be the one making the payments to the crew. Part of the charm of an escort is the possible option to turn on the client and seize their valuables, but keeping payment elsewhere can deprive the crew of that option.

Once the Captain and employer have settled up, it functions more or less like a haul or ferry. The crew still rolls to travel spans and deals with whatever they encounter, they now just have to deal with another ship in the mix. When they finish the job, they talk to the employer and get paid. If they opt for things to get ugly, make sure that the client brings in some backup—they've just paid the crew for an escort, they obviously can't take them on themselves, so to make that option sting properly the client will need some more muscle.

If the client is not on the same planet as the crew, there may a kind of 0.5th step to the job, where they fly to wherever the client is. This is unusual, but it can make for interesting moments: consider the escort where the previous escort has gotten wasted, and now the crew's called in mid-span as the new escort. There are lots of other ways you can spin this, but make sure most of the job is actually escorting, not flying-to-the-escort.

ESCORT PAYOUT

Payout for an escort is a little trickier than for a haul or a ferry, because while spans flown do matter, the bigger factor is in the heat of the client. Clients that just need a little extra muscle are cheap, while clients that will have all kinds of dangers bearing down on them are worth significantly more.

The payout for an escort looks like this:

- *By default, pay 6 credits per span flown.*
- *Add somewhere between +1 and +4 credits per span flown, based on the heat of the client.*
- *If the client is wanted by the Authority, add +3 credits per span, bare minimum.*

Most escorts pay more than most hauls or ferries because they're more specialized: anyone can pull cargo, but it takes weapons, fighters, and a preparedness for action to run escorts. The cheapest, safest escorts will typically pay around 15 credits; the longest, most hair-raising escort runs can easily pay north of 125 credits, no problem. Sometimes more, if the client really has the Authority on their ass.

You should feel free to add on more to those values, especially if there are extra ships or extra steps involved: the crew has to meet the client somewhere, or they're wrangling a handful of ships, or they've got to take special precautions or detours—any of those warrants a pay raise. Exactly how much varies, and needs to be played by ear a bit. I'd advise against running real complicated escorts early on in your MC'ing career. Once you've gotten a few jobs under your belt and have a sense of how the game's economy flows, then feel free to spice it up.

Like a ferry, there's a chance a potential client would only be willing to pay out for actual services rendered, meaning they'd pay in chunks based on the number of active dangers warded off. Most Captains are wary of these sorts of deals, since they tend to involve very low payouts if there's no trouble, but if things go awry and the client gets hit more than once, they can be very lucrative indeed. An exceptionally cunning Captain might try to find a way to set up an easily-defeated challenge if this was the case, though I'd avoid outright suggesting that to your players.

Whatever you decide for payouts, make sure your players have a general sense of the job ahead of time. The escort has arguably the most volatility in terms of payout, so you can be a little less obvious about it, but do your best to make sure your players know just as much about it as their [experienced freighter] characters would.

ESCORT MOVES

The escort moves are:

- *Push **get a read** and **threaten someone***
- *The client makes a detour*
- *The client demands unreasonable behaviors of the crew*
- *The client offers more payment for dangerous diversions*

- *Target the client over the crew's own ship*
- *Show off the power of the client's pursuers*
- *Bring down pursuers on the client and the crew*
- *Reveal the client as someone different than they said*
- *Hint towards turning on the client directly*
- *Force a decision between the client and something else*

In general, the client is the source of all escort-specific trouble. There's normal trouble to be had, obviously, there always is out in the hulks, but having another ship to wrangle brings in all kinds of new dimensions to the job. Don't be afraid to make the client annoying, prickly, and demanding; push at the crew in places they don't want to be pushed. Just like the ferry, the power dynamic of the client-wielding-credit versus the client-needing-protecting is what makes the escort tick. Use it.

THE HIT

It's the same "hit" you find in "hitman." To run a hit means to go somewhere to kill or destroy a target. When you compare baseline-level jobs, a hit is the most dangerous one on offer: on most jobs, there's a chance the crew will have to get in a fight—on a hit, it's a guarantee.

Structurally, hits are also the most unusual. While a hit typically involves travelling a span or more to kill a target, it doesn't necessitate it. In theory, a hit could take place in the same hub or station the crew's already in; that would be quite out of the ordinary, but not impossible. Beyond that, though, hits are almost always operated remotely—the crew will go somewhere to kill someone, and then receive payment over the wires or else through dead drop. Going somewhere to kill someone and then meeting an employer at that same place would almost certainly provoke suspicion.

Hits are dangerous, unpredictable, and often desperate. For crews that are kitted for them, though, they're invaluable. If a crew can prove reliable at doing one of the least-desired jobs in the system, they'll make easy money.

HIT SETUP

In a lot of ways, a hit is the inverse of a ferry or an escort: there's still a key NPC or ship that serves as the focal point of the job, but rather than ensuring its safety, it's the crew's job to destroy it.

For you, there are two major pieces to setting up a hit: the target, whatever or whoever it may be; and the employer, the person or organization that wants the target fragged. It's important for you to figure out why the employer needs or wants the target gone, and what's stopping them from simply doing it themselves. In the case of Authority bounties, one of the most common scenarios for a hit, it's simply because it's cheaper to hire bounty hunters; for organized crime syndicates, hiring independent crews make for easier cover-ups. Whatever the reason, it's important to consider the reasoning behind the hit, as it's what drives the whole tension of the job.

Once you have the employer, the target, and their connection, you're pretty much done. Hits are often set up over the wires, rather than in-person, but that can vary. Completing the job usually requires some trophy of the target: the head of a VIP, for example, or the signature piece of an engine. When the crew gets the trophy, they'll bring it somewhere—either to the employer, a representative, or maybe a dead-drop—and present it as proof of the job's completion.

For the players, a hit functions more or less like any other job; there might be a few more questions asked (or a few less, if they know what's good for them), but their basic job of going to a place and doing a thing is still the same, though hits have more murder.

Legality as it regards to hits is more or less the same as all other jobs, but this time with any veneer removed: illegal jobs target the Authority, or those the Authority favors; legal jobs target those the Authority wants dead or removed. No matter where the crew falls, though, the Authority doesn't take kindly to heavily-armed independent ships flying free, so any crew worth their salt will keep a low profile regardless.

HIT PAYOUT

The payout for a hit swings based on how dangerous or well-protected the target is, making them vary in greater amounts than most other jobs. The payout for a hit looks like this:

- *By default, pay 4 credits per span flown.*
- *Pay 10-50 credits for the hit, based on the danger of the target.*
- *If the hit is targeting Authority, add another 20 credits, bare minimum.*

The cheapest hits on-world usually pay around 10 credits, though this is rare. The most dangerous, suicidal hits can pay upwards of 100 credits, even for targets that are relatively close by.

Just like with escorts, there's no universal scale for judging how dangerous a job will be, and thus how many credits to pay out. Generally, a 10-credit hit is for someone that's pretty much harmless, while a 50-credit is for a ship that's armed to the teeth, fully crewed, and in top shape. Experiment; it's usually better to overpay and hit hard afterwards than it is to underpay.

Unless the hit involves multiple separate targets, the payout process is quite straightforward: the crew gets paid a little upfront if they can wrangle it, but otherwise receives full payment only at the end. Unlike ferries and escorts where the employer is usually present, on a hit the employer is talked to as little as possible, and so the pay structure is kept streamlined.

The one exception to this guideline is the trophy: if the employer asks for a target's distinctive eyepiece and the crew kills the target but fails to retrieve the eyepiece, the employer will not react well. If the crew can prove they completed the hit they might still get paid, but if they can't, the employer has no reason to pay them whatsoever.

HIT MOVES

The hit moves are:

- *Push **get in a fight***
- *The target counterattacks the crew*
- *The target flees at speed*
- *The target makes a show of force*
- *The target begs, pleads, or bargains for their life*
- *Bring another hunter down on the target*
- *Reveal the target as perhaps not deserving death*
- *Frame the crew, innocent or not*

Hit moves are all about the target's capabilities. The hit is a daring, dangerous job, and so the moves are meant to push the crew at every turn, forcing them to be equally daring and dangerous in response. The crew has also knowingly taken on a job that puts them in danger, so don't be afraid to push a little harder; they can really only fail the job if they're defeated themselves, so don't worry about inflicting damage along the way.

THE FETCH

To fetch something is to go somewhere and retrieve something. A fetch means that the crew has to go to a specific location to acquire a certain object or person, and then bring it somewhere.

Fetches have the most variation in basic task of any job, as they have two additional variables on top existing ones, like distance and legality. The first of these is the cargo itself, be it a person or an object. The second is the effective heat of job, whether it's considered hot or cold; a cold job means there's no resistance, it's just retrieval, while a hot job means there's likely to be armed resistance, making the job far more dangerous. A hot fetch with a person as cargo would either be a kidnapping or a hostage rescue, while a cold fetch centered on a person is nearly always a search-and-rescue operation. A cold fetch with an object as cargo would likely be a simple scavenging job, where a hot fetch for cargo is essentially a heist.

While these significant variations do exist inside the scope of a fetch, they're all considered to be the same job because they all follow the same basic structure and format. All fetches have more or less the same goal, and have the same relationship between the crew and the employer. Fetches vary more in terms of their raw content than any other job, but they are no more variable in other areas than any other job.

Easy fetches are fast and quick jobs, simple to complete and cheaply-paid. Hard fetches are long, arduous, and messy jobs, ones that are among the most dangerous in the whole system. Make sure the crew knows what they're getting into.

FETCH SETUP

Fetches have three main sections, structurally: going to the cargo, getting the cargo, and then going with the cargo to the dropoff.

The first section, going to the cargo, is real simple. After the Captain's picked up the job, the crew just needs to fly to their target location, like they would any other. Roll to fly spans as always, and act as they go appropriately.

Actually getting the cargo is the most complicated part of the job; depending on how hot the cargo is and what they're actually trying to retrieve changes the situation a lot. For cold jobs, emphasize whatever ticking clocks you can—they're running out of air, the item's decaying, the hulk is drifting apart—and keep things mysterious and unusual.

For hot jobs, you can build the situation like you would a hit: heavy defenses around a central target, the cargo, which the crew have to somehow get through. The added twist is that, unlike a hit where they can simply blow through anything, the crew has to ensure that their target remains intact (and potentially alive). It's a tricky, dicey thing, one that requires extra care and planning on the part of the crew. Don't be afraid to push hard on them.

After the crew's retrieved the cargo, then it's basically a haul or a ferry to wherever the dropoff point is. In a lot of cases, this dropoff is the same place the crew got the job from, but that's not always the case. If it's an Authority-backed job, for example, then the dropoff point is probably the nearest hub or station with significant Authority presence. Wherever the dropoff is, the last leg of the job is to ensure that the cargo makes it there safely, however that may require.

As with a hit or a haul, the key detail in setting up a fetch is the cargo itself, and why it matters. Why does the employer need it, and why can't they get it themselves? Where's the cargo from? If it's a person, what do they think of the employer? If it's an object, what does its maker think of the employer? The broad strokes of these relationships are key to the fetch: use them.

For a fetch, legality itself matters less than the heat of the cargo. Sure, breaking into an Authority prison ship will be dangerous pretty much always, but it's not all that much more dangerous than kidnapping a criminal syndicate's underboss. Even cold fetches often tread on the fringes of legality—scavenging hulks usually being illegal, after all—so most crews pulling a fetch don't sweat the law.

FETCH PAYOUT

Because each section of pulling a fetch can be quite involved, the general payout tends to be higher than many jobs, though fetches often take longer.

The payout for a fetch looks like this:

- *By default, pay 5 credits per span flown.*
- *Pay 5-25 credits for the retrieval, depending on how difficult it is to get to the cargo.*
- *For a hot fetch, double that amount.*
- *Pay up to an extra 5 credits per span flown once the crew has the cargo, depending on how dangerous or volatile it is.*

The cheapest fetches typically pay about 15 credits, and the most expensive ones, fetches that involve flying across the system to retrieve an ultra-hot, highly dangerous target and then fly them back, can easily pay upwards of 150 credits.

Cold fetches pay significantly less than hot fetches. This is by design; a hot retrieval pays about the same as an equivalently-difficult hit, while a cold fetch is always less. Even the most dangerous cold fetches—scavenging in a nuclear-powered hulk, for example, or trying to rescue someone rapidly losing oxygen on a doomed station—will never require the same level of brutality and threat as a hot retrieval.

Make sure your players know all of this going in. Fetches have among the most complicated payout matrices, so take the time to explain to them why they're being paid what they are.

Despite the complicated payout quantities, fetches typically have very simple payout plans: the crew gets a chunk upfront if they ask for it, and then everything else at the end. Very occasionally the crew might receive a chunk of the payment once the retrieval is completed but they're still carrying the cargo, but this is uncommon.

As with a haul or a ferry, if the cargo is destroyed, the crew gets nothing. Whatever they're fetching is all-important.

FETCH MOVES

Fetch moves sit halfway between a haul and a hit; there's action, but there's also long stretches of moving freight that could, maybe, be dangerous.

The fetch moves are:

- *Push **scrape a hulk**.*
- *Hide the cargo behind layers of protection or obscurity.*
- *Interest other crews in the cargo.*
- *Pursue the cargo once it's been retrieved.*
- *Add a timer on the cargo, before or after retrieval.*
- *Reveal the cargo as something other than something described.*
- *Threaten the cargo, or have the cargo threaten itself.*
- *Turn the cargo against the crew, intentionally or not.*

All of these moves apply whether the cargo is physical cargo, like a powerful piece of tech, or a person, like a VIP.

While the retrieval of the cargo is typically the most directly-dangerous part of a fetch, the ensuing spans (once the cargo's in hand) can often provoke even more trouble. Keep that in mind as you run the game, and don't be afraid to have the cargo bring on trouble at every turn.

MULTI-JOBS

Most of the time you're playing *Rust Hulks*, the crew will be on a job. If they aren't, they'll either be dealing with the fallout from their last job or be busy hunting for the next. Sometimes, the crew wants to pick up another job; since spans are flown linearly, it's entirely possible for a crew to pick up and then finish a new job before they finish the first.

That's fine, it's cool, don't sweat it. It works like this: when they want a second job, make somebody (probably the Captain, but it could be whoever) burn a contact for it, but don't start hurling consequences from the **contacts** roll yet. Roll to **get a job** as normal; keep those results in mind.

However that **contacts** roll went determines how "fitting" the second job is. If they got a hit, it'll be something on the way or close by to their original job. If it's a 7-9, tack on something iffy to the second job, like a sketchy employer or unstable cargo or something. If it's a miss, it's a crappy second job, the wrong direction from where the crew is heading anyway—or maybe the contact just won't give them a job at all, and they'll have to burn another.

Any once-per-job moves, like contacts or a jockey's **getaway driver**, reset only once the crew has finished every job currently active. At some point, they gotta break.

That said, second jobs are a great way to pick up some extra credits. A crafty crew that can swing second and third jobs will have a lot of extra dough for when things eventually go belly-up.

For you, the MC, don't treat multi-jobs as anything too fancy. You can make moves from any of the jobs' move lists, and can cross some of them over if you're feeling it. You might also consider tossing around some consequences if an employer finds out the crew they've hired is pulling jobs on the side. Lots of employers—like the Authority—want a crew's complete focus, and so running side jobs presents as inherent risk.

Play it by ear. Don't sweat it too much.

**GEAR
AND
STUFF**

WEAPONS

Weapons are things that people use to fight. Pistols, rifles, shotguns, rockets, grenades, knives, axes, clubs, and other, less common implements of destruction—all weapons. Stuff that goes *bang-bang* and *snicker-snack*.

Weapons have two key values: their harm, and their range. Harm is how much damage the weapon does; range is how close or far you need to be to attack with it. On top of that, weapons also have tags: modifiers and conditionals and adjustments that mean the weapon behaves in a certain, specific way. Tags are often good, but are also often bad. Depends.

HARM

The harm of a weapon determines how much damage the weapon does, how deadly it is. An ordinary crewmember can take 5-harm before they're dead; an average NPC can eat about half that before they're toast.

Fists, rocks, pieces of scrap, headbutts, kicks, and other weak implements are 1-harm. You can definitely kill someone by beating them to death with your hands, but it takes time.

Pistols, knives, crowbars, clubs, bows, submachine guns, and all other small-caliber type weapons are around 2-harm. They'll seriously wound anybody, and can outright kill some people.

Shotguns, automatic rifles, axes, machetes, and other big and scary weapons are about 3-harm. They will kill pretty much anything but the toughest meatheads out there.

Grenades, heavy rifles, flamethrowers, and other heavy-duty guns and explosives are 4-harm. They'll utterly shred people, and usually more than one person at a time. They'll also damage weaker ships, though not super effectively.

Machine gun fire and rockets hover in the 5- to 6-harm range. They'll pulp anything that walks instantly, and can deal damage to most ships.

Most things in this range need to be mounted to work properly, but a few can be toted around by hand.

7-harm and above is reserved for the biggest, baddest ship-only heavy weapons, like torpedoes, railguns, and plasma cannons. They need only blink at a person to kill them, and can tear through just about anything else with ease.

Regardless of how much harm a weapon deals, it works basically the same way: when it deals harm to a target, subtract the target's armor from the weapon's harm, and then deal that much harm. If a 3-harm shotgun deals harm to a 1-armor pirate, that pirate takes 2-harm; if a 7-harm coilgun deals harm to a 5-hull engine, that engine takes 2-harm. That same shotgun would do nothing to the engine, and that same coilgun would leave nothing but paste of the pirate.

There are also two other kinds of harm: *s-harm*, which means "stun," and *e-harm*, which means "electronic."

S-harm is applied by things like stun guns, paralyzing agents, sudden shocks, that kind of thing. If an NPC gets hit by s-harm, they're stunned and stuck for quite a while; if a crewmember gets hit with s-harm, they must **hold firm** first before they can do anything else. S-harm has no effect on ships; it just kinda dings off them.

E-harm is applied mainly by electromagnetic pulses, which short out all electronics in a given radius but does no actual harm otherwise. These kind of EMP weapons are rare and costly, as they can render a room entirely useless without needing to destroy it. If a ship's room is hit with e-harm, it counts as being destroyed until it's repaired or patched. If a person gets hit with e-harm, anything electronic they're carrying is fried, and then treat it as a hefty dose of s-harm.

RANGE

The range of a weapon is how close or far you need to be to your target to deal harm. Range is a constraint, typically; a weapon with far range can only be used at far range, just as hand range can only be used hand-to-hand.

Scalpels, syringes, wire-based weapons, and other unusual implements have a range of *intimate*. This means that you need to be real close and personal with your target, close enough to get at their innards. Being at arm's reach isn't close enough, you've got to really get inside their personal space for it to be intimate.

Knives, axes, clubs, close stunners, and other melee weapons have a range of *hand*. This means you need to be within about arm's reach to attack with the weapon. Most of them have a haft or handle, so you've got a little bit of wiggle room on that, too.

Pistols, SMGs, shotguns, and most stunners have a range of *close*. Close is about shouting range, generally. If you can yell to someone and have a real conversation with them, you're within close range. If they can't hear you, or if it's so garbled and distant it's worthless, you're out of range.

Rifles, cannons, and most machine guns have a range of *far*. Far is where you can see your target, but can't make much more than basic detail. If you can see the whites of their eyes, you're too close.

Heavy ship weaponry and the most intense sniper rifles have a range of *extreme*. Extreme means that, with the naked eye, you probably can't see your target as more than a distant speck; it takes binoculars, scanners, or complicated math in order to effectively hit your target. If you can make out any detail on your target whatsoever bare-eyed, you're too close.

Lots of weapons have a combined range, like the assault rifle's close/far, or the plasma cannon's far/extreme. That means they work at either range just fine. It's theoretically possible (through a smoker's kit or some other mod) to have a weapon with a range like close/extreme, but these would be rare and difficult to use effectively.

WEAPON TAGS

Weapons have tags, which are modifiers or adjustments to the weapon. Some tags are passive effects, meaning that the weapon has some ongoing effect tacked onto it. Some tags are more active, requiring specific action after certain triggers.

The tags for weapons are:

Area. When this weapon is used, it covers a big area, and so can hit a whole bunch of people at once. Note that this is people, not rooms—a weapon with the area tag can still only hit one room.

Autofire. You can optionally use this weapon with the *area* tag, but afterwards you must *reload*.

Hellfire. You can optionally use this weapon to hit every single room on a ship at once, but afterwards you must *reload*. Basically a souped-up *autofire*; found only on ship's guns—it can't be applied to regular guns.

Hot. When you make a move using this weapon and roll a miss, the weapon immediately starts burning itself and everything around it. It breaks and must be repaired, and that fire will spread, fast.

Infinite. You have seemingly limitless quantities of the weapon. You can expend them as much as you want, and you'll always have more, no sweat.

Loud. The weapon is noisy and loud; usually from a gunshot, but maybe something else entirely, like screaming.

Messy. The weapon is *loud*, but it also makes a big mess when you use it. It leaves skid marks, spews smoke, or makes a lot of blood and guts.

No-air. This is a weapon that normally requires air (like a gun), but this version doesn't, either because it's hermetically sealed or has been modified specially. This is important because there's no air in space, normally. (It's also worth noting that melee weapons never need air to work anyway.)

Refill. After being used, this weapon needs to be refilled with something special. Ordinary guns can just be reloaded with no worries, but this weapon takes fuel, or poison, or some kind of other kind of rare resource.

Reload. After being used, you have to take a specific moment to reload the weapon. During that time, you might be exposed to all sorts of nastiness, and you can't fire it again until you reload.

Slow. This weapon takes a specific moment to set up, where you might expose yourself. Maybe it needs to be wound, or primed, or aimed really well—whatever it is, each time you use it, you gotta get set up first.

SHIP'S GUNS

Ship's guns, weapons mounts on the guns room (page 116), have a couple of extra special rules:

The first rule is that all ship's guns count as having *no-air*. They're built specifically to fire in space, and so are equipped with all of the necessary plating and sealants to make sure that works. Sometimes, a ship's gun is the same as a handheld gun: this doesn't mean that that specific handheld gun counts as no-air. The gun has to be actually mounted on the ship for it to count.

The second is that all ship's guns are mounted, and thus can't be moved. In order to use them properly, you have to actually go to the guns room and fire them there. Smokers can potentially change this, but for everyone else they've got to go there.

Otherwise, ship's guns are basically the same. They follow all of the same rules, more or less, they're just bigger and badder.

WORN GEAR

There are two kinds of essential worn gear: armor, and space suits. Armor is defensive, meant to protect the wearer from all manner of physical harm. Space suits are suits that allow the wearer to breathe and move in space.

Worn gear, unlike weapons, is passive. When you wear that gear, you get the benefits. No active conditions, no triggers, no moves, just perks. It's simple.

ARMOR

Armor, like weapons, comes with a rating. That rating is how effective the armor is against physical harm. When you take harm, you subtract your armor from the weapon's harm, and only take the difference. If you get stabbed with a 2-harm knife and have 1-armor, you take 1-harm. If you had no armor, you'd take 2-harm; if you had 2-armor, you'd take no harm.

Ordinary clothes, rags, naked skin, and patchwork garments all provide no armor. Bullets and weapons will rip through, punches and kicks aren't slowed.

Big heavy leather clothes, clothes with a few plates riveted on, and simple bulletproof vests all provide 1-armor. You can usually hide 1-armor under your clothing, or have it be subtle or basic enough to not attract attention.

Serious metal plating and Authority-grade body armor provide 2-armor. It's never subtle, and will almost always attract significant attention if you go walking around in a station or hub wearing it.

3-armor might theoretically exist, like maybe in some kind of experimental Authority mechanized armor or something, but it's not in the game by default. If the crew does something really exceptional or there's a bonkers-dangerous enemy there might be 3-armor, but don't bring it into the game casually.

ARMOR

Space suits are sealed metal-and-nylon suits that are built to allow you to breathe and travel in space. Most of them have enough oxygen for several hours, and have small jets (or similar) built in to let you get around through empty space, though space suits are usually slow and not very maneuverable.

Space suits come in two essential varieties: full suits, and pullover suits.

A full suit is a big heavy contraption, with full-body skin tight containment, distinct torso, limb, and head sections, and a large pack filled with essential accoutrements. They last a long time and are fairly maneuverable, but are heavy and rare.

A pullover suit is the opposite: it's basically a helmet with a loosely-fitted nylon sack attached, plus a can of oxygen. They're cheap and common, and they let you wear armor and gear under or over it. Almost all independent ships carry at least a few pullover suits, as they make scraping through hulks far easier. Most pullover suits only have enough air for an hour or two, and not much more.

Both have about the same mechanical effect. If a crewmember has invested in upgrading a full suit, or has one specially made or something, maybe give them slight advantages. Similarly, if a crewmember's got a suit that's real shit, cobbled together out of toilet paper and scrap leather, you might consider making them **act fast** a bit more often to keep it all together.

It's your call, though. Do what feels right.

CONSUMABLE GEAR

Consumable gear is gear that gets used up, it gets consumed. Typically, that means it has limited stocks or supplies that are spent performing some task. Crews will usually buy several of any given consumable, so they can have multiple uses of that same effect.

There are two common kinds of consumable gear: medpacks and repair kits.

A medpack is basically a first aid kit: it's got a bunch of bandages, antibiotics, painkillers, cleaning alcohol, and some scissors. When a crewmember uses a medpack on themselves or someone else, they instantly heal 1-harm.

A repair kit is a toolbox full of scrap. It's got wrenches and pliers and saws, but also spare piping, extra plating, discarded metal, replacement parts, and lots of extra metal around. When a crewmember uses a repair kit on a room, that room instantly heals 1-harm; this can repair destroyed rooms.

Once a medpack or repair kit is used, it's used up forever, empty. Gotta make or buy a new one.

It's also worth mentioning that every single station, hub, and outpost will sell these. If a crew doesn't have a greaser or infirmary, these are effectively the only to repair a room or keep a crewmember alive. They're pretty damn important, so don't skimp on who has them.

BUYING AND SELLING GEAR

In any station or outpost, anyone can buy pretty much any basic gear: most personal weapons, most armor, medpacks, repair kits, and supplies. They can also get repairs for their ship or gear from a local mechanic. In a hub, anyone can get any of those, plus all of the rarer things: new ship rooms, any weapon, any armor, exotic goods, that kind of thing.

By and large, most merchants will sell anything they have, anything off that list. They will, however, only buy gear that's in good condition and not much used. If the crew finds an armory full of shiny new rifles, those are good to sell; if they're pulling bloodstained rifles off of pirates half-jammed with rust, no merchant's gonna buy those.

Pretty much all basic gear costs 1-credit. Fancy basic gear, like 2-armor or a big bad weapon, might cost 2-credit. Repairing any item costs 1-credit.

Ship repairs cost 1-credit per damage, per room. This means that if your size+3 engine room has been hit for 2-harm, it'll cost 2-credit to repair. This doesn't fix anything but the engine room, and if you only have 1-credit you'll only heal 1-harm.

It's not too complicated. Don't worry yourself.

**THE
WORLD**

HOW WE GOT HERE

Rust Hulks takes place a few hundred years after the present day. It's "the future!" and any broader details aren't super necessary. (If your players really beg and moan for an exact date, just go with 2345; it's good enough.)

Sometime not too long after the present day, humanity got serious about colonizing the rest of the system. A hundred years or so later, and all of nearby, solid planets and moons had colonies on them. Another hundred years or so, and the rest of the planets had them, too. Human population exploded, scientific leaps were made in bounds, and everything was peachy.

Rust Hulks is set about another hundred years after that. It's not that there was any one specific catastrophe that brought everything down, just that everything sort of went. We reached the outer bounds of the nearby planets, science's leaps became puny little hops, and everything got all snarly and rusty. A central Authority rose in power, the rich got richer, and everybody that wasn't part of that Authority got screwed.

That's where we are now.

The rest of this chapter has bits of history, detail, and inspiration to help get your brains chugging. It's meant to answer questions like "Oh God, what even is on Neptune?" and "What kind of stuff does the Authority do?" It doesn't answer questions like "Which year did humanity first begin atmospheric adjustment on the Venusian skies?" or "Who's the current ruler of Luna?" These bits and sections are meant to be evocative, to push you out to invent your own cool stuff for your game—not lock you into specific lore.

More than anywhere else, this kinda thing is flexible. Change it to suit your game. That said, this is all public information—your players, and their crew, should know the world in its broad strokes as well as you do. *Rust Hulks* is not a game about secret information, so make this is all well-known.

THE AESTHETIC

More than history or science or anything else, the vision of the future that *Rust Hulks* paints is that of a particular aesthetic. Across the system, it's clear that things were once bright and gleaming and efficient, but now they're dull and rusted and clunky. We had the great age of science fiction, and this is all the shit that comes afterwards.

This is sometimes called a “used future” aesthetic: a picture of the future that is not new or innovative, but old, worn, and used.

This is true of *Rust Hulks*. Everything should have wear and tear on it; nothing should be brand new. When you describe a scene or a ship or a person, it should always be clear that there's a story behind the facade. Let the cracks show; let the flaws be known.

When the players interact with or examine an object, be sure to show its use over time. Every object, from spare parts to gear to basic appliances, should be used. Almost everything sold in a market has been owned by at least one person, usually two or three or four.

Ships are cobbled together from the hulks of many others; most ships draw major parts from 3-4 others, and minor parts from a dozen others. Rooms on a ship never match; they have different textures and materials, their floors and ceilings don't line up, and there are sharp edges everywhere. No two ships ever look the same.

Tools, equipment, and weapons are usually basic, low-tech; they match what we have today. Wrenches, screwdrivers, and hammers are all very common, and more or less what we have now. Guns fire bullets, not plasma or lasers or bolts. Computers are large and clunky and two-tone, used more for landing calculations, data processing, and communications, rather than entertainment or leisure.

Metal is universal, anywhere and everywhere in the system. Wood is common on the solid planets closer to the core, where it's cheap, but is less

common further out; it's just too expensive to grow a whole tree. Plastic is common, used for all of the cheap crap that overwhelms everyday life; it's less popular for things that need to last. Leather is expensive and thus uncommon, but artificial leather-like nylon is quite popular for straps, bags, armor, and that sort of thing. Basic polyester cloth is common in clothing, and oftentimes in upholstery for seats, couches, and the like.

Rust Hulks is a game set after the golden age; the capitalist ideals have collapsed in on themselves. Production has grown unsustainable, and now everyone must fight for the scraps, and make do with what they can.

Make sure your players feel it.

MAXIMALISM

The other big reigning aesthetic of *Rust Hulks* is maximalism. Minimalism means “less is more;” maximalism means “more is more.” Ships, above all else, are maximalist: they're crammed with rooms, passages, tools, spare parts, personal effects, people, and everything else. Let there be no empty space. It's also reflected in the mechanics of ships, particularly in the room-size-as-dice-modifier: bigger is always better.

Let this influence you and your players, too. Embrace the late capitalism. Always add more.

MEDIA INFLUENCES

Rust Hulks takes place in our possible future; the point of divergence has yet to come. That means that it's entirely possible for the vision you make of the system in the future to be based off of popular science fiction media. When you have a bunch of overly egotistical technocrats with no limits, they can and will model things after the sci-fi that influenced them. Venus always features storms and jungles in media for some reason, so it does in the world, now. Picking through the remains of what came before is a major theme in the game, and that includes media, too.

THE AUTHORITY

The Authority is the catch-all name for the collection of government bureaucrats, military commanders, corporate overlords, and other powerful individuals that control the system. They are centered on the Core, in huge sprawling cityscapes that cover the planet's surface. There is no singular leader or governing body to the Authority, but rather a morass of ambition and ego, all rolled together with wealth and force of arms.

The Authority exists to maintain control; if it were up to them, every person, ship, and tool would bear their registration numbers, and the Authority could track everyone everywhere.

The Core is utterly controlled by the Authority; nothing happens without their knowing it; the same goes for Luna. The nearby planets, Mercury and Venus and Mars, are also firmly under the Authority's command. Past the Belt, things get a little dicier. The Authority is still present, certainly, but they're more confined. They operate out of specific offices and barracks, their ships are a minority, and their soldiers can only cover so much ground. Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus—all have Authority presence, but it's rare. In the deeps, on Neptune and Pluto and beyond, the Authority has minimal control. Hunter ships only get sent out for the most important tasks and the most dangerous targets, and even that is rare.

Everywhere that is not under the direct control of the Authority is ruled by gangs, pirates, or warlords. In many cases, these bands are no worse than the Authority, sometimes even better. While some criminal syndicates might span several hubs or even multiple planets, none can possibly hope to match the raw power of the Authority. They might hold sway in one spaceport or other, but a crew with an able ship can nearly always flee.

The Authority are the exception to the aesthetic of *Rust Hulks*. Their ships, uniforms, weapons, equipment—all match, according to the master design. The tools of the Authority are sleek, efficient, and identical; their helmets cover their faces, and their ships bear no heraldry. To look upon one Authority ship is to look upon them all; they are faceless, and thus flawless.

CRIME AND THE LAW

There's only one law in the system, really: that of the Authority. Whatever the Authority desires is legal; whatever they do not is illegal. If an Authority officer does it, it is legal; if they say that something is illegal, it is. This cannot be changed.

In practice, this means that most things exist in a kind of grey legal area: not necessarily explicitly allowed, but also not immediately disallowed, either. Much of the success of an independent crew relies on their ability to avoid the attention of the Authority.

Generally, the Authority doesn't mind the transport or sale of cheap, common goods: foodstuffs, textiles, ore, scrap, that kind of thing. They tend to take an interest in the more expensive, unusual goods: medical supplies, new ship parts, heavy industry, livestock, and other goods along those lines. They will almost certainly stop really valuable stuff: weapons, drugs, advanced tech, and other goods of equal value. Contraband is determined solely by that which the Authority wishes it could sell themselves.

The transport of people follows roughly the same lines: ordinary travelers and merchants are fine, wealthy elites and specialists are precarious, criminals and VIPs will almost certainly get stopped.

How the crew behaves with regards to the law is up to them. Illegal jobs tend to pay better than legal ones, and ones that directly interfere with the Authority pay even more. Most crews find a place in the middle, straddling the line between legal and not.

Whichever the crew decides, you should reflect it by how the Authority treats them. Legal crews get stern glances and extra paperwork, and illegal crews get search-and-seizure operations with death warrants. Make sure the crew knows exactly where they stand.

HUBS, OUTPOSTS, AND STATIONS

Most of the system is empty. There are millions of kilometers of nothing space, and most planets are bare rock or gaseous clouds.

What little civilization there is can be divided into three rough categories: hubs, outposts, and stations. They all share some traits, but have critical differences.

Hubs are cities. They are big, bustling, and loud. Every hub has a spaceport big enough for hundreds of ships, sometimes even thousands. Thousands of people live in hubs, occasionally reaching into the millions. The streets themselves are narrow, cramped, and maze-like; buildings twist and sprawl in and around themselves, forming solid masses of construction rising ever higher. Anything can be bought or sold in a hub, and there is always work for able crews with a ship.

Easily-settled planets like Mars and Venus have dozens of hubs; the Core itself is really just one big hub. Past the Belt, most planets only have a handful of big hubs; Neptune and Pluto have maybe one real hub between them.

Outposts are really just small hubs. They're towns; docks with enough room for a few dozen ships, populations numbering in the low thousands. They'll have the bare necessities for sale, certainly, but rare and costly purchases will likely be unavailable. Outposts spring up for all kinds of reasons, but are often found near deposits of natural resources, or other places of importance for a chunk of planet.

The more settled planets have hundreds of outposts, scattered all over the place. Middling planets will have dozens, maybe reaching a hundred; in the deeps, outposts are really the best thing to hope for. Outposts are also

small enough that they can sometimes be found on larger asteroids, usually havens for pirates in the Belt.

Critically, both outposts and hubs are both located on solid ground, or at least something approximating it—stations are the opposite.

A station is a “freestanding” space station, located at a fixed point in space. They have oxygenated interiors, docks for ships to land, and markets to sell at. Bigger stations can be the size of hubs, with their own interior streets and buildings, while smaller ones are little more than a few docks welded onto a single central chamber. Really, the only difference between a hulk and a station is that the station still has enough power to keep its lights.

Stations are scattered all over the system in roughly equal density, as both built-up worlds near the Core and isolated deeps planets need them. They serve as refueling stops for freighters, footholds of control for factions, and a place for broken ships to pull in when they desperately need help.

Beyond hubs, outposts, and stations, most other people live alone, in tiny settlements in the middle of nowhere, or—more likely—in ships. The crew is among this number; they may stop elsewhere, but they truly live on their ship.

MERCURY

Mercury is a sun-blighted rock.

It takes Mercury about 90 days (that is, the standard 24-hour Core day, which is the standard that the Authority uses) to rotate around the sun, but its days are about 1400 hours long, or just shy of two months on the Core.

The parts that sit in the sun during those two-month days are utterly boiling: they reach over 400 degrees Centigrade (*Rust Hulks* uses Celsius, since at least in the golden age we dropped the barbaric Imperial system). At night, it can drop beneath -150 degrees; the poles constantly hover around -90.

Because of this, most of the permanent hubs and outposts on Mercury sit closer to the poles, and have heavy layers of insulation and artificial atmosphere to keep everybody inside from boiling or freezing to death. The Mercurian locals are generally pretty sangfroid about the whole thing; they mock people from other planets who can't handle the huge swings in temperature.

Planetside, there are thousands of kilometers of nothing, just endless craters and barren rockface. Almost nobody sends out land vehicles, because the raw amount of shielding and protection they need from the elements makes them almost totally non-viable. Still, there are enough valuable minerals close to the surface to keep the Authority's interest, and so Mercury remains an important planet in the system as a whole.

There are always travellers that want off of Mercury, so ferrying jobs are easy to come by. It's close to the Core, so most legal freighters don't need protection, but illegal ones very well might. Because absolutely nothing can grow on Mercury, there are always foodstuffs being shipped there, and plenty of ore to be hauled back.

Mercury's not a terrible place, all things considered. Hot and cold all at once, and too close to the sun, but not bad otherwise.

VENUS

Venus was the second planet terraformed, and now it's filled with lush jungles, verdant growth, and huge storms.

Venus takes about 225 days (again, Core days) to rotate around the sun, or around seven-and-a-half months. It's very similar in size and shape to the Core, but has two key differences: first, a Venusian day is approximately 5832 hours, or roughly 240 days; second, it rotates on the opposite axis to all other planets in the system, meaning the sun rises in the west and sets in the east.

These two traits—the longer-than-years days and the inverse sunrise—give Venus a perpetually mysterious affect. More than any other planet, what few poets are left write about Venus.

Even after being terraformed, Venus has the thickest atmosphere of any of the terrestrial planets, by far. This means that it's always, always hot—pre-terraform, the average was around 450 degrees. Nowadays, that's down to about 50 degrees; blistering hot for people, but manageable. It rains constantly.

Venus is covered in hubs and outposts, everywhere. The flora and fauna that grow on the Venusian planetside are valuable for all kinds of reasons, and so vast ranches and farms are common. Being so close to the Core, Authority officers are everywhere, constantly patrolling and observing.

For its wealth, security, and balmy climes, Venus has become something of a “resort planet.” It boasts huge, luxurious compounds where the rich and wealthy play, and nobody else ever sees. Independent crews might occasionally be brought in for hauling cargo or ferrying passengers, but this is a rare occurrence.

Venus is a playground for the rich and wealthy, a greenhouse for the Core, and a sweltering, overgrown hellhole for everyone else.

THE CORE

The Core is the ironclad city, the home of the Authority.

When the expansion first began, the Core was still called “Earth,” but as the system was claimed and power began to centralize, it eventually took on its name as “the Core,” originally as a title. Eventually, that title became synonymous with the planet, and the name Earth was lost.

The Core is an endless cityscape. Every available meter of land, water, and sky is bristling with steel skyscrapers. Black smog fills the air. Everything is regimented, industrious, and jam-packed with people.

The Authority’s control is absolute, and entirely without question. There is a soldier on every street corner, a watchful eye on every rooftop, and an officer at every desk. Everyone that dwells on the Core is, in same shape or form, a subordinate of the Authority; to attempt to do otherwise would be folly.

What little plant and animal life exists on the Core is solely within the pent-houses and manors of the rich and wealthy; all uncaged living things apart from humans have been long since snuffed out.

The Core is filled with factories; all of the natural resources from other planets are brought to the Core, and all that gobbled material is spat out as new goods, ships, and weapons. Of course, most people never see those things; nearly all of it goes to fund the Authority’s ever-industrial military expansion efforts.

For strictly legal crews, the Core is safe, but tight; there are endless searches and paperwork to be completed, but there is no chance of trouble from outside the law. For crews with anything less than polished legality, there is an opportunity: they can sidestep the clenched fist of regulation, and get things off- or on-planet with ease. There’s a massive risk involved, of course, but there’s plenty of profit to be made as well.

By and large, the Core is a danger to independent crews; the Authority is at its most controlling, and thus most hostile to any that would step outside their law.

If you're playing with new players, you should be exceedingly clear with this point. Most experienced players avoid the Core like the plague; new ones might not realize quite how nasty the Authority is.

LUNA

Luna, the Core's moon, houses the Authority's training facilities and custom shipyards.

It's still just a big grey rock, but the Authority has embraced its lifelessness and developed it into the primary engine of war. Every soldier that serves under the Authority has spent at least some time on Luna, and every ship-of-the-line the Authority flies was built, at least in part, on Luna.

Nearly all crews avoid Luna like the plague. There are hubs and outposts, sure, but every single one is run by Authority military officers, and no crew wants to deal with that. For those willing to run the harebrained risk, however, there are all manner of illegal fetches to be made to Luna, usually to steal Authority-grade technology or schematics.

Luna's dangerous, but it still holds the dreams of some crews.

MARS

Mars is a sprawling desert, filled with shipyards and manufacturing plants.

A Martian day is only just longer than a day on the Core—24 hours and 40 minutes. A Martian year, is nearly double, ending up at about 687 days. Mars grows colder than the Core in the winter, dropping down to about -143 degrees, but is roughly as warm, reaching 35 degrees or so during the summer.

It's for these reasons, and for its proximity, that Mars was the first planet terraformed by humanity, and so is the most built-up, after the Core. It still has its vast, iconic, red deserts as far as the eye can see, but now has been peppered with towering buildings and enormous drydocks.

Mars is home to many of the would-be merchant princes and lesser corporate interests in the system; it lacks as much rigid structure as the Core, but is still well-protected and very rich, making it ideal. The Martian wealthy dwell in huge towers of steel and glass, while the poor live in sprawling shantytowns and sand-soaked outposts.

Mars is a common stopping point for crews of all varieties; for more criminal crews, it is the closest they will get to the Core, while it makes a convenient stepping-off point for those that are more legal. Jobs of all stripes and for all clients are readily available: hauls and fetches of cargo, escorts for myriad merchants, hits on opposing interests, and ferries for all manner of people.

DEIMOS & PHOBOS

Deimos and Phobos are Mars' two moons; both are miniscule, less than 30 kilometers in diameter each, more like large asteroids than anything else.

In many ways, the two moons are more like an extension of the Belt than anything else. For the criminal interests that look to earn some Mars' great wealth but avoid the Authority's reach, Deimos and Phobos are ideal.

They are, however, less comfortable. No terraforming, crummy outposts, and both are swarming with pirates and cutthroats.

THE BELT

The Belt, more formally the Asteroid Belt, is a ring of a couple million asteroids that circle the sun, located roughly halfway between Mars and Jupiter. Most are small, with only a handful—Ceres, Vesta, Pallas, and Hygeia—being big enough to approximate petite moons. The rest are less than 100 kilometers in diameter, most far less.

Contrary to more popular imagery, the asteroids of the Belt are spaced pretty far apart. It's usually thousands, if not tens or hundreds of thousands, of kilometers between them. They can still definitely hit a ship, and cause serious problems when they do, but the depiction of weaving in and out of a sea of rocks is not particularly accurate.

Despite this—or perhaps because of it—the Belt is overrun with pirates. Many, many asteroids house a ship or two, ready to spring out as soon as an unsuspecting merchant drifts by. All ships should expect trouble when passing through the Belt, though because most pirates only have one ship, heavily-armed crews or very fast crews shouldn't have too much trouble.

Due to these long decades of piracy, the Belt now has also taken on hundreds of thousands of hulks as well, some of which are still intact. Scavengers are also highly common in the Belt, picking through the wreckage, both free-floating and buried in asteroids, looking for the choicest morsels. Crews that need scrap might do worse than stop in the Belt for a time to scrape up what they can.

The Belt also marks the border of the Authority's tightest control. As soon as it's crossed, encounters with the Authority become the exception, rather than the rule. Their hunters and bases are still fairly common, but it's entirely possible for ships to fly without expecting to encounter them. The Belt marks a natural border to their best-kept territory, and so the Authority rarely pushes in significant force beyond it.

JUPITER

Jupiter is an enormous giant, composed of endless storms.

Jupiter's first and mightiest of the gas giants, meaning that rather than have any solid material at the surface, it is simply raging stormcloud. It's worth noting that while it's described as a "gas giant," the average density of the planet is thicker than that of water. The gas that makes up the planet's surface is more like a heavy smog or viscous rain than anything else; it's not fluffy by any means. It's wracked by storms near-constantly, averaging about 360 kph.

Jupiter's years are long, lasting almost 12 Core years. On the flipside, Jovian days are short, just shy of 10 hours long. It also bears mentioning that Jupiter is enormous. It's about 1/1000th the size of the sun, which also means that it's about two and a half times the size of every other planet in the system put together. It's utterly gigantic; whatever you describe, it's bigger than that.

There may be some truth to this: while they're still referred to as hubs and outposts, as they are roughly "planetside" and move with the planet's rotation and orbit, Jupiter's hubs and outposts stand on no solid ground. They float, just beneath the highest clouds of gas, kept aloft by enormous thrusters and the orbit of the planet itself.

Nearly all settlements on Jupiter are based around the gas mines; Jupiter has nearly endless supplies of helium, which are constantly being mined and used as fuel for other ships. These mines need operation around the clock, and so the settlements naturally grow up around them; the biggest ones are as large as Martian or Venusian hubs.

The Authority works its hardest to maintain these mining settlements as their own, but it's not universal; some have shifted owners, falling into the hands of merchants or syndicates, who turn and sell the helium for profit.

For crews, as with everyone else, Jupiter is a risky proposition: there's money to be made in hauling or stealing the gas, absolutely, but between the storms and the Jovians tendency to fight tooth and nail, it's no sure thing.

JOVIAN MOONS

Jupiter has four big moons: Io, Ganymede, Europa, and Callisto. They're all a few thousand kilometers in diameter, and all have at least something of an atmosphere and a bit of terraforming. There are also several dozen other, smaller satellites of Jupiter, most of which are pretty small and mostly house pirates and scavengers looking to pick off merchant ships.

The four big moons are well-settled, each boasting a handful of hubs and a scattering of outposts. They're much friendlier than Jupiter proper, and so are a much more common waystop for freighters, either ones going through the Belt towards Mars, or else further outwards.

On the four moons, of course, the uptick in population and settlement means that there are more Authority officers and ships crawling around. Likewise, however, there are also more criminal elements, and thus things are more balanced.

Most crews that are looking to stop on Jupiter will head for the moons instead, rather than risk the stormy planetside. The moons have most jobs available, as they, like Mars, serve as a major way-stop for all stripes of travellers.

SATURN

Saturn is a light and airy planet, ringed by a hive of corsairs and buccaneers.

Saturn is the planet that “gas giant” most aptly describes; it is huge, second-largest after Jupiter, but its surface gases are less dense than water, making it akin to fog or mist. Saturn’s years last almost thirty Core years, but its days, like Jupiter’s, are about 10 and a half hours long. While there are still storms that wrack Saturn’s surface, they are far less constant and far less fearsome than Jupiter’s.

At first glance, this might seem to make it more appealing for outposts and hubs on the surface, but the truth is that it simply makes them less necessary. The mining settlements do still exist, certainly, but Saturn contains far less helium and other valuable gases than Jupiter, and thus is far less thickly settled.

Due to the Rings, most of those mines are not controlled by the Authority, either. Instead, they prefer to lurk near the poles and along the fringes of the Rings, preying on weaker merchants and seizing their cargo. It’s a strange inversion of piracy, one that grows ever more common as you get further from the Core.

It’s usually only the most legitimate of crews that land planetside proper on Venus. The rest of them just to the Rings.

THE RINGS OF SATURN

The Rings of Saturn, almost always just called “the Rings,” are a collection of satellites that orbit Saturn. There are a bunch of asteroid-sized ones, a moon called Titan, millions of chunks of ice, and thousands of broken and battered hulks. They orbit the equator of Saturn, packed together very tightly; it’s pretty much impossible to fly into the Rings without nudging aside some bits of ice and busted scrap.

The Rings are, simply put, the biggest bunch of settlements that are outside the purview of the Authority. Titan itself is coated with small hubs and

outposts, all of which belong to a different local pirate lord, criminal gang, or band of brigands. Likewise, each of the larger satellites, be they natural or artificial, has been claimed by some crew or other, and is thus guarded with jealousy.

There is both constant trade and constant infighting inside the Rings; the only thing that brings both to a stop is an Authority incursion. These are rare, however, as it's difficult to bring force to bear against a thousand different settlements all at once, especially when each tiny criminal crew knows it is its best interest to ally against the Authority.

The Rings are a popular destination; they're really among the last few hold-outs of civilization before reaching the deeper parts of the system. Anything can be bought or sold somewhere in the Rings, and so any merchant willing to turn a blind eye can easily ply their trade. Likewise, strange cultures, people, and machines develop out in the Rings, where no law governs them. Icy, bizarre wonders are whispered about, formed of rock and metal and the cold itself.

For independent crews willing to skirt the law, there is always work of all varieties to be had in the Rings.

URANUS

Uranus is icy, bitter cold, full of strange wonders and desperate settlements.

Like the other gas giants, Uranus' surface is fluid comprised of swirling gases; there's no physical surface to land on other than the hubs and cities that float above it. What's different is that the inner parts of Uranus are far colder, meaning it has an ice-like quality to it; Uranus and Neptune both are considered to be "ice giants." Average surface temperature is about -225 degrees.

A Uranian year takes about 84 Core years to complete; a Uranian day is about 17 hours long. One distinct quirk of Uranus is that it sits at a different axis to the rest of the planets; its equator is at a roughly right angle to its orbit. This means that for each quarter of the Uranian year, 21 Core years, the sun shines directly at one of the poles, plunging the other half into a winter of darkness.

Uranus marks the rough border between the "frontier" worlds, just past the Belt, and the "deep" worlds, which include Neptune, Pluto, and anything beyond. Due to spending so much time in perpetual darkness, the Uranian locals are tough, bitter, and strange. Some people say that they go mad being the dark for so long, while others say that they're all haunted by the things they see, so far away from the light.

For its part, the Authority has little interest in Uranus. Its atmosphere is mostly methane, far less valuable than helium, and so it's used more as a waystop than anything else. On rare occasions it might serve as a staging ground for an incursion further from the sun, but this is a rare thing.

Crews looking to indulge the stranger elements of humanity might easily find work on Uranus. For those that are more grounded, however, many of the offers might seem bizarre or nonsensical.

URANIAN MOONS

Uranus has dozens of small moons, and five large ones: Miranda, Ariel, Umbriel, Titania, and Oberon. They're small, relatively speaking, usually only a few hundred kilometers in diameter, but they've all been terraformed in places. Hubs and outposts are far more common on the moons, and each of the moons sees more regular light than the mainland of Uranus.

As you might imagine, the Authority has significant presence on the moons; Saturn's Rings are too hostile to serve as a forward base, and so the Uranian moons do, instead. Given how far out they are, the moons have a high number of soldiers and hunters about, none of whom value the lives of the Uranians.

Crews that are wary of the frigid depths of Uranus often come instead to the moons. The clientele's weirder than the Rings or the Jovians, but they pay well enough. Hauls, fetches, and hits are all common, but escorts and ferries moreso—lots of people want off the moons.

NEPTUNE

Neptune, by and large, is just the worst.

A Neptunian year is about 165 Core years; some people will see one Neptunian year complete, many others won't—some people won't even see a full season. A Neptunian day is about 16 hours; it's about 90,000 Neptunian days to the year. Neptune averages about -200 degrees, so it's warmer than Uranus, but is far stormier: its winds average around 2200 kph, more than six times faster than Jupiter's.

The winds render Neptune borderline-uninhabitable for everything but the largest, heaviest, and most intense floating hubs. There are only a handful of these hubs, and less than half are controlled by the Authority. They were originally set up for helium mines, but those functions have been largely abandoned in favor of increased mining on Jupiter instead.

A few truly unhinged pirates and scavengers attempt to ride the winds of Neptune, hurtling along with minimal control. This is highly fuel-efficient, except that it's quite difficult to break free of the winds once they've been entered. Most such wind-pirates do not survive.

Neptune, broadly, is considered the start of the “deeps,” the farther reaches of the solar system, where things get very strange indeed. Most social customs break down, there's less light, and everyone is bitter and grim. Jobs on Neptune are slim. There's little hauling work to be had, and there's little enough to care about planetside, so fetches and hits are slight, too. Most common work is ferries and escorts for people looking to get out, quick as they can.

The population also tanks at Neptune and beyond. The frontier worlds are reasonably well populated, and the core ones are packed, but Neptune and Pluto are barren. The hubs are small, the outposts smaller, and both are farther and fewer between. No one loves the deeps.

TRITON

Triton is Neptune's moon; there are a handful of small others, but Triton is the largest by far, without question.

It's a giant lump of ice, basically. The surface is comprised primarily of large, icy sheets, dotted here and there with outposts and the occasional hub. It's one of the coldest places in the system, on average, typically hovering around -235 degrees. Triton's also bigger than most moons, coming in at about 1500 kilometers in diameter.

Desperate crews and desperate people come to Triton. The Authority rarely touches down, instead preferring to hunt at a distance. Everything is cold all the time, and the buildings freeze into the ice. There's always need for food to come in, and there are always people wanting out.

The only thing that can be said for Triton, frankly, is that at least it's not Neptune.

PLUTO

Yes, I know the IAU says it's not a planet anymore, I don't give a damn.

Pluto is home to freaks, outcasts, and whatever other aberrants wash up.

Pluto itself is rocky and icy, and small. It's smaller than every other planet by far, smaller even than Luna. A Plutonian day is about 150 hours, or just over 6 Core days; a Plutonian year is about 248 years. It's frigid, averaging around -240 degrees, but it also shares Uranus' off-kilter axis, meaning that its winters plunge a quarter of the planet into darkness, and its summers leave a quarter of the planet covered in light. These seasons last more than 60 years.

Most people in the system never go to Pluto. It has its own, strange culture, with discomfiting rituals and anomalous customs. It is a harbor for all of the people in the system that, for whatever reason, could not bear to be anywhere else. It's an icy, dark, and unknown harbor, but harbor still.

The Authority barely touches Pluto. It is so far removed from their sphere of influence, and has such little impact, most consider it simply not worth the effort. Their hunter ships may drift by from time to time, but it has no real presence.

Even now, speculations about what lies on Pluto run wild. Tales from sailors and freighters grow with the long hours of travel, and so very few people have hard facts. And, honestly, what might be true at one outpost—as Pluto has no hubs—may very well be false elsewhere. Pluto maintains its mystery, and its inhabitants would have it no other way.

BEYOND

There are other celestial bodies beyond Pluto. Charon, Styx, Nix, Hydra, Eris, the Kuiper Belt—these and many others all lie further, deeper into the dark. There are hulks that have been knocked or launched from orbit, too, hurtling into the wild dark yonder.

No one knows, really, what lies beyond. There are other solar systems, yes, with other planets and moons and suns, but no one has ever seen them up close. Would-be explorers sometimes venture out, aboard ships kitted for months of travel; sometimes they return with nothing, sometimes they don't return at all.

For most crews, the beyond holds little of interest. There are no jobs, no clients, and no credits out there. The endless black is just that—utterly without end, and utterly dark. It's difficult enough for most crews to make it a single span, let alone wander aimlessly out into the eternal night.

Still, inside the hearts of many people, the dream to explore still exists. To board a ship and set course for the great unknown, to see what lies beyond the ken of humanity.

Here be dragons.

HACK- ING THE GAME

CHANGING THE SETTING

On paper, this is a game about spaceships. Really, though, it's not. It's a game about a giant-ass machine that you're trying to keep together. You know the War Rig in *Mad Max*? The one that they're driving for basically the entire movie? That's a ship in *Rust Hulks*.

You can do this for all kinds of settings. Anything where there's importance placed on a large, rickety machine that moves, and you can really hack *Rust Hulks* into it. Spaceships, boats, zeppelins, mechs, whatever. It's really not all that hard to hack these rules on.

A couple of suggestions:

- If your setting is about driving giant sandcrawlers through the desert, you might be playing *Dust Hulks*.
- If your setting is about huge drill-based machines digging deep into the earth, you might be playing *Crust Hulks*.
- If your setting is about big, breezy airships that sail across the skies, you might be playing *Gust Hulks*.
- If your setting is about towering mecha-knights travelling across the realm administering the law, you might be playing *Just Hulks*.
- If your setting is about rickety, spindley contraptions with a kind of, like, grandmotherly mothball flavor, you might be playing *Must Hulks*.

You get the idea; I'll let you work out *Thrust Hulks*, *Trussed Hulks*, *Disgust Hulks*, and *Nonplussed Hulks* for yourself.

Point is, the vehicle rules are pretty adaptable. Engines can become sails or propellers or legs; guns can become cannons or sword-arms or ballistae or something. As long as it's a machine with separate parts you can set up as rooms, you're good to go. The playbooks will take a little bit of tweaking, but it can be done.

NEW MOVES

Moves come in different flavors:

- Active moves, like the envoy's *peacemaker*, or the runner's *cut and run*. They very specifically add new abilities and stuff the crewmember can do, stuff outside the bounds of normal moves.
- Passive moves, like the bruiser's *not on my turf*, or the greaser's *well-learned*. They add flat, passive bonuses, sometimes with specific narrative constraints.
- Substitute-y modifier-y moves, like the sawbones' *practical surgery*, or the smoker's *no bullshit*. These let you swap in one stat for another one, usually under specific circumstances.
- "Extra stuff" moves, like the tech's *audio-neural interlinks*, or the jockey's *autonav relay*. They add some extra stuff for the playbook use, usually outside of specific mechanical increase.

There are a bunch of other kinds of moves, too, ones that break these rules or morph them or otherwise add on other stuff. These are just some of the most common types.

You should feel free to make up new moves. Maybe you've got a jockey that really wants a specific maneuver they can pull, or a smoker that wants to soup up a gun in a cool new way, or a tech that wants some newfangled bit of science. All fine.

Remember that most moves have triggers: the "when you do X" of the move. A lot of these, especially for the basic moves, are just "when you do this thing," but some of them are more specific, requiring certain fictional positioning or constraints or requirements. These are all good.

If you're in need of inspiration, look at other "Powered by the Apocalypse" games. They use the same rough kinds of moves, and you can crib from the good ones (like me when I made this game).

You can and should hack in new stuff to your game. It's good, it gets you thinking, and it pushes you to new heights. I believe in you.

ADDING PLAYBOOKS

For some players, the nine playbooks aren't enough. They want more, or something different. That's cool. Sometimes, you get a rad idea that doesn't quite fit into what's here already. That's cool, too.

Making new playbooks is tricky. The nine here are based off of a mix of media touchstones, mechanical demands, and my own instincts on what I thought was cool. Each playbook its own kind of "thing": bruisers smack people around, junkers make new shit, jockeys fly the ship. On paper, there's some overlap between these (bruiser vs. smoker, say, or greaser vs. junker), but part of what makes a good playbook is that it still feels distinct to play.

When you make a new playbook, there are basically [x] things you need:

- Moves. The playbook moves themselves, and also the Captaincy move.
- Gear. Starting weapons and stuff, plus any custom gear they get, like the smoker or junker's kit.
- Look. Every playbook should feel a little distinct visually, make it stand out a bit. They're scrappy and shitty, but have vestiges of other things.
- Contacts. You need to pick a stat, then you also need some sample NPCs, the kind of thing an archetypal crewmember of that playbook might run into.
- Dedicated room. It's possible they'll need a new room (see the next page).
- XP triggers and advancements. These aren't too different, but they help nail down exactly how the playbook should feel.

It's also worth mentioning that you should only endeavor to make a new playbook if you really feel like it's the right thing to do. If some newish player is harassing you about wanting new custom abilities that just happen to always deal +2 harm, tell them to fuck off. Design when it's good for the game, not because a player's badgering you.

NEW ROOMS

You can also add new rooms to the ship! There are all kinds of weird and unusual things you might come up with for a spaceship, which definitely wouldn't be included in a standard game.

Rooms basically need a, like, “passive function,” in that the engines make the ship go and the helm steers the ship and the cargo has physical space or whatever. Then, once you've got that established, they need their own room move, which is where the real juicy meat of the room comes in.

In one of our playtests, a player wanted to be a really melee-focused Bruiser, and didn't think that the boarding dock was enough. So, naturally, he lobbied me and the junker to help him make a giant claw that could grab onto other ships. It had a move that looked like this:

*When you **attach to another ship with the claw**, roll+size. On a 7-9, one of these is true; on a 10+, both:*

- *the other ship can't move*
- *your ship doesn't take damage in the process.*

On a miss, neither of these is true.

Yeah, it was fast and messy, but it worked. It got the point across well, and the player was overjoyed to have a giant claw arm on their ship.

If you're swapping around the setting of the game, you might also need new rooms for that. A game of *Gust Hulks* might need a specific “sail” room, for example, that lets the crew get extra speed. A game of *Crust Hulks* might need a drill to both move and harvest gemstones, one separate from the engines. A game of *Just Hulks* might need a specific command room, where you can look out of the mech's head and see what's going on.

All of these and more are fine and good. You should always feel free to hack on extra rooms and tidbits to make your game more exciting and engaging.

Do it. I believe in you.

**ACK-
NOWL-
EDGE-
MENTS**

THANKS

I have to thank my original band of playtesters: Sam Belisle, John Blau, Will Gajewski, William Gallagher, Patrick Geaslin, David Joy, Rohit Kaushik, Kaleb Kronimus, Dom Liotti, Tadeo Menichelli, Jacob Poirier, Allie Sangalli, and Kay Schwenk. They were the crews of the first four ships: the *Bad Larry*, the *Mrs Higgins*, the *Breadbox*, and the *Red November*. Without them, this game wouldn't be half of what it is now.

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I owe very special gratitude to Avery Alder, Vincent Baker, Emily Care Boss, and Jason Morningstar. Obviously, their games were and are hugely influential, but they also helped get this game off the ground in a very real way.

I of course have to thank my parents, too, for believing in me this far.

LUDOGRAPHY

Rust Hulks is, obviously, based on *Apocalypse World*. There's about a 90% chance any given move is based on something out of that game.

What follows is a very non-complete list of games and designers that I was influenced by, drew inspiration from, or shamelessly cribbed:

- **Get in a fight** and the get-XP-for-failing are straight out of Adam Koebel and Sage LaTorra's *Dungeon World*.
- I got the XP-for-playbook-specific-actions out of John Harper's *Blades in the Dark*, which in turn comes from Luke Crane's *The Burning Wheel*.
- The whole idea for rooms as distinct entities comes from Subset Games' *FTL*.
- **Scrape a hulk** is based on a move from the "Advanced Fuckery" chapter of *Apocalypse World*, specifically made by John Harper.
- **Get paid** is ripped more or less wholesale from Hamish Cameron's *The Sprawl*.
- **Contacts** is based on an ability that the Speaker gets in Stras Acimovic and John LaBeouf-Little's *Scum & Villainy*. *Scum* is a *Blades* hack, and that ability in particular is probably from some other game.
- Personalities for rooms is pulled from plane personalities in Jason Morningstar's *Night Witches*.

Like I said, that list is super non-complete. There's a high chance something in this game is pulled from somewhere else.

KICKSTARTER BACKERS

These are the people who were bold, foolish, and generous enough to back Rust Hulks on Kickstarter, not only at the basic tiers, but beyond:

Alex Cartwright, Alonzoeh Stone, Bluejay, Christopher McDonough, Craig Hinkle, Daniel Crisp, David E. Dalton, Derek Bollman, Devon “All Daggers” Anderson, Eli Martin, Elite Planning Crew, Ezra Forsyth, Jason Bostwick, John Taber, Joseph Siegel, James Haikney, Marc “Fugitive Unknown” Thompson, Martin E Stein & Scott A Saxon, Michael Pelletier, Michael Sattler, Mike Collins, Milcheax MacLear, Mischa D. Krilov, Nic Bové, Perrin “Starhiker” Rynning, Pete Rivera, Piotr “ThePiachu” Piasecki, Professor Weez, Ravenstead, Robert Mittel-Carey, Story Games Westchester, Stu Masterson, T. Stacy, Thomas McGrenery, Trent Kelly, Tyler Curry, Will Robot, William Gallagher, zero ring circus

Many thanks. May your pockets never empty and your engines never tire.

INDICES

USEFUL TABLES

WHAT'S THE CARGO FOR THE HAUL?

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|----|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Livestock, mostly cows and pigs | OR | New ship engine prototypes |
| 2 | Bolts of luxury fabrics and silks | OR | Vacuum-sealed foodstuffs |
| 3 | High-grade medicinal opiates | OR | Purified water in huge barrels |
| 4 | Crates of Authority-made guns | OR | Sealed, secret documents |
| 5 | Sheets of recycled metals | OR | Drums of engine fuel |
| 6 | A person, cryogenically sealed | OR | Refurbished spacesuits |

WHO'S THE PASSENGER FOR THE FERRY?

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|----|------------------------------|
| 1 | Someone who hides their face | OR | Three orphan children, alone |
| 2 | A group of itinerant workers | OR | A princeling from the Core |
| 3 | An Authority officer-at-large | OR | A pair of engrossed lovers |
| 4 | A band of very casual criminals | OR | A known Authority fugitive |
| 5 | A professional gambler | OR | A crewmember's ex-partner |
| 6 | Two corporate consultants | OR | A stowaway with a sob story |

WHO'S THE CLIENT FOR THE ESCORT?

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|----|----------------------------------|
| 1 | A fat, rich merchant vessel | OR | Several passenger barges |
| 2 | A sheltered kid's pleasure cruise | OR | An Authority bigwig's ship |
| 3 | A Core fat cat's party yacht | OR | A deep-space surveyor craft |
| 4 | A pair of bounty hunter sloops | OR | A mobile mining refinery |
| 5 | A scavenger that struck gold | OR | A pirate ketch on the run |
| 6 | A newly-refurbished hulk | OR | A station that needs to relocate |

CATCH-ALL JOB EMPLOYERS

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 1 | A ruthless corporate agent | 4 | An underworld crime boss |
| 2 | An officer of the Authority | 5 | A local station or hub ruler |
| 3 | A scrapper or junk-trawler | 6 | A stranger, hooded and masked |

WHO OR WHAT IS THE TARGET OF THE HIT?

- | | | | |
|----------|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | A debtor that couldn't pay | <i>OR</i> | The local crew of pirates |
| 2 | A criminal syndicate's top boss | <i>OR</i> | An Authority hunter-captain |
| 3 | A fugitive from the Authority | <i>OR</i> | A scandalous, unfaithful lover |
| 4 | A rival corporation's shipment | <i>OR</i> | A bar serving as a criminal front |
| 5 | An outpost's mining operation | <i>OR</i> | A factory's new prototype |
| 6 | An Authority listening post | <i>OR</i> | A fast-approaching asteroid |

WHO OR WHAT IS THE TARGET FOR THE FETCH?

- | | | | |
|----------|--------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | A parent's wayward child | <i>OR</i> | A syndicate's imprisoned boss |
| 2 | A rich corporate executive | <i>OR</i> | A lead weapons engineer |
| 3 | A scavenger with too much cred | <i>OR</i> | An Authority investigator |
| 4 | Blueprints for a spacesuit | <i>OR</i> | A big old box of credsticks |
| 5 | A shipment of explosives | <i>OR</i> | Crates of rare metal ore |
| 6 | A crime boss's prized pet cat | <i>OR</i> | An Authority hunter ship |

EYES & VIBES

- | | |
|----------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Bright or wild or round |
| 2 | Sharp or piercing or narrow |
| 3 | Misty or distant or glassy |
| 4 | Vibrant or colorful or stark |
| 5 | Deep or somber or mournful |
| 6 | Puffy or bloodshot or missing |

FACE & APPEARANCE

- | | |
|----------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Gaunt or haggard or bony |
| 2 | Plump or rotund or voluminous |
| 3 | Muscular or stout or broad |
| 4 | Tattooed or scarred or pierced |
| 5 | Lean or chiseled or stringy |
| 6 | Waxy or glistening or slick |

CLOTHING & LOOKS

- | | |
|----------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Grimy, worn-down jumpsuit |
| 2 | Patchwork cloth jacket |
| 3 | Welded scrap metal armor |
| 4 | Mass-produced cheap suit |
| 5 | Threadbare repainted poncho |
| 6 | Grafted rubber spacesuit |

WEAPONS & TOOLS

- | | |
|----------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Stained, notched boarding axe |
| 2 | Blackened, leaky blowtorch |
| 3 | Rickety, re-welded shotgun |
| 4 | Bent, grimy monkey wrench |
| 5 | Sparking, twitchy stunner |
| 6 | Dripping, pockmarked welder |

HULL & EXTERIOR

- 1 Charred, sooty, and blackened
- 2 Smooth, reflective, and sleek
- 3 Spiky and covered in chains
- 4 Bulky, dull, and geometric
- 5 Refit, patched, and layered
- 6 Covered in myriad greebles

SYSTEMS & OPS

- 1 Layers of clattering keyboards
- 2 Huge arrays of blinking buttons
- 3 A dome of computer terminals
- 4 A switchboard covered in dials
- 5 A crank-operated ops console
- 6 Endless wires and cables

BUNKS

- 1 Knotty, mildewy hammocks
- 2 An old cargo hold's slabs
- 3 Cryochambers, re-upholstered
- 4 Bunk beds, four to a rack
- 5 Rubber mats on metal bunks
- 6 Thick shag carpet on the floor

SHIP'S GUNS

- 1 An oversized harpoon cannon
- 2 A glimmering blue plasma gun
- 3 A heavy rotating chaingun
- 4 Shark-painted torpedo rack
- 5 A cylindrical flak cannon
- 6 An electromagnetic railgun

ENGINE & THRUSTERS

- 1 Smoky, smelly, and chugging
- 2 Glowing, blue, and humming
- 3 Fiery, sweltry, and roaring
- 4 Wet, slippery, and spattering
- 5 Gear-heavy, shiny, and clicking
- 6 Rusty, sharp, and grinding

HELM & COCKPIT

- 1 A fitted metal box for one
- 2 A cracked leather swivel chair
- 3 An old 360-degree VR room
- 4 A wall of switchboards
- 5 A single joystick and porthole
- 6 A hexagonal steering wheel

CARGO HOLD

- 1 All catwalks and grilled floors
- 2 Shipping crates fused together
- 3 An entire hulk, gutted and refit
- 4 A single enormous steel crate
- 5 An old inactive shuttle
- 6 A giant net bolted onto the ship

EXTRA STUFF

- 1 An infirmary, run out of drugs
- 2 Bolt-holes behind air vents
- 3 An armory with only knives
- 4 A shuttle made out of wood
- 5 A jetway-turned-boarding-dock
- 6 A mysterious, bare, empty room

HUB

- 1 Glass towers piercing the clouds
- 2 Maze of concrete and rebar
- 3 Identical prefab cubicle-homes
- 4 Underground hive of corridors
- 5 Web of canals and alleyways
- 6 Tiered, many-decked platforms

STATION

- 1 A hollowed-out asteroid
- 2 Several hulks lashed together
- 3 An ancient mining refinery
- 4 Refurbished NASA-era station
- 5 A glass-and-steel sphere
- 6 A prefab corporate station

UNKNOWN SHIP

- 1 Red-painted spiky hull; pirates
- 2 Chrome, winged hull; nobility
- 3 Dull hull; plainclothes Authority
- 4 Damaged broken hull; junkers
- 5 Blocky, ugly hull; syndicate
- 6 Bright lights; local wreckers

WHAT'S ON THIS HULK?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 A double-V radiation battery | OR A beta-level fragmentation pod |
| 2 Six capsules of oxoethanoic acid | OR A crate of helium fuel casks |
| 3 The barrel of a "hydra" cannon | OR A dozen new motherboards |
| 4 Four ultra-dense protein bars | OR Thirty feet of undamaged cable |
| 5 A case of polymer jackets | OR Three engine pistons, still good |
| 6 A fifth of high-grade grog | OR A still-living plant terrarium |

OUTPOST

- 1 A single old apartment complex
- 2 Cluster of tiny wooden shacks
- 3 An overgrown refueling stop
- 4 Abandoned mining shafts
- 5 An Authority training compound
- 6 A hulk, crashed planetside

SPACEBORNE HAZARD

- 1 Plasma capsules, now leaking
- 2 Sputtering electrical batteries
- 3 A hulk with still-active engines
- 4 An Authority drone gone rogue
- 5 Clouds of detritus and spacesilt
- 6 An oncoming fiery asteroid

AUTHORITY AGENT, DEPARTMENT

- 1 Investigator, from Inquiries
- 2 Enforcer, from Compliance
- 3 Assault Designer, from R&D
- 4 Judge-At-Large, from Ethics
- 5 Sergeant, from Marine Corps
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