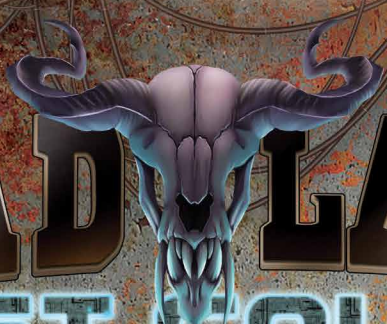




DEAD LANDS

LOST COLONY



WIDOWMAKER



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DEADLANDS LOST COLONY

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WIDOWMAKER

In these pages, you'll find a guide to the Belt's most infamous mining settlement, Widowmaker. There are also a pair of adventures set on Widowmaker, as well as a couple of nasty creatures and characters to throw at your posse.

LIFE IN THE BELT

There are dozens, even hundreds, of permanent settlements in the Belt, in the form of either free-floating stations or habitats built onto the surface of the larger, more stable asteroids. The battered station Goliath's Belt is still the single largest human habitation in the region, averaging over 3,000 souls on board at any given time, but several other settlements have populations that reach into the low four figures.

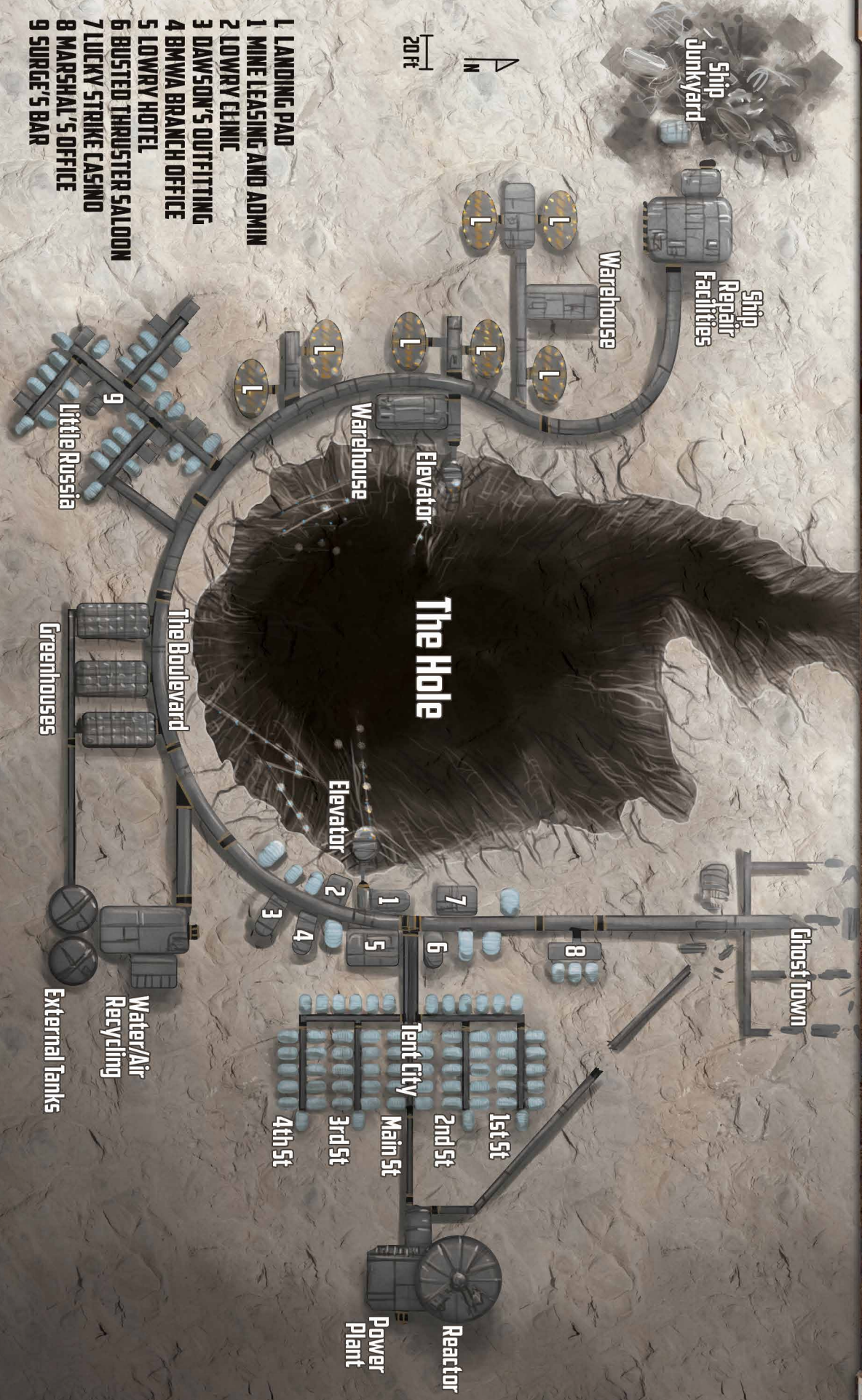
Of course, if you're desperate enough to count individual strikes, that number jumps into the hundreds, or possibly even thousands. Most of those are home to only a handful of miners or sometimes even a single prospector hoping to strike it rich. The only visitors those lonely outposts receive are infrequent supply ships or pirate raiders, who are nowhere near as infrequent as most Belt residents might prefer.

Whether you're talking massive stations or tiny mining outposts, the ugly truth most Belt settlements have come to grips with is they've vastly outlived their intended life expectancy. Some of the oldest human bastions in that region are over 40 years old. And for the last decade and a half, humanity has been cut off from Earth's manufacturing base and left to make do with what it can scrape and salvage in Faraway.

That means settlements in the Belt are usually less pristine habitats full of scientific marvels and wonder and more patchwork shelters held together by duct tape, spot welding, and rust. As a result, most Belters are fairly creative at jury-rigging scrap metal and repurposing spare parts to fit their need of the moment. Making a square peg fit a round hole in the side of your space station leads to creative—or at least desperate—solutions.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Belt has an abundance of metals, both heavy and precious, and most importantly—at least from the viewpoint of those looking to make their fortune there—ghost rock. What the Belt doesn't have is anything else. Manufactured goods, provisions, and most basic goods and materials have to come from elsewhere, namely Banshee and the orbital stations.



Ship
Junkyard

Ship
Repair
Facilities

Warehouse

20ft

N

The Hole

Warehouse

Elevator

Elevator

Ginost Town

The Boulevard

Greenhouses

Water/Air
Recycling

External Tanks

Jent City

Reactor

Power
Plant

1st St

2nd St

Main St

3rd St

4th St

- 1 LANDING PAD
- 1 MINE LEASING AND ADMIN
- 2 LOWRY CLINIC
- 3 DAWSON'S OUTFITTING
- 4 BMWa BRANCH OFFICE
- 5 LOWRY HOTEL
- 6 BUSTED THRUSTER SALOON
- 7 LUCKY STRIKE CASINO
- 8 MARSHAL'S OFFICE
- 9 SURGE'S BAR

Little Russia

The value of the materials mined from the Belt asteroids means the population has a fair amount of income. Of course the scarcity of goods and even basic necessities wipes it out just as fast. The end result is that life in the Belt is very similar to that of the boomtowns of the Old West. Fortunes come quick but are drained away in a constant need for food, water, and even oxygen.

What this means for game purposes, Marshal, is that you can assume the scarcity of any item above Common is one step worse—Uncommon becomes Scarce, Scarce becomes Rare, and so on. Furthermore, the price of *any* item or service purchased in the Belt is roughly twice that listed in *Deadlands: Lost Colony*.

THE COST OF LIVING

While the sheer number of permanent settlements might make it seem otherwise, living in space with only a thin plating of steel between you and the endless Dark isn't exactly a walk in the park. Life—human life, anyway—is actually pretty high maintenance. Food, water, heat, and a breathable atmosphere are all fairly non-negotiable requirements to ensure continued admittance to the rather exclusive Club of Not Being Dead (Yet).

And most of those things aren't exactly common in the vacuum of space.

Many of the smaller mining stations border on self-sufficiency, often due to the simple fact that fewer people consume fewer resources than exceptional efforts at sustainability. Solar cells or small nuclear plants provide more than enough power for their needs, and a simple greenhouse can help offset oxygen requirements and produce a fair amount of food. Other, less squeamish (or just more desperate) folks employ "recyclers" to help with nourishment needs. Those devices turn waste products into edible, if not actually pleasant, foodstuffs. And yes, we do mean *those* waste products.

The larger settlements require relatively frequent resupply of food and other consumables from Banshee. Each finds a way to pass the cost down to the inhabitants and visitors to the settlement. Some of the older communities have established sales and

use taxes to offset the cost, but the smaller outposts rely on some form of entry and exit fees to make ends meet.

ICEBERGS...IN SPACE!

The one necessity that can be found in the Belt is water. Early in the exploration of the region, spacers discovered the Belt is home to large deposits of ice. And we're not talking small deposits on the surface of some asteroids, but chunks big enough to qualify as large asteroids all on their own.

The current, most commonly accepted explanation for these is that they are the remnants of comets that collided with debris in the Belt. Actually, they're just the remains of water left after the Craghan cataclysm, but so far, only a few astronomers even theorize the Belt was once an actual planet.

The spacers in the Belt farm the icebergs, using them to supply settlements with water. The colonists don't just use the water for mundane purposes like drinking and (occasionally) bathing. They also utilize it as reaction mass for ship engines, cracking the molecule to produce oxygen for atmosphere, and hydrogen for fuel.

However, even with a somewhat more ready supply of water than other vital necessities, nearly all outposts and stations recycle every drop of waste water they can.

WIDOWMAKER

Widowmaker sits on a mid-sized asteroid creatively named M04 on the opposite side of the system, just about as far away from Goliath's Belt as you can get and still be in the Belt.

The settlement began as a single strike, way back (for Faraway, at any rate) in 2059. Frank Lowry, a lone and painfully inexperienced prospector, struck out on his own to search the relatively unexplored sector opposite Goliath's Belt. The distance between the main hub for commerce and resupply had left that region largely unexplored early in the ghost rock rush.

Frank Lowry found a surface deposit of ghost rock during a cursory sweep of

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The settlement is recorded on most maps and official documents as Lowry, but nearly everyone in the Belt knows it by another name, Widowmaker. Even while Frank Lowry was alive, most folks started calling the outpost by that appellation, and since then, it's the only name anyone uses anymore.

Large numbers of individuals driven by ghost rock fever to venture out onto an airless asteroid and chop at rock with tools ranging from good, old-fashioned pick axes to pneumatic double sledges is a big part of the recipe for disaster. Another part is near-criminal lack of training, experience, or regulations—none of which are found in abundance on Asteroid M04.

On top of that, mix liquor, other mind-altering substances, and literal handfuls of untraceable, valuable minerals together in close quarters for extended periods, and you end up with more than a few “accidents”—accidents involving carefully aimed firearms or multiple stab wounds.

What we're saying is folks die a lot on Lowry, and that fact didn't go unnoticed by the residents. The saying goes “The easiest way to earn your fortune on Widowmaker is to make your life insurance payments on time.”

asteroids in the sector, and staked his claim. Unfortunately, asteroid M04 turned out to hold just enough of the valuable mineral to convince Frank to invest in a semi-permanent habitat before running dry. Between the cost of building a few lasting shelters on the surface and the expense of trips to Goliath's Belt to exchange ghost rock for credits and credits for supplies, Frank was left quite a bit short of the fortune he'd come to Faraway to find.

FROM BUST TO BOOM...

Most struggling miners in his position would have sold their claim to another mining company, taken a one-time windfall,

and drank until their livers resigned. But while Frank Lowry didn't have the mind of a prospector, he did have the heart of an entrepreneur. Frank instead sold leases to mine his strike.

The Belt was filled with prospectors looking to find a mother lode, and Lowry simply catered to the market. For a small daily fee, he allowed individual miners access to a proven vein of ghost rock. All they had to do was extract it.

With thousands of new arrivals to Faraway looking to get rich quick on ghost rock, but lacking the resources and know-how to work their own asteroids, Frank's scheme caught like wildfire. Soon, he was drawing more miners than his original facilities—little more than a few basic shelters—could handle. Frank quickly invested in improving infrastructure on the asteroid.

Since M04 was out in the hinterlands of the Belt, he would have a stranglehold on most goods and services any itinerant miners would need, from housing to food to entertainment. However, his reach soon exceeded his financial grasp, forcing him to bring in outside investors in 2065. Saloon owners, casino operators, outfitters, and even bath-house proprietors all found a space in Frank's eponymously named boomtown, and the prospector-turned-pioneer found his bank account growing once again.

...AND BACK TO BUST

Lowry continued to expand facilities, always believing there would be bodies to fill any new beds he built. He commissioned construction on two additional habitats to house more lease workers, counting on future leases and commodity sales to cover his initial expenditures.

Sadly, the strike hit its carrying capacity for miners around 2078. The ghost rock veins were still filling pockets, but there simply wasn't enough to go around. Miners stopped flocking to M04. Lowry's bank account went dry, leaving one of the habitats partially completed and the other little more than a skeleton of steel supports.

Nearly penniless, Frank succumbed to the very vices he once peddled to his miners, drawing on his reputation and position in the

settlement to cover his bar tabs and gambling debts. When those reached their limit, he bartered against his physical assets and deeds. And when those ran dry, legend has it he stole the gun he used to kill himself with.

The settlement didn't die with its founder, though. Those holding the majority of Frank's markers and debts were owners and proprietors of businesses at the outpost—in particular, the saloon and casino owners. Closing down the mine and settlement didn't serve their own best interests. Of course, overinvestment in upkeep didn't either. Or virtually any investment at all, as it turned out.

LIFE ON WIDOWMAKER

Time has not been kind to the outpost or its inhabitants. Not only did the new owners of the settlement stop all construction; they put a halt to any major maintenance project as well. They reasoned the boomtown wasn't a tourist resort, it was a mining outpost, and miners don't need fancy waxed floors or shiny furnishings.

While Lowry's original habitat and most of the core of the settlement were constructed of prefabricated modules, lack of upkeep has begun to take its toll. Worse, later expansions were almost exclusively made from repurposed shipping containers, ship segments, or even welded-together scrap, so the trip to decrepitude was even shorter for those areas.

Exposed metal on Widowmaker almost always shows a blood-red crust of rust, as the station's air recyclers for years have been jammed on a setting that ensures a humidity of over 50%. Some residents attempt to protect against the encroachment of rust by applying paint, and in some places the layers seem nearly thick enough to stop a bullet.

THE TOWN COUNCIL

Nowadays, Widowmaker is administered by a group of locals. Most of these folks have been on the rock since before Lowry passed on. They accumulated a fair amount of real estate as debt repayment either before or after he took up residence in Widowmaker's Boot Hill—which is what the settlement's

recycling facility is called. So...maybe not-so-permanent residence.

Votes are allotted based on the amount of property owned on the asteroid. A core group of six individuals controls the lion's share of both the settlement and therefore the votes. These are: Lionel Murphy, owner of the Busted Thruster; Belinda Jameson, proprietor of the Lucky Strike; George Dawson, of Dawson's Outfitting; Dr. Miguel Herrera; and Sergei Kovalenko, owner of Surge's (and much of Little Russia). A couple dozen other residents and miners are also stakeholders, but if you rounded up all of them they still wouldn't offset one of these six.

The council collects all taxes and fees, and uses the funds to keep the day-to-day operations on the asteroid functioning. What's left over then trickles down to the stakeholders in proportion to the size of their holdings.

All major decisions must be passed by a majority vote. There are more hard feelings and infighting between the members of the core group than you'd get after shaking up a box full of wet cats. As a result, very little of any import changes in the settlement without years of maneuvering, bribes, and cajoling.

POWER AND AIR

Widowmaker draws its energy from the same decades-old reactor Lowry installed when he first laid the foundations for the outpost. Luckily, the man had big plans, so the power output far exceeds the current need. Still, like most equipment in the Belt, the infrastructure is past its intended life expectancy, so brown-outs and shortages aren't uncommon as breakers fail, wiring frays, or a junction box finally succumbs to rust.

An aging recycling system provides most of the atmosphere for Widowmaker. It's been repaired so many times over the years there may not be a single original part from the original install. No small number of replacement parts are jury-rigged abominations apparently sprung from some drunken engineer's nightmares, and the air ducts have begun to double as breeding beds for all manner of fungi.

A small series of greenhouses supplement the recyclers. The outpost long ago gave up



on trying to produce enough fresh vegetables and fruit for the population and transitioned to cultivating engineered plants with abnormally high carbon-dioxide exchange rates. Still, even with occasional atmospheric resupplies from Banshee or iceberg farmers, the air on Widowmaker carries a subtle but constant stink of mold and decay.

KEEPING ONE'S FEET ON THE GROUND

Like all asteroid bodies in the Belt, M04 is far too small to generate more than a feeble gravitational field on its own. While most outposts just do without, some use spin to create centripetal force. A rare few use gravity generators cannibalized from HII gravity drives. Lowry, not one to spare expense, chose the latter method.

All the common areas and administrative shelters have functional gravity equal to Earth norm. The Boulevard, Main, and 1st through 4th Streets are also equipped with generators. Sergei Kovalenko outfitted his bar with them himself, but the rest of Widowmaker, including the shelters in Tent City and Little Russia, are effectively zero-g environments.

These zero-g areas often catch visitors off guard, sending them careening into the ceiling or walls at transition points. Long-term residents wear magnetic boots to make the change between gravity and zero-g areas less disorienting.

The unintended consequence of the gravity drives is the Fear Level on Widowmaker is a whopping 4. Combined with the age of the outpost, the desperation most independent prospectors wear like cheap cologne, the sour atmosphere, and the overall lawlessness at the settlement, Widowmaker quickly overwhelms a first-time visitor with a sense of almost palpable dread—which some would argue is just truth in advertising.

Perhaps for that reason Widowmaker and other asteroid settlements using gravity generators are breeding grounds for Belt ghost stories. Tales of horrors awaiting the unwary in the depths of the Dark—spun in the Busted Thruster or Surge's—just seem more believable than they would elsewhere in the system.

BREATHING TAX

Widowmaker's council pays for the upkeep (such as it is) on its infrastructure by charging visitors and inhabitants an "atmo fee" of \$20 per day. On arrival, any visitor is required to pay for six days of atmo (\$120)—non-refundable. Upon departure, administrators check the spacer's length of visit and collect any fees due for days in excess of the six-day visit. Long-term residents can pre-pay at a discounted rate (\$500 every 30-days).

Widowmaker's Station Marshal, currently former EXFOR marine Katy Winslow, takes custody of any who can't pay their outstanding atmo fees, holding the violator in custody until they pay or work it off somehow. Of course, additional atmo fees accrue during custody.

Every few months or so, EXFOR recruiters arrive and offer to pay offenders' debts in exchange for enlistment. EXFOR also pays a finder's fee for each recruit gathered this way, so enforcing the atmo fees is something the settlement administrators take *very* seriously.

THE LAW (OR LACK THEREOF)

Over the years, one constant on Widowmaker has been a very lax approach to the law. Technically, Colonial Rangers have jurisdiction on the outpost, but Widowmaker is so far out of the way a miner might see several birthdays pass before he catches sight of a Ranger's star-shaped badge. And while EXFOR claims control of the Belt nowadays, Warfield's patrols visit only once every few months, and then only to pick up the newest batch of "recruits."

The town council employs a Station Marshal, the one-armed but tough-as-nails Katy Winslow, and a pair of deputies to keep the peace. Winslow serves not only as the enforcement arm of the settlement, but also dispenses most sanctioned punishments. While this might seem like a recipe for abuse, it's served Widowmaker pretty well over the years. The council has laid out guidelines for the infractions it considers important enough to warrant attention, and any marshal who oversteps her authority is quickly looking for work elsewhere.

Outside of oxygen theft, most petty crimes go unpunished, unless theft or destruction

of property is involved. In those cases, restitution for damages is mandated, along with a fine of an equal monetary value paid into the settlement's coffers. Those who can't pay meet the same fate as those who can't meet their oxygen debt: EXFOR conscription.

Murder is also taken very seriously, although self-defense is a valid and often-used defense against the charge. All that's necessary is a witness or two to collaborate one's story. Claim-jumping is likewise punished swiftly and harshly. In either case, the offender is "spaced," or in other words, cycled through an airlock without a pressure suit. Saves on the cost of a bullet.

Widowmaker has a standing ban on any firearms other than pistols, scatterguns, or flechette guns. All long arms are turned over to the marshal on arrival and returned upon departure (and payment of oxygen debt). This isn't so much to prevent violence between residents as it is to protect the outpost. Nothing ruins a day faster than a stray rifle bullet perforating the wall of a shelter, after all.

FREE PORT

Being located in the boondocks of space with virtually no defense of its own and paying only lip-service to EXFOR, one might expect Widowmaker to be a prime target for pirates. But in reality, Widowmaker enjoys an unspoken agreement with most of the raiders. As long as the pirates behave when in town and don't raid, loot, or pillage too close to the settlement, their money's as welcome in the small spaceport as anyone else's. In practice, this works well for all parties involved. The pirates have places to spend their ill-gotten booty and the businesses at the outposts get more money.

Rumor has it the actual terms might be a little more involved, depending on the outpost and just how far in the pirate pocket it sits. It's not unheard of for the folks in charge to give pirates a heads-up of any known EXFOR visits, or for particular pirate bands to act as an impromptu defense force against other, less civilized representatives of their profession. Widowmaker seems to sit at the conservative side of the equation—in other words, "Don't rob us and we'll serve

you drinks and let you gamble away your stolen money."

On the other hand, the Widowmaker charter specifically allows bounty hunters to operate within the outpost, as long as they abide by the other, admittedly few, laws in place. The law on Widowmaker often turns a blind eye to bounty hunters who are a little... *enthusiastic* with their efforts, especially if the target is particularly vile. All claims of neutrality aside, the council's aware that any pirate with a high enough bounty to make chasing them that deep into the Belt cost-effective is probably a pustule that needs popping, but to help maintain the appearance of impartiality, the council doesn't allow the marshal or her deputies to collect bounties.

VISITOR'S GUIDE TO WIDOWMAKER

Widowmaker isn't a sprawling metropolis by any measure, but it is home to roughly 400 folks at any given time. Only about half of those are permanent residents, and the rest are either space crews on a brief shore leave or short-timers only committed to a few weeks trying to unearth a lottery ticket in the Hole.

THE HOLE

The heart of Widowmaker is the roughly football-field-sized pit in the center of the colony affectionately known as the Hole. The Hole has been the site of countless excavations over the decades and extends down to over 200 feet deep. Access to the bottom of the shaft is via one of two elevators positioned at opposites sides. Scaffolding lines much of the inner walls, as miners gamble on which spot is going to produce the next big haul of ghost rock.

Following Frank Lowry's footsteps, the town council prohibits any mechanical digging involving machinery larger than a double sledge, so progress in the pit is slow. But it's also steady, as a constant flow of new miners hoping to hit a big score replaces those who go broke, quit, die, or very rarely, strike it rich.

The restriction on advanced equipment has kept Widowmaker's vein active for far longer than other outposts that have allowed

more efficient techniques. It also keeps the settlement in business. Prospective miners purchase permits to specific sections of the Hole. Each permit costs \$750 for a five-day period, regardless of how much ghost rock the miner recovers.

The average miner manages to scrape about half a pound of ghost rock from the pit each week, assuming he puts in about 12 hours a day turning big rocks into little rocks. If you do the math, you quickly realize he's paying out a good portion of his take in expenses just to get the permit, have a place to sleep at night, and air to breath. And that's without food or any of the other necessities, like alcohol or gambling scratch. Unless he arrives on the asteroid with a good-sized bankroll, he probably ends up exchanging at least some of what he digs out at one of the local assayer's office — also run by the town — which pays at a rate of 75% market price.

And yes, it is by design that the rental periods, oxygen tax, and mining permits don't conveniently line up in duration. The merchants and town council have carefully structured their fees, rates, and prices to almost exactly drain the average miner's account as quickly as it fills. At the end of a week, the average miner may have a few hundred credits to his name, assuming he stays out of the brothels, casinos, or bars. Most don't.

THE BOULEVARD

The Boulevard is the main artery in Widowmaker. It stretches over 300 yards from the dry dock on the west side of the Hole to just north of the marshal's office at the end of the business district. Most corridors on the outpost are eight feet tall, but the Boulevard is twice that, with a height of nearly 15 feet.

It's also better lit than the rest of the outpost, but the lighting dims along the business district, which by the way is what most residents mean when they refer to the Boulevard by name. That stretch of corridor is intentionally illuminated to a lower level, replicating a perpetual evening, albeit one that's lit by garish neon lights. There's no set day or night hours on the outpost, but the owners of the bars and casinos figured out it was easier to convince folks to tie one on and

pay money to look at cards if their bodies felt it was nighttime.

Many businesses live relatively short lives on Widowmaker, either by design or the whims of finance. Certain enterprises are perpetually represented, if under different ownership and signage. There's always at least one public bathhouse—or more accurately shower-house—that doesn't do quite as much business as the residents might prefer. Diners, smaller bars and/or gambling dens are also popular enterprises along the Boulevard. And occasionally, the odd curio shop opens its doors, selling a variety of wares from across the system—sometimes even dealing in relics, whether actually Craghan artifacts or cheap hoaxes.

In addition to these, there are several permanent fixtures on the Boulevard, as listed below.

BMWA Branch Office: The Belt Mine Workers Association is the primary union for Belt miners. There's not a big call for it on Widowmaker, as each miner is self-employed and thus not technically eligible. Many a prospector on Widowmaker has found himself too broke to pay passage off the asteroid and facing mounting oxygen tax bills. The BMWA does a fairly brisk business recruiting spacers in just that situation for positions with larger, corporate operations elsewhere in the Belt.

Busted Thruster Saloon: Run by Lionel Murphy, one of the most influential council members by virtue of property ownership if nothing else, the Busted Thruster is the largest saloon on Widowmaker. The building is three stories high and built so that it actually has a second-floor balcony overlooking the Boulevard. That's so Murphy can show off the other service his saloon offers—the only brothel on Widowmaker, servicing any and all preferences. Murphy has blocked every attempt to open a competing business, either in the council or by straight muscle.

Dawson's Outfitting: Widowmaker's equivalent of a general store, Dawson's maintains a diverse stock of everything from mining implements to foodstuffs—at premium markups, of course. The challenge of importing goods from elsewhere in the system means George Dawson seldom has

ASTEROID M04

Asteroid M04 is a largish, but otherwise unremarkable hunk of rock. It's roughly cylindrical in shape, approximately five miles long on its longer axis and three miles on the shorter. Its size means it generates so little gravity that it is, for game purposes, a zero-g environment.

It rotates slowly on its longer axis, completing a revolution just about every 12 hours—not enough to generate any serious centripetal force. The residents of Widowmaker use the rotation to designate compass directions, mostly for ships arriving at the port. There's nothing else on the asteroid of any interest outside of Widowmaker and its adjoining mine.

any serious competitors. When he does, he simply drops prices to the point any upstart can't maintain profitability, then makes up the loss once he's got a monopoly again. The one common item he does not carry is firearms of any sort, but a thriving black market ensures anyone who wants a pistol can get one easily enough. Rumor has it Dawson is the primary supplier to said black market.

Lowry Hotel: The Lowry provides short-term accommodations. The "rooms" are actually 7' × 3' × 3' cubicles stacked two high. The coffins, as locals refer to them, run \$50 a night and come with an entertainment monitor and little else. Access to the hotel's communal bathroom and shower facilities are included, but can also be purchased separately for \$10, and at times, the Lowry's bathhouse is the only available public shower facility on the outpost, making it quite crowded.

Lowry Clinic: Run by Dr. Miguel Herrera, the Lowry Clinic is the total extent of medical care available at the settlement. His facility is well-equipped by most standards, combining elements of a general practitioner with that of an emergency room, but any major event would quickly overwhelm his resources.

Lucky Strike Casino: The Lucky Strike is *the* casino on Widowmaker. Small-time card sharps occasionally open shop, but if you really want to lose your money in style, you visit the Lucky Strike. The casino staffs several live table games and a host of electronic ones, as well as offering a serviceable, if not exactly exotic, dinner menu around the clock. Brenda Jameson bills her enterprise as the classiest joint in the Belt, at least outside of Tian, and it draws a fair number of spacers and private prospectors from around this sector of space.

Marshal's Office: Widowmaker usually has a marshal and two full-time deputies on staff, one of whom is always on shift. The marshal's office has three attached fabric shelters (similar to those in Tent City) with biometrically keyed entries for holding cells. Each cell can hold up to four prisoners comfortably.

Mine Leasing Administration: Anyone looking to mine the Hole purchases her permit here. It's also where any local assaying of ghost rock is performed. The town council oversees the operation—and reaps all the profits from it—so all records are very well-maintained.

TENT CITY

Tent City is the section of Widowmaker where most longer-term, semi-successful miners reside. It's also home to employees of many of the Boulevard businesses, but not the owners—most of those have private living quarters built into their establishments.

It takes its name from the construction of the individual living quarters. Each is a collapsible fabric shelter made from a composite of insulating polymers and ballistic fabrics, and vacuum-sealed compounds. The resulting walls aren't quite as strong as steel, but are sufficient to withstand most impacts up to small caliber pistol rounds without puncturing (Hardness 12).

Each shelter is approximately 15' × 10' and houses a pair of hammocks, a table, chair, storage closet, and a latrine with privacy curtain. Shower facilities are not included, but they're available from one of the bathhouses or the Lowry Hotel—at an extra cost. Unlike the Boulevard and the outpost's

main corridors, the individual shelters have no artificial gravity, providing another reason for long-term residents to invest in magnetic boots.

Originally, Lowry hoped to make the settlement as much like an actual town as possible, naming each of the corridors like numerical streets, with the central maintenance corridor named Main. In reality, the cheap cosmetic does little to disguise the fact the inhabitants are living in fabric cubbyholes along rusty service tunnels.

Ten of the shelters are privately owned by the resident inhabiting them. Of the remainder, Lionel Murphy owns 30 and Belinda Jameson another 20. The rest are held by other members of the settlement in blocks of one or two. Due to turnover, a few are always uninhabited at any given time, and competition for rents keeps the going rate at \$500 a week or \$2,000 for a month. Tent City shelters are almost never available for rent on a day-to-day basis.

LITTLE RUSSIA

The small section of living quarters nearest the landing pads is the last completed expansion of the outpost—or at least quasi-completed. Lowry went bust shortly after the initial corridors were completed and a few fabric shelters were in place. He sold the rights to complete the development of the area to Sergei Kovalenko, a bartender on Boulevard who made a small fortune by accepting ghost rock in trade for liquor and blackline.

Kovalenko finished construction on the area, but unlike Lowry, had no qualms about cutting corners or even whole walls at times. Rather than invest in high-falutin' prefabricated shelters, he converted shipping containers, wrecked lifeboats, spacecraft sections, or welded sheet metal to create additional space.

The end result is a hodgepodge of buildings and corridors with little rhyme or reason to their design. Many of the individual shelters are two or even three stories tall. As neither the corridors nor any attached constructions (beside's Surge's Bar) have artificial gravity, it's not uncommon for the multi-story buildings to forgo stairs or ladders, and

instead simply provide a hole to provide passage between floors.

The area takes its name not from any actual ethnic concentration, but simply from the owner's name. Kovalenko himself was actually born and raised in Scotland and speaks with a heavy, if artificially affected, brogue, which confuses first-time visitors.

Little Russia has several shelters without working connection to the power grid, and even the areas that are connected suffer frequent outages. It's Widowmaker's equivalent of a slum, with Kovalenko charging whatever he thinks he can get from potential renters. The area is rife with blackline dealers, thieves, and criminals, and Kovalenko is rumored to get a cut of any dealings that occur within his realm. Most residents willing to risk their necks sleeping in Little Russia are either desperate or more of a threat than any who might think to prey upon them.

Surge's: This place draws the worst of the worst on Widowmaker. It's the first stop for both pirates and bounty hunters, but it's the basis for Kovalenko's claim to be a legitimate businessman. Unlike the rest of Little Russia, it has artificial gravity and fairly consistent power, which makes it a step up from the rest of the section. Of course, that's like being a step above a cesspool—it still stinks and more often than not you're going to step in crap. (And the transition from gravity to zero-g leads many patrons to "recycle" the alcohol they just imbibed not far from the door to Surge's, making this analogy almost literally true.)

SPACE PORT

On the west side of the central mining pit, "the Hole," sit the seven landing pads and associated facilities that comprise Widowmaker's spaceport. The pads can only accommodate vessels up to Medium Size. Larger vessels must employ their own shuttles to ferry crew or cargo to the surface. At one time Widowmaker had a pair of shuttles for that purpose, but time and tight budgets have taken their toll; their remains now rest in the nearby junkyard.

The marshal's office loosely coordinates any air traffic, but only for the purpose of

ensuring all entry and exit fees are paid. Pilots are largely left to their own devices when landing and departing. Fortunately, the outpost seldom has more than two or three ships docked at any given time, so collisions between ships aren't too great a risk.

Widowmaker has a dry dock facility as well (Medium Size or smaller). A small stock of common repair parts is available, but most wrench jockeys discover they have to sort through the wrecks in the adjacent junkyard to find key components, or at least something they can jury-rig long enough to make it back to civilization. Repair costs on Widowmaker suffer the same 100% markup as any other goods and services in the Belt.

GHOST TOWN

While Lowry managed to scratch together the money to get most of his first expansion habitable enough to use, his bank account went belly up before the second was much more than foundation and the bones of a framework. Ghost Town, as it's known to most locals, is an unfinished section of the outpost that lies just beyond the marshal's office at the end of the Boulevard. The only functional part ever completed was the airlock that was intended to allow access to it.

The partially completed walls of the planned corridors still stand, as do those of a few larger constructions the town's founder had hoped would draw more merchants. Over the years, residents of Little Russia have cannibalized most of the usable materials from the area, leaving only bare steel girders poking up from the asteroid's thin layer of dust, like the claws of a skeleton clawing its way from the grave.

> I RECKON YOUR ODDS AT THE LUCKY STRIKE ARE A LITTLE BETTER THAN MAKING MONEY IN THE HOLE —

**-BRENDA JAMESON,
OWNER OF THE LUCKY STRIKE**

3:10 TO GOLIATH'S BELT

This adventure ends up involving the heroes in a bit of Widowmaker politics, a dash of Banshee history, and a smidge of system-wide intrigue. It begins in the outpost's best known dive, Surge's...

BEHIND THE SCENES

Nigel Friedman is a xeno-archaeologist. He secured a grant from Hellstromme Industries and has been mapping the asteroids in the Belt for over a decade. He (rightly) believes the Belt was actually once a planet that suffered a cataclysmic event. Friedman is even working on an algorithm capable of reverse-plotting each asteroid back into its original location on the planet.

Vanessa Hellstromme sponsored Friedman's work, well aware that his hypothesis is correct. With a little luck, she realizes, Friedman's algorithm could help her locate the powerful Craghan artifacts she craves.

Friedman, who is more than a little flaky, slowly realized something was off with his corporate master. As his paranoia grew, he stopped sending updates on his algorithm. He also began quietly posting his findings, both about the Craghan empire and Vanessa's strange and otherworldly knowledge in certain occult fields. Hellstromme had no choice but to send agents to track him down.

Then General Warfield caught wind of the HI representatives in his stomping grounds and wanted to know what they were up to. Friedman believes the EXFOR commander intends to weaponize his work somehow and has been dodging them since they first inquired into his work months ago. In reality, Warfield would shake his head at more "eggheaded nonsense" and cut the man loose, but Friedman's paranoia is cranked up to ELEVEN where the military is involved.

Having less luck than the HI field reps, Warfield issued a standing order to his patrols and all outposts to hold Friedman for questioning should he be spotted.

TAX EVASION

Surprisingly, xeno-archaeology isn't a top-paying field, and idealism isn't known for its riches. Friedman managed to stretch his HI grant out for several months, but he came up short right when it mattered the most: paying his oxygen tax as he attempted to leave Widowmaker. He now sits in the Widowmaker holding facility, terrified to see which party finds him first.

The current marshal, Katy Winslow, is a former EXFOR officer. While she still feels loyalty to her former comrades-in-arms, she disagrees strongly with Warfield's increasingly militant stance toward the colony. She's seen the general's bulletin, but

neglected to notify EXFOR when the scientist was brought in. While the town council also prefers to avoid entanglements with EXFOR, Friedman has been locked up for his overdue fees for nearly a month, and a patrol ship is due by to pick up new "recruits" within a few days.

AN INTERESTED PARTY

A few of the Fallen—the former sykers now possessed by the spirits of Craghan priests (see *Deadlands: Lost Colony*)—prowl the Belt, hoping to unearth powerful artifacts. While most Fallen still answer to the skinnies, a handful shrugged off their old loyalties and set out on their own. One of these is Lilith, who commands a small number of particularly savage pirates, not all of whom are human...or alive.

Lilith recently caught wind of Friedman's work via contacts in EXFOR (she doesn't know about Hellstromme's trackers yet). With her knowledge of Craghan history, she's in the perfect position to fully exploit his algorithm. She plans to pick Friedman's brain—literally, if necessary—to extract the entirety of his research. If she can use it to narrow down her searches, she could build a powerful arsenal of lost Craghan weapons and relics, eventually amassing enough might to challenge her former masters directly.

Lilith knows once Friedman's in EXFOR hands, he's out of her reach, but a holding cell on a lonely outpost is well within her grasp...

UNINTENTIONAL HEROES

The posse is in one of Widowmaker's bars, possibly stretching their legs after a long flight from Banshee or just spending a little of their hard-earned wages. A pale, bald woman enters. She has a stylized tattoo of a cruciform dagger and wears heavy leather goggles. By her side is a pack of the worst looking specimens of humanity outside of a colonial prison. She's carrying only a MkIV FOP, but the men with her are armed to the teeth with scatterguns and wicked looking knives. One has a submachine gun slung across his back—highly illegal on Widowmaker. The group clears a table, sits, and orders a round of drinks.

Any sykers immediately recognize the woman as one of their number. A Common Knowledge roll from either a syker or bounty hunter identifies her as Lieutenant Lopez, a former member of the Psychic Legion's Killer Angels. Lopez, along with 12 other members of the squad, went AWOL during the assault on Castle Rock. Not only that, but they massacred the troops and officers with them at the time. EXFOR slapped a high bounty on each member of the renamed "Fallen Angels" soon after. The cruel outlaws have since earned numerous colonial bounties as well.

TROUBLE WITH THE LAW

Before anything can happen, Station Marshal Katy Winslow arrives and announces Lilith and her crew are under arrest for disturbing the peace, along with a host of other crimes.

"Lieutenant Desideria Lopez, aka Desi, aka 'Lilith,' you and your crew are under arrest for disturbing the peace and violating Widowmaker's weapon laws. On a personal note, I hope you make this difficult. You killed several of my friends at Castle Rock."

Lilith looks up from her table, almost bored, and motions off-handedly at her crew. The pirates immediately draw their weapons and move to intercept Winslow. The marshal is badly outnumbered but stands her ground. If the heroes intervene, the pirates immediately respond.

Winslow relies on her stunner as much as possible—she intends to take Lilith alive and turn her over to EXFOR for trial and execution. She has no compunction against killing the other crew members, but switching between weapons is clumsy when you're short an arm—and someone's trying to blow your head off.

Lilith doesn't enter the fight unless attacked directly, and then uses only *confusion*. She doesn't want to risk escalating the encounter when she's not sure of the heroes' capabilities. Lilith has more than one back-up plan in case she's captured, and no wish to die after fighting for millennia to hold onto her existence.

Lilith's minions, on the other hand, fight to the bitter end. They're all more than a little

insane. Once her crew is Incapacitated, Lilith surrenders.

If the heroes opt not to get involved, don't play the battle out. Instead, Marshal Winslow has a tough fight but manages to stun Lilith first, 'cuff her, then slug it out with the rest of the pirates. When the smoke clears, some of the pirates are dead and the rest scatter.

➤ **KATY WINSLOW:** See page 29.

➤ **LILITH:** See page 29.

- **PIRATES (1, PLUS 1 PER HERO):** Use the stats for Pirate Crew from *Deadlands: Lost Colony*. One is armed with a Commando SMG (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 3, AP 2). The others carry either scatterguns (Range 5/10/20, Damage 1-3d6, RoF 1-2) or police pistols (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, AP 2), and knives (Str+d4).

AFTER THE SHOOTOUT

If they helped, Winslow thanks the group for the assist. If they didn't, she looks them over and decides to recruit 'em anyway.

"Her name's Lilith. She's a syker, in case that wasn't obvious. EXFOR has been trying to gets their hands on her bald head for years. She and some of her partners went rogue during the Battle of Castle Rock. They were the Killer Angels. Now they're called the Fallen Angels. They killed dozens of their fellow soldiers – including some very good friends of mine.

"EXFOR has a sizable bounty on Lilith for desertion, treason, numerous counts of murder and piracy, and more lesser charges than I have the breath or patience to recite. I'm forbidden as marshal to collect bounties, so I guess they'd be up for grabs for anyone who was there when she was turned over.

"An EXFOR patrol ship is due in a few days. I plan to turn Lilith over to 'em for transport to Goliath's Belt and trial. The problem is a bounty this big is going to draw its share of flies. My deputies cut bait when they learned she and her murderers were on the outpost, so I'm short-handed.

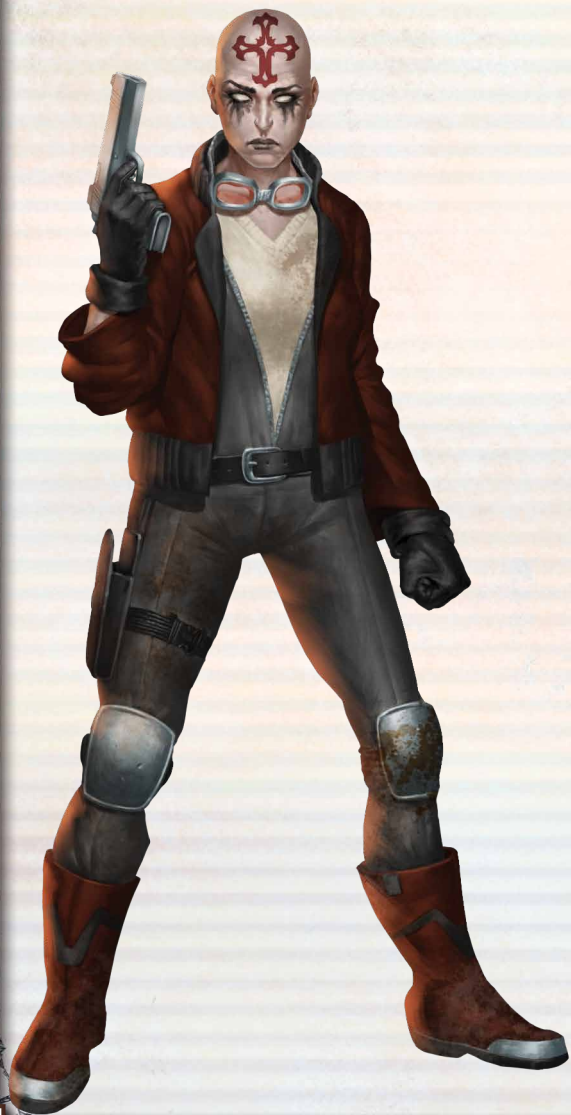
"I'm not authorized to deputize you myself, but I can accept the assistance of concerned citizens in the pursuit of my duties...and if you folks were to pitch in and help keep her under lock and key for a few days, that bounty'd be yours for the taking."

If asked, Winslow says the reward is \$50,000 for Lilith (alive) and \$5,000 for each of her crew members (dead or alive). Assuming they accept, the marshal welcomes their help.

Winslow has the team escort her and Lilith to the dilapidated EXFOR office in Widowmaker. En route, she explains she had a pair of deputies to help her, but they cut bait when they learned she was going after Lilith.

NOW THAT WE'VE CAUGHT HER...

Winslow moves Lilith into one of the office's three detention cells. One of the others holds a bookish, middle-aged man (Friedman) who looks not only out of place in the holding cell,



but on Widowmaker in general. The third cell is empty.

The cells have plexiglass walls and doors rather than bars. The doors are locked with an electronic, biometric pad keyed to Winslow's hand print. The officer gives her prisoner a thorough pat-down search, removing her palmcorder, commlink, and goggles. This reveals the Fallen's mutated eyes, startling Winslow briefly.

"Blackline freaks," she mutters. A Common Knowledge roll from a character familiar with the drug or its users tells the hero those are not normal manifestations of blackline abuse. "There's no telling how that crap interacts with one of those brainburners."

LILITH'S COUNTEROFFER

Lilith takes her seat on one of the iron bunks in the cell with a smirk. If the spacers engage her in conversation, she says:

"If you're smart, you'll cut and run like the marshal's deputies did. There's gonna be plenty of folks looking for that bounty money—and most of 'em wouldn't think twice about offing an EXFOR lackey and her monkeys."

"Even if that doesn't worry you, know my other ship'll be coming to spring me—long before any patrol ship makes it to Widowmaker. And they're not the nice, Sunday-go-to-meeting types I brought with me."

"And then there's me. There are few things in the Dark worse than me, children. And I have a very long memory."

"I won't offer you a reward for letting me go, but if you scamper off to the deepest, darkest hole you can find, right now, we might not come look for you when we're done peeling the skin off that walking dead woman wearing the marshal's star over there."

Winslow merely swings her boots up onto her desk and gives her best dead-eyed stare to the last remark. She almost looks tough enough to stare down the strange-looking pirate, then Lilith grins, revealing overlong canines—fangs, almost. She clacks her teeth to emphasize the point.

Lilith could use puppet to get free, but she's playing it cautious. She wants to slip out with

BLACKLINE

Blackline is ghost rock powder dissolved in water or a saline solution, then injected into a user's veins. A blackline hit gives the user a massive surge of adrenaline, deadens pain receptors, and often induces hallucinations or other psychotic breaks. In rare cases, users even manifest psionic abilities.

Frequent blackline users are recognizable by the dark discoloration of their veins caused by the ghost rock accumulating along the walls of their circulatory systems. It's also hideously addictive, with a single use sometimes enough to cause a powerful psychological and physiological dependence.

Friedman and doesn't want to risk either of them getting shot. She's also patient and has plenty of help waiting both in the shadows of Widowmaker (some of her ship's crew who weren't at Surge's) and a few more surprises already on their way.

THE OTHER GUY

If the heroes ask about the other prisoner, Marshal Winslow explains he's in custody for unpaid oxygen debt. She adds he's probably going to be conscripted by EXFOR on the same ship to which she plans to transfer Lt. Lilith Lopez. She's aware the man was working for Hellstromme Industries and is some sort of scientist:

"He's an astronomer or geologist or something like that. He blathered on about it when we picked him up, but I didn't pay much attention, to be honest."

The only other thing about Friedman that she shares (or knows) is that General Warfield had a BOLO (i.e., a "be on the lookout" order) for the man. Winslow's unsure why Warfield wants the man, but guesses Warfield plans to use him as an olive branch to rebuild ties with HI.

Should the party talk to Friedman, he's happy to expound on the nature of his work, but does so in a generally rambling fashion, heavily sprinkled with esoteric terms that are nearly indecipherable to anyone outside

the field. Those with Science can make a roll at -4 to determine he's talking about some sort of former alien species that lived on a shattered world, and that he has developed an algorithm to track the planet's fragments. He doesn't mention any artifacts, however.

Friedman adds that he believes Warfield wants to use his research to construct a weapon of some sort, though his paranoia seems more general than specific and has no idea how anyone could do so.

LOCKDOWN

After getting Lilith settled in, Winslow tells the heroes they're going to need to earn their keep. Lilith's ship, the *Reave*, is still docked at one of the settlement's landing pads and she needs them to secure it. She doesn't force the entire team to go, but strongly implies if at least some don't, it likely affects their reward status. Any pirates on board are fair game, so that might help sweeten the pot for reluctant posse members.

If the posse agrees, Winslow provides them with access codes to override any locks, either in the settlement or ship, as well as ones to disable the ship's drive engines. She also opens her equipment locker if the heroes aren't fully outfitted, offering body armor and pump shotguns. There are enough of each to fully outfit the team, as well as two

EQUIPMENT: EMERGENCY VACC SUIT

These lightweight environmental suits are intended for short-term, emergency use in case of atmospheric breach on an outpost, station, or spaceship. It takes only three rounds to don one of these suits.

These suits protect the wearer against the effects of a vacuum, but are relatively thin, and unlike regular spacesuits, provide no armor. Each suit contains a small oxygen supply that allows for 30 minutes of breathing.

Weight: 10 lbs, **Cost:** \$1000, **Scarcity:** Uncommon

additional stunners and five emergency vacc suits.

If some of the team decide to stay and help guard the office, she doesn't argue against it. She's well aware of the possible threat from some of Widowmaker's less desirable element—more frequently referred to as “average citizens.”

FLOATING HORROR SHOW

The *Reave* is docked at one of the outpost's landing pads. An umbilical passage connects its airlock to the station. When the heroes arrive, allow each to make a Notice roll at -2 to spot that the surveillance camera monitoring the area has been destroyed. From the damage, it looks like a blast from a scattergun was the cause.

The ship is a heavily modified shuttle. It's retrofitted with improved armor (+2), medium autocannons (x2), and torpedo tubes (x1) with eight torpedoes. Otherwise, it uses the stats for a standard Shuttle from *Deadlands: Lost Colony* should it become necessary for any reason.

Inside is a cockpit, a communal head, a single cabin, and combination cargo hold/engine room.

COCKPIT

The *Reave*'s bridge is a fairly cramped, four-person cockpit. Most of the cabin is filthy and disorganized. Trash of all sorts litters the floor, and the workstations are covered in grime and other substances of indeterminate origin. Only the command chair is pristine, as is all associated panels and monitors.

The crew appears to sleep on the floor of the vessel, with bedrolls piled in corners of the corridors, the galley, and even the head. More litter and filth is cluttered around each bedroll, like nests made of garbage. If the team tries to count the total crew from the bedrolls, it's impossible to get an accurate number due to the mess. However, it is clear there were likely more pirates on the ship than they encountered when Lilith was taken captive.

CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

The shuttle has a single sleeping cabin. Unlike the rest of the *Reave*, it's very clean.

Even its walls are austere, devoid of any pictures or clippings that adorn most spacers' living spaces.

It isn't barren, though. Shelves have been bolted into the walls, and a number of strange statues, artifacts, and the like adorn them. Also on one wall is a whiteboard and markers. The board is covered in an indecipherable scrawl. A Common Knowledge roll realizes it's a language of some sort, but cannot decipher it.

A character with a xeno-anthropology or xeno-archaeology background can make a Common Knowledge roll at -2 to identify the artifacts and writing as similar to those found in the Black Cities on Banshee.

THE HOLD

The hold has been converted into a morgue—or more accurately, a place where bodies are piled. Nearly half a dozen in various states of decomposition are stacked along the walls with no effort at preserving the deceased's flesh or dignity. Observing the grisly mess requires a Fear check versus nausea (at -2, and another -4 for Widowmaker's Fear Level).

In the center of the hold, a large metal table has been bolted to the floor. A mutilated corpse is currently strapped to it. Pieces of metal have been inserted into its flesh, and some jagged ones stick out at sharp angles.

More of the strange writing rings the corpse, fingerpainted on the table in blood. Numerous alien-looking implements, most clearly intended for cutting and carving flesh, also sit on the table.

During her downtime, Lilith sometimes uses blasphemous Craghan rituals to animate the corpses of her victims to use as foot soldiers. The hold is currently stocked with the remains of the last vessel to fall prey to the Fallen and her pirates.

DEBRIEFING

Back at the marshal's office, Winslow is unsettled by the account of what the team encountered in the *Reave*. She adds it to her report, noting it's a shame Lilith can only be executed once. The only answer Lilith gives to any questions about the bodies on the ship is:

"When you're on a long voyage, you go crazy if you don't have a hobby of some kind."

If the team spotted the broken cameras at the landing pad, the marshal reviews the tapes. The first pirate off the *Reave* shot the cameras so she can't say how many others may have disembarked. The cameras on the Boulevard record only Lilith and the pirates that were with her at her capture. Winslow admits it's possible other pirates slipped into the outpost undetected if they were careful.

Should the heroes look into the identity of the bodies in the *Reave's* hold, an hour of effort and a successful Investigation roll identifies them as the crew of a small freighter named *Lucille*. The freighter has been listed as missing for several weeks now.

SHIP OF THE DEAD

The Fallen has a few ships at her disposal, but fortunately for the posse, only one is relatively close to Widowmaker at the time of her capture. About eight hours after she's captured, Lilith's second ship, the *Ravage*, arrives. You can extend this time period to give the posse time to recover or plug in another short adventure of your own, but the *Ravage* reaches Widowmaker well ahead of the EXFOR patrol ship.

While Lilith's personal ship seldom makes landfall at outposts, the *Ravage* never does. The reason for that is pretty simple: it's filled with the undead. The corpses Lilith converts in her spare time man her other vessels. Not only are they more fearsome combatants, but having a crew composed of walking corpses saves on provisions and the like. Also, she's just evil.

IMMIGRATION CONTROL

Winslow gets warning of the *Ravage's* approach before the ship actually touches down. She sends the heroes to lock down the spaceport and prevent the pirates from gaining access to the settlement. The marshal also gives them the codes to seal the exterior airlocks.

The spacers may want one or more of their number to remain at the marshal's office, either to reinforce the marshal or just protect

their investment. Winslow recommends the entire group head to the landing pads, in case they don't get there in time and have to shoot it out, but she doesn't insist on it.

By the time the ship appears on the office sensors, it's only a little more than a minute out. The *Ravage* is coming in fast, landing at the farthest pad. From the marshal's office, it's 200 yards of travel along the looping Boulevard.

From the time Winslow sends them to the landing pad, they have two minutes before the *Ravage* crew begin to pour into the settlement. The posse has to hurry to get to the airlock in time to seal it. Unfortunately, some of Lilith's crew did sneak onto the outpost—and they've got a few obstacles to throw in the team's path.

BLACKLINE ATTACK

The surviving members of the *Reave's* crew managed to recruit some of the worst inhabitants on Widowmaker, with a little help from Lilith's psychic powers. The addicts are convinced Lilith will reward them for freeing her from the jail. They're hopped up on blackline, light on tactics, and more than a little crazy. The blackliners have one mission, to delay the posse long enough to allow the pirates from the *Ravage* to get onto Widowmaker.

They ambush the posse as it nears the easternmost entry to Little Russia—the one without an airlock. Their entire strategy can be boiled down to rush the office and put holes in everyone there. Minimizing holes in themselves is not a priority. The blackliners attack until Incapacitated.

Not long after the gunfire starts, the civilian businesses on the outpost quickly go on lockdown, sealing their doors against entry. The rest of the workers and citizens seek cover in their residences as soon as possible.

- **BLACKLINERS (1, PLUS 1 PER HERO):** See page 28. In addition to the gear noted, one is armed with a flechette gun (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d4+1, RoF 3, 3RB).

REPELLENT BOARDERS

If the spacers don't reach the landing pad in time to seal the airlock, the pirates pour into the corridors. Like you'd expect from zombie

pirates, the *Ravage* crew is remorseless and implacable.

The pirates fight to the bitter end and don't retreat. Their sole plan is to battle through to the marshal's office and free their boss by sheer force of arms. If they fail, Lilith has another plan—two, actually.

If the heroes board the vessel after the fight, they find the *Ravage* is a standard light freighter with autocannons (x2) and torpedo tubes (x1) welded onto it. There's also an unpleasant smell of decay, both from the crew and...leftovers from some of the pirates' other victims. The charnel nature of the vessel requires a Fear test against nausea at -2 (and don't forget the -4 penalty for Widowmaker's Fear Level).

There's little of real value on the ship. Lilith uses the *Ravage* mainly for boarding actions, and any valuable cargo is divvied up among her living crew.

- **UNDEAD PIRATES (2 PER HERO):** See page 32.

WHILE THE POSSE'S AWAY

While the *Ravage* crew poses a significant threat if they manage to get off their ship, Lilith's primary purpose for them is to serve as a distraction. About the time the blackliners start their dust-up with the heroes near Little Russia, the second prong of her attack begins at the marshal's office.

After hiring the blackliners, the remaining crew of the *Reave* make their way to the marshal's office and begin their own assault. They fear Lilith's wrath should they fail, so they fight to the death.

If any heroes remained at the office to help guard the Fallen, run the fight as normal. Otherwise, the marshal contacts the team by commlink just long enough to let them know she's under attack.

- **PIRATES (1, PLUS 1 PER HERO):** Use the stats for Pirate from *Deadlands: Lost Colony*. They have body armor (+4), police pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, Shots 7, AP 2), one spare magazine, knife (Str+d4).

A HELPING HAND

The pirates' main role is to distract any guards just long enough for Lilith to employ her supernatural abilities on Marshal Winslow. Once the fight starts and her captors are distracted, Lilith uses *puppet* to take control of Winslow and have her open the Fallen's cell. She then Incapacitates Winslow and severs her hand to use as a "key."

If the posse doesn't stop Lilith, she then pulls Freidman out of his lockup and tries to rendezvous with her crew, securing emergency suits from the lockers in preparation for her minions breaching the corridors.

If the posse left Winslow alone, Lilith's efforts are automatically successful. If any of the party remained with the marshal, Lilith has Winslow first release her, then attack the spacers. The Fallen joins combat just long enough to get Friedman and then pretends to use him as a hostage and human shield. She tries to keep him alive, but sacrifices him if it's necessary for her survival to do so.

➤ **LILITH:** See page 29.

➤ **NIGEL FRIEDMAN:** Use the stats for Colonist from *Deadlands: Lost Colony*. Friedman is a Wild Card with Science d12, and is unarmed.

PLAN C

Even on the odd chance none of Lilith's other attempts to escape with Friedman fail, she's still got one hole card left to play.

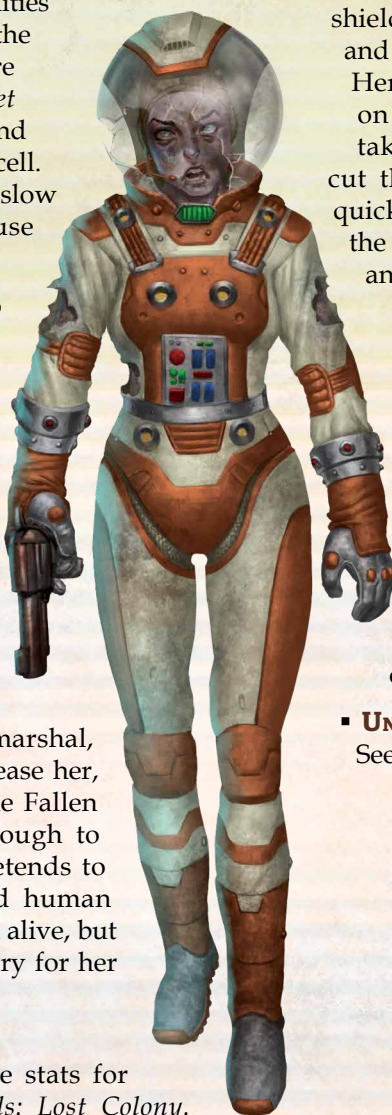
While the main body of the *Ravage* crew engaged the team in the passageways, a smaller team exited the ship onto the asteroid's surface. In addition to their normal weapons, these zombies carry a portable mining laser capable of burning through the fabric walls of the shelters used to form the

holding cells. They use this to cut through the wall to Lilith's cell.

The Fallen uses *environmental protection* to shield herself against the vacuum and cold once her cell is breached. Her minions then use the laser on the door to her cell. This takes four rounds. Once they cut through the door, the office quickly decompresses, triggering the emergency airlock between it and the Boulevard.

Once she's freed, Lilith and her crew secure the office. If any emergency suits remain, they use one to suit Friedman up and head back to the *Ravage* over the asteroid's surface. Should none remain intact, they instead reseal the breached cell door, open the airlock, and use the Boulevard corridor to return to their ship.

▪ **UNDEAD PIRATES (1 PER HERO):**
See page 32.



INTERCEPT COURSE

Should the heroes somehow detect the attackers outside the outpost and go outside to intercept, they face the hazards of not only the vacuum, but also operating in what is effectively a zero-G environment. There is just enough gravity to allow the posse to move along the surface without hurtling into the Dark, but all other effects of zero-G environments apply. Additionally, don't forget the -2 penalty to all Agility and Agility-based skill rolls!

AFTERMATH

Assuming the posse manages to stop all of Lilith's attempts to escape, the remainder of the day and a half or so until the EXFOR patrol arrives at Widowmaker passes relatively uneventfully. The team might be a little frustrated when they learn the reward for the Fallen and her pirate crew isn't instantly paid out. They have to wait until Lilith is processed in at Goliath's Belt and positively identified before the funds are added to their account.

However, barring any complications you want to throw in to frustrate your heroes, Marshal, EXFOR does come through with the funds in about two weeks. It may seem like a lot of money to hand over to the spacers, but if they're operating (or looking to purchase) a ship of their own, it's a drop in the bucket.

FRIEDMAN'S FATE

Assuming the adventurers were successful in saving Friedman from Lilith's clutches and/or death, Marshal Winslow keeps the odd scientist locked up. The posse can purchase his release for the cost of his outstanding oxygen debt, which now sits at a staggering \$360.

If they do, Friedman is grateful, but has little to offer in way of repayment. Little of his actual work has value outside of academic pursuits, but if it fits your game, the researcher may have the location to an otherwise undiscovered asteroid containing some intact Craghan ruins he passes along out of gratitude—or if you're looking for a more ongoing plot device for your campaign, he may try to recruit the group to venture out to one of his projected finds and verify its existence and trajectory. This could lead to other ruins, encounters with pirates, EXFOR, and even Hellstromme Industries as his project nears fruition.

Otherwise, Friedman is transferred to the same patrol ship that takes custody of Lilith. Warfield has the man thoroughly debriefed over the course of the next few weeks and eventually concludes nothing he knows is of strategic importance. EXFOR also recognizes pretty quickly Friedman isn't cut out for even conscripted military service and releases him. Whether HI picks him up or he makes a later appearance in your campaign is entirely up to you.

TOWN COUNCIL

The town council isn't thrilled with the attack on the outpost caused by Lilith's incarceration. Initially, they try holding the spacers responsible for any damages to the settlement, since they claimed a bounty on Lilith. You're welcome to let the players make their case through a **Social Conflict** (see *Savage Worlds*).

If none of the team is particularly silver-tongued, Marshal Winslow explains her initial arrest predated the characters' bounty claim, and Lilith's pirates would have attacked anyway. She even spins it so the team ends up looking more like model citizens who volunteered to help out of their own sense of duty.

Regardless of whether the heroes defend themselves or Marshal Winslow speaks up for them, the council eventually relents. They not only drop any damage claims and allow the group to remain on the outpost, they waive all oxygen fees for a week as compensation for their inquest.

The heroes may express interest in acquiring one of the pirate ships. Unfortunately, EXFOR seizes both the *Reave* and the *Ravage* as evidence in the trials against Lilith and her pirates.

> DON'T TRY ANY OF YOUR HOODOO, LILITH. YOU SO MUCH AS TWITCH AN EYELASH AND I'M GONNA BLOW A HOLE IN YOUR FOREHEAD BIG ENOUGH TO PILOT A DROPSHIP THROUGH —

—STATION MARSHAL KATY WINSLOW

NOT ONE OF US

Not every tale told in the Belt is a tall one. The heroes learn that sometimes horrible truth comes from the mouths of babes when they discover an alien lifeform quickly subjugating the inhabitants of Widowmaker.

A LITTLE BACKSTORY

The discovery of strange ruins or alien artifacts is the bread and butter of stories whispered in the space stations and outposts of the Belt. Odd pieces of rock, strangely-melted metallic globs, and unusual gemstones are sold for ridiculous prices by the Faraway equivalent of medieval charlatans hawking religious relics.

It's no surprise, then, that when a Belt miner unearths a strange find she thinks she may have found the next Rosetta stone. Or more importantly, the riches that would accompany it.

UNLUCKY STRIKE

Last week, Allie Sturgis, holder of a mining lease on Widowmaker, unearthed a peculiar rock from her claim. Unnaturally smooth, it was over a foot in diameter and vaguely ellipsoid in shape. In spite of its size, she found it surprisingly lightweight. Sturgis figured she might have stumbled onto an actual artifact of some alien culture.

What Sturgis found was an actual Craghan relic—at least, of sorts. Sturgis had unknowingly unearthed a small cache of abominations used by the Craghan to control unruly slaves—braincrawlers!

When Sturgis began tinkering with the artifact that night, the hapless miner released a small horde of the six-inch, multilegged horrors. Sturgis quickly succumbed to the creatures.

MULTI-LEGGED VIRUS

Under the control of the braincrawler, Sturgis set about introducing others on the outpost to her new “friends.” Over the next several days, the number of braincrawler-infected people on the outpost grew geometrically. The original egg contained 16 braincrawlers, but several more lay buried in her strike, and the monsters used some of their slaves to unearth the rest of them.

By the time the heroes enter the scene, 16 miners and workers have been subjugated by the abominations, and that number doubles every day until it's well over a hundred restless souls. Once they've freed the rest of their kind, the abominations plan to spread to other settlements in the sector.

CRY WOLF

One member of the crew is approached by Lindsay Walker, the 8-year-old daughter of one of the residents of Widowmaker. She's obviously terrified and tells the hero about the "bug" that has taken control of her parents. Her story is odd, to say the least.

Lindsay's father, Sam, is a miner at the outpost. Two days ago, Lindsay was in the family living quarters when a few miners came in to speak with her dad. They held her dad down and stuck a centipede-like thing on the back of his neck. It burrowed into his flesh and he quickly stopped fighting with them.

The little girl was playing behind a box in a corner, so the miners didn't know she was there. When she saw what they did to her father, she screamed and fled. Since then, she's seen her father looking for her, but she's sure he's going to turn her over to the "monsters."

Lindsay has been watching the hero for a little while and got a good enough look at his neck to be sure he doesn't have one of the "bugs" on him. Other adults she's told haven't believed her—or worse, tried to take her back to her father.

UNEARTHING TROUBLE

There are a few ways the heroes can handle this if they believe Lindsay's story. They quickly find that no one else believes the little girl's claims. To get any traction, the team is going to have to produce some evidence.

Be sure to play up a growing sense of paranoia, Marshal. Do the other residents scoff at the story because it's ridiculous... or because they've been taken over by the strange creatures?

THE AUTHORITIES

Until they have hard evidence, neither station marshal Katy Winslow nor anyone else in a position of authority accepts the "*Invasion of the Body Snatchers*" story. The heroes are treated like they're either gullibly naive or outright crazy.

Complicating matters is the fact the braincrawlers infected the local doctor, Carlos Herrera, days ago. He helps cover for the parasites, denying he's seen any evidence whatsoever. The doctor claims via lots of specialized language that the existence of such a creature is simply impossible—but no, the spacers can't see the back of his neck, thank you very much (insistence can provoke violence, see **Neck Check!** on page 25).

The characters may decide to try to hack into the outpost's computers to look for evidence. This takes a Hacking roll at a -2. There is no direct proof for their claims. No one's filed for a license for a multi-legged, neural xeniform recently (or ever).

However, if a computer jockey decides to review the security footage (by Hacking, subterfuge, bribes, etc.) from the numerous cameras in the settlement, she can make a Notice roll at -4 to spot some miners bringing back some odd-looking "eggs" from the Hole over the past week or so. It's hard to get an exact count, but the hacker can get a few names: Sturgis, Sam Walker, and Garth Mikkelsen.

A raise on the Notice roll also finds footage of some folks messing around one of the ships on a landing pad the previous day. All are dressed in miner's work suits, so it's unlikely they're crew or repair techs. The ship hasn't left port, but getting aboard to search it takes a Persuasion roll at -4. Once in, a Notice roll at -2 finds a strange, egg-shaped object hidden near the crew quarters. See the sidebar **Breaking an Egg** on page 25 for more details.

HIT THE CORRIDORS

The spacers may try asking around about any residents acting strangely. A Networking roll at -2 discovers some of the miners haven't been working their claims for the last few days. The crew also learn a few have been helping Allie Sturgis work her claim instead of their own. No one knows why, but assumes she's hit a rich vein and is subcontracting labor.

Unfortunately, Networking also alerts the braincrawlers that the team is poking their noses where they don't belong. See **Now You've Done It** (page 25).

NECK CHECK!

The direct route is to track down Sam or one of the other miners they've identified as suspects and look for the signs of alien critter on their necks. Some folks might be okay with the strange request but others are likely to refuse, even if they're completely uninfected. Remember, Widowmaker has a high crime rate and lots of unsavory characters, so strangers asking folks to turn around and trust them require a fair amount of persuasion.

Not surprisingly, the braincrawlers' pawns take care to avoid revealing this obvious giveaway. All cover the backs of their necks, wearing high-collared clothing, bandannas, long hair, or even just wearing their pressure suits (without helmets, of course), when in public. And they certainly avoid anyone running around checking necks.

Attempting to force one of the drones to expose his neck results in a fight. Any nearby braincrawlers rush to help defend their cohort, so unless the heroes are careful to do this in a secluded area, assume 1d6 more of the braincrawler drones jump into any ensuing fight—possibly causing a major brawl involving non-infected residents, if they're really incautious about the confrontation.

The infected miners fight until Incapacitated, but any normal residents back off once it's clear the heroes have the upper hand.

- **INFECTED MINERS (5):** Use the stats for Infected Host, page 31.
- **WIDOWMAKER MINER:** Use the stats for Colonists in *Deadlands: Lost Colony*.

NOW YOU'VE DONE IT

At some point, the team almost certainly tips off the braincrawlers that they're onto them. How confrontational the posse is about its actions determines how the creatures respond.

As time progresses, don't forget the braincrawlers basically double their number every day. If you think your heroes are up to it, you can even have the abominations begin subverting more of the town council—or even Marshal Winslow!

LOW PROFILE

If the spacers are relatively subtle about their investigations, the horrors first see if they can thwart the intruders without drawing further attention to themselves. For example, the braincrawlers may use one of their more influential pawns (like Dr. Herrera) to discredit the spacers—or even get them locked up.

In most cases, the braincrawlers lay low for a bit and watch for an opportunity to catch one of the crew alone, perhaps in an isolated corridor or in private living quarters. Then four of the creatures' hosts attempt to subdue the intended victim and drill into the poor rocket jockey's neck.

If successful, the newly infected character works to sabotage any further investigative efforts. The unwilling traitor also tries to separate the posse so more members can be introduced to the braincrawlers.

BREAKING AN EGG

There are a number of ways the spacers might get their hands on a braincrawler cache. There's one hidden on the Deluge, at least one in Sturgis' living quarters, some still in the ground at her strike, and more spread about the outpost. It's likely the team comes across one before the yolk really hits the fan.

Unopened, the container looks like a grayish-beige semi-translucent ellipsoid. Held in front of a strong light, vague shapes about half a foot in length are visible, but no details are possible. A very close inspection reveals faint inscriptions around the middle of the artifact, but they are not in any recognizable language. A hero who's had experience with Black Cities or other Craghan artifacts can make a Common Knowledge roll at -4 to recognize the similarity.

The eggs are surprisingly hard (Hardness 12). They can also be opened by succeeding on a Science roll at -4. Either way, the result is 16 braincrawlers spilling onto the floor and attacking any potential hosts!



Of course, should the attempt to subvert one or more of the team fail, the braincrawlers are forced into a more direct approach.

- **INFECTED HOST (4):** See page 31. They're armed with various hand weapons (Str+d4).
- **BRAINCRAWLER (1):** See page 30.

MARSHAL'S NOTE: You might want to pull the unlucky victim aside for the initial ambush and subsequent outcome so the other players don't know their former friend is now one of the enemy. Not only is this a good chance to let the player of the new "convert" play a bad guy for a bit, Marshal, it's also much more likely to succeed than if you take over the character and run it. And even if he manages to avoid the braincrawlers, the rest of the party won't know *for sure!*

THE GLOVES COME OFF

Once the braincrawlers feel the jig is up, either by the posse directly confronting one of their hosts or their own actions, they try to move quickly to eliminate the threat. Their preferred tactic is to corner some or all of

the group in a side corridor and try to either infect them, or failing that, eliminate them.

In any such fight, they always make sure to outnumber the group by at least two to one. Given that a day or two is likely to have progressed by the time the braincrawlers decide to take direct action, they have literally dozens of extra hosts at their disposal.

This means if the heroes manage to overcome the attack, they're going to have undeniable proof that Lindsay is telling the truth!

- **INFECTED HOST (2 PER HERO):** See page 31. Half are armed with Ruger Redhawks (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, Shots 6, AP 1), and the rest with an assortment of hand weapons (Str+d4).

ERADICATION

Once the spacers have their hands on some hard evidence—a braincrawler or infected host—the marshal and other town council members can be convinced with a simple game of show-and-tell. Putting the brakes on the situation might take a little effort, especially since the people in charge want to keep any casualties to a minimum, even among the infected hosts.

Detecting the infected is as easy as checking the back of folks' necks for the telltale marks. (Of course, any host resists this tooth and nail, which is kind of a dead giveaway.) If Dr. Herrera isn't identified as infected, he offers to help by searching for a way to "remove" the braincrawlers, while actually trying to sabotage the outpost's efforts and release any captured hosts.

JUMPING SHIP

If the braincrawlers number less than 30 by the time the heroes manage to alert the outpost, the majority flee toward the landing pad and storm the *Deluge*. The braincrawlers hope to overcome the crew and commandeer the ship. They also carry any remaining braincrawler eggs with them. If the team doesn't stop them, the braincrawlers escape the outpost and head off into the Belt, spreading caches to other outposts. This might lead to further adventures as the posse tries to root out the infestation—or they can simply alert EXFOR and move on to other challenges.

Regardless, the hosts remaining on Widowmaker engage the heroes and any allies. They've been chosen to be sacrificed in a holding action to buy time for the rest of the infected to spread their brood. Unlike the leaders of Widowmaker, they have no compunction against killing anyone who stands in their way.

- **INFECTED HOSTS (2 PER HERO):** See page 31. Half are armed with Ruger Redhawks (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, AP 1) and the rest with various hand weapons (Str+d4).

FIGHTING IN THE CORRIDORS

If the numbers of infected are greater than 30 by the time they're exposed, a large number of hosts move against the posse and any volunteers Station Marshal Katy Winslow puts together, hoping to overwhelm the settlement's defenses. The abominations move en masse against any groups of humans trying to identify or capture infected hosts in large numbers.

The remaining hosts make a dash for the *Deluge*, as detailed in **Jumping Ship**.

- **INFECTED HOSTS (4 PER HERO):** See page 31. One quarter of the hosts are armed with Ruger Redhawks (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, AP 1) and the rest with assorted hand weapons (Str+d4)

AFTERMATH

If the posse manages to avert the braincrawlers' takeover of the outpost, their work isn't completely done. Unless they identify Sturgis' strike as the point of origin, the alien centipedes may resurface when the next miner discovers another batch of "valuable artifacts." A total of ten more caches are still in the wall of the asteroid there.

The town council probably can't hide the outbreak from the rest of the populace, but tries to deflect concerns that the aliens originated on Widowmaker. That's the sort of thing that scares away customers, after all! They claim the creatures came from a vessel that had docked at the outpost earlier.

The council attempts to enlist the spacers in this deception as well. A Persuasion roll convinces them to cough up a bribe of \$500 per hero to buy their silence (\$1000 with a raise). The council doesn't offer any reward for saving the settlement, but savvy characters may realize they have a powerful bit of blackmail to keep the outpost's leadership playing nice in the future.

CRITTERS AND CHARACTERS

HUMANS

BLACKLINER

It's fairly easy to spot a blackliner with a serious habit—and there aren't many other types. The ghost rock sticks to the inside of their veins, giving them easily recognizable black lines snaking across their skin. Their addiction also shows in the general decline of their personal appearance, which makes even most Reapers look positively dapper by comparison.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d4, Fighting d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9

Hindrances: Outlaw

Edges: —

Gear: Blackliners are usually armed with a variety of firearms and/or melee weapons.

Special Abilities:

- **Feel No Pain:** Blackliners receive +2 Toughness, and a +2 bonus to recover from Shaken. Blackliner Wild Cards suffer no Wound penalties.



WILD CARDS

LILITH

Desideria Lopez was one of Warfield's Killer Angels, an elite squad composed of 22 of the Legion's most powerful sykers. She was also one of the 13 members who survived the initial encounter in the Belt with the disembodied Craghan priests—because she was possessed by one. Now she answers to Lilith, a demonic name the Craghan sorcerer extracted from Desi's memories.

After the possessed Killer Angels turned on their EXFOR compatriots at Castle Rock, Lilith escaped to the Belt where she seized control of a pirate vessel that did not know what it had gotten its hands on until it was too late. She's since commandeered a couple of other ships, either corrupting or murdering the original crews. Lilith continues to search the Belt for ruins in the hopes of finding Craghan artifacts, supernatural minions that could have weathered the planet's destruction, or even other priests who managed to survive the cataclysm.

Like the other Fallen, Lilith has absolutely no morality in her, at least as we understand it. Humans and anouks are oddities to be studied, used, or toyed with. She has no respect for the abilities or accomplishments of either race, viewing them as nothing more than upstart animals.

Lilith still resembles Desi Lopez for the most part—at least at a distance. Up close, there are definitely signs that all is not right in the house of Lopez. Her eyes are pupilless, blood-red orbs, and thick, black veins radiate out from them, like mascara run amok. A look at her teeth reveals canines that are just a tad too long...and carnivorous in appearance. However, Lilith generally filters her communications through her host's brain to sound human when interacting, rather than like a millennia-old alien priest..

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d12+2, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d10, Occult d10, Persuasion d8, Psionics d12, Shooting d8, Stealth d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11 (4)

Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics), Channeling, Concentration, Level Headed, Menacing, Mentalist, Power Surge, Rapid Recharge (Imp), Soul Drain.

Hindrances: Cautious, Ruthless (Major), Secret (Lilith is one of the Fallen—see *Deadlands: Lost Colony*).

Gear: Body Armor (+4), MkIV FOP (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1 AP 1, Shots 15), amanitol (five doses).

Powers: Bolt, confusion, disguise, Drain Power Points, havoc, healing (self only), mind reading, mind wipe, puppet, telekinesis, zombie. **Power Points:** 50.

Special Abilities:

- **Energy Tap:** The Fallen tap into the power of the Hunting Grounds differently than regular sykers, hence their pool of 50 Power Points.
- ⊛ **Coup:** The hero gains 20 Power Points and Arcane Background (Syker), if he doesn't have it already.

MARSHAL KATY WINSLOW

Marshal Winslow was a captain in EXFOR during the Castle Rock campaign. During the fighting, she lost her left arm. Her injury left her unable to continue her career in the UN Expeditionary Force, but she had developed an attachment to the Faraway system and stayed after mustering out. She's currently the marshal on Widowmaker, and her military bearing is still evident in the way she carries herself, interacts with others, and performs her daily duties.

STUNNER

This stubby weapon is about the size of a sawed-off shotgun. The stunner uses a low-powered laser to ionize the air along a path to its target. A high-powered electrical charge follows the ionized air, subjecting the victim to a powerful shock.

Anyone hit by a stunner must make a Vigor roll at -2 (-4 if hit with a raise) or be Stunned.

Stunners don't use any ammunition. Instead, two fully charged small batteries power the weapon for 15 shots.

Range: 5/10/20, **Damage:** —, **RoF:** 1, **Weight:** 5, **Shots:** 15, **Cost:** \$450, **Rarity:** S

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d10, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Piloting d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (4)

Edges: Brave, Nerves of Steel, Soldier

Hindrances: One Arm, Loyal, Stubborn

Gear: Body Armor (+4), MkIV FOP (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1 AP 1, Shots 15), stunner (Range 5/10/20, Damage —, RoF 1, see **Stunner**, page 29).

itself keeps the host focused on its master's goals while allowing the host more flexibility in reacting to its environment.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4, Spirit d12, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8, Stealth d6, Survival d10, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 2

Edges: —

Special Abilities:

- **Dug In:** Once inside a host, a braincrawler can't be targeted.
- **Fearless:** Braincrawlers and their hosts are immune to Fear and Intimidation.

ABOMINATIONS

BRAINCRAWLER

Braincrawlers are six-inch-long, centipede-like creatures that attack by burrowing into a victim's neck. They prefer sleeping or solitary victims as those make for easier prey. They often follow potential targets for extended periods to await the perfect opportunity. Once inside, the creature attaches to the spinal cord and floods the victim's mind with horrific images, sustaining itself on the host's terror and adrenaline.

Humanity first encountered these abominations about 200 years ago, but they existed long before that. Created by the skinnies as a method to control or torment unruly subjects, the Reckoners seized upon the nasty creepy crawlers to spread fear and confusion on Earth early in the Reckoning. Braincrawlers (and those infected by them) didn't appear on Banshee until after the Nemesis Shower.

A host controlled by a braincrawler is fairly easy to spot. His eyes turn solid black, he seldom speaks in more than single words, and he's a lot less finicky about what he eats—be it bugs, carrion, or human flesh. The braincrawler overrides most higher nerve functions, making the host effectively fearless and immune to pain.

Braincrawlers and their victims are extremely easy for skinnies to control. Unlike subjects controlled through a skinny's *puppet* power, braincrawler-infected hosts don't require constant focus. The braincrawler



- **Numbing Effect:** Hosts can't be Shaken!
- **Parasite:** A braincrawler attacks by burrowing into the back of its victim's neck. This is automatically successful if the victim is sleeping. Each following day, the victim must make an opposed Spirit roll or succumb to the creature's control. The victim remains subjugated by the braincrawler until it's forced to leave the body.
- **Size -4 (Tiny):** Braincrawlers are less than 6 long.
- **Surrogate:** Braincrawlers possessing a Wild Card ignore the first two levels of Wound modifiers.
- **Weakness (Alcohol, Fire):** A braincrawler can be forced from its host by dowsing the original Wound with 100 proof alcohol or burning the area with an open flame. The braincrawler must make a Spirit roll (-4) when exposed to either or flee the host body. Each attempt causes Fatigue that can Incapacitate but not kill. Those Incapacitated in this way suffer brain damage, lowering Smarts a die type.

INFECTED HOST

Other than a small but unsightly hole at the base of the neck, infected hosts are nearly impossible to identify. Anyone holding a lengthy conversation with one can make a Notice roll at -2 to spot odd facial tics or strange body language, as the host struggles against the creature's influence.

Taking down a host doesn't automatically kill the braincrawler. The disgusting alien crawler abandons its host and tries to skitter away to a safe spot to hide until it can infect another host.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Repair d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Hindrances: —

Edges: —

Gear: Spacesuit (+1). Most own at least a knife (Str+d4), while many have mining implements suitable for use as a weapon (Str+d6, Parry -1). A few have a pistol of some sort.



Special Abilities:

- **Fearless:** Braincrawlers and their hosts are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Numbing Effect:** A host cannot be Shaken by an attack, but he can be wounded normally.
- **Surrogate Wild Card:** Braincrawlers only gain Wild Card status while possessing a Wild Card. Wild Cards controlled by braincrawlers ignore the first two levels of Wound modifiers, but also lose the advantage of their Wild Die.

> DAVE? IS THAT YOU? LEMME SEE YOUR NECK. _

-DEBBI DALLAS
COLONIAL RANGER

> I THOUGHT WE'D MOVED PAST THAT WHOLE AWKWARD ROMANCE STAGE. _

-DAVE ROSS,
COLONIAL RANGER

UNDEAD PIRATE

Lilith “upgraded” these walkin’ dead by embedding jagged pieces of metal in their flesh before reanimating them. This makes them especially dangerous in a vacuum, as they can rip spacesuits simply by coming in contact with their foes, whereas the lack of oxygen poses little threat to them.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d4, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Piloting d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 11 (4)

Gear: Armored spacesuit (+4), IW-91 gyrojet pistols (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d6+2, RoF 1, half damage vs. armored targets), and knives (Str+d4).

Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d4
- **Fearless:** Walkin’ dead are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Spikes:** The metal projecting from these zombies is sharp and jagged. On a successful grapple, they inflict Str+d4 damage in addition to the other effects. Anyone hitting them with a melee weapon takes damage equal to their own Str+d4.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; no additional damage from Called Shots; ignores 1 point of Wound penalties; doesn’t breathe; immune to disease and poison.
- **Weakness (Head):** Called Shots to the head do the usual +4 damage.

