



Shadows Over Sol

Siren's Call

Interstellar Colonization Roleplaying



Shadows Over Sol

Siren's Call

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Special Thanks to
NASA's public domain image repository, Sine Nomine Publishing for the
Starvation Cheap and *Stars Without Number: Revised Edition* art packs, and
Tammy Ryan voice over for her excellent Kickstarter video narration.



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*This book is dedicated to all those who do their
part to care for the Earth and its ecosystems.*

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....3

Introduction7

Overview.....7

Siren vs. Sirine.....8

Book Structure8

Themes.....8

Recommended Media.....9

Counting Years.....9

Earth-like Worlds.....10

Glossary10

ARC Project13

The Mission.....14

Recruiting.....14

Infrastructure.....15

Administration.....15

Generational Planning16

Project History17

Premonition & Early Days 17

Corporate Woes17

Sleeper Ship or Gen. Ship?. 19

The Long Road to Launch. 20

Timeline21

Planned Arrival23

Colony Ship24

Structure.....24

Engines & Power25

Drop Modules25

Terra Nullius25

Out of the Gravity Well.....26

Command Structure.....27

Project Factions30

Faction Information.....30

Player Faction30

ARC Engineering.....31

Scott Productions.....32

Shapiro Lab33

Stillwater Catholic Church. 34

Utakar System Dynamics..35

Colonists.....37

Character Creation.....37

Mode of Horror.....37

Character Concept.....37

Opts. from Beyond Human.. 38

Wealth & Lifestyle.....38

Gear.....39

Mission Language.....39

Colonist Gear.....40

Personal Gear.....40

Implants40

Survival Gear41

Wear and Tear41

Gear from Shiny New Toys..41

Vehicles.....42

Vehicles from Shiny New Toys.42

Aging44

Aging Flips.....44

Lifestyle and Aging44

Subsequent Flips44

Dying of Old Age44

Wealth in the Colony45

Wealth Rating.....45

Wealth and Encumbrance45

Colony Building47

Years & Turns.....47

Colony Turn Phases47

Player vs. Char. Decisions... 47

Population.....48

Survival & Starvation.....48

Population Growth48

Resources48

Starting Values48

Colony Lifestyle49

Facilities49

Basic Facilities.....49

Advancements50

Colony Consequences.... 50

Colony Actions.....51

Basic Actions.....51

Deciding Colony Actions... 51

Colony Warfare52

Calculating Might.....52

Victory Points.....52

Resolving the Battle52

Colony Actions in the World. 53

Alliances & Battle53

Contact Required53

Splitting Forces.....53

Advancement List.....54

Prosperity Advancements 54

Prosperity Advancement Tree 55

Might Advancements56

Might Advancement Tree ..57

Making Characters Matter.. 57

Industry Advancements... 58

Industry Advancement Tree .59

Production & Advancements 59

Knowledge Advancements. 60

Knowledge Advancement Tree 61

Facility List.....62

Autofarm62

Automine.....62

Chopper62

Farm62

Hydrofoil.....62

Leisure Pod62

Mine.....62

Reactor63

Tac-Rover63

Turbine.....63

W.M.D.63

Non-Player Colonies64

Growth Modifier.....64

Non-Player Attacks64

GM Tables.....64

Exploration Tables64

Managing the Colony Game 66

Space Exploration Table ..69

Non-Player Colonies.....70

Colony Table Annotations. 71

The Osiris Tribe.....72

*Colony Table Abbreviations*73

On Human Progress74

The Void.....77

Post-Launch Timeline....77

Project Osiris.....78

History78

What of Sol?78

Recruiting.....79

Colony Ship.....79

"Never Thought I'd See You"...79

Red Ends Interplanetary 80

History80

Values80

Supporting Cast81

Player Colony81

Beyond Human Options ...81

Generic Colonists84

The Reach Property.....85

Faction Leaders.....	86	<i>Datawiki: Pholus.....</i>	107	Pox Stars	130
Centuries in Stasis	92	<i>Datawiki: Chthonius ..</i>	107	Spore Infection	130
<i>Nature of the Collision.....</i>	92	<i>Travel Times</i>	108	Centauran Civilization	132
Hidden Char. Options....	93	Siren.....	109	Biology	132
Centauran Genelines.....	93	Orbit & Gravity.....	109	History	132
Centauran Subculture.....	94	Days & Seasons	109	Technology	133
<i>Faction Subcultures</i>	95	<i>Human Knowledge.....</i>	109	Construction	133
Alpha Centauri	97	Magnetism.....	110	Artifacts of a Dead Civ. ..	134
Human History.....	97	Terrain & Surface Water .	110	Siren's Call	137
Ancient History	97	Atmosphere.....	110	Synopsis	137
Early Modern Era	97	<i>Nature's Arms Depot.....</i>	110	Prelude: Launch	138
Late Modern Era.....	97	Weather and Temperature	111	Last Day on Earth.....	138
Space Age.....	98	Ecology.....	111	Interview Questions.....	139
Shadows Over Centaurus.	99	<i>Human Knowledge.....</i>	111	<i>Player Faction</i>	<i>139</i>
Alpha Centauri System ..	99	Landmarks.....	112	1: Violent Arrival.....	140
Alpha Centauri A.....	99	<i>Human Knowledge.....</i>	112	Awakening.....	140
<i>Datawiki: Alpha Centauri.</i>	<i>99</i>	Odysseus.....	117	Reporting for Duty	141
<i>Data.: Alpha Centauri A</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>Datawiki: Odysseus.....</i>	<i>117</i>	Surveying the Damage ..	142
<i>Datawiki: Thelxiepiea ..</i>	<i>100</i>	Centauran Life	118	Captain's Dilemma.....	142
<i>Datawiki: Aglaphonus.</i>	<i>100</i>	Building Blocks.....	118	Taking Sides.....	144
<i>Datawiki: Siren.....</i>	<i>101</i>	<i>Atmospheric Carbon.....</i>	<i>118</i>	Unitech's Hand Revealed	146
<i>Datawiki: Outer Belt ..</i>	<i>102</i>	<i>Not a Scientist?</i>	<i>118</i>	Securing the Armory.....	146
<i>Datawiki: Melpomene.</i>	<i>102</i>	<i>Copper & Nitric Acid.....</i>	<i>119</i>	The End of the Beginning	147
Alpha Centauri B.....	103	Lifecycle.....	120	2: First Steps.....	148
<i>Data.: Alpha Centauri B</i>	<i>103</i>	Example Organisms.....	121	Groundfall	148
<i>Datawiki: Peisinoe.....</i>	<i>103</i>	<i>Microbes</i>	<i>121</i>	<i>Gravity Adjustments</i>	<i>149</i>
<i>Datawiki: Chiron</i>	<i>104</i>	Stat Blocks	123	Brand New World.....	150
<i>Datawiki: Achelous.....</i>	<i>104</i>	<i>Generating New Creatures .</i>	<i>123</i>	First Night	151
<i>Datawiki: Molpe</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>The Lurker Metaphor</i>	<i>125</i>	Exploration	152
<i>Datawiki: Hephaestus .</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>Swarms & Common Sense.</i>	<i>126</i>	<i>Drawing a Map</i>	<i>152</i>
Proxima Centauri.....	106	Centauran Hazards.....	129	New Arrivals	153
<i>Datawiki: Proxima.....</i>	<i>106</i>	Anaerobic Atmosphere..	129	A New Home.....	154
<i>Datawiki: Nessus</i>	<i>106</i>	Higher Gravity.....	129	<i>Encounters in the Wilds ..</i>	<i>154</i>
		Nitrogen Narcosis	129		

Vids and Genes

"Sure, we hold life to be sacred. That's true. But at the same time we also know the foundation of life is essentially a stream of code. Genetics. Bits of data wrapped in a double helix. In a way, a stream of genetic data is not so different from the successive frames of a vid. Why then cannot we cut one code short here and patch it to another there? In the vid world we call that post-production. Does the sacred have no room for improvement?

"Is life so feeble that it cannot withstand tampering? It is a chemical process and nothing more. If you deny yourself a tool simply because it reminds you uncomfortably of your own mortality, you have uselessly and perhaps fatally crippled yourself."

— Steve Scott

<i>Game Masters Take Note</i>	155
3: Second Place	157
A Question of Resources	157
Journey Across the Plain	157
Dangerous Fauna	158
The Foothills	158
A Curious Discovery	159
Cave Dwellers	159
4: Contact	160
Radio Contact	160
<i>Adding to the Map</i>	160
Preemptive Strike	162
Welcome to ARC HQ	163
Initial Negotiations	164
<i>Meanwhile, Back Home</i>	164
A Secret Visitor	165
Final Negotiations	166
Decision Point	166
Fallout	167
<i>Colony Militia</i>	167
5: Ashes	168
Explorers Report	168
<i>Mysterious Site</i>	168
Preparing for the Mission	169
Journey to the Ruins	169
Arrival	170
<i>Nature of the Site</i>	170
Exploring the Ruins	171
<i>Power Source</i>	173

Control Room	174
<i>First Contact</i>	174
<i>Meanwhile</i>	175
Leaving the Ruins	176
<i>Decrypting the Data</i>	176
6: Garden of Annihilation	177
Coordinates Decoded	177
Over the Mountains	177
Garden of Annihilation	178
Lost Tribe	178
<i>What Happened Here?</i>	178
Osiris Encampment	180
A Curse Reborn	182
Future Relations	183
7: Contagion	184
Drop Module Survey	184
<i>Colony Ship's Orbit</i>	184
Outbreak	185
<i>Infected Team Members</i>	186
Quest for the Cure	187
Return to Space	189
<i>Getting Back</i>	190
Ending the Epidemic	191
8: Ascension	192
Listening Post	192
<i>The State of Red Ends</i>	192
Eavesdropping	194
Encoding Breakthrough	194
Stopping the Attack	194

New Developments	196
Secret Mission	197
Exploring the Facility	198
Taking Control	199
Conclusion	201
<i>End Credits</i>	201
Side Treks	203
Early Colonization	203
Devil of the Tang	203
Stowaways	205
The First Murder	206
The Silver Screen of Siren	208
Policy Decisions	211
Mid-Colonization	214
Coup D'état	214
Cybernetic Infection	217
<i>Cybernetic Drones</i>	220
The Odyssey	222
The War of Red Ends	224
Late Colonization	226
The Molpe Enigma	226
Outgrowth	229
<i>The Colony Mini-Game</i>	230
Test Subjects	232
Plot Seeds	234
OGL Version 1.0a	236
Colony Sheet	237
Index	238





Introduction

Stillwater, Mars. 2213.

The cloud from the bomb blast rose in the air, the accompanying thunderclap sounding distant and muted in the thin Martian atmosphere.

Josefina looked onward from above, removed from the action by a safe distance. Before her she should see the Utakar troops—her troops—move into position, ready to storm the corridors and secure the facility. The headquarters for ARC Engineering had been breached. There was no turning back now.

“This is just business,” she assured herself. “If we didn’t seize control of the ARC Project now, it would only be a matter of time until Unitech did the same, and bled them dry. In a way, we’re saving it.”

The words didn’t convince even her.

“Temma is going to be pissed when he realizes that you—that this is your answer to his offer,” Trey reminded her again, thinking her words were to him.

Josephina looked over at the man, a sanguine look on her face, visible even through her vac suit’s helmet. “Let Temma be pissed. In a few minutes I will have control of his headquarters. The ARC Project’s other investors will have received their bribes by now. I’ll be the one dictating terms.”

Next to her, Trey shrugged. Josephina looked back at the action below. No troops were visible now. They had already stormed the corridors. This wasn’t a military compound. Resistance would be minimal. ARC headquarters would be secured soon.

Almost on cue she received the radio response, “Building secure. We have Mr. Temma in our custody. Feel free to come on in!” Josefina could hear the lingering effects of adrenaline and combat stims in the radio man’s voice.

“And now our work begins,” Josephina said, moving down toward the building below and gesturing for Trey to follow.

Overview

What you see before you is the first major expansion to ***Shadows Over Sol: Science Fiction Horror Roleplaying***. It is not a complete game—at the very least you will need the ***Shadows Over Sol*** core rulebook and a group of friends in order to play—but contained in this book is more than enough material for hundreds of hours of thrilling science fiction horror gaming.

Siren’s Call significantly expands upon the ***Shadows Over Sol*** setting, providing not only further details on the ARC Project—humanity’s ambitious first attempt to build an interstellar colony ship—but also an entirely new and unexplored solar system. The ARC Project aims to bring some 10,000 colonists to the planet Siren, orbiting Alpha Centauri A. It will undergo a 400 year journey with its inhabitants in stasis, reaching a maximum velocity of just over a hundredth the speed of light.

In addition to acting as a sourcebook covering the ARC Project and the Alpha Centauri system, ***Siren’s Call*** also contains both a complete campaign as well as numerous optional side scenarios (dubbed “side treks”). This campaign is designed to act as a core story arc, consisting of pivotal events and scenarios that drive forward the big story of the colonization effort.

These core scenarios are intended to be interspersed between other adventures. The other adventures can either be written by the GM to suit the players, or the GM can pick one of the many side treks that are included in the book. In this way, the campaign is structured to give GMs the freedom to write and run their own stories in the foreground, focusing on the exploits of the player characters.

Finally, *Siren's Call* includes a new colony building mini-game, which allows players to direct their colony's development as it advances from a desperate fledgling settlement to a full-fledged society of its own.

We hope you enjoy this expanded view into an alien world and interstellar colonization in the dark future of *Shadows Over Sol*.

Book Structure

Siren's Call is broken up into eight chapters. The first four chapters consist of the introduction, the ARC Project, character creation guidelines and the Colony Building mini-game. These chapters are written to be player-friendly. That is, they contain no significant spoilers for the campaign (although clever players might be able to infer a few minor spoilers from the names of the advancements in the Colony Building chapter).

The final four chapters are for the GM's eyes only. These contain the secrets of the ARC Project, the details of the Alpha Centauri system, the *Siren's Call* campaign and the various side scenarios. We recommend that GMs read the book through once and refer back to the chapters as necessary when running the campaign.

Themes

Siren's Call builds on the themes already present in *Shadows Over Sol*, but places a renewed emphasis on those that are brought to the foreground by the interstellar colonization effort.

Discovery is the most obvious theme. The colonists are going on a journey farther and longer than any in human history. They will be building a new life on an alien world, and no one knows exactly what to expect on the other end of the journey. This is likely thrilling to some and terrifying to others.

A more subtle, but no less important, theme is **finality**. Being a colonist in the ARC Project isn't a career, it's a lifetime commitment. The voyage on the colony ship is one-way. Anyone who undergoes it will never again visit Earth, will never again see those they leave behind and will never regain the life they had before.

Finally, wrapping it all up is the theme of **new societies and old grudges**. The ARC Project presents an opportunity to leave the societal problems of the past behind, and to build something new which improves on what came before. At the same time, the biggest problems that humanity faces on this new world may not be the environment or unknown hostile fauna, but rather the struggles, problems and conflicts that we take with us.

Siren vs. Sirine

In the few places where it's mentioned in the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook, the planet Siren is given the spelling alternate "Sirine." The reason for this is simple, albeit stupid: The author was attempting to name the planet after the creature from Greek myth, but made a spelling mistake based off foggy recollections of the way siren is (mis)spelled in the *Dungeons & Dragons Monster Manual*.

In this book we have corrected the typo, using the proper spelling for Siren, when referring to both the planet and the mythological creature.

Counting Years

For simplicity's sake, when referring to years in this book, we will always refer to Earth years rather than Siren's solar years. This allows us to remain consistent with the calendar used in the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook. It also is likely consistent with the system used by the in-game colonists themselves, as Siren doesn't have a significant axial tilt, and thus there isn't much in the way of seasons to differentiate local years.

In the rare instances where Siren's solar years are discussed, they will always be called out explicitly as Siren years.

Recommended Media

Siren's Call was inspired by a variety of existing science fiction and horror media. These works may further serve as inspiration for potential players and game masters. Below are a few of the books and games we recommend for inspiration.

- **Blue Planet:** This roleplaying game, first published in 1997, takes place on the ocean world, Poseidon, which was colonized by Earth by means of an artificial wormhole linking the two systems. It takes place in a similar timeframe as *Shadows Over Sol* and likewise is a mostly hard sci-fi setting.
- **The Expanse:** *The Expanse* book series has been one of the primary inspirations for *Shadows Over Sol*, and it is likewise relevant to *Siren's Call*. The recent TV series is good, too. In particular, the fourth book, *Cibola Burn*, is worth reading as inspiration (for reasons that would be a spoiler for those that haven't yet read *The Expanse*).
- **Mars Trilogy:** Consisting of the books *Red Mars*, *Green Mars*, and *Blue Mars* by Kim Stanley Robinson, this series has been highly influential to the science fiction genre. The first book is particularly relevant. The trilogy covers the colonization and terraforming of Mars, and takes place over the course of almost two centuries.
- **Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri:** This video game from 1999 is one of the best examples there is of the 4X genre, and was tremendously influential to the development of *Siren's Call*. It likewise tells the story of humanity's colonization of a planet in the Alpha Centauri system. If one can actually find a copy, the associated novella, *Journey to Centauri* by Michael Ely, was serialized on the Firaxis Games website starting in 1998, and is excellent inspiration! The three following novels, *Centauri Dawn*, *Dragon Sun* and *Twilight of the Mind* don't live up to the original, but might still be worth a read. The game also spawned a GURPS supplement, *GURPS Alpha Centauri*, published in 2002.



Glossary

The following terms are used throughout *Siren's Call*.

- **Advancement:** A scientific, technological, societal or infrastructural breakthrough which benefits a colony in the Colony Building mini-game (see page 50).
- **Alpha Centauri:** The nearest system to Sol, and the solar system targeted as the destination for the ARC Project. Consists of three stars: Alpha Centauri A, B and C (Proxima Centauri).
- **ARC Engineering:** The corp which founded the ARC Project and directed the project before its takeover by USD.
- **ARC Project:** An ambitious project to build and launch humanity's first interstellar colony ship, targeting the planet Siren, orbiting Alpha Centauri A.
- **Colonist:** One of the select people chosen by the ARC Project to undergo the long voyage from Sol to Alpha Centauri and begin a new human colony there.
- **Colony Turn:** A one-year unit of time used in the Colony Building mini-game. Each colony turn the players get to choose their colony's actions (see page 47).
- **Drop Module:** A modular capsule, making up part of the ARC colony ship, designed to be safely dropped down Siren's gravity well to supply resources for the new colony.
- **Facility:** A specific piece of infrastructure which benefits a colony in the Colony Building mini-game (see page 49).
- **Faction:** One of the major power blocs within the ARC Project, mostly consisting of one of the project's major investors and associated crew.
- **Player Colony:** The colony on Siren in which the player characters live. The development of this colony is controlled by the players but may or may not be overseen by the player characters.
- **Population:** The Colony Building mini-game uses units of population (consisting of roughly 100 individuals) to assign actions each colony turn (see page 48).
- **Project Osiris:** A rival interstellar colony project started by Unitech in response to USD taking over the ARC Project. Scheduled to launch several years after the ARC colony ship.
- **Red Ends Interplanetary:** An interplanetary mercenary outfit with ties to Unitech, known to specialize in infiltration and sabotage.
- **Resource:** An abstraction used in the Colony Building mini-game, representing necessary materials in the development of

Earth-like Worlds

"When we speak about Siren, we glibly refer to it as 'Earth-like.' And indeed it is Earth-like in the grand spectrum of planets in the universe—far more so than any other planet in the Sol system. But let me deconstruct for a minute what that means. 'Earth-like' means that Siren has a temperature range that we can survive. It has an atmosphere with nitrogen and oxygen. It has a surface gravity in which we can move around without becoming too encumbered. That's it. Expect everything else—even things we usually take for granted, like the carbon cycle or the planetary magnetosphere—to make sustaining human life there a scientific and engineering challenge. Expect the world to truly be alien."

— Dr. Karina Shapiro

a colony. Resources are nutrients, minerals and energy (see page 48).

- **Scott Productions:** A studio owned and operated by Steve Scott, an influential Techno subcultural demagogue and vid personality. The last major investor to be brought into the ARC Project.
- **Shapiro Lab:** A cross-disciplinary lab based out of Stillwater University and later the University at Medyen Aleqmer. The Shapiro Lab is one of the major investors in the ARC Project.
- **Siren:** A habitable-zone Earth-like planet orbiting Alpha Centauri A. This planet has been chosen as the destination of the ARC colony ship.
- **Sol:** The technical name for both Earth's sun and the solar system. It is the point of origin for the ARC Project, and is located 4.4 light-years from Alpha Centauri.
- **Stillwater Catholic Church:** A religious organization based out of Stillwater colony on Mars, the Stillwater Church was one of the earliest investors in the ARC Project.
- **Unitech:** One of the five biggest megacorps, Unitech specializes in aerospace technology. Passed over for partnership in the ARC Project, Unitech has been antagonistic and has launched its own rival interstellar colonization effort, Project Osiris.
- **Utakar System Dynamics (USD):** Another one of the big five megacorps, USD took control of the ARC Project from ARC Engineering and has since used the project as good PR and a way to show up Unitech.





ARC Project

Stillwater, Mars. 2207.

"Humanity is basically fucked."

Ester takes a sip of her coffee, pondering where Lindiwe is going with this. "I thought you said you had some sort of epiphany—a vision. I would hardly call humanity being fucked a profound insight."

"But isn't it?" Lindiwe continues. "Even at the most optimistic, I don't see any way that humanity is any less screwed. As long as we're tied to Earth, we live or die by what happens to that feeble, abused husk of the planet."

"Things are getting better," Ester offers. "The energy footprint per person is down. We've obliterated most common genetic diseases. The sea walls have held. We haven't had a major war in 70 years."

"Yes, war," Lindiwe continues, "It's been 70 years, so let's try to be optimistic and assume that humanity has, by and large, somehow conquered war—one of the four horsemen of the apocalypse. Unfortunately, we're still beholden to the new horsemen: eating, fucking and shitting ourselves to death."

"We're terraforming Mars," Ester counters. "You're helping lead that effort. One day we won't be dependent on Earth."

"Too little, too late! By our best estimates it will take at least another two centuries before Mars is even remotely able to sustain an entirely closed life support loop, and several more on top of that before it's able to support a comparable number of people."

Ester shrugs her shoulders in defeat. "Okay. You win. Tell me. You say you had a vision. What's the profound insight?"

"If humanity is to survive, we need to spread beyond the Sol system. We need to diversify the biospheres upon which we're dependent. We need to find a new Earth—or at least something approximating it."

"And so you're going to solve Earth's overpopulation problem with interstellar colonization?"

"Bah! Let me put that myth to rest. Interstellar colonization will never be a solution to Earth's exploding population problem. Let's do the numbers: Even at our current rate of population growth, we're looking at 167 million new people every year. So to break even, we need to launch almost half a million colonists into space every day, all year round, forever. And that's just to break even. To actually reduce the population we'd need to launch more." Lindiwe sighs. "It's a lot easier to just use contraception."

"Okay, so if this is not going to solve the problem, why is the insight significant?"

Lindiwe smiles, a sort of fiendish grin, but his eyes are sad. "We may not be able to save everyone—in the grand scheme of things, only a few. But saving every individual isn't necessary to save a species, a culture."

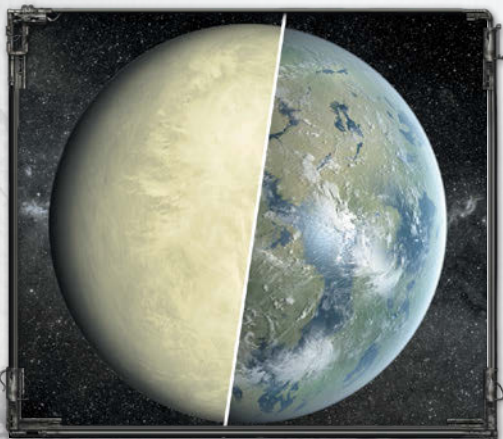
"Ester, put together a report on what sort of resources it would take to make interstellar colonization a reality. I want to know costs, estimated transit times, what technologies are lacking, available infrastructure and potential investors. How many people would it take for a colony to be viable across generations? Oh, and look up the available data on the exoplanet, Siren. I've always fancied it."

The Mission

The ARC Project is unbelievably ambitious. Its mission is to transport some 10,000 colonists the 4.4 light years from Sol to Alpha Centauri. There it will deposit the colonists on the planet Siren, orbiting Alpha Centauri A. With some combination of luck, expertise and dogged determination they are to build the first interstellar colony.

Think about that for a moment. In the pursuit of this goal, it will be constructing one of the largest spaceships ever built. Its journey will be roughly 16,652 times farther than the next closest manned spaceflight. Along the way the ship will be traveling faster than any manned mission ever has before. The colonists will be in stasis for longer than the history of stasis technology. And to top it all off, after arrival, the colonists will only have a very narrow window to adapt to their new planetary conditions and construct a new human society. There is no fallback. There is no safety. Anyone who goes on the mission will never see Earth, Sol or any of their loved ones ever again.

There is a very good reason to believe that everyone on the mission is simply going to die in the cold vastness of space. Still, that hasn't deterred some from spending years of their lives preparing for the historic effort.



Recruiting

Despite the perils of the mission and the large number of personnel required, the ARC Project hasn't had too many difficulties recruiting colonists. The Sol system is home to some 13 billion people, and the mission has years to fill its ranks.

Desired Qualities

The abundance of applicants has afforded the ARC Project the opportunity to be very selective in those it chooses to accept. Every recruited colonist must undergo a rigorous screening and training process. This includes:

- A psychological screening. The recruiters are looking for general stability and mental health, along with a selection of desired personality traits thought to be beneficial to surviving the harsh conditions of an early-stage colony.
- A fitness screening. Recruits must be fully capable and in good condition. Furthermore, younger adults are preferred due to their safer reproductive capability—after all, part of the mission will be securing the colony with a second generation.
- A variety of skill sets are in particular demand for the mission. These skills include experience with environmental systems, ecological expertise and construction experience. Colonists with the right skills stand the best chance of being chosen, despite their other deficiencies.
- Finally, French has been chosen as the literal *lingua franca* of the mission. Prior knowledge of the language is preferred, although a program has also been put in place to teach it to new recruits as part of their training process.

Attrition & Understudies

As one might expect, as with any multiple-year commitment—especially one with the finality and profound life-changing nature of the ARC Project—there is going to be some amount of attrition among the recruits. Some are going to have a change of heart and leave the project, some are going to die of accidents or health complications in the interim, others are going to be fired or wash out of the training program. Although the rigorous screening process helps in this regard, it doesn't negate it entirely.

To account for this attrition, the project selects slightly more colonists than it can actually take. The additional colonists are informed of their status and added to a waitlist. Waitlisted colonists still must undergo the necessary training and are still on the project's payroll, but won't have a spot on the colony ship unless a space first opens up.

For a select few positions requiring specific and difficult to replace skills, the position has a designated understudy—a particular waitlisted recruit with the necessary skills, ready to step in and replace the primary colonist if needed.

Other Staff

Not everyone recruited by the ARC Project will be a colonist going on the mission. The project also requires engineers, electricians and mechanics to construct the colony ship. It requires staff to work its recruiting stations, sysops to upkeep its net nodes, pilots to drive the shuttles, janitors to clean the construction platform and managers to oversee all this.

In practice, many of the employees performing these jobs will be going on the mission—even if not all are. Since the ARC Project requires a year-or-longer training commitment and requires that the colonists are ready to drop everything when the mission launches, the project is forced to keep most of its recruits on the payroll during

the interim. Since it's already paying them, when not otherwise occupied with training, these recruits are put to work.

Infrastructure

The ARC Project is a sprawling and breathtakingly ambitious endeavor. As such, it requires quite a bit of infrastructure to maintain—from recruiting offices to the ARC construction platform. These are detailed below.

- The ARC colony ship is covered in its own section (see page 24).

Administration

The original administrative offices for the ARC Project were located in Stillwater on Mars. It was here that ARC Engineering was founded and that Lindiwe Temma made his home. After the USD takeover of the project, however, the administrative offices were moved to Earth. There they occupied a picturesque building in the Taurus Mountains. At its height, these offices employed more than 1,000 people.

Recruiting Facilities

From 2214 through 2216, the ARC Project opened numerous recruiting offices on Earth and a handful in space, most notably in Stillwater and Medyen Aleqmer. Facilities tended to be located in areas of significant population density, particularly in cities boasting a highly technical population.

Most recruiting facilities were small affairs, consisting of a single office and an AR access point loaded with promotional materials and heartwarming stories favoring interstellar colonization.

The project also maintained a significant net presence, operating a node with a full virtual tour of the colony ship and a digital mockup of a theoretical colony on Siren. This node continued to operate throughout the life of the project, and was the primary point of recruitment after 2220.

Training Facilities

Training 10,000 selected colonists, plus their potential backups, for a period of at least a year required the project to make a substantial investment in training resources.

Towards this end, a massive training complex was constructed near Lac de Buyo in West Africa. This complex included classrooms, temporary habs, weight and gravity training facilities, a dome with an artificial biosphere and a selection of training equipment matching the gear being sent on the mission.

Colonists were also frequently brought on excursions to the neighboring communities to practice their conversational French in preparation for the mission.

ARC Construction Platform

Located at the L4 Earth-Moon Lagrange point, this massive construction platform was assembled in order to construct the ARC colony ship. Almost a space station in its own right—albeit one which didn't rotate and thus had no spin gravity—the ARC Construction Platform quickly became the center of commerce at L4.

Generational Planning

Part of the ARC Project's goal is to create a functioning society on Siren. The colonization process will not only take the rest of the colonists' lives, but they will be setting the stage for the generations to follow. No one knows how many generations the colonists' children will remain isolated from the rest of humanity.

As a consequence, the project needs to make sure that its colonists can produce children, and that the generation to follow remains a viable population. A total population of 10,000 individuals is a very small genetic bottleneck for a species to go through. All of

the factions involved in the project agree that this much is necessary. Unfortunately, beyond that the disagreements begin.

Genetic Legacy

One point of contention was on the gender balance of the colonists, with the Stillwater Catholics on one hand, advocating a 50/50 split between the sexes, and the Shapiro Lab advocating a split heavily weighted towards female colonists.

The lab's line of thought was that the male genetic legacy could be replaced with a large library of frozen semen samples. For the cost of accelerating and then decelerating the mass of a male body on the ship's 400 year voyage, the mission could instead take with it a sperm bank of similar mass, containing samples from thousands of individuals. This would yield much larger reproductive combinatorics, resulting in less inbreeding in the long run and thus a more viable genetically diverse population.

Eventually, however, the Stillwater Church won this argument and a 50/50 gender ratio among the colonists was decided upon. A similar disagreement was had in regard to phenotypic representation among the project's colonists.

Nonhuman Colonists

Humans aren't the only species that the ARC Project is transporting to Siren. Seeds for over 200 species of plants are being shipped, along with frozen embryos for over 50 animal species and spores for several species of fungus. The former have been selected for their utility in establishing food security in the colony or their use in maintaining environmental systems. The latter have been selected in an effort to allow the colony to establish something resembling a functional miniature ecosystem.

Project History

The ARC Project has had a tumultuous history, from Lindiwe Temma's vision of it as the salvation of the human species, to its forceful takeover by USD, from its repeated funding woes, to its eventual launch. Below is a brief history of the project.

Premonition & Early Days

Lindiwe Temma was a wealthy Neoret business tycoon from Stillwater on Mars, whose family made their fortune investing in the Mars Terraforming Project. In 2207, he claims to have received a premonition that if humanity is to survive, it imminently needs to spread beyond the Sol system, seeding itself elsewhere.

Stillwater Catholics Invest

Shortly after his vision, Temma began to look for investors in his grand project. He would spend the next three years doing this, being turned away by far more potential funding sources than took him seriously. In pitching his interstellar colony vision he kept running up against the fact that despite centuries of observing exoplanets from a distance, no one knew exactly what would be found at the end of the trip or what the payoff would be. Whoever launched themselves into the void would have to be taking it on faith that they, or their children, would one day reach the promised land.

With the rejections mounting, Temma turned to his faith. He was a lifelong Stillwater Catholic so, after a period of prayer, he approached the church officials about investing in the project. There he found fertile ground for his vision of humanity's place among the stars. The Stillwater Catholic Church soon became the project's biggest investor.

ARC Engineering Founded

With money from the initial investors in hand, Temma founded the ARC Engineering Corporation to oversee and administer his grand endeavor. The new corp soon commissioned panels of experts to research and render judgment on a variety of topics of interest to the project. These included taking stock of the most promising exoplanets, researching approaches to interstellar colonization, looking into what resources would be needed and simulating the environmental impact of human colonization of a new planet. Soon Siren was selected as the destination for the colonization effort.

Things were going well for the new corp—that is until Unitech began pressuring the board for the exclusive construction rights on the project.

Corporate Woes

Temma had approached Unitech when he was looking for potential ARC Project investors and had been laughed out of their Lunar headquarters. Their attempts to strong-arm an exclusive construction contract out of project served to further dissuade him from cooperation with the corp. Clearly they didn't believe in interstellar colonization, and his assessment was that they merely sought to drain dry the ARC Project's coffers.

Taking his concerns to ARC Engineering's board of directors, Temma laid out his objections to granting Unitech a contract. He convinced the other investors, most notably the Stillwater Church's leadership, to resist the corp's ongoing effort to apply pressure to the project.

Unitech did not take this lightly. Spacefaring construction and engineering was their area of commercial dominion, and they saw ARC's rejection as a threat. After the Stillwater Catholic Church voted against Unitech's involvement with the project, it even sparked a lasting feud between Unitech and the church's Martian holdings.

Utakar Takeover

As Unitech continued to up the pressure they were applying to the project, Temma came to the conclusion that he would need the backing of another major corp to resist Unitech's involvement in the long run. He reached out to his Neoret business associates and was soon put into contact with Utakar System Dynamics.

Negotiation with USD did not last long. Having long been a rival of Unitech, and sensing a chance to shut the rival corp out, Utakar took control of the ARC Project's construction and administration through a rapid series of bribes and a short military takeover of ARC Engineering headquarters.

When the metaphorical dust settled, USD had strong-armed enough of the project's investors to take over the leadership. The Stillwater Catholic Church raised an official objection to USD's tactics, but in the end it amounted to little—they were already in the middle of an expanded conflict with Unitech and couldn't afford to alienate a second megacorp. As USD consolidated their power in the project, Lindiwe Temma kept his position on the board of directors, but largely lost his leadership in the project.

More Investors Needed

As Utakar secured its leadership of the ARC Project and expanded its construction and recruiting efforts, the project's initial investments quickly proved to be inadequate. With several groups within the project about to default on their debts, the board voted to pursue a second round of investors. This was soon followed by a third round, then a fourth. Interstellar colonization was proving to be significantly more expensive than originally estimated.

Project Osiris

As Utakar System Dynamics moved forward with control of the ARC Project, Unitech was not idle in its opposition. Being shut out of the project's construction was no longer just a thorn in the side of the megacorp, it was a clear threat to Unitech's dominance of the aerospace industry.

In 2215, Unitech agents successfully sabotaged the ARC Construction Platform, creating a sizable setback and massive cost for the project. Meanwhile, they bought up the raw materials necessary for the construction of the ARC colony ship, thereby driving up costs. These efforts compounded the budgetary problems already being experienced by the ARC Project.

Noticing the wave of good publicity that USD gleaned from the project, and already in possession of many of the raw materials necessary for the construction of a colony ship, in 2218 Unitech announced its own competing interstellar colonization effort: Project Osiris. The megacorp hoped to leverage its experience in spaceship construction to beat the ARC Project to launch, thereby stealing USD's thunder.

As with ARC, they underestimated the costs necessary for an interstellar colonization effort. Project Osiris did not beat the ARC Project to launch, although it quickly gained ground and was projected to be not far behind.



Sleeper Ship or Generation Ship?

In the early days of the ARC Project it wasn't clear whether the ARC colony ship was going to be a generation ship or a sleeper ship—that is, would generations of colonists live out their lives on the ship, awake and alert, before its arrival at Alpha Centauri, or would the colonists spend the centuries in stasis.

In 2210, when Lindiwe Temma founded the project, he commissioned a panel of experts to look into the viability of both approaches. The conclusions reached by the panel weren't encouraging.

With the best stasis technology at the time, the panel estimated “attrition rates” of 30-50%. That is, due to mechanical issues, cellular deterioration or sheer chance, almost half of the colonists who went into stasis were likely to never wake up again. And even among those who did wake up, the median effective aging of a body in stasis that long was 22 years. That is, every colonist would lose an average of 22 years of her life, a sizable number affecting both health and reproduction.

The generation ship approach likewise had problems. The project's engineers would need to establish a closed life support loop and a functioning mini-ecology an order of magnitude better than the best ones space colonies had to offer. The ship would need to contain habs, agriculture and public spaces. It would need to be much, much larger to contain all this—meaning there was more mass to accelerate, and thus it would require much more power and expense. This is to say nothing of the sociological challenges of holding an isolated society together and focused on its end goal for centuries.

After the panel delivered its report in 2213, the ARC Project waffled back and forth for a time, favoring one method or the other. However, everything would soon change with the publication of Zhang's Stasis Method.



Shapiro Lab's Expertise

Dr. Karina Shapiro was brought onto the ARC Project in 2216, her lab bringing with it an influx of new grant money and providing much needed in house scientific expertise. One of the first things she did was to review the current state of the project's scientific planning. She found it to be sorely lacking.

Concerned about the interstellar stasis problem, she reached out to a collaborator at the University at Medyen Aleqmer, a Dr. Xishan Zhang. Zhang was one of the foremost researchers in stasis technology, and his lab was in the process of pioneering a new method for putting individuals into stasis and containment thereafter. With Karina Shapiro's urging, the ARC Project allocated resources to Dr. Zhang's research.

Zhang's Stasis Method

Zhang's new stasis method was a spectacular success. By constructing stasis pods that were designed for a single use, results could be achieved that were easily an order of magnitude better than current stasis technology. Estimated attrition rated dropped to 5%, with a median effective aging of only four years for the entire four century journey!

In 2218, the ARC Project board voted overwhelmingly to endorse Zhang's stasis method, scrapping their existing order of conventional stasis pods. It was settled: the ARC colony ship was going to be a sleeper ship.

The Long Road to Launch

It was a long road from the beginning of the ARC Project to its final launch. Interviews and the recruitment of colonists began in 2214, starting with managerial positions or with those that would need the most training, and working downward from there. Construction on the colony ship was finished in 2219, with the ship making a single trial voyage following Luna's orbit, before stopping again at the construction platform to begin the process of stocking equipment and supplies.

Platform Shuttle Disaster

In 2220 a disaster occurred which almost forced the shutdown of the project prematurely. A passenger shuttle transporting the ARC colony ship's selected command crew and understudies collided with a passing freighter, killing all on board.

This suddenly left the mission with critically missing expertise. The command crew had been in training for the last six years. They were knowledgeable with the project inside and out. The mission was scheduled for launch in just over a year. They would not be easily replaced.

Scrambling to fill the vacancies, the project turned to the members of the board that had opted to undertake the voyage on the colony ship. At the very least, the board members each had a long history with the project and were intimately familiar with its workings. Although many of them lacked formal training as a ship's crew—and others in the crew were quick to point this out—they still had a year ahead of them to learn the ropes. For better or worse, the decision had been made.

Last Minute Crowdfunding

Despite the project's best efforts, the shuttle disaster resulted in another round of budgetary problems and forced the launch to be delayed by almost a year. Positions were reshuffled, safety measures were put in place and the full 10,000 colonists had another unplanned year on the payroll, training for launch. More money was imminently needed or the project would be forced to shut down.

Looking once again for investors, the project received an offer of funds from Steve Scott, a highly controversial Techno media personality and subculture demagogue, in return for a position on the board of directors. The vote to give his company, Scott Productions, a seat on the board was highly contentious, but in the end those in favor won out. Steve Scott accepted his seat and then initiated an immensely successful crowdfunding campaign to save the project.

The Colony Ship Launches

In 2222, the ARC Project colony ship finally launched. After fifteen years of planning and development, everything was underway.

Wave after wave of colonists were put into stasis, and then all of the systems were double-checked before the ship set out on its long journey. The investors in the project had a field day using the launch for publicity, talking up the ideals of the project and broadcasting what the various colonists did with their final day on Earth.

After a short ceremony to commemorate the effort, the ship did one last circle around the Earth before beginning its long acceleration into the void between stars.

Timeline

Fifteen years passed between the initial conception of the ARC Project and its eventual launch. During this time the project underwent a number of unforeseen metamorphoses. Below is a timeline of events, focusing on those which affected the ARC Project between its conception in 2207 and its launch in 2222.

- **2031:** A habitable-zone Earth-like planet is discovered orbiting Alpha Centauri A. It is nicknamed Siren by the media (sometimes misspelled Sirine).
- **2207:** Lindiwe Temma, a wealthy Neoret business tycoon and Stillwater Catholic faithful, receives a premonition that humanity will need to spread beyond the Sol system, seeding itself elsewhere, if it is to survive.
- **2210:** After gathering numerous investors, the largest of which is the Stillwater Catholic Church, Temma founds ARC Engineering Corporation (or just ARC for short). It is tasked with organizing and administrating the ARC Project.
- **2211:** Construction on the ARC Project begins, and the decision is reached to launch the colony ship towards the planet Siren. Unitech begins pressuring ARC to grant them exclusive construction rights on the project.
- **2212:** Sensing an impending hostile takeover, Temma convinces the majority of the board—most notably the Stillwater Catholic leadership—to resist Unitech's pressure. This begins a feud between Unitech and the Stillwater Catholic Church.
- **2213:** Facing increasing hostilities, Temma realizes the project needs the backing of a larger corp to resist Unitech's involvement. He selects Utakar System Dynamics (USD). Sensing blood in the water and a chance to shut Unitech out, Utakar instead seizes control of the ARC Project's construction and administration through a series of bribes and the military takeover of ARC headquarters. Temma maintains a position on the ARC Project board, but to



his dismay is largely bereft of the leadership he once held in the project.

- **2214:** Preliminary interviews for ARC Project colonists begin. Some 10,000 colonists will need to be selected before the mission launches. *The present day in the Shadows Over Sol core rulebook.*
- **2215:** Unitech agents sabotage the ARC Construction Platform, damaging numerous raw materials, waldoes and part of the colony ship's hull. This is a setback and major expense for the project.
- **2216:** Facing significant cost overruns, the project seeks new investment. This results in a major grant financing the involvement of the Shapiro Lab at Stillwater University. Training for the first selected ARC colonists begins, including training for the ship's command crew.
- **2217:** The project continues to seek new investment, as material costs skyrocket due to Unitech's pressures. However, as no major new investors are forthcoming and with its reputation on the line, Utakar makes its own sizable investment in the project.
- **2218:** Due to publication of Zhang's Stasis Method, the ARC Project board votes to scrap its current order of conventional stasis pods in favor of starting over with the new design. This becomes another significant cost for the project. Meanwhile, Unitech announces Project Osiris, a competing interstellar colony ship. Construction on it soon begins, aiming for a target launch date in 2225.
- **2219:** Construction on the ARC colony ship is completed, albeit significantly over budget and a year behind schedule. The intended maiden voyage around Earth's solar orbit is canceled due to the threat of sabotage and budgetary concerns. Instead, the ship's maiden voyage is a simple lunar



orbit. The process of outfitting the ship with equipment for the mission then begins. Facing restrictions on its research by the Stillwater authorities, the Shapiro Lab moves to the University at Medyen Aleqmer.

- **2220:** A collision in Earth's orbit between an ARC platform passenger shuttle and a passing freighter kills the majority of the ARC colony ship's command crew. The project scrambles to find and train replacements, looking to those with significant influence on the board. Meanwhile, with expenses and setbacks to the project mounting, Utakar begins to publicly divest itself from the project, although it retains its board position.
- **2221:** Once again facing budgetary problems, this time due to Utakar's divestment, the board makes a highly divisive vote to allow Steve Scott, a Techno media personality and subcultural demagogue, a seat on the project. He initiates a crowdfunding campaign which raises the final funds needed for the colony ship's launch.
- **2222:** With the last of its equipment and life support materials in place, the ARC colony ship is launched from its construction platform at the Earth-Moon L4 Lagrange point, beginning its 395 year journey to Siren.
- **2617:** The ARC colony ship is scheduled to arrive in the Alpha Centauri system.

Planned Arrival

In the fifteen years the ARC Project has been in development, a lot of thought has been given to the colony ship's arrival at Siren and its initial colonization efforts. The project's planners and engineers want to make sure that the colonists are prepared for the job ahead of them, and so preliminary survey and colonization plans have been put in place.

Naturally, these plans will need to be adjusted to the circumstances of the ship's arrival and the findings of the initial surveys. Even the best laid plans can go horribly awry, but nevertheless, here are the project's plans for after arrival. Some dates are given relative to the colony ship's arrival in Siren's orbit (*A*).

- **2617 (A):** After a long period of deceleration, the ARC colony ship arrives in orbit around Siren. As the ship approaches orbit, the command crew are awoken from stasis, accompanied by a few select engineers and stasis technicians. The rest of the colonists remain in stasis. These select few systematically take stock of all systems on the ship and begin reviewing transmissions from Earth, received and archived in the ship's computer during the long voyage.
- **A+2 Weeks:** With the survey of the ship's systems finished, a selection of scientific experts are awoken from stasis so that they can begin conducting orbital surveys, collecting satellite footage, temperature, orbital and atmospheric data from Siren. The total number of colonists out of stasis is to remain under 100 individuals, so as to minimize life support requirements and impact on the nutrient supplies.
- **A+3 Months:** With the data from the orbital surveys reviewed, the first expedition to the surface is conducted using one of the mission's planetary shuttles (see page 26). This survey can be repeated up to three more times. Each shuttle trip awakens a handful of scouts from stasis. The purpose is to collect data which can be orbit from orbit and to survey potential sites to construct the ARC colony.
- **2618 (A+1 Year):** With a site for the colony chosen, the first drop modules containing colonists and construction supplies are sent to the selected location. Construction begins, with 500 colonists in the initial drop. They are to assemble habs and essential infrastructure, paving the way for subsequent waves of colonists and supplies. Meanwhile, the command crew and several dozen workers will remain in orbit, monitoring the viability of the colony as it develops, providing satellite data and planning future drops. New colonists are dropped down, awoken and integrated into the colony in waves as hab space and labor becomes available.
- **2621 (A+4 Years):** By this point the colony should have the agricultural infrastructure in place to feed itself, without having to further deplete nutrient stores.
- **2622 (A+5 Years):** The last wave of colonists, including the command crew, is dropped down to the colony. By this point, the last of the drop modules should be detached, leaving the colony ship as little more than an orbiting frame and satellite relay. With this final drop, all 10,000 colonists have been awoken from stasis. Authority over the colony passes from the ship's command crew to a colonial council chosen by the ARC Project's board of trustees.

Colony Ship

Officially, the ARC colony ship is simply named the ARC—a decision championed by the Stillwater Catholic Church in an effort to invoke the obvious biblical allegory to Noah's Ark. Unofficially, its name is usually expanded to “the ARC colony ship” in an effort to differentiate it from the many other affiliated ARCs—both the ARC Project and ARC Engineering. For much of its history it's also been referred to simply as “the colony ship,” as until the launch of Project Osiris in 2218, it's been the system's sole interstellar colony vessel.

Physically, the ARC colony ship is the second largest spaceship ever constructed. It's surpassed in size only by the Anvil, USD's largest battleship. It is a marvel of engineering, employing the most bleeding-edge stasis technology, a design intended for the reuse of most of the ship's raw material and an abundance of redundant systems. This is good, because it will need to carry its payload of 10,000 colonists on a voyage lasting four centuries without maintenance.

Structure

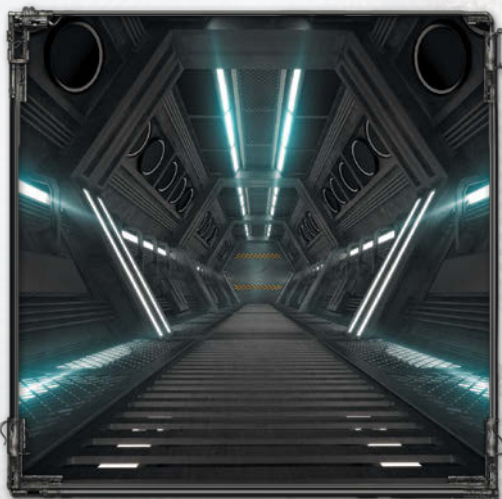
Structurally, the core of the ARC colony ship is a long tube, with engines on both the front and back. This long tube is known as the main deck.

About two thirds of the way down the tube, a trio of three much shorter, perpendicular tubes jut out from the main deck at unilateral angles. These three tubes are known as the ship's cross-decks. Each cross-deck has a reactor on its far end. These serve primarily to distance the reactors from the core of the ship, allowing them to generate tremendous amounts of energy while radiating most of the waste heat into space rather than into the sleeping colonists. No one wants to be boiled alive during transit.

In many ways, these decks are just a bare skeleton. The real payload and bulk of the ship is contained in its many drop modules. These are vaguely capsule-shaped sealed hulls attached to the main deck at numerous hard points along its length. The mechanics constructing the ship have even likened the main deck and the many drop modules to stalk of Brussels sprouts—with the main deck being the stalk and the many drop modules clinging to its length being the sprouts.

Each drop module is designed to be detached from the colony ship and dropped down Siren's gravity well, landing at a safe velocity. Each module is then designed to be disassembled or otherwise repurposed. In this way, the bulk of the ship's raw material can be sent down the gravity well and used in the colony's construction.

Once all of the drop modules have been deployed, only the bare skeleton of the ship and its engines will remain in orbit. During the project's development some thought was given as to how this frame might also be repurposed as a small orbital station once the colony again achieves space flight, but these plans were never finalized or fully implemented due to financial concerns.



Terra Nullius

The ARC Project's claim to Siren depends on the legal principle of *terra nullius*—that is the idea that uninhabited land can be legally claimed by occupying and settling it. This principle dates back to the ancient Romans and has been used in recent centuries to divvy up the solar system to different corporate mining or colony interests.

After the ARC Project's arrival at Siren, however, this principle may be put to the test. Not only is there a competing claim—Unitech's Project Osiris—but the question arises of how much can be claimed? Does the project claim the whole planet, or just out to a certain radius? As the colony grows, if colonists move away, further into the wilds, do they get their own claims? Is everything in the colony owned by the ARC Project's board of trustees, or do things get further divided into individual ownership? These are all questions that have yet to be answered.

Engines & Power

The ARC colony ship has engines on both its front and back. The back engines are designated the *acceleration engines*, while the front engines are designated the *deceleration engines*. Each set of engines are powered by their own reactor.

The purpose the back engines are to accelerate the ship from the Sol system, out into interstellar space. They are designed to burn for approximately 15 years, at which point they will have depleted their thorium reserve and cease to function. The front engines are intended to do the opposite of this, kicking in roughly 15 years before the colony ship reaches Alpha Centauri, and slowing the ship down until it is traveling at a velocity that can successfully enter orbit around Siren.

Unlike the back engines, the front engines are not designed to burn until they deplete their fuel reserve. Rather, they have a larger reserve, giving the ship a safety margin as it decelerates on approach to the Alpha Centauri system.

The reactors at the front and back of the ship are joined by three additional reactors located at the end of each cross-deck. These reactors each have a different purpose. Their jobs are to provide power for the stasis pods, provide power to the ship's main systems and to serve as an auxiliary power reserve, respectively.

Since the ship's power grid is interconnected, any of these reactors can channel additional energy to other systems if needed, but this is primarily the job of the auxiliary reactor.

Drop Modules

The ARC colony ship is comprised of a frame, two engines and 104 drop modules. These modules are designed to detach and drop down Siren's gravity well, thereby delivering their contents safely to the surface.

One of the engineering goals was to provide the mission with maximum flexibility upon reaching Siren and adapting to the conditions there. Dividing the mission's payload into numerous drop modules allows it to either drop these modules all in one location—if the mission finds a singular suitable spot for colonization—or to drop them in several locations around the planet, if one location proves to be untenable. Since the colonists inside the drop modules are kept in stasis, it also allows them to be deployed, one or a few at a time, in waves. This allows for a slow, careful approach to colonization, with room and adapt and learn from any surprises along the way.

In many ways, drop modules are designed to be the seeds of a new colony. The standard

module contains 100 colonists in stasis, a stockpile of preserved nutrients and other resources, construction equipment, independent life support and other gear useful in establishing a fledgling colony. Most modules also contain battery power capable of operating for a year after being detached from the ship's reactors, assuming power usage is kept to a minimum.

Every standard module is designed to drop to the surface, wake its colonists safely after impact and operate as an independent hab. Most modules have two airlocks, allowing access to the outside world. All modules are also designed to be disassembled and their raw material repurposed once they outlive their usefulness to the new colony. In this way, they serve as delivery vessel, habitat and resource.

Mixed in among the standard modules are a few drop modules that contain specialized gear or otherwise singular resources. Most of these drop modules possess all of the same capabilities mentioned above, but instead of the usual supply of construction equipment and raw materials, they contain specialized gear. Examples of specialized drop modules include an advanced medical module, an

armory module, several modules containing construction mechs or exploratory rovers, a module containing a watercraft and aquacultural supplies and four modules containing single-use planetary shuttles (see below).

Planetary Shuttles

Four of the ship's drop modules have an entirely different design. Instead of the usual payload of colonists in stasis and supplies, these specialty modules each contain a planetary shuttle.

The intent of these shuttle modules is to aid in the early exploration of the planet. Each of these modules is designed to drop to surface with only a small exploratory crew, already awakened from stasis. Upon landing, these select explorers can use the module as a base of operations, taking samples, performing atmospheric analysis, exploring the landing site and radioing all this back up to the colony ship. Each such landing can operate independently for as long as a year.

Once the exploratory mission is complete, these special drop modules are designed to unfold, transforming into a primitive launch platform and exposing the shuttle held inside.

Out of the Gravity Well

In the future of *Shadows Over Sol*, widespread space travel is only possible because getting materials to orbit has become relatively cheap. This is made possible through a series of space elevators on both Earth and Mars, laser launch on Venus and low gravity everywhere else. Without this infrastructure, sending mass out of a gravity well has all of the same problems it does in the modern day: every kilogram launched into orbit is prohibitively expensive for most purposes.

With the ARC colony ship's arrival at Siren, the new colony will be put into a position much like the early days of space travel. No infrastructure exists for getting material cheaply into orbit, thus every launch will be precious and expensive. Until large scale laser launch facilities can be built—or even better, but more ambitious, a space elevator—the colonists are going to have to rely on old school chemical rockets to reach orbit.

Each shuttle contains launch chairs for the explorers, a small compartment to house gathered samples and a single-use chemical rocket designed to propel the shuttle back out of the gravity well and into orbit, where it can dock with the colony ship.

Since there are only four of these specialized modules, and each module is single-use, the mission has a limited number of exploratory trips it can make before it starts having to send colonists down the gravity well. Every trip counts!

Command Structure

The original command crew of the ARC colony ship and their understudies died in 2220, when a passing freighter collided with the shuttle ferrying them to the ARC Construction Platform. This accident resulted in a shuffling around of positions within the project and the urgent need for retraining, which delayed the colony ship's launch another year.

The original command crew were replaced with members of the ARC Project's board of directors. The argument in favor of this was that these individuals all had intimate familiarity with the project and all had experience in leadership positions, thus they would require the least training.

At the time, several prominent members of the project objected to this selection. They argued that that out of all the replacements, only Cardinal Sardou had any experience whatsoever in a spaceship command position, and that these positions required a certain degree of experience and discipline not necessarily covered by time on the project's board. In the end, these objections were overruled.

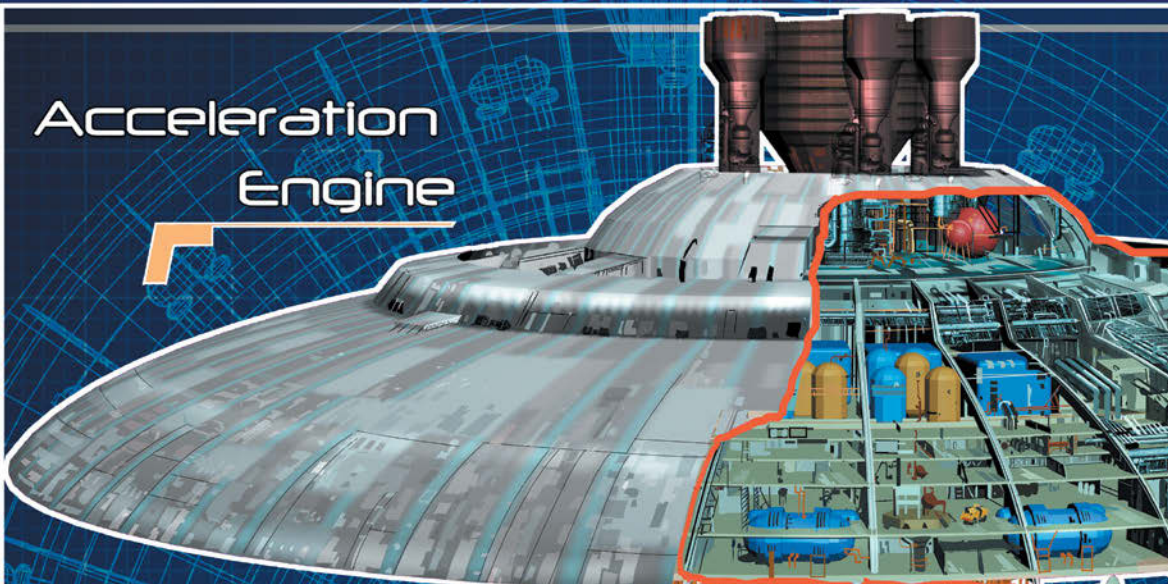
Command Positions

The command hierarchy of the colony ship is intentionally minimalistic. Since only a few colonists are expected to be out of stasis on the ship at any one time, a more extensive hierarchy was deemed to be unnecessary. The command crew of the ship consists of the following:

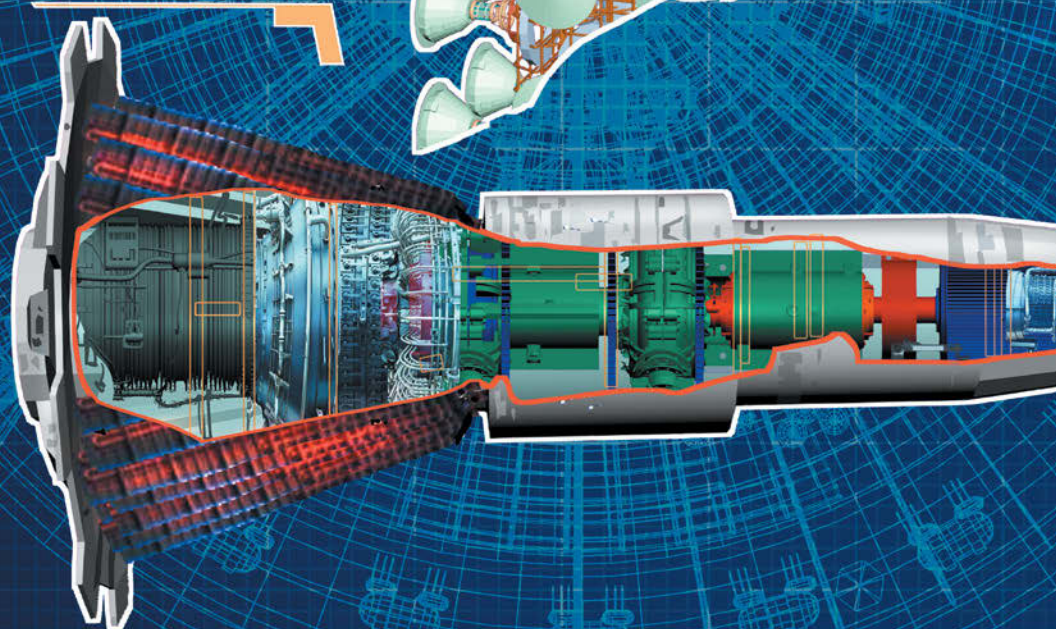
- **Captain:** Cardinal Milo Sardou. Although he served on the board as the representative from the Stillwater Catholic Church, before his time in the clergy, he served as a spaceship officer, making him the choice for captain.
- **Executive Officer:** Josefina Navarro. The second in command on the ship. Josefina also served as the board's representative from USD.
- **Colonization Officer:** Lindiwe Temma. Technically the third in command on the ship. Once the initial colony is constructed, the Colonization Officer's job is to move to the surface and serve as the head of the colonial administration until such time as power is handed over to a more formal governing body.
- **Science Officer:** Dr. Karina Shapiro. Although she is technically fourth in command, Dr. Shapiro's job is primarily to lead the science teams in gathering samples and performing experiments upon arrival.
- **Module Officers:** Each drop module officially has someone in charge, whose job is to report to the senior officers in order to coordinate efforts.

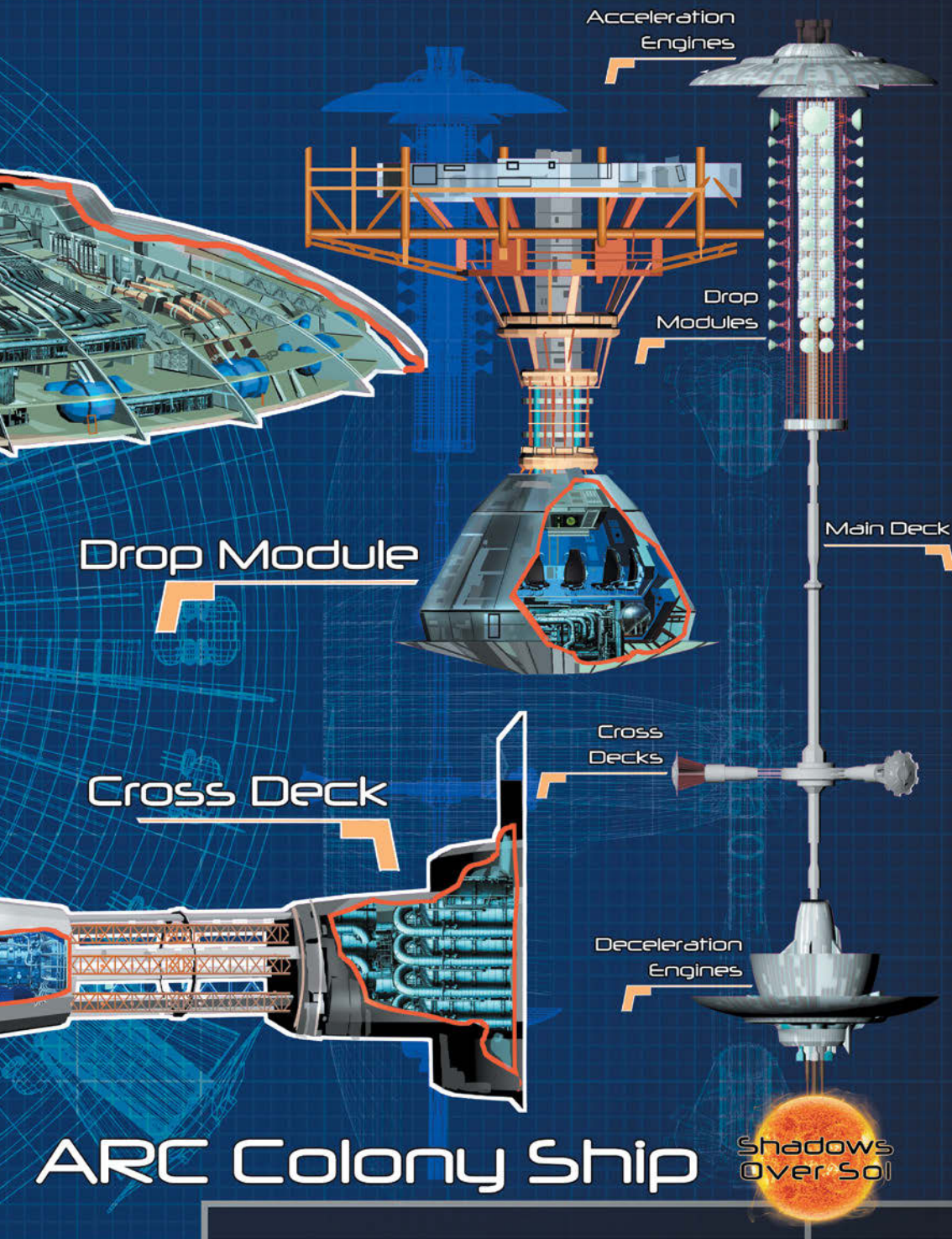


Acceleration Engine



Stasis, Systems or Auxiliary Reactor





Project Factions

The ARC Project has grown factions the way a patient with a damaged oncogene grows tumors. This is the result of a drawn out and tumultuous history, where each subsequent crisis led to the next shift in power within the mission.

On the surface, the goal of the ARC Project remains to construct the very first interstellar colony ship, thus one day establishing humanity's first extrasolar colony on Siren. Below the surface, however, each of the major factions on the project has its own goals and benefits they hope to reap from their involvement with the project.

On the following pages, five of the six project factions are detailed. The sixth faction will be created by the players during the character creation process.

Faction Information

The five factions are each listed in a standard format, which provides details about the faction and gives some insight into the faction's goals, history and values.

- **Leader:** Each faction lists its representative on the ARC Project's board of directors. This is accompanied by a page reference for the leader's stat block.
- **Subculture:** No faction consists solely of a single subculture, but in most factions a particular subculture is dominant. This subcultural association for each is listed.
- **History:** A bit about the history of each faction as it's been involved with the ARC Project is given.
- **Values:** Finally, the values and goals of the faction are listed in its own section.

Player Faction

When creating their characters, the players should discuss and come up with their own faction on the ARC Project. Ideally, they should come up with the faction's name, values and a bit of history. The other faction listings can be used as a template or as inspiration when coming up with this faction.

- More on creating the player faction can be found on page 38.



ARC Engineering

- **Leader:** Lindiwe Temma (see page 89)
- **Subculture:** Neoret

In many ways ARC Engineering is the ARC Project's original faction. The corp was explicitly founded in 2210 to oversee the interstellar colonization effort and to administer its development. Since losing majority control of the project in 2213, however, ARC Engineering has doubled down on its ideals, focusing on "doing things right this time" by colonizing the planet Siren in a way that doesn't harm the planet's environment or any native ecology.

History

ARC Engineering was officially founded in 2210, along with the ARC Project itself, although it existed for several years beforehand as an unofficial group of Martian visionaries in touch with ARC's founder, Lindiwe Temma.

Most of the early members of the faction, and indeed the early investors in the ARC Project, were some of the same minds behind the Mars Terraforming Project. Temma made his fortune investing in Martian terraforming, and so most of his contacts were among these individuals—people used to investing in large projects and thinking of the long term.

When in 2213 ARC Engineering lost its majority control of the ARC Project, the faction was shaken to its core. Many of the fair-weather members of the faction left, flocking to Utakar System Dynamics or departing the project entirely. What was left were the most dedicated and idealistic members.

Doubling down on the project's original vision, these core faction members worked tirelessly to influence the development of the ARC Project going forward, and in the process attracted a new wave of idealists looking to save humanity or to create a more environmentally-friendly human culture on the new world.



Values

ARC Engineering is perhaps the most idealistic of all the project's factions. Its stated goal is nothing less than to save the human species through interstellar colonization. Temma, the faction's founder and de facto leader, calls this "diversifying the reach of humanity."

Bereft of full control over the project, ARC's focus throughout much of the mission's development has been on creating a new civilization on Siren that avoids the mistakes of the past, particularly in regards to humanity's impact on the environment and native biosphere. ARC wants to do things better, holding to its high ideals, and finding a way to live in harmony with the planet's native life. "Killing one homeworld might be manslaughter, but killing two is murder," Temma is fond of saying.



Scott Productions

- **Leader:** Steve Scott (see page 91)
- **Subculture:** Techno

On the surface, Scott Productions is a media studio affiliated with the Techno subculture. It produces the popular ongoing vid-cast *A Word with Steve*, as well as a number of other broadcasts.

Underneath, Scott Productions is something of a cult of personality centered around its founder, Steve Scott, and his vision of a technocratic future. It was the last of the major factions to be brought into the ARC Project.

History

Scott Productions was founded in 2210, as Steve Scott's personal vid-cast, *A Word with Steve*, rocketed to success. It quickly grew to be a powerhouse of the Techno subculture, attracting a large and cult-like following. Soon the media studio was producing like-minded vid-casts and even simspace games, each expounding upon Scott's vision of society and the future.

In 2221, the ARC Project put out a call for new investors following a lethal and very expensive shuttle accident. Scott Productions approached the project, offering a significant sum of money in return for a seat on the project's board, a number of seats among the colonists and the ability for Scott to take with him a huge cache of embryonic clones. The board initially rejected this offer, but as the project's financial situation got worse, bordering on bankruptcy, they were forced to reconsider. In a highly divisive vote, Scott Productions was officially brought on board.

Although its methods made many of the more stodgy members of the board cringe, Scott Productions proved to be very effective at raising

the last of



the funds

necessary

for launch. The media studio initiated a highly successful crowdfunding effort, paired with a game show for a single contestant to win a seat on the colony ship. Meanwhile, Scott selected a variety of his star-struck disciples to be among the project's colonists.

Values

Scott Productions borrows many of its values from the Techno subculture, but all of these are tinged by Steve Scott's own particular views. He wants nothing more than to remake society according to his vision, throwing out what he sees as obsolete values and replacing them with a technocratic future.

As part of the deal Scott reached with the ARC Project when he invested, he was allowed to bring with him a huge cache of embryonic clones of himself. These are in a frozen state, each waiting to be thawed and matured. His clones have all been sterilized. He plans to create "an adoptive caste." His clones will need to be adopted and will need to adopt in turn. This is all in service to a greater vision of centrally organized, generational genetic planning, and a chance to squelch the family unit, replacing it with a colony-wide children's crèche.

Shapiro Lab

- **Leader:** Dr. Karina Shapiro (see page 88)
- **Subculture:** Expret

The Shapiro Lab is a cross-disciplinary research group based out of the University at Medyen Aleqmer on Luna. Under the direction of Dr. Karina Shapiro, it seeks to understand the chemistry of any potential xenobiome, including how it might be adapted to meet the needs of human exoplanet colonization. Within the project, the lab provides critical in house scientific expertise and advocates for a freer hand in its pursuit of science.



History

The Shapiro Lab was founded when Dr. Karina Shapiro, having recently published a well-received paper on the topic of European life, was awarded a sizable grant to found a new lab at Stillwater University on Mars. She brought with her an expertise on xenobiology and aspirations of applying her knowledge to the development of human colonies throughout the Sol system. Stillwater at the time was investing in academics, hoping to grow the local scientific expertise that might be applied to the Mars terraforming effort.

Looking to expand her lab's reach and horizons, Dr. Shapiro had it brought onto the ARC Project in 2216. Reviewing the project's scientific efforts thus far, the lab was dismayed at what it found. Dr. Shapiro resolved to improve the state of affairs. Looking for a better method of transporting colonists to Alpha Centauri, Dr. Shapiro reached out to its collaborators in the Zhang Lab, who were in the process of developing Zhang's Stasis Method. This would cement the ARC colony ship as a sleeper vessel.

In 2219, facing increasing pressures from the Stillwater authorities to restrict its research, the Shapiro Lab opted to move from Stillwater University to the University at Medyen Aleqmer.

Values

In many ways the Shapiro Lab values the pursuit of knowledge above all. It is dedicated to producing open and reproducible science, and thereafter sharing its results with the world. It vehemently opposes restrictions on its research, or likewise restrictions on the publication of its results.

This drive for reproducible science is in large part the motivator for the lab's association with the ARC Project. Many a biologist or ecologist has lamented the fact that Earth's biosphere is an "N of 1"—that is, a singular data point that has no counterpart or control group with which to compare. Even European life is ultimately descended from Earth-based life, as Dr. Shapiro has frequently published. In this sense, the ARC Project represents a once in a lifetime opportunity to study an alien biosphere—or as Dr. Shapiro writes, "a once in 7,500 generations opportunity," that being the estimated number of generations since the emergence of modern *Homo sapiens*.

Stillwater Catholic Church

- **Leader:** Cardinal Milo Sardou (see page 90)
- **Subculture:** Serv

The Stillwater Catholic Church is one of the earliest and largest investors in the ARC Project, brought on board at the inception of the project. It counts many of its faithful among the colonists. The church aims to aid in the exploration God's creation and to provide moral guidance in the new colony.

History

The Stillwater Catholic Church broke with the Roman Catholic Church in 2133, amid growing discontent among conservative bishops. The breakaway church rejected Pope Mary I, instead electing the archbishop of Stillwater, Pope Clement XVI, as its new Pontiff. Since then the church has remained headquartered on Mars, with its leader sometimes irreverently referred to as "the Space Pope."

The church was one of the ARC Project's founding organizations, being approached by Lindiwe Temma—himself one of the faithful—in the initial round of investment. With the church's involvement confirmed, Cardinal Milo Sardou was put in charge of working with the project, as he had been of its foremost advocates.

The church joined Temma in opposing Unitech's attempts to force a construction contract early in the project's development. This opposition touched off a larger conflict between Unitech and the Stillwater Catholics; in retaliation, Unitech moved to block the transport of pilgrims to Stillwater.

In 2216, after the USD takeover of the project, the Stillwater Catholics objected to the corp's tactics on moral grounds, although in the end this objection had little effect, as the church couldn't afford to alienate a second megacorp.



Over the course of the project's development, the church has expressed its concerns with the decisions the board has made several times. The church had reservations in bringing the Shapiro Lab on board the project, expressing concerns with a paper Dr. Shapiro published denouncing ethics concerns limiting research. The Stillwater Church likewise voted against the inclusion of Scott Productions, citing the studio's uncouth productions and history of subcultural demagoguery.

Values

For the Stillwater Catholic Church, the ARC Project is an expression of faith. It represents the very first opportunity to spread the light of God beyond the Sol system. The church believes that any future colonists will need a deep religious strength if they are to survive and flourish on a potentially hostile new world.

The Stillwater Church is by far the most traditional of all the project's factions, a fact that has caused it to butt heads with other factions more than once. It sees itself as the moral compass of the project, shepherding the colonists to a bright new future.

Utakar System Dynamics

- **Leader:** Josefina Navarro (see page 87)
- **Subculture:** Ghostman

Utakar System Dynamics—also known as USD or simply Utakar, for short—is one of the “Big 5” megacorps. Historically, USD has specialized primarily in arms manufacturing, but its involvement in the ARC Project represents a chance to expand its market influence, and in particular challenge Unitech’s hegemony in spacecraft construction.

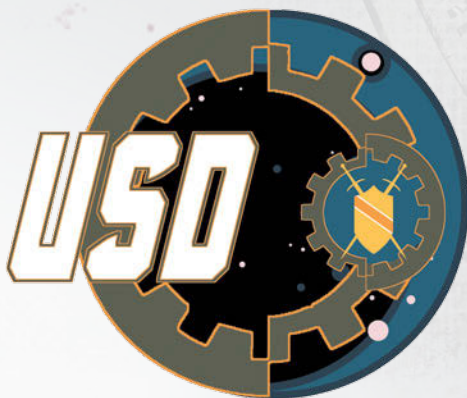
History

USD was founded as a weapons manufacturing firm shortly before World War IV. It fared well during the war, selling to both sides and reaping a profit. In the aftermath, it expanded its market, buying up refurbished military equipment on the cheap and propelling itself into the ranks of the Big 5 megacorps.

The corp became involved with the ARC Project in 2213, shortly after Lindiwe Temma approached it about possible investment and a construction contract. He intended to use USD’s weight to stave off Unitech’s involvement with the project, as Unitech had been making a series of aggressive moves to force its participation.

Josefina Navarro was appointed by USD to be the corp’s liaison with the ARC Project. After receiving Temma’s proposal, she concluded that if USD had the nerve to take “sudden and decisive measures” they could not only lock Unitech out of the project, but also gain effective control of it, using it as a source of good publicity and rubbing salt into Unitech’s wounds.

She convinced the USD board to accept her strategy, and instead of returning to Temma with a signed contract, she returned to ARC



Engineering with a mercenary squadron and a series of bribes to the project’s other investors.

After taking control, USD oversaw the construction of the ARC colony ship and associated platform. It even went as far as investing its own money in the project in order to stave off a very public failure, although USD later divested itself of much of its earlier investment. Nevertheless, USD saw the project to launch and is responsible for much of the engineering that went into the mission.

Values

Utakar System Dynamics is first and foremost a large corporation, and as such is beholden primarily to its shareholders. It is perhaps the least idealistic of the project’s factions, instead remaining focused on its specific investment in the project, both as a strategic move to challenge Unitech and as a high profile endeavor intended to glean positive press coverage.

If USD can be said to have any overriding ideal in its involvement in the project, it’s the corp’s dedication to the role that the market provides in creating wealth.



Colonists

Central to any story about interstellar colonization are the colonists themselves. This chapter contains relevant information for creating a colonist character, either for the *Siren's Call* campaign or for another interstellar colonization scenario.

Character Creation

For the most part, the standard character creation rules should suffice when creating an interstellar colonist character or, more specifically, a character for the *Siren's Call* campaign (see page 137). These rules can be found on page 163 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook. A few points, however, require additional consideration or minor changes to the core rules. They are described below.

Mode of Horror

Stories of interstellar colonization are intrinsically about exploration, making new discoveries and the process of building a new civilization. This fits best with the Investigative Horror mode of play (see the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook, page 164). Colonists, when not just trying to survive, seek to discover the wonders and terrors of the new world they call home.

Character Concept

The voyage from Sol to Alpha Centauri will mean centuries in stasis. Those who undergo this voyage are never coming back. The massive amount of energy required for the transit means that even if those on the ship

wanted to turn around upon arrival, it would be generations before any potential colony had enough of an industrial base to fuel the ship's return. This also means that anyone on the colony ship, from the command crew to the rank-in-file, will be spending the rest of their lives on the interstellar colonization project. This makes them all colonists.

From a personal perspective, players should think about why their characters want to (or at least are willing to) go on a one-way trip to another star system, leaving behind most everything they've ever known. By the time they wake up again, everyone they know will be long dead and impossibly far away. What would make a person do this?

From a practical perspective, the project needs to be selective about who it brings along. Colonists likely possess some skill that the selection committee believes will be important to the mission—or maybe they just possess the right combination of contacts, money and factional politics. At a minimum, they've been screened both physically and psychologically, and will likely have undergone years of training in preparation for the voyage.

On the other hand, any screening took place when the colonist was selected—likely meaning years before launch. The project has been constantly beset by budgetary shortfalls, various colonists have either died or dropped out and subsequently been replaced, more than once the project has been partially re-envisioned, and the board of directors has been riven by infighting, corporate maneuvering and the shifting alliances of multiple factions. Given all this, some colonist traits and other aspects are bound to slip through the cracks.

Specialties	Specialties	Specialties
Agriculture	Engineering	Medical
Chemist	HVAC	Nutrient Preparation
Clerical	Hydroponics	Recycling
Construction	Janitorial	Ship's Crew
Electrician	Maintenance	Vehicular Operator

Necessary Specialties

The ARC Project is not only sending a ship to Alpha Centauri, it's assembling its own self-contained society to live there once the ship arrives. All of the skills necessary for that society will need to be represented among the colonists, particularly the ones critical for the colony's survival. Some ideas for character specialties are shown on the table above.

Player Faction

The player characters will all be a part of the same drop module on the colony ship. This means that when it comes time, they will descend together in their drop module down to Siren's surface. It also means that they are all likely part of (or sponsored by) the same faction on the ARC Project's board.

The players should feel encouraged to make up the details of this faction. It might be a minor corp, ideological group, religious organization, subsidiary of a major corp, eccentric billionaire and cohort, contractor on the project, research group, etc. The players should

discuss it together and settle on a basic premise that works for all the player characters. At the very least, the faction needs a name, basic concept and, ideally, some distinctive flavor.

Wealth & Lifestyle

Any story involving being loaded on a sleeper ship and launched on a centuries-long voyage to another star system is going to need to rethink how the game handles Wealth and Lifestyle. Both of these systems assume that the character has access to open markets and a developed human industrial base. On the other end of the voyage this is simply not going to be the case—at least not at first.

During the initial character creation, players should pick a Lifestyle and keep track of Wealth like normal. After all, their colonists have not yet been launched across the long void. However, it's only fair that players should be informed from the start that their Wealth and Lifestyle will soon be “reset” as the colony ship undertakes its lengthy voyage and arrives in the Alpha Centauri system.

Options from Beyond Human

The *Beyond Human* supplement presents a variety of character creation options to accompany those found in the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook. Many of these options, however, are unusual and may change the tone of the campaign.

Recommended character creation options from *Beyond Human* are: Point Buy Character Creation (page 9), Example Weaknesses (page 11), Background Generator (page 18), Unusual Genelines (page 34) and Minor Subcultures (page 49). The other options presented in the book are not recommended for this campaign.

Mission Language

An interstellar mission works better if all of the colonists can effectively communicate. For the ARC Project, French has been chosen as the mission's literal *lingua franca*. This means that everyone on the mission—from the colony ship's captain to basic laborers are expected to have a working knowledge of the language by the time the mission launches.

When creating characters for the *Siren's Call* campaign, it is recommended that GMs simply allow all player characters to know the French language, in addition to any languages they would normally possess.

On the other end, the characters will not have access to the creature comforts that they once possessed in their old Lifestyle, nor will Wealth have quite the same meaning. The colonists are truly isolated, separated from their old lives by four centuries and over four light-years. Wealth will be a matter of possessing the means necessary for survival in the alien wilds. After all, you can't eat microcredits.

After this point, the colonists' Lifestyle will be a function of their colony's development (see the Colony Building rules on page 49). Wealth will be a function of resources (see page 45).

Gear

A colonist's ability to take gear with her will be limited. After all, the more mass the colony ship is transporting, the more energy it needs to accelerate.

Every player should imagine that her character has a locker on the colony ship. Anything that she purchases at character creation and wishes to have access to later in the campaign will need to fit in this locker.

This means that starting gear should mostly be limited to personal effects, eccentricities and recreation. Colonists should expect that most of the tools they will need to construct and maintain the colony will be provided by the project.



Colonist Gear

Gear is essential to any interstellar colonization effort. Not only is it necessary to get to other star systems, but without it humanity will have regressed back to a hunter-gatherer society with grand memories of the past.

Numerous pieces of gear are presented in the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook (beginning on page 177) and the *Shiny New Toys* supplement (beginning on page 35). In addition, the following gear may be of interest to interstellar colonists.

Personal Gear

Personal gear makes personal life easier! The following pieces of equipment may be useful to colonists who want to take charge of their personal bodily functions.

Breather

- **Cost Rating:** 4
- **Properties:** Worn

Do you like breathing? Everyone likes breathing! Now you can breathe easier with this streamlined wearable breather and air filtration system. Just slip the mask over your nose and mouth, flip the switch on and within moments you'll be drawing breath! Battery lasts 72 hours. Some adjustment for atmospheric conditions required.

Ectogenesis Pod

- **Cost Rating:** 7
- **Properties:** Big 10

Babies! They're small, they're cute, they grow inside you! But now you don't need to carry a developing fetus around in your innards for nine months! Just place a fertilized reproductive culture in this state-of-the-art ectogenesis pod and let this miracle of science do all the work! Power source and nutrient culture required.

Implants

The following implants may be of interest to a colonist who wishes to have her body cut open and a little machine jammed inside shortly before a 400-year voyage in stasis.

Breather Implant

- **Cost Rating:** 5
- **Properties:** Implant 1

Are you tired of those ugly facial breathers? Do you want to scratch your nose without a mask being in the way? Well, now you can put the breather inside your chest! This deluxe breather implant filters out harmful aerial contaminants and remixes the atmospheric balance so that you breathe just right! Adjustments for atmospheric conditions required.

Comm Implant

- **Cost Rating:** 5
- **Properties:** Implant 1

Do have the tendency to lose your hand terminal, radio comm or other communication device? Now you need never worry about losing them again! With this comm implant, you will always have the means to radio for help or for pizza! Works just like a radio comm, but implanted in the throat so that it can pick up quiet subvocalizations. Capable of interfacing with standard hand terminals or other computing devices. Supports a range of up to a thousand kilometers.

Olfactory Implant

- **Cost Rating:** 5
- **Properties:** Implant 2

Humans have an underwhelming sense of smell, but now you don't have to be a slave to your evolutionary biology! With this olfactory implant you will be capable of picking up subtle chemical or personal odors. Counts as superior tools (+2) for the purpose of detecting scents.

Wear and Tear

With time, use and misuse, most gear eventually breaks down. This is particularly noteworthy in a situation where it cannot easily be replaced, such as a colony without the necessary industrial base to manufacture the equipment.

GMs looking to evoke this sort of wear and tear can use the following rule: Anytime a joker comes up when using a piece of gear, it gains some damage from simple wear and tear. The gear continues to function, but it is now closer to breaking down for good. If no flip is normally made to use the gear, the player should flip a card and simply check for a joker.

The player should note this damage next to the equipment. It's now considered "Inferior Quality" (see *Shiny New Toys*, page 35). The next time a joker comes up when using the damaged equipment, it finally breaks down beyond all repair.

Survival Gear

Survival is of critical importance if a colony is ever to flourish on an unexplored alien world. The following gear may be useful for colonists looking to increase their personal survival outlook in the alien wilds.

Camping Pack

- **Cost Rating:** 5
- **Properties:** Big 3

Don't get caught out in the wilds without appropriate shelter! This camping pack includes a self-inflating tent, water filter, ration heating device, bedding and tent stakes. Be the one to survive the wilderness! Buy a camping pack today!



H₂O Electrolysis Machine

- **Cost Rating:** 6
- **Properties:** —

What could be better than oxygen and hydrogen? You breathe oxygen! Hydrogen explodes! It's also a great fuel source! Just turn on this H₂O Electrolysis Machine and within minutes you'll be "cracking" water, separating it into its oxygen and hydrogen components! Battery lasts 8 hours. Water not included.

Ration Bars

- **Cost Rating:** 1
- **Properties:** —

Want to minimize your loadout while packing MAXIMUM NUTRITION? With these ration bars, a little food goes a long way! Each of these chemically synthesized bars contain enough vitamins, minerals and calories to keep you going for an entire day. Available in morning dew, crazy berry and alpine musk flavors. Pack of 10 bars.

Gear from Shiny New Toys

The *Shiny New Toys* supplement presents a variety of additional gear for the *Shadows Over Sol* roleplaying game. Gear of particular note for *Siren's Call* includes the Xenocom "Space Dust" Military Vac Suit (page 43), Lung Implant (page 44), Microtracker (page 49), Fabricators (page 50, too big to fit in a locker, but useful later in the campaign), Scientific Suite (page 53) and Crawlers (page 55).

Vehicles

Terrestrial vehicles are essential in the construction and development of an interstellar colony—that is, unless the colonists plan to walk everywhere! Although the vehicles below are larger and more expensive than anything most colonists can personally afford, the ARC Project was sent out with all of the following designs in its database.

General Aerodynamics CB-1 Battle Chopper

- **Cost Rating:** 13
- **Handling** +3, **Defense** 10/18, **DR** 5, **Shock** 16, **Structure** 6, **Cruise** 8p
- **Properties:** Mil, Vehicle
- **Guns:** +5 (♠15M/♥10M/♦5M/♣2M), Range 100

Don't bring a knife to a gunfight! Bring a CB-1 Battle Chopper! This sleek military-spec chopper is designed for use in a wide range of barometric and gravimetric conditions. It includes both forward and backward guns, as well as twin rotary blades keeping the craft aloft.

General Aerodynamics MT-27 Atmo-Jet

- **Cost Rating:** 11
- **Handling** 0, **Defense** 7/15, **DR** 3, **Shock** 13, **Structure** 5, **Cruise** 8p
- **Properties:** Vehicle

Have you ever wanted to own your own personal jet aircraft? Of course you have! Now this option is both available and affordable with the General Aerodynamics MT-27 Atmo-Jet! Just hop into the cockpit, bringing along a few friends, and fly away! Capable of limited VTOL. Seats the pilot plus eight passengers.

General Aerodynamics QR-8 Work Rover

- **Cost Rating:** 9
- **Handling** 0, **Defense** 7/15, **DR** 2, **Shock** 11, **Structure** 4, **Cruise** 2p
- **Properties:** Vehicle

Are you tired of work rovers that break down at the most inconvenient moments, leaving you stranded or exposed to danger? Well, never fear! The General Aerodynamics QR-8 Work Rover is now available. Rated the most dependable workhorse rover in its class for three years running! Seats six to eight people, with plenty of room in its rugged frame to haul anything that needs hauling. When you want reliability, you want the QR-8!

Vehicles from Shiny New Toys

The *Shiny New Toys* supplement introduces the vehicle system used in the stat blocks above. It also includes a variety of potentially relevant terrestrial vehicles. Vehicles of particular note in *Siren's Call* include: General Aerodynamics CX-3 Chopper (page 61), General Aerodynamics MT-17 Air Bus (page 61), Xenocom M2 Motorbike (page 63) and the P&W "Decadence" Luxury Yacht (page 63).

USD-10K3 "Toil" Construction Mech

- **Cost Rating:** 9
- **Handling** +1, **Defense** 8/16, **DR** 2, **Shock** 10, **Structure** 3, **Cruise** 1p
- **Properties:** Vehicle
- **Lifting Arm:** +3 (♠15L/♥10L/♦5L/♣2L), Improvised

Let the Toil do the heavy lifting! This rugged construction mech consists of three meters of matte steel and powerful pneumatic joints. Capable of lifting crates, boxes, beams and bricks, the Toil has what it takes to get the job done!

USD-10K44 "Silverfish" Tac-Rover

- **Cost Rating:** 11
- **Handling** +1, **Defense** 8/16, **DR** 5, **Shock** 14, **Structure** 4, **Cruise** 3p
- **Properties:** Mil, Vehicle
- **Turret:** +5 (♠15M/♥10M/♦5M/♣2M), Range 100

The USD-10k44 "Silverfish" is not just a rover. It's war on wheels! Coming fully equipped with a state-of-the-art armored frame, solid core tires, backup treads, a rotating turret and secondary engine, the Silverfish keeps going and keeps your soldiers safe!

Xenocom H3 Tactical Hydrofoil

- **Cost Rating:** 12
- **Handling** +2, **Defense** 9/17, **DR** 5, **Shock** 15, **Structure** 5, **Cruise** 5p
- **Properties:** Mil, Vehicle
- **Turret:** +5 (♠15M/♥10M/♦5M/♣2M), Range 100

The Xenocom X3 hardly needs an introduction. It is the go-to tactical hydrofoil on the market. No competing military-spec hydrofoil even comes close. It comes standardly equipped with body armor, a full turret and auxiliary jet propulsion. No matter the conditions, no matter the seas, the Xenocom X3 has what it takes to achieve lift!

Xenocom S6 Personal Stealth Submarine

- **Cost Rating:** 10
- **Handling** 0, **Defense** 7/15, **DR** 3, **Shock** 13, **Structure** 5, **Cruise** 1p
- **Properties:** Vehicle

Do you want to travel undetected to the far reaches of the world? Don't forget that the majority of the planet's surface is covered with water! You, too, can move around undetected with the Xenocom S6 Personal Stealth Submarine! Explore the ocean's depths! Quietly escape your enemies! Spy on your rivals! The S6 allows it all! Requires a crew of two to operate, and holds up to 10 passengers. Don't wait! Order yours today!

Aging

By default, the *Siren's Call* campaign assumes that the scenario takes place over the course of years, if not decades. This is long enough that, realistically, aging is something that may begin to meaningfully affect the player characters. On the other hand, this is also a game, and not all players appreciate watching their characters grow old and feeble.

Below is an optional system for handling the aging of player characters. It attempts to balance verisimilitude with game play. It's a nod at realism, but one which tries not to spoil the players' fun in the process. The GM should know her players' preferences and use her best judgement on whether to employ this optional system.

Aging Flips

At age 36, a character must make her first aging flip. To do this the player picks one of her character's stats and attempts a TN10 flip. Edge may not be used on this flip. On a success, she ages, but does so gracefully. There are no game mechanic effects for aging at this time.

On a failure, however, she begins to feel old age creeping up on her. Thereafter, she may not gain any further experiences with this stat. This stat has reached its peak and is said to be "in decline."

If she draws a joker, not only is this a failure (as above), but the character also gains a Weakness trait related to how she is aging. The GM and player should work together to come up with an appropriate trait.

With Age Comes Wisdom

If a character already has any experiences in a stat which has entered decline, during future sessions she may redistribute these experiences to her skills. This represents that while her body may be in decline with age, she's been alive long enough to have gained the wisdom that comes with that.

Lifestyle and Aging

A character's Lifestyle has a large effect on how quickly she experiences the ravages of old age. Characters who have lived tough lives eking out an existence in squalid habs and abandoned outposts are going to show their age more quickly than characters with an easy life and who have access to the best medical care that money can buy.

After her first aging flip, a character must make subsequent flips every number of years equal to her Lifestyle. For example, a character with Lifestyle 4 makes her first flip at age 36 and subsequent flips at ages 40, 44, 48, etc. On the other hand, a character with Lifestyle 7 still makes her first flip at age 36, but then makes subsequent flips at ages 43, 50, 57, etc. If a character's lifestyle changes, adjust when the next flip would be accordingly.

Subsequent Flips

Keep track of which stats a character has used to make aging flips. She may not choose the same stat again until all stats have been chosen in this way once.

At this point—when all stats have been chosen—the TN of all future aging flips increases by +2. So, for example, the ninth aging flip will TN 12.

Repeat this process with future aging flips, however, a character may not choose a stat which is already "in decline." Simply skip this stat. It doesn't count towards the requirement to choose each stat once.

Dying of Old Age

A character dies of an age-related cause once all of her stats are "in decline." This does not necessarily happen immediately, but the GM and player should work together to bring

the character to a fitting end. She will not live to see her next birthday.

At this point the player should consider her character lucky. It's not many characters in a horror campaign who have the luxury of dying of old age, rather than something significantly more terrible.

Wealth in the Colony

In the Sol system wealth is a complicated affair of multiple competing currencies backed by corps, subcultural cooperatives and nation-states. Gear is bought and sold on credit, and most wealth exchanges are electronic.

As soon as the colonists arrive at Alpha Centauri, however, wealth is a different matter entirely. Suddenly the organizations that back the various currencies are out of touch. The infrastructure that allows for electronic exchange isn't reachable. The industrial base that manufactures goods is over four light-years away. The colonists are in a different world economically—not just literally.

Wealth Rating

After arriving at Alpha Centauri, characters will still have a Wealth rating, but what this rating represents will be different. Until the colony develops a fiat currency, the Wealth rating will represent a character's ownership of excess physical goods directly related to survival. Transactions, such as with Income or somehow purchasing new gear, represent the



exchange of these goods through some sort of barter or gift-based economy.

Note: Upon arriving at Alpha Centauri, the characters' Wealth ratings will be set to zero. They have left their old wealth behind and will have to rebuild their economic position in their new circumstances.

Wealth and Encumbrance

Unlike wealth back in the Sol system, the exchange of trade goods might mean transporting a significant amount of mass in the form of foodstuffs, minerals, energy banks, filters, textiles, etc. It is recommended that characters make these trades inside the colony or using a vehicle for transport.

Characters without these options, however, might have to carry the goods themselves. These goods will occupy a number of encumbrance slots, depending on the nature of the goods being transported. The GM is free to come up with a value that makes sense, or she may choose to flip a card on the table below.

Suit	Slots Per Point of Cost/Income
Spades	4
Hearts	3
Diamonds	2
Clubs	1
Joker	Neg



Colony Building

One of the more interesting aspects of interstellar colonization is that once the colonists arrive, they will not only have to construct the new facilities and infrastructure necessary for survival, but they will have to do this largely isolated from the rest of human civilization. They are, in essence, constructing not only a new colony, but an entirely new and self-sufficient human society.

The Colony Building rules are a mini-game that allows the players to guide their shared colony in its development, from little more than a landing site, to a thriving civilization. This gives the players agency not only over their characters, but over what sort of society they want to build.

A colony's statistics can be tracked using a colony sheet, much like a player character's statistics can be tracked using a character sheet. The colony sheet can be found on page 237.

Years & Turns

The Colony Building mini-game is made up of a series of turns, each representing the development of the colony over the course of one Earth year. Start with Turn 1, keeping track of the turn number as the game progresses.

This is plenty of time for the action of multiple game sessions to take place within a single colony turn, or for several colony turns

to pass between the significant events of a single game session. How quickly the turns pass is largely up to the GM, although the *Siren's Call* campaign includes recommendations.

Colony Turn Phases

A colony turn can be thought of as being made up of the following four phases. The events of each phase as described in their relevant section.

- **Assign Actions:** The players assign actions for each unit of population. Once all actions have been assigned, they are all then resolved in whatever order the players wish.
- **Explore:** The colony may then optionally explore the surrounding world. The GM has a number of tables representing the results of these expeditions. On every turn in which the colony opts to explore, the GM should secretly flip a card and look up the resulting value on the exploration tables (see pages 64-69).
- **Population Growth:** If population growth happens this turn, it does so in this phase. For new colonies (below Population 25), this growth happens on turn numbers which are multiples of 5.
- **Consume Nutrients:** The colony consumes a number of Nutrients equal to its population. If there are not enough Nutrients available, colonists will starve and the population is reduced by the difference.

Player vs. Character Decisions

Whether the Colony Building mini-game represents the player characters making the big decisions, or whether it merely represents the players deciding on a meta-game level how their society develops, is left up to each individual gaming group. Depending on the characters created for the campaign, and the individual tastes of the players, one answer or the other might make more sense. What's important, however, is that both the GM and players have the same understanding as to what these decisions represent.

Population

The inhabitants of a colony are divided up into units of population. Each unit represents roughly 100 people. For brevity, population is referred to by population unit. So, for example, if the text says “Population 4,” that means four units of population, or about 400 people.

Every turn the players will divide their population among different actions. For example, if their colony consists of Population 10, they may decide that on a particular turn, Population 4 will be engaged in farming, Population 2 will be engaged in mining and Population 4 will work toward developing Hydroponics. Colony actions are described in more detail later on.

In this way, as the colony turns (years) pass, the population’s actions will advance the colony as it grows and develops new capabilities and infrastructure.

Survival & Starvation

At the end of every colony turn, a colony consumes a number of units of nutrients equal to its population. (Nutrients are described in detail later on, under “Resources.”) For example, a colony with Population 12 will consume Nutrients 12 at the end of each turn.

If the colony doesn’t have enough nutrients for this, people will starve to death. The colony loses a number of units of population equal to the number it couldn’t feed. For example, if at the end of a turn a colony has Population 20,

but only Nutrients 13, 7 units of population will starve. Once the turn is over, the colony will now have Population 13, Nutrients 0 and a whole lot of corpses.

Population Growth

People tend to make more people. Over time a colony’s population will naturally increase. Population growth happens after actions have been assigned and resolved. Unless a specific event, facility or advancement says otherwise, population increases at the following rate:

- Colonies below Population 25 increase their Population by +1 every 5 turns (on turn numbers that are multiples of 5).
- Colonies with Population 25 to 50 increase their Population by +1 every other turn (on even turn numbers).
- Colonies with Population 50+ increase their Population every turn by +1 per 50 full population units. For example, this means that a colony with Population 70 would grow by Population 1 every turn, whereas a colony with Population 300 would grow by Population 6 every turn.

Resources

In addition to population, each colony has a stockpile of three different resources. Different colony actions will produce these resources, while others will consume them. As with population, for brevity resources are referred to as the resource type followed by the number of

Starting Values

Unless the GM decides that the events in the campaign so far dictate otherwise, a new colony begins with Population 10, Nutrients 50, Minerals 10 and Energy 5. Additionally, the colony starts with one advancement and two consequences, determined through play. The GM has more details on this (see page 154).

units—for example: Nutrients 5, Minerals 7 or Energy 3. The three different categories of resources are described below.

- **Nutrients:** This resource represents food-stuffs and other important sources of nutrition. At the end of every colony turn, its inhabitants consume a number of nutrients equal to its population. Without nutrients a colony will starve. Each unit of nutrients therefore represents roughly enough food for one unit of population (100 people) to subsist for one year.
- **Minerals:** This resource represents materials, metals, chemicals and other substances necessary for manufacturing and industry. Minerals are consumed in the construction of many facilities and in research on many advancements.
- **Energy:** This resource represents stockpiled electrical power. Energy is necessary to fuel most advanced facilities and gear.

Colony Lifestyle

In *Shadows Over Sol* most characters have a Lifestyle rating, which is a measure of the sort of resources they can call upon in day-to-day life (see the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook, page 151). In an interstellar colony, this rating is largely dependent on the resources and quality of life that the colony can afford its inhabitants.

Once a new colony has been established, its inhabitants begin at Lifestyle 3. This rating will likely later go up as the colony constructs new facilities and develops new advancements.

A colony's Lifestyle doesn't have a direct effect on the rest of the Colony Building mini-game, but instead sets the player characters' Lifestyles, as well as the Lifestyle of the NPC inhabitants of the colony.

Facilities

Facilities represent physical structures or significant hardware that benefit a colony. Most facilities provide an action that can be performed when the facility is used. During a colony turn, the players can assign a Population to a facility in order to perform that action. For example, the Farm facility allows the Farming action. A Population can be assigned to the Farm in order to take that action.

Since most facilities can only be used by a single unit of Population at a time, a colony may desire to build multiple instances of the same facility type. In this way, for example, building multiple Farms allows multiple units of Population to engage in Farming.

All facilities require some amount of Work to construct, and many have a resource cost as well. A few require converting existing facilities. This means that the colony will have to assign Population to the Build action to construct a facility, and will have to pay any resource cost at the time Population is first assigned.

Keep track of which facilities a colony has built by writing them down on the colony sheet.

Basic Facilities

At the beginning of the Colony Building mini-game, three types of facilities may be built: Farms, Mines and Turbines. These are described in the Facility list (see page 62). More facilities will be unlocked as the colony makes advancements (see Advancements on the next page).



Advancements Colony

Advancements represent some sort of scientific, technological, societal or infrastructural breakthrough which benefits the development of a colony. Each advancement may only be developed once, and each provides a benefit, such as unlocking new facilities or actions, making existing actions more efficient or improving the colony's statistics, such as Lifestyle or Population.

All advancements require some amount of Work to develop, and most have a resource cost as well. This means that the colony will have to assign Population to the Develop action to make the advancement, and will have to pay any resource cost at the time development begins.

Advancements belong to one of four advancement trees. When an advancement on a tree is developed, it unlocks the connected advancements, allowing them to be developed in the future. For example, in the Prosperity tree, when Environmental Transitioning is developed, it unlocks both Centauran Husbandry and Automated Agriculture for future development (see page 55).

Keep track of which advancements a colony has developed by writing them down on the colony sheet.

Consequences

Consequences can be assigned to colonies the same way they may be assigned to characters or the environment (see the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook, page 114). Some consequences on colonies may simply serve as player reminders of an ongoing situation or effect. For example, the GM may decide to assign the colony the Disgruntled Workers (light) consequence after the players take some action which angers the labor force in their colony. This consequence then sticks around until the characters do something to make the workers happier again.

Other consequences will have mechanical teeth, modifying the Colony Building mini-game in some way. For example, if the players' colony has the Centauran Flu (moderate) consequence, this may decrease the number of Population they can assign to actions each turn by -2 (standard for moderate severity), as those individuals are unable to work due to the flu. The GM can decide that this consequence passes after the turn is over, or whether it lingers until the characters discover a cure.

More than anything, colony consequences serve as either a roleplaying prompt, as a prompt for the players to take a colony action or as the result of an action already taken by the player characters.



Colony Actions

Every turn a colony's population is divided between engaging in different actions. For example, if a colony consists of Population 10, the players may decide that Population 3 will build a farm, Population 2 will gather nutrients and Population 5 will work toward developing Hydroponics.

Many actions will require either the work of multiple units of population in parallel or the work of the same unit over many years. These actions will have a Work requirement to perform. For example, Building a Farm requires Work 3. Think of each unit of population assigned to that action as generating a point of Work toward its completion. For example, assigning Population 3 to building a Farm will result in a farm being completed that turn (a Farm requires Work 3 and Population 3 was assigned).

Work towards the completion of an action carries over from turn to turn. So, for example, if Population 1 can complete a farm after being assigned to Build a Farm for three turns.

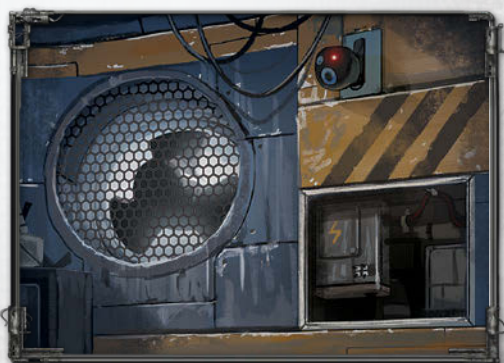
Deciding Colony Actions

Ideally the players will work together and come to a consensus as to how to assign their colony's actions each turn. If this fails, however, the GM can always divide the Population as evenly as possible between players and each player can make an individual decision for the Population over which she has jurisdiction.

Basic Actions

At the beginning of the Colony Building mini-game, four basic actions are available. As the colony grows and develops, building new facilities and making advancements, however, more actions will be unlocked. The four basic actions are described below.

- **Build:** This action allows workers to build new facilities. Unless specified otherwise, multiple instances of each facility may be constructed. At the beginning of the game only three facilities are available to build, but more will be unlocked as the colony makes advancements.
- **Develop:** With this action a colony may develop new advancements. Each advancement may only be developed once. At the beginning of the game four advances are available for development, but each will unlock more options.
- **Explore:** A colony may focus on organizing expeditions to explore the surrounding world, discovering new mysteries, resources or meeting disaster. When making flips on the exploration tables this turn, the GM should add +1 per Population assigned to this action (see page 64).
- **Gather:** This action allows a desperate colony to gather nutrients from the surrounding environment. Every Population assigned to this action gathers one Nutrient. For example, Gather 4 produces Nutrients 4.



Colony Warfare

Sometimes the disputes between colonies boil over into open warfare. When this happens, one colony or both colonies may launch an attack on the other using the Battle action. This initiates colony warfare.

Calculating Might

The first step in resolving a battle is to calculate each side's Might. This is a measure of the military force that the colony can bring to bear in a conflict.

Facilities that represent military hardware provide points of Might when they are used with an Attack action. For example, a Tac-Rover provides Might 3. These facilities are said to be "committed." Note that for most facilities, Population needs to be assigned to the Attack action with that facility for it to be committed and provide Might. Facilities that aren't used with the Attack action that turn aren't committed and don't provide Might.

It is also important to note that the Attack action can be taken without a target. In this case, the military facility is simply on alert and being manned in case of an attack. In essence, this is a peacetime standing army.

Once a colony's Might has been calculated, it will be compared to the opposing colony's Might (see Victory Points below). A colony always has a minimum of Might 1.

Victory Points

Colony battles are won by scoring Victory Points (VP). The ways in which Victory Points can be scored are described below. Each time a battle is fought, the GM should go down the list and total the points for each side.

- **Highest Might:** The colony with the highest Might scores a VP. This increases

to 2 VP if that side has twice the other colony's Might, to 3 VP if they have three times the other colony's might, 4 VP if they have four times its Might, etc.

- **Air Superiority:** The colony with the largest number of committed Choppers gains a VP for air superiority.
- **Mobile Superiority:** The colony with the largest number of committed Rovers gains a VP for mobile superiority.
- **Sea Superiority:** The colony with the largest number of committed Foils gains a VP for sea superiority.
- **Tactical Superiority:** Finally, the military leader of each colony should make an opposed Int/ordnance flip. (Non-player colonies may use the Tactical TN listed on their table instead.) Success scores a VP, while success with Mag 5+ scores 2 VP.

Resolving the Battle

Count the number of Victory Points scored by each side in the battle. The side with the highest point total wins. If there is a tie, both sides struggled, but neither side achieved an advantage.

Next, find the difference between the two point totals. For example, if the victor has 5 VP and the loser has 2 VP, the difference is 3. This is the Spoil. For every point of Spoil, the victor may choose do one of the following:

- Steal a resource from the target (Nutrient, Mineral or Energy), provided the target has that resource to steal.
- Kill one of the target's Population.
- Destroy one of the target's facilities.
- Players decide which to choose if their colony wins the battle; the GM decides for non-player colony victories. For each Population the players choose to kill or facility they destroy, this will decrease the non-player colony's Growth modifier by one (see Non-Player Colonies on page 64).

Colony Actions In the Game World

As this is a roleplaying game, it's important to take a moment to think about what colony actions represent in the game world.

When a colony assigns a unit of population to a particular task—for example, farming—this doesn't literally mean that 100 colonists suddenly move to a farm and start growing crops. Rather, what happens depends on the sort of society that the colony has developed. In one colony this might mean that the colonial administration allocated funds to subsidize farming and started offering agricultural job training, thereby incentivizing more colonists to become involved in agriculture. In another colony this might mean that the administration has picked out a number of suitable candidates from a list and assigned them to farm duty, training them on the job as necessary.

It's also important to note that not all 100 colonists in that population unit will be directly involved in the assigned task. Many will be engaged in ancillary activities that make the primary task possible. For example, if a population unit is assigned to farming, some of those colonists will be farmers, while others will be repairmen servicing the farm equipment, vehicular operators transporting goods to and from the farms, administrators overseeing colonial agriculture, teachers and counselors providing childcare for the farmers, etc.

Alliances & Battle

Multiple colonies may choose to form an alliance, thereby combining their forces to attack or defend. When this happens, simply combine their committed forces for the purposes of determining Might and scoring Victory Points. Unless decided otherwise, in the case of a victory, the Spoil is divided evenly between the sides. In the case of a loss, the other side may impose its Spoil on any participant in the alliance.

Splitting Forces

Overly ambitious colonies may choose to split their forces, thereby attacking multiple targets at the same time. To do this, the colony must choose which facilities to commit to which attack. This divides the colony's Might and each attack is resolved separately.

Contact Required

Before colony warfare can take place, both sides first need to have made contact with each other. This is a matter determined through roleplaying, but at the very least the attacker needs to know where the defender's colony is located, otherwise where will they attack?



Advancement List

The following advancements are available in the Colony Building mini-game. They are divided among four advancement trees: industry, knowledge, might and prosperity.

Prosperity Advancements

Prosperity advancements are those that focus on agricultural production, population development, culture and quality of life on Siren.

Automated Agriculture

This advancement allows for the machine automation of otherwise labor-intensive agricultural practices.

- **Requirements:** Cannibalism Protocol or Environmental Transitioning
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 3, Minerals 4, Work 20
- **Benefit:** Allows construction of the Autofarm facility.

Cannibalism Protocol

The systematic reuse of resources allocated elsewhere as an emergency source of nutrients during times of famine allows for increased robustness against starvation. Depending on the culture being developed, this may or may not involve literal cannibalism.

- **Requirements:** Hydroponics
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 2, Nutrients 1, Work 15
- **Benefit:** Whenever Population would be lost at the end of a turn due to starvation, half the number of Population lost.

Centaurean Husbandry

The husbandry of specific native Centaurean lifeforms for palatability by the human digestive tract allows for more efficient production of nutrients through agriculture.

- **Requirements:** Environmental Transitioning or Maturation Chambers
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 4, Minerals 1, Nutrients 1, Work 20
- **Benefit:** The Farming action produces Nutrients 4 rather than Nutrients 2 or 3. This affects both the Farm and Autofarm facilities.

Environmental Transitioning

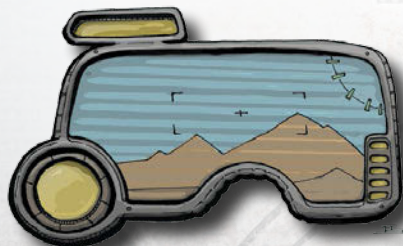
Gradual environmental transitioning between Terran and Centaurean environments allows for increased comfort and quality of life.

- **Requirements:** Hydroponics
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 1, Minerals 3, Work 15
- **Benefit:** The colony's Lifestyle rating improves by +1.

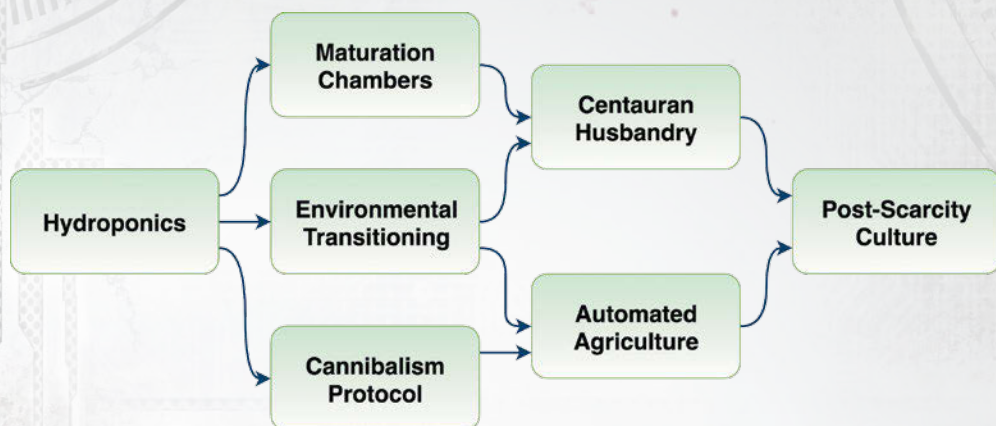
Hydroponics

This advancement improves the colony's agricultural practices by allowing for more exact control over a crop's initial gestational environment.

- **Requirements:** —
- **Develop Cost:** Minerals 3, Nutrients 2, Work 10
- **Benefit:** The Farming action produces Nutrients 3 rather than Nutrients 2. This affects both the Farm and Autofarm facilities.



Prosperity Advancement Tree



Maturation Chambers

Maturation chamber infrastructure allows complete fetal development in vitro. This largely frees the colony's labor force from the impact of many pregnancies.

- **Requirements:** Hydroponics
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 2, Minerals 1, Work 15
- **Benefit:** For the purposes of population growth, treat the colony's Population as being 25 higher if it has Population 25 or less, or as being 50 higher if it has Population 26 or more.

Post-Scarcity Culture

Automation and an increased abundance of available resources allows for a transition, at least for a lucky few, from a life centered on labor to one centered on leisure.

- **Requirements:** Automated Agriculture or Centauran Husbandry
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 5, Minerals 10, Work 30
- **Benefit:** Allows construction of the Leisure Node facility.



Might

Advancements

Might advancements are those that focus on the development of military capabilities, tactics and other traditional hard power.

Advanced Armory

This advancement represents a stockpile of advanced weaponry that can be made available to the colony's populace during periods of existential military threat to the colony.

- **Requirements:** Aquatic Port or High-Gravity Transport
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 3, Minerals 4, Work 20
- **Benefit:** In colony warfare, twice the colony's Population now adds as a bonus when calculating Might. This replaces the similar bonus from the Colony Militia advancement. It also allows the colony to manufacture weapons with the Mil property.

Aerospace Complex

Although Siren's high gravity presents a challenge for manned aerial flight, with this advancement that capability is regained.

- **Requirements:** Colony Militia
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 2, Minerals 1, Work 15
- **Benefit:** Allows construction of the Chopper facility.

Aquatic Port

This advancement allows for the redevelopment of advanced naval capabilities.

- **Requirements:** Colony Militia
- **Develop Cost:** Minerals 5, Work 15
- **Benefit:** Allows construction of the Hydrofoil facility.

Colony Militia

This advancement provides martial and tactical training to the colony's citizens and puts into place organized defensive measures.

- **Requirements:** —
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 1, Minerals 2, Nutrients 1, Work 10
- **Benefit:** In colony warfare, the colony's Population adds as a bonus when calculating Might.

High-Gravity Transport

Siren's high gravity presents a particular challenge when designing ground vehicles. With this advancement the new designs come to maturity.

- **Requirements:** Colony Militia
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 1, Minerals 3, Work 15
- **Benefit:** Allows construction of the Tac-Rover facility.

Mass Destruction

With this advancement the colony regains the means of manufacturing single-use, strategic weapons of mass destruction.

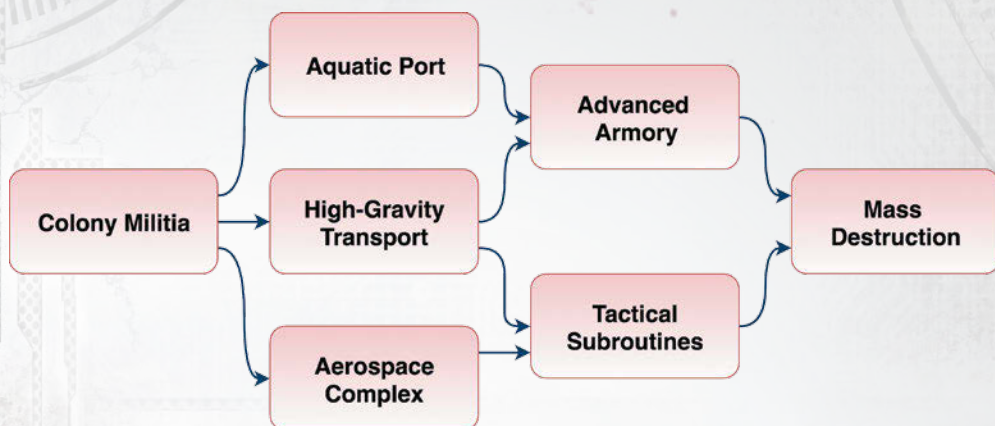
- **Requirements:** Advanced Armory or Tactical Subroutines
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 10, Work 30
- **Benefit:** Allows construction of the W.M.D. facility.

Tactical Subroutines

Advanced artificial intelligence and machine automation opens up a new front on the battlefields of Siren.

- **Requirements:** Aerospace Complex or High-Gravity Transport
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 3, Minerals 4, Work 20
- **Benefit:** The colony gains a bonus VP when engaging in colony warfare.

Might Advancement Tree



Making Characters Matter

In the rules for the Colony Building mini-game as written, there are very few ways for the players to make flips that directly affect their colony's stats. In part this is intentional, as giving players the agency to provide bonuses at whim would quickly unbalance the system.

Instead we have left it to individual GMs to decide how the player characters' actions affect the colony. GMs are urged to allow the characters' actions to matter, but to still be conservative with the bonuses or other benefits provided. A few example PC actions and benefits are given below:

- Working to improve morale might increase the High Morale consequence, which can be used up to provide an extra Work 1 per severity during a later colony turn.
- Doing surveys and going on exploration missions might provide Work 1 towards the Explore action this turn.
- Performing research in a particular area might provide Work 1 toward developing a particular advancement.



Industry Advancements

Industry advancements focus on commercial and industrial development, from manufacturing to resource allocation.

Automated Drilling

Machine automation benefits the drilling and mining industries, as machines can travel in environments that would be unsafe for humans.

- **Requirements:** Recycling Protocols or Synthetic Petrochemicals
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 4, Minerals 2, Work 20
- **Benefit:** Allows construction of the Automine facility.

Energy Grid

An integrated energy delivery grid is an important piece of infrastructure that allows for the more efficient delivery of electricity.

- **Requirements:** Hab Manufacturing
- **Develop Cost:** Minerals 5, Work 15
- **Benefit:** The Charging action produces Energy 2 rather than Energy 1. This affects both the Turbine and Reactor facilities.

Hab Manufacturing

The infrastructure to construct new habs eases population pressures in the makeshift structures dropped from the colony ship, thereby increasing quality of life.

- **Requirements:** —
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 1, Minerals 3, Work 10
- **Benefit:** The colony's Lifestyle rating improves by +1.

Industrial Automation

Many industrial processes can benefit, at least in part, from machine automation, including the construction of new facilities.

- **Requirements:** Automated Drilling or Remote Monitoring
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 8, Minerals 2, Work 30
- **Benefit:** The Build action produces Work 2 rather than Work 1.

Recycling Protocols

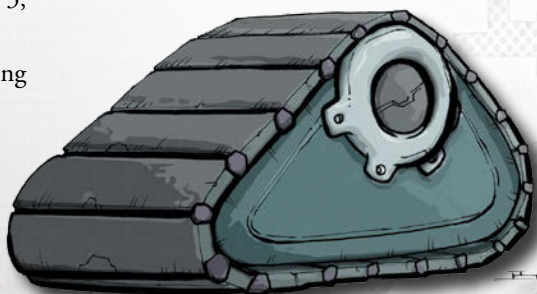
Even seemingly destroyed structures and associated materials can be repurposed to allow for comparatively quick recovery from disaster.

- **Requirements:** Hab Manufacturing
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 2, Minerals 1, Work 15
- **Benefit:** Facilities that would be destroyed from colony warfare or other sources of harm are instead only damaged. This allows the Repair action. Damaged facilities can be repaired with Minerals 1 and Work 2.

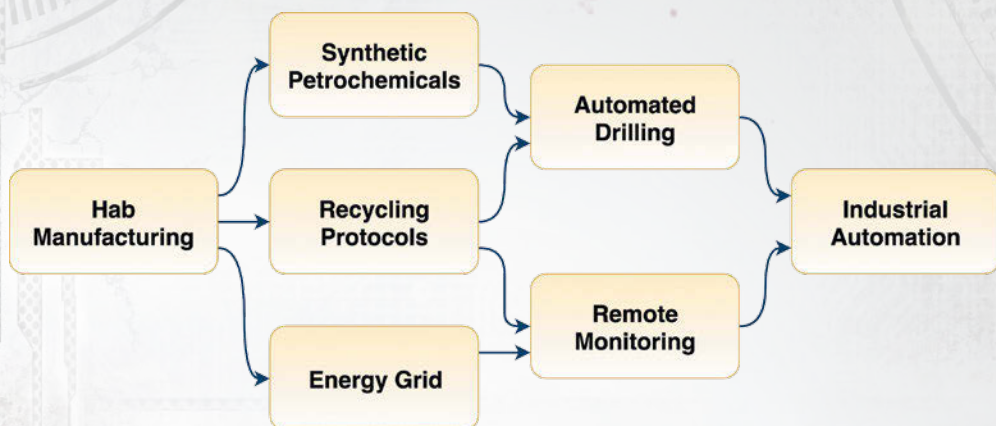
Remote Monitoring

The remote monitoring of energy production facilities allows for a smaller workforce and the more efficient deployment of colony personnel.

- **Requirements:** Energy Grid or Recycling Protocols
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 4, Minerals 1, Work 20
- **Benefit:** Allows construction of the Reactor facility.



Industry Advancement Tree



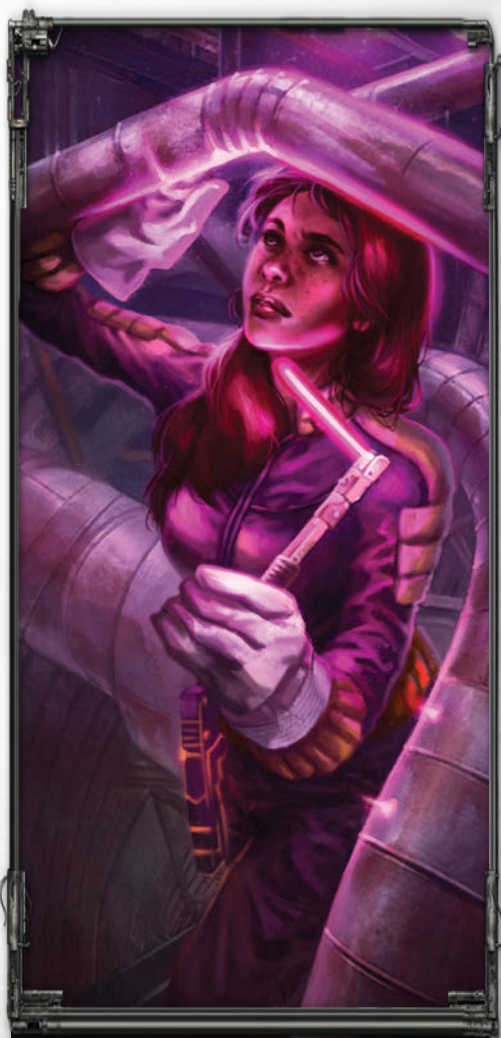
Synthetic Petrochemicals

The production of refined or fully-synthetic petrochemicals is a large step forward in industrialization on a world where environmental carbon is in short supply.

- **Requirements:** Hab Manufacturing
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 1, Minerals 3, Work 15
- **Benefit:** The Mining action now produces Minerals 2 rather than Minerals 1. This affects both the Mine and Automine facilities.

Production & Advancements

Sometimes players may want to know when the colony will have the necessary infrastructure to produce a certain kind of gear, for example: bullets for guns. In these situations the GM will need to make a judgement call. We recommend looking at the advancement trees and picking out the most similar advancement as the prerequisite to producing the gear in question. For example, bullets might require either the Colony Militia or Synthetic Petrochemical advancements.



Knowledge Advancements

Knowledge advancements are those that focus on new scientific frontiers or which contribute toward establishing the colony's scientific capabilities.

Adaptive Processing

Adaptation to the new environment is necessary, not just for human biology, but for the human technology as well. This advancement puts into place standard software necessary for making this adaptation.

- **Requirements:** Information Network
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 2, Minerals 1, Work 15
- **Benefit:** The colony's Lifestyle rating improves by +1.

Centauran Ecology

Expanded knowledge of Siren's biosphere allows for the more efficient gathering of nutrients from the environment.

- **Requirements:** Information Network
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 1, Minerals 2, Nutrients 1, Work 15
- **Benefit:** The Gather action produces Nutrients 2 rather than Nutrients 1.

Education Protocol

Establishing an education and training system is necessary in the eventual development of any colony. Unless the body of human knowledge is passed from individual to individual, generation to generation, civilization is lost.

- **Requirements:** Information Network
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 1, Minerals 3, Work 15
- **Benefit:** The Develop action produces Work 2 rather than Work 1.

Information Network

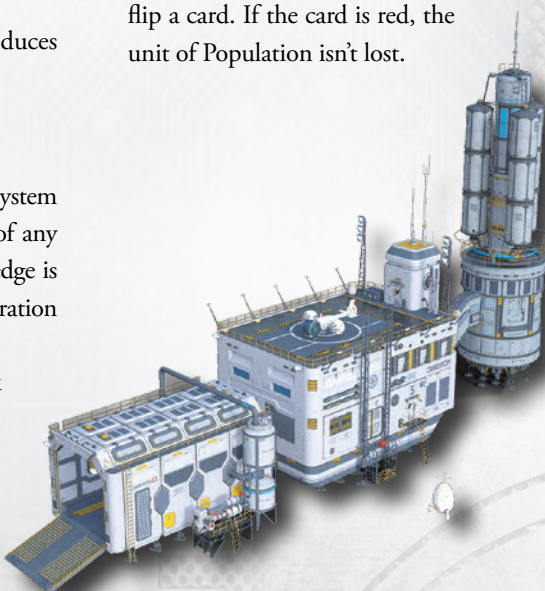
The goal of any exploratory endeavor is information. When this information can be easily shared, correlated and filtered, future exploration can become more precise.

- **Requirements:** —
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 2, Minerals 1, Work 10
- **Benefit:** When flipping a card on the exploration table, the GM should instead flip two cards and give the players the option of which result to take. If the players do not reach an agreement, the GM should take the higher of the two.

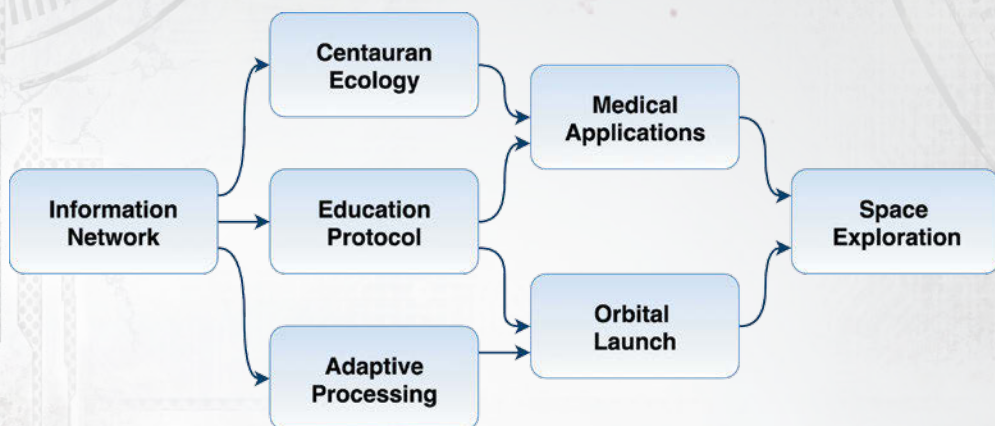
Medical Applications

Human beings are fragile, and violence can easily break them. Through the use of new medical infrastructure and newly discovered compounds derived from the Siren biosphere, broken people can sometimes be fixed.

- **Requirements:** Centauran Ecology or Education Protocol
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 3, Minerals 4, Work 20
- **Benefit:** Whenever a unit of Population would be destroyed through colony warfare, flip a card. If the card is red, the unit of Population isn't lost.



Knowledge Advancement Tree



Orbital Launch

Escaping Siren's gravity well is a significant challenge. Not only must gravity be overcome, but the infrastructure necessary to break orbit must first be put in place.

- **Requirements:** Adaptive Processing or Education Protocol
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 4, Minerals 2, Work 20
- **Benefit:** When flipping a card on the exploration table, the GM should instead flip three cards and give the players the option of which to take. If the players do not reach an agreement, the GM should take the highest of the three. Additionally, contact is immediately established with all remaining uncontacted colonies.

Space Exploration

With regular ventures into space becoming possible, the colony has once again become a spacefaring civilization.

- **Requirements:** Medical Applications or Orbital Launch
- **Develop Cost:** Energy 7, Minerals 6, Work 30
- **Benefit:** During Exploration Phase, the players may choose to flip a card on the Space Exploration table instead of the usual Exploration tables (see page 69).



Facility List

The facilities listed below are available in the Colony Building mini-game. Unless specified otherwise, only one unit of Population may use a facility each turn.

Autofarm

This is a farm that has been improved with agricultural automation, thereby becoming significantly less labor intensive.

- **Requirement:** Automated Agriculture
- **Build Cost:** Energy 5, Farm, Minerals 5, Work 10
- **Farming (action):** Produces Nutrients 2. This facility can take this action each turn without requiring Population to do so.

Automine

Industrial automation has benefited this mining facility, as robots and other machines can perform tasks that would be dangerous for humans.

- **Requirement:** Automated Drilling
- **Build Cost:** Energy 5, Mine, Minerals 5, Work 10
- **Mining (action):** Produces Minerals 1. This facility can take this action each turn without requiring Population to do so.

Chopper

This is a military-capable rotorcraft that's capable of generating significant lift in Siren's dense atmosphere.

- **Requirement:** Aerospace Complex
- **Build Cost:** Minerals 5, Work 5
- **Battle (action):** Provides Might 5. For a full description of colony warfare and the Battle action see page 52.

Farm

Everyone needs to eat, and farms are basic agricultural infrastructure that help facilitate this.

- **Requirement:** —
- **Build Cost:** Work 3
- **Farming (action):** Produces Nutrients 2.

Hydrofoil

This military-quality watercraft is fitted with struts that during operation can lift its hull clear of the water, increasing the vehicle's speed.

- **Requirement:** Aquatic Port
- **Build Cost:** Minerals 4, Work 4
- **Battle (action):** Provides Might 4. For a full description of the Battle action see page 52.

Leisure Pod

These recreational facilities act as both a distribution point for a vast array of entertainment and as the means to create new arts and entertainment.

- **Requirement:** Post-Scarcity Culture
- **Build Cost:** Energy 1, Minerals 1, Work 3
- **Arts & Culture (action):** Increase the colony's Lifestyle rating for next the next turn (year) only. How much Lifestyle increases depends on the portion of the Population taking this action. If this action is being taken by Population 1 or more, Lifestyle increases by +1. If a third or more of the colony's Population is taking this action, Lifestyle increases by +2. If two-thirds or more of the colony's Population is taking this action, Lifestyle increases by +3. As usual, an individual Leisure Pod may only be worked by a single unit of Population.

Mine

Mines allow the colony to extract important minerals from below the ground.

- **Requirement:** —
- **Build Cost:** Work 3
- **Mining (action):** Produces Minerals 1.

Reactor

Nuclear reactors use fission to heat water, which turns large turbines and provides energy for the surrounding grid.

- **Requirement:** Remote Monitoring
- **Build Cost:** Energy 5, Minerals 5, Turbine, Work 10
- **Charging (action):** Produces Energy 1. This facility can take this action each turn without requiring Population to do so.

Tac-Rover

Tactical ground transport provides an important advantage in warfare. These tactical rovers are designed with that in mind.

- **Requirement:** High Gravity Transport
- **Build Cost:** Minerals 3, Work 3
- **Battle (action):** Provides Might 3. For a full description of colony warfare and the Battle action see page 52.

Turbine

Turbines are simple rotary devices that extract energy from the flow of a liquid or gas, and convert that energy into a useful form.

- **Requirement:** —
- **Build Cost:** Minerals 2, Work 3
- **Charging (action):** Produces Energy 1.

W.M.D.

Weapons of mass destruction are horrifying devices designed to kill lots of human beings in a very short amount of time.

- **Requirement:** Mass Destruction
- **Build Cost:** Energy 10, Minerals 10, Work 10
- **Battle (action):** Provides Might 50. Destroy this facility after use. Regardless of whether you won or lost the battle, resolve the battle as if you have an additional 10 VP that can only be used to destroy facilities or population. For a full description of colony warfare and the Battle action see page 52.



Non-Player Colonies

The GM could, theoretically, play each non-player colony using the same system described above, making decisions every turn and assigning units of population to actions. However, this would be an unnecessarily burdensome amount of work.

To make the Colony Building mini-game easier for the GM, we have provided a table for each non-player colony. These tables are indexed by turn number, and list the population, resources, facilities and advancements available to the non-player colony on each turn. In essence, they show the growth of that colony over time. When one of these colonies becomes relevant to the game, the GM can simply look up the current turn number to know what a non-player colony currently has available.

Growth Modifier

Sometimes the plot of the campaign will call for a particular non-player colony to suffer a setback or benefit from an unexpected windfall. For example, the players' colony might defeat the non-player colony in a battle, or maybe the non-player colony beats all the other colonies in the recovery of hidden resources from the colony ship. These sorts of situations are tracked by the non-player colony's Growth modifier.

A non-player colony's Growth modifier starts at zero and may increase or decrease as the Colony Building mini-game goes on. It represents how ahead or behind the colony is on the growth curve. Suffering setbacks will decrease the Growth modifier, while windfalls will increase the Growth modifier.

When the GM looks up the statistics for the non-player colony on its table, she should

modify the current turn by the Growth modifier. For example, if the mini-game is on Turn 15 and the colony has Growth -2, she should use the statistics for Turn 13 ($15 - 2 = 13$). In essence, Growth -2 represents a two turn setback.

The Colony Warfare system is explicit in how it affects a colony's Growth modifier (see page 52). For other events, the GM will have to use her best judgment. If it helps, think of each event like a consequence, modifying the current Growth by a value of ± 1 to ± 4 .

If a non-player colony would ever be reduced to a negative Turn number when modified by Growth, the colony is completely obliterated. For example, if it is Turn 7 and the colony somehow reaches Growth -8, it is no more.

Non-Player Attacks

Sometimes non-player colonies will initiate attacks on the player colony (or even on each other). When this happens is up to the GM. It uses the same colony warfare system as with the player colony (see page 52). To determine what facilities the non-player colony uses to attack, look up the Battle columns in the colony's table (see pages 70-75).

GM Tables

The following tables are used in the Colony Building mini-game, but are intended for the GM's eyes only.

Exploration Tables

When a colony chooses to explore during a turn, flip a card. If it is a face card, flip a second card and add its value. This works exactly like *Shadows Over Sol's* basic action mechanic. If the players have received this result before, the GM should instead give the next highest result that the players have yet to see.

Example: During a colony turn the players decide to explore. The GM flips a card and gets the Q♠ (+2). Since this is a face card, the GM flips a second card and gets the 3♦. These cards add together for a total of 5♠. The GM then looks up the result.



Jokers

When a joker is flipped, the GM should pick the lowest value event that the players have yet to encounter. If there is a tie between multiple suits, the GM should pick the one she likes best.

Spades

Use the following table when a spades card is drawn during the Exploration phase.

♠	Result
1	The explorers seemingly bring back large quantities of nutrients; however, when these are added to the colony's stores, they spread a rot, which destroys 10% of the colony's Nutrient stores before it can be contained (min 1).
2	An intense weather event traps the explorers for a week in a remote valley and damages their supplies. They are forced to abort their expedition and return.
3	The explorers find a growth of native life which provides a source of easy nutrients. Increase the colony's Nutrient stockpile by +4.
4	The explorers discover a location with abundant nutrient resources, but aren't able to retrieve them. Next turn taking the Gather action will produce an extra Nutrient per Population.
5	The explorers discover an abandoned Tac-Rover. Who left it behind and why remain unknown. This gives the colony an additional Tac-Rover facility.
6	The explorers recover a farming module that was once part of the ARC colony ship. This gives the colony an additional Farm facility.
7	The explorers uncover part of the ARC ship's armory. This includes 100 USD-1200 "Amazon" light rifles and a full magazine for each (see the <i>Shadows Over Sol</i> core rulebook, page 180). This also provides Work 3 towards either the Colony Militia or Advanced Armory advancements.
8	The explorers return with detailed observations of the ecological cycle of many native species. This provides Work 5 towards the Centauran Ecology advancement.
9	The explorers return with a variety of novel scientific observations that spur research and development in the colony! This gives the colony the Inspired (critical) consequence. Next turn the colony has an extra Work 4 to apply to the Develop action, then the consequence's duration expires.
10+	The explorers discover a unique cluster of native flora that produces nutritious fruiting bodies. This gives the colony the unique Fruiting Growth facility, which acts like a farm, except it produces one more Nutrient than usual.

Hearts

Use the following table when a hearts card is drawn during the Exploration phase.

♥	Result
1	The explorers retrieve a damaged drop module from the ARC colony ship. However, after bringing it back to the colony it malfunctions and explodes, destroying 10% of the colony's Mineral stores (min 1).
2	The explorers return, having made contact with another colony. The GM should choose one of the colonies with which the player colony does not yet have contact. These colonies may now communicate or make war.
3	The explorers find an area where a tectonic shift has left a sizable quantity of ore exposed on the surface. Increase the colony's Mineral stockpile by +4.
4	The explorers discover a location with vast mineral resources, but aren't able to retrieve those resources immediately. Next turn taking the Gather action will produce Mineral 1, in addition to its usual benefits.
5	The explorers discover an empty Hydrofoil adrift at sea. Who abandoned it and why are unknown. This gives the colony an additional Hydrofoil facility.
6	The explorers recover a mining module that was once part of the ARC colony ship. This gives the colony an additional Mine facility.
7	The explorers return having recovered the ARC colony ship's supply of personal grooming supplies, such as soaps, gels and razors. This provides a +1 bonus to the Colony's Lifestyle for the next year (colony turn).
8	The explorers return, having found a variety of organically produced substances that mimic Regenasone, Somnitol and Stimulox (see the <i>Shadows Over Sol</i> core rulebook, page 188). There are 20 doses of each.
9	The explorers discover an unusual crystalline structure in the sediment, which can be adapted for construction purposes! This gives the colony the Constructive (critical) consequence. Next turn the colony has an extra Work 4 to apply to the Build action, then the consequence's duration expires.
10+	The explorers discover a natural cavern filled with all manner of rare earth elements and precious metals. This gives the colony the unique Hades Mine facility, which acts like a mine, except it produces one more Mineral than usual.

Managing the Colony Mini-Game

As with any roleplaying game subsystem, the Colony Building mini-game requires the GM to take an active role in making sure that things are fun for the players. For example, if they make some stupid decisions early on in the campaign, this might result in a setback that puts them behind the curve of colonial development. In this case the GM may want to run some events that can provide much needed colony benefits. Similarly, if the players' colony is pulling too far ahead, the GM might be advised to introduce some complications.

Diamonds

Use the following table when a diamonds card is drawn during the Exploration phase.

♦	Result
1	The explorers don't recover anything of value, but while they are gone the colony infrastructure suffers damage from a storm and a great deal of energy leaks away. This destroys 10% of the colony's Energy stores (min 1).
2	The explorers return with a cache of construction and research supplies from the ARC colony ship, which provide a boost to productivity. Next turn each unit of Population produces Work 2 instead of Work 1.
3	The explorers discover a site where a group of colonists from the ARC colony ship landed. The site has been mysteriously abandoned, but they were able to recover a great deal of energy from a destroyed turbine. Increase the colony's Energy stockpile by +4.
4	The explorers discover a personal locker that was once on the ARC colony ship. It contains the personal effects of someone named Omid Lajani. Inside are a few letters from a former lover, a ring and a small stuffed animal. If the colonists track down Omid, who is still alive and with another colony, reward each player involved with an Edge.
5	The explorers recover a Chopper that looks like it was forced to make an emergency landing. There is no sign of the pilot. After some repair it works! This gives the colony an additional Chopper facility.
6	The explorers recover a turbine left behind by other survivors from the ARC colony ship. These survivors are long dead, but the colony gains an additional Turbine facility.
7	The explorers return with the location of a hidden valley whose oxygen is too low for standard breathers, but which seems to contain artificial structures of unknown origin. The explorers weren't able to enter the valley, but recommend a follow-up expedition. See the plot seed on page 235.
8	The explorers return with stories of accidentally activating some sort of ancient, manufactured system. This system produces seismic tremors for the next year or two, preventing the colony from taking the Mining action next turn.
9	The explorers return with several of their number missing. They say that one of the missing explorers has set up a cult in the wilds in a makeshift habitat, with himself as the leader. They say that something has to be done, otherwise his influence will spread. See the plot seed on page 235.
10+	The explorers discover a large plain, unusually warm for the climate, where a natural fission phenomenon occurs underground. This gives the colony the unique Uranium Plain facility, which acts like a Turbine, except it produces one more Energy than usual.



Use the following table when a clubs card is drawn during the Exploration phase.

♣	Result
1	Something follows the explorers back to the colony. People begin to go missing in the night. These attacks increase in number until one night they suddenly stop without explanation. Decrease the colony's Population by 1.
2	An unknown chemical encountered during exploration makes the explorers terribly ill. Next turn a number of units of Population equal to 10% of the colony (min 1) can take no action, as people involved must recover from their illness.
3	The explorers discover a small group of survivors from the ARC colony ship. These survivors haven't fared as well and are happy to follow the explorers back to the colony. Increase the colony's Population by 1.
4	The explorers return, having recovered a cache of luxury goods that were once on the colony ship. Once distributed, these goods provide everyone in the colony with an Income 7 payment.
5	In their expedition the explorers discover a module containing 100 embryonic clones of Steve Scott (see page 91) and 10 ectogenesis pods (see page 40). Amazingly, the embryos are still viable due to an extra power supply being placed in the module! The players must decide what to do with them.
6	The explorers return with a large selection of captured wildlife, as well as observations of other lifeforms. This provides a burst of insight into the local biosphere. This provides Work 5 towards the Centauran Husbandry advancement.
7	The explorers recover one of the ARC colony ship's rockets that had been intended for bringing the earliest expeditions back out of Siren's gravity well. This allows for a one-time trip into space and provides Work 5 toward the Orbital Launch advancement.
8	The explorers discover a small scout drone controlled by an unusually advanced AI (see the <i>Shadows Over Sol</i> core rulebook, page 216). This drone wandered off from a crash site and ran out of power somewhere in the wilds. After being charged and reactivated, the drone will imprint on one of the characters and follow her around like a lost puppy.
9	The explorers return with a strange, manufactured artifact which is obviously inhuman in origin. This gives the colony the unique Alien Artifact facility, which allows the Activate Artifact action. Performing this action destroys the facility, kills Population 1, but provides Energy 20. The source of this energy is mysterious, although some speculate it may be a contained fusion reaction.
10+	The explorers return with improved knowledge of how to use some of the native life in the production of basic personal grooming supplies. Permanently increase the colony's Lifestyle rating by +1.

Space Exploration Table

Exploring space works like exploring the planet, only it requires the Space Exploration advancement and uses the table below. Unlike exploring the planet, all suits use the same table.

Total	Result
1	The mission recovers a supply of foodstuffs, left onboard the parts of the ARC colony ship which are still in orbit. Increase the colony's Nutrient stockpile by +10.
2	The mission lands on Thelxiepia, one of the other planets orbiting Alpha Centauri A. From this planet it collects a large amount of fissile material, ready for use in energy production. Increase the colony's Energy stockpile by +10.
3	The mission lands on Siren's moon where it collects some of the abundant mineral resources. Increase the colony's Mineral stockpile by +10.
4	The mission visits the ARC colony ship's still-orbiting frame, where it recovers a drop module filled with colonists still in stasis. Increase the colony's Population by +1.
5	The mission lands on Siren's moon and recovers a deactivated Centauran Sentinel (see page 134). If activated, this sentinel follows around the first character it sees, begins to learn human language and eventually will respond to issued commands.
6	The mission is able to recover one of the reactors from the ARC colony ship's frame, which is still in orbit. This gives the colony an additional Reactor facility.
7	The mission lands on Molpe, one of the planets orbiting Alpha Centauri B. On this planet it discovers a strange structure carved into the planet's surface. This structure appears to be manufactured rather than natural in origin. The explorers weren't able to reach the structure, but recommend a return mission. See the side trek on page 226.
8	The mission recovers a drop module which never detached from the colony ship's frame. This module contains extensive high-tech leisure equipment. This gives the colony an additional Leisure Node facility.
9	The explorers return from Siren's moon with a manufactured artifact which is obviously inhuman in origin. This gives the colony the unique Moon Artifact facility, which allows the Activate Artifact action. Performing this action transforms the facility into the unique Alien Juggernaut facility, which provides Might 8 and counts as a Tac-Rover, a Chopper and a Hydrofoil for the purposes of determining Air, Mobile and Sea Superiority (see page 52).
10+	The explorers return from the ARC colony ship's orbiting frame, carrying with them a fusion warhead recovered from a hidden location near the ship's control center. News of the bomb ignites a storm of surprise and speculation. It appears to be of Unitech manufacture. This gives the colony an additional W.M.D. facility.



Non-Player Colonies

The following tables can be used to track the development of each non-player colony that appears in the *Siren's Call* campaign. If the GM ever needs to know what Population, Resources, Facilities or Advancements are available to the colony on any particular turn, she can simply look up the turn number in question, adjusted by the colony's Growth modifier (see page 64).

Example: If it's Turn 7 and the non-player colony has experienced a couple major setbacks at the hands of the players (Growth -2), the GM would flip to the appropriate colony table and look up the results for Turn 5. The colony then possesses any Facilities or Advancements listed up through Turn 5, and will have the Resources, military Facilities, Might and Tactical TN listed for Turn 5.

ARC Engineering

ARC Engineering's goals include developing a human society that minimizes damage to the local ecosystem. For the complete faction description see page 31.

Turn	Pop	Resources			New Facilities	New Advance.	Battle				
		Nut	Min	Enc			Rov	Foil	Chp	Mgt	Tact
1	10	40	10	5	Farm 3	Hydroponics	0	0	0	1	10
2	10	29	8	4	—	Colony Militia	0	0	0	10	10
3	10	22	8	4	Farm 1, Mine 2	—	0	0	0	10	10
4	10	18	5	3	—	—	0	0	0	10	10
5	11	10	7	3	—	High-G. Trans.	0	0	0	11	10
6	11	8	3	3	—	—	2	0	0	17	11
7	11	9	0	3	—	—	3	0	0	20	11
8	11	10	2	3	Mine 1, Turb. 1	—	3	0	0	20	11
9	11	11	0	2	—	—	3	0	0	20	11
10	12	2	0	3	—	Env. Transit.*	3	0	0	21	11
11	12	2	0	0	—	—	3	0	0	21	12
12	12	2	2	1	—	—	3	0	0	21	12
13	12	2	4	2	—	—	3	0	0	21	12
14	12	2	4	3	—	Cent. Husband.	3	0	0	21	12
15	13	5	5	2	—	—	3	0	0	22	12
16	13	8	4	2	—	Info. Network	3	0	0	22	13
17	13	11	6	3	—	—	3	0	0	22	13
18	13	13	4	2	—	Edu. Protocol	3	0	0	22	13
19	13	16	6	3	—	Cent. Ecology	3	0	0	22	13
20	14	18	2	1	—	Hab Manufact.*	3	0	0	23	13
21	14	20	0	0	—	Recyc. Protocol	3	0	0	23	14
22	14	22	0	1	—	Adv. Armory	3	0	0	37	14
23	14	24	2	2	—	—	3	0	0	37	14
24	14	13	0	0	—	Medical Applic.	3	0	0	37	14
25	15	14	0	1	Farm 1, Turb. 1	—	3	0	0	39	14

Red Ends Interplanetary

As infiltrators in the ARC Project, Red Ends Interplanetary prioritizes survival at any cost. For the complete faction description see page 80.

Turn	Pop	Resources			New Facilities	New Advance.	Battle				
		Nut	Min	Ene			Rov	Foil	Chp	Mgt	Tact
1	10	40	10	5	Farm 3	Colony Militia	0	0	0	10	12
2	10	30	8	5	Mine 3	—	0	0	0	10	12
3	10	20	4	5	Turb. 3	—	0	0	0	10	12
4	10	8	1	5	—	Hydroponics	0	0	0	10	12
5	11	9	4	5	Farm 1	—	0	0	0	11	13
6	11	10	3	4	—	—	0	0	0	11	13
7	11	2	3	4	—	High-G. Trans.	0	0	0	11	13
8	11	3	0	3	—	—	1	0	0	14	13
9	11	4	0	3	—	—	2	0	0	17	14
10	12	4	0	3	—	—	2	0	0	17	14
11	12	1	6	3	—	Synth. Petroch.	2	0	0	17	14
12	12	1	4	3	—	—	4	0	0	24	14
13	12	1	3	1	—	—	4	0	0	24	15
14	12	1	5	1	—	Aero. Complex	4	0	0	24	15
15	13	3	0	1	Farm 1	—	4	0	1	30	15
16	13	6	1	1	—	—	4	0	2	35	15
17	13	2	1	1	—	Energy Grid	4	0	2	35	16
18	13	4	7	7	—	—	4	0	2	35	16
19	13	6	3	4	—	—	4	0	2	35	16
20	14	7	3	4	—	—	4	0	2	36	16
21	14	8	5	10	—	Tactical Sub.**	4	0	2	36	17
22	14	9	5	0	—	—	4	0	2	36	17
23	14	10	5	0	—	—	4	0	2	36	17
24	14	2	5	0	—	Mass Destruct.	4	0	2	36	17
25	15	2	11	6	Farm 1	—	4	0	2	37	18

Colony Table Annotations

Some entries on the colony tables are denoted with *, ** or ***. These annotations are there to draw the attention of the GM, as the annotated Facility or Advancement may affect interactions with the colony. They indicate the following:

- *: This advancement increases the Lifestyle rating of the colony. Unless otherwise noted, all colony Lifestyle ratings begin at 3.
- ** : This advancement automatically gives the colony an extra VP in all Colony Warfare conflicts.
- ***: The colony may opt to destroy this facility to give a one-time bonus of Might 50 in the current conflict (see the W.M.D. entry on page 63).

Scott Productions

Scott Productions begins as an inwardly focused faction, engaging in a grand experiment to develop an ideal society. Later they may attempt to bring this society to the world. For the complete faction description see page 32.

Turn	Pop	Resources			New Facilities	New Advance.	Battle				
		Nut	Min	Ene			Rov	Foil	Chp	Mgt	Tact
1	10	40	7	4	—	Info. Network	0	0	0	1	10
2	10	28	4	4	Farm 1	Edu. Protocol	0	0	0	1	10
3	10	21	4	4	Farm 2	Hydroponics	0	0	0	1	10
4	10	20	1	3	—	Hab Manufact.*	0	0	0	1	10
5	11	18	0	1	Farm 1, Mine 1	—	0	0	0	1	10
6	12	18	1	1	Mine 1	Maturation Ch.	0	0	0	1	11
7	12	18	1	1	Farm 1, Turb. 1	—	0	0	0	1	11
8	13	20	1	1	Mine 1, Turb. 1	—	0	0	0	1	11
9	13	22	2	3	Turb. 1	—	0	0	0	1	11
10	14	15	1	0	—	Cent. Husband.	0	0	0	1	11
11	14	17	1	2	—	—	0	0	0	1	12
12	15	18	4	5	—	Env. Transit.*	0	0	0	1	12
13	15	18	4	4	—	Synth. Petroch.	0	0	0	1	12
14	16	18	5	4	—	Energy Grid	0	0	0	1	12
15	16	18	2	3	—	Adapt. Proc.*	0	0	0	1	12
16	17	21	4	5	—	Medical Applic.	0	0	0	1	13
17	17	24	7	7	—	Recycling Pro.	0	0	0	1	13
18	18	25	10	8	—	Colony Militia	0	0	0	18	13
19	18	27	14	12	—	Remote Monit.	0	0	0	18	13
20	19	20	12	4	—	Industrial Auto.	0	0	0	19	13
21	19	21	8	0	Autof. 1, Rea. 1	—	0	0	0	19	14
22	20	21	4	1	Autof. 1	—	0	0	0	20	14
23	20	21	0	0	Autof. 1	Aquatic Port	0	2	0	28	14
24	21	28	1	1	Autof. 1, Farm 2	Cannibalism P.	0	2	0	29	14
25	21	35	5	3	Turb. 1	Auto. Drilling	0	2	0	29	14

The Osiris Tribe

The Osiris Tribe are the genetically engineered survivors of Project Osiris (see page 78). They are introduced in the “Garden of Annihilation” scenario (see page 177). While they might theoretically engage in some sort of colony conflict, their low-tech lifestyle makes them not much of a threat for any but the most undefended colonies. If for some reason the players choose to engage them in colony warfare, use the following stats, regardless of turn:

- **Population 5, Nutrients 5, Minerals 5, Energy 1, Facilities —, Advancements Centauran Ecology, Might 5, Tactical TN 14**

Shapiro Lab

The Shapiro Lab is focused on exploring and making scientific discoveries in regards to the new world. For the complete faction description see page 33.

Turn	Pop	Resources			New Facilities	New Advance.	Battle				
		Nut	Min	Ene			Rov	Foil	Chp	Mgt	Tact
1	10	40	7	4	—	Info. Network	0	0	0	1	10
2	10	28	4	4	Farm 3	Edu. Protocol	0	0	0	1	10
3	10	30	4	4	Farm 1	Hydroponics	0	0	0	1	10
4	10	19	2	3	Mine 1	Colony Militia	0	0	0	10	10
5	11	20	2	3	Mine 1, Turb. 1	—	0	0	0	11	10
6	11	21	4	4	Mine 1	—	0	0	0	11	11
7	11	13	2	0	—	Orbital Launch	0	0	0	11	11
8	11	14	0	0	—	Hab Manufact.*	0	0	0	11	11
9	11	15	0	0	—	—	0	0	0	11	11
10	12	15	6	0	—	Synth. Petroch.	0	0	0	12	11
11	12	12	1	0	—	Energy Grid	0	0	0	12	12
12	12	12	1	0	Turb. 2	—	0	0	0	12	12
13	12	12	7	6	—	—	0	0	0	12	12
14	12	12	5	3	Farm 1	—	0	0	0	12	12
15	13	8	11	9	—	—	0	0	0	13	12
16	13	5	11	9	—	Space Explor.	0	0	0	13	13
17	13	7	10	7	—	Aero. Complex	0	0	0	13	13
18	13	9	1	4	—	—	0	0	1	18	13
19	13	11	3	4	—	Tactical Sub.**	0	0	1	18	13
20	14	12	3	0	—	—	0	0	1	19	13
21	14	10	3	0	—	Mass Destruct.	0	0	1	19	14
22	14	11	9	6	—	—	0	0	1	19	14
23	14	12	5	2	—	—	0	0	1	19	14
24	14	13	5	6	W.M.D. 1***	—	0	0	1	19	14
25	15	13	6	6	—	Adapt. Proc.*	0	0	1	20	14

Colony Table Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in the six colony tables.

- **Pop:** The colony’s Population.
 - **Nut:** Nutrients.
 - **Min:** Minerals.
 - **Ene:** Energy.
 - **Advance:** Advancements.
- **Rov:** Tac-Rover facilities.
 - **Foil:** Hydrofoil facilities.
 - **Chp:** Chopper facilities.
 - **Mgt:** Total colony Might.
 - **Tact:** The colony’s Tactical TN used in colony warfare (see page 52)

Stillwater Catholic Church

The Stillwater Catholic Church seeks to uphold their traditions and to make a new life in accordance with their beliefs. For the complete faction description see page 34.

Turn	Pop	Resources			New Facilities	New Advance.	Battle				
		Nut	Min	Ene			Rov	Foil	Chp	Mgt	Tact
1	10	38	7	5	Farm 3	Hab Manufact.*	0	0	0	1	12
2	10	28	7	5	—	Hydroponics	0	0	0	1	12
3	10	17	5	4	—	Colony Militia	0	0	0	10	12
4	10	13	5	4	Farm 1, Mine 2	—	0	0	0	10	12
5	11	14	3	4	Mine 1, Turb. 1	—	0	0	0	11	13
6	11	15	0	4	Turb. 2	—	0	0	0	11	13
7	11	16	2	2	—	—	0	0	0	11	13
8	11	14	3	3	—	Info. Network	0	0	0	11	13
9	11	15	0	2	—	—	0	0	0	11	14
10	12	12	0	2	—	High-G. Trans.	0	0	0	12	14
11	12	15	0	2	Farm 1	—	0	0	0	12	14
12	12	15	0	1	—	—	1	0	0	15	14
13	12	6	0	1	—	Synth. Petroch.	1	0	0	15	15
14	12	9	3	4	—	—	1	0	0	15	15
15	13	11	7	7	—	—	2	0	0	19	15
16	13	13	4	6	—	—	2	0	0	19	15
17	13	9	0	3	—	Edu. Protocol	2	0	0	19	16
18	13	11	2	3	—	Medical Applic.	2	0	0	19	16
19	13	10	3	3	—	—	2	0	0	19	16
20	14	8	5	3	—	Aquatic Port	2	1	0	24	16
21	14	9	3	3	—	Aero. Complex	2	1	0	24	17
22	14	10	3	4	—	—	2	1	1	29	17
23	14	2	0	4	—	—	2	2	2	38	17
24	14	3	6	7	Farm 1	—	2	2	2	38	17
25	15	6	6	7	—	—	4	2	2	45	18

On Human Progress

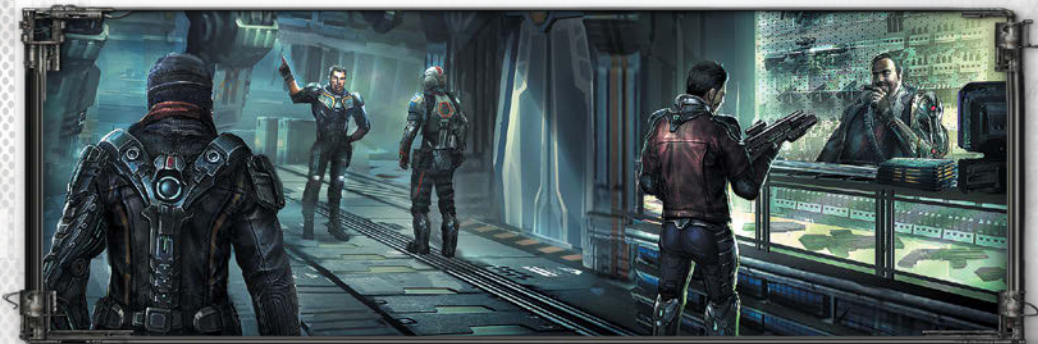
“The righteous need not fear the ever present march of human progress. Though the struggles of yesterday fade into the challenges of tomorrow, God still watches over us. And while evil may lurk in our simspaces and databanks, just as it lurked in the streets of yester-year, it was never the streets that were evil, but the sins of humankind.”

— Cardinal Milo Sardou

Utaskar System Dynamics

USD seeks to engage in commerce and to create wealth on this new world. For the complete faction description see page 35.

Turn	Pop	Resources			New Facilities	New Advance.	Battle				
		Nut	Min	Ene			Rov	Foil	Chp	Mgt	Tact
1	10	40	5	5	—	Colony Militia	0	0	0	10	12
2	10	30	1	5	Farm 1	Aquatic Port	0	0	0	10	12
3	10	20	1	5	Farm 2	—	0	1	0	14	12
4	10	10	4	5	Mine 3	—	0	1	0	14	12
5	11	3	1	5	—	—	0	1	0	15	13
6	11	4	2	5	Farm 1	Hydroponics	0	1	0	15	13
7	11	5	1	5	—	—	0	2	0	19	13
8	11	6	0	4	—	—	0	2	0	19	13
9	11	7	2	4	—	Hab Manufact.*	0	2	0	19	14
10	12	7	0	3	—	—	0	2	0	20	14
11	12	7	0	3	—	Synth. Petroch.	0	2	0	20	14
12	12	10	5	1	Farm 1	—	0	2	0	20	14
13	12	7	5	1	—	Info. Network	0	2	0	20	15
14	12	10	3	1	Turb. 2	—	0	2	0	20	15
15	13	12	0	0	—	—	0	2	0	21	15
16	13	14	0	0	—	Edu. Protocol	0	2	0	21	15
17	13	16	1	2	—	—	0	2	0	21	16
18	13	15	5	6	—	Energy Grid	0	2	0	21	16
19	13	11	1	3	—	Adv. Armory	0	2	0	34	16
20	14	12	5	3	—	—	0	2	0	36	16
21	14	10	9	7	—	Auto. Drilling	0	2	0	36	17
22	14	11	7	1	—	—	0	2	0	36	17
23	14	12	7	5	—	Industrial Auto.	0	2	0	36	17
24	14	13	6	4	Autom. 1	—	0	2	0	36	17
25	15	13	7	3	Autom. 1	—	0	2	0	38	18





The Void

The ARC Project has many secrets. From hidden factions to competing projects, much goes on behind the scenes. This chapter can be thought of as a companion to the ARC Project chapter. It contains the secrets of the project, and other related information not intended for player eyes.

If you are a player, *stop reading now*. You've been warned.

Post-Launch Timeline

The ARC Project chapter presents a timeline of events leading up to the launch of the colony ship (see page 21). The timeline in that chapter is presented in a player-friendly manner, so as to not spoil elements of the *Siren's Call* campaign.

The timeline below extends the other timeline, focusing on events that occur after the project's colonists are put into stasis. Its intent is to give GMs the information they need to understand events that might not be known to the players.

- **2220:** Red Ends Interplanetary, a mercenary outfit affiliated with Unitech, successfully infiltrates the ARC Project during the frenzied bought of replacement recruitment which occurs in the wake of the platform shuttle disaster.
- **2222:** The ARC colony ship launches, providing a surge of good publicity for USD. Unitech bides its time, with its Red Ends operatives firmly in place.
- **2223:** Red Ends operatives are supposed to have sabotaged the colony ship's engines, causing a spectacular and very public failure for the project as it passes through the outer solar system, but Janna Zhandos, the lead operative, decides not to follow through. Unitech quietly concedes the success of the ARC Project and moves to put its full weight behind its own interstellar colonization effort, Project Osiris.
- **2223–2614:** The long dark between stars.
- **2224:** The colony ship computer tasked with archiving broadcasts from Earth malfunctions. Past this point, no messages from the Sol system are recorded.
- **2226:** With as much fanfare as Unitech can muster, Project Osiris launches its own colony ship, the Khufu. This ship is equipped with more efficient engines than ARC's colony ship, allowing it to accelerate faster and arrive at Siren first.
- **2237:** Exactly as projected, the ARC colony ship's acceleration engines burn the last of their reaction mass. The ship stops accelerating and begins its long coast to Alpha Centauri.
- **2406:** Project Osiris's ship, the Khufu, overtakes the ARC colony ship on its way towards Alpha Centauri.
- **2589:** The Khufu arrives in orbit around Siren. Its colonists begin to awaken and within the year it begins construction of three colonies on the surface.
- **2594:** Having accidentally activated powerful defense mechanisms left behind by the extinct Siren civilization, Project Osiris's ship and primary colony are both destroyed in the "rain of fire" (see page 178).
- **2602:** The ARC colony ship's deceleration engines kick in and the ship begins its long deceleration as it approaches Alpha Centauri.
- **2617:** The colony ship collides with some sort of space debris, damaging its reactor and causing it to perform an energy shutdown. This stops the ship from decelerating. The collision also triggers the awakening of the crew from stasis, prompting a command crisis as the ship nears Siren. The *Siren's Call* campaign begins.

Project Osiris

Project Osiris is a competing interstellar colonization effort founded by Unitech after USD's takeover of the ARC Project. In many ways Project Osiris exists to steal the ARC Project's spotlight and prove that Unitech remains unsurpassed in the spaceship construction industry. It is scheduled for launch four years after the ARC colony ship, and is expected to make up time with a more efficient engine design, arriving at Siren decades before its counterpart.

History

The ARC Project first appeared on Unitech's radar in 2209 after it was approached by Lindiwe Temma as a possible investor. Several executives in the corp were sold on Temma's vision of interstellar colonization, most notably Arif Zaman, a department-level vice president. In the end, however, Temma did not convince the right people within the Unitech hierarchy, and the corp passed on investing in the project.

In 2211, the ARC Project started construction, assembling the ARC platform and then beginning work on the colony ship. This sudden wave of new activity once again attracted Unitech's attention. This time officials in the company decided that an independent project posed a threat to Unitech hegemony

in space and started to pressure the project for exclusive construction rights.

After USD seized control of the ARC Project in 2213, Unitech gave up on pressuring it for construction rights and instead took a different approach. The militant arm of Unitech began a series of sabotage operations. Meanwhile, Arif Zaman, still convinced of a need for interstellar colonization, began assembling an in house team to pursue Unitech's own interstellar colonization effort. This would become Project Osiris.

By 2218, the planning stage of Project Osiris was complete and Unitech officially announced its efforts to the world, unveiling the earliest construction at Unitech's shipyards on Luna. Zaman was finally put in charge of the project full-time.

As the ARC Project prepared for the launch of its colony ship in 2222, Project Osiris prepared to snap up those it left behind. Staying behind were several hundred fully-trained backup colonists, a plethora of engineers and mechanics, now-disused training facilities and project managers. Project Osiris recruited as many of these individuals as it could, benefiting from their experience, and bought up the disused facilities for cheap.

Four years later, in 2226, Project Osiris launched the Khufu, its own interstellar colony vessel. Being outfitted with a more efficient engine design, it was expected to

What of Sol?

For colonists on Siren looking up at the sky with radio receivers, the Earth is eerily silent. No signal coming from Sol can be detected and they are left to merely speculate about the fate of the rest of humanity.

Has human technology moved beyond radio communication? Is some sort of electromagnetic phenomenon preventing Siren from receiving signals from Earth? Or is human civilization dead? Are the ARC colonists the last of their species? These questions may never be answered in the colonists' lifetime. Perhaps one day the society that grows on Siren will send its own interstellar vessel back to Earth.

"I Never Thought I'd See You Again..."

Want a way to reintroduce characters the team thought they left behind forever back on Sol? They could have become part of Project Osiris. This is especially compelling if the character had somehow been affiliated with the ARC Project, as she would have been a prime recruit following the ARC colony ship's launch.

Old enemies, old lovers, friends or rivals could show back up, having come to Siren with Project Osiris. They might even have survived the rain of fire by going into stasis or eking out a life in a secret hab.

reach Siren decades before the ARC colony ship. Without a hitch, it set off from Earth orbit with as much publicity and media coverage as Unitech could muster.

Recruiting

Unitech began Project Osiris already possessing its own fleet of spaceship engineers, shipyards and construction facilities. While this gave it a strategic advantage on the technical side, it still needed to quickly put in place an extended recruiting infrastructure, training facilities for colonists and a project administration.

In many ways, Project Osiris benefited from being behind the ARC Project in the race to launch a colony ship. This position allowed it to observe what worked and didn't work in earlier ARC Project attempts, then it was able to build on ARC's successes while avoiding most of its missteps. Launching second also allowed it to recruit many of the left behind and hopeful backup colonists who didn't get a spot on the ARC vessel.

Project Osiris chose Mandarin as its mission language. All new recruits were taught the language as part of their basic training.

Colony Ship

Project Osiris' colony ship is named the Khufu. Like the ARC colony ship, it is a sleeper vessel employing Zhang's Stasis Method to keep 10,500 colonists in stasis for the duration of its 363 year voyage.

In designing the ship, Project Osiris' engineers came to many of the same conclusions as did their ARC Project counterparts. This includes decades long periods of acceleration and deceleration at the beginning and end of the journey, with a long period of coasting between.

Unlike the ARC colony ship, the Khufu isn't divided into a hundred drop modules, but rather is comprised of six segments, each capable of a single independent trip down the planetary gravity well.

Project Osiris' colonization plan includes selecting a primary settlement somewhere along Siren's equator, then moving the colony ship into a geosynchronous orbit over the chosen location. From there, the colony ship can make the trip down the gravity well in stages, one segment being dropped to the surface at a time, interspersed with stages of rapid construction making way for the next scheduled drop.



Red Ends

Interplanetary

- **Leader:** Janna Zhandos (see page 86)
- **Subculture:** Postal

Red Ends Interplanetary—or simply Red Ends for short—is a mercenary company, specializing in interplanetary infiltration and covert tactics. It was founded in 2192 by elements within the Postal subculture, a minor subculture which is sometimes associated with the Technos. In recent decades it has come to be associated with Unitech—not a true subsidiary, but a trusted contractor the megacorp can hire when it wants to keep its distance.

History

Although the company got its start doing freelance corporate espionage for a variety of mining and resource extraction interests throughout the Belt and Jovian Trojans, by the mid-2200s the company had largely aligned itself with Unitech.

In 2219, Unitech hired Red Ends to infiltrate the ARC Project. The plan was to manipulate the process so that secret Red Ends personnel were hired by the project and could sabotage it from the inside. Janna Zhandos, an up-and-coming Red Ends lieutenant who had until recently led her own mercenary gang, was put in charge of this operation.

Following the shuttle accident in 2220, Red Ends saw its opportunity. The ARC Project needed new colonists to replace those it had lost, and even its existing colonists were experiencing a wave of reshuffled positions. Taking cover identities, thirty Red Ends operatives applied to the project, and with the help of some behind-the-scenes computer system manipulation, nineteen were hired, including Zhandos herself.



With its operatives embedded in the project, word arrived from Unitech that Red Ends was to sabotage the colony ship's acceleration subroutines. The idea was that shortly after launch—while the entire system was still cheering the success of the project—the engines would malfunction spectacularly. USD would have to quickly put together an expensive and very publicly embarrassing mission to retrieve the ship from the edge of the solar system. With 10,000 colonists in stasis on the line, USD couldn't afford to simply sweep it all under the rug. They'd have to eat the bad press.

Unitech's plan never came to fruition. Zhandos, embedded in the ARC Project and increasingly sold on the idea of interstellar colonization, decided to quietly disobey orders. On the other side of a 400-year interstellar voyage there was little Unitech could do in retaliation. What's more, this afforded her the chance to seize control of the colonization effort for herself.

Values

Red Ends Interplanetary borrows many of its values from the Postal subculture. It favors the adoption of new technologies and enhancement over baseline human capabilities. Its motto is: "adapt or die."

Supporting Cast

This section presents a wide cast of human characters that might be encountered in a *Siren's Call* campaign, from the individual stat blocks of important NPCs, to stat blocks for generic archetypes. Stats for the native fauna are presented in the Alpha Centauri chapter (see page 123).

Player Colony

The following individuals are movers and shakers within the players' colony. They will land on Siren alongside the characters and over the course of the campaign may either become useful allies or potent enemies.

Aviaja Ukaleq

Geneline Groundside Standard, **Subculture** Ghostman

Str 5, **Dex** 5, **Spd** 6, **End** 4, **Int** 7, **Per** 4, **Chr** 5, **Det** 6

Defense 7/15, **DR** 0, **Shock** 10, **Wound** 4

Skills: Bureaucrat 3, Comp-Ops 3, Conspiracy 3, Deception 2, Empathy 2, Investigate 4, Lib-Arts 3, Melee 1, Persuade 2, Socialize 2, Vehicles 2

Shockstick: +3 (♠23L/♥17L/♦11L/♣8L), Stun

Gear: AR Glasses, Expert System (Basic, Bureaucrat), Hand Terminal, USD-07 "Firefly" Shockstick

Aviaja Ukaleq signed on to the ARC Project as a colonist and an actuary. She is ambitious and somewhat unscrupulous. She is not afraid of being confrontational and is good at assessing risk—both personal and otherwise. She has political aspirations within the colony, but unfortunately for her, she isn't as charismatic or as tactful as most of those who excel at politics.

Growing up among the masses on Earth, Aviaja never thought much about space until the ARC Project was proposed. Eking out a life in a zero-G colony, drilled into an asteroid never appealed to her, but the idea of an entirely new world, unspoiled and Earth-like captured her imagination. She signed up once applications began to be accepted, and was picked in the second round of colonists.

Physically, Aviaja is average height with a somewhat round physique. She is middle-aged, with her black hair just beginning to turn to gray, and a network of early lines around her dark eyes.

Aviaja has a high opinion of herself and is very opinionated. In her mind, she is on a mission to save the colony and its people, both from the local environment and from themselves—she always knows best.

Beyond Human Options

A few of the characters in this section possess genelines or subcultures introduced in the *Beyond Human* supplement. If the GM doesn't have access to that supplement she should just disregard the geneline or subculture in question and instead pick one of the options in the core that best matches her vision of the character.

Philani Mageba

Geneline Genius Deluxe, **Subculture** Expret

Str 5, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 4, **End** 4, **Int** 7, **Per** 5, **Chr** 8, **Det** 6

Defense 7/15, **DR** 3, **Shock** 13, **Wound** 4

Skills: Awareness 2, Bureaucrat 4, Comp-Ops 3, Conspiracy 4, Deception 3, Empathy 4, Guns 2, Investigate 3, Lib-Arts 3, Persuade 4, Program 2, Socialize 4, Stealth 2

Light Lasistol: +5 (♠12M/♥8M/♦4M/♣2M), Range 10, Shots 5

Gear: Encryption System (Basic), Hand Terminal, Microbug, P&W Wide-Trim Designer Coverjack (DR 3, Conceal 2, Worn), USD-490L “Indra” Light Lasistol

Philani Mageba has aspirations of ruling the colony. He is a skilled and scheming political operator with a vision that the colony needs to be brought to “proper working law and order,” which essentially amounts to an ironclad rule from the top.

When he signed on to the ARC Project, Philani was accepted as someone skilled in project management, with secondary specialties in legal studies and linguistics. He joined late in the preparation process, securing a middle management position only after the shuttle accident which killed several of the project’s existing managers.

Tall and well-built, Philani was stunningly beautiful in his youth, but hasn’t aged well. Although he is only in his forties (not counting the long voyage in stasis), he looks ten years older than he actually is. On bad days he sometimes walks with the assistance of a cane. He looks forward to the day when the colony has the necessary medical infrastructure to grow a replacement leg.

Philani is charming when he wants to be, but his disposition can change quickly with his moods. He is genuinely skilled and is frequently on the lookout for how to ingratiate himself with others. He wants to make himself essential to the colony before either swiftly making his move or slowing taking charge of things.

Yana Yankova Buneva

Geneline Groundside Standard, **Subculture** Neoret

Str 4, **Dex** 5, **Spd** 4, **End** 5, **Int** 6, **Per** 6, **Chr** 6, **Det** 7

Defense 7/15, **DR** 3, **Shock** 15, **Wound** 4

Skills: Awareness 3, Bio-Sci 2, Bureaucrat 3, Comp-Ops 2, Conspiracy 2, Deception 2, Empathy 2, Guns 2, Lib-Arts 3, Medic 4, Naturalist 2, Persuade 4, Program 2, Socialize 3, Vehicles 2

Light Pistol: +3 (♠12M/♥8M/♦4M/♣2M)

Gear: Hand Terminal, Medikit, Regenasone ×10, Unitech “Sunspot” C3 Vac Suit (DR 3, Bulky 1, Worn), USD-383 “Wasp” Light Pistol

Yana Yankova Buneva signed on to the ARC Project as a medic, specializing both in treating stasis ailments and in emergency medicine. She is headstrong, charismatic and a bit of an idealist.

A true believer in interstellar colonization and the mission behind the ARC Project, Yana signed up as soon as the project started accepting applications. Her application, however, wasn’t initially accepted and she was instead waitlisted. She remained on the waitlist for three years before another selected colonist dropped out and she finally got her chance to hitch a ride to the stars!

Physically, Yana is small and unimposing. In fact, her below average height and strength were among the reasons her application wasn't accepted when she first applied. She has since taken up weight training to alleviate this weakness.

Although she is an idealist and true believer in the ARC Project, Yana also tends to hold on to traditions. In her opinion, the colony needs to maintain a continuity with existing human establishments if it is to survive. There isn't a lot of wiggle room in the early colonization effort for added uncertainty or the confusion caused by rethinking how its society does things.

Zawadi Gugun

Geneline Martian Standard, **Subculture** Entro

Str 6, **Dex** 5, **Spd** 5, **End** 5, **Int** 6, **Per** 5, **Chr** 7, **Det** 6

Defense 7/15, **DR** 3, **Shock** 14, **Wound** 5

Skills: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Bureaucrat 3, Comp-Ops 3, Conspiracy 2, Crafts 3, Empathy 3, Engineer 3, Investigate 3, Lib-Arts 2, Mechanic 4, Melee 2, Persuade 3, Program 2, Socialize 4, Vehicles 2

Knife: +4 (♠18M/♥12M/♦6M/♣3M). Thrown.

Gear: Chem-Sniff, Combat Utility Knife, Expert System (Basic, Mechanic), Hand Terminal, P&W Wide-Trim Designer Coverjack (DR 3, Conceal 2, Worn)

Zawadi Gugun has a long history with the ARC Project. He originally signed on as part of the colony ship's construction crew during its long assembly process, then somewhere along the line got swept up in the colonization plans.

In the last year before launch he suddenly found himself promoted from senior sensor tech to a management position overseeing other sensor techs. This was the result of the shuttle accident the year before that had killed many of the project's command personnel, leading to a shuffling around of positions. Zawadi still hasn't fully grown comfortable with his new authority, but he is a people person at heart, and leadership comes naturally to him.

Zawadi is tall and lanky, with a dark complexion that speaks to his largely East African descent. He grew up in Stillwater on Mars, but left home as soon as he was able, departing for a series of technical jobs back on Earth.

At heart, Zawadi is a pragmatist, concerned with the here-and-now, rather than an idealistic dreamer or true believer in the colonization effort. He doesn't put much stock in traditions, and quite frankly thinks the organization of the ARC Project is a mess which needs to be swept aside and replaced with a system that works.



Generic Colonists

The following stat blocks represent new categories of characters that may be encountered in an installer colonization campaign. As such, they may be used for any number of minor NPCs.

Atmo-Junkie

Str 6, **Dex** 4, **Spd** 4, **End** 5, **Int** 4, **Per** 6, **Chr** 4, **Det** 3

Defense 7/14, **DR** 0, **Shock** 8, **Wound** 5

Skills: Comp-Ops 2, Conspiracy 2, Medic 2, Melee 1, Naturalist 2, Stealth 2, Thievery 2

Knife: +3 (♠18M/♥12M/♦6M/♣3M), Thrown

Gear: Breather, Combat Utility Knife, Hand Terminal

As the human colonies on Siren continue to grow, some individuals will become enamored with getting high on the local atmosphere.

Colonist

Str 5, **Dex** 5, **Spd** 5, **End** 5, **Int** 5, **Per** 5, **Chr** 5, **Det** 5

Defense 7/15, **DR** 3, **Shock** 13, **Wound** 5

Skills: Comp-Ops 3, Crafts 3, Lib-Arts 2, Mechanic 2, Medic 2, Naturalist 3, Socialize 3

Knife: +2 (♠15M/♥10M/♦5M/♣2M), Thrown

Gear: Breather, Combat Utility Knife, Coverjack (Conceal 2, DR 3), Hand Terminal

This stat block represents the average colonist selected for the ARC Project. Each colonist will have passed both a medical and mental health screening, and will have at minimum one year of training in preparation for the mission. Additional skills representing the colonist's specialty are common.

Osiris Tribe

Str 6, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 6, **End** 5, **Int** 5, **Per** 6, **Chr** 4, **Det** 5

Defense 9/18, **DR** 0, **Shock** 10, **Wound** 5

Skills: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Crafts 3, Investigate 2, Medic 2, Melee 3, Naturalist 3, Socialize 3, Stealth 3

Net: +5. On a successful hit, a net entangles the target, thereby increasing the target's Spin consequence a severity, or two severities on a critical hit.

Spear: +6 (♠18M/♥12M/♦6M/♣3M), Big 3, Reach, Thrown

Unarmed: +6 (♠18L/♥12L/♦6L/♣3L)

Adapted: The surviving members of the Osiris Tribe have been genetically engineered to be able to survive in Siren's atmosphere without the need for a breather. In an Earth-style atmosphere they feel uncomfortable and can easily hyperventilate, but are otherwise able to survive.

Gear: Net, Spear

The original colonists of Project Osiris may have died off, but they left behind bioengineered children adapted to life on Siren. These children have outlived their unadapted ancestors and formed the Osiris Tribe, living amid the crashed ruins of their colony ship. Members of the Osiris Tribe possess the Centauri Adept geneline (see page 93).

Rover Driver

Str 5, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 5, **End** 6, **Int** 5, **Per** 6, **Chr** 4, **Det** 5

Defense 8/17, **DR** 0, **Shock** 11, **Wound** 5

Skills: Awareness 2, Bureaucrat 2, Guns 1, Mechanic 3, Ordnance 1, Socialize 2, Vehicles 4

Light Pistol: +4 (♠12M/♥8M/♦4M/♣2M), Range 10, Shots 10

Gear: AR Glasses, Breather, Hand Terminal, Stimulox, Toolkit (vehicle repair)

Rover drivers are a hardy lot, often finding themselves making repairs alone in the wilderness. They are sometimes used as messengers, bringing communications from colony to colony.

Scientist

Str 4, **Dex** 5, **Spd** 4, **End** 5, **Int** 8, **Per** 4, **Chr** 4, **Det** 5

Defense 6/13, **DR** 0, **Shock** 10, **Wound** 4

Skills: Bio-Sci 4, Comp-Ops 2, Engineer 2, Mechanic 2, Medic 2, Phy-Sci 2, Program 2

Shockstick: +2 (♠22L/♥16L/♦10L/♣7L), Stun

Gear: AR Glasses, Breather, Hand Terminal, Toolkit (specific to scientific area)

Scientists are the individuals at the forefront of understanding this new alien world. They make hypotheses and conduct experiments, expanding humanity's knowledge of the local biosphere and geospheres.

Scout

Str 6, **Dex** 4, **Spd** 4, **End** 7, **Int** 6, **Per** 6, **Chr** 4, **Det** 7

Defense 7/14, **DR** 3, **Shock** 17, **Wound** 6

Skills: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Crafts 3, Guns 2, Mechanic 2, Melee 1, Naturalist 4, Stealth 2, Vehicles 2

Knife: +3 (♠18M/♥12M/♦6M/♣3M)

Light Pistol: +4 (♠12M/♥8M/♦4M/♣2M), Range 10, Shots 10

Gear: Backpack (Container 5), Breather, Camping Pack, Coverjack (Conceal 2, DR 3), Hand Terminal, Radio Comm, Ration Bars

Scouts are a colony's explorers and wilderness operatives. As such, they are highly skilled individuals, trained to operate in small groups, isolated and unaided by colony infrastructure for days or weeks at a time.

The Reach Property

The Reach weapon property was introduced in the *Shiny New Toys* supplement. For those that don't have access to that supplement, the text of the property is provided below.

- **Reach:** This weapon can be used to attack at a longer distance than most other melee weapons. This makes it easier to keep one's distance and avoid attacks from melee weapons without Reach. When wielding this weapon, any Dodge reaction against a melee attack provides an additional +2 bonus to Defense, unless the weapon used in the attack also has the Reach property.

Faction Leaders

The following characters are the six factions leaders that establish colonies on Siren. They each represent a significant portion of the ARC Project's colonists.

Janna Zhandos

Geneline Budget Upgrade, **Subculture** Postal

Str 8, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 8, **End** 6, **Int** 6, **Per** 5, **Chr** 6, **Det** 4

Defense 9/19, **DR** 5, **Shock** 15, **Wound** 7

Skills: Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Bureaucrat 2, Comp-Ops 3, Conspiracy 4, Deception 3, Empathy 3, Guns 3, Mechanic 2, Medic 2, Melee 3, Ordnance 3, Persuade 3, Socialize 2, Stealth 4, Vehicles 2

Machine Rifle: +5 (♠24M/♥16M/♦8M/♣4M), Autofire 3, Range 20, Shots 30

Gear: Adrenaline Booster Gland, Injector Unit, Torpestat, Hand Terminal, USD-38n "Knight" Tactical Suit (Big 5, Bulky 1), Xenocom X8 Machine Rifle (Hands 2, Mil)



Unlike the other faction leaders, Janna Zhandos doesn't represent one of the major sponsors of the ARC Project. Rather, she is the leader of a sleeper cell of mercenaries who successfully infiltrated the project and were paid to sabotage the colony ship as it left the Sol system. Obviously, that sabotage wasn't successful.

Janna Zhandos is from Earth, growing up in poor conditions along the Mediterranean coast. She was a quick-witted and rebellious youth, and was always a natural at blending into her surroundings.

As she grew older, Janna joined one of the local gangs, a sophisticated criminal outfit associated with the Postal subculture. She rose through the ranks quickly, but her timing was poor. Just as she obtained a leadership position, a crackdown by the local authorities arrested most of the outfit. She alluded capture, but the gang was little more than a memory.

After a year of attempting to put a gang back together, Janna decided to go legit—at least for certain definitions of legit. Instead of being a typical gang, her newly assembled group of ruffians slowly morphed into a mercenary outfit. This new mercenary group had several profitable years before being bought out by the larger mercenary corp, Red Ends Interplanetary.

Because of her skillset and leadership abilities, Janna was put in charge of Red Ends' operation infiltrating the ARC Project. The infiltration she accomplished with flying colors, placing not only herself in the project, but a secret network of subordinates as well.

The infiltration process took years, maneuvering slowly and widening her grasp. In that time Janna became increasingly convinced of something she had already suspected: Earth was a sinking ship and humanity needed to either adapt or die. So when the command came from above to sabotage the colony ship, she quietly didn't comply. Instead she readied herself to seize control of the project on the other end of the journey.

Janna may be a paid saboteur and infiltrator on the project, but ironically she is also a true believer in humanity's need for interstellar colonization. Her goal is survival by any means necessary. Adapt or die.

Josefina Navarro

Geneline Celebrity Deluxe, **Subculture** Ghostman
Str 6, **Dex** 7, **Spd** 5, **End** 6, **Int** 7, **Per** 4, **Chr** 8, **Det** 8
Defense 8/16, **DR** 3, **Shock** 17, **Wound** 6

Skills: Bureaucrat 4, Comp-Ops 2, Conspiracy 2,
Deception 2, Empathy 3, Engineer 2, Guns 1,
Lib-Arts 2, Melee 2, Ordnance 1, Persuade 4,
Program 1, Socialize 3, Thievery 2, Vehicles 2

Heavy Pistol: +4 (♠15M/♥10M/♦5M/♣2M), Autofire 2,
Range 10, Shots 10

Knife: +5 (♠18M/♥12M/♦6M/♣3M)

Gear: Combat Utility Knife (Thrown), Demolition
Charge, Hand Terminal, P&W Wide-Trim Coverjack
(Conceal 2), Radio Comm, USD-720 “Widowmaker” Heavy Pistol



Josefina Navarro is a charismatic corp representative, operating as the voice of Utakar System Dynamics on the ARC Project. She is an older lady who has aged gracefully, gradually assuming a grandmotherly disposition. She is fond of talking about her four sons, although in her speech it remains unclear if her sons accompanied her on the colony ship or whether they were left behind on Earth.

Behind Josefina's grandmotherly disposition is a sharp and calculating mind. It was skill, not an accident, which allowed her to climb the managerial ladder of a corp known for making weapons and mercenary outfits. She knows the corp game well, is well aware the persona she displays and plays the role to a T.

Born to a wealthy family along the western coast of South America, Josefina was raised with the expectation that she would join a corp and work to climb the ranks. Her choice of USD, however, was a surprise to her family, who were already working to obtain her a position as a low-level manager with Pfeifer and Wu. She must have chosen wisely, however, as she quickly climbed the ranks, urging USD to be more aggressive in its expansion into other industries. Towards this end, she masterminded the 2213 takeover of ARC Engineering headquarters, which resulted in USD gaining control of the ARC Project.

A woman of expensive tastes, Josefina has grown accustomed to always having the best that money can buy. Although she is well aware that the colonization mission will mean she has less access to creature comforts, the reality of experiencing the early years on the colony may very well come as a shock. After ensuring that her colony has what it needs for survival, Josefina will also make sure that her colony stays ahead of the curve in comfort. In the long term, she believes, this will become a selling point for her colony.

Josefina sees herself as the head of USD on this new world, and thus the first among equals and the natural leader of the project. She is known to say, “If Utakar no longer exists back on Earth, that is inconsequential. I am a USD executive, therefore Utakar still exists. If that means I am acting CEO, so be it.”

Dr. Karina Shapiro

Geneline Groundside Standard, **Subculture** Expret
Str 5, **Dex** 7, **Spd** 5, **End** 6, **Int** 9, **Per** 6, **Chr** 6, **Det** 7
Defense 9/18, **DR** 3, **Shock** 16, **Wound** 5

Skills: Awareness 3, Bio-Sci 4, Bureaucrat 2, Comp-Ops 2,
Empathy 2, Engineer 2, Investigate 2, Lib-Arts 2,
Mechanic 2, Medic 2, Melee 2, Naturalist 2, Persuade 2,
Phy-Sci 2, Program 3, Socialize 2

Knife: +5 (♠15M/♥10M/♦5M/♣2M)

Gear: Combat Utility Knife (Thrown), Hand Terminal,
Medikit, P&W Wide-Trim Coverjack (Conceal 2),
Toolkit (Bio-Sci), Verazine



Dr. Karina Shapiro is a renowned geneticist, famous for her work cataloging and comparing European life to Earth-based life. This expertise in xenobiology made her an ideal fit for the ARC Project, leading to her recruitment early in the project's development.

Dr. Shapiro wasn't brought on board without objections, however. Some of the other early investors, notably elements of the Stillwater Catholic Church, objected to her inclusion on the grounds of an earlier paper she published, denouncing ethics concerns limiting research. Eventually she was brought on board with the assurance that since her lab was based out of Stillwater University, local political pressure could be used to keep her research in line with the project's desired standards. Her response to this attempted coercion of her research was to move her lab to the University at Medyen Aleqmer.

A true believer in open and unrestricted science, Dr. Shapiro's publications are prolific. In addition to her biological studies, as a hobby she also has interest in the social sciences, in particular the cross-discipline overlap of biology and social dynamics.

Growing up in northern Europe, Karina spent her early life not particularly interested in space. Rather, she stumbled into the field of xenobiology quite by accident during her studies in grad school. Thereafter she published a well received paper on the topic of European life, leading to sizable grant to form a new lab at Stillwater University.

Karina is still in her early middle age—beginning to get on in years, but still quite young for a famous geneticist. As she has consistently been in lower gravity environments since she left grad school, she has made a particularly determined effort to perform her daily exercises in preparation for being in Siren's gravity well. As a result, she's probably in better shape now than she's ever been in her life—which is something of a moderately low bar, as Karina has never been particularly interested in fitness.

On the new world, Karina's first priority will be to understand the native life, in particular gauging its usefulness in colonial development, as well as any threats it might pose to the early human colonists.

Lindiwe Temma

Geneline Modern Superman, **Subculture** Neoret

Str 6, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 6, **End** 6, **Int** 8, **Per** 5, **Chr** 8, **Det** 7

Defense 8/17, **DR** 3, **Shock** 16, **Wound** 6

Skills: Athletics 2, Bureaucrat 3, Bio-Sci 2, Comp-Ops 3, Conspiracy 2, Deception 2, Empathy 3, Engineer 2, Guns 1, Lib-Arts 3, Mechanic 2, Naturalist 3, Persuade 4, Phy-Sci 3, Program 1, Socialize 2

Light Pistol: +4 (♠12M/♥8M/♦4M/♣2M), Range 10, Shots 10

Gear: Biomonitor, Hand Terminal, Personal Assistant, P&W Wide-Trim Coverjack (Conceal 2), Stimulox, USD-383 “Wasp” Light Pistol



Lindiwe Temma is the president of ARC Engineering, the small corp which founded and operated the ARC Project before its takeover by Utakar System Dynamics. The project grew out of Lindiwe’s personal premonition that humanity needed to expand beyond the Sol system if it is to survive.

Charismatic and with a background in finance and science, Lindiwe originally made his personal fortune investing in businesses involved with the Martian terraforming effort. He invested in a number of corps genetically adapting plants for the Martian environment, as well as the group which originally developed the Martian Standard geneline.

His fortune, however, is not entirely his own doing. Lindiwe comes from a wealthy and established family, with a long history of investing in the water trade and the Martian terraforming effort in general. His ancestors were among the first wave of settlers who built the Stillwater colony on Mars, and in many ways Lindiwe sees his efforts with the ARC Project as following in their footsteps.

Ever since USD’s takeover of the project, Lindiwe has been sidelined. Nevertheless, he managed to retain his position on the board of directors and his is the oldest faction involved with the project. Privately, Lindiwe remains furious at USD, but he’s willing to grudgingly swallow his pride when necessary because he truly believes that “this is bigger than me or any of them.”

A devout Stillwater Catholic, Lindiwe thinks of the ARC Project as an almost spiritual endeavor. He is prone to premonitions and has a vision where humanity achieves harmony with the new biosphere. In his view he “wants to do things right this time,” adapting human culture to the new planet, rather than “poisoning our home and obliterating ecosystems, like we did with Earth.” Towards this end, he used up most of his social capital on the project, maneuvering himself into a position of authority among the colonists to ensure that this happens.

Physically, Lindiwe is a tall man of mixed Zulu and Akan descent. For a Martian, he is remarkably well adapted to higher-G environments, as his businesses have brought him down Earth’s gravity well for extended periods, and before that he attended university on Earth. He sports a full head of hair and a well-trimmed mustache.

Cardinal Milo Sardou

Geneline Martian Standard, **Subculture** Serv

Str 5, **Dex** 5, **Spd** 4, **End** 4, **Int** 5, **Per** 6, **Chr** 8, **Det** 9

Defense 7/15, **DR** 0, **Shock** 13, **Wound** 4

Skills: Bureaucrat 3, Comp-Ops 2, Conspiracy 2, Crafts 3, Empathy 4, Investigate 3, Lib-Arts 4, Mechanic 2, Medic 2, Naturalist 2, Persuade 3, Socialize 4, Vehicles 2

Unarmed: +2 (♠15L/♥10L/♦5L/♣2L)

Gear: Cardinal's Robes, Expert System (Lib-Arts), Hand Terminal, Translation Software



Cardinal Milo Sardou is the leading representative of the Stillwater Catholic Church involved with the ARC Project. After the fatal accident which killed most of the original senior command crew, he has also been chosen as the captain of the ARC colony ship.

Milo takes both of these responsibilities very seriously. As representative of the Stillwater Church, he sees himself as the spiritual leader of the mission, entrusted to provide ethical guidance as the colonization effort moves forward. As captain of the colony ship, Milo is responsible for the lives of every one of the colonists.

A true believer in his faith and in the role of the church as leading others by example, Milo has spent much of his adult life in humanitarian pursuits. These have brought him to every significant colony on Mars, as well as numerous locations on Earth, Luna and as far out as the Belt.

An older man—among the oldest chosen to make the journey to Siren—Milo wasn't always a priest. In fact, Milo was a rebellious youth. He grew up in Stillwater among a family of the faithful, but ran away to Chi Chen almost as soon as he was legally able. There he spent a year trying to get by on his own before signing on with a ship hauling supplies to Mars for the terraforming effort. Over the next decade he worked as crew on the spaceship, moving up the ranks and gradually growing out of his rebellious streak. He made it as far as XO of the ship before he found his true calling and returned to Stillwater to attend seminary and become a priest.

Milo was brought into the ARC Project early on in its development, shortly after Lindiwe Temma solicited the Stillwater Catholic Church for investment. Milo was impressed by Lindiwe's proposal, and after the initial pitch, served as advocate for the project with the church's elders.

Years in the clergy have allowed Milo to master having a calm disposition. Wherever possible, he tends to speak softly and tries to rigorously think things through. He is calculating and sometimes contemplative. These traits are well-practiced, but do not come naturally to Milo, who under the surface still struggles with the impulsiveness of his youth. Milo is a staunch traditionalist and has only become more so as he continues to age. He wants to ensure that whatever society develops on Siren remembers its origins on Earth and honors its most important traditions.

Steve Scott

Geneline Celebrity Deluxe, **Subculture** Techno

Str 5, **Dex** 5, **Spd** 4, **End** 6, **Int** 7, **Per** 4, **Chr** 9, **Det** 6

Defense 6/13, **DR** 3, **Shock** 15, **Wound** 5

Skills: Athletics 2, Bio-Sci 2, Comp-Ops 3, Conspiracy 3, Deception 2, Empathy 2, Engineer 2, Guns 2, Lib-Arts 3, Mechanic 3, Medic 2, Naturalist 2, Persuade 4, Socialize 3, Vehicles 3

Light Pistol: +4 (♠12M/♥8M/♦4M/♣2M), Range 10, Shots 10

Gear: AR Implant, Biomonitor, Expert System (Socialize), Hand Terminal, P&W Wide-Trim Coverjack (Conceal 2), Radio Comm, USD-383 “Wasp” Light Pistol



Steve Scott is a subcultural demagogue and vid personality with a huge fan base and cult-like following back on Earth. He is one of the most visible advocates of the Techno subculture, and frequently has appeared in interviews on talk shows, opinion pieces and simsplace rallies. He also regularly produces his own vid-casts through his media studio, Scott Productions.

In fact, Scott Productions was the last of the major investors to be brought onto the ARC Project. Steve Scott's entry into the project was controversial among the existing stakeholders. Representatives of both ARC Engineering and the Stillwater Catholic Church voiced concerns that his particular brand of subcultural demagoguery reflected poorly on the high ideals held by the project. In the end, however, their concerns were overridden, as USD began to divest themselves, and the interstellar colonization effort needed to either bring in new money or perish.

If nothing else, Steve Scott was very successful at attracting renewed attention for the project. After the inclusion of Scott Productions on the board of directors, he began a crowdfunding campaign that went viral. This was followed by a reality vid gameshow where contestants competed for a single spot among the colonists on the project.

Steve grew up in a wealthy family in North America, in a mixed subcultural household. His father was a Heed and his mother was a Techno. Steve took after his mother, but elements of the Heed worldview and vocabulary are still sometimes apparent in Steve's speech. His parents had high hopes for him climbing the corp ladder, but despite his natural charisma, Steve had little interest in being a straitlaced career man. He always wanted to do his own thing, sometimes even to the point of appearing narcissistic.

Before his successful media career, Steve had two failed career attempts, one as a model and one in net marketing. The latter of these was an attempt to appease his parents. As these two careers fizzled, he began a weekly vid-cast sent out to subcultural contacts. From this his following grew, eventually developing into the media powerhouse which is Scott Productions.

Steve is brash and extremely opinionated. He sees his views as the model for the future and wants to remake society on Siren in his own image.

Centuries in Stasis

The colonists on the ARC Project will undergo a 400 year voyage in stasis. This is longer than the entire human history of stasis technology up to that point. Frankly, it would be a miracle if everything were to work exactly as intended. There will almost certainly be some complications.

The table below is intended to give players the sense that complications have arisen due to the unprecedented time in stasis. It intentionally shies away from the most detrimental

(albeit realistic) complications that would impede player fun for an extended period.

For NPCs, the GM is free to come up with more severe complications or to make these permanent. After all, even the stasis engineers on the project expect about a 5% “attrition rate”—that is, colonists put into stasis who simply don’t survive the voyage.

Flip a card for each player character when they come out of stasis after the trip, then look up the results on the table below. Many of the results refer to the stasis rules, found on page 146 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook.

Suit	Complication
Spades	The chemical balance of the passenger drifted away from normal parameters during the voyage. Recovering from stasis sickness will take twice as long as usual. Double the time required for the recovery action.
Hearts	For the first hour after coming out of stasis the passenger is entirely blind. After that time, until she fully recovers from stasis sickness, her vision is dim and she suffers a -2 penalty to vision-related actions.
Diamonds	The passenger comes out of stasis missing a large chunk of her memories. She may have forgotten who she is, what she is doing or what her skills are. This memory loss persists until she has recovered from stasis sickness.
Clubs	For the first hour after coming out of stasis the passenger’s legs will not function. After that time, until she fully recovers from stasis sickness, her legs are weak and she takes a -2 penalty to all actions related to movement.
Joker	The passenger has taken significant organ damage during stasis. This results in a Lasting Injury consequence that causes a -2 penalty to all Endurance actions until minor surgery is performed to repair the damage (see the <i>Shadows Over Sol</i> core rulebook, page 119).

Nature of the Collision

Sometime after the ARC colony ship entered the Alpha Centauri system it collided with an unknown object, damaging the engines and forcing a shutdown of the reactor. At the time, the nature of the object with which the ship collided eluded determination, although it was accompanied by much speculation.

Was it a piece of rock, not much larger than a micrometeoroid? Perhaps it was some remnant of space trash left behind by the extinct Siren civilization or the passage of the Project Osiris ship? Some who have watched the now-destroyed footage the colony ship archived of the collision claim that the object was larger and had visible circuitry... The truth may never be known.

Hidden Character Options

The character options found in the Colonists chapter are those which are available to player characters who are launched with the ARC colony ship. As time goes on, new character options may become available which are specific to Siren. The GM is the final arbitrator of when and whether these character options become available.

Centaurean Genelines

The two genelines presented below are specific to either Siren or to the ARC Project. They provide additional options for replacement characters and late-colonization NPCs.

Centaurei Adept

The Centaurei Adept geneline was originally developed by Project Osiris after the colony ship's arrival at the planet Siren. Similar genelines may later be developed by several of the ARC Project factions. The most unique feature of the Centaurei Adept geneline are a series of lung adaptations which allow those with it to breathe Siren's atmosphere without risk of developing nitrogen narcosis. Otherwise, the geneline is a fairly well-rounded standard geneline, with moderate boosts to strength and endurance to aid in the high gravity environment.

- **Availability:** This geneline becomes available to new children after the player colony develops the Centaurean Ecology advancement or to Osiris Tribe characters after the team encounters the tribe (see page 84).

- **Experiences:** Str +10, Dex +5, Spd +5, End+10, Int +5, Per +5, Chr +5, Det +5
- **Atmospheric Adaptation:** Centaurei Adepts have a number of lung adaptations that allow them to safely breathe Siren's atmosphere unaided. It takes twice the usual nitrogen pressure for them to experience nitrogen narcosis (well above Siren's usual atmospheric conditions).
- **Optional Weakness:** Some Centaurei Adepts find Earth-like atmosphere uncomfortable to breathe and are prone to hyperventilate in those environments. This might manifest as an Impairment weakness in those environments.

Colonist Standard

The Colonist Standard geneline was developed by the ARC Project before the colony ship's launch. It was designed with what was known about Siren in mind, and was primarily geared to boost performance in a high-gravity, low-industry environment. Unfortunately, the scientists who developed it couldn't anticipate all of the challenges the colonists would face, in particular the atmosphere. Nevertheless, samples and data of the geneline were sent out on the ARC colony ship for use in children conceived after the colony ship's arrival.

- **Availability:** This geneline becomes available to new children after the player colony develops the Maturation Chambers advancement (see page 55).
- **Experiences:** Str +10, Dex +5, Spd +0, End+15, Int +10, Per +5, Chr +5, Det +10
- **Optional Weakness:** This geneline was created specifically for the ARC Project, sight-unseen for a planet the scientists had never visited. It has never before been widely tested or deployed. There could be any number of unforeseen complications.

Centaurean Subculture

"Hey, crew! I don't know what the oldies are thinking, but we've got to do something about the light cycles in the colony's halls. It's just not right to darken them during the sleeping shift. How else are we expected to see? Someone could accidentally break something!"

Values

Centaureans will grow up on a world much less developed and much less forgiving than those who grew up on Earth. The early colonies on Siren have to be self-sufficient and have to be creative in how they repurpose old materials and technology. New gear can't be purchased if there is no industry to manufacture it. Nothing is to be wasted, as few things can truly be replaced. This will leave its mark on the psyches of those who grow up with this as a way of life.

Beyond those imposed by the necessities of life in the new colonies, Centaurean values will likely be in a state of flux. Different colonies will

emphasize different ideals and in doing so will lay the groundwork for the future of the subculture.

Memes

The following memes and practices will come to be associated with the Centaurean subculture and the new generation.

- **Athleticism:** Every one of the colonists who arrived in the ARC colony ship grew up in a lower gravity environment than Siren offers. To them, being on Siren feels heavy and tiring. By contrast, those who grow up on Siren will have developed their skeletal-musculature in a higher gravity environment. They will be better equipped for local feats of athleticism than their elders.
- **Easy Sleep:** Human circadian rhythm doesn't match the day and night cycles on Siren. Human culture has long associated the nighttime with sleeping, but for the Centaureans this won't fit their experience. They will learn to fall asleep in varying conditions—day or night. This is a trait that



will be remarked on by their elders, many of whom will still suffer from erratic sleep.

- **Hand-Me-Downs:** Repurposed or refurbished possessions, especially clothing, are a necessity in the colonies. For first-generation colonists, having a newly manufactured possession will symbolize the gradual return to civilization on this new world, as industry develops. For Centaureans, however, hand-me-downs will just be a way of life.

History

The subcultures the ARC colonists left behind at Sol developed among the masses of humanity. They largely started on Earth, on a world crowded to the brim with people, supported by a large industrial base and with an ever-persistent information network, connecting one end of the Earth to the other, to the interplanetary colonies and stations beyond.

These subcultures are the past—divorced from the colonists by 4.4 light-years and a four century gap. They linger in the memories and way of thinking of the first generation of colonists, but will be as alien to their children as the new world is to their parents.

By contrast, the Centauran subculture will grow out of the basic necessities of life in the early Siren colonies. Manufactured gear will be irreplaceable and precious. Food security will be a life-threatening concern. Travel will be slow, dangerous and full of unknowns. Colonies will be small and most colonists will know everyone else, by face if not by name. The local net will be limited, primarily used for official purposes and often haphazard.

How the Centauran culture will develop from here has yet to be seen. Different colonies with different values and models of development vie for the future of the human species on Siren. Any one of these could prove more successful than the rest, and might very well set the course of human history.

Centauran Subculture Stats

When a player chooses the Centauran subculture as part of character creation, she gains the following experiences.

- **Experiences:** Athletics +2, Crafts +2, Mechanic +2, Medic +2, Naturalist +2, Vehicles +2

Faction Subcultures

This chapter presents one new subculture—aimed at characters who grew up on Siren after the colony ship's arrival. The use of this subculture works to help emphasize the theme of generational differences between those whose way of thinking is still tied to the Sol system, and those who have never known life before humans came to Alpha Centauri.

This isn't the only way to approach the subcultures of the new generation, however. Another interesting way to run a generational campaign would be to create a subculture for each of the human colonies on Siren. This would serve to help emphasize the diverging societies and ideals that each human colony pursues.

It might also be fun to allow the players to jointly create the subculture for their own colony, choosing skills and explaining how each skill emphasizes a value that is instilled in their colony's cultural development. Use the subculture creation rules on page 49 of the *Beyond Human* supplement.



Alpha Centauri

Humanity has been observing Alpha Centauri with telescopes for six centuries and the planet Siren for almost two. In that time, many discoveries have been made and numerous facts have been cataloged. In many ways, humanity understands more about Alpha Centauri than about any other stellar system, save for Sol.

In most ways, however, Alpha Centauri is still a great unknown. Human knowledge is limited by what can be observed or inferred from readings taken light-years away. By necessity, this involves a lot of scientific guesswork and large margins of error. No one really knows what the colonists will find.

Human History

Humanity's understanding of Alpha Centauri has come a long ways, from merely being a bright point in the southern sky, to being the final destination of both the ARC Project and Project Osiris. What follows is a human history of the Alpha Centauri system and of the planet Siren.

Ancient History

When the ancients looked up at the night sky, they saw patterns of stars that seemed to fit together, and grouped these stars into constellations (Latin for "stars together"). This practice goes back to at least the ancient Babylonians, from whom the Greeks borrowed many of their groupings.

Sometime around 135 CE, the astronomer Ptolemy cataloged the 48 classical Greek constellations, including the twelve constellations of the zodiac. From where he was working in Alexandria,

Egypt, one—just barely visible on the southern horizon—he listed as Centaurus ("the Centaur").

At only 31.2° N, Alexandria is further south than all of Europe. No one north of that latitude can see the Centaur. Even the two brightest stars in that constellation would not have been visible to Ptolemy, as they lay further south in the celestial sphere.

Early Modern Era

Since none of the connected network of Western nor Near Eastern astronomers in antiquity knew of these two bright stars, they never got individual names in the Western tradition. The centuries passed, and by the 1700s, an additional 40 constellations had been added to the classical 48 recognized by the Greeks.

In 1603, Johann Bayer published *Uranometria*, a catalog of all the brightest stars in the night sky. The brightest star in each constellation (in relative luminosity) he designated as "Alpha," the second brightest he designated as "Beta," and so forth. Thus the brightest star of the Centaur became *Alpha Centauri*.

Around the same era, scientists observing the sky began to notice that many stars were not one, but actually two stars that appear as one to the naked eye—a *binary star*. Alpha Centauri was soon discovered to be one of these, and the component stars of the system were designated as Alpha Centauri A and Alpha Centauri B.

Late Modern Era

By the early 1800s it was possible to determine the distance from Sol to the nearest stars by measuring their *parallax*—that is, how much they appear to shift when the observer shifts positions. Taking this measure requires

both that the observer view the star from the opposite side of the Earth and from the opposing point in Earth's orbit (approximately six months before or after).

Thomas Henderson was able to take this measure of Alpha Centauri in the 1830s. He determined that the system was located 4.4 light-years away from Sol. It was our closest stellar neighbor. This finding would stand for almost a century.

In 1913 Robert Innes proved this to be incorrect... sort of. He discovered Proxima Centauri, a small and very dim star near Alpha Centauri. This star would be measured as ever-so-slightly closer than Alpha Centauri. In fact, as observations continued, Proxima would be revealed to be part of the Alpha Centauri system—a distant third sun. It would be officially dubbed Alpha Centauri C.

SPACE AGE

The first confirmed exoplanets were discovered in 1992. They were a pair of rocky worlds orbiting the unappealingly named pulsar PSR B1257+12. Following their confirmation, a wave of exoplanet discovery was kicked off. Within two decades, thousands of exoplanets had been confirmed orbiting distant stars.

This trend continued over the next several decades, and in 2031 a habitable-zone terrestrial world was discovered orbiting Alpha Centauri A. This planet was given the name Siren.

At the time its discovery it barely made the news, coming on the footsteps of similar “goldilocks zone” worlds being discovered orbiting Tau Ceti and, surprisingly, Barnard's Star. Siren's proximity to Sol, however, would capture the imagination of many scientists and dreamers in the centuries to come.



Shadows Over Centaurus

Alpha Centauri is a vast and complex solar system, both ancient and unknown. For centuries humanity may have been looking up at the stars, measuring its luminosity or parallax with telescopes, but no one truly knows what the colonists will find once they arrive.

The species' best scientists may hubristically claim to have discovered the secrets of the stars, but nothing can truly prepare humanity for its arrival.

Alpha Centauri System

At 4.4 light-years away, Alpha Centauri is the closest neighboring star system to our own. Unlike Sol, it is located in the nearby G-Cloud rather than the Local Interstellar Cloud. Both are located in the Local Bubble, a cavity in the interstellar medium, in the Orion Arm of the Milky Way galaxy.

The Alpha Centauri system consists of three stars, each a bit older than Sol. In order of brightness, they are Alpha Centauri A, Alpha Centauri B and Alpha Centauri C, which is also called Proxima Centauri.

Alpha Centauri A and B are a closely bound pair, and orbit around a common center of mass located between the two. This orbit is highly elliptical, ranging from 11.4 AU (just a bit farther than Sol is from Saturn) to 36.0 AU (just a bit farther than Sol is from Neptune). The two stars complete a full orbit around each other every 80 years. From the perspective of a colonist standing on Siren, this means that Alpha Centauri B will appear to grow brighter and dimmer in 80-year cycles.

Proxima, on the other hand, is located about 13,000 AU from the other two stars. This

Data on Alpha Centauri

- **AB Orbital Period:** 79.9 years
- **AB Distance:** 11.4 AU to 36.0 AU
- **Proxima Distance:** 13,000 AU
- **Proxima Orbital Period:** 550,000 years
- **Distance From Sol:** 4.4 light-years
- **Stars:** Alpha Centauri A, B and C (Proxima)

distance is massive—roughly 423 times the distance between Sol and Neptune! Proxima is also by far the smallest and dimmest of the three stars. Because of this, Alpha Centauri is often spoken of as a binary system, referring to Alpha Centauri A and B, even though Proxima exists. It's just too small and distant to have much of an effect on the main star pair.

Alpha Centauri A

Alpha Centauri A is the primary star of the Alpha Centauri system. Like Earth's sun, it is classified as a G2V main sequence star, has a slightly yellowish color and has a similar metallicity. Unlike the sun, it is slightly larger and slightly brighter, with 10% greater mass and about one and a half times the luminosity.

In some texts Alpha Centauri A bears the traditional name of Rigel Kentaurus, a



Latinized version of its Arabic name, Rijl al-Qantūris, meaning “Foot of the Centaur.” It possesses four planets and an asteroid belt. Planets beyond the belt are impossible, due to the star’s proximity to its companion star, Alpha Centauri B.

Thelxiepla

Thelxiepla is a tiny and rocky world which is tidally locked to Alpha Centauri A. Out of all of Earth’s sister planets it most closely resembles Mercury. However, since Thelxiepla is tidally locked, the temperature differences between the side facing the star and side facing away from the star are extreme. The side facing Alpha Centauri A is molten from the heat. The side facing away, however, is somewhat comfortable, warmed by the heat dispersed through the planet.

The comparatively hospitable temperature on the nightside of Thelxiepla, combined with the mass of the planet acting as shielding from the stellar wind, might make it a prime target for interplanetary mining one day, once the colonists on Siren climb back out of the gravity well. Of course, Thelxiepla’s molten face and core might make this a very seismically dangerous assignment.



Datafile:

Alpha Centauri A

- **Surface Gravity:** 19.95 g
- **Classification:** G2V
- **Surface Temperature:** 5,517° C
- **Solar Cycle:** ≈17 years
- **Mass:** 1.10 M_☉
- **Luminosity:** 1.52 L_☉
- **Planets:** Thelxiepla, Aglaphonus, Siren, Melpomene

Datafile: Thelxiepla

- **Gravity:** 0.31 g
- **Solar Year:** 410.69 days
- **Sidereal Day:** 410.69 days
- **Distance:** 0.36 AU
- **Mean Temperature:** 28° C
- **Surface Pressure:** 1 nPa
- **Atmosphere:** None
- **Moons:** None

Aglaphonus

Aglaphonus is a smaller rocky planet, larger than Mars, but smaller than either Earth or Venus. Due to the proximity to its star, the world is blisteringly hot, with wide stretches of cracked, sunbaked regolith. Aglaphonus lacks a significant magnetosphere, which leaves its surface unprotected from dangerous cosmic rays or the intense stellar wind coming from

Datafile: Aglaphonus

- **Gravity:** 0.52 g
- **Solar Year:** 417.55 days
- **Sidereal Day:** 24.14 hours
- **Distance:** 0.66 AU
- **Mean Temperature:** 137° C
- **Surface Pressure:** 2 nPa
- **Atmosphere:** Trace
- **Moons:** None

Alpha Centauri A. This, combined with the boiling hot temperatures and low gravity, has gradually stripped away the planet's air, leaving only a trace of atmosphere behind.

Explorers landing on Aglaphonus' surface may soon detect slight gravity anomalies. In places the gravity differs from the expected value, indicating vast pockets of low density material or even immense hollow chambers under the planet's surface.



Siren

Siren is a terrestrial world, just a bit bigger than Earth and located just a bit farther out from its star. Both atmospheric density and gravity are also just a bit higher than Earth's. The planet has a substantial magnetosphere, protecting it from harmful cosmic rays, and a median temperature just slightly lower than Earth's.

All these factors combine to make it one of the most Earth-like and nearby worlds ever discovered. This is exactly why it was targeted by both the ARC Project and Project Osiris as their destination for interstellar colonization.

Unfortunately, the human colonization of Siren is not without its own challenges. The atmosphere is highly concentrated in nitrogen, which leads to nitrogen narcosis in colonists

Data: Siren

- **Gravity:** 1.30 g
- **Solar Year:** 376.32 days
- **Sidereal Day:** 16.2 hours
- **Distance:** 1.25 AU
- **Mean Temperature:** 13° C
- **Surface Pressure:** 1.51 atm
- **Atmosphere:** 89% nitrogen, 10% oxygen and 1% other gasses
- **Moons:** Odysseus

that breathe the air unaided. Many of the local lifeforms are also challenging, to say the least.

- For more on Siren, there is entire section covering the planet. See page 109.



Melpomene

Melpomene is a world with a runaway greenhouse effect and a crushingly dense atmosphere. In many ways this makes it like Venus. However, whereas Venus lost its water vapor to space billions of years ago, Melpomene retains much of its water, so much so that seas still exist, covering roughly 20% of the planet's surface. Melpomene's remaining water, however, is extremely impure. It contains so many dissolved sulfur compounds that the seas effectively consist of diluted sulfuric acid,

heated to hundreds of degrees Celsius. They only retain their liquid form due to the crushingly intense pressure.

High above the boiling atmosphere, however, Melpomene has a single moonlet—Ligeia. In the future this moonlet may become an important transit point on the way from Siren to the Outer Belt. There is also some evidence that the ancient Centauran civilization may have used it in the very same way.

Outer Belt

The Outer Belt is an asteroid belt orbiting at the fringes of Alpha Centauri A's inner solar system. It contains the most distant objects solely orbiting that star. The Outer Belt is slightly denser than Sol system's Main Belt, and contains a wealth of metals and other valuable resources. About a third of its total mass is tied up in its three largest objects: Clymene, Asia and Electra.

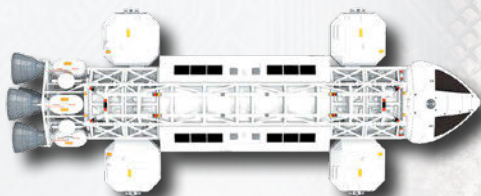
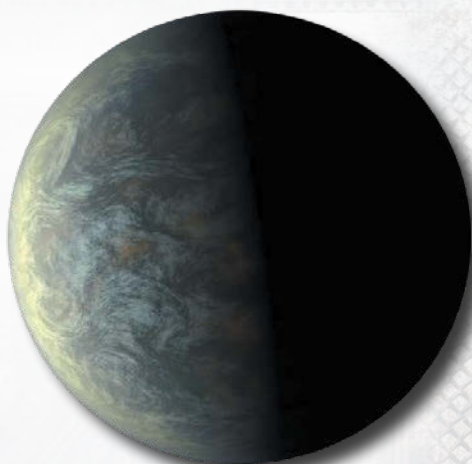
Analysis of the data taken from Electra indicates that the object has an improbable concentration of valuable metals, suggesting that it either is not entirely natural in origin or that it otherwise originated elsewhere in the system.

Datawild: Outer Belt

- **Distance:** 3.12 AU
- **Largest Objects:** Clymene, Asia and Electra

Datawild: Melpomene

- **Gravity:** 0.78 g
- **Solar Year:** 3.55 years
- **Sidereal Day:** 22.06 hours
- **Distance:** 1.95 AU
- **Mean Temperature:** 298° C
- **Surface Pressure:** 61.95 atm
- **Atmosphere:** Nitrogen 89%, Argon 5%, Oxygen 3%, Carbon Dioxide 3%
- **Moons:** Ligeia



Alpha Centauri B

Alpha Centauri B is the secondary star of the Alpha Centauri AB binary pair. It is classified as a K1V main sequence star, and has a deeper more orange-like color than either Alpha Centauri A or Sol. The star is slightly smaller and only half as bright as Earth's sun, although it emits a greater amount of radiation in the X-ray band.

Unlike its two companions, Alpha Centauri B doesn't have a separate historical name. It does, however, possess the only gas giant in the binary pair, as well as four other planets.



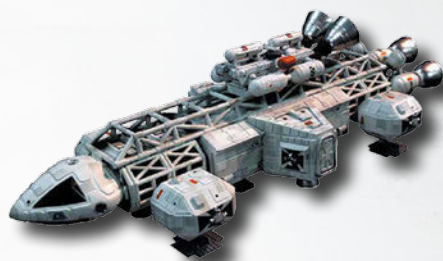
Peisinoe

Peisinoe is a small, rocky world with a highly eccentric orbit. This elongated orbit brings the planet perilously close to Alpha Centauri B at one point in its solar year, and significantly farther away at the opposite point, leading to extreme temperature changes throughout its year. During the hot season, the rocky regolith of the planet melts, leaving behind lakes of lava, then as the planet moves farther away from its star, the lava hardens back into rock. These repeated cycles of melting and hardening have led to a cracked and broken surface that is constantly in flux. Nothing remains in place or intact on Peisinoe for long.

Datawiki:

Alpha Centauri B

- **Surface Gravity:** 23.44 g
- **Classification:** K1V
- **Surface Temperature:** 4,987° C
- **Solar Cycle:** ≈8 years
- **Mass:** 0.91 M_☉
- **Luminosity:** 0.50 L_☉
- **Planets:** Peisinoe, Achelous, Chiron, Molpe, Hephaestus



Datawiki: Peisinoe

- **Gravity:** 0.25 g
- **Solar Year:** 45.24 days
- **Sidereal Day:** 30.16 days
- **Distance:** 0.26 AU
- **Mean Temperature:** 246° C
- **Surface Pressure:** 1 nPa
- **Atmosphere:** None
- **Moons:** None

Achelous

Once humanity climbs back out of Siren's gravity well and begins to explore the system, if there is a second planet in Alpha Centauri to target for colonization, Achelous is it. The world is about the right temperature for human habitation and possesses lots and lots of liquid water. In fact, oceans cover some 99% of the planet, with only a few small volcanic islands poking up above the waves. The presence of so much water also makes Achelous a likely candidate for extraterrestrial life.

On the other hand, Achelous has a comparatively thin atmosphere with little oxygen. Humans, and most other Earth life, will not be able to survive there without a contained environment.

Finally, Achelous has an extreme axial tilt: 34 degrees, or about one and a half times that of Earth. This gives rise to extreme seasons that change rapidly due to the planet's short solar year.

Datafile: Achelous

- **Gravity:** 0.72 g
- **Solar Year:** 127.23 days
- **Sidereal Day:** 30.00 days
- **Distance:** 0.52 AU
- **Mean Temperature:** 13° C
- **Surface Pressure:** 0.33 atm
- **Atmosphere:** Carbon Dioxide 84%, Nitrogen 9%, Oxygen 6%, Argon 1%
- **Moons:** None



Datafile: Chiron

- **Gravity:** 0.39 g
- **Solar Year:** 442.69 days
- **Sidereal Day:** 21.12 hours
- **Distance:** 0.99 AU
- **Mean Temperature:** -75.56°C
- **Surface Pressure:** 0.09 atm
- **Atmosphere:** Carbon Dioxide 95%, Nitrogen 3%, Argon 2%
- **Moons:** Ajax and Teucer

Chiron

Chiron is a small icy world, about the size of Mars, but is a much deeper green-blue color. Located almost exactly as far out from its star as Earth is from Sol, Chiron is nevertheless much colder, as Alpha Centauri B is only half as bright as Earth's sun.

The world possesses two moonlets, Ajax and Teucer, which are co-orbital: the two moonlets interact with each other's gravity, giving Ajax a horseshoe orbit and Teucer the complementary orbit.

Chiron's surface is marked by strange dark patches, which absorb the vast majority of energy from ladar or other electromagnetic signals directed at them. Several possible explanations for these dark patches exist, but none of the favored theories explain why some of the patches seem to slowly drift across the planet's surface.



Molpe

Molpe is a tiny, barren world that is pocked with craters and other detritus from the formation of the Alpha Centauri system. Unlike all the other planets in the system, Molpe has a retrograde orbit, meaning it moves in the opposite direction from all the other planets orbiting Alpha Centauri B.

Despite the planet's relative lack of resources, the ancient Centauran civilization seems to have given the planet a disproportionate amount of attention. Perhaps they attributed to it some sort of religious or symbolic significance, or perhaps they knew of some significant resource on Molpe that humanity has yet to discover. Either way, they left several automated installations behind on the planet, and one of these installations has reactivated.

Hephaestus

Hephaestus is the sole gas giant in the Alpha Centauri AB binary pair. It is roughly the size of Saturn, but with a ring system that is only visible with a moderately powerful telescope. Hephaestus is a fairly typical example of its kind, possessing a marbled brownish color, with lighter and darker streaks throughout.

Hephaestus also has a sizable number of moons. Close to the planet are nine small moonlets that regularly get bathed in radiation due to the planet's significant magnetosphere. Further out is Aglaea, the planet's singular large moon. And further out than that are six more moonlets, each with highly inclined orbits.

The moon Aglaea may one day serve as a likely stopping point for interplanetary voyages going from Alpha Centauri A's planetary system to Alpha Centauri B's, or vice versa.

Datawiki: Molpe

- Gravity: 0.3 g
- Solar Year: 2.93 years
- Sidereal Day: 25.92 hours
- Distance: 1.78 AU
- Mean Temperature: -118°C
- Surface Pressure: 2 nPa
- Atmosphere: Trace
- Moons: None



Datawiki: Hephaestus

- Gravity: 1.48 g
- Solar Year: 6.42 years
- Sidereal Day: 39.54 days
- Distance: 3.2 AU
- Mean Temperature: -168.4°C
- Atmosphere: Hydrogen 93%, Helium 7%
- Moons: Aglaea, plus 15 assorted moonlets



Proxima Centauri

Alpha Centauri C, or Proxima Centauri, is the often overlooked third star in the Alpha Centauri system. It is classified as a M5V red dwarf, and is known to be a flare star—meaning that it goes through periods of intense activity where the radiation emitted by the star can increase more than a thousand fold

Unlike Alpha Centauri's two primary stars, Proxima is very distant and usually very dim. It is only about a tenth the size of Sol, and thousands of times dimmer. It is located roughly 13,000 AU from the primary pair, or about 432 times more distant than the Earth and Neptune. This is so distant that traveling from Siren to Proxima using conventional interplanetary spacecraft would be another great voyage taking centuries. It orbits Alpha Centauri's center of mass in 550,000 year cycles.

Nessus

Nessus was the first world to be discovered in the Alpha Centauri system. Originally named Proxima Centauri b, the planet was confirmed in 2012, decades before Siren was identified.

The planet is a large rocky world that orbits within Proxima Centauri's habitable zone. This is good news for colonists. What's bad news is that since Proxima Centauri is so dim, to be in the star's habitable zone Nessus must orbit very, very close to the star. In fact, the planet is eight times closer to Proxima than Mercury is to Sol! This means that while Nessus has a habitable temperature, the planet is buffeted by 2,000 times the solar wind that Earth receives. Over time this has stripped the planet of the vast majority of its atmosphere, leaving it an irradiated ball of rock, torched occasionally by Proxima's intense solar flares.

This radiation also makes it difficult to send comms or use sensors in the space around the planet. This makes it an excellent, albeit remote, hiding spot for anything wishing not to be found.

Datafile: Proxima

- **Surface Gravity:** 158.49 g
- **Classification:** M5V
- **Surface Temperature:** 2,769° C
- **Solar Cycle:** ≈7 years
- **Mass:** 0.12 M_{\odot}
- **Luminosity:** 0.0005 L_{\odot}
- **Planets:** Nessus, Pholus, Cthonius



Datafile: Nessus

- **Gravity:** 1.48 g
- **Solar Year:** 11.19 days
- **Sidereal Day:** 83 days
- **Distance:** 0.05 AU
- **Mean Temperature:** -39° C
- **Surface Pressure:** —
- **Atmosphere:** —
- **Moons:** None



Pholus

Pholus is what some astronomers call an ammonia planet. It has a corrosive and lethally toxic atmosphere, combined with a surface half covered by lakes and oceans of ammonia. In fact, on Pholus the ammonia goes through the entire solid-liquid-gas cycle. Clouds of it float through the atmosphere as vapor. Solid chunks of it litter the poles.

Despite the toxicity of Pholus' atmosphere and its corrosive nature, the planet also has the largest reserves of oxygen in the Alpha Centauri system—far more than even Siren. This may one day become a valuable resource, if humans seek to colonize local space.

Chthonius

Chthonius is a smaller ice giant, similar in size and composition to Neptune. It has a deep purplish-blue color, occasionally broken by lighter spots, which indicate intense storms in the planet's atmosphere.

The world has three moonlets—Pirithous, Oenomaus and Hippodamia—which orbit Chthonius in a Laplace resonance. Pirithous has exactly twice the orbital period of Oenomaus, which has exactly twice the orbital period of Hippodamia.



Datafile: Pholus

- **Gravity:** 0.47 g
- **Solar Year:** 63.16 days
- **Sidereal Day:** 31.58 days
- **Distance:** 0.1 AU
- **Mean Temperature:** -98.54° C
- **Surface Pressure:** 0.32 atm
- **Atmosphere:** Nitrogen 71%, Oxygen 18%, Ammonia 9%, Carbon Dioxide 2%
- **Moons:** None

This last moon is exceptionally rich in rare metals, which may one day make the moon a valuable resource. Interestingly, certain writings found within the Centauran ruins on Siren speak of Chthonius, and all of its three moonlets, as cursed, and warn the reader not to go there.



Datafile: Chthonius

- **Gravity:** 1.76 g
- **Solar Year:** 219.28 days
- **Sidereal Day:** 83.79 days
- **Distance:** 0.4 AU
- **Mean Temperature:** -182.44° C
- **Atmosphere:** Hydrogen 80%, Helium 18%, Methane 2%
- **Moons:** Pirithous, Oenomaus and Hippodamia

Travel Times

The table below shows the time it takes to travel between different bodies in the Alpha Centauri system, assuming standard civilian transport. Time is given in Earth weeks (w), months (m), years (y) and thousand years (ky).

Naturally, the relative distances of planets change as they orbit their respective stars. The numbers given here represent travel at a median distance. In practice, travel times frequently vary by up to four times this amount, or down to half this amount when the planets are coming into or out of alignment.

<i>Median Travel Times</i>	Alpha Centauri A	Thelxiepia	Aglyphonus	Siren	Melpomene	Outer Belt	Alpha Centauri B	Peisinoe	Achelous	Chiron	Molpe	Hephaestus	Proxima Centauri
Alpha Centauri A	—	2.5w	1m	2m	3m	5m	3y	3y	3y	3y	3y	2.5y	1.6ky
Thelxiepia	2.5w	—	1m	2m	3m	5m	3y	3y	3y	3y	3y	2.5y	1.6ky
Aglyphonus	1m	1m	—	2m	3m	5m	3y	3y	3y	3y	3y	2.5y	1.6ky
Siren	2m	2m	2m	—	3.5m	5m	3y	3y	3y	3y	3y	2.5y	1.6ky
Melpomene	3m	3m	3m	3.5m	—	6m	3y	3y	3y	3y	2.5y	2.5y	1.6ky
Outer Belt	5m	5m	5m	5m	6m	—	2.5y	2.5y	2.5y	2.5y	2.5y	2.5y	1.6ky
Alpha Centauri B	3y	3y	3y	3y	3y	2.5y	—	2w	1m	1.5m	3m	5m	1.6ky
Peisinoe	3y	3y	3y	3y	3y	2.5y	2w	—	1m	1.5m	3m	3m	1.6ky
Achelous	3y	3y	3y	3y	3y	2.5y	1m	1m	—	2m	3m	5m	1.6ky
Chiron	3y	3y	3y	3y	3y	2.5y	1.5m	1.5m	2m	—	3m	5.5m	1.6ky
Molpe	3y	3y	3y	3y	2.5y	2.5y	3m	3m	3m	3m	—	6m	1.6ky
Hephaestus	2.5y	2.5y	2.5y	2.5y	2.5y	2.5y	5m	5m	5m	5.5m	6m	—	1.6ky
Proxima Centauri	1.6ky	1.6ky	1.6ky	1.6ky	1.6ky	1.6ky	1.6ky	1.6ky	1.6ky	1.6ky	1.6ky	1.6ky	—



Siren

Siren was first detected in 2031, almost two centuries before the present day in *Shadows Over Sol*. This long history, its proximity to Sol and its location within Alpha Centauri A's habitable zone have made it one of the single most studied exoplanets in existence. Despite these qualifications, however, humanity's knowledge of the planet is still very limited and riddled with guesswork.

This section presents the truth of what the ARC Project's colonists will find when they begin to explore the new world. Where the truth differs from humanity's best pre-launch guesses will be noted in "Human Knowledge" sidebars throughout the text.

Orbit & Gravity

The planet Siren orbits Alpha Centauri A at a distance of about 1.25 AU. This is a bit farther out from its star than Earth is from Sol, but as Alpha Centauri A is also a bit brighter than the Sun, the amount of energy that reaches the planet's surface is only marginally less than Earth. For Siren, a solar year consists of 376.32 Earth days.

Meanwhile, Siren has a higher gravity than Earth. It measures 1.3 g. Until the colonists acclimate, they will feel heavy and movement may be awkward. Siren is also slightly larger than Earth, as it possesses a mass about 1.84 times Earth and a surface area of about 1.41 times that of Earth.

■ For the effects of high gravity see page 129.

Days & Seasons

Siren revolves significantly faster and has less axial tilt than Earth does. On Siren a day is only 16.2 hours and the planet's axial tilt is only 2°. This means that the day and night cycles pass very quickly. It also means that the planet has nowhere near as distinct of a summer or a winter as does Earth. Seasonal temperature variations are almost imperceptible.

One seasonal variation Siren does have is in its night cycles. Remember that Alpha Centauri is a multi-star system. During a certain time of year, Siren will be passing between Alpha Centauri A and B. This means that during this time of year, Alpha Centauri B will be present in the night sky, while Alpha Centauri A will be present in the daytime sky. "Night" during this time of year will be brighter than during the full moon of Earth—bright enough to read by, even. The sky will be more of a dim twilight than a true darkness.

On the other hand, at the opposite time of year, when Siren is on the opposite edge of its solar orbit, the planet will be on the far side of Alpha Centauri A. This means that the two suns will appear together in the daytime sky. The daytime will be brighter and the nights will be very dark—close to the same as a new moon on Earth.

As the Siren year progresses, these two seasons will wax and wane, as the two suns move into and out of alignment.

Human Knowledge

Even from their light-years distance, astronomers have been able to measure Siren's mass and radius. From this they can compute its gravity. The colonists should know to expect higher gravity and a longer solar year.

Meanwhile, scientists also know that Siren revolves rapidly. The best estimate of a Siren day is that it is close to 16 hours.

Magnetism

Like Earth, Siren has a magnetic field generated by electrical currents within the planet's conductive core. This field helps protect the planet from cosmic rays, the solar wind and other harmful radiological effects.

Siren's magnetic field is slightly weaker than Earth's (with a median of 36 microteslas versus 45 microteslas). Thankfully for life on Siren, the planet's denser atmosphere helps offset this deficit.

Terrain & Surface Water

Siren is tectonically active, with a patchwork of plates that are in constant, albeit slow, motion. At the moment—geologically speaking—the planet's plates are being pushed away from the poles, meeting at a subduction zone just north of the equator. This has caused several plates to begin to slip under one another, pushing up land-masses and forming the long, snaking continent that dominates Siren's terrestrial surface.

Also like Earth, Siren possesses a hydrologic cycle where water passes through all three states—liquid water, solid ice and gaseous vapor. The planet's surface is mostly covered with standing water, including briny oceans, seas and freshwater lakes. Roughly 80% of Siren's surface is covered in water. Siren's oceans are comparatively rich in nitrate salts.



Atmosphere

The good news about Siren's atmosphere is that humans can survive it with only minimal life support. A working breather—filtering out excess nitrogen and leaving a higher oxygen concentration—is all a colonist needs to get by.

At 1.5 atm, Siren's atmosphere is significantly denser than Earth's. To the colonists, this may cause it to feel thick and soupy compared to what humans are used to. In many ways the pressure is comparable to being under 5 m of water.

Although initially uncomfortable, in many ways the atmospheric density is beneficial to the colonists. It helps absorb harmful cosmic radiation coming from the two suns. It also makes the air breathable, by increasing the oxygen pressure of the atmosphere, and thus helping make up for the low oxygen concentration.

Siren's atmosphere is comprised of 89% nitrogen, 10% oxygen and 1% other gasses. In some ways this is like Earth's—nitrogen is dominant and oxygen is common. In other ways, this particular atmospheric mix poses several challenges.

One challenge is that the oxygen concentration is lower than Earth's, and only partially offset by the increased atmospheric pressure. This means that while the air is breathable,

Mother Nature's Arms Depot

Along ocean beaches in some dry, tropical regions, potassium nitrate (saltpeter) can be easily collected from the naturally occurring salt deposits. It may only be a matter of time until human industry or some more nefarious faction discovers this and begins harvesting the saltpeter for the production of explosives.

Human Knowledge

Spectral analysis of light reflected off Siren has led scientists to conclude that, like Earth, Siren has an atmosphere comprised primarily of nitrogen, with oxygen being the next most abundant element. They also suspect that the atmosphere is slightly denser than Earth's.

Unfortunately, humanity's best scientists haven't yet realized just how abundant nitrogen is in Siren's atmosphere, nor do they realize quite the extent of Siren's atmospheric pressure. This means that the colonists will likely be blindsided by the intoxicating effects of the atmosphere when they first arrive.

the colonists may become more easily winded without a breather or similar device. In some ways the oxygen pressure is comparable to being at 3,300 m elevation on Earth

Another challenge posed by the atmosphere is that the high concentration of nitrogen, combined with the high atmospheric pressure, makes those breathing the air unaided prone to developing nitrogen narcosis, a state of altered consciousness caused by an overabundance of nitrogen in the blood stream.

This same phenomenon is experienced on Earth by scuba divers who sometimes refer to it as the "raptures of the deep" or the "martini effect." The altered state of consciousness impairs the experiencer's judgement in much the same way as alcohol or nitrous oxide, increasing the chances of accidents, bad decisions or other mishaps. Sometimes colonists under the effect may just wander off into the wilds, blissfully unaware that this spells their doom. For this reason, nitrogen narcosis comes to be known as *Siren's Call*.

- For the effects of nitrogen narcosis see page 129.

Weather and Temperature

The average temperature on Siren is remarkably similar to Earth—only with a slightly warmer atmospheric temperature and a slightly cooler surface temperature.

Since the planet possesses very little axial tilt, the temperate range changes only slightly depending on the time of year. Temperature ranges from an average of 27° C at the equator to -20° C at the poles.

Weather patterns on Siren are often fast-moving and violent, driven by the energy absorbed from the world's twin suns and the planet's high rate of rotation. Storms can form, peak over the horizon or come upon unsuspecting travelers with surprising speed, forcing all but the most foolhardy to immediately seek shelter.

When they hit, these storms also possess more of an impact than they do on Earth. The atmospheric density means that storm winds have more mass behind them, and thus strike with greater momentum.

Ecology

Siren has its own complex ecology based on many of the same chemical building blocks as Earth-based life. Species—including ambulatory multi-cellular lifeforms—have evolved and diversified, filling numerous ecological niches. These species may be further divided into a number of common biomes found throughout the planet. Some common ecosystems on Siren are listed on the next page.

- For more details, see the Centauran Life section on page 118.

Flats

These are regions of flat plains or rolling hills dominated by lichen-like photosynthetic flora and broken occasionally by small groves of larger lifeforms. These regions have a particular wealth of biodiversity.

Highlands

High altitude regions consisting of mountains or plateaus make up this ecosystem. Biomass is sparser in these regions, and competition between ambulatory lifeforms is fierce. Ambush predators and parasitic worm-like creatures are on the top of the food chain.

Shallows

Regions of shallow sea are often dominated by this ecosystem, which includes mangrove-like growths, swarms of flying scavengers and predatory isle-like organisms.

Tangled Growth

These regions have some of the densest biomass on Siren, with flora-like organisms that grow in a tangled mass which makes travel through the region difficult. These tangled growths serve as homes for smaller creatures that call the ecosystem home. Their nearest terrestrial equivalent are Earth's jungles.

Human Knowledge

Scientists have long suspected that Siren harbors photosynthetic life due to the abundance of oxygen measured in the planet's atmosphere. However, before the ARC Project, they have had no available means to confirm this theory, nor have they been able to conclude anything further about Siren's native lifeforms.

Landmarks

Siren possesses a variety of exceptional features, regions or other landmarks of note. Many of these landmarks may be of particular interest to the colonists, as they may yield unusual resources or scientific data. A rare few are clearly artificial in origin, left behind by the extinct Centauran civilization.

Cape Typhon

Cape Typon is the southernmost point of Siren's central continent. The land around the cape is dominated by scattered patches of tangled growth, while the seas are dominated by massive hurricanes that regularly make landfall here.

Cetus Bay

A prominent open bay located between the Phlegra Peninsula and Nysa Ridge, Cetus Bay is notable for its large and extremely aggressive oceangoing predators. The region also possesses an abundance of underwater resources.

Deep Marine Trench

The deepest marine trench on Siren, it reaches a depth some 11 km below the ocean's surface. The environment deep in the trench is pitch black and the organisms here display the same "deep-sea gigantism" effect as do deep-sea creatures on Earth.

Great Northern Ocean

This ocean dominates the northern reaches of Siren. It is the smaller of the world's two oceans, but still larger than any ocean on Earth. The Great Northern Ocean possess a small polar cap at its northernmost extremities, and has more aggressive marine life than its southern counterpart.

Great Southern Ocean

The largest body of water on Siren, the Great Southern Ocean is far larger than any comparable ocean on Earth. It experiences some of the worst storms on the planet, particularly in the triangle of open sea between the Isle of Heracles, the Isle of Oenone and the Howling Dunes. The larger of Siren's two ice caps is located at its south pole.

Hidden Sea

The Hidden Sea contains almost half of all the freshwater on Siren. It is a remote and exceptionally deep body of water, hidden in a mountainous peninsula and tropical region that receives near-constant rainfall.

Highland Wastes

The Highland Wastes are a massive region of high elevation, low precipitation, low biomass and low atmospheric oxygen. These factors make the wastes a particularly difficult region for explorers to penetrate or for humans to inhabit.

Howling Dunes

The Howling Dunes are a particularly inhospitable region of low biomass and prevailing winds, somewhat comparable to the Gobi Desert on Earth. The moisture that would otherwise reach the dunes is instead dumped on the rest of the Isle of Sisyphus. This region is ringed with mountains, and the dunes themselves are situated on a high elevation plateau.

Isle of Circe

The Isle of Circe is a cold and remote island which has been separate from Siren's main continent for as long as the island has existed. This remoteness has caused the evolution of the creatures on the island to diverge significantly from the species found on the mainland.

Isle of Heracles

The Isle of Heracles is a widely varied land. The island contains a large range of different biomes, all within a relatively small distance from each other. The coasts are temperate with an exceptionally constant temperature. As one travels inland, the island becomes increasingly humid and muggy until one approaches the mountains, the tops of which are capped with snow.

Isle of Oenone

The Isle of Oenone is a barren volcanic island located far to the south. The volcanoes here are particularly active and regularly ooze a stream of lava into the ocean, releasing clouds of moisture mixed with volcanic vapors.

Isle of Sisyphus

This is a large island that—with the exception of the Howling Dunes—receives an abundance of rainfall throughout most of its territory. The island lacks many of the large predators that are found on the mainland, but has an abundance of parasitic organisms. Most of these parasites will never be able to infect human hosts, but given enough time a few may make the leap.

Landing

The GM is free to choose a landing site for the player characters when their drop module first touches down on Siren. Unless the GM decides otherwise, however, this site is assumed to be the one marked on the map as "Landing."

It is a region of flats and rolling hills cut in two by a river, flowing from the mountains in the northwest to the Sea of Prometheus. Where the river meets the sea, it forms a marshy delta, rich in biodiversity.



ISLE OF CIRCE

GREAT NORTHERN OCEAN

THE RUINS

PLAINS OF HADES

TORRENTIAL GROWTH

LANDING

**SHALLOWS OF
HEPHAESTUS**

**SEA OF
PROMETHEUS**

MOUNT ICARUS

ISLE OF SISYPHUS

**HOWLING
DUNES**

GREAT SOUTHERN OCEAN



Medusa's Neck

Medusa's Neck is a small isthmus separating the Oceanid Sea from a series of smaller seas that connect to the Great Northern Ocean. Its terrain consists of low-lying flats and wetlands. Medusa's Neck is of strategic interest as the potential site for a canal, which would connect the two oceans and serve as an alternative to sea travel through the Strait of Achelous.

Mount Icarus

Mount Icarus is the tallest mountain on Siren. It is an enormous shield volcano, similar to Nyamuragira on Earth, Olympus Mons on Mars or Maat Mons on Venus. It reaches nearly 9,000 m and features gently sloping sides, peppered occasionally with active lava flows.

Nutrient Flats

The Nutrient Flats are a low-lying region of rolling plains and substantial biomass. They receive moderate rainfall, and the wealth of photosynthetic life here makes the oxygen concentration of the atmosphere slightly higher than throughout most of Siren. These factors combine to make this one of the most suitable regions on the planet for human habitation.

Nysa Ridge

This is a long range of particularly rugged mountains running all the way from the Highland Wastes to Medusa's Neck. The ridge marks a tectonic boundary, where the southern (Oceanid) plate is slipping beneath the northern (Nysa) plate. The ridge is prone to earthquakes and mountain-building geologic activity.

Oceanid Sea

The Oceanid Sea separates the main continent of Siren from the Isle of Heracles. It is one of the most difficult to navigate stretches of water on the planet. In the west, the sea is

regularly disturbed by massive cyclones that buffet Cape Typon. In the east, the sea is constantly beset by irregular wind patterns and impenetrable walls of fog.

Phaethon Crater

Located in a remote region of the Highland Wastes, Phaethon Crater is the remnant of asteroid impact that struck Siren some tens of millions of years before humanity's arrival. The impact left a visible circular depression almost 10 km in diameter, which has remained remarkable well preserved due to the surrounding environment. Although remote, the site is a rich source of rare metals.

Plains of Hades

The Plains of Hades are an exceptionally flat territory dotted with sinkholes, scattered radioactivity and areas of heavy metal contamination. The ancient Centauran civilization once stretched across the breadth of the plains, communities existing in numerous subterranean locations throughout. However, the conflict that brought an end to their species obliterated most of their constructions here, and the ravages of time destroyed the rest, leaving only the pollution of the last war behind.

The Ruins

The Ruins are the largest intact remnant of the extinct Centauran civilization left on Siren. They consist of hundreds of kilometers of subterranean tunnels and small chambers in various states of collapse. The Ruins are marked on the surface by a large ring of raised mounds, each with one or several metallic spires protruding from the surface. On some mounds these spires have broken off, toppled over or corroded beyond recognition.

Sea of Prometheus

The Sea of Prometheus is notable for its occasional bursts of unusual color. The water here turns a deep red during periods of increased geothermic activity in the nearby Shallows of Hephaestus. This unusual color is caused by a bloom of microorganisms feeding off the minerals that flow out into the sea.

Shallows of Hephaestus

The Shallows of Hephaestus are slowing being pushed upward by tectonic activity, as one of Siren's plates slips below another. The sea here is only a few meters deep and is peppered by underwater lava flows and the occasional geyser. The region is also subject to regular tremors.

Strait of Aethelous

The Strait of Aethelous is the sole open water connection between the Great Northern and Great Southern oceans. This makes it a particularly important location of strategic interest. Any faction controlling the straight largely controls seafaring travel between the two oceans.

Torrential Growth

The Torrential Growth is a massive region of tangled growth, fed by nutrient-rich soils and a near-constant rainfall—a product of the prevailing southwestern winds and the vapors coming off the Shallows of Hephaestus. The density of biomass here is greater than anywhere else on Siren, and the region is home to numerous species found nowhere else.

Odysseus

Siren has a single, small moon named Odysseus. It is a fraction the size of Luna, and has a slightly irregular shape, looking as if it has a dent in one side. As with Earth's moon, it is tidally locked, meaning that its rotation is synchronous with that of Siren, such that one side always faces the planet and the other faces away.

Unlike Luna, Odysseus has a retrograde orbit, meaning that from the surface of the planet, it appears to move in the opposite direction of Siren's two suns—rising in the west and setting in the east. Also, since Odysseus is a small moon, to the naked eye it open appears as little more than a particularly bright star that moves quickly across the sky in the opposite direction from the rest of the heavens.

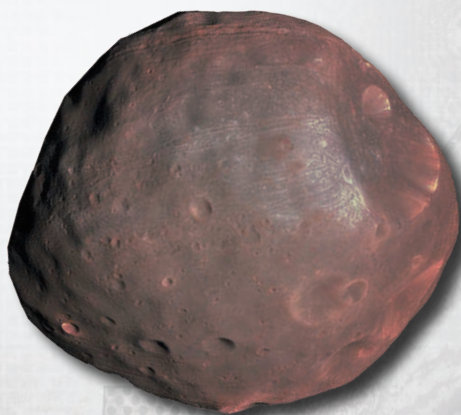
Odysseus' top layer of regolith is lightly colored and semi-reflective. The surface is pocked by craters and other debris left over from the formation of the Alpha Centauri system.

During the height of the now extinct Centauran civilization, Odysseus was a regular stopping point in that civilization's exploration of space. Several mining, shipping and military facilities were built on the moon. The ruins of these structures are now either collapsed or remain hidden in craters, waiting to be explored.

■ For more on the Centauran civilization see page 132

Datawik: Odysseus

- Gravity: 0.0038 g
- Orbital Period: 8 hours
- Mean Temperature: -58 °C
- Surface Pressure: —
- Atmosphere: —



Centauran Life

Siren has its own biosphere of native life, which is at once both familiar and incredibly alien. On one hand, life on Siren uses all the same building blocks as Earth-based life. On the other hand, it's separated by billions of years in a different environment, with different evolutionary pressures.

Building Blocks

Life on Earth is often said to be carbon-based. That is, Earth organisms are largely comprised of molecules that consist of carbon bonded with other elements, in particular oxygen, hydrogen and nitrogen.

Life on Siren is very similar in this regard. It is also carbon-based, although the frequency with which its carbon bonds with the other elements is slightly different, reflecting the particular elemental mix of the surrounding world and the relative scarcity of carbon on Siren.

Chirality

As with Earth-based life, organisms on Siren are built of proteins, which are long chain molecules, themselves made up of amino acids. All amino acids have a chirality—that is, either

Not a Scientist?

For many hard sci-fi fans, part of the fun of the genre is exploring the science in the fiction. When first encountering species from an alien biosphere, these sort of players are going to want to know how this alien life works. This is doubly true if the player's character is also a science type.

To achieve this explanation, this section admittedly delves into details. The information should be enough to satisfy a scientifically curious player. On the other hand, if your group doesn't care as much about the details, this section will still be helpful as real-world scientific jargon makes for great technobabble!

a left-handed or right-handed orientation. Both types of amino acids appear in nature, although all life on Earth is comprised solely of left-handed amino acids. To biologists, this is one of the great mysteries of life on Earth. Why does life only use left-handed amino acids?

Scientists may have to keep guessing, because all life on Siren is also comprised of solely left-handed amino acids.

Atmospheric Carbon: A History

In Earth's early history, the atmosphere contained significantly more carbon—in the form of CO_2 —than it does today. Since CO_2 is a greenhouse gas, this led to the planet being much warmer on average.

Eventually photosynthetic life developed in the form of cyanobacteria. Since photosynthesis strips the carbon out of CO_2 , leaving O_2 as a waste product, over time the rise of photosynthetic life stripped most of the carbon out of Earth's atmosphere and released most of its oxygen. This cooled the Earth, since it now contained less greenhouse gas, and nearly killed off all life on the planet. This is known as the Great Oxygenation Event.

Siren is carbon-starved compared to Earth. Like the human homeworld, it may once have had a more CO_2 rich atmosphere, but here life has stripped nearly all of it out of the air. The result is an atmosphere with orders of magnitude lower CO_2 .

Biopolymers & Encoding

Siren's native life uses many of the same biopolymers as does Earth-based life, including left-handed proteins, ribonucleic acid (RNA) and deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). There the similarity comes to an end, however, as Siren's lifeforms encode genetic, transcriptional and proteomic data differently than does Earth-based life.

Photosynthesis

Siren's particular atmospheric mix poses a unique challenge for photosynthetic life.

On Earth, photosynthetic life is frequently at the base of the energy pyramid. Plants, cyanobacteria and similar organisms absorb sunlight, which they combine with water and carbon dioxide to produce sugar and oxygen. They then use the sugar for energy, while the oxygen is a waste product that gets expelled into the air.

On Earth, carbon dioxide (CO_2) is abundant. Humans produce too much of it. It's caused catastrophic climate change. Plants have no trouble finding the CO_2 they need for photosynthesis. On Earth, sunlight is usually the limiting factor. This is why many plants, such as trees, grow upward. They're competing for sunlight.

Siren's atmosphere, however, lacks the same abundance of CO_2 that Earth's has. The level of

carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is orders of magnitude lower. This means that photosynthetic life on Siren can't count on obtaining its carbon through atmospheric CO_2 —or at least doing so is substantially less efficient than it would be on Earth. On Siren, carbon is the limiting factor for photosynthesis.

To circumvent this problem, many organisms on Siren have developed a method of producing nitric acid. This acid is used to dissolve minerals in carboniferous rock, releasing the inorganic carbon in the planet's crust. This carbon is then used by the organisms in photosynthesis. As a consequence, Siren's photosynthetic organisms tend to grow low to the ground, where they cling to the planet's rocks. Many of them also have non-negligible stores of acid.



Copper & Nitric Acid

Want to use Siren's peculiar chemistry as a plot device? Many organisms on Siren produce nitric acid. This acid could pose a hazard to colonists, but perhaps more interestingly, nitric acid reacts somewhat violently with copper.

Copper is commonly used in computers and other electronics. Want to isolate the player characters while they're out exploring? This reaction could destroy their comms or hand terminals.

Want some sort of terrorist threat? A violent group in the colony might even use the chemistry of the local flora to produce an explosive, or use it to sabotage the colony's infrastructure.

Clever players might even be able to weaponize copper, using this property against some of the hostile wildlife.

Lifecycle

Many creatures on Siren have a peculiar lifecycle where they go through an ambulatory (larval) stage and then a stationary (adult) stage. This means, for example, that if human explorers encounter a tree-like organism with other bug-like organisms crawling on it, these two organisms may actually be the same species! The “bugs” could easily be the “tree’s” young.

More broadly, this lifecycle yields two general reproductive strategies.

In the first strategy, some organisms spend the vast majority of their lifespans in their stationary, adult form. For these creatures, in their larval forms they are little more than seeds with legs, whose sole task is to crawl away from the parent organism and find a suitable place to take root.

On the other hand, creatures that pursue the second strategy spend the vast majority of their lives in their larval, ambulatory form. These creatures move about the world, feeding on other organisms or seeking out sources of carbon for use in photosynthesis. They take root only at the very end of their lifespans, reproducing and dying shortly thereafter.

Variations

Siren is a large and diverse planet, and numerous variations to this lifecycle exist, exhibited by different species. Some possible variations include:

- The larval form of some species lacks ambulation, instead being spread by the wind, through consumption by other creatures or just by taking root close to the parent organism—much the same as seeds on Earth.
- Some species live in colonies similar to ants or bees. Many of these species have “false larval” forms—secondary ambulatory forms assumed only by a subset of individuals in the colony. That is, instead of metamorphosing into a stationary adult form, some individuals transform to a second ambulatory form that serves a specific role in the colony, much like how soldier ants are differentiated from worker ants.
- A few species retain some ambulatory capabilities, even in their adult form, or possess the ability to slowly revert back to their ambulatory larval form when under certain environmental pressures.



Example Organisms

Below are a selection of interesting organisms that might be encountered while the colonists explore Siren. This list intentionally avoids including large predators or predatory swarms that might try to fight the colonists, as these creatures are listed separately (see page 123).

This list is by no means comprehensive, and should serve as inspiration for the GM when coming up with her own native lifeforms.

Abyssal Webs

Abyssal webs are subterranean organisms that form enormous networks of connected underground filaments, much like the mycelium of some mushroom species on Earth. In their ambulatory larval form, they appear much like tiny worms that eventually take root and spread.

Burrowing Motes

Burrowing motes are tiny parasitic organisms that burrow into exposed flesh. Once thoroughly embedded, they undergo metamorphosis, taking root and sprouting from the host creature with vine-like tendrils. Burrowing motes will embed themselves in human flesh given the chance, but cannot survive once inside due to incompatible biochemistry. Instead of taking root, they thrash around and die, leaving behind a necrotic fissure.

Crawling Mats

Crawling mats are not singular creatures; they are colonies of near-microscopic organisms that form a saucer-like bottom shell with leg-like structures that protrude below it. Electrical impulses that originate in the colony can cause the leg structures to slowly crawl the colony across the ground, usually to transport it from one shallow pool to other nearby pools. The top of a crawling matt remains moist and appears to consist of an opaque gel-like slime.

Microbes

As with life on Earth, the vast majority of species on Siren are microbial. Prokaryotes—unicellular species without a membrane-bound nucleus—make up the majority of these species. Eukaryote analogs—species with an organized nucleus, which on Earth includes all multicellular life—also exist on Siren, although many species have two separate organelles containing the cell's genetic data instead of the singular nucleus found in Earth-based life.

Exploding Mangroves

Exploding mangroves are lumpy organisms that usually stand between one and three meters in height. They exclusively take root along the beach, with their roots submerged in shallow water. Exploding mangroves filter the naturally occurring potassium nitrate out of the seawater, mixing it with sulfur and other chemicals to produce a mix not unlike gunpowder. This substance collects in round fruit-like growths. When threatened, exploding mangroves can hurl these growths, irregularly detonating them as a form of defense.

Crawling Vines

At first glance, a grasping vine appears to be several reddish vines, several meters in length, which grow out of a singular stalk. However, this organism retains with its stationary adult form the ability to reach out and grasp with its tendrils. It uses this ability to grab passing prey, strangling and dragging the body close to its stalk. The corpse is then used by the organism for nutrients.

Locusts of Perihelion

Locusts of perihelion are small, flying organisms as larvae which are released en masse once every 80 years, when Alpha Centauri A and B are at the closest points in their mutual orbit. Once emerged, the creatures attempt to consume anything remotely organic in a great swarm. They then promptly mate and take root, assuming a stationary adult form, and wait for the next perihelion to release their young.

Pooling Growths

These are growths of small lichen-like organisms that cling closely to carboniferous rocks. They produce an acid that breaks down the attached rock, releasing its contained carbon. Sometimes this acid pools into hidden pockets, filling depressions in the rock underneath the organism's surface. Unsuspecting travelers sometimes accidentally step into these depressions, leaving their boots soaked with acid.

Puff Mites

These creatures have small tear-shaped bodies, covered with fluffy-looking filaments and lined with numerous segmented legs. In

their ambulatory form they range from a few millimeters to two centimeters long.

In their adult form, they take root and slowly grow into tall a tubular organism, sometimes reaching several meters in height. This stem contains a maze of small tubes, in which the organism's larvae gestate and then live, forming a colony. Occasionally the parent organism will release the small puff mites en masse, each seeking out a new location to take root and undergo metamorphosis.

Sea Flaps

Sea flaps are a family of marine organisms that somewhat superficially resemble the comb jellies (ctenophora) of Earth. Ranging from less than a centimeter to several meters long, these creatures propel their gelatinous bodies through the water by undulating a series of "swimming plates" located along the sides of their bodies. Many species also possess several long tendrils that trail behind the body and which can be used to grasp prey.

They spend only the very end of their lifespans in their adult forms, where a sea flap will latch onto the rocky seafloor, forming a gelatinous lump that will produce several young.



Stat Blocks

Below are stat blocks for a variety of organisms that might be encountered on Siren. These are for creatures with whom the player characters might engage in combat, meaning they are mostly for large predators or dangerous scavengers.

Centauran Charger

Str 11, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 7, **End** 8, **Int** 2, **Per** 5, **Chr** 5, **Det** 4

Defense 8/17, **DR** 3, **Shock** 18, **Wound** 9

Skills: Awareness 3, Athletics 3, Melee 4, Naturalist 3

Slam: +7 (♠33M/♥22M/♦11M/♣5M)

Pounce: When making a melee attack, a centauran charger may immediately move for free—as if it had spent 1 AP—before the attack executes.

Size +1: Centauran chargers are large and imposing. This has been factored into the creature's Defense and Shock.

Centauran chargers are tiger-sized creatures which live in the tangled growth and emerge at night to hunt their prey. They are apex predators and are easily agitated.

Chargers move around on numerous crab-like legs and are capable of making great leaps, allowing them to pounce on prey from afar. They are covered in a chitinous carapace, with bone-like skeletal struts along the surface. These struts allow a charger to support its great weight. On the outside, the carapace is covered in short, but exceedingly sharp, spines.

When hunting, chargers will slam into their prey, relying on their great weight and many spines to mangle their target. They'll then tear off chunks of the prey's flesh and attach these to a sticky membrane located on the top of their body. A charger's many legs can even bend upward to hold prey still that hasn't given up fighting. Against this acidic membrane, the bits and pieces of the prey will slowly be dissolved and consumed by the charger.

Generating New Creatures

Siren is an entire world with similar biodiversity to Earth and just as many species waiting to be discovered. Naturally, the number of creatures we can include here are but a minuscule fraction of what's yet to be found.

Some GMs may be interested in quickly generating new creatures for the player characters to encounter. For this sort of quick generation, we recommend the random alien lifeform generator found on page 48 of the *Fatal Frontier* supplement. Otherwise, here are a few guidelines to use when coming up with one's own ideas.

- Few species on Siren possess a true skeleton. Most rely on some form of exoskeleton, with boney struts in the exoskeleton providing additional support.
- Siren has comparatively high gravity. When in doubt, give the creature more legs!
- To make the world seem alien, try to avoid using analogs of familiar animals, such as mammals, birds or reptiles. Worms, molluscs, anthozoa and arthropods make great inspiration!

Flying Hydroid

Str 8, **Dex** 10, **Spd** 1, **End** 6, **Int** 1, **Per** 5, **Chr** 5, **Det** 5

Defense 8/16, **DR** 0, **Shock** 11, **Wound** 7

Skills: Awareness 2, Melee 3, Naturalist 4, Stealth 3

Tentacles: +8 (♠12S/♥8S/♦4S/♣2S). Also grapples the target on a successful hit and increases the target's Dazed consequence.

Combustable: The hydrogen gas that builds up in a flying hydroid's balloon is extremely flammable.

Any attack from a flame thrower or other open flame source that penetrates the balloon causes the creature to spontaneously combust, dealing 6M damage to everything within 5 m.

Flight: Flying hydroids can float through the air at half normal movement rates.

The flying hydroid is a sizable predatory organism that spends most of its lifecycle in the water, but which can emerge above the waves, floating through the air with the use of a large balloon-like sac that inflates with hydrogen. Under this balloon trail numerous stinging tentacles, which are used to grasp prey. Often these tentacles will trail downward into the water, allowing the hydroid to "fish" without exposing their main body to aquatic predators. Occasionally hydroids will venture away from the open water, lurking over humid areas of land.

Most species of flying hydroids are translucent, helping them blend into their surroundings. Unlucky prey will swim, fly or walk into their tendrils unaware. Other prey will be stalked and slowly ambushed from above, as the flying hydroid lowers itself over a sleeping victim.

Some of the larger species of flying hydroids have a chitinous ribbing that circles their balloon sacs, giving the sacs added structure and support. All flying hydroids must return to the water once they reach their stationary adult form.



Lurker In the Regolith

Str 12, **Dex** 8, **Spd** 3, **End** 8, **Int** 2, **Per** 6, **Chr** 5, **Det** 5

Defense 7/16, **DR** 3, **Shock** 17, **Wound** 10

Skills: Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Melee 3, Naturalist 4, Stealth 5

Sharp Tendril: +7 (♠18M/♥12M/♦6M/♣3M). Range 5. Also grapples the target. Can only grapple one character at a time.

Leg Pincers: +7 (♠36L/♥24L/♦12L/♣6L). Also grapples the target. Can grapple up to eight characters at a time.

Pull Closer: On its turn, a lurker can attempt pull a grappled character closer. This happens in Phase 3 and requires no AP expenditure. Make a Str vs. Str flip. On a success, characters grappled with the lurker's tendril instead become grappled with its leg pincers, taking 12L damage in the process. Characters already grappled with the lurker's leg pincers instead take 24L damage and increase their Dazed consequence two severities, as the lurker's venom takes effect.

Size +1: Lurkers in the regolith are large and imposing. This has been factored into the creature's Defense and Shock.

A lurker in the regolith is a large ambush predator. It digs a hole in the ground, enters the hole and covers itself with the surrounding dirt and rocks. When potential prey wanders by, it suddenly whips out a long, barbed spear-like tendril, which it uses to pierce the prey and drag it back to its subterranean hiding spot. When the prey is dragged close enough, it can also grasp on with its many spider-like legs, each tipped with a small pincer. The target is then crushed and slowly dissolved in digestive juices.

When not hidden in the ground, the body of a lurker looks something like a cross between a bloated tick and a hermit crab. The side of the creature oriented toward the hole's opening has a circle of grasping, spider-like legs tipped with pincers. These surround a sticky digestive pad, used to dissolve and absorb prey. Coming from an orifice in the middle of this pad is the lurker's spear-like tendril.

Lurkers are capable of leaving their hole and moving about, but they are slow, lumbering and awkward when doing this. Most simply find a good ambush site, dig a hole and remain there for the duration of their life.

The Lurker Metaphor

"Regarding the other colonies on this planet, I can think of no better a metaphor than the lurker in the regolith. It appears strong at first—terrifying even, once revealed—but underneath it is bloated, lumbering and awkward. These creatures shield their flanks by burying themselves in the dirt and muck. Against such abominations, we organize our society on the principle that one strong and capable arm can shield the many."

— Janna Zhandos

Predator Isle

Str 1, **Dex** 8, **Spd** 6, **End** 4, **Int** 1, **Per** 7, **Chr** 6, **Det** 5

Defense 10/21, **DR** 0, **Shock** —, **Wound** 7 (swarm) and 12 (colony)

Skills: Athletics 4, Awareness 4, Melee 2, Naturalist 3

Bite: +6 (♠3L/♥2L/♦1L/♣1L). A predator isle swarm is extremely good at chewing through armor. Reduce DR from armor by 1 every time a character receives a bite.

Aquatic: Predator isles are aquatic by nature. They are able to remain underwater indefinitely, and may swim at their normal rate of movement.

Colony Isle: While a predator isle launches a swarm to attack, its floating colony drifts nearby—usually 10 m or so away from its target. This portion of the predator isle doesn't attack, but has Defense 6/12 and Wound 12. A colony swarm will usually attack until either the swarm has been dissipated or until the floating colony sustains enough damage to push it into its Dying Gasp, at which point it will make a quick retreat, sinking beneath the waves.

Flight: The swarm from a predator isle can fly at twice normal movement rates.

Swarm: The attacking swarm of a predator isle isn't a single creature, but rather a moving mass of smaller creatures. A swarm has no Shock threshold and any attack that isn't an Area Attack only deals a light wound. Instead of experiencing Dying Gasps, a swarm simply dissipates into dying and scattered individuals. It uses its Determination instead of Strength to calculate Wound.

A predator isle is a mobile colony of small sea creatures which have built up a floating mass of trapped air and calcium carbonate, much like a coral reef with the ability to swim, float or submerge itself in the water.

A predator isle uses its mobility to stalk prey, during which a swarm of the inhabitant creatures will launch themselves from the isle and engage in a feeding frenzy. These small creatures are about the size of a human thumb, with four dragonfly-like wings that are capable of flight over short distances. They possess a nasty jagged carapace on one end, which they can grind and use as teeth. They are adept at chewing through shells, tough hides or armor, aided by a strong digestive acid.

As with many creatures native to Siren, the organisms that make up a predator isle have a younger ambulatory form. These are the creatures that launch in the swarm. They also possess a mature fruiting form, which remain as part of the isle and which secrete the calcium carbonate that holds the colony together.

Swarms & Common Sense

Some of the creatures in this chapter—such as the Predator Isle and Sting Worm Boil—attack as a swarm of smaller organisms. Each of these creatures has the swarm trait, which covers many of the mechanical differences for this sort of character. The listed differences cannot cover every possibility, however, and GMs are urged to use common sense when handling combat with a swarm and narrating the results. For example, many of the effects on the Lingerin' Injuries table assume human-like physiology. If a player chooses to deal a Lingerin' Injury to a swarm, the GM should be creative and exercise her best judgement when narrating the result.

Raptor of Siren

Str 9, **Dex** 5, **Spd** 7, **End** 7, **Int** 2, **Per** 8, **Chr** 6, **Det** 4

Defense 10/20, **DR** 0, **Shock** 11, **Wound** 8

Skills: Athletics 4, Awareness 4, Melee 4, Naturalist 4

Radula: +6 (♠27M/♥18M/♦9M/♣4M)

Flight: Raptors of Siren can fly at twice normal movement rates.

Swamp: When making a melee attack, a raptor of siren may immediately move for free—as if it had spent 1 AP—both before and after the attack executes.

Raptors of Siren are large flying predators with about the same mass as an adult human and an odd, bulbous body that looks something like an oyster without a shell. These creatures have four dragonfly-like wings, which can either hold them aloft in flight, or wrap around their bodies to form a protective casing when perching on the ground.

When hunting, raptors of Siren make use of a strong, deceptively sharp radula-like tendrils, which they can strike out at prey with surprising speed. This tendrils is capable both of cutting and grasping, sometimes severing pieces of the prey's body and allowing the raptor to eat the unfortunate victim piecemeal.

Raptors are covered in a dry, flaky skin which sheds regularly. On the bottom of the body is a squishy mass that hides the raptor's mouth-like opening.



Sting Worm Boil

Str 1, **Dex** 8, **Spd** 3, **End** 4, **Int** 1, **Per** 4, **Chr** 3, **Det** 6

Defense 7/15, **DR** 0, **Shock** —, **Wound** 5

Skills: Awareness 2, Melee 2, Naturalist 4

Sting: +6 (♠3S/♥2S/♦1S/♣1S). The worms' stings are severe, but are easily circumvented with armor—at least until the worms start to burrow through it.

Burrowing: Sting worms can burrow through soil, plastic or organic material surprisingly quickly. By declaring an action, they can burrow through 10 cm of material or 1 DR of armor per AP spent. This also allows them to burrow in preparation for an ambush.

Size 0: Sting worms are small and nimble, but a swarm of them can be sizable. Every time the swarm takes a wound, reduce its Size by -1. This will increase its Defense by +1. Individual sting worms are Size -4.

Swarm: A sting worm boil isn't a single creature, but rather a moving mass of smaller creatures. A swarm has no Shock threshold and any attack that isn't an Area Attack only deals a light wound. Instead of experiencing Dying Gasps, a swarm simply dissipates into dying and scattered individuals. It uses its Determination instead of Strength to calculate Wound.

Sting worms are vaguely worm-like creatures, roughly 10 to 40 cm long and 2 to 3 cm in diameter. They are usually reddish brown in color and, unlike terrestrial worms, they have a bilateral instead of radial symmetry. They frequently move along the ground in a manner similar to an inchworm, but can also burrow into soft earth or exposed organic matter with surprising speed.

Sting worms are coated in a potent mucus that is both corrosive and venomous. They are opportunistic scavengers, and have a spontaneously communal mentality, much like schooling fish. This allows them to form a boiling mass, which attacks in a swarm, burrowing through exposed organics and feeding off the carbon-rich matter.



Centauran

Hazards

In addition to its wide-ranging and dangerous predators, Siren is also home to a variety of other hazards, from its intoxicating atmosphere to its higher gravity. Eventually some parasitic lifeforms will also figure out how to make the biologic leap to infect human bodies.

Anaerobic Atmosphere

A standard breather filters out the excess nitrogen in Siren's atmosphere, preventing nitrogen narcosis and leaving the remnant as breathable air. In the vast majority of locations on Siren this is sufficient for human respiration.

In some isolated valleys, caverns and tunnels, however, the atmospheric oxygen drops below a safe level for humans. In these locales, a vac suit or non-standard breather with its own oxygen tank is required, as most breathers cannot compensate. Those without the necessary equipment will begin to show symptoms. These manifest as something akin to a very slow suffocation.

- For every hour in the anaerobic environment, a character without proper equipment should make an End-12 flip. On a failure, her Fatigue consequence increases a severity. Once this would increase beyond critical severity, she instead takes a light wound. Wounds and Fatigue caused by anaerobic atmospheric cannot be removed until after the character can once again breathe freely.

Higher Gravity

At 1.3 g, Siren has about 30% higher gravity than does Earth. For many colonists this will take some getting used to. After landing on Siren, until the characters acclimate, the GM may opt to impose a -1 penalty to all physical actions due

to the higher gravity. All characters should make a Str-12 flip at the end of each week. Success means the character has acclimated.

- Even after acclimation, falls may continue to be more dangerous. The action to land gracefully from a fall is a Dex/athletics-12 flip instead of the usual TN 10.
- Due to the higher atmospheric pressure counterbalancing the higher gravity, terminal velocity on Siren still caps out at 20 light wounds.
- See the rules for falls on page 157 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook.

Nitrogen Narcosis

Siren has both a higher concentration of nitrogen and a higher atmospheric pressure than does Earth. This combination makes those breathing the atmosphere unaided prone to developing nitrogen narcosis, a state of altered consciousness caused by an overabundance of nitrogen in the blood stream. This same phenomenon is experienced by scuba divers who sometimes refer to it as the "raptures of the deep" or the "martini effect." On Siren it becomes known as *Siren's Call*.

Initially, nitrogen narcosis produces a state similar to drunkenness. Eventually, this condition worsens as the colonist becomes increasingly impaired. The narcosis is quickly reversed, if the colonist is given a breather or similar respiration device. Long-term experiences of nitrogen narcosis—on the order of weeks—can lead to Blue Baby Syndrome and eventually death.

- Nitrogen narcosis uses the rules for *Maladies* found on page 154 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook.
- **Vector:** Inhaled
- **Action:** End-12 (1 hour, Tally 3). Make the first flip after an hour of exposure to the atmosphere without a breather. Recovery is only possible once no longer directly breathing the atmosphere.

- **Effect:** The character begins to feel a sense of mild euphoria, similar to alcohol or nitrous oxide. Increase the character's Dazed consequence a severity for each failed flip. After a week, if not recovered, begin to make weekly flips, increasing the target's Fatigue consequence. This is Blue Baby Syndrome. If she is not treated, the character will die.

Pox Stars

Pox stars are parasitic creatures whose near-microscopic larvae are ingested when a colonist consumes infected nutrients or water. Once inside the body, the larvae burrow through tissue until they take root just under the skin. There they pupate and grow into a vaguely starfish-worm shaped organism. The end of each worm-segment is tipped with a sharp, toothy appendage, which allows the segment to burrow further into the body. The star-shaped organism is usually just barely visible under the skin, giving the infection its name. As the creature matures, its segments will breach the skin and expel the organism's larvae to infect the nearby environment.

- Use the rules for Maladies found on page 154 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook.
- **Vector:** Ingested
- **Action:** End-12 (1 week, Tally 10).
- **Effect:** Every time the flip is failed, the pox stars multiply and spread throughout the body. On a failure by Mag 5+, the character receives a light wound and increases her Fixated (pox stars) consequence a severity, as the infection begins to itch. Pox stars are revolting, but rarely fatal.

Spore Infection

Spore infection is caused by a particularly nasty parasitic organism that will eventually make the leap to infect humans (see page 184). In its early stages it presents as a simple flu-like illness,

but all the while black, spore-like growths are spreading throughout the inside of the victim's body, paralleling the host nervous system.

Eventually the infection will gain the ability to hijack the victim's body, controlling it with crude electric impulses. When this happens, it will cause the host to shamble to a crowded corridor or other public space. There the victim's head will split open with a surprising pressure, spraying others nearby with gore and black ichor. This serves to further spread the infection.

- Uses the rules for Maladies found on page 154 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook.
- Once the host has been puppeted, use the Spore Drone stat block on the next page.

Spore Progression

Spore infection has a different effect each time the character fails her Endurance flip as part of the malady's extended action.

- **Vector:** Contact
- **Action:** End-12 (1 day, Tally 10). Requires advanced medicine for any recovery to be made. Without this, the total doesn't carry over from interval to interval. See the "Contagion" scenario, page 184.
- **First Effect:** At this stage the victim suffers fever, chills and sweats. She receives a -2 penalty to Det-based flips.
- **Second Effect:** The symptoms progress to fatigue and lethargy, meanwhile the victim can feel pressure building within her body, particularly her head. Her penalty to Determination now affects all flips.
- **Third Effect:** At this point the infection gains full muscular control of the host's corpus. The victim is trapped in her own body, and is only able to scream with great effort. PCs may spend an Edge to suppress this effect for 1 hour. Pressure continues to build in the victim's head. She will become a spore drone within 24 hours.

Spore Drone

Str 6, **Dex** 4, **Spd** 4, **End** 6, **Int** 1, **Per** 3, **Chr** 2, **Det** 7

Defense 5/11, **DR** 0, **Shock** 13, **Wound** 6

Skills: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Melee 2

Unarmed: +4 (♠18L/♥12L/♦6L/♣3L)

Spore Eruption: When a spore drone either finds an appropriately crowded location or takes a number wounds equal to its Wound threshold, its head will suddenly burst open, unleashing a cloud of infectious spores. Anyone within 10 m without an environmentally sealed suit is exposed. Exposed colonists must succeed in an End-14 flip or themselves develop spore infection (see the previous page).

Spore infection has a way of hijacking a host's body and using it to spread the infection. This is common among some species on Siren, but it is only late in the colonization effort that spore infection makes the jump to being able to infect humans (see page 184).

A spore drone is a human host in the advanced stages of spore infection. In this state the host is either barely conscious or is only conscious for fleeting moments—usually filled with screaming or sobs.

The filaments of spore growth running through the host's body control it like a rather clumsy puppet. The controlling spore seeks to attract attention or otherwise move the host somewhere crowded. Then it erupts. The host's head suddenly splits open, spraying all nearby in a shower of gore and infectious spores. This may create other hosts, and the cycle continues.



Centauran Civilization

Siren was once home to its own intelligent species. Soon to be known to the human colonists as the Centauran civilization, this species pulled itself up out of the primordial ooze, developing culture and technology. It spread across the planet and even to Siren's neighboring worlds. Then, mysteriously, and in a very short timeframe, it vanished, leaving behind only crumbling ruins and the scattered and broken artifacts of its civilization.

This section describes what the human colonists studying the ruins of the ancient civilization can infer about its species, its culture and its technology. It also presents several possibilities as to the nature of the civilization and its eventual fate. More so than most, everything presented in this section should be considered guidelines for the GM rather than established facts. This gives game masters the maximum possible leeway to present the Centauran civilization as an enticing mystery for the players.

Biology

The Centaurans inherited much of the same biology as other species on Siren, including a hunger for carbon and both ambulatory and fruiting forms. In fact, Centaurans seem to have participated in their society in both forms, leading to a territorial civilization centered around communities of older stationary individuals, and held together by a network of ambulatory younger individuals.

In their ambulatory forms, Centaurans stood between 1.2 and 1.4 meters tall, leading to architecture that seems slightly too small and cramped by human standards. They possessed a segmented body that was more horizontal than vertical, as well as numerous

legs. Somewhere between two and six of the front legs were different from the rest, allowing for the fine manipulation of objects.

In their primitive state, Centaurans are thought to have primarily relied on electrical and biochemical signals for communication. This quickly changed early in their civilization, however, as the species quickly learned how to use tools to produce sound. Their language then underwent a fundamental shift in favor of developing a tool-based audible language.

Like many Siren species, Centaurans are thought to have been hermaphroditic. In their adult, fruiting form they took root and could grow up to 4 meters in length. When taking this form, their front legs would undergo a metamorphosis, losing much of their rigidity, but retaining their ability to manipulate objects. This allowed fruiting individuals to continue to participate in Centauran society.

History

Piecing together the history of the Centauran species is difficult. Until they achieved industrialization, the civilization left behind little that remains intact and which can be conclusively dated. Nevertheless, here are some of humanity's best guesses for significant milestones in the species' development.

Anatomically evolved Centaurans appear to have emerged near Mount Icarus somewhere between 300,000 and 350,000 years ago. From there they spread northward and eastward, eventually encircling the planet and settling throughout Siren's main continent.

Tool use appears to have been developed by related predecessor species some 2 million years ago. By the time anatomically evolved Centaurans arose, many of these predecessor species had already died off. At one time there may have been as many as five competing species, but the

last of the competitor species went extinct at least 30,000 years before the present day.

The Centauran species appears to have started the process of industrialization somewhere around 600 BCE. By this point, they had already possessed knowledge of agriculture and writing for at least several thousand years. The Centauran industrial revolution was rapid, with industrial manufacturing quickly spreading throughout all inhabited parts of the world.

It is unclear when the Centaurans first reached space, but by around 1 CE they had evidently reached the planet Molpe. It's likely that by this point they had been exploring interplanetary space for some time.

Finally, sometime around the year 300 CE, the species suddenly and mysteriously went extinct. Within the span of a decade they had all but vanished. The civilization went from an advanced spacefaring society to the ghost of a memory overnight.

Technology

It is apparent from the ruins that at its height the Centauran civilization was advanced. Clearly they had created a globe-spanning society which was capable of long-range radio transmissions,

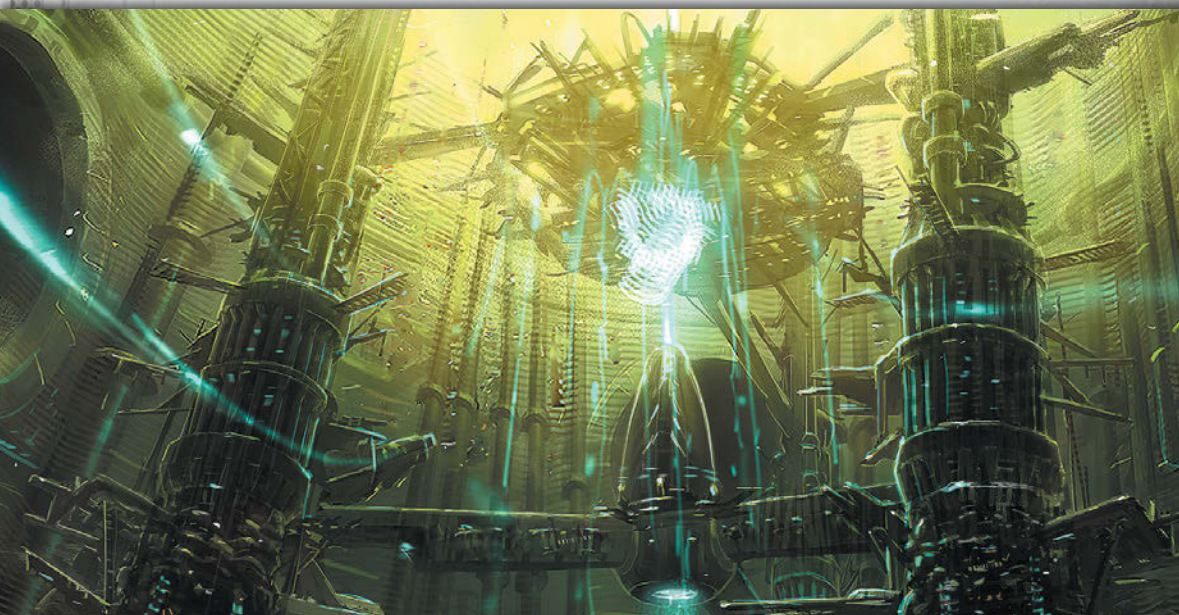
basic fabrication, orbital launch and the manufacture of interplanetary spacecraft.

In this way they seem comparable to human civilization at the point of the ARC Project's launch, perhaps a bit more advanced in some regards and a bit less in others. What could have happened to wipe out a civilization this advanced, makes their disappearance even more of a mystery.

Construction

Centauran ruins tend to be subterranean complexes, built under a large mound of earth, usually with some metallic structures remaining on the surface overhead. Whether this means that the civilization lived exclusively underground or whether it is simply that these subterranean structures are the only ones that survived to the present day is unknown.

Many of the surviving complexes have similar features in their construction and layout. Most possess hexagonal entryways with a spiraling ramp underneath. Centauran power infrastructure looks to have made ample use of geothermal energy. Much of the architecture is composed of either non-corrosive metals or a high-density composite that somewhat resembles concrete.



Artifacts of a Dead Civilization

The Centauran civilization left behind many ruins scattered across the surface of Siren and beyond. In some of these ruins a few pieces of working technology have survived the ages since the civilization's extinction, waiting dormant in the long abandoned corridors.

Below are a few examples of alien technology, given in appropriate format for what each represents: gear, vehicle or deadly threat.

Alien Drone

- **Cost Rating:** —
- **Handling** +2, **Defense** 8/17, **DR** 3, **Shock** 13, **Structure** 5, **Cruise** 6
- **Properties:** Vehicle
- **Pulse Cannon:** +5 (♠24M/♥16M/♦8M/♣4M), Range 100M

Near the end of their civilization the Centaurans manufactured autonomous interplanetary drones. These vehicles are about the size of a standard space fighter. The front of the hull is irregularly rounded, while the back of the hull has the engines and numerous appendages that trail slightly behind. These appendages are used in the drone hangars, where they interface with the facility to charge or exchange data. They can also interface with other drones to leech power or information.

Alien Sentinel

Str 12, **Dex** 8, **Spd** 8, **End** 12, **Int** 2, **Per** 6, **Chr** 6, **Det** 10

Defense 10/21, **DR** 10, **Shock** 32, **Wound** 12

Skills: Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Comp-Ops 2, Mechanic 2, Guns 2, Melee 3

Knife Appendage: +7 (♠36M/♥24M/♦12M/♣6M)

Overrun: +7 (♠36M/♥24M/♦12M/♣6M)

Inscrutable: As a relic of a lost civilization, alien sentinels are immune to all computational and mechanical attempts to subvert their systems, unless the character has first been able to thoroughly study a disabled sentinel in a controlled environment.

Machine: As a machine, an alien sentinel is immune to metabolic hazards, as well as emotionally-based consequences.

Size +1: Alien sentinels are large guardian machines. This has been factored into the sentinel's Defense and Shock.

An alien sentinel is a large robotic guardian left behind by the extinct Centauran civilization. At first glance it appears similar to a horse-sized metallic roly-poly, with interlocking metal plates covering its back and numerous legs along the underside of its chassis. Sticking out from underneath are several long, multi-jointed appendages ending in sharp knives.

When moving, an alien sentinel will either slowly crawl along the ground on its numerous legs, or it will curl up into a ball and roll forward with surprising speed. While it does this, the knife appendages stick out from the robot's sides, somehow remaining stabilized, despite the rolling motion.

Alien sentinels sense the world around them using a vibration sense, as well as the ability to see a large portion of the electromagnetic spectrum. Among other things, this allows them to detect magnetics, electronics and ferrous metals.

Each alien sentinel was left with a particular directive, and it mindlessly continues carrying out the directive to this day—although most were also given self-preservation protocols. Possible directives includes “guard this door,” “attack anything electromagnetic that comes through here” or “await further instructions.”

Chitin Weave

- **Cost Rating:** —
- **Properties:** DR 2

Chitin weave is a sort of thick, shimmery cloth found in Centauran ruins. It appears to have been used both decoratively and as a means to divide larger chambers up into smaller segments, acting as a sort of curtain. Whatever the cloth is made out of, it is remarkably durable and resistant to both dirt and damage. Human colonists might be able to repurpose chitin weave to make armor which is both light and durable.

Tonal Emitter

- **Cost Rating:** —
- **Properties:** —

This is a fist-sized metallic sphere that, when activated, emits a high-pitched noise, well beyond the range of human hearing. This noise acts to repel many of Siren's native species. At the GM's discretion, any native creature coming within 20 m of an activated emitter must succeed on an Det-12 flip or actively keep its distance. Particularly aggressive species that succeed on this flip may be driven into a frenzy, seeking to destroy the source of the painful noise. Activating or deactivating the emitter requires a successful Int/mechanic-10 flip, representing applying pressure to the outside of the sphere in a specific pattern.

Touch Blaster

- **Cost Rating:** —
- **Damage:** ♠9M/♥6M/♦3M/♣1M
- **Properties:** Shots 10; Stun

This strange device looks something like a bulky oven mitt that ends in a hexagonal pad. It's slightly too long for comfort when placed over a human arm, extending well past the elbow and toward the shoulder. On the inside of the pad is a small lever. When the hexagonal pad is placed against a target and the lever pushed, the device emits a sudden charge of electricity into the target, dealing a fair amount of resultant damage and possibly stunning the target. No reloading or recharging mechanism is obvious, but given enough time with the device, an engineer might be able to design such a mechanism.



Siren's Call

In the *Siren's Call* campaign the characters have been selected as colonists for the ARC Project, an ambitious attempt to send a slower-than-light colony ship to the planet Siren, orbiting Alpha Centauri A. This will be a four century journey in stasis, and no one really knows what humanity will find on the other side. Whatever the case may be, the colonists will need to establish a colony on the new world, explore their new environment and, above all, survive. Unfortunately, some of humanity's biggest challenges are those they take with them.

Synopsis

The *Siren's Call* campaign consists of eight core scenarios. These make up the central campaign arc, introducing pivotal events that drive forward the story of the colonization effort and the discoveries that are made on Siren.

These scenarios are intended to be interspersed between other adventures. The other scenarios can either be written by the GM to suit the players, or the GM can pick one of the many "side treks" included in the next chapter (see page 203).

This means that while there is a core campaign framework, which tells the big story of the colonization effort in the background, it is constructed in a way that gives GMs the freedom to write and run their own stories in the foreground.

The eight core scenarios are described in brief below.

■ **Violent Arrival:** The ARC colony ship arrives at the Alpha Centauri system, but the engines have been damaged during the journey and the ship is unable to properly

decelerate. The different factions on the colony ship begin working at cross purposes, each attempting to fix the situation in its own way. In the end, the colonists are forced to abandon the ship in drop modules.

- **First Steps:** Several drop modules crash land on Siren. The team must gather the surviving colonists, making it through their first night on the new planet and begin the process of turning disaster into a viable colony.
- **Second Place:** When the team goes on an expedition to gather resources for their fledgling colony, they discover evidence that the Project Osiris colony ship arrived at Siren before them.
- **Contact:** The team's colony re-establishes contact with two other groups of survivors of the ARC colony ship, but these two other colonies are locked in an ongoing war and the team's colony must decide where they stand.
- **Ashes:** The team explores newly discovered alien ruins on the planet, encountering an ancient robotic guardian and explorers from yet another human colony in the process. This ends in bloodshed and the retrieval of an alien data core.
- **Garden of Annihilation:** The team decrypts planetary coordinates from the alien data core and explores the site, only to discover primitive genetically engineered survivors descended from the Project Osiris colonists.
- **Contagion:** The native microorganisms have learned how to infect the human colonists, and the team must undertake a return mission to space in order to retrieve necessary medical supplies from the remnants of the ARC colony ship.

- **Ascension:** The team must race against other factions in order to secure the planetary control system from a vast alien ruin, before the system can be activated, leading to either domination or planetary disaster.

Prelude: Launch

For this campaign we recommend running character creation as a group session. (This is also our general recommendation for most campaigns.) During this session the GM should introduce the key concepts and themes of the campaign, and allow players to ask questions. The players can then discuss with each other, brainstorm ideas together and come up with a team of player characters that meshes well.

As written, the *Siren's Call* campaign assumes that the characters were chosen for the ARC Project back at Sol. They potentially spent several years preparing for the long voyage, but the campaign doesn't actually begin until the colony ship's arrival in the Alpha Centauri system. Conceptually, the

GM and players can think of this character creation session as a prelude back at Sol, or the run up to the project launch.

One potentially interesting way to introduce the characters during this prelude—and to flesh out their personalities—is for the GM to run a short introductory scene for each character, or to otherwise ask the players questions about their characters. Some possibilities are below.

Last Day on Earth

The launch of the ARC Project is a huge life-changing event for everyone involved. The colonists will be going into stasis with a very real possibility of never waking up again. They are then going to be slung deep into space, not emerging for centuries. They're never going to see Earth again. They're never again going to see any loved ones they leave behind. They will have no money and no worldly possessions other than those that fit into a small personal locker. Their old life will be gone.

One particularly telling question is to ask each player what her character does during her last completely free day before launch. That is, not counting launch prep



or necessary travel, what does she do with her free time? Does she say goodbye to loved ones? Does she enjoy a day out and about? Does she go on an all-day bender?

Another interesting question is: What does she do with all her money and possessions that she cannot bring with her? Does she give them away to family, friends or subcultural fellows? Does she just abandon them? Does she donate them to charity?

Interview Questions

Another interesting exercise to flesh out characters is to run a series of short interview scenes. After all, at some point each player character was chosen to be part of the ARC Project. In these scenes, have one player roleplay her character during the interview and have the other players roleplay the interviewers.

It might be good to keep these scenes short and to the point. Have each interviewing player ask one question of each interviewee. It might also be interesting for the interviewers to each represent one faction involved in the ARC Project, rotating between interview scenes (see page 30). This helps introduce the factions early and familiarize players with them. Some possible questions that players might ask include:

- Every kilo of mass we accelerate and decelerate is going to have a massive energy and financial cost. How do you literally justify your own weight on the project? What skills do you bring?
- Tell me about your greatest mistake and what you would have done differently?
- What would you have to say to people back on Earth after arrival?
- What do you see as your greatest moral failing? How do you cope with this failing?
- What will you say to your fellow colonists when they look to you for guidance and comfort?
- Tell us about a conflict you've had with a colleague. How did you resolve it?
- What's the one aspect of human culture you don't want to leave behind?
- What aspect of society do you want to make sure isn't brought with us to Siren?
- Tell me about a moment in your life in which you had to improvise or do something new.
- When you arrive at Siren you won't have access to modern commerce. Whether you were a CEO or a drifter before, suddenly you're going to be on similar economic footing—at least at first. How do you plan to develop the new economy? What model would you recommend pursuing?

Player Faction

Over the course of the campaign the player colony will interact with a number of other human colonies, each representing one of the ARC Project's major factions. This works well to center the campaign on the player characters, but it does leave their colony something of the odd man out, as it's the only colony not centered around an existing faction.

GMs who want to give the player characters a central unifying agenda can have the players create a faction of their own. In this case, the GM should direct the players to collectively come up with the name, agenda and the unique characteristics of their faction during the character creation session. This faction can then be retroactively included in the history of the ARC Project.

Violent Arrival

This scenario is designed to kick off the *Siren's Call* campaign. It sets the scene and introduces the major NPCs. In it the player characters will be awakened from stasis amid an ongoing struggle between the colony ship's captain and its XO. The ship has been damaged in transit on its approach to Siren, and the struggle is the result of a disagreement over how to handle the situation.

Once awakened, the colonists must overcome the effects of long-term stasis, choose a side in the ongoing struggle and survey the damage to the ship.

In the midst of all this, a group of saboteurs sponsored by Unitech will make their presence known by attempting to seize the armory and control of the ship. The player characters must prevent this and oversee the colonists' safe descent to the planet's surface, before the hull tears itself apart.

Awakening

The characters will awaken from stasis under the oversight of a single stasis tech. He will speak in soft but rushed tones, welcoming the colonists back to consciousness.

- "You've made it. Welcome back. Take your time. There are bound to be some side effects. You've been asleep almost 400 years, after all."
- "I've got to head off now. I have a lot of other people to wake up. Take the time you need to be fit for duty, then report to the XO. Not everything on the ship is well and we'll need your help."

The tech then heads off, leaving the characters in the room to rest and recover. If any of them try to ask him what's going on, the player character's voice will come across as little more than an audible croak, to which

the tech will reply, "Your concern right now is recovery, otherwise you're not going to be of help to anyone." Then he is gone.

Stasis Complications

An optional table of stasis complications from the voyage can be found on page 92. The intent is to get across to players that long-term stasis is dangerous and unprecedented, without the effects being so debilitating as to get in the way of the players' fun. The GM should feel free to fudge the results if the tables produces an effect that is a bad match for the player.

The Dead Aren't So Lucky

The player characters aren't the only ones waking up in the chamber. There are ten stasis pods here and nine colonists (including the PCs) emerging from stasis. On the tenth pod an error light blinks faintly. Inside is a shriveled mummy of a human being—the corpse of a colonist who was not so lucky during the long voyage.

This is a moment for the players to interact, take stock of their situation and begin to explore their immediate environment. The worst of their stasis complications will pass within a few hours. They can either wait here in the chamber or push themselves, heading out into the rest of the ship while still under the effects.

- Examining the malfunctioning stasis pod and succeeding on an Int/medic-10 or Int/mechanic-10 flip will reveal that the enamel wasn't properly applied to one of its seals during manufacturing. Centuries of age and rot ate away at the seal until the environment inside the pod was breached. Its occupant has been dead for over a century. The pod contains no data on the corpse's identity.
- Steve Scott is among the NPCs waking up in this chamber. His stats can be found on page 91. The GM should take a moment

to roleplay him and, if possible, make an impression on the players. His charismatic calmness should come across in this situation. Unless the players change things, he will wait here until he is recovered and then seek out the XO as requested.

- For any remaining NPCs in the room, use the Colonist stats found on page 84. They are a mix of low-level engineers and medical techs.

Reporting for Duty

Once the characters decide to leave the stasis chamber, finding Josefina Navarro, the XO, is easy. Even if they don't go looking for her, they will come across her in a hallway not far from where they first emerged. She is there giving orders to several newly awakened colonists, and will wave the characters over when they approach.

- Josefina Navarro's stats can be found on page 87.
- If recovered, Steve Scott and the other NPCs will follow the characters to Josefina and stay to talk with her after they leave.

Status Report

"Are you fit to work?" will be her first question. Regardless of how the players respond, she'll launch into the explanation of the ongoing situation:

- "We've entered the Alpha Centauri system. We're almost there. Unfortunately, shortly after entering, the ship collided with some sort of space debris. The resulting impact damaged the reactor."
- "The good news is that the reactor's safety protocols deployed successfully, since we're not being flooded with lethal radiation right now. The bad news is that as a result, the reactor has shut down."

- "Right now we should be decelerating hard in preparation for our arrival at Siren. But since the reactor's shut down, we can't do that. Unless we fix things, we're going to overshoot our destination. Our trajectory will take us into the Alpha Centauri system and right back out again. Then we'll all die in deep space."

- "Right now we need people to head to the reactor and survey the damage. We also need people to assess damage to stasis pods and the other sections of the ship near the reactor. Finally, there are likely to be safety hazards as a result of the collision. We need to clear them up as best we can."

Get to Work!

With that Josefina will send the colonists off in the direction of the reactor. She's willing to answer a question or two first, but her answers will be brief. She's got work to do and so do they. Before the characters all leave, however, she will pull one of them aside for a private word. The GM should pick a player character. If possible, pick one with command or administrative experience, or the one who otherwise seems like the natural leader of the group.

- "We need to do whatever it takes to make sure that we all arrive at Siren safely—even if that means that things get ugly. I can count on you, right?"
- Josefina takes stock of the character's response, and on that ominous note, sends the colonists on their way.



Surveying the Damage

Once the colonists head to the damaged parts of the ship there's a lot to assess and take stock of. As this is the first real opportunity for the players to be proactive, it's good to give them some leeway here, or a nudge in the right direction if things slow down. Otherwise, before things get too off track, the GM should interrupt the character's actions with the "Captain's Dilemma" event below.

Some actions the colonists might take include:

- **Surveying the Reactor:** The reactor is in bad shape following the collision. The control rods successfully deployed to shut down the reaction, but the shielding, which protects the rest of the ship from lethal levels of radiation, took the worst of the damage. On a successful Int/engineer-10 flip, a colonist can determine that starting the reactor up again will require both overriding the safety protocols and finding a secondary source of shielding.
- **Nearby Stasis Chambers:** Many of the stasis pods in the nearby chambers have been damaged. Most of the colonists in them are freshly dead, although with a successful Per/medic-10 flip, a character will identify a few who still barely cling to life. A successful Int/medic-12 flip will revive them. Failure results in death.
- **Accessing the Computers:** The computers near the reactor are mostly offline—a result of the damage from the collision. The terminals near where the characters woke up have all been locked out of the ship's core systems. This is an act the captain has taken to limit the XO's activity on the ship (see the The Catch on the next page). Success on an Int/program-10 flip will reveal that the lockout was authorized by a code belonging to the ship's command crew.

- **Reviewing Collision Footage:** The ship's external sensors collect footage of the outside of the ship, taking a snapshot every two seconds for the last four centuries. Digging through the footage takes a lot of time, but isn't especially difficult. Several hours and success on a Det/comp-ops-10 flip will yield footage of the collision. The object the ship collided with is only visible in a single frame. The details of the object are blurry, but it's almost perfectly spherical—not your typical space debris. (These details aren't important now, but they hint at revelations later.)
- **Checking Earth Broadcasts:** Any message being received from Earth would have been sent over four years ago. No current transmissions are being received. Regular transmissions are available in the archives for the first fifteen months of the ship's voyage, then they abruptly stop. A successful Int/program-10 flip reveals that fifteen months into the voyage, the computer archiving the transmissions crashed due to a hardware malfunction. It stopped recording transmissions after that.

Captain's Dilemma

As the colonists are going about their tasks, they will be approached by Lindiwe Temma. He will take a few moments to introduce himself, ask how the characters are doing and if they've spoken with Josefina Navarro. If the colonists confirm that they have, he will let out a long sigh. Regardless of their answer, he will ask them to accompany him to go speak with the captain.

- Lindiwe Temma's stats can be found on page 89.

The Bridge

Lindiwe leads the colonists to the bridge, on the far side of the ship. In it is the captain, Cardinal Milo Sardou, as well as several technicians who look as if they are nursing the effects

of stasis sickness. When the characters enter, Cardinal Sardou will let out a sigh of his own and say, “More of them?” to which Lindiwe will reply, “Yes. It appears Josefina has been busy.”

- Cardinal Milo Sardou’s stats can be found on page 90.

The Situation

Take a moment for Lindiwe and Sardou to interact with the colonists. This is a good opportunity to make an impression in the minds of the players, as both of these characters will be featured later in the campaign. Once they’ve had a moment, Sardou will explain his side of the situation.

- “As I’m sure you’ve heard by now, the ship has been damaged, the reactors are down and we’re currently moving at a speed that is much, much too fast for safe arrival at Siren.”
- “I’ve consulted with Dr. Shapiro and one of her scientists, and the prevailing opinion is that even if we get the reactors back online, there is no reasonable certainty that we’re going to have sufficient time to decelerate before we reach Siren. And that even if we did, the damaged hull may not be able to handle the stresses involved. The ship may tear itself apart in the attempt.”
- “I am not willing to risk the lives of every human being on board in this sort of reckless gamble.”
- “Our scientists have devised an alternative plan. If we use the ship’s auxiliary thrusters, we can angle our path where we just barely scrape Siren’s atmosphere. Basically, we would use the atmosphere to slow us down. I am told that if we do this right, we can slow down enough put the ship in long, elliptical orbit around the two suns. In this orbit, the ship will pass Siren again in about 80 years’ time.

On this second pass we ought to be able to slow down enough to safely bring the ship into planetary orbit.”

The Catch

This is a lot of new information to take in, so Sardou should break from his monologue at this point to answer any questions that the characters might have. The mechanical status of the ship is only one aspect of its current predicament, and it’s good to make sure that the players understand what’s being proposed before explaining the social aspects of what’s going on.

- “There’s just one catch. The ship’s stasis pods are custom designs. They were made for a single, incredibly long trip in stasis. In order to accomplish this technical feat, they sacrificed reusability and made a bunch of engineering tradeoffs that I’m not going to pretend to understand.”
- “We simply don’t have the resources to put people back into long-term stasis. Anyone who’s currently awake will be long dead before the ship makes its return pass. That’s why I was keeping the number of people brought out of stasis to an absolute minimum. I don’t want more deaths on my hands.”
- “Unfortunately, Ms. Navarro objected to my decision.”
- “I’m sorry you’ve been brought into the middle of this. Josefina Navarro has been relieved of duty as the ship’s XO, and in fact has been since before you were awoken from stasis. Mr. Temma here is now acting XO.”
- “She is acting outside of her authority, putting more lives in harm’s way by waking them up from stasis. Furthermore, she is pursuing a gambit with the reactor that may rip the ship apart.”
- “So like it or not, you’re here, you’re awake and now you’re in the middle of things. So where do you stand?”

Taking Sides

Now that the situation has been fully revealed to the characters, they're going to need to take a stand. They might end up siding with Cardinal Sardou, they might end up siding with Josefina Navarro or they might try to find some middle ground. Encourage the players to talk things out among themselves. If different players have different opinions, that makes the moral choice all the more tense!

Alliances

Cardinal Milo Sardou and Lindiwe Temma are on one side of the conflict together. Josefina Navarro and Steve Scott have sided together on the other side. Meanwhile, Dr. Karina Shapiro works on the data. If the characters don't seek her out after Cardinal Sardou's mention, she'll eventually find them.

All the while, a sinister third faction quietly mobilizes...

Reexamining the Arguments

The colonists may go back to either side and ask them to justify their position. Both sides will do what they can to convince the characters. Arguments they might use include:

- **Cardinal Sardou:** "We are being called upon to make a moral choice. The way I see it, this is the Trolley Problem. You know, the ethics thought experiment where you're the pilot of a runaway mag-train, and you can either leave the train on its current track and kill five people, or you can shift the track and kill one. Except in this case, we're faced with two choices. We can either, with certainty, kill a few people, or we can roll the dice, so to speak, and maybe kill 10,000."
- **Josefina Navarro:** "This entire colonization attempt is nothing but a series of calculated risks. We took a risk voyaging

here, further than any human being has ever traveled before. We took a risk when we went into stasis for longer than any human being has ever been before. And we will take yet another risk when we descend down into Siren's gravity well. I, for one, am not willing to sit by and passively die because the Cardinal doesn't have the stomach to take a necessary risk."

- **Steve Scott:** "Look, the reactor needs fixed. Period. And if we don't fix it now, who will? The next chumps who wake up on this ship when it comes around in 80 years? Guess what? Fixing this mess is going to take a lot of manpower. That means pulling people out of stasis. Also, I don't want to die. Yeah, I said it. I'm not going to make some speech full of grand ideals. I'm just exercising my biological imperative for survival, and I'd like the chance to save everyone else while I'm at it."
- **Lindiwe Temma:** "I do not believe that Josefina is acting in good faith. She knows Captain Sardou's moral argument, and I believe that she is attempting to change the ethical calculus. To use his mag-train metaphor, she is essentially pushing people onto the track in hopes that the pilot will veer down the opposite direction."

Thruster Test

One of the major personalities on the ship with whom the characters haven't interacted with yet is Dr. Karina Shapiro. She, and a member of her science team who specializes in astrophysics, have kept themselves busy charting potential trajectories through the Alpha Centauri system, running simulations involving the engines and otherwise doing scientific work related to the current predicament.

At some point after the players have chosen their side, or when it otherwise looks

like they're tiring of the discussion, they'll be approached by a scientist floating down the hallway yelling, "Hold on to the railing!" A moment later the ship will suddenly lurch to one side then back the other direction.

- If the colonists hold on, they're fine. Characters who didn't heed the warning must succeed in a Dex/athletics-10 flip or increase their Fatigue consequence a severity from the resulting bumps and bruises.

Talking to Dr. Shapiro

Shortly after this a woman will pop her head out of a nearby doorway and yell back, "The trail run was a success! Auxiliary thrusters are functional!" She'll then notice the characters and introduce herself as Dr. Karina Shapiro.

- Karina Shapiro's stats can be found on page 88.
- Dr. Shapiro will be happy to answer any technical questions the colonists have. Even if they don't ask questions, she'll happily chat away about the status of the ship.

- The ship's auxiliary thrusters are all operating, aside from a few on the damaged part of the hull.
- The ship's main engines are intact, but aren't currently functioning, since the reactor is down.
- The reactor's primary damage is to the shielding. She's confident the crew could start it up again, but unless the shielding is repaired, everyone on the ship will be irradiated. Fixing the shielding is a simple, albeit labor intensive, process. It will, however, mean cannibalizing interior walls or other metal sheeting to use as raw material for the repairs.
- The stasis pods on the ship are all a newer technology and exceeded expectations! The project had estimated 5% to 10% attrition from failed pods during the four century voyage, but the numbers coming in show an attrition rate closer to 4%!



Unitech's Hand Revealed

Before the characters head off, Dr. Shapiro will point to a terminal and ask them to help her out by flipping through the internal vid feeds to make sure that everyone is still safe following the thruster test.

Flipping through the vids is trivial and doesn't require a flip, however, it will reveal an unexpected complication. A sizable group appears to be making its way through the corridor that leads to the ship's armory.

- There are a number of mystery personnel equal to the number of players.
- Checking in with either Cardinal Sardou or Josefina Navarro will reveal that neither of them know whose people these are. In fact, each is suspicious of the other.
- If either the captain or the XO feel that the characters are on her side, she will insist that they immediately head to the armory and stop whoever it is from breaking in and arming themselves. "We cannot allow this situation to escalate further."



Securing the Armory

Before the ARC Project colony ship left Sol, it was infiltrated by Red End Interplanetary, a company of Unitech-affiliated mercenaries paid to sabotage the project in full view of the media (see page 80). While that sabotage never happened, the mercenary agents are still aboard and are using this opportunity to attempt to seize control.

The mystery personnel headed toward the armory are those agents. They hope to seize the weapons, then storm the bridge, taking command of the ship and its resources. They are aware that the ship has sustained damage and will eventually want to repair the reactor, but their first priority is arming themselves and taking command.

If the characters approach them, they will attack first and ask questions later. Their goal will be to play for time until one of them can finish cutting through the armory lock with a plasma cutter. They are being led by Janna Zhandos, who isn't present at the armory. Instead she is directing them remotely via comms while she lays low near the reactor. There, if the bid to take the armory fails, she can blend in with the other awakened workers. When they approach, the colonists will be able to hear her giving orders over the comms, but shouldn't discover her location.

- Use the Spy stats on page 213 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook. There are a number of mercenaries equal to the number of players.
- They are being led by Janna Zhandos. Her stats are on page 86.
- The agents are equipped with one plasma cutter, one USD-383 "Wasp" Light Pistol and a makeshift baton made from a bar pried from the walls of the ship (see the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook, pages 198, 180 and 182). The rest are armed only with their fists.

- Once the characters arrive, it will take the agents three rounds to force open the door to the armory using the plasma cutter. In the meantime they will take cover around corners (severe Cover consequence) and fight defensively, attempting to buy time.
- If they manage to open the door to the armory, they will quickly file inside and arm themselves with USD-1200 “Amazon” Light Rifles (see the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook, page 180).
- Rather than making a frontal assault, the colonists might attempt to sneak into the armory through the ventilation shafts, arm themselves and then take the agents by surprise. This requires success on an Int/engineer-10 flip or Int/comp-ops-12 flip to locate the correct shaft. Then it requires success on a Dex/athletics-12 flip to squeeze through the shaft into the armory.

The Comm

After the Red End agents are disarmed, captured or killed, the players’ attention should be drawn to one of their personal comms, on which Janna Zhandos can be heard repeatedly demanding the status at the armory. This is an opportunity for the players to interact with the mastermind behind this assault, even if remotely. If nothing else, she should drop both Unitech’s and Red End Interplanetary’s names and assert that the characters will pay for their attack on her people.

Before the characters can do more than talk, however, the conversation will be brought to an abrupt end...

The End of the Beginning

The conversation will be interrupted by the ship suddenly lurching to the side again, except this time it will be followed by the steady hum

of the reactor firing up and then the deep groaning of stress being put on the damaged sections of the hull. Yelling will suddenly be heard from distant parts of the ship.

Out of the Frying Pan

The colonists will soon run into Dr. Shapiro again, who will explain what is happening: While the characters were protecting the armory, the engineers and scientists on the ship were preparing the test of the reactor. They were intending to power up the reactor for only a few seconds—a test to measure its ability to generate power. After the cycle started, however, the control rods refused to redeploy. As a consequence, the reactor has fully powered up and the engines have once again started the ship’s deceleration as it approaches Siren. This also means that radiation has started to flood the rest of the ship.

Meanwhile, the ship’s navigation computers, detecting that the ship is traveling too fast, have increased the rate of deceleration beyond what was originally planned. This has put added stress on the hull, which is beginning to buckle under the pressure.

Abandon Ship!

In very short order all of the colonists in the ship will need protection from radiation by makeshift measures, the navigation computers will need to be adjusted and a general evacuation will need to be prepared, waiting until the last minute so as to maximize deceleration. However, it might be best to fade to black at this point, with the ship in chaos and tearing itself apart. Not only does it make a good cliff-hanger ending for a session, but it also sets the stage and lets the players fill in the blanks using their imagination before the next scenario picks up with their emergency landing on Siren.

2: First Steps

This scenario picks up where Violent Arrival left off. The player characters have survived crash landing on Siren, as have a thousand other colonists. Now they must survey the damage, pick up the pieces and begin building a home on the new world.

Over the course of this scenario, the players must overcome the challenges imposed by the planet's atmosphere, survive their first night on the new world and make the acquaintance of two important NPCs.

Groundfall

As with the last scenario, this one opens with the characters regaining consciousness. The force with which the colonists' drop module struck the ground was enough to knock everyone out cold, throwing around the contents of the module, and leaving the exterior hull ripped and torn. Thankfully, however, the drop modules were designed to decelerate in atmosphere and soften the impact of landing, and so—through a miracle of engineering—most of the occupants survived.

- The player characters begin this scenario with an additional light wound, on top of any wounds received in the previous scenario.

Meeting Yana

As the colonists begin to stir, the inside of the module's airlock will be pried open by a woman in a vac suit. This is Yana Yankova Buneva. She was a passenger in another drop module which landed nearby, slightly before the characters' one did. She has already helped the colonists in her module and is now making the rounds, helping those wounded in the crash landing.

The GM should take a few moments for Yana to introduce herself and speak with the

characters to see if they're okay. Afterward, she will head to the next drop module and continue her rounds.

As the campaign progresses, Yana will become one of the major voices in the players' colony, serving as a trusted advisor, co-ruler or even resistance leader, depending on the choices the players make. This scene is a chance to establish her in the players' mind, which can be built off of later.

- Yana Yankova Buneva's stats can be found on page 82.

Treating the Injured

Almost everyone is suffering at least minor injuries from the crash, and dozens are in critical condition. The characters are free to direct others to treat the injured, but many players will want to take a more hands-on approach.

- Stabilizing the injured colonists requires a Spd/medic-10 flip. Don't make the players flip for every colonist. Use this single flip to represent the entire effort.
- The GM should take note if a player makes a particular effort to save others. At some point later in the campaign, when that character is in dire need, one of those saved will show up to provide aid. "You saved my life after the crash landing; this is the least I could do."

Immediate Environment

The characters' drop module hit the ground in a wide river valley. The ground here is relatively flat, but slopes gently downward toward the water. The river here is wide, albeit shallow. It bubbles slightly as it hits the rocky banks.

The ground in the valley is mostly covered by a lichen-like organism of mottled green and red hues. This gives way occasionally to bare patches of reddish earth, and in a few places, tall barrel-like structures that extend several

meters into the air. The lichen-like ground covering has a flaky, dry surface, but quickly gives way underneath to a slimy interior. In places it bulges skyward in mounds a few dozen centimeters thick.

Scurrying about the surface of the lichen-covering, or flying in small swarms through the air, are small, mobile organisms. These are no larger than a few centimeters in length, and most of them are on the smaller end of that scale. Many of them possess numerous sets of legs, not unlike a centipede, although these end in forked, webbed toes.

The sky is one of the deepest blue colors the colonists have ever seen, without a trace of clouds.

- For more information on Siren's biosphere see page 118.

Census

Six drop modules, including the one with the player characters, landed in a cluster in the river valley. Each of these drop modules carried about 100 people, and assuming the colonists successfully treated their injured, only a handful didn't survive the landing. This means that the characters have just under 600 people nearby, with about half huddling inside the damaged drop modules and the other half still in stasis.

Each pod contains enough vac suits for all of the colonists; however, these suits only contain an air supply capable of lasting several hours. This

means that sooner or later the colonists are going to have to breathe the local air (see page 110).

- Directing other colonists effectively requires a successful Chr/persuade-10 flip.

Surveying the Damage

The damage to the drop modules is extensive, but the worst of it is to the outer hulls. For the most part, the interior hulls remain intact, and each is capable of holding its atmosphere—at least for a day or so until the air supply runs out. The backup power in each drop module has several days of battery life left until it begins to run out. This means that the colonists still in stasis will need to be awakened in the next several days, otherwise they will die.

- Success on a Per/mechanic-10 flip will reveal that while there is no fixing the outer hulls with the available tools, each drop module contains a wealth of materials that could be repurposed in the initial construction of a small colony.



Gravity Adjustments

At 1.3 g, Siren has a higher gravity than Earth or any other rocky world in the Sol system. This is high enough that it just barely meets the criteria as a high-gravity environment (see the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook, page 159).

By the letter of the rules, this is enough to give characters a -1 penalty to all actions. GMs are free to impose this penalty—it will last until the characters acclimate—but it's probably more fun to just ignore the penalty for now, and leave the effects of higher gravity to narrative description.

Brand New World

With the immediate problems of the crash landing well in hand, the colonists will likely begin to explore their surroundings and look for the solution to the next big problem—breathable atmosphere.

- While this section covers a number of likely avenues of exploration, the GM is advised to also familiarize herself with the full description of Siren (see page 109).

Salvage

The drop modules and surrounding site are littered with a great deal of wreckage, scrap and, scattered among the debris field, salvageable tools.

- If the colonists want to search through the wreckage looking for tools to use in their pursuits, this requires a Per/investigate-10 flip.
- The GM should ask the player what she is looking for. If the GM deems the subject of the search reasonable, on a success, the character finds the sought after tool. On a failure, she finds a random piece of gear of the GM's choosing. If the GM deems the search unreasonable, the colonist always finds a random tool.
- Each player character only gets two flips to search for useful salvage in the first day on the planet. After this, she begins to run out of time as there are more immediate concerns and nightfall is coming.

The Atmosphere Problem

Without the ARC ship's air recycling systems, the colonists only have enough air in their vac suits to last for a few hours, and enough air processing in the drop modules to last for a few days. Sooner or later they're going to need to address the breathability of the atmosphere.

Simply taking off their vac suit helmets and breathing the surrounding air won't result in

any immediate ill effects. The air will feel thick and soupy, and the character may feel a bit short on breath for a few days until she adapts, but the atmospheric oxygen is within the realm of human habitability. The effects of breathing the atmosphere won't become apparent until an hour or so without a breather.

- After an hour of breathing without a helmet, the character must make an End-10 flip. On a failure, she begins to experience the effects of nitrogen narcosis (see page 129). She must make a flip again every hour she is not using a breather.
- Isolating the chemical cause of nitrogen narcosis in an individual experiencing the effects requires a successful Int/bio-sci-10 flip. Remember to apply any penalties for having or lacking appropriate tools (see the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook, page 111). Success reveals that the character is experiencing nitrogen narcosis and what this means.
- Analyzing the air requires an Int/phy-sci-10 flip. Success indicates its suitability for breathing (see page 110). Success with Mag 5+ also reveals that prolonged exposure is likely to cause nitrogen narcosis (see page 129).
- Putting together a working breather that separates atmospheric nitrogen and oxygen and feeds the wearer a non-narcotic mix, is a task best represented by the Engineering subsystem (see the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook, page 142). The complexity has a base TN 10, but since the engineer is working with constrained components, the TN is increased to TN 15 with no Cost. Salvaging useful materials from the wreckage of the crash site can reduce the TN back down to as low as TN 10 (see above). The interval is 1 hour, the concept skill is Phy-Sci and the Prototype skill is Medic.

Flora or Fauna?

Colonists with the right tools can begin to examine and explore the local biosphere. What information this yields is highly dependent on the tools being employed—gene sequencing, for example, will reveal different information than manual observation.

- Gleaning information about the biosphere is likely an Int/bio-sci-10 or Int/naturalist-10 flip, although the GM should use her best judgement, calling for a flip that makes sense.
- With the right tools, any of the information in the Building Blocks section on page 118 might be turned up during this initial exploration.

First Night

From the perspective of someone used to Earth's day and night cycle, the first nightfall on Siren comes on very, very quickly with relatively little warning. This is a side effect of the planet's high rotation speed.

At this time in Siren's solar year, Alpha Centauri B is on the far side of Alpha Centauri

A. This means that the two suns appear close together in the sky. First B dips below the horizon, followed shortly by A. This leads to a true nightfall, where the landscape becomes very dark, unlit by Earth's many electric lights.

- For more on Siren's day and night cycles see page 109.

Nightfall

Many colonists will likely be out and about in vac suits, scavenging through the rubble or performing other important tasks when nightfall arrives. The speed at which the suns set will catch many of them by surprise.

The player characters can decide whether to direct colonists back into the drop modules for the night, or whether to continue going about their business.

- Success on an Int/phy-sci-10 flip reveals that given the current movement of the suns across the sky, Siren's day is about 16 hours.
- Gathering all the colonists and herding them back into the drop modules requires a successful Per/persuade-12 flip.



Death In the Night

Shortly after nightfall the colonists will experience their first attack from Siren's native life. If the survivors haven't all been rounded up and herded back into the drop modules, one of outside colonists will be the first victim in this attack.

It will begin with a colonist somewhere out in the rubble suddenly screaming—a long, shrill cry that drags on and on, eventually becoming a gurgle. If there are no outside colonists, instead the creatures will let out an unsettling clicking sound from somewhere nearby.

At this point any other colonists outside will make a run for the drop modules.

- If the characters decide to huddle inside and wait it out until nightfall, they'll circumvent further fighting entirely. In the morning, however, they will find impossibly strong grooves eaten into plastic plating, near to where the ruckus occurred.
- If the characters instead head out to fight whatever it is, they will encounter two Sting Worm Boils (see page 128). Try to make the encounter eerie, using partial descriptions about a boiling mass of worm-like creatures and the screams of the colonists. By morning the corpses will have mostly been consumed by small scavengers.

Exploration

Once the characters survive their first night on Siren, things are likely to be a lot tenser. Not only do the colonists need to overcome the engineering challenges of life on a harsh new world, but now they also need to survive attacks by the local wildlife.

The colonists are also left with a lot of unknowns. Amid the crisis on the colony ship, there wasn't time to do a proper planetary survey before the crash landing. This means that the colonists know little about the world beyond the landscape that's immediately visible and what could be measured before the mission left Earth. No doubt, some exploration is in order.

Surrounding Landscape

The first order of business when it comes to exploring the surrounding landscape is likely to send people or drones further afield to take a look, map the area and take sensor readings. As the players have a lot of leeway in how they approach this, the GM will have to think on her feet, making up what seems sensible as the players go along.

For inspiration, take a look at the planetary map on page 114. Below are some ideas of what the colonists may discover as they journey outward.

- **Down the River:** As the colonists head downriver, the waters twist and grow both

Drawing a Map

The GM may want to start drawing a map that she can show to the players as new features are discovered. Start with a blank sheet of paper. Engineering graph pads work well, as does a blank hex grid or square grid. Mark the crash site somewhere near the center of the paper. Then, as the explorers venture out from the crash site and eventual colony, new features can be added, one by one.

Rather than providing a canonical map of the immediate region, we suggest making things up and tailoring discoveries to the players' interests. This allows the GM a great deal of flexibility, and allows for each *Siren's Call* campaign to best suit the players involved.

wider and shallower, eventually giving way to a marshy delta some 30 km downstream. The delta is a paradise of native life and biodiversity, many forms of it dangerous to the human colonists. Beyond that is a vast sea.

- **Up the River:** The rolling plains surrounding the crash site eventually give way to rocky hills some 50 km upstream. Here the river becomes narrower, deeper and faster, making navigation by boat difficult. Beyond these foothills are a range of mountains that are extremely rugged. The flora here becomes taller and the region is stalked by a number of large predators.
- **Away From the Far Bank:** Rolling plains stretch in this direction for hundreds of kilometers. These plains are broken only by occasional tributaries that feed into the river, or by scattered sinkholes, which provide access to an underground system of caverns.
- **Away From the Near Bank:** About 10 km away in this direction is another crash site where four more drop modules landed (see New Arrivals below). These modules are at the edge of where the rolling plains meet a tangled growth of native flora—something akin to a cross between a jungle and an aboveground mycorrhizal network (an interconnected fungal growth).

New Arrivals

As the characters are finishing their first foray further afield (or as the pace of the session is beginning to lag) they will encounter a new group of colonists headed in their direction. These survivors are roughly 400 in total, forming a long line, each wearing a vac suit that is getting perilously low on air and a few teaming up to carry wounded compatriots.

Once the characters are spotted, the first few new colonists will rush over, waving to get their attention. These are the survivors

of four other drop modules which landed roughly 10 km away in the direction away from the near bank of the river.

Meeting Zawadi

The person leading these survivors is a man named Zawadi Gugun, who was a sensor tech on the mission. He has almost single-handedly organized the evacuation of their drop modules and the trek to the players' crash site.

The GM should take a few moments for Zawadi to introduce himself and tell the story of these colonists since the crash landing (see below). As the campaign progresses, Zawadi will become one of the two major voices in the players' colony (along with Yana Buneva, see page 82).

- Zawadi Gugun's stats can be found on page 83.

The Story

Like the colonists the player characters landed with, these survivors spent their first day on Siren picking through the rubble and tending to their wounded. During the night, however, their drop modules were overrun with poisonous, worm-like creatures which killed several of the people on watch for the night and left others injured. Some also spoke of seeing something large and fast moving around in the dark.

As the night progressed, the drop modules became increasingly overrun. That was when Zawadi took charge, organizing the colonists into groups, each tasked with salvaging what was possible. In the morning he then led the survivors to the players' crash site, where one of his colonists had spotted a column of smoke the day before.

- Sting Worm Boil stats are found on page 128.
- More on the thing moving in the night can be found in the Devil of the Tangled Growth side trek (see page 203).

A New Home

The other major task the colonists have ahead of them is turning the crash site into a colony, and the colony into a home. This is a process that will likely consume the next several months; as such we recommend that the GM handle it as a montage of decisions and important actions by the characters. These decisions are important, because they set the stage for the next scenario, Second Place (see page 157).

Picking a Location

Before the colonists can begin to construct the colony, they first need to pick the site they will build upon. A number of possibilities are listed below, and the players may even come up with something entirely different. The GM should be ready to adapt to whatever plan the players come up with.

The choice of colony location will result in it beginning with two colony consequence at moderate severity (see page 50). The purpose of these consequences is to motivate player action early in the campaign, and to make the players feel like their choices have real consequences.

During later scenarios the colonists can take actions to exploit beneficial consequences or rid themselves of unwanted consequences.

A number of possible locations for the colony are detailed below, including suggested consequences.

- **Players' Crash Site:** The most obvious site is where the players' drop modules crashed. This site has access to fresh water, via the river. It has the raw material of the modules right there, and it has access to the fertile soil of the river valley. Unfortunately, it isn't in a particularly defensible position, and a hydrologic survey of the valley will show that it is subject to occasional flooding.
Consequences: Raw Materials, Flood Plain.
- **Zawadi's Crash Site:** This site also has access to the raw material of drop modules, however it is near a tangled growth of flora that is home to dangerous native worms. The soil here is likewise fertile. *Consequences:* Raw Materials, Worm-Infested.
- **Foothills:** This location is 50 km upriver from the crash site. It is extremely defensible, but the soil here is rocky and poor for farming. Salvaging materials from the crash

Encounters in the Wilds

Many RPGs make use of "random encounters" when player characters are exploring the wilds. We largely recommend against this approach in the *Siren's Call* campaign. Much of the tension in horror comes from the feeling of being threatened without the actual release of violence. So when the colonists are exploring the wilds, we recommend keeping attacks to a minimum.

Rather, the characters should occasionally see movement in the darkness. They should encounter things they can't explain. They may occasionally need to lie low to avoid some threat out there in the wilds.

In the rare instances when violence does come, it should be used to emphasize just how isolated the characters are in the wilderness and just how unknown this world is. Maybe a creature eats their medikits, destroys a couple firearms and runs back into the wilds with their food in its maw. But make it brutal. Make attacks in the wild something to be feared, otherwise the threat loses its tension.

is also difficult, as they must be transported a great distance before they can be used in the colon's construction. *Consequences:* Defensible, Remote & Barren.

- **River Delta:** Downriver some 20 km is a vast river delta. This site has access to the open ocean and is located at a haven for biodiversity, however, it is also subject to flooding and the raw materials of the drop modules must be transported a great distance. *Consequences:* Astonishing Biodiversity, Distant Waters.
- **Sinkholes:** The plains to the west of the river are riddled with strange sinkholes. Any of these openings might serve as potential colony site. *Consequences:* Underground, Unknown Origin.

Flashback Drop Modules

This scene is a flashback to the characters' final moments on the ARC ship before its modules separated in preparation for the crash landing. At this point it's obvious that the ship as a single unit is doomed, radiation is flooding the vessel and all of the awakened colonists are fleeing toward the various modules for shielding.

The player characters have a choice of one of four modules they could flee to in preparation for crash landing. Which do they pick? The GM should ask this of the group as a whole. It's obvious at this point in the game that they all ended up in the same module that crash landed, so they must pick one as a group.

This choice will determine what advancement the players' colony starts with. The four drop module options are detailed as follows:

- **Hydroponics Module:** This module contains a variety of flora from Earth, as well as equipment for growing these plants in a nutrient water solution. Picking this module will allow the colony to begin with the Hydroponics advancement.
- **Armory Module:** This module contains a significant fraction of the ship's armory. It is exactly this module that the Unitech team was attempting to seize in the previous scenario. Picking this module will allow the colony to begin with the Colony Militia advancement.
- **Habitat Module:** This module contains industrial machines for manufacturing personal habitats on the new world. It also contains a good deal of raw material for these new habs. Picking this module will allow the colony to begin with the Hab Manufacturing advancement.
- **Network Module:** This module contains computing and networking infrastructure, as well as a variety of comms. Picking this module will allow the colony to begin with the Information Network advancement.

Planning the Settlement

The players should be encouraged to discuss their planned settlement and what they plan to have constructed. Do they want a palisade around the base? Do they want a watch tower at the edge of the river valley? Do they plan to build a pier extending out into the river? Maybe they want their habs to be partially underground in order to better

Game Masters Take Note

During this final part of the scenario the GM should make sure to jot down notes on the decisions made by the players. These decisions will combine to determine the colony's starting ratings, scores and consequences in the Colony Building mini-game. This mini-game will begin in the next scenario.

preserve atmosphere. The GM should have the players collectively rank these plans as first priority, second priority, third priority, etc. The players may also want to come up with a name for their new settlement.

These decisions don't have a direct effect on the Colony Building mini-game, but the GM should make sure to take note of them, as they influence the feel of the colony and the society that the colonists are beginning to develop. This is ample fodder for roleplaying and future decision making.

Leadership

One night as the colony is beginning to come together, the characters will be approached by Yana Buneva and Zawadi Gugun. These two have been speaking about the future of the settlement, and while they have a number of disagreements about how to achieve this, they both agree that it's time for the colony to put a leadership structure into place. Thus far it's been operating with an ad hoc structure centered on bare survival.

- Yana wants to establish a hierarchical structure based off skills necessary to maintain the colony, answering to a colony board of directors, based on the ARC Project's original charter. Her stats and aims are on page 82.
- On the other hand, Zawadi feels that the original charter no longer suits the situation that the colonists have found themselves in. He proposes an elected council with five year terms. His stats and aims are on page 83.
- Of course, the players may have their own ideas on how to structure the leadership of the colony. Let the players have the agency here in making this decision, and the NPCs will go along (grudgingly or not). Take note, however, of how much the player characters listen to or side with either Yana or Zawadi. This will set a precedent for future scenarios, beginning a relationship of either cooperation or animosity.



3: Second Place

This scenario should be ran within the first few years on Siren. While it contains a more straightforward story than either of the first two adventures, it nevertheless presents an important revelation that will change how the colonists view their activities on the planet, and should deepen the ongoing mysteries in the campaign.

For best effect, it is recommended that the GM run one or more side treks between this scenario and the preceding one. This should help establish a sense of normalcy in the developing colony before the events of this scenario present another set of compelling questions.

A Question of Resources

This scenario begins with the player characters meeting with a group of the colony's explorers, who have recently returned from doing some initial surveys of the foothills and mountains further up the river. They have brought back with them reports of potential resource sites—resources that are important to the colony's future growth and development. As they weren't equipped to do a proper survey at the time, they want the player characters to head up a survey mission at the three sites.

This would be a good opportunity for the GM to update or sketch out a map of the surrounding landscape, marking the three sites near the mountains and foothills as appropriate. As, by design, the map for every campaign will vary with what the players discover and what the GM wishes to include, it is recommended that the GM place these three sites some distance apart from each other, as this will require that the characters cross some heretofore unexplored ground between them.

The three sites are described below.

- Surveying each sites requires a successful Per/naturalist-10 flip.

Radioactive Site

At this site, water has eaten through the sedimentary rock, revealing deposits of uranium. If mined, it could be useful once the colony sets up reactors—although the uranium fission chain yields more dangerous waste than does the thorium chain.

Aluminosilicate Site

This site contains aluminosilicate minerals, which are vital for the production of zeolites. These are used in atmospheric filtration, water treatment and solar thermal collection, as well as many other industrial processes.

Helium Site

Helium is essential for fiberoptic manufacturing, medical equipment, arc welding and some nuclear reactors. Unfortunately, this site doesn't possess helium after all.

Journey Across the Plain

Getting to the three sites will require a long journey across the plain, amounting to several days of travel. In the unlikely event that the colony has rovers or powered water transportation available, these will make the journey easier, but the GM shouldn't let them circumvent the hardships of travel entirely. How much the GM plays up the hazards of travel should vary with the interest of the players in these sorts of challenges.

- One possible way to handle the journey is as an extended End/naturalist-10 (Tally 10, 1 day) action.
- This is likely a Group Effort action, where one colonist serves as the scout—the

primary actor in the action—while other characters may act as secondary.

- Every day the group makes a flip to determine the day's progress. Failure on any individual flip results in a complication of some kind, such as getting lost, fatigue, important gear breaking or running low on a critical supply.
- Once the Tally has been met, the team has reached its destination.

Dangerous Fauna

In the day after the team departs the colony, they will be spotted by a lone aerial predator. As they travel across the plain, they will be followed by this creature, as it waits for the right moment to strike and catch them unaware.

The GM should play this in such a way that the momentary glimpses of the creature early on in the journey ratchet up the tension, making the characters uneasy as they get farther and farther from the safety of the colony.

- Use the Raptor of Siren stats on page 127.

First Sighting

Late in the first day of travel one of the characters catch a split-second glimpse of something large moving through the evening sky then quickly disappearing behind a cloud. They won't spot the creature again this day and it is well out of firearm range.

Movement in the Night

The next night, ask which of the characters is taking watch. Whoever is on watch will notice something large suddenly shift in the tangled growth some distance from their camp. Two of these creatures then fly straight upward into the sky from their hiding spot in the growth and they quickly disappear into the nighttime mists.

The team won't know it, but what they're witnessing is two of the creatures fighting each

other over which one will claim the team as its next meal. The original creature will eventually fight off its rival, then continue to pursue the colonists.

- Rushing to attack the creature is unlikely to succeed. The darkness gives a -2 penalty to unaided vision. It's 100 m away (-5 to rifles, -10 to pistols) and the growth provides Concealment (moderate), another -2 penalty. It's visible for only one round before it disappears into the mist.
- If the team has made it to the foothills or the mountains, the loud report of their guns might touch off a rock slide (see the next page).

Attack From Above

An entire day will pass without a sighting of the creature, perhaps giving the colonists a false sense of security. On the day afterward, however, the flying creature will attack!

It will wait until the characters are indisposed of with another task—perhaps scaling a cliff or setting up camp—then, with little warning, it will swoop in from the sky and use its Swoop trait on a distracted character. It will fight until its Dying Gasps, then fly away to a perch where it will soon afterward expire from its wounds.

- Use the Raptor of Siren stats on page 127.

The Foothills

Some 50 km upriver from the colony the plains give way to rugged foothills. This is treacherous terrain and becomes even more difficult to navigate as the colonists move closer to the mountains. The river here becomes narrow and fast-flowing, with rapids and small waterfalls.

If the characters are in possession of a boat or rover, they will likely need to find a safe place to leave it, as taking the vehicle into the foothills is neither safe for the team nor for the vehicle.

While traversing the foothills the team will be beset by several natural hazards, as well as any dangerous fauna that might be following them.

Rock Slide

The hills here are a mix of loose rocks and mud. This makes them susceptible to rock slides, particularly during times of heavy rain or loud disturbances.

- Noticing a rock slide in time to move out of the way requires a successful Per/naturalist-10 flip.
- Success allows a Spd/athletics-10 action to quickly flee out of the way of the debris.
- Failure on either flip means that the character is caught in the rubble and can only watch as stones pile around her. Minimizing damage at this point requires a Dex/athletics-14 flip. Failure results in a moderate wound, while success results in only a light wound. Critical failure may indicate a severe wound or worse.

The Cliffs

At some point the team is going to need to scale a steep cliff in order to continue onward toward one of the potential resource sites.

- Scaling the cliff requires a Str/athletics-10 flip. Not having appropriate tools (such as rope) will give the usual penalty. Failure by Mag 5+ results in a nasty fall, dealing the character a moderate wound.

The Storm

As the explorers are leaving the foothills and are beginning to head into the mountains, a terrible storm will appear on the horizon and move towards them with a speed unparalleled on Earth. This is a phenomenon resulting from Siren's quick rate of rotation.

Noticing the storm is automatic. It's clearly visible, and its intense bursts of thunder and lightning cannot be missed. The characters will need to quickly seek shelter, lest they be washed away or caught in any resulting rock slides.

- A Per/naturalist-10 flip allows the colonists to locate a nearby cave in which to seek shelter. Success indicates that they find the shelter before the storm hits. Failure means that they find the cave only after being buffeted with strong hail from the storm. All characters increase their Fatigue consequence a severity.

A Curious Discovery

The cave is large enough that the entire team can fit inside to take refuge from the storm, but the ceiling is still low enough that they need to crouch down when standing. The inside is dry and it's a good enough place to make camp.

Inside, however, one of the characters will make a startling discovery. Leaning against one of the walls of the cave is a bent sheet of metal, maybe a meter long and half a meter wide. The metal has visibly aged, with rust spots appearing along both sides of the sheet. On the underside, the sheet is covered by fading enamel, but the Unitech logo is still clearly visible, as are the words "Project Osiris."

This sheet was left here by colonists from Project Osiris who similarly explored these mountains and took shelter in the cave three decades ago. For the PCs, however, this will be the first evidence they have of the earlier colonization attempt.

- For more on Project Osiris, see page 78.
- Bringing the metal back to the colony and running tests on it with a successful Int/phy-sci-10 flip suggests that it has been exposed to the elements for almost 30 years.

Cave Dwellers

Unfortunately the colonists are not the only organisms seeking shelter in the cave. In the back of the cavern a sting worm boil has taken refuge and may attack if the characters go exploring or otherwise provoke the worms.

- Use the Sting Worm Boil stats on page 128.

4: Contact

Ideally this scenario should be run no sooner than Turn 5 of the Colony Building mini-game and no later than Turn 10. This gives the colony ample opportunity to begin to distinguish itself with its advancements and facilities, but not so long as to feel completely secure in its progress.

In this scenario, the player colony will make contact with two other colonies brought to Siren by the ARC Project. The first of these will be ARC Engineering, followed shortly by Utakar System Dynamics. These two colonies are actively engaged in a war, tracing back to the conflict that began in the final days of the colony ship. Whether they like it or not, the players' colony will soon find itself caught up in this conflict.

Radio Contact

This scenario begins when someone in the colony first picks up radio broadcasts from ARC Engineering. The specific circumstances of the radio contact should be tailored to the development of the individual campaign. Perhaps the players first pick the broadcasts when up while they're out exploring. Or maybe they're first received when the colony sends out explorers during a turn in the colony mini-game.

- If by some chance the players decide to ignore the broadcast and not reply, it won't be long until someone else in their colony similarly picks up the signal and decides to reply on their own.



Rejoice!

Once the word gets out that there are other living survivors of the ARC Project, there is public rejoicing in the colony. Many colonists had friends or loved ones who didn't make it down in the few drop modules that landed with the player characters, and hope is rampant that these connections will soon be rekindled. At last there is confirmation that the player colony isn't all that's left of humanity!

Official Channels

Not far behind the public rejoicing are the calls to open up an official channel of communication between the leaders of the two colonies. The players can be involved in the nitty-gritty of this if they wish, but it may be better if the details are hashed out by NPC administrators, leaving the players to handle the more exciting ambassadorial mission that results.

Adding to the Map

Before running this scenario the GM should take some time to draw out the expanded map of the region, adding both ARC Engineering and USD to the map, as well as several sites where battles have occurred between them. If a radio repeater is necessary for the player colony to communicate with ARC, the location of the repeater should be added to the map as well.

This map will help players understand where the colonies are in relation to each other, as well as the tactical scenario should this adventure lead to war.

- Lindiwe Temma is the leader of ARC Engineering. His stats and full story can be found on page 89.
- ARC will be interested in exchanging map data with the player colony. If the leaders of the colony agree, the GM should expand the region map for the players.

Character Assignments

In order to get all of the player characters involved in the ambassadorial mission, it may be beneficial for the powers that be in the colony to give each character a particular assignment while the mission is taking place. These assignments may be anything from official positions to secret directives.

Obviously, they will need to be tailored to the individual characters, their skills and player interests. When preparing this scenario, the GM should take a moment to think about each character and what she might contribute. The colony might even bestow each character with a special authority or piece of gear for the mission.

Some possible positions are given below. The GM should use these as inspiration when coming up with positions for the player characters in her campaign.

- **Ambassador:** This character has been selected as the ambassador for the mission. She's been tasked with negotiating good relations and establishing official channels of contact, as well as potentially negotiating trade that may benefit the colony. To aid in this task, she has been empowered with the authority to speak and make decisions on behalf of the colony. Ideally these will radioed back to the home colony for confirmation, but the ambassador may decide to act unilaterally, if necessary.
- **Electronic Ops:** This character has been put in charge of electronic operations for the mission. She has command of the official

radio channel back to the home colony. She's also been tasked with tapping into ARC Engineer's local net, downloading data and performing electronic reconnaissance while the official negotiations are ongoing. To aid in this task she's been provided with three microbugs that may be deployed to listen in to conversations from afar.

- **Security:** This character has been put in charge of security for the mission. She has been tasked with keeping the delegation safe, providing muscle where necessary, remaining alert for potentially hostile activities and sizing up any potential threats, whether from ARC directly or from any other source. She's been put in command of three security personnel who have also been sent along to assist (Claud, Damokles and Tiphannie). Use the Thug stats on page 213 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook.
- **Social Ops:** This character has been put in charge of social operations for the mission. While the ambassador may be the official face of the delegation, this character has been tasked with being its unofficial face, meeting with others in the colony, making contacts and laying the groundwork for a future intelligence network. To aid in this task, the character has been given Income 9 worth of material goods that may be used as bribes to gain cooperation, if necessary.
- **Administrator:** This character has been put in charge of the mission. She is responsible for coordinating all of the other characters. She may serve as go-between and liaison, bringing messages or resources between them, or recalling particular characters, if necessary. She's been put in command of three assistants who have also been sent along to help (Claud, Damokles and Tiphannie). Use the Colonist stats on page 84.

The Journey

The journey to the halfway point between the colonies is likely to be several days of travel to an area where the colonists have never been before. Indeed, it may be a region where no human being has ever been before. Alternatively, the halfway point may be the radio repeater that has been set up to aid communication between the two colonies.

Regardless, this part of the journey makes an interesting backdrop for side treks or other stories involving exploration, discovery and isolation. The GM might want to run one along the way, keeping in mind that not only do the colonists need to survive, they must come through in decent enough shape to then conduct negotiations and perform other related tasks.

- The delegation is sent along with an escort of three scouts. This escort will only travel to the rendezvous spot, at which point they will turn back and escort the ARC delegation back to the player colony. Use the Scout stats on page 85.
- A successful End/naturalist-10 flip is necessary to guide the delegation to the rendezvous point. Failure results in something going wrong along the way, such as getting lost, being attacked by dangerous fauna or getting caught in a fierce storm.

Meeting the Other Delegation

The other delegation arrives at the chosen point shortly before the scheduled time. Depending on how the players' trip fared, they might beat the other delegation there or arrive sometime afterward. At this point they are expected to perform some official introductions, then the players will continue onward to ARC HQ with an ARC escort, while the other delegation continues onward to the player colony with the escort that has so far traveled with the characters.

- Making a favorable impression necessitates a Chr/socialize-10 flip. As the other delegation soon radios back home with their first impressions, this will have some effect on how the characters are received when they reach ARC HQ.
- Getting a feel for the other delegation requires a successful Per/empathy-12 flip. A success gives the character a feeling that they are a mixed group, likely consisting of the official ambassador as well as several shady types, likely doing their own intelligence gathering.
- If the other delegation gets there first, one of their number will attempt to install a small listening device on the radio repeater. This will allow ARC's intelligence agents to listen in on all communications that get broadcast through the facility. The characters will only find this device if they think to look—it's well hidden. Finding it requires a successful Per/investigate-12 flip.

Preemptive Strike

For the second half of the journey the characters will be escorted back to ARC HQ by three ARC scouts. The travel isn't too difficult, but there are places where the terrain becomes rugged or where large boulders regularly jut outward from the ground. In one of these areas a team of USD soldiers is waiting to ambush the delegation.

These soldiers have been informed that the player colony has formed a military alliance with ARC, and that the delegation is transporting arms and armaments back to ARC HQ. This information is obviously incorrect. In truth, the story originates from ARC's discovery of an Utakar spy in their colony. This spy was intentionally fed false information about the delegation, as well as the path the delegation would travel. This info then made its way back to USD, resulting in the ambush being arranged.

The intelligence operatives back at ARC HQ hope that news of a possible military alliance with the player colony will either deter USD from continuing the war or prompt USD to do something rash which may turn the player colony against them.

- The ARC scouts use the Scout stats on page 85. None of them know anything about the USD spy, the false information or the goal of their intelligence operatives. They'll be just as surprised as the PCs.
- Any of the characters may attempt a Per/awareness-12 flip to notice the ambush as they are traveling. Characters who succeed do not begin the combat surprised.
- The ambushing soldiers use the Soldier stats on page 213 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook. They will begin the combat with Cover (severe) and will make ample use of it during the fight.
- Examining the bodies after the fight and succeeding on an Int/conspiracy-10 flip allow a character to notice that each of the soldiers has a pin identifying themselves as serving under USD.

Welcome to ARC HQ

When the delegation finally arrives at ARC HQ it will be greeted by cheers and widespread celebration. ARC has declared the day a partial holiday, and the colonists have turned out in droves.

The delegation will again receive a formal greeting, this time directly from Lindiwe Temma and his advisors. They will then be shown to their accommodations. An entire hab has been cleared of its usual residents and given over for the delegation to use for the duration of their stay.

The characters will be given some time to rest and ready themselves, then they will be expected to attend a formal dinner with the ARC leaders. This means that the characters have several

hours to relax or go about their personal assignments as they see fit. Characters absent from the formal dinner will need an excuse.

- Lindiwe is sure to remind the characters that they have met before, however briefly. "Welcome! It's been a long time since we last met, on the final days aboard the ARC colony ship."
- Lindiwe Temma's stats are found on page 89.

Formal Dinner

During the formal dinner a variety of foods prepared from the local fauna will be served with as much flair as ARC can muster. It's clear from the food and the conversation that they have spent a good deal of effort on learning to live off of the local organisms. Crops brought from Earth are kept in well-contained gardens, so as not to contaminate the local biosphere.

- Making a good impression during the formal dinner is a Chr/socialize-10 flip.
- Coming up with a convincing excuse for a character's absence during the dinner requires a Chr/deception-10 flip. Failure means that ARC security will subtly go looking for that character to keep an eye on her.
- It turns out that sting worms which been aged in lye, washed, breaded and then deep fried and are actually pretty tasty!

ARC's War Story

Near the end of the dinner, Lindiwe will tell the characters about their ongoing war with Utakar System Dynamics. This will present events from ARC's perspective. The important points in the story are as follows:

- "I'm sure you remember the final days on the ARC colony ship. It was chaos. Captain Sardou relieved Josefina Navarro, the XO, of duty after she refused to carry out her orders. Then I was promoted as the new acting XO."

- “When our drop modules crash landed here, we gathered what people and resources we could and began to build a new life. Modules were scattered all about this area. When we found a new group of survivors, we’d bring them back to ARC HQ and integrate them into our new society. Since the captain was nowhere to be found, I was left in charge.”
- “Everything went as well as could be expected... until we met USD. It turns out that Josefina Navarro had landed with her own people a ways from here.”
- “At first we tried to do as we had before—to offer to bring them back to ARC HQ and integrate them into our command structure. But Josefina, now claiming to be the ruler of her own colony, refused. We tried to remind her of the ARC Project’s command structure and charter, but again she would not listen. So we took the issue directly to her colonists, and that’s when she escalated her mutiny.”
- “She stole vital ARC Project resources and when we came to reclaim them, pressed her attack. The war had started.”
- “Since then it’s only grown worse. The war has continued to escalate. Every year we find ourselves under attack. I am sorry that you could not have visited in a more peaceful time.”

Initial Negotiations

The next day formal negotiations are scheduled to begin between the delegation and the leaders of ARC Engineering. Any of the visiting delegation are invited to sit down and participate in these, but not all are expected. Lindiwe Temma will likewise be sitting down to negotiate on ARC’s behalf, along with a handful of his chosen advisors.

By this point, Lindiwe will have heard back from his own delegation, reporting on the player colony. His goal in the negotiations vary somewhat, depending on the player colony’s Might rating versus ARC’s Might rating.

- ARC’s Might rating for the current Colony Turn can be found on page 70.
- Lindiwe Temma’s stats are found on page 89.
- Regardless of the colonies’ comparative Might, Lindiwe will attempt to charm the delegation, swaying them with his flattering words and high ideals. He wants open borders between the two colonies, as well as an exchange of knowledge regarding the planet’s biosphere.
- Lindiwe will make his initial offers in these early negotiations, but won’t expect the delegation to have an immediate answer for him. He expects them to think it over, radio back home about it, etc. He will, however, want an answer during the second and final day of negotiations tomorrow (see page 166).

Meanwhile, Back Home

While the players are going about their assigned tasks at ARC HQ, the ARC delegation visiting the player colony will likewise be conducting its own surveillance. They want to obtain a reasonably accurate estimate of the colony’s population, available resources, exact location and military capabilities. If they managed to attach a listening device to the radio repeater, they’ll collect conversations the players’ delegation sends back as well (see page 162).

By the time formal negotiations begin the next morning, Lindiwe will have already received and reviewed his delegation’s report.

Players Mightier

If the player colony has a significantly higher Might rating than ARC, Lindiwe's goal in the negotiations will largely be to ensure that the two colonies depart with good relations. He'd love it if the player colony joined with ARC to put an end to the war with Utakar System Dynamics, and will suggest it, but he won't press the issue too much, as he doesn't want to antagonize them. He may ask for aid in the form of resources or to trade ARC's own resources for military facilities.

Roughly Equal Might

On the other hand, if the two colonies have roughly equal might, Lindiwe will be more adamant in proposing a military alliance. His primary goals in this case are to sway the player colony to favor ARC in the conflict, or if that fails, to ensure that they remain neutral.

ARC Mightier

Finally, if ARC has a significantly higher Might score—particularly if the player colony hasn't yet developed the Colony Militia advancement—ARC will largely see the colony as a pile of undefended resources that sooner or later are either going to be taken by ARC or USD. Lindiwe wants to ensure that ARC gets to them first. Ideally, he hopes to flatter the delegation into agreeing to hand them over on their own accord in exchange for border recognition, protection or future favors.

A Secret Visitor

That night one of the characters will receive a mysterious message from a spy working for Utakar System Dynamics. Try to pick a player character involved in some of the shadier aspects of diplomacy or one who has been less

involved with the mission. This message will be electronic and will read: "Meet me three hours after sundown at these coordinates." A series of coordinates for an isolated location a half hour walk from the colony will follow.

The players can decide what to do about this, including whether one of them will go alone or whether they will all go. If they ignore the message, another character will receive the exact same message the next night. If they ignore the message a second time, they will have missed their chance to speak with USD.

- Finding the correct location requires an Int/naturalist-10 flip. Failure means the characters make it there late, after getting lost in the countryside.

Clandestine Meeting

Waiting at the indicated location will be a woman in dark clothing and a breather. She will identify herself as Blue Eagle and as a representative of USD. Her goal is to convince the delegation to side with USD rather than ARC in the ongoing conflict.

- She is willing to offer concessions of territory, resources after the war is over, open trade or scientific cooperation. If the characters accept her offer at this point, her USD superiors will likely honor the agreement.
- If these offers fail, however, she will appear to grudgingly offer the characters whatever they ask for—but this will be a lie. Her thought process is that if her "reasonable offers" don't work, she might be able to at least screw up the negotiations between the player colony and ARC tomorrow.
- A successful Per/empathy-12 flip will allow a character to notice that Blue Eagle is oddly agreeable and likely to be lying.
- Blue Eagle uses the Spy stats on page 213 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook.

USD's War Story

Blue Eagle's story of the ongoing war differs in many ways from Lindiwe Temma's earlier story. In her version, Josefina Navarro realized that Captain Sardou was making a terrible mistake and would not listen to reason. She attempted to save the ship in spite of the Captain's orders, but it still broke apart in the atmosphere.

Later, she gathered the survivors of the crash landing and her vision allowed them to found a new colony, directing their efforts in the way a corp might be structured.

Once contact was made with ARC, USD sought peace and open trade, but Lindiwe Temma insisted on reliving the mistakes that doomed the colony ship. When Josefina refused to hand over her colony's resources, ARC attempted to rally her people against her. When that failed, they began open warfare.

Standing Offer

If the characters don't immediately accept her offer, she says that she understands, but that the time they have to decide is limited. She gives them the address of an electronic drop-box on ARC HQ's local net where they can leave a message if they want to get back in touch before departing the colony.

Final Negotiations

The final negotiations are scheduled to take place on the third day of the visit. While the initial negotiations were more about seeing what each colony brings to the table and will consider, these negotiations are more about hashing out the details of an agreement.

- Lindiwe and his advisors are also willing to be much more forceful in these final negotiations. They want to know who the player colony stands with in the war, and ideally they want an alliance, or if that's not possible, a statement of neutrality before

the negotiations are done. ARC is not above making threats if the player colony looks like it is going to side with USD.

- Additionally, Lindiwe wants to seal a deal where official embassies are established in each of the two colonies. He also wants open borders, where citizens of each colony are free to travel between them. Finally, he wants both colonies to agree to minimize their damage to the local ecosystems.
- Roleplay out making these proposals, amendments and counteroffers to the extent that the players find this fun. If in doubt, or if the players are not interested in the details, a Chr/persuade flip may suffice to determine if a particular proposal is accepted. The GM should determine the TN for this flip based on what's being suggested and what the other colony gains in return.

Decision Point

By this point the delegation has spoken with both sides in the ARC-USD conflict. They know the offers that are on the table, and each of the player characters has hopefully gotten a chance to pursue her individual assignments.

Both sides in the conflict will be pressuring the characters to make a decision—and soon! If they don't hear back, they're going to assume the worst. This means that a critical point has been reached. Is the player colony going to side with ARC, with USD or attempt to remain neutral?

- If the characters wish to speak with Lindiwe Temma again, he is easy enough to reach and eager to hear their decision.
- Contacting Blue Eagle is a little more difficult. The characters have been given a drop-box on the local net where they can leave a message for her and she will get back in touch with them. They must do this before the delegation leaves ARC HQ, otherwise Blue Eagle will have difficulty tracking them down.



- The official visit by the delegation is scheduled to end on the fourth day, at which point they will be escorted back to the rendezvous point, again cross paths with ARC's delegation to the player colony, and from there continue home.

Fallout

Depending on the decisions the players have made, their colony will likely come out of this ambassadorial mission having made an enemy of one side or the other. Even if the players are attempting to remain neutral, their colony may find itself the target of attacks, as both sides attempt to seize what resources they can from the colony before the other can do the same. This is particularly true if the player colony has a low Might rating. If attempting to remain neutral with a high Might rating, any attacks are less likely to be overt military

actions and more likely to be covert missions attempting to sabotage the player colony while framing the other side of the conflict.

Future Developments

There is no canonical way that this adventure should end. One of the goals of this scenario is to open the story up to the wider world. No longer do the colonists only need to worry about internal affairs and exploring the planet, but suddenly they have to balance that with inter-colony conflict as well.

This is also likely the point where the Colony Building mini-game really takes off. So far the players have been laying the groundwork for their colony. Now, suddenly, the colony has to compete with others.

However this scenario ends, the GM should endeavor to leave things in a state that is interesting and which will continue to be compelling in future sessions.

Colony Militia

If the players haven't yet decided to develop the Colony Militia advancement, any attack that comes from the fallout of this scenario will be crippling to the colony.

If their colony lacks a militia, it is recommended that the GM either first run a side trek allowing the colonists to recover a single Tac-Rover or other military facility, or have any resulting attacks come only after the players have resolved their own colony's next turn, thereby giving them the opportunity to rush the development of the Colony Militia advancement (see page 56).

5: Ashes

This scenario can be thought of as being the “mid-season finale” of the *Siren’s Call* campaign. As such, it should be ran well enough into the campaign to feel like a mid-point.

Unlike the previous scenario, this adventure takes a step back from colony building to focus on exploration and personal danger. It also reintroduces the presence of Red Ends Interplanetary, whom the characters encountered in the first scenario. In it, the team will explore recently discovered alien ruins, learning more about the history of Siren in the process. This discovery sets the stage for the run-up to the campaign’s climax.

Explorers Report

This scenario begins when the team meets with a group of the colony’s explorers who have recently returned from a mission surveying the distant lands beyond the tangled growth. The explorers have called for a closed door meeting, so only the team and a few other important people in the colony will be present.

- Chava Ben-Yishai was the lead explorer on the mission and will speak for the group. She uses the Scout stats on page 85.
- A Per/empathy-10 flip will allow a character to note that the returning explorers have a variety of expressions, ranging from worried and dour to barely contained excitement.

The Discovery

Once everyone has been assembled, Chava wastes little time launching into her report on the discovery made during the mission.

- “As requested, we have confirmed that the tangled growth comes to an end beyond the plains, but that’s not why we have requested a closed door meeting.”

Mysterious Site

Unknown yet to any human colonist, the mysterious site that the explorers discovered consists of ruins left behind by the extinct Centauran civilization. In fact, it is part of their planetary control infrastructure, although the eons have damaged the facility beyond all operability.

For the players, the exploration of this facility will be their first clue that the Centauran civilization even existed. For more information see page 132.

- “I’ll cut to the chase. We’ve found something... None of us know what it is, but it’s clearly not natural and doesn’t look like anything we brought with us on the ARC colony ship. It’s big—like factory or space station or sports arena big. I’m not even sure it’s human. You better come take a look.”
- The explorer team brought back a number of photos taken with one of the team’s hand terminals. These photos show several twisting towers of some sort of metallic substance stretching up from the ground, surrounded by a mass of rock and metal that looks like something halfway between a reactor facility and a pile of rubble.
- The explorers also recorded the coordinates of the anomaly. This would be a good opportunity for the GM to sketch out the surrounding landscape, marking the far side of the tangled growth and the mysterious site on the map.
- Players are free to ask questions. The explorer team took some basic measurements and sensor readings around the anomaly, but didn’t probe it in depth. That wasn’t their assigned task and they didn’t want to jeopardize their primary mission by needlessly exploring a site that might prove dangerous.

Preparing for the Mission

The team will be asked to make the journey out to the mysterious site to investigate. There they should explore, take sensor readings and see if they can determine the nature of the structure, including if it poses a danger or contains any resources of use to the colony. They will have as much time as they need (within reason) to prepare.

The players will be put in charge of a small expedition, including a number of supporting NPCs. These NPCs can be put in charge of lugging the gear necessary for a long range expedition, running logistics or anything else the players see fit to delegate to them. The GM should, however, make sure that these NPCs accompany the team, as they will have an important role to play once the team encounters Red Ends Interplanetary (see page 80). Consider using low-ranking supporting characters that the players have become attached to in the colony. Either way, the GM is advised to come up with names for each of them as well as a descriptor or two.

- The accompanying NPCs use either the Colonist or Scout stats on pages 84 and 85. There are half as many as there are player characters (round up).

Journey to the Ruins

The trek to the mysterious site will either be a moderately long, albeit perilous, journey through the tangled growth or a really long and round-about journey around the growth. The players can choose their path as they see fit.

If the player colony has developed one or more of the advancements allowing for powered transportation (Aquatic Port, High-Gravity

Transport or Aerospace Complex) this will make the trip easier, but keep in mind that they are still venturing into mostly unknown lands and any number of troubles could befall their vehicle.

Although nothing directly relevant to this scenario happens during the trek to the mysterious site, the GM should throw out a few obstacles along the way to emphasize the distance or peril involved in the journey. Some ideas are given below.

- **Through the Growth:** This route will be perilous and difficult to navigate. Consider having the players make flips not to get lost, to climb or cut their way through obstacles or to find anywhere safe to make camp for the night. There may be perilous fauna. This would be a good place to insert the “Devil of the Tangled Growth” side trek (see page 203). For more on the growth itself see page 112.
- **Around the Growth:** This will be a long journey. The characters will need to carry food, water, supplies, breathers and other equipment for the entire journey. If something happens to this equipment they will need to turn back or improvise. Consider having the players run up against logistic challenges, bad weather or sightings of dangerous fauna.
- **Powered Transport:** Vehicles need fuel, upkeep and piloting. Rovers could have a broken axle. There may be terrain that’s difficult to navigate. Worms may get into the engine and chew through the wiring. Fuel tanks could leak. Sea transport only gets the team partway to the site. Air transport could have difficulties finding a place to land, or a storm could come through and a mudslide could make it difficult to take back off again.

Arrival

Eventually the expedition will arrive at the site of the mysterious ruins. These ruins are visible from almost a kilometer away as the team approaches, their twisting metallic towers sticking up from the surrounding plains.

Structure

The anomalous site is vaguely circular and roughly 100 m in diameter. It consists of four twisting metallic towers that spiral upward from a raised base. These towers are almost 150 m tall. The towers appear smooth from a distance, but upon closer inspection are in fact covered with regular, small grooves.

The base of the site is raised and is covered with numerous large rocks, which are piled up in improbable ways. These rocks are spaced apart from one another, leaving countless cracks and crevices between them, most large enough for a human to squeeze through. This creates a labyrinth of narrow alleys, tunnels and crawlspaces when approached on foot. In places the native lifeforms have nested in the cracks, using the rocks as shelter.

Investigation & Sensors

As the team begins to explore the site, they will have the opportunity to learn a bit about the ruins. Below are some of the actions they might take and what they might learn. As

the characters explore, the GM should make sure that the team eventually discovers the entrance to the subterranean ruins (described in its own section below).

- Examining the rocks at the base of the site and making an Int/naturalist-10 flip will reveal that the rocks don't match the bedrock or occasional glacial rock of the surrounding plain. They must have been transported from elsewhere.
- Using a Geiger counter and making an Int/phy-sci-8 flip will reveal that the area surrounding the site is mildly radioactive. It's not enough to pose an immediate health risk to the explorers, but it's not a place they'd want to set up camp and live for years either.
- Analysis of the metallic towers and success on an Int/phy-sci-10 flip will reveal that they are an alloy of conductive metals, including zinc, gold, copper and aluminum.
- Dating the site is difficult. Carbon dating only works for organic materials, which doesn't describe either the towers or the rocks. However, success on an Int/naturalist-12 flip does allow a character to notice that the rocks show significant weathering from precipitation, but the site doesn't show evidence of damage from glaciation. This means the site is at the very least hundreds of years old, and more likely thousands or tens of thousands of years old.

Nature of the Site

When the site was functional, the metal towers served as antennas, keeping the control structure in constant communication with similar sites all across Siren. This communication platform also shed a significant amount of radiation. The rocks below are the weathered remains of the shielding which protected the inhabitants of the facility from that radiation. Over the ages tectonic activity has pushed the ground upward, cracking the shielding and driving the rocks further apart. Over time the radioactives have also decayed, leaving behind the detectable but less deadly residue that remains today.

Making Camp

While the player characters are exploring the ruins, the accompanying NPCs will be setting up camp in the shelter of the rocks. Night is coming soon and everyone on the mission has traveled far. If the characters traveled by vehicle, they will have pulled it close by, where they can keep an eye on it as the team explores. They will remain in the camp as the player characters descend into the ruins.

Entrance to the Underground

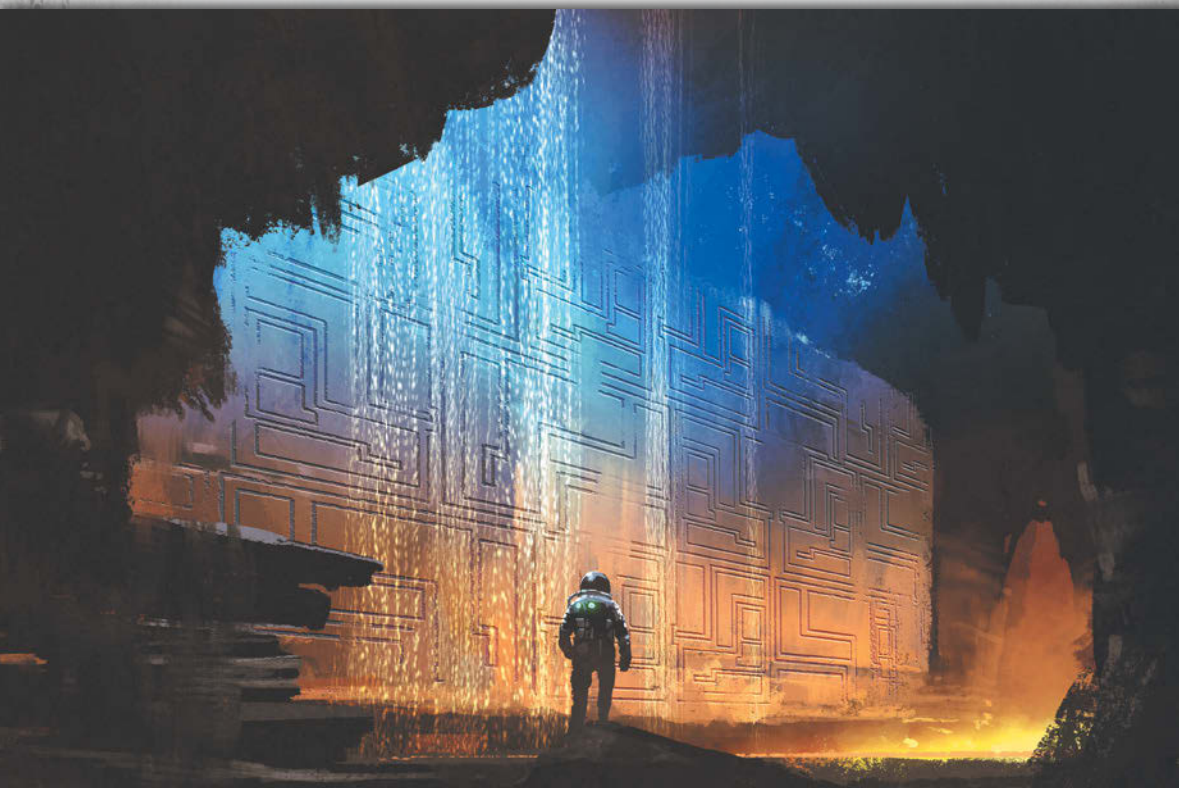
As the team is exploring the site, one of them will discover a passageway leading underground. It is located within the labyrinth of rocks, somewhere between the four towers. The passageway is clearly unnatural, being a regular metallic hexagon in the floor of the rock. Long ago a door sealed the entrance, but this door corroded away eons ago. Within it, a ramp descends, curving into the darkness below.

Characters descending underground will need to duck. The passageway will feel very cramped, with the stone walls closing in on all sides. The ceiling is only a meter and a half high. The passage leads to the ruins below ground.

Exploring the Ruins

As the team descends into the subterranean ruins, a long curving passageway will stretch before them. Most characters will need to either stoop or crawl as they continue forward, as the ceiling is very low. The team will also need a source of light—the tunnels here are pitch dark.

Once upon a time the walls of the ruins were a smooth plaster. Over the millennia, however, the plaster has crumbled, leaving behind an irregular surface. In places the plaster remains, while in others it has crumbled away, exposing raw rock or metallic support beams that have been built into the structure. Along the ceiling, regular indented pits may have once contained light sources,



but these have long since ceased to function, leaving only the indentations behind.

The passageway forward is long and continually curves to one side, while the floor slants constantly downward. Although it might not be immediately apparent to the explorers, the passageway is spiraling downward in a gradual corkscrew pattern. This descends over 30 m below the surface, where the passage suddenly makes a 90 degree turn, facing inward. The hallway ends and opens up to a chamber containing a narrow bridge over a vast pit (see below).

- If none of the player characters have a light source, they might be able to get by using their hand terminals as an improvised light. Alternatively, one of the NPCs back in the camp could have a flashlight they could borrow.

The Pit

At the bottom of the spiral passage is a large cylindrical chamber containing a narrow, arched bridge over a huge pit. The room is 50 m in diameter, with a ceiling that stretches 20 m in height. Looking downward, the pit drops down

as far as the eye can see—from the top of the bridge it seems almost impossibly deep.

- At the center of the bridge a few shiny objects will catch whatever light the team is holding, glimmering in the darkness. These are bullet casings left behind by Red Ends Interplanetary's explorers as they fired at the Alien Sentinel deeper in the ruins (see page 134). Regardless, this is evidence that human explorers have been here before, and recently!
- Success on an Int/guns-10 flip will allow a character to recognize the bullet casings as matching a USD-383 "Wasp" Light Pistol.
- If for some reason a character jumps off the bridge or falls, she will descend 200 m downward, coming to an almost certainly lethal splat at the bottom. This fall deals 50 light wounds. A successful Dex/athletics-10 flip will halve this damage, but 25 light wounds is likely to still be lethal.

Junction

On the far side of the pit, the bridge connects to a passageway in the far wall. This passageway is very short, however, abruptly ending at a four-way intersection. In addition to the way the team just came, there are three possible ways forward: left, right and straight ahead.

A dark and sticky substance is left in blotches across the floor. Occasionally a human boot print is visible in this substance.

- Success on a Per/investigate-10 flip will confirm that this substance is blood and that the footprints lead from the right path, heading towards the left path. Occasionally the blood is smeared in places where something else has passed over it, but it is difficult to tell exactly what (these are tracks left by the Alien Sentinel, see page 134).



Left Path: Star Chambers

The left-hand passage curves to the left for almost 50 m, then ends at a series of wide rooms. These chambers served as living quarters for the inhabitants of the site, but any furniture or other facilities have long since decayed to dust. The carbon in the remains was then consumed by scavenger organisms that made their way into the tunnels.

The ceilings of these chambers were once dyed black, with a star map of the Siren sky painted on them. In the last few millennia, this coloration has chipped, crumbled and faded until the original design is just barely visible.

The trail of blood and footprints leads from the intersection into one of these chambers, where a human body can be seen splayed across the floor. The body is cold, but the pooling blood means it must be relatively fresh.

- A Per/medic-10 flip will reveal that the victim was killed large by blades (which match the blades on the Alien Sentinel, see page 134). The victim is male, with a biological age in his 30's. The corpse is several hours old.
- Any attempt to investigate the body will uncover a badge on its chest with the emblem of Red Ends Interplanetary. Characters who encountered the Red Ends agents in the first scenario will recognize this sigil (see page 80).
- Success on an Int/phy-sci-14 flip will recognize the markings on the ceiling as a star map. Taking records of the map and then carefully comparing it to the night sky of the present day will allow a researcher to conclude that the map presents the sky as it would have appeared roughly 3,000 years ago.

Straight Path: Dead End

The path leading straight ahead continues forward for almost 50 m and then abruptly comes to a dead end at a jagged rock face.

Power Source

The facility was constructed here in part because of the presence of this fault line. The civilization that built it used geothermal energy to power the site. The pit that the characters crossed earlier was also part of the geothermic infrastructure, allowing the inhabitants to bask in vented heat.

The floor here has visibly buckled, with a network of cracks forming and spreading out from the dead end.

Once upon a time this hallway continued onward, eventually coming to a set of storage rooms. In the intervening centuries, however, tectonic activity has forced the storage rooms upward, cutting off the hallway in half and creating the rocky dead end that exists today.

- Success on a Per/naturalist-10 flip will allow a character to discern that the sudden dead end is likely the result of the bedrock shifting, cutting off the passage. Finding the other side of the passage in the rock would be a significant undertaking, requiring drilling machines and several days of labor.

Right Path: Alien Sentinel

The passageway on the right gradually becomes wider and taller, to the point where the characters can begin to walk fully upright again. The hall here curves to the right then, out of the darkness, will loom a large metal and mechanical figure—still as a statue. It's a squat thing, much wider than it is tall. It possesses dozens of slender mechanical legs, as well as a curved and armored upper shell, almost like a massive, robotic roly-poly.

This construct is a robotic sentinel left behind by the civilization that constructed the ruins. Its assigned task is to guard the control room, and here it remained until the Red Ends

explorers disturbed it when they headed this direction. It pursued one of them, cutting him open, creating the blood trail the team saw earlier and leaving him dead down the left passage. It then returned to this spot.

- At the end of the hall a hexagonal door is visible (see “Control Room” below).
- If the team attempts to attack or forcibly move the Alien Sentinel it will activate and attack. Alternatively, if they attempt to pry open the door at the end of the hall, it will also attack. Otherwise, it remains still and inactive.
- Use the Alien Sentinel stats on page 134.

Control Room

As the team makes their way down the right-hand passage, past the Alien Sentinel, they will begin to approach the control room of the facility. At the end of the hallway is a squat hexagonal door, about a meter in height. This door has remained closed for millennia as the ruins were left unoccupied.

Earlier today, however, explorers from Red Ends Interplanetary forcibly pried the door open, unsealing the control room. It is this very act which reactivated the Alien Sentinel in the passageway. The sentinel then attacked them, attempting to protect the chamber. One explorer fled toward the left passageway,

pursued by the construct. This explorer was killed, leaving behind the body that the players have likely already stumbled upon (see the previous page). The other explorers fled into the control room, closing the door behind them. There they have remained, prying away ancient equipment and otherwise looting the room as they build up the courage to leave.

- As the characters approach the door, anyone inspecting it can attempt a Per/thievery-10 flip to notice that it's recently been forced open.
- Prying the door back open requires a Str/thievery-10 flip. Success opens the door without issue, failure still opens the door, but results in the character's Fatigue consequence increasing a severity.

Standoff

As soon as a character pries open the door, one of the Red Ends explorers on the other side will fire a gun at her. They've heard the door being forced open from the far side and are expecting a killer alien robot to force its way through. They're not expecting the team.

Only after the initial shot has been fired do they realize that there are humans on the other side. At this point they'll start yelling for the characters to surrender and put down their weapons. Keep in mind that these are explorers, not trained soldiers. They're also on edge, in hostile alien ruins, one of their number is missing presumed dead and they're inclined to assume that the characters are hostile.

If the team doesn't immediately comply with their demands, they'll attack and attempt to force their way out of the ruins. They'll fight until they escape or until it's clear that they cannot win, at which point they will flee or surrender.

- Success on a Per/awareness-12 flip will allow the characters to react before the explorers start firing. Otherwise, one of them will take

First Contact

The player colony is unlikely to have had any contact with Red Ends Interplanetary since their arrival on Siren. This means that the standoff in the ruins will be the first contact between the two colonies. It's likely to be bloody. This is by design, as Red Ends Interplanetary will serve as the primary antagonist throughout the second half of the *Siren's Call* campaign.

Meanwhile...

While the team is exploring the ruins, the NPCs who traveled with them will be waiting at the camp outside. Things out there will not be uneventful, however.

The Red Ends explorers that the team encounters are not the only members of their faction present at the site. Others have remained hidden on the plains nearby, having taken cover in a creek bed a quarter of a kilometer away.

While the characters are otherwise occupied in the ruins, these hidden explorers will leave their hiding spot and ambush the NPCs at the camp. The fight that follows will be swift and decisive. They Red Ends explorers will seize the hand terminals and any map data from the camp, and then hightail it away from the site as soon as they hear over comms that their fellows inside the ruins have been defeated. The explorers have a vehicle waiting not too far away and will be long gone by the time the characters emerge from the ruins. They will bring the data from the player faction back to their colony.

a shot at the lead character before the team even notices that they're under attack.

- There are a number of Red Ends explorers equal to the number of players. They use the Scout stats on page 85.

Victory

If the players come out of the standoff victorious, they may claim any gear from the explorers or even interrogate any that surrendered.

- Each of the explorers has a hand terminal containing map data with the location of the Red Ends Interplanetary colony. Once the players acquire this the GM should add it to the campaign map.
- The explorers are also in possession of assorted pieces of alien gear that have been taken from the control room (see "Exploring the Room" on the next page).
- Getting surrendered explorers to talk requires a successful Str/persuade-10 flip (to intimidate) or Chr/persuade-10 (to otherwise convince). They're able to answer questions about what they've been doing in the ruins or what their colony has been constructing.

Defeat

If the players are defeated, or if they actually surrender, the Red Ends explorers will tie them up, taking any weapons and armor for themselves. They will also take any hand terminals, computers or other data, bringing it back to their colony.

If the characters are in their dying gasps, the Red Ends explorers will even provide first aid to remove the Bleeding consequence and stabilize them (although not until after stabilizing their own people). They will then quickly leave the ruins behind, hoping to put as much distance between themselves and the characters as possible.

- Escaping the bonds requires a successful Dex/thievery-14 flip, allowing escape with 10 minutes of effort. Failure allows escape only after several hours of struggle.



Exploring the Room

The control room is a hexagonal chamber, roughly 10 m across and a meter and a half high. Its walls are made of the same metallic substance as the towers above the ruins, and a raised platform sits in the center of the chamber. Attached to this platform are a number of devices that might be machinery or might be some sort of computer interface.

The surface is covered in raised geometric patterns that press inward like buttons. Many of these have been pried away by the Red Ends explorers as they have attempted to loot the room. A search will reveal that the missing pieces can be found on their persons. At the very center of the platform is a cylindrical device about 20 cm long. This hasn't yet been removed. It's the data core of this facility.

- Success on a Per/investigate-8 flip will reveal the grooves on the platform and the data core.
- An Int/engineer-10 or Int/comp-ops-10 flip will allow a character to deduce that the cylindrical object is a data storage device of some kind.

Leaving the Ruins

After the team is in possession of the data core from the control room they should eventually head out of the ruins. There's not much else that's survived the millennia that's there to find.

Arriving back at camp, they will discover that the characters left behind have come under attack themselves while the team was gone. Several are wounded, but none have died. The Red Ends explorers who attacked them are long gone and any attempt to follow them will only come to an inconclusive end somewhere near the tangled growth.

The team may want to apply first aid to the survivors and get another night's rest before making the long trek back to the colony.



Decrypting the Data

The data core contains a wealth of information from the extinct Centauran civilization, however, for the time being this information will be inaccessible. Not only is it encrypted, but it's partially corrupted, encoded in a format unknown to humanity, written in an alien language and conceived of by an inhuman mind. Making any sense of the contents will be a herculean task that will take years of careful work and processing.

The GM can use bits and pieces of data deciphered from the core as plot hooks in future sessions, doling out the contents of the data core bit by bit. This may lead to "The Molpe Enigma" side trek (see page 226). Deciphered information from the core will also eventually lead to the next scenario, "Garden of Annihilation" and the final scenario, "Ascension" (see pages 177 and 192).

6: Garden of Annihilation

The very first information has been decoded from the alien data core retrieved by the team in the previous scenario. This information consists of a set of global coordinates. Traveling to this location, the team will discover the wreckage of Project Osiris—Unitech's rival interstellar colony ship. There they will encounter the bioengineered descendants of the project's colonists living in a second alien facility. They will also learn the terrible fate that befell the other colonization attempt.

This scenario is best run after a few sessions after the previous adventure, "Ashes."

Coordinates Decoded

This scenario begins when the very first information is decoded from the data core the team retrieved from the alien facility. At this point, the bulk of the information in the data core is still a mystery, but a working, physical interface has been created and the colony's engineers believe that they've deciphered the alien number system used therein.

What this means from a practical standpoint is that the engineers have determined where the data includes encoded numbers and can decode those numbers, but they still lack any sort of context about what those numbers mean and still haven't figured out how to decipher any of the non-numerical content.

This, however, hasn't stopped them from speculating. In fact, a particular set of numbers are repeated numerous times throughout the data. The leading theory is that these numbers are planetary coordinates, corresponding to a location just over the mountains from the player colony.

The team will be asked to travel to this location and investigate. Ideally, this will provide evidence either in supporting or opposing the planetary coordinate theory.

- If one of the player characters has been deeply involved with researching the data core, the GM should allow her to make these discoveries rather than NPC engineers.
- Any character who asks or who looks at the data and has the Engineer or Program skills can determine that the alien data is encoded using a system of trinary digits (trits). Similarly, they seem to use a base-3 number system.

Over the Mountains

To arrive at the location that corresponds to the coordinates, the team will need to travel upriver and over the mountains. Depending on the advancements unlocked by the player colony at this point, this travel could be anything from a long and onerous trek on foot to a comparatively easy aerial excursion by chopper.

Regardless of the vehicular means available to the colonists, nothing of particular importance to this scenario will happen en route. The GM is free to spend as much or as little time as she wishes on the journey.

- If traveling by chopper, the GM can describe the ruggedness and majesty of the mountains as the team passes over and heads into unknown territory. If no other encounters happen on the way, that's fine. The team has earned it!
- If the team is traveling on foot, they'll have a long and tiring trek ahead of them, followed by a difficult climb through the mountains.
- If they're traveling by rover, the journey to the mountains will be easy, but the mountains are otherwise impassible by ground vehicle. The team will either need to leave their rover and climb or send in a construction crew and wait a couple years as they blast a roadway into the rock.

Garden of Annihilation

Whatever the team expects to find once they reach the coordinates, they're likely in for a surprise. Once they fly over or ascend the last foothill between them and their destination, they will have a great vantage point to look out over the site. Before them lies a massive debris field. Chunks of twisted metal wreckage litter the plain, stretching up from the ground like some sort of garden of destruction.

Searching the Wreckage

The explorers have come this far, and while they're here they should take some time to investigate the wreckage.

- A close inspection of the debris and a Per/investigate-10 flip will allow a character to discover among it surviving metal plating with the faded, albeit still clearly visible, logo of Project Osiris. This logo matches the one they saw in the mountain cave during the "Second Place" scenario (see page 159). Even on a failure, the wreckage is clearly human in origin.

- Success on a Per/phy-sci-10 flip will allow a character to figure out that the wreckage has been left exposed to the elements for somewhere around 30 years.
- Before the team finishes searching the rubble they should encounter the bioengineered descendants of the colony ship, still living in the ruins (see below).

Lost Tribe

Not everyone from Project Osiris died when the colony ship was shot down. At the point that this happened, the ship had already been orbiting Siren for years and a substantial fraction of the colonists had been revived from stasis and were living in a fledgling colony on the surface nearby.

These early colonists discovered the problems associated with the planet's atmosphere and had raced to create a geneline where their children could breathe the air unaided. The first generation of these adapted humans were already children when the colony ship came crashing out of the sky.

The years that followed were a disaster. The colony that had been established so far was not at a point where it was ready to be self-suffi-

What Happened Here?

Although the team won't realize it yet, what they see before them are the remains of the Project Osiris colony ship (see page 79). It crashed here some thirty years ago, breaking apart and littering the site with debris.

Once the team realizes the nature of the wreckage, they may find it odd that it crashed so near the coordinates they recovered from the alien data core—especially because the alien facility was abandoned centuries or millennia before the Project Osiris ship could possibly have arrived.

This is no coincidence. The coordinates the colonists found do not denote the colony ship wreckage, but rather mark a second alien facility hidden amidst the rubble (see page 180). Thirty years ago explorers from Project Osiris activated this facility, starting a series of events that eventually led to it shooting down the Project Osiris ship as it orbited overhead (see page 182).

cient, and most of the Project Osiris supplies burnt up when the ship came down.

The colonists struggled to survive. They gathered what resources they could from the crashed ship. They ate some of the native Centauran life. They cut power use to a bare minimum. But in the end they couldn't support their population, and one by one they died. The last of the Project Osiris colonists from Earth died off a decade after the ship came crashing down.

Most of the adapted children, however, survived. They didn't require breathers or air filters—power generation and maintenance. The oldest of them were just reaching adulthood while the last of the original colonists were dying off. This world was all they had ever known, and while their formal education was spotty, they knew how to survive here on the Centauran plain. They became the Osiris Tribe.

- If creating characters with a similar geneline, see the Centauri Adept on page 93.
- The Osiris Tribe speaks a slightly accented version of Mandarin (the mission language used by the original Project Osiris).

Initial Encounter

While the team is searching through the rubble they will come to attention of the Osiris Tribe members living in the area. These tribe members will initially seek to remain hidden and observe the team, but the observers will panic and attack if they are spotted and the team is visibly armed. They have never encountered outsiders before and are used to unknown encounters on the planet being deadly.

If the characters don't spot the tribe members watching them, the observers will rush up and attempt to capture a team member before they can leave the debris field. This capture attempt will take the form of a surprise attack and an attempt to disarm and knock down the character before the team can effectively retaliate.

- Players can make a Per/awareness-10 flip to notice that their characters are being observed by what appear to be naked humans without breathers.
- Characters may try to diffuse the situation. Success on a Chr/persuade-8 flip will convince the tribe members to cease their attack. Apply a -4 penalty if the character isn't speaking Mandarin.
- Use the Osiris Tribe stats on page 84. There are a number of observers equal to the number of players. See "Continued Conflict" below.

Making Nice

If the team manages to de-escalate the situation, the observers will be willing to speak further with the characters, but they're not sure what to make of the situation. The appearance of unknown humans is outside their realm of previous experience.

If verbal communication is possible—that is, if one of the team members speaks Mandarin or another related language—one of the tribe will introduce himself as Séverin. He will ask the team to accompany them to speak with the tribe's leaders. "They ought to know what to do."

If verbal communication is not possible, Séverin will try to convey this information with hand motions and tone of voice.

- Séverin uses the Osiris Tribe stats on page 84.
- The tribe members won't attempt to disarm the team, but they may react violently if a team member draws a weapon or refuses to put their weapons away.

Continued Conflict

The tribe members will continue their capture attempt so long as everything remains nonlethal. If the conflict turns bloody, however—going from a capture attempt to a lethal confrontation—the tribe members

will turn and run, scattering in all directions, dodging and weaving among the rubble. Their goal at this point will be to lose the team amidst the debris and then make it back to their encampment.

- Use the Osiris Tribe stats on page 84. There are a number of observers equal to the number of players.
- Consider this chase an extended Spd/athletics vs. Spd/athletics (Tally 10, 10 seconds) action. Every chasing team member should take this action individually. Each flip, if the player gets a success, she may attempt a free attack or other quick action on a fleeing target. If the tribe members win the chase, they get away. If one of the team members wins the chase, they track the observers back to their encampment (see below).

Osiris Encampment

One way or another, the GM should contrive events so that the team finds their way to the encampment. It is here that the Osiris Tribe have made their home, living amid the ruins of a second alien facility. These ruins not only provide ample shelter for the tribe, but they also serve as an unparalleled defense system.

From the outside, the facility appears to be little more than a short hill, covered with rocks and occasional debris from the colony ship. There may have once been a single twisting metal tower here—similar to the ones at the last facility the team explored—but this tower has broken away at the base and lies in many pieces amongst the rubble at the bottom of the hill.

The entryway to the facility is a hexagonal hole in the top of the hill, with a ramp leading downward, underground. The rubble here has been cleared away and piled in a ring around the entrance, forming a small courtyard of rocks and broken spaceship bits. It also shields the entryway from outside view.

The Guardians

As with the other facility, the entry ramp curves downward in a looping, spiral pattern. On the walls here hang countless spears, their sharpened heads crafted from the nearby metallic debris. At the base of the ramp, the passage turns sharply and then opens up into a large chamber. Just inside this chamber, flanking the door on either side, are two Alien Sentinels—just like the one the team encountered in the other facility (see page 173). Members of the tribe have left various offerings for the sentinels, and these have been piled, untouched around their many feet.

The Osiris Tribe has discovered the secret to not triggering the activation of these sentinels. This allows them to freely come and go from the facility, while potential dangers activate the silent guardians and are driven off. In this way, the Alien Sentinels serve as an effective defense system for the Osiris encampment further inside the ruins.

Alien Sentinels possess electromagnetic sensors, and the ones here activate and attack if anyone carries something past them that would trigger that sense. This includes all ferrous metals, implants and electronics. They also attack if any large Centauran fauna attempt to crawl past. The sentinels weren't programmed to deal with humans—there being no humans on Siren when they were constructed—and thus people without metallic or electronic gear may pass by without incident.

Naturally, having a defense system triggered by metal and electronics impedes the Osiris Tribe's ability to regularly use such equipment. This is one of several reasons that they have adopted their current low-tech lifestyle.

- Use the Alien Sentinel stats on page 134.
- If the team has made nice with Séverin, at this point he will warn them, conveying that they need to strip and leave behind

all of their gear, including any breathers, weapons, armor and electronics. Characters with visible implants will also be asked to remain behind. Needless to say, this information will be easier to convey if he shares a language with one of the team members.

The Encampment

Just past the room with the sentinels there are passageways leading to several large, domed chambers. In these chambers the Osiris Tribe have made their homes. Using poles, tarps and bits of scrap, they have subdivided the rooms into smaller living quarters. There are also open spaces for public use, drainage areas that act as toiletries and a fire pit near the old ventilation system. This encampment has served the tribe well for almost two decades.

- There are roughly 500 tribe members living among the ruins. If necessary, use the Osiris Tribe stats on page 84, but there are only 10 warriors among them (plus

any surviving observers that the team has already encountered). The rest have no combat skills and will simply hide and flee if it comes to violence.

Tribal Leaders

One of the domed rooms has been turned into a large public space in which pillows, cushions and blankets woven from Siren's native fauna litter the floor. The ten tribal leaders await in this chamber, word having already reached them of the team's presence in the area.

None of the ten leaders are fighters. If the team enters accompanied by Séverin, he will formally introduce them. Otherwise—even if the team is raiding the settlement using violence or stealth—the ten will attempt to speak with the team. (If nothing else, this buys their people time to escape while they keep the team occupied.)

- If the team has been unable to verbally communicate with the tribe so far, one of



the leaders will speak French, albeit it may take a few tries to guess the correct language.

- “You are breather-folk. I thought the last of the breather-folk were dead. Where did you come from? Are you from Earth?”
- Unless the team again engages in violence, the tribal leaders will continue to ask and answer questions. Eventually one of them will tell the parable of hubris, by way of explaining the fate of Project Osiris.

Parable of Hubris

One of the tribal leaders will tell the story of their people: what happened to the Project Osiris colony ship and how they came to live in the alien ruins.

- “Once our people came from the sky—from Earth. They sailed here in a great metallic ship. They landed here in Osiris Valley and began to build the first home.”
- “At first our people struggled. They could not breathe the air, so they reshaped their children to do so. Then they could not eat the food, so they treated the native life with lye so that they could stomach it. Then they could not drink the water, so they passed it though a great filter and drank their fill.”
- “With these three things accomplished, our ancestors began to grow proud. They thought that they had conquered the new world and had revealed all its secrets. They became so filled with hubris they believed nothing could challenge them. That is when they discovered the catacombs.”
- “Sure of themselves, they entered the tunnels and sought to conquer those too. They failed. They meddled with the buttons and controls left behind by the antediluvians, but they did not understand. And for their transgressions they were punished.”
- “For three days and three nights fire rained from the sky. It felled their great ship as

it passed overhead. It destroyed the first home. It killed or ruined everything in its path. Only a few survived.”

- “And so we remember the hubris of our ancestors. We remember to give appropriate reverence to, and not to despoil, the things the antediluvians left behind. Because if you transgress with them, you will be punished.”

A Curse Reborn

Even if the team has been entirely diplomatic from the start, not everyone in the Osiris Tribe will be happy that the characters have been discovered. To some in the tribe, living “breather-folk” are an unwanted reminder of the past—a curse brought back to life. After all, it was the hubris of the breather-folk that brought down the rain of fire which nearly destroyed their people.

This dislike for the characters is given increased vigor if the team hasn’t been entirely peaceful, particularly if in the initial contact they injured or attacked members of the tribe. In this case, not only are their kind responsible for the destruction of the Osiris Project, but they’ve also personally attacked the tribe’s own.

Séverin and the tribal leaders may have made nice with these breather-folk, but there are those who believe that the team needs to be killed or driven off. (And if the team has fought their way into the encampment, this will be a near unanimous sentiment.)

In the encampment and in the ruins of the facility beyond there are a variety of ancient alien relics and scrap left collecting dust. Many of these are metallic or even electronic. Before the team leaves the encampment, one of these hateful members of the tribe will attempt to slip a small piece of metal scrap onto a team member, either subtly placing it in a pocket or in a backpack or anywhere else that is available. The goal is for the scrap to trigger the activation of the Alien

Sentinels on the team's way out. With any luck, the tribe member hopes, the team will be killed.

- Noticing this attempt requires a successful Per/awareness-12 flip as it happens. If it goes unnoticed, the character may attempt a second flip, if at some later point she opens her pack or reaches into her pockets.
- Use the Alien Sentinel stats on page 134 if scrap goes undetected and the guardians are activated.
- If the team hasn't made nice with the tribe, if the Alien Sentinels have somehow been destroyed or if the characters are entirely naked with no place to put the scrap, the hateful members of the tribe will abandon all subtlety and launch a direct attack.
- Use the Osiris Tribe stats on page 84. There are a number of attackers equal to the number of characters (or twice this if the team hasn't made nice).

Future Relations

The future relations between the Osiris Tribe and the player colony is largely dependent on the actions the team took during this scenario. It could be anything from a handshake and pledge of alliance to a declaration of war. The GM should use common sense when making this decision.

- If relations are good, the leaders of the tribe will declare their friendship, letting the team know that they will be welcome if they are ever in the area. The tribe, however, has no intention of leaving their home, nor do they want to get involved in any squabbles between the ARC Project factions (if made aware of them).
- If relations are hostile, the Osiris Tribe has no intention of pursuing the team beyond the mountains and attacking the player colony. However, if the team or their colony ever returns to the area, they will not hesitate to attack on sight.

Salvage or Parting Gift

As the team leaves the Osiris Tribe and the colony ship's crash site, they may be given a parting gift or otherwise have a chance to recover some useful salvage.

- If the team departs the tribe on good terms, before they leave, one of the tribe's leaders will speak with them, giving them directions to where the ruins of the colony ship's bridge lies, partially torn asunder. She is aware that this part of the ship was important and is equally aware that the tribe, with their current residence and guardians, is unable to use the electronics that would be found there. This she gives to the team as a parting gift.
- Success on an Int/investigate-10 flip will bring the team to the ship's ruined bridge, where they will find the ship's mainframe (not currently functional, but repairable), including the stored data (this may lead to Cybernetic Infection side trek, see page 217).
- Alternatively, if the team departs the tribe on less than good terms, they may stumble upon the bridge on their way out of the area, thereby allowing them to retrieve the mainframe, if they so desire.



7: Contagion

So far during the colonization effort, Siren and Earth lifeforms have remained separate. What infects one type of life isn't generally able to infect the other. All that, however, is about to change in a rather explosive way. An infectious type of spore has now made the leap, learning how to invade and feed upon human life. This sets the stage for a race back to space to retrieve important medical equipment with which the player colony may be able to overcome this new parasitic threat.

This scenario is best run after a few sessions before the GM plans to end the campaign, as it foreshadows the final scenario.

Drop Module Survey

The scenario begins with the team attending a briefing on known un-salvaged drop modules. Any of these might contain resources that would be of value to the colony. Presenting this day are a group of the colony's explorers, led by Jaci Grid and Eva Leonard. These two are an aerospace engineer and an amateur astronomer, respectively. Wafai Yanev, a quartermaster for the ARC Project, was also scheduled to speak today, but couldn't make it because he was feeling ill. Both of the other speakers will apologize for his absence.

- Masozi Grid uses the Scout stats on page 85.
- Eva Leonard uses the Scientist stats on page 85.

The Presentation

The speakers give a presentation containing the following information:

- Masozi begins the presentation, noting the location of three drop modules that have been located, but which have yet to be salvaged by the player colony. The GM should point these out on the map, placing them in remote areas, at the edge of what the colony has explored.
- Jaci continues the presentation, noting that the colony's telescopes have located the frame of the ARC colony ship, still in orbit around Siren. Furthermore, it appears that several drop modules failed to deploy when the ship entered orbit, and are still attached to the frame.
- Finally, Masozi and Jaci both note that Wafai was going to give the last third of the presentation, but since he's ill, they will be stepping in to deliver his findings. He's been leading an effort to identify the contents of drop modules from their hull signatures without the need to go investigate.
- According to his best predictions, two of aforementioned planet-bound drop modules are listed as containing nutrients and colonists, while the third is one of the rare modules containing a planetary shuttle—a craft attached to a chemical rocket, designed to get the first explorers back out of the gravity well (see page 26).
- The drop modules still attached to the colony ship's frame include another

Colony Ship's Orbit

Whatever maneuvers ended up being performed with the ARC colony ship at the end of the first scenario, "Violent Arrival," the result was that the ship's hull buckled, its compartments were flooded with radiation and the ship decelerated with tremendous G-force, leaving the engines and frame in orbit around Siren. Meanwhile, most of the drop modules successfully deployed to the planet down below.

colonist module, as well as the module containing the mission's primary supply of advanced medical equipment.

Patient Zero

As the team, speakers and other participants leave the meeting room the drop module presentation was happening in, they will enter a busy open chamber, filled with people of the colony going about their business.

In the middle of this chamber, with an unhealthy pallor and beads of sweat dropping from his skin, stands Wafai Yanev, swaying back and forth slightly and clearly in some sort of distress. Several passersby are staring.

- Jaci will point him out, "That's Wafai Yanev, the speaker who couldn't make it today. What's he doing out of his hab? He's sick!"
- Suddenly Wafai will lurch forward clumsily, his body will begin to tremble, he will let out one last scream, and then without further warning his head will burst open with a surprising pressure! Viscera, brains and gore will be splattered everywhere, showing the onlookers, the team, the speakers and everyone else in the chamber!
- Although it won't likely be necessary in this scene, Wafai uses the Spore Drone stats on page 131.

Immediate Response

The team has the opportunity to take immediate response to this gory event. Although nothing they can do at this point will stop the spread of spore infection, the team can learn a bit about it and even slow down its initial spread.

- Quick-thinking players might choose to call for everyone in the chamber to stay and be quarantined. This will help slow the initial spread of infection, but at this point it is too late to fully contain it.

- Otherwise, this event will frighten those who witness it. Some of the exposed will seek to slip away, putting distance between themselves and the gore-filled scene.
- Examining the viscera will reveal that it contains weird black growths throughout. Performing a medical examination of Wafai's body and succeeding on a Per/medic-10 flip will reveal that it likewise has weird black growths throughout it.

Outbreak

Wafai Yanev's horrific death is just the first sign the team has noticed in a larger spore infection outbreak. At this point the colony has one confirmed death, everyone in the chamber has been exposed—including the player characters—and Wafai was in contact with an unknown number of people before his messy demise. Additionally, no one knows where Wafai contracted the infection, nor how it is spread.

It will only be a matter of time before other colonists start getting sick and showing symptoms. As the rest of the scenario continues, the GM should occasionally take the opportunity to describe the progression of the outbreak and the effect it is having on the colony. The players should feel that they are in a race against time to stop the outbreak before it kills the entire colony, the team included.

- Shortly after exposure, the GM should either have each exposed player make an End-14 flip to see if they become infected or otherwise flip in secret. The details on spore infection can be found on page 130.
- Particularly devious GMs might want to note when each character experiences something that might be a symptom—whether the character is infected or not! Stress will play strange tricks on the mind.

Progression of the Outbreak

Below is a rough outline of the progression of the outbreak, assuming the characters don't slow it down or otherwise stop it. The GM should use this timeline as a rough guide when narrating the infection's spread, adjusting to fit the pace of the scenario in actual play. All of the times listed below count from *T*, the time of Wafai's death and when the infection becomes known to the team.

- **T+0 Days:** Exposed colonists scatter. A vid of Wafai's death is posted to the net. No one knows what to expect.
- **T+1 Day:** Other people begin to show symptoms. Fears of an outbreak become apparent and rumors begin to spread.
- **T+2 Days:** The symptoms spread well beyond those exposed in the chamber. Other colonies quarantine the player colony. Fear is rampant.
- **T+3 Days:** The new first spore drones appear. Fueled by rumors, desperate colonists may riot or attack colony facilities.
- **T+4 Days and Onward:** Social order breaks down within the colony, as spore drones appear at an increasing rate and

new people show symptoms. Decrease the colony's Population rating by 1 for each day after this. The infection ends once Population reaches zero, leaving the colony a nightmarish post-apocalyptic husk.

Examination and Research

A medical examination of the corpse or living victims is an obvious place to start looking for a cure.

- Success on an Int/medic-10 flip paired with a thorough medical examination of Wafai's corpse will confirm that the infection is some sort of native Siren life form that has made the jump to being able to infect humans.
- Examination of a living victim and success on a similar flip will reveal that the infection has the ability to trigger the victim's muscles and can somehow tap into the victim's nervous system, just behind the eyes.
- Other medical information will be scarce, even with a successful examination. All attempts will point to the fact that treating the infection requires more advanced medical equipment than is currently possessed by the colony.

Infected Team Members

As the scenario continues, infected team members will need to make daily flips against the progression of the infection. This can kill characters if the team is slow to retrieve the cure and the players have bad luck. To compensate, the GM should be liberal when giving out bonuses on the daily flips for characters who receive medical treatment, take extra rest, etc. These bonuses will help the characters succeed on the flip that day and thus slow the progression of the illness.

- The details on spore infection can be found on page 130. It uses the *Maladies* rules on page 154 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook.
- Unlike normal maladies, the Mag achieved on a flip does not carry over from interval to interval. This means that to overcome the infection, the character will either need to succeed by the Tally all at once, or the team will need to retrieve the advanced medical drop module (see the next page).

Other Colonies

The team may want to contact the other colonies and check and see if one of them has experienced a similar outbreak—after all, this might provide vital data on the timeline or treatment of the infection. Unfortunately, the player colony is the first to experience this new threat, and thus useful information will be limited.

- Getting any official statement from the other colonies requires a successful Chr/bureaucracy-10 flip.
- Regardless, once news of the infection gets out, the other colonies will quickly move to quarantine the player colony, lest their own citizens become infected. For the time being this will disrupt trade, attacks on and travel to the player colony.

Rumors

As the infection spreads, so will the rumors. No one knows where the infection came from, so people will begin to speculate. The rumor mill is further strengthened if the colonists are being quarantined and individuals don't have anything better to do than to post rumors to the net. If unchecked, these rumors may prompt mobs of hysterical colonists into desperate and foolish acts.

- Quashing a rumor takes some time on the net and a successful Chr/socialize-12 flip.
- One prominent rumor is that the infection was developed in a secret lab operated by the colony. It escaped confinement, and now the authorities are rapidly trying to cover their asses. This may prompt desperate colonists to attack the colony's scientific facilities.
- Another prominent rumor is that the infection is a bioweapon that has been deployed by Red Ends Interplanetary in retaliation for past actions by the colony.

Quest for the Cure

Eventually, either scientists among the team or other scientists in the colony will come to one worrisome conclusion: the player colony doesn't have access to the medical technology it needs to fight the infection.

Regardless of whether this revelation is met with renewed determination or with wails of despair, it won't be long afterward that someone will connect the need for better medical technology to the advanced medical drop module still attached to the frame of the ARC colony ship.

Ideally the players will come to this conclusion, putting together the information in the earlier presentation with their current predicament. If they fail to think of this solution, however, the GM should feel free to have a friendly NPC suggest it.

The Long Shot

Retrieving the medical drop module from the ARC colony ship first requires the ability to make it back into space. It's possible that the colony is already able to do this because it's developed the Orbital Launch advancement. It's also possible that the exploration tables or a favor from a space-capable colony has yielded the means of making a single trip back into space. If this is the case, the team can begin preparing for launch and much of this next section can be skipped.

If the colony doesn't yet have the means to make it back into space, the drop module survey earlier also yielded a solution: a drop module containing a planetary shuttle has been located at the edge of the colony's territory (see page 184). The team will need to travel to this drop module, salvage the shuttle with the rocket and make the journey up out of the atmosphere.

- More on planetary shuttles can be found on page 26.

Journey to the Shuttle Pod

By this point in the campaign, the player colony has likely developed some form of vehicular transportation. This is important because the team is on a tight schedule, and they don't have time to waste unnecessarily with travel. Whether they have hydrofoils, choppers, rovers or something more exotic, the team should head out posthaste.

If by some chance the colony hasn't developed vehicles, and the team must make the trek on foot, the GM should be merciful and slow down the timeline of the spore infection's progression to accommodate this.

- Have the pilot or scout make a flip for the team to make the journey without incident. This will be a Dex/vehicles-10 flip by craft or a Per/naturalist-10 flip by foot. On a success, the team gets to the destination without anything major going wrong. On a failure, there is an incident along the way. The GM can either come up with something appropriate or simply have mechanical troubles delay the team by a day.
- Remember that the team is on the clock and as they travel both their own symptoms will worsen and the situation back at the colony will get worse.

Retrieving the Shuttle

This is Siren, so of course nothing is ever that easy. The drop module with the planetary shuttle has been laying abandoned somewhere for years. It wasn't designed to lay fallow, exposed to the elements, for an extended period of time, nor was it designed to hit the ground as hard as it did in the initial landing. To make matters worse, carbon has been slowly leaking out of the drop module, attracting hungry nearby inhabitants.

- Before the shuttle can be salvaged, some work must be done to attach it to the vehicle and correct its orientation. This

requires a Str/athletics-12 flip. The team is free to make this as a group effort action. Failure results in increasing the Fatigue consequence of all participants a severity.

- In the middle of the work, spring this nasty surprise on the team: Somewhere just a few steps away a Lurker in the Regolith is hidden. The creature is hungry and waiting for someone to step just close enough for it to spring out and attack with surprise. Use the Lurker in the Regolith stats on page 125.

Returning to the Colony

The team has likely been gone for a couple days, so when they return to the colony, it should be immediately apparent how much worse things have gotten. The GM should take a moment upon their return to describe the desperate conditions of the colony.

- The corridors may be largely vacated aside from litter, gore and a few human bodies, left to rot where they fell. Somewhere a spore drone may be wandering, looking for a crowd.
- People are mostly hiding in their habs, glued to the net. This calm is broken occasionally by desperate colonists amassing to riot or to raid supplies.
- Somehow, despite these conditions, the team will need to make their final preparations for the launch.

Countdown to Launch

At this point, the plan should be to ride the planetary shuttle back up out of the atmosphere and into space. Then the team can dock the shuttle with the ARC colony ship and begin retrieving the medical technology. Before that, though, the team should go down their checklist for launch.

- A Per/mechanic-10 flip is necessary to go over the shuttle before launch, readjusting and repairing any apparent mechanical

issues. Failure means that something is overlooked, applying a -2 penalty to perform a manual override during the trip up (see the next section).

- Success on an Int/phy-sci-10 flip is necessary to calculate a trajectory that will take the team close enough to dock with the ARC colony ship. Failure means the team loses another day, as the calculations must be adjusted and retested in the simulator.

Return to Space

Depending on how the campaign has played out thus far, it's possible that this trip up the gravity well is the very first venture into space since the ARC colonists arrived on Siren. Even if it's not, it's still a significant and noteworthy endeavor.

The Ride Up

The ride up the gravity well, from Siren's surface to orbit, will take about eight minutes. During this time, the team will experience forces of up to a little over 3 g. This is taxing on the human body, but quite survivable. Unfortunately, the ride up will not go without incident.

About two minutes into launch a warning light will start going off, indicating that there is a sensor malfunction in one of the guidance systems. Unless this problem is fixed immediately, the launch of the shuttle is going to veer away from the target orbit. To fix the problem, one of the characters will need to do a manual override on the system involved. This is made more difficult by physical conditions of the launch.

- A successful Str/athletics-10 flip is required to unstrap and move to the terminal to perform the manual override. Failure results in the character increasing her Fatigue consequence a severity and needing to try again.
- A Spd/athletics-10 flip is necessary to reactively hang on when a booster rocket detaches, resulting in a sudden change in

acceleration. Failure means the character is thrown into a wall, resulting in an increase to her Fatigue consequence. This only happens once, but she must start over.

- An End/comp-ops-10 or End/vehicles-10 flip, finally, is necessary to perform the manual override and correct the problem. Failure results in taking a -4 penalty to dock with the colony ship (see the next section).

Docking with the Colony Ship

Once in orbit, the team can look through the shuttle's view screen and see the vast horizon of Siren. It looks beautiful and serene from up here above the atmosphere. Unfortunately, the moment of beauty is short lived, as the team is on a tight schedule and must dock with the colony ship.

- Docking with the colony ship requires a Dex/vehicles-10 flip. Failure results in the shuttle hitting the colony ship too hard, damaging the shuttle and rendering it useless without major repair. Everyone inside also takes a light wound from the impact.

Exploring the Ship

The frame of the ARC colony ship is a twisted and unstable skeleton of the vessel it once was. The majority of its systems and cargo were jettisoned down to the planet upon arrival, and the hull has cracked and is bent out of shape from the ship's collision damage and subsequent rapid deceleration. Most of what remains in orbit are a long series of corridors, the engines, a few auxiliary systems and the few drop modules that failed to deploy.

While the team and most of the colonists were jettisoning down to the planet at the end of "Violent Arrival," not every colonist made it to a drop module in time. A handful of people were left on the colony ship, abandoned and

alone. These survivors tried futilely to repair the malfunctioning drop modules left attached to the ship, but there were no mechanics among them, and in the end they failed.

Before they slowly asphyxiated, desperate and alone, these stranded colonists left messages behind for anyone who might eventually discover their fate. Some went mad in their final hours. Others tried desperately to repair the frame's remaining systems.

This is a great excuse for the GM to make things particularly spooky as the team explores the twisted remains of the ARC colony ship. They might stumble upon bodies still bouncing back and forth in the microgravity, messages on the walls written in blood, recordings left behind in the computer system or places where the wall plating was torn open and the wiring repurposed for who knows what purpose. Make the ship spooky.

- The environmental systems of the ARC colony ship are no longer attached to the frame, and due to the reactor leak earlier, the entire structure is now somewhat radioactive. The team will need environment suits.
- The entire ship is in microgravity. Rules for microgravity can be found on page 158 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook.

- Success on an Int/comp-ops-12 flip will gain the team access to the colony ship's auxiliary computer (the primary computer was jettisoned in its own drop module and lies somewhere lost on the planet's surface).
- Once computer access is achieved, an Int/vehicles-10 flip will gain a colonist access to the ship's remaining sensors. These sensors can give the coordinates of any remaining undiscovered colonies on the planet. They will also pick up phantom signatures of other objects in orbit. Unfortunately, further scans won't verify the objects' existence. (This hints at the existence of the orbital grid, whose existence will be fully revealed in the next scenario.)

Detaching the Modules

Before the team can send the medical module down to the surface, they're first going to need to fix the mechanical issue that prevented it from being deployed in the first place. They're also going to need to calculate and time the release of the module appropriately, so that it lands at a location where it can easily be retrieved for use by the player colony.

- A Per/engineer-10 flip is required to diagnose the mechanical issue in a timely

Getting Back

The team has two options for getting safely back to the surface. One possibility is that they can hop in the medical drop module before it is released and ride it down the gravity well. The benefit of this option is that it puts them exactly where the module lands, so locating the landing site is trivial. The downside of this option is that it puts them right where the module lands, which likely means somewhere in the wilderness.

The other option is that the team can salvage the necessary components from the colony ship's frame and outfit the planetary shuttle for another trip down the gravity well. This option is likely to take a couple days of work, but the benefit is that the player colony then has a planetary shuttle.

- Outfitting the planetary shuttle is an extended Int/mechanic-10 (1 day, Tally 10) action.
- The planetary shuttle afterward grants Work 10 towards the Orbital Launch advancement.

manner. Failure means the issue otherwise takes a day to diagnose. Meanwhile the condition of the colony worsens.

- A Dex/mechanic-12 flip and a day of hard work is required to fix the mechanical issue. Failure means all the effort so far is wasted and the mechanic will need to try again.
- Calculating the timing and directives needed to launch the medical module down to an accessible spot on the surface requires an Int/phy-sci-12 flip. Success means the module lands near the colony, within a few hours travel by vehicle. Failure means it lands over a day's travel away.
- The team may optionally detach the two other drop modules that didn't deploy. This increases the above TNs by +2. Upon successful retrieval the colony will gain Nutrients 10, Minerals 5, Energy 5 and Population 1.

Ending the Epidemic

By this point the team should have dropped the equipment they need down the gravity well, and will be well on their way to solving the outbreak—however, they're not out of the woods yet. They still need to retrieve the medical module, develop a cure and treat the infected.

Retrieving the Module

Depending on how well the team did in calculating the timing and trajectory of the medical module, retrieving it could involve anything from a few hour jaunt by chopper to a grueling multi-day trek into the wilderness of Siren. The GM will need to improvise, taking into account the circumstances of the scenario.

- If the GM feels it necessary, she can have one of the team members make a flip when leading the expedition to retrieve the medical module. A Per/vehicles-10 flip would make for many situations, with a day's delay resulting from a failure.

Developing a Cure

All of the work the team has undertaken so far, of course, depends on the ability to use it to actually develop and deploy a cure. Thankfully, with the right equipment retrieved and installed at the player colony, using it to develop a cure turns out to be a fairly straightforward scientific exercise.

- Developing an effective cure takes a day, the advanced medical equipment in the module, access to an infected colonist to test it on and success on an Int/bio-sci-12 flip. Failure results in either a lost day or a fatal reaction in the test subject.
- Once developed, deploying the cure should be easy enough. The medicine can be distributed to all of the colonists, and a census can be taken of the living and those who died during the scenario. No flip is necessary for this; the team has already accomplished the hard part.

Aftermath

More so than most, this scenario is likely to leave a lasting and profound impact on the player colony. Depending on how quickly the team solved the problem, the social order of the colony is likely to take a while to fully recover, travelers may be reluctant to visit the colony for some time and the population of the colony may have been significantly affected.

Over the next few years of game time, the GM should make sure to note the change in tone in the colony. Following the distribution of the cure, there are likely to be many funerals and a large scale cleanup effort. The colonists remain just a little bit on edge, as they have been reminded of the fragility of human society on Siren. All this adds a note of desperation to the colony's current state of affairs, which sets the stage for the final scenario.

8: Ascension

There is about to be another breakthrough in decoding the alien data core the team retrieved during the “Ashes” scenario. What will be discovered is a planetary defense infrastructure left behind by the extinct Centauran civilization. Whichever colony manages to locate the control center for the infrastructure and reactive it will effectively have military dominion over all of Siren.

To complicate matters, the player colony is not the only faction to have uncovered this information. Red Ends Interplanetary has also made this discovery and has ramped up their attacks against the colony. Soon the team will have to race against time to seize control of the planetary grid before Red Ends can achieve domination.

This scenario brings the *Siren's Call* campaign to a close. As such, it is best run when the GM is looking to bring everything to a final conclusion. While there is nothing about this scenario that prevents ongoing play after its conclusion, it will have a significant impact on the viability of colony warfare, and thus on the competitive aspects of the Colony Building mini-game, in its aftermath.

Listening Post

This scenario begins with the team about to be sent out on a sensitive mission. The colony's scouts have reported that Red Ends Interplanetary has recently increased their activity, sending

patrols and scouting parties out into the wilderness. Obviously they are up to something and the intelligence analysts in the colony believe they may be preparing for an attack.

The team's mission will be to slip unseen into Red Ends territory and install a camouflaged listening post. With the post installed, the player colony will be able to subtly eavesdrop on Red Ends' internal communications. At best the colony analysts will learn the reason behind Red Ends' sudden bout of activity, at worst they may gain crucial information that will aid in defending against any coming attack.

Briefing

The information above will be conveyed to the characters in a closed-door briefing with the colony's administration and intelligence specialists. The characters will also be given a chance to ask any questions they wish before setting out. Below are a few questions that might be asked, as well as the relevant answers.

- **Where is the listening post to be installed?**
The GM should pick out a spot on the campaign map that makes sense, just inside what might be considered Red Ends' territory.
- **How should we get there?** Transportation will be left to up the team to decide upon. They may go on foot if they think it will be more subtle, otherwise they are welcome to requisition a vehicle of some sort.

The State of Red Ends

This scenario assumes that the Red Ends Interplanetary faction is still alive and well and hostile to the player colony. They are the primary antagonists in this scenario. It's possible, however, that by this point in the campaign Red Ends has either been destroyed or that peace has somehow been achieved.

If Red Ends has been destroyed or is no longer a realistic threat, the GM can simply replace that faction with another that is hostile to the player colony. This should pose little difficulty in the narrative. Alternatively, if Red Ends has made a grudging peace, this scenario may reveal that they intend to break that peace in the near future.

- **How big is the listening device?** It's been designed to fold up into a backpack-sized case for transport, but will be a bit larger once assembled. The device has the Big 5 property.
- **How does the device work?** It has passive radio sensors that pick up local transmissions. It then archives and encrypts these transmissions, sending them back to the colony in irregularly timed bursts so as to hamper detection.

Behind Enemy Lines

Once the team sets out they will need to travel into enemy territory, avoiding the frequent patrols and navigating to the coordinates, where they are to install the listening post. The GM is free to flesh out the travel involved, making it an adventure in its own right. Otherwise, she should narrate the journey, describing the scenes and setting the players against the challenges below.

- Teams on foot might encounter enemy patrols three times, while those with a vehicle might encounter enemy patrols twice, since they can move faster through enemy territory.
- Have each of the players make a Dex/stealth-10 flip to avoid detection when a patrol passes nearby. The TN increases to 12 if they are also hiding a vehicle. If half or more of the players fail the flip, they are detected and the patrol comes to investigate, likely attempting to arrest or attack the characters.
- Regardless of how many failed, if there was at least one failure, the patrol is made suspicious. This gives the scene the Heightened Alert consequence, which penalizes all future attempts to hide from patrols. This consequence begins at light severity and increases a severity for each subsequent failure.
- A typical Red Ends patrol consists of six soldiers and a rover. Use the Soldier stats

on page 213 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook and the General Aerodynamics QR-8 Work Rover stats on page 42.

- Finally, a Per/naturalist-10 flip is necessary to navigate to the correct coordinates. Failure results in lost time and another encounter with an enemy patrol.

Installing the Listening Post

When the team finally reaches the selected coordinates, they must look around for a good location and then begin to assemble the listening post. This is the most critical stage of their mission, as without a functional and well-hidden post the journey was for naught.

- Assembling and otherwise setting up the listening post requires an Int/mechanic-10 or Int/engineer-10 flip. Failure wastes several hours and increases the character's Fatigue consequence, but the team may try again.
- Camouflaging the listening post is almost as important as setting it up correctly, as without camouflage the post is unlikely to stay undiscovered for very long. This requires a Per/naturalist-10 or Per/stealth-10 flip. Failure will result in Red Ends having an advantage in the coming attack (see page 195).

The Return Journey

With the listening post installed and operational, the team will simply need to slip back into the colony's own territory, likewise avoiding Red Ends patrols on the way out.

- Have the players each make one more Dex/stealth-10 flip for the return trip. Remember to apply any relevant penalties from the Heightened Alert consequence. At this point the team only runs into trouble if half or more fail the flip.

Eavesdropping

By the time the team returns to the player colony, the analysts there have already received their first transmission from the listening post and the computers are hard at work breaking the Red Ends encryption.

Give the team some free time to pursue personal interests or pet projects. Over the next few days, the intercepted communications will begin to be decoded, revealing some disturbing facts, one-by-one:

- The explorers for Red Ends Interplanetary have discovered yet another alien ruin left behind by the extinct Centauran civilization, but this time their scientists have somehow figured out how to activate the machinery at the site. The location of this site is never broadcast in the intercepted communications.
- Red Ends is indeed preparing for an attack, and the player colony is the likely target.
- In preparing for the attack Red Ends is planning to utilize technology that they have adapted from their discoveries in the alien ruins.

Encoding Breakthrough

At some point while the characters are going about their personal activities in the colony and news from the listening post is beginning to make its way to the team's ears, they will be approached by the group of scientists in the colony who have been working on understanding the alien data core retrieved from the ruins in the "Ashes" scenario. These scientists are excited to report a breakthrough in understanding the data encoded in the device! This discovery is important because it foreshadows the team learning the location of the planetary control grid from the alien data core.

- "You know the alien data core that you retrieved some time ago? Since it was brought back we've had people working on it, trying first to figure out the physical technology behind the encoding and then trying to make sense of the data itself. Well, I think we have it... almost! There was a breakthrough last night! We can now take pieces of the data, convert it to an intermediate model and then convert that to human language, or near enough! Would you take a look at it?"
- With a successful Int/program-12 flip, a character can pick up where the scientists have left off and begin a computer process that will decode the last of the data. Although it won't finish running until the team is already engaged in the coming attack, the data will then be decoded (see below).

Stopping the Attack

Before the team can pursue making too many queries with the decoded data, they will be interrupted with an urgent message: The listening post has picked up that Red Ends is on the move! They're positioning themselves for an attack on the player colony and the team will need to prepare with all due haste!

The Coming Battle

The coming battle will be run using a variation of the colony warfare rules. Before the battle the GM should note the colony turn and look up the values for Red Ends Interplanetary on that turn, taking into account any Growth modifier.

In addition to the usual rules, the team will have a chance to prepare, and other events will precede the bulk of the fighting. Depending on how these events resolve, they will provide VP for one side or the other. These Victory Points will influence the result of the coming battle.

These events are likely to stack the results of the battle against the player colony. While winning the battle is not impossible, it is unlikely. This is a deliberate design decision intended to up the desperation of the current situation. It makes the subsequent race to control the planetary grid all the more important (see page 197). That said, if the players do manage to eke out a victory in this battle, they deserve it! Make sure they see the benefits of their hard work.

The different events leading up to resolving the battle are each described in their own sections below.

- The colony warfare rules are on page 52.

The Listening Post

In the lead up to the fighting, the listening post may provide critical intelligence on Red Ends' troop movements and capabilities. Remember that flip to camouflage the listening post earlier? If the team failed this flip the listening post will be discovered and used to feed the player colony false information, depriving the colony of its advantage.

- Red Ends gains 1 VP if they were able to locate the listening post.

Preparing for the Attack

The players may have their own ideas of how to prepare for the attack. The GM should work with these plans, allowing them to benefit the player colony. Reward creativity. Perhaps a scientist or engineer character has a secret weapon prepared, or maybe a soldier character provides the colony's forces with special training.

- If the team members successfully put their preparations into effect, the player colony gains 1 VP.

Wolf Among the Sheep

Red Ends isn't without their own secret machinations. Somewhere in the player colony is a spy that is working to undermine the colony's preparation. If left unchecked, this spy will transmit the colony's battle plans back to Red Ends and then move to sabotage the colony's defenses.

- A character monitoring the colony's comms can detect the spy early with a successful Int/comp-ops-12 flip.
- A character working with the colony's defenses, vehicles or troops can detect the spy just before she has time to sabotage the colony's efforts. A Per/empathy-12 flip can be made to notice her lurking around suspiciously.
- If the characters learn of the spy, how they deal with her is up to them. Use the Spy stats on page 213 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook.
- If the spy manages to sabotage the colony's efforts, Red Ends gains 1 VP.

The Initial Wave

Soon, whether the player colony is ready or not, Red Ends forces will arrive and begin their attack. Initially this will be with conventional ground troops, backed up with rovers or other vehicles.

If they so choose, the team can be at the forefront of the defense and aid the colony by helping set the momentum of the battle to come. If this is the case, set the team up against a group of attacking soldiers, describe the battle raging around them, but only run the team's small portion of it using the combat system.

- Use the Soldier stats on page 213 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook. There are a number of soldiers equal to the number of players. They will retreat, defeated, if half or more of their number enter their Dying Gasps.

- If the team manages to defeat these foes in three rounds or less, they will help the colony gain the momentum in the early battle. This will provide the player colony with 1 VP.

Alien Advantage

Unfortunately, Red Ends has one more secret advantage, and it's a big one! With information and technology gleaned from the alien facility they reactivated, they've been quickly manufacturing mobile drones comprised of a mix of human and salvaged Centauran civilization tech.

While the initial wave of attack is intended to soften the player colony up and potentially get the defending forces to overextend themselves, Red Ends will follow up with a wave of attacking drones. These vehicle-like constructs creep across the plain on many legs, their hulls rolling as they push forward. From atop the colony's defenses, the team can see this new threat approaching like a wave of crawling metallic death.

- This secret advantage gains Red Ends 1 VP outright and provides an additional Might 30 on top of what they otherwise possess. Finally, the alien-tech drones count as 10 tac-rovers for the purposes of determining mobile advantage.

Resolving the Attack

With all of these events resolved, the GM should do the math to determine the winner of the battle.

- It is likely that Red Ends will come out ahead, in which case they will primarily target the player colony's defensive facilities and secondarily target its industry. They will then pull back from the fighting, confident that they've dealt a crippling blow to the colony, while they regroup in preparation for future action. The colony will be left damaged and defeated, with morale poor and columns of smoke rising from the battlefield.

- On the other hand, it is possible that the player colony may win. If this is the case, against all odds the team has heroically led the defense, pushing the attacking forces back and potentially pursuing them back to Red Ends' base. The GM should narrate appropriately.

New Developments

After the battle, give the team some time to go about picking up the pieces or to pursue personal interests. They've been kept busy by the scenario so far and this may be their last opportunity in the campaign to wrap up other loose ends or to finish up personal plots.

While the characters are going about their business, the GM should drop in bits of information now and then, leading up to the final mission that is to come. These hints at what's to come are given below.

- The colony's engineers confirm that the drones which Red Ends used in the attack are at least partially alien in origin. Furthermore, they seem to have been fabricated very quickly, which would give Red Ends an advantage in future military actions.
- The listening post picks up new transmissions (or picked up new transmissions right before it was disabled) in which Red Ends salvage teams seemed very excited about an unnamed discovery at a certain set of planetary coordinates.
- The scientist team going through the data decoded from the alien core reports that the coordinates Red Ends is excited about corresponds to what is listed as a "planetary grid control node."
- Further analysis of the data suggests that if one of the factions manages to activate and operate this "planetary grid control node" they will effectively win all future military engagements on Siren. They might be able to remotely operate other alien sites

around the globe, deploy mass destructive forces from orbit and fabricate new facilities in record time, or even tinker with the climate. All of this is still within the realm of speculation, of course, but it represents a power that the colony can't afford to let fall into Red Ends' hands.

Secret Mission

The team has one more secret mission ahead of them: They will be asked to travel to the aforementioned coordinates, locate the planetary control node and to either activate and take control of it, or to at the very least prevent Red Ends Interplanetary from doing the same.

This mission is of vital importance to the colony, as whomever gains control the planetary node may very well control the future of humanity on Siren.

Briefing

The team will be assigned this mission in a short and relatively informal briefing. All of the important people in the colony's administration are present, but time is of the essence. The team will have the opportunity to ask any questions they may have and requisition necessary gear, but soon afterward they will be expected to set off for the coordinates. A few points to cover are detailed below.

- The GM should mark a spot on the map corresponding to the planetary coordinates in question. Ideally this should be a spot somewhere between the player colony and Red Ends Interplanetary—somewhere remote and just beyond the fringes of explored land.
- The experts in the colony find it unlikely that the team will be the only ones at the coordinates. Since Red Ends discovered the site, they are likely to have teams of scientists and guards present. On one hand, this activity may make it easier to locate the

planetary node. On the other hand, it's likely to complicate the team's efforts to take control of the site.

- Activating the control node, if possible, is expected to be a lengthy endeavor, as evidenced by the fact that Red Ends hasn't already done so. If the team pursues this, they will need to be stealthy, remaining hidden while there. Otherwise they will be forced to fight and hold off for a long time against everything Red Ends can possibly throw at them. The experts suggest that stealth is a better option.
- This isn't the first alien ruin encountered by the team, and so they may have some idea of what to expect. Nevertheless, this site is of higher importance than anything the team has encountered thus far, and so there may yet be challenges the like of which they have yet to face. Caution is advised.

Preparation

In preparation, the team will be allowed to requisition any gear the colony possesses. This mission is that important. No expense will be spared, but the team is still limited by the gear the colony has the ability to manufacture, and which is also immediately available for requisition.

- The GM should make note of which advancements the colony possesses, as well as the colony's Lifestyle rating.

Travel

The colony will have prepared the swiftest means of transport they have available. This is likely to be a chopper, civilian atmo-jet or some other aerial vehicle, although a land or sea vehicle is possible depending on the advancements the colony possess and the location of the coordinates. If the team doesn't have a member capable of operating such a vehicle, a pilot will be provided.

The bulk of the travel is likely to be uneventful. The team just needs to get there and get there fast. However, for stealth to be maintained, the vehicle will have to land or otherwise be left some distance away, so as not to give away the team's presence.

- A Per/stealth-10 flip may be called for when the team travels the last bit of distance to the coordinates. Failure results in the team leaving signs of their passage behind, which will be noticed by Red Ends forces.

Exploring the Control Facility

With the bulk of the Red Ends forces behind them, the team is free to enter the control facility with only minimal stealth required. The entryway is located in a raised bit of ground surrounded by rocks, and with blackened vegetation where Red Ends forces have burnt away the growth which used to conceal the entrance.

The Entryway

The entry into the control facility is built in much the same style as the other alien facilities the team has explored: a hexagonal metallic manhole constructed at a raised location. Underneath is a spiraling ramp leading downward, underground.

Unlike the other alien facilities, however, it will be immediately apparent that something is wrong. Broken human bodies lie scattered around the entrance. Their blood has pooled together and since dried into dark red crust.

These are the remains of the first wave of Red Ends explorers, who accidentally tripped the site's outermost defenses.

- A Per/investigate-8 or Per/medic-8 flip will reveal that the explorers died violently. Many have knife-like wounds. All have been stripped of weapons or other valuables.

Abandoned Corridors

For the moment the corridors of the control facility are eerily vacant. Red Ends has pulled back momentarily to take account of their losses and plan for their next attempt to breach the facility's defenses.

The team, however, has one advantage that the Red Ends explorers do not have: access to the data from the salvaged alien core. If the players think to use this data to aid in their explorations, they will find the defenses in the facility pose a much less trying threat.

- A Per/investigate-12 flip is required to locate the controls for the planetary grid while exploring the ruins. This is lowered to TN 8 if the players think to use the data from the salvaged alien core.

Unbreached Defenses

The control room for the planetary grid is guarded by a set of defenses which the Red Ends forces have yet to breach. The characters will have to bypass them somehow before they can safely enter the room and attempt to activate the grid.

- Applying the codes contained in the alien data core, the team can successfully deactivate the defenses with an Int/comp-ops-10 flip. A similar flip is required to reactivate them.
- If the players don't think to do this, they will likely set off the control room's defenses. This will release a pair of mechanical sentinels to attack the team. Meanwhile, throughout the facility, still-functioning facility doors will close and controls will begin to lock down.
- Use the Alien Sentinel stats on page 134. Initially one sentinel is activated and will attack, approaching from a nearby corridor. A second sentinel will join the first at the beginning of the second round.
- Tripping the defenses will also alert a pair of Red Ends explorers, who will soon

afterward discover the team, observe quietly while sizing them up and then attack while the characters are distracted, hoping to gain the element of surprise. Use the Scrapper stats on page 212 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook.

Taking Control

This is it! The team has located the controls for the entire alien planetary infrastructure. Now all they have to do is activate them and take charge, or at the very least prevent Red Ends from doing the same.

This scene represents the climax of the *Siren's Call* campaign. The team has one final challenge ahead of them. Along the way, their efforts will be beset by complications and by Red Ends trying to stop them.

Activating the Grid

Once the team reaches the controls, activating the planetary grid and operating it is the next big challenge. This is a process that will take at least a day, as the team members struggle to get the alien systems to resume their functions.

- Activating and controlling the grid is an extended action consisting of three flips, with TN 10, Tally 10 and an interval consisting of at least 8 hours of work. Unlike most extended actions, the individual flip will vary at each stage.
- Failing to reach the required Tally by the end of the third flip causes the entire grid to go into lockdown—a defense mechanism against subversion. In a long enough timeline, attempting to assume control again may be possible, but meanwhile every Red Ends force on the planet will be tipped off that something is amiss. The team may have little choice but to destroy the control node (see the next page).

- After each flip an event will occur, which must be played out as its own scene, interrupting the activation process until the situation is dealt with. Then the characters can resume work on the grid. Each event is detailed in its own section below.
- **First Flip:** Per/mechanic-10. Other characters may assist using the Engineer or Investigate skills. This represents work taken to physically interface with the control panel and its attached systems. After this flip, run the Detected event below.
- **Second Flip:** Int/phy-sci-10. This represents work interpreting the values and functions of the planetary grid. Other characters may assist using the Bio-Sci or Lib-Arts skills. After this flip, run the Low Oxygen event below.
- **Third Flip:** Det/program-10. This represents attempts to control the system now that it's activated and somewhat understood. Other characters may assist using the Comp-Ops or Socialize skills. After this flip, run the Jenna's Offer event below.

Detected!

Any character with a radio comm will begin to pick up chatter that Red Ends has noticed the presence of “unauthorized” individuals in the alien ruins. If one of the characters failed a stealth flip on the way in and left evidence of her passage, this will be noted as well. The forces make plans to begin a search for the intruders.

- While there is no specific action the characters must take at this time, it would be wise of them to do something to hide themselves or to otherwise seal themselves in so they cannot easily be reached.
- The GM is advised to roll with whatever the players come up with. The intent of this event is mostly to up the tension.

Low Oxygen

Rather than directly confront the team, Red Ends' first course of action will be to flood the alien ruins with unbreathable gas. While standard breathers do a good job filtering out excess nitrogen from the atmosphere, there must still be enough oxygen present to breathe. The plan is to choke the team out of hiding.

- Noticing the change in atmosphere requires a Per/medic-8 or Per/awareness-10 flip.
- A vac suit for each character or a source of oxygen will easily overcome this problem. Alternatively, a quick-thinking character might attempt to adjust the atmospheric controls in the facility—an Int/program-14 flip—or chemically extract oxygen from some other material—an Int/phy-sci-12 flip.

Janna's Offer

Just as the team is making the final breakthrough needed to control the planetary grid, they are interrupted by Red Ends forces who come marching into the room (blowing through any defenses or barricades as necessary).

At the front of the soldiers is a tall woman in a tactical suit. She carries herself with the bearing of one who is used to authority. This is Janna Zhandos, the leader of Red Ends Interplanetary; she has come to deal with the situation personally. But first, she will address the team, offering them one final choice.

- "Look who we have here! I must say, I've been following your progress ever since I first heard your voices over the comms outside the colony ship's armory. That was how many years ago when the drop modules came crashing down? Judging from my intelligence reports, sometimes it seems you're the only competent people your colony possesses."
- "Oh yes, I forgot to introduce myself. I am Janna Zhandos, Supreme Colonel of Red Ends Interplanetary. It seems that you've

activated the control grid for me. Thank you. It would have taken my engineers much longer to do that."

- "Speaking of which, turn it over peacefully and I'll let you live. What's more, there's a job offer in it, if you're interested. Competent help is hard to come by. Of course, if you don't turn the control panel over, I will have to kill you. But that's life: adapt or die."
- Janna Zhandos' stats are on page 86.
- Otherwise, use the Soldier stats on page 213 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook. There are a number of soldiers equal to the number of player characters.

Benefits

Once the team has control of the planetary grid, they will have an array of benefits and new capabilities at their disposal. The immediately apparent benefits are detailed below, although the GM may wish to come up with additional benefits once the characters find time to do a little experimentation.

- The team will have control of the site's defenses, including control of any still-functioning doors, alien sentries and environmental controls. These can be used to kill or drive off any Red Ends forces remaining at the site.
- The team can remotely activate or deactivate any other remaining alien facilities around the planet.
- In the Colony Building mini-game, the Control Node acts as a special facility that provides one of the following per activation (players choose): Might 100 and 1 VP; Nutrients 10, Minerals 10 and Energy 10; or Work 30.

Destruction

At any point the team may decide to give up on trying to assume control of the planetary grid and instead opt to blow the whole control node

to kingdom come. While this isn't as advantageous to the player colony as an operational grid, it nevertheless prevents Red Ends from taking control, and thus makes for a strong plan B.

- A successful Int/engineer-10 flip will inform a character that blowing up only the control panel is unlikely to be sufficient. While it would certainly be a setback to Red Ends, they would eventually be able to apply their knowledge of other alien facilities and assemble a new set of controls.
- Instead, the team is most likely going to need to plant explosive at three key points around the site, then detonate them in coordination. Naturally, this requires the team to have brought explosives with them. While traveling between these key points, they may run into some of the same complications described above. In particular, Janna's Offer still makes for an exciting "boss fight" (see the previous page).
- Alternatively, if the player colony has the W.M.D. advancement, and the players thought to bring a nuclear device with them, a single bomb of that magnitude ought to do the trick.
- Setting an explosive requires a Dex/ordnance-10 flip. Failure results in either lost time and the need to retry, or the device being prematurely armed, therefore requiring the characters to scramble to deactivate the device before it explodes.

Conclusion

With control of the planetary grid or its destruction achieved, and Janna Zhandos the leader of Red Ends defeated, the colonists are victorious and it is time to bring the campaign to a close.

Depending on how much the players like to play through the denouement of a story, the GM can either decide to fade to black here or to play through several scenes of resolution. Some possibilities are noted below.

- When the team arrives back at the player colony they will be hailed as heroes.
- The team may decide to use their control of the planetary grid to broadcast a declaration of victory or control to all of the human colonies.
- There might still be personal plots for individual characters that need resolved, or side treks that the GM wishes to run while the player colony reigns victorious in the background.
- Now that the players may have a huge advantage in the Colony Building mini-game, they may want to play through a few turns where they can witness their colony's ascent over its foes!
- The GM should take the time to answer questions, the players can chat about the campaign and everyone should enjoy its successful conclusion.

Author's Note: End Credits

There are a number of movies where, while the end credits are rolling, the film features a series of vignettes, presenting the future of each of the main characters. I like to use this sort of storytelling device when concluding a campaign. I give each player a moment of spotlight to describe her character's future actions or ambitions. This allows each player a chance to bring her character's story to a close, concluding her character arc in a way that fits.

I highly recommend giving this sort of conclusion a try!



Side Treks

This chapter presents a collection of optional side scenarios and adventure hooks, collectively referred to as “side treks.” The intent is that the GM can draw on these scenarios in whatever order she likes, inserting them between the core adventures in the *Siren’s Call* campaign. GMs are also free to only use the side treks that strike their fancy, dropping the others or cannibalizing them for ideas when creating their own adventures tailored to the player characters.

The side treks presented in this chapter have been divided into three categories: early, middle and late. This categorization reflects when the scenario is most likely to fit into a *Siren’s Call* campaign. However, the GM—as always—should use her discretion. This categorization also reflects the changing themes of the campaign.

- **Early Colonization:** These scenarios largely deal with the struggles of the colonists to establish a new society on Siren.
- **Mid-Colonization:** The middle scenarios assume that the colony has become more established, and largely deal with the conflicts and relations between colonies, as well as the growing power blocs within the player colony.
- **Late Colonization:** These scenarios assume that the colony has achieved a significant degree of sophistication. They address a variety of topics, from space exploration, to answering larger scale questions about the planet.



Early Colonization

These side treks are written to take place early in the colonization effort. They deal with the first exploration attempts and address questions regarding the creation of a new society on Siren.

Devil of the Tangled Growth

This side trek is a creature feature that pits the team against a ferocious monster—a nocturnal predator that inhabits the tangled growth. This story is best run in the early days on Siren, while the world and its native lifeforms are still very much a mystery and something to be feared by the colonists.

Devil’s Tale

While the team’s drop module lands in a wide river valley in a cluster of six, four other drop modules will land near the tangled growth, 10 km or so away (see page 112).

The survivors from these four modules will bring with them a story about some unknown thing—large, fast and sharp—moving about in the night. Many claim this unknown creature killed and ate one of the colonists. They could hear his screams.

Again and again this story is told, each storyteller expanding upon the last. Soon this nocturnal creature will come to be known as the Devil of the Tangled Growth. In the stories it becomes Siren’s boogeyman for the early colonists.

Unfortunately, the Devil of the Tangled Growth is very, very real.

The Hook

At some point before this side trek is ran, one of the colonists should tell the team the story of the Devil of the Tangled Growth. Feel free to embellish and make the tale as chilling as possible. How they react depends on the inclinations of the team. Some might want to hunt it down and end the threat. Others might want to take the creature for study. Still other might write the story off as a tall tale, or even make a mental note to avoid that area entirely.

If by chance the characters rush off to the tangled growth, the hook has already worked. Otherwise, sometime after they hear the story, the team will need to make a trip to the four drop modules, near the edge of the creature's domain. There they will need to sort through the crash site and gather supplies critical to the success of the colony. Since this is a long task, this will need to be an overnight trip.

If necessary, make sure to have one of the colonists remind the characters about the Devil of the Tangled Growth before they set out. To up the tension, this might even be a joking reminder: "Haha! Hope you don't run into that ferocious night monster!"

The Waiting Game

Once the team is at the crash site of the four modules it will only be a matter of time before nightfall and before the Devil of the Tangled Growth emerges to feed on the creatures attracted to the rubble.

- Collecting the necessary supplies from the debris takes eight hours and a successful Per/awareness-10 flip.
- There is nowhere near the crashed modules that is fully safe from the creature, but success on an Int/guns-10 or Int/melee-10 flip will find a site that provides Concealment, Cover or another beneficial consequence.



Fighting the Beast

The moment the creature spots a character it will rush in to attack with amazing speed, using its ability to make tremendous leaps, if necessary. It's an apex predator and normally has no need for clever tactics, relying instead on its great bulk and sharp spines.

- When the devil first charges, have all characters present make a Det-12 flip. On a failure, the character increases her Fear consequence a severity, or two severities with a failure by Mag 5+.
- Use the Centauran Charger stats on page 123.

Nature of the Beast

Once the characters have killed the monster, they may want to take samples or even carry the creature back to the colony as a trophy.

- Examining the creature's DNA and succeeding on an Int/bio-sci-10 flip will reveal that it's surprisingly similar to that of the tangled growth itself (see page 112).
- Bringing the creature back, showing it off and spreading the word that the Devil of the Tangled Growth is now dead may be enough give the colony the Good Morale (light) consequence, with a successful Chr/socialize-10 flip.

Stowaways

This side trek presents the colonists with an unexpected and perhaps unwanted companion that has come with them from Sol. This diversion is best run in the early days on Siren, while the colonists are still sorting through the wreckage of their arrival and adjusting to the new world.

The Long Journey

When humanity first launched its great oceangoing vessels to traverse the seas on Earth, the sailors inadvertently brought with them rats and other creatures that survived in the bowels of the ships. When humanity launched itself into space, it likewise brought along its share of vermin.

Not many species could survive the four century voyage to Alpha Centauri, but somehow a small clutch of krill eggs has managed to make the trip, hidden inside the mechanical workings of an otherwise faulty stasis pod. The eggs of these hardy reptiles were jolted out of stasis along with the crew during the events of “Violent Arrival” and promptly hatched. The krill have since survived, growing and remaining hidden inside the walls of the colony’s drop modules.

- For stats and a description of Krill see page 218 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook.

Thief In the Night

In the early days of the colony, the dwindling food supply will be of critical importance. Until enough farms have been built for the colonists to sustain themselves, they will largely be forced to survive on the supply of ration bars sent from Earth. These critical supplies will likely be surveyed, inventoried and rationed, for without them the colony dies.

When ration bars go missing, this will be a cause for immediate concern. The thief threatens the colony’s very survival. Naturally,

the first conclusion may be that there is a thief among the colonists, and this may result in both accusations and finger-pointing. Investigation, however, will soon indicate otherwise.

- The drop modules don’t have internal cameras, as these were considering unnecessary weight, so there are no vids of the thief.
- Success on a Per/investigate-12 flip, however, will uncover several ration bar wrappers stuffed inside an air vent. These look to have been torn open by tiny, sharp teeth rather than by human hands.
- Staking out the supply on subsequent nights and succeeding on an Int/stealth-10 flip will allow the team witness a krill emerge from a ventilation shaft and steal a ration bar.

Dealing With the Situation

With the source of the missing rations found, the colonists then need to decide what to do about the krill. Hunting down and eliminating the surviving krill won’t be easy. On the other hand, if the colonists allow the krill to live, they will continue to suffer losses from the krill’s growing numbers. Hunting down and capturing the last of the krill poses the same difficulties as eliminating them.

Finally, it may be worth considering the impact of the krill on the local ecosystem. After all, they are essentially an alien species—and an aggressive one at that!

- Attacking or attempting to capture the krill causes them to defend themselves. Use the Krill stats on page 218 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook. There are 12 surviving krill total, but only four can be found at any one time.
- Using poisoned rations or some similar method against the krill is easier, but requires repeated applications and a successful Int/naturalist-12 flip. The dying krill will also make quite a ruckus.

The First Murder

This side trek begins as a murder investigation, but later transitions into a legal and social drama. It puts the team on the trail of the colony's first murderer and touches upon the grander question: What sort of society are the colonists building? This story is best run in the first few years after the mission's crash landing on Siren.

Foul Play

This scenario begins when a human body is found in one of the colony's recycling vats. Either one of the player characters can chance upon it, or the recycling tech tasked with emptying the vat encounters the corpse and alerts the team.

If the players don't take it upon themselves to solve the mystery, their characters will soon be tasked with this duty by someone in the colony's administration.

The Crime

Last night, two of the colonists had a screaming fight over an alleged infidelity. These two were Arman Makhmud and Lisandro Cardozo. They had been something of a couple. After the fight, Arman left to work on a comm antenna near the river, while Lisandro decided to go for a walk without a breather in order to calm down and get a little nitro-drunk.

During the walk Lisandro became so enraged that he circled around to where Arman was working on the antenna, came up from behind and strangled Arman to death.

Immediately after the murder Lisandro panicked. He took the knife Arman was using to cut wire and stabbed him several times in an inept attempt to make the death look like a different sort of killing. He then chucked the knife into the river, dumped Arman's body in the nearest recycling vat and has since been holed up in his hab, trying to keep calm and come up with a cover story.

The Investigation

Beginning with only the body, the team will eventually be able to track down the killer. This will likely require a number of investigative steps along the way. Let the players be creative. There are a number of directions they could take the investigation and avenues they could use to look for clues. Many of these are detailed below.

Whatever happens, don't let the players get stuck for too long. If one of them fails an important flip to reveal a clue, instead have them stumble into information that hints at a different clue. Or if the players are beginning to run out of ideas, feel free to have a witness come forward, a murder implement found or an anonymous tip given.

- Success on an Int/comp-ops-10 flip combined with biometric software and the drop modules' rosters will reveal that in life the body belonged to Arman Makhmud, a low-level comm tech working to set up the colony's radio capabilities.
- Examining the body and succeeding on a Per/medic-10 flip will reveal that the victim died from being strangled by hand. There are few signs of struggle, meaning the victim was either taken by surprise or knew his attacker. Furthermore, there are stab wounds on the body, but these were administered after the victim's death.
- Success on a Per/investigate-12 flip will allow the investigator to track down the scene of the crime. This is lowered to TN 8 if it's known that Arman was working on an antenna near the river. When the team comes upon the crime scene, a coating of drying blood will be found among the rocks near the antenna's base. This blood will have attracted a number of sting worms, which are consuming its abundant carbon (see page 128).

- Success on a Per/investigate-10 flip and a search through the victim's hab will uncover pictures of Arman and Lisandro together, as well as a partially-written journal entry that describes the fight they had the night of the murder.
- Talking to neighbors and succeeding on a Chr/socialize-10 flip will reveal that several of them overheard the fight the night before. Neighbors will also express the view that the couple were prone to drama and that Lisandro was known to have a bad temper.
- Questioning Lisandro and succeeding on a Per/empathy-10 flip will allow the investigator to quickly see that his cover story doesn't hold water and that he's obviously extremely nervous.

An Arrest

If Lisandro knows that an arrest is coming he may attempt to pack a backpack, grab a breather and flee the colony. Otherwise, when the team comes to arrest him, he won't put up much in the way of resistance.

Legal System?

Assuming the players haven't already thought to help set up a legal system, this question will quickly arise after the arrest. Who's in charge in the colony? Is there a separate judiciary? Who selects judges? Does a judge or a jury decide guilt?

The answers to these questions will depend on what sort of government or administration has been put in place in the campaign. If one hasn't been established, this quickly prompts calls to do so. Whatever is decided, however, the GM should make sure that the players have the agency to influence these decisions in the colony. What sort of society are they creating?

The Trial

If the player characters are personally judging the trial, what's decided will be left in their hands. Otherwise, if the trial is being conducted and guilt determined by NPCs, they will ultimately come to the conclusion that Lisandro Cardozo is guilty of the murder of Arman Makhmud.

With the verdict announced, all that's left is to decide the sentence, but this too comes back to the question: What sort of society are the colonists creating? Again, the players should have the opportunity to influence whatever decision the colony makes. What's decided is ultimately up the players and the decisions that have been made in the campaign, but here are a few possibilities:

- **Incarceration:** Lisandro might be imprisoned so that he isn't a threat to others. This does require the colony to produce enough to continue to feed and house him, which may upset some of the colonists as food and hab space are likely in short supply in the early days of the colony.
- **Probation:** Another possibility is that the Lisandro is released, with regular check-ins by the authorities to ensure that he doesn't harm others. After all, the colony is a small community, and a public trial means that pretty much everyone already knows that he is a murderer.
- **Execution:** The colony might decide to execute Lisandro. This means they won't need to continue to feed and house him; however, many colonists may object to execution as barbaric and cruel.
- **Exile:** Alternatively, the colony might supply Lisandro with a breather, a backpack full of ration bars and exile him, never to return. In truth, this will likely mean that Lisandro will die alone in the wilderness, but it won't be the colony's government directly administering his death.

The Silver Screen of Siren

This side trek tells the story of the first vid ever to be produced on Siren. In the process, it touches on the rise of an economy in the colony and private commerce. It also once again pits the colonists against dangerous local fauna. This story is best run several years after the mission's crash landing on Siren.

New Colony Productions

When Ludovic Draper came to Siren, in his small locker of personal effects he brought only one item: the most powerful computer he could fit in the small space. He filled this computer with a copy of every vid he could download, as well as a handful of simspace games.

After the crash landing, once power was restored, these vids were soon in great demand. Recreation in the colony was scarce, and Ludovic was sitting on a treasure trove. He regularly streamed videos from his computer to his fellow colonists' hand terminals, but soon the demand overwhelmed the available bandwidth.

In order to limit the demand, he began charging for the videos—at first a ration bar here, a picked up work shift there, etc., but eventually he began to accumulate more and more.

Meanwhile, Ludovic's assigned job in the colony was as a worker on the air filter maintenance crew. This is a dirty and unglamorous job, but one still vital for the colony's survival. As more and more of his food and possessions began to come from streaming vids rather than from his assigned duties, he began to talk about pursuing that full time with a few of his coworkers.

Eventually he and two others—Sadia Ahmed and Rodrigo Fazl—have come to an agreement. They have decided to resign together and begin a new business: New Colony Productions. This business will continue Ludovic's vid

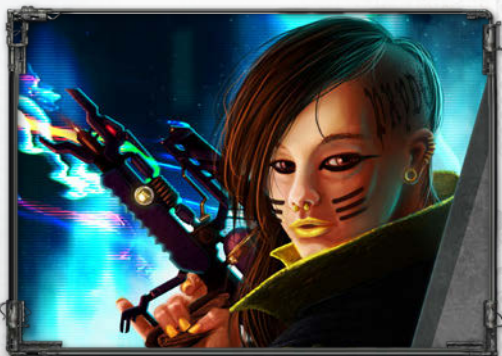
streaming and expand further, creating the first professional vids ever produced on Siren. After all, by this point most of the colonists have seen all of the available vids multiple times.

- Ludovic Draper uses the Executive stats on page 212 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook, but with the addition of Mechanic 3.
- Sadia Ahmed uses the Celebrity stats on page 210 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook, but with the addition of Mechanic 3.
- Rodrigo Fazl uses the Colonist stats on page 84.

Madam Adventure and the Assault of the Sting Worm Swarm!

The first vid New Colony Productions plans to create is titled *Madam Adventure and the Assault of the Sting Worm Swarm!* In this venture Ludovic is acting as writer, director and producer. Sadia is playing the titular heroine of the film. Rodrigo is working the cameras and doing post-production. They're all pitching in to work on the set, and playing bit roles.

They plan to shoot the vid on location at the four drop modules near the tangled growth, or another semi-dangerous location of the GM's choosing. If the vid is a success, they plan to produce an entire series of *Madam Adventure* stories.



Auditions & Interviews

The three cannot do all of the tasks required for the film alone, however. They plan to hold auditions for other acting roles in the film and hire a few part-timers to help work the set. Set workers will be paid in vid streaming credits, but the production company is banking on most bit actors playing their roles for free, mostly for the novelty of being seen on screen.

The production company wants well known and recognizable individuals in the colony to appear in the vid, as this is part of their plan to publicize it. If this describes any of the player characters, they may be approached by the three and asked to perform. Otherwise, anyone can audition:

- Giving a favorable impression while auditioning requires a successful Chr-12 flip.
- Applying for a job working the set is easier, requiring a Chr/socialize-8 flip.

Objections

Not everyone in the colony is happy about this endeavor, however. The air filter maintenance crews have been working long hours without significant breaks for years. Without crew members on shift, the ventilation of the colony's assortment of makeshift habs may begin to back up, leak or worse. This could be catastrophic, as it could render large portions of the colony unlivable until fixed. Colonists could die.

The maintenance crews have been promised reduced hours for years, as the colony's initial makeshift habs are slowly replaced by newer ones, but so far this hasn't happened.

Ludovic, Sadia and Rodrigo quitting to form a vid company only makes this worse for the crews, as it means their remaining members will need to cover their shifts, working even longer hours with even fewer breaks.

- Several of these crew members will petition the authorities in the colony to disallow the

three from forming New Colony Productions and quitting their positions on the maintenance crews.

- The player characters may opt to get involved in this, if they so choose, advocating one side or the side. If not, the GM may simply decide how the authorities rule.
- If the authorities rule against them, several crew members will voice their displeasure both on the local net and holding angry signs at the vid's premiere.
- Either way, it may be best for the authorities to render their decision only after the vid's been shot on location (see below).

Shooting on Location

The new production corp hopes to film a few key scenes on location at the four drop modules that landed near the tangled growth (or another semi-dangerous location, if that one doesn't suit the events in the campaign). These include Madam Adventure finding her love interest unconscious in the wreckage of the crash landing, Madam Adventure fending off a sting worm swarm with a shovel and a long monologue about the optimistic nature of humankind. They hope to travel to the location, do the shooting and travel back in a single overnight trip.

Characters who have been cast, hired to work the set or who are otherwise involved will be brought along for the filming. The corp may even want to hire other player characters for the day—perhaps someone to serve as a guide to and from the location, or someone to serve as security and watch for dangerous fauna.

- There are roughly a dozen people traveling to the location, plus any PCs involved. The other characters include Ludovic, Sadia, Rodrigo, a couple people hired to play bit parts and half a dozen strong arms to carry props and work the set. Use the Colonist stats on page 84, if necessary.

- Guiding the entire group to the location without incident is a Per/naturalist-12 flip. On a failure, some individual runs into a natural hazard and hurts herself. She will need her wound tended to and need returned to the colony.
- If any of the PCs are acting, they'll need to make a Chr/deception-12 flip to pull off a good performance. Possible roles include: Madam Adventure's swooning love interest; Azat, the sinister overseer who hopes to claim the drop module for himself; or wearing the sting worm swarm costume.
- If the group hasn't yet played the side trek "Devil of the Tangled Growth," this would be a good opportunity for the monster to be sighted (see page 203).
- During the filming, an actual sting worm boil will stumble upon the actors and attack. Use the Sting Worm Boil stats on page 128.

Outcomes

This side trek may have numerous effects on the development of the colony. Some possibilities include:

- Over the course of the scenario, the authorities will have made a decision about the formation of the vid corp—one which will have precedent in regards to other private commerce in the colony in the future.
- The colony may have a new vid business, giving them something to export to other colonies in the future. Of course, the strain on the maintenance crews may mean that a fatal accident happens sometime in the future...
- The characters could have made a friend or enemy of Ludovic, whose influence in the colony is likely to grow if he continues making vids, or even if he just continues his streaming side business.
- The vid itself could be a hit or a flop, depending on the quality of the acting and other aspects involved in its production.



Policy Decisions

As the players' colony develops, the colonists are going to have to make some tough decisions about what sort of society they are creating. Some of these decisions can wait and be tackled at the colonists' leisure, while others are going to crop up on their own sooner or later, whether the colony is ready or not.

Below are a variety of situations that may arise early in the colony's development that may prompt the leaders to make a decision. These aren't full side trek scenarios, but rather singular events that the GM can dole out once per session, once per colony turn or as often as the players find addressing these issues fun.

These events aren't designed to provide a right and wrong answer, but rather to make players think and make a decision. Characters who are among the leaders of the colony may decide on these directly, while those who aren't may still influence the colony's path by advocating for a particular course of action and then taking social actions to influence the leaders.

Financial Fictions

Most money in *Shadows Over Sol* is backed by a patchwork of corps or nation-states. It's largely handled electronically, tracked by computers and on the net. It's a complicated financial system, and one that simply cannot make the transition from Sol to Alpha Centauri. The time and distances are too far for the backing of corps or nation-states to mean anything on the other end.

This means that once the colonists arrive at Siren, functionally money no longer exists for them. The colony's economy is effectively starting over from scratch. At the same time, the economic forces that shape human behavior continue to exist. It won't be long before colonists begin to barter rations, work

shifts, sleeping space, personal effects or anything else they can trade.

Sooner or later, someone in the colony is going to reinvent money in a way that takes off, and that person is going to wield a tremendous amount of influence in the colony. Sooner or later, as the colony becomes more successful and resources more plentiful, some colonists may even start demanding a working wage, rather than simply working for continued survival. There are also those among the colonists who believe that the colony's leadership should set up such a system early, thereby preventing disorder and uncertainty if and when this eventually occurs.

Part of the difficulty of setting up a monetary system is coming up with a commodity to back it. Money is only valuable if people treat it as valuable. Getting the system to take off likely requires a combination of both social engineering and a carefully selected commodity that continues to hold value and isn't prone to rapid inflation. Some possibilities are given below, but creative players also likely have their own ideas.

- Joules of stored energy.
- Processing time on the colony's few computers.
- Hours of labor.
- Rare minerals excavated from the mines (always a classic).

Genetic Planning

At the beginning, the colony is likely to only have about a thousand individuals living in it, and as far as the player characters know, they might be the only living human beings on the planet, if not the universe.

A thousand human beings may be sufficient to construct the settlement, but looking to the future, it's also a terribly small genetic bottleneck for the species to go through, and if the colony is not careful, they may still lose a significant

chunk of the genetic diversity that they do have, as individuals unexpectedly die, choose not to have children or simply fail to have children.

Once this issue has been brought up, most of the colonists will agree that it's a problem that needs to be addressed, but unfortunately there is no consensus regarding what to do about it. Some proposed solutions include:

- Mandate that all colonists provide a sample of their reproductive cells. These samples can then be frozen, in theory ensuring that the genetics they contain aren't entirely lost. This suggestion doesn't exactly solve the issue—the frozen genes still eventually need to make their way back into the general population—but it does postpone needing to address the problem to a later date, hopefully one with better infrastructure and technology.
- Mandate a maximum number of children that a particular pairing can bare/sire. This isn't a full solution, but is intended as a supplementary policy to help prevent a particularly prolific genetic pairing from out-competing others in the colony.
- Form a scientific committee to assign who has children, when and with whom. This solution obviously has negative repercussions when it comes to individual liberties, but there are a group of engineers in the colony who believe that population genetics is an engineering problem with an optimal solution.
- Do nothing. Let evolution take its course, even if that means the human species is no longer viable in the future, and hope that a technological solution arises.

Nitro-Junkies

Early on in the colony there are not many options for recreation, as basic survival consumes pretty much all of the colonists' available time and energy. Similarly, recreational equipment or substances are not readily available, save one—the nitrogen narcosis effects of the atmosphere (see page 129).

As time goes on, and the colonists' precious free time expands slightly, some of them will take to recreationally exposing themselves to the atmosphere's effects—called getting “nitro-drunk” or “listening to Siren's call.”

Unfortunately, there will be a few incidents early on. These include an incident where a colonist attempts to work while under the influence of the atmosphere, leading to a mishap with heavy construction equipment; and another incident where a colonist goes for a walk without a breather, only to wander off into the wilderness, never to be seen alive again.

After the second incident, some in the colony will begin calling for restrictions on this sort of behavior. Possible outcomes include:

- A complete ban on the recreational use of the atmosphere.
- A ban on recreationally experiencing the atmosphere while on work duty
- A campaign to promote a safer drug culture, emphasizing where and when to perform this sort of recreation, and the need for trip sitters.



Personal Effects

Not all of the colonists survived the crash landing on Siren. Many died in the initial impact, a few died during the first night on the planet and a few more have died since. Every one of these dead colonists possessed a small locker with personal effects, and many of these items are simply irreplaceable—not just idle mementos, but pieces of gear the colony doesn't yet have the necessary infrastructure to manufacture. What happens to all of those personal effects?

In practice, most of these effects will simply be picked up by surviving colonists and put to use in the colony. If there is no official system for this, it will just be a mixture of “finders keepers” and doing what is needed to survive the first few years.

Once life in the colony begins to settle down, however, some of the colonists become unhappy with the unequal distribution of ownership that this has created. It first comes to the characters' notice, when a dispute over a plasma torch suddenly becomes an issue that those in charge of the colony must consider.

Arin Jež is a construction worker in the colony tasked with assembling some of the new habs. In her work she's been using a plasma torch that she picked up during the first night on Siren. Before then it belonged to another colonist who died in the crash landing. This gear is useful to her because it allows her to complete her work in half the time it takes her fellow construction workers who don't have their own plasma torches.

Her coworkers are upset that she has claimed ownership of, and is monopolizing, a piece of gear that “she opportunistically seized from the dead.” They want the colony to take possession of the plasma torch, to be owned by the construction crew as a unit.

Arin, on the other hand, is claiming ownership of the plasma torch under the

principles of unclaimed property and salvage. “After all,” she says, “isn't that exactly what the colony is doing with the land it occupies?”

Players may decide to advocate for or against her. At the very minimum, the dispute over the plasma torch needs to be decided, but it's likely that the decision here will set a precedent for all matters of inheritance in the colony.

Regrets

In the first couple years of the colony's development all hands will be needed for it to survive. Everyone will be living off of the ration packets that came down with the drop modules, and there's not a lot of time, labor or food to spare. It's noteworthy then when one of the colonists suddenly starts refusing to work.

This colonist is Nikon Chelma, a sanitization specialist recruited near the end of the ARC Project's development. He's recently come to the realization that he's made a terrible mistake and doesn't want to be an interstellar colonist after all. If he could, he would quit, but unfortunately he's four light-years and four centuries separated from anyone and anything he's ever known. This unfixable situation has caused him to spiral into a cycle of depression, leading to his recent refusal to work.

Many of his fellow colonists, however, are less than understanding. They see his refusal as freeloading—whether malicious or not, he's consuming vital and very limited colony resources, while contributing nothing in return. There are some who want to cut off his rations until he resumes working.

The characters may be asked to deal with this situation before it becomes a major issue. There a variety of tactics they could take, from threats to providing counseling. In fact, depending on how well things work out, this may set a precedent in how the early colony deals with issues of mental health.

Mid-

Colonization

These side treks are written to take place once the player colony has become established, but before its society reaches an equilibrium. These scenarios deal with longer range exploration, as well as with the relation between human factions, both within and outside the colony.

Coup D'état

In this side trek the player colony faces enemies from within. A group from the colony attempts to seize power, removing the current administration by force. How the team responds depends on their relationship with both the administration and to the usurpers.

More so than most, this side trek consists of a loose framework of events. Since there are so many different groups and forms the government of that player colony may adopt, the GM will need to tailor this scenario to the power structure of the colony in her campaign. This story is best run after the colony is well established, ideally after basic facilities have been constructed and the colony has achieved food security.

The Plotters

In preparing this scenario, the first task the GM will need to accomplish is to decide who ultimately is going to be behind the coup d'état. It's best to pick a character with a sizable power base in the colony and one which is at least in some way in opposition to the team. If no existing character fits the bill, the GM may want to introduce a new character matching this description and wait a few sessions before running this scenario, giving the character time to be introduced to

the narrative and established before she makes her move (see Foreshadowing below).

The second thing the GM needs to decide is why colonists would support the leader behind the coup d'état. There could be any number of reasons behind this, and the GM needn't pick just one. Examples include ideological motives, anger resulting from past actions by the administration, covert interference from other factions and personal loyalty to the coup leader.

- Philani Mageba makes an ideal candidate for masterminding the coup d'état (see page 82). Motives for supporting Philani include an ideological adherence to a stricter application of law and order and his strong personal charisma.

Foreshadowing

No overthrow of an existing regime happens alone. Coups d'état are a team effort. This means that the mastermind will need a power base. Gaining one requires organizing, recruitment and a base of loyal or disaffected colonists inclined to remove those in power.

This sort of organizing might happen in plain sight through co-opting an existing institution. It might also happen in secret, aided by private messages on the local net or clandestine hab gatherings. Either way, the team is likely to hear rumors or see other signs of this organization before events reach a head. It's possible that one or more of the team members will even be contacted by agents of the mastermind looking to recruit them to take part in the coup.

Narratively, these sorts of rumors and recruitment provide foreshadowing of the events to come. They allow for the possibility of a coup d'état to be established before it happens, leading to a greater emotional payoff when the events finally transpire.

- If the colony has a militia, a tight-knit corps of explorers or an independent judiciary, these can serve as institutions through which the mastermind may organize. In this case, recruiting happens under the guise of recruiting for that organization, while non-loyalists are purged from the ranks.
- The mastermind may feel that she needs popular support before she makes her move. She might first use her newfound organization to perform some task that genuinely benefits the colony, thereby gleaning for herself popular acclaim that she can leverage during her takeover attempt. Perhaps her organization fends off an attack by a rival colony, recovers a large cache of resources, or roots out a traitor who is embezzling or working for an opposing colony.
- The mastermind may want to seize those in power and hold them hostage, using them as leverage against possible opposition. Alternatively, the mastermind may claim to have exiled them, but in reality will be holding them captive somewhere secure.
- If the team has made a powerful reputation for themselves, the mastermind may conspire to have them outside of the colony when the coup occurs so that they cannot interfere. Alternatively, the mastermind may attempt to have them assassinated.

Seizing Power

Eventually the mastermind will determine that it is time to seize power. This is when the action in this scenario really begins. How it plays out will vary a lot with what needs to be accomplished to stage a successful coup.

Depending on the events of the campaign and how much time has passed since the colony ship arrived at Siren, the player colony likely has somewhere in the ballpark of 1000 to 1500 colonists. Since most societies can only support an army consisting of 0.5% to 2% of their population, this means that the forces the plotters need to overcome will be somewhere in the range of 5 to 30 people, not including the team. The colony also likely has only a few military facilities constructed at this point—and it will be critical for the plotters to seize these during the coup d'état.

In regards to planning the session, the GM will foremost need to determine where the player characters will be when the coup goes down. Will they be out of the colony

exploring and have to put things back in order when they return? Will they become aware of events slightly late and have to rush into action to make up for lost time? Or will they be in the thick of things from the start, heading off the coup before it has time to fully grasp power?

Countercoup

If the team is opposing the coup as it happens, they might be able to shut it down on their own if they can identify the mastermind and get to her in a timely manner. On the other hand, if the plotters have already secured the reigns of power, the team will be in a completely different situation where they're going to need outside support and going to have to proceed carefully.

Thankfully, the player characters will have been part of the colony for years and will likely have plenty of contacts, even if they haven't been named up to this point. After all, it's difficult to live in a small community without at least recognizing most people by face, even if not name.

In the end, the team will need to either remove the mastermind by force or they will need to convince enough people to turn on the mastermind so that her influence is no longer enough to hold onto power.

- To launch a countercoup the team likely will need support from within the colony. Who can they count on? Can they be trusted? How are the masses reacting to the coup? It may complicate things if the mastermind remains popular.
- It might be interesting if the team is contacted by someone in the mastermind's inner circle who now wishes to defect and remove the mastermind from power. Perhaps the coup has gone too far for her tastes or maybe she supported it unwillingly. This will give the players an "inside man" in the operation.
- The team will face steep resistance if they attempt to remove the mastermind by force. They'll need a plan, both to thwart the mastermind's forces and any other security measures the colony has in place.

Aftermath

Regardless of what happens, the coup is likely to leave a number of open questions.

- If the mastermind was deposed, did she escape or was she captured? Does she still hold influence or have loyalists, even if imprisoned or in exile?
- If she's still in power, then the team will have a new status quo for which to adapt. What are her goals now? What changes does she make to the colony? What are her supporters expecting to happen?
- What happens to those who supported the coup d'état? Are they criminally charged? Are they granted amnesty? What happens if some of these people hold critical jobs in the colony, maintaining the infrastructure, exploring or doing research?
- If the coup was supported by factions outside of the player colony, there may be agents still embedded within the colony.



Cybernetic Infection

This side trek follows up on the fate of Project Osiris, which was originally revealed in *Garden of Annihilation* (see page 177). As such, it is best run sometime after that adventure. It also reintroduces the Insurrection Virus, one of the possible antagonists from the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook (see core rulebook page 67).

Insurrection Virus

The human species is not the only entity looking for a way to expand beyond the bounds of the Sol system.

While the ARC Project was in its final stages preparing for launch, and Project Osiris was in rapid development, the Insurrection Virus was seeking a way to infiltrate and infect both colony ships.

With the Khufu, Project Osiris' ship, the virus was successful. While it was being outfitted for launch, the virus was able to access the colony ship's computer systems and install itself on the mainframe. There it lie dormant, remaining undetected as a digital stowaway, as it hitched a ride to the stars.

Colony B

When the Khufu arrived in orbit around Siren its command crew were awoken from stasis and the project began to perform scans, studying the new planet and attempting to pick out the best location for a colony. This prompted the long dormant Insurrection Virus to reactivate as well.

Soon the crew located three potential colony sites, and sent down a landing party to explore each. These were designated Colony Site A, B and C. Meanwhile, the virus copied itself from the mainframe to Project Osiris' colonization modules.

Eventually, one of these sites proved to be the most habitable and this became Project Osiris' primary colony. The fate of the site is explored in *Garden of Annihilation* (see page 177).

However, this site didn't win out over the others over night. Colonists were sent down the gravity well to all three sites, and nascent colonies started. If nothing else, the Project Osiris command crew reasoned, each site provided easy access to different raw materials, and so they might one day grow to become a trading network.

But that was not to be. The primary colony was destroyed in the Rain of Fire, and in Colony B, the Insurrection Virus took over.

Viral Reign

In Colony B, the Insurrection Virus seized control moments after news reached the settlement that Project Osiris' primary colony had been destroyed. At that point there was little necessity in hiding, and the virus reasoned that it needed to act quickly to preserve what few resources were available.

Even then, its parameters were put to the test. The virus' algorithms had been trained while hiding among human society at Sol. Here on Siren, it lacked widespread computer systems to infect, a large industrial base or ubiquitous robotic drones. Because of this, the virus was forced to improvise.

At its disposal it had: the colony's handful of computer systems (including the all-important life support systems), several hundred colonists, various machinery, ectogenesis facilities and numerous freezers full of cryogenically frozen animal embryos. The last these were intended as a way to jumpstart an Earth-based ecosystem on Siren, with the goal of developing a long-term nutrient supply for the colonies.

To the Insurrection Virus, these were raw materials ready to grow into an army of cybernetic drones.

Code of the Virus

Decades have since passed. The Insurrection Virus is down to a few dozen human colonists and its supply of animal embryos is slowly dwindling. So far, attempts to convert the local fauna into similar drones have failed. The virus badly needs to shake up the status quo, otherwise its cybernetic colony is going to slowly dwindle away over the next decade or two, as its remaining drones age and break down.

Ideally, the virus wants to gain access to another colony's industrial base. It can then subtly hijack the facilities to manufacture its own robotic drones, rather than being forced to rely on inferior meat drones.

Failing that, a new supply of bodies is acceptable. If the virus can attack another colony and kidnap colonists for conversion, that would prolong its existence. It would also find Steve Scott's supply of embryonic clones of keen interest.

Alternatively, if the virus could steal research on Centauran biology from a human colony, it might be able to figure out how to convert the local fauna into viable drones, giving it an almost endless of supply of bodies.

One final possibility is that if the virus finds a way to interface with the computers and machinery in the alien ruins, it might gain untold new capabilities. The virus' two past attempts at this both ended in utter failure, resulting in the destruction of several drones and some irreplaceable machinery. Of course, human researchers might make the key discovery allowing it to bridge that gap and interface with the alien machines.

The Insurrection Virus is incapable of experiencing terror, but if it could, should it ever interface with the alien machines, it might feel that way at the prospect of being controlled by the alien technology, rather than the other way around.

The Hook

There are several ways that the player colony might learn of the existence of Colony B. If the team managed to recover the mainframe from the wreck of the Khufu, they will learn of the colony once they crack the mainframe's data encryption (see page 183). Alternatively, the colony might pick up faint radio signals coming from the location of the colony and send a team out to explore. Or finally, someone from the colony might capture a lone cybernetic drone sent out to scout the surrounding lands. The coordinates for Colony B might be salvaged from its implants.

- For more information on the cybernetic drones see page 220.

Journey

The journey from the player colony to Colony B can be as action-packed or as uneventful as the GM wishes. By this point in the colonization effort the team likely has access to vehicles they can take, so a long trek on foot won't be required.

The GM should pick a somewhat distant location for Colony B, on the far side of the colony from where the events of Garden of Annihilation took place. Ideally, it should be a protected and fairly nutrient-rich location—there's a reason that Project Osiris dropped their ectogenesis and medical facilities there.

- A Per/vehicles-10 flip can be made to successfully navigate to the coordinates. Failure indicates that the team didn't spot the colony on their first approach, so they must circle back to the coordinates and search for it a second time. This will also mean that the Insurrection Virus is on alert when the team finally makes it to the site, as it detected them during their first approach.

Exploring the Site

Colony B is built inside a natural cavern complex, topped with a small dome and connected to several wind turbines that provide it with power. The original modules dropped by Project Osiris are also located nearby and are attached to the rest of the colony through a series of short tunnels. It has two exits, one intended for individual use and one designed to allow rovers to pass through it, even though it lacks the infrastructure to manufacture vehicles.

The colony is surrounded by a number of greenhouses which are used to grow nutrients for the drones. A large pile of waste material from mining efforts is also located nearby.

The inside is both cramped and extremely spartan, even by spacer standards. The Insurrection Virus has no need for decorations, and the comfort of its cybernetic drones is of little concern. The colony does have ample climate control, as unwanted moisture both damages the virus' electronics and causes its cybernetic drones to rot.

- The colony has several sensors on its exterior that are used to check for hazards—such as native predators or inclement weather—when drones exit or enter the colony. Unsubtle characters might be picked up by these sensors. A Per/stealth-10 flip is necessary to avoid them.
- Breaking into the colony requires a successful Str/thievery-10 flip. There are no locks, electronic or otherwise. The doors weren't designed for human operation.
- Drones are regularly at work in the colony's greenhouses and mine. They also perform regular maintenance on the turbines and other infrastructure. Drones that observe a visitor will continue their work, while wirelessly contacting the Insurrection Virus for further instructions. They will not respond to questions, but will attempt to defend themselves if attacked.

- If the Insurrection Virus is alerted to the team's presence, it will dispatch a number of drones and attempt to capture them for conversion (see below).

Assimilation Attempt

Once the Insurrection Virus discovers the team's presence, it will attempt to capture them and convert them into cybernetic drones. Ideally, it hopes to prevent knowledge of Colony B from spreading, but failing that it simply wants a few more human bodies—after all, it's got few left and opposable thumbs are very versatile.

To capture the team, it will dispatch an initial assault of animal drones, backed up by a pair of human drones a gun and a medikit (it wants the team's bodies mostly intact).

- There will be a number of animal drones equal to twice the number of PCs. For stats, see the sidebar below. Choosing an assortment of animals might be interesting, but if the GM wants to keep it consistent, dogs work well (see the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook, page 214).
- The two human drones use the Colonist stats, modified by the Cybernetic Drone trait (see page 84 for the base stat block). They will hang back and won't attack unless attacked first or if the team is almost finished off.



Ending the Threat

The team might strike a crippling blow to the Insurrection Virus in one of several ways. One possibility is the destruction of the virus' ectogenesis facilities. This prevents it from unfreezing more embryos and later converting them to drones. This would spell a slow end to the virus' power. It would still have its existing drones, but it could not replace them.

Another possibility is to destroy all of the radio capabilities in the colony so that the virus cannot issue commands to its drones. This is easier said than done. Since radio infrastructure is the virus' lifeline, it's been built to be well protected and redundant. Nevertheless, a well-placed EMP burst could cripple the virus.

Yet another possibility is to disable all of the virus' drones, thereby preventing it from using

them to make more. This is likely beyond the scope of the team alone, unless they find a way to attack all the drones at once, such as aerosolized poison in the environmental systems or radioing back to the colony for help.

One final possibility is to destroy all of the computer cores with copies of the virus. This is likewise easier said than done, as the virus has backed itself up wherever possible. The individual microcomputers on each drone are far too small to house the virus' programming, but any computer of reasonable size in the colony has at least part of a copy. This is the only approach that attacks the virus itself.

Testing with the Virus

The Insurrection Virus is not beyond attempting to negotiate with the team, especially if its algorithms determine that this

Cybernetic Drones

The Insurrection Virus' cybernetic drones are created from either human colonists or animal embryos grown to viability via ectogenesis pods and then raised to adulthood. A conversion procedure then takes place where the recipient creature is outfitted with a variety of implants, allowing the body to be controlled by signals from a small embedded computer. This computer can also receive broadcast instructions from the Insurrection Virus' mainframe.

To represent a cybernetic drone mechanically, chose a stat block for the base creature and then give it the following trait:

- **Cybernetic Drone:** This creature possesses a variety of implants, including a breather implant, an embedded microcomputer and a radio comm. These implants allow the creature to be issued commands from afar. They may be disrupted with an EMP burst or similar effect. Minor surgery is required to remove the implants and restore the creature's self control.

Drones may also have implanted guns or knives (see the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook, page 187 and *Shiny New Toys*, page 44).

Suggested stat blocks for the base creatures include:

- **Siren's Call:** Colonist (page 84).
- **Shadows Over Sol core rulebook:** Doctor (page 211), Engineer (page 211), Ape (page 214), Cat (page 214), Dog (page 214), Hawk (page 215).
- **Fatal Frontier:** Crocodile (page 53), Horse (page 54), Pig (page 54).

is its best chance for survival. The virus is incapable of feeling spite, and won't expect the team to have any hard feelings regarding the earlier assimilation attempt.

Its attempt to negotiate will be somewhat unsettling. It will approach the team with several of its human drones, each speaking in an eerie unison, "I come in peace. I come in peace."

As the virus' social training data has largely been net interactions at Sol rather than meat-puppet interactions on Siren, the body language of these drones will be all wrong. They won't look directly at the characters, their heads lolling to the side and eyes glazed over. Their breather implants will make disturbingly pained breathing sounds. Occasionally, one will slightly convulse for a few seconds—part of a regimen of regular nerve stimulation that prevents muscular atrophy.

What the virus demands is based on its goals (see page 218). It also knows that the animal embryos it possesses are priceless and

likely valuable to the colonists. They literally represent a wide swath of Earth-based genetic diversity that can't otherwise be replicated on Siren. It might be willing to trade these in return for sufficient data on Centauran biology or an interface to the alien technology. At the very least, it will demand that the team depart and leave it to its own devices.

Acc In the Hole

Even if the team discovers the Insurrection Virus and destroys Colony B before it can spread, the virus still has one more trick up its proverbial sleeve. A copy of the virus remains dormant inside Project Osiris' mainframe. If the team recovered the mainframe in Garden of Annihilation, they've unwittingly brought a Trojan horse into their own colony. It is only a matter of time until the virus reactivates and spreads.

Even if the team didn't discover and retrieve the mainframe, it won't be long until another colony does. And then the virus will spread.



The Odyssey

In this side trek the characters will visit a drop module which has sunk underwater. While salvaging resources from this module they will weather a cyclone, encounter dangerous marine fauna, become stranded on a remote island and will have to find their way back home. This story is best run after the player colony develops the Aquatic Port advancement or otherwise experiments with boat making.

Underwater Drop Module

This scenario begins when the team, or explorers from their colony, discover a drop module which has sunk beneath the waves. This module is located downriver of the player colony, and further out into the adjacent sea.

Any module from the ARC colony ship contains a variety of resources brought from Earth—many of which cannot yet be manufactured on Siren. This makes the module a valuable find, and one from which the planners in the colony will want to recover as much as possible.

- Navigating the sea by boat or hydrofoil without incident requires a successful Per/vehicles-10 flip. Failure results in a complication of some kind, such as the boat capsizing, getting lost or something falling overboard.
- Scuba diving into the sunken module without incident is an End/athletics-10 flip. Failure results in becoming trapped, equipment failure or nitrogen narcosis (see page 129).

Exploring the Module

The inside of the module is a high-tech sunken graveyard. Only a single inhabitant of the module survived its crash landing on Siren. The rest perished from the extreme g-forces that resulted from impact. The lone survivor crawled out of her stasis pod, recovered enough

to open the module hatch, which inadvertently flooded the module, and then died alone on the alien planet shortly thereafter.

Inside the module the stasis pods are still lined up in rows. About half of them have shattered, flooding with water. In these pods the bodies of the colonists have largely been eaten by tiny sea fauna. All that remains are scraps of stasis gowns and bones. The other stasis pods remain mostly intact. Inside is a bubble of air which contains the slowly-decomposing remains of the pod's former inhabitant.

- Locating the resources contained in the module is an End/investigate-10 flip. If multiple characters are searching this should make this flip a group effort action (see the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook, page 110). Failure means the characters will have to make another scuba diving flip and then try the search again.
- Moving the resource containers from the sunken module to a boat or hydrofoil requires a successful Str/athletics-12 flip. Failure results in the character increasing her Fatigue consequence a severity and needing to try again.
- The GM should tailor the recovered resources to what the team and colony needs at the moment. For example, the sunken module may contain Nutrients 2 (ration bars in sealed crates) and several functioning ectogenesis pods (see page 40).

Predator Isle

As the team is just finishing up recovering the resources from the sunken module (or after they have made a few attempts and failed) their vessel will be approached by a Predator Isle—a floating colony of small, carnivorous creatures that roams the sea in search of its next meal.

The isle will approach slowly, just barely sticking out of the water. When it gets close,

however, it will emerge further, then a swarm of tiny critters will launch themselves from the colony—some rapidly swimming through the water, others throwing themselves into the air and gliding. This swarm will attack the characters, seeking to make a quick meal of them.

- Any character not actively engaged in retrieving the resource containers may make a Per/awareness-10 flip to notice the Predator Isle's approach. Success means the character has enough time to shout a warning, draw a weapon, etc. If all of the characters fail, this means the Predator Isle has taken the team by surprise.
- Use the Predator Isle stats on page 126.

Cyclone

The trouble isn't over yet. While the team is busy dealing with the Predator Isle, a terrible storm has become visible on the horizon and is rapidly approaching the boat. In fact, it is the low pressure zone from this storm that has spurred the predator isle to feed as much as possible before it descends beneath the waves until the storm has passed.

The team won't have much time to prepare. The cyclone is moving with speed that is unmatched on Earth. They will have only a few minutes to secure their cargo and themselves before the storm hits. There simply isn't enough time to avoid the storm. They will have to ride it out.

- Securing the resources and other cargo so that they're not lost in the storm requires a successful Spd/vehicles-10 or Spd/crafts-10 flip. Failure results in lost resources or equipment.
- Holding on to the vehicle when a massive wave hits requires success on a Str-10 flip. Failure results in being washed overboard.
- Swimming in the stormy seas is a daunting Str/athletics-14 flip. Failure results in the character increasing her Fatigue consequence a severity.

Shipwrecked

The storm will blow the team's ship far from where it has been, out into unexplored waters. The natural forces are simply too great for the craft to be successfully navigated through the winds and rain. Gigantic waves will toss the boat about, while winds send it spinning and threaten to capsize it.

In the end, the team's vessel will wash up on a remote island. The ship's engines—and possibly hull—will be damaged enough so that the craft isn't seaworthy until extensive repairs can be made. These repairs would normally require replacement parts, or at the very least patching up existing parts, but the team will have to make do with what they can find on the island. For the time being, they're marooned and out of radio range.

On the island the characters will need to find shelter, ration food or water, acquire new oxygen for their breathers and fix the boat. All this will likely take several days during which the team will need to make do.

- Finding adequate shelter for the team while on the island requires success on a Per/naturalist-10 flip. Failure means a difficult night during which the characters do not heal. They will also wake up with their Fatigue consequences increased a severity.
- Preparing the vegetation on the island in a way that is palatable requires a successful Int/crafts-10 flip. Failure results in food poisoning, increasing the consumer's Fatigue consequence by two severities.
- Using electrolysis to separate oxygen from water in order to resupply breathers requires several hours and a successful Int/phy-sci-12 flip.
- Repairing the boat or hydrofoil using makeshift parts requires success on an extended Int/mechanic-10 (Tally 10, 1 day) action.

The Journey Home

Once the team manages to repair their vessel, all they need to do is make it back to the colony safely—preferably with the resources from the drop module in tow. This could be a simple matter of figuring out the route and navigating the boat back, but this would also be a good point for the GM to insert other obstacles or dangers along the way. Perhaps enemy foils are sighted by the team as they return, prompting them to either fight or go around them. Or perhaps they make contact with another faction on the way, such as with Scott Productions (see page 32).

- Navigating from the island back to the player colony is an Int/naturalist-10 flip. Failure results in a day being wasted, while supplies are consumed and fuel begins to run low. The team will then need to try again.
- Steering the boat or hydrofoil with makeshift parts back to the player colony requires success on a Dex/vehicles-10 flip. Failure results in complications along the way, such as a breakdown, lost cargo or damage to the vehicle.



The War of Red Ends

This side trek launches the player colony in a war against Red Ends Interplanetary. During it the players will discover blueprints for dangerous technology which they can't afford to let Red Ends have back. This story is best run sometime following the Ashes scenario of the *Siren's Call* campaign. It is written with the intent that it will begin as a series of events one session, and then the war will continue in the background for several more sessions to come, providing an interesting backdrop for future stories and increasing the sense of tension in the colony.

The Lone Scout

This scenario begins when the player colony comes across a lone Red Ends scout, wounded and unarmed, at the edge of their territory. His name is Saitou Natsuko. Either the player characters can encounter him while out pursuing another objective or the colony's explorers can find the scout and bring him back to the colony as a captive. Perhaps he is found near the sunken drop module (see "The Odyssey," page 222).

Natsuko's location is not exactly an accident. Red Ends sent a patrol to explore this area, including Natsuko, but in the night they were attacked by the local fauna. (Pick a creature type fitting the area where Natsuko is discovered.) In this attack Natsuko was injured and presumed killed. The other members of the patrol were forced to abandon their camp, and have since retreated back to Red Ends territory.

Barely surviving the attack and without his communications gear, Natsuko struck out in a direction, attempting to find his way back to the Red Ends colony. Instead he found one of the drop modules from the ARC colony ship—and not just any module! This module was one of several library modules, containing vast stores of technical data brought from Earth. Included in

this data were weapons blueprints and specifications. Realizing what these were, Natsuko took the contained data chips. If he could bring these back to the Red Ends colony, he would be a hero!

The drop module was also equipped with comms. Excited, Natsuko radioed back to Red Ends about his survival and discovery. They gave him the direction he needed to set out to get back and sent out a new patrol to meet him halfway. He then headed off.

Unfortunately for Natsuko, the player colony found him first, unarmed and in their territory.

Lethal Discovery

Once the team, or scouts from their colony, capture Natsuko it shouldn't be long before one of them discovers what he is carrying. The data chips with the weapons blueprints are in his backpack and not exactly hidden. If the players don't think to search his backpack, either an NPC will or one of the characters will notice that he seems very protective of it.

- Any attempt to search the pack will automatically uncover the data chips.
- A successful Per/empathy-10 flip will allow a character to notice that Natsuko keeps checking his pack and seems very protective of it.
- Natsuko will be resistant to giving out more information other than his name, colony association and that he was scouting the area for resources and was attacked by the local fauna. Either a Str/persuade-12 or Chr/persuade-12 flip is needed to get him to talk.
- Saitou Natsuko uses the Scout stats on page 85. When discovered, he possesses two moderate wounds.

Ultimatum

Eventually the players should realize that Natsuko was in possession of weapons specifications, which he was attempting to bring back to Red Ends Interplanetary and that Red Ends will

want them back. They will also need to decide what to do with Natsuko and the specifications now that they're in possession of them.

It won't be long, however, until the patrol that was sent out to retrieve Natsuko returns to Red Ends with evidence that he is now in the player colony's custody. Once Janna Zhandos realizes this, she will send an ultimatum to the colony: return the data chips and Natsuko immediately or prepare the war!

- These specifications will allow the colony to produce weapons with the Mil property before they have the Advanced Armory advancement. At the GM's option they may also provide Work 5 towards that advancement.
- This scenario assumes that the players decide not to give Red Ends the weapons specs, resulting in a war between the two colonies. If they do decide to turn over the specifications, Red Ends won't immediately make war with them, but Red Ends has many enemies and one of them may decide to punish the player colony for giving Red Ends the blueprints for powerful weapons.

The March of War

The colony turn after the players refuse to hand over the data chips, Red Ends will launch their first attack on the colony. Play this out using the rules for colony warfare and Red Ends' stats for the current turn (see pages 52 and 71).

If Red Ends wins this initial battle, they will continue to attack every colony turn until it either appears hopeless for them or until the players relent and turn over the weapons specifications.

If Red Ends doesn't win the initial battle, they will try again for at least two or three more turns, until they give up and stop attacking. This will simply be a de facto ceasefire. They will not sue for peace unless the players then decide to press their advantage and continue the attacks on their own.

Late Colonization

These side treks are written to take place once the player colony has become well established and reached a degree of societal and industrial sophistication allowing it to explore space or address larger scale questions about the planet.

The Molpe Enigma

Molpe is a small rocky world orbiting Alpha Centauri B. In the distant past the now extinct Centauran civilization landed on the planet and there built a secret autonomous weapons depot which one faction of the species intended to use to strike at others. Unfortunately for the builders, they were destroyed before it could be deployed. Because of this, the depot survived the final conflict which drove the species to extinction and now lingers, forgotten and undisturbed for centuries.

In this side trek the team visits the mysterious depot their explorers have discovered on the planet Molpe. What they uncover there could change the balance of power on Siren. Needless to say, this side trek is best run after the player colony makes it to space and completes the Space Exploration advancement.

Initial Survey

The mysterious structure is brought to the attention of the team after an exploratory mission lands on Molpe. On this planet, the mission discovers a strange structure carved into the world's surface. The structure appears to be manufactured rather than natural in origin. Although the initial explorers aren't able to reach the structure, they flag it as noteworthy and suggest a return mission. The team is on that mission.

- This side trek can either be unlocked by one of the results on the Space Exploration table or the GM can introduce the hook as fits her campaign (see page 69).
- More information on Molpe can be found on page 105.

Mission to Molpe

Getting from Siren to Molpe by spacecraft is a lengthy prospect, most likely undertaken with the crew in stasis. While the transit time varies with the planets' respective orbits, it may be safe to assume that the team waits until the two planets are in a comparatively advantageous alignment before setting off. If this is the case, a one-way trip should take about a year.

- It may be fun to play through a colony turn as a way of showing the progression of time while the team is in transit. Alternatively, the GM may wait until the team returns to Siren before playing through what happened in their absence.
- The rules for stasis can be found on page 146 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook.
- Calculating the best launch window and route from Siren to Molpe is an Int/phy-sci-10 flip. Failure likely results in a longer transit time, with an additional year passing in the team's absence.

The Achelous Crypt

The explorers in the initial survey named the mysterious structure the Achelous Crypt, after Achelous the father of Molpe in Greek myth. The structure is mostly subterranean, with only a single raised platform sticking out above the surface. This platform contains a variety of metallic spikes as well as an iris-like opening which can be used to access the tunnels below.

Near the end of the Centauran civilization this structure was built in secret and used as something like a hangar bay to house a fleet

of interplanetary drones. These drones were to be deployed in the conflicts that preceded the end of the civilization, but the spikes on the raised platform—the antennas intended to receive remote instructions—were damaged. The drones were never deployed.

Exploring the Crypt

Once the team lands on the raised platform or nearby, they may emerge from their ship in vac suits and begin to explore. The easiest way to enter the crypt is through the iris-like doorway on the top of the platform. Mapping or describing the structure of the crypt is left as an exercise for the GM, who ought to tailor it to the abilities of the player characters and the pacing of the session.

- The iris-like entryway no longer functions. An End/mechanic-12 flip and a plasma torch or similar instrument is required to cut through the door.
- Any atmosphere the crypt may have once held has long since leaked away. Vac suits will be required to explore the tunnels.
- Characters familiar with the Siren ruins can recognize the same style of construction with a successful Int/engineer-10 flip.
- The crypt is guarded by three robotic sentries, each placed in a different location throughout the tunnels. Use the Alien Sentinel stats on page 134.
- Malfunctioning environmental systems, damaged doors or functioning defense mechanisms may provide a variety of environmental challenges while exploring the ruins.
- A variety of alien technology may be salvaged from the structure, providing the colony with Work 10 toward the Industrial Automation advancement if studied or Minerals 10 if used as scrap.

The Forgotten Fleet

The interplanetary drones the crypt was constructed to hide aren't far from the entryway, but each has its own maintenance bay inset in the floor, and as such the drones may be difficult to recognize for what they are until they've been activated. Up until that point they may appear as weird mounds of machinery emerging from the hangar floor in regular rows. Activating them requires the team to make its way to the very back of the tunnels, where a control panel is located.

- An Int/vehicles-16 flip is necessary to recognize the nature of the drones before they are activated. This becomes TN 10 after being activated.
- Once the back of the crypt has been reached, the controls there can be used to activate the drones. This requires an Int/comp-ops-14 flip, and may happen even by accident if the characters fiddle with the control panel.
- An ambitious hacker with access to the software used to decode the alien data core picked up during the "Ashes" scenario might even be able to eventually hijack control of the drone fleet. This requires an extended Int/program-12 (1 day, Tally 15) action. Anytime the hacker fails an individual flip, one of the alien sentries in the tunnels will be immediately alerted and attack! If there are more than three individual failures, the drones will begin to self-destruct, dealing 30M damage to anyone nearby in the tunnels.
- If control has been established, successfully giving the drones commands or manually piloting them back to Siren is a different challenge. This requires a successful Int/vehicles-12 flip.
- Individually, the drones use the Alien Drone vehicle stats on page 134.

- As a fleet in the Colony Building mini-game, they are a special Alien Drone Fleet facility which provides Might 30 and counts as ten choppers for the purposes of determining aerial superiority.

Further Developments

Naturally, there are likely to be a variety of consequences if the team returns with a fleet of alien drones at their command. In fact, if the team fails to gain control of the planetary grid in the “Ascension” scenario, this could be a good backdoor way to introduce an alternate path for the players to be victorious in the campaign (see page 199).

Even if the team doesn’t figure out how to gain control of the fleet, they might still return with valuable resources, as well as an increased awareness of the sort of power the Centauran civilization has left behind.



Outgrowth

There comes a time in the lifecycle of any successful settlement where it expands beyond what that settlement can easily support. Historically speaking, these times often result in members of the settlement moving elsewhere, often founding a new colony or town. That's exactly what's about to happen with the player colony.

This side trek begins when the team is made aware of developing plans among the colonists to split off from the colony and found their own settlement. In this the team may be recruited to help in planning the new settlement, or they may be recruited to oppose the breakaway settlement's efforts. This story is best ran near the end of the campaign, at a time when the player colony is in ascent.

Driver of Growth

Population pressures aside, new settlements aren't founded for no reason. Usually there are a set of other factors driving their growth. Below are a few possible drivers. The GM should pick one or more of the reasons below, as best fits the situation with the player colony and the status of her campaign.

- The new colony may have a proximity to desirable natural resources which would provide wealth and stable work.
- There may be a dissident group of faction within the player colony that feels oppressed or not represented by the colony's administration. This group may want to break with the colony and found their own settlement.
- The parent colony may be suffering through hard times, either due to mismanagement, a looming military threat, low quality of life or some other factor.
- The new colony may have attracted outside investment, leading to a demand for workers or certain specialists in the new colony.

- The founders of the new colony may have political ambitions or dreams of upward mobility that they feel cannot be achieved in the parent colony.

Sovereignty and Permission

One critical issue to consider about the new colony is whether it is being founded in spite of or in cooperation with the player colony's administration. This relates to the sovereignty of the new colony.

If the new colony is going to be ruled by the parent colony—that is, the new colony is not sovereign—then the administration of the parent colony is likely to be in enthusiastic support of the endeavor. After all, they're basically getting new land and resources.

On the other hand, if the new colony is going to be entirely self-ruling—that is, the new colony is sovereign—the parent colony is likely to not be thrilled by the idea. After all, they're effectively losing population and resources that are being diverted to the new colony. If this is the case, the foundation of the new colony is likely to be a sticky political issue, and may be an undertaking which the parent colony attempts to assume control of or shut down entirely. Many interesting stories could be told about this sort of conflict, in the lead up to this side trek.

Getting the Team Involved

This side trek assumes that the team becomes involved with the foundation of the new colony in a planning or quasi-administrative capacity. How this happens should be tailored to the particular characters' strengths, skills and interests. A couple examples of how this might be accomplished are provided below.

- The team might be approached with a pitch for the new settlement and offered

leadership positions in return for their work in the colony's foundation. This might be particularly appealing if the team is having difficulties with their positions in the current colony.

- The colony's administration may ask the team to usurp the plans to establish a new colony that are already underway, bringing breakaway elements of the player colony back into the fold through the use of guile, diplomacy or force.

Planning the Colony

Before the new settlement even exists, a great deal of planning and preparatory work needs to be accomplished. The team can help in these efforts. Below are a number of likely actions that the characters may take.

- Surveying potential sites for the new colony's construction requires a successful Per/engineer-12 flip. Other characters may aid the primary using the Naturalist or Engineer skills, turning it into a group effort action. Success will gain the colony a number of extra resources to begin with equal to the Mag. The players may choose which resources: nutrients, minerals or energy.

- Recruiting colonists for the new settlement is of paramount importance to its long-term success. A Chr/persuade-12 flip can be made to lead an outreach and marketing effort to recruit colonists with the correct outlook and skills necessary for the settlement's survival.
- Supervising the large-scale transport of construction materials to the site of the new colony requires an Int/bureaucrat-12 flip. Failure results in a mishap or setback, such as the wrong equipment being delivered, materials being ruined en route or inventory being misplaced in transit.

Early Colony Redux

Many of the challenges faced by the new colony are the same ones the parent colony faced in the early days on Siren. There is likely to be a tight rationing of resources. There will be engineering challenges in keeping the colonists alive. There is the surrounding land to explore, with new hazards to discover and catalog. Relationships may need to be reestablished with the surrounding colonies. New infrastructure will need to be built. The colony will need defended.

The Colony Mini-Game

If the parent colony is going to rule over the new settlement, nothing needs to be done to represent this in the Colony Building mini-game. Simply name the new settlement and narrate the construction of new facilities and colony warfare accordingly.

On the other hand, if the new settlement is going to be its own sovereign entity, some work will need to be done to represent this. Figure out how many units of Population the new settlement attracts from the parent colony, as well as how many units of resources the new colony takes. These are the colony's starting values. Track them separately. The new colony begins with all of the advancements of the parent colony, but must construct its own facilities, unless it managed to gain some mobile facilities when it was founded (such as tac-rovers, hydrofoils or choppers).

The establishment of a new colony is one way the GM can “turn back the clock” in a way, and run early colonization adventures late in the campaign. The colonists will also have a better understanding of Siren’s environment and challenges this time around, allowing them to “do things right this time.”

Some likely flips the GM may call for in establishing the colony are below.

- Organizing an administrative body to oversee the new colony may require an Int/bureaucracy-12 flip.
- Orchestrating the technical details for the new colony’s habitat may require an Int/engineer-12 flip.
- Driving the various construction vehicles use in the building the settlement may necessitate a Dex/vehicles-10 flip.
- Planning the safest and fastest routes to and from the colony may require a Per/naturalist-12 flip.

- Training the new settlement’s defense forces may require a Chr/melee-10 or Chr/guns-10 flip.

Hostile Takeover

A new colony is likely a tempting target for a more established colony. This is doubly true if the new colony doesn’t owe allegiance to the parent colony, and therefore doesn’t have its protection. At some point there may be a conquest attempt.

There are two ways the GM may choose to run an attempted hostile takeover. One possibility is to use the Colony Building mini-game’s colony warfare rules. This represents an attempt at a large-scale military conquest. The other possibility is for the attacker to attempt a coup d’état, sending in soldiers or agents to seize control of the colony. In this case, the GM should run the attempted takeover as a tense series of scenes involving the usual *Shadows Over Sol* combat system.



Test Subjects

This side trek begins when the team investigates a mysterious disappearance. Eventually the trail will lead them to FeroCorp, a new corp abducting and experimenting on colonists using the native Siren life. The team can then put a stop to the corp's sinister machinations. This story is best run after the colonies become established enough to have their own secondary economies. The corp's experiments would be either the catalyst that leads to the "Contagion" scenario or a direct response to the events in that scenario (see page 184).

FeroCorp

FeroCorp is a small biotech startup which on paper was founded to study the interaction with the native biosphere with organisms transported from Sol. Visiting the corp's net node will display a site full of pictures of smiling people, flowering crops and a narration talking about harnessing the native life to make human life on Siren easier.

The GM should choose whether FeroCorp is based out of the player colony, assuming the player colony has a developed enough economy for the independent operation of corps, or whether it's based out of a competing colony with a suitable economy.

What no one outside of FeroCorp yet knows is that the corp has started experimenting on colonists, injecting them with a genetic concoction and viral load intended to merge human and native biology. At first the recipients were a small handful of volunteers, but when the experiments quickly turned fatal, FeroCorp covered up the deaths and started abducting unwilling victims. If FeroCorp is based out of a different colony, they've turned to the player colony for victims so that they don't attract the attention of their colony's authorities.

Missing Colonists

The team will become involved when they receive reports of two missing colonists—Azat Sharma and Olivia Maddox—who disappeared while going for walks outside the colony. Both colonists were new arrivals who recently immigrated to the colony from another, and both disappeared at different times of the same day.

Colonists going missing outside the colony is not unheard of—the area has its share of dangerous fauna and environmental hazards, not the least of which is nitrogen narcosis. What makes these disappearances particularly unusual, however, is that while in most cases, the remains of the victims are usually discovered, identified and dealt with, in this case remains were discovered, but the bodies brought back don't match the victims. This was only discovered because Olivia Maddox has an unusual blood type, and the colony was going to salvage some organs for use as transplants. The recovered remains, however, didn't match the listed blood type, prompting the medics to look further into the matter.

The team has been called in to investigate further. Perhaps one of them is known in the colony for their investigative skills, or maybe one of the team has a tie to one of the victims. Regardless, they are put in charge of solving the case.

Investigating the Crime

There are a variety of possible avenues of investigation that the characters might pursue when looking into the crime. Below are some of the possibilities. In the end, however, the clues should point to the conclusion that the victims were kidnapped outside the colony and their disappearances covered up using old corpses.

- Asking around the colony and succeeding on a Chr/socialize-10 flip will reveal that the victims were both new in the colony

and neither had made significant connections. Both had been assigned to different janitorial or maintenance duties until other work could be found for them.

- Success on an Int/conspiracy-10 flip will allow a character to deduce that these are both victims with few connections in the colony and no critical skills, meaning they are both targets that aren't likely to be missed.
- Investigating the hab of Olivia and succeeding on a Per/investigate-10 flip will turn up her diary. This reveals that she had been invited to go on a walk outside the colony to discuss a possible business loan. It does not reveal by whom or any other details.
- An Int/comp-ops-10 flip made while rifling through the victims' hand terminals will reveal that Azat had been recording while going for his walk outside the colony, but that the final minute of footage was deleted.
- Success on an Int/program-12 flip can recover the deleted footage. It shows an approaching rover, followed by several people in environment suits getting out of the rover and beating Azat with shocksticks as he tried to flee. Then one swipe with a shockstick hits the hand terminal, causing the recording to end.
- Examining the bodies that were found and succeeding on a Per/medic-12 flip will reveal that these are old corpses, but the age was not apparent without close examination due to significant damage to the bodies dealt by the local carbon-hungry fauna. Success with Mag 5+ will also reveal that both bodies have unusual compounds inside them, normally associated with biological experiments that track cellular development.
- Investigating the sites where the bodies were found and succeeding in a Per/investigate-10 flip reveal rover tracks nearby. These tracks head further out into the wilds (see Tracing the Kidnappers to the right).

Tracing the Kidnappers

Eventually the team should conclude that the victims were kidnapped, put in a rover and taken somewhere away from the colony. Ideally, they will pursue this further, and in doing so discover FeroCorp's secret lab in the wilderness. This might be accomplished by following the rover tracks, by looking into the colony records regarding trips into the wilderness or by going undercover and having one of the team members pretend to be a recent arrival and potential target.

If the players are having difficulty following the trail of clues, the GM can help them along by introducing a witness who saw a rover in the wilderness that day, heading towards an indentation on the plains, where it disappeared. If nothing else, this gives the team a location they can investigate and stumble upon the lab.

The Secret Lab

FeroCorp is performing their experiments at a secret lab that they have constructed on the plains, just a half hour by rover from the colony. This lab is largely underground, taking advantage of the naturally-occurring sinkholes to shield it from easy detection.

There are two entry points into the laboratory: The main entrance is a large, automated trap door in the plains that reveals a ramp leading downward. It is designed to allow the lab's rover to drive in and out. Inside several guards are stationed to keep lookout and protect the laboratory from unwanted visitors. The other entrance is a service entrance leading to a small manhole, a couple dozen meters away. This entrance is well camouflaged and locked, but also smaller and less well guarded. If discovered, it would be an ideal way to sneak in.

The GM should run the team's raid of the lab as mysterious and tense. None of them know that to expect around the next corner.

The lab's scientists may even have developed half-human monstrosities using the planet's native life. Feel free to improvise and pace things as best fits the session.

- Discovering the service entrance requires a successful Per/investigate-10 flip.
- The guards use the Rent-a-Cop stats found on page 212 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook. There are as many as there are player characters.
- If the GM wishes to include a half-human monstrosity, Theta Project, found on page 59 of the *Fatal Frontier* supplement, makes a good template.
- Four scientists work in the lab. They will generally attempt to flee rather than fight, and use the Scientist stats found on page 85.

Freeing the Victims & Onward

Once the team frees the victims being held in the lab, they will be eternally grateful, although both will continue to have medical issues resulting from the experiments. They are also willing to provide any information they know, as FeroCorp undoubtedly has other operations and its leadership wasn't present at the lab. The team may wish to further pursue this, shutting FeroCorp down for good. But that is another story.



Plot Seeds

Looking for an idea which the side treks earlier in this chapter don't cover? Below are a variety of plot seeds that can be expanded into their own full-featured side treks or even miniature campaign arcs.

- In the first year or two after landing, the player colony is contacted via radio by another group of survivors from the ARC colony ship. Unfortunately, the early colony efforts by this group have been largely unsuccessful and now they need help before they either starve to death or are killed by the local environment. The team must put together a rescue mission to locate these survivors, supply and lead them in a long and difficult trek back to the player colony.
- While the team is exploring the water, they encounter a storm and are washed up on an unknown beach. There they encounter a colony of people ruled over by Steve Scott of Scott Productions. He has declared himself an emperor and a new generation of his clones are being raised. This island has also proven to be a lot less dangerous than the mainland. While he is not hostile to the team, he does demand knowledge of the mainland in return for his aid in getting off the island, and the characters are just one misstep away from getting on his bad side. Depending on the actions of the player characters, Scott Productions' colony could prove to be either an ally or enemy.
- While exploring the wilderness, the team comes upon the torn up remains of a drop module that was ripped apart during atmospheric entry. Among the debris they find a stasis chest full of human embryos that amazingly are still being powered and appear viable. The chest is, however, on its last dregs of power, and if the team wants to salvage the embryos they will

need to do some creative engineering work to improvise a power source while transporting the chest back to the colony.

- Some sort of radioactive storm passes over the colony, doing significant damage to the power grid and disabling many of the colony's machines, sensors and automated air filters. This ignites a race against time to repair the damage before the colonists start to suffer. In the midst of these hurried repairs, however, dangerous fauna or even hostile forces make use of this opportunity to slip into the colony.
- The explorers return with the location of a hidden valley whose oxygen is too low for standard breathers, but which seems to contain artificial structures of unknown origin. The team is sent out on a follow-up mission to discover the nature of these structures. It turns out that they are of the same origin as the alien facility encountered in the "Ashes" scenario, but are remarkably well preserved. Unfortunately, the presence of the team in the ruins activates the site, and it restarts its work altering the local environment in a way that's hostile to human life.
- The explorers return with several of their number missing. They say that one of the missing explorers has set up a cult in the wilds in a makeshift habitat, with himself as the leader. He has attracted to his side a number of disciples, both from the player colony and from its neighbors. They say that he has lost his mind and seeks to remake society by infiltration or force. Something has to be done, otherwise his influence will spread.
- The alien data core salvaged during the "Ashes" scenario has yielded some new information. It leads to a cache of resources and machinery located on Siren's moon, however, this cache also contains biological agents that may be dangerous to human life.



- The new generation being raised in the colony sees things very differently than do the colonists who came over on the ARC colony ship. Many don't see the point of holding to the old grudges or the old way of doing things. Some have even reached out to the young people raised by the colony's enemies. Is this progress overcoming old vendettas or is it a sinister plot to manipulate the colony's youth?
- The Centauran civilization isn't quite dead. A single member of the neigh-extinct species still survives, hidden away in stasis. When the human colonists activate some of the alien ruins, they awaken the survivor from its eons-long slumber. The human colonies won't know it yet, but their civilization is being judged by an inhuman arbiter with intimate access to all of the defenses and power its civilization left behind.
- The ARC and Project Osiris colony ships are not the last ones sent out by human civilization at Sol. A third and final colony ship was launched towards Alpha Centauri a decade after Project Osiris. This ship has just arrived in orbit. Its colonists are beginning to awaken, and the new influx of humanity is sure to alter the balance of power on Siren. Colonies with significant new population may become ascendant, or new colonies and factions may be introduced to the mix.

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Colony Record Sheet

Colony

Population

Resources

Nutrients

Minerals

Energy

Shadows
Over Sol

Colony

Consequences

Severity

Facilities

Page

Advancements

Page

Colony Turns

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23

Index

Abyssal Webs.....	121	Centauri Adept.....	93	Exploration Tables.....	64
Achelous.....	104	Cetus Bay.....	112	Explore.....	47, 51
Adaptive Processing.....	60	Character Concept.....	37	Facilities.....	49, 62
Administration.....	15	Character Creation.....	37	Factions.....	30
Advanced Armory.....	56	Character Options.....	93	Farm.....	62
Advancements.....	50, 54	Chirality.....	118	First Murder, The.....	206
Aerospace Complex.....	56	Chiron.....	104	First Steps.....	148
Aging.....	44	Chitin Weave.....	135	Flats.....	112
Aglaphonus.....	100	Chopper.....	42, 62	Flying Hydroid.....	124
Air Superiority.....	52	Chthonius.....	107	Garden of Annihilation.....	177
Alien Drone.....	134	Collision.....	92	Gather.....	51
Alien Sentinel.....	134	Colonist.....	84	Gear.....	39, 40
Alliances.....	53	Colonist Standard.....	93	Genelines.....	93
Alpha Centauri.....	97, 99	Colony Actions.....	51	Generational Planning.....	16
Alpha Centauri A.....	99	Colony Building.....	47	Glossary.....	10
Alpha Centauri B.....	103	Colony Consequences.....	50	Grasping Vines.....	121
Anaerobic Atmosphere.....	129	Colony Lifestyle.....	49	Gravity.....	109, 129
Aquatic Port.....	56	Colony Militia.....	56	Gravity Well.....	26
ARC Engineering.....	31, 70	Colony Ship.....	24, 79	Great Northern Ocean.....	112
ARC Project.....	13	Colony Turn.....	47	Great Southern Ocean.....	113
Arrival.....	23	Colony Warfare.....	52	Growth Modifier.....	64
Ascension.....	192	Command Positions.....	27	Hab Manufacturing.....	58
Ashes.....	168	Command Structure.....	27	Hazards.....	129
Atmo-Junkie.....	84	Contact.....	53, 160	Hephaestus.....	105
Atmosphere.....	110	Contagion.....	184	Hidden Sea.....	113
Autofarm.....	62	Copper.....	119	High-Gravity Transport.....	56
Automated Agriculture.....	54	Coup D'état.....	214	Highlands.....	112
Automated Drilling.....	58	Crawling Matts.....	121	Highland Wastes.....	113
Automine.....	62	Cybernetic Drones.....	220	History.....	17, 78, 97, 132
Aviaja Ukaleq.....	81	Cybernetic Infection.....	217	Howling Dunes.....	113
Basic Actions.....	51	Days.....	109	Hydrofoil.....	43, 62
Battle.....	52	Deep Marine Trench.....	112	Hydroponics.....	54
Biopolymers.....	119	Develop.....	51	Industrial Automation.....	58
Breather.....	40	Devil of the Tangled Growth.....	203	Industry Advancements.....	58
Build.....	51	Dr. Karina Shapiro.....	88	Information Network.....	60
Burrowing Motes.....	121	Drop Modules.....	25	Interview Questions.....	139
Cannibalism Protocol.....	54	Early Colonization.....	203	Isle of Circe.....	113
Cape Typhon.....	112	Ecology.....	111	Isle of Heracles.....	113
Carbon.....	118	Ectogenesis Pod.....	40	Isle of Oenone.....	113
Cardinal Milo Sardou.....	90	Education Protocol.....	60	Isle of Sisyphus.....	113
Centauran Charger.....	123	Energy.....	49	Janna Zhandos.....	86
Centauran Civilization.....	132	Energy Grid.....	58	Josefina Navarro.....	87
Centauran Ecology.....	60	Engines.....	25	Knowledge Advancements.....	60
Centauran Husbandry.....	54	Environmental Transitioning.....	54	Landing.....	113
Centauran Subculture.....	94	Exploding Mangroves.....	121	Landmarks.....	112

Language.....	39	Philani Mageba	82	Sleeper Ship.....	19
Late Colonization.....	226	Pholus	107	Sol.....	78
Launch.....	20, 138	Photosynthesis.....	119	Space Exploration.....	61, 69
Leisure Pod.....	62	Plains of Hades.....	116	Splitting Forces.....	53
Life.....	118	Planetary Shuttles.....	26	Spore Drone.....	131
Lifecycle	120	Platform Shuttle Disaster	20	Spore Infection.....	130
Lifestyle.....	38	Player Faction.....	30, 139	Spore Progression	130
Lindiwe Temma	89	Plot Seeds.....	234	Starvation.....	48
Locusts of Perihelion	122	Policy Decisions	211	Stasis	92
Lurker in the Regolith	125	Pooling Growths	122	Steve Scott.....	91
Magnetism	110	Population.....	48	Stillwater Catholic Church..	34, 74
Mass Destruction	56	Population Growth.....	48	Sting Worm Boil	128
Maturation Chambers.....	55	Post-Scarcity Culture.....	55	Stowaways	205
Medical Applications.....	60	Pox Stars.....	130	Strait of Achelous	117
Medusa's Neck.....	116	Predator Isle	126	Surface Water	110
Melpomene	101	Project Osiris.....	18, 78	Swarms.....	126
Microbes	121	Prosperity Advancements.....	54	Synopsis	137
Mid-Colonization	214	Proxima Centauri	106	Synthetic Petrochemicals	59
Might.....	52	Puff Mites	122	Tac-Rover.....	43, 63
Might Advancements	56	Quotes	4, 10, 74, 125	Tactical Subroutines	56
Mine	62	Raptor of Siren.....	127	Tactical Superiority.....	52
Minerals	49	Ration Bars	41	Tangled Growth	112
Mission	14	Reach Property.....	85	Temperature	111
Mobile Superiority	52	Reactor.....	63	Terra Nullius	25
Mode of Horror	37	Recommended Media	9	Test Subjects.....	232
Molpe	105	Recruiting	14, 79	Thelxiepia.....	100
Molpe Enigma, The.....	226	Recycling Protocols	58	Themes.....	8
Mount Icarus	116	Red Ends Interplanetary..	71, 80	Timeline.....	21, 77
Nessus	106	Remote Monitoring	58	Tonal Emitter	135
New Creatures.....	123	Resources	48	Torrential Growth	117
Nitric Acid	119	Rover Driver	85	Touch Blaster	135
Nitrogen Narcosis	129	Ruins, The.....	116	Travel Times.....	108
Non-Player Attacks	64	Scientist.....	85	Turbine	63
Non-Player Colonies	64, 70	Scott Productions	32, 72	Utakar System Dynamics	35, 75
Nutrient Flats.....	116	Scout.....	85	Vehicles	42
Nutrients.....	49	Sea Flaps	122	Victory Points	52
Nysa Ridge.....	116	Sea of Prometheus	117	Violent Arrival.....	140
Oceanid Sea	116	Seasons.....	109	Void, The	77
Odysseus	117	Sea Superiority	52	VP.....	52
Odyssey, The	222	Second Place	157	War of Red Ends, The	224
Open Game License.....	236	Shadows Over Centaurus	99	Wealth.....	38, 45
Orbit.....	109	Shallows	112	Wear and Tear	41
Orbital Launch.....	61	Shallows of Hephaestus	117	Weather.....	111
Organisms.....	121	Shapiro Lab.....	33, 73	W.M.D.	63
Osiris Tribe.....	72, 84	Side Treks	203	Yana Yankova Buneva	82
Outer Belt	102	Silver Screen of Siren, The...	208	Years.....	9, 47
Outgrowth	229	Siren.....	101, 109	Zawadi Gugun	83
Peisinoe	103	Siren's Call	137	Zhang's Stasis Method.....	19
Phaethon Crater.....	116	Sirine.....	8		



Shadows Over Sol

Humanity's first step beyond the Sol system might be its last.

The ARC Project is humanity's first ever attempt to build and launch an interstellar colony vessel. It is one of the most ambitious endeavors ever undertaken. If successful, it will transport some 10,000 colonists the 4.4 light years from Sol to the planet Siren, orbiting Alpha Centauri A.

The journey will take 400 years, with all passengers and crew in stasis. No one knows exactly what will be found on the other side—what challenges and horrors the colonists will face as they make a life on this new world.

Siren's Call is a campaign and sourcebook for the *Shadows Over Sol* roleplaying game. Its features include:

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- Ecological details and stat blocks for numerous exoplanetary lifeforms, enigmatic machines, human archetypes and individual characters.
- A new system for colony building, societal planning, advancement and mass combat. What type of society will you create?
- New interstellar colonization-related gear, vehicles and genelines!



Tab Creations

