



TM



WILDFIRE
Igniting Imagination

CORE



TM

SERIOUSLY? FREE-TO-PLAY?

Imagination is powerful. To quote Albert Einstein, "Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand." Well said.

We believe in the power of imagination and how it creates wonder and inspiration. Roleplaying games are one of the few things that can do what they do. Some might say they are the last frontier for wild imagination and creativity. We certainly believe so. That's why we make roleplaying games – to help make that possible.

Making roleplaying games the way we have hasn't helped us spark imagination the way we'd hoped. We want to try something different.

First, we're adopting the Creative Commons license, so that you can contribute to the game in a meaningful way. That way, we can support you in your awesome ideas and help you get them out to your fellow players.

Then, we're going to give away electronic copies of the core book for free. We've all bought games that didn't end up working out for us. That's why we're giving this to you for free – so that you can figure out if you like the game before you decide to spend money on it.

If you like The Void and you play it, we're going to put out a bunch of cool material at very reasonable prices. We're going to do it buffet-style, so you can pick and choose what works best for you and your group. Buying these supplements supports us making more cool material, along with the rest of your fellow players.

After all, life's too short to waste time and money on games you don't like.

– The Staff of WildFire



CREDITS

Created By

christopher DORN
robert GLASS
matthew GRAU
fraser MCKAY
mike VAILLANCOURT

Written By

christopher DORN
robert GLASS
matthew GRAU
fraser MCKAY
stephen MCQUILLAN

IP/Line Developer

matthew GRAU

Editing

jonni EMRICH, matthew GRAU

Art Direction & Graphic Design

mike VAILLANCOURT

Layout & Typesetting

matthew GRAU

Cover Art

marco MAZZONI

Interior Illustration

Jonas ANDREASSEN, Marco CARADONNA,
Daniel CHAVEZ, Empty Room STUDIOS, Tom
GARDEN, Zach GRAVES, David HAMMOND,
Alex IGLESIAS, Marco MAZZONI, Blake MCDER-
MOTT, Sean MCMURCHY, Oleg SAAKYAN, Adam
SCHUMPERT, Marek TARNAWSKI, Chris TILSTRA,
Mike VAILLANCOURT, Frank WALLS

WildFire Management

matthew BURKE
matthew GRAU
fraser MCKAY

Thanks To

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Forums, Information, Downloads

WildFire LLC
23321 SE 291st St.
Black Diamond, WA 98010
www.wildfirellc.com

Black Sky
www.blackskystudios.com

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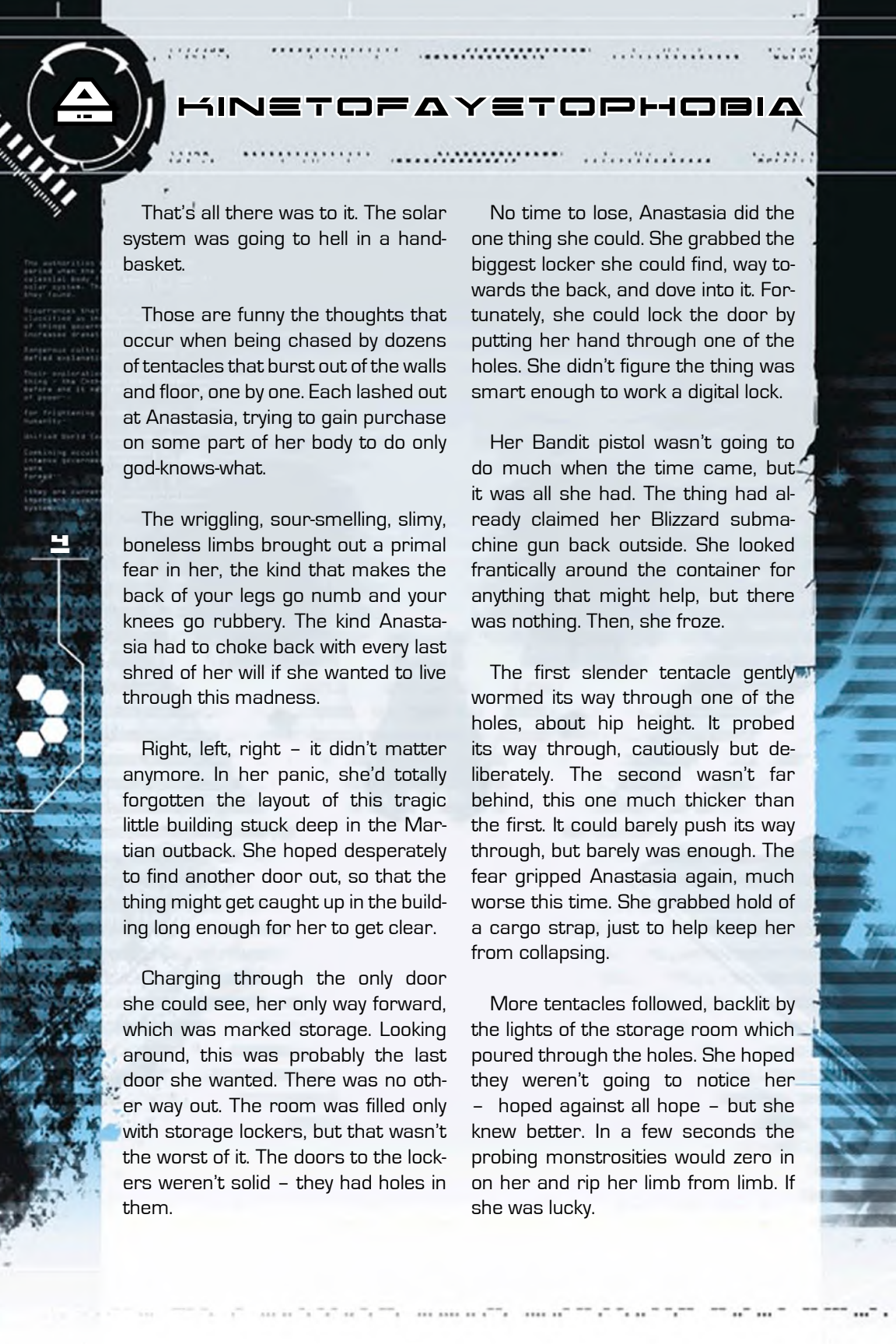
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>(A) Fiction: Kinetofayetophobia</i>	4
(1) Introduction	16
(2) Overview	20
(3) Teaching Adventure	26
<i>(B) Fiction: The Hulk</i>	48
(4) Setting	54
<i>(C) Fiction: Training's Over</i>	70
(5) Characters	76
(6) Skills, Qualities, Talents	92
(7) Rules	110
<i>(D) Fiction: Spin Control</i>	140
(8) Technology	146
(9) Spaceships	172
<i>(E) Fiction: Far Strider</i>	178
(10) Worlds	184
<i>(F) Fiction: Bad Salvage</i>	194
(11) Monsters	200
<i>(G) Fiction: Level 23</i>	210
(12) Gamemaster	216
Appendices	236



KINETOFAYETOPHOBIA

That's all there was to it. The solar system was going to hell in a hand-basket.

Those are funny the thoughts that occur when being chased by dozens of tentacles that burst out of the walls and floor, one by one. Each lashed out at Anastasia, trying to gain purchase on some part of her body to do only god-knows-what.

The wriggling, sour-smelling, slimy, boneless limbs brought out a primal fear in her, the kind that makes the back of your legs go numb and your knees go rubbery. The kind Anastasia had to choke back with every last shred of her will if she wanted to live through this madness.

Right, left, right - it didn't matter anymore. In her panic, she'd totally forgotten the layout of this tragic little building stuck deep in the Martian outback. She hoped desperately to find another door out, so that the thing might get caught up in the building long enough for her to get clear.

Charging through the only door she could see, her only way forward, which was marked storage. Looking around, this was probably the last door she wanted. There was no other way out. The room was filled only with storage lockers, but that wasn't the worst of it. The doors to the lockers weren't solid - they had holes in them.

No time to lose, Anastasia did the one thing she could. She grabbed the biggest locker she could find, way towards the back, and dove into it. Fortunately, she could lock the door by putting her hand through one of the holes. She didn't figure the thing was smart enough to work a digital lock.

Her Bandit pistol wasn't going to do much when the time came, but it was all she had. The thing had already claimed her Blizzard submachine gun back outside. She looked frantically around the container for anything that might help, but there was nothing. Then, she froze.

The first slender tentacle gently wormed its way through one of the holes, about hip height. It probed its way through, cautiously but deliberately. The second wasn't far behind, this one much thicker than the first. It could barely push its way through, but barely was enough. The fear gripped Anastasia again, much worse this time. She grabbed hold of a cargo strap, just to help keep her from collapsing.

More tentacles followed, backlit by the lights of the storage room which poured through the holes. She hoped they weren't going to notice her - hoped against all hope - but she knew better. In a few seconds the probing monstrosities would zero in on her and rip her limb from limb. If she was lucky.



Warden Anastasia Kiss: Martian Outback

One of the larger tentacles inched its way towards her. The tip touched her uniform and slowly slithered its way up. If terror hadn't already paralyzed her, the smell would have made Anastasia vomit. Another came from

the other side, closer every moment. The command came from her brain to fire the gun, but something short-circuited the thought en route.

This was a hell of a way to die.

Suddenly, the storage room exploded with a bright orange light and she could smell burning flesh. The tentacles spasmed and began to yank their way out of the locker. The room lit up again, but this time some of the flames shot through the holes in the locker, singeing Anastasia's eyebrows and bangs. The last of the tentacles slithered out and she was thankfully alone.

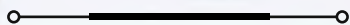
Anastasia kicked the hot metal door as hard as she could. Her combat boot took the worst of it, but the door shot open. The wriggling things were withdrawing into the ground as a figure shot another burst of fiery death at them. It took a minute for Anastasia to overcome her shock to figure out who it was.

It was Felius, who looked downright funny – a bookworm with a flame-thrower. What the hell. It wasn't the weirdest thing that she'd seen today. He just sat there, grinning like an idiot.

No time to waste, Anastasia kicked her legs to get the numb out of them.

"Look what I found," said Felius.

Anastasia pointed at the hole in the ground. "Look what found us. Let's get back to the rover so we can call in an airstrike. I'm not taking any more chances."



It was good to be back on Gany-
mede. She was born in Troy, under

the bright lights of the casinos. Its
mayhem felt like home.

Coming back from the restroom, she practically melted into the chair. "Finally," she said. "A hot meal in a civilized place."

Marcus looked carefully around the room, taking in each person in turn, which was something he did everywhere he went. "I ordered for you while you were gone."

"Thanks," she replied. "I didn't want to wait. I've missed Asian food so much. What did you order?"

Marcus smiled. "It's a surprise."

"So I've been correlating the data and this isn't good." Felius had his nose in his computer again.

Anastasia took a sip of her water. It was nice, properly recycled water. "When is it ever good?"

"The reports show that bodies have been going missing from the morgues with regularity. There's almost a pattern to the body-snatching. It appears that two cadavers, more or less, are stolen from different parts of the colony every week and have been for a little less than three months now."

Marcus frowned, his eyes on other things. "Necrophiliacs wouldn't need bodies with that kind of frequency. That leaves cults and..."

"Ghouls," finished Anastasia.

Just then, the food arrived. Felius had ordered what many had come to call "white people chicken," while Marcus' tastes tended more towards the exotic – Echizen jellyfish, which can be toxic if not prepared properly. Which is something Anastasia had forgotten when she asked him to order for her.

There it was – san nak ji. A live octopus on a bed of vegetables. Anastasia knocked the chair over jumping out of it and away from her "dish."

"Take it away!" she shouted at the waiter, who promptly fell all over himself to remove the offending delicacy. He bowed and disappeared.

Anastasia composed herself and sat back down. Marcus looked at her, shocked. "What's wrong with you?"

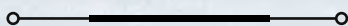
"Kinetofayetophobia."

Even Felius was stumped. "Kinetofayetophobia? What the hell is that?"

"Fear of moving food. It's the closest phobia that translates to tentacles. Remember the thing on Mars?"

Marcus picked up a chunk of jellyfish with his chopsticks. "They've got phobias for everything, don't they?"

"Everybody's scared of something."



The locals had already tried setting a trap, but had no luck. That meant the body-snatchings were either an

inside job or that the perpetrators were using the access tunnels in the city to get around. Either way, Anastasia and her team still didn't know what they were up against.

While Marcus positioned the local authorities to keep surveillance on any of the two dozen people who might possibly be insiders, Anastasia was stuck with the fun job of crawling through the access tunnels. Fortunately, Felius was sitting at a remote terminal with the city plans at his fingertips.

"At the next intersection, turn left," he said.

Whoever built Troy at least had the sense to make it easy to get around, even for the maintenance staff. The hidden corridors were big enough for a person with gear to stand up in – as well as being big enough to transport dead bodies through. They also had softly glowing lights throughout the tunnels. They may not have illuminated everything, but they were enough to get around.

Anastasia reached the intersection and turned left, only to be greeted by darkness. "Is there any reason the lights should be out in this part of the grid?"

"Hold, please," She could hear Felius typing. "Okay, I don't see any complaints or repair requests. According to the system, no one knows the lights are out. The other utilities are working just fine. Is the rest of the electricity on?"



"I'm not going to lick my fingers to find out, but I can hear the lines humming. Can you turn them back on?"

More typing. "Huh. Looks like someone has taken that system completely off-line."

Anastasia pulled out her pistol and snapped a glow-stick to life. The corridor ahead glowed a sickly green, a color that always reminded her of either Halloween or radioactive waste. Neither was particularly comforting right now. "Well, if someone's taken it off-line, then someone's up to something. Call Marcus and let him know what we've found. But Felius, don't go anywhere."

Fortunately, she knew from experience that Felius had no problem multi-tasking.



"Wait. This isn't on my schematics."

Those were not the words Anastasia wanted to hear. "Then where am I?" She thought she smelled something funky.

Felius stammered. "Uh... uh... you... you're off the grid. I don't know why there would be tunnels that aren't on the schematics. These are supposed to be the maps for the entire city. I got them from the city mainframe!"

Anastasia stepped into what looked like a spacious junction room, but paused when the smell hit her – the

sickly sweet smell of rotting flesh. The green light of her glow-stick slowly revealed something she did not want to see. "Oh no."

"What? What is it?" She could hear Felius pulling out his sidearm.

Though she covered her mouth, Anastasia said, "Don't go anywhere. Stay put."

This room was much larger than it first appeared. Whoever had stolen the corpses had brought them here. Over a dozen dead bodies in various states of decay were arranged in an almost reverent fashion. Some were hung on the walls in carefully considered poses. Some were placed in compromising positions that suggested things that made Anastasia sick.

Stepping further in, she eventually found something that made it all clear, or at least as clear as it was going to become. There, on the opposite wall, was an altar, made of bone and other unidentifiable things.

"Felius," Anastasia finally spat out after a couple tries. "It's not ghouls. I'm sending you images of the altar."

"Oh no," she heard him respond. "We need to get the locals mobilized."

"I'll stay here, just in case whatever sick bastards did this come back."

From behind her, Anastasia heard a voice that made her skin crawl. "Too late. We're here."

She whipped around in one practiced motion and squeezed the trigger, aiming right in the face of the portly, sweaty man licking the curved blade. The gun didn't fire. She pulled the trigger three more times. Nothing.

The man snarled. "Must be magic."

Without missing a beat, Anastasia jabbed a knife hand into his trachea. The man stumbled backwards into another, choking violently.

She didn't need a firearm to make sure these low-lives paid for their crimes. This was not Anastasia's first barbecue.

There was a satisfying thunk as the Knight's Errant corvette formed a hard seal with the dock. Welcome to Warden Prime, also known as the Eye. The gigantic space station hovered over Earth and was the primary center of Warden operations for the entire solar system.

Anastasia cued the comm. "Ladies and gentlemen, please stay seated until the captain has turned off the fasten seatbelt sign. Also, be



Docking at the Eye

careful when opening the overhead compartments as things may have shifted during flight. Thank you for flying Warden airlines. Welcome to the Eye."

Powering everything down, Anastasia zipped up her suit and headed for the airlock. Marcus and Felius were already waiting for her.

"Man, is it good to be back in civilization!" said Marcus, smiling. "If the Captain's feeling generous, maybe we can get a vacation day to go planetside. It's the perfect time of the year for the beaches in Ibiza."

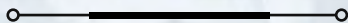
"Hanging out and getting burned by the sun while having smelly salt water sprayed on you sounds like a blast," added a particularly sarcastic Anastasia. "I'm sure the Captain will see that as an important use of our time."

"I don't even know how you call yourself human. What do you think, Felius?"

As usual, it took Felius a few minutes to realize someone was talking to him. "I'm sorry. What?"

"Figures," replied Marcus.

And with that, they walked out of the docking area and into the busy halls of the most notorious space station in the solar system.



Captain Calado was waiting for them in a debriefing room. The heavily scarred man stood staring out the window at the Earth below. He was the kind of man that made people wonder whether or not he was boiling with anger on the inside. The patchwork color of his hair, which couldn't decide if it was black or gray, didn't help.

Marcus made a happy sound as he grabbed a seat at the conference table. As the only one of the three that was from Earth, it made him nostalgic – homesick even.

"I never tire of the sight. Do you, Agent St. Croix?"

"Absolutely not, sir," replied Marcus.

Calado turned and assessed his underlings. "The report got here weeks ago, so we can skip most of the BS. Any new thoughts?"

"Always, sir," began Felius. "We put our heads together on the trip and came up with several hypothesis. However, given the facts, it seems like it was Primoris Nox. Not many other cults would be that organized and want to play with that many dead bodies."

The Captain poured himself a glass of water, but didn't bother to sit down. "Cults, huh? Monsters I get. I like monsters. They're ugly and nasty and you know you should shoot them. Cults are full of people and people are devious. They're hard to root out. Too bad we can't just hook everyone up to a lie detector and flush them out."

"We believe we broke the back of that particular cell. The morgues on Troy should be safe again. Until the next time," said Anastasia.

"Well, the locals will be keeping an eye on things in the meantime. On to new things for you. So, which do you want first – the good news or the bad news?"

Anastasia almost laughed. "Let's hear the bad news first."

Calado turned to look back out over the beautiful blue planet. "I know

"I promised you a rotation on the inner planets, but something's come up. I need you to go right back out again."

Anastasia saw Marcus twitch. Too much time on the outer planets made him unhappy. She never really understood why.

"Something's up on Callisto," continued Captain Calado. "Local scientists thought they read something strange in the atmosphere. They thought the epicenter was in one of the impact craters. Naturally, they went out to see what they could find and never came back. The readings look real. The data has already been uploaded to your ship."

Marcus put down his glass. "Sir, why us? I mean, isn't there someone closer?"

"Believe it or not, Agent St. Croix, this is a busy agency. We don't always have the luxury of sending who is closest. You're between cases and Agent Kiss is Jovian. Any other questions?"

"What about the good news?" asked Anastasia.

Calado snorted. "Since when has there been good news?"

As they approached the Jovian moon, Felius read statistics off his comp, like he always did. "Callisto is the outermost of the Galilean Moons, with low enough radiation to make it

ideal for colonization. The surface is covered with giant impact craters. Ursa, the only colony on the planet, has been constructed in one of them."

"Ana, this is your neck of the woods. What do we need to know?" asked Marcus.

The moon loomed larger every minute and they were about to break atmosphere – though the thin layer of carbon dioxide and molecular oxygen didn't really mean anything in terms of entry. Anastasia kept her hands on the controls. "It's a bedroom community mostly. People do tours elsewhere in Jupiter space and then come back to homes here. It's quiet. If you don't live there, there isn't much of a reason to go there."

The former cop in Marcus started to show through. "Okay, so I'm assuming that means low crime. Any racial tensions to worry about?"

"No. Callisto has about eighty thousand residents who do whatever they need to keep Ursa a nice place to live. Most of the crime is drug smuggling, domestic disputes, or minor property crime, with the occasional drunken assault. Honestly, it's some of the biggest bang for your buck property-wise anywhere in the outer planets."

"Thanks," replied Marcus. "I'll remember that for when I retire."

"Get yourself geared up, smart alec. The locals don't like disturbances and they'll view us as exactly that.

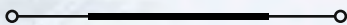
You'll have to do some fancy talking to keep them happy."

Oblivious to the rest of the conversation, Felius chimed in. "Wow. There's a subsurface ocean more than 100 km down. Is anyone researching that? Could that have anything to do with these readings?"

Anastasia brought the Knight's Errant into Callisto's airspace, slowly descending over the frost-capped peaks surrounding the massive craters. "There's a small outpost that's been digging and taking samples, but it is really radioactive down there. I'm no scientist, but it seems like it wouldn't have anything to do with what we're looking at."

Up ahead, she could see the giant dome of Ursa. She cued her comm. "Ursa Spaceport, this is Warden vessel Edge of Dawn requesting docking clearance."

"Edge of Dawn, you are cleared for docking on pad five. Welcome to Callisto."



They hadn't even gotten out of the docks before Ursa Security met them. Just to make a point, there were five of them. Another warm Warden welcome.

The one that was clearly in charge led the pack. He had a round face and the kind of eyes that lied. In the past, he looked like the kind of guy who would have suffered from male pat-

tern baldness, if such a thing hadn't been cured. He approached and held out his hand. "Welcome. I am Lieutenant Ismo Jarvi, Head of Ursa Security. Governor Amarnath asked me to greet you."

Marcus stepped up to shake his hand, smiling disarmingly. "Pleasure. I'm Agent Marcus St. Croix. This is Agent Felius Fickerwith and Agent Anastasia Kiss."

Jarvi turned and ran his eyes up and down Anastasia. "Kiss? Is that intentional?"

Though she wanted to immediately bathe herself, Anastasia knew that you catch more flies with honey than vinegar. So, she gave him one of her best smiles, the kind that typically got men to do what she wanted. "It should be, but it's actually Hungarian."

Jarvi looked pleased, so Marcus took the opportunity. "So, Lt. Jarvi. We have no intention of making your life difficult. We'll make our way to the site and get out of here as soon as we can."

Jarvi tore his eyes away from Anastasia long enough to relax. "That is wonderful news. We'd like to minimize your exposure to the population. Our citizens prefer a quiet life, one unhampered by the kind of concerns Council agents like yourself most often represent. We've prepared the gear you'll need on our end, so gather up the rest of what you'll need and we'll escort you there."

There wasn't much choice, so the three Wardens went back into their Knight's Errant and headed to the armory. Marcus snorted. "For once, I wish these colonies weren't so worried about whatever crap they're worried about and start worrying about what's really going on. They do have bigger problems."

"That would make our job easier. Except that it's also our job to make sure they don't know what's going on," responded Felius.



The place in question was several hours journey from the colony. The rover took them as far up the side of the crater as possible, and it was on foot from there. The extremely low gravity of Callisto made it both harder and easier for them to get up the slope. They each wore heavy weights on their ankles to maintain some traction, and grapple guns and ropes allowed them to reach the lip of the crater with only some small fuss. Fortunately, it was the middle of the day or the whole thing would have been nearly impossible.

Anastasia was the first to the rim and what she saw there made her gasp. This only served to make the other two scramble to join her as quickly as possible. What they saw was not lost on them either.

It didn't take a genius to recognize that something very strange was happening. A thick, swirling mist filled the crater about halfway to the top. They could see the shadows of something growing up out of the ground – maybe stalagmites or even trees? Either would be way out of place. Even worse, there were sounds. Noth-



The Crater on Callisto

ing lived on the surface of Callisto, so there should be no sounds other than the ones they were making. Something also seemed to be glowing down there.

They stood in awed silence for a moment. Finally, Anastasia was the first one to speak. "We're going to have to go down in there, aren't we?"

Without waiting for an answer, she took her first steps down towards the bottom of the crater.



It felt a little like diving underwater. Going under the mist layer was more than any of them could have expected.

Felius stepped up to the gray trunk-like thing before him. It had delicate tendrils splayed out from the nearly eight-foot top.

"Don't touch it!" cautioned Marcus.

Felius turned and frowned. "Do I look new?" He took out a scanner and nudged the thing. The tendrils swayed as if caught in a breeze. "Whatever it is, it's alive. Wait, that could mean..."

Anastasia and Marcus stood back while Felius did something that looked very technical. He then waited patiently, until his comp beeped. "The mist layer is actually an atmosphere."

"What? How is that even possible?" asked Anastasia.

Marcus wasn't far behind. "What kind of atmosphere? Can we breathe it?"

Felius held his hand up and closed his eyes, the way he did when he was asked too many questions at once – not something that happened infrequently. "One answer at a time. How is this possible? I don't know and it will take a lot more research to get even close to an educated guess. What kind of atmosphere? The kind that can support life, just not ours. Open your helmet now and you'll asphyxiate." He paused, thoughtfully. "Better than explosive decompression, I suppose."

"Great. Let's review. Life and an atmosphere." Marcus was getting agitated, as he did when trouble loomed. "Don't we have enough to leave and call in a better equipped team?"

Felius answered his question by ignoring him and walking deeper into the crater.

He walked about another ten feet and stopped. The others joined him, quickly discovering what had grabbed Felius' attention. That plant was only the first. They were entering what appeared to be a forest. An alien and foreboding forest, but a forest nonetheless.

"Should we be taking samples or something?" inquired Anastasia.

Felius shook his head. "I'm not touching anything until we're on our way out."

Anastasia lifted one of her feet and noticed something she'd missed in her shock. Things felt heavier. "Uhh, guys? Why does it feel like I don't need the leg weights anymore?"

The other two finally noticed as well. Felius took off his weights and tried to walk. It wasn't bad. "The gravity is definitely higher in here. I'd guess about half a G. And before you ask, I have no idea how that can happen."

Anastasia and Marcus followed suit and shed their weights. The increased gravity made it much easier to press forward.

There appeared to be many smaller plants, if one could call them that, growing amongst the bigger ones. It was as if what they were seeing were only the first shades of much larger things to come.

Not much further in, they came to what appeared to be a stream, though the liquid flowing down it seemed to have a silvery sheen on its surface. There was some kind of thick growth near the bank of this stream, with blue and pink speckled fronds, perhaps a little like ferns. However, the texture was wrong – more leathery.

Felius was the first to the stream. He knelt carefully down near the edge, sticking some kind of device into it. The surface tension of the liquid was much greater than that of water and he had to push a little harder than normal.

Meanwhile, Anastasia walked over to investigate the speckled growth. Again, it felt like she should be underwater someplace like Europa to be seeing things like this. However, something caught her eye behind the fronds – several somethings, in fact. Gently nudging the plants aside with her assault rifle, she saw a patch of football-like objects, set upright in the ground. Each was white and rough, with an almost vein-like texture.

"Tell me these don't look like eggs," she said.

Felius was up like a shot. "Oh no. Of all..."

Before he could finish his sentence, something large charged through the alien forest near them. Anastasia took a defensive stance and looked every which way, trying to find the thing that was most likely mom. The others drew their firearms, too, preparing for what they knew was the inevitable.

From out of the mist, something wriggled. Several meaty green tentacles, tipped with black talons, moving with sinister purpose. Anastasia could feel the chill creeping up the back of her legs.

"Not this again," was all she said before opening up with her assault rifle, its blaze lighting up the alien forest with flash after flash.

Yup. The solar system was going to hell in a hand-basket.



2159 AD. It is a good time to be alive. The nations of the world still exist, but they have become more civilized. Countries resolve their disputes through the forum of the Unified World Council. Colonies of mutual cooperation exist throughout the solar system. We have stretched to the edge of our known world.

But, alas, it is not to be our time.

Something approaches, a thing on an orbit from far away. Seemingly dark matter, this object is known in obscure prophecy as the Chthonian Star. It is a thing that has been traveling through the universe on its oblique trajectory for millions, if not billions, of years. It is a part of the natural cycle of things, on its eon-long orbit. Now, again, it is awakening things long thought lost or dead, things that have slumbered awaiting its return.

It begins slowly. Colonists begin to notice unusual things throughout the solar system. Then people begin to disappear. Then entire settlements. Ships go missing. However, it isn't long before the unspeakable horrors that have awakened can no longer contain themselves. Moons thought dead such as Callisto come to life, producing alien ecosystems never before seen by man. Things stir in the distant Kuiper Belt. It is something that cannot be denied and people live their lives knowing that there are dangerous and terrifying things in the dark.

Such phenomena naturally become something of intense interest to the

powers that be. Mighty corporations marshal their resources to figure out how such things might be harnessed for profit. The Unified World Council sends out special teams of sanctioned Wardens, whose job it is to ascertain the new threats to human life, to learn everything they can about them, and fight them wherever they are found. They are discovering that they are encountered with greater frequency.

There are also those who believe the murmurs of madmen, who have listened to the occultists who point to forbidden books and forgotten prophecy. They are the ones who believe that humanity is a young race and there are much older and darker things in the universe, so-called deities and their minions who care nothing for the children of men. They confront the horror that is looming, looking to the past, trying desperately to make the world understand in the present.

It is true. These are the end times. The Old Ones are waking up and what we thought was our solar system is making itself home for its returning masters. The monstrous races that serve them are coming back out to help prepare the way. Humanity is as many always thought – temporary stewards of this part of the galaxy at best, parasites at worst.

All this from the influence of a body that is still millions of miles away. As the Chthonian Star marches ever onward, things are only going to get worse. Who knows what will happen when it is finally here?

The Game

The scope of *The Void* is contained to a fantastical setting that is still familiar to us – our solar system, from Mercury out to the frontier of the Kuiper Belt. Earth is still the center of the universe, home to all mankind, but millions of people dwell in colonies and space stations spread throughout the solar system. Spaceships travel between the worlds, using technology that propels them from world to world in a matter of months, instead of years.

Despite the fact that the nations of the solar system are united in a way never before thought possible, the vast distances that separate the colonies of humanity create a sense of isolation. The journeys through the black are long and lonely. There are many who find this isolation difficult to deal with, especially given the things that now roam in the dark.

The Void supports playing pretty much any kind of Character, but steers players towards playing as Wardens, agents of the Unified World Council special commission. That way, your Characters already have reason to travel around the solar system and the resources that allow them to do so.

Accessibility

We've designed *The Void* with ease of use in mind. There are several important ways we've worked to implement this.

First, the following Overview chapter gives you the basics in a nut-shell. You'll learn about the setting, Charac-

ters, and rules in a few easy pages that shouldn't take you more than ten minutes to read. When you're done, you'll have a good sense of how to play this game.

Second, we've included what we call a teaching adventure. This adventure is designed to teach both the players and the GM the setting and how to play *The Void* while they are playing it. Combined with a few pre-generated Characters, you can buy this book and be playing within about an hour.

Third, we've included *At a Glance* sidebars throughout the book. These sidebars contain bullet points of the most important information in each section, so that you can skim them and learn what you need to know. You can go back and read all the details later. Essentially, you can become familiar with everything in *The Void* in a very short time without having to read every word in the book.

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This means that you are free to share electronic versions of *The Void* and that you can create your own official derivatives – being supplements, optional rules, or what have you – to share with others.

However, there are several conditions that go with that. You must attribute your derivative works to us, us-

ing the legal text found in the front of this book, also attributing the people who created *The Void*. You also may not make any money whatsoever off of your sharing of *The Void* or of your derivative works. You must distribute your derivative works under this exact same license, so that others must follow the same rules. After all, this is a license. This means that we still own and will protect our intellectual property, but that we want you to come play in our sandbox with us. We know you're going to come up with cool things for *The Void* and we want to enable our community to produce as much material as we can.

We want to post the best material that people create under the Creative Commons license. We'll post it to the downloads section of our web-site so that others can find it and use it with their games.

Send your Creative Commons creations to creativecommons@fearthevoid.com. PDFs and word processing documents are preferred. If your file is above 10 MB, please use a forwarding service like *YouSendIt*.

The Cthulhu Saga

You may have seen the *Cthulhu Saga* logo on the cover and wondered what it was. *The Void* product line is but one in an overall saga that is designed to take place through multiple points in time. *The Void* is but the first of a series of games that take place in the same universe and the same time-line, each highlighting an exciting era. In the end, you will be able to play multiple Characters – or the legacy of a family

lineage – that have all shaped the way of things in their own age.

Influences

Nothing is created in a vacuum. There have been several excellent movies and games that the creative team would like to site as influences in developing *The Void*.

Alien

This movie needs no introduction. It's the story of a corporate crew instructed to touch down on an uninhabited rock to investigate the crash of an alien ship. They bring back a creature who must kill a host to be born. Just one such alien was enough to kill nearly every member of the *Nostromo's* crew. H. R. Giger's alien design scared the heck out of most of us as kids.

Dead Space

Investigating a mining operation's distress call, Engineer Isaac Clarke winds up marooned with his crashed ship and a couple surviving crewmates. An alien virus ravages the corpses of the dead, forcing him to face horrifying creatures on his quest to stay alive long enough for rescue. Add in an ancient relic that causes homicidal madness and you have a recipe for great sci-fi horror – and an awesome but controversial suit design.

Event Horizon

A ghost story in space, the story follows a crew sent out to Neptune to discover the fate of the *Event Horizon*, a ship that's been missing for years. It was equipped with an experimental gravity drive that was supposed to al-

low it to fold space-time in an effort to cross vast interstellar distances in an instant. It didn't work as planned and the ship comes back alive from a place that can only be described as hell.

Ghosts of Mars

Police are dispatched to a mining outpost to transport a notorious criminal on a nearly terraformed Mars. They arrive to discover dead bodies and a bunch of strangely acting miners. It turns out the former inhabitants of Mars were capable of surviving as possessing microbes and are very territorial.

Outland

An old-school Sean Connery film, this movie shows a more realistic picture of colonization. It follows a marshal assigned to a corporate mining outpost on the Jovian Moon of Io. Drugs have become a part of the productivity cycle and they are beginning to cause miners to go mad and die. Naturally, the corporate masters don't want such a thing coming to light, so they hire hit-men to take care of the law.

Pandorum

A couple of crewmen wake up from hibernation aboard a giant spacecraft with little recollection of who they are or what they're supposed to be doing. It seems that the ship has been overrun by horrifying creatures who hunt the survivors for food. Worse yet, the reactor core is about to overload and blow everything to smithereens. On top of that, there are surprises for which not even the crew is ready.

Got Feedback?

We're all roleplayers here. When you're playing *The Void*, you're going to have feedback – whether it be questions, comments, or the awesome stuff you came up with while you're playing. We want to hear it. You've got two options. You can just fire off an e-mail to feedback@fearthevoid.com. Alternatively, you can jump into the pool on our forums and engage in conversation with both us and other players. Find them at <http://wildfire-community.com/forums>.

In Case You Missed It

In case you missed it, check out the very first page of this book. We're trying out something new here and we'd really appreciate your support.

Welcome to the overview of *The Void*. In these six pages, you'll get an idea of everything you need to know to play the game. If you read only these six pages and play through the teaching adventure found on p. 26, you'll be able to start within about an hour of buying this book and sitting down to play. You will learn as you play, instead of having to sit down and read the better part of this book first. You can also skim the *At a Glance* sidebars throughout this book for more detailed overviews of the setting and rules – a great way to learn faster.

The Game

The Void is a game about humanity's spread into our solar system and the horrors we discover as we go there. It is an exciting mix of Lovecraftian horror and hard science-fiction.

The Void is also a genre of horror known as survival horror. This genre has become especially popular in video games, with franchises like *Resident Evil* or *Silent Hill*. Survival horror means that your Characters are almost always going to be in peril and fighting for their lives. The world of *The Void* is a dangerous place and it will require that players are careful and clever if they want their Characters to survive.

The Scope

The scope of *The Void* is our solar system.

Mercury

Mercury is a small dead world that slowly rotates like a pig on a spit un-

der the punishing heat of the Sun. The Chinese government has built the Port Tian mining colony inside the Chao Meng-Fu crater, where it remains in the shade. They mine the wealth of natural metals and minerals underneath the surface. Life here is spartan and simple, with very little in terms of creature comforts.

Venus

Venus has a decidedly hellish surface with high winds and temperature in the hundreds of degrees. Five corporations control Venus, under the nominal authority of the Venusian Administrative Body. Each corporation has utter autonomy and authority within their colony. However, outside of the colony, the VAB has the final authority. Nearly all aspects of life on Venus occur underground – subsurface colonies have been by far the cheapest method of colonizing the planet in the long term. Venusian culture is corporate culture, but the corporate colonies offer much in the way of comforts.

Earth

The nations of Earth are still pretty much as they have been, though some borders and centers of power always shift. Modern nations have become more civilized and choose to resolve their disputes through the forum of the Unified World Council. Fortunately, the Earth suffers no more from the threat of ecological disaster, though it has been damaged. Air quality has recovered, but climates have changed permanently in many parts of the world. There are places where it is not safe to travel outside without special

suits, where the thinning or non-existent ozone no longer protects life from dangerous solar radiation. However, the Earth is still a paradise compared to the rest of the solar system.

Mars

People thought Mars was going to be the new prosperous frontier. In the beginning, the mining operations proved this to be true. People flocked to Mars. Then they discovered an incredibly hard and useless substance under the surface that shut many mining operations down. Tourism has also waned in favor of more exotic locations in the outer planets. Furthermore, dust clogs the sky from a mysterious collision of the moons. Though the only partly terraformed planet in the solar system, and the planet with the largest population other than Earth, the Red Planet has taken its hits and so have its people.

Jupiter

It is the largest planet in our solar system, and the planet itself is home only to two large floating gas mines. The real excitement of Jupiter is found on the four Galilean moons – Callisto, Europa, Ganymede, and Io. Callisto is where many of those working on other Galilean Moons and Jupiter live, and it is best described as a bedroom community. Europa is home to a giant underground saltwater ocean, with its own life and ecosphere – the first extra-terrestrial life discovered in the history of man. Ganymede's primary trade is tourism and entertainment. It is, for lack of a better analogy, the Las Vegas of the outer planets. Io is rife

with geological activity, with many mountains and volcanoes. Bunkers that shield visitors from the intense radiation provide staging grounds for those who wish to come and climb the majestic mountains in a low gravity environment. However, there have been some unusual reports in and around Jupiter space and many residents find themselves nervous.

Saturn

Saturn could be said to be the heart of the new frontier. Over three million residents of the Republic of Saturn live and work here, striving daily to build their lives around the promise of a free and independent world. Rapid growth has created a strong economy built on industry, manufacturing, mining, tourism, and perhaps the most important of Saturn's commodities – agriculture. On Titan, Saturn's largest moon, great cities and mammoth farming bio-domes have arisen. The city of Chronos has become one of the most important trade centers in the Solar System, built on the need to transport Titan's wealth of agricultural goods off world. Ice harvesting has also become an important industry among Saturn's moons. Other moons like Rhea play host to huge manufacturing plants and ship yards that allow Saturn to produce bio-domes, shuttles, transports, and other necessary components that sustain the colony.

Uranus

For years, the Uranus sector had been nothing more than a junction point for transports. That all changed when the Wesley family founded the

hydrogen mining facility from Veronica Station. The Wesley family obtained the rights to the moons surrounding Uranus and has offered them to independent prospectors or corporations to do with as they will – as long as they obtain deeds for mining rights from Wesley Corp. Given that Uranus has no solid surface, the only colony for Uranus proper is Veronica Station – the mining facility run by John Paul Wesley to extract molecular hydrogen from the atmosphere. Law is officially maintained by the internal security supplied by the Wesley family. However, being much like the gold rush towns of the old west on Earth, law is very often handled as an personal matter between prospectors.

Neptune

Neptune, the last planet of our solar system, is so far into space that it is thirty times the distance of the Earth to the burning Sun. Wind is a near constant on Neptune – the average daily winds range from 45 mph to nearly the speed of sound. Unsurprisingly, the only colony on Neptune's surface is underground. Salacia is the primary and only colony on Neptune. It is a mining colony, as the planet produces diamonds, the most precious gem in the solar system. Salacia is a joint operation of the European Federation and the Rhodes Company – a firm with long roots in the diamond business and the fabulous wealth that goes with it. Over the last few years, strange things have become commonplace on Neptune. Many people have started to have intense nightmares – insomnia (or sleep aids) are an epidemic. People also have started to go missing from time to time, without any trace. On top

of all that, there are those who claim to have heard eerie distant sounds through the surface flurries, like the songs of whales. None of these facts are advertised by Rhodes – it would be bad for business.

Pluto

Across the solar system nearly every planet and moon has felt the presence of humanity. Not so with Pluto. The planet has made it clear that it wishes to be left free of man's company. There have been attempts, many of them, over the years. Most expeditions have never made it to the surface and those that did never last. Even satellites and probes last only a few hours at best before their signals are lost. Pluto wishes to be left alone and thus far humanity has found itself a distant observer. In recent years, that observation has increased ten-fold. More recently, however, the small world has begun exhibiting even more bizarre and inexplicable behavior – the orbit of Pluto has been changing. There is no known cause that science can find for its behavior.

Kuiper Belt

Past the distant planet of Neptune lies a thick band of rock, dust and ice known as the Kuiper Belt – the new frontier of the solar system. Prospectors go to this distant place to make their mark on the solar system. Many explorers have found massive deposits that have netted them finder's fees that allowed them to retire in style. Many more, however, have simply vanished never to be heard from again. While there is great promise in the Belt, there is also great danger.

Technology

The Void is a couple hundred years into the future. In terms of its influences, the setting is approximately equivalent to the technology presented in such movies as *Aliens* or *Event Horizon* – though confined to our solar system.

Space travel is perhaps the single most important technological advancement in the setting. Transit drives can propel ships across the void at speeds formerly not possible. Travel from Earth to Neptune takes only several months instead of twelve years. Passengers must seal themselves in suspended animation inside specially designed gravity-mitigating chambers to survive acceleration and deceleration – which means they unfortunately lose time every time they travel, unaware of what might occur in the vacuum in the interim.

Computers have continued to become smaller and more powerful. People travel with small portable body-computers that are capable of feats that seem like magic. Augmented reality is commonplace, and in fact necessary for many aspects of society. Robotics and nanotechnology have taken over manufacturing, as well as many menial jobs, forcing people to become educated to take on more skilled professions.

Medical technology has advanced to a point where nearly all hereditary disease has been cured. There are few illnesses that plague humanity. Even limbs and organs can be replaced through limited cloning technology. People live longer and are healthier than ever before.

Weapons are still predominantly chemically or magnetically propelled, though computerized advancements make them more accurate, powerful, and capable than ever before. Despite the detente that exists in most places in the universe, it is still not entirely a period of peace. Therefore, the powers that be still spend exorbitant sums of money on weapons research, so the technology of “defense” continues forward.

Characters

The Void supports playing pretty much any kind of Character that one might expect in the setting, but steers players towards playing as Wardens, agents of the Unified World Council special commission. That way, their Characters already have reason to travel around the solar system and the resources that allow them to do so.

While many associate aliens with sci-fi, all characters in *The Void* are human, with some variation based on world or colony of birth.

Character Components

Characters in *The Void* are made up of several key mechanical pieces. They have Attributes and Skills, which are commonplace to modern roleplaying games. They also have Qualities, which represent innate Advantages and Disadvantages (with several that are specifically flavored for the unique setting), as well as Talents, which represent cool things to help define the Character even further. Together, they create diverse Characters, even among all-Warden groups, with plenty of room to customize and grow.

Characters grow through a free-form method of point-based character development, powered by Advances.

The UWC Wardens

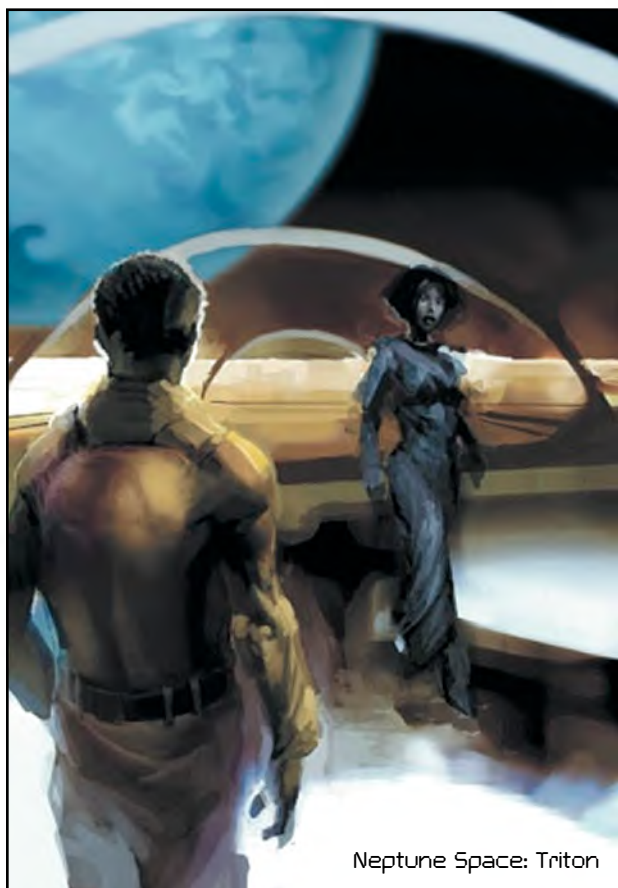
The UWC Wardens are a governmental agency created to deal with the strange things that are emerging in the solar system. They have three primary duties. First, they are charged with investigating all reports and manifestations of the unknown throughout the solar system. Second, it is their responsibility to eliminate unknown or occult threats to the people of the

solar system. Their third, last, and perhaps most distasteful duty, is to keep the unknown and occult a secret from the population at large.

There are three primary specialties in which Warden field agents are trained – Enforcer, Investigator, and Researcher. Enforcers focus on combat, trained in many different kinds of weapons in order to most effectively eliminate resistance. Investigators are the detectives of the Wardens, focused on processing information and evidence in order to draw conclusions. They are also trained to extract useful

information out of people. Researchers are the book worms, educated in the occult and other disciplines in order to draw conclusions and sift through data for that which is useful. Regardless of specialty, all Wardens are combat trained, have a basic knowledge of the occult and the inhuman enemies they must face, and a basic education in cults.

Wardens are typically sent out into the field in teams of three to six. A small team is composed of one of each specialty, while a larger team typically has



Neptune Space: Triton

three Enforcers, two Investigators, and one Researcher.

We recommend playing Warden Characters, unless you have a special sort of story in mind. We created Wardens so that Characters already have the motive to investigate all of the crazy and scary things that are happening in the universe, and so they have the resources – such as authority, weapons, and spaceships – to do so. However, if you're interested in playing *The Void* like *Call of Cthulhu*™ in space, the game certainly supports it and it can be a lot of fun.

The Basic Rules

The Void uses six-sided dice, in dice pools. In general, any time you want to try something that is a challenge, you will roll a number of dice in a pool equal to the appropriate Attribute plus Skill – both of which are rated on a scale of one to five. That means you'll be rolling between two and ten dice for your Tests.

When rolling for a Test, each die that comes up a five or six is considered a Success. You need to get between one and five Successes to accomplish your task, where two is Average and three is Hard. These Tests may be modified by your Character's Qualities and/or Talents.

Naturally, we have created rules for psychology – fear and madness. The otherworldly things that are a part of

the *The Void* setting will scare the pants off of characters, and the unspeakable things they witness will slowly drive them mad. These are themes central to all Lovecraftian horror.

Combat Overview

Combat uses opposed Tests, where every defender is given the opportunity to defend against those attacks of which he is aware. If you equal or exceed your opponent's Defense Test, you'll hit and he'll take damage to his Health.

Characters have a certain number of points they can take before they die, but there are levels of hurt in between. As they get hurt, they begin to take penalties to their Tests and movement speed.

The Void also includes basic social combat, so that you can labor to change someone's mind when it is important. Having someone in your group who specializes in social combat is a good idea.

The Teaching Adventure

Included next in this book is a teaching adventure. It is designed to help you learn the game as you play, so that you don't have to spend a lot of time learning before you jump right into the game.

The teaching adventure in this book also includes four fully statted Characters, each of which is ready to play.

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TO SERVE AND SURVIVE

This is an introductory adventure for four new Wardens. The Wardens have recently completed their training and must investigate the disappearance of a freighter, the *Pandora's Hope*. Starting at Warden Prime, they travel to Mars where the *Pandora's Hope* was launched to begin the investigation. From there, the investigation will continue to the final destination of the freighter – a mining colony on Chiron.

Gamemasters will find scene-by-scene descriptions, special notes to help jump into the action quickly, and seeds for expanding this investigation into a springboard for a longer campaign.

Each scene is laid out in the following format:

At a Glance

This section provides a brief synopsis of the scene action to help Gamemasters skim the entire adventure quickly.

For the Players

The classic "boxed text," GMs should read this text aloud directly to the players. It describes the scene from an in-character perspective.

Behind the Scenes

This is the primary section for Gamemasters, including all of the extra information about NPCs, their motivations, and flow of events before the players begin to influence things.

Special Notes

This section won't appear in every scene, but contains special notes and advice to new GMs. It will include page references, rules examples, and suggestions for changes.

Note to the Players: If you want to play through this scenario, or you think your GM may want to run this adventure for your group – PLEASE STOP READING! Don't spoil the surprises for yourself and your friends.

Note to the GM: While your players are reading through the Character options, skim through the adventure quickly, making sure to at least read the **At a Glance** sections. The more prep time you have, the easier this will be. Have fun and don't sweat any mistakes that come up along the way.

Training's Over

At a Glance

The Characters are called up to Warden Prime – the main outpost floating above Earth. Captain Roland Dearborn assigns them to investigate the disappearance of *Pandora's Hope*, a freighter which lost communications just past Saturn. The Wardens have arranged for transportation to Mars, where the freighter embarked.

For the Players

After the last few weeks of training in the Himalayas, you've come to learn that there are places left on Earth which can be just as desolate as the Martian outback. With the

training exercise complete, you've received orders to report to the Eye.

Warden Prime, as it's officially known, floats in orbit above Earth. From this vantage point, the Wardens monitor activities across the entire solar system. Getting called in means that Command has an assignment. Your team is loaded into a shuttle and the entire trip only takes about half an hour.

Captain Roland Dearborn is waiting for you in the briefing room. He is an older Brit with a stern military bearing.

"Wardens, good morning. Please take a seat. I will keep this briefing as short as possible."

With a few strokes on the keypad in front of him, several images project onto the vidscreen.

"This is the freighter, Pandora's Hope. She launched from the Martian orbital elevator 84 days ago on her way to a mining colony on Chiron. All communications were lost seventeen days ago. While that is disturbing, it's not unheard of. Today, we lost communication with the Chiron mining colony.

"Your mission is to go to Mars, investigate if anything got on board the freighter, and armed with that information go to Chiron to discover why communications were lost. Are there any questions?"

Behind the Scenes

Captain Dearborn will answer any questions that he can for the Wardens, though there isn't a lot of information available. This group was chosen because they were finishing a training rotation, and were readily available. The Wardens did not want to pull in a team from the outer system blind, which is why their team is being sent to Mars first.

Pandora's Hope

The freighter is a modified freighter with increased engine systems for long haul shipping. It registered with Martian control as carrying food-stuffs and supplies (air scrubbers, spare parts, etc) for Chiron base, and returning with ore from the mining colony. The freighter has a crew complement of thirty souls.

Communications were lost just before it was scheduled to pass Saturn. The standard flight time should have it arrive at Chiron in four days. It is possible if the engines were pushed, that it could have arrived today.

Transportation

As this is the team's first mission, the Warden command is booking all of the transportation throughout the mission. The Characters can adjust the plans that are laid out for them, but will have civilian on-lookers throughout the assignment. Command does not tell them, but this is a form of test to see how the young Wardens handle their discussions and contain knowledge of the threats. On future assignments, Warden command may give

the team a transport to move them around.

The Wardens have booked passage for the Characters on a regularly scheduled transport between Earth and Mars, which leaves in several hours. The trip from Earth to Mars takes an average of fourteen days. During the trip, all passengers must be in grav bed stasis for acceleration and deceleration – which is the entire trip.

Extra Gear

If the characters want any extra gear, they can requisition supplies on the Eye. Depending on how large the gear is, and how dangerous it is, they may be cautioned against tipping their hand to the civilians. There is also a Warden station on Mars which they will be able to requisition supplies from, once they have a better grasp on what they may be dealing with.

Special Notes

The Wardens have three ground rules:

1. Investigate Unknown or Occult threats.
2. Contain and eliminate the threats.
3. Keep the population from finding out.

During this scene, the Captain can remind them of these rules. They give the Wardens vast authority throughout the solar system, and they can requisition nearly anything that is needed to uphold the charter. The need for secrecy often keeps Wardens from showing up armed to the teeth until they are ready to engage a threat. This can be a good reminder for players

that sidearms are better choices than assault rifles and heavy body armor, when dealing with civilians.

The Red Planet

At a Glance

Having arrived on Mars, the Characters begin investigating the *Pandora's Hope* and its crew. The investigation can take them from the Docking Port at the top of the space elevator, to the Mariner Valley colony on the surface.

For the Players

Disembarking the ship at Mars, there are signs for the Dockmaster's office, Longshoreman's Union, and Transit Centers. While the transport docked in the tourist section, it is clear that most work on the station is done with the freighters. Holoprojectors show the news and weather information for the Mariner Valley far below, along with a projection of the space station, tethered to the ground by a massive elevator cable.

Everywhere you look, the space is very organized and well-used. There are no vast expanses, or large waiting areas. The only section that looks like it is wide open is the center ring of the station. It is lined with storefronts on either side, but has space for ten people walking side by side. Camera nodes jut out prominently, clearly showing that everything in the area is being recorded.

If the characters go to the Dockmaster's office:

Following the signs, it is easy to find the Dockmaster's office. It is a cramped

space with several uniformed men and women sitting at the back of the office with headsets on, monitoring computers. At the front of the office two men are reviewing a schedule on a tablet and making changes. A large window shows the red glow of Mars, blocked by a massive freighter and several shuttles.

The older of the two looks up at you and barks with a gravelly voice, "identification and travel papers...please."

Behind the Scenes

Mars is the primary investigation spot for the Wardens to find out what happened to the *Hope* until they actually get to Chiron. If the Characters get lost or feel that they don't know where to go next, they can contact the Warden outpost on Mars. The Warden outpost's field officer has been able to track down some of the crew hang-outs during their shoreleave.

1. Captain Lee Quartararo primarily stayed aboard ship, but met with the Dockmaster on the day the ship berthed and the day it left. He was seen walking in the central promenade of the space station. His ident-card was never scanned for transit to the surface.
2. The first officer, Commander Karl Roslin travelled with nearly half the crew to the surface and stayed at the Deimos hotel in the Mariner Valley. Having an officer planet-side during shoreleave is not unusual, especially with freighter crews. The first officer, oddly, spent extensive time in the hotel bar.
3. The chief engineer (Commander Nathan Adar) never left the ship at all. There are reports of several shipments being brought on board the ship for him, but he never set foot on Mars or the station.
4. The crew stayed predominantly in the Mariner Valley colony. They showed identcard scans at several lower class hotels, bars, and brothels. The medical staff took a day trip to Chloe (a Seven Sisters colony on Mars). The Chloe medical chief reported that they volunteered in the clinic.

Making Skill Tests

A Skill Test is made by having the player roll a pool of six-sided dice equal to the appropriate Skill and associated Attribute. Each die that comes up a five or six is a Success. If the total number of Successes meets or beats the difficulty of the Test, then the Character succeeds. This process is used for all Skill Tests.

Example: Alexis has a Investigate skill of 2 and an Awareness (the Linked Attribute for Investigate) of 4. She rolls 6d6 and gets a total of two fives and sixes on the dice, generating two Successes. The difficulty for this test is Average (2), so Alexis succeeds. If the GM had ruled that the Difficulty was Hard, then Alexis would have failed the test.

Visiting the Dockmaster

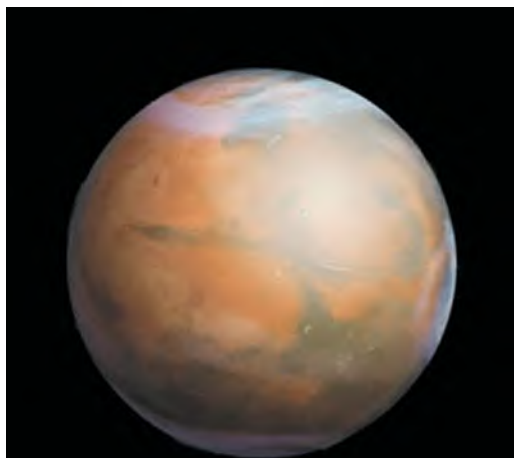
The Dockmaster's office is directly off of the promenade, along the outer ring where the station is spun for gravity. Dockmaster Higgins and his staff work in the office on a standard eight hour shift, but will come into the office on off hours to accommodate shuttles arriving and departing. Like everywhere else on the station, space is a premium and the office has a cramped feeling. If the Characters identify themselves as Wardens, Higgins will ask for them to step down to the end of the counter to talk. He has a private

office, but it is not designed for having more than one person in it. The dockmaster will doubt that the Wardens have any secrets that they are going to share with him that cannot be told to his staff.

He remembers the *Hope* berthing on the station. It was loaded with standard medical supplies and foodstuffs, along with spare parts for different pieces of equipment in the colony. Higgins spoke with the Captain at length during loading, as the Captain wanted to make sure that everything was balanced properly. Acceleration to the Outer System requires the entire crew to sleep in grav couches for a week, and it is not the time when you want a container to shift.

If they ask about the Engineer, Higgins will unconsciously rest his hand on his sidearm. He tells the Characters that Adar broke several laws during his last stay on Mars. Because of that, he is not allowed to utilize any colony resources – including oxygen.

Higgins can provide a full manifest of supplies that were loaded onto the *Pandora's Hope* by the longshoremen, but will note that anything the crew brought back from shoreleave will not be listed. He trusts his men, and strongly believes that if anything went wrong on the ship it is either Adar's fault, or something that the crew brought back. In addition to the manifest, the



Type: Terrestrial Planet

Size: Approximately 0.5 Earths by Mass

Gravity: 0.375 g (Moderately Low)

Surface Pressure: 1 kPascal

Surface Composition: Primarily a basalt rock base containing some silica glass. Surface covered in finely grained iron-oxide dust.

Atmosphere: Mostly Nitrogen (78%) and Oxygen (19%), with the remaining amount made up of Argon, Carbon Dioxide, Krypton, Neon, Nitrogen, Xenon, and Water Vapor

Surface Temperature: Around 4.4° C/40° F.

Day: 24.6 Hours

Year: 1.8 Earth-Standard Years

Satellites: Formerly 2, now a loosely formed ring.

Dockmaster has the flight plan on file. The estimated flight time was eighty-eight days including a seven day acceleration and deceleration window.

Dockmaster Higgins

Dockmaster Charles Higgins is a gruff, older man with a no-nonsense attitude about flight control and procedures. He has a tendency to rant about the dangers of space travel and colonization to anyone who asks foolish questions. Higgins does have a strong respect for authority, but believes that authority without experience is a dangerous proposition.

Attributes: Awr 3, Clv 4, Dem 3, Gra 2,
Psv 3, Phy 3

Health: 10

Key Skills: Computer 4, Guns: Pistol
1, Law 3, Notice 3, Survival 2

Armor: Flak Jacket (5/2)

Weapons: ACC-62 Bandit (3d6)

The Deimos Hotel

The Deimos Hotel is a nice, but not luxurious, hotel which primarily serves ship's officers and mid-level corporate managers. It is a business hotel rather than a tourist one. There is very little automation, due to the pressing need for jobs on Mars. At any time, there is a minimum of two concierges on duty for check-in and assistance at the front desk. The hotel also has a bar, called the Cosmic Lounge, and a restaurant – Johnny's. The lobby, bar and restaurant all have a very open feeling to them, which is different from the space station above. It is explained by needing to be large enough to support the full hotel above them. The hotel has seven floors above ground, and a subterranean level where all of the support ac-

tivities (cooking, laundry, storage, etc.) are completed.

Asking around the hotel about Commander Roslin will be fruitful. All of the staff remember him, as he tipped generously. The concierge will direct the Wardens to either the Cosmic Lounge where "the Commander held court" or a jazz club several blocks over called the *Rue d'Auseil*. The bartenders will point to a corner table, designed to seat eight, where Commander Roslin sat for ten hours a day, reading the news, drinking, and talking with crewmembers. Throughout the day, crew members would come to him, and ask for permission to do different activities or to be issued pay. The bartenders noted that there seemed to be a bartering system, where the crewmembers would need to provide something to the commander or make some kind of promise before being authorized or issued pay. It stood out to them as very odd. The last two nights that Roslin was at the Lounge, a rat-faced man came to see him. He spoke with the commander for about twenty minutes and then they departed together.

If the Wardens request it, security footage from the lounge can be viewed to watch Commander Roslin with the crewmembers and his unnamed guest. Digital stills can be transferred to a wristcomp. To transfer the entire security file will take an Average Persuade Test. The Warden's authority will provide one free Success, if the Characters show their badges. (See below for more information on Social Tests and Legwork).

Rue d'Auseil

At the height of the Mariner Valley colony, the Rue d'Auseil was a lively jazz club. In the years following the economic collapse, the owner began to borrow his way out of debt, finally ending up owing more than the club was worth to the local mafia. The mafiosos made a deal, give them all of the profits and the authority to run it their way, and they would let him stay on to collect a small salary and manage everything. The local Warden outpost is aware of this, but since it isn't anything supernatural, they let it be. If the Characters ask the outpost about the Rue d'Auseil, they will be told that it is a mafia-front for money laundering, gambling, and drugs. There are hundreds of patrons each week, who don't know about the influence and are not involved in the gambling or drugs.

Identifying themselves as Wardens will immediately set the attitude of all the employees to Unfriendly. (See the Special Notes in this section and p. 127 for more details on Attitude.) The Characters making it clear that they don't care about the mafia activities, will begin to salvage the situation and a Persuade Test can set the attitude back to Ambivalent.

Visiting the club during the daytime, the Characters will find it nearly abandoned. There is a small team of janitorial staff cleaning, and four bar-backs working to restock the bar and kitchen before the evening shift arrives. Showing pictures of Commander Roslin will result in blank stares and no answers. The rat-faced man will be identified as Jackie Criswell. He is a regular guest and a friend of the manager.

Visiting in the evening, the club is busy, though not packed. There are two bouncers working the door. The bouncers won't allow anyone inside with obvious weapons or body armor, though a knife or pistol under a coat is fine. Inside, a live band plays jazz mixed with a little bit of monologuing from the lead singer. There is a small dancefloor where patrons are grooving. Looking around the club (an Average Notice Test), the Characters will spot Criswell at the bar talking with the bartenders as they work.

Criswell will not want to leave the club with the Characters, especially if they identify themselves as Wardens. They can choose to arrest him, but will have to tell him why. Alternatively, the Intimidation or Persuade Skills may convince Criswell to talk with them in the back room of the club. Any active violence against Criswell in the club will attract the attention of the bouncers.

Interrogating Criswell – either politely or through more direct means – will get Criswell to tell them that he worked as the intermediary for a deal between the Miners Guild and Commander Roslin. The Chiron station was being sent a supply of “Substance Thirteen.” It is illegal to possess on Mars, but the outer worlds and corporate colonies haven't prohibited it. The drug increases the metabolism rate of the user for several hours, meaning they are more productive at physical tasks. The downside is that the drug makes the user exceptionally tired afterwards so they sleep for ten to twelve hours. The Miners Guild uses the drug to keep remote populations

under control, and limit risk of mutiny. Criswell doesn't have any more of it, he sent all four cases with Roslin and Adar. Because drug trafficking isn't part of the Warden mission, he hopes that telling them will get the Wardens to leave him be. As a bag runner for the Mafia, he has enough legal ties to beat the drug charges since there is no proof that he ever had the drugs in his possession.

Jackie Criswell

A rat-faced Caucasian man, Criswell is a bag-runner for the local mafia. He is also secretly a member of the Children of the Void, a murderous cult. Using his underworld connections, Criswell has managed to begin adding special substances into various drugs. None of the patrons or employees of the Rue d'Auseil know of his connection to the Children.

Attributes: Awr 4, Clv 4, Dem 3, Gra 3, Psv 2, Phy 3

Health: 10

Key Skills: Deception 4, Fraternize 3, Hand Weapons: Blades 2, Intimidate 2, Occult 3

Armor: None

Weapons: Knife (1d6)

Bouncers

These guys are what one might expect from a mafia-fronted club.

Attributes: Awr 3, Clv 2, Dem 3, Gra 4, Psv 3, Phy 3

Health: 10

Key Skills: Guns: Pistols 2, Hand Weapons: Blades 2, Notice 4, Unarmed Combat 3

Armor: Flak Jacket (5/2)

Weapons: Knife (1d6)

Research on "Substance Thirteen" (an Average Computer or Hard Investigate Test) supports Criswell's claims. The drug is illegal in the Inner System, though prosecution from Mars outward is almost non-existent. The side-effects besides exhaustion, include black-outs, amnesia, and sleep walking.

Special Notes

During investigations, there will often be a lot of talking with various people. Depending on the preference of the GM and players, this legwork – where the Characters talk with contacts and informants – can be done in-character through roleplaying or by making Social Tests. While roleplaying is encouraged, the Social Combat system is provided for groups that do not have players who enjoy all of the talking, or for players who may trip over their own words in ways that their Characters would not.

Most NPCs begin at a Ambivalent attitude, though situational modifiers such as bias or previous violence can change that. Page 128 has the list of which Skills can be used based on attitude. A streamlined way of doing legwork is to have the Character who is leading the discussion make a Test using the appropriate Social Skill against the base Difficulty. For every Success equal to or over the Difficulty, they learn one additional piece of information about the subject they were asking.

Example: Andras is talking with the Bartender about Commander Roslin. He asks the bartender to describe his behavior. He rolls 6d6 with three Successes.

The GM assigns an Average Difficulty for the bartender's attitude. Andreas will learn two facts about Commander Roslin, one for the initial difficulty, and one more for beating the Test by one Success.

Next Stop, Chiron

At a Glance

Armed with information about the Freighter, the Wardens arrange for transport from Mars to Chiron. Due to the length of the journey, the only vessel they can secure quickly requires grav stasis.

For the Players

Climbing into the grav couches, the crew helps you to attach the bio-monitoring systems that will watch as you are in stasis. They assure you that the systems are perfectly safe, running through an internal script that they have told thousands of passengers before you.

As the lid of the bed closes down over you, small lights turn on along the length of the bed. There is a sensation of drowning as the grav couch fills with fluid. The computer screen above you displays a message from Warden Command, "The nearest backup team is thirty two days out from your call."

With that final note, darkness overtakes you.

Behind the Scenes

There is very little to this scene. At its core, this scene is to teach the players about long-term space travel. If the Characters absolutely refuse to go into

stasis for the entire voyage, they can arrange for different transport, but it will take an extra week before the Wardens can arrange a shuttle with sufficient life support systems for the team to be in staterooms.

The journey will take 84 days to complete, with the crew in gravstasis for seven days at the beginning and end of the journey for acceleration and deceleration.

Danger on the Horizon

At a Glance

The Wardens are awoken a few hours before arrival at Chiron. The transport has slowed down to docking speed and is approaching the large asteroid. There is substantial debris trapped in the gravity well of Chiron.

For the Players

Coming out of stasis, your body aches as each muscle comes back to life with the sensation of pins and needles. There isn't much time to adapt, as klaxons sound and you feel the ship shake as something hits it. The voice of the captain comes over the loudspeaker.

"We are on final approach to Chiron. There is substantial debris. Passengers please report to the briefing room immediately. All crew begin decompression inspection."

In the Briefing Room

Entering the large conference room, a viewscreen on the opposite wall shows a computer simulation of the vessel and Chiron. Debris from aster-

oids is strewn across the thousand miles between them. As the system zooms in on the mining colony, the computer dims the freighter docked there and the majority of the station. There are no energy signatures coming from either.

Behind the Scenes

With the debris field, the crew will be approaching slowly to maneuver around the largest chunks. If the Characters request sensor sweeps or specific information about the area, the crew will determine the following:

1. The freighter docked at Chiron is the *Pandora's Hope*.
2. The *Hope* is heavily damaged with multiple hull breaches.
3. It may still be pressurized internally if the crew was able to seal off the breaches.
4. Primary engine systems are offline, but there is substantial radiation bleeding out. Backup systems can't be detected through the debris and interference.
5. The mining colony has sustained substantial damage from the debris.
6. There are several hull breaches along the outer ring.
7. The inner ring near the mine appears to be undamaged.
8. Primary power is offline throughout the station.

An Average Engineer: Life Support or Engineer: Power Systems Test will tell the Characters that the mining colony should have backup generators in different sections that can be used for short-term life support, while the primary generator is repaired. Many

freighters have hand-crank generators to provide power for personal use if ship-wide power is lost.

Attempts to hail the colony or the *Pandora's Hope* return only static. Visual magnification shows the long range communication arrays have been destroyed on the freighter, though short range communications should be possible. Sensors are picking up a large amount of radiation from the *Hope*, which could be interfering with communications.

The captain will ask the Characters if they wish for the ship to dock, or to establish an orbit above the colony and have the team do an EVA jump. Characters should remember the three rules in the charter and, until they have ascertained what caused the problems, presume that it will need to be kept secret. If they choose to dock, the captain will obey the order but be very cautious on the approach.

For an EVA jump, the vessel can approach the colony without docking. From here, the characters will need to make an Average Freefall Test to jump across the gap and grab ahold of the colony airlock. Cables can be used to create a tether line between Chiron and the vessel. If so, only the first Warden making the jump to secure the tether needs to make the Freefall Test. Anyone else can use the tether to pull themselves along the cable. Once everyone is secure on Chiron, the crew will disconnect the tether and back the vessel away to avoid the debris.

Aboard the colony, the loss of power has caused several obstacles which the Characters will need to overcome.

1. The deck plates have stopped providing any sense of gravity. While working on Chiron, until power is restored, Freefall Tests may be called for when traversing large spaces, or performing complex physical actions.
2. There are no lights or life support systems on-line. Spacesuits provide eight hours of breathable air, which should be plenty of time for the Wardens to scout the area and determine if it is safe for their vessel to land. If the suit is breached, the inner suit will provide roughly one hour of breathable air. Additional damage can reduce this time further. Because of flashlights, GMs can apply vision penalties for partial lighting.
3. None of the hatches or doorways respond to the automatic sensors. Manual overrides are clearly labeled and do not require any technical knowledge to operate. In combat though, opening or closing a hatch takes an Involved Action.

Terror 101

At a Glance

Entering through the docking port, there are no immediate signs of danger. Later into the colony, the Wardens find corpses in partial vacsuits or with breathers on. All of the corpses have been torn limb from limb.

For the Players

The colony is silent, except for the sounds of breathing coming through the radio from your team. Moving through the station, there

are no signs of damage or the miners – until you reach the habitat ring. Here, miners are half into vacsuits, and wearing emergency breathers. It appears that there was sudden decompression and several of the miners were caught in the vacuum. Looking closer, many of the suits show punctures and the throats of several miners were slit. The corpses are floating, preserved by the vacuum of space.

Behind the Scenes

When *Pandora's Hope* docked, the crew of the freighter was infected with Myriad (see p. 208) because of drug usage. The Myriad-infected crewmen swarmed off the ship and began to slaughter all of the miners. During their murderous rage, several small explosive devices caused emergency decompression. Damage response crews went into action before the alarm could be sounded that the colony was under attack.

As the team moves through the area, they will find extensive damage to the outer surface of the colony. It is possible to seal several bulkheads and block off areas that are exposed to vacuum. Until that happens, the life support system will not be capable of re-establishing an atmosphere. The lack of atmosphere is keeping the bodies from decomposing, and has effectively freeze-dried all of them.

If the team searches the Habitat Ring for survivors and crew members, go to scene **Any Survivors?**

If the team boards the *Hope*, go to scene **The Other Survivors**.

Special Notes

Each group will have their own threshold for the amount of gore and viscera that they prefer. If this is the first time the group has played in a horror setting, the GM should gauge the player's reactions while describing violence and horror. It is important to not push too far beyond the comfort levels of the player group. You may even want to check in with them beforehand.

Any Survivors?

At a Glance

The team finds a small group of survivors who have locked themselves in the kitchen and storerooms. The survivors are emotionally rattled and at the edge of their sanity.

For the Players

Moving inward along the habitat ring, you find something rather unexpected – a sealed door with the pressure gauge showing green. On the other side is a sustained habitat. Looking at the colony map on your HUD, the next room should be a storage area, connected to the kitchen.

Behind the Scenes

When the security force was overrun and there were murderous psychopaths running amok, the galley crew gathered everyone who was eating and pulled them into the kitchen. From there, they manually sealed the doors and barred them so the hatches could not be opened manually from the other side. For the last three months, they have been hiding here. They have

Making Horror Tests

Facing horrifying or gruesome scenes can require characters to make Horror Tests. This is done by making a Perseverance Attribute Test. Page 113 has a complete list of suggested Difficulties. Failing a Horror Test can result in momentary paralysis or on more serious failures, a need to flee the situation.

Example: Andras has come face to face with several miner's floating in zero-G, which have been eviscerated. The GM decides the Difficulty of this Test is Easy. Andras rolls 4d6 and gets one Success. He has succeeded on the Horror Test and can act normally.

used hand-crank generators, taking shifts, to keep enough power for the refrigeration systems and life support. The twelve survivors have been living on stores designed to feed 200 people.

The problem is that the survivors are all on the edge of a psychotic break from being locked in a confined space. Add to that the horrors seen just before coming in, the lack of any response from calls for help, and you find a group ripe for madness. Once they sealed the doors, the galley chief refused to open them for any reason. First there was banging and screaming, then the pressure sensor registered a vacuum. The screams stopped, but there was still banging and scraping against the door. The galley chief said it was the monsters – men who

had succumbed to space madness, trying to break in.

By the time the Characters have arrived on scene, the survivors are a wreck. They are all still alive, but will not respond to banging on the door and will begin to panic. Short range communications are impossible because of the radiation coming from *Pandora's Hope*, but the Wardens can re-establish the atmosphere in one of the adjacent rooms to the survivors. Once pressure has been re-established, sound will carry through the walls. If this is done, the Characters can make Persuade Tests to talk with the survivors and explain the situation. Alternatively, they can cut through the doors if they have the appropriate tools. Cutting through the doors, without first sealing the area will result in sudden decompression of the storage area and galley. This will kill the survivors, as they do not have breathers or space suits.

Special Notes

This can be a socially heavy scene. Refer to p. 33 as needed to review information about Social Combat. All of the survivors are no longer well and will need extensive psychological counseling to be brought back to normal. If the Characters choose to cut through the hatch, have them make a Hard Horror Test as they realize what they've done.

The Other Survivors

At a Glance

The crewmembers of the *Hope* are no longer what they appear to be.

Beyond the infected crew, a Karrak'in (see p. 204) has begun eating through sections of the hull.

For the Players

Approaching the docking bay where the Hope is berthed, the signs of violence become even stronger. Viscera floats in the vacuum, and there are dozens of corpses in the hallways. Some appear to have taken their masks off and begun feeding on the entrails of their victims – not realizing that they were suffocating in the void of space. In the airlock, two bodies float limply. Something appears to have melted their spacesuits from the inside, spreading from sternum all the way down to a knee. With the suit eaten away, you can see organs and bone clearly visible within the cavity that used to be their body.

Behind the Scenes

Moving aboard the ship, it will become obvious that something went horribly wrong on the freighter. Several of the grav couches have been damaged, with cracks and burn marks as if hammers and acetylene torches were taken to the beds. There are still the corpses of crew members inside many of the beds. The Myriad-infected crew are adapted to very low-levels of oxygen, and are primarily feeding off the corpses to get the necessary amino acids and proteins to stay alive. Some of the life support systems are still functioning to refill air tanks, which keeps the infected crew moving.

As the Characters begin to move through the ship, the *Hope's* crew will start to rally and attack the Wardens.

The infected crew attacks like a rabid swarm, with improvised knives, clubs, and spears. (Treat all damage as 1d6, expect for special attacks) Many of the tools look like sections of the ship have been ripped apart to create them.

Beyond the infected crew, there are several Karrak'in aboard the ship. They have been slowly eating their way across the freighter and have not interacted with the infected crew at all. If no hostile actions are taken against them, the huge spider-like creatures will simply keep eating. When provoked, they release a chemical signal and shriek which causes all of the Karrak'in to destroy all living creatures other than themselves. The upside is that the Wardens could try to provoke the Karrak'in and then flee, and have the creatures attack the infected crew. (Presuming they can reach the ship...)

Special Notes

Inevitably, there will be conflict and combat. Combat is broken into rounds to codify the process. At the beginning of the round, every Character should roll Initiative. The GM rolls initiative for all of the bad guys or monsters in an encounter. Write down the initiative order from highest to lowest. This is the order everyone will act in the combat round. Finally, everyone takes their actions.

During combat, every Character may take a Free Action, a Simple Action, and an Involved Action. After every Character and enemy has acted, repeat the process, roll Initiative, take Actions. (See p. 119 for more detailed information on Combat.)

Characters also have Tension and Fate Points. Tension Points can be used for a variety of uses, with a price. Fate Points are for Characters to use to save their lives in the face of certain death. For full rules see p. 138 & 217 and p. 123.

Calling for Help

At a Glance

It's time for the Characters to report back what they have found. Options range from restoring communications on Chiron, to using the transport's communication system.

Behind the Scenes

This scene doesn't have specific text to be read aloud to the players because of the broad range of options. There are three basic options for communicating back to Warden Command: using the transport which the wardens travelled on, using Chiron's communication system, or the *Hope's* system. Each has their own trials and tribulations.

The Transport

If the transport did not dock, the Characters will need to get back aboard somehow. Their short range communications are being jammed because of the background radiation from the *Hope's* reactor. Shutting down the reactor will re-enable short range communications. Otherwise, they will need to do another EVA jump from Chiron to the ship. This is a Hard Freefall Test because of the debris and the higher orbit which the transport is hovering in.

Making Combat Tests

- *Initiative:* Awareness + Reaction
- *Attack:* (Weapon Skill) + (Linked Attribute)
- *Defense:* Grace + Defense

If the total of an Attack roll is equal to or higher than the Defense roll of the target, the attack is successful. The more that an Attack roll beats the Defense, the more damage is done. The difference between the rolls is called the *Damage Bonus*.

- *Doing Damage:* (Weapon Damage) + Damage Bonus – Target's Armor.

Example: Alexis and Andras are sparring, with full contact. They roll Initiative, and Alexis gets one Success, while Andras gets two.

Andras attacks first, because his initiative is higher. He uses his sparring knife and gets three Successes. (Hand Weapons: Blades 2 + Grace 5 = 7d6) Alexis attempts to dodge the blow and gets 1 Success on her Defense. (Defense 2 + Grace 3 = 5d6). His attack was successful, and he earns a Damage Bonus of 2 dice. Andras rolls 1d6 of damage for his blade, +2 dice for the Damage Bonus, +1 die for his Physique, and -10 points for Alexis' armored coat. (3d6 = 14) Andras does 4 points of damage to Alexis.

It is now Alexis' turn to act.

Once on board, they can either use the bridge communication system, which is in full view of the captain and crew, to discuss matters with Warden command, or send a message packet which will have a lag time in the message. The message packet will, if all goes well, be answered in a few hours. A Persuade Test can also be made to convince the Captain and his crew to leave the bridge while the Characters speak to Warden command. It is likely that the crew will have an unpleasant reaction if they learn the truth.

Chiron's Communication System

The long-range communications array is functional, but it doesn't have any power. When the *Hope* docked, it appears that the crew sabotaged the power relays. The primary generator will need to bypass the damaged sections. This can be done with the spare parts that were being transported on the *Hope*, and a Hard Engineering: Power Systems Test. It will take several hours to complete the bypass, then build up power in the reactor. Any sections that are sealed from the vacuum of space, will also pressurize and the gravplates will activate in sections that are not bypassed.

Repairing the Freighter

Presuming the Characters have managed to clear out the infected crew members and Karrak'in aboard the *Pandora's Hope*, there will be little stopping them from ransacking the ship's holds for spare parts to fix the reactor. The long-range communications array has been destroyed aboard the freighter, presumably by the Karrak'in. However, the freighter's transit drive is strong enough to leave Chiron and

make the journey back to Mars, or the nearby Saturn and Uranus. To repair the fusion reactor shielding requires a Hard Engineering: Power Systems Test. Alternately, they can eject the fusion reactor into space with the emergency systems. The downside to this is that without the fusion reactor, the freighter will not have power for life support systems and be incapable of pushing off the surface of Chiron.

Once the Wardens have restored communications, they can call for backup and report what happened. Warden Command will remind the Characters to contain the creatures aboard *Pandora's Hope* and provide a cover story to the survivors aboard Chiron. If the Characters cannot come up with anything, Captain Dearborn will suggest a variation on the truth – the crew suffered a psychotic break brought on by illegal narcotics. While tragic, it was no different than an addict on a rampage on Earth.

They are ordered to move any corpses of the miners or crewmembers on to the freighter before releasing the survivors, to avoid any possible contamination or infection.

Special Notes

The infection can serve as a jumping point for continued missions or investigations for the Warden team. Additional investigation into how the infection spread can be found in the freighter's logs. The First Officer spread a few doses out amongst the crew, to see how ship performance would be affected or improved. Unfortunately, there were Myriads (see p. 208) in suspension within the drug. The drug has

markings of the Cult of the Void, and it appears that someone within the Martian underworld has joined with the cult. This connection can take the Wardens back to Mars, to speak with Jackie Criswell and launch a long-term campaign investigating the cult.

As a GM, foreshadowing events and connecting things across missions, provides an overarching storyline and vision. While the events do not need to have blatant ties, hinting at them and then allowing realization later will make the game more cohesive.

Heading Home

At a Glance

With communications restored, the Miner's Guild sends out a repair team to fix the habitat. The Wardens are told to vacate before they arrive. A Warden-approved crew is dispatched to fly the freighter out, and the Characters are called back for their next assignment.

For the Players

You receive a message from Captain Dearborn after he has had a chance to review the information you transmitted to Warden command. He looks tired and has reading glasses on.

"Well done Wardens. Seal the hatches to the Hope and return to Mars for debriefing. I have expedited a recovery team from the Umbrella, to collect the freighter. The Miner's Guild is also sending out a new batch of miners and repair technicians to restore the Chiron base. It was requested that our as-

sets be removed before they arrive – that means you have three days to wrap anything up that you have left and get moving. We don't even want residual transit traces left for them to complain about. Thank you."

With that, the message terminates.

Behind the Scenes

This is the end of the assignment. If the Characters have anything they want to do on the mining base, or additional hooks added by the Game-master – such as what is in the mine – now is the time to address them, and then get back for their next assignment.

A Quick Note about the Characters

There are four Characters included for this adventure – two Warden Enforcers, one Warden Investigator, and one Warden Researcher. However, they all each have other important roles as well.

- In addition to being the Researcher, *Phillip Boganda* is the group's doctor and engineer. He knows how to keep things, both animate and inanimate, running.
- *Alexis Vasquez* is designed to be a straight-forward soldier.
- *Andras Votova* is an agile fighter with some social skills and street smarts.
- In addition to being the Investigator, *Wei Li* is socially capable and also the crew's pilot. He also knows how to blow things up.

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LES QUATRE CENT COUPS

JEAN-PIERRE L  AUD

CIN  MA



Andras Kotova
Warden Enforcer



Wei Li
Varden Investigator



Phillip Boganda

Ethnicity: African

Homeworld: Europa – Europeans are often careful, thoughtful, intellectual people, who are also quite curious.

Age: 34

Profession: Warden Researcher

Physical Description: Bald, Brown Eyes, Tall

Personality Traits: Focused, Strange

Attributes:

Awareness 4

Cleverness 5

Demeanor 2

Grace 4

Perseverance 3

Physique 2

Statistics:

Health 9

Speed 10 mph

Walk 8 yd/turn

Run 25 yd/turn

Special:

Fate Points1

Skills:

Skill (Attribute) Rating/Pool

Bureaucracy (Clv) 2/7

Communications (Clv) 1/6

Computers (Clv) 1/6

Cryptozoology (Clv) 2/7

Defense (Gra) 2/6

Drive: Wheeled (Gra) 1/6

Engineer: Basic Drives (Clv) 3/8

Engineer: Electrical (Clv) 2/7

Engineer: Life Support (Clv) 3/8

Engineer: Power Systems (Clv) 3/8

Engineer: Transit Drive (Clv) 2/7

Guns: Handgun (Gra) 2/6

Investigate (Awr) 2/6

Language: English (Clv) 3/8

Language: Mandarin Chinese (Clv) 2/7

Law (Clv) 2/7

Medicine: Physical (Clv) 3/8

Medicine: Psychological (Clv) 2/7

Occult (Clv) 3/8

Reaction (Awr) 2/6

Science: Earth (Clv) 2/7

Science: Life (Clv) 2/7

Weapons:

ACC-62 Bandit Pistol – 3d6 Damage, Mag. 9

Damage:

01-09: Bruised (-1 to all Actions)

10-18: Battered (-2 to all Actions)

19-27: Hurt (-4 to all Actions, Half Movement)

28-36: Incapacitated (Unconscious)

37+: Dead



Qualities:

Double-Jointed

Dream Void

Internal Clock

Luck (3)

Phobia (Vacuum)

Slow

Quirks:

Bartending (Clv) 2/7

Whistle in Tune (Awr) 2/6

Talents:

Choose either: Deeply Weird or

Know Where Your Towel Is

Armor:

Warden Armor (10/5)



Alexis Vasquez

Ethnicity: Mexican

Homeworld: Mars – Martians are often hardy and resourceful people, though somewhat resigned about life – possibly even bitter.

Age: 29

Profession: Warden Enforcer

Physical Description: Brown Hair, Brown Eyes, Muscular

Personality Traits: Determined, Self-Righteous

Attributes:

Awareness 4
Cleverness 2
Demeanor 2
Grace 3
Perseverance 5
Physique 4

Statistics:

Health 12
Speed 16 mph
Walk 13 yd/turn
Run 40 yd/turn

Special:

Fate Points1

Skills:

Skill (Attribute) Rating/Pool
Athletics: Fitness (Psv) 2/7
Communications (Clv) 2/4
Computers (Clv) 2/4
Defense (Gra) 2/5
Drive: Tracked (Gra) 1/4
Environmental Suit (Awr) 2/6
Hand Weapons: Blades (Gra) 3/6
Guns: Assault Weapons (Awr) 2/6

Guns: Handgun (Awr) 3/7
Guns: Longarms (Awr) 3/7
Heavy Weapons: Portable Artillery (Awr) 2/6
Intimidation (Dem) 3/5
Investigate (Awr) 2/6
Language: English (Clv) 3/5
Law (Clv) 2/4
Notice (Awr) 3/7
Occult (Clv) 1/3
Orienteering (Awr) 3/7
Reaction (Awr) 3/7
Stealth (Gra) 2/5
Tactics: Military (Clv) 1/3

Weapons:

ACC-62 Bandit Pistol– 3d6 Damage, Mag. 9
Combat Shotgun – 5d6 Damage, Mag. 6
SM-12 Hornet SMG – 4d6 Damage, Mag. 16, Auto 3 (8 rounds)
Combat Knife– 1d6 Damage

Damage:

01-12: Bruised (-1 to all Actions)
13-24: Battered (-2 to all Actions)
25-36: Hurt (-4 to all Actions, Half Movement)
37-48: Incapacitated (Unconscious)
49+: Dead

Qualities:

Fast
Gifted Metabolism
Nightvision
Arrogant
Tormented

Quirks:

Juggling (Gra) 2/5
Recite Movie Quotes (Clv) 2/7

Talents:

Choose either: Born in Freefall
or Snake Eyes

Armor:

Warden Armor (10/5)

Andras Kotova

Ethnicity: Russian

Homeworld: Ganymede – Ganymedans are often extroverted and clever, no strangers to the ebbs and flows of nearly any strata of society. They are often also known for thinking several steps ahead and nearly always trying to work an angle.

Age: 30

Profession: Warden Enforcer

Physical Description: Black Hair, Hazel Eyes, Brooding

Personality Traits: Cynical, Humorless

Attributes:

Awareness 4

Cleverness 2

Demeanor 4

Grace 5

Perseverance 2

Physique 3

Statistics:

Health 10

Speed 16 mph

Walk 13 yd/turn

Run 40 yd/turn

Special:

Fate Points1

Skills:

Skill (Attribute) Rating/Pool

Athletics: Coordination (Gra) 2/7

Cryptozoology (Clv) 3/5

Deception (Dem) 2/6

Defense (Gra) 3/8

Drive: Military (Gra) 1/6

Drive: Wheeled (Gra) 1/6

Environmental Suit (Awr) 1/5

Fraternize (Dem) 2/6

Freefall (Gra) 1/6

Guns: Assault Weapons (Awr) 2/6

Guns: Handguns (Awr) 3/7

Guns: Longarms (Awr) 2/6

Guns: Special (Awr) 2/6

Hand Weapons: Blades (Gra) 2/7

Heavy Weapons: Launchers (Awr) 2/6

Insight (Awr) 1/5

Language: English (Clv) 3/5

Law (Clv) 1/3

Notice (Awr) 3/7

Reaction (Awr) 3/7

Stealth (Gra) 3/8

Streetwise (Dem) 3/7

Tactics: Military (Clv) 1/3

Weapons:

ACC-62 Bandit Pistol– 3d6 Damage, Mag. 9

Combat Shotgun – 5d6 Damage, Mag. 6

SM-12 Hornet SMG – 4d6 Damage, Mag. 16, Auto 3 (8 rounds)

Flamethrower – 5d6 Damage, Mag. 15

Combat Knife– 1d6 Damage

Damage:

01-14: Bruised (-1 to all Actions)

15-28: Battered (-2 to all Actions)

29-42: Hurt (-4 to all Actions, Half Movement)

43-56: Incapacitated (Unconscious)

57+: Dead



Qualities:

Nightvision

Rapid Recovery

Darkness Magnet

Tough (2)

Vengeful

Quirks:

Clean Spotlessly (Gra) 2/6

Car Knowledge (Clv) 2/4

Talents:

Choose either: Double Tap or Killer Instinct

Armor:

Warden Armor (10/5)



Wei Li

Ethnicity: Chinese

Homeworld: Uranus – Uranians are often hard-working and tenacious, but are distrustful of newcomers and in the habit of watching their backs.

Age: 33

Profession: Warden Investigator

Physical Description: Black Hair, Brown Eyes, Stylish

Personality Traits: Pragmatic, Unreadable

Attributes:

Awareness 4

Cleverness 4

Demeanor 2

Grace 4

Perseverance 3

Physique 3

Statistics:

Health 10

Speed 14 mph

Walk 11.5 yd/turn

Run 35 yd/turn

Special:

Fate Points 1

Skills:

Skill (Attribute) Rating/Pool

Communications (Clv) 2/6

Computers (Clv) 2/6

Cryptozoology (Clv) 2/6

Defense (Gra) 2/6

Explosives (Clv) 2/6

Environmental Suit (Awr) 1/5

Freefall (Gra) 1/5

Guns: Handguns (Gra) 2/6

Hand Weapons: Blades (Gra) 2/6

Insight (Awr) 1/5

Investigate (Awr) 3/7

Language: English (Clv) 3/7

Language: Mandarin Chinese (Clv) 2/6

Law (Clv) 2/6

Notice (Awr) 3/7

Occult (Clv) 2/6

Odd Jobs (Variable) 2

Persuade (Dem) 2/4

Pilot: Atmospheric (Gra) 1/5

Pilot: Spacecraft (Awr) 2/6

Reaction (Awr) 2/6

Research (Clv) 2/6

Stealth (Gra) 2/6

Surveillance (Clv) 1/6

Qualities:

Common Sense

Eidetic Memory

Peripheral Vision

Persistent Injury (1)

Quirks:

Identify Spices (Clv) 2/6

Video Games (Awr) 2/6

Talents:

Either: Don't I Know You or
Wicked Smart

Armor:

Warden Armor (10/5)

Weapons:

ACC-62 Bandit Pistol– 3d6 Damage, Mag. 9

Combat Knife– 1d6 Damage

Damage:

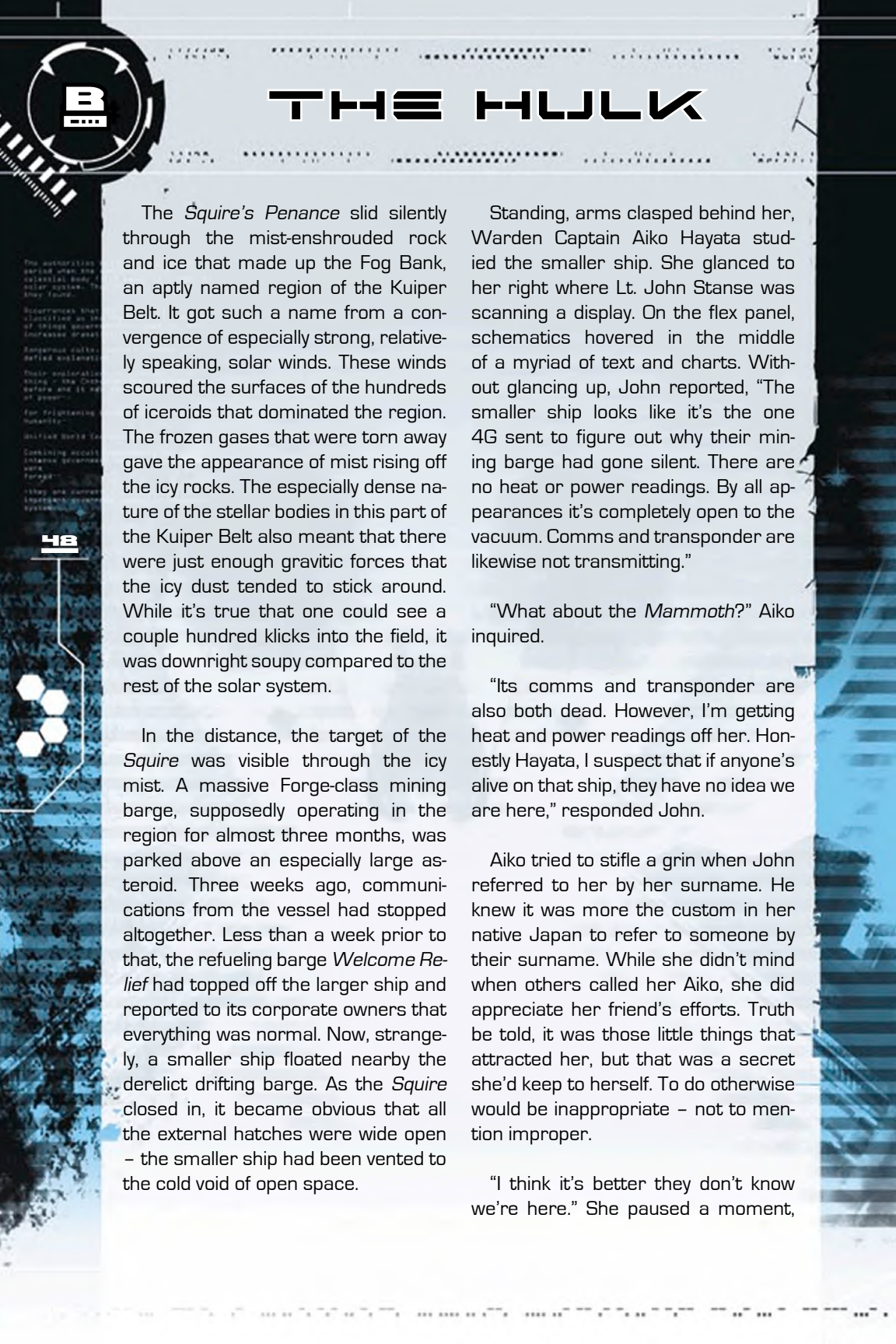
01-10: Bruised (-1 to all Actions)

11-20: Battered (-2 to all Actions)

21-30: Hurt (-4 to all Actions, Half Movement)

31-40: Incapacitated (Unconscious)

41+: Dead



THE HULK

The *Squire's Penance* slid silently through the mist-enshrouded rock and ice that made up the Fog Bank, an aptly named region of the Kuiper Belt. It got such a name from a convergence of especially strong, relatively speaking, solar winds. These winds scoured the surfaces of the hundreds of iceroids that dominated the region. The frozen gases that were torn away gave the appearance of mist rising off the icy rocks. The especially dense nature of the stellar bodies in this part of the Kuiper Belt also meant that there were just enough gravitic forces that the icy dust tended to stick around. While it's true that one could see a couple hundred clicks into the field, it was downright soupy compared to the rest of the solar system.

In the distance, the target of the *Squire* was visible through the icy mist. A massive Forge-class mining barge, supposedly operating in the region for almost three months, was parked above an especially large asteroid. Three weeks ago, communications from the vessel had stopped altogether. Less than a week prior to that, the refueling barge *Welcome Relief* had topped off the larger ship and reported to its corporate owners that everything was normal. Now, strangely, a smaller ship floated nearby the derelict drifting barge. As the *Squire* closed in, it became obvious that all the external hatches were wide open – the smaller ship had been vented to the cold void of open space.

Standing, arms clasped behind her, Warden Captain Aiko Hayata studied the smaller ship. She glanced to her right where Lt. John Stanse was scanning a display. On the flex panel, schematics hovered in the middle of a myriad of text and charts. Without glancing up, John reported, "The smaller ship looks like it's the one 4G sent to figure out why their mining barge had gone silent. There are no heat or power readings. By all appearances it's completely open to the vacuum. Comms and transponder are likewise not transmitting."

"What about the *Mammoth*?" Aiko inquired.

"Its comms and transponder are also both dead. However, I'm getting heat and power readings off her. Honestly Hayata, I suspect that if anyone's alive on that ship, they have no idea we are here," responded John.

Aiko tried to stifle a grin when John referred to her by her surname. He knew it was more the custom in her native Japan to refer to someone by their surname. While she didn't mind when others called her Aiko, she did appreciate her friend's efforts. Truth be told, it was those little things that attracted her, but that was a secret she'd keep to herself. To do otherwise would be inappropriate – not to mention improper.

"I think it's better they don't know we're here." She paused a moment,



The Squire's Penance

then said, "Everyone get suited up. Let's assume that at least part of the *Mammoth* is open to the vacuum as well, or could easily become that way. Marco, get us docked as close to the ring as you can." Aiko directed this

last order towards Marco Bianchi, the wiry pilot.

The smaller Knight's Errant slid up next to the giant mining barge. A docking tunnel extended out from the

ship, connecting the two as automated systems on the barge locked the tunnel in place. The team donned the lightly armored vacc suits that were unique to their agency. Each colored in the traditional black and red of the Warden uniform, these suits were the most advanced available in the solar system. They provided them a modicum of protection from bullets, knives, and the unfortunately not-so-occasional claw, while not compromising their agility like many of the more traditional armored vacuum suits did.

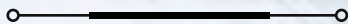
With a whoosh of pressurized air, the airlock leading into the *Mammoth* cycled open. Automated lights flickered to life in the cramped confines of the tunnel. The lock of the large ship was too small as far as Aiko was concerned and it took two cycles for the entire team to make it inside the ship. This was not a tactical situation the senior Warden would have chosen. One never knew what was going to be encountered on missions like this and splitting the team up right off the bat was never a sound move.

While there were those who believed that the Wardens were just another extension of the Unified World Council's influence in the solar system, the truth was much more significant than that. Not everything that happened in the domain of humanity, especially in the more remote regions, was easily explained – these were the things that the Wardens were tasked with investigating. Also, unfortunately in many cases, they had to hide the truth from the masses. Aiko herself knew that much of what she had seen in her years as a Warden was

not something the general public was ready to accept. It was difficult enough explaining the things that could not be hidden away, like the bizarre behavior of Pluto or the strange changes occurring on some moons. Telling them that an explosive decompression tragedy was caused by a delusion-inducing tentacle-armed creature would cause unwanted panic.

Looking at her team, Aiko said, "John, take Marco to the bridge and see what you can find out. I'll take Jenny and Rashim to check out the crew quarters. Keep in contact, reports every five minutes."

The atmosphere in the ship read as safe, if somewhat stuffy. It was likely the CO2 scrubbers had not been properly cleaned in over a week. As they split, the Wardens snapped back the faceplates of their vacc suits to better sense their environment. John and Marco moved forward towards the bow of the barge, while Aiko and the others made their way back towards the access ports that would lead them to the crew quarters. Such accommodations were situated in the rotating ring that provided the crew some form of genuine gravity.



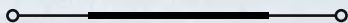
"At least the deck's energized," Marco commented, as the pair moved cautiously forward, assault rifles at the ready. Despite the zero-g environment, the decks created a field which interacted with special plates in the soles of their boots and with threads that were integrated into their clothing and gear. The effect pulled them

towards the deck – it wasn't true artificial gravity, but it did make things a lot easier.

John ignored Marco as the team reached the ladder that led to the bridge. Motioning with his gun, he crouched to keep an eye on the corridor while Marco slung his rifle over his shoulder and climbed up the ladder. Thus far, the entire situation was giving them both the willies. Neither had seen any sign of the crew, which didn't speak well for what they were going to eventually find.

At the top of the ladder, Marco punched the security override codes into the hatch's keypad. The click of the magnetic lock releasing echoed loudly through the quiet corridors behind him. He fired off a quick whistle and moments later he could feel John climbing up the ladder below.

Using the nose of his rifle, Marco cautiously pushed the hatch open a crack for him to peek through. Nothing on the other side reacted and he could see no movement. Pushing the hatch all the way open, he quickly moved out to take a defensive kneeling stance so that his companion could safely join him. Scanning the bridge as John made his way, what Marco saw caused even his battle-hardened resolve to waver for a moment as bile crept up the back of his throat.



The others rode an elevator that traveled the length of one of the gravity ring's spokes, traversing from the zero-g environment of the main body

of the ship to the centrifugally-induced gravity of the rotating ring. These trips were designed to ease the transition between functional weightlessness and artificial gravity. Specially designed chairs would automatically adjust their angles to minimize the discomfort one tended to feel when making such a change, and the deck plates would energize slowly as 'down' changed relative to the outer edge of the ring. Aiko's team, however, were used to this and moved with practiced ease, adjusting their positions as their relative up and down changed.

A soft chime warned the group that they had arrived at their destination and the elevator doors opened. Their senses were instantly flooded with the horrid sickly-sweet stench of rotting meat. Most would have been overcome, forced gagging to the floor, but Aiko's team had been forced to smell worse in training. Jenny took point, exiting first and scanning left and right down the main corridor of the ring. Finding their first evidence of the crew, she pointed and then the gagging began.

Aiko cautiously crept out of the elevator, steeling herself for what she knew would be an awful sight. She had seen so much in her time as a Warden, but there were always new and more terrible surprises – like this one. Four bodies hung upside-down from the ceiling, split open like specimens on an autopsy table. Grotesque ropy intestines dangled in coils from the corpses, and their eyes and parts of their faces had been gouged – or gnawed – away, leaving slick white bone exposed. Their twisted expres-



sions led Aiko to believe they may have been alive when this started. That thought turned her stomach, but she swallowed it back.

Taking stock of the rest of her team, Rashim had gone from olive to ash, but kept a keen eye on the corridor behind them. Jenny wiped her mouth on the sleeve of her vacc suit. Aiko stepped over to help the rookie up. "This won't be the worst thing you'll see," she said. "Don't focus on this. Focus on who else might be alive. This doesn't tell us much. We need to move."

Jenny nodded and got to her feet, shaking. The grisly scene had rattled her, but she was a tough girl. Aiko knew that, regardless of her fortitude, moments like these would leave lasting scars. Such things were an unfortunate consequence of the job.

In motion, Aiko barked an order at the rookies. "Close your helmets. It'll keep the stench out." She heard the hiss of their suits pressurizing as her radio came to life. It was John's voice. "Hayata, there's no one here. At least, no one alive. From what I'm looking at, whatever did this isn't human."

"Affirmative," answered Aiko. "See if you can recover any data or logs that can help. If it isn't human, we need to know what it is."

An image of the ship's deck plans came to life on her faceplate, showing Aiko that the mess hall was a short way straight ahead. That would be a good place to start a methodical search of the ring. They quickly reached the door, which fortunately

had not been locked down. Aiko took a deep breathe before she hit the sensor button. "On your toes, people. This could get messy."

The door slid open and the horror continued. The mess hall was a slaughter house. Dozens of dead crew slumped dead among spilled trays of blood-soaked food. However, something else moved in here. The things that had done this were not yet gone.

The rookies both spun around, weapons tracking a sound not unlike fingernails on an old-style chalk board, along with an eerie buzz. Jenny saw it first and, to her credit, her jitters did not return. Diaphanous wings and segmented limbs made it seem like an insect, but the hard, spiky, wine-colored shell spoke of a crustacean. However, a budding mess covered what should be the thing's head, furry and cancerous like a fungus, though protruding in places like cilia. Each of the segmented legs ended in prehensile claws, with razor-sharp tips. It rubbed these claws together, which – if intel was accurate – was a sure sign of aggression. Holding back for a moment, it seemed to twist as it assessed the team, while its wings whirled into motion, producing a buzzing that began to sound like a voice...

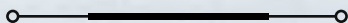
Jenny didn't wait. She raised her rifle and opened fire on the thing. As she pulled the trigger, it leaped into the air, claws bearing down on her. But it wasn't fast enough, and a hail of bullets ripped through the thing's steaming innards. It slammed into the floor, rolled and nearly knocked Rashim over. It slammed into a nearby

wall, a flailing mass of unsettling alien limbs.

With barely a pause, more clicking from behind them let Aiko know this creature wasn't, as she suspected, alone. Bad move. They'd been lured into a trap.

"Back to the elevator," she shouted, though the rookies were already on their way. At least until they realized that they were surrounded, that more of the creatures were pouring out of the elevator shaft in front of them. Turning, Aiko heard the buzzing of more wings from the mess hall. There was no way out.

Even as she raised her rifle to fire, she issued John one final order.



John heard the gunfire over the radio as Aiko ordered him to evacuate. He and Marco each grabbed a couple memory cubes and dropped back down through the hatch. As they ran, John imagined that he could hear Aiko fighting for her life through the hull of the ship. Fighting the urge to run to save her, John led the retreat back to the *Squire's Penance*. As they boarded, he tried to raise Aiko on the hope they had somehow managed to escape, but all he heard was static – and the shrill sound of claws scraping

on metal. Gritting his teeth, he sealed the airlock and the Knight's Errant pushed off.

Drifting away, John locked the ship's weapons onto the hulk's drive section. Aiko had said only one thing besides her order to evacuate – Mi-Go. Insect-like aliens of which he'd only seen pictures. "Where did they come from?" he muttered.

"What?" asked Marco.

John shook his head. "Nothing."

The pair paused in silence for a moment, the only sound the targeting computer confirming the weapons lock. John waited as long as he dared, his finger hovering over the fire button, hoping for something to come through the radio. Nothing came.

Explosions tore across the hull of the massive mining ship as rail gun rounds and guided missiles ripped it apart, detonating the drive core. John watched through a film of tears, quietly praying for his fallen friends. However, something new blossomed in his heart, growing in the void where Aiko used to be. Something that would carry him through, something that would bring meaning to these deaths.

Vengeance.



HISTORY – THEN UNTIL NOW

A Dying World

>>2010 – 2019<<

Many people saw the beginning of the 21st Century as the final chapter in mankind's relentless march toward self-destruction. Intense social, economic, and political pressures wore heavily on the fabric of international relations. By 2010, the world had suffered the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. The United States, seen by many nations as the cause of this economic crash, began to decline in its position of global dominance. Regional wars, international terrorism, and the threat of emerging nuclear powers further exacerbated economic strain and political tensions that led to the growing belief that the United States was no longer the global superpower of yesterday.

The face of the world changed quickly. Growing public attitudes toward isolation caused nations to withdraw from international relations. The United Nations crumbled in 2013. The United States imploded in 2014, leaving individual States to deal with civil riots, starvation, and an overall system breakdown. China's rapid rise collapsed due to a weak economic infrastructure and the sudden loss of one of its largest export markets. The European Union, already strained economically and fearing the same kind of chaos, dissolved itself. Nothing seemed to be able to stop this global downward spiral.

Unfortunately, the possibility of war loomed ever closer and war finally

erupted in the Middle East in 2015, sparked by a conflict between Israel and Iran. While both sides gathered their remaining allies, China launched attacks on Taiwan, the Korean Peninsula, and parts of Southeast Asia. World War III was at hand.

The brutal fighting raged for three years. Then, the inevitable finally happened – the first and only nuclear detonation of the war exploded in 2018. Radical Islamic terrorists, still bent on carrying out their Jihad against a crippled United States, managed to load a crude atomic bomb on a cargo ship headed for Los Angeles. The bomb detonated prematurely while the ship was in layover at the Malaysian port of Port Klang. Millions of Malaysian Muslims died within minutes that day.

The resulting dramatic shock caused an immediate ceasefire among warring parties. The possibility of a world teetering on the brink of death became all too real. Many historians would later regard the sacrifice of Port Klang as the event that saved the human race from extinction. Religious radicalism and old hatreds seemed to wane in light of a new urgency to find common ground. In 2019, the Treaty of Jerusalem was signed, officially ending World War III and ushering in a new age for mankind.

A New Age Begins

>>2020 – 2030<<

By 2020, the time for rebuilding had begun. It was the common belief that humanity had passed its final test and

that the march toward armageddon had ceased. The nations of the world pulled together in a new spirit of cooperation. Reconstruction was well underway by 2022. Leaders of the world devised a plan to create a new global organization with a strengthened authority to govern the affairs of individual states. This new organization was to be designed on the principles of the old United Nations, but with greater legislative and executive power. The Unified World Council was born in 2028 and was perhaps the greatest formalized show of world cooperation ever.

In the meantime, world religious institutions came together in partnership after the Muslim Reformation of 2026. The First Council of Jerusalem created a common body where individual religious institutions could work together in the spirit of mutual cooperation and sharing. This new Unified Ministry of God suddenly made the promise of a new spiritual enlightenment all the more real.

One of the first tasks taken on by the Unified World Council was to create a solid financial system. The Commonwealth Treasury was established by the UWC in 2029 to issue and manage such a currency. The resulting Commonwealth Credit would quickly evolve into the standard currency.

For a time, the nations of the world were allowed to enjoy a universal level of peace, harmony, stability, and prosperity. The values of learning, phi-



Port Klang Nuclear Disaster: 2018

losophy, and industry propelled civilizations forward at an amazing rate. By 2030, it was a New Golden Age.

A Promising Frontier

>>2031 – 2062<<

With this new age came an increased focus toward conservation, clean energy, and the rebuilding of infrastructures. Some industries began to look toward space as a new frontier filled with infinite promise. It was in 2032 that the Venture Corporation first launched its own Moon mission, which is credited for sparking the New Space Race – one waged not by nations, but by private corporations.

Humans began to venture off-world in large numbers. 2042 saw the establishment of Tranquility on the moon. Manned scouting missions swept into the solar system to seek out new opportunities and mark territories for their parent companies. The abundant availability of ore deposits, natural resources, and the promise of growing wealth spurred more businesses to expand toward other planets. A kind of frenzy arose by 2053, similar to that of the 1800s Gold Rush in America.

The impact of this rapid expansion was certainly felt back on Earth. National governments that had previously focused on post-war rebuilding and societal affairs were stunned by this new wave of frontierism. After all, no existing law accounted for possible tax revenue gained in space trade. Individual nations hungered for a cut of the pie and soon banded together to join in on the space boom. Key members of the UWC found themselves concerned

at the chaos that might ensue over unregulated territorial rights. Thus, the UWC established the Pendleton Act of 2062, to partner private industry with national government patronage. This act allowed for the regulation of taxes and it established UWC authority to grant territorial ownership to individual colonies. A new phase of Unified World Council influence had evolved beyond the boundaries of Earth.

A System Conquered

>>2063 – 2100<<

The Alliance of American States, once the territories of the United States and Canada, recognized the need to provide a reliable communications network in space. Project Caduceus was launched in partnership with private industry to provide an expandable orbital satellite communications relay system. The initial phase of the Caduceus Network went live in 2063, causing a sense of unity among worlds for the first time in history.

The Caduceus Network may have created the connection among colonies, but it wouldn't be until 2080 that large-scale interplanetary trade would weave the individual worlds into a strong interdependent system. In that year, the transit drive was developed. The resulting impact of this new opportunity for rapid space travel suddenly drove a skyrocketing level of trade similar in effect to America's first transcontinental railroads.

2087 saw the creation of the first non-Earth sovereign nation, when the Republic of Saturn declared independence from its founding sponsors. The

hand of mankind had finally touched every world by 2100, as the time of frontierism was coming to an end. New colonial identities and a sense of individual rights started to germinate among some off-worlders. The solar system was conquered and colonists felt less and less a part of Earth.

A Shadow Descending

>>2101 - 2159<<

Despite the achievements of civilization, it was hard for some not to notice cracks. While religious intolerance has greatly declined, the Unified Ministry of God has faced new radical sects, which have been branded cults. The cooperative body continues to debate whether such fringe religions should be validated and recognized.

With advancements in business and technology came great wealth. Increased trade and expansion seemed to benefit everyone, except the working class. A rift formed again between those who had and those who had not. Among the space-born, this bred a new attitude of independent liberty throughout the solar system. A spirit of defiance arose.

Meanwhile further tensions arose on Earth. Those nations who could not participate in the space market grew increasingly resentful of those that could. 2132 saw the eruption of global strikes, defying openly the will of the Unified World Council. By 2140 the conflicts, riots, and skirmishes on Earth had turned into a struggle of differing ideologies – the balance between centralized control and individual freedom.

History At a Glance

- An accidental terrorist nuclear detonation in Malaysia in 2018 sparks world cooperation.
- The Unified World Council is created in 2028. It is a more powerful United Nations, with greater legislative and executive power.
- By 2053, space exploration was akin to the 1800s Gold Rush in America.
- 2062 sees partnership between private industry and the government to colonize the solar system.
- In 2063, the Caduceus Network of system-wide communication is created.
- In 2080, the transit drive is created.
- Now, in 2159, the UWC struggles to maintain unity.

Today the UWC struggles to maintain a sense of unity and universal justice. Meanwhile, the colonies themselves seem to drift further away from the social and political roots of their home world. Piracy remains a constant interplanetary threat, even with the shadow of an increased naval presence. Rising taxes eat into profitability and many merchants now turn to shadier, but cheaper freelance traders to sustain their business. Violent crime statistics continue to climb and rumors of darker things whisper from the shadows. Many wonder if the New Golden Age of Humanity has finally come to an end.

COLONIZING THE SOLAR SYSTEM

Since the earliest people walked the Earth, they looked up at the dark sky wondering what it was that lay so far out of reach. Many have been at a loss to explain why it actually took so long to finally take that leap and move out into the solar system.

In the early days of space exploration, nearly all the efforts were undertaken by various governments across the globe. Communication and spy satellites were the lion's share of man-made objects placed in orbit. Corporate concerns soon began to understand the potential benefits of entering

space industries. While initially limited to satellites that they paid a government entity to place into orbit, private and public corporations eventually overtook governmental efforts.

After the former United States stood on the moon in 1969, many believed it would be the beginning of what would become vast colonies beyond the atmosphere of Earth. However, the opposite was actually true. After the last Apollo mission, the moon would not feel the touch of human feet again until 2032 and it would not be a government

or country who would do so, but the Venture Corporation. The first colony, Tranquility, was established on the moon in 2042. It was a cooperative effort of four corporations, with Venture Corp as the senior partner. The colony served several functions. Outwardly it was a destination for the super-rich. However, it also became a hub for the four companies for their next big initiative – the asteroid belt.

For years, Venture and their partners sank deep into the red and many believed their efforts would drive them into bankruptcy. However, in 2053 the first Ven-



Luna Station Proserpina: 2041

ture-flagged mining vessel returned from its maiden voyage to the asteroid belt and brought with it a cargo hold filled with proof that they were right.

Many liken the initial rush into space to be similar to the Gold Rush of the 1800's in California. In the wake of Venture's success, dozens of other firms and individuals who had the resources rushed to catch up. This explosion into space was initially limited to efforts centered around the Moon and asteroid belt. However, it was obvious to all that those who were willing to take the risks to push this boundary further out were the ones most likely to be able to cash in on the discoveries that were made. As humanity forged deeper into the solar system, new industries were created to support them. Transit drives were introduced and suddenly trips that used to take months to make now only required weeks.

Today humankind can be found in nearly every recess of the solar system. From Mercury to the Kuiper Belt, humans have spread wherever resources are or, in some cases, scientific knowledge can be found. The one notable exception is the dwarf planet Pluto. Thus far, every effort to even establish a presence in orbit around Pluto has met with disaster.

While corporations and private concerns make up the lion's share of those who operate within the solar system, the Unified World Council has gone to great lengths to ensure they have at least a modicum of representation. In some places, such as Neptune, this is limited to a liaison/ambassador who

Colonizing At a Glance

- Initially, explorations into our solar system were governmental efforts.
- In 2032, humanity set foot on the moon for the first time in decades. Ten years later, the first lunar colony was established as a cooperative effort by four corporations.
- Mining and resources spurred on the exploration into the solar system.
- Transit drives made exploration practical, as trips that used to take months or years took a fraction of the time.
- Humanity has now spread from Mercury to the Kuiper Belt – with the exception of Pluto.
- The Unified World Council maintains a presence everywhere, even if small.

tries to keep the UWC's interests represented. Closer to Earth, this presence can be felt more heavily, with the military working to keep trade lanes safe.

Life across the solar system varies in danger and comfort. The colonies of Mars and Venus offer colonists relative luxury. On the other hand, life further out gets progressively less grand, more spartan, and more dangerous. All the way out in the Kuiper Belt, the type of people you find are hardy and self-reliant. Accidents are not uncommon and help is often too far out to be useful. However, it is also where a person has the greatest chance of making a mark on the universe.

THE CHTHONIAN STAR

Humanity has always believed that we are the most important thing in the universe. Now something is coming to test our place in the universe, to see if humanity actually has a right to exist.

Those with a thirst for the unknown were the first to notice. A celestial body of unknown origin and composition comes. Perhaps it's an asteroid or a rogue chunk of dark matter. It was discovered only a few years ago and dubbed Fong's Body, but occultists know it as the Chthonian Star.

The Chthonian Star is moving at an amazing speed, in a trajectory that will take it past the edge of our solar system. Scientists theorize that it will arrive in a decade. Those studying it lucked out, stumbling across a band showing that the Chthonian Star was emanating an unknown kind of energy. This energy was so powerful that it radiated light years out from the celestial body – so far that this unknown energy has been affecting the solar system for the last several decades. While the Chthonian Star may not arrive for a decade, its full power will be felt within the next several years.

The authorities began to look as to when the energies of the celestial body first began to affect the solar system. They did not like what they found. Occurrences that could only be classified as the supernatural, the kind of things governments covered up, had increased dramatically during that period. Dangerous cults, horrific things that defied explanation and more, had been on the rise. It seemed obvious the reason why.

For the first time in history, the powers that be began to consult with learned scholars of the hidden, those who had made the mystical world of the occult their own. Ancient books were consulted and new archaeological digs were financed to bring lost things to light. Their explorations all pointed to one thing – the Chthonian Star had been here before and it may very well be a source of power for frightening beings with no love for humanity.

While they searched for a solution, the Unified World Council needed agents who could keep this problem in hand. Combining occult knowledge with intense government training, the UWC Wardens were formed. They are charged with keeping things quiet and cleaning up the first harbingers of the Chthonian Star in the solar system as best they can. Though quiet and secretive, they are currently the single most important government agency in the solar system.

Very few know the Chthonian Star even exists, mostly the top levels of governments across the Earth. The public most certainly has no idea the peril that is coming and the powers that be are working very hard to keep all of this a secret.

The reactions from world leaders are varied and what to do about the Chthonian Star is the topic of heated debate. The European Federation wants it destroyed and is in favor of sending powerful nuclear warheads to blow it up the minute it is within range. The Sino-Asia Union wants to find a way

to harness the mysterious energy of the Star for its own purposes. The Alliance of American States wants to rip open the annals of occult history and embrace the changes, hoping to enslave the unnatural creatures that are coming into existence to remain at what they see as the top of the food chain.

The effects of the Chthonian Star are being felt more and more each day. 30 years ago, when the Star's energy first reached our solar system, the effects were minor. However, as it grows steadily stronger, there are more unwholesome horrors at play than ever before, to a point where the UWC is beginning to worry whether or not they can properly censor related news stories. There are those experts who believe that, if things keep progressing at the current exponential rate, the solar system may soon be unrecognizable to us.

The Star At a Glance

- A celestial body of unknown origin, approaching the edges of our solar system.
- The Star has been bathing our solar system in unknown energy for decades.
- Since then, strange things have begun to infect our world.
- The Star will arrive in a decade, but its full power will be felt in the next several years.
- Few know the Star exists.
- The European Federation wants it destroyed.
- The Sino-Asia Union wants to find a way to harness it.
- The Alliance of America States wants to embrace the changes and enslave the unnatural creatures.
- The effects grow greater with each passing day.



POLITICS & THE UWC

The Unified World Council is separated from national governments by a universally agreed upon division of political power. While individual nations continue to focus on internal concerns, the UWC concentrates on global concerns such as a monetary policy, trade regulation, colonial policy, international dispute reconciliation, and global security. Whereas individual nations are free to operate within the government structure of choice, the Unified World Council itself is constituted under the concept of a Federal Parliamentary Republic. The advantage is that all nations, despite their size or strength, get to have a fair and equal voice on the global stage.

The arrangement of Legislative Houses is such that one House provides stability and a check and balance over the other. The upper House is the State Council, where national governments appoint their representation. The Unified Assembly is the lower House, and its Council Representatives are chosen in a general election through an Electoral College system.

The Chancellor of the Unified World Council exercises supreme executive power. This Chancellor is selected by the ruling party of the Unified Assembly and serves a term equal to that of the Assembly's election cycle, namely four years. Once elected, the Chancellor appoints his own Cabinet Ministers to execute the policies of his administration.

The modern political landscape is somewhat different than that of the previous age. National parties contin-

ue to wrestle for political control. However, the existence of a trans-national political arena has given rise to a new layer of politics. Global political parties now exist, and though some national parties maintain unbreakable ties with their favored global party, others can be quite fickle. Trying to maintain a strong support base for a global political party can be a dramatic challenge in and of itself. The Democratic Coalition is one of the larger global political parties. Democratic Coalitionists often stand center-left in their point of view and favor a broad spectrum of liberal ideas. To them, the health and well-being of all human citizens is a global responsibility. On the other hand, the Federal Conservative Party takes more of a right-wing view. They see the Unified World Council as a finite tool to foster international cooperation, but that the rights of self-government for the individual nation still stand as paramount. Other smaller parties exist as well, often swaying support between the two larger parties as leverage for their own agendas.

Pirate attacks on interplanetary trade have become an increasingly difficult issue. The UWC has increased the naval presence among many of the higher trafficked trade routes, but results have been limited. In addition, this military build-up has created a much greater strain on the defense budget. Several politicians on Earth are calling for greater financial support from the colonies in the form of higher taxes. This, of course, has outraged many citizens of the other worlds and has further served to create a greater rift between Earth and its colonies.

The age-old debate about freedom of religion has once again reared its head. A strange new breed of religion seems to be causing strains in this spiritual détente provided by the Unified Ministry of God. Many disillusioned people, especially in poor countries, have begun to cast off the tenants of traditional religion to embrace teachings of a different sort. The grass-roots rise of what some refer to as cults has caused certain legislators within the Unified World Council to seek a remedy to what they see as a threat. The idea of state-sponsored religion would give legality to established churches, but ban under the law the spread of these new cultist groups. Of course, such proposals have also caused heated debate from those who prefer to champion individual religious rights.

Politics At a Glance

- The UWC concentrates on global and interplanetary concerns.
- The UWC is a Federal Parliamentary Republic.
- There are two Legislative Houses – the State Council and the Unified Assembly.
- Global political parties, such as the Democratic Coalition and the Federal Conservative Party, dominate politics.
- There are currently three super-powers – the Alliance of American States, the European Federation, and the Sino-Asia Union.
- The Unified Ministry of God has brought religions together in detante.
- Fringe religions called cults arise.



Unified World Council Headquarters: 2159

BUSINESS IN THE NEW ERA

With the creation of the Unified World Council in the wake of the economic and political collapse of the 2010's, one of its first orders of business was to establish a strong financial plan. It created a global banking system with a single world currency, as well as a series of wide-ranging social service programs to improve the quality of life of regular citizens.

Resistance to UWC plans for a global economy ranged from countries that simply didn't have the capital to enact the new requirements to larger nations that were too stubborn to change their ways for the betterment of all mankind. To solve this issue, the Unified World Council turned to businesses instead of politicians. Fair pay, health benefits, and other business-related programs allowed the UWC to step into the private sector. From that position of power, they were able to bend political will to support not only adopting the proposals of the UWC in their own countries, but also to extend the aid necessary to get those programs started in nations less fortunate than their own.

It has been written in subsequent years that the UWC strong-armed its ideals onto the nations of the world. This is something that the UWC will not deny. *"The world is falling apart and we must make a stand or humanity is lost. We must not, we will not fail them!"* This was the statement made by Chancellor Andrew Fleming to the general assembly, as the Council met to begin talks on how to build up the foundation for a true united Earth. These words are now engraved above

the entryway into the Council's main meeting hall.

The plan began to show results when it became obvious that the Unified World Council was able to keep the peace. Nations previously at war with each other, while never truly forgiving their rivals, could see that there would never be a return of the saber-rattling and terrorist attacks of the past. The UWC was fast, and at times brutal, with reprisals for attacks of any kind. In many regions of the world, the Council established police states where there was no local controlling government present. Soon attacks ceased altogether. With peace maintained by the Council, businesses were free to explore new, never before dreamed of areas of opportunity, with exciting new revenue streams.

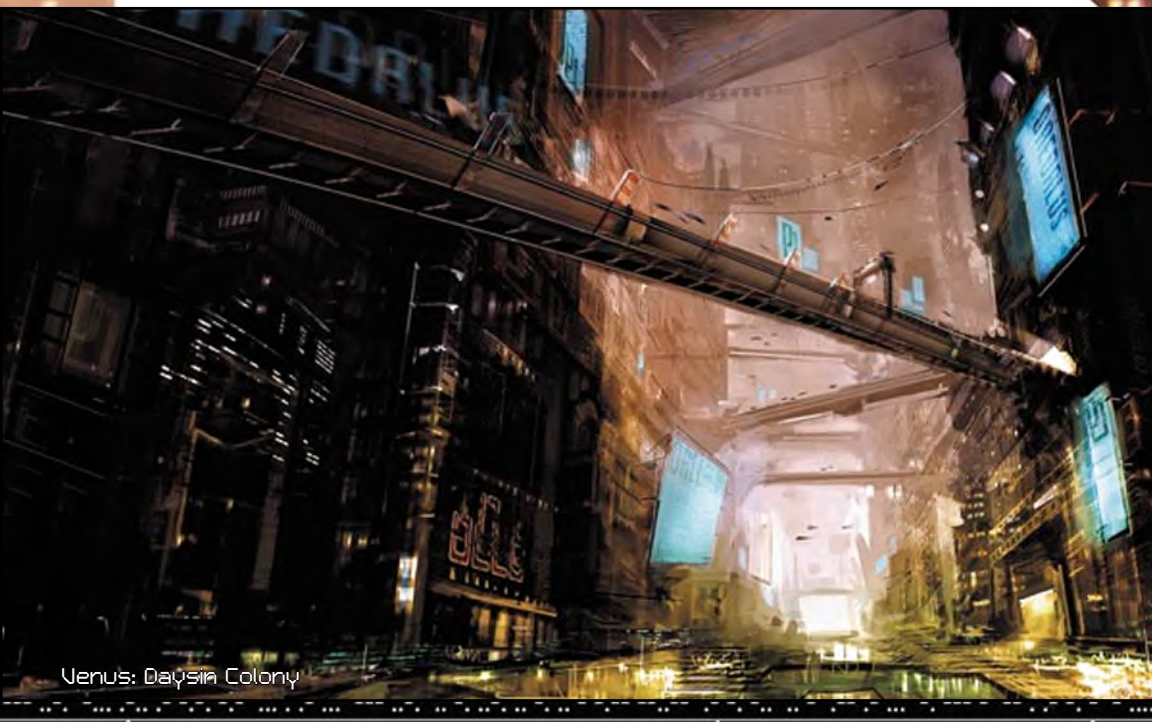
While the large corporations had the capital to take advantage of these new frontiers, it was the small to medium-sized businesses that were able to flourish the most during these early stages. Being smaller, they were more agile and were able to modify their business models more easily than the larger companies. This was an attractive feature for nations that previously had little or no outside commerce. Of course, the larger companies were able to make their own kind of fortunes as well, because they were able to do things on a larger scale.

While there is a diverse group of businesses and corporations from all sectors that support the efforts of the UWC, there are companies that arose to stand at the forefront of industry.

4G Industries is the conglomerate formed from Venture Corp and its partners. AQX is the original mega-corp, evolving out of Anderson Munitions. Widely diversified now, they remain a market force in nearly every consumer or military industry. Recovery Earth was originally an environmental lobby. However, now they've been charged by the UWC with fixing said environmental damage. They've discovered it is harder to do the job than it was to simply protest. Svobodova Aerospace Industries focuses on spaceship design and construction, most especially for the UWC. Thorn Pharmaceuticals is the company that created the biological enhancer that has helped humanity exist in less-than-Earth gravity. Wesley Corp is a British company grown out of a shipping business. Though now a multi-planetary conglomerate, Wesley Corp remains a family business, despite the eccentric policies of the owners.

Business At a Glance

- A global economy, backed by the Commonwealth Credit, now powers the solar system.
- 4G Industries is a conglomerate formed from the companies that established the first lunar colony.
- AQX has evolved out of Anderson Munitions and is the original mega-corp.
- Recovery Earth is a former environmental lobby now charged with solving environmental damages.
- Svobodova Industries focuses on spaceship construction.
- Thorn Pharmaceuticals has developed a biological enhancer for less-than-Earth gravity.
- Wesley Corp is an eccentric family-owned multi-planet conglomerate.



Venus: Dayasia Colony

THE UWC WARDENS

The UWC Wardens are a governmental agency created to deal with the strange things that are emerging in the solar system. They have three primary duties. First, they are charged with investigating all reports and manifestations of the unknown throughout the solar system. Second, it is their responsibility to eliminate unknown or occult threats to the people of the solar system. Their third, last, and perhaps most distasteful duty, is to keep the unknown and occult a secret from the population at large.

There are three primary specialties in which Warden field agents are trained – Enforcer, Investigator, and Researcher. Enforcers focus on combat, trained in many different kinds of weapons in order to most effectively eliminate resistance. Investigators are the detectives of the Wardens, focused on processing information and evidence in order to draw conclusions. They are also trained to extract useful information out of people. Researchers are the book worms, educated in the occult and other disciplines in order to draw conclusions and sift through data for that which is useful. Regardless of specialty, all Wardens are combat trained, have a basic knowledge of the occult and the inhuman enemies they must face, and a basic education in cults.

Wardens are typically sent out into the field in teams of three to six. A small team is composed of one of each specialty, while a larger team typically has three Enforcers, two Investigators, and one Researcher.

Wardens have an array of resources at their disposal. They are given their own spaceships, which usually house

a team, support crew, and shuttles, as well as mobile labs and arsenals. They are allowed to carry sidearms in their everyday investigations, and have access to assault rifles, explosives, and combat armor. However, it is their duty to keep things quiet and hidden, so it is rare that Wardens appear with anything that isn't concealable – unless the situation is already dire.

Since Wardens are not a widely advertised agency, they maintain quiet offices in all civilized corners of the solar system. Warden presence is typically received with some level of open arms by the colonies and it is expected that the authorities in all parts of the solar system will cooperate, though this is not always the case. The solar system is a big place and those far enough out don't always feel that the law strictly applies in their case. The Wardens, however, are afforded nearly absolute authority by UWC charter, though they rarely have need to use it. In some cases, Wardens must also have the strength to enforce their authority, because some of the powers that be, far out there, won't afford them the respect and latitude they deserve.

The Wardens maintain a network of space stations throughout the solar system, from which they stage their operations. Warden Prime, also known as the Eye, sits above the Earth. A monolith in the sky, this labyrinthine structure is the primary headquarters of the Wardens. Beyond the Eye, Warden 1, also known as the Umbrella, floats in orbit around Saturn to service the outer planets and protect the precious agriculture of Titan. It is of similar size to the Eye, but designed as a gateway and emergency station for those

missions going further out. To service the inner planets, Warden 2, known as the Nugget, hovers in geosynchronous orbit above Mercury. It is a small station, hastily deployed to provide some kind of support to Mercury and Venus. The Lighthouse, more formally known as Warden 4, sits far out in the Kuiper Belt, exploring, watching, and listening for anything that might be at the edges of the solar system.

Work as a Warden is perilous. Wardens must travel from one side of the solar system to the other, facing threats of which man was not meant to know. It can be a very dark job. They must undergo regular psychological screening, for the dangers they face readily erode one's grip on reality. Insanity is a price which many agents must contend with, and one many are resigned to as their eventual fate. Either that or death, for many a Warden has met an unspeakable and violent end.

Wardens At a Glance

- An agency created to investigate and deal with the new threats to the solar system.
- There are three primary specialties for Warden field agents: Enforcers, Investigators, and Researchers.
- Teams are typically three to six agents, with a mix of specialties.
- Wardens have access to a variety of resources, including spaceships and weapons.
- They have quiet offices in all civilized corners of the solar system, for support.
- They are not always met with open arms by local corporate or governmental interests.
- The Wardens maintain a network of space stations for their operations.



Warden Quarantine on Mars

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Things certainly have been on an upswing for humanity, at least until the last couple of decades. We have developed technology that has taken us out beyond our home planet, as well as that which allows us to live longer. The UWC has brought a new age of peace and prosperity. However, the Golden Age of Humanity is showing its first real cracks.

Some of these cracks are felt by nearly every person in society. The growing rift between the working class and the elite, and the disappear-

ing middle-class, is most certainly one of them. There is also growing resentment among the colonies. Some of those that live beyond the confines of Earth believe that they should no longer be governed by that distant body. Religious tensions are once again on the rise, as new ideologies enter the arena. New radical sects are on the rise. Branded cults by the UWC, many governments are worried. While most are intent on allowing religious freedom, there is much discussion on what to do with the cults.

Despite growing tensions in some parts of society, most people live decent lives, free from old prejudices, at a base level never before seen. The reconstruction of the global economy and the influence of the Unified World Council has all but eliminated poverty. Most people find their basic needs met, even in countries with totalitarian regimes. People live longer than ever before – the average person lives a little more than 150 years. Furthermore, many diseases have been wiped out and modern medicine can tackle



The Iris Club: Ganymede

nearly any malady, reducing suffering throughout the world.

Naturally, with the evolution of technology, the media has continued to grow out of control. People are wildly distracted by the massive amount of entertainment that is available at the touch of a button. The internet has grown to be the central clearing house for all such distraction, and people spend lots of time connected to each other through social networks, video chat, and instant messaging.

From a broad view, the way of life for your average person hasn't changed much in the last century and a half. People still grow up, raised by their families (though often mixed), they get an education or vocational training, they get a job to produce something or serve a role for society, many get married and have their own families, most eventually retire, and all eventually die – usually of old age.

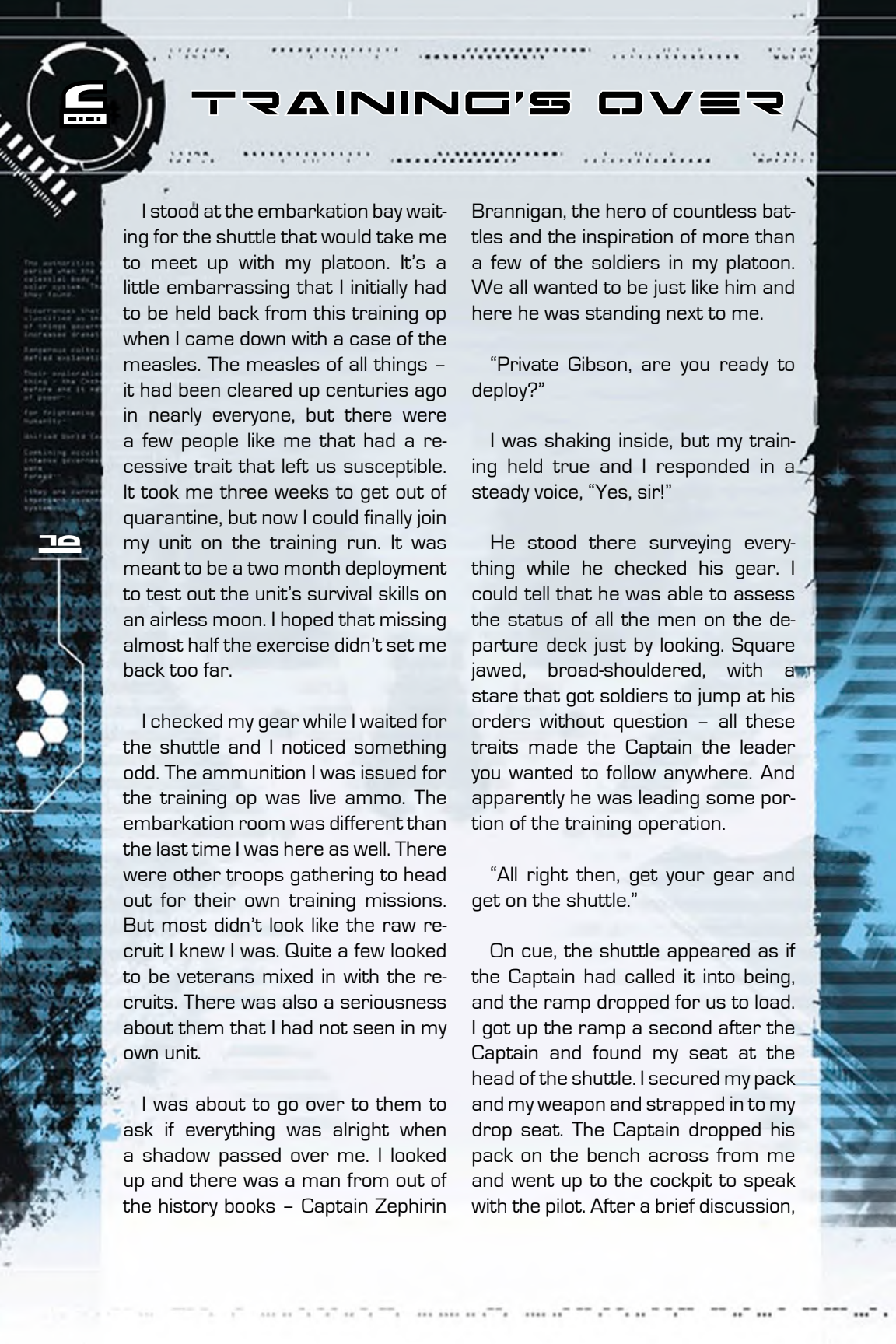
Life on the colonies is a different pace, however, though it is not all that different from those settlers that lived in the frontier towns of yesteryear. People still want the same things, but those in the colonies have a more independent and self-reliant mind-set. They're the kind of people that do for themselves, take care of their own, and don't take kindly to outsiders telling them their business. To many, the colonies also represent new opportunities and there's a general feeling of hope among colonists.

Unfortunately, ghost stories are becoming increasingly popular. Even

Daily Life At a Glance

- There is a growing rift between the working class and the elite, and the middle class is disappearing.
- Tension grows between Earth and the colonies.
- Radical religious sects, branded as cults, are on the rise.
- Old prejudices are gone.
- Poverty is all but eliminated.
- People live more than 150 years, due to advancements.
- Most diseases have been wiped out.
- The media is giant and out of control.
- The colonies have a more independent and self-reliant view.
- Ghost stories are becoming increasingly popular.
- While most deny such tales, there are those who believe.

on Earth, people can sense there are things moving in the darkness. There has been an increase in the popularity of horror movies on Earth, and it isn't unusual to hear "real-life" ghost stories in a colonial bar. Most people are quick to dismiss such tales, as the alternative is believing that such horrors are real. There is, however, a growing community on the internet dedicated to plumbing the depths of what are classified as urban legends. Despite the growing darkness, most people on Earth regard such things as entertainment. However, those out on the colonies can feel something closing in and those that visit such places most certainly can feel that as well.



TRAINING'S OVER

I stood at the embarkation bay waiting for the shuttle that would take me to meet up with my platoon. It's a little embarrassing that I initially had to be held back from this training op when I came down with a case of the measles. The measles of all things – it had been cleared up centuries ago in nearly everyone, but there were a few people like me that had a recessive trait that left us susceptible. It took me three weeks to get out of quarantine, but now I could finally join my unit on the training run. It was meant to be a two month deployment to test out the unit's survival skills on an airless moon. I hoped that missing almost half the exercise didn't set me back too far.

I checked my gear while I waited for the shuttle and I noticed something odd. The ammunition I was issued for the training op was live ammo. The embarkation room was different than the last time I was here as well. There were other troops gathering to head out for their own training missions. But most didn't look like the raw recruit I knew I was. Quite a few looked to be veterans mixed in with the recruits. There was also a seriousness about them that I had not seen in my own unit.

I was about to go over to them to ask if everything was alright when a shadow passed over me. I looked up and there was a man from out of the history books – Captain Zephirin

Brannigan, the hero of countless battles and the inspiration of more than a few of the soldiers in my platoon. We all wanted to be just like him and here he was standing next to me.

"Private Gibson, are you ready to deploy?"

I was shaking inside, but my training held true and I responded in a steady voice, "Yes, sir!"

He stood there surveying everything while he checked his gear. I could tell that he was able to assess the status of all the men on the departure deck just by looking. Square jawed, broad-shouldered, with a stare that got soldiers to jump at his orders without question – all these traits made the Captain the leader you wanted to follow anywhere. And apparently he was leading some portion of the training operation.

"All right then, get your gear and get on the shuttle."

On cue, the shuttle appeared as if the Captain had called it into being, and the ramp dropped for us to load. I got up the ramp a second after the Captain and found my seat at the head of the shuttle. I secured my pack and my weapon and strapped in to my drop seat. The Captain dropped his pack on the bench across from me and went up to the cockpit to speak with the pilot. After a brief discussion,

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UWC Marine Drop: Iapetus

he came out and said, "Strap in, no time to wait for the others. We're needed at the drop site."

I held no illusions – it was really him that was needed. I was just along

for the ride, but the man gave me a boost to my courage. Captain Branigan was the man who defused the Ganymede hostage crisis last year, had handled the Neptune Bandit Fleet, and was rumored to have

worked closely with the Wardens on missions too secretive to mention.

The shuttle door closed and the cabin sealed. Then we took off and began the journey to the moon's surface. The Captain found his way back to the seat across from me and sat down. There was an interesting look on his face as he looked me over once more from head to toe.

"You ready for this, Private?"

"Yes, sir! Ready and able, sir!"

I could see he was going to say something else, but a sudden jolt shook the shuttle and he left to go up to talk to the pilot. Moments later, shouting from the cockpit made me jump. There appeared to be something very wrong, as the Captain started shouting orders to the pilot to maintain course and speed.

The drop to the moon below was rougher than I expected. It took a while before I heard the scraping along the hull – what it was, I didn't know. I unbuckled myself and unsteadily got up to join the Captain at the door. When I looked, the view port only showed a sea of what looked like black bodies slamming against the shuttle as it hurtled to the surface below. I looked to the Captain, who casually waved me back to my seat. He nodded to his suit helmet and I saw that he had sealed his combat suit. I quickly followed suit.

The shuttle landed roughly and I was thrown to the deck as it skidded

to a halt. The Captain had taken the landing in stride and reached down to pick me up.

"Up and at 'em, son."

"But this is a training mission! The unit said so before they shipped out. What the hell is going on?"

The Captain's reply was lost as my suit's intercom was filled with a screeching static that drowned out all sound. I looked to the Captain and it appeared that he couldn't hear it. He didn't notice my pain as he moved to the rear of the shuttle to open the egress ramp. When it opened, I looked and what I saw was a scene out of a nightmare. The sky was filled with hundreds of flying creatures with slick jet black skin like wet leather, with thick tails trailing out behind them. There was no air for them to be flying in, but they soared just the same as they swept in on what looked like my unit in the distance. They were bunkered in front of a large cave opening and firing blindly as they were assaulted from all angles.

They had dug in a defensive position and, although the attack was coming from the air, the main focus of my entrenched friends appeared to be the cave mouth itself. Grenade launchers and heavy machine guns were arrayed in fox holes on the cave side. While a portion maintained a hail of covering fire, the majority watched over the cave entrance.

While the creatures in the air were horrible in their own right, with their

claws and eyeless faces, the real terror came from within the cave. At first, it was hard to see what was there; it looked to be a dark void, except something moved within. Thick tendrils snaked out from deep within the cave, towards the opening. The mass of evil – that's what it felt like – looked as if it was trying to crawl its way out. As the tendrils reached the entrance, I heard the screech again. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw that some of the others also reeled in pain. I suddenly realized that the sound was not coming over the intercom, but from inside my head.

I'm not sure how my brain processed all of this, as I stood there frozen in terror. Unfazed, the Captain let loose with three volleys from his grenade launcher, straight into the heart of the cave beast. I was the useless grunt to his hero, the muzzle flash from his launcher lighting up the stone set features within his helmet. There was even a hint of a smile on his face as he turned and shook me.

"Get it together, kid! Training's over. This is the real deal. Stay on my six and watch my back."

Somehow, that got through and I shook my head to clear it. The Captain dumped the empty grenade launcher, shouldered his rifle, and charged into the battle. I stayed right by his side, firing at anything that came close as we cleared the 200 meters between us and my unit. The flying nightmares swept down to harass us, coming in waves. I fired my weapon as best I could and kept them off the Captain.

From that close, I could see that they indeed had no face – no mouth, no nose, no eyes or ears. They had long thin arms and legs, and from their backs, pairs of alien wings swept out, giving them the strange ability to fly in an airless atmosphere. There was a thick tail as well, ending in a sharp stinger, like some kind of sick bug.

I saw the tails striking at my compatriots in the distance. Streaking down from the skies, the creatures came up short and swung their tail to have the stingers impact. The things were so sharp and hard that they penetrated their armored suits, and decompression wasn't far behind.

We nearly didn't make it to the bunker as a large swarm of creatures suddenly headed toward us. I emptied clip after clip into the oncoming mass, but even this was not enough to hold back the monsters. Without warning, tracer rounds from the bunker lit up the skies, saving our hides. The creatures fell back and we were able to make it to the safety of the bunker.

We met up with my platoon leader, who was rallying my friends and trying to hold the line until reinforcements could land. Beyond the wall of flying madness above me, I could see them – the drop shuttles I had seen at the embarkation bay. They were all here, landing in a rain of steel and off-loading their payloads of soldiers. Some shuttles didn't safely make it to the ground. The creatures sensed that there was danger and began to focus on the landing vehicles. They

swarmed them and tore at the shuttles to bring them down.

Luckily, we got most of them to the ground. As the soldiers met at the bunker, they rallied around the Captain while we took a respite from the aerial assault. The Captain organized the men and started to plan an attack to take down the creature from the cave. The plan was to seal the cave and keep the creature inside until the military could come with bigger weapons to finish it off, whatever the hell it was. The Captain and my platoon were to approach the right side of the cave, while another unit was assigned to approach from the left. Each of the teams carried enough det packs to bring the whole thing to the ground. The Captain ordered us to move out, and for some reason he kept me with him. When I asked him why, he replied, "Because you did your job on the way here. Keep doing that and we'll all make it out of here."

We began to make our approach, with the rest of the support platoons provided covering fire to the skies above, as well as the cave mouth. Even with the hail of rounds surrounding us, the nightmares found openings in our defenses. They seemed to concentrate their attacks on the other team, so by the time we reached the side of the cave they'd lost nearly three quarters of their troops. We'd only lost four.

The Captain signaled what was left of both teams to advance into the cave. We didn't notice it from the outside, but the flying things never

crossed the threshold of the cave mouth, and when I moved inside I wished I hadn't either. If the existence of the things in the sky weren't already proof enough of the horror of this place, the feeling of being in the cave was indescribable. The place felt wrong – like something that just should not be. The sensors on my combat suit were going crazy; apparently there was some kind of atmosphere in the cave. Gravity felt different here as well, like we suddenly lost 50 pounds. Everyone lurched a bit as we crossed the threshold.

We took position just on the other side of the entrance. When I looked up to cover the Captain's six, I saw that the place didn't look like a natural formation. Instead, the entrance opened up immediately into a larger cavern. The horror we saw from the outside sat within a circle of what looked like glowing runes that were nearly 200 meters across. In places, we could see the circle had been damaged – it was from these wrecked areas that the thing was able to extend those horrible tendrils of terrifying blackness to attack us. Somehow maintaining my sanity enough to tear my eyes away from the creature, I looked back toward the cave mouth. Similar runes were carved into the walls. Whenever a tendril came close, what could only be called a flash would cause the cave to dip into darkness for a millisecond. The creature would then let loose the screech I heard before – but here the sound was different, more the wailing of something that had been hurt.

The Captain ordered everyone to set their explosives and get ready to fall back. Just then, it appeared that the monstrosity had finally realized we were a threat and attacked. The thing flailed wildly, striking everything within reach without mercy. The tendrils crushed whatever lay in their path. Soldier after soldier fell to the beast, until only the Captain and I were left from our team. We could see that there were a few other soldiers heading back to retreat to the bunker, so the Captain grabbed my shoulder and ordered me out as well. Not one to leave people behind, the Captain needed to be sure on the way out that the horror that resided here had crushed all the soldiers under his command. I provided covering fire for him, honoring those who had died. My rounds did little to the creature beyond irritating it, but I was apparently safe beyond the unseen barrier of the cave mouth. My distraction gave the Captain enough time to finish his job and make his way away from the impending explosion.

"I believe I ordered you to get back to the bunker, Priv..."

Suddenly, just as when we had first met, a shadow came over me. This was different. The shadow was cast by the Captain, but the light was no longer the light of an embarkation deck – it was the light of the exploding det packs.

I later learned that the other survivors made it back to the bunker and

reported that they saw no one else coming after them. Somehow, they dug me out of the rubble about an hour later. I was unconscious, badly bruised, and oxygen deprived – I wouldn't wake for another two days. The medics said that it was a miracle that I had survived at all. If the Captain hadn't thrown himself on top of me when he did, I would most likely be dead. The reports said that once the cave was destroyed, the flying creatures lost coherency and scattered. The relentless fire from the ground forces eventually either brought them down or drove them off.

I stood by his side the entire battle. I saw that day what a hero really was. The thing in the circle was crushed by rubble and the flying nightmares were scattered or destroyed, all because of the Captain. I still stand by his side today as well. I don't think I'm worthy to be here, but my commander said that actions have earned me this place. We laid him in the ground with full honors – gun salute and all. Personally, I think he would have hated it, but a lot of soldiers wouldn't have been here today if it wasn't for him, myself included. I gave him the only honor I could – my salute – as the trumpeter sounded another soldier home to rest.

If things really are like they were on that damned moon, someday I'll join him. Soon.

51



Your Character is your fictional interface with the setting of *The Void*. The rules presented here will help guide you towards making an interesting and effective Warden Character. While the *Advanced Character Guide* will present rules for creating any kind of Character, Wardens are recommended to start. As Wardens, your Characters will have the reason, authority, and resources that warrant traveling all over the solar system to investigate strange occurrences.

The Design Process

You'll be developing your Character by choosing and combining certain templates. The meat of this process begins on p. 79. However, before you start this process, you'll need to know about all the different things that go into Characters. These things include Attributes, Statistics, Qualities, Talents, Quirks, Special Things (such as Fate Points), and Gear.

Let's examine those things here.

Attributes

Attributes are a measure of your Character's innate abilities and capabilities. Each Character has six in *The Void*, and they are rated on a scale from 1 to 5. A rating of 1 is considered challenged, while a rating of 2 or 3 is considered average, and a rating of 5 is quite amazing.

Awareness

Awareness is a measure of a Character's sense acuity, keenness of perception, and intuition. Awareness is used

for any Skill requiring attentiveness, as well as for effectively utilizing ranged weapons.

Cleverness

Cleverness is a measure of a Character's intellect, ability to learn, and memory. Cleverness is used for any learned Skill, including those that are technical and scientific in nature.

Demeanor

Demeanor is a measure of a Character's social ability and force of personality. It is not necessarily a measure of beauty or charm, which are better reflected by a Character's Qualities, Skills, and Talents. Demeanor is used for any social Skill.

Grace

Grace is a measure of a Character's agility, manual dexterity, and finesse. Grace is used for any Skill that requires bodily control, including those that involve fighting in close quarters or getting out of harm's way.

Perseverance

Perseverance is a measure of a Character's endurance, stamina, and willpower. Perseverance is used for any taxing physical Skill, as well as to resist the effects of the horrible things that Characters might experience.

Physique

Physique is a measure of a Character's strength and physical might. Physique is used for lifting heavy things, restraining people, and anything else that requires raw physical power.

Statistics

Statistics are a few other important details about your Character that are derived from his Attributes. They include how fast he moves, as well as how much punishment he can take.

Health

Health is a measure of a Character's overall level of wellness and vitality. It represents how much physical punishment he can take before he expires. To determine your Character's starting Health, add together his Grace, Perseverance, and Physique.

Speed

Speed is a measure of how fast your Character can move when the time comes. To determine Speed, add your Character's Grace and Physique together and consult the table below.

Skills

Skills are those things in which a Character has been trained or educated. Each Skill represents a body of knowledge or a type of training in which your Character has ability. Every Character starts with a number of different Skills, each rated on a scale

Characters At a Glance

Attributes

- Rated on a scale of 1 to 5.
- A rating of 1 is severely challenged, 2 or 3 is average, and 5 is quite amazing.
- *Awareness* = sense acuity, keenness of perception, and intuition.
- *Cleverness* = intellect, ability to learn, and memory.
- *Demeanor* = social ability and force of personality.
- *Grace* = agility, manual dexterity, and finesse.
- *Perseverance* = endurance, stamina, and willpower.
- *Physique* = strength and physical might.

Statistics

- *Health* is your Character's level of wellness and vitality. Equals Grace, Perseverance, and Physique added together.
- *Speed* is how fast your Character can move, based on Grace and Physique.

Grace + Physique	Speed	Walk/Per Turn	Run/Per Turn
2	4 mph/6.5 kmh	3 yd/m	10 yd/m
3	6 mph/9.5 kmh	5 yd/m	15 yd/m
4	8 mph/13 kmh	6.5 yd/m	20 yd/m
5	10 mph/16 kmh	8 yd/m	25 yd/m
6	12 mph/19 kmh	10 yd/m	30 yd/m
7	14 mph/22.5 kmh	11.5 yd/m	35 yd/m
8	16 mph/26 kmh	13 yd/m	40 yd/m
9	18 mph/29 kmh	15 yd/m	45 yd/m
10	20 mph/32 kmh	16.5 yd/m	50 yd/m

from 1 to 5. Those with a rating of 1 are considered students, while those with a rating of 3 are considered competent professionals, and those with a rating of 5 have mastered the Skill in question.

The list of Skills available to your Character starts on p. 92.

There are three Skills that are important for your Character's ultimate survival and every Character is given the opportunity to acquire them during Character Creation. They are *Defense*, which is used to avoid harm in combat, *Notice*, which is used to identify harm before it has a chance to come, and *Reaction*, which is used to determine when your Character can act in combat.

Qualities

Qualities are both good and bad things that affect a Character's everyday life and game play, but which can't be easily defined as an Attribute or a Skill. There are two types of Qualities. Advantages are positive traits, while Disadvantages are negative traits.

The list of Qualities available for your Character starts on p. 99.

Talents

Characters also develop, most especially during play, special action-oriented abilities called Talents. These abilities might be something that allows your Character to attack twice for a single action or that provides bonuses to special social Skill Tests. Some Talents are in play all the time, while others must be Triggered (see p. 112).

The list of Talents available for your Character starts on p. 106.

Quirks

Introducing quirky elements to Characters, especially ones that might have use in the game from time to time, can foster a richer roleplay experience. You can choose from two to five Quirks, each at a Skill rating of 2. These Quirks should be personal in nature – perhaps even a hobby or kind of trivia – but the kind of things you may actually see using from time to time.

To help put you in the right mindset, here are a few examples of Quirks:

- Bartending
- Car Knowledge
- Clean Spotlessly
- Follow Recipes Perfectly
- Identify Spices
- Juggling
- Make Pastries
- Reciting Movie Quotes
- Spaceship Knowledge
- Sports Team Knowledge
- Video Games
- Whistle In Tune
- Wiggle Eyebrows, Nose, and Ears Independently

Special

There is one other piece to your Character that doesn't fit neatly into the other categories: Fate Points.

Fate Points

Characters have Fate Points, which are designed to keep them alive. Fate Points can be used to catch a break when facing certain death, or used to cancel a deadly attack and heal them

to keep fighting. Your Character begins with one Fate Point.

Gear & Acquisition

Instead of tracking money in amounts of currency, Wealth can be tracked in levels. Higher levels allow for greater goods and services. This is another way that Characters or teams can advance.

An explanation of Wealth can be found on p. 158.

CHARACTER DESIGN

Characters are designed in four stages. First, you'll choose a birthplace, you'll choose a primary template, then you'll choose two secondary templates, and last you'll work out a few important remaining details.

All Characters begin with their native Language at 5. Since the two predominate languages in the solar system are English and Mandarin Chinese, you should probably choose one of those.

1. Choose Birthplace

Everyone learns something from the place they grew up. Choose your birthplace from among those listed here. You'll get three Skills associated with that place at a rating of 1.

Mercury

You were born in the Port Tian mining colony, settled within the Chao Meng-Fu crater – the only colony

Characters At a Glance

Skills

- Skills are those things in which your Character has been trained or educated.
- Rated on a scale from 1 to 5.
- A rating of 1 is considered a student, 3 is considered professional, and 5 is mastery.

Qualities

- Qualities are both good and bad things that affect a Character's life.
- Advantages are positive traits.
- Disadvantages are negative traits.

Talents

- Talents are special action-oriented abilities.

Quirks

- Quirks are personal elements that foster a richer experience.
- Characters have between 2 and 5.

Special

- *Fate Points* are designed to keep Characters alive.
- Characters start with 1.

Gear & Acquisition

- Characters will have a level of Wealth, which will determine what kinds of gear to which they have access.

Character Design

Characters are developed according to four stages.

1. Choose Birthplace

There are 16 possible choices in our solar system.

2. Choose Primary Specialty

There are 3 possible choices – Warden Enforcer, Warden Investigator, or Warden Researcher

3. Choose Two Secondary Specialties

There are 4 or 5 possible choices.

4. Determine Other Details

Acquire gear and fill in personal details.

on Mercury. Perhaps you were raised in the ethnically diverse upper levels, or in the distinctly Asian lower levels. Perhaps your family came to work the mines and left before you were grown, or perhaps they were management and you spent most of your growing life there. Perhaps your parents were Wardens, stationed on the Nugget.

Mercurians are often social though stoic people, who are hardy and resourceful. They are most at home in underground colonies or in the confines of space stations.

Starting Skills: Bureaucracy 1, Environmental Suit 1, Freefall 1

Venus

You were born in one of the corporate colonies of Venus – McAlister

Mining Concern's McAlister City, Rare Earths Incorporated's Daysin Colony, Geo-Excavations' Diamond Head, 4G Enterprises' Daedalus Complex, Solar Mining Corporation's Flare City, or the Takashi Group's Oshuki Colony. Perhaps your family came on a short term mining contract and you left before you were grown, or perhaps your family are company people and your life was spent growing up on Venus. Regardless, you have opinions and feelings about the corporation that dominated your upbringing.

Venusians are often canny and clever people, who are also suspicious and are always looking to make sure they've got their behinds covered. They are most at home in underground colonies or in the confines of space stations.

Starting Skills: Bureaucracy 1, Insight 1, Savoir Faire 1

Earth

You were born on the planet that is humanity's native home, a world capable of seeing to all our needs. Perhaps you were born within one of the three primary superpowers – the Alliance of American States, the European Federation, or the Sino-Asia Union. Perhaps you were born on one of the five Lagrange Point stations, or in Tranquility colony on Luna. Perhaps your family were Wardens, stationed in orbit on the Eye.

Terrans, as those from Earth are called, are a widely varied group of people. The typical traits associated with any group will depend entirely on where that person grew up in the

great expanses of the planet. Terrans from planet-side are most at home on Mars or in large colonies. Those born in orbit or on Luna prefer smaller colonies, spaceships, and space stations.

Starting Skills: Computers 1, Language (any) 1, Streetwise 1

Mars

You were born on the once romanticized Red Planet, in one of the colonies known as the Seven Sisters – Abbey, Annie, Chloe, Dena, Jeanne, Nikki, or Wendy. Mars is, in many ways, a smaller analog to Earth, so your family's professional leaning and culture can be nearly as widely varied as those of humanity's home. However, life on Mars is not normally as prosperous as life on Earth, and it carries the dangers associated with a planet that was not necessarily meant to sustain life.

Martians are often hardy and resourceful people, though somewhat resigned about life – possibly even bitter. There are those who feel downright lost within the desperation that most often is Mars. They are most at home on Earth or Mars.

Starting Skills: Computers 1, Language 1, Survival 1

Jupiter (Callisto)

You were born in the only colony on Callisto – Ursa. It is a quiet place, best described as a bedroom community for those who work other places in Jupiter space. Your family could have been involved in any of several different industries, whether it be the scientific operations of Europa, the casino or entertainment industries of Ganymede, the pleasure tours of Io, or the mining operations of Jupiter itself.



A Cast of Characters: 2159

In any event, your youth was probably simple and uneventful out on Callisto.

Callistans are often gregarious and value community, though distrustful of newcomers. They also value privacy, as well as peace and quiet in their regular environment. They are most at home in domed colonies, spaceships, or space stations.

Starting Skills: Environmental Suit 1, Language (any) 1, Freefall 1

Jupiter (Europa)

You were born in one of the three scientific colonies of Europa – Minos, Rhadamanthus, or Sarpedon. Your family was most likely involved in some scientific endeavor, studying the subsurface oceans and alien aquatic life. If not, they were most likely involved with some sort of administration or service of said scientists. Your youth was most likely fascinating, but safe and quiet.

Europeans are often careful, thoughtful, intellectual people, who are also quite curious. They are most at home in underground colonies, space stations, or on spaceships.

Starting Skills: Computers 1, Freefall 1, Science (Life or Space) 1

Jupiter (Ganymede)

You were born in Troy, the sole colony of Ganymede. Your family was most likely involved with the tourism or entertainment industries that dominate the colony, often described as the Las Vegas of the outer worlds. Your youth was most likely fast-paced and exciting, with nearly constant stimulation

and an influx of new people to meet. You're also probably a little jaded.

Ganymedans are often extroverted and clever, no strangers to the ebbs and flows of nearly any strata of society. They are often also known for thinking several steps ahead and nearly always trying to work an angle. They are most at home in smaller colonies or space stations.

Starting Skills: Fraternize 1, Freefall 1, Streetwise 1

Saturn (Dione)

You were born on a tiny icy moon in the colony of Nova Lyon. Your family were colonists, hoping to be a part of the growing settlements and the opportunities for business and wealth. It is an austere place, breeding the kind of mentality and communities common in the Arctic Circle on Earth.

Dionians are often optimistic and plucky, though suspicious of newcomers and provincial. They are most at home in smaller surface colonies.

Starting Skills: Environmental Suit 1, Freefall 1, Notice 1

Saturn (Enceladus)

You were born in either Oceanus or New Halifax, the two colonies of Enceladus. It is likely that your family was involved with either the scientific operations that go with the subsurface ocean here, or the extensive tourist trade that goes with them and the rest of the moon. Perhaps they are scientists or administrators, or perhaps they are any of the various professions designed to service tourists from all over.

Enceladans are often outgoing and affable, though sometimes to the point of being fake. They are also often either intellectual or focused on economic opportunity. They are most at home in colonies of nearly any kind.

Starting Skills: Freefall 1, Science (Life or Space) 1, Savoir Faire 1

Saturn (Hyperion)

You were born on Hyperion, the only known source of the rare element known as therminium. Your family was somehow involved in the mining of therminium or the administration of said mining operations – the only reason people go to Hyperion. The colony itself is governmental in nature, and is well-supported. However, it is most certainly “small town,” regardless of the constant traffic.

Hyperions are hard-working and enjoy a simple life, though they are definitely provincial and sometimes intolerant. They are most at home in smaller surface colonies.

Starting Skills: Environmental Suit 1, Freefall 1, Notice 1

Saturn (Rhea)

You were born on the industrial moon of Rhea, most likely in the colony of New Glasgow. Your family was part of the ship-building or industrial manufacturing industries that dominate Rhea, or at least part of the administration serving those industries.

Rheans are hard-working blue collar folks, though they are more open-minded than most. They are most at home in smaller surface colonies.

Starting Skills: Environmental Suit 1, Freefall 1, Trade: Product 1

Saturn (Tethys)

You were born on the moon Tethys, in the Odysseus water-mining colony. Your family was part of the effort to mine the walls of the Ithaca Chasm, or at least part of the administration serving that industry. Like those from most moons of Saturn, Tethys has a mindset similar to those of Terran small towns. They keep to their own.

Tethyians, are similar to their Rhean cousins, though perhaps even more provincial and suspicious in nature. They are most at home in smaller surface colonies.

Starting Skills: Environmental Suit 1, Freefall 1, Trade: Product 1

Saturn (Titan)

You were born in the center of Saturnine culture, prosperity, and government. Perhaps you were born in one of the three major cities – Chronos, Cassini, or Crius. Life on Titan is wide and varied, but most are involved with the two major industries of agricultural and food processing or tourism. Perhaps your family is involved personally in one of these industries, or perhaps they focus on the other needs of colonists.

Titanians are often outgoing and clever people, though sometimes arrogant and distrusting of those beyond Saturn space. They are most at home in large surface colonies or Mars.

Starting Skills: Computers 1, Freefall 1, Streetwise 1

Uranus

You were born on Veronica Station under the watchful eye of the Wesley Corporation, or among the prospectors of the Uranian moons Oberon or Titania. It is likely that your family works for the Wesley Corporation in some capacity, whether involved in mining operations or administration. They may also be involved with AQX Corporation's mining interests on Oberon, or freelance prospectors with permission to operate from Wesley Corp. Regardless, for an Outer World, it is a surprisingly vibrant place.

Uranians are often hard-working and tenacious, but are distrustful of newcomers and in the habit of watching their backs. They are most at home in small colonies, space stations, or spaceships.

Starting Skills: Bureaucracy 1, Environmental Suit 1, Freefall 1

Neptune

You were born either on the tiny Triton station or in Salacia colony on the surface of Neptune, all under the watchful eye of the Rhodes Company and the European Federation. There are very few that stay on Neptune for more than eighteen months at a stretch, so it's unlikely that you spent all your time growing up here. Perhaps your family came back to Neptune several times during your youth, or perhaps they were management and some of the few people who actually spend substantial time so far from civilization.

Neptunians are often aloof and stoic people, who are resourceful and ca-

pable of great focus. They are most at home on spaceships, space stations, or smaller colonies.

Starting Skills: Bureaucracy 1, Environmental Suit 1, Notice 1

Kuiper Belt

You were born way out in the black, among the prospecting communities of the Kuiper Belt. Perhaps you were the child of prospectors who went out to strike it rich or perhaps you were the child of those who sold supplies or administered the tiny space stations meant to service those prospectors. You may also be the child of Wardens, stationed in the Lighthouse. In any event, the communities you grew up in were small and outside contact was infrequent at best.

Kuipers are often freewheeling in nature and cowboy in attitude, who are also very resourceful and broadly skilled. They also don't tend to like or respect authority very much. They are most at home on space stations or space ships.

Starting Skills: Environmental Suit 1, Freefall 1, Odd Job 1

2. Choose Primary Specialty

The Wardens come in one of three specialties: the combat-oriented Enforcers, the information-gathering Investigators, and the knowledge-oriented Researchers. Choose one of these three specialties, which will determine your starting Attributes, half your Skills, your Qualities (Advantages & Disadvantages), and a Talent.

3. Choose Secondary Specialty

Where your Character's primary specialty shows who he is now, his secondary specialties shine a little light on his background. Each primary specialty has several secondary specialties associated with it. Choose two of them and assign ten points to Skills in each to round your Character out.

4. Determine Other Details

There are a few key things left to determine before your Character is ready for play.

Statistics & Special

Determine the following:

- *Speed*, both running and walking, as found on p. 77.
- *Health*, as found on p. 77. Also, record your Health in each of the four Damage Levels.
- *Fate Points* = 1.

Quirks

You should also choose at least two Quirks, as found on p. 78.

Personal Details

To help flesh your Character out in a roleplaying sense, there are a few other personal details you should work out before you begin playing.

Also, since your Character is experienced, choose an age between 28 and 35. You can go a little over or under, but you should have a good explanation as to why he is over or under-skilled for his age.

To go with that, you should determine ethnicity, height, weight, and important personality traits that define who he is to others. Ethnicity is especially important, as Characters in *The Void* come from all kinds of heritage.

Gear

The Void uses Wealth Codes to track a Character's financial resources, rather than tracking specific credit amounts. Normally, starting Characters begin with a Personal Wealth of 2 and a Sponsored Wealth of 1, unless modified by the Wealthy or Poor Qualities. See p. 158 for a more detailed explanation of Wealth Codes.

Freeform Design

If you're an experienced roleplayer and you don't have any interest in restricting yourself to the template-driven Character Design system presented here (or you want to create non-Warden Characters), here are some rules for creating your Characters in an entirely freeform fashion.

- Spend a total of 20 points on Attributes.
- Choose a home world and take the three Skills provided. Spend an additional 50 points on Skills. If you choose to purchase a Skill at 4, it will cost you 2 points from 3 to 4. If you choose to purchase a Skill at 5, it will cost you 3 points from 4 to 5.
- Spend another total of 5 points on Advantages, taking up to another 12 points worth of Disadvantages.
- Choose 1 Talent.
- You have a Personal Wealth of 2 and a Sponsored Wealth of 1.

WARDEN ENFORCER

Attributes

As an Enforcer, your starting Attributes are as follows. Distribute an additional 5 points between them. *Those Attributes that are especially important for this specialty are marked with *.*

• Awareness	3*
• Cleverness	2
• Demeanor	2
• Grace	3*
• Perseverance	3
• Physique	2

Skills

For your primary specialty, distribute 30 points among the following Skills. If you choose to purchase a Skill at 4, it will cost you 2 points from 3 to 4. If you choose to purchase a Skill at 5, it will cost you 3 points from 4 to 5. *Those Skills that are especially important for this specialty are marked with *.*

- Armorer
- Athletics: Brawn
- Athletics: Coordination
- Athletics: Fitness
- Athletics: Speed
- Cryptozoology
- Fraternize
- Defense*
- Drive: Wheeled
- Drones
- Environmental Suit*
- Explosives
- Freefall*
- Guns: Assault Weapons*
- Guns: Handguns*
- Guns: Longarms*
- Guns: Special
- Hand Weapons: Blades*
- Hand Weapons: Blunt*
- Hand Weapons: Improvised*

- Heavy Weapons: Launchers
- Intimidation
- Language
- Law
- Liberal Arts
- Notice*
- Occult
- Orienteering
- Reaction*
- Stealth
- Survival
- Thrown Weapons*
- Unarmed Combat*

Secondary Specialties

You should also choose 2 of the following 5 secondary templates, which help further define your Character's background. Assign 10 points on the Skills within each (for a total of 20).

Checked Past

- Crime: High
- Crime: Low
- Impersonation
- Odd Job
- Streetwise

Military Veteran

- Drive: Military
- Gunner: Mobile Weapons Platforms
- Heavy Weapons: Portable Artillery
- Mechanic
- Tactics: Military
- Tactics: Naval

Pilot

- Astrogation
- Gunner: Shipboard Weapons
- Pilot: Atmospheric
- Pilot: Spacecraft
- Sensors

Sailor

- Nautical: Motor Boats
- Nautical: Ocean Liners
- Nautical: Sail
- Nautical: Submarine
- Sensors

Social Butterfly

- Deception
- Insight
- Persuade
- Savoir Faire
- Seduction

Qualities

The following Qualities are appropriate for an Enforcer. Spend 5 points to acquire Advantages. Conversely, you gain 1 point with which to purchase further Advantages for every 1 point of Disadvantages you take – up to 12 additional points. Qualities marked with a * may be chosen multiple times.

Advantages

- Acute Senses (1)*
- Ambidextrous (1)
- Common Sense (2)
- Disease Resistant (1)
- Double-Jointed (1)
- Dream Void (2)
- Fast (2)
- Fearless (3)
- Gifted Metabolism (1)
- Hard to Kill (1-3)
- Internal Clock (1)
- Internal Map (1)
- Luck (1-3)
- Nightvision (2)
- Occult Sensitive (3)
- Peripheral Vision (2)
- Rapid Recovery (2)
- Sexy (1)
- Sixth Sense (3)

- Tough (1-3)
- Wealthy (2-3)

Disadvantages

- A/D Stasis Visions (2)
- Annoying Traits (1)
- Arrogant (1)
- Bigoted (1)
- Chronic Pain (2)
- Dark Secret (1-3)
- Darkness Magnet (3)
- Depressed (1)
- Enemy (1-3)*
- Fanatic (1-3)
- Manic (1)
- Nightmares (3)
- Persistent Injury (1-3)
- Phobia (1)*
- Poor (2-3)
- Rival (1-3)*
- Tormented (1)
- Ugly (1)
- Vengeful (1)

Talents

The following Talents are appropriate for an Enforcer. Choose 1.

- Black Heart
- Born in Freefall
- Double Tap
- Fight, Not Flight
- Killer Instinct
- Lift With Your Legs
- No Rest for the Wicked
- One Foot in the Grave
- Peek-a-Boo
- Sexual Magnet
- Snake Eyes
- True Grit
- Whiff of Death
- Wicked Smart

WARDEN INVESTIGATOR

Attributes

As an Investigator, your starting Attributes are as follows. Distribute an additional 5 points between them. *Those Attributes that are especially important for this specialty are marked with *.*

- Awareness 3*
- Cleverness 2
- Demeanor 3*
- Grace 2
- Perseverance 3
- Physique 2

Skills

For your primary specialty, distribute 30 points among the following Skills. If you choose to purchase a Skill at 4, it will cost you 2 points from 3 to 4. If you choose to purchase a Skill at 5, it will cost you 3 points from 4 to 5. *Those Skills that are especially important for this specialty are marked with *.*

- Athletics: Fitness
- Athletics: Speed
- Communications
- Cryptozoology
- Deception*
- Drive: Wheeled
- Drones
- Environmental Suit*
- Fraternize*
- Guns: Assault Weapons
- Guns: Handguns*
- Guns: Longarms
- Hand Weapons: Blades
- Hand Weapons: Blunt
- Defense*
- Freefall*
- Insight*
- Intimidation
- Investigate*
- Language

- Law*
- Liberal Arts
- Notice*
- Occult
- Orienteering
- Persuade*
- Reaction*
- Research
- Savoir Faire*
- Science: Social
- Seduction
- Stealth
- Streetwise*
- Survival
- Thrown Weapons
- Unarmed Combat*

Secondary Templates

You should also choose 2 of the following 4 secondary templates, which help further define your Character's background. Assign 10 points on the Skills within each (for a total of 20).

Corporate Sector

- Bureaucracy
- Computers
- Law
- Trade: Business
- Trade: Product

Former Cop

- Animal Handling
- Crime: High
- Crime: Low
- Law
- Surveillance

Pilot

- Astrogation
- Gunner: Shipboard Weapons
- Pilot: Atmospheric
- Pilot: Spacecraft
- Sensors

Former Undercover Cop

- Art: Acting
- Hand Weapons: Improvised
- Impersonation
- Law
- Odd Job

Qualities

The following Qualities are appropriate for an Enforcer. Spend 5 points to acquire Advantages. Conversely, you gain 1 point with which to purchase further Advantages for every 1 point of Disadvantages you take – up to 12 additional points. Qualities marked with a * may be chosen multiple times.

Advantages

- Acute Senses (1)*
- Ally (1-3)*
- Ambidextrous (1)
- Contact (1-2)*
- Common Sense (2)
- Disease Resistant (1)
- Dream Void (2)
- Eidetic Memory (3)
- Empath (1)
- Fast (2)
- Fearless (3)
- Gifted Metabolism (1)
- Hard to Kill (1-3)
- Internal Clock (1)
- Internal Map (1)
- Luck (1-3)
- Nightvision (2)
- Occult Sensitive (3)
- Peripheral Vision (2)
- Rapid Recovery (2)
- Sexy (1)
- Sixth Sense (3)
- Tough (1-3)
- Wealthy (2-3)

Disadvantages

- A/D Stasis Visions (2)
- Arrogant (1)
- Bigoted (1)
- Chronic Pain (2)
- Dark Secret (1-3)
- Darkness Magnet (3)
- Depressed (1)
- Enemy (1-3)*
- Fanatic (1-3)
- Fat (2)
- Manic (1)
- Nightmares (3)
- Persistent Injury (1-3)
- Phobia (1)*
- Poor (2-3)
- Rival (1-3)*
- Sensory Impaired (1)*
- Skinny (2)
- Slow (2)
- Tormented (1)
- Vengeful (1)

Talents

The following Talents are appropriate for an Investigator. Choose 1.

- Black Heart
- Born in Freefall
- Don't I Know You?
- Double Tap
- Fight, Not Flight
- Killer Instinct
- Know Where Your Towel Is
- Lift With Your Legs
- No Rest for the Wicked
- One Foot in the Grave
- Peek-a-Boo
- Sexual Magnet
- Too Innocent
- True Grit
- Whiff of Death
- Wicked Presence

WARDEN RESEARCHER

Attributes

As an Researcher, your starting Attributes are as follows. Distribute an additional 5 points between them. *Those Attributes that are especially important for this specialty are marked with *.*

- Awareness 3*
- Cleverness 3*
- Demeanor 2
- Grace 2
- Perseverance 3
- Physique 2

Skills

For your primary specialty, distribute 30 points among the following Skills. If you choose to purchase a Skill at 4, it will cost you 2 points from 3 to 4. If you choose to purchase a Skill at 5, it will cost you 3 points from 4 to 5. *Those Skills that are especially important for this specialty are marked with *.*

- Athletics: Speed
- Computers
- Cryptozoology*
- Deception
- Defense*
- Drive: Wheeled
- Environmental Suit*
- Fraternize
- Freefall*
- Guns: Assault Weapons
- Guns: Handguns*
- Guns: Longarms
- Hand Weapons: Blades
- Hand Weapons: Blunt
- Investigate*
- Language*
- Law
- Liberal Arts
- Notice*

- Occult*
- Orienteering
- Persuade
- Reaction*
- Research*
- Science: Earth
- Science: Life
- Science: Physical
- Science: Social
- Science: Space
- Survival
- Thrown Weapons
- Unarmed Combat*

Secondary Templates

You should also choose 2 of the following 4 secondary templates, which help further define your Character's background. Assign 10 points on the Skills within each (for a total of 20).

Artist

- Art: Acting
- Art: Dance
- Art: Music
- Art: Oratory
- Art: Writing
- Art: Other

Engineer

- Engineer: Basic Drive
- Engineer: Electrical
- Engineer: Life Support
- Engineer: Power Systems
- Engineer: Transit Drive
- Mechanic

Physician

- Animal Handling
- Bureaucracy
- Medicine: Animal
- Medicine: Physical
- Medicine: Psychological

- Deception
- Persuade
- Insight
- Savoir Faire
- Seduction

The following Qualities are appropriate for an Enforcer. Spend 5 points to acquire Advantages. Conversely, you gain 1 point with which to purchase further Advantages for every 1 point of Disadvantages you take – up to 12 additional points. Qualities marked with a * may be chosen multiple times.

- Acute Senses (1)*
- Ally (1-3)*
- Contact (1-2)*
- Common Sense (2)
- Disease Resistant (1)
- Dream Void (2)
- Eidetic Memory (3)
- Fearless (3)
- Gifted Metabolism (1)
- Hard to Kill (1-3)
- Internal Clock (1)
- Internal Map (1)
- Luck (1-3)
- Nightvision (2)
- Occult Sensitive (3)
- Rapid Recovery (2)
- Sexy (1)
- Sixth Sense (3)
- Wealthy (2-3)

- A/D Stasis Visions (2)
- Annoying Traits (1)
- Arrogant (1)
- Bigoted (1)

- Chronic Pain (2)
- Coward (3)
- Dark Secret (1-3)
- Darkness Magnet (3)
- Depressed (1)
- Enemy (1-3)*
- Fanatic (1-3)
- Fat (2)
- Manic (1)
- Nightmares (3)
- Persistent Injury (1-3)
- Phobia (1)*
- Poor (2-3)
- Rival (1-3)*
- Sensory Impaired (1)*
- Skinny (2)
- Slow (2)
- Tormented (1)
- Ugly (1)
- Vengeful (1)

The following Talents are appropriate for a Researcher. Choose 1.

- Black Heart
- Born in Freefall
- Deeply Weird
- Double Tap
- Fight, Not Flight
- Killer Instinct
- Know Where Your Towel Is
- No Rest for the Wicked
- One Foot in the Grave
- Peek-a-Boo
- Sexual Magnet
- Snake Eyes
- Too Innocent
- True Grit
- Whiff of Death
- Wicked Smart



SKILLS

Skills are the useful things your Character has learned how to do. They are listed here in alphabetical order, according to the type of skill. Each is listed with its most commonly used appropriate Attribute.

There are also two reference lists in the next few pages to assist.

Artistic Skills

Art: Acting (Awareness)

This skill covers being capable of pretending to be someone else in imaginary situations.

Art: Dance (Grace)

This skill covers being capable of rhythmically moving one's body.

Art: Music (Awareness)

This skill covers being capable of playing a musical instrument or instruments, or of singing.

Art: Oratory (Demeanor)

This skill covers being capable of speaking publicly.

Art: Writing (Cleverness)

This skill covers being capable of effective written communication.

Art: Other (Variable)

This skill enables you to choose another art form not represented here.

Combat Skills

Defense (Grace)

This skill covers being capable of avoiding harm in conflict situations.

Gunner: Mobile Weapons Platforms (Awareness)

This skill covers being capable of firing all manner of large-scale artillery.

Gunner: Shipboard Weapons (Awareness)

This skill covers being capable of firing all manner of shipboard armament.

Guns: Assault Weapons (Awareness)

This skill covers being capable of firing submachine guns and assault rifles.

Guns: Handguns (Awareness)

This skill covers being capable of firing pistols.

Guns: Longarms (Awareness)

This skill covers being capable of firing rifles and shotguns.

Guns: Special (Awareness)

This skill covers being capable of firing exotic weapons, like flamethrowers.

Hand Weapons: Blades (Grace)

This skill covers being capable of fighting with bladed weapons.

Hand Weapons: Blunt (Grace)

This skill covers being capable of fighting with blunt weapons.

Hand Weapons: Improvised (Grace)

This skill covers being capable of fighting with improvised weapons.

Heavy Weapons: Launchers (Awareness)

This skill covers being capable of firing grenade and rocket launchers.

Heavy Weapons: Portable Artillery (Awareness)

This skill covers being capable of firing mortars and machine guns.

Reaction (Grace)

This skill covers being capable of effectively reacting when danger presents itself.

Tactics: Military (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how to coordinate fighting forces on land or in the air.

Tactics: Naval (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how to coordinate fighting forces at sea or in space.

Thrown Weapons (Grace)

This skill covers being capable of utilizing thrown weapons of all kinds.

Unarmed Combat (Grace)

This skill covers being capable of fighting using only your body as a weapon.

Knowledge Skills

Investigate (Awareness)

This skill covers understanding how to look for evidence, clues, and information trails, as well as how to analyze data for meaningful patterns.

Language (Cleverness)

This skill covers being capable of speaking languages other than one's native tongue. Choose one per skill, most prevalent being English and Mandarin Chinese.

Liberal Arts (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding a broad education of basic mathematics, history, philosophy, and the like.



Alien Autopsy: Deep One

Skill List by Group

Artistic Skills

Art: Acting (Awareness)
Art: Dance (Grace)
Art: Music (Awareness)
Art: Oratory (Demeanor)
Art: Writing (Cleverness)
Art: Other (Variable)

Combat Skills

Defense (Grace)
Gunner: Mobile Weapons Platforms (Awareness)
Gunner: Shipboard Weapons (Awareness)
Guns: Assault Weapons (Awareness)
Guns: Handguns (Awareness)
Guns: Longarms (Awareness)
Guns: Special (Awareness)
Hand Weapons: Blades (Grace)
Hand Weapons: Blunt (Grace)
Hand Weapons: Improvised (Grace)
Heavy Weapons: Launchers (Awareness)
Heavy Weapons: Portable Artillery (Awareness)
Reaction (Grace)
Tactics: Military (Cleverness)
Tactics: Naval (Cleverness)
Thrown Weapons (Grace)
Unarmed Combat (Grace)

Knowledge Skills

Investigate (Awareness)
Language (Cleverness)
Liberal Arts (Cleverness)
Occult (Cleverness)
Research (Cleverness)

Physical Skills

Athletics: Brawn (Physique)
Athletics: Coordination (Grace)
Athletics: Fitness (Perseverance)
Athletics: Speed (Physique)
Freefall (Grace)

Scientific Skills

Cryptozoology (Cleverness)
Medicine: Animal (Cleverness)
Medicine: Physical (Cleverness)
Medicine: Psychological (Cleverness)
Science: Earth (Cleverness)
Science: Life (Cleverness)
Science: Physical (Cleverness)
Science: Social (Cleverness)
Science: Space (Cleverness)

Social Skills

Deception (Demeanor)
Fraternize (Demeanor)
Insight (Awareness)
Intimidation (Demeanor)
Persuade (Demeanor)
Savoir Faire (Demeanor)
Seduction (Demeanor)

Surreptitious Skills

Crime: High (Cleverness)
Crime: Low (Grace)
Impersonation (Demeanor)
Stealth (Grace)
Streetwise (Demeanor)
Surveillance (Cleverness)

Survival Skills

Notice (Awareness)
Odd Job (Variable)
Orienteering (Awareness)
Survival (Perseverance)

Technical Skills

Armorer (Cleverness)
Communications (Cleverness)
Computers (Cleverness)
Engineer: Basic Drive (Cleverness)
Engineer: Electrical (Cleverness)
Engineer: Life Support (Cleverness)
Engineer: Power Systems (Cleverness)
Engineer: Transit Drive (Cleverness)
Environmental Suit (Awareness)
Explosives (Cleverness)
Mechanic (Cleverness)
Sensors (Awareness)

Trade Skills

Animal Handling (Awareness)
Bureaucracy (Cleverness)
Law (Cleverness)
Trade: Business (Cleverness)
Trade: Product (Variable)

Vehicle Skills

Astrogration (Cleverness)
Drive: Wheeled (Grace)
Drive: Military (Grace)
Drones (Awareness)
Nautical: Motor Boats (Awareness)
Nautical: Ocean Liners (Awareness)
Nautical: Sail (Awareness)
Nautical: Submarine (Awareness)
Pilot: Atmospheric (Grace)
Pilot: Spacecraft (Awareness)

Occult (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding the secret and hidden world.

Research (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how and where to search for desired and accurate information.

Physical Skills

Athletics: Brawn (Physique)

This skill covers being capable of athletic feats based primarily on strength training.

Athletics: Coordination (Grace)

This skill covers being capable of athletic feats based primarily on agility training.

Athletics: Fitness (Perseverance)

This skill covers being capable of athletic feats based primarily on endurance training.

Athletics: Speed (Physique)

This skill covers being capable of athletic feats based primarily on speed training.

Freefall (Grace)

This skill covers being capable of functioning effectively in microgravity or zero-G.

Scientific Skills

Cryptozoology (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding unnatural creatures.

Medicine: Animal (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how to

diagnose and treat injury and illness in animals.

Medicine: Physical (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how to diagnose and treat injury and illness in people.

Medicine: Psychological (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how to diagnose and treat behavioral and mental disorders.

Science: Earth (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding the factors behind planetary formation and planetary cycles.

Science: Life (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding the biological factors behind all kinds of life and how life is sustained.

Science: Physical (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding the physical laws of the universe.

Science: Social (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how human beings interact and how societies function and have evolved.

Science: Space (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how celestial bodies are formed and behave.

Social Skills

Deception (Demeanor)

This skill covers being capable of lying, spinning half-truths, or conversationally steering away from tough topics or questions.

Alphabetical Skill List

Animal Handling (Awareness)
 Armorer (Cleverness)
 Art: Acting (Awareness)
 Art: Dance (Grace)
 Art: Music (Awareness)
 Art: Oratory (Demeanor)
 Art: Writing (Cleverness)
 Art: Other (Variable)
 Astrogation (Cleverness)
 Athletics: Brawn (Physique)
 Athletics: Coordination (Grace)
 Athletics: Fitness (Perseverance)
 Athletics: Speed (Physique)
 Bureaucracy (Cleverness)
 Communications (Cleverness)
 Computers (Cleverness)
 Crime: High (Cleverness)
 Crime: Low (Grace)
 Cryptozoology (Cleverness)
 Deception (Demeanor)
 Defense (Grace)
 Drive: Wheeled (Grace)
 Drive: Military (Grace)
 Drones (Awareness)
 Engineer: Basic Drive (Cleverness)
 Engineer: Electrical (Cleverness)
 Engineer: Life Support (Cleverness)
 Engineer: Power Systems (Cleverness)
 Engineer: Transit Drive (Cleverness)
 Environmental Suit (Awareness)
 Explosives (Cleverness)
 Fraternize (Demeanor)
 Freefall (Grace)
 Gunner: Mobile Weapons Platforms (Awareness)
 Gunner: Shipboard Weapons (Awareness)
 Guns: Assault Weapons (Awareness)
 Guns: Handguns (Awareness)
 Guns: Longarms (Awareness)
 Guns: Special (Awareness)
 Hand Weapons: Blades (Grace)
 Hand Weapons: Blunt (Grace)
 Hand Weapons: Improvised (Grace)
 Heavy Weapons: Launchers (Awareness)
 Heavy Weapons: Portable Artillery (Awareness)
 Impersonation (Demeanor)
 Insight (Awareness)
 Intimidation (Demeanor)
 Investigate (Awareness)
 Language (Cleverness)
 Law (Cleverness)
 Liberal Arts (Cleverness)
 Mechanic (Cleverness)
 Medicine: Animal (Cleverness)
 Medicine: Physical (Cleverness)
 Medicine: Psychological (Cleverness)
 Nautical: Motor Boats (Awareness)
 Nautical: Ocean Liners (Awareness)
 Nautical: Sail (Awareness)
 Nautical: Submarine (Awareness)
 Notice (Awareness)
 Occult (Cleverness)
 Odd Job (Variable)
 Orienteering (Awareness)
 Persuade (Demeanor)
 Pilot: Atmospheric (Grace)
 Pilot: Spacecraft (Awareness)
 Reaction (Grace)
 Research (Cleverness)
 Savoir Faire (Demeanor)
 Science: Earth (Cleverness)
 Science: Life (Cleverness)
 Science: Physical (Cleverness)
 Science: Social (Cleverness)
 Science: Space (Cleverness)
 Seduction (Demeanor)
 Sensors (Awareness)
 Stealth (Grace)
 Streetwise (Demeanor)
 Surveillance (Cleverness)
 Survival (Perseverance)
 Tactics: Military (Cleverness)
 Tactics: Naval (Cleverness)
 Thrown Weapons (Grace)
 Trade: Business (Cleverness)
 Trade: Product (Variable)
 Unarmed Combat (Grace)

Fraternize (Demeanor)

This skill covers being capable of blending into social functions and circles of all kinds.

Insight (Awareness)

This skill covers being capable of discerning other people's personalities and motivations.

Intimidation (Demeanor)

This skill covers being capable of cowering another person either through browbeating or physical intimidation.

Persuade (Demeanor)

This skill covers being capable of convincing people to agree with you or do what you want.

Savoir Faire (Demeanor)

This skill covers understanding how to properly behave in different social circles and to negotiate with diplomacy.

Seduction (Demeanor)

This skill covers being capable of arousing someone's sexual interest and to manipulate them through it.

Surreptitious Skills

Crime: High (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how to plan and execute white collar crimes.

Crime: Low (Grace)

This skill covers being capable of performing street crimes.

Impersonation (Demeanor)

This skill covers being capable of disguising oneself and/or pretending to be somebody official or specific.

Stealth (Grace)

This skill covers being capable of hiding and moving quietly, so as not to be noticed.

Streetwise (Demeanor)

This skill covers being capable of surviving on the streets and navigating the shadier side of society.

Surveillance (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how to observe the movements and actions of a subject, without him knowing.

Survival Skills

Notice (Awareness)

This skill covers being capable of noticing important things in one's environment.

Odd Job (Variable)

This skill covers being capable of dabbling from a broad base of knowledge, but being truly proficient in none.

Orienteering (Awareness)

This skill covers understanding how to navigate planet-side.

Survival (Perseverance)

This skill covers being capable of sustaining one's own life in hostile circumstances.

Technical Skills

Armorer (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how to make and modify weapons, armor, and ammunition.

Communications (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how

to use and foil advanced communications equipment.

Computers (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how to use computers and, at higher levels, program them to do what you want them to do.

Engineer: Basic Drive (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how to design and repair basic spaceship drives.

Engineer: Electrical (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how to design and repair electrical systems.

Engineer: Life Support (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how to design and repair life support systems.

Engineer: Power Systems (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how to design and repair power generating and distribution systems.

Engineer: Transit Drive (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how to design and repair spaceship transit drives.

Environmental Suit (Awareness)

This skill covers being capable of utilizing environmental suits of all kinds.

Explosives (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how to effectively make and use explosives for traps or demolitions.

Mechanic (Cleverness)

This skill covers being capable of repairing mechanical machinery.

Sensors (Awareness)

This skill covers understanding how to use and understand remote sensors.

Trade Skills

Animal Handling (Awareness)

This skill covers understanding how to handle, care for, and train animals.

Bureaucracy (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how to work in administration and organizations.

Law (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding law, law enforcement techniques, and litigation.

Trade: Business (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how to engage in commerce.

Trade: Product (Variable)

This skill covers being capable of producing a kind of good or service.

Vehicle Skills

Astrogation (Cleverness)

This skill covers understanding how to navigate the solar system.

Drive: Wheeled (Grace)

This skill covers being capable of driving wheeled land vehicles.

Drive: Military (Grace)

This skill covers being capable of driving military land vehicles.

Drones (Awareness)

This skill covers being capable of operating robotic drones remotely.

Nautical: Motor Boats (Awareness)

This skill covers being capable of piloting motor-powered boats.

Nautical: Ocean Liners (Awareness)

This skill covers being capable of piloting large ocean-going vessels.

Nautical: Sail (Awareness)

This skill covers being capable of piloting wind-driven vessels.

Nautical: Submarine (Awareness)

This skill covers being capable of piloting submersible vessels.

Pilot: Atmospheric (Grace)

This skill covers being capable of piloting rotor or fixed wing terrestrial flying vehicles.

Pilot: Spacecraft (Awareness)

This skill covers being capable of piloting all kinds of spaceships.

QUALITIES

Qualities are those things about your Character that can't be easily summed up by Attributes or Skills, but which are still an innate part of him.

Any Quality marked * may be taken multiple times for multiple effects, which are explained in the descriptions. Additionally, bonuses or penalties from different Qualities that affect the same things stack on one another for additional benefit or detriment.

Advantages

Acute Senses (1)*

One of your Character's senses (sight, hearing, touch, or smell/taste) is extra-

sharp. You receive one free Success for Tests that rely on this sense. You may purchase this advantage once for each of your Character's senses.

Ally (1-3)*

Your Character has developed a relationship with someone who will go out of his way to help. The relationship with this ally goes both ways, however – he may occasionally also ask for help. Your Character should be careful not to abuse this relationship, because allies will stop being so if not treated properly.

An Ally/1 has some measure of influence and/or skill, while an Ally/2 is moderately influential and/or skilled, and an Ally/3 is very influential and/or skilled.

Ambidextrous (1)

Your Character is capable of using either of his hands effectively and functionally has no preference. He can continue to function normally if one of his hands or arms is wounded.

Contact (1-2)*

Your Character knows someone who can provide limited help or pass on important information. Unlike an Ally, this person doesn't ask for much in return other than the occasional favor, so the relationship is more difficult to abuse.

Contact/1 represents either two contacts of low-ranking position or one contact of mid-level position, while Contact/2 represents either two contacts of mid-level position or one contact of high-level position.

Qualities List

Advantages

- Acute Senses (1)*
- Ally (1-3)*
- Ambidextrous (1)
- Contact (1-2)*
- Common Sense (2)
- Disease Resistant (1)
- Double-Jointed (1)
- Dream Void (2)
- Eidetic Memory (3)
- Empath (1)
- Fast (2)
- Fearless (3)
- Gifted Metabolism (1)
- Hard to Kill (1-3)
- Internal Clock (1)
- Internal Map (1)
- Luck (1-3)
- Nightvision (2)
- Occult Sensitive (3)
- Peripheral Vision (2)
- Rapid Recovery (2)
- Sexy (1)
- Sixth Sense (3)
- Tough (1-3)
- Wealthy (2-3)

Disadvantages

- A/D Stasis Visions (2)
- Annoying Traits (1)
- Arrogant (1)
- Bigoted (1)
- Chronic Pain (2)
- Coward (3)
- Dark Secret (1-3)
- Darkness Magnet (3)
- Depressed (1)
- Enemy (1-3)*
- Fanatic (1-3)
- Fat (2)
- Manic (1)
- Nightmares (3)
- Persistent Injury (1-3)
- Phobia (1)*
- Poor (2-3)
- Rival (1-3)*
- Sensory Impaired (1)*
- Skinny (2)
- Slow (2)
- Tormented (1)
- Ugly (1)
- Vengeful (1)
- Wanted (1-3)

Common Sense (2)

Your Character has a sense when a course of action or inaction is foolish. Whenever your Character is about to

participate in something that is foolhardy, your GM will make a secret Cleverness Test – if successful, he will warn you about your potential mistake.

Disease Resistant (1)

Your Character doesn't get sick easily and doesn't typically stay sick as long as other people. He gains one free Success to resist the effects of disease or illness, and stays sick only half as long.

Double-Jointed (1)

Your Character's joints bend extra far. He gets one free Success to any Grace-based Test in which his double-jointedness might give him an advantage.

Dream Void (2)

Your Character, given what is now in the universe, is fortunate – he is one of those rare people who doesn't dream. He cannot be plagued by nightmares, nor is he susceptible to the influence of the Old Ones in his sleep.

Eidetic Memory (3)

Your Character commits things he sees and hears to memory, and it sticks. He has a nearly photographic recall, giving him two free Successes for Tests involving remembering things he has read or experienced firsthand.

Empath (1)

Your Character has an intuitive sense of what other people are feeling. He gains one free Success to Social Skills, including Insight.

Fast (2)

Your Character is faster than he looks. He gets a bonus of +1 Die for

Reaction Tests, and can move one full category faster in terms of Speed. He also gains one free Success on any Test of the Athletics: Speed Skill.

Fearless (3)

Your Character appears to others as fearless and doesn't get spooked easily. He is immune to the kinds of normal everyday human fears that plague people, such as those related to stress or anxiety, and receives one free Success for Horror Tests.

A Note to GMs: It will be tempting for every player to arm their Character with this advantage. Feel free to restrict it to one per group.

Gifted Metabolism (1)

Your Character's body processes foods, drugs, and poisons better than other people. He gains one free Success for Perseverance Tests to resist the effects of poisons, toxins, or drugs.

Hard to Kill (1-3)

Your Character is the kind of person that fights to stay alive, even when others would pass on. At Hard to Kill/1, your character suffers the penalties of the Hurt Wound Level all the way until death, never becoming Incapacitated (though his armor is useless at that level). At Hard to Kill/2, your character ignores the damage from one attack that would kill him, per day – at Hard to Kill/3, two attacks.

Internal Clock (1)

Your Character has an intuitive sense of the passage of time, even when unconscious. He always knows what time it is, usually within about 10 minutes. However, this internal clock is set to his

time, not necessarily the clock time of the planet or colony he is visiting.

Internal Map (1)

Your Character has an intuitive sense of direction and bearing. Once he establishes where he is, he remembers places he's been and how to get between them. He never gets lost in cities or colonies he's been to before. This also gives him two free Successes for Astrogation or Orienteering Tests.

Luck (1-3)

Fortune smiles on your character. At Luck/1, you can re-roll one Test per session and take the better result, at Luck/2, you can re-roll two Tests per session and take the better result in each, and at Luck/3, you can re-roll three Tests per session and take the better result in each.

Nightvision (2)

Your Character can see better in dim lighting than other people, and halves any environmental penalties due to darkness or obscuring conditions.

Occult Sensitive (3)

Your Character has an intuitive sense for the presence of the otherworldly. Whenever otherworldly influence is present, your GM will make a secret Cleverness Test. If your Character is successful, your GM will let you know he senses such influence – though not the source or direction of it.

Peripheral Vision (2)

Your Character can see things in more detail throughout his field of vision, and is capable of making Tests to notice things on the periphery of his vision that other people would miss.

Rapid Recovery (2)

Your Character heals twice as fast as normal, regardless of mode of treatment. This only applies to physical wounds only.

Sexy (1)

Your Character is especially attractive to the opposite sex (or those who would be attracted to his gender). He gains one free Success to all Social Skill Tests involving anyone who might be attracted to him, opposite or same sex.

Sixth Sense (3)

Your Character has an intuitive sense for danger. Whenever dangerous situations arise, your GM will make a secret Notice or Cleverness Test. If your Character is successful, your GM will let you know he senses danger – though not the source or direction of it.

Tough (1-3)

Your Character can take more punishment than others. Each level of Tough adds twice that many points to the Character's Health. For example, a Character with Tough/2 is treated as having a Health four points higher than usual and is capable of taking an extra four points of damage at each Wound Level (12 extra damage total).

Wealthy (2-3)

Your Character has amassed a fortune. Perhaps he understands finances and investment the way others don't, perhaps his family is wealthy, or perhaps he just got lucky. Your Character's starting Wealth will determine what kinds of gear to which he has access.

Characters normally begin play with a Wealth Code of 2, which represents

Middle-Class. However, by spending two points, he can increase that to Wealth Code 3 (Affluent), and by spending three points, he can increase that to Wealth Code 4 (Wealthy).

Disadvantages

A/D Stasis Visions (2)

Your Character suffers terrible and nightmarish visions while suspended in a gravity couch. There is something in that state of suspended animation that opens him up to dark influence. Each time he emerges from a gravity couch, make an Average Perseverance Test; failure means he suffers a penalty of -1 Die to all Tests for the first two days after he comes out of A/D Stasis.

Annoying Traits (1)

There is something about your Character that really bugs other people. He suffers a penalty of -1 Die to all Social Skill Tests, except Insight and Intimidation.

Arrogant (1)

Your Character thinks he's great, but others don't necessarily agree. He suffers a penalty of -1 Die to all Social Skill Tests, except Insight and Intimidation.

Bigoted (1)

Your Character doesn't like people (or cultures) that aren't like him. He doesn't care much for people from other countries, colonies, or planets, or for those with other skin colors or native languages. He suffers a penalty of -1 Die to all Social Skill Tests, except Insight and Intimidation, when dealing with people who aren't closely related to his native racial stock.

Chronic Pain (2)

Your Character has an old injury or condition that still interferes with his comfort or mobility. He may have migraines, joint pain, inflammatory or digestive issues, or anything of that nature. At the beginning of each in-game day, make an Average Perseverance Test; failure means he suffers a penalty of -1 Die to all Tests for the first half of his day, as well as moves at a reduced rate of 75% of his Speed. Some conditions may cause the pain to flair up again and call for a re-Test, at your GM's discretion.

Coward (3)

Your Character is easily frightened and he does not deal well with danger. Even normal things can freak him out, and he suffers a penalty of -2 Dice to Horror Tests.

Dark Secret (1-3)

Your Character has done or knows about something that others would freak out about. At Dark Secret/1, he would become the target of ridicule or be socially ostracized if the secret were discovered. Dark Secret/2, he would gain a powerful enemy if the secret were discovered, and Dark Secret/3, he would be incarcerated or killed if the secret were discovered. At all levels, the Character suffers the effects of the levels below and his chances of advancement in his chosen career will be adversely affected.

Darkness Magnet (3)

The dark things of the universe are drawn to your Character. It is almost as if he is a cosmic beacon for horrible things. Even if he tries to avoid the things in the shadows, they will

somehow find him. It is difficult for him to live in civilized areas and he most often finds himself on the fringes of society. Unless he is resourceful and combat-trained, it is likely his lifespan will be short.

Depressed (1)

Your Character feels down and mopey most of the time. He sleeps a lot, has little motivation, is constantly pessimistic, and has nothing good to say about himself or life. In addition to all the ways this can cause him problems, he suffers a penalty of -1 Die to all Social Skill Tests, except Insight.

Enemy (1-3)*

Your Character has angered someone and they are out to get him. This person will go out of their way to cause your Character problems and at least wishes to ruin, if not outright physically harm, him.

An Enemy/1 has some measure of influence and/or skill, while an Enemy/2 is moderately influential and/or skilled, and an Enemy/3 is very influential and/or skilled.

Fanatic (1-3)

There's something in life your Character regards as vital to the point of extremism, most likely an ideal. At Fanatic/1, he will risk social consequences for his fanaticism, at Fanatic/2, he will risk danger, and at Fanatic/3, he will sacrifice his life for it. Fanaticism forces his behavior – he's given up choice.

Fat (2)

Your Character isn't heavy or big boned – he's some shade of obese. He suffers a penalty of -1 Die to Reaction

Tests, as well as a penalty of -1 Die to any Tests involving speed or Grace, especially uses of the Athletics Skill (except Brawn). He moves one full category slower in terms of his Speed.

Manic (1)

Your Character is upbeat and energetic most of the time, in an exaggerated way that is unnerving to those around him. He can't sit still, talks too fast, and has an over-inflated sense of self-esteem. In addition to all the ways this will get him into trouble, he suffers a penalty -1 Die to all Social Skill Tests, except for Insight.

Nightmares (3)

Your Character suffers from nightmares, often brought on by the darkness that is once again coming into the world. Each morning, make an Average Perseverance Test; failure means he suffers a penalty of -1 Die to all Tests for the day.

Persistent Injury (1-3)

Something happened to your Character that impairs normal physical function. Perhaps there's some complication that has prevented physicians from operating or replacing organs or limbs, or maybe he lost a body part and something happened to prevent regenerative therapy.

At Persistent Injury/1, this means he suffers a penalty of -1 Die to any Tests that would be influenced by the injury (such as to Notice when missing an eye). At Persistent Injury/2, this increases to a penalty of -2 Dice, and to a penalty of -3 Dice at Persistent Injury/3.

Phobia (1)*

There's something that scares the daylight out of your Character. Most times, phobias are of simple and natural things, some of the most common being acrophobia (fear of heights), arachnophobia (fear of spiders), entymophobia (fear of insects), or scotophobia (fear of the dark). Whenever a Character is confronted with the object of his fear, he suffers a penalty of -1 Die to all Tests until a couple of minutes after the object is no longer an issue.

Poor (2-3)

Your Character is not financially solvent. Something has happened to ruin his financial standing, whether it be malfeasance, personal flaw, or addiction.

Characters normally begin play with a Wealth Code of 2, which represents Middle-Class. However, by acquiring this Disadvantage at two points, he can decrease that to Wealth Code 1 (Underprivileged), and by acquiring this Disadvantage at three points, he can decrease that to Wealth Code 0 (Destitute).

Rival (1-3)*

Your Character has someone who feels he is in competition with your Character for something, be it an object or objective, or accomplishment in a particular field. He will harass your Character, and generally attempt to out-do or humiliate him. A Rival/1 has some measure of influence and/or skill, while a Rival/2 is moderately influential and/or skilled, and a Rival/3 is very influential and/or skilled.

Sensory Impaired (1)*

One of your Character's senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell/taste) doesn't work the way it should. You receive a penalty of -1 Die for Tests that rely on this sense. You may acquire this disadvantage once for each of your Character's senses.

Skinny (2)

Your Character is not trim or wiry, he's downright sickly. He suffers a penalty of -1 Die to Reaction Tests, as well as a penalty of -1 Die to any Tests involving Perseverance or Physique, especially uses of the Athletics: Brawn or Fitness Skills. This does not effect non-physical uses of Perseverance, such as Horror or Madness Tests.

Slow (2)

For some reason, your Character moves much slower than most would expect. He suffers a penalty of -1 Die to Reaction Tests, and moves one full category slower in terms of Speed. He also suffers a penalty of -1 Die on any Test of the Athletics: Speed Skill.

Tormented (1)

You Character is the kind of person that wrestles with inner demons. He may suffer from tragic self-doubt or have psychological scars from some sort of abuse. In any event, what is normal for him may not be normal for other, well-adjusted people. Though being Tormented does not have an immediate effect on social interactions, it is difficult for such people to maintain long-lasting romantic relationships. Those who've known Tormented Characters for any length of time will regard them as strange or damaged as well.

Ugly (1)

Your Character is, in no way, an attractive person. He suffers a penalty of -1 Die to all Social Skill Tests that in some way involve physical appearance, though not for Insight or Intimidation.

Vengeful (1)

Your Character doesn't take losing or being wronged very well. He doesn't even have to have actually lost or been wronged, he only has to perceive he has. He suffers a penalty of -1 Die to all Social Skill Tests, except for Insight or Intimidation, when dealing with the person upon which he wishes vengeance. Furthermore, he must make a Perseverance Test not to take action against the person, whether through verbal abuse, attempted humiliation, pranks, legal action, or even physical violence, each time he is confronted with them.

Wanted (1-3)

Your Character has done something and now the law wants to have a word. At Wanted/1, he has committed a misdemeanor and the search for him is not intense – though there will be a warrant for his arrest on file. At Wanted/2, he has committed a non-violent felony, which has brought on a warrant and mild alert for his arrest. However, at Wanted/3, he has committed a violent felony and authorities everywhere are on the look-out for him. In any event, he'll need a false identity to move around, unless smuggled.

TALENTS

There are those unexplainable knacks that people seem to naturally

Talents List

Black Heart
Born in Freefall
Deeply Weird
Don't I Know You?
Double Tap
Fight, Not Flight
Killer Instinct
Know Where Your Towel Is
Lift With Your Legs
No Rest for the Wicked
One Foot in the Grave
Peek-a-Boo
Sexual Magnet
Snake Eyes
Too Innocent
True Grit
Whiff of Death
Wicked Presence
Wicked Smart

have, which help define who they are. Those things are defined as Talents. As you choose your Talents, notice that many of the Talents suggest a certain type of personality trait that go with them. Choose your Talents carefully, as they mold who your Character is in a very real sense. Your GM may choose to deny you the bonus from a Talent if you do not incorporate these aspects into your Character on a regular basis.

Black Heart

Your Character has the special ability to do messed up things, especially to other people, with no threat of suffering from Horror Effects or Madness. If it has to do with human suffering or remains, he is immune – he only has to Test against otherworldly things that truly threaten his being or grasp on reality.

Born in Freefall

Requires: Freefall Skill

Your Character doesn't need to Test for basic moves in freefall or micro-gravity, and gains two free Successes to any other Tests he must make.

Deeply Weird

Requires: appropriate Skills

Your Character gets one free Success for Cleverness-based Tests when analyzing or using alien life or technology.

Don't I Know You?

Requires: Savoir Faire Skill & Trigger

Your Character has the amazing ability to create relatedness with strangers. You gain one free Success for Social Skill Tests of a friendly sort with the person in question, for purposes of this first introductory interaction.

Double Tap

Requires: Appropriate Gun Skill & Trigger

Your Character can make a free second, non-auto shot at same target at which he just fired, at a -1 Die Penalty.

Fight, Not Flight

When your Character suffers a Horror Effect, you may spend one Tension Point to instead immediately make a free attack against the source of said Horror at no Penalty.

Killer Instinct

Requires: Combat Skill & Trigger

Your Character knows how to hit where it hurts and this one attack ignores any of the target's armor.

Know Where Your Towel Is

Your Character is an expert and prepared traveller, who is simply more prepared than others. In any one situation per session, you have access to a needed piece of gear, even when it isn't listed among your Characters possessions. It can even be something that is unlikely for most other unseasoned travelers to have packed.

Lift With Your Legs

Your Character can lift and/or carry 150% of what his peers might.

No Rest for the Wicked

Your Character has the ability to ignore all penalties caused by Wound Levels for 1d6 turns of combat. You can choose when to bring this Talent to bear, but can only use it once every 24 hours.

One Foot in the Grave

Your Character knows he is likely to come to a bad end and has embraced it. When he suffers a Horror Effect, he can shift that effect up or down one result on the table.

Peek-a-Boo

Requires: Notice Skill

Your Character is unnaturally good at sensing living things that are trying

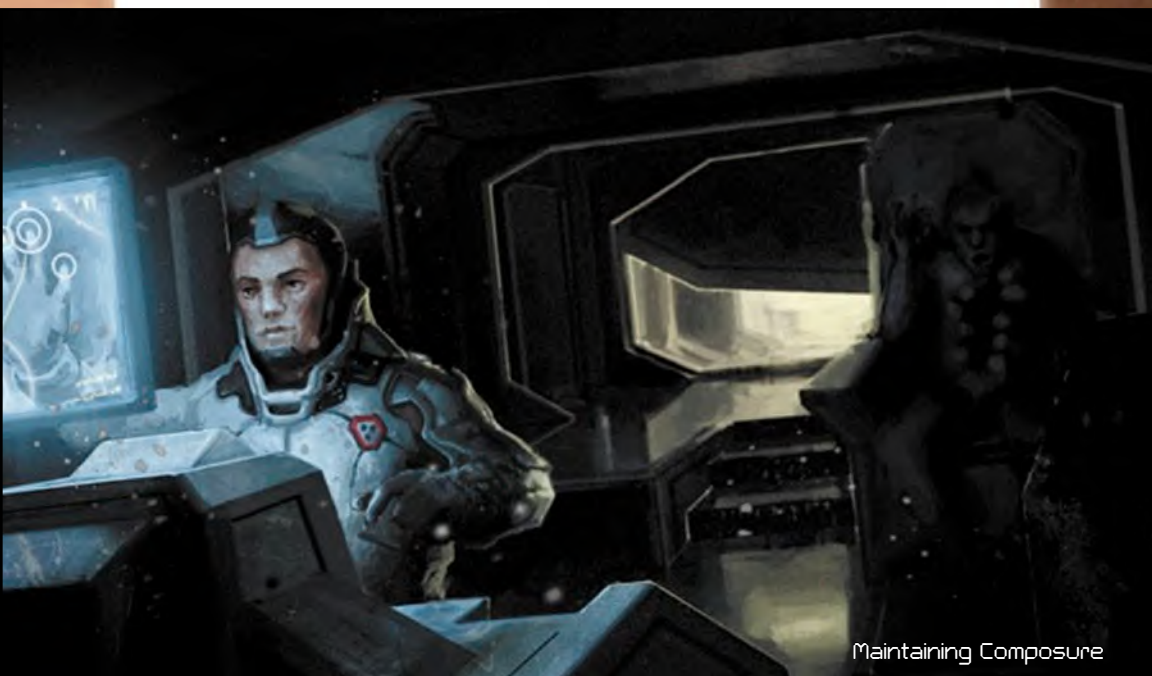
to hide, and gains one free Success to such Tests.

Sexual Magnet

Whether or not your Character is considered to be conventionally attractive and sexy, there is something about him that makes other people want to be sexually involved with him. He gains one free Success for Seduction Tests against those who would normally find him sexually attractive.

Snake Eyes

Your Character has the ability to render his inner self as frightening as the world around him, at least temporarily. He has the ability to delay the onset of any Horror Effect for 2d6 turns – though he will suffer the full effect once this duration has passed. As a side effect, he gains one free Success to any Intimidation Tests.



Maintaining Composure

Too Innocent

Your Character is the kind of person that people never suspect of wrongdoing. He can avoid being the target of such investigations, at least initially. Naturally, once evidence mounts up, he's in as much trouble as the next guy – however, he gets that crucial initial reprieve.

True Grit

Your Character suffers one less than the usual penalty to Tests when wounded. This means that he suffers no penalty at Bruised, only -1 Die at Battered, and -3 Dice at Hurt.

Whiff of Death

Requires: Notice

Your Character has the uncanny and unnerving ability to sense when death is near. This can come in the form of someone who is in mortal peril, nearby corpses, or nearby morgues, graveyards, or other places of death. Your GM will let you know when this Talent comes into play.

Wicked Presence

Requires: Fraternize

Your Character knows how to bring his personality to bear, gaining one free Success to any Social Skill Test. However, he also stands out when doing this and people take notice of him. He cannot blend in when using, or having recently used, this Talent.

Wicked Smart

Requires: Training in skills to be used

Your Character is generally life-smart, not book-smart, and gains one free Success to non-Scientific or Technical Skills based on Cleverness.

Character Advancement

Like most modern roleplaying games, *The Void* relies on a more dramatic, less realistic form of character advancement. Characters are awarded Advances at the end of every play session, which they can bank and eventually spend to increase or purchase new Attributes, Skills, or Talents, and to acquire or dissolve Qualities.

Regardless of other costs and requirements, there are two maxims that are applied to anything on your Character Sheet – you may only improve something by one point at a time and you may never improve the same thing two game sessions in a row.

This goes for acquisition as well – you can't acquire a new Skill two sessions in a row, or new Talents two sessions in a row. You need to give your Character a little space to acclimate.

Improving Attributes

It is possible through training and luck to improve your Character's Attributes. You must increase your Attributes incrementally, so you can't just skip from an 2 to a 4 without also increasing to 3 in between.

In order to improve an Attribute, you must have spent time in-game doing the kind of things that are required to train the Attribute in question to be better honed. You will also need to have your GM's approval, as to whether or not you've put in a convincing amount of in-game energy to warrant the increase.

Improvement	Advance Cost
From 1 to 2	2
From 2 to 3	2
From 3 to 4	3
From 4 to 5	4

Learn a New Skill

There are always new Skills you'll want your Character to learn. In order to learn a new Skill at 1, you'll either need to spend the in-game equivalent of 20 hours studying and training or 10 hours with a qualified teacher (anyone with the Skill at 3 or greater). Once you've done that, spend 1 Advance and you get the Skill at 1.

The Odd Job skill is a special case, since it covers such a wide array of knowledge. It takes twice as long to learn and costs 2 Advances to get the Skill at 1.

Improving an Existing Skill

In order to improve one of the Skills your Character already has, you must have spent time using that Skill in-game recently. You must improve your Attributes incrementally, so you can't just skip from an 2 to a 4 without also increasing to 3 in between.

Improvement	Advance Cost
From 1 to 2	1
From 2 to 3	2
From 3 to 4	2
From 4 to 5	3

Again, the Odd Job Skill is a special case – it costs twice as much.

Acquiring New Talents

Characters will also develop many new individual Talents as they grow. To acquire a new Talent costs 2 Advances. This new Talent should be relevant with how you're playing.

Modifying Qualities

Sometimes your story will give your Character the opportunity to acquire a new Advantage or finally lose a Disadvantage. Check in with your GM when you think either of these might be appropriate – if he approves, you can spend the advances below to do so.

Your GM may also assign you new Disadvantages during play. You don't have to pay for them, but you also don't get any new additional points for Advantages from them.

Cost	Advance Cost
1 Point	2
2 Points	3
3 Points	4



Pretty much everything you'll want to do in *The Void* will be covered by Tests, which determine whether or not you succeed or fail when it matters. Tests are made by rolling a number of six-sided dice as determined by things on your Character Sheet, trying to get as many fives and sixes as you can.

TESTS

Successes

Whenever you roll dice for a Test, you are rolling to get what are called Successes on each individual die in your pool. Each five or six you roll counts as a Success.

Difficulties

Before we can talk about how you make Tests, we need to talk about Difficulties. Everything you try to do has a certain level of difficulty associated with it. One thing might be easy, while another is just plain hard. To reflect this, *The Void* uses a scale of numbers that reflect the difficulty of the task.

Whenever you need to make a Test, your GM will tell you the Difficulty, based on what it is you're trying to do. When you make your dice roll, you're going to want to get a total number of Successes that's equal to or greater than the Difficulty.

Here are the levels of Difficulty and the number of Successes you need at each Difficulty

Task	Difficulty
Easy	0 (if Skilled)/ 1 if Unskilled
Average	1
Hard	2
Very Hard	3
Legendary	4

Skill Tests

When you want to do something that requires training, you'll need to make a Skill Test – the most common type of Test in the game.

Once you've determined which Skill makes sense, roll a number of dice equal to the Skill's rating, along with the appropriate Attribute's rating. This will typically yield a dice pool of between two and ten six-sided dice. If the number of Successes you roll is equal to or greater than the Difficulty, you succeed.

Skills are paired with the most likely Attribute that you'll use. However, sometimes you'll be trying to do something that makes more sense using a different Attribute – go with the one that works best.

Unskilled Tests

Sometimes you'll need to try doing something that your Character is not skilled at doing. If your GM says that you can try it – not all types of things can be attempted by someone who isn't trained – then you'll make a different type of Skill Test. You'll really only

be able to succeed at fairly easy or routine things, but sometimes you've got to try.

To try something when you have no Skill, roll only a number of dice equal to the appropriate Attribute's rating. Only sixes count as Successes for this Test. If your total number of Successes is equal to or greater than the Difficulty, you succeed.

Complimentary Skills

Sometimes you'll need to try doing something that your Character isn't specifically skilled at doing, but he's got a skill that's close. For example, your Character may not be able to specifically shoot a pistol, but he knows how to shoot rifles. Your GM will allow you to use that complimentary Skill as if you had a rating of one lower in it (with a minimum of one). Your GM will ultimately determine if the Skill you want to use instead will work – sometimes they will and sometimes they won't.

Attribute Tests

Sometimes you'll need to do something that is covered by your raw abilities alone. There are many things in life that rely on your natural gifts, rather than what you've learned over the years.

Once you've determined which Attribute makes the most sense, roll a number of dice equal to twice the appropriate Attribute's rating. If your total number of Successes is equal to

Tests At a Glance

Difficulties

- When you need to make a Test, your GM will tell you the Difficulty.
- When you make your dice roll, you need to get a number of fives or sixes that's equal to or greater than the Difficulty.

Skill Tests

- When you want to do something that requires training.
- Determine which Skill makes the most sense.
- Roll a number of six-sided dice equal to the appropriate Skill and Attribute ratings.
- Every five or six is a Success.
- If your total Successes equal or exceed Difficulty, you succeed.

Unskilled Tests

- When you want to try something when you have no Skill.
- Roll dice equal to the appropriate Attribute.
- Count only sixes as Success.

Complimentary Skills

- When you want to try something when you have no Skill, but you have a Skill that's close.
- If your GM allows, you can use the complimentary Skill for the Test, as if you had a rating one lower in the appropriate Skill.



Horror At Play

or greater than the Difficulty, you succeed.

Triggers

Triggers are special effects that are built into certain Talents that must be Triggered in order to do their magic.

When you roll a minimum of one Success more than you needed to succeed, you may choose to activate an appropriate Trigger. You may only activate a Trigger if you have succeeded at the Test in question, and you may only activate one Trigger for each action, regardless of how many are available.

Epic Fails

If you ever roll and all of your dice are ones, it's an Epic Fail and things fall apart in a spectacular fashion. Your GM will tell you just how bad things are.

Hail Mary

Sometimes you may need to attempt a Test that is at a Difficulty that is above your capability. There is still a slim chance you may succeed.

When you must attempt a Test at a Difficulty that requires more Successes that you are capable of generating based on your dice pool, roll your pool anyway. If you

succeed on all of your dice, you may roll another die. If that one comes up a six, it counts as a Success and lets you roll yet another die. You may continue rolling as long as these extra dice come up sixes. This may allow you to succeed at tasks far beyond your ability in times of extreme need.

Contests

Sometimes the thing you're trying to do will meet with the resistance of another living thing. When this happens, you'll engage in a Contest to try to beat your opponent.

When you engage in a Contest, both you and your opponent make your rolls, whether they're Skill or Attribute Tests. Whoever gets the highest number of Successes wins. If you tie, roll again until someone wins.

Your GM might give you an extra die or take away one of your dice in your Contest if you or your opponent have some kind of advantage.

Extended Tests

Sometimes the thing you're trying to do is something that's going to take a lot of time and effort. If this is the case, make three Tests. If you succeed at two out of the three, you succeed overall.

Teamwork

Sometimes the thing you're trying to do is something where your friends can help you out. In order to do so, your friend must have a rating in the skill that is a minimum of one lower than yours. If this is the case, you get a bonus die for that Test.

SPECIAL TESTS

Horror Tests

Characters in *The Void* run into some very scary things. Sometimes it's situations that are frightening and sometimes it's the things that go bump in the night. Your Character's reaction to such things are simulated by Horror Tests.

Whenever your Character has a chance of getting scared or runs into a frightening creature, he must suc-

Tests At a Glance

Attribute Tests

- When you need to do something covered by raw abilities alone.
- Roll a number of six-sided dice equal to double the appropriate Attribute's rating.
- Every five or six is a Success.
- If your total Successes equal or exceed Difficulty, you succeed.

Triggers

- Triggers are special effects that are built into certain Talents.
- When appropriate, you may activate a Trigger when you get one more Success than you needed.

Epic Fails

- If you ever roll all ones, things fall apart in a spectacular fashion.

Contests

- When something you're trying will meet with the resistance of another living thing.
- You and your opponent make Tests. Whoever rolls more Successes wins.
- Ties re-roll until someone wins.

Extended Tests

- When something you're trying to do will take time and effort.
- Make three Tests. If you succeed at two out of three, you succeed overall.

Tests At a Glance

Teamwork:

- Sometimes friends can help.
- Each must have a minimum rating of one lower than your Skill rating.
- You get a bonus die to the Test.

Special Tests At a Glance

Horror Tests:

- When something might scare your Character, you must succeed at a Horror Test or be afraid.
- Horror Tests are Perseverance Attribute Tests against a Difficulty provided by the GM.
- If you fail, you suffer a Horror Effect. To determine, roll 2d6 and consult the Horror Effects table.
- If a scary thing is something the Characters must face with any regularity, the GM should only call for Horror Tests the first half dozen or so times.

ceed at a Horror Test to prevent his fight or flight instinct from triggering.

Horror Tests are Perseverance Attribute Tests, against a Difficulty provided by the GM. Terrifying creatures have a Difficulty already associated with them, to make it easy.

Here are a few general Difficulty guidelines for horror that is situational in nature:

Horror	Difficulty
Disturbing	Easy
Scary	Average
Terrifying	Hard
Nightmarish	Incredibly Hard
Mind Shattering	Legendary

If your Character succeeds at his Horror Test, then he processes the fear without adverse effect. He will not need to make another Horror Test for this particular stimulus at this time, whether it be situational or creature-induced.

However, if he fails, he suffers a Horror Effect – to determine how he reacts, roll two dice and consult the Horror Effects table.

2d6	Horror Effect
2-3	Mess Your Pants
4-5	Run Away Screaming
6-7	Shriek Like A Little Kid
8-9	Freeze
10-11	Faint Dead Away
12	Fight Instincts Kick In (Foolishly)

Explanation of Effects

There are six primary effects someone in the throes of fear can suffer, and none of them are pretty – many of them can leave Characters in danger.

Mess Your Pants

Your Character is so scared he loses control of his bodily functions. He has urinated or defecated in his pants (possibly both). In addition to the discomfort and potential for later embar-

rassment, he cannot take action for two turns.

Run Away Screaming

Your Character is so freaked out that he wants to get as far away from the thing as possible. He can take no other action than to run in the opposite direction away from the thing that scared him, and he will scream unless stifled. He will keep running until he either feels relatively safe or that he has a reasonable chance of hiding from the thing. Then, after being still for a few moments, he can begin to take conscious action again.

Shriek Like A Little Kid

Your Character is so scared he starts to scream. These screams are the panicked shrieks of the terrified. He cannot stop shrieking for six turns, though he can begin to take other action again after three turns.

Freeze

Your Character's psyche is so overloaded by the experience that he freezes up. He can take no action for three turns, not even to make a sound. He is literally frozen, even if he suffers damage at the hand of aggressors.

Faint Dead Away

Your Character is so freaked out that he can't take it anymore. He blacks out and crumples in a heap on the floor. Unless someone wakes him with smelling salts or a stimulant of some kind, he's out for the next 10 minutes to an hour (1d6 x 10 minutes).

Fight Instinct Kick In (Foolishly)

The fight or flight instincts are closely related and most fearful things trig-

ger flight. However, whatever scared your Character forced his primal fight instinct to kick in instead, and now he must attack the thing that scared him with a terrible rage. If it is a situation that triggered this reaction, he must flip out in a fit of rage that is partly directed against the situation and partly just insanity. He regains control of himself after the stimulus is either dead or gone – or until one to six minutes (1d6 minutes) have passed, or he has taken at least 10 points of damage.

Becoming Accustomed

It is possible to face a situation or a creature so many times that it loses its fearful barbs. If such a thing is something the Characters must face with any regularity, referees should only call for Horror Tests the first half a dozen or so times. After that, the only way the situation or creature should inspire fear again is if it is presented in some way that is out of the ordinary.

Madness

The world of *The Void* is as such that the fragile world that people have crafted for themselves can come tumbling down around their ears – psychologically speaking. Whenever a Character is exposed to something that puts pressure on his psyche or forces him to face something that is outside his understanding of things, he risks madness.

Situations that can instill madness are rated in two ways. Madness Tests are Perseverance Attribute Tests, against the Madness Intensity. The Madness Intensity has two parts – the Difficulty for that Test and the number

of Madness Levels a character will gain should he fail the Madness Test.

For example, being captured and tortured for days might carry a Madness Rating of Average/1, so failure would mean the Character would gain one Madness Level. On the other hand, reading a true and intact version of the Necronomicon could have a Madness Rating of Hard/2, and failure would mean the character would gain two Madness Levels.

All Characters begin at Lucid and work their way up the Madness Scale from there.

The Madness Scale

There are four levels of madness, as well as one level of sanity. All characters begin at Level 0: Lucid, as the Wardens require functional people.

Level 0: Lucid

Your Character's psychic defenses are intact and a psychologist would brand him well-adjusted – or at least as well-adjusted as people get. He seems perfectly normal to pretty much everyone.

Level I: Cracked

Your Character has some of what people might politely refer to as "quirks." Of course, these quirks are merely the cracks in your Character's psyche that are the first hint of his eroding sanity.

Level II: Bonkers

Your Character can masquerade as normal for brief periods of social interaction, but anything longer – as well as in instances of people visiting his personal space – will clearly point to his oncoming madness. A mental health professional will strongly recommend care, and your Character runs the risk of being committed if he sits still long enough.



Madmen Are Not Swayed By OG

Level III: Raving

Your Character can no longer keep his madness to himself, nor can he sit quietly with it. He may still have good phases that allow him to interact with society, but anyone spending time in even casual conversation will know he is not right. Mental health professionals will commit him to care without question.

Level IV: Loony

It is impossible to hide how utterly gone your Character is. He is completely divorced from conventional sanity and can in no way function in society or with other reasonably sane people. The authorities, if they aren't already, will be looking to intervene and carry him to in-patient therapy.

Mental Disorders

Based on your level of madness, you may choose how this manifests in your Character. There will be eccentricities that will begin to show in the way your Character behaves around other people. The more mad he becomes, the more radical and pronounced these will be.

To make it easy, choose one mental disorder for your Character for each level of madness (except for Lucid). All of your Character's disorders should intensify and become more pronounced with each Madness Level. Rather than give you an exhaustive list of all the ways a human psyche can break, here are a few of those disorders that will be the most interesting for this kind of game.

- *Dependent Disorder* – your Character no longer takes responsi-

Special Tests At a Glance

Madness Tests

- When a Character is exposed to something that puts pressure on his psyche or is something outside his understanding of things, he must make a Madness Test.
- Madness Tests are Perseverance Attribute Tests against the Madness Intensity, which is the Difficulty.
- If failed, the Character gains a number of Madness Levels.
- If Characters reach Level IV: Loony, they are in serious trouble.
- You must choose one Mental Disorder for each Madness Level your Character has.

Madness Recovery

- Madness Levels I & II can be dealt with by regular therapy, which is preferable.
- Madness Levels III & IV must be dealt with via in-patient therapy, or treatment in a mental hospital.
- Characters that reach Level IV Madness are no longer playable as is. They will be out of play for a while as they recover.

bility for his life, and now relies on others to make decisions and take care of him.

- *Eating Disorder* – your Character develops an unhealthy relationship with food.

- *Hypochondriasis* – your Character is always afraid of being sick and constantly thinks that something is wrong with him health-wise.
- *Major Depression* – your Character experiences episodes of deep sadness and despair.
- *Manic-Depression* – your Character alternates between depression and mania, sadness and despair alternates with exaggerated elation, recklessness, and distractibility.
- *Multiple Personality Disorder* – your Character develops a whole other unique personality to deal with the horrors he has faced. Work out the details with your referee as to when this other personality surfaces and whether or not you have control over it.
- *Narcissistic Disorder* – your Character suffers from an over-inflated view of his own self-importance and needs to be the center of attention.
- *Panic Disorder* – your Character now suffers from panic attacks.
- *Paranoid Schizophrenia* – your Character suffers from delusions of persecution or grandeur or both.
- *Phobia* – your Character is now irrationally fearful of something common.
- *Rage Disorder* – your Character has virtually no patience and loses his temper when anything bothers him. He is likely to break things and physically harm people when it is inappropriate to do so.
- *Schizoid Disorder* – your Character withdraws from social interaction and no longer engages in emotional relationship with others.
- *Sleeping Disorder* – your Character has a problem sleeping through the night or getting to sleep at all. Nightmares may be a factor.
- *Sociopathy* – your Character no longer views other people as such, but rather as objects or tools. He no longer has any regard for life and has difficulty faking normal human emotions.

Coming Back

It is far easier to slip into the depths of madness than it is to come back from it. The human psyche may be a marvelously resilient thing, but once damaged tends to stay that way.

There are two types of care that can help a Character return to sanity. The first is therapy, which can involve counseling and drugs, and the second is in-patient therapy, also known as being committed or being thrown in the bin. The first is far more preferable, but is quite limited.

Therapy involves working things through in counseling and may or may not be accompanied by medication. This kind of treatment works for those at Levels I or II Madness. Characters must generally go once or twice a week in order to gain any benefit, over a period of time. Generally, the first month is a wash, as patient and therapist develop a relationship and work through any barriers to the process that might exist. As a simplification, characters will lose one Madness Level every four months after that. However, some mental disorders may take longer than that, such as multiple personalities. Your GM will determine how long it takes.

In-patient therapy means the Character has been committed to a lock-and-key institution and cannot get out without his physician's approval. He is under constant supervision and is most likely heavily medicated. This type of therapy is the only kind that will help those who have reached Levels III or IV Madness. As a simplification, it takes a year of game time to come back from Level IV to Level III, then another six months from Level III to Level II. Then, a Character can be released to regular therapy and into the world.

That may seem like a long time, but it's a small price to pay. These guidelines are for Characters only, so that you can bring your Character back from the very edge. Others in the setting may not be so lucky. Your GM will rule as to how long it takes for other NPCs to recover – those who have reached Level IV Madness may not recover at all.

Beyond the Pale

Characters who reach Level IV Madness are about as far gone as you can get. They no longer are capable of appearing normal and they're at the point where they might lock themselves in a room and write on the wall in their own excrement. In short, such Characters are no longer playable as is.

Does this mean that your Character who has had one too many bad days is now going to be taken away from you forever? Not at all. It does mean he'll be out of play for a while, however. You have two options that will work – both involve having your Char-

acter committed to an institution for a period of time (usually 18 months), so that he can recover with the proper help and guidance.

The first option is that your Character spends time in an institution and you choose to sit that time out. You can choose not to attend play sessions, or you can come and provide moral support and participate in whatever way you are capable. Perhaps you can help the GM out by portraying NPCs. Regardless, your Character is on hiatus while the rest of the group plays on. However, you shouldn't be punished for that. It is recommended that GMs give Characters in such predicaments half of what the rest of the group earns in terms of Experience.

The second option is similar to the first, except that you either generate a temporary Character to play (perhaps with a grisly fate in mind) or that you take on the role of one of the regular secondary NPCs in your game. That way, you are fully participating – and, as such, it is recommended that your referee award you full Experience for your primary Character, even if he is in the bin.

Eventually, the magic day will come when your Character is free again and back to normal – or at least normal enough to go out in public.

COMBAT

The Void is a game of survival horror and that means that there are many things in the solar system that will be actively trying to kill your Character.

There are also times where you will want to either enforce your will (or resist the will of another). The rules that follow cover both sorts of conflict – Physical and Social.

Physical Combat

Physical combat is split up into a series of five second-long turns, in which everyone involved in the combat gets to do something.

The Combat Turn

Each and every turn of combat follows these simple six steps:

1. Each participant makes an Initiative Test for the turn. This is an Awareness + Reaction Test.
2. In descending order of Initiative, each participant acts. Each can take one Free Action, one Simple Action, and one Involved Action each turn.
3. To attack a target, a player must succeed in a Contest. The attacker makes a Test using the appropriate Skill + Attribute for the weapon he is trying to use.
4. The defender then makes a Test using Grace + Defense.
5. If the attacker's total equals or beats the defender's total, he hits.
6. If successful, the attacker gets to add an additional die of damage for each Success he beats his opponent by to the damage roll, which is reduced by the target's armor (if any).

1. Initiative Tests

Initiative determines who gets to act in what order. To determine your Initiative for the turn, make a Test using Awareness + Reaction. Once everyone gets to start taking action, play goes in order from highest Initiative to lowest. In the case of ties, the combatant with the higher base Reaction goes first. If those are somehow tied, each combatant rolls one die until one of them rolls higher than the other.

You may choose to hold your action to see what others are going to do – you can choose to act on any lower initiative. You only need to tell your GM when he announces that lower initiative.

2. Take Action

Each turn, each participant can take one Free Action, one Simple Action, and one Involved Action. On your initiative, you get to take all three Actions and resolve them in whatever order you want.

Free actions are anything that can be done quickly and generally requires no real concentration. Simple actions involve some effort and take a bit of time. Involved actions generally require a Character to concentrate on the task at hand. Below is a list of different actions and how they are classified – if you wish to do something not on this list, work out with your GM how to classify the action.

Free Actions include:

- Ducking
- Shouting at someone or speaking a short sentence
- Surveying the situation

- Taking a couple of steps (less than a yd/m)
- Using a Skill to identify a creature

Simple Actions include:

- Aim an attack
- Draw or put away a weapon
- Dropping something
- Taking cover
- Move at Walking Speed
- Opening an unlocked door
- Reload most weapons
- Skill Tests that don't require full attention

Involved Actions include:

- Attack
- Break Away from Close Quarters
- Move at Running Speed
- Skill Tests that do require full attention
- Reloading heavy weapons

3. Attacks

The solar system is a dangerous place and sometimes you'll want to end something before it ends you. Attacking something requires three things: a weapon of some kind, some skill with that weapon, and being in range to use the weapon.

You'll find a list of weapons, with their accompanying ranges, in Chapter 8.

To attack a target, you must make a Test using the appropriate Skill + Attribute.

4. Defenses

Unless an attack is from surprise, every Character gets to defend against every attack that comes at him. To do so, make a Test using Grace + Defense.

Combat At a Glance

Physical Combat

- *1. Initiative Tests* – make a Test using Awareness + Reaction. The turn goes in order from highest to lowest.
- *2. Take Action* – each participant can take one Free Action, one Simple Action, and one Involved Action each turn, resolving them in whatever order he wants.
 - *Free actions* are anything that can be done quickly and with little concentration.
 - *Simple actions* involve some effort and take some time.
 - *Involved actions* generally require that the Character concentrate on the matter at hand.
- *3. Attacks* – To attack a target, you must make a Test using the appropriate Skill + Attribute.
- *4. Defenses* – To defend against an attack, make a Test using Grace + Defense.
- *Cover* may provide you with a number of bonus Dice for your Test.
- *5. Determine Success or Failure* – If the attacker's total Successes equals or exceed the defender's, he hits.

Cover

In order to survive real firefights, particularly those that involve automatic weapons or especially deadly

creatures, you'll need to utilize cover. Each type of cover provides you with a Bonus number of dice to your Defense Test against those from which it would protect you.

Here are the different types of cover and the Bonuses they give you:

Cover	Bonus
Diving and fighting prone	+1
Partial cover (from 25-60%)	+2
Complete cover (from 61-99%)	+3

Partial cover might include hiding behind a short wall, a post or small tree of some kind, or furniture. Complete cover might include ducking down behind a car or shooting from behind a wall.

5. Determine Success or Failure

If the attacker's total equals or beats the defender's total, he hits with the attack.

6. Doing Damage

Once you've hit an opponent, you get to roll to see how much damage you do with your attack. Roll a number of dice equal to the weapon's damage rating, along with Bonus dice that come from your overall Success, and add it all together. For each Success by which you beat your opponent, you

do one additional die of damage – ties do not yield additional damage. This total is reduced by the target's armor (if any).

You'll find a list of weapons, with their accompanying ranges, in Chapter 8.

If you are attacking with a close quarters weapon, such as your fist, a dagger, or the like, you can add one more Bonus die of damage for every two points of your Physique.

Taking Wounds

Whenever something is hit in physical combat, it takes a certain amount of damage. That damage is translated into wounds.

Every Character (or monster) has a Health Characteristic. He then has this number of points in each of the four Wound Levels: Bruised, Battered, Hurt, Incapacitated. If a Character takes more damage than four times his Health, he's dead.

Each Wound Level has its own penalties that are applied to the Character in question once he reaches that Wound Level, as shown in the table below.

The penalties associated with each Wound Level apply to all Actions the

Wounds	Penalties
Bruised	-1 die Penalty to all Actions.
Battered	-2 dice Penalty to all Actions.
Hurt	-4 dice Penalty to all Actions; reduced to half Speed & Armor.
Incapacitated	Character falls unconscious.

Character takes, whether in or out of combat. They are not alleviated until the Character is treated.

Armor

If you're wearing armor, it will reduce the amount of damage you take from each attack – for the most part. When you take damage, immediately reduce the amount of damage you take by its protection. However, armor has two levels of protection. It starts at its maximum protection. Once you've taken enough damage to be Hurt, the amount of protection it offers is cut in half. If you are reduced to Unconscious, your armor has been rendered useless.

For example, a full suit of Warden armor reduces damage by 10 points. Once you take enough damage to be Hurt, the protection of the armor drops to 5 points. If you take enough damage to be rendered Unconscious, it won't provide anymore protection until it is repaired (or replaced).

Fate Points

Every Character has one Fate Point, which you can use to save your bacon when it looks like your Character is going to die. These are unique to Characters, as NPCs and monsters don't get to use them. Fate Points can be used in two ways.

The first way is to avoid certain death (such as falling off a tall building or being flushed out an airlock). This will only work if you and your GM can work out a reasonably believable, if amazing, way that your Character survives the experience. Your GM may rule that you take some sort of dam-

Combat At a Glance

Physical Combat

- **6. Doing Damage** – Roll a number of dice of damage equal to the weapon's rating. For each Success by which you beat your opponent, you do one additional die of damage.
- **Taking wounds** – Each Character has four Wound Levels, each equal to a number of points of damage equal to his Health rating. Each Wound Level has penalties associated with it.
- **Armor** – Reduce the amount of damage you take by the rating of your armor.
- **Fate Points** – each Character has one Fate Point, which can save from certain death. If spent to avoid an incapacitating or killing blow, that attack's damage is ignored and you immediately heal another 3d6 worth of damage.
- **Healing** – Once hurt, you can heal Naturally, with First Aid, or with Medical Attention.
 - **Naturally** = 1 Health every 2 Days.
 - **First Aid** = 2d6 Health immediately, and 1 Health every day.
 - **Medical Attention** = 4d6 Health immediately, and 2 Health every day.

age, though it can't be enough to incapacitate or kill your Character.

The second way is to avoid a blow that would render your Character unconscious or dead. The Fate Point negates the attack that would do this sort of damage and treats it as if the attack missed completely. You also get to immediately heal 3d6 points of Health, as it looks like the wounds you've already suffered aren't as bad as you thought. If this brings your Character from Hurt or Unconscious, it also brings his armor back to the appropriate level of effectiveness – it too was not as badly damaged as you thought.

All Characters begin with one Fate Point. Once a Fate Point is spent, you get it back the game session after next. You'll be without one for one complete session, so be careful.

Healing

Once your Character has been hurt, there are three ways in which he can heal – Naturally, with First Aid, or with complete Medical Attention. Medical advances have made it so that people can heal at much greater rates than today, but healing naturally still takes a painfully long amount of time.

If you have no other choice than to heal naturally, you'll get back one point of Health every two days of game time.

If you can be tended to by someone who knows first aid and has access to a fully-stocked modern first aid kit, you'll immediately heal 2d6 damage. You'll then heal at a rate of one point of Health every day of game time.

If you can receive full medical attention by a qualified professional with access to modern medical facilities, you'll immediately heal 4d6 damage. You'll then heal at a rate of two points of Health every day of game time.

Special Modifiers

Aiming

Taking time to aim a projectile weapon is something you want to do when you have the freedom to do so, because if anything happens to disrupt your Character while aiming he loses all benefit. Otherwise, any Character who spends a simple Action aiming gets one free Success on his next attack. If you spend two simple Actions on two successive turns, he gets two free Successes on his next attack. However, if he is hurt between the time he takes to aim and when he makes the attack, the bonus is lost.

Automatic Weapons

Some weapons are designed to fire at a high rate of fire. If you're firing on single shot with an automatic weapon, resolve the attack as normal. When firing on automatic, your attack requires one more Success than usual, but you add the weapon's Auto value as a number of damage dice. The Auto value will also tell you the number of rounds firing on auto consumes – in general, it will be about half of a full clip.

Charging

If you can reach an enemy with your maximum Run Speed using an Involved Action this turn, you may charge him. This gives you a free at-

tack at a -1 die Penalty, but if successful will do one extra die worth of damage. This applies to attacks that are unarmed or using hand weapons only – guns do not gain benefit from charging.

Epic Fails

There will be times that you roll an Epic Fail during combat. If you roll an Epic Fail for your Defense Test, your Defense is treated as if it were 0 for the turn. If you roll an Epic Fail for your attack, your attack not only fails, you also somehow mess up your weapon in such a way that you can't attack with it for the rest of this combat.

Escaping Close Quarters Combat

When you're already engaged in close quarters combat, it isn't so easy to get away. If you try to break away, you must engage in a Grace Contest with each other combatant. This is an Involved Action. If you win, you can move your Run Speed away. Otherwise, you've wasted your Involved Action for the Turn and must stay in the combat.

Ganging Up

Sometimes you'll either be surrounded by foes, or you and your allies will close in on a particular enemy. If two combatants surround an enemy, they each get a bonus of one free Success to their attacks; if three or four combatants surround an enemy, they each get a bonus of two free Successes to their attacks.

Guns in Close Quarters

Once an enemy closes to close quarters, you would normally choose to use your hand-to-hand combat or

Combat At a Glance

- *Aiming* – One simple action gives you one free Success on next attack, as long as not disrupted. Two over two turns gives two free Successes, and three over three turns give three free Successes.
- *Automatic Weapons* – Attacks require one more Success than usual, but you add the weapon's Auto value as a number of damage dice.
- *Charging* – If you can reach an enemy at Run Speed, you attack at a -1 Die penalty. If you hit, you do one extra die of damage.
- *Epic Fails* – If defending, your Defense equals 0. If attacking, your attack not only fails, it messes up your weapon so it is useless this combat.
- *Escaping Close Quarters Combat* – To break away from close quarter combat, engage in a Grace Contest with each combatant. If you win, move Run Speed away.
- *Ganging Up* – If two combatants surround an enemy, each get a bonus of one free Success. Three or four is two free.
- *Guns in Close Quarters* – You can use handguns at a -1 Die penalty.
- *Obscured Targets* – Partially obscuring is a -1 die Penalty, truly obscuring is at a -2 die Penalty.

hand weapons skills. However, you can still use your handguns, but at a -1 die Penalty to your attacks.

Obscured Targets

Naturally, attacking a target normally requires a clear line of sight between you and it. However, there will be times when you'll want to do something in obscuring conditions, whether they be in smoke, fog, darkness, or something similar. If the conditions make sight difficult (partially obscuring), such as light fog or dusk, you suffer a -1 die Penalty to those Actions that require sight. On the other hand, if the conditions are truly obscuring, like in heavy smoke or darkness, the Test Penalty increases to -2 dice, but again only for Actions requiring sight.

Shooting Into Combat

If you choose to shoot at an enemy that is embroiled in close quarters combat with another – ally or otherwise – they each need to make a Defense Test against your attack. If either misses, they are hit by the attack.

Static Targets

Sometimes you'll want to shoot at something that isn't alive. Taking a shot at a static target is a shot against a regular Difficulty instead of a Contest.

Range	Difficulty
Short	Easy
Medium	Average
Long	Hard
Extreme	Incredibly Hard

This Difficulty may be modified by the size of the target. In general, espe-

cially small targets will be one level of Difficulty higher, while especially large targets are one level of Difficulty lower. In any case, your GM will let you know.

Suppressive Fire

There may be situations in which you'll want to fill an area full of bullets to slow your opponents down, instead of trying to harm them. Automatic weapons are the most effective in these situations, but any gun will do.

Your attack will encompass a 45° arc in any direction. To accomplish this, you must succeed at an Average Guns Test. All combatants that are moving through the field of fire must succeed at an Average Defense Test, or take damage equal to one round from the gun – with no bonus damage. Regardless, if you succeed, all combatants must slow their advance.

The amount combatants in that area are slowed is shown by the following table, depending upon whether or not you're using an automatic weapon and whether the area is open area with lots of room to move, or if it is confined with little room to maneuver.

Suppressive Fire	Amount Slowed
Auto – Open	50%
Auto – Confined	75%
Semi – Open	25%
Semi – Confined	50%

Surprise

Sometimes, a defender will be completely unaware that they are about to be attacked. If this is the case, the defender does not get to make a Defense

Test against that attack. As long as the attacker's Test yields one Success, it will hit and do damage – treating every Success as bonus damage.

Two-Handed Attacks

If you are skilled with a weapon (have at least a rating of 1 in the appropriate skill), you may be able to use two of that weapon at the same time. Naturally, the weapons in question must be the kind of weapons a person can use two of at the same time. Daggers make sense, as do handguns, but shotguns or machine guns do not.

If you can wield two weapons at the same time, you can attack with both of them in the same turn for an Involved Action. Both attacks are made at a -1 die Penalty.

SOCIAL COMBAT

There will be times when you'll want to try to enforce your will on another person, or when someone else will try to force their will onto you. Social combat involves pitting social skills against each other to see whose social pressure prevails.

Everyone you face will have one of four attitudes toward you – Friendly, Ambivalent, Unfriendly, or Hostile. Social combat affects each of these attitudes differently. Your GM will let you know what a Character's or NPC's attitude is when it becomes important. Just as in real life, most people in normal circumstances will be ambivalent toward you.

Each of the four attitudes means that the person in question will be-

Combat At a Glance

- *Shooting Into Combat* – All enemies in close quarters combat must make a Defense Test against your attack.
- *Static Targets* – Shooting something at Short range is Easy Difficulty, at Medium is Average, at Long is Hard, and Extreme is Incredibly Hard.
- *Suppressive Fire* – All combatants moving through your 45° arc must succeed at an Average Defense Test or take damage equal to one round with no bonus damage. You must succeed at an Average Guns Test. Enemies slowed by an amount shown on opposite page.
- *Two-Handed Attacks* – Attack with two weapons at the same time at a -1 die Penalty.

have a certain way, within certain boundaries:

- *Friendly* characters are nice, open, and helpful, in general.
- *Ambivalent* characters don't feel one way or the other. They'll be polite or cordial, but may or may not be helpful.
- *Unfriendly* characters are rude, closed off, unhelpful – or simply scared – in general.
- *Hostile* characters actively seek to cause harm – or are freaked out.

There are six social skills and each provides a different type of result:

- *Deception* allows you to spin falsehoods and make people believe whatever you want them to believe.
- *Fraternize* allows you to seamlessly blend into casual social situations without arousing suspicion, avoiding awkward situations.
- *Intimidation* allows you to cow someone else into giving you what you want.
- *Persuade* allows you to convince someone of something, whether it's a point of view or a course of action.
- *Savoir Faire* allows you to seamlessly blend into formal social situations and to negotiate.
- *Seduction* allows you to manipulate members of the opposite sex with promises of sexual congress, spoken or unspoken.

Which skills you can use depends upon the target's attitude:

Attitude	Social Skills
Friendly	All
Ambivalent	All
Unfriendly	All, except Fraternize
Hostile	Only Deception or Intimidation

Which skills require Contests also depends upon the target's attitude. Any social skill you are allowed to use is likely to have the immediately desired effect, as long as the intent is not outrageous.

Attitude	Skills Requiring Contests
Friendly	Deception, Intimidation, Seduction (if not predisposed)
Ambivalent	Deception, Intimidation, Persuade, Seduction (if not predisposed)
Unfriendly	All
Hostile	All

Exchanges

Social combat is divided up into Exchanges, instead of turns. Exchanges, unlike turns, are much more fluid and take as much time as is realistically needed. During an exchange, each party gets to take their social action. There is no initiative or turn order in an exchange – all actions occur simultaneously.

1. Choose Your Desired Effect

Your first step will be to determine what skill you can and will use, and what you want your desired outcome to be. Make that test, using the appropriate Skill + Attribute.

2. Insight

Whenever someone is trying to manipulate someone else, the defending Character makes a Test using Perseverance + Insight. If you equal or beat your opponent's Insight total, then you get to wear down his will.

3. Shift Attitude

Once you've overcome a person's psychological defenses, you get to shift their Attitude one step closer to pliability. If the person is already

Friendly or Ambivalent, then go to Step 4 – whatever it is you were trying to do succeeds, within reason. If the target was hostile, they move to Unfriendly, and if Unfriendly, they move to Ambivalent. Once a target is Ambivalent, one more successful Test will yield results. If you choose to spend further Exchanges to increase your target's Attitude to Friendly, then the results will be more to your liking.

4. Determine Effect

Once you've won enough Contests to shift your opponent's Attitude to Ambivalent, your GM will determine what sort of effect you've had. Obviously, moving someone from unfriendly to ambivalent using seduction won't yet produce the desired result, but you're one step closer. It should be obvious what attitude a person will need in order to do what it is you're trying to do – Ambivalent in many cases, through Friendly in others. If a Character spends the time to move a target's Attitude to Friendly, even though only Ambivalent would have been necessary, then the GM will determine the more favorable result that has been produced by the extra work.

Once each person who has chosen to be a part of the Exchange gets to go, then a new Exchange begins until it is over.

Determining Attitude

As a player, when you enter a social situation where your Attitude may be required for Social Combat, you should work with your GM to determine what your likely Attitude is to-

Combat At a Glance

Social Combat

- Everyone you face will have one of four attitudes towards you – Friendly, Ambivalent, Unfriendly, or Hostile.
- *Friendly* characters are generally open and helpful.
- *Ambivalent* characters generally don't feel one way or the other.
- *Unfriendly* characters are generally closed off and unhelpful.
- *Hostile* characters generally seek to cause harm.
- There are six social skills that affect interactions – Deception, Fraternize, Intimidation, Persuade, Savoir Faire, and Seduction.
- Which skills you can use depends upon the target's attitude.

Exchanges

- 1. *Choose Your Desired Effect* – Determine which skill you can and will you use.
- 2. *Insight* – Defend using Perseverance + Insight.
- 3. *Shift Attitude* – If you win, shift Attitude one step closer to your desire effect.
- 4. *Determine Effect* – Your GM determines the effect of the Attitude shift, if any.

wards the people in question. Please be realistic when doing this – it's unlikely your Character is going to be

Unfriendly or Hostile towards everyone, just so you get the rules benefit of them having to work harder to manipulate him. Most people in life are simply Ambivalent to one another, unless there is a personal connection, social circumstance, or prejudice involved.

Epic Fails

There will be times that you roll an Epic Fail during social combat. If you roll an Epic Fail for your Insight test, you simply fail in your defense. If you roll an Epic Fail for your Desired Effect, your social attack not only fails, you give your opponent a +2 die bonus to his social actions against you this Exchange – or next turn if he's already gone.

Recovery

Once you've ended an Exchange, your Attitude towards the person in

question remains pretty much the same, unless something happens that would change your opinion about him. People don't tend to walk away from social situations and immediately question how they feel about the other people involved, unless neurosis is in play.

Stalemate

Social situations can end in stalemates, where neither party is ready to give in to the other. This occurs if, during the same Exchange, both parties shift each others' Attitudes to Friendly. Both parties realize that they're not going to be able to outdo the other – or that they have no desire to manipulate the other person – and the exchange ends. They cannot continue social combat unless something happens to change their Attitudes about one another.



4G Board Meeting

Intimidation & Torture

The use of the Intimidation skill is a little different, in that it pretty much can't shift a person's Attitude to Ambivalent or Friendly in the conventional way. After all, you are somehow browbeating, threatening, or outright causing physical pain to another person to force them to take a course of action you desire them to take. When a person who is being intimidated or tortured reaches Ambivalent, they will do something that they are against, but that doesn't have terrible consequences. When that same person reaches Friendly, they will do whatever it is you wanted them to do out of fear. Additionally, you gain +1 die bonus to such Contests for every die of damage you do when torturing a person during an Exchange.

PHYSICAL FEATS

Sometimes it will be important to know some of your Character's physical boundaries. Here are a few additional rules to help you determine them.

Climbing

A Character can climb at a maximum speed equal to a third of his maximum land speed. The Difficulty of this climb may be affected by the surface and environmental conditions, like wind or rain.

Endurance

Every Character has a limit to how far he can go. Characters can walk for a number of days equal to their twice their Perseverance, before they have to take time to rest. They can

Combat At a Glance

Social Combat

- *Epic Fails* – On Insight Test, equals a fail in defense. For Desired Effect, attempt fails and the opponent now gains +2 die Bonus for this Exchange.
- *Recovery* – Once Exchange is over your Attitude remains the same, unless something happens to change opinion.
- *Stalemate* – If both parties shift each other's Attitudes to Friendly, the Exchange ends.
- *Intimidation & Torture* – When shifted to Ambivalent, subject will do something they are against. At Friendly, they will do anything. You get +1 die to Contests for every die of damage you do.

Physical Feats At a Glance

- *Climbing* – One third Speed.
- *Endurance* – There is a limit to how far a Character can go, including walking, running, swimming, climbing, and combat. See the rules starting on this page for specifics.

also run at half their maximum speed for a number of hours equal to twice their Perseverance or at full speed for a number of hours equal to their Perseverance. Swimming and climbing are more difficult and Characters can swim or climb at half their maximum

speed for a number of hours equal to their Perseverance or at full speed for a number of hours equal to a half their Perseverance (round down). They can maintain strenuous physical activity or combat for a number of minutes equal to twice their Perseverance and can stay awake for a number of days equal to half their Perseverance (round down).

When Characters reach these limits, they must rest. Your GM will tell you for how long, but any Action you try to take while exhausted is at a -2 die Test Penalty.

Jumping

Characters can jump a yard/meter across and a foot/30 cm high for every point of Physique.

Lifting

Characters can lift 100 pounds/45 kg and carry half that for every point of Physique. Mass, size, grip, and other conditions affect how easily something can be lifted or carried.

Movement

The quality of terrain limits the maximum speed at which a Character may move. Difficult terrain, such as sand, limits speed to half of maximum and Severe terrain, such as dense jungle or mud, limits it to a quarter.

Swimming

A Character's maximum swimming speed is one-third his land speed, assuming that the Character knows how to swim. Conditions, such as waves and currents, also affect how difficult it is for a Character to swim.

Throwing

Characters can throw reasonably light objects ten yards/meter for every point of Physique.

SURVIVAL

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

It won't always be horrible creatures or small arms fire that hurt your Character. Environmental hazards including burning, drowning, or falling are

Damage	Environmental Conditions
2 dice/turn	Hazardous conditions; exposure to the environment seriously affects your Character's health.
4 dice/turn	Very dangerous conditions; exposure to the environment for more than a few moments will seriously affect your Character's health.
8 dice/turn	Life threatening conditions; exposure to the environment for even a couple seconds will cause your Character severe damage and may cost him his life.
12 dice/turn	Extremely life-threatening conditions; if your Character does not find a way out of the environment very quickly a swift death is in the post.

just as real a danger. When your Character finds himself in such danger, your GM will determine how much damage you suffer based on conditions. Armor may protect against some things – just use your common sense. Here are a few of the most common kinds.

Crushing

Crushing all depends upon how much of the Character's body is being crushed and by what. If only a part of his body is being crushed or the weight isn't obscene, the situation might call for two or four dice of damage per turn. Having a shuttle land on you is worth twelve dice per turn.

Drowning/Suffocation

Not being able to breathe is always life-threatening, causing eight or twelve dice per turn. This is applied only once a Character has run out of air in his lungs – usually 30 seconds to one minute.

Explosive Decompression

Characters have ten seconds to do something once they've been exposed to the vacuum of space. After that, they take twelve dice of damage per turn. If they're lucky, they'll survive about 30 seconds.

Falling

The damage that comes from falling depends on how far the Character falls and onto what. Normally your Character will take four dice of damage for every five yards/meters he falls, adjusted up or down based on the landing surface.

Physical Feats At a Glance

- *Jumping* – One yard/meter across and one foot/30 cm high per point of Physique.
- *Lifting* – Though other factors apply, in general 100 lbs/45 kg per point of Physique.
- *Movement* – Difficult terrain halves Speed, severe terrain reduces to one quarter.
- *Swimming* – One-third Speed.
- *Throwing* – Ten yards/meters per point of Physique for light objects.

Survival At a Glance

Environmental Hazards

- *Damage* – Dangerous conditions will cause a Character to take from between two and twelve dice of damage per turn.
- *Crushing* – Total damage depends on how much is being crushed and what is crushing.
- *Drowning/Suffocation* – After 30 seconds to one minute, damage is eight or twelve dice per turn.
- *Explosive Decompression* – After ten seconds, damage is twelve dice per turn.
- *Falling* – Normally, damage is four dice for every five yards/meters of fall.
- *Fire/Heat/Smoke* – Individually, damage is two or four dice per turn. Together, eight dice.
- *Radiation Poisoning* – See rules on the next page.

Fire/Heat/Smoke

Individually these conditions might not be immediately lethal, only causing two or four dice per turn. However if all conditions are present, such as if your Character is trapped inside a burning ship, it becomes an extremely life-threatening situation.

Radiation Poisoning

There are many places in the solar system where exposure to high levels of radiation is a concern. Most of the Galilean Moons are excellent examples. However, people travel in radiation shielded vehicles or in radiation shielded suits that protect them, so it is unlikely you'll have to deal with the effects of radiation. On the other hand, it could happen, so here are some guidelines for you to use.

Radiation is measured in rems. Mild doses of radiation, those under 100 rems, won't cause any noticeable damage. Medium doses, in the 100 to 200 rem range, can make a person sick. High doses are in the 200 to 1000 rem range, and cause serious illness. The higher the rem, the more likely it will be fatal. Cancer is likely in most of the range. Lethal doses are those higher than 1000 rem. There are other factors to keep in mind, of course. Length of exposure is an important factor, but radiation does its work quickly. Layers of protection are also a factor, as is the source of said radiation.

You may want to avoid giving characters cancer, since it can be an ugly and prolonged disease – you may wish to rule that significantly high doses of radiation are simply lethal, even with a lingering death. Since such events are

going to be rare at best, this may work best for everyone.

Exotic Atmospheres and Environments

Across the solar system, there are a wide variety of atmospheres and levels of gravity. These highly variable environments can have a distinct affect on the way Characters function. Operating in the almost livable atmosphere of the partially terraformed Mars is a far cry from taking a stroll across the desert plains of Venus. The following rules can be used to help simulate some of the difficulties when operating in these dangerous environments.

Exotic Atmospheres

There are a whole host of different atmospheres across the solar system. Some are relatively benign and forgiving, while others will kill a man in a matter of seconds. To simplify things to an extent, all atmospheres are split into one of several categories, each of which is discussed below.

Earth-like

This is the standard atmosphere one would find on Earth or within a colony or station with a properly functioning environmental processor. There is no special gear necessary in this sort of environment.

Near-Earth

Mars has been in the process of being terraformed for decades. As a result, the atmosphere has started to approach a point that is habitable. However, it still has several decades to go before it will truly be a habitable planet. A person can survive un-

protected on the surface of Mars for several hours, so long as he does not exert himself. With a simple breathing mask, this period can be extended indefinitely. Space stations and colonies with severely damaged environmental systems can also fall under this category of atmosphere.

If exerting oneself in a Near-Earth type of atmosphere, a Character must make an Average Perseverance Attribute Test each turn. Failure results in the Character being unable to do anything more than move half his normal rate, as he tries to catch his breath. If this Test is failed three turns in a row, the Character falls unconscious and can only be revived once a sufficient supply of oxygen has been provided.

Non-Toxic Exotic Atmospheres

This sort of atmosphere lacks a sufficient supply of oxygen for a human to survive. However, it is not immediately toxic either. An oxygen supply is absolutely vital for any Character to operate in this sort of environment.

A Character without an independent supply of oxygen will fall unconscious in a number of turns equal twice his Perseverance. If attempting to exert himself, a Character must make an Average Perseverance Attribute Test. Failure means the Character has fallen unconscious. Once unconscious, the Character can survive another number of turns equal to twice his Perseverance. After this point, he will have suffocated to death.

Toxic Exotic Atmospheres

These atmospheres are poisonous. Merely catching a whiff will send one

Survival At a Glance

Exotic Atmospheres

- *Near-Earth* – Exertion without breathing mask requires Average Perseverance Test each turn. Failure equals no action and half Speed. Failure three times equals unconsciousness.
- *Non-Toxic Exotic Atmospheres* – Without oxygen, will fall unconscious in twice Perseverance in turns. Exertion requires Average Perseverance Test or unconsciousness. Unconscious Characters suffocate in two times Perseverance in turns.
- *Toxic Exotic Atmospheres* – Without oxygen, requires an Average Perseverance Test per turn not to die. Holding breathe is only way to survive.

into a coughing fit, as the body tries to purge itself. No Character should ever even consider trying to operate without an independent source of oxygen.

If a Character has no source of oxygen, he must succeed at an Average Perseverance Attribute Test each turn or outright die. A Character can hold his breath for a number of turns equal to quadruple his Perseverance if he is doing nothing more strenuous than walking. Doing anything more strenuous than this will limit the number of turns he can hold his breath to half that.

Exotic Environments

Beyond the composition of the atmosphere, the overall environment can also have a significant effect on the way Characters operate. In many cases, the environment itself will require more than just a breathing mask.

Temperate

This is considered normal for humans and they can operate without anything fancier than some winter gear or sun screen – if even that is necessary.

Arctic

Arctic environments are those which average temperatures are less than zero degrees Fahrenheit. A Character will need to wear an environmental suit or risk freezing to death. Each turn a Character is exposed to an arctic environment, he must make an Average Perseverance Attribute Test. Failure causes a -1 die Test Penalty to all activities, physical or mental, until the Character can get warmed up. This Test Penalty is cumulative with each failure. When the total number of failures equals twice the Perseverance of the Character, he will lose consciousness and freeze to death in a number of turns equal to four times his Perseverance.

Super-Cold

This environment is so cold (-100 degrees Fahrenheit or less) that merely being exposed to it for a few moments can result in severe frostbite. A Character cannot operate in a super-cold situation at all without wearing an environmental suit. If exposed to a super-cold clime, the Character cannot do anything more than stagger for-

ward at half his normal speed and will freeze to death in a number of turns equal to his Perseverance.

Super-Heated

These are hot, super-heated atmospheres that are oven-like. Stepping into this sort of environment will result in severe and debilitating burns within seconds. Each turn exposed to these temperatures, the Character will suffer four dice of damage. This damage cannot be mitigated by armor or other conventional means. In addition, the Character will suffer long-term burns that will impose a -2 die Test Penalty to all actions until they are healed.

Gravity

Very few places in the solar system provide the type of gravity to which humans are accustomed. Whether it be outside the gravity ring of a spaceship or on the surface of a Jovian moon, gravity other than 1G will affect the way Characters act.

Low Gravity

Within our solar system, there are three classifications of planetary gravity. Moderately low gravity planets are those that hover around 0.9G, such as Venus or Uranus. Low gravity planets are those that hover around 0.4G, such as Mercury and Mars. Extremely low gravity planets are those that hover around 0.15G, such as Callisto, Europa, Ganymede, Io, and Titan.

When on moderately low gravity planets, Characters lift and carry 10% more, jump and throw 10% further, move and climb 10% faster, and can endure 10% more (with the exception of sleep deprivation).

When on low gravity planets, Characters lift and carry 50% more, jump and throw 50% further, move and climb 50% faster, and can endure 50% more (with the exception of sleep deprivation).

When on extremely low gravity planets, Characters lift and carry twice as much, jump and throw twice as far, move and climb twice as fast, and can endure twice as much (with the exception of sleep deprivation).

The Saturnine moon of Enceladus has such low gravity that it should be treated as zero gravity.

High Gravity

There are few places in the solar system where Characters are going to experience gravity higher than 1G. The surface of Neptune is 1.14G, and if one were to go towards the core of Jupiter and Saturn gravity would dramatically increase.

When on Neptune, Characters lift and carry 10% less, jump and throw 10% less far, move and climb 10% slower, and can endure 10% less (with the exception of sleep deprivation).

When approaching the core of Jupiter or Saturn, Characters lift and carry half as much, jump and throw half as far, move and climb half as fast, and can endure half as much (with the exception of sleep deprivation).

Zero Gravity

In zero or microgravity, such as in space or one smaller asteroids, moons, or dwarf planets, Characters can have a difficult time moving around. Ships

Survival At a Glance

Exotic Environments

- *Temperate* – Basic survival gear may be required.
- *Arctic* – Without proper survival gear, must make an Average Perseverance Test or suffer -1 die to all actions. Penalty is cumulative with each failure. If total failures equals twice Perseverance, unconsciousness results. Will freeze to death in four times Perseverance in turns.
- *Super-Cold* – Without protection, can only stagger at half Speed and will die in a number of turns equal to Perseverance.
- *Super-Heated* – Without protection, each turn yields four dice of damage. Long-term burns impose -2 die Penalty to actions.

Gravity

- *Low Gravity* – At around 0.9G, Characters lift, carry, jump, throw, move, climb, and endure an increased 10%, at around 0.4G an increased 50%, and at around 0.15G, twice as much.
- *High Gravity* – At around 1.14G, Characters lift, carry, jump, throw, move, climb, and endure a decreased 10%.

have lines and hand-holds to help people move around, but anyone

who wants to get around well must be trained in the Freefall Skill.

Normally, a Character's Speed is halved and he suffers a -2 die Penalty to any Tests associated with getting around or even manual dexterity (things float around, too). Energized deck plates and objects designed to interact with them halve these penalties.

Any type of movement also requires a surface from which the Character can push off. If the Character finds himself in an awkward position or fails to get to his destination for whatever reason, he can spin out of control.

In most situations, success at an Average Freefall Skill Test will negate these penalties.

Tension Points

As a group, you and your fellow players have access to a pool of Tension Points each time you sit down to play. These Tension Points are very important, as they allow you to affect the game in beneficial ways when you really need the help. For an average four-hour session, you'll usually have a pool of five Tension Points.

You can spend them for one of five benefits, with varying costs.

Re-Roll One Roll

1 Tension Point

By spending one Tension Point, you can immediately roll again and take the better result. You can do this multiple times and choose from multiple results for one single roll.

Look What I Found

1 Tension Point

You can spend one Tension Point in order to find an item that is particularly needed, such as a box of ammo, a first aid kit, a flashlight, food, or the like. This item must be something that is relatively common and appropriate for the setting in which it is found.

Force GM Re-Roll

2 Tension Points

For two Tension Points, you can force the GM to re-roll any roll and take the worst result. You can do this multiple times and choose from multiple results for one single roll.

Get a Clue

2 Tension Points

If your group has gotten off track, is lost, or is in need of critical information they didn't get at the appropriate time, you can spend two Tension Points and your GM will give you the information you need.

Help From An Ally

2 Tension Points

If there is a plausible explanation for how a Character, either another player's or an NPC, can immediately come to your aid in a time of peril, two Tension Points can make that happen.

Extra Fate Point

3 Tension Points

If your Character is out of Fate Points, you can spend three Tension Points to instantly buy and spend one.

To spend Tension Points, the majority of the group must be in agreement. However, there's always a catch. Each

time you spend a Tension Point, the GM gets it. As he accumulates Tension Points from your expenditures, he can save them and spend them in ways that will be detrimental to you and your fellow players. That's why they're called Tension Points – they build the tension. You'll only want to use them when you really need them, as each one carries a price for its use.

Tension Points do not carry over from session to session for players. Any that are unspent at the end of a session are lost.

Survival At a Glance

Gravity

- *Zero Gravity* – Normally, Speed is halved and Characters suffer -2 die Penalty to moving or manual dexterity. Energized objects halve these penalties. Movement also requires a surface from which to push off. Normally, an Average Freefall Test will negate these penalties.

Tension Points At a Glance

- Normally, for a four-hour session, you get five Tension Points to spend as a group.
- One Tension Point allows you to re-roll one roll or find something that is particularly needed.
- Two Tension Points allows you to force the GM to re-roll one roll, to get a clue you need, or get help from an ally when in trouble.
- Three Tension Points allows you to get an extra Fate Point.
- Expenditure requires majority agreement.
- Spent Tension Points go to the GM, who will spend them to hamper you later in the game.



"Mother... the least you could do is warm the floor up for me, Doc," complained Percy. He looked over at Doctor Curtis Spence, who was scanning readouts on the flex panel that was suspended from the ceiling between the two. Glowing characters slowly scrolled up the screen as the Doctor's eyes flicked back and forth, taking in the information. He was an older man with the slightly portly body that tended to come upon one as the decades passed by. Percy and he had been making the Neptune run for almost ten years together now. Enough time with enough stuff in the past to make their relationship a little more than just a friendship.



Awakening from A/D Stasis

Curtis looked up and smiled, "What, and miss your cute dance? You'd think after ten years you'd man-up and deal with it instead of prancing around like a school-girl princess."

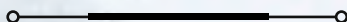
Percy shot him a sour look as he padded over to the showers. It was the same routine every time he woke up – a private way the two reaffirmed their bond before the rest of the crew stirred.

As he stepped into the shower, Percy said, "I feel a bit heavy. I think I'm getting old."

"You are getting old, but that's not what your feeling. Seems the ring is spinning about 2% faster than it should," the Doctor reported, as the water started washing the gel off Percy.

"I'll get Anya to take a look at it when she wakes up," replied Percy. Anya Galperin was the ship's chief engineer. She had only been on this run three times, but thus far Percy had nothing bad to say about the woman. She kept his ship running in top shape, which is all one could reasonably want when traveling this deep into the solar system. Emergencies in deep space often meant death for those involved.

"Wake the crew, Doc. I'm heading to the bridge. Get Anya up first," said Captain Aniston as he finally pulled on some warm socks.



About twenty minutes later, Anya ducked under the lip of the bridge hatch, thankful for being able to walk in zero-gravity. Special magnetic plates in her shoes and special fibers that ran through her clothing were attracted to others that were built into the deck of the ship, which pulled her towards the deck. Everything on the ship that wasn't bolted down was the same. Drop a pen and it will fall to the deck – albeit a little

slower than it would in 1G. However, it meant that one didn't have to worry much about tools and gear floating away, which was important in her line of work.

"Heya Cap. Doc tells me your dance this time was especially amusing," Anya smiled.

Percy frowned. Curtis had a habit of recording his first steps out of the grav couch and showing it to new crew members. He said it kept Percy human in the eyes of his people. The Captain shot Anya a look, but was greeted by her gleeful imitation of what she'd seen on the tape. It was actually funny, so Percy couldn't help but smile – but just a little.

"If you are quite done, I need you to take a look at the rotational settings on ring one," said the Captain.

Anya stopped her dancing almost immediately. As the engineer, this was the kind of thing she took very seriously.

"Doc said something and I thought I could feel it. Seems the deck plates in the zero-G regions are fine though," she said, as she sat down at the engineering station and brought the flex panel to life. A schematic of the Costello filled the screen with a variety of readouts, showing the status of several key areas of the ship. Percy could see that a small area glowed red near the power plant for ring two. Before he could ask about it, Anya touched the area on the

screen and the schematic zoomed in.

"Looks like we took a micrometeorite hit during acceleration. Nothing to worry about though. It doesn't look like it was near anything critical. I'll get it patched up later today," Anya reported, as she zoomed back out. Moments later, she had focused in on the rotational motors for ring one and frowned at what she saw. Percy could see nothing out of the ordinary – no tell-tale red or yellow glowing lines that usually indicated a problem spot.

"I'm not seeing any problems with the ring one drives, Captain." Anya tapped a few keys on the board in front of her, opening several more windows that appeared on the flex screen. "You said the rings were running 2% too fast right?"

"No, Curtis said that, but he's a doctor not an engineer. He could have had the number wrong."

"Not likely. You don't need to be an engineer to read a number on the screen. It shows it's 3% above nominal now. Just a sec..." She hit more keys and looked at some new information. "This is weird. The ring started accelerating minutes after the ship exited the A-Curve." A few more key presses and her frown deepened. "Twenty minutes later, ring two started the same acceleration. Both rings are still speeding up."

"Can't you just reset them?" the Captain asked. His worry was starting to show in his voice.

"Already tried. The reset doesn't seem to be doing anything. I'm going to need to go down there. I need Jackson awake – I may need another hand."

Percy started to open a comm channel to the med bay when an alarm from the engineering panel stopped him.

"What the hell? Both rings just jumped to six percent. I can't wait. I need to get down there now." Anya shot up from the chair just as Curtis' voice came over the intercom.

"Hey Captain, I just felt a weird vibration through the floor and I can definitely feel the gravity here increasing." Now Curtis sounded worried, too – if not a bit frightened.

"Anya's on it. Get Jackson awake and tell him to meet her in the ring drive room. She needs his help." Percy sat down at the engineering station to keep an eye on the screen.

"He's showering now. Is this a serious problem?" Curt's asked.

"Don't worry, Anya's on it," Percy replied, putting more confidence in his voice than he felt. Even the smallest emergencies in deep space were bad and he prayed this was not going to become one.

○ ————— ○

Anya stopped by her quarters long enough to grab her gear, a portable comp, some tools – everything she might need. Her mind was going over the programs and electronics that controlled the ring's rotational speeds, but she could not figure out why they would be accelerating. It just wasn't something that should happen. She would understand it if they were stopping altogether. That would be normal mechanical failure, but not likely on her ship. For them to increase in speed someone would need...

Just as the thought was going through her mind, a flash of movement ahead caught her eye. At first, she thought she had imagined it, but then she saw it again. A man peered around the open hatch ahead – the hatch that led to the drive room for ring one. Before she could really process the thought, he brought up a pistol and aimed it right at her. Her rusty naval instincts kicked in, but not soon enough. Anya cried out as the bullet ripped through her shoulder. She fell backwards and rolled behind a support. For some reason, it occurred to her that this was the first time she had ever been shot. It hurt like hell and she was leaking.

○ ————— ○

On the bridge, Percy felt an unpleasant vibration through the deck. He knew his ship inside and out, including all the sounds and vibra-

tions. This was not normal. Looking at the readout, he saw that the rings had just jumped to 10% above optimal. They were still accelerating and the rate at which they were doing so was still increasing. Soon it was going to get a lot harder to move. Just as he was about to buzz Anya, the comm beeped.

"We have a really big problem, Captain!" Percy recognized the panic rising in her voice.

"I know. The rings just jumped in velocity again," Percy responded.

"That's not the problem! Somebody down here just shot me!"

That was the last thing Percy expected to hear. How could anyone besides his crew even be awake? All the passengers were kept asleep on this long of a voyage – it was easier and cheaper that way.

"I'm betting this guy and the problem with the rings have something in common. Hold on... I think I hear him. I've got to get moving again." Percy heard Anya groan in pain.

"Are you okay? How bad is it?"

"It's just my shoulder, but it really hurts. Be..."

Her response was cut short by the sound of gunfire.

"Anya! Anya! Are you okay?" shouted the Captain.

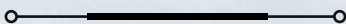
"Yeah, he was shooting out one of the control panels." The deck of the ship suddenly shuddered. "Uh, how fast are the rings turning now?"

The Captain glanced at the read-out on the flex screen. It read 14%.

He relayed the data. "How fast can they go before we have a problem?"

"Not much more," she said. "I've got to do something."

Percy was about to tell her not to take foolish risks, but Curtis interrupted. "Jackson is heading out now. Gravity in here is still increasing. Percy, we're in real trouble, aren't we?"



The man with the gun had apparently moved on, so Anya made a run for it. Ducking through the nearest hatch, she found him there, ready to shoot out the last of the intact control panels. He looked like one of the passengers. He saw her and smiled.

"I'm sure this all comes as a surprise to you, no?" He turned to level the gun at her, again.

Anya could only nod.

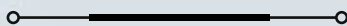
"I am sorry about your shoulder. I didn't mean to make you suffer."

And then he fired into the panel, blowing it to smithereens. Anya could hear the machinery strain even harder.

"Why? Why are you doing this?" she shouted, panicked.

The man laughed. "Little girl, I am but a harbinger of the truth. Humanity is nothing more than a pestilence that will soon be purged by the true gods. They will purify existence and right all that is wrong. Only those of us who understand our place will be...."

His words were cut short by a loud pop. Anya knew what that sound meant. She closed her eyes and prayed.



From the outside, if anyone had been there to see it, the first gravity ring of the Costello seemed to have lost its center. It wobbled in a way the ship was not designed to handle. The stresses of the uneven spin snapped structural supports throughout the ship, tearing them out and ripping holes in the hull. Atmosphere vented to space as the rotating ring broke free. As it spun off into the void, one of the ring's spokes caught on the second ring, and the whole thing started over again. Within moments, the remnants of the Costello were scattered, tumbling through empty space, leaving nothing behind.

The crew's fate would not even be a memory.



The technological advances of the last 150 years have enabled humanity an unprecedented level of comfort, security, and convenience. Every field has seen major leaps forward, with each leap providing the seeds needed for the next leap. In some cases, advances in one field have necessitated the need for advances in others. As medical technology has improved and life spans have increased, the Earth has become ever more crowded, leading to the need to expand beyond the boundaries of our home planet. This has led to necessary advances in thermal dynamics, astrophysics, and materials sciences needed to make the exploitation of the solar system truly commercially viable. Food sciences have created breakthrough methods of growing food far from Earth. It is a cycle that has only increased in intensity as humanity seeks more ways to go beyond the normal limits Mother Nature originally imposed upon the race.

Medical Sciences

In the last century, the life expectancy has radically increased, with an average person now living for a little over 150 years. This has largely been a result of a number of major medical advances that have led to an ever-increasing understanding of the way the human body works, and how to best combat the natural ravages that time inflicts upon it. While many in the medical field would like to point to their own specialty as the leading factor in the improvement of the human experience, it is a combination of disciplines that have worked together to make this possible.

Custom Organs

In days of old, if a person's organ failed, either from disease or simply due to age, there were only two options: install an artificial version or find a donor with a compatible spare. Unfortunately, there was no guarantee that the body would accept either and, in the case of a donor organ, one often had to wait until the donor had died. Today, a third and infinitely superior option exists.

Using technology derived from rapid-prototyping, organs that are exact duplicates of a patient's own can literally be printed in biological 3D. The technology works in two steps. First, a biopsy of the organ in question is taken from the patient. The genetic structure of the organ is then inserted into a special organic liquid called bioreplicant gel. This gel absorbs and takes on the same genetic building blocks as the patient, ensuring that it is completely compatible and reduces the chance of the organ being rejected to zero. The organ in question is then scanned by highly sensitive and precise scanners, building a three-dimensional model. Doctors can then look for any imperfections in the organ and correct them. Once this is complete, the model is fed into a highly specialized rapid prototype printer. The printer builds the organ using the bioreplicant gel, one layer at a time. When complete, an organ that is an exact duplicate of the patient's own is ready to be surgically inserted. The entire process, sans the surgery itself, takes less than 72 hours. The only organ that is unable to be recreated in this manner is the brain, which is

far too complex for such a procedure to work.

Regenerative Therapies

The capability of a lizard to grow a new tail after his old one has been severed or for a crab to replace a missing limb that was torn off by another predator has long fascinated medical researchers. However, it took decades of research before a true understanding of the workings behind those capabilities was obtained. The long hard work has paid off, however, and today it is possible, with significant help, for a victim of an accident or other trauma to replace a lost limb.

Regenerative therapy, as the discipline of regrowing lost limbs has come to be known, is not a perfect science and there are some for whom the therapy simply is not effective. Even for those on whom it does work, the process is long and can require dozens of visits to the hospital. The raw severed stub is submerged in a special bath that stimulates the cells to slowly start to replace those that are missing. In time, the missing limb is slowly regenerated.



Modern Diagnostic Bed

Early versions of this therapy required the patient to stay in the hospital throughout the process – something that can take upwards of a year to complete. For many, it was simply not a realistic option, as not many can afford to stay out of work for that kind of time. Today, the end of the stub is sealed in a small portable container, generally referred to as a tub, that contains the regenerative bath, as well as the circulation and filtration systems necessary for the procedure to be successful. Every week, this tub is checked and adjusted by the super-

vising doctor to ensure the process is proceeding correctly.

As with all biomedical technology, regenerative therapy has its limits. The candidate limb cannot have been allowed to begin its own healing process. The human body is not programmed to regenerate its limbs, and once the stub begins to heal the cells needed for the process are replaced and the cellular memory required is lost. The stub also cannot have been cauterized by any means – the severed end must be raw.

For the patient, the regenerative process is always accompanied by some level of constant pain, as the nerves are live. The regenerative bath does reduce this to a manageable level but, due to limitations in the process, cannot completely negate it. Live active nerves are a necessary part of the regeneration if the new limb is to be fully functional.

Medical Tools

The tools used by medical professionals have come a long way from decades gone by. From high-tech medical scanners to laser scalpels and sub-dermal monitors, the tools and aides available make doctors from previous times seem primitive and almost cruel in comparison. Even the smallest clinics and med-bays have an impressive array of tools to help doctors and med-techs diagnose and treat patients.

Gravity Couch

Found on all interplanetary spaceships, a gravity couch is used while the ship is in either its acceleration

or deceleration phase. They protect anyone inside from the crushing forces the ship undergoes during these stages of a journey between planets. Each couch is designed to support a single person. To be fully functional, the couches must also be filled with gravity gel, as described below.

Gravity Gel

Used in conjunction with a gravity couch, this gel cushions the body while a spaceship is experiencing the tremendous forces encountered during its acceleration and deceleration phases. The gel is actually a two-part polymer. One part is a greenish-colored water-like liquid that fills the couch once a subject is in it. This liquid makes the body naturally buoyant and the subject will tend to float in the middle of the couch. Once this is achieved, a powder is injected into the water that turns the liquid into a thick gel. At the end of the journey, a third liquid is injected into the gel that slowly turns it back into a water-like liquid that is then drained out of the couch, freeing the person inside. More than a few people find the experience of floating in a tube of thick gel to be claustrophobic and unpleasant.

Computer Technology

Since the late 20th century, computers have been a common part of both work and home life. They have also seen some of the most frenzied development when compared to other technologies. For decades, the power of computers was limited by the technology behind them. Silicon wafers imprinted with the circuitry grew ever smaller, until the point was reached that they simply could not be made

any smaller. Limitations of the materials, as well as heat problems, plagued these early computers and such systems required significant cooling fans and, in some cases, actual liquid cooling systems. In addition, with electricity providing the primary means of transporting data, resistance in the conducting materials limited the speeds at which the processors could ultimately function. For a time, this caused a stall in the advancement of computer. Multi-processor systems came into being which helped to overcome this limitation, but this was more of a stop-gap while engineers puzzled over how to overcome the barrier they had seemingly hit.

Optical Computer Systems

Optical computers replaced electricity as the transporting medium with light. It took time to perfect the technology, but when it had been achieved computers that were easily four times as powerful as the current leading edge systems quickly emerged. These systems not only ran much faster than their older counterparts, they nearly completely negated the heat problem from which the traditional processors suffered.

Optical computer chip circuitry is made of a light transmitting compound. In the modern optical chip, each circuit is only a single molecule in width. Each circuit is separated from its neighbor by a two molecule thick insulating material. This allows for incredibly dense circuitry and powerful processors. With light being the data conducting medium, it also makes these chips incredibly fast. However, most engineers agree that optical

computers have reached the zenith of their development, as there hasn't been a new major breakthrough in almost two decades. Even so, there is no sign that optical computers are going to be vanishing anytime soon.

Modern Storage Media

Modern computer systems can store and process massive amounts of data. When data needs to be moved from one system to another, it is most often done wirelessly – but sometimes this is either not possible or not advisable, most often due to security concerns. When this is the case, memory cubes are used instead.

A memory cube is a small synthetic crystal cube roughly two cubic centimeters in size. Data is stored by making slight alterations in the alignments of the crystal matrix inside the cube. Cubes are re-writable, though the matrix eventually becomes unstable. When this occurs, the cubes are designed to change from their normally bluish color to a red color. Cubes can be encrypted to a variety of keys, from basic entry codes to biometric data keyed to a specific individual, group of specific users, or even specific cube readers. Each cube can store up to 1,000 terrabytes of data.

Wrist Comps

Wrist comp has become the universal name used for the small personal computers that nearly every person carries around with him today. These micro computers serve a wide variety of functions, ranging from things as simple as data organizers, gateways to the internet, or games. This functionality is only dwarfed by the wide

variety of styles and looks in which they are available. For most people, they are a natural part of life and have, for many, become the modern equivalent of a 21st century personal assistant. So ubiquitous are wrist comps that things like appointments, work schedules, and meetings are generally automatically uploaded into the owner's scheduling software.

Each wrist comp has a unique identifier created by the owner, that is also linked to a biometric signature. The pair exist not to simply lock out the wrist comp from unauthorized access, but also to provide authorization for automatic uploads from outside sources. Owners can also provide limited access to their wrist comps by authorizing guest accounts.

Most wrist comps have a small screen integrated into them that a user can use. However, in general, they transmit their data either to a nearby flex screen or to a set of eye bands that have been linked to the comp, either of which affords a larger view area.

Flex Screen

Gone are the days when monitors were large monstrosities that took up a significant portion of a person's desk. Today, monitors are made of a flexible, normally transparent plastic that is stored in a small tube. When one needs to utilize the monitor, the plastic is pulled out of the tube, much like one pulls paper off a roll. When fully extended, a small electrical charge stiffens the plastic into a rigid sheet suitable for viewing anything on. Flex monitors come in a variety

of sizes, from small portables to massive wall-mounted screens. They can maintain their rigid state for indefinite periods without compromising their flexible nature when powered down. Images displayed on these monitors can either be transparent enough to allow one to gaze through them to whatever lies on the other side, or can be rendered fully opaque. When transparent, anyone on the opposite side of the monitor will also see the images – though any text will appear reversed from their point of view. When opaque, the back of the monitor is black.

Work stations tend to have more permanent versions of flex screens. They are generally made of a thicker, more robust material and are permanently rigid. However, they also tend to be large – sometimes they will stretch the length of a room.

All flex screens and related monitors are touch sensitive, meaning that the user simply need touch an icon or piece of data to manipulate or access it in some way. Special gloves can also be worn to further enhance the ability to interact with the screen, allowing one to virtually hold 3D representations of items or data, rotate them, move them, and so on. This technology has created a more natural work environment and reduced injuries caused by repetitive actions that haunted computer users in decades past.

The Internet

The internet is a virtual representation of the electronic network that is so prevalent in colonized regions. Its

roots can be traced back to the 20th century, though, at that time, the internet was severely limited when compared to today – upload and download speeds are now lightning fast. A whole host of devices, ranging from wrist comps to alarm systems and powerful super computers, exist on the internet. All internet capable devices can not only access other similarly capable devices, but can also act as a sort of repeater beacon, automatically passing data back and forth to other devices. This function is generally separated from the device itself, so as not to compromise its security or burden its primary processor.

Nearly everywhere man has established himself has some version of the internet. On Earth, it is a pervasive virtual world that is taken for granted by most everyone. Mars also has an extensive internet. People can send e-mail from planet to planet. Spaceships tend to have their own micro-internets, with the spaceship's computer acting as the hub. These smaller iterations of the internet are more about ease of communications than data storage and access, though



Modern Consumer Computing

they do generally support the latter – especially when it comes to the entertainment libraries.

Nanotechnology and Molecular Manufacturing

Nanotechnology has long been the Holy Grail of scientists and researchers and there has been a significant amount of progress in the field. For a long time researchers sought for ways to create molecule-sized machines that held promises that, to some, almost seemed magical in nature. The ability to program an army of nanites to build objects at a molecular

level would give engineers an unprecedented level of accuracy and precision. Manufacturing technologies would change overnight if nanites were mastered. Unfortunately, while the theory is sound, it has proven much more difficult to execute in practice. In addition, there have always been those who fear the other side of the nanite coin – the ability to disassemble things, or people, at the molecular level. They could be ultimate assassination tools. For this, and other more practical reasons, research into this area has been slow and met with a great many hurdles over the decades. However, this is not to say that the research has been fruitless.

The biggest benefactor of nanotech research has been in the field of materials engineering. Many of the most common building materials used in modern construction are engineered at a molecular level to be stronger and lighter than previously possible. Building on successes that can be traced as far back as the early 21st century, engineers have created armored panels that literally merge into one another creating a seamless armored shell, intelligent carbon composites that can stitch themselves back together after suffering damage, and multi-state materials that can shift from vapor to liquid to solid as needed. This latter is often used as part of the damage control systems commonly found on spacecraft.

Planetary Transportation

Whether on Earth, Mars, or some distant moon, there is always the

need to be able to get around. In the modern age, this is a relatively effortless affair, though the exact method of transport depends upon the location and environment.

Personal Transport

Ever since man started riding on horseback, owning a personal transport of some sort was not just a status symbol, but for many a point of pride. Today is no different. Unlike years past, personal transport comes in both the ground and air varieties.

Despite what many old science-fiction stories postulated, most planet-based personal transport is still the tried and true automobile. There are nearly as many automobile models as there are types of people. The modern auto is similar in many ways to its ancestors. They have two to four wheels, a steering wheel, lights, and so on. Modern autos do, however, have many amenities that were not available in earlier years. The classic instrument panel has been replaced with a heads-up system that projects all the relevant data on the windshield or helmet faceplate as appropriate. Sensors provide the operator constant updates on what is around him, reducing the chances of accidents. Automated systems take control when necessary to avoid collisions. The heads-up display can also provide thermal vision at night and in low-light conditions. In well developed areas, and along major arteries, autopilot systems can free up the driver for other tasks or simple conversation.

Personal air transport has also become a relatively common sight.

These vehicles tend to be highly automated in order to reduce the chances of operator error. In areas where these systems are not available, pilots must be licensed, with renewals occurring on a regular basis. Generally, air transport is used between cities. Any that are used within a city's airspace must have the appropriate permits and the pilot must be properly licensed for operation in the region. All personal air transports are (VTOL) vertical take-off and landing craft.

Mass Transit

Mass transit systems have become integral to most people's everyday life. Those who live in the same cities in which they work generally use the mass transit system in lieu of their car to get to and from work. Many use the systems when travelling between cities. On colonies, especially on Mars and Luna, maglev trains are about the only way to travel between settlements.

The most common form of mass transit is the maglev train. These trains do not run on a traditional track, but rather float over them. A series of magnets built into the trains and the



track cause the train to actually float roughly twelve inches above the track. Additional magnets along the sides of the track and train keep it centered as well, removing the need for a guide rail of any kind – though an emergency guide wheel can be lowered should there be a malfunction of the normal magnetic system. This system enables the train to achieve speeds of almost 400 miles per hour, allowing it to cross entire continents quickly and efficiently. Within cities, smaller versions of these trains run under the streets in a manner similar to old subway systems.

When travelling long distances in which time is a factor, air travel is still the preferred method of most. Modern airlines have undergone remarkably little change over the years and still operate in the same manner they did in the early 21st century. Intercontinental flights are now suborbital flights that take less than half the time they once did. Most moderately-sized towns support small VTOL airports that can accommodate most commercial VTOL aircraft used in local routes. Most cities have larger airports built to support larger long-range aircraft, many of which still utilize runways for take-off and landing. The largest of these can also accommodate the specialized needs of suborbital aircraft, with each continent generally having half a dozen or more scattered across it.

Space Technologies

As Earth became ever more crowded, the need to expand beyond grew in importance. For a time, the development of space was firmly the purview of the governments of the world. However, these bodies proved to have neither the will nor the foresight necessary to truly develop the technologies needed to overcome the hurdles to long term survival in space, as well as on the planets of the solar system. Initial commercial interest in space was limited to lifting of payloads into orbit and the use of orbit for commercial satellites tasked primarily with enhancing communications across the globe. However, with the efforts of a number of individuals and groups who had the foresight and courage necessary, commercial enterprise firmly took control over the develop-

ment and exploitation of space in just two decades.

Maneuvering Systems

There are two distinct types of maneuvering systems used by spaceships: maneuvering drives and transit drives. Maneuvering drives are used for exactly what they sound like, designed to provide the craft its maneuvering capability. They are used for standard orbital and deep space maneuvering needs. Most maneuvering drives are a highly advanced ion drive. These drives work by firing ionized xenon atoms through a charging grid that both accelerates and neutralizes the atoms. The resulting plasma energy released is guided down a magnetic tunnel and provides the thrust necessary to maneuver the spaceship. The size and shape of this magnetic tunnel can be manipulated, resulting in an increase or decrease in the amount of thrust generated, without requiring higher fuel expenditures. This makes the drives very efficient and reduces the amount of fuel they need to carry, compared to older drive designs. In addition, xenon is a very stable element, which means that there is no fear of an explosive detonation, even if the fuel system takes some sort of direct damage. The charging grids of these systems tend to glow, giving ship thrusters a glow effect. The thrust itself, however, is actually invisible to the naked eye.

Transit drives are used by spaceships when they are travelling between planets. These drives have a single purpose in mind – to make the ship go really fast. These drives can push a spaceship to a speed of

0.005% the speed of light – a feat that was impossible using traditional ion drive technologies. They also do this without requiring the ship to expend massive amounts of fuel, though the drives do require vast amounts of energy to operate compared to the more mundane maneuvering drives. As a result, during operations, most other systems on a spaceship are unavailable and these drives provide a craft no maneuvering capabilities. In order to stop, these ships must literally turn around and fire the transit drives again.

Transit drives are an evolution of what used to be known as the magnetoplasmadynamic (or MPD) drive. These drives operate in a manner similar to an ion drive, in that they push an atomized plasma medium down a magnetic tunnel. However, unlike their smaller cousins that rely on a separate system to generate the magnetic field, transit drives work at such high energy levels that they generate their own magnetic tunnel. The reactant used for these systems comes in the form of specially designed teflon bundles. A super-high current is run through this bundle, which boils off the surface molecules, which are then directed down the magnetic tunnel created via the same current. The constriction of this field accelerates the resulting plasma gasses to speeds in excess of 500,000 meters per second, enough to rapidly propel the craft to incredibly high speeds. Unlike maneuvering drive exhaust, the exhaust from a plasma drive is both highly visible and incredibly dangerous. In general, spaceships are not allowed to engage a transit drive within 5,000

miles of any other craft or station for safety purposes.

Spaceports

With a look and feel similar to large international airports, spaceports are the link between planetary surfaces and orbit. Earth supports six such facilities: two in North America, one in South America, one in Europe, one in Australia and one on the Chinese mainland. Spaceports are generally located far from any large population centers, though most do have a small town that has developed around the facility. Most spaceports have an integrated airport and mag-lev train station. Spaceports on other planets are generally much smaller. The two that Mars supports are the largest off-planet and are the size of the smallest Earth-based facility. The other colonized planets each have a single spaceport that is generally located near the first colony founded on the planet (or moon). In some cases, the colony is a part of the spaceport.

Orbital Transfer Vehicles

Generally referred to by the simpler moniker shuttles, OTVs ferry passengers and cargo from the surface of planets to orbital stations or waiting spaceships. Shuttles come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, from small personal transports to massive cargo haulers that can lift almost 200 tons of cargo to orbit. Most shuttles have a relatively limited endurance, as they are designed to go from the surface to orbit and back – though some models have the endurance to travel to the moons within the planetary system. Shuttles, however, do not have the transit drives or fuel to make the

trip between the planets themselves. Most OTVs utilize a vertical take-off and landing system, though a few older designs still need a large runway to get aloft.

Spaceships

Spaceships, like everything in modern society, vary in size and function, and cost a great deal. In general, there are two distinct types of spacecraft.

The first are inner-system spaceships. These ships are designed to operate strictly within the inner portion of the solar system, or within a single planetary system such as around Jupiter. Those designed to work within a single planetary system generally lack the transit drives necessary to make the journey between planets in any sort of reasonable amount of time, even if their maneuvering drives allowed for it. They also generally do not utilize a rotational ring for generating artificial gravity, as the crews are not in space long enough to warrant the extra cost these systems entail, and they have a smaller fuel reserve. Also, ships that are limited to a single planetary system lack the gravity couches needed in an interplanetary journey. Jupiter and Saturn are the most common places these types of ships are found, though they are found anywhere that travel between a planet and moon or high orbit space station is necessary – such as Uranus or Neptune.

The second common type of spaceship is the inter-planetary spaceship. These ships are designed to travel anywhere within the solar system and, to a lesser extent, beyond the so-

lar system itself. These ships are large, with extensive hydroponic gardens, recreational facilities, and other amenities not present on smaller inner-system ships. All inter-planetary ships have at least one, and oftentimes two or three, rotational sections to provide the crews gravity during the long journeys these ships commonly undertake. They also have extensive machine shops and spare stores so that they can do any repairs underway that may be necessary.

Orbital and Deep Space Stations

It is said that space stations are like snowflakes – there are no two that are identical. While this is not exactly true, there is a staggering variety of stations, both in layout and function, across the solar system. Some stations are not much more than warehouses in space. These basic stations are used by corporations and governments to store or stage goods, machinery, and just about anything else of which you can think. Many of these stations are little more than open skeletal structures with docking clamps that hold cargo containers waiting for pickup. At the other end of the spectrum are the massive luxury resort stations that have become popular vacation spots. Some of these stations are located literally in the middle of nowhere, in order to stay out of the jurisdiction of any government or corporate entity, which enables them to offer services that would be frowned upon at best, and outright illegal at worst. Such stations are, naturally, secretive.

Orbital and deep space stations follow two very distinct design philosophies. Orbital stations, which re-

fers to stations that are built around colonized planets, moons, and asteroids, tend to rely on resupply from the planet or colony they orbit. This comes either in the form of direct shipments from the planet or colony, or through logistic ships that supply the colony itself. As a result, orbital stations generally do not have space dedicated to hydroponics and maintain a smaller reserve of fuel for powering their reactors. These stations also tend to rely on the native defenses of the planet or colony and, with the exception of military stations, are generally unarmed or have a very light suite of defensive weaponry and systems. They also tend to maintain smaller support staffs since the station can easily call upon personnel from the planet or colony should the need arise.

Deep space stations generally refer to stations that are built in the deep black between the orbital paths of planets. As a result, these stations need to be much more self-reliant. Deep space stations support large hydroponic gardens to provide both



Chicago Spaceport

a native food source and a natural carbon dioxide recycling system. Many times, these gardens are designed to be as natural-looking as possible in order to provide crew and guests a more natural environment to relax in from time to time. In many cases, small animals, birds, and insects are an integral part of the garden; though when this is the case, their populations are tightly controlled and special measures are taken to ensure they do not escape the garden area. Deep space stations also maintain a much higher reserve of fuel and other supplies should an event mean the sta-

tion is going to be isolated for longer than normal. The crews on these stations are also large since, again, they must be as self-reliant as they possibly can be. Finally, deep space stations tend to be well-armed in order to protect themselves from would-be pirates or raiders that may see it as a target of opportunity.

Space Suits

The modern space suit is a true example of how far space technologies have come over the decades. As little as thirty years ago, space suits were massive, cumbersome affairs that one person could not hope to put on alone. This bulkiness limited what the suited person could easily accomplish. Modern space suits are much lighter and far more effective.

Most space suits are made up of three parts. First, a person wears a body glove, which contains sensors for monitoring his vitals, thermal cells that maintain his body temperature, and micro bladders which pull sweat away and convert it into drinkable water. It also acts as temporary protection from the hard vacuum of space should the outer suit be breached, though it is only effective in this role for less than an hour – generally long enough for someone to return to the safety of a ship or station.

The outer shell of the space suit is made of a highly flexible kevlar-carbon composite weave that acts as a shell against the cold vacuum and deflects the radiation that bombards anyone outside the protection of a spacecraft hull. This outer shell has no hard joints, save for the attachment

ring for the helmet, and is nearly as flexible as the inner body glove. Utility belts worn outside this provide places for tools to be attached. Micro thrusters built into the feet, hips, shoulders and palms of the suit provide the wearer a great deal of mobility.

The final part of a space suit is the helmet. Available in a host of models, such helmets are highly sophisticated, containing the computer systems that operate the entire suit. On the inside of the face shield, the user can customize a variety of displays to assist him in his task, provide navigational data, or coordinate communications, depending on what is needed. Many spacers spend a great deal of time customizing their displays.

CHARACTER WEALTH

The Void is a game about surviving the horrors that have begun to awaken in the solar system. Adventures do not generally revolve around payments, and the core goal of most Characters is not the acquisition of wealth. Furthermore, some things, such as spacecraft, are simply too expensive for Characters to purchase in the traditional method during the course of a standard game. However, it is natural and expected that one will wish to improve the wealth of a Character in order to more easily gain access to cool and better toys. The following system is designed for this very goal, but without the need to track every credit a Character may gain and lose over the course of their career.

Wealth Codes

Instead of worrying about a Character's bank account, each Character is instead assigned a Wealth Code. This code is a general representation of the disposable wealth a Character has available to him at any given time. The higher the Character's Wealth Code, the more easily he can obtain an item, be it a new gun, a medical kit, or a new module for the spacecraft.

Wealth Codes have two aspects to them. The first is the Character's Personal Wealth – what he personally earns and saves. The second is the Character's Sponsored Wealth – the amount of resources the Character's sponsoring organization is willing to entrust to him. Items obtained using Personal Wealth are the property of the Character from that point forward. Those obtained through Sponsored Wealth belong to the organization and are only available for the duration of the current assignment or mission and must be returned upon completion.

It is possible, depending on the game, for a Character to have two or more sponsoring organizations. If this is the case, the Character will have a Wealth Code for each unique organization for which he works.

Wealth Codes range from 1 to 4, with the higher representing greater financial resources.

Personal Wealth

Characters normally begin play with a Personal Wealth of 2. This can be modified through the acquisition

of either the Wealthy Advantage or Poor Disadvantage, as found on p. 102 and p. 104, increasing Personal Wealth up to 4 or decreasing it all the way to 0. Please note that it is unlikely that a Warden Character would ever wind up with a Personal Wealth of 0

Socio-Economic Strata **Wealth**

Destitute	0
Underprivileged	1
Middle Class	2
Affluent	3
Wealthy	4

Sponsored Wealth

Unless your GM decides otherwise, Characters begin the game with a Sponsored Wealth of 1 with the appropriate sponsor (usually the UWC Wardens). In some games, depending upon tone, the Characters may begin with a Sponsored Wealth of 2 – it is recommended that the starting Sponsored Wealth is no higher than this.

Gaining & Losing Wealth

Gaining Personal Wealth

Personal wealth can be increased through the use of Advances. The table below shows the cost to advance from a Character's current Personal Wealth level to the next highest.

<i>Currently Wealth</i>	Cost
Underprivileged	2
Middle Class	3
Affluent	4
Wealth	n/a

A Character can also gain a Personal Wealth level as a result of some large payday in-game. In this case, the GM

will indicate how many Advances are gained towards the Character's next Personal Wealth level. For example, the Characters could come across a very valuable artifact and, once sold, the GM will give each Character two Advances towards their next Personal Wealth level. These Advances are dedicated to that purpose only and cannot be used for any other form of advancement. These sort of rewards should be uncommon.

Losing Personal Wealth

In general, a Character will only lose Personal Wealth as a result of purchases he makes during the course of his career. As will be discussed below, purchasing some items will reduce the Personal Wealth of the Character, especially when purchasing items that are "expensive" relative to the Character's current Personal Wealth. Some story events can also result in the loss of a Personal Wealth level. The GM can either reduce the current Personal Wealth of a Character a full level, or incrementally by applying negative Personal Wealth Advances. For example, the Character could lose a spaceship. Since so much of the Character's Personal Wealth is tied up in the ship, the GM tells him he loses four Advances worth of Personal Wealth. If he was initially Wealthy (4), that would reduce him to Affluent (3). If he were Affluent (3), it would reduce him to Underprivileged – with one Advance built up towards moving back into Middle Class.

It's important to note that losing Personal Wealth as a result of a big purchase doesn't necessarily mean the Character is living poorly again.

Rather it is a representation of the Character's decreased purchasing power, until he builds his liquid capital up again.

Gaining and Losing Sponsored Wealth

As Characters work for a given organization, the GM will award Sponsored Wealth Advances for that organization. This is done in a similar manner as gaining Personal Wealth, but the GM will indicate when a Sponsored Wealth Advancement is gained. It is recommended that this generally occur at the end of key missions or assignments.

Just as the organization can give, it can also take away. Events in the game may indicate that the Character loses Sponsored Wealth. This could be due to failed missions, a period during which the Character does no work for the organization, or even financial hard times for the organization. Again, this is left to the discretion of the GM.

Making Purchases

All gear available to a Character will have a Cost Code associated with it. This code indicates how difficult it is for the Character to get ahold of a particular item, as well as any impact it may have on the Character's Wealth and any potential restrictions that may further complicate the Character's attempt to obtain the item. Cost Codes take on the following form:

Cost Level: This is rated from 1 to 4, with higher numbers indicating more expensive items.

Impact: This indicates the impact the purchase will have on the Character's Wealth.

Restrictions: Not all items are available on the common market, which can make obtaining them more difficult if the Character does not have the proper contacts to lubricate the wheels.

Making the Purchase

When a Character wishes to make a purchase, compare his Wealth (Personal or Sponsored) to the cost code of the item. If the Cost Code is lower than the Character's Wealth, then he may obtain the item freely. If the two ratings are equal, he must make a Purchase Test. This takes the form of either an Insight, Persuade, or Savoir Faire Test, or a Trade: Business Test. This represents the Character's ability to shop around for the best price.

If the Character succeeds at a Hard Difficulty, the item is purchased without an issue and he may purchase more goods immediately. If the Test succeeds at an Average Difficulty, he obtains the item without a problem, but it uses his currently available funds. He cannot make any additional purchases until after he is awarded an Advance – though he does not need to spend the Advance to purchase again. If he succeeds only at an Easy Difficulty, it has the same effect as Average above, but costs more than expected – it increases the overall Impact by 1 (see below). If completely failed, the item cannot be purchased. Either the Character cannot find it for the right price, or simply can't find it. He may attempt to purchase something else normally.

If the item's Cost Code is one level higher than the Character's Wealth, a -4 Test Penalty is applied. If the Cost code is more than one level higher, then the item cannot be purchased.

Impact of the Purchase

Once the purchase is made, its impact on the Character's finances must be determined. This is based on the Impact Rating of the item. Some items are simply more expensive and have an immediate impact on the Character's purchasing power. Each point of Impact is applied immediately to the Character as a negative Wealth Advance in the same manner as discussed above when losing Wealth. However, these points automatically regenerate at the rate of one each time an Advance is granted. If this lowers a Character's effective Wealth any further, purchases are made at the reduced level until it recovers.

Restricted Items

There are three levels of restrictions for an item: unlicensed, licensed and restricted. Each of these impact the ability to purchase them as indicated below.

Unlicensed: These are available to the average joe. Any Character may purchase them.

Licensed: This item generally requires some sort of license to obtain. The effect of this is to delay the delivery of the item in question. Once purchased, the item will actually be made available to the Character after the next Advance is awarded. This represents the time the vendor needs to to process the paperwork. If the Character

wishes to avoid the delay he may try to purchase one "under the table." This is done by treating the Cost Code for the item as being one point higher.

Restricted: These items are heavily monitored by the local governing authority and very difficult to obtain. The Character must show a legitimate and legal cause for needing the item. This requires not only some in-game roleplaying, but also a delay for receipt of the item. It will not be delivered until after the Character has been awarded two Advances. These items can be purchased "under the table," but their Cost Code is increased by one and their Impact Code is increased by two points.

Purchasing from the Sponsoring Organization

A Character purchases items from the sponsoring organization in the same manner as listed above. This represents the Character filling out the appropriate paperwork and smooth-talking the appropriate people, rather than actual cash changing hands. However, the items are available only for the duration of the current assignment, after which they must be returned.

Licensed items are easily available from a sponsoring organization and have no delay in delivery. Restricted items are also more easily available. There is no delay in delivery, but most organizations frown upon repeated requests for this sort of gear. As a result, the Impact of these items is increased by two points.

EQUIPMENT

The solar system can be a challenging and dangerous place. However, the proper equipment can go a long way towards overcoming any potential obstacles that may be encountered. What follows is a list of some of the most common equipment one might come across in *The Void*.

Weapons

Melee Weapons

While many conflicts occur at range, sometimes a battle is fought up close and personal. When this happens, it is always good to have a good blade or club nearby to give you an edge. Most modern blades are honed to a near mono-edge, allowing them to cut through armor and flesh alike. Some, known as vibro-weapons, have small power packs that energize the blade so that it vibrates at extremely high frequencies, allowing it to be even more effective in combat. Most club weapon are also energized, so that they deliver a shock to the target with each successful hit. This can often-times incapacitate an opponent.

Boarding Axe

Used mainly in boarding actions, these axes can be used either as weapons or as tools to hack through obstructions. Boarding axes are always vibro-weapons, as the extra cutting ability enhances their ability to cut through the thinner walls found on the interior of many spaceships and stations, or to cut through cabling or other potential obstructions. Boarding axes are also balanced for throwing.

Boarding Pike

Another popular weapon used by marines and other boarding parties, boarding pikes are used to help clear defenders from around hatches or from the other side of obstacles. Like boarding axes, these weapons are always vibro-weapons, enhancing their ability to punch through obstacles and armor alike.

Chain Sword

Chain swords are truly fearsome weapons that can hack through the heaviest armor with ease. Similar to the classic chainsaw used for so long to fell trees, chain swords use finer teeth and are balanced for fighting. The hardened spinning teeth also tend to knock aside any weapons being used to parry attacks. The wounds left by these weapons are ragged with chunks of flesh and bone literally ripped from the victim. Because many

consider these weapons to be unusually cruel, most organizations restrict or ban their usage.

Combat Knife

Combat knives are long-bladed knives measuring almost 12 inches in length. They come in a variety of designs, with smooth and serrated edges, straight and curved. While effective in combat, they are generally used for a variety of more mundane tasks.

Cutlass

Cutlasses have been in use on ships since the earliest days of wet navies. Larger and more dangerous than a combat knife, they are still small enough to be used in the close confines found in the corridors of a spaceship or station – and carry no danger of puncturing the hull.



A Warden "Buffet"

Electro Whip

Electro whips are rare weapons that require a great deal of practice to master so that a user does not hurt himself when using them. If the wielder succeeds at an Average Grace Test after striking a target, he has entangled his target. Damage is then applied every round thereafter, until the wielder stops or the victim makes a successful Average Physique Test to break free of the whip.

Mono-Strand

Mono-strands are thin wires only a few molecules wide, with a weight on one end. The micro-thin wire can easily cut through armor, flesh, and just about anything else with frightening ease. Most mono-strands are no more than two feet in length and they are wielded much like a small whip. When they strike, the weighted end tends to wrap around the target, cutting into him as it unwraps. A variant of this type of weapon is the mono-garrote, which has handles on both ends. They are generally used in surprise attacks.

Sap

Another melee weapon that has been around for as long as humans have been fighting one another, the sap is a weapon designed to incapacitate a victim instead of killing him outright. Popular with law enforcement organizations, as well as those in less savory occupations, saps are easy to obtain and can come in virtually any size and shape one could wish. When attacking, if the target is not wearing a helmet, he must make an Average Perseverance Test. If this fails, he is rendered unconscious for 1d6 minutes.

Shock Mace

Heavier, with a more potent shock attack than its little brother, shock maces are truly deadly weapons. Their weight alone can crush a skull or shatter bones, but the deadly shock the weapon unleashes on impact can finish any job the mace alone fails to accomplish.

Stun Baton

Used when the goal is to apprehend rather than kill, the stun baton nevertheless can be a deadly weapon in the hands of a trained combatant. These blunt hand weapons release a charge when they impact a target, potentially stunning him into submission.

Throwing Knife

Smaller than a combat knife, the throwing knife is balanced for accurate throwing, giving it an enhanced flexibility the standard combat knife does not enjoy. Throwing knives do not have a vibro equivalent, as the power cell tends to throw the balance of the blade off.

Handguns

Handguns, often referred to more simply as pistols, are common firearms used in military, government, and civilian circles. While lacking the range of a rifle, they are more easily employed at short range and are also more practical within the closed confines of a spaceship. Handguns are also the easiest weapon to be licensed by common civilians, as anything more serious tends to raise red flags with the authorities. Handguns use caseless ammunition, removing the need for an ejection port and re-

ducing the number of moving parts – and the chances of a jam. Different types of ammo can be used, if desired.

ACC-44 Holdout

The ACC-44 is a tiny handgun that can easily be concealed in a pocket or purse. They are commonly used for self-defense and are more of a deterrent than a real threat, since most people will think twice about accosting someone with a gun no matter how small. The simple, single-action operation of this weapon means it is easy for even an amateur to master and it rarely suffers any mechanical problems.

ACC-62 Bandit Semi-Automatic Pistol

This 9 mm semi-automatic pistol, and similar models by other companies, is perhaps the most common handgun used in civilian circles, and also sees common use by police forces across the solar system. With noticeably more stopping power than the ACC-44, it is preferred over its smaller cousin by serious gun enthusiasts and professionals alike. The ACC-44 utilizes an integrated laser scope, making it accurate even in the hands of an amateur.

AP-445 Scimitar Machine Pistol

The AP-445 is a popular ship-board weapon commonly employed by a variety of marine corps. Its large clip size and high-rate of fire allows a marine to suppress any advancement in the confined space of a ship corridor, but still maintains the agility needed in the close actions that are common when boarding an enemy ship. An integrated blade in the grip of the weapon provides a quick melee weapon,

though one not properly trained can find it a bit awkward to use.

HCC-90 Anvil Heavy Pistol

The HCC-90 Anvil is a large caliber pistol that can take down heavily armored opponents or punch through decking and walls to get at an opponent. However, this hitting power comes at the cost of a limited magazine capacity. Many Anvil's are equipped with a penetration scope to allow the user to see through a limited amount of cover and maximize their efficiency with what shots they do have.

HCS-4 Blaster Hand Cannon

For all intents and purposes, the HCS-4 Blaster is a shotgun built into a pistol frame. It is a single shot weapon that, at point blank range, is absolutely deadly. Highly effective at skewing the odds of a fight in your favor, especially in the opening volley, these weapons rarely see a second use during a given encounter. Instead, most owners discard them in favor of a weapon with a better endurance, hoping that the initial blast makes the enemy think twice about continuing the engagement.

Rifles

Rifles are the big brothers of handguns. Designed for use at moderate and long ranges, rifles give the user a long reach in an engagement. Rifles come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, with some being simple semi-automatic affairs used for hunting and precision shooting, while others are fully automatic with the ability to engage and pin down multiple targets in protracted firefights. Most ri-

fles have two or more option rails that can be used to expand the weapon's capabilities.

AFL-4 Assault Rifle

This light assault rifle is based on the semi-automatic rifle model, but altered for military use. While it may have a relatively low rate of fire when compared to a dedicated assault rifle, it is inexpensive and completely reliable. When fitted with a scope, the AFL-4 makes a good medium-range sniper rifle. Many police forces issue these weapons as part of the standard set of gear for their personnel.

AFL-16 Mach Assault Rifle

Built by Advanced Firearms, the same company responsible for the RFL-4 and AFL-4 models, the Mach assault rifle is one of the most commonly used assault rifles in the solar system. Known for its accuracy and reliability, many police and military forces use this weapon – or one of the many derivatives that exist. A whole host of peripherals for the AFL-16 can be found, ranging from high-end digital thermographic scopes to under-slung micro-missile launchers.

RFL-4 Long Rifle

The RFL-4 is a common civilian rifle that sportsmen use for hunting. It is also popular with ranchers and farmers for protecting their crops and fields from pests and predators. With a respectable range and stopping power, it also sees use by pirates and other underworld elements due to its easy accessibility and inexpensive price tag. With a number of options available, the rifle can easily be specialized for specific functions.

RFR-44M Paxton Assault Rifle

Designed with maximum suppression of the enemy in mind, the RFR-44M Paxton is known for its rate of fire, but not for its accuracy. Using a larger than normal clip, a user can send a veritable torrent of fire into a region that only the more insane person would dare stick his head into. Unfortunately, this weapon is prone to jams during extended use. Because this weapon is designed for volume rather than accuracy, it lacks the normal scope rail most assault rifles have, so users must rely on built-in illuminated iron sights.

SX-90 Splinter Sniper Rifle

The Splinter is a top-of-the-line sniper rifle with the ability to engage targets accurately as far as 3300 yards/3000 meters away. With a standard digital telescope, integrated targeting assist computer, and stabilizing bipod, the weapon has everything a professional sniper could want. The SX-90 can also be fitted with a remote firing system, allowing a sniper to set it up at one location and fire it from a completely separate location.

Submachine Guns

Submachine guns attempt to merge the best aspects of an assault rifle and a handgun into one do-all form. Unfortunately, they don't exactly succeed in this endeavor, though they still maintain their popularity with a great many organizations – especially those of a criminal nature. Their small size makes them ideal in confined and cramped conditions and their high rate-of-fire allows for sufficient suppressive fire.

SM-3 Blizzard Submachine Gun

The SM-3 is large for a submachine gun due to the larger caliber ammo it uses, affording it a higher damage potential than most SMGs. Most users are more than happy with this trade-off. An optional extendable stock enables the weapon to be fired in the same manner as an assault rifle and affords it a bit more accuracy when used in burst rather than full automatic mode. The SM-3 can also be fitted with a scope, an unusual feature for an SMG, giving the weapon a fairly respectable accuracy when used in short bursts. When fired fully automatic, however, a scope is all but useless.

SM-112 Hornet Sub-Machinegun

There are few in the solar system who are not familiar with the SM-112

Hornet. It has seen extensive use in nearly every action movie produced today. Small with a high rate of fire, the SM-112 is, in truth, only a mediocre weapon. It is a small caliber fire-arm, which affords it a larger magazine capacity with the trade-off of a barely acceptable damage capacity. The weapon is cheap, however, and has no bells or whistles available. Seen in use by some police forces, it is most popular with the less savory elements of the solar system.

XSM-90 Blindeye Sub-Marchingun

Equipped with a swivel stock and an integrated VTA (video targeting assist) system, the XSM-90 gives the user the ability to fire the weapon from behind the safety of cover, without exposing anything more than the weapon itself. The VTA feeds into a special monacle



Wardens: Gearing Up

that allows the user to see targets from behind cover or around a corner. This makes it a popular weapon when fighting in close confines, such as an urban environment or a spaceship. Blindeyes do take some training to learn to use properly, since they are often held at odd angles which enhance the effects of recoil, especially when fired in a fully automatic mode.

Defensive Equipment

Light Armors

Light armor refers to any type of body armor that is light enough not to reduce the wearer's mobility. Light armor tends to be made up of ballistic vests, padded pants, and helmets. They are rarely sealed against the environment. While they can provide respectable protection, they are not nearly as effective as the bulkier heavy armors that most militaries and mercenary outfits use.

Flak Jacket

Flak jackets have been around for more than a century and have been standard equipment for most law enforcement agencies for almost as long. Basically a heavy vest with ballistic plates on the front and back which protect the vital organs, many police officers have survived hits by perpetrators that would have killed them without the jacket. Openly available and inexpensive to purchase, even the lowest end security force generally issue their people flak jackets.

Flak Body Suit

Similar to a flak jacket in nature, the flak body suit extends protection to the entire body rather than just the torso. Armored pads above and below the knees provide the legs protection and armored kneepads are worn over the outside. Sleeves provide similar protection for the arms. These suits can be somewhat cumbersome to wear, but most believe the trade-off



It's Important To Keep Your Weapons In Shape

of extended protection is more than worth it.

Heavy Armors

Heavy armors encompass full body suits which generally enjoy sealed environmental systems that can protect the wearer from gas and chemical attacks. Bulkier than their lighter cousins, heavy armor is generally worn for as short a period as possible in order to reduce fatigue, though someone trained in their use has generally built up the endurance for protracted use when necessary.

Combat Body Armor

When entering a known combat situation, especially one in which heavy weapons are likely to be employed, it is a good idea to don a suit of combat body armor. A fully sealed suit, combat body armor is stout enough to offer excellent protection from most small arms fire and can even keep one alive after a hit from a heavier weapon. Shrapnel also tends to be easily repelled, unless the wearer is especially close to the shrapnel.

Vacuum Combat Armor

Similar in nature to combat body armor, this armor also offers full protection from the harsh vacuum of space. The endurance of these suits tends to be somewhat limited, however, with a safe operating window of less than two hours – less if the suit is breached by weapons' fire.

Travel Expenses

Not everyone in the solar system has a spaceship they can use to get around. These poor souls have to rely on booking passage on the most con-

venient transport they can find. There are generally four types of transport that are most commonly available to a potential traveler.

Planetary Transport

Planetary transport gets people from point 'A' to point 'B' on a given planet. In many cases, publicly funded overland trains will suffice, but they are on a fixed schedule so they are not always convenient. For faster travel, there are generally easily accessible forms of air travel that can get one anywhere on a planet in just a few hours. The table on the next page shows the general costs involved in booking this type of transport, which is common and easy.

Orbital Transport

Anyone wishing to travel to a different planet or moon must most often make their way to an orbital transfer station. Some ships capable of transit speeds can land on planets, but these tend to be the exception rather than the rule. Some inter-planetary ships offer shuttle services from the planetary surface, but others are not so generous. Orbital transports are also often chartered when one wishes to go between moons within the same planetary system, which is especially common in the Saturnine and Jovian systems.

Inner-System Travel

Inner-system travel refers to any interplanetary travel that lies within the orbit of Mars. This is the most common type of traffic in the solar system and the easiest to book in a timely manner. Even so, it sometimes can require the potential travelers to

wait in an orbital transfer station for a couple days while outbound ships load cargo, refuel, and perform general maintenance. In addition, some ships give passengers the option to either stay in their grav couches the entire trip (in which case they will be unconscious as well) or be roused once the acceleration curve has been completed. Doing the latter means a more costly fare, but some travelers, especially those that travel between planets a great deal, cannot stay under for extended periods for a variety of reasons.

Outer-System Travel

When travelling beyond the orbit of Mars, travelers must book passage on one of the more specialized long-range transports. These trips can get expensive and generally require more planning, as ships travelling to the outer system are not as common as those travelling between the inner planets. It is also possible to be woken for the journey, but this is even more expensive due to the extra costs incurred by the ship. On some ships, the option will not even be offered unless there are documented medical reasons.

Planetary Transport Costs

Transport Type	Average Travel Times	Range	Wealth Code	Impact	Restriction
Public Transit	Few minutes, to as much as a day or more	Continental	Free	0	U
Air Taxi (In-City)	Usually under half hour	Local	1	0	U
Air Taxi (Next City)	One or more hours	Regional	1	1	U
Airliner	Several hours	Intercontinental	2	1	U
Chartered Airline	Several hours	Intercontinental	3	2	U

Orbital Transport Costs

Transport type	Range	Wealth Code	Impact	Restriction
Surface to Orbit/Orbit to Surface	Orbit	2	0	U
Inter-Orbital (ie: Planet to Moon)	Single Planetary System	2	1	U
Station to Station	Between orbital objects	1	0	U

Inner & Outer System Transport Costs

Transport Type	Travel Delay	Wealth Code	Impact	Restriction
Inner System (sleeper)	1 to 4 days	2	2	U
Outer System (sleeper)	1 week to 3 weeks	2	3	U
Outer System (awake)	1 week to 3 weeks	3	3	U

Standard Weapon Ranges

Weapon Range	Effective Distance
Point Blank	10 ft/3 m
Short	25 ft/7.5 m
Medium	50 ft/15 m
Long	200 ft/60 m
Extreme	1000 ft/300 m

Weapon	Range	Required Skill	Damage	Magazine	Auto	Wealth Code	Impact	Restriction
Handguns								
ACC-44 Holdout	Point Blank	Guns: Handguns	1d6	4	–	1	1	U
ACC-62 'Bandit' Semi-Auto Pistol	Short	Guns: Handguns	3d6	25	–	1	2	U
AP-445 'Scimitar' Machine Pistol	Short	Guns: Assault Weapons	3d6 or 1d6 Blade	20	2 (10 rnds)	2	1	L
HCC-90 'Anvil' Heavy Pistol	Short	Guns: Handguns	5d6	13	–	2	2	U
HCS-4 'Blaster' Hand Cannon	Short	Guns: Handguns	6d6	1	–	2	3	U
Rifles								
RFL-4 Long Rifle	Long	Guns: Longarms	5d6	6	–	2	2	U
AFL-4 Assault Rifle	Long	Guns: Assault Weapons	3d6	30	2 (15 rnds)	2	3	L
SX-90 'Splinter' Sniper Rifle	Extreme	Guns: Longarms	5d6	10	–	3	4	R
RFR-44M Paxton Assault Rifle	Long	Guns: Assault Weapons	3d6	30	4 (30 rnds)	3	2	L
AFL-16 Assault Rifle	Long	Guns: Assault Weapons	3d6	30	2 (10 rnds)	3	2	L
SMGs								
SM-3 'Blizzard' SMG	Medium	Guns: Assault Weapons	3d6	30	2 (15 rnds)	2	3	L
SM-12 'Hornet' SMG	Medium	Guns: Assault Weapons	1d6	60	6 (60 rnds)	2	2	L
XSM-90 'Blindeye' SMG	Medium	Guns: Assault Weapons	3d6	30	2 (15 rnds)	3	1	L

Melee Weapons	Required Skill	Damage	Wealth Code	Impact	Restriction	Special
Boarding Axe	Hand Weapons: Blade	3d6	1	2	L	Ignore 3 pts of Armor
Boarding Pike	Hand Weapons: Blade	5d6	2	1	L	Ignore 5 pts of Armor
Combat Knife	Hand Weapons: Blade	1d6	1	0	U	
Chain Sword	Hand Weapons: Blade	5d6	2	1	R	Ignore 5 pts of Armor
Cutlass	Hand Weapons: Blade	3d6	1	1	U	
Electro-Whip	Hand Weapons: Blade	1d6 + Stun	2	2	R	Stun
Unarmed (Untrained)	n/a	1d3	n/a	n/a	U	
Unarmed (Trained)	Unarmed Combat	1d6	n/a	n/a	U	
Mono-Strand	Hand Weapons: Blade	5d6	3	1	R	Surprise Only
Sap	Hand Weapons: Blunt	1d6 + Stun	1	0	U	See Text
Shock Mace	Hand Weapons: Blunt	3d6 + Stun	1	2	L	Stun
Stun Baton	Hand Weapons: Blunt	2d6 + Stun	1	2	L	Stun
Throwing Knife	Hand Weapons: Blade or Thrown Weapons	1d6	1	1	U	Range: Thrown

Armor	Protection	Required Skill	Wealth Code	Impact	Restriction
Light Armors					
Flak Jacket	5	None	1	2	U
Flak Body Suit/Warden Armor	10	None	2	2	U
Heavy Armors					
Combat Armor	15	None	3	3	L
Vacuum Armor	10	Freefall 1	3	2	L



To service the needs of human expansion into the far reaches of the solar system, a vast array of spaceships have been designed by architects and built in one of the many shipyards that exist across the system. Some of these vessels are as simple as orbital transfer vehicles that ferry people and materials between orbital ships or stations and spaceports on the ground. Others are large military cruisers that patrol the space around planets as well as the major trading routes in the solar system, ensuring that each of the various governments' and corporate entities' interests are protected. On the following pages, a selection of important ships seen throughout the solar system are presented, including their most basic statistics and a short summary of the ship's function and use. Due to space limitations, the ships presented here have been selected because they are found in common use across the solar system, and are not the dedicated designs of one entity or another – with the exception of the UWC Wardens' Knight's Errant.

Travelling the Solar System

The travel times chart on the next page lists the maximum and minimum times in days that it can take to get from one planet to the other, depending upon their position in the solar system. Your GM will determine how long a trip will take, based on these numbers and what is required for your game.

For nearly any trip, except when the inner planets are very close together, anyone on a spaceship must enter a gravity couch to survive the firing of the transit drive. This suspended animation is referred to as A/D stasis, where the crew is put into deep sleep in a grav couch during this period. For trips to the outer planets, this is for seven days each for both acceleration and deceleration. However, many passengers will stay in their grav couches for the entire trip – it saves on life support and resources. Within the inner system, this can be between 1.5 and 3 days each. While in A/D stasis, the only thing monitoring a ship is the computer.

Gravity in the Ship

While most ships utilize rotating sections to create simulated gravity for a crew's quarters, mess halls, and other areas, a great many locations on a ship simply cannot benefit from this. For example, it is simply not feasible to build the engineering section of a spaceship in a rotating section. As a result, much of the ship operates in a micro-gravity environment. This can sometimes make even basic tasks trickier to complete than they might be otherwise. Since the technology to create true artificial gravity is beyond the current knowledge of humans, a crutch of sorts has been created instead. That crutch is known as the Energized Deck Plate.

EDPs, as they are more commonly referred to, generate a specially tuned

magnetic field. This field only interacts with a specially engineered composite material known as EDP micro-fibers. The energized plates attract this fiber to them in much the same way a traditional magnetic field attracts ferrous materials. The field created by the plates is tuned to pull at the micro-fibers with a force similar to what one would experience if walking on Earth. These micro-fibers are integrated into nearly every tool, piece of clothing, and other objects commonly found on a spaceship. However it does not create true artificial gravity, so any other object, such as a piece of fruit or naked body, which does not have these fibers integrated into them will float in mid-air as is normal in a micro-gravity environment.

Weapons on Ships

Getting into combat on spaceships can be a tricky thing. On one hand, one needs the combat ability to deal with the threat at hand. On the other, one needs to not damage the delicate systems on a ship or to blow a hole in the hull. It is for this reason that most combat on a ship or a space station utilizes small arms or hand weapons, such as shotguns or cutlasses, to assure that such damage doesn't occur.

Spacecraft Characteristics

Spacecraft use a common set of characteristics to define their capabilities within the game.

Travel Times: Adjusted for Acceleration/Deceleration (Days: Min/Max)

	Mercury	Venus	Earth	Mars	Jupiter	Saturn	Uranus	Neptune	Pluto
Mercury	–	14/14	14/14	14/14	28/32	53/57	109/113	171/176	226/230
Venus	14/14	–	14/14	14/14	26/34	51/59	107/115	169/178	224/232
Earth	14/14	14/14	–	14/15	24/36	49/61	105/117	168/179	222/234
Mars	14/14	14/14	14/15	–	21/39	46/64	102/120	165/182	219/237
Jupiter	28/32	26/34	24/36	21/39	–	25/85	81/141	144/204	198/258
Saturn	53/57	51/59	49/61	46/64	25/85	–	56/166	119/229	173/283
Uranus	109/113	107/115	105/117	102/120	81/141	56/166	–	63/284	117/339
Neptune	171/176	169/178	168/179	165/182	144/204	119/229	63/284	–	54/401
Pluto	226/230	224/232	222/234	219/237	198/258	173/283	173/339	54/401	–

Notes

- Standard acceleration/deceleration envelope is seven days from normal cruise to transit speed.
- Inner system travel doesn't allow for maximum transit speeds. Thus, trips take longer than one might expect.
- Inner system travel tends to be roughly equal, no matter where you are heading, due to the fact that the longer trips allow for bigger acceleration/deceleration envelopes.

General Characteristics

Size Class: Small, medium, large, huge, or gargantuan.

Crew: The crew operates the ship's weapons, navigation, and helm, as well as engineers and other personnel who are essential to the basic operations of the ship. There are two measures. The first is the standard crew complement while the second is the size of the skeleton crew – the minimum number of people to keep the ship operating nominally.

Support Crew: Support crews are responsible for a spacecraft's specific mission operations – who they are varies. On a mining barge, they are miners, smelters, geologists, and others who are necessary to a suc-

cessful mining operation. On a hospital ship, they are doctors, nurses, orderlies, and others that would be found in a hospital. Not all spacecraft have support crew.

Endurance: This is the length of time a ship can operate without resupplying basic necessities such as food, water, and general supplies. Crew efforts such as rationing can extend this time to some extent.

Availability: How easily the ship can be obtained. There are three levels of availability: unlicensed, licensed, and restricted. Unlicensed ships can be purchased on the open market by anyone with the money. Licensed ships require special permits for one reason or another before they can be purchased.

Space Stations

While space stations are a common sight in the universe of *The Void*, they are not generally defined in the same manner as spacecraft. Space stations are generally a location or adventure hub for the Characters in much the same way as a planet or city, and the station's specific capabilities are not important to the overall events. When they are important, the particular adventure will generally define the necessary capabilities for the station.

Space Combat

The rules presented here are designed to get you up and running with spaceships in the most basic sense. Further rules that provide greater detail, customization, and spaceship combat will be presented in the upcoming *Spacecraft* supplement.

Equinox Class Interplanetary Transport

The Equinox is one of the more common inner-system transports in use. Designed to operate exclusively within the Martian orbit the Equinox carries both passengers and cargo. An in-line rotational section provides crew and passengers a near 1-G gravity during the cruise portion of the trip. Cargo is stored in both pressurized and vacuum-exposed pods aft of the rotational section. Because the ship sometimes makes trips to the innermost parts of the solar system, all of this is hidden behind a large solar shield mounted both forward and aft of the ship.

General Characteristics

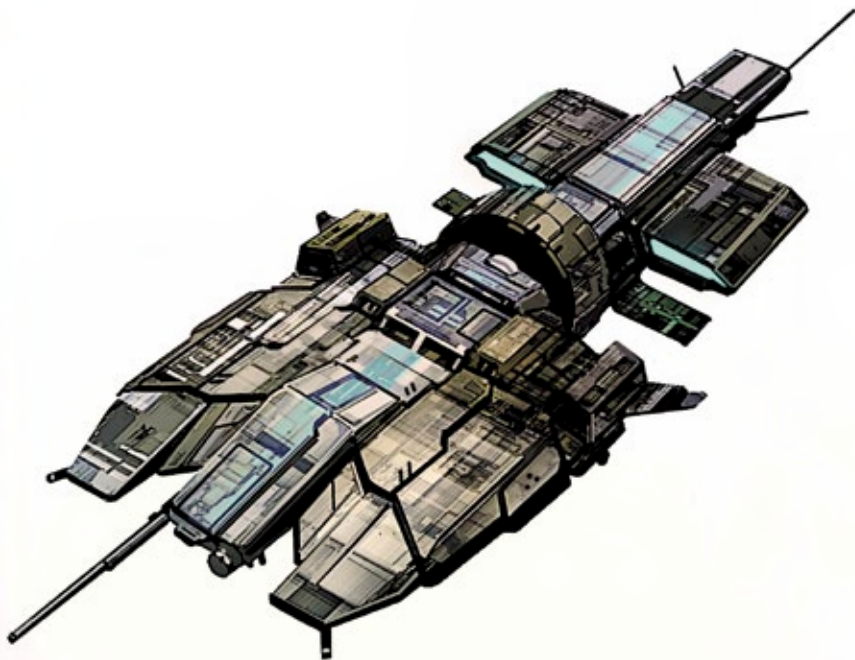
Size Class: Medium

Crew: 18 (Skeleton 6)

Support Crew: 12 (Staff)

Endurance: 64 days

Availability: Unlicensed



Knight's Errant Class Corvette

The Knight's Errant is a ship unique to the UWC Wardens. Officially designated as a corvette, the truth is it really doesn't fit easily into any traditional designation. Designed to assist Warden teams who have been deployed on missions, these ships have a menagerie of systems that all contribute to this end. Science stations, medical bays, high end sensors, and more are available to the team. These ships are also armed well enough that they can generally fight off anyone foolish enough to actually take an aggressive stance towards the ship.

General Characteristics

Size Class: Medium

Crew: 8 (Skeleton 3)

Support Crew: 0

Endurance: 365 days

Availability: Licensed



Perth Class Bulk Freighter

A great deal of ore and other materials are generated in the outermost portions of the solar system, and that material must find its way to the factories and refineries that are located primarily in the inner system. This is where bulk freighters come in, and the Perth class is one of the most successful designs in common usage today. When empty, these vessels look like nothing more than an incomplete ship skeleton. However, when in ac-

tion, that skeleton is covered in cargo pallets filled with a variety of cargos. Most commonly these include ores, precious metals and other bulk materials, but the ship can also take on pallets designed to store more precious cargos, such as foodstuffs and delicate machinery. A pair of counter-rotating life sections sit at either end of the ship, providing the crew a gravity environment for the long trips between the inner and outer system.

General Characteristics

Size Class: Large

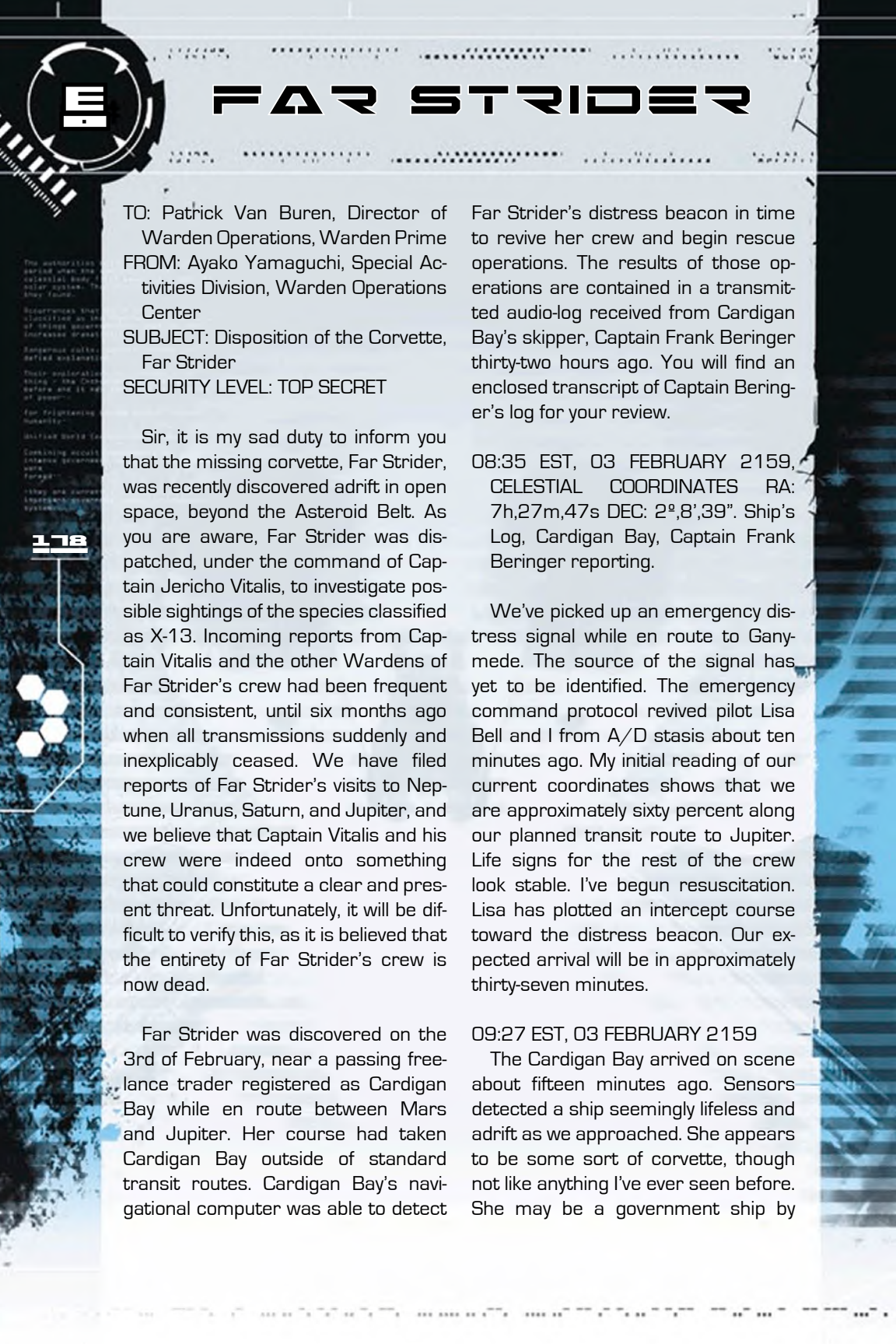
Crew: 18 (Skeleton 6)

Support Crew: 12

Endurance: 300 days

Availability: Unrestricted





FAR STRIDER

TO: Patrick Van Buren, Director of
Warden Operations, Warden Prime
FROM: Ayako Yamaguchi, Special Ac-
tivities Division, Warden Operations
Center
SUBJECT: Disposition of the Corvette,
Far Strider
SECURITY LEVEL: TOP SECRET

Sir, it is my sad duty to inform you that the missing corvette, Far Strider, was recently discovered adrift in open space, beyond the Asteroid Belt. As you are aware, Far Strider was dispatched, under the command of Captain Jericho Vitalis, to investigate possible sightings of the species classified as X-13. Incoming reports from Captain Vitalis and the other Wardens of Far Strider's crew had been frequent and consistent, until six months ago when all transmissions suddenly and inexplicably ceased. We have filed reports of Far Strider's visits to Neptune, Uranus, Saturn, and Jupiter, and we believe that Captain Vitalis and his crew were indeed onto something that could constitute a clear and present threat. Unfortunately, it will be difficult to verify this, as it is believed that the entirety of Far Strider's crew is now dead.

Far Strider was discovered on the 3rd of February, near a passing free-lance trader registered as Cardigan Bay while en route between Mars and Jupiter. Her course had taken Cardigan Bay outside of standard transit routes. Cardigan Bay's navigational computer was able to detect

Far Strider's distress beacon in time to revive her crew and begin rescue operations. The results of those operations are contained in a transmitted audio-log received from Cardigan Bay's skipper, Captain Frank Beringer thirty-two hours ago. You will find an enclosed transcript of Captain Beringer's log for your review.

08:35 EST, 03 FEBRUARY 2159,
CELESTIAL COORDINATES RA:
7h,27m,47s DEC: 2°8',39". Ship's
Log, Cardigan Bay, Captain Frank
Beringer reporting.

We've picked up an emergency distress signal while en route to Ganymede. The source of the signal has yet to be identified. The emergency command protocol revived pilot Lisa Bell and I from A/D stasis about ten minutes ago. My initial reading of our current coordinates shows that we are approximately sixty percent along our planned transit route to Jupiter. Life signs for the rest of the crew look stable. I've begun resuscitation. Lisa has plotted an intercept course toward the distress beacon. Our expected arrival will be in approximately thirty-seven minutes.

09:27 EST, 03 FEBRUARY 2159

The Cardigan Bay arrived on scene about fifteen minutes ago. Sensors detected a ship seemingly lifeless and adrift as we approached. She appears to be some sort of corvette, though not like anything I've ever seen before. She may be a government ship by



Help Is Always A Long Way Away

the looks of her markings. The name printed on her hull is *Far Strider*. I've directed my navigator, Jose Perez, to research the name on the master vessel database, but he has yet to find anything useful. Whatever she is, this ship is well armed.

We've attempted to raise her on standard communications channels, with no results. Our initial inspection of the outer hull indicates no rupture or any other sign of damage. Nevertheless, the ship seems lifeless. We'll need to board her as soon as we can

to commence rescue or salvage operations. I've already ordered Lisa to bring us alongside. Chief Engineer Dante Williams is preparing a boarding party. We will begin operations as soon as we are securely moored to Far Strider's docking hatch.

10:22 EST, 03 FEBRUARY 2159

The boarding party is now aboard Far Strider. Party members include Chief Williams, Assistant Engineer Sheila Watts, Pilot Lisa Bell, and our medic Lionel Heskey. Entry through the outer airlock was difficult due to Far Strider's advanced security system. Fortunately, Sheila is somewhat of a wiz at breaking security codes – even the toughest ones. I don't know what kind of work she did before this, but some of her more dubious skills often come in handy.

Perez located a listing for Far Strider under the master vessel database, but the entry was marked as classified. She must be a government ship – I'd bet a year's pay on it.

Initial reports from Williams' team are insubstantial. There's no sign of life whatsoever – no bodies, no living souls, nothing. Sheila is making her way toward the engine room while the others head toward the bridge. Perhaps Far Strider's log is accessible from there.

10:36 EST, 03 FEBRUARY 2159

My God, what happened over there? Williams has linked me into a live video feed. It looks like the hatch to the bridge is sealed and barricaded by welded bands of steel. The door, walls, and deck plates are all sprayed

with splashes of what looks like blood. There's also quite a bit of damage to the door frame, as if something powerful had battered against it from the other side.

Williams is scanning for life signs, but I don't have a good feeling about survivors after seeing this mess. Nevertheless, we've got to make sure. On the other hand, Far Strider might fall under UWC regulations as free salvage if there are no survivors and clear ownership can't be verified. A ship like this could be worth a fortune. Whatever the case, we must get into that bridge. I'll make sure the cutting gear is ready – and I may just unlock the weapons locker as well. I hope to God that we don't find whatever made this bloody mess locked in on the other side.

11:02 EST, 03 FEBRUARY 2159

No life signs have been detected, so Williams and the team have cut through the hatch and entered the bridge. The crew made a quick sweep, with pistols drawn, but there was no immediate threat. The bridge is in shambles, however. Most of the control consoles and equipment have been ravaged the same way as the door. Scorch marks indicate that there may have been a small electrical fire. The lighting in there is very dim. I can hardly make out details through the Chief's video feed. A computerized voice is coming from somewhere to the left near the navigation station. I can just make out the shape of a chair and the lights of the console as the Chief moves closer. There seems to be something on the floor as well. Oh dear God!

11:26 EST, 03 FEBRUARY 2159

We've discovered the body of a woman. Something ripped her in half and dropped the fleshy pieces on the deck like discarded cigarette butts. Lisa had to leave the bridge to throw up. What the hell could have done this? I give Williams a lot of credit for having the stomach to deal with this mess, especially since he's the one examining what's left of the body. The tattered remains of her uniform still display a portion of her insignia, revealing what she was - this woman was a Warden.

11:52 EST, 03 FEBRUARY 2159

Williams has patched me into Far Strider's navigation control. It took some doing, but I managed to retrieve her logs and discovered two things. First, Far Strider was set to the last stage of her self-destruct sequence. One more command and boom!

Second, Far Strider's captain, someone named Vitalis, seemed worried about the possible presence of a hostile alien life form on Neptune. Far Strider was dispatched to Salacia to dig up evidence of something they call X-13. There seems to be a profile record in Far Strider's database for this thing, but I can't seem to get past its security profile. According to Vitalis' log entry, the Warden's didn't believe that this X-13 was native to Neptune. But, some strange sightings and the sharp escalation of murders within the colony followed a bizarre event that eyewitnesses described as a shimmering wave in the air followed by an explosion of static electricity - very strange.

Whatever this thing was, it certainly looked like Vitalis and his crew were able to track it. He described it as a "cunning and intelligent predator possessed of incredible strength and speed, with a will for violent bloodshed." Skimming ahead here, I can see that the Wardens were able to corner the creature somewhere within Salacia's spaceport. However, it got away in what may have been a cargo shipment to Uranus. Yes, I can see here where Vitalis mentions the discovery of a derelict freighter adrift near the moon Oberon. She must have been towed to Veronica Station, because the next thing that Vitalis notes is a series of random grizzly murders on the Saturnine moon of Enceladus soon after a passenger liner, recently arrived from Veronica Station, had landed there. Whatever this thing was, it seemed to be very deliberate in its journey toward the inner planets.

According to Vitalis' logs, the Wardens arrived on Enceladus only days after the creature's departure. The carnage and destruction it left behind had the local population in a paranoid uproar. Whatever this X-13 alien was, it was intelligent and apparently skilled. Local police reports on Enceladus included an apparent shuttle theft - the vessel in question being later found docked at Chronos Station above Titan. What I don't get is how this thing could possibly infiltrate busy population centers without discovery. Oh God, I remember hearing about the disappearance of an entire class of young school children while transferring onto a shuttle at Chronos Station, but no details had ever been released of the incident. According to

Vitalis, a cruise liner heading toward Jupiter picked up the shuttle, apparently adrift in Saturn's orbit. All that was found was a gruesome collection of toddler heads and body parts piled in a fleshy stack of bloody meat inside the cabin.

Scanners had not picked up signs of life on that shuttle either. Yet, evidence of the creature's passing remained clear when some of the cruise liner's passengers began to disappear. Wait, if they couldn't detect any life on the shuttle, then...

I need to contact Williams now!

12:14 EST, 03 FEBRUARY 2159

I've put Williams and the rest of the crew on alert. Whatever this thing is, I know now that it somehow got on the Warden ship. Vitalis believed that they had destroyed the creature after catching up with it on Ganymede. He was wrong! I read Vitalis' account of X-13's apparent abilities. Like a chameleon, it's able to blend itself into its surroundings to avoid detection. It's somehow invisible to standard bio-scanners as well. What the hell did we just step into here?

The account of the Warden's discovery that they weren't alone on-board ship after Ganymede is quite clear in Vitalis' log. Two of the Wardens were violently eviscerated and half eaten while in A/D stasis. The remainder of the team was revived under the computer's emergency protocol. They tried their best, but couldn't stop this thing. They knew that they had no chance. One of the Wardens, Shelly Brice, tried to set Far Strider's

auto-destruct. I guess that's one way to win a fight. Vitalis and his crew tried to barricade themselves up on the bridge, but the thing got in. Brice's death, being ripped in two, bought the time for the rest of the Wardens to slip out the hatch and weld it shut. Even so, there is no sign of this creature on the bridge now.

Oh no! There's a ventilation shaft in the overhead! According to the ship's schematics, the shaft leads to a junction that runs straight back toward the engine room. Sheila! She was back there and she hasn't checked in for almost an hour!

12:20 EST, 03 FEBRUARY 2159

I've alerted Williams to collect the crew and abandon the Far Strider! We've got to get out of here now! Neither of us can raise Sheila on the comm link. Lisa is making her way back to the mooring hatch now. Perez is preparing the nav computer for departure. Williams and Heskey should not be far behind. I can see them moving through Far Strider's corridor from Williams' video cam. There's the airlock hatch at the T-juncture. But where's Lisa? I can tell that Williams is wondering the same thing as I watch his camera pan back and forth with such a blur that it's hard to make out details. Wait! That's a woman screaming! Oh no. I just saw a bloody body fly across the T-junction and slam against the far bulkhead! Heskey is making for the airlock hatch. I think that the Chief is trying to find the thing!

Something just lunged at them from the shadows. Whoa... it's big and re-

ally fast! I can't see anything! Everyone's cameras are bouncing all over the place! I hear yelling and screaming everywhere. No one seems to be able to hear me! And that screeching roar. That... that isn't right. It's like a cross between a howl and the scraping of metal on metal! It's horrible!

The Chief and Heskey are both down. The Chief's camera only points at the deck now. But I can see... oh god... that's Heskey's head. Where is his body?! No... there... there the thing is. No... no... that can't be real. Wai... I'm going to be sick.

No... that's the airlock! Perez, seal the door, now!

12:32 EST, 03 FEBRUARY 2159

[heavy breathing] Just escaped the bridge in time! Perez is dead! Ship compromised! I'm... I'm the last. No sign of the creature. Doesn't seem to want to chase me, for some reason. Ship's computer is activating launch sequence! How can that be? Can't do anything from here. Got to get to Far Strider. Headed to vacc suit locker. With any luck...

12:53 EST, 03 FEBRUARY 2159

I think my heart's going to explode. I'm on Far Strider's bridge now. I managed to space-walk from Cardigan

Bay's outboard airlock to avoid detection. I've seen what's left of my crew. I don't have time to think about that now.

Cardigan Bay's mains are fired up and ready for maneuvering. Her docking tube is starting to retract. Whatever that thing is, it's smart enough to steal my ship! Where the hell is it going?! I've got to stop it! How do you activate the gun turrets on this thing?! All the consoles are smashed! Wait! That's it! The nav console!

The ship's self-destruct sequence is still active. I just need the final command. Oh hell... screw it. That's right, you freak! I'm not letting you out of here!

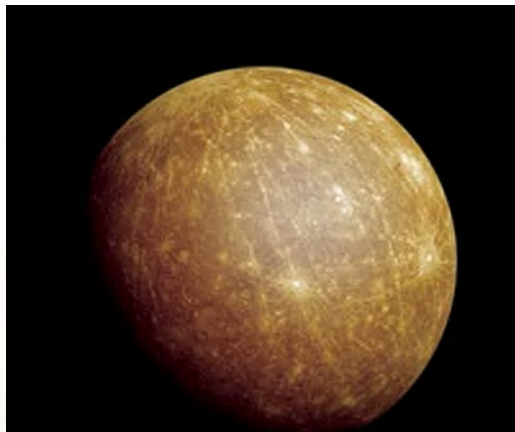
12:56 EST, 03 FEBRUARY 2159

This is Captain Frank Beringer of the freighter Cardigan Bay. I'm broadcasting this message to send my personal log as a warning. Anyone who doesn't believe in alien life out here in the cold void is dead wrong! I've seen it and it destroyed my ship and my entire crew.

But now it's time for payback! Auto destruct on the count of three.

Three... Two... One...

MERCURY



Type: Terrestrial
Size: Approximately 0.055 Earths by Mass
Gravity: 0.38 g (Low Gravity)
Surface Pressure: Negligible
Surface Composition: Metallic Material (70%), Silicate Rock (30%)
Atmosphere: Trace – Molecular Oxygen (42%), Sodium (29%), Hydrogen (22%), Helium (6%), Potassium (0.5%)
Surface Temperature: Around 427° C/800° F.
Day: 176 Days
Year: 88 Earth-Standard Days
Satellites: None

Mercury is a small dead world – a rock in space marred and cracked by ages of meteor impacts. It slowly rotates like a pig on a spit under the punishing heat of the Sun. The temperature variance on any given day between the dark and roasting sides range between -315°F and +800°F. Building a sustainable colony here would be next to impossible under these extreme conditions. So, why would anyone want to invest so much time and expense to come here in the first place? The answer is mining.

Though dead on the outside, Mercury harbors a wealth of natural metals and minerals below her surface. Investment in a colonial mission to Mercury would naturally be dangerous and risky, but that was a risk the Chinese government was willing to take. Luckily for them, the unconquerable dead world had one Achilles heel, one place where humans could land in relative safety.

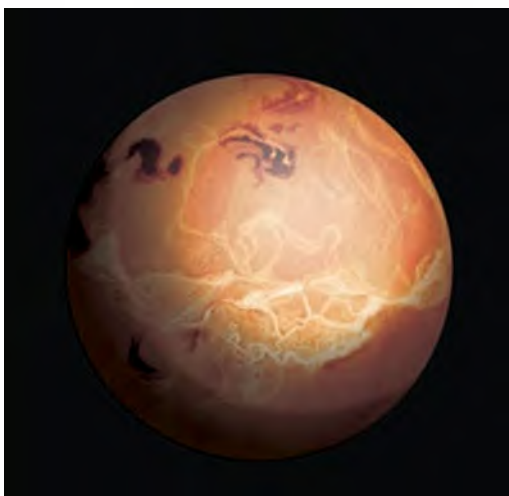
The Chao Meng-Fu crater, located on Mercury's southern pole, is the only location on the planet that remains mostly in the shade throughout an entire day – thus the temperature stays relatively constant. It was here that the Port Tian colony was established as the only human presence on Mercury. Life here is spartan and simple, with very little in terms of creature comforts. Nobody goes to Mercury unless they have business here - at least nobody who wants to live a comfortable life-style. Yet there is wealth to be had for those brave enough to join the drilling operations that sink further and further toward the planet's core. A miner might be able to return home to Earth with a small, dream-building fortune after a few years of hard work. That is, of course, if he doesn't disappear first among the dangerous labyrinth-like tunnels of Mercury's mines.

VENUS

Venus has one of the harshest climates in the solar system. Despite being only a bit smaller than the Earth and well within the range of the sun that is generally held to be friendly to life, Venus has a decidedly hellish surface with high winds and temperature in the hundreds of degrees – no matter if you are on the day or night side. Despite these conditions, however, it is a world that has extensively felt the touch of humanity.

Five corporations control Venus, under the nominal authority of the Venusian Administrative Body. Each corporation has utter autonomy within their colony, with each colony having its own set of rules and regulations, customs, holidays, and so on. However, outside of the colony, including any mining operations those colonies may claim, the VAB has the final authority. While the Venusian Administrative Body is supposed to be apolitical, its rulings are generally tilted in favor of whichever corporation currently has the most influence.

Nearly all aspects of life on Venus occur underground. With the high temperatures, scouring winds, and corrosive environment of the surface, subsurface colonies have been by far the cheapest method of colonizing the planet in the long term. Most of these colonies can trace their roots back to the initial mining opera-



Type: Hothouse

Size: Approximately 0.815 Earths by Mass

Gravity: 0.904 g (Moderately Low Gravity)

Surface Pressure: 9.3 million Pascal (about 93 times Earth sea level)

Surface Composition: Basalt rocky surface dominated by volcanic plains with interspersed highlands. Iron, gold, silver, uranium and a variety of other valuable ores and minerals can be found.

Atmosphere: Mostly Carbon Dioxide (85%) with Nitrogen (3%) and other trace gases such as sulfur dioxide, argon, water vapor and carbon.

Cloud Layer Temperature: Around 460° C/860° F.

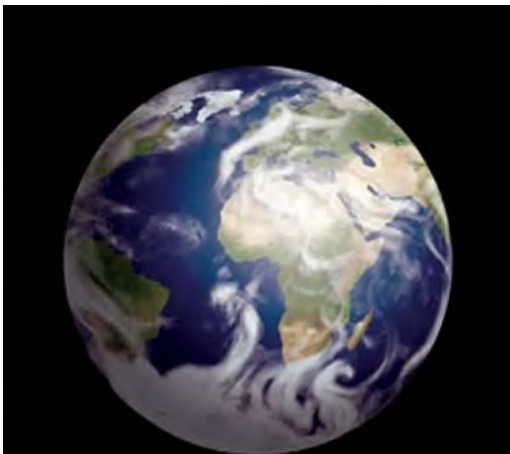
Day: 243 Days

Year: 224.7 Earth-Standard Days

Satellites: None

tions of the corporations but, for the most part, those mining operations have moved to other areas of the planet. Despite this, these colonies offer comfortable environments with wide caverns modeled much like the parks found on Earth, giving them an open-air feel. There is never mistaking, however, which colony you are in, for nearly every corridor you walk down, napkin you wipe your face with, and glass you drink out of has the associated corporate logo emblazoned across it.

EARTH



Type: Terrestrial Planet

Size: 1 Earth by Mass

Gravity: 1 g

Surface Pressure: 101 kPa

Surface Composition: Rocky surface with active plate tectonics. Composed mostly of iron, silicon, magnesium, sulfur, nickel, calcium, and aluminum.

Atmosphere: Mostly Nitrogen (78%) with Oxygen (21%), with the remaining amount made up of argon, carbon dioxide, and water vapor.

Surface Temperature: Average 24° C/75° F.

Day: 24 Hours

Year: 365 Earth-Standard Days

Satellites: 1

The nations of Earth are still pretty much as they have been, though some borders and centers of power always shift. The threat of terrorist nuclear strikes and the nuclear devastation of Port Klang in Malaysia woke the world up. Modern nations have become more civilized and choose to resolve their disputes through the forum of the Unified World Council – a powerful cooperative body that has replaced the impotent United Nations.

Fortunately, the Earth suffers no more from the threat of ecological di-

saster. The damage done during the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries was halted and, in some cases, reversed. However, the Earth has been damaged and a person from the 21st century would find the world to be quite different. Air quality has recovered, but climates have changed permanently in many parts of the world. There are places where it is not safe to travel outside without special suits, where the thinning or non-existent ozone no longer protects life from dangerous solar radiation. Many species are permanently extinct, though cloning efforts labor to bring some of them back – to little avail.

On the other hand, pushing people out to live on other worlds has helped ease the threat of overpopulation. People still have not learned, however, and there are no population controls in place. It will only be a matter of time before overpopulation becomes a problem again – or at least it would were not things awakening in the galaxy that are helping to thin the herd.

Compared to the rest of the solar system, though, the Earth is paradise. Large cities and population density make it very safe and the natural ecology of the planet is where humanity was meant to exist. That, however, does not mean that the strange happenings in the rest of the solar system have not found their way to Earth.

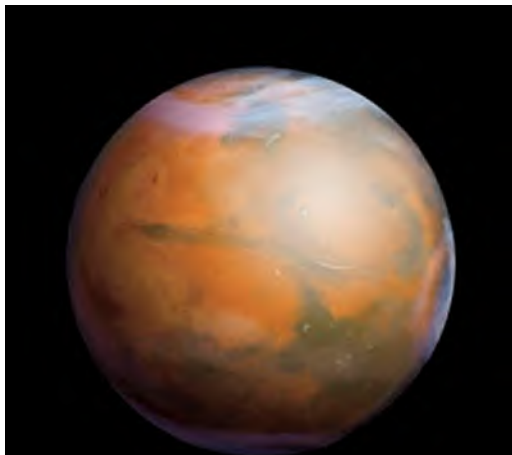
MARS

112 years ago, the first permanent settlement was created on the surface of Mars. In the beginning, the mining operations on Mars produced better results than anyone ever hoped. Jobs were plentiful and calls to Earth for more and more settlers brought shuttle after shuttle of people hoping to cash in on the prosperity. The original colony expanded and smaller settlements began to spring up in areas that could be easily protected from meteor and radiation damage.

However, this did not last. The dig sites all began to encounter a material in the ground that was incredibly hard to drill, blast, or bore through. The material was useless to the miners, as no one could find any way to profit from it. Worse yet, all indications showed that this material was present all over the planet.

Tourism, the second largest money-maker for the planet, was beginning to lag behind the more exotic locations found on Ganymede and Io. However, Mars had one final message to the people of Earth that thought that life could be restored to the Red Planet. Two years ago, the moon Diemos radically shifted orbit and swung into the path of Phobos.

The impact shattered the moons and blanketed the orbit of Mars with



Type: Terrestrial Planet

Size: Approximately 0.5 Earths by Mass

Gravity: 0.375 g (Low Gravity)

Surface Pressure: 1 kPascal

Surface Composition: Primarily a basalt rock base containing some silica glass. Surface covered in finely grained iron-oxide dust.

Atmosphere: Mostly Nitrogen (78%) and Oxygen (19%), with the remaining amount made up of Argon, Carbon Dioxide, Krypton, Neon, Nitrogen, Xenon, and Water Vapor

Surface Temperature: Around 4.4° C/40° F.

Day: 24.6 Hours

Year: 1.8 Earth-Standard Years

Satellites: Formerly 2, now a loosely formed ring.

millions of particles of space debris. Much of the debris rained down in a hail of meteorites that peppered the planet for days on end. The location of the colonies in low-lying areas saved them from the worst of the damage. The dust storm created by the impact of so many meteorites continues to blanket the planet to this day. Solar collectors struggle to collect the little sunlight that sneaks through the clouds above.

It is a world supported by will alone.

JUPITER



Type: Gas Giant
Size: Approximately 318 Earths by Mass
Gravity: 2.53 g
Surface Pressure: 20-200 kPascal (cloud layer)
Surface Composition: Liquid Metallic Hydrogen with Some Helium
Atmosphere: Mostly Hydrogen (89%) and Helium (10%), with trace amounts of Ammonia, Ethane, Hydrogen Deuteride, Methane, and Water, as well as Ammonia, Ammonium Hydrosulfide, and Water Ices.
Cloud Layer Temperature: Around $-125^{\circ}\text{C}/-193^{\circ}\text{F}$.
Day: 9.9 Hours
Year: 11.86 Earth-Standard Years
Satellites: 63

It is the largest planet in our solar system, so large that it is two and a half times the mass of all the other planets combined. The gas giant has captured the imaginations of many, with its massive satellites and giant red eye. It's too bad for them that the reality turned out to be far less fascinating than they had hoped.

The planet itself is home only to two large floating gas mines. Most workers live on Callisto and come in month-long shifts. The real excitement of Jupiter is found on the four

Galilean moons – Callisto, Europa, Ganymede, and Io.

Callisto's most distinct features are the numerous and massive impact craters that cover the surface. This is where many of those working nearby live – a bedroom community.

Europa is home to a giant underground saltwater ocean, kept warm by the magnetic influence of Jupiter. The lifeforms survive by chemosynthesis, similar to the black smoker environments of Earth.

Ganymede is the largest moon in the solar system. The moon's primary trade is tourism and entertainment. It is, for lack of a better analogy, the Las Vegas of the outer planets.

Io is rife with geological activity, with many mountains and volcanoes. Bunkers that shield visitors from the intense radiation provide staging grounds for those who wish to come and climb the majestic mountains in a low gravity environment.

However, there have been some unusual reports in and around Jupiter space. Gas miners in the upper atmosphere of Jupiter report seeing shadows of things floating in the alien clouds. Scientists on Europa claim that the "fish" they're studying have been acting differently. Perhaps most unusual is the way that a part of Callisto has begun to change.

SATURN

Out there, beyond the treacherous rim of the Asteroid Belt and the great orbit of Jupiter lays the heart of mankind's new frontier – Saturn. Her many rings highlight the moons that are home to a rising civilization. Over three million residents of the Republic of Saturn live and work here, striving daily to build their lives around the promise of a free and independent world. Opportunities abound here for the adventurous of heart and the ingenious of mind. Rapid growth has created a strong economy built on industry, manufacturing, mining, tourism, and perhaps the most important of Saturn's commodities – agriculture. It might seem ironic that the world in the solar system named after the Roman god of the harvest would actually deliver on the promise of her namesake. However, Saturn has evolved into what is called the breadbasket of the outer planets.

Ice harvesting has become an important industry among Saturn's moons, especially Enceladus with its giant plumes of sprayed ice shot majestically into space from massive geysers on its southern pole. Other moons like Rhea play host to huge manufacturing plants and ship yards that allow Saturn to produce biodomes, shuttles, transports, and other necessary components that sustain the colony. Saturnine colony structures and merchant vessels are not uncommon among the Outer Worlds.



Type: Gas Giant

Size: Approximately 95 Earths by Mass

Gravity: 2.5 g

Surface Pressure: 140 kPascal (cloud layer)

Surface Composition: Liquid Metallic Hydrogen and Helium. Theoretical rocky core.

Atmosphere: Mostly Hydrogen (96%) and Helium (3%), with trace amounts of Ammonia, Ethane, Hydrogen Deuteride, Methane, and Water.

Cloud Layer Temperature: Around $-185^{\circ}\text{C}/-301^{\circ}\text{F}$.

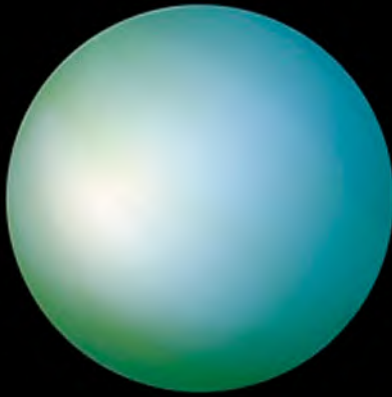
Day: 10.57 Hours

Year: 29.46 Earth-Standard Years

Satellites: 200 observed, 62 with secure orbits

Perhaps the most amazing example of the Republic of Saturn's achievements is Titan. It is here, under the orange sky and dense atmosphere of Saturn's largest moon, that great cities and mammoth farming bio-domes have arisen. Cassini University, located within the capital city of Cassini, is famous for its schools of Planetology and Organic Chemistry. The city of Chronos has become one of the most important trade centers in the Solar System, built on the need to transport Titan's wealth of agricultural goods off world. The fact of sustainable colonies on Neptune and Uranus can be directly attributed by some degree to the success of the Saturn colony.

URANUS



Type: Ice Giant

Size: Approximately 4 Earths by Mass

Gravity: 0.89 g (Moderately Low Gravity)

Surface Pressure: 100 kPascal

Surface Composition: Hot and dense fluid mixture of water, ammonia, and other volatiles.

Atmosphere: Mostly Hydrogen, with trace amounts of Helium, Methane, and Molecular Hydrogen.

Cloud Layer Temperature: Around $-193^{\circ}\text{C}/-379^{\circ}\text{F}$.

Day: 17.9 Hours

Year: 84.01 Earth-Standard Years

Satellites: 27

For years, the Uranus sector had been nothing more than a junction point for transports off to the lucrative diamond mines of Neptune or the vast expanse of the Kuiper Belt beyond. Even then, that was only when the orbital alignments worked out. That all changed when the Wesley family founded the hydrogen mining facility from Veronica Station. The Wesley family obtained the rights to the moons surrounding Uranus and has offered them to independent prospectors or corporations to do with as they will.

The surface of the planet is not actually a surface at all, but a mix of water, ammonia, and methane in a thick liquid form. Despite its large size, the gravitational forces of Uranus are actually less than that of Earth, so it would be possible to land on its surface if it was solid. Given that Uranus has no solid surface, the only colony for Uranus proper is Veronica Station – the mining facility run by John Paul Wesley to extract molecular hydrogen from the atmosphere. The space station is a patchwork of various components and sections from a number of failed attempts to set a mining rig in the orbit of Uranus.

The moons of Uranus have all been set up as mining and prospecting regions, where independent contractors and corporations obtain deeds for mining rights from Wesley. Law is officially maintained by the internal security supplied by the Wesley family. The reality, however, is that the local prospectors and corporations will deal with suspected criminals internally. In fact, the region has the lowest reported theft rate of anywhere in the solar system, but that only means that little crime is reported. Being much like the gold rush towns of the old west on Earth, law is very often handled as an personal matter between prospectors.

NEPTUNE

Neptune, the last planet of our solar system, so far into space that it is thirty times the distance of the Earth to the burning Sun. Wind is a near constant on Neptune – the average daily winds range from 45 mph to nearly the speed of sound. Unsurprisingly, the only colony on Neptune's surface is underground – or under the thick ice layer, which has baffled scientists. Beyond it lies only the Kuiper Belt, a place filled with only dwarf planets and miscellaneous chunks of rock. It's no wonder it is a frigid, inhospitable world, where only the greedy or desperate would dare set foot.

Salacia is the only colony on Neptune. It is powered entirely by geo-thermal taps, utilizing the extremely hot core of the planet. At first glance, it would seem amazing that anyone would want to spend the large amounts of money and incredible effort required to maintain a colony on Neptune. Positivity or curiosity hardly seem reasonable motivations. The answer is simple – Neptune produces diamonds, the most precious gem in the solar system. Salacia is a joint operation of the European Federation and the Rhodes Company – a firm with long roots in the diamond business and the fabulous wealth that goes with it.

Over the last few years, strange things have become commonplace



Type: Ice Giant

Size: Approximately 17 Earths by Mass

Gravity: 1.14 g (Moderately High Gravity)

Surface Pressure: 1.5 Pascal (equal to about 75 miles above Earth sea level)

Surface Composition: Mostly Ammonia, Ammonium Hydrosulfide, Methane, and Water ices.

Atmosphere: Mostly Hydrogen (80%) and Helium (20%), with a small percentage of Methane and trace amounts of Hydrogen Deuteride and Ethane.

Surface Temperature: Around $-200^{\circ}\text{C}/-300^{\circ}\text{F}$.

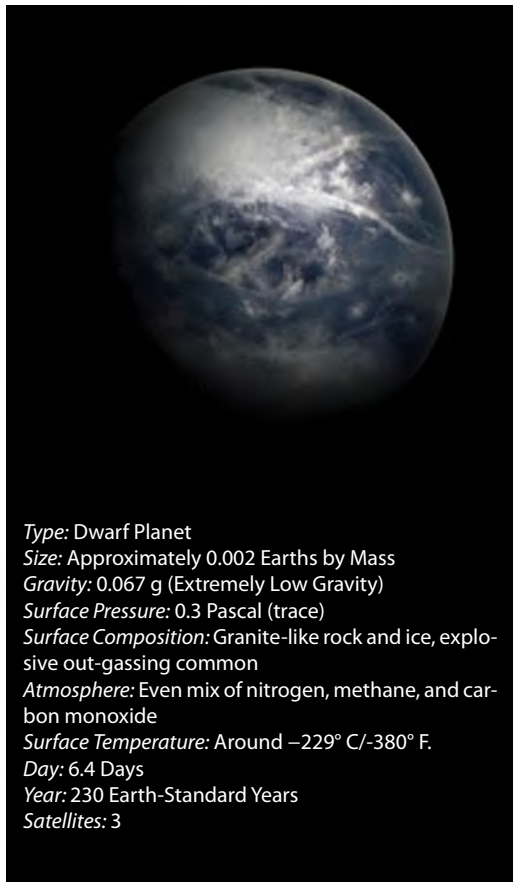
Day: 16.11 Hours

Year: 164.79 Earth-Standard Years

Satellites: 13

on Neptune. Many people have started to have intense nightmares, some of which have induced homicidal fits in otherwise normal folks. Insomnia (or sleep aids) are an epidemic. People also have started to go missing from time to time, without any trace – some believe there's a conspiracy afoot. On top of all that, there are those who claim to have heard eerie distant sounds through the surface flurries, like the songs of whales. None of these facts are advertised by Rhodes – it would be bad for business.

PLUTO & THE KUIPER BELT



Type: Dwarf Planet

Size: Approximately 0.002 Earths by Mass

Gravity: 0.067 g (Extremely Low Gravity)

Surface Pressure: 0.3 Pascal (trace)

Surface Composition: Granite-like rock and ice, explosive out-gassing common

Atmosphere: Even mix of nitrogen, methane, and carbon monoxide

Surface Temperature: Around $-229^{\circ}\text{C}/-380^{\circ}\text{F}$

Day: 6.4 Days

Year: 230 Earth-Standard Years

Satellites: 3

and thus far humanity has found itself a distant observer. In recent years, that observation has increased ten-fold.

The small dwarf planet has always been a bit of an enigma in the solar system. Its orbit sneaks in and out of the Kuiper belt and is tilted, running north and south of the ecliptic plain. There has never been a satisfactory explanation of this oddity. More recently, however, the small world has begun exhibiting even more bizarre and inexplicable behavior – the orbit of Pluto has been changing. The change was small at first, but it seems to be increasing. Its velocity has also shifted, sometimes speeding up and sometimes slowing down. There is no known cause that science can find for its behavior, though many great minds have been set to the task of finding it.

Across the solar system nearly every planet and moon has felt the presence of humanity. Not so with Pluto. The planet has made it clear that it wishes to be left alone. There have been attempts, many of them, over the years. However, with each attempt comes screams and then silence. Most expeditions have never made it to the surface and those that did never last. Even satellites and probes last only a few hours at best before their signals are lost. Pluto wishes to be left alone

Even with this new development, travel to the world is strictly forbidden. Even its moons are off-limits. Inevitably someone will again make the attempt to land on the world, to force from it the secrets that it hides, and inevitably those same someones will transmit screams of terror into the dark void before they too go silent. Pluto will surrender its secrets when it is ready, not when we demand it, for Pluto has no time for our needs.

The Kuiper Belt, The New Frontier

Past the distant planet of Neptune lies a thick band of rock, dust and ice known as the Kuiper Belt. Many dismiss this region as nothing more than another asteroid field, but those people do not truly understand the scope of the belt. Despite being far less dense in most areas than the better known belt of rocks that sits between Mars and Jupiter, the Kuiper Belt dwarfs its inner system cousin in its sheer population of rocks and ice that slowly drift through it. For this reason, the Belt has become the new frontier of the solar system.

For those who are brave or, depending on who you ask, foolish enough to venture that far out, there lies a great potential to truly make a mark on the solar system. Many explorers have

found massive deposits that have netted them finder's fees that allowed them to retire in style. Many more, however, have simply vanished never to be heard from again. While there is great promise in the Belt, there is also great danger.

So far out is the Kuiper Belt that even a small emergency can turn deadly. Unlike the inner system, there is usually no help to be found. Those who make their living in the belt are truly self-reliant – they have to be to survive. They are also freer to pursue their dreams than anywhere else in the solar system. The Unified World Council has no say out here and even those corporations that have staked a claim out here, such as the massive 4G Enterprises, understand that they will never have any influence beyond the walls of their own stations.

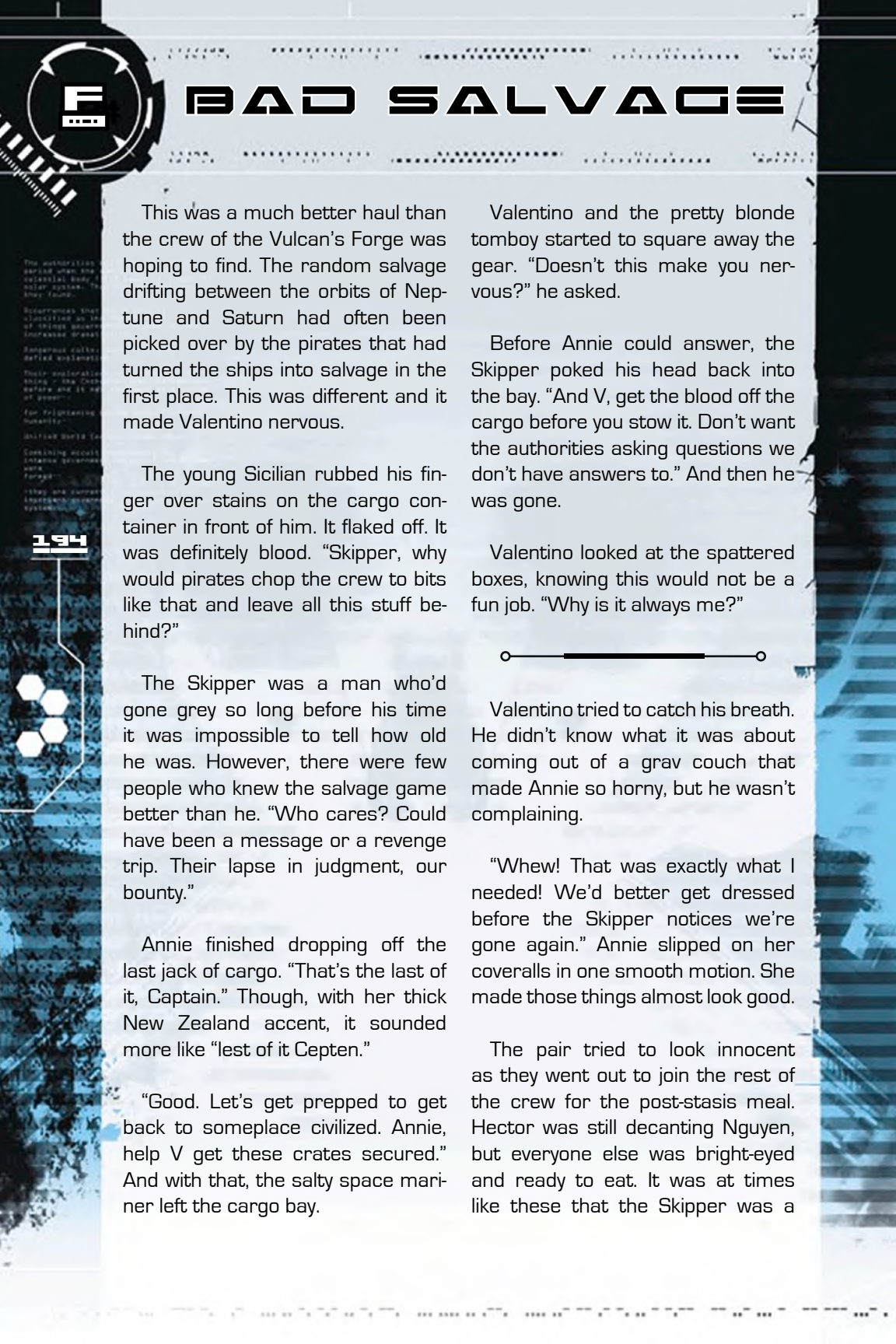
The Kuiper Belt

Type: Asteroid Belt

Accepted Border: Inner 35 AU – Outer 50 AU

Composition: Primarily iceroids with a small percentage of asteroids, infant comets, and roughly half a dozen dwarf planets.

Major Locations: Dyonis Complex, Fog Field, the Lighthouse, Smoke, the Forge



BAD SALVAGE

This was a much better haul than the crew of the Vulcan's Forge was hoping to find. The random salvage drifting between the orbits of Neptune and Saturn had often been picked over by the pirates that had turned the ships into salvage in the first place. This was different and it made Valentino nervous.

The young Sicilian rubbed his finger over stains on the cargo container in front of him. It flaked off. It was definitely blood. "Skipper, why would pirates chop the crew to bits like that and leave all this stuff behind?"

The Skipper was a man who'd gone grey so long before his time it was impossible to tell how old he was. However, there were few people who knew the salvage game better than he. "Who cares? Could have been a message or a revenge trip. Their lapse in judgment, our bounty."

Annie finished dropping off the last jack of cargo. "That's the last of it, Captain." Though, with her thick New Zealand accent, it sounded more like "lest of it Cepten."

"Good. Let's get prepped to get back to someplace civilized. Annie, help V get these crates secured." And with that, the salty space mariner left the cargo bay.

Valentino and the pretty blonde tomboy started to square away the gear. "Doesn't this make you nervous?" he asked.

Before Annie could answer, the Skipper poked his head back into the bay. "And V, get the blood off the cargo before you stow it. Don't want the authorities asking questions we don't have answers to." And then he was gone.

Valentino looked at the spattered boxes, knowing this would not be a fun job. "Why is it always me?"

Valentino tried to catch his breath. He didn't know what it was about coming out of a grav couch that made Annie so horny, but he wasn't complaining.

"Whew! That was exactly what I needed! We'd better get dressed before the Skipper notices we're gone again." Annie slipped on her coveralls in one smooth motion. She made those things almost look good.

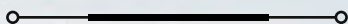
The pair tried to look innocent as they went out to join the rest of the crew for the post-stasis meal. Hector was still decanting Nguyen, but everyone else was bright-eyed and ready to eat. It was at times like these that the Skipper was a



Things in the Salvage

generous man – he made sure his crew had honest to goodness food, instead of the usual crap rations that went with deep space voyages. It was the little things that made all the difference, usually.

It was, however, entirely deceptive. Little did they know that this was going to be the last normal moment any of them would ever know.



It was only two days later when Ilse, one of the new crew, needed Hector to check her out. She'd developed a painful welt on her lower right back and hadn't felt right since it showed up. Ilse thought that it happened when she hit some of the scrap the wrong way when working the cargo bay, but Hector said it looked more like the bug bite of something big.

Since there weren't any bugs on board and since they hadn't been to a port with bugs for quite a while, Hector was stumped. There wasn't much he could do about it, other than give her some topical medicine. He was a medic, not a doctor.

Valentino knew something was wrong, and he hadn't felt right since they pulled the salvage onboard.

The Skipper looked across the table, one eyebrow raised. "Lord, Ilse. You trying to eat me out of house and home?"

The skinny little German girl wolfed down a second helping of miso soup and something that was supposed to be potstickers. "I don't know what's been going on. Seems like I can't get enough to eat ever since this last stasis. I must look like a little piggy!" She stopped eating long enough to make little piggy snorts at everyone, which made Annie burst into laughter. At least Ilse still had her sense of humor.

It was later that day that Valentino discovered that something had been into the food stores. He called the Skipper down, because this wasn't something that was going to be easy to explain. Food containers had been torn open, even the ones that were sealed in hard materials.

"Now what could have done this?" The Skipper seemed more curious than angry.

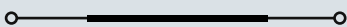
Valentino shook his head. "I don't know, but I've got a bad feeling about this. Think this has anything to do with Ilse's bite?"

The Skipper reached down to grab himself a handful of nuts, which were spilled across one of the shelves. "If it is, it ain't a bug and it's a whole lot bigger than I thought. We're going to have to get everyone stun rods and search the ship. But where did it come from?"

"It couldn't have come from that ship," said Valentino. "What could have survived? It was vented to space."

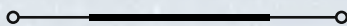
Nguyen checked in with Hector later that day. He'd gotten stung by something down in engineering, but he never saw what it was and couldn't find anything. He was sure he hadn't accidentally bumped into anything.

It was for certain. Something was on the ship. Everyone gathered together to make a plan to find it and the Skipper broke out the stun batons.



The crew had gotten about halfway through their first pass of the ship when Ilse called in, saying she wasn't feeling well. She'd been complaining about feeling bloated the last couple of days and her digestive system had been on the fritz. No one thought anything of it and simply adjusted their search pattern to accommodate her absence.

It had been several hours and no one had seen anything. It didn't help that they didn't know what they were supposed to be looking for. They assumed it could be as small as a rabbit and went from there. Since Ilse had gone radio silent, the Skipper sent Hector to go find her.

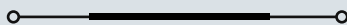


Hector was just as freaked out as everyone else. He had no good explanation for what happened to Ilse. It took him a while to find her, but she had been dead for at least a few hours. He managed to keep it together enough to bag her body, but we had to draw straws to see who was going to clean up all the blood.

Ilse had died just outside her bathroom. Hector wanted to say it was some kind of hemorrhagic fever, but

that's only because he didn't have any other explanation that even sounded good. It was like her digestive system had exploded out her backside.

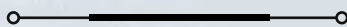
The Skipper asked Hector to do some kind of work-up on the body to make sure there wasn't a disease loose on the ship. He made Hector put Ilse's body in quarantine, but we all knew that wouldn't help. If it was a virus, we already most likely had it.



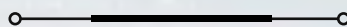
The crew, shaken and distraught, managed to complete their first pass of the ship.

They didn't find anything. When they got back, they discovered that both Hector and Ilse's body were missing. It was pretty obvious that there was no disease.

The Skipper put Annie on modifying the ship's sensors to find whatever was doing this. He also opened up the weapons locker and gave everyone shotguns.



Nguyen was more freaked out than anyone. Now he was hungry all the time and eating like a horse. With Hector gone, there wasn't anyone left who could do anything about it. Nguyen did the only graceful thing – he locked himself into quarantine.



Everyone had gathered around the dining table. The Skipper was pulling up diagrams of the ship on the flex screen that hung above it.

"Whatever's here knows we're looking for it and knows how to hide," he said. "We've got to assume that these things are using maintenance ducts or the other life support ducts near them. I hope nobody's claustrophobic."

The rest of the crew fidgeted, eager to get to some kind of action.

The Skipper continued. "I know we're all on edge, but please be careful what you shoot at in there. Otherwise, you could blow out something important, like life support. With Nguyen in quarantine, we don't have a genius to pull us out of the fire."

Valentino raised his hand. "Um, boss? Why don't we just get what we need to survive and lock ourselves on the bridge until we get back to civilization?"

"No way." It was Annie that replied. "We'd be locked up in quarantine the minute we arrived. They might even destroy the ship and our salvage. I'm scared, but I don't want to end up broke, jobless, and in UWC solitary for six months."

That was that. Annie had the sensors modified and was going to be guiding the teams. Everyone else was given a section of the duct grid.

It took a couple of shots of whiskey to build up the courage for the crew to get to the task ahead.

Crawling through the ducts was no joy for Valentino. Fortunately, they were big enough to crawl comfortably on hands and knees, unlike smaller ships where one had to alligator crawl.

Annie found two unusual readings and guided the teams toward the first. Tensely, the other crew tried to move as quietly as possible, trapping whatever the thing was in the net while giving themselves room to fire and not hit each other.

Then Annie screamed that it was moving. Then the ducts echoed with the sounds of gunfire. Then the Skipper was gone. Annie called a general retreat after this, but everyone was already scrambling to get out of the ducts.

Rallying on the bridge, Valentino had discovered something along the way. Nguyen was dead now, in a massive pool of his own blood. It was the same way Ilse had gone.

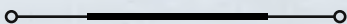
Valentino's lungs burned as he ran like he'd never run before. Fear gripped his brain like an ice cold vice. All he could think about was getting as far away from these things as possible, as quickly as possible.

Rounding another corner, unsure where it was he was heading, Valentino finally registered the voice screaming in his ear. "No, V! No! Not that way! It's in front of you!"

Finally, his higher brain functions retook command. "Where are you?"

"I'm locked in the bridge," replied Annie. "You're clear for the moment. Run!"

It took Valentino a second to figure out where he was, while Annie continue to scream at him over the radio. Then, he was off.



The thing was on his heels, it's black chitinous claws clicking on the metal plates as it clawed its way along in OG. Valentino rushed the bridge doors and wasn't even through when Annie started to close

them. He turned, watching in slow motion as the thing came closer. It wasn't going to make it, but it was still going to try.

It was hard to make it out by the emergency lights. However, in the last few seconds it had, it gracefully leaped towards the doors, wheeled around, and snapped its sharp tail through the opening. The tail lashed only a few inches from Valentino's head before whipping back out the door before it closed completely.

He turned to Annie, both of them in the throes of shock. They would be safe for a while, but the thought would occur to them later – what would they do when they needed to get back to their grav couches for deceleration?

It seemed they were only delaying the inevitable.

B&B



Monsters have always been the stuff of human legends. As soon as early hominids figured out how to communicate, they began to tell of horrible things that went bump in the night. Some of those stories were the product of imagination and some of them were exaggerations of animals that might have scared primitive humans. However, some of these legends have always been close to the mark, for there have always been unspeakable horrors lurking out there, just beyond what humans know.

Now that the Chthonian Star again approaches, there are many monstrous creatures that are coming into the world – some in ways never before seen. We'll take a look at a few of them here.

Reading Monsters

Each monster begins with an italicized description of the creature, designed for you to use in your game. Once you've used the stock description a couple of times, you'll most likely want to riff on it, adapting it for your specific uses and the specific situation to which it applies.

Following that is a general overview of the monster, to help you understand what it is and how you might want to use it in your game.

On the second page, you'll find the actual game statistics for the monster. These include the creature's size and habitat, as well as its Attributes, Statistics, natural Skills, weapons and armor, its Horror Factor (the Difficulty for Hor-

ror Tests when encountering it), and its special abilities.

These game statistics are designed to represent the average member of the monster's species. As a GM, feel free to tweak the creature's Attributes and Skills in order to change it up – you may even want to give it a few appropriate Talents. It's always fun to keep your players guessing, and that most certainly happens if the monsters of the same type have different capabilities.

Special Attributes & Skills

A few of the usual Attributes may be treated differently as applied to monsters, as well as a couple Skills unique to them.

Attributes

You'll notice that many monsters have Attributes greater than 5. This is because they have surpassed human limits. Use them as you normally would.

There are monsters that are clearly beasts, yet they have reasonable Cleverness ratings. In these cases, their Cleverness more accurately represents the creature's instincts than its ability to reason. It may not ever be able to figure out how to use a computer, but it may figure out how to open a door or the like. Those instincts also help keep it alive, knowing when to fight and when to run. It also allows them to hunt effectively.

Demeanor is another Attribute that won't necessarily work the same way.

For intelligent creatures, it works the way it normally is intended among their own kind. There are also those creatures that will use its Demeanor for most normal uses.

However, in general, if a creature cannot be perceived as human, or near-enough to human to matter, its Demeanor is used only to intimidate. For more, see Social Combat below.

Skills

There are two skills that are unique to Monsters.

- *Athletics: Flight (Grace)* – This skill covers a creature's ability to perform athletic feats while keeping itself aloft.
- *Natural Weapons (Grace)* – This skill covers a creature's abilities to use its innate defense mechanisms.

Physical Combat

Most monsters have several ways they can attack. When using a monster in physical combat, don't simply always go for the attack that does the most damage. Put yourself in the situation and utilize the attack that makes the most sense, given the circumstances.

Social Combat

Most forms of Social Combat are not going to apply to monsters. Since most monsters will be considered Hostile, the only Skill you'll be able to use is Intimidate. This may be of use, as you may be able to get a creature

to temporarily back down or choose less troublesome prey if moved to Unfriendly.

Deception may also be of use against intelligent creatures, if they are interested and capable of opening a dialog.

Some intelligent creatures may be moved to Unfriendly and will talk further, but this is the exception rather than the rule. Monsters are alien and most interested either using humans for their own ends, or killing or eating them.

Monsters may never be moved further than Unfriendly through Social Combat. However, Unfriendly might just buy the Characters some time.

Monstrous Traits

While the monsters presented here (and in future supplements) have traits unique to themselves, there are many that they have in common. Presented here are descriptions of these traits and how they work.

Adaptable

A creature that is adaptable is capable of changing its physiology in such a way to survive in ecosystems that might not normally be expected to support its life. The ecosystems in question are explained along with the monster.

Burrower

A burrowing creature is one that has the ability to travel underneath the

ground. Some simply tunnel, while others actually pass the substrate through their bodies as they go. The base Speed for any burrower is normally equal to that of a similar human's top speed. However, some may burrow so fast that they can move at speeds faster than a human can run – the listing will provide a Speed multiplier, if this is the case.

Climber

Some monsters have the ability to climb in ways far beyond that of humans. There are even those that can stick to sheer surfaces like an insect or some lizards. The listing will provide a multiplier in climbing speed, as well as if the creature can stick to walls and other sheer surfaces.

Constrictor

A constricting creature can wrap itself around an enemy and squeeze. To do so, the monster makes a normal attack. If this attack is successful, the target cannot move or attack, and suffers damage each turn until he succeeds at a Hard Physique Test. He automatically escapes if the creature is killed.

Echolocation

Some creatures can “see” by bouncing sound waves off nearby objects. They have a range of 75 yds/60 m to “see,” even in complete darkness – though some sensors may reveal them or they may simply make an audible sound doing so.

Entangling Attack

A creature with this trait has the ability to attack a second time in the same turn it successfully hits with an entangling attack. Usually, this second

attack is a bite or something similar. The second attack requires that a creature have another applicable mode of attack, and the attack is resolved normally.

Deceiver

Monsters with this ability can physically or mystically deceive a target, making that person believe the creature is something else. This trait requires a simple Deception vs. Cleverness Test.

Flyer

Some monsters are equipped for flight, usually with wings or membranes of some kind. They are also designed to survive in altitude. The creature may fly faster than normal ground Speed, and that multiplier can be found in the listing.

Glider

A creature who is capable of gliding can travel through the air, with a distance that depends on the winds and the height from which launched, as well as gravity. A gliding creature can glide in any real atmosphere.

Infrared Senses

A creature with this trait sees into the infrared spectrum, in addition to normal visual perception. This allows them to see in the dark and detect basic heat patterns.

Jumper

A creature who is a jumper is capable of incredible leaps. It can leap a number of times as far as a human in 1G, but is of serious benefit in lower gravity environments. The multiplier in question is listed with the monster.

Skilled

There are those monsters who are fully sentient and capable of learning. Such creatures are given additional skill points with which to buy skills other than those listed and typically may learn any skill a human can know, perhaps even with advanced technological knowledge.

Sorcerer

The monster in question is not only sentient, it is capable of mastering magical rituals to harness the powers of the cosmos. For more on magic, see the GM chapter.

Telepathic

The creature can sense any sentient creatures within a given range. It can also become immediately fluent in a target's language by succeeding at an Average Language (any) Test.

Tool-User

A creature with this trait is not only sentient, it also knows how to use tools and technology. Depending upon the creatures, they may actually have technology of their own.

Truly Amphibious

A creature with this trait is able to operate uninhibited both under the waves and on land. Such creatures can breathe both air and water and have the anatomy to support long-term existence in both conditions.

Void-Dweller

There are creatures whose alien physiology allows them to survive in the vacuum of space. They are shielded against any of the perils that come from exposure to the void, and usually

have some sort of way to find sustenance among the scant bodies of the solar system – or to hibernate.

Alien Technology

There are several creatures that are not only tool users, they are from races that have technology of their own. The most notable presented here are the Mi-Go.

This new alien technology will be presented in future releases. For now, just assume that they utilize their own alien versions of any kind of human technology.

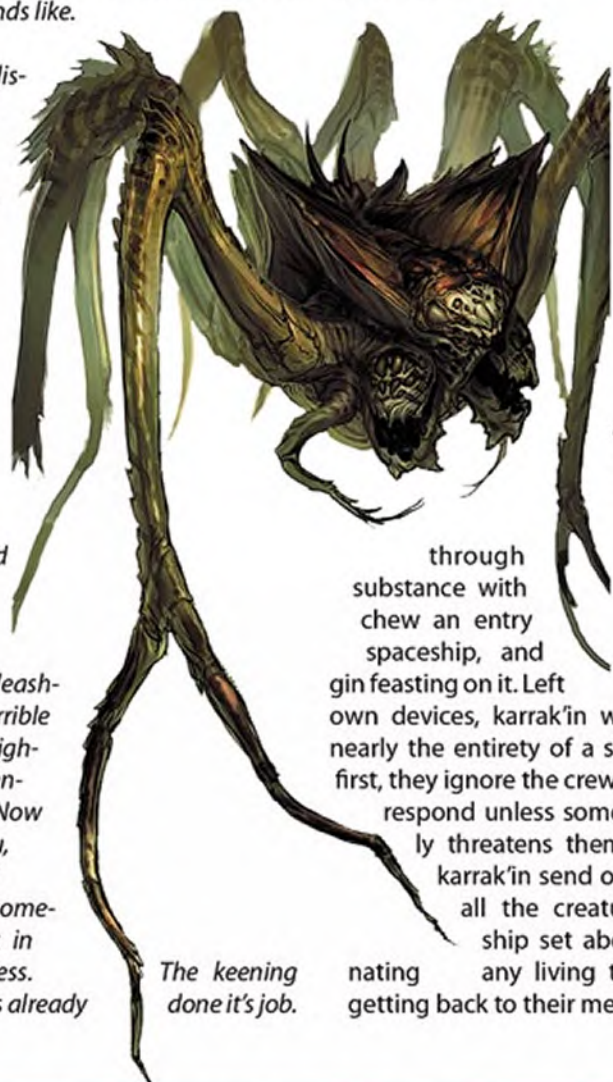
A Few Differences

You may notice that some of these monsters are familiar from Lovecraftian fiction, but that they are somehow different. That is because the Chthonian Star isn't just awakening them, it's causing them to change – to evolve for the first time in millions upon millions of years.

KARRAK'IN

Something clicks in the darkness. You shine your flashlight around, trying to find out what has entered your ship uninvited. There it is. It could be a spider, but no spider is that big. Easily a yard across, it is covered with rough black chitin and a host of legs. You can't see its face, as it appears to be eating. However, it's fangs are ripping out chunks of metal from the bulkhead – or at least that's what it sounds like.

It seems disinterested in you, until you draw your pistol and take aim. Suddenly, it's head snaps around as if on a swivel, revealing a multitude of eyes and several saw-like mouths. Then it unleashes this horrible sound, a high-pitched keening wail. Now behind you, all around you, more somethings click in the darkness. ends, but it's already



The keening done it's job.

Karrak'in are spider-like creatures that live in space, jumping from asteroid to asteroid to moon searching for food. They are immune to the vacuum, and launch themselves across the void using their powerful legs, maneuvering with gas pockets, hibernating for months at a time. While traveling, they appear to be just another chunk of space debris.

They consume minerals, which is what attracts them to spaceships. The karrak'in have mouths and salivary glands that allow them to chew nearly any substance with ease. They chew an entry into the spaceship, and then begin feasting on it. Left to their own devices, karrak'in will consume nearly the entirety of a spaceship. At first, they ignore the crew and will not respond unless something clearly threatens them. Then, the karrak'in send out a call and all the creatures on the ship set about exterminating any living thing before getting back to their meal.

Karrak'in Game Statistics

Size: 3' across, 40 lbs.
1 m across, 18 kg

Habitat: Space – Asteroids, Moons

Average Attributes:

Awareness	3	Grace	5
Cleverness	1	Perseverance	7
Demeanor	2	Physique	4

Average Statistics:

Health	16	(16/32/48/64)
Speed	18 mph	

Skills: Athletics: Brawn 3, Athletics: Coordination 3, Athletics: Fitness 3, Defense 3, Freefall 5, Natural Weapons 2, Notice 2, Reaction 3, Stealth 3, Survival 5

Weapons: Bite (5d6 + Poison)

Armor: Chitin (10)

Horror Factor: Average

Special Abilities:

- *Climber (x2)* – Karrak'in can climb twice as fast as they can run on flat surfaces, and can cling to sheer surfaces like an insect.
- *Hallucinatory Poison* – Any Karrak'in bite that does damage to a person will deliver this poison. The victim must succeed at a Hard Perseverance Test. Those affected by the poison will soon begin to suffer mild hallucinations, which will ramp up to full-blown dissociative waking nightmares within an hour or so. Such victims will have difficulty making rational decisions or discerning friend from foe. This poison flushes from a person's system in six hours – if he can survive that long.
- *Infrared Senses* – Karrak'in can sense in the dark.
- *Void Dweller* – Karrak'in can survive in thin atmospheres or the vacuum of open space.

MI-GO

It's almost as if evolution couldn't figure out what it wanted this creature to be. Diaphanous wings and segmented limbs make it seem like an insect, but the hard, spiky, wine-colored shell speaks of a crustacean. However, the budding mess that covers what should be its head is furry and cancerous like a fungus, though protruding in places to the point of cilia.

It moves as if it doesn't have a sense of up and down, with a maddening stuttering cadence. Pieces of that fungoid head lap out at the air like a snake's tongue. Worse is that you can almost make out words when it buzzes its wings...

The inhabitants of Pluto, the mi-go are creatures that came to this solar system millennia ago. Eventually, they came to serve the Old Ones and drove many other more noble races from these cosmic shores.

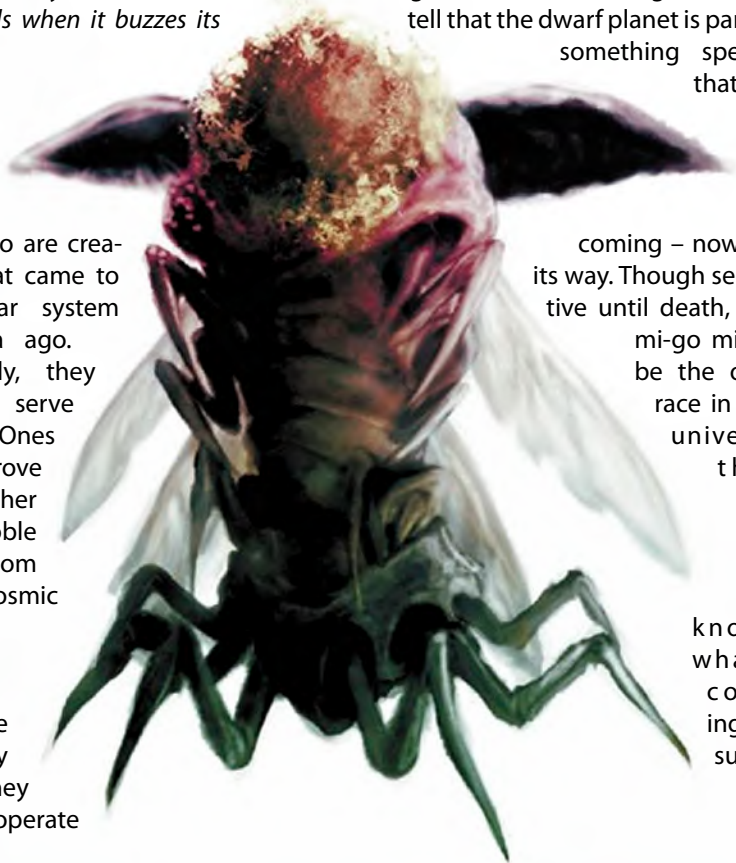
The mi-go are very, very alien. They do not operate

like other terrestrial life. The creatures are incredibly intelligent and technologically capable, but lack anything resembling emotions or what could be construed as ethics. To a human being, they appear to be emotionless and malevolent.

While they once lived on Earth, they now only travel to our blue-green planet to mercilessly experiment on people and to gather resources not found in their neck of the solar system – Pluto. They are the reason nothing gets near Pluto, a planet they revere in a religious fashion. Their legends foretell that the dwarf planet is part of something special that is

coming – now on its way. Though secretive until death, the mi-go might be the only race in the universe that

knows what's coming for sure.



Mi-Go Game Statistics

Size: 4' - 5' long, 10' wingspan, 120-170 lbs.
1.2 - 1.5 m long, 3 m wingspan, 54-77 kg

Habitat: Pluto, some parts of Earth

Average Attributes:

Awareness	4	Grace	6
Cleverness	5	Perseverance	3
Demeanor	3	Physique	3

Average Statistics:

Health	12	(12/24/36/48)
Speed	18 mph	

Skills: Athletics: Coordination 2, Athletics: Flying 5, Defense 3, Insight 2, Investigate 3, Gun Combat (any) 2, Freefall 5, Natural Weapons 3, Notice 2, Odd Job 2, Reaction 3, Science: Life 3, Stealth 2

Weapons: Claws (5d6)

Armor: Alien Hide (5)

Horror Factor: Average

Special Abilities:

- *Adaptable* – Mi-Go can adapt to pretty much any environment, given a few hours.
- *Climber (x1)* – Mi-Go can climb as fast as they run, and can cling to sheer surfaces.
- *Flyer (x1)* – Mi-Go can fly as fast as they run.
- *Skilled* – Assign another 40-60 points in skills for individual Mi-Go, in addition to the basic skills listed here.
- *Tool Users* – Mi-Go have technology all their own, as well as using that of humans.
- *Void Dweller* – Mi-Go can survive in thin atmospheres or the vacuum of open space.

MYRIAD

"The whispers... they speak to you too, don't they? They didn't make sense at first, but they became clearer and more entrancing as time went by. What glories have they asked you to perform? How have you shown your love for the one who sleeps below? No. No!

No! I can see it in your eyes, they don't speak to you. You're not one of the chosen. Not yet, anyway. Let me show them to you..."

- Final video recording of an interrogation of a murder suspect on Titania. Neither the suspect nor the interrogator have ever been seen again.

Not all monsters shamble through the night with claws and horns. One of the most insidious threats to humanity so far is a creature no larger than a blood cell. The Myriad seep into the blood stream of unsuspecting hosts and multiply until they are able to influence the mind of their new puppet. To the victim, it starts with whispers, soft voices at the edges of the room.

Making no sense at first, they seem to care more than anyone the host has known before in their lives. Then, as the Myriad acclimate, the voices speak to the glories about to unfold before the faithful. While the Myriad can never completely take over their hosts, they can convince even the most strong-willed person to commit horrifying acts of depravity in service to their unknown masters.

This alone would make the Myriad threat enough for humanity, but they will not allow themselves to be caught. In such an event, the creatures convert the energy in the host body, forcing it to become a dreadful protoplasmic blob. If this wasn't bad enough, the process of converting the body turns it incredibly acidic. The Myriad will attack anyone in the vicinity as long as their physical form remains intact.



Myriad Game Statistics

Size: Microscopic

Habitat: Atmosphere of Uranus

Average Attributes:

Awareness	3	Grace	3 (as Blob)
Cleverness	5	Perseverance	6
Demeanor	3	Physique	6 (as Blob)

Average Statistics:

Health	As Form, 15 as Blob	(15/30/45/60)
Speed	As Form, 18 mph as Blob	

Skills: As Host

Weapons: As Host, Blob (6d6)

Armor: As Host, Blob (15)

Horror Factor: Average

Special Abilities:

- *Adaptable* – Myriad can survive in cold environments with thin atmospheres, like Uranus or Neptune, as well as Earth-like atmospheres.
- *Infection* – A potential host must succeed at a Hard Perseverance Test when exposed to the Myriad. Once infected, the host must succeed at an Average Perseverance Test to resist compulsion each day. The Difficulty for this Test increases to Hard after one week and to Legendary after two weeks. There is no known cure for Myriad infection.
- *Protoplasmic Blob* – If a Myriad host is threatened and is forced to reveal itself, it will covert its host to a acidic protoplasmic blob. Anything that touches it takes the listed damage above. Myriad can convert back to their normal host form when the danger is gone.



LEVEL 23

This was a big deal for Francesca. It wasn't like she hadn't been to the Eye before – nearly all Wardens had at one time or another. However, today she was getting to go to the infamous Level 23. This was the kind of place that was the topic of many rumors within the agency, kind of like their very own version of Earth's Area 51. Most people thought Area 51 was where the old United States of America hid aliens and alien artifacts. Similarly, most agents thought Level 23 was where monsters were kept.

Such privilege was not without its price. The last several weeks seemed like a terrible nightmare to Francesca. Her memories even seemed smeared in an effort to protect her from the truth. The Kuiper Belt, dead friends, floating in space, the... thing. Or was it several things? These were many of the shadows that stalked her subconscious now. Under different circumstances, she would just bury the memories and move on. Unfortunately, being a Warden meant dealing with just this sort of madness.

The waiting room outside Major Contee's office was about as nice as they get on space stations. It had wood paneling, several padded chairs, a water dispenser, and the Major's assistant seated behind a wood desk that matched the walls.

This wouldn't be much planet-side, but up here was another story. The Major's assistant was a rather severe-looking girl, most likely eastern European, who had greeted Francesca with a kind of cold formality.

Finally, the comm on her desk beeped and, without looking up, she said, "The Major will see you now."

Francesca rose and straightened her uniform, but before she could take a step Major Contee opened the door and stepped out. He was an impressive figure, a tall man of African descent who would best be described as stately. The Major had the kind of aura that spoke to one day running for elected office. He made Francesca want to salute, but the Wardens weren't that kind of organization. Instead, he held out his hand and said, "Lieutenant Ortiz, thank you for coming."

Francesca shook his hand and smiled deferentially.

Major Contee gracefully moved through the cramped office, towards the door. "Walk with me," he said, as he passed Francesca. She didn't hesitate to fall in step.

The senior officer walked out into the hallway. "Lt. Ortiz, what we have to discuss is sensitive. I'm taking you somewhere that is currently beyond

The authorizing
period was the
critical key to
the system.
The system
was designed to
be a self-contained
unit, capable of
operating in a
standalone mode.
The system was
designed to be a
self-contained
unit, capable of
operating in a
standalone mode.
The system was
designed to be a
self-contained
unit, capable of
operating in a
standalone mode.

210



The Back Way to Level 23

your security clearance, so the meat of our conversation is best saved for when we arrive. I know you're accustomed to dealing with sensitive information, so I know this won't be a problem."

"Of course, sir."

They made their way around a corner, passing other Wardens as they went. They were heading for a part of the Eye that was unfamil-

iar to Francesca – not that a good chunk of the station wasn't in that same category.

"While we're walking, why don't you tell me about your most recent mission? I read the reports, but the reports never really do such things justice."

Francesca cleared her throat. "I'm still sorting through it in my head. To be honest, I'm not sure I want to remember."

They approached an unmarked security checkpoint – the sensitive kind where the guards were armored and packing submachine guns. The Major paused for a quick retinal scan and signed in. The guards nodded and they were through. Not surprisingly, this hallway was much less crowded.

The Major continued to lead the way. "Your reaction is only natural. From what I gather, you lost some good friends out there."

That was most certainly true, but the details were still a little fuzzy. Tyrone's suit got a tear in it and the vacuum claimed him. All Francesca could remember about Yvonne was her screams.

"What little I remember is this," continued Francesca. "The Light-house had recorded some strange activities out in the Kuiper Belt during routine patrol. Me and my team were on a six month tour out there

on the edge. It was our turn on the duty roster, so out we went to investigate."

They approached an elevator, which automatically opened for them. The Major scanned his retina again and entered a code. The door shut and they descended.

"Not to interrupt, but what is it like out there? I've never had to go further than the Umbrella."

"It feels like the end of the universe, like there can't possibly be anything out further." Francesca paused. "It makes you feel small, like the human race is totally insignificant."

Major Contee shifted a little. "It might be. But please continue."

"We were quite a ways out when we came to the asteroid. Now when I say asteroid, that doesn't really do it justice. It was almost a planet in its own right. For some reason, it had a very thin atmosphere. The asteroid was riddled with caves, so we began to explore. They were more like tunnels, so it made it easy for us. Then, a ways down, they started to change. They started to look more organic."

The elevator slowed and came to a stop. The door opened, and they exited. The lights flickered on in what appeared to be an antechamber, clearly an entrance to something much bigger. There was a door over which was marked simply "23."

The Major stopped at the door. "We're here, but please finish."

"There's not much more to tell. We found something down there and I barely escaped. I know my brain will sort it out, because it always does. Whatever it was, it was big, fast, and terrifying."

"Let's see if anything in here rings a bell," said the Major, as he punched in yet one more code. The door opened and Francesca immediately knew that the rumors were true.

The room beyond the door was enormous, lit by the glow of tube after tube of... things. Unspeakable monstrosities floated within them, clearly dead and suspended in preservative. It was a graveyard of the darkest things in the universe, kept on display for those morbid enough to seek them.

Though Francesca had hoped the rumors were true, the reality was not what she expected. It was much, much worse. She stood, frozen in horror at the freakshow in front of her.

The Major gently put his hand on her shoulder. The warmth of human contact helped lessen the reality some. "Most people have the same reaction when they first see it. I certainly did. Take as long as you need."

After everything she'd seen, especially recently, it took a few minutes

for Francesca's mind to deal with this place. Finally, she said, "Why did you bring me here?"

"First, let me tell you what Level 23 is," replied Major Contee. "It is a place to learn. This is where we bring the things we've found so that we can study them."

With a gentle nudge, the Major guided Francesca into the room. She found herself strangely both repulsed by and attracted to the things in the tubes.

The first thing she passed was nothing she'd encountered before. It was a grotesque lizard-like thing, with a lamprey sucker mouth. She couldn't tell if it walked on two or four legs, or both. Regardless, it was clearly a predator.

As Francesca pressed further into the room, the next tube contained something that looked like a thing that had started to spit out a human woman, even though it was all part of the same body - if you could call it that. The woman wasn't fully formed, however, but enough to be eerie nonetheless.

Major Contee guided her slowly through the room, giving her the time to see what she wanted to see. While some of the creatures were new to her, there were many with which she was unfortunately familiar. Though short one of its heads, there was a karrak'in floating limply ahead, one of the many that had

tried to eat her corvette after a stop in the asteroid belt. A ghast, one of the nasty hopping predators she'd fought away from a frontier colony on Mars. And there were others, each carrying its own memory.

The pair reached the far wall, having made but one pass through one row of this macabre laboratory. Francesca turned to regard the place again, this time with eyes of fascination instead of disgust.

"You still haven't told me why you brought me here."

In her reverie, Francesca failed to notice the door near them. Major Contee turned and keyed in his code yet again. "There's still more for you to see."

This new door opened and Francesca realized that the surprises today were hardly over – and that the Major had taken her into Level 23 the back way. Before her was an even larger lab, this one complete with equipment and scientists, each in a Warden uniform. However, they weren't alone here.

Lining the walls were clear fronted cages, and in them were live versions of many of the monstrosities from the other room.

"It's only so useful to study them when they're dead," said Major Contee. "Though it's hard to bring some of them back alive."

Francesca turned to the cage closest to her and jumped back. A black, winged thing pressed its horned, featureless face against the clear front. It followed her as she moved, as if anticipating its prey. She took a deep breath and relaxed. "I hate night-gaunts."

"We managed to capture this one in Jupiter space, completely by accident. Many of these are here by accident, but that's not going to help us learn what we need to learn in time."

"In time for what?" asked Francesca.

The Major ignored her and continued on. "That's where you come in. I need people who can go out and hunt these things and the other things we haven't even seen yet. Teams that can seek them out and capture them to bring back here, instead of killing them, as is usually the case."

"Wait a minute. Why me? I'm the 'kill them as quickly as possible, let the researchers work with the pieces' kind of agent. Most of these things give me nightmares as it is."

Major Contee guided her further into the lab. The scientists at work here didn't even stop to acknowledge them. They were apparently preparing for an experiment in a black-lit cage on the far side of the room.

"Lt. Ortiz, are you aware of your record?"

"Yes, sir," she replied. "Dedicated service for nearly six years."

The Major smiled. "That's not what I'm referring to. The incidence of you encountering hostile lifeforms is higher than most of your fellow agents."

Francesca looked back over her shoulder to make sure the night-gaunt wasn't still following her movements. "I didn't know that."

"It's almost like you're attracted to places they are – or that they're attracted to you." The Major continued to guide her across the room.

"That's not a comforting thought," Francesca replied.

Major Contee smiled. "No, but it could be a useful one. You're not alone, Lt. Ortiz. There are others like you in service of the Wardens. Others who always seem to find themselves in the middle of something strange, at ground zero for cult activity, or finding the things that go bump in the dark. We've only recently begun to correlate this data. After all, it's not the sort of thing you immediately look for in your personnel."

As they approached the cage of interest, Francesca could see why the cage was black-lit. Inside were a pair of ghastrs, stripped of any

form of technology. From the looks of the equipment, it looked like the scientists were trying to figure out how to communicate with them. The creatures were certainly intelligent enough for that – she knew from personal experience.

"So you want me to join one of these monster hunting units and go out into the solar system and bring these things back alive?"

Major Contee stopped walking and turned to make eye contact. His presence was undeniable, especially with that move. "Yes, I do. Your last team met with an unfortunate end, and now is the time to make a move."

Several waves of emotion hit Francesca, and it was difficult to determine one from another. However, one emotion made itself plainly known. Dread.

"Sir, I'm not sure I want to start actively hunting the things that give me nightmares."

"I don't think you have that luxury," replied the Major. "If past history is any lesson, these things will continue to find you, whether you want them to or not. Why not meet them head on?"

For some reason, despite the conflicting emotions, that made a lot of sense to Francesca. She sighed. It was going to be a hell of a job.

Running a game of *The Void* has plenty of its own specifics and nuance. You need to know how to best manage some of the particular rules of the game, including Difficulties, the Odd Job Skill, special Advantages and Disadvantages, Tension Points, and Fate Points. This chapter will help guide you for all of these rules.

This chapter also presents you with some guidelines to help you design your own adventures, including a discussion of the survival horror genre, three-act structure, the Old Ones, magic, awarding your Characters, and more.

In general, this chapter should arm you for being an effective Gamemaster of *The Void*. The dark universe is in your hands – good luck and have fun!

Assigning Difficulties

In general, the best way to determine the Difficulty for a given task is to assume that Average Difficulty is how the average person trained in such a skill would perceive the task. The key here is that the average person is someone who is trained in the skill in question – a competent professional.

The Odd Job Skill

The Odd Job Skill represents someone with a broad base of general knowledge, but not specialized knowledge. It represents someone who tinkers, and requires special handling.

In general, Odd Job allows a Character to make Tests for many Skills

he doesn't have. If you think the situation is something that someone whose done a mess of Odd Jobs could conceivably try, let them use it. They should never be able to do anything that requires specialized knowledge, like something someone who was truly trained in such a Skill could do. Furthermore, it should never be an educationally intense Skill, such as Engineering or Science, nor should it be a Physical or Combat Skill, such as Athletics or Guns.

You may want to limit the number of Characters in your group who have this Skill. Once players find out what it does, they usually want to buy it – it occurs as a free way to try to do things their Character normally can't do. It doesn't make sense for most, or every, Character in your group to know this Skill.

Advantages

Occult Sensitive & Sixth Sense

Both the Occult Sensitive and Sixth Sense Advantages allow you to give a player early warnings of potential or impending danger. For both of these, you'll need to make secret Tests. Make a Cleverness Test for Occult Sensitive and either a Notice or Cleverness Test for Sixth Sense (whichever is higher). Success means that you give the player in question a warning.

Determining the Difficulty depends upon the nature of the threat. An oppressive looming threat should be Average, while a insidious, creeping threat should be Hard. Those threats

coming from incredibly powerful, subtle, and intelligent creatures or that are part of a long-term, long-reaching plan should be Legendary. Most should be Average or Hard, however – none should be Easy, because there are rarely dangerous situations that are.

These warnings, however, are not meant to interfere with your game. Keep them vague. Occult Sensitive should simply let a Character know that the supernatural is present and influencing their environment. Sixth Sense should let a Character know that he is in physical danger. Neither should provide them with details or specifics. You may occasionally provide them with false positives or situations where these advantages don't work the way they normally do. However, be kind to your players, as they paid for their Characters to have these advantages.

Limiting Advantages

There are several Advantages that are tempting for every player, most especially Fearless, Luck, Occult Sensitive, and Sixth Sense. You may want to limit the number of Characters in your group who can take these Advantages – one or two per group. After all, this is survival horror and it doesn't make a lot of sense for most or every Character in your group to be Fearless. It also doesn't make much sense for everyone to have amazing Luck, or for them to be sensitive to the Occult or know when danger is present. Use your best judgment and do what works for you.

Being a Gamemaster: Not At a Glance

Throughout the rest of this book, we've provided you with handy sidebars that call out the most important information for you to skim.

The information in this chapter is not so easily broken down. This contains advice for GMs, as well as a variety of ways for them to adjudicate a variety of the game's rules. It is, for lack of a better term, a tool kit.

GMs should read this chapter in its entirety and take the things that work for them, throwing away the rest. Every GM knows how they want to run their game, and it is not our place to dictate how best to do so.

Out of respect, please read on.

Tension Points

Players get a pool of Tension Points every time you sit down to play together. For a normal sized group (3-4 players) in a four-hour session, give them a pool of five. They can spend them to help them out in times of need, but each point they spend goes to you. Once in your possession, you can spend them to foil the characters later in the adventure.

If you have a bigger or smaller group, you should give them a bigger or smaller pool of Tension Points.

For 1 or 2 players, give them 3 Tension Points, and for 5 or 6 players, give them 7 Tension Points.

Likewise, the number of Tension Points should be modified if you are playing shorter or longer sessions. Cut the number of Tension Points in half (rounded up) if you're only playing for a few hours, and double it if you're playing for more like 8 hours.

You can spend them for one of six benefits, with the following costs:

Re-Roll One Roll

1 Tension Point

By spending one point, you can immediately roll again and take the better result. You can do this multiple times and choose from multiple results for one single roll.

Deny

1 Tension Point

You can spend one point in order to deny players from finding a needed item or supply that should normally be found where they are searching.

Force Player Re-Roll

2 Tension Points

You can force a player to re-roll any roll and take the worst result. You can do this multiple times and choose from multiple results for one single roll.

Give Key NPC Fate Point

3 Tension Points

If you have a monster or NPC who is important and you don't want them to die, you can spend three Tension Points to instantly buy them one and spend it to keep them alive.

It should always be visible to your players how many Tension Points you have in your pool, as well as what you're spending them on.

Note that Tension Points cannot be spent to negate each other. Whoever, player or GM, initiates their expenditure first is the one who wins and get to execute on their desires.

Now while the player pool of Tension Points does not carry over from session to session, and all unspent points are lost, the same is not true for you. As the GM, you get to hold onto your Tension Points until the adventure is complete. If you're playing a much longer game, then you get to hold onto a single batch until the current story arc is complete. While you can save all of them until the final confrontation or scene and make that moment particularly difficult and horrifying for the Characters, you will probably be better served by peppering them throughout to create more moments of greater tension.

Fate Points

The world of *The Void* is deadly and Fate Points are one of the few things that can help Characters stay alive when they've found themselves in unfortunate situations. One Fate Point will cancel a deadly attack and heal a Character – those rules are self-explanatory.

However, they can also be used to help a player avoid what might otherwise be certain death. It is your job to work with the player to come up with some kind of feasible explanation of

how he survived, and survived in such a way that he is not just immediately put right back in mortal peril. If he's about to be flushed out the airlock without an environmental suit, perhaps the controls jam so that the outer door can't open. If he's about to fall off a giant cliff on Mars, perhaps he falls fifteen feet and grabs a hand-hold or falls to a ledge below. There are always ways out of whatever was going to kill the Character, no matter how thin, and feel free to put it to the group to explain it – as long as it doesn't take up too much game time.

Once spent, a player has to go one full session without that Fate Point. Again, if you're playing longer or shorter games, you may want to modify this time frame. For sessions that only last a couple of hours, you may want to make them wait another two or three sessions before it comes back. For longer games, like 7 or 8 hours, you may want to give them the Fate Point back next session. Regardless, it should be frightening to be without it.

Sufficiently advanced Characters, the kind who you've taken to hell and

back and they've managed to survive, may be the kind you'll want to give a second Fate Point. It's entirely up to you, but if you feel they've become epic enough, give them the second point. However, Characters should never have more than 2 Fate Points, no matter what they've faced in the game, and it always takes just as long to get them back.

Social Combat

While the rules for Social Combat are presented on p. 127, included here are a few other things you'll want to



Cult: The Children of the Void

keep in mind as you adjudicate such matters.

The first thing you'll do in any Social Combat is to work out the different parties attitudes towards each other, as this determines what Skills may be used. Many will be immediately obvious, but default to Ambivalent when no other attitude is obvious.

However, the goals of Social Combat are the most important thing you can determine. The players will know where they want to take things with their Characters, but what do the NPCs want? Once confronted, does the snippy admin wish to make friends or does he wish to really upset the Characters?

Once you know where everyone wants things to go, you can realistically play out the flow of Exchanges and have more satisfying Social Combats.

Awarding Advances

Advances are what allow players to improve their Characters over time, and for them to take on greater challenges. Many GMs think that things which help a Character improve is a reward for that Character's achievements. The philosophy of *The Void* is different – Advances are a reward for players playing the game. There's a lot that goes into creating and breathing life into a compelling Character and negotiating all of the life stuff that goes into committing to a regular play group. Please keep that in mind that when rewarding your players.

Some game systems suggest docking a disruptive players' Character ad-

vancement for their behavior. The philosophy of *The Void* is again different. Please don't dock a disruptive player's Advances – confront him in an honest fashion. After all, it's just good sportsmanship.

In general, you award players a fixed number of Advances each time they play. This rewards the player for playing, instead of how "well" he played, as well as providing a way for players to plan their Character's advancement in predictable ways – bonus for the both of you.

We recommend that you award 1 Advance each time you complete a session, assuming a session that's approximately 4 hours long. If you play sessions that are only a couple hours long, award 1 Advance every other session. If your sessions are more like 8 hours long, award 2 Advances per session.

Bonuses

There are always situations where you can give your players bonuses to the number of Advances they receive.

The first place is regarding Character portrayal. If a player really nails his Character performance, does cool things, and generally entertains every else, you should give him a 1 Advance bonus for that session. However, make sure the same player isn't winning this bonus too often – not only will the other players feel neglected, the Character in question will become substantially more powerful.

You can also award bonuses for completing sections of the story –

award these Advances after the session that completes the plot. These sorts of rewards help create a sense of closure that benefits the game.

- *Completing a personal subplot:*
1 Advance
- *Completing a minor plot:*
1 Advance each
- *Completing a major plot:*
2 Advances each.
- *Completing an epic storyline:*
4 Advances each

Other Rewards

Providing Advances is not the only way to reward Characters. There are a variety of in-game effects that are almost equally rewarding as improving a Skill or adding a new Talent. They all revolve around giving your Characters access to new levels of gear, or just pieces for which they've been looking forward.

The most obvious way to do so is to increase the Characters' ability to purchase or requisition more and more powerful toys through Organizational Wealth. This sort of permanent increase should be warranted, as it will take your game to a new level.

However, giving Characters one-time gear rewards is a more manageable scenario. For example, the Warden Enforcer gains access to a prototype weapon on a mission, or a Warden Researcher gains access to a previously unavailable forbidden tome of knowledge. Some might gain access to a piece of enchanted gear. Whatever is appropriate, your players will enjoy a piece of unique gear.

Plot Points

Investigation is a key part of the Wardens' job, which means Characters will be spending time in nearly every adventure doing so. It can be very frustrating for players when investigation grinds on or if they find themselves at a dead end through no fault of their own. This is why *The Void* uses Plot Points, so that the outcome of any investigation isn't left up to chance.

In published adventures, as well as adventures that you write yourself, you'll have a chain of related evidence that will be the subject of investigation by the players, the bulk of which together will unravel the mystery for the Characters and put them on the path of resolution. Each piece of this chain is called a Plot Point.

Once in the appropriate place to earn a Plot Point, the Characters must simply have the resources necessary to gain it and they do. They don't have to make a series of Tests, hoping to succeed at all of the Tests they need to in order to glean the clues or information. To determine if the Characters have the necessary resources, simply total up the requisite dice pools from the Skills + Attributes necessary. If it is equal to or greater than the Plot Point score, they succeed.

In general, assign a score to each Skill required and then add them all together for the total Plot Point score. Easy requisites are four or five, average are six or seven, and difficult are nine or ten.

For example, the Characters wish to search the quarters of a missing com-

puter technician in Salacia. The key information they need to learn there is that the place has been completely wiped clean (sterilized) and that the hard drive in the dwelling's computer hasn't just been erased, it has been replaced. This requires the Investigate and Computer Skills, but not particularly high levels of either. The GM determines that the Investigate portion rates a four as does the Computer portion, together giving a Plot Point score of eight. If the players enter the scene, spend the time, and have a total pool of points from their Investigate + Awareness and Computer + Clever-

ness ratings that equals or exceeds eight, together they glean all the information there is to gain.

Sometimes players won't have the necessary resources at hand. In many cases, they'll know that they've come to an important juncture and be aware of the resources they are missing. They can simply go away, gather those resources, and return. If they cannot and it is important they gain the information at this Plot Point, have them make Tests using the appropriate Skill at whatever Difficulty seems sensible. If they succeed, they get the Plot Point.

If not, they'll miss it, just like people sometimes do – or just have them spend 2 Tension Points to Get a Clue.

NPCs

You will undoubtedly want to create NPCs of differing ability. To help you out, we suggest five levels of NPCs – insignificant, novice, peer, powerful, and mastermind.

- For NPCs that are weak and insignificant, spend 14 points for Attributes, 30 points for Skills, 1 point for Advantages, with up to 5 points for Disadvantages.



Something Unexpected in the Kuiper Belt

- For NPCs that are novices, spend 16 points for Attributes, 40 points for Skills, 3 points for Advantages, with up to 8 points for Disadvantages.
- For NPCs that are peers with starting Characters, spend 20 points for Attributes, 55 points for Skills, 5 points for Advantages, with up to 12 points for Disadvantages.
- For NPCs that are powerful, spend 22 points for Attributes, 65 points for Skills, 5 points for Advantages, with up to 12 points for Disadvantages.
- For NPCs that are functionally "masterminds," spend 24 points for Attributes, 80 points for Skills, 7 points for Advantages, with up to 12 points for Disadvantages.

Survival Horror

The Void is a special genre of horror known as survival horror. This genre has become especially popular in video games, with franchises like *Resident Evil* or *Silent Hill*. Survival horror means that your Characters are almost always going to be in peril and fighting for their lives. Here are a few hallmarks of survival horror, to help you create this atmosphere.

1. Help Is Never On The Way

No matter where the Characters find themselves, they aren't going to get reinforcements. If they somehow do, the reinforcements won't be enough and will just be more victims for whatever is trying to kill them. This is a simple thing to create in most places of *The Void*, because of the vast distances

between planets and the limited resources of colonies. Help might easily be months away at best.

Another great convention to facilitate this is to have something interfere with communications equipment, to destroy it, or to otherwise render it useless. Be careful about doing this too often, but you won't have to if your Characters are traveling around.

2. The Stuff You Need Is In Short Supply

Make sure to find ways to limit the things the Characters really need, most especially weapons, armor, ammunition, and medical supplies. If they're playing Wardens, they'll have access to good-sized armories on their ships and can requisition even more. However, that doesn't mean they should always get to use it. Come up with ways to get them into trouble when they're out of armor. Have local officials forbid them from carrying anything other than their sidearms. Have critters chew through cables and lock down their armory. Have bad things happen to their supply crates. When you're done cut them off from being able to easily replace those things.

Be careful when cutting players off from their Characters' gear. Rotate what you take from them and when you take it from them, so that they don't get frustrated and feel like what's on their Character Sheet is useless.

3. The Environment Is Hostile

The environment in which the Characters find themselves is dangerous, if not downright lethal. The most obvious and easy way to create this

is through the natural way of the solar system. Unless they're on Earth or Mars, the planetary atmosphere of every other planet in the solar system or cold void of space is something that's likely to kill in short order. Death is one environmental suit tear away.

Taking this one step further, the things in said environments should be just as deadly. There are always horrifying things trying to kill the Characters, and those things are probably tougher than they are. If horrifying things aren't trying to kill them, it's likely that cultists, mad-men, or foreign agents or corporate security will be and they're probably better armed and know the landscape better.

In order for this kind of pressure to not become oppressive, you'll naturally have to ease up from time to time. Give the Characters breathers where they can feel safe for a few moments, something the equivalent of save points in a video game. Once they've relaxed a little, the pressure will be frightening again.

4. Something Sinister Is Always Going On In The Background

While not everyone is up to something nefarious and not every place in the solar system is host to horrific creatures, there should be enough of them in your game that they feel commonplace to the players. Insidious cults should be behind many devious plans. That shop owner should have something terrible in the back. The sewers should be infested with ghouls. The hills are alive with ghosts that are hungry and plotting to take the Characters as their next meal.

When creating this kind of atmosphere, you're trying to create a feeling of something being amiss all around the Characters and not a sense of immediate danger. The players should instead feel like something sick is going on all around them and its happening just outside of what they can see.

5. Survival Is Its Own Reward

While getting gear, advancing the plot, or uncovering the truth of what's really going on is nice, survival is its own reward. As players finish sessions and sections of your plot, they should have a sense of relief that their Characters have survived to live another day and to have further adventures. Anything else they get is just icing on the cake. Make sure you put them in the pressure cooker so they feel like their survival is well-earned – give them plenty of scares that make them think they're gonna die.

Killing Characters

The Void is fundamentally survival horror and that means that, regardless of good adventure design, Tension or Fate Points, Characters are sometimes going to meet their end. Having a Character killed is always a traumatic experience for a player and you should never allow Characters to die casually. Here are a few guidelines to help you make Character deaths meaningful.

1. Don't Leave It To Chance

Killing a Character because you got great dice rolls and the player in question didn't could be considered callous. If it works with your play space, roll your dice behind a screen of some kind so that the players can't see what

you're rolling. That way, you can fudge when you need to. Feel free to punish the Character in other ways, but don't kill him for the bad luck of it.

2. Give it Purpose

One way to help a player deal with the death of his Character is if that death has purpose and is dramatic in some way. Dying holding off the monsters is heroic and so is sacrificing oneself to make sure the bomb goes off. Characters can easily die in combat this way, as long as said death serves the scene and the story.

3. Make It Awful

When the unfortunate time comes that you are forced to kill a Character, use the conventions of the genre. Characters in horror stories don't die in mundane ways – their deaths are graphic. Respecting the boundaries of your players, make this death as horrific as you are comfortable doing. You might even find that the player in question wants a crazy death for his Character, if he has to have one.

If there's one time to make things horrific, now's it. This is the only time this Character is going to die, so try to make it memorable.

4. If You're Gonna Be Stupid, You Gotta Be Tough

Sometimes, despite ample warning – even from you – and against common sense, Characters are going to do something stupid. That something might be taking on a hohle with nothing more than a simple assault rifle or something equally insane. Players come up with creative things all the time, but unfortunately they some-

times come up with creative ways to do suicidal things. There's another saying, beside the title of this point, that applies: if you can't be an example to others, at least you can be a terrible warning.

When a Character insists on doing something that will get him killed and he has no Fate Points to save him, it's your responsibility to let him die. After all, you've given him a fighting chance to avoid it. At least the Character can be a lesson from which everyone can learn.

Carrying On

No one should be penalized for their Character dying in the course of a game. If you have to kill a Character, use these guidelines for helping the player craft a new Character that's at approximately the same power level. After all, Character advancement is a reward to the player for playing the game, not for Character achievement.

If you've been tracking Advances, which hopefully you have, you can simply have the player create a new Character from scratch and then spend that amount of Advances. If not, guesstimate to get him in the ballpark.

Then you can work with the player to come up with a good story to introduce this new Character to the group, especially how to integrate him.

What is especially cool is if you can work with the player to come up with some sort of family legacy for the new Character. Maybe the new Character is a sibling or a cousin who has an eye on avenging the former Character's

death. It certainly works in many forms of serialized media, so why not here?

Classic Story Structure

Most of us should be familiar with the classic three act structure, handed down from the Greeks. It can be a useful tool when creating your own role-playing adventures for *The Void*, helping you pace your story and provide the necessary elements to make it feel fulfilling. While classic story structure may apply to a single adventure, it can also apply to an overall multi-adventure story arc. Try using it on both levels to see how it works for you.

Let's take a look at the elements of classic story structure, followed by the overall guiding three acts.

Elements

- *Plot* – A series of events caused by protagonists going up against opposing forces; the core of the story.
- *Subplot* – A secondary story, occurring underneath the main plot, which usually involves the plight of individual Characters; often more personal stories.
- *Twist* – An unexpected development in the story.
- *Climax* – The most important or exciting point in the story.
- *Denouement* – The final part of the story, in which loose ends are wrapped up. Everything is now clear and few questions or surprises remain.

Act One

This should be about the first quarter of your overall story. Before this act is

complete, you should have introduced the setting, the main player Characters and non-player Characters, and the plot of the story, as well as have introduced any subplots. You should also have introduced the antagonist's main goal, or at least evidence of it. At the end of this act there is a twist, which alters what the Characters are used to and forces them into action.

Act Two

This should be about the middle half of your overall story. Characters explore the setting and complications of the story during the first half of the act, uncovering piece after piece of the puzzle and overcoming one hurdle after another. About half of the way through Act Two, both the plot and any subplots should have their own twists. The second half of the act, in general, gets more dangerous and more dark. The end, in particular, should have its own dark twist that makes things not look good for the characters.

Act Three

This should be about the last quarter of your overall story. Things should get more and more challenging for the Characters, to the point where they should wonder whether or not they can succeed or survive their experience. This all should lead up to the climax, which is the thing to which the whole story has been building and which will ultimately conclude the tale. After the climax, stories typically move into the denouement, which answers most of the questions raised by the story and ties up loose ends. The denouement should be to the point.

However, since you may be playing a game that will last more than one adventure, you may want to leave some things open. That way, the Characters' next course of action is clear.

Themes

Since *The Void* is a game that is heavily influenced by the kind of horror pioneered by H. P. Lovecraft, there are some of the themes common to this genre that will aid you in creating an atmosphere that feels right. These themes are like spices – don't use all of them at once. You'll know best when to add a dash of this or a pinch of that. The key is to always be using at least one of them, so that the players are never quite at ease.

Creeping Dread

In *The Void*, there should always be a feeling that something isn't right, and it only gets worse the more a Character discovers what is really going on. The truth is rarely a comfort and denial is the only true shelter. Dread is always in the background, like white noise, waiting to grow into a cacophony.

You can simulate this by always upping the ante. Each piece of the mystery the Characters uncover reveals another darker, more disturbing layer – like peeling back the layers of an onion of pure madness. Just when they think things couldn't get any worse, voila! However, be cautious and know the limits of your players so that you do not cross a line and offend them.

Fear & Insanity

What people believe to be reality is merely a cleverly fabricated story to

make them feel better. The reality of the universe is usually too much for people to face. As they do, they lose themselves to the fight-or-flight instinct, and eventually lose touch with reality altogether. Characters spend a lot of their time frightened, losing friends, and oftentimes themselves, to the downward spiral of madness.

The Horror and Madness rules do a good job of simulating this. However, don't be afraid to put important non-player Characters into harm's way using these rules. Madness should claim those around the Characters on their journey, just to remind them how lucky they are. Of course, given unfortunate circumstances, a couple of Characters may follow them...

Futility

Fighting against the awakening horrors of the universe is, in the end, pointless. The things humanity now faces are simply too powerful – there is no way they can win. Characters, though they may be dedicated to just such a fight, will eventually have to face this terrible fact.

A great way to implement this theme is to create adventures in which the horrors of the unknown are so great that the only choice the Characters have is to retreat. Put them up against enough fundamentally unbeatable odds and they'll get the point. However, be very careful doing this, because you don't want your players to get disheartened. Make sure they win enough that they want to continue on – just remind them of their place in the universe from time to time.

Isolation

The solar system is a big place with lots of nothing in between settlements. It can take weeks or even months for help to arrive. Characters, even if they are part of solar system-wide authorities like the UWC Wardens, are ultimately on their own. What's worse is the time that is lost in gravity couches while spaceships accelerate or decelerate. Many, many things can happen to an unmanned spaceship in the void...

Players are often used to being able to have their Characters call for help – especially if they are governmental agents or have other powerful organizations at their back. Though that help may not come for hours, the cavalry is on the way. Don't give them that luxury here. Corporate or governmental intrigue may block them, or they may be so far out, deep in space, or trapped in a terrible storm so that help will only get there in time to find their corpses.

Tragedy

Things do not often turn out well for those who face cosmic horror. Many things are sacrificed, including minds and lives. Some such sacrifices are difficult choices to make. Characters are the kinds of people who, over time, will have a litany of tragedy that they have faced. Such things become their battle-scars and can bring an unbearable heaviness to life.

Your players' Characters will eventually bond with key non-player Characters. Don't be afraid to kill such NPCs in disturbing ways or drive them utterly mad. It's best if you give the player Characters a fighting chance, but you

do not have to do the same for those around them.

The Unknown

What humanity collectively thinks it knows about the universe is a very small slice. They have chosen not to look further for fear of what they might find. Now, the unknown has come looking for them. Much of what people face is a complete enigma. The powers-that-be who have some inkling of what is going on have only the barest grain of truth.

This is an easy thing to bring to your game. Just make sure to always present things that keep your players guessing. If they've been good and haven't read things they shouldn't have, this will be easy. If they have, then make crazy stuff up. Create your own disturbing creatures, make up your own cults, and generally just throw them into supernatural situations that put them so far off balance they have to wing it.

Cosmic Power

Hidden inside forbidden tomes is lost knowledge that can put the metaphysical power of the cosmos in a person's hands. This power is most often referred to as magic and its practitioners as sorcerers or magicians. Because magic requires entreating powerful entities, many which could easily be considered dark, there are few sane people who pursue its practice – those that do usually slip down the slope of madness quite quickly.

Magic is not something that should be in the hands of your players. It is pri-

marily the domain of cultists and other madmen. Because of that, we have not provided detailed rules for magic in *The Void*. However, we will provide you with some guidelines to implement it in your game, primarily as something the Characters must face in their adversaries.

- Magic does whatever you need it to – it is a GM tool to add flavor and complications to your stories. If you need something cool and supernatural to happen, then magic can do it.
- Magic comes in many varieties, but they are all simply flavor for the practitioner. Some practice witchcraft, others hermetic magic, others voodoo, others cult magic – it is all fundamentally the same.
- Foreign, dead, or even alien languages are often a part of magic. Many use Latin, some use Arabic, while others may use R'lyehian, which is the language of Cthulhu and the Deep Ones.
- Magic is ritual-based, for the most part. The most powerful magics require groups of sorcerers or cultists to gather together in a specially-prepared space and chant for at least hours, if not days. Magic that can be done by a single sorcerer for immediate effect does exist, but it is not as powerful, in comparison.
- Magic can be imbued into items, creating enchanted objects. Essentially, the object can bring its magic to bear for a user instantly and at will. The most powerful enchanted objects have been around awhile and are called artifacts.

- The practice of magic is dangerous. Sorcerers are opening themselves up to powerful entities and the power of the cosmos. Very bad things can happen if things aren't done properly or are interrupted. There can also be alarming side-effects, some even physical.

Either you or your players may insist that they have access to magic, since it exists in the setting. In these cases, make up some kind of ritual for them to learn and give them the ability to make it happen. Then, make their lives more terrifying and dangerous because of it. Magical power is not something with which normal, well-adjusted people should play.

Unknowable Gods

The Old Ones are incredibly powerful. They are, from our perspective, simply unknowable. They exist in ways we cannot comprehend and they wield the cosmic forces of the universe. They are, for lack of a better term, gods. In fact, they may be the only actual gods in our universe.

Your Characters should not encounter the Old Ones as a matter of course. They cannot encounter them physically, as they have not yet fully awoken or manifested yet. However, their power extends far further than that. Characters will regularly encounter minions of the Old Ones, as well as their influence over other things. The Characters may have nightmares caused by the Old Ones or experience shifting weather patterns or the like. The point is to show them how much power the Old Ones wield while they're still not a

part of this solar system, so that they are worried about the amount of power they'll wield when they return.

We have not and will not provide statistics for the Old Ones. They are gods and should be able to wipe out the Characters – even armies – with a thought, if they so choose. The Old Ones are the big, scary ultra-bad guys that the Characters should be trying to stop from showing up, instead of trying to figure out whether or not a nuke would destroy Cthulhu.

If you do have an itch to use the Old Ones, you may have one of their avatars appears. An avatar is a part of the Old One's consciousness and power that has been given physical form. However, there are few avatars in the solar system and only a couple of the Old Ones have avatars that are even remotely human – most are horrifying.

Forbidden Knowledge

It is likely that your Characters are going to want to learn more about the secret world they encounter. Such occult knowledge is not easy to find. Most of it has been lost to the world, and what little remains is typically hidden away in secret places, or hoarded by reclusive madmen with no desire to share. However, that does not mean the Characters can't find it – especially if they work for an agency like the Wardens.

Most such knowledge is kept in old books. Since they are the province of madmen and lost places, few have been brought into the digital age. The Wardens have digitized a few, so that they can have access in the field.

There are many such tomes that have been an important part of Lovecraftian lore throughout the years,



The Mi-Go in the Himalayas

such as the ever-popular Necronomicon, which we are not going to detail in this book. If you'd like to use such books, simply make up a foreboding name, detail what kind of knowledge it covers, provide a Bonus for Cryptozology or Occult Tests regarding that knowledge, and determine whether or not the knowledge within is so mind-blowing that it calls for some sort of Madness Test. That way, you can introduce your own new legendary tomes to the experience.

Behind the Curtain

People have a tendency to talk, and that has not changed in the era of *The Void*. Here are a series of rumors for each of the planets. Some of them may be true, some of them may not be, but they provide you with fertile ground to throw information at players – or from which to draw flavor or adventures for your game. At the very least, you can simply keep them all as rumors, things the Characters hear in spaceports. If all of them were true, it would be...

Mercury

1. The recent collapsed mine that killed six miners was not an accident. It was purposely collapsed by TRIAD to contain something that had been found in those deep tunnels. The families of those killed, as well as any survivors, have been given handsome payoffs to keep quiet about the entire incident. Those that haven't taken the money are missing.
2. TRIAD has managed to pierce one of the deep pockets that have for

so long vexed attempts to discover what they are. What was found was not some previously unknown mineral or element, but was actually the remnants of an ancient and decidedly non-human city. Now they are doing all they can to keep the Wardens from sticking their nose in the discovery.

3. The Warden station in orbit over Mercury is there to spy on what the Chinese and TRIAD are doing on the planet. The UWC does not trust the Chinese to keep them informed of any unusual discoveries and want to be certain that any that are made are shared with the appropriate agencies.

Venus

1. Rare Earths Inc. has stumbled into a series of tunnels in their mining operations that some believe are not natural in origin. Efforts to learn more about the tunnels have been mired in mysterious disappearances, though Rare Earths denies these rumors are true.
2. 4G Enterprises is making noises of a hostile take-over of Geo Excavations, in order to increase their control over Venus. The other mining concerns are working to protect Geo Excavations from the take-over, for fear they will be next. The VAB remains quiet and neutral.
3. Adam McAlister of the McAlister Mining Concern has had a mental breakdown. He has not been seen in public in almost six months and

now McAlister Mining Concern is being run by Amanda Benard. The Concern's Board of Directors has denied these rumors and claims that Amanda is running things only while Adam is back at Earth on sabbatical.

Earth

1. Strangely, entire mountain villages have left their homes and migrated out to the rest of the world. Even stranger, they have migrated to major cities, not simply other rural communities – many thousands of miles from their homes.
2. The Unified World Council has sponsored several Warden-supervised digs in Australia and South America. Who knows what they're looking for – or what they've already found? Some say ancient cities or artifacts, while others say they are creating some sort of planetary defense.
3. Many governments are concerned over the new movements that have been popping up among young people. It is suspected by those in the know that the cults of the solar system are aggressively recruiting from urban youths, disguising their true identities under more appealing dogma.

Mars

1. The medical breakthrough for Martian physical problems with gravity is causing some interesting and unusual side effects. Some people are even changing. The changes do not seem to be in line with natural human evolution.

2. The original architect for Founders Square was a follower of the dark gods. His design for the statues commemorating the original settlers and their placement are a potential gateway.
3. There is a corporate leader whose business is failing to the point he will do anything to get out from under the debt – even if it means killing everyone in Mariner Valley when the main atmospheric converter plant blows up. He'll be able to collect the insurance, and maybe those voices will stop talking to him when no one is in the room with him.

Jupiter

1. The drug trade on Ganymede has reached epic proportions. It is said that organized drug cartels have carved out their own empire there, and are buying up the casinos and hotels. It is becoming more analogous to the Las Vegas of the Outer Planets each day.
2. Miners swear they've seen things floating in the water cloud layer of Jupiter – living things.
3. There have been a rash of brutal murders on Callisto. There seems to be no rhyme or reason to the deaths, but they are clearly by human hands. The residents of Callisto are paranoid now, and do not take kindly to outsiders.

Saturn

1. An eco-terrorist group has been arming itself for what it believes to be the eventual conflict over the

disposition of the oceans on the moon. Some say that the group is actually a cult that believes that the oceans are the home of beings of far more galactic significance than any human.

2. The strange behavior of the core of Saturn is linked to the odd behavior of Pluto. Something, perhaps a cult or a previously unknown intelligence, is engineering an eventual collision of the two bodies with the expectations that it will ignite the gas giant, turning the planet into a new sun.
3. The Republic of Saturn is covertly building an offensive military, diverting some of the construction capabilities of Rhea. Conspiracy theorists claim they have their eyes on taking control of Neptune, in order to wrest control of the lucrative mining operations.

Uranus

1. Wesley and all his family have been involved with the dark arts. While he uses conventional means like bribery and sabotage to take down his competitors, he has been known to use his knowledge of those things beyond to get his way. In fact, he destroyed the military mining station using dark powers. His outward calm only exists because he is able to transfer his psychosis to another innocent victim, thus keeping him what he considers sane.
2. There is something on Puck after all. In the exact spot where the Wardens are building their base,

buried deep within the moon, a creature sleeps. It is Wesley's plan to wake this creature up, but not before it has some fun with the Wardens there.

3. AQX's take over of Oberon, while costing them an enormous sum in fees to Wesley, was done for the purpose of spying on Wesley. The mining operation is a front for the espionage missions planned by AQX senior management, meant to bring Wesley down.

Neptune

1. The Rhodes family, fabulously wealthy from their many years of strangle-hold on the diamond trade, maintains their own personal army and navy. This militia is outside the purview of the European Federation. No one messes with the trade.
2. Spies, thieves, and pirates are never reported in Neptune space. It is said that the Rhodes Company kills anyone who they even think falls into one of these categories, and no one from the European Federation asks any questions.
3. The European Federation has taken a keen interest in the strange things that have been reported on the surface of Neptune. However, the Rhodes Company isn't taking kindly to a broader EF presence on the planet. Tensions abound.

Pluto

1. Long-range observations have seen objects leaving the surface of Pluto, but the powers-that-be

are trying to keep this information from the public for fear it may cause panic.

2. The moons of Hydra and Nix no longer orbit Pluto. Experts have been unable to locate them for almost a month. Some believe the destabilization of Pluto's orbit caused them to crash into the small solar body.
3. A cult has sprung up in places across the solar system that worship Pluto as a deity and believe its recent peculiar behavior is a precursor to its return to rule mankind. The Wardens are said to have taken a keen interest in this cult, which has no precedent in history – secret or otherwise.

The Kuiper Belt

1. Disappearances of miners and independent operators are more pronounced than has been officially recognized. While pirates are officially blamed, many who live in the region believe that the causes are not altogether human.
2. Scientists have detected some peculiar readings inside the Fog Field. Space-time itself seems to have become distorted in small pockets within. There are no official explanations as to what would cause such a phenomena.
3. Half the members of the independent group of miners and prospectors known as the Ruffians have vanished while working an especially large asteroid just outside the Fog Field.

Plot Hooks

This section is designed to give you some plot hooks. They are intended to spark your imagination, so that you can take each idea and flesh it out in a way that works for you.

Blank Moments

Location: Spaceship

There are oftentimes days where a crew is in A/D stasis where the only thing paying attention to the ship is the computer. Sometimes, things decide to crawl onto a ship during these blank moments.

This plot hook can be attached to virtually any kind of game, for most games will involve Characters traveling from one world to another. However, during this journey while everyone lays sleeping in their grav couches, karrak'in wind up finding the ship and climbing aboard. Alternatively, it could be either some kind of creature that can be insidious or remain hidden, such as a metamorphasite or a seethari.

The size of the ship should determine how long you want it to take before the characters notice they've picked up unwanted passengers. If the ship is large, the karrak'in could be almost anywhere. If the ship is small, you might want to begin their predations outside. Regardless, make sure that the creatures make their way inside, so they can become a real threat.

Claim Jumping

Location: Kuiper Belt

Out on the great frontier of the solar system, just like the former great frontier of the American west, it is not

uncommon for the less scrupulous to attempt to steal a mining claim from those who are legally entitled to it. However, with the way things are changing, there are those claims the jumpers will have regretted trying to steal.

The Wardens, sometime when they are in the outer part of the solar system, are notified of a group of prospectors whose friends and families are worried. No one has come home. This doesn't necessarily speak to the influence of the Chthonian Star – even the smallest accidents out in the Kuiper Belt can be lethal. However, there aren't a lot of rescue vehicles out this way and the Wardens may be the only authorities around to investigate.

Naturally, things aren't as they seem. The first group of prospectors have unearthed something on a dwarf planet quite an uncomfortable ways into the Belt. They were ambushed by the claim jumpers, and only one of the original prospectors remains alive and crazed in the brig of a ship. He will tell a tale of how they found something under the ground, like a buried temple or something, which contained some kind of technology that filled their heads with horrible things. Worse yet, they seemed to have unleashed some kind of monster.

A Challenging Vacation

Location: Jupiter (Io)

The Jovian moon Io, while bathed in dangerous radiation, is a popular vacation spot for the wealthy thrill-seeker. Climbing gigantic mountains in very low gravity provides an experience not found in the rest of the solar sys-

tem. There are companies who maintain small shielded bunkers/resorts designed to cater to those wishing to partake of Io's unique pleasures, for a healthy price.

However, the Wardens received a call yesterday from one of these companies, named Ionian Excursions. They have received a distress call from one of their guides, a veteran named Tayla Ruuk, and now have lost all communication. Normally, this would be a job for the local authorities, but it is the nature of the distress call that had the local authorities escalate it to the Wardens. Tayla is clearly panicked and describes people in and amongst the mountains that have been picking the climbers off one by one. However, she describes one of them as having a face that isn't human, but rather bestial and toothy.

The reality is that a clutch of ghosts have found their way to Io. This was a recon mission for them, and they simply ended up on the wrong transport. They have stolen several of the radiation-shielded suits and have taken over the resort. They are now hunting the remaining survivors in the resort, as well as those out climbing. Once they have made sure their supplies are covered and all is secured, they will set about stealing a ship to get off of the moon.

The Wardens should arrive right about the time the ghosts are still hunting, but have had a chance to get themselves in good defensible shape. The ghosts will not be afraid to go outside, where they can use the terrain to their advantage.



Action	120	Enforcer Template	86
Advances	108	Environmental Hazards	132
Advantages,	99, 216	Epic Fails	112, 125, 130
Aiming	124	Equipment	162
Armor	123, 168	Escaping Close Combat	125
Armor List	171	Europa	82
Artistic Skills	92	Exchanges	128
Assigning Difficulties	216	Exotic Atmospheres	134
Attacks	121	Exotic Environments	136
Attitude	127	Explosive Decompression	133
Attribute Tests	111	Extended Tests	113
Attributes	76	Falling	133
Automatic Weapons	124	Fate Points	78, 85, 123, 218
Awarding Advances	220	Fire/Heat/Smoke	134
Awareness	76	Forbidden Knowledge	230
Basic Rules	25	Freeform Design	85
Business	64	Gamemaster	216
Callisto	81	Ganging Up	125
Character Advancement	108	Ganymede	82
Character Design	79	Gear	79
Characters	23, 76	Gear	85
Charging	124	Grace	76
Chthonian Star	60	Gravity	136, 172
Cleverness	76	Guns in Close Combat	125
Climbing	131	Hail Mary	112
Colonizing	58	Handguns	164
Combat	119	Healing	124
Combat Overview	25	Health	77, 85
Combat Skills	92	History	54
Combat Turn	120	Horror Effects	114
Complimentary Skills	111	Horror Tests	113
Computer Technology	149	Hyperion	84
Contests	112	Initiative Tests	120
Cover	121	Insight	129
Creative Commons	17	Intimidation & Torture	131
Crushing	133	Investigator Template	88
Cthulhu Saga	18	Jumping	132
Daily Life	68	Jupiter	21, 188, 232
Damage	122	Karrak'in	205
Defenses	121	Killing Characters	224
Demeanor	76	Knowledge Skills	93
Determining Attitude	129	Kuiper Belt	22, 84, 193, 234
Difficulties	110	Lifting	132
Dione	82	Madness	115
Disadvantages	102	Madness Scale	116
Drowning	133	Madness Treatment	118
Earth	20, 80, 186, 232	Magic	228
Enceladus	83	Making Purchases	160
Endurance	131	Mars	21, 81, 187, 232

Medical Sciences	146	Space Stations	174
Medical Tools	148	Space Technologies	154
Melee Weapons	162	Spaceships	172
Mental Disorders	117	Special Modifiers	124
Mercury	20, 79, 184, 231	Special Tests	113
Mi-Go	206	Speed	77, 85
Monsters	200	Sponsored Wealth	159
Monstrous Traits	201	Stalemate	130
Myriad	208	Static Targets	126
Nanotechnology	151	Statistics	77
Neptune	22, 84, 191, 233	Story Structure	226
NPCs	222	Submachine Guns	166
Obscured Targets	126	Successes	110
Odd Job Skill	217	Suffocation	133
Old Ones	229	Suppressive Fire	126
Perseverance	76	Surprise	126
Personal Wealth	159	Surreptitious Skills	97
Physical Combat	120	Survival	132
Physical Feats	131	Survival Horror	223
Physical Skills	95	Survival Skills	97
Physique	76	Swimming	132
Planetary Transportation	152	Talents	78, 105
Plot Hooks	235	Talents List	106
Plot Points	221	Teaching Adventure	25, 26
Pluto	22, 192, 233	Teamwork	113
Politics	62	Technical Skills	97
Primary Specialty	84	Technology	23, 146
Qualities	78, 99	Tension Points	138, 217
Qualities List	100	Terrain	132
Quirks	78, 85	Tests	110
Radiation Poisoning	134	Tethys	83
Recovery	130	Themes	227
Researcher Template	90	Throwing	132
Rhea	84	Titan	83
Rifles	165	Trade Skills	98
Sample Characters	44	Travel Expenses	169
Saturn	21, 189, 232	Travel Times	173
Scientific Skills	95	Triggers	112
Secondary Specialty	85	Two-Handed Attacks	127
Shifting Attitude	129	Unified World Council	62
Shooting Into Combat	126	Unskilled Tests	110
Skill List (Alphabetical)	96	Uranus	21, 84, 190, 233
Skill List by Group	94	Vehicle Skills	98
Skill Tests	110	Venus	20, 80, 185, 231
Skills	77	Wardens	24, 66
Skills	92	Wealth	79, 158
Social Combat	127, 219	Wealth Codes	85, 159
Social Combat Effects	129	Weapons	162
Social Skills	95	Weapons List	171
Space Combat	174	Wounds	122

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THE STYGIAN CYCLE

The Stygian Cycle is an epic campaign taking Warden Characters to every corner of our solar system, played out over a series of turn-key published adventures. Released monthly, they'll provide all you'll need to keep your group excited and engaged for a quite a while.

These adventures will also be connected to Organized Play. That means that you can take any Organized Play authorized Character to play in any group using the Organized Play framework. You can play with your group or multiple groups, as well as at conventions or events. Naturally, you can play the adventures with your regular gaming group – but Organized Play gives players the flexibility to take their Characters to other groups should their regular group move on to other games.

Here's a quick look at the first four adventures of *The Stygian Cycle*.

Awakening I: Barsoom

Trouble brews in the small mining colony of Presidia, found deep within the Martian Canals of the Outback. Things have begun to go missing – now people as well. The Wardens are assigned to investigate, as this seems like more than a simple mystery.

Awakening II: Venusian Sunset

Venus is a corporate world with a caustic atmosphere. Now a rash of murders and the increase of the drug trade have gone beyond where authorities can handle them. While not normally the domain of the Wardens, the Unified World Council thinks there may be something more underneath the surface.

Awakening III: The House Always Wins

Troy, a pleasure city often thought of as the Las Vegas of the Outer Planets. Three days ago a collection of ten bodies was found arranged in a neat circle in the center of the main thoroughfare. They all show signs of radiation burns from the inside out. The Wardens must find the source of this atrocity, while keeping the ever-important flow of tourism going.

Awakening IV: Turbulence

The weeks long journey from Saturn to Jupiter is not without its share of perils, including stellar bodies, debris, pirates, and the cold vacuum of space. However, none of these are what plague the Wardens, stuck on a civilian transport. Sometimes the dark things in the solar system come knocking without warning.

UPCOMING SUPPLEMENTS

There are many exciting supplemental books coming up for *The Void*!

Horrors of the Void I: Monsters

The *Horrors of the Void* series introduces you to more of the fascinating and terrifying creatures that are awakening in the solar system.

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The *Ecological Footprint* series provides in-depth looks into the different planets of our solar system, with more setting, adventure seeds, and character options. This first installment explores Jupiter – most especially the Gallilean Moons of Callisto, Europa, Ganymede, and Io.

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This volume greatly expands the roster of spaceships for *The Void*, including expanded stats, customization, and rules for spaceship combat.

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THE STARS WERE NEVER MEANT FOR US

2159 AD. It is a good time to be alive. The nations of Earth still exist, but they have become more civilized, and humanity has expanded into the rest of our solar system. But, alas, it is not to be our time. Something approaches, a thing on an orbit from far away. Seemingly a mysterious shard of dark matter, this object is known in obscure prophecy as the Chthonian Star. It is awakening things long thought lost or dead, things that have slumbered awaiting its return. The Unified World Council sends out special teams of sanctioned Wardens, whose job it is to ascertain the new threats to human life, to learn everything they can about them, and fight them wherever they are found.

The Void is an original Lovecraftian hard sci-fi horror setting.

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- Designed with accessibility in mind. A short overview and introductory adventure can have you playing within an hour.
- Uses simple but satisfying d6 dice pool mechanics.
- Introduces exciting new rules to ratchet up the survival horror.
- Gives Characters many options for diversity and customization.
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