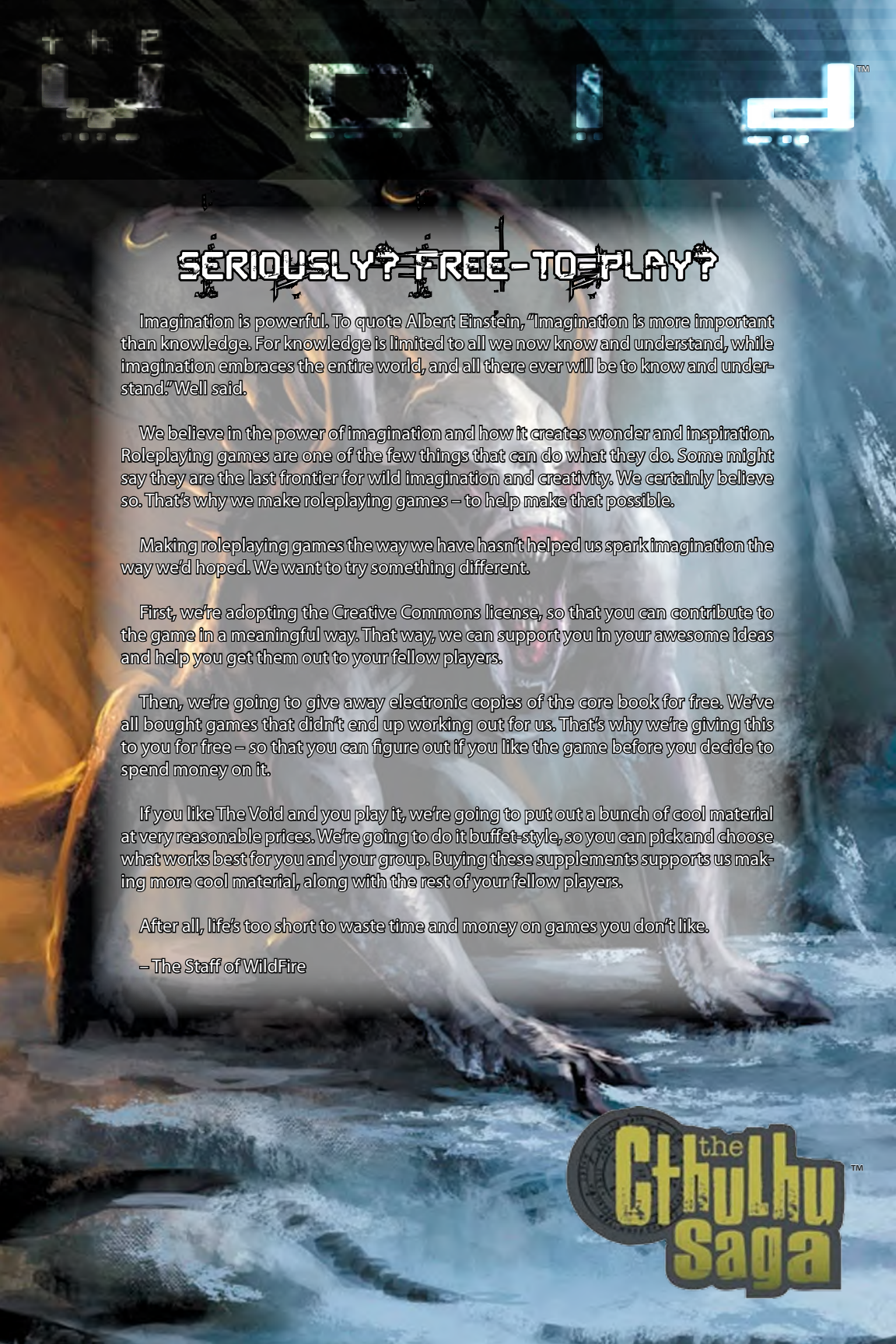




**WILDFIRE**  
Igniting Imagination

PANDORA'S PATHS I:  
ADVENTURES



## 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.

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

– The Staff of WildFire





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Welcome to *Pandora's Paths I*. This series will provide you with ready-to-run adventures for *The Void* – ones that aren't necessarily part of the epic campaign contained within the *Stygian Cycle* organized play adventures.

These adventures are self-contained and should only take a couple of game-play sessions to complete. They're good for one-off games, though they can be linked together as part of a longer campaign. The best way to run them is to order from far to near, or near to far. The former option would start on Uranus with Miranda, move to open space with The Sarcophagus, and finish up on Venus with A Plot Too Far. The latter option reverses this order, starting out on Venus and ending in Uranian Space.

Naturally, these adventures are intended for Gamemasters. However, as a player, you may find the way the setting of *The Void* is brought to life in these adventures useful for your visualization of your Character and game. You probably don't want to memorize the adventures if you plan to play them – it'll only ruin your enjoyment.

Let's take a quick look at the three adventures in this book.

### Miranda

This adventure takes Warden Characters to Uranian Space, specifically the ice moon Miranda. An ice mining station has gone silent – after broadcasting screams and terror. The response team sent in by Wesley Corp

has also gone missing. Now it is up to the Characters to discover what is going on in the mine and to rescue any possible survivors.

### Uranus

The gravity on Miranda is Moderately Low, so Characters will have to deal with those effects – as found on p. 136 of *The Void Core*. Fortunately, the mining station has been designed with this in mind. It is equipped with maneuvering lines and energized deck plates, to help things maintain some semblance of normalcy. The Characters should be able to get around without too much trouble, especially if they have the Freefall Skill.

### A Plot Too Far

It starts as what appears to be a simple case of espionage among the corporate colonies of Venus. However, a vicious terrorist attack leads the Wardens to an emerging cult – one with which they are unfamiliar. Can they save the colonies before it's too late?

### Venus

The gravity on Venus is Moderately Low, so Characters will have to deal with those effects – as found on p. 136 of *The Void Core*. The colonies have been built to accommodate this. Every part of the colonies has energized deck plates, and there are entire sections of the colonies that are spinning rings that simulate 1G of gravity.

However, going outside is a problem, even with the appropriate kind of environmental suit. Venus is extremely



hot and corrosive, with high winds to boot. If a Character is exposed to the atmosphere, use the Toxic Exotic Atmosphere and Super Heated rules found on p. 135 and p. 136 from *The Void Core*, respectively. It is death to be exposed without a sealed suit.

## The Sarcophagus

Summoned by a distress beacon, the Wardens come aboard a massive civilian luxury cruiser making its way through the Outer Planets. The Chief Engineer has been murdered and the ship's transit drive sabotaged. The Wardens must investigate what appears to be the domain of regular police, while the crew and passengers become more and more erratic – finally facing the thing that has emerged from an ancient sarcophagus.

## Open Space

This adventure takes place aboard a ship in open space. The environment is zero gravity, as described on p. 137 of *The Void Core*. The luxury liner has a couple generous gravity rings and energized deck plates to mitigate the 0G environment. Those Characters with the Freefall Skill will function best here.

If exposed to the vacuum of space – through a tear in an environmental suit or being flushed out an airlock without one – the Character will most likely need a Fate Point to survive. Use the explosive decompression rules found on p. 133 of *The Void Core*.

## 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](mailto: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://www.reddit.com/r/TheVoidRPG/>.

## Overview

The basic premise of this adventure is a bug hunt-style investigation. The Chthonian Star is awakening sleeping horrors all over the solar system and one such horror is lying dormant under the ice of the Uranian moon Miranda. The ice miners have dug their way to the gateway of a primordial den that was previously frozen and sealed away. The digging has released something and the base has not responded to hails ever since. The base is buried in the side of an ice canyon, three miles down the sheer walls, on a protruding ledge of compacted rock. It is another mile down the wall until the canyon floor is reached.

The Characters are a Warden team stationed at the in-process Warden station on the Uranian moon Puck – alternatively, they could be stationed on the Umbrella orbiting Saturn. The final recorded message from the Miranda base was a series of screams and inhuman howls that could not be identified. A private security team was sent by the owner of the facility, Wesley Corp, to make contact with the base and see what was wrong. The only communication received after the security team landed was another series of screams and inhuman howls. Thus, the Wardens were contacted to investigate. The adventure begins with the orbital insertion of the team and a briefing from the Warden Command staff via long range communications.

## Act I: Moon Trouble

**Goals:** To introduce the mining station as the main setting and allow the Char-

acters to investigate the scene to help determine what they are up against.

**Setting:** The Miranda Ice Mining Facility

**Cast:** The Characters and Warden Command

### Scene 1: The Briefing

Once the Characters have settled in for their briefing, their commander enters and gives them the run-down. Read them the following.

*"The situation is this. Wesley's primary ice mining facility on the Uranian moon Miranda has failed to report in for the past two days and everyone on Veronica Station is worried. Twelve hours ago, a security detail from Veronica was sent in to check on the station and the only communications received once they landed was an unintelligible scream and something howling in the background. Our experts have not been able to determine the source. We all know that there are things that go bump in the night and this could very well be something we all need to be concerned about. Take all possible precautions. Find out what happened and who is responsible. Warden base out."*

The Characters should be allowed to pull up schematics of the facility, pull any personnel dossiers, and review staff rosters. There is not a lot of time to review anything as the shuttle drops to the surface. However, if they're

coming from Saturn, they'll have more than enough time to gather data.

### **Station Statistics**

*Personnel on Site: 52*

*Crew Breakdown: 32 miners, 10 mechanics, 4 doctors, 3 administrators, and 2 security officers*

*Base Commander: John Levirit, 42*

As the shuttle approaches the mining station, this is what the Characters see:

*"As the shuttle silently settles over the surface of Miranda, the pilot slowly takes the shuttle down into an impossibly deep canyon. The reports indicate that the canyon is four miles deep and three miles across. Dug into the side of the sheer walls, three miles down, is the mining facility. Although there is no atmosphere on Miranda, the canyon seems to hold a haze that blocks vision for more than 10 yds/m. The report made no mention of this fact, despite that it clearly impedes your investigation.*

*Homing in on the station's beacon, the computer reads off the distance to the facility in a monotonous tone. Slowly the haze parts and the mining station appears in the view port. Looking down, you see that the facility is completely contained within the wall of the canyon. The only external view of the facility is the main cargo bay door that allows access for cargo shuttles to pick up ice and deliver supplies. The cargo bay door is cur-*

*rently open and the shuttle from the security detail is parked within. There is room to land next to them within the cargo bay."*

A thermal scan of the facility will show that the heating system is still active, but nothing other than the interior structures can be made out. There are no hot spots to indicate anything living. The internal airlock is still functioning and is the only method to access the base. The facility appears to still be pressurized with no discernible leaks. In short, the mine is still functioning, but no one's home and there's no evidence as to what happened.

From the cargo bay, the Characters can see that the access ramp to the security team shuttle is down and that something is lying at the top of the ramp. The way the hull and ramp are situated, there is no way to get a better view of what that object is without going out and physically looking.

### **Scene 2: Landing At The Base**

The Characters can land their ship without much fuss. When they decide to investigate the security team's shuttle, read the following:

*"Within your environment suits, you inch towards the embarkation ramp of the adjacent shuttle. Due to the lack of atmosphere, all you can hear is your breathing, as well as the breathing of your compatriots via the live audio link you all share. Shining your light up the ramp, there is a dark shape lying at the top. It appears to be a combat*



*environment suit much like your own, but unlike yours there is obviously no pressure billowing out the sleeves and legs in this suit. Turning the unfortunate soul over, you see that the face guard has been completely smashed in along with most of this person's face.*

*Checking the body, the first thing that stands out is that the combat environment suit is not the standard issue that most private security firms use in the Uranian system. The suit looks more military issue than even the Warden-issue suits you are wearing, which is strange."*

Entry into the shuttle is impossible, as the doors are locked via a very sophisticated security system. It is so sophisticated that anyone with knowledge of security systems would marvel at the complexity and wonder where a private security group was able to get their hands on something this advanced. Nothing short of blowing the door open will provide access to the ship at this moment. There is nothing on the body that would give the Characters any advantage in hacking their way inside. Scans of the ship will be blocked by a signal it is projecting.

There are no markings on the ship besides the standard markings of the Wesley Corporation, and no exterior signs of damage. A closer inspection of the ship will discover that these Wesley Corp markings were only recently put on the shuttle.

### **Scene 3: Entering the Base**

Investigating the cargo bay area will show that there is no sign of a

struggle, or anything else out of the ordinary. With nothing else to investigate in the cargo area, the Characters should move to the main air lock. They will find it operational and they can make their way into the base easily.

Once the airlock is opened, read the following to your players:

*"As the airlock opens, it becomes apparent why no one has answered any attempts to communicate with the base. Beyond the airlock is the warehouse. Bloody, crushed bodies have been tossed around the room, as if a juggernaut had trampled them in a mad rush to escape. Monitors are smashed and equipment is flattened. Looking through the doors to the kitchen, operations, and the cafeteria, you can see similar devastation and more mutilated bodies. The bodies show no signs of cuts or puncture wounds. The damage appears to be simple and violent blunt force trauma."*

Inspecting the bodies more closely will show that all suffered tremendous blunt force trauma, as though they were struck by a vehicle or large piece of machinery. The layout of the bodies indicates that they were congregated in their normal spots when an unexpected blitz attack took them completely by surprise. Securing the base is too large a task for this small group to perform, and the Characters should be reminded of the dangers of splitting up. Naturally, that doesn't mean they won't.

Entering operations, the Characters will discover that the computer sys-

tems are still in working order – just that all monitors that were operational at the time have been destroyed. The monitors that were turned off appear to be in good working order. Success

at an Average Computer Test should allow a Character to download station logs to a personal computing device. There are three interesting things that the Characters will be able to



## The Mining Base

determine from these logs. First, they indicate that the security feeds from the engineering, packaging, and supply areas, as well as from the actual mine, are not available. Apparently, a power spike occurred a week before communications were lost that fried the leads to the cameras. Second, the Characters' briefing indicated that the last communication from base personnel was three days ago, but the base logs show communications going out to Veronica Station within the last eighteen hours. Finally, there are two events of note in the video logs. The first is dated seventeen hours ago – the date that the station logs show communications were lost. The second is from thirteen hours ago, when the security detail arrived on the moon.

### **The First Recording**

*"The grainy video record shows the workers of the base going about their business. Images of the people walking around that you just found dead on the floor give you shudders. There are images from all sections of the facility, except for the mine itself and the engineering, packaging, and supply areas, due to a glitch the previous day that took those systems down.*

*Then, without warning or alarm, the Cafeteria is thrown into chaos. Objects are tossed around and people are smashed against walls with enough force to shatter bones. All that can be seen on the recording is a black blur. Even slowed down or paused there is no discernible image on the screen. Whatever it is, it moves impossibly fast. Impact with anything in its way is immediately*

*devastating. In a flash, the creature moved to the recreation area and then beyond to other areas of the facility. Once all the inhabitants were dead, it disappeared and did not show itself again."*

### **The Second Recording**

*"The security detail arrives on site just as you did, but their attention is not on the dead they find on the floor. A team of eight heavily-armed mercenaries bursts into the room and sets up a defensive perimeter around a man in a standard environment suit that had started taking readings on an unknown device. They immediately travel to the rear of the facility, back towards the mine entrance. Based on the equipment and hardware they are carrying, they were obviously expecting trouble.*

*After leaving the supply area and going into the packaging area, there is no activity for ten minutes. Then, the civilian and one of the mercenaries come running back into camera range and are seen leaving the base via the airlock. There is no indication that the creature followed them. The two are seen to run to their ship but, because of the camera angle, nothing more can be seen. They may or may not have made it."*

At this point, the Characters are free to look through any area of the facility. However, once they enter the engineering area, the Creature encounter should begin, so head them off with the information starting in Act II to get them out to the shuttles again. All the



other rooms in the complex look similar to the warehouse. They suit their purpose, but they are scenes of general destruction and bodies litter the ground.

## Act II: The Survivor

**Goals:** To ramp up the action and lay the seeds that there are other forces at work that knew about the creature within the mine. Also, the Characters will lose access to their shuttle and be forced to deal with the Creature in the mine or be killed.

**Setting:** The shuttles outside the Miranda Ice Mining Facility

**Cast:** Doctor Simon Flint

### Scene 4: The Survivor

The security recordings indicate that there were two people that escaped the facility and made it to the mercenary ship. Obviously, something happened to one of them – the pressure suit on the dead body they discovered earlier will lead the Characters to believe that he was the remaining mercenary. That leaves the civilian as the only survivor.

Watching the security recording, the Characters should be in an area where the current security display is also available. On this display, within the cargo bay, the civilian security team member is seen again. He is creeping from the embarkation ramp of the mercenary ship and moving to the Characters' ship. Even though the Characters' ship has been secured, the civilian uses some device that he is carrying to easily gain access to their ship.

Read this to your players:

*"Reviewing the destruction of the base leaves you chilled by the terrible carnage that the creature is able to cause. What makes it worse is that you have not been able to get a decent image of the creature, as it is moving far too fast to get a good look. On another screen in the security room, there is a live feed of the cargo bay. There, you see the civilian sneaking along the cargo bay towards your ship."*

*This should not be an issue because your ship is secured and very difficult to hack. However, as he approaches the door, the civilian takes an object from a case that he is carrying and presses it to the door of your ship. The door suddenly opens up and he enters. There is now a potential hostile on your vessel."*

If the Characters decide to ignore this for some reason, the civilian will be able to eventually assume control and take off. If this occurs, then skip the encounter with the Doctor and go directly to the investigation of the mercenary ship.

Racing back to the Character's ship goes quickly and, when they get there, the Characters find the ship is secured once again. However, the civilian has not had time to change the entry codes and the Characters will be able to gain access to the ship. Upon entering the airlock, success at an Average Notice Test will reveal the device that the civilian used to gain access to the ship is lying discarded on the floor.

Encountering Doctor Flint at the controls, the Characters will see a disheveled middle-aged man at the end of his rope.

*"After cycling the airlock to your ship and getting inside, you can hear shuffling and muttering coming from the bridge. With weapons drawn, your team advances to the bridge and finds a man frantically attempting to access the controls to get the ship ready for take off. Because he is seated with his back to you, you are unable to determine if he has a weapon."*

### Doctor Simon Flint

Attributes:

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

Statistics: Health 8, Speed 6 mph

Skills: Defense 2, Explosives 3, Insight 3, Reaction 2, Unarmed Combat 2

Equipment: Environmental Suit, Strange Device

Notes: At the time of encounter the doctor has gone completely insane. His only goal is to get off the moon and he will kill all those in his way, or at least try.

### Scene 5: Last Stand

Here is how this scene will most likely play out. Doctor Flint has only one desire – to get off this moon to whatever safety he can find. He has already lost his mind to fear and is not thinking rationally. The arrival of the Characters will push him completely beyond reason and into blind panic. He will come to believe that he has only one way out because, although the Characters could not see it initially,

Dr. Flint is carrying a weapon – a fragmentation grenade. Feeling that he is being cornered, the Doctor will decide to take his own life and take everyone else with him, to ensure that the creature does not get him.

However, the Characters should have a chance to avoid catastrophe. Read the section below and give the Characters only a few moments to decide their course of action.

*"With a wild look in his eyes, the civilian suddenly turns on you and waves his right hand in the air. There is something in that hand and, with a feeling of dread, you can see what it is – a grenade. Worse yet, dangling from a finger on his left hand you see the pin. You have only seconds to react. Scramble for safety or attempt to rush the civilian. What do you choose?"*

Diving out of the bridge into the relative safety of the hallways requires an Average Grace + Athletics: Coordination Test. Success means that the Characters have reached cover when the blast destroys the bridge. Anyone failing the Test will take the appropriate damage from the blast (6d6) and their environmental suit will be irreparably torn. Regardless, the ship has begun to leak from tiny blast holes in the hull and the bridge will need to be sealed off.

Attempting to take the grenade from the Doctor requires a Hard Grace Test. Success will mean that the player is able to get to the Doctor before he is able to release the grenade and thus the pin can be replaced. Failing

the Test means the Character who attempted to wrestle with the doctor will take half the appropriate damage from the blast – they are saved from the worst by the fact that they came up short in their leap and ended up behind a row of seats. The ship has been breached however, and the bridge must be sealed off.

Regardless of the outcome, the good doctor will either be dead or a gibbering madman that will need to be heavily sedated in order to not be a constant threat to the Characters. This will render him pretty much useless as anything other than comic relief, if that's the right term. However, he has left the key to his ship at the door of theirs.

### **Scene 6: The Mercenary Ship**

Utilizing the access device to unlock the mercenary ship will require a Hard Computer Test. Once the door is open, the Characters will find equipment similar to the advanced equipment that on Warden ships. Accessing the ship logs will require six Plot Points, relying on Cleverness + Computers.

The ship logs indicate that these men are not the original security detail sent by Veronica Station. They appear to have been contracted to monitor all communications to and from the base and to intercept anything that may be of interest. There is no record of who contracted them – not even a ghost trace. When the base radioed Veronica that they had opened a hole into a deep cavern with strange markings, the mercenary team intercepted the transmission and acted as though they were from Veronica Station.

The station supervisor was directed to continue into the cavern and return with any information he could find. The supervisor informed the imposter crew that there was a large monolith blocking entry into the cavern. The mercenary team ordered the mining base to use blasting charges to clear the way. The base commander informed the mercenaries that the monolith was holding up the ceiling of the cavern, but that it might be possible to shore up the sides of the entryway and see if they could remove the monolith. They were told to continue and report back, which they did. This was the last actual communication with the base.

Once communications were lost with the base, the mercenaries received an incoming message that Veronica Station was sending a team to check on the mining facility. The mercenaries intercepted the ship from Veronica and destroyed their vessel. Then the mercenary ship broke orbit to a set course for the mining facility, posing as the official security detail. The staff of this facility never knew the difference and expected official help when they arrived.

## **Act III: The Creature**

**Goals:** To engage in open battle with a monster.

**Setting:** The mine

**Cast:** The creature

### **Scene 7: The Guardian**

Once the Characters enter the packaging area, the creature will notice



them and they will likewise immediately notice it. It knows nothing other than to fulfill its mission – to ensure that no one awakens those that it has been tasked with guarding. These things are creatures, even more horrible than itself, that must never be allowed to roam free.

The creature has been struck by a specialized weapon that the mercenary team brought with them. The weapon is essentially an ice cannon. It fires a compressed form of liquid nitrogen that is rapidly released and blankets a target in layers of ice until

it is immobilized and/or dead. When the team attempted to enter the cavern beyond the mine, the creature attacked to keep them out. The mercenary team was able to score a near direct hit on the beast, trapping it within a layer of ice. Unfortunately the creature had already killed seven members of the team.

The creature has been severely injured and dramatically slowed by the freezing process, but it is beginning to recover. This will give the Characters time to engage the creature before it can recover to the point that it speeds up so much that they will be unable to stop it.

### **The Guardian**

#### *Attributes:*

Awareness 4

Grace \*

Cleverness 2

Perseverance 8

Demeanor 1

Physique 6

*Statistics:* Health 22,  
Speed \*

*Skills:* Defense 5,  
Natural Weapons 5,  
Reaction 4

*Weapons:* Bite (10d6),  
Claws (6d6)

*Armor:* Thick Hide  
(15/7)

*Horror Factor:* Hard

*Notes:* At the start of the encounter, the creature starts at a Grace of 3 and a Speed of 10 mph. Each turn this value



The Guardian

increases by one and 40 mph, until it reaches a Grace of 8 and a Speed of 210 mph. At this point, the creature moves too fast to be hit.

The creature was frozen to the wall near the entrance to the mine. It will just be breaking free of its bonds as the Characters enter the packaging area. During the first turn, the speed gains made by the creature may make it slower than the Characters, so it will use cover to evade them. After that, the creature can move fast enough to cause damage and will attack the Characters.

The ice cannon, as luck would have it, fell inside a waste bin near the entrance to the mine when it was knocked from the hands of the final member of the mercenary unit. An Average Awareness + Notice Test will be required in order to find it, reduced to Easy for any Character who mentions that they wish to look near where the creature was trapped before.

This combat event will play out until the creature is either too fast to hit, at which time the Characters would be advised to leave if they can, or they find the ice cannon that the mercenaries used. If the Characters manage to obtain the ice cannon, the creature will realize that there is too great a chance that the cavern could be breached, so it will do the only thing it can think of to stop the Characters – it will bring the mine down on top of everyone, sealing the cavern off.

If the creature is nearing death, or the Characters get possession of the

ice cannon, the creature will not risk the cavern being disturbed, so it will strike the monolith and try to bring the cavern down.

## Epilogue

The Characters have hopefully survived their encounter and the cavern was brought down sealing the hidden creatures below tons of ice. If the Character's ship was damaged in the attack, the mercenary ship will be able to send communications to the Warden base on Puck to schedule a pick up.

Where to go from here:

- The mercenary ship will show that there is a highly funded organization out there attempting to gain access to the information from which the Wardens are attempting to protect everyone.
- There is no evidence that Wesley or anyone on Veronica Station was involved with the mercenary team.
- The Wardens will want to find out what the creature was protecting, but Wesley Corp is unlikely to give them the rights to do so.



## Overview

While enjoying a break on Venus as their ship gets a new load of cargo, the Characters are approached by a representative from the Venusian Advisory Board. She offers them a job to investigate some unusual activity by a mid-level corporate executive. What begins as a simple case of suspected corporate espionage turns into something uglier. The Characters soon find that a much darker truth lies behind the activities of the person in question. A man long believed to be dead reappears, leading the efforts of the relatively new cult known as the Devout of the Returned – and he wishes nothing more than to help the Returned bring mankind into his dark and fatal embrace.

This adventure is aimed at non-Warden characters – especially those with a corporate and/or security background. The key events are described here, but there is plenty of room to add additional encounters that you can use to bring even more color to the adventure.

## Wardens

It doesn't take a lot of alteration to turn this adventure into a Warden mission. Instead of the VAB looking to hire freelancers to investigate potential corporate espionage, Julie Stern will come to the Wardens to investigate Hector Valdez due to "unusual and shady affiliations." She's not entirely sure what the Wardens do, but she knows they look into strange happenings and behavior. Of course, this will be a lie, as she wants external author-

ity figures to uncover any corporate espionage. However, this manipulation pays off and gets the Wardens on the path of the adventure. Things may also be easier for them, as they have much greater authority than what Julie would offer freelancers.

## Act I: An Unexpected Job

**Goals:** To introduce the Characters to the corporate nature of Venus; to investigate Hector Valdez

**Setting:** Venus – Flare City Colony, Diamond Head Colony

**Cast:** Julie Stern the General Corporate Liaison from the Venusian Advisory Board, Mystery Man

## Scene 1: Approach

After a long stint aboard ship, the Characters are partaking of some much earned shore leave in the luxurious Windhouse Hotel and Resort, a well-known and popular vacation spot in Flare City. The hotel is located in the side of a Venusian mountain, above Flare City proper, providing their guests some privacy away from the bustle of the colony itself. It is also one of the few places in the colony that have actual viewing ports that afford a view of the Venusian surface.

As the group is relaxing, whatever their preferences might be, a woman approaches. Read the following to your players:

*"A woman wearing a high-end business suit approaches your group with an obvious purpose.*



*Her attire seems out of place, given that the Windhouse is a place to unwind. All things being equal, she is not likely here for a friendly chat."*

The woman introduces herself as Julie Stern. She hands each of the Characters a business card which has the Venusian Advisory Board logo, her name and title (General Corporate Liaison), and her relevant contact info.

She then tells them that their names were recommended for a possible short-term contract with the VAB. The job is expected to last no more than a week. If the Characters have a ship of their own, the VAB will cover all their port and orbital fees, refueling costs, as well as the next payment on the ship's title, if it is not owned outright. In addition, she will also offer the group 5000 credits each (or some other amount that is appropriate to the circumstances for your group). If the group does not own or lease a ship, then she will offer them each 15,000 credits – increase their Wealth Code by 1 for their next purchase.

The job involves the investigation of a man named Hector Valdez, a mid-level manager at Geo Excavations. The Venusian Advisory Board believes he may be involved in active corporate espionage for Rare Earths Inc. Should it be true and he be discovered by his employers, it could set up a conflict between the two companies, which the VAB would like to avoid. The VAB wishes to employ outsiders that are not tainted by local politics in order to ensure that there is no bias involved,

given the antagonistic relationship of the two companies in question.

If they inquire as to the details of the feud, Ms. Stern shares that Rare Earths and Geo Excavations have been fighting over mining rights around the Cryst Rift Zone, which is located almost directly half-way between the two colonies.

The Venusian Advisory Board will provide all necessary travel visas and provide the group with papers that will exempt them from any colony entry fees, as well as cover all transport fees that may be incurred. They will be able to travel freely, without question.

The group will not be authorized to make any actual arrests, but only acquire evidence as to the truth of the suspicions one way or another. The group will have warrants that will allow them to search Hector's home, but it is recommended that they do so when he is not there. If he is innocent, the VAB would prefer him to not know the investigation ever took place. They will be unable to search his office, as the VAB could not get the warrants to violate the sanctity of corporate autonomy.

The group will be authorized to carry small arms but their use will need to be seriously justifiable should any incidents occur.

Assuming the group agrees, they will be provided with Hector Valdez's address and information regarding the appropriate authorities, and docu-

ments will be couriered to their suites later that day.

## Scene 2: Hector's Home

Hector lives in Diamond Head, so the group will need to catch a train from Flare City. Once they arrive, they find that Diamond Head has a very different atmosphere from Flare City. Security is open and obvious. There is also a noticeable number of employees from other corporations, as evidenced by patches and other insignia. The group is easily able to find the sector of the colony in which Hector lives.

Mid-level managers seem to be paid fairly well, given the sector in which Hector lives. High-end shops, restaurants, and other establishments that obviously cater to those with more than average credits fill the well-maintained and open-air marketplace that dominates the sector. Residences in this sector are built above the market, with windows that afford views down into the carefully maintained and manicured parks, giving the area a very open and outdoor feel. Hector's home is built into the 'north' wall and has a private balcony and stairs that afford access.

When the group arrives, Hector will just be returning from work and the group will see him enter his home. It means the group will need to wait until the next day to search his home, unless he should go out again. There are a number of places in the sector that afford a good view of his home, should the group wish to keep tabs on him (and this should be encouraged). The group can also ask around about him. Five Plot Points earned through

Demeanor + Persuade or Demeanor + Fraternize allows the Characters to find out the following information, in the order presented.

1. Hector is a quiet man who tends to keep to himself, though he is generally a friendly sort.
2. People have noticed that he seems to have had a number of people visit him over the last couple weeks. Normally it is rare for him to have visitors.
3. He has seemed more tense in the last week than is normal. He also seems to be constantly pre-occupied.

As the group finishes their inquiries, or at some point before the group decides to retire, they should make an Awareness + Notice Test against an Average Difficulty. Success means a Character will notice someone on Hector's balcony.

Someone has approached Hector's door and seems to be requesting entrance. The man is fairly nondescript and doesn't wear anything that affiliates him with one company or another. As you watch, Hector answers the door. He seems agitated by the person, and the two exchange harsh words. The man pushes Hector back into his home and closes the door behind them.

Give the group a moment to react and decide what they should do. If they contact Julie, she will remind them that they can't make arrests, but she will back them if they decide to find out who is visiting and what the argument was about.

Once they have made a decision, the following occurs – please read the following to your players:

*“Before you can do more than plan your next course of action, there is a sudden explosion. The doors and windows of Hector’s home shatter outward as black smoke and balls of fire roll up the wall. Alarms wail and people scatter in panic as the shock wave of the explosion rolls over your group.”*

As everyone scurries about in panic, have the Characters make an Awareness + Notice Test against an Average Difficulty. If successful, they notice that amidst the chaos a single man stands up calmly from a table in the marketplace and makes his way through the crowd. The Characters can try to pursue him – have them make any appropriate Tests you wish. Regardless, he disappears into the crowd in the end.

Shortly after the explosion, the Characters will be contacted by Julie Stern wanting a report of what has happened. Assuming the Characters mention the mystery man, she will use her assets to figure out who he is and get back to the Characters. If they didn’t see him, Ms. Stern will tell them that there was a report of one witness acting like he had expected the explosion.

They may also opt to search Hector’s home. The documents they have been provided give them the authority to do so. Using the Awareness + Investigate, they will earn Plot Points – the number of which will reveal information. They learn everything below

through a combination of searching the scene and talking with other investigators on the scene. You should make it clear that the local security forces do not appreciate agents of the Venusian Advisory Board (or the UWC Wardens) sticking their noses into a corporate incident.

1. 4 Plot Points – There is only one body to be found inside.
2. 6 Plot Points – The explosion’s origin seems to be the center of the main room.
3. 8 Plot Points – The locals are treating this as an accident until they have reason to do otherwise.
4. 10 Plot Points – Hector was being investigated by Geo Excavations for embezzlement.

## Act II: Not As Simple as It Appears

**Goals:** To track down Careen Murphy, to discover the cult and their nefarious plans

**Setting:** Venus – Diamond Head Colony, Daysin Colony

**Cast:** Julie Stern the General Corporate Liaison from the Venusian Advisory Board, Careen Murphy the Mystery Man, Careen’s daughter Amanda

### Scene 3: Who Is He?

The next morning Julie will contact the group. She tells them she has a lead on the man they noticed at the site of the explosion. He has been identified as Careen Murphy, an employee of Rare Earths Inc., where he worked as a mine superintendent. He was believed killed in a mining acci-



dent that happened a couple months ago, though his was the only body of the 20 victims that was never recovered. They also learn that he was survived by a sole daughter – Amanda Murphy – who lives in Daysin Colony. Julie provides the group with her location and recommends a conversation with her.

Amanda is an attractive red-headed woman in her mid-twenties who works as a low-level administrator for Rare Earths. She is friendly when the group first meets her, though she may grow hostile depending on how the Characters proceed when talking with her. She will initially tell the group that her father is dead, killed in a mining operation. Amanda will portray him as a kind-hearted man whom she loved dearly. A successful Exchange using Demeanor + Persuade against her Awareness + Insight of 6 will reveal the following information. However, each failure moves her Attitude one level down (Friendly to Ambivalent, and so on). At Hostile, she will no longer speak with them and ask the Characters to leave.

1. In the last couple of months of her father's life, he started meeting with people in secret. She had stumbled onto one meeting when she returned home early one night. When she asked him who he was talking with, Careen told her not to worry about it.
2. Amanda has suspected that he might be alive, but refuses to believe he would not contact her if he were.
3. She has noticed some recent activity in his private bank account

when she was finalizing some paperwork to transfer his assets to her. She didn't tell anyone about this activity, hoping it meant he is alive – though afraid of what it meant if he isn't.

There is not a lot more information the group can get out of Amanda. Success at a Hard Computer Test will allow the group to track down the unusual activity in the accounts. However, they need to get the appropriate authorization to do so from Julie – they may need to be reminded of this formality. There have been a number of large deposits and withdrawals since Careen was supposedly killed. Julie can track down more detailed information about these transactions, which lead the group to a credit transfer station that is used to transfer credit from accounts to credit sticks.

#### Scene 4: Careen Murphy

The group is able to locate the transfer station Careen last used to transfer credit onto a stick. It is a rundown area of Daysin Colony that is dominated by under-utilized storage spaces. There are a number of possible approaches the Characters may take at this point to further their goals. They may try to question the locals. They need to earn six Plot Points using Demeanor + Persuade or Demeanor + Streetwise to learn the following as they move forward in their investigations.

1. They first discover someone who has seen Careen frequent a small local bar called the Last Hope.
2. He has apparently been seen with a small group of people who call themselves the Devout.

3. The bartender knows Careen, and will tell the group that Careen comes in every night at around 9 pm EST (Earth-Standard Time).

At this point, they may try to apprehend Careen – this will devolve into a fight if they do. He comes in with a pair of friends, who will help him out if conflict arises. They may also opt to follow him to see what he is doing. If this is the route the group chooses, the Characters who follow should engage in two Grace + Stealth versus Careen's Awareness + Notice. The Characters gain one free Success on the first Contest, as Careen has no reason to expect someone to be following him and has grown complacent. If the Characters fail this first Contest, Careen starts looking over his shoulder as he gets the feeling he is being followed. The Characters do not receive the free Success for the second Contest – in fact, Careen gains one free Success if he's already looking over his shoulder. If the Characters fail, Careen and his friends notice them and a fight breaks out.

If the group successfully tails Careen, he will lead them to an abandoned storage space. If they kill or incapacitate him, they will find an access card in his pocket to the space. Stats for Careen and other combatants can be found at the end of this Act.

### Scene 5: The Discovery

The storage space is relatively large and was once used to store heavy equipment. The door to the space is locked and a pair of guards can be spotted keeping an eye on the place with a successful Average Awareness + Investigate or Awareness + Notice

Test. The guards will need to be dealt with before the group can get into the space. If the guards are not noticed, they will attack the Characters as they try to get into the storage space alerting those inside – their stats can be found at the end of this Act.

If the Characters already acquired the access card, then getting into the storage space is simple. However, if they have not, they will need to succeed at a Hard Cleverness + Computer Test to override the lock. A single failure will warn Careen and the others that are inside. If the first Test is successful, the Characters will take the cultists by surprise.

Inside the space, Careen and others are starting a ritual to worship a being they call the Returned. If the cultists are unaware of the Characters, then they will lose one turn to surprise when the Characters enter. The Characters may attempt Social Combat using Demeanor + Persuade or Demeanor + Intimidation to try to talk the cultists into surrendering – however, their Attitude is Hostile.

Once the cultists either surrender or are defeated in the fight, the Characters can glean new information. They need to earn 6 Plot Points using Awareness + Investigation to learn the following.

1. The group belongs to a cult called the Devout of the Returned. Success at a Hard Cleverness + Occult Test will reveal very little, other than they are a new cult that somehow worships the Chthonian Star.



### The Storage Space

2. A ledger shows that there are approximately twenty members in this cell, assuming it is correct. The names in the book all use obvious aliases (such as Brother Devout Phobos, and the like).
3. A stash of explosives is hidden in a false floor panel in the back corner of the storage space. They seem to have come from both Rare Earth's and Geo Excavations. A box of detonators is also present, but half of them have been removed.
4. A map of a transit tunnel has a series of X's at various points and a time (6:45 pm EST the following evening) scrawled on it. The number of X's seems to correspond to the number of missing detonators, minus one.

The Characters will need to successfully interrogate the cultists to learn what the map means, using Demeanor + Persuade or Demeanor + Intimidation against their Hostile Attitude. If successful, they will learn that the cult plans on destroying the transit tunnel that connects Daysin Colony and Diamond Head. The detonation is timed to coincide with the two trains passing by one another, which will likely be filled with passengers (over 200 if the trains are full).

Once the Characters contact Julie with what they discover, she will arrive on scene with a Rare Earth's security team to formally arrest any survivors. If the group has not learned all of the above information, then Julie and her team will get it out of the survivors and pass the information along the following morning.

If there are no survivors to interrogate, then Julie will inform the group the following morning that she believes she knows where the cult plans on striking. She has discovered what she believes to be a bogus work order on the transit tunnel in question. While she is attempting to get forces mobilized, she fears that red tape and corporate politics will delay things long enough to be too late, so she requests that Characters get out there quickly to investigate. She will arrange for a shuttle to take them to the nearest access point and provide them with the



hard suits needed to survive the brief time they will be on the surface.

### **Careen Murphy** **Cultist Miner**

#### **Attributes:**

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

**Statistics:** Health 12, Speed 14 mph

**Skills:** Bureaucracy 1, Computers 2, Deception 3, Defense 2, Explosives 3, Guns: Pistols 3, Hand Weapons: Blades 3, Insight 2, Notice 3, Persuade 2, Occult 1, Reaction 3

**Equipment:** Combat Knife, HCC-90 Anvil Pistol, Flak Jacket

### **Devout Cultists**

**(6 Cultists inside, including 2 friends of Careen, and 2 Guards outside)**

#### **Attributes:**

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

**Statistics:** Health 9, Speed 12 mph

**Skills:** Defense 2, Guns: Pistols 2, Hand Weapons: Blades 1, Insight 1, Notice 2, Reaction 2

**Equipment:** Combat Knife, ACC-62 Bandit Pistol

## **Act III: Tunnel of Death**

**Goals:** To stop the cultists from destroying the transit tunnel

**Setting:** Venus – Diamond Head Colony

**Cast:** Julie Stern the General Corporate Liaison from the Venusian Advisory Board, Careen Murphy the Cultist, Devout of the Returned Cultists

### **Scene 6: Transit Tube Access Port**

Julie provides the team with a VAB shuttle (and pilot, if necessary), as well as the location of the access point closest to the region she believes the cultists are planning to attack. She has tried to delay the two trains, but those above her believe that doing so may cause undo panic. It is up to the Characters to stop the plot before it is too late.

When the shuttle arrives at the access lock read the following:

*"The winds on the surface are blowing hard and the temperature is over 400 degrees F. Fortunately, all shuttles that fly to the surface of Venus are required to carry enough hard suits to cover all passengers and crew. With help, each of you dons the clunky gear and steps outside. Even with the weight of the suits, the winds threaten to knock you over. Through the dust, you can see a maintenance vehicle with VAB markings near the structure that houses the lock. The transit tunnel itself looks like a massive concrete and steel tube that runs as far as you can see in both directions."*

The maintenance vehicle, a six-wheeled monster, is empty and unlocked. Success at an Average Cleverness + Investigate Test will uncover a single detonator under one of the seats. The airlock into the tunnel is locked, but Julie has provided the access codes necessary to get inside. However, when the Characters get to the lock, they discover that the keypad has been dismantled and overridden.

It will require Success at a Hard Cleverness + Engineer: Electrical or Cleverness Computers Test to get the door to open. A failed Test means it takes longer than normal to gain access, but the Characters will eventually get in. If delayed due to failure, the team will encounter the cultists as they retreat back towards the lock, instead of in the process of setting the explosives.

Once inside, the team can remove the hard suits if they wish. However, they should be warned that, if the explosives do detonate, such action will leave them exposed to the Venusian atmosphere. If they opt to wear them, they will need to succeed at an Average Environmental Suit Test or suffer a -1 Die penalty to any actions due to the bulkiness of the suits. The suits do offer 10 points of armored protection, in addition to any light armor they might wear.

### Scene 7: Encountering the Cultists

If the Characters entered the tunnel with no delay, they will interrupt the cultists as they are planting the explosives. If they were delayed, they will encounter the cultists as they return from planting the bombs. In either case, the cultists will fight to the death. When the cultists start to lose the fight, one of them will try to run back to the explosives in order to detonate them, if possible. Doing so will require the cultist to succeed at a Hard Explosives Test, as the bombs weren't made to be manually detonated.

Once the cultists have been defeated, the bombs will need to be defused. Success at an Easy Explosives Test will reveal that the bombs have a timer,

as well as a mercury switch that will detonate them if the bomb is moved. Disarming the bombs requires success at an Average Explosives Test. Disarming just the mercury switches requires success at an Easy Explosives Test, but then the bombs will need to be quickly carried out of the tunnel and placed well away before the timer runs out. This is doable, but play it up as best you can. There are five total bombs, but one of them is missing a detonator. If the team encounters the cultists before they are done arming them, only two are fully armed. If someone rolls an Epic Fail while attempting to disarm a bomb, the bomb detonates, killing the the Character and causing 8d6 damage to any within 20 meters. Otherwise, a Character can attempt to disarm each bomb twice – Failure on both Tests yields the above result. If a bomb explodes, it will also blow out the side of the tunnel, allowing the Venusian atmosphere into the tunnel and will destroy the track.

There's time to complete this last task before the trains arrive, but make the Characters feel pressured.

### Devout Cultist Team Leader

(1 Cultist in the Tunnel)

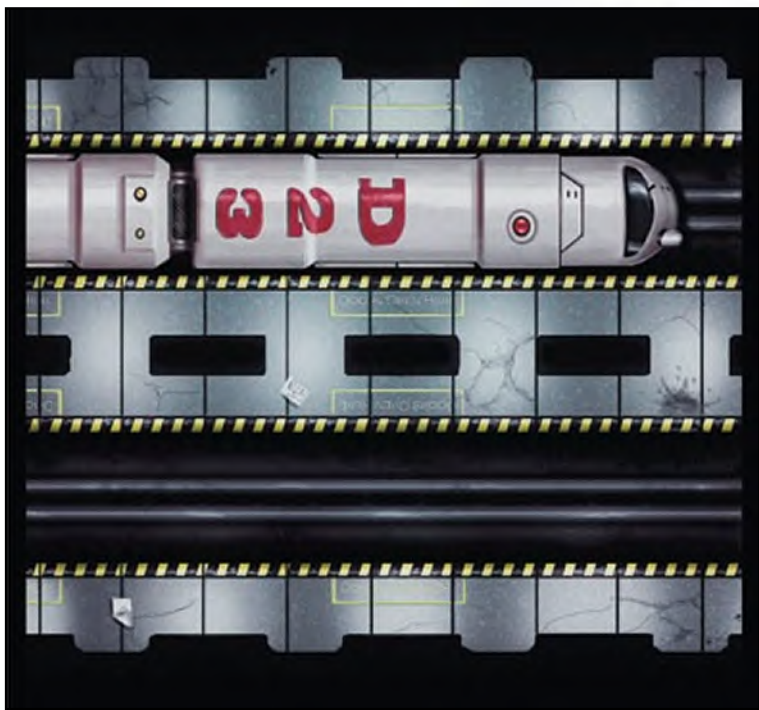
*Attributes:*

|              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| Awareness 3  | Grace 3        |
| Cleverness 3 | Perseverance 4 |
| Demeanor 3   | Physique 3     |

*Statistics:* Health 20, Speed 12 mph

*Skills:* Defense 2, Explosives 3, Guns: Assault Weapons 3, Guns: Pistols 3, Hand Weapons: Blades 2, Insight 2, Reaction 2

*Equipment:* Combat Knife, ACC-62 Bandit Pistol, AFL-4 Assault Rifle



## The Tunnel

### Devout Cultist

(6 Cultists in the Tunnel)

#### Attributes:

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

**Statistics:** Health 9, Speed 12 mph

**Skills:** Defense 2, Guns: Pistols 2, Hand  
Weapons: Blades 1, Insight 1, Notice  
2, Reaction 2

**Equipment:** Combat Knife, ACC-62 Ban-  
dit Pistol

### Epilogue

Now that the VAB knows the cult is active, they will begin to take steps to root them out. The team will have the thanks of the VAB, Geo Excavations, and Rare Earths Inc. Julie Stern will also become a contact for the Characters and may have additional work in the future for them. Finally, for the next year, the VAB will pick up any orbital, docking, and refueling costs the Characters may incur if they have their own ship and visit the planet again.



## Overview & Prelude

This is a story intended for a Warden game. The Characters should be a Warden team currently resting in A/D Stasis while in transit aboard their Knight's Errant spaceship, somewhere among the Outer Planets.

The story opens with murder. Somewhere within the empty void of space, and far beyond the knowledge of your players, drifts a space liner in distress. The transit drive is offline. Chief Engineer Paul Hardie makes his way to the engine room at the request of his Third Officer.

Though a little unconventional, feel free to read the following to your players to set up the story:

*"Paul Hardie had just awoken from A/D Stasis to the sound of alarms and the urgent call of his third officer over ship's comm-link. His ship was adrift in deep space with its mains off line. But why? He damn well knew that the transit drive energy flow regulator system was almost foolproof. The wreck of his flow regulator could only have been caused by human negligence. Someone would certainly answer for this later. For now, he simply had to figure out how to get this mess back online as soon as possible.*

*Even with the main transit drive offline, the engine room still echoed with mechanical noises and the hum of power plants. Perhaps that's the reason why Hardie failed to hear the sound of footsteps behind him.*

*His mind did not register that anything was wrong, not until that first splash of blood sprayed like a paint-gun splat across the machinery in front of him. It was only the searing pain framed inside an eternity of a split second that made Chief Hardie realize that the blood he saw was his own. He tried to turn his head to get a glimpse of his assailant, but it was too late. The weapon came down upon him with final judgment. In just a few seconds of hard-edged metal violence, Chief Hardie ceased to be."*

## Act I: Mayday!

**Goals:** To introduce the civilian cruise liner *Mariner of the Stars*; to have the Characters answer the distress call.

**Setting:** The civilian cruise liner *Mariner of the Stars*

**Cast:** Chief Security Officer Monica Gabrielli, Captain Andre Martel

## Scene 1: Wake Up

Please read the following to your players:

*"You come to, propped up in your grav couch. Data readouts flash upon a small screen superimposed over the clear front of your chamber's lid. It is 07:32 EST (Earth Standard Time). You've awoken 4 weeks early. Something has gone wrong.*

*Your grav couch lid now opens with a rush of air. You notice others of your crew stirring from their sleep. The synthesized female voice*

*of the ship's computer suddenly grabs your attention. 'Emergency resuscitation procedure activated. Ship-to-ship distress signal received. Executing adjustment to course and speed. Estimated arrival in thirteen minutes.'*

The ship in distress is identified as the *Mariner of the Stars*. She's a gigantic civilian cruise liner, the kind that makes something like the Aristocracy-class yacht look tiny. Scanners indicate both life and power onboard, yet the vessel is drifting.

Standard vessel-to-vessel communications channels raise a somewhat relieved voice on the radio. He identifies himself as Captain Andre Martel. The captain explains that an accident has knocked out his main propulsion systems. There are over three thou-

sand passengers onboard and this emergency has caused a substantial level of unrest. He urgently requests assistance from the Wardens. They are directed to moor alongside docking bay two.

## **Scene 2: Aboard The Ship**

The *Mariner of the Stars* is a standard luxury cruise liner filled with amenities. Many of these are conveniently located along the ship's extravagant royal promenade ring. One might imagine the royal promenade to be a festive and lively place. However, for today, there is a definite tension in the air as people move about their business.

A slim athletic woman meets the Wardens as they disembark from their ship. Her hair is short and well kept, her demeanor is professional, and she



The Last Moments of Chief Engineer Paul Hardie

wears the smart uniform of the ship's crew. She introduces herself as Chief Security Officer Monica Gabrielli. She has been sent to escort the Wardens to the captain's quarters. She leads them through the promenade ring hub and forward toward the ship's bridge.

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**Monica Gabrielli**  
**Chief Security Officer**

*Attributes:*

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

*Statistics:* Health 10, Speed 14 mph

*Skills:* Bureaucracy 1, Defense 2, Guns:

Pistols 2, Hand Weapons: Blades 2,  
 Investigate 2, Pilot Spacecraft 2, Re-  
 action 2, Tactics: Military 2

*Equipment:* ACC-62 Bandit

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Captain Andre Martel is a tall, good-humored Frenchman. His manner is such that it would be easy to imagine him as an amiable and generous host to his passengers. However, it's clear that the stress of recent events have taken their toll. He greets the Wardens warmly.

Captain Martel explains that the *Mariner* has been helpless and adrift for the last three days, after they found their transit drive sabotaged. The Captain explains that the transit drive alarm panels lit up like a Broadway musical when the system went offline. He'd ordered Chief Engineering Officer Hardie to investigate the problem and report back immediately. He recalls only two messages from the engine room. The first was from Engineering Officer Miyamoto to report the status of the transit drive energy flow regulator. The second was several minutes

later when Officer Miyamoto informed him that Chief Hardie was dead.

Captain Martel requests that the Wardens investigate and help solve this murder. His small security contingent onboard is already pressed with managing passenger issues. The fact remains that a killer is still at large and the Wardens are the best chance of finding him.

The Captain offers what resources he can to assist the Wardens in their investigation. Chief Security Officer Gabrielli is available if needed. The Wardens may have free run of the ship's amenities. However, it is absolutely vital that this killer be found as soon as possible.

## Act II: The Killer's Trail

**Goals:** To investigate the persons of interest on-board

**Setting:** The civilian cruise liner *Mariner of the Stars*

**Cast:** Actress Zarina Bahar, Archaeologist Dr. Sebastian Wells, Chief Security Officer Monica Gabrielli, Cruise Director Petra Mendoza, Engineering Officer Maria Miyamoto, Saturnine Politician Gunther Eichmann, UWC Delegate Helen Falk, Dr. Wells' Assistant Nate Carstensen

### Scene 3: Scene Of The Crime

Officer Gabrielli escorts the Wardens to the scene of the murder. The area is under tight security. The energy flow regulation system is located in a remote corner of the engine room between two of the transit drive mains.



The Wardens need five Plot Points to find all the following clues at the scene of the crime. The most common way to meet this condition is through Awareness + Investigate, but Awareness + Notice can work as well. Feel free to parcel out this information in any order you like:

- Blood splatter patterns and small chunks of flesh on the surrounding equipment suggests that the attacker struck from behind with a heavy instrument.
- Dents and cracking in the actual flow control unit also suggests a well-placed strategic assault by a heavy instrument. It was most likely something blunt.
- Sabotage of the flow control unit happened before the murder.
- Engine alarm logs indicate that the flow control unit went off line at 1:32 am EST (Earth Standard Time).
- A suspicious figure was caught on surveillance cameras in a passageway not far from one of the hatches to the engine room, according to Gabrielli's report. The figure can be seen running in a dark cloak – physical characteristics are hard to identify.

Gabrielli soon addresses the Wardens, in order to go over a few case details. She explains that she'd interviewed Miyamoto shortly after the murder, but the engineer was too emotionally unstable to provide anything useful. Gabrielli also informs the

Wardens that there is a UWC political delegation onboard, headed by Helen Falk. They've taken a strong interest in the details of this case and have continuously badgered Captain Martel for updates.

According to Gabrielli, Chief Hardie was old school when it came to maintaining "his ship." He was very good – considered by many to be one of the best in the fleet. He was short of time and gruff in demeanor, unless you were his superior. Gabrielli can specifically recall Hardie's behavior during the ship's initial cruise party. The Chief had been seen arguing with a few people – most notably a Doctor Sebastian Wells and Helen Falk. Gabrielli recommends speaking with Cruise Director Petra Mendoza.

Once all questions have been answered, Gabrielli will take her leave to attend to other duties.

#### **Scene 4: Examining The Suspects**

The Wardens are free to conduct their investigation as they choose from this point forward. They can interview "persons of interest" in whatever order they like. Each interview will provide further information that should allow the Wardens to track down the killer. The good news is that, while there are thousands of passengers on board, they have a starting point.

In the meantime tensions begin to rise among both crew and passengers, as the course of the investigation consumes more time. An understandable level of concern among passengers has resulted from the initial news of the ship's distress. However, isolated

outbreaks of violence begin to take place over time, that will eventually escalate in frequency and brutality. These might include fights among passengers, drunken rampages, theft among promenade shops, or any other examples of passengers losing control. Crew members will beseech the Wardens to help keep order – providing a level of distraction from the task at hand. The Gamemaster is free to randomly insert such scenarios during the course of the investigation.

Here are the various Characters that the Wardens will encounter and can interview, during their investigation.

### **Petra Mendoza**

#### ***Cruise Director***

##### ***Attributes:***

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

***Statistics:*** Health 8, Speed 10 mph

***Skills:*** Bureaucracy 2, Computers 1, Defense 1, Fraternize 2, Insight 2, Persuade 2, Reaction 1, Savoir Faire 2

Petra is very cooperative in her role as Cruise Director and will offer the Wardens every courtesy. However, a subtle edge will creep into her tone when the conversation steers toward Chief Hardie. She openly provides the Warden's information on the attendees of the cruise party.

Her view of Hardie's character is not flattering. She saw him as overbearing, controlling, and nosy. She recalls seeing him argue with Dr. Sebastian Wells during the party. Alcohol may have been involved. She recalls Dr. Wells interrupting a conversation be-

tween his assistant Nate Carstensen and Chief Hardie. That's when things became heated. Petra's limited knowledge of Dr. Wells is that he and Nate Carstensen are members of some sort of scientific research team headed to Titan. She's vaguely heard something about their archeological discovery on Mars.

Petra is also aware of a high-level political delegation onboard headed by Helen Falk. She doesn't know anything about the delegation, except that they're in the middle of a controversial negotiation. Interestingly enough, there was a tense conversation between Falk and Hardie during the party. Hardie seemed to be pretty chummy with the opposition leader, Gunther Eichmann. It seems that an argument broke out between Falk and Eichmann that got pretty ugly. Things were said and Falk walked away furious.

Petra recommends talking to Maria Miyamoto. Her voice softens at the mention of Maria's name. Her view of Maria is absolutely glowing, but she is concerned about the woman's well-being. If pressed, Petra will reveal that Maria was in the midst of an affair with Chief Hardie – something that Petra despises due to her own interest in the other woman.

The last person that Petra had seen Chief Hardie with during the party was a young actress named Zarina Bahar. Chemistry seemed to explode between the two of them – something that irritated Petra due to her perceived view of Hardie's infidelity to Maria.

a short time later to find him lying in a pool of blood. That's when she screamed.

Maria will not talk about her affair with Hardie unless the Wardens reveal their knowledge gleaned from conversations with either Zarina or Petra. She was deeply in love with what she saw as a gentle and loving man – a side that Hardie only revealed to her.

Maria's only possible alibi is that the time between her first report to the bridge and her second report about the murder would make it difficult to kill Hardie and dispose of the murder weapon.

*Statistics:* Health 8, Speed 10 mph

**Helen Falk**  
*UWC Delegate*

*Attributes:*

*Statistics:* Health 8, Speed 10 mph

*Skills:* Bureaucracy 3, Deception 3, Fraternalize 2, Insight 3, Law 3, Persuade 3, Savoir Faire 4

Helen Falk's one and only focus right now is to reach Titan in time to present her proposal to the Saturnine legislature. She explains to the Wardens that missing the current legislative session would mean that her delegation would be forced to wait for the next cycle, thus allowing the opposition to rally support against them. The Unified World Council is offering a chance to reduce trade tariffs for certain Saturnine manufactured goods in return for the right to establish a Unified World Council military industrial yard facility on Rhea. This controversial facility



would provide for refit and maintenance services for the UWC Navy vessels and at the same time bolster the local economy with new jobs. Many Saturnians however see this as a first step in an overall Unified World Council incursion into their territorial independence.

If asked about her argument with Hardie, she will explain that she had approached the Chief during the party in an attempt to recruit his influence with his brother. Samuel Hardie is a member of the Saturnine legislature and a clear fence-sitter on this issue. Helen relates that she was shocked at the venom of the Chief's refusal, stating in his somewhat inebriated state that he'd "rather insert a hot coal into his butt than subject his brother to a gibbering shrew like her." The conversation did not end well. She also recalls, in her indignity, that Gunther Eichmann was there as well. The last thing she heard Gunther say to Hardie as she stormed away was, "If only there were some way to delay this trip."

Helen Falk would not be a likely suspect, as she has no motivation to sabotage the transit drive flow control system. In addition, she possesses no technical knowledge of such things. She can, however, become an unwelcome distraction to the Wardens by pressing for updates on the investigation in the face of her urgent need to get to Saturn.

---

### **Gunther Eichmann**

#### ***Saturnine Politician***

##### ***Attributes:***

Awareness 3    Grace 3  
Cleverness 4    Perseverance 4

Demeanor 4    Physique 3

*Statistics:* Health 10, Speed 12 mph

*Skills:* Bureaucracy 3, Deception 3, Engineering: Transit Drives 2, Insight 3, Law 3, Persuade 3, Savoir Faire 4

---

Gunther is an unusual breed of politician in that he is reserved in his speaking. He is passionate about stopping Falk's treaty though. He'd only met Hardie on this voyage. The two men hit it off well during the party – Gunther in particular enjoying Hardie's sarcastic sense of humor.

Gunther admits to being pleasantly surprised by Hardie's response to Falk's overtures during the party. He admits that he joked with Hardie about sabotaging the ship so that they wouldn't reach Saturn in time for Falk's agenda. However, he insists it was just meaningless banter. If pressed further, Gunther will reveal that the last person he saw Hardie with at the party was the actress Zarina Bahar – to whom the Chief had made advances. He saw them leave together under an umbrella of chemistry that suggested a busy night.

A background check on Gunther would reveal that he spent some time working at the Saturnine shipyards on Rhea before he entered a life of politics. He likely possesses knowledge of transit drive flow control units. However, ship's records have him safely secured in his grav couch during the time of the murder.

---

### **Zarina Bahar**

#### ***Famous Actress***

##### ***Attributes:***

Awareness 3    Grace 4

Cleverness 3    Perseverance 2  
Demeanor 5    Physique 2

*Statistics:* Health 8, Speed 12 mph

*Skills:* Art: Acting 4, Computers 1, Deception 2, Insight 4, Fraternize 4, Persuade 3, Savoir Faire 2

---

Zarina Bahar is a young and beautiful actress of Arabic descent. This cruise was a much-needed break for her after a long schedule of filming and promotional engagements. She had only met Chief Hardy at the party and claims that she had found him somewhat attractive in a gruff sort of way. Her initial claim is that they only chatted briefly during the party. However, if confronted by eyewitness accounts of her departure with the Chief, she'll reluctantly admit that it was true.

Zarina explains her need to keep a low profile. The less people know of her presence on board ship the better. What dalliances she chose to take she wanted to do with caution, so that media leakage would not cause unnecessary embarrassments. She'd gone to great lengths to hide her identity, even to wear a traditional Islamic Hijab to avoid detection. She'd chosen to wear the long black over-garment to the party, but had removed it at the coat check once she'd arrived. However, the Hijab turned up missing when she went back to claim it.

The Wardens can clearly see that Zarina is upset over the death of Chief Hardie. Five Plot Points – earned by Awareness + Investigate, Awareness + Insight, or Demeanor + Persuade – will reveal anger underneath her upset. Zarina was humiliated after she discovered that Hardie was involved with

another woman. Someone had sent her an anonymous tip.

She will share that she had also spoken to Dr. Sebastian Wells during the party. He seemed to be a very agitated man, though she doesn't know why. He talked about an important archeological find and how critical it was to get something to Titan.

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### **Nate Carstensen**

*Assistant to Dr. Sebastian Wells*

*Attributes:*

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

*Statistics:* Health 8, Speed 10 mph

*Skills:* Bureaucracy 2, Computers 2, Deception 3, Defense 2, Engineer: Basic Drive 3, Engineering: Transit Drive 3, Guns: Pistols 3, Hand Weapons: Blunt 3, Odd Job 2, Reaction 2, Science: Social 2, Stealth 1, Survival 2, Unarmed Combat 2

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The Wardens find Nate Carstensen in his cabin. He has a hard and edgy look about him. A man in his mid-thirties, Nate has been through his share of life's trials. He is cordial, however, and very willing to be cooperative with the Wardens. In fact, his overt friendliness seems to almost jar with his ruggedly tough exterior.

Nate has been an assistant to Dr. Sebastian Wells for the last two and a half years. Much of that time he'd spent on Mars managing an archeological expedition to the region of the planet known as Syrtis Major. He and his wife Maddy had moved to Mars to take up the assignment there for a sizable salary. He recalls Dr. Wells talking excitedly

about clues left behind by an ancient manuscript. The doctor believed very strongly that those clues might lead to evidence on Mars of an ancient civilization that predated man. He'd come to Mars with a substantial grant from Cassini University to try to find a dig site in Syrtis Major to which the clues pointed. Nate, however, regrets taking the assignment since he lost his wife out there on that Martian wasteland thanks to a freak accident.

His wife's death happened soon after they'd found the entrance to what they believed was an alien burial chamber. While exploring the depths of the chamber, they discovered a large object lying on its back over a stone structure inscribed with concentric circles. Nate tells the Wardens that it reminded the doctor of an ancient sarcophagus that you'd find in old mummy tales back on Earth. Dr. Wells resolved to dig the sarcophagus out and ship it back to Titan to be studied at the University. Strange accidents began to occur once the sarcophagus was placed in their warehouse back on Mars, little things like equipment breakdowns. That's when Maddy died.

Nate recounts the cruise party that he and Dr. Sebastian had attended prior to A/D Stasis. He admits that the doctor had become increasingly nervous and agitated since Mars. However, he had not expected the crazed shouting match that took place with Chief Hardie. Nate believed that Dr. Wells was being overly paranoid about the safety of the sarcophagus. He wanted the Chief to pull some strings to increase cargo bay security. Chief Hardie merely brushed off the

doctor's request. That's when the doctor snapped into a raging fit of paranoid ranting. He insisted that the ship might be in danger. Nate had to forcefully pull the doctor away and calm him down.

Nate tells the Wardens that Dr. Wells is likely down in the cargo bay studying the sarcophagus. The doctor has also become obsessed with being near the artifact and refuses to eat or sleep. He offers to escort the Wardens down to the cargo hold and find his employer.

A background check on Nate Carstensen will reveal that he had spent several terms in the UWC Navy working as a Chief Engineer prior to his engagement with Cassini University's archeological expedition team.

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**Dr. Sebastian Wells**  
***Crazed Archaeologist******Attributes:***

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

***Statistics:*** Health 7, Speed 8 mph***Skills:*** Bureaucracy 2, Computers 2, Insight 2, Investigate 2, Occult 5, Savoir Faire 2, Science: Life 4, Science: Social 5, Survival 2

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Dr. Sebastian Wells, once considered a level-headed and brilliant man, appears agitated – perhaps even frightened. He mumbles to himself while frantically pacing back and forth, as if he's trying to piece together some unseen puzzle. The approach of the Wardens startles him and the look on his face screams helplessness. The man looks trapped and lost.



Dr. Wells' account of the happenings on Mars and during the party corroborates Nate's story, for the most part. However, his mind sometimes wanders off into a side topic, forcing Nate or one of the Wardens to pull him back. He'll clam up if pressed about what's frightening him. Successful use of Persuade against his Unfriendly Attitude will convince him to open up to one of the Wardens – but he will insist that the Warden speak to him privately and out of earshot of everyone else.

The doctor reveals to the Warden that something horribly evil had awoken when they removed the sarcophagus from its resting place on Mars. Dr. Wells will insist that a curse has been brought onboard ship by the sarcophagus. As crazy as this sounds, he'll beg the Warden to believe him. He claims that the curse caused the murder of Chief Hardie, just like it caused the murder of Maddy Carstensen back on Mars. Wells says that Nate refuses to hear such things though, despite the fact that he has evidence that he speaks truly. He asks the Warden to meet him in his cabin in an hour. He needs the time to get everything together, but he doesn't explain exactly what that is. Wells leaves the cargo bay once the Warden agrees to his terms.

### Act III: An Inhuman Evil

**Goals:** To deal with a ship gone mad; to defeat the thing in the sarcophagus

**Setting:** The civilian cruise liner *Mariner of the Stars*

**Cast:** All Characters from Act II, the Syrtis Major Nyphelous

The *Mariner of the Stars* is caught in the grip of an ever-growing swirl of chaos among its passengers. Violent outbreaks have dramatically increased during the course of the Warden's investigation. A strange kind of paranoid and violent madness has gripped the people of this ship.

Gabrielli radios the Wardens and asks for their urgent assistance. Crowds have gathered within the promenade ring and it looks like it's about to get ugly. She doesn't have enough security people left on her team to control the mob. She needs their help now!

### Scene 5: Riot

All hell has broken loose on the promenade ring. Vacationers turned rabid swarm the area with the deadly intent of an angry mob. People are running, screaming, beating, and being beaten within the ebb and flow of this nightmarish rampage. The Wardens can see Gabrielli and three of her crew trying to hold their own near the broken window of a perfume store. The Wardens also spot Zarina Bahar huddled close to Gabrielli's team. If they can make it to a hatch about forty feet away, then they might be able to get out of there safely.

The Wardens have the option to assist Gabrielli and her team. If for some reason they choose to do something else, then Gabrielli will radio them and beg for help. The trick will be to fight through the crowd and get to Gabrielli's team while minimizing casualties among passengers. The Wardens will surely have surmised by now that something supernatural has gripped the ship and the use of deadly force

against civilians would be a highly questionable move. If they're fortunate, they're already travelling with stun weapons of some kind – like a shock mace or stun baton (p. 171, *The Void Core*) – or snagged them from the ship's weapons locker. If not, and you're feeling kind, one of the other security officers may arm them.

### Scene 6: Another Murder

The Wardens, Gabrielli's team, and Zarina make it to safety. Zarina explodes in a flurry of different languages as she addresses the Wardens. She claims that she saw someone wearing her Hijab. He or she was moving fast. Zarina tried to follow to get a glimpse of the thief, but got caught in the promenade riot. When asked, she'll explain that she last saw this figure headed toward one of the stateroom sections of the ship – the one that houses Dr. Wells.

The Wardens find Dr. Wells' cabin door swung wide open. They discover Dr. Wells himself lying crumpled in a heap upon the deck, awash in a fresh pool of bloody mess. The shape of his skull is unrecognizable from the vicious battering it took in an attack from behind. Near the body, haphazardly strewn on the floor, is a large spanner wrench stained with blood. A damp black garment lies scattered just beyond the large mechanics' tool – it's Zarina's Hijab. The Wardens need to earn six Plot Points – using Awareness + Investigate or Awareness + Notice – to locate a small, old fashioned, handwritten notebook lodged between a desk and the bulkhead. It's open to a final page with a hurriedly scribbled note that reads:

*"...I know now that the thing is onboard. It haunts my dreams and whispers to me in my quiet moments. It seems to feed on fear. I checked the seal on the sarcophagus today. As I feared, it's broken. I don't know how it could have survived in there, but near as I can tell it would have needed help to break out. I can only think of one person that could have done it. What kind of bargain could he have made with such a devil? But, then again, it's also hard for me to believe that he would have murdered his own wife back on Mars. God, I hope the Wardens get here soon!"*

### Scene 7: Hunting The Beast

Success at a Hard Occult Test will reveal that the Wardens are likely dealing with a Nyphelous, onboard a crippled cruise ship filled with terrified people – a virtual feast for the creature. This Nyphelous is special, however. Instead of being able to affect only one person at a time, it is capable of sowing the seeds of fear and despair to dozens in a shot. It is an exceptional creature capable of much destruction.

It has somehow enlisted the help of Nate Carstensen. He had the knowledge of the ship's transit drive and access to the sarcophagus. He certainly had a motive to cripple the ship. He had the opportunity to steal Zarina's Hijab at the party to sneak into the engine room. It's up to the Wardens to destroy the Nyphelous and bring Nate Carstensen to justice.

How the end-game plays out is up to the Gamemaster. The Nyphelous will begin to pray on the Warden's fears as

well, creating a sense of helplessness among the mass hysteria aboard ship. It stalks the dark places inside the ship, but always goes back to the cargo bay with its sarcophagus. It will also try to target Captain Martel. A ship without its captain will surely erode into full panic.

Carstensen wants power and the Nypheinous has promised him just that if he does its bidding. Nate will first try to assassinate the captain. If the Wardens enlist Gabrielli's aid in apprehending him, one of her guards will report him headed toward the officer's deck. The Wardens will have just enough time to wade through the violence of the mob in time to stop Nate from carrying out his plan.

One way or the other, the hunt is on!

### **The Syrtis Major Nypheinous** **Powerful Bringer of Terror**

#### **Attributes:**

|              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| Awareness 6  | Grace 5        |
| Cleverness 4 | Perseverance 5 |
| Demeanor 4   | Physique 5     |

**Statistics:** Health 15, Speed 20 mph

**Skills:** Athletics: Coordination 4, Deception 5, Defense 3, Insight 5, Language: All 4, Natural Weapons 4, Reaction 4, Stealth 4

**Special Abilities:** The Syrtis Major Nypheinous is more powerful than the average member of its species – perhaps why it was locked away in the sarcophagus in the first place. It has the following amplified Nypheinous abilities. (For information on Nypheinous and their abilities, see p. 39)

- *Deceiver* – Affects all targets within 100 meters, and can appear as anyone all targets know or have known, simultaneously. Therefore, multiple targets will see different people from their lives, but all will be taken in by the deception.
- *Telepathic* – Extended range to 100 yards/meters.

## **Aftermath**

The end of this adventure depends upon what the Characters do.

If they succeed at defeating the Nypheinous, it will die and its grip on the passengers and crew will end. There will be quite the mess to clean up, and the Wardens will have an interesting time trying to convince everyone involved to keep their mouths shut.

If they fail at defeating the Nypheinous, it will either slaughter the Wardens and any other threats or escape on a life boat, or both. If it escapes, it will be lost to the Wardens as it takes time for them to reach their ship and get it operational.

However, there is a third option. The Characters may decide that they want to capture the Nypheinous instead of killing it. After all, Level 23 on the Eye would be very pleased with such a prize. This course of action could result in commendations for a job exceptionally done.

- *Coercer* – It can coerce up to a dozen people with one single Test.



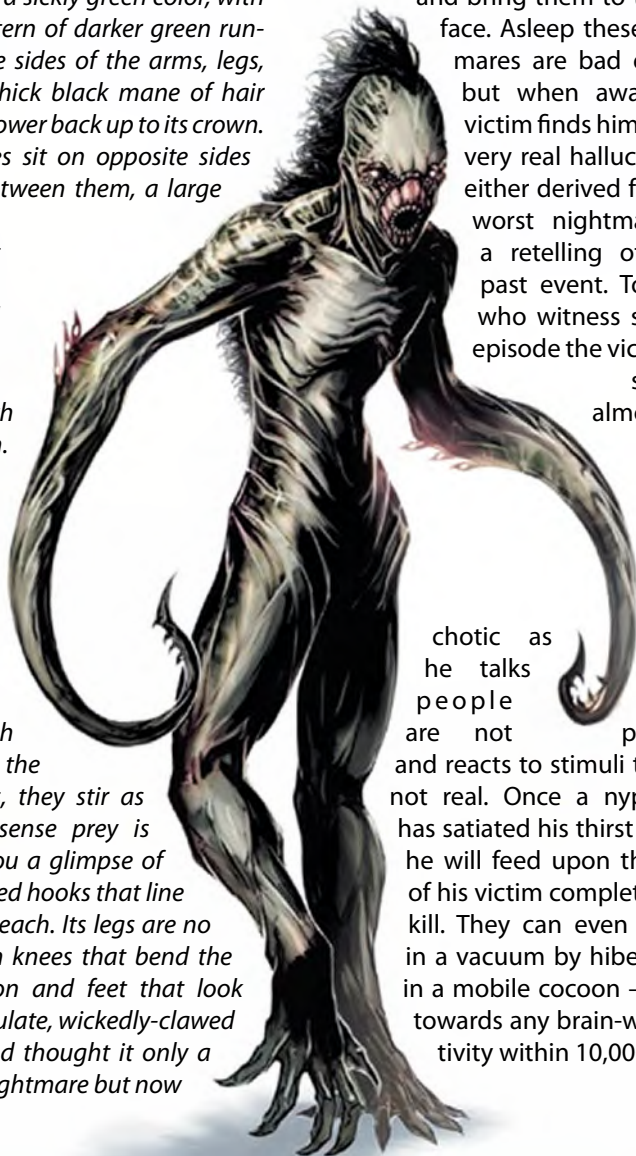
# NYPHELOUS

NYPHELOUS

From the shadows it looks almost human, though it walks with a gait decidedly alien. It is, however, only from the shadows that it appears nearly human. As it steps into the light, you hear the gasps of dismay of those around you. The creature is a sickly green color, with a mottled pattern of darker green running along the sides of the arms, legs, and torso. A thick black mane of hair runs from the lower back up to its crown. Two small eyes sit on opposite sides of its head. Between them, a large round mouth, with lips that seem to have been peeled back from its jaw, is filled with ragged teeth. What you thought were limp arms in the shadows turn out to be a pair of tentacles sprouting from each shoulder. As the creature nears, they stir as though they sense prey is near, giving you a glimpse of the small barbed hooks that line the bottom of each. Its legs are no less alien, with knees that bend the wrong direction and feet that look more like articulate, wickedly-clawed hands. You had thought it only a figment of a nightmare but now it is very real.

Oftentimes referred to as a Night Terror, these creatures feed upon the fear and stress of their victims before feasting upon their flesh. Intelligent, they dive into a victim's mind searching for phobias or horrific memories and bring them to the surface.

Asleep these nightmares are bad enough but when awake the victim finds himself in a very real hallucination, either derived from his worst nightmares or a retelling of some past event. To those who witness such an episode the victim can see almost psy-



chotic as he talks with people who are not present and reacts to stimuli that are not real. Once a nyphealous has satiated his thirst for fear he will feed upon the flesh of his victim completing the kill. They can even survive in a vacuum by hibernating in a mobile cocoon – drawn towards any brain-wave activity within 10,000 miles.

**Size:** 5'9" - 6'6" long, 210-240 lbs.  
1.75 - 2 m long, 95-109 kg

**Average Attributes:**

|            |   |              |   |
|------------|---|--------------|---|
| Awareness  | 3 | Grace        | 4 |
| Cleverness | 3 | Perseverance | 4 |
| Demeanor   | 4 | Physique     | 4 |

|            |        |               |
|------------|--------|---------------|
| Health     | 13     | (13/26/39/52) |
| Resilience | 12     | (12/24/36/48) |
| Speed      | 18 mph |               |

**Weapons:** Bite (1d6 + 2d6 for Physique),  
Tentacles (3d6 + Entangle + 2d6 for Physique)

**Horror Factor:**  **Average**

- *Coercer* – Nymphelous may convince anyone that is friendly towards it to perform any action that is not immediately life-threatening. This requires winning a simple Deception vs. Perseverance Contest.
- *Deceiver* – A Nymphelous can choose any one target within 50 yds/45 m. It can then appear to be anyone the target knows or has known. Everyone now sees the Nymphelous as that person, until it chooses another victim to deceive.
- *Entangling Attack*– A Nymphelous can use its tentacles to entangle.
- *Telepathic* – A Nymphelous can sense the greatest fears and tragedies or any person within 50 yds/45 m.
- *Void Dweller* – A Nymphelous can survive in thin atmospheres or the vacuum of open space.



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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.

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- In *The Sarcophagus*, the Characters are summoned via distress beacon to a massive civilian luxury cruiser. The Chief Engineer has been murdered and the ship's transit drive sabotaged – and people are starting to act differently.
- Introduces the new horrific Nyphelous.



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