

SERENITY
ROLE PLAYING GAME

INNER
DEMONS

A TALE

OF ORDINARY HEROES
IN THREE ACTS

SERENITY ROLE PLAYING GAME

INNER DEMONS

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HERE'S HOW IT IS

The job seems simple enough, take a small load of legal cargo and some passengers from Hera to Greenleaf. For a Crew just trying to keep flying, this easy milk run is a way to make some coin and not have to look over their shoulder while they are doing it. That's how the job starts, but things on the Rim are never as easy as they seem and the Crew soon find themselves enmeshed in a series of increasingly deadly events where murder is only the first problem they encounter.

GAME MASTER NOTES

Every GM is strongly encouraged to read and become familiar with *Inner Demons* before attempting to run it. Players may choose to stray from pre-arranged plotlines, and the only way to respond to such circumstances is to know the adventure thoroughly.

Inner Demons is a tale of ordinary folk faced with an extraordinary situation and is presented in three acts of two scenes each. Act one consists of *This is Where the War Was Lost* and *Gettin' out of the World*. Act two leads to *They're not Stories* and *A Ruttin' Murder Mystery* with the final act concluding with *It's the Gorram Law* and *Them As Gazed Into the Abyss Return*. *Inner Demons* is meant for Greenhorn Crews that have gained some experience. Veteran or Big Damn Hero level Crews can use this adventure, but the GM will have to increase the skills of the NPCs as well as increase the task difficulties in order to provide a better challenge.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

THIS IS WHERE THE WAR WAS LOST

As the adventure begins, the player characters (PCs) are aboard their ship that descends into Hera's atmosphere. In the ship's cargo bay, half a ton of spices and six tons of iron ore await collection while three passengers want to disembark. Although the 4-day trip from Beaumonde has been an uneventful, not to say boring, one, any PC who opposed the Alliance's imperialist hegemony and joined the Browncoats' fight for freedom will not be looking forward to visiting the largely agricultural world because the Battle of Serenity Valley was fought here. To complete the Browncoats' misery, the PCs are about to dock at Serenity Views' spaceport.

After the ship touches down, the airlock opens, the ramp comes down, the passengers leave and a short while later, the cargo is collected. As the PCs finally pile out and Hera scrunches under their feet, you, the Game Master (GM), should read the following passage out loud or paraphrase it.

Serenity View is a small town that is located out of the infamous Serenity Valley which is still ravaged by the fire storm that swept through it more than seven years ago. On the opposite side of the rocky valley, over half a million small and identical tombstones call to mind that a vast number of men and women, Alliance and Browncoats alike,

have lost their lives in the bloodiest encounter of the War for Unification. Despite its relative puniness, Serenity View's spaceport is fully-staffed and equipped. Restocking services and a small shipyard for minor repairs are available to the families and friends who come to Serenity View to visit the graves of fallen loved ones.

If a PC wants to honor one of the unnamed graves or the last resting place of a fallen friend or family member and the PC's player engages in some remarkable roleplaying, he should be awarded with one or two Plot Points.

PCs who have not fought in the war, however, should ply their trade. After fuelling up the ship, restocking any supplies that have run low and paying port fees, it's about time that the PCs start to look for new jobs. They may check the computerized placards in front of the ship's berth or simply ask around which requires an AVERAGE (7) *Willpower + Influence / Appropriate Specialty* roll. Apparently, only three cargo transportation jobs are available at the moment. A man by the name of Gordon Choi wants ten tons of seeds to be transported to Whitefall, while someone called Aaron Harris has six tons of medical goods that are to be hauled to Greenleaf. Finally, Lao Wang wants five tons of airtights¹ and other foodstuffs to be shipped to Greenleaf as well. While Choi is willing to pay 700 Credits, Harris' and Wang's offers, however, add up to 1,125 Credits. Besides, it is an AVERAGE (7) mental feat (*Intelligence + Pilot / Astrogation*) to know

¹ Canned goods

that the trip to Greenleaf will take round about two weeks and is therefore going to be the less costly one. Obviously, the PCs should decide to go to Greenleaf.

Taking on passengers is a chance to bring in some easy money. Finding non-player characters (NPCs) who want to go to Greenleaf and convincing them to choose the PCs' ship is an AVERAGE Complex Action (35 vs. *Willpower + Influence / Appropriate Specialty*). The PCs may indirectly assist one another. Each roll represents 10 minutes' work. When the threshold is reached or exceeded, the PCs have convinced Sir Basil Protheroe, his butler Andrew Lin, Louise Boyd, George Burrows as well as Selma Woodrow and her husband Jesse to book a passage to Greenleaf. If a PC botches twice, George Burrows will not accompany them. Please refer to the appendices and describe the NPCs in detail and according to the specifications that are given there. Although the PCs will be given a chance to come to know all their passengers in *Scene 2: Getting' out of the World* they should already receive a strong first impression of the people they will travel with for the coming weeks. Since the journey to Greenleaf will roughly take two weeks, it is only reasonable as well as an AVERAGE (7) feat (*Willpower + Influence / Appropriate Specialty*) to convince each passenger to pay 250 Credits up front. On a *Botch*, the passenger will only pay 85 Credits, while a *Failure* means that the passenger won't pay more than 125 Credits. An *Extraordinary Success* indicates that the passenger is willing to pay as much as 300 Credits. Note that the situation should be role-played. Moreover, the NPCs will agree to the new

price, but the PCs have the choice to refuse the deal.

When the cargo and the passengers are aboard and the PCs are about to close their ship's main airlock, read:

"Deng deng¹!" someone shouts unexpectedly as the hatch slowly slides shut in front of you, "Wait for me, gorramit!"

As the door slides back open, you can't fail to notice that a middle-aged woman who is carrying a small duffel bag is making toward your ship apparently as fast as she can.

After she has finally come to a stand and caught her breath, she says, "Duo xie². Looks like I'm just in time, don't it? The name's Emily, by the way, Missus Emily Bates."

She smiles jovially and extends her right arm to shake hands. Before locking hands with the stranger, you size her up. She is a dumpy little, yet rather severe-looking woman, with brown hair drawn into a tight bun.

"All right, then", she says, "I hear you're going to Greenleaf. Dui bu dui³?" Instead of waiting for an answer, she continues, "I want to go there, too. You see my daughter Amanda, her husband John, and my lovely grandson Jimmy live there. Little Jimmy's fallen ill with the gorram *de guo ma zhen*⁴. The boy's crying for his *wai po*⁵ all the time. I can't really blame him. Amanda's never

¹ Literally, "Wait a minute!"; "Hold on!"

² "Many thanks"; "Thanks a lot"

³ "Right or wrong?"; "Is it right?"

⁴ "Measles"

⁵ Mother's mother; maternal grandmother

been that good with kids, you know.

The next ferry's not going to leave until the day after tomorrow. Besides, those shuttles are dreadful slow."

She produces a heavy purse and takes out a surprisingly thick wad of money.

"Wu lun ru he⁶", she finally says, "150 Credits will be enough, I take it? At least, that's what I always pay for that awful crowded shuttle."

It is an EASY (3) feat (*Willpower* + *Influence*) to convince Mrs. Bates to pay 250 Credits. While an *Extraordinary Success* indicates that she will to pay as much as 300 Credits, neither a *Failure* nor a *Botch* will beat the price down. Mrs. Bates wants to go to Greenleaf and obviously can't be stirred from her resolve. The headstrong woman is even willing to sleep in the cargo bay if all passenger cabins are taken. As soon as Mrs. Bates is aboard, the Crew's pilot can request permission to take off, which, after a short while, is granted. The PCs' ship lifts off and breaks atmo. Proceed to *Scene 2: Getting' Out Of The World*.

SCENE TWO

GETTIN' OUT OF THE WORLD

The journey from Hera to Greenleaf takes a ship that has a Speed Class of 1 ten weeks, one day, and eighteen hours (1,722 hours). Divide by the ship's Speed Class to get the actual travel time. The trip will take a vessel with a speed class of 5 approximately 14 days, for instance.

Plotting a direct course is a HARD (11) task (*Intelligence* + *Pilot* / *Astrogation*). A *Botch*

⁶ "Anyhow"; "anyway"; "whatever"

means that the ship is off-course, doubling the actual travel time. A *Failure* means that the actual travel time is multiplied by 1.5. While a *Success* does not modify travel time, an *Extraordinary Success* indicates that the actual travel time is multiplied by 0.75.

During the next days, the PCs should come to know the passengers they will spend quite some time with. The GM should take a little detour and tell some short stories that, to some extent, may branch off from the main story line. They should, however, introduce the NPCs and their reasons for having booked a passage on the PCs' ship, as well as hint at what motivates or haunts them.

The GM might think of the following as "sideshowes" and can either use them as written or build their own scenes. If, for example, a NPC can interact with a PC instead of another NPC, by all means, change the suggested encounter accordingly. It is solely significant that the PCs become acquainted with the passengers. The better they know the NPCs, the better.

Emily Bates does not want to visit her daughter's family. In fact, she is not a grandmother. Emily Bates is not even her real name. However, she seems to be cheerful and likeable. After she has approached the captain, read:

"Excuse me, *xiang sheng*¹", the woman who insists on being called Emily says, smiling jovially, "I've noticed that there's an awful lot that dreadful paste in them kitchen drawers. I don't want

¹ "Sir"; "mister" (title of respect)

to run afoul with you, mind. I ain't tetchy, either. I'm just feeling kind of apologetic right now. What with my rudeness and all, you know. Anyways, how about I take a closer look at them canned goods and spices and cook a nice and tasty meal to make things up, eh?"

Provided that the captain doesn't object, Emily indeed manages to prepare a pleasing meal from what she can find in the ship's galley. When everyone has gathered around the dining table, almost everyone enters into conversations. Only Andrew Lin, Sir Protheroe's butler, stays in the background. The PCs can find out, for example, that both Protheroe and Lin want to return to Sir Basil's small and secluded estate on Greenleaf, while Louise Boyd has a job lined up at a nice saloon in need of a house singer. If asked politely, she'll gladly volunteer a song later on. Selma and Jesse Woodrow say that they are traveling with a small cargo of trade goods that they are going to sell on the Rim world. As all good Shepherds are charged, George Burrows is traveling to bring religiosity to those of the 'Verse most in need of salvation. After everyone is introduced properly, the PCs and NPCs may engage in some small talk. Topics vary. Before long, however, a particularly sensitive subject comes: the Unification War. While Shepherd Burrows, Louise, and Emily seem not to be politically involved. The Woodrows obviously opposed what they felt to be nothing more than imperialist hegemony. Sir Protheroe, however, supported Unification. When they've argued for a while, read:

"Madam, please do not lose your temper", Protheroe says in a calm voice, "Life on the Rim was often unnecessarily barbaric. The Alliance wanted to bring those worlds into the fold of enlightenment, after all." Selma Woodrow's jaw clenches. "Suffering is common to all," Shepherd Burrows remarks unperturbedly. "The Buddha explained that people live in a sea of suffering because of ignorance and greed. They are ignorant of the law of karma and are greedy for the wrong kind of pleasures. They do things that are harmful to their bodies and peace of mind, so they cannot be satisfied or enjoy life."

After a short pause, the Shepherd adds, "Going to the Buddha for refuge is the first step on the path to true enlightenment."

"What is the most important Buddhist teaching, Shepherd?" Louise Boyd asks quickly. The ravishing woman hasn't spoken in quite a long time and seems to be rather relieved that the subject was finally changed.

"Do no evil, do only good. Purify your heart," the Shepherd answers. Obviously, Louise expected to hear a very long explanation. She protests, "Any young'un can understand that!" "Yes," Burrows replies, "But even as a devout monk cannot do it."

Louise is apparently taken aback by the Shepherd's answer and asks, "Why are you a Shepherd, then?"

Once again the bald man smiles amiably, as if he is waiting for something amusing to happen. "Even if

enlightenment is not achieved in this life," he explains, "One has a better chance to become enlightened in a future life."

Jesse Woodrow bursts out, "Enlightenment, my ass. The ruttin' Alliance decided that every world should be an Alliance planet, whether we wanted or not."

"That simply is not true, sir", Protheroe objects, "I ask you not to propagate such blazing lies."

"If I wanted to take orders from everyone that likes barkin' them, I wouldn't have fought them Purple Bellies, would I?" Woodrow responds angrily, "They're all ruttin' murderers, gorrarnit!"

Protheroe, however, falls silent. Cold sweat drips off his forehead and he seems to be disoriented. All of a sudden, he exclaims, "Sergeant, have that man placed in the stockade!"

Andrew Lin stands up immediately, helps his obviously confused master out of his chair and says, "Sir Basil will now retire to his quarters. We thank you for this hearty and most delicious meal very much indeed."

Then the servant and his master leave the common room.

The next day, Protheroe apologizes profusely for having misbehaved. Proceed to *Scene Act 2, Scene 1: They're not Stories!*

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

THEY'RE NOT STORIES!

After the PCs' ship has covered round about two-thirds of the distance between Hera and Greenleaf, ask for an EASY (3) ship's *Alertness* + pilot's *Technical Engineering* / *Sensors* roll. If the ship is flying by wire most of the time, use the ship's *Perception* instead of the pilot's *Skill*. The degree of success indicates how close the approaching Reaver ship gets before it is detected. On a *Botch*, they PCs will not notice the Trans-U until it is within *Short Range*, while a *Failure* means that they become aware of it when it enters *Medium Range*. A *Success* means that the PCs notice the ship when it is within *Long Range*. An Extraordinary Success indicates that the ship is noticed at *Extreme Range*.

When you have figured out how far away the Trans-U is, read:

The sensor readouts show a commercial transport of the Polaris Class that was made famous a long time ago by the Trans-Universal Shipping Company that went out of business in the wake of a war-profiteering scandal. According to the readouts, the transport is operating without engine core containment, leaking a lethal dose of radiation. Even though the ship doesn't seem to be headed anywhere in particular, it will pass your ship before long. If you maintain your current course, that is.

Although the ship is still quite far out, you can get a visual. You see a more than aged ship that obviously once was a commercial spaceliner. Now it looks like nothing you've ever seen, though. It is tricked out, ornamented and crudely painted in garish colors. Giant missile tubes were jury-rigged near the ship's bow. In short, it is a gorram war machine.

It is an EASY (3) mental feat (*Intelligence* + *Willpower*) to remember campfire stories about men gone savage at the edge of space who, if they take a ship, will rape her company to death, eat their flesh and sew their skins into their own clothing. If the crew is very lucky, they will do it in that order. Obviously, Reavers are not just stories.

As the two ships are slowly and silently nearing each other, the PCs can either engage their pulse drive and flee as fast as possible or try to stay calm and hold course. Even if the PCs' ship is armed, they should not attack the Reavers because the madmen will fight back viciously.

Regardless of which course of action the PCs take, they all have to make an AVERAGE (7) *Willpower* + *Willpower* roll because this encounter is so unusual and terrifying that it might mentally stun the PCs, or even permanently scar them. Note that PCs who have the STEADY CALM Asset gain a +2 step Attribute bonus. A *Botch* means that the PC is no longer in control and may do anything. For instance, he might try to escape the unspeakable atrocities the Reavers will undoubtedly commit by jumping out of an airlock or by doing

something equally suicidal. It is strongly suggested that the other PCs prevent their frightened companion from doing something that drastic, though. An ordinary *Failure* indicates that the PC panics or freezes up. The player may decide whether the PC runs around screaming, sits down and cries, or does something equally pointless for d6 minutes. At the end of that time, the PC may roll *Willpower* + *Willpower* against an AVERAGE (7) Difficulty once per minute to snap out of it. The PC may also spend a number of Plot Points equal to the number of minutes rolled to shake it off. It is a HARD (11) feat (*Willpower* + *Discipline* or *Influence / Leadership*) to jolt a frightened PC back into action. Even a *Success* means that the PC is frightened and mentally stunned. The PC suffers a -1 step penalty on all Mental Attributes for d12 turns. Only an *Extraordinary Success* indicates that the PC can act without penalty.

If the ship's pulse drive is turned on, she will move in roughly a straight line. Unless the pilot turns her nose by making an EASY (3) ship's *Agility* + pilot's *Pilot / Appropriate Specialty* roll before going to hard-burn, the PCs expose themselves to the danger of crashing into the Trans-U head-on. If the ship's pulse drive is turned on before the course has been adjusted, the pilot may try to bend her heading slightly by making a ship's *Agility* + pilot's *Pilot / Appropriate Specialty* roll. The Difficulty depends on the distance between the PCs' ship and the Trans-U: It is an INCREDIBLE (23) feat to avoid the Reaver ship if it is within *Short Range*. If it is within *Medium Range*, the Difficulty drops to HEROIC (19). At *Long Range*, the Trans-U can be avoided by

making a FORMIDABLE (15) roll. If it is within *Extreme Range*, it is still a HARD (11) feat not to collide with it. A *Failure* means that the PCs' vessel crashes into the Trans-U. The Difficulty is treated as an attack roll while the Skill roll made to avoid it is treated as a defense roll. Damage is Basic type. On a *Botch*, the ship must make an AVERAGE (7) Endurance roll (*Vitality* + *Willpower*). If successful, the damage above is taken normally. If the roll fails, the ship takes debilitating damage to a critical system. Roll d6 to determine which system is damaged: 1 means that the engines are critically damaged and cease to function; 2 - 5, engines are damaged, the ship's Speed Class drops by one-half (rounded down); 6, the ship's sensor and communication equipment is destroyed, all *Alertness*-based rolls fail automatically.

Even if the PCs' ship collides with the Reaver ship, the brutal and primal madmen will not attack because they are about to hit something else. Raiding the PCs' ship is nothing but a waste of time and resources to them since a much worthier quarry is nearby. As a matter of fact, the Reavers are about to rendezvous with a small fleet that will attack the large prey relentlessly from all angles.

That is why the PCs may also hold course without being boarded. If they choose to stay calm, you should describe how the two ships are nearing each other slowly. Tell the PCs that all the passengers are waiting in silent terror, their hands shaking. When the Trans-U is almost upon the PCs' ship, they realize that it is much bigger than it had appeared to be. The Reaver ship comes close enough to cast a shadow on the PCs'

ship who see the magnetic grapples and the missile tubes that are attached on the Trans-U's front. In short, make the scene as tense as possible. The Reaver ship does pass, though. After a few seconds, the pilot can affirm that it is holding course and the PCs may finally breathe a sigh of relief. Their courageous, not to say foolhardy, attitude gains them two or three Plot Points. If the PCs attempted to abscond from the Reavers, the players are awarded with one or two Plot Points. Proceed to *Scene 2: A Ruttin' Murder Mystery*.

SCENE TWO

A RUTTIN' MURDER MYSTERY

The next day goes by uneventfully, but in the following night, PCs must make an HARD (11) *Alertness + Perception / Hearing* roll to hear a muffled gun report. Since most PCs are sound asleep in their quarters when the shot is fired, they are at -2 Skill step. If all the rolls fail, the PCs will wake up because someone is screaming and audibly trying to smash in a door.

When the PCs get out of bed and open their cabin doors, they notice that Andrew Lin is knocking at his master's door. Depending on how long it takes the PCs to wake up, he has either just started to do so or has been doing it for quite some time.

When the PCs approach Protheroe's butler, he tells them that his master does not answer the door which seems to be locked. Lin asks the PCs to open it immediately. Since the captain certainly knows the code that opens the door, no roll is required to do so. When it slides open, read:

Protheroe's cabin is unlit. You can, however, smell the faint scent of gunpowder.

When you've turned on the lights, you notice that the aristocrat seems to lie in bed, sound asleep. However, a dark viscid liquid is slowly dripping from a small, roughly circular wound in Protheroe's right temple. The blanket is already partially soaked in his blood.

"Tian ya¹", Lin mutters under his breath. Then he adds in a louder voice, "Are you all right, Sir? Sir, can you hear me?" He steps closer to feel Protheroe's pulse. Before long, Lin lets go off his master's wrist and Protheroe's arm lifelessly drops back on the blood-smeared blanket. "He's dead", the butler gasps.

All of a sudden, Lin picks up Protheroe's dead hand again and takes a ring off one of his master's fingers. After a few moments, the ring drops from Lin's shaking hand and falls to the ground. Only now you notice that it is an emergency signal ring.

It is an EASY (3) mental feat (*Intelligence + Knowledge / Appropriate Specialty*) that the ring is nothing but a miniaturized distress beacon that can be tracked easily.

Moreover, a personal code that is built into the ring lets authorities identify it. Since Lin has obviously just activated Protheroe's ring, it is only a matter of hours until the authorities respond in force. In fact, Commander Akana, the I.A.V. Middenburg's commanding officer, is about clear one of the ASREVs his ship carries for take-off and

¹ "Heavens!"; "My goodness!"

to alter the Longbow-Class patrol cruiser's course. The ASREV will intercept the PCs' ship in three hours and thirty-seven minutes. It is an AVERAGE (7) feat (*Intelligence + Knowledge / Law*) to know that a ship's captain is responsible for the security of his vessel, crew, passengers and cargo. Federal punishment for neglecting one's duty as a captain includes arrest, immediate impounding of the vessel involved, a fine between 50 and 1,000 Credits, up to ten years imprisonment, and possible loss of business or flight certification. Besides, the Feds will ask awkward questions and may arrest the entire Crew unless the PCs can come up with a lucid explanation of what has happened. The Feds may still take the PCs into custody and search their ship, but chances are that they won't trouble themselves if the PCs can tell them why the distress beacon was activated and explain how and why Sir Basil Protheroe died. First of all, it is an EASY (3) task (*Alertness + Medical Expertise / Appropriate Specialty*) to confirm Lin's unprofessional diagnosis. Sir Basil Protheroe is indeed dead. It is safe to assume that the cause of death is the gunshot wound. To be absolutely sure, the Crew's physician can conduct a superficial autopsy. The post-mortem examination's results are given below (see *Investigatin' the Crime*). While the Crew's doctor is examining Protheroe's dead body, the PCs can *Investigate the Crime*, *Hear the Passengers*, and *Interrogate the Suspects*. If they're smart, they might figure out *What Has Really Happened* in the end.

Investigatin' the Crime

All the information given below should only be disclosed if the players state explicitly that their characters are checking the listed item.

The Autopsy

Carrying out a hurried autopsy of Protheroe's dead body is a HARD Complex Action (55 vs. *Alertness + Medical Expertise / Appropriate Specialty*). Each roll represents 10 minutes' work. Sir Basil Protheroe was a male Caucasian in his mid-thirties. He was 5'8" tall and weighed 164 pounds. Since the body's core temperature has only fallen slightly and its muscles are still in a relaxed state, it is safe to say that Protheroe has been dead for less than two hours. The cause of death was indeed the gunshot wound to the head. There are no traces of gunshot primer residue around the entry wound which seems to indicate that the firearm was too distant to leave trace evidence when the lethal shot was fired. There are, however, traces of a feather cushion's stuffing inside the wound. Quite possibly, the deadly shot was fired through a pillow. The small caliber bullet did not penetrate the victim's skull. The autopsy also reveals that Protheroe was intoxicated. There are traces of the highly sedative drug Compalixin in his blood. It is an AVERAGE (7) mental feat (*Intelligence + Medical Expertise / Pharmaceuticals*) to know that Compalixin possesses anti-anxiety, anticonvulsant, sedative, muscle relaxant, and amnesic properties. The drug could have been administered intravenously, intramuscularly, or as a suppository, but was apparently applied orally. Compalixin is

only available on prescription. No roll is required to gather information on the drug by searching the Cortex. Finally, there are neither traces of particles of gunshot residue on Protheroe's hands nor defensive wounds on any part of his body.

The Crime Scene

It is an AVERAGE (7) task to notice (*Alertness + Perception / Investigation*) that the door has not been forced open.

It is an EASY (3) task (*Alertness + Perception / Sight*) to notice the small, pocket-sized semi-automatic pistol that lies under the left side of the bed. One cartridge is missing from the gun's 8-shot magazine. The unspent cartridges in the magazine are of the same caliber as the one that killed Protheroe, as is the one spent casing found near the body. It is an AVERAGE (7) feat (*Alertness + Guns / Pistols*) to know for certain that the pistol has been fired recently.

Moreover, it is an EASY (3) task (*Alertness + Perception / Sight*) to notice a feather pillow that has been shot through.

Coagulated blood stains one side of the pillow. It is an AVERAGE (7) feat (*Intelligence + Guns / Appropriate Specialty*) to know that the pillow was probably used to minimize or negate blood splatter, not to muffle the shot.

Furthermore, it is an EASY (3) feat (*Alertness + Perception / Sight*) to notice the Whisky bottle as well as the half-full Whisky glass under the right side of the bed. It is an AVERAGE Complex Action (35 vs. *Alertness + Medical Expertise / Pharmaceuticals*) to establish that Compalixin has been dissolved in the

Whisky inside both the bottle and the glass. Each roll represents 5 minutes' work.

An additional AVERAGE (7) task (*Alertness + Perception / Sight*) will notice a large, brown button that lies next to the doorstep, outside of Protheroe's cabin. Apparently, it has come off a man's coat, probably a duster.

Searching Protheroe's personal belongings is an AVERAGE Complex Action (35 vs.

Alertness + Perception / Investigation).

Each roll represents 1 minute's work. The PCs find neither a coat that is missing a button, nor a box of Compalixin, nor any kind of hint that suggests that Protheroe owned a gun. However, among Protheroe's clothes and personal effects, the PCs do find a half-empty bottle of Desytal which, according to the small bottle's label, is an antidepressant used for the treatment of moderate to severe depression and which was prescribed almost eight months ago. The PCs also find a digital photograph that shows a group of vaguely smiling Purple Bellies. It is EASY (3) to spot (*Alertness + Perception / Sight*) Protheroe in the picture that was taken more than seven years ago. He is wearing the battle dress uniform of a Lieutenant of the Allied infantry. Apparently, Protheroe fought in the War for Unification. The PCs may search for finger- or palm prints, as well as fingerprinting the passengers' and Crew to compare known prints to determine if the impressions are from the same finger or palm. This is a HEROIC Complex Action (95 vs. *Alertness + Medical Expertise / Forensics*). Each roll represents 20 minutes' work. Because the PCs probably have neither the equipment that assists in the proper gathering and

storing of this kind of evidence at their disposal nor a computer expert in their midst who can process all the prints digitally, they are at -2 Skill steps. In all likelihood, they will not have any results before the I.A.V. Middenburg arrives. Besides, only Protheroe's, Lin's, and the Crew members' prints can be found in the aristocrat's cabin. There are a few unidentifiable prints as well, but those stem from former passengers. Finally, it is safe to assume that the PCs do not have the equipment needed to check the passengers' hands, arms and faces for particles of gunshot residue as evidence of having recently handled or fired a gun.

Searchin' the Rest of the Ship

None of the passengers allows the PCs to search their cabins without raising objections. However, only Jesse and Selma Woodrow will have to be compelled to give their consent. It is an AVERAGE (7) feat (*Willpower + Influence / Appropriate Specialty*) to do so. Searching a cabin is an AVERAGE Complex Action (35 vs. *Alertness + Perception / Investigate*). The PCs may assist one another indirectly. Each roll represents 5 minutes' work. The only item of importance can be found in the cabin occupied by the Woodrows: Jesse's brown duster is missing a button. The button the PCs found in Protheroe's cabin and the ones that are still attached to Mr. Woodrow's coat are as alike as peas in a pod.

Searching the rest of the ship is an INCREDIBLE Complex Action (115 vs. *Alertness + Perception / Investigate*) with a time increment of 10 minutes per roll. Again, the PCs may assist one another

indirectly. If the threshold is reached or exceeded, the PCs find an empty bottle of Compalixin in their ship's engine room. By all appearances, it had been hidden there many hours before.

Hearin' the Passengers

Provided that he is on-board, *George Burrows* cannot give the PCs any relevant information. He is a deep sleeper. As a matter of fact, has to be awakened in order to be questioned. He will tell the PCs dozily that he has neither heard nor seen anything. It is an AVERAGE (7) task (*Alertness + Perception / Empathy*) to know that he is telling the truth. An *Extraordinary Success* provides complete competence.

Louise Boyd did hear the muffled shot as well as Lin's screams and stayed in her cabin for fear that something might happen to her. She does not offer her help obligingly because she distrusts everyone. In point of fact, it is an AVERAGE (7) task (*Willpower + Influence / Appropriate Specialty*) to persuade her to answer the PCs' questions. In a low voice, she tells the PCs that she doesn't sleep soundly and that she tends to wake up if there is even the slightest of noises. That's why she has heard that the door of the cabin next to hers was opened and closed round about 10 minutes before the shot was fired. The door slit open and shut again shortly after Mrs. Boyd heard the muffled shot. She also points out that this has happened almost every night before. Again, it is an AVERAGE (7) feat (*Alertness + Perception / Empathy*) to know that she is telling the truth. The

cabin next to Mrs. Boyd's is occupied by the Jesse and Selma Woodrow.

Both *Selma* and *Jesse Woodrow* are wide-awake and following the course of events with great interest from inside their cabin. While Selma can satisfy the PCs that she was awakened from sleep by the gunshot, her husband Jesse readily tells them that he could not sleep and walked out of the room to stretch his legs. He was strolling around the ship aimlessly when he heard a muffled shot. He returned to his cabin on the double, entered it silently, and left the door ajar. That's why he saw a person exiting Mr. Protheroe's cabin a few moments later. Due to the dim twilight that the ship's night lights cast, he cannot tell with certainty who that person was. If the PCs force him to venture a guess which is an AVERAGE (7) feat (*Willpower + Influence / Appropriate Specialty*), Jesse Woodrow says that he thinks that he saw Protheroe's butler Andrew Lin coming out of his master's cabin. Moreover, it is an AVERAGE (7) task (*Alertness + Perception / Empathy*) to know that he is telling the truth. On an *Extraordinary Success*, however, the PCs sense that Mr. Woodrow is withholding vital information that is not necessarily connected with the case at hand. If they confront him with their suspicions, tackle the Woodrows about Mrs. Boyd's statement, or bring the missing button up for discussion, they are indeed questioning them. The Woodrows' answers to the PCs' questions are given below (see *Interrogatin' the Suspects*).

Emily Bates is awake, too. In fact, she walked out of her cabin shortly after the PCs left theirs and has been following the PCs' at every step ever since. She tells them willingly that she was awakened from her sleep when the shot was fired, but that she has unfortunately neither seen nor heard anything of importance. It is a FORMIDABLE (15) feat (*Alertness + Perception / Empathy*) to distinguish by Mrs. Bates' facial expressions and manner of speaking that she is telling nothing but blatant lies. If the PCs confront her with their faint suspicion, they start to question her. Mrs. Bates' answers to the PCs' questions are given below (see *Interrogatin' the Suspects*).

Finally, Andrew Lin answers the PCs' questions rather reluctantly. It is an EASY (3) task (*Willpower + Influence / Appropriate Specialty*) to persuade him to tell the PCs that he was still awake when he heard a muffled shot. He immediately bolted out of his cabin to make sure that his master was all right. Because Sir Protheroe did not answer the door, Lin started to pound on it and to call out for his master at the top of his voice. It is a HARD (11) feat (*Alertness + Perception / Empathy*) to catch that Mr. Lin is lying. If the PCs question the butler on the gun or the Compalixin they found in Protheroe's cabin, Lin tells them that he is completely certain that his master did not own a firearm. Neither did he take sedatives of any kind. If the PCs ask the butler about his master's handedness, he tells them that he is certain that Sir Protheroe was right-handed. The PCs can also remember this fact by making an AVERAGE (7) Recall roll (*Intelligence +*

Willpower). He can also tell the PCs that Sir Protheroe tended to have a drink before retiring to bed. It is, however, an AVERAGE (7) feat (*Willpower + Influence / Appropriate Specialty*) to make Lin talk about his master's past. Lin tells the PCs that he has been in Protheroe's service for more than 15 years and that Lin thinks very highly of his master. Lin firmly rejects the possibility that Sir Protheroe might have committed suicide. It is a HARD (11) task (*Willpower + Influence / Appropriate Specialty*) to get the butler to talk about Protheroe's personal history. The PCs are at +1 Skill step if they found the photograph and/or the bottle of Desyral in Protheroe's cabin and confront Lin with their findings. If the PCs are successful, Lin tells them that Protheroe once was an Allied Lieutenant and that he did indeed fight in the War for Unification. According to Lin, Protheroe's company landed in the hamlet of Flagstaff on Hera following a short artillery and gunship preparation. The soldiers found no enemy fighters in the village on the morning of May 16, 2511. Many suspected there were Browncoat troops in the village, hiding in the homes of their elderly parents or their wives. The Alliance soldiers, one platoon of which was led by Lieutenant Protheroe, went in shooting at suspected enemy position. After the first civilians were killed and wounded by the indiscriminate fire, the soldiers soon began attacking anything that moved, humans and animals alike, with firearms, grenades and bayonets. The scale of the massacre only spiraled as it progressed, the brutality increasing with each killing, and was not ended until an Allied gunship pilot intervened, saying that

his crew would open fire on Protheroe's men if the killing did not cease immediately. Protheroe was given a dishonorable discharge and was, on November 5, 2512, charged with six specifications of premeditated murder for the death of 97 civilians. His trial started on December 17, 2513, and resulted in a verdict of not guilty. Testimony revealed that Protheroe had not ordered his men to shoot everyone in the village. In fact, he had spared no effort to regain control of the men who had gone berserk, gunning down unarmed men, women, children and babies. This verdict did not help Protheroe to find any peace of mind, though. He sank into the depths of a clinical depression and had to be treated with potent antidepressants. Over the course of the following years, his condition improved. Still, Protheroe always kept a bottle of Desyral on his person just in case his mood began a downward spiral. When Protheroe lost interest in usual activities, or when his ability to experience pleasure diminished unexpectedly, he swallowed a pill. As far as Lin knows, his master hasn't popped a pill in quite a long time, though. A Cortex search for which no roll is required or an EASY (3) *Alertness + Perception / Empathy* roll can ascertain that the butler is telling the truth. Finally the butler says that Sir Protheroe visits Hera regularly to atone for his sins by visiting the graves of those who have lost their lives because of his incompetence and his inability to lead the men he was in charge of. As a matter of fact, he had done so before booking a passage on the PCs' ship. If the PCs confront Lin with their faint suspicion that he lied about the course of events that led

to this conversation or confront him with Mr. Woodrow's statement, they start to question him. Mr. Lin's answers to the PCs' questions are given below (see *Interrogatin' the Suspects*).

Interrogatin' the Suspects

Interrogating a suspect is a Complex Action (*Willpower + Influence or Discipline / Interrogation*). Once again, the PCs may indirectly assist one another. Threatening to physically harm a suspect grants a +1 step Skill bonus, while actually hurting a suspect increases the bonus to +2 Skill steps. Torturing is, however, illegal. In fact, a suspect should not be harmed in any way because torturing is considered vile behavior and will bring retribution.

You, the GM, must roleplay the suspect that remains silent or lies until the Difficulty Threshold is reached or exceeded. A *Botch* not only increases the threshold to break the suspect by one category, but also means that a good, believable lie is told. It is a HARD (11) mental feat (*Willpower + Perception / Appropriate Specialty*) to see through the suspect's lies. Rolling a second *Botch* indicates an automatic failure. The suspect does not cooperate, remains silent, or lies.

Interrogating *Jesse Woodrow* is a HARD (55) Complex Action. Each roll costs 5 minutes of time. If the PCs bring the missing button up for discussion, they gain a +1 step Skill bonus. When the threshold is reached or exceeded, read the following passage out loud or paraphrase it if the PCs interrogate Selma Woodrow instead of her husband.

"Mei yi si¹", Jesse Woodrow suddenly exclaims, "I don't know nothin' about no gorram button... That shi wu's² been missin' for days. I sure as hell ain't no ruttin' murderer. Got out of bed cos I wanted to check my property."

Because Woodrow can't fail to note that you eye him suspiciously, he adds hesitantly, "That don't seem to make you feel all kinds of reassured? A Browncoat's word is his bond, gorramit!

"De le³, I checked them damn goods! Yeah, you heard me just right. We're smugglers, gorramit! Me and me missus run zhang wu⁴ from Hera to Greenleaf. What with all them Feds snoopin' round all the time, that job's awful hard to do, I don't mind tellin' you."

After a short pause he adds, "Looks like you're humped anyways. Why make things worse by tellin' the gorram law about the goods, eh?"

The PCs can easily check if Jesse is telling the truth by opening the crate the Woodrows stored away in the cargo hold. Picking the crate's lock requires a lockpick set and is an AVERAGE Complex Action (35 vs. *Agility + Covert / Open Locks*). Each roll costs 10 seconds of time. The PCs may also ask Mr. Woodrow to open it for them. The crate contains twenty boxes of protein packs, imprinted with the official Alliance seal. Read:

¹ (idiom) Unable to put forward an opinion; "I have no idea!"

² "Thing"; "item"

³ "All right"; "that's enough!"

⁴ "Booty"; "stolen goods"

"It's *chun jing*¹", Woodrow says, "Two hundred packs of healthy, if boring, chuck² that'll store a good long while. Probably even longer than it needs to cos there ain't no small number of hungry mouths to feed on Greenleaf. Paid twelve hundred for the lot. In coin. Going to sell 'em for fifteen. Might just as well pay you five hundred if you keep your mouths shut about them packs."

Regardless of whether the PCs take Woodrow's bribe, the players should now be awarded with one or two Plot Points for solving the first part of the puzzle.

Interrogating *Andrew Lin* is a FORMIDABLE (75) Complex Action. Each roll costs 10 minutes of time. If the PCs confront Lin with Woodrow's statement, they gain a +1 step Skill bonus. When the threshold is reached or exceeded, read:

"All right, all right", the butler finally says, "There seems to be no further need to keep this farcical charade up. This night, I woke up when I heard a gunshot. I promptly got out of bed, exited my cabin, and entered Sir Protheroe's to see whether he was all right."

Lin pauses for a moment as he becomes aware of your questioning looks.

"My word! As a matter of course, I do know the code that opens my master's cabin door. Do you take me for a fool? I would be a rather inept servant if I couldn't minister to my master on a

¹ "Pure"; "clean"; "unmixed"

² Food

moment's notice, wouldn't I? Now, I walked into the cabin and could not fail to note that Sir Basile had..."

Lin pauses again as he obviously struggles to retain his composure. After having gulped back a sob, he says, "I could not fail to note that Sir Basil had committed suicide. His lifeless hand still held the smoking gun that had ended his life in an untimely fashion. Without thinking, I took the damned thing out of his hand and threw it away."

Lin sobs again. Then he adds, "I will be perfectly honest with you. I not only wanted to avert the shame the Protheroes will undoubtedly endure if it is made public that Sir Basil has taken his own life. Furthermore, I am fairly certain that Sir Protheroe's life insurance company will refuse to pay if it is brought to their attention that he has committed suicide."

With tears in his eyes, he eventually says, "That is why I have tried to stage the suicide to look like a murder. I am not proud of what I have done, I might add."

If the PCs ask Lin about the pillow, he says that he hadn't taken note of it. They players should now be awarded with one or two Plot Points for solving another part of the puzzle.

Interrogating *Emily Bates* is a HEROIC (95) Complex Action. Each roll costs 30 minutes of time. Even if the PCs confront her with their faint suspicion that she lied about the course of events, they do not gain a Skill step bonus. However, if the PCs are smart

enough, they may gain a bonus. They have to establish a connection between Protheroe's past and this seemingly jovial lady by making a Cortex search which does not require a skill roll. Before long, they find a list of survivors of the Flagstaff Massacre. It a HARD (11) task (*Alertness + Perception / Search*) to recognize Mr. Bates on one of the pictures. According to its caption, her name is Cassandra Hartford. If they confront Mrs. Bates with their discovery, the PCs gain a +1 step Skill bonus. In spite of that, it is still highly unlikely that they will be able to make her talk before the I.A.V. Middenburg arrives. If, contrary to expectations, Mrs. Bates confesses, paraphrase the information on *What Has Really Happened*, below, and award the players with one or two Plot Points for making Mrs. Bates own up to her crimes.

What Has Really Happened

Emily Bates' real name is Cassandra Hartford. She was born and raised on Hera and is one of the few survivors of the Flagstaff Massacre. She has hunted down and killed those who have committed those unspeakable atrocities and, more importantly, killed her husband James as well as her son Nicolas and her daughter Audrey. Sir Basil Protheroe, the commanding officer of the platoon that took her family from her, was the last person responsible for the indescribable torments she had to endure. Mrs. Hartford knew that Protheroe visited Hera on a regular basis and shadowed him during his most recent stay. When he booked a passage on the PCs' ship, she followed suit. She took her time to spy out Protheroe's habits and

decided that it was time to act when the Reaver ship was encountered. She picked the electronic lock of Protheroe's cabin door, sneaked in, and spiked his Whisky. In the following night, she picked the lock again, tiptoed into Protheroe's cabin once more, put the pillow on the sedated man's face, and fired a shot from her own pocket pistol through his temple. Then she placed the gun in his right hand and left as silently as she had entered. Protheroe's butler heard the shot and got out of bed quickly. He opened his master's door and entered the cabin in the way described above. Since he fell for Hartford's deception, he hurriedly tried to make the presumed suicide look like a murder, left the cabin, and waited for the PCs to show up. The button that has come off Mr. Woodrow's duster is of no relevance whatsoever.

It is entirely at your discretion when, within the context of the game, three hours and thirty-seven minutes have passed. You may, for example, keep track of the time the PCs spend on completing Complex Actions and estimate how much time they spend on accomplishing other tasks or you can just wing it. Unless you decide to keep a detailed track of time and the PCs exceed the time limit, the right point of time for the ASREV's arrival has come when the players think that their characters have convicted a suspect of the crime. It is irrelevant whether that person is indeed the perpetrator. Moreover, the ASREV should intercept the PCs' ship when the players have run out of ideas or things to do. Do not allow the game bog down. Use your discretion to determine

when it is time to proceed to *Act 3, Scene 1: It's the Gorram Law!*

ACT THREE

SCENE ONE

IT'S THE GORRAM LAW!

Three hours and thirty-seven minutes after Andrew Lin has activated his master's emergency signal ring, the PCs' ship is hailed. Federal Marshal Edogawa the PCs to release control of their helm, to prepare to be docked and boarded, and breaks the connection immediately afterwards. Obviously, the Feds do not want to talk to the PCs. Moments later, an ASREV enters visual range. If the PCs do not stop their ship immediately, the Feds will fire a warning shot across the ship's bow. That shot is the Feds' last warning. If the PCs still do not comply with the Feds' instructions, they target the ships' engines and open fire. The Feds' gunner aims at the ship's engines, suffering a -1 step Skill penalty. If the attack is successful, the PCs' ship suffers d4 points of Wound damage. Moreover, the PCs must make an AVERAGE (7) roll, using their ship's *Vitality + Willpower*. If the roll fails, the engines are destroyed. If necessary, the Feds fire additional salvos until the ship's engines cease to function. When the PCs' ship is rendered immobile or if the PCs comply with the Feds instructions straight away, the ASREV intercepts the PCs' ship and docks at one of its airlocks. It should be obvious that the Feds are not going to knock politely. That's why the PCs should unlatch the airlock immediately. If they fail to do so, the Feds will pick the outer hatch's

electronic lock and blow the inner hatch open without hesitation. Moreover, the Feds will toss a "noise and flash diversionary device", also known as a flashbang grenade, through the hatch instead of boarding the PCs' ship in an alert, yet relatively composed, manner. The grenade deals 2d6 points of Basic damage and has a *Range Increment* of five feet. Everyone within twenty feet of it is stunned for one turn. Furthermore, everyone within range must make a HARD (11) Get Out of Harm's Way roll (*Agility + Alertness*). If a PC succeeds, he is stunned for two more turns. If he fails, the PC is unable to act for d6+d6 more turns. When all PCs have recovered or if the hatch has been unlocked in time, read:

Two armored Federal Marshals enter your ship at a smart pace, automatic firearms at the ready.

"Yan qi xi gu¹", one of them shouts angrily, "Federal Marshals! Put your hands where we can see them!"

"We ain't in no jokin' mood", the second Federal adds at the top of his voice, "One false move and you're dead meat. Now, you're all going to stand all-fired still as my plumb ringy² colleague here disarms them as felt the need to bring a piece to this wei xiao³ shindig."

If the PCs open fire on the Feds, it will be returned relentlessly. Assuming the PCs are wise enough not to attack the Federal Marshals, they pat the PCs down and relieve

¹ "Give in!"; literally, "Lay down the flag and still the drums!"

² Angry; mad

³ "Nice"; "pleasant"

them of all the weapons they carry, even concealed ones. After the Feds have disarmed the PCs, read:

“All clear, sir!”, the first Marshal shouts over his shoulder.

Shortly afterwards, another Federal Marshal steps through the airlock and sizes you up for a few moments.

Apparently, he is higher-ranking than the officers who have burst into your ship.

“Very well, then”, he says calmly and in a faintly condescending tone, “Would someone be kind enough to explain why an automated distress call was sent from this ship almost four hours ago? Oh, by the way, I warn you not to confuse my patience with sympathy. We will search this vessel and question all those who are currently aboard. I am merely trying to save us all a peck of trouble. Have I made myself understood?”

The PCs are now supposed to tell Federal Marshal Edogawa what they think has happened aboard their ship. The players are now awarded with a number of Plot Points that depends on what their characters have found out. If they know that Mrs. Bates killed Sir Basil Protheroe, they deserve up to six Plot Points. If they think that the aristocrat committed suicide, they players the reward should be lower. Toss them up a Plot Points or two. If, however, the PCs have not found out anything, the players should not be awarded at all. Note that it makes no difference which NPC the PCs actually turn

in. Edogawa listens to the PCs’ statements intently. When they’re done, read:

“Kong gu zu yin¹”, says the Fed, “That’s quite an interesting tale indeed. It does have an oddness to it, I must say, but it sounds plausible enough. Soon we’ll see if it’s actually true. The I.A.V. Middenburg will arrive in round about two hours. Until then, you’re grounded. I’m hereby officially impounding this vessel. Marshals Yip and Haggerty will escort you to the common room which you mustn’t leave until the cruiser arrives.”

After a short pause, he adds, “So, are we going to do this the easy or the hard way?” After having said that, he draws a stun baton and smiles spitefully.

Even though Edogawa and his men will not use lethal force, they will attack disobedient PCs with stun batons. When subdued, the defiant PCs are handcuffed. If the PCs turned in Mrs. Bates, she is handcuffed and frogmarched off the PCs’ ship straight away. The PCs are escorted to their ship’s common room and asked to sit down and be silent. The next two hours and six minutes pass by uneventfully. Shortly before the I.A.V. Middenburg arrives, Edogawa disembarks and the ASREV undocks. Edogawa’s men, however, continue to keep a jealous watch over the PCs. A few minutes later, the PCs’ ship jerks noticeably as docks with the cruiser. Read:

¹ “That’s something you don’t hear often!”; literally, “sound of footsteps in an empty valley”

“Listen up!”, Marshall Yip says in loud and commanding voice, “Here’s what’s going to happen: You’re going to stand up nice and slow and follow Marshal Haggerty there to the airlock. I’ll be directly behind you the whole time. I’ll end them as feel like makin’ sudden moves my own self, *dong ma*¹? Now, on your feet, ladies and gentlemen! Get a move on!”

If the PCs do not comply with Yip’s instructions, the Marshals will use non-lethal force to bend the PCs to their will. The PCs and NPCs are escorted off their ship and enter one of the cruiser’s small, brightly lit, and almost antiseptically clean hangar bays. When the characters climb out of the ship’s airlock, they see an Alliance officer with a short, regulation haircut who wears a dark grey uniform. She introduces herself in a friendly, yet businesslike manner. Ensign Eleanor Lung will accompany the PCs and NPCs to the guest quarters they will occupy until the I.A.V. Middenburg has arrived at Greenleaf where the PCs’ ship will be investigated thoroughly. She also asks the characters if she may take their fingerprints and swab the inside of their cheeks to take a sample of the characters’ DNA. If the PCs reject Lung’s request, she will point out amicably that, even though she may not be authorized to do so, Federal Marshals are indeed empowered to use force to take fingerprints and DNA samples from uncooperative persons. The Woodrows refuse to cooperate and are marched off immediately. After the characters’ fingerprints and samples of their DNA have

¹ “Understand?”

been taken either with or without their consent, Ensign Lung asks the PCs and the remaining NPCs to follow her. If the PCs refuse to do so, Federal Marshals make them get a move on. Read:

Ensign Lung spins on her heel and makes toward the exit of the hangar bay at a brisk pace. In the control room above the wide door, three Allied technicians eye you suspiciously until you’ve stepped through the double door that slides open almost soundlessly. “This way, *bai tuo*²”, Lung says as she turns left into an antiseptic and brightly illuminated corridor that stretches to your right and left.

Players who state explicitly that their characters want to memorize the way Ensign Lung leads must make an EASY (3) *Intelligence + Alertness* roll to do so. Ensign Lung walks down the corridor and leads the PCs past numerous hangar bay doors that look exactly like the one they’ve just stepped through. After a few minutes, she comes to a halt at the end of a short hallway that leads to a lift. Lung tells the characters proudly that intraship personnel transport is provided by a network of inductively powered cars. Each elevator car travels through tubes to reach its destination. These shafts run throughout Middenburg both horizontally and vertically, and allow lifts to reach almost any area within. When the lift door slides open, Lung invites the characters to step into the car and presses one of the numerous buttons. Faintly humming, the car begins to move

² “Please!”

upward and then sideways. After roughly a minute, it stops again, the door slide open, and the PCs enter a lounge area at a corridor junction. Lung tells them that they are now in on Deck 5. Most of Middenburg's guest quarters are located in this section. She leads the characters down another seemingly endless corridor until they've reached a number of doors in front of which armed Allied officers seem to stand watch by twos. Lung says that these doors lead to the accommodations the characters will live in for the next few days, asks the characters not to leave this section of the ship, turns on her heel again, and leaves. The security officers open the doors and invite the characters to step into the double cabins that are surprisingly spacious. Each cabin is roughly 250 square feet in size and fully furnished. Although each PC may choose his or her roommate, it should be obvious that the characters are placed under arrest and may not roam the ship freely. The security guards keep a close watch on the PCs' every move and will stop the characters from leaving this section of the ship. The next hours pass by uneventfully. Proceed to *Scene 2: Them As Gazed Into the Abyss Return*.

SCENE TWO

THEM AS GAZED INTO THE ABYSS¹ RETURN

As the PCs think it's time to go to bed, read:

A klaxon rings out unexpectedly. Even those of you who have never been aboard an Alliance vessel know with

¹ "And if you gaze for long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you." (Friedrich Nietzsche)

dead certainty that this piercing noise is a battle alarm signal. Moments later, a seemingly incorporeal male voice booms, "Battle stations! Battle stations! All hands, man your battle stations! This is not a drill. Repeat, this is not a drill. All hands to battle stations!"

If the PCs exit their cabins to ask the security officers what is going on they are told to stay inside their cabins until further notice. After a few minutes have passed by, read:

All of a sudden a thunderous explosion rocks the cruiser. The floor of the cabin lurches wildly, carrying you off your feet. More explosions follow, violently shaking the ship back and forth. Somewhere close by you hear the dreadful sound of metal scraping metal and the hissing of escaping atmosphere. Then the lights cut off and you are plunged into almost impenetrable darkness.

It is an EASY (3) task (*Alertness* + *Perception*) to find the way to the cabin doors. Because it is completely dark, the PCs suffer a -2 step Skill penalty. With the power down, the doors do not open. A HEROIC (19) Burst of Strength (*Strength* + *Strength*) is required to push them open. PCs may assist one another directly by rolling as usual and combining their totals. If the PCs decide to sit around in the dark, you should describe how the breathing air gets thinner as time passes. Moreover, periodic explosions will rock the ship, hastening the urgency of the situation. Once

the PCs open the door, they find themselves in the central corridor that is dimly lit by emergency lighting as well as confronted with the security officers who have not abandoned their posts. They ask the PCs to return to their cabins and futilely try to put the PC's minds at rest. If the PCs do not comply with the officers' instructions, they issue an urgent warning. It is an INCREDIBLE (23) feat (*Willpower + Influence / Appropriate Specialty*) to talk the guards into letting the PCs go. More likely than not, the security officers will draw their laser pistols. To disarm the guards, the PCs must make attack rolls (*Agility + Unarmed Combat / Appropriate Specialty*) at -2 Skill steps that is opposed by the officers' *Agility + Unarmed Combat* rolls. If the PCs succeed, the officers must make a HARD (11) *Agility + Willpower* roll or drop their weapons. Picking up a dropped laser pistol is an action. Due to the dim light, the PCs suffer a -2 Skill step penalty if they try to a target that is more than 10 feet away. The PCs may also smash a piece of the cabins' furniture and use a part of the remains as an improvised weapon. A broken-off chair leg, for example, deals d4 points of Basic damage and can be wielded by making *Melee Weapon Combat / Clubs* rolls. When the officers are defeated, read:

A series of deafening explosions rocks the ship, knocking you to the corridor deck. When you've regained your feet, you notice that dark smoke begins to fill the hallway. Mere seconds later, a wave of hot air hits you and, struck dumb with horror, you notice that a raging fire storm starts to devour the

corridor that stretches to your right, blocking it with a flaming inferno.

Obviously, the PCs cannot go down that way. It is, however, highly inadvisable to board the next lifeboat and leave right away because the PCs' ship would perish along with the cruiser. The PCs should therefore decide to go back to their ship. Unless someone successfully memorized the way, an AVERAGE (7) Recall roll (*Intelligence + Willpower*) is required to remember the way back to the hangar deck. The lift is located at the end of the corridor that stretches to the PCs' left. They make their way to the elevator and find that there is no power in this section of the cruiser, either. The PCs must open the lift doors manually. This requires an INCREDIBLE (23) Burst of Strength (*Strength + Strength*), but up to three PCs may assist one another directly to pry open the door. Read:

After having slid the door to the lift open with great effort, you notice that there is no lift car behind it. Instead, the grim red emergency lighting reveals the yawning void of the obscure elevator shaft. Without the car, the only way out of the approaching inferno is to climb.

The PCs can climb through the shaft using the ladders on each side of it. Climbing down leads to the hangar bay deck and is a HARD Complex Action (55 vs. *Strength + Athletics / Climbing*). Each roll costs three minutes of time. While rolling a *Botch* increases the task's Difficulty Threshold to FORMIDABLE (75), rolling a second *Botch*

indicates that the PC has his lost grip and falls down the shaft. Falling PCs can catch a protruding ladder rung by making a **FORMIDABLE (15) *Strength + Alertness*** roll. Those that fail this roll fall to their death. Provided that the PCs rescued the NPCs as well, bearing them or another ailing character a helping hand causes a -1 step Skill penalty to the helping PC's *Athletics* actions, but grants a +1 step Skill bonus to the helped character's rolls. Note, however, that you should not make Skill rolls for the NPCs because that would bog the game down unnecessarily. Carrying incapacitated or seriously wounded characters on one's back not only causes a -1 step Skill penalty, but also requires a **HARD (11) Long Haul (*Strength + Vitality*)** roll. On a *Failure*, the carrying character suffers an additional -1 Skill step penalty on all *Athletics* rolls made to climb down the shaft. A Botch increases the penalty to -2 Skill steps. When the first PC reaches or exceeds the threshold, he reaches a labelled door that leads to the hangar deck. Since there is power in this section of the cruiser, the door can be opened using a conventional control panel. When the last PC climbs out of the shaft, read:

A particularly jarring explosion shakes the cruiser.

Shortly afterwards, another klaxon sounds and a computerized voice says, "The ship's structural integrity has sustained heavy damage. Complete structural failure is imminent. All hands, abandon ship! All hands, abandon ship!" The klaxon continues to

sound and the ship's urgent message repeats in Chinese.

The PCs have 15 minutes to escape. From now on, you have to keep track of the time that passes. For easy of play, do not enter combat turn into you calculations. However, there are several Complex Actions the PCs have to take in order to leave the battered cruiser. The Complex Actions' time increments are given in minutes so that you can stay on top of things easily. After the PCs have gotten their bearings, ask them to make an **AVERAGE (7) *Alertness + Perception / Hearing*** roll. Those PCs who make it hear the clang of heavy boots echoing upon the corridor's metal floor. If no one makes the roll, the PCs are caught by surprised by the small Reaver raiding party whose shuttle has landed in hangar bay nearby. Read:

Three odd-looking figures step into the corridor a few yards in front of you. Despite the eerie twilight that is cast by the emergency lighting you note that they are terrible corruptions of something that may once have been human. Their clothes are ragged, soaked with flesh blood and held together by patches that seem to be made out of human skin. Their own almost hairless bodies are marked with primitive tattoos. Their flesh is not only disfigured with repulsive burn marks and slashed by scabbed wounds that apparently are self-inflicted, but also pierced by abhorrent shards of metal and other sharp objects such as rusty nails. Their reddened eyes are sparkling

with untold anger. The nightmarish men are growling and snarling like wild beasts. Their teeth are filed to sharp points and stained with blood. You hear the faint hiss of breath as the shapes apparently try to scent an unseen quarry. Then the Reavers advance.

If the PCs failed to make their *Alertness + Perception* rolls, the Reavers spot them first and attack viciously. The PCs cannot act during the first turn. They may not even dodge the initial attacks. They may only make unskilled *Agility* rolls as their defense numbers. They can, however, dodge any attacks made in subsequent turns. If the PCs did make the roll and are trying to hide, they must make an AVERAGE (7) *Alertness + Covert / Stealth* roll. The PCs' best chance of surviving this encounter is to remain hidden. They may also jump the Reavers when they get close enough. If surprised, the Reavers may not act during the first combat turn, either. If the PCs have been spotted or otherwise made their presence known, they must either charge directly into the Reavers, dodge their attacks, or run the other way. If the PCs run in the opposite direction, they may make HARD (11) *Agility + Covert / Stealth* rolls to get out of sight in a doorway or around a corner.

After the encounter, the players are awarded with one to three Plot Points. The PCs must now escape from the cruiser. Unless someone successfully memorized or remembered the way, a HARD (11) Recall roll (*Intelligence + Willpower*) is required to remember under which hangar bay the PCs' ship is docked. If the PCs fail to make this roll, they have to search for their ship.

Finding it is a HARD Complex Action (55 vs. *Alertness + Perception / Search*). Each roll costs one minute of time. When the threshold is reached or exceeded or if the PCs remember the way, they locate the hangar bay their ship is docked at. Read:

Like the rest of the deck, the small bay is a mess and filled with smoke that obscures vision in all directions. Doors have been pried open and there are signs of irrational, unspeakable violence everywhere. There are no bodies, though. At least, the airlock under which your ship is docked is still sealed.

Opening the sealed airlock is a HARD Complex Action (55 vs. *Alertness + Covert / Disable Device*). Since the PCs do not have the equipment that assists in the disarming of electronic devices, they suffer a -2 step Skill penalty. Each roll costs one-sixth of a minute (10 seconds) of time. Powering up the ship's engines is an AVERAGE Complex Action (35 vs. *Alertness + Pilot / Appropriate Specialty*). Each roll costs half a minute (30 seconds) of time. While it may occur to clever PCs earlier, the pilot notices at the latest when the systems are online that the docking clamps by which the PCs' ship is held in place haven't been released yet. The PCs are unable to leave until these mechanical devices are released. This can be done by climbing up to the bay's control room. The control panels are smeared in blood, but still accessible. It is a FORMIDABLE Complex Action (75 vs. *Alertness + Technical Engineering / Hacking*) to defeat the computer security

and release the clamps. Each roll costs one-sixth of a minute (10 seconds) of time. When the PCs' ship is free, they can finally flee. However, their ship has taken heavy damage during the battle. Her Wounds are equal to half her Life Points and she suffers a -2 step Attribute penalty on all subsequent rolls.

However, if the ship's engines have been destroyed in previous scene, the PCs cannot repair them in time. They have to steal an Alliance shuttle. Hot-wiring it is a FORMIDABLE Complex Action (75 vs. *Alertness + Covert / Appropriate Specialty*). Each roll costs one-sixth of a minute (10 seconds) of time. When the shuttle is powered up, the PCs can open the hangar doors by remote.

When the PCs leave the I.A.V. Middenburg, read:

The Black is filled with what must be an armada of at least a dozen ships. Some of them are small and deformed, others are large and bizarrely shaped. The Reavers' repulsive vessels are cobbled together from captured craft, battered, and torn. The skeletal remains of victims adorn their hulls.

The I.A.V. Middenburg's cannons lay down a heavy automated barrage on those abominations of spaceships while her small and maneuverable fighters engage them desperately to make sure that the lifeboats that have been launched can slip through the enemy line.

A frenzied, confusing battle, an ecstasy of irrational and inhumane destruction, rages all around you. The Reavers

attack the cruiser furiously, asking no quarter and giving none. It is safe to assume that numerous Reaver ships have rammed Middenburg which has left her scarred and badly wounded. By the looks of it, she is about to die a wretched death.

Piloting the ship through the raging battle is a HARD Complex Action (55 vs. the ship's *Agility + the pilot's Pilot / Appropriate Specialty*). Each roll costs one turn of time. The pilot may speed up the process by taking the risk of making multiple actions in a turn, but at the normal penalties for multiple actions (i.e., if three Skill rolls are taken in one turn the penalty to each roll is at -2 Skill steps). The PCs will leave the battle behind more quickly if they move rapidly, but the downside of using speed is that, once per turn, they must roll to avoid a collision with a randomly determined hazard such as another craft or debris. Avoiding such a collision is a free reaction. The obstacle's size, speed, and course set the Difficulty for each ship's *Agility + the pilot's Pilot / Appropriate Specialty* roll. This roll must take into account any and all other multiple action penalties in effect for that turn. Failing a roll to avoid an obstacle means that the ship collides with it and takes damage. Although avoiding a hazard is a free action, players may choose to fly slower to reduce the Multiple Action penalty. Roll a d10 to determine the obstacle's size and base Difficulty for the pilot's roll to avoid it.

d10 Roll	Size	Pilot Difficulty
1	Gigantic	INCREDIBLE (23)
2 – 3	Colossal	HEROIC (19)
4 – 5	Huge	FORMIDABLE (15)
6 – 7	Large	HARD (11)
8 – 9	Medium	AVERAGE (7)
10	Small	EASY (3)

Roll a d8 to determine the obstacle's speed and modify the Difficulty accordingly.

d8 Roll	Speed	Difficulty Modifier
1	Very High	+8
2 – 3	High	+4
4 – 5	Medium	±0
6 – 7	Slow	-4
8	Stationary	-8

Roll a d6 to determine the final modifier based on the movement vectors of the obstacle and the PCs' ship.

d6 Roll	Direction	Difficulty Modifier
1 - 2	Moving Toward	+4
3 - 4	Moving Perpendicular	±0
5 - 6	Moving Away	-4

If the Difficulty drops below EASY (3), no roll is required to avoid the obstacle.

Failing a Pilot Skill roll to avoid an obstacle means that the PCs' ship collides with it.

The Difficulty is treated as an attack roll, while the Skill roll made to avoid the obstacle is treated as a defense roll.

Damage type is Basic.

The Reavers have lost control of themselves, making frenzied attack against whatever they see as a cause of trouble.

Unless the PCs' ship is armed and the PCs use these weapons, they are not attacked since their ship does not pose a threat to the bloodthirsty Reavers.

Fifteen minutes after the computerized warning has been issued for the first time, a series of soundless explosions rock the spinning derelict. Then Middenburg blows

up. The explosion deals 3d12 points of spacecraft-scale Wound damage to every ship within *Point Blank* range. Boats beyond *Point Blank*, but within *Short* range take one die less. Keep moving out one Range Category at a time, always removing the die with the highest result until no more dice are left.

Once the PCs' ship has cleared the battle, they are free to go wherever they please.

They should decide quickly where to go because their ship has to be repaired soon.

To determine the cost to repair one Wound, divide the original ship's purchase price by a number equal to twice its Life Points.

Multiply the quotient as follows:

Vitality	Multiplier	Vitality	Multiplier
d2	x 2	d8	x 0.66
d4	x 1.5	d10	x 0.5
d6	x 1	d12	x 0.33

A seriously damaged Firefly, for example, has taken 4 Wounds. As per table 5:12:

Healing Difficulty & Wounds, her mechanic must succeed at an EASY (15) Complex action to repair her. The cost of spare parts is 968 credits.

Because there is still cargo, not to mention 600 Credits' worth of stolen protein packs, in the PCs' ship cargo hold and since they may have rescued at least some of the NPCs, Greenleaf is as good a port of call as any. Selling the protein packs will be a HARD (11) feat (*Willpower + Covert* or *Influence / Streetwise*). Selling the Allied laser side-arms the PCs got a hold of will be a FORMIDABLE (15) task.

Regardless of which world the PCs set a course for, their players are now awarded with three to six Advancement Points.

THE END

FOLKS AND RASCALS

EMILY BATES

Agi d8, Str d6, Vit d6, Ale d10, Int d10, Wil d8;

Initiative d8+d10, Life Points 14

Traits: Cortex Specter (Major Asset), Talented: Performance / Acting (Minor Asset), Portly (Minor Complication), Prejudice: Purple Bellies (Minor Complication), Traumatic Flashes (Minor Complication)

Skills: Animal Handling d2, Athletics d2, Covert d6 / Disable Devices d8 / Open Locks d8, Stealth d8, Discipline d4, Craft d6 / Cooking d8, Guns d4, Influence d6 / Conversation d8, Knowledge d4, Medical Expertise d2, Mechanical Engineering d2, Melee Weapon Combat d2, Perception d6 / Hearing d8, Performance d6 / Acting d8, Technical Engineering d2

Description: Emily Bates is the personification of a middle-aged and dumpy little woman with brown hair drawn into a tight bun. However, in rare unguarded moments she reveals a rather severe expression.

Background: A tormented survivor of the Flagstaff Massacre, Emily Bates' real name is Cassandra Hartford, but she has not used that name for so long that even she doesn't recognize it anymore. To disappear she assumed her new name of which there are almost no records in the Cortex. Being a ghost that is gliding through the system unseen has greatly assisted Bates in her unrelenting drive as avenger of not only her own murdered family, but of all the lost souls of Flagstaff.

SIR BASIL PROTHEROE

Agi d8, Str d6, Vit d8, Ale d6, Int d10, Wil d10;

Initiative d8+d6, Life Points 18

Traits: Friends in High Places (Minor Asset), Highly Educated (Minor Asset), Moneyed Individual (Major Asset), Branded (Minor Complication), Hooked: Alcohol (Minor Complication), Traumatic Flashes (Major Complication)

Skills: Athletics d6, Covert d4, Craft d2, Discipline d6, Guns d6, Heavy Weapons d4, Influence d4, Knowledge d6, Linguist d2, Mechanical Engineering d4, Medical Expertise d2, Melee Weapon Combat d4, Perception d6, Planetary Vehicles d4, Survival d2, Technical Engineering d2, Unarmed Combat d4

Description: Basil Protheroe is a stocky, ruddy-faced, and prematurely grey man in his mid-thirties. He seems to be an upper-crust nobleman who wears fine clothes, is sleekly handsome and has a strong code of behaviour. Protheroe may seem a mite pretentious and arrogant sometimes, but he does have a certain amount of shy and introverted charm.

Background: The Protheroe family has maintained an almost Victorian lifestyle for centuries, to include the tradition of insisting their third son Basil join the military because it was expected of him. His inability to control his soldiers resulted in him being found partially responsible for the Flagstaff Massacre. Protheroe was all but disowned by his family and he has led a lonely existence fortified by alcohol since the court-martial.

ANDREW LIN

Agi d6, Str d6, Vit d6, Ale d10, Int d8, Wil d8;

Initiative d6+d10, Life Points 14

Traits: Highly Educated (Minor Asset), Sharp Sense: Hearing (Minor Asset), Steady Calm (Minor Asset), Easy Mark (Major Complication), Loyal (Minor Complication), Non-Fightin' Type (Minor Complication)

Skills: Animal Handling d2, Artistry d4, Athletics d4, Craft d6, Discipline d6, Guns d2, Influence d6, Knowledge d6, Linguist d2, Mechanical Engineering d2, Perception d6 / Hearing d8, Performance d4, Planetary Vehicles d4, Technical Engineering d2, Unarmed Combat d2

Description: Andrew Lin is a handsome young blond Eurasian man of average height and physique. He is always meticulously groomed and impeccably dressed. Although probably unknown to all but the highly educated, Lin's garb and manner are the very epitome of a Victorian manservant.

Background: Lin has been in the Protheroe family service for more than 15 years, serving as Sir Basil's batman during the war... A time he refuses to speak about. He alone remained loyal to Protheroe after the trial and has closely shepherded Sir Basil ever since.

LOUISE BOYD

Agi d6, Str d4, Vit d4, Ale d8, Int d6, Wil d8;

Initiative d6+d6, Life Points 12

Traits: Allure (Minor Asset), Talented: Performance / Singing (Minor Asset), Coward (Minor Complication), Soft (Minor Complication)

Skills: Artistry d4, Athletics d4, Discipline d6, Influence d6 / Persuasion d8 / Seduction d8, Knowledge d4, Medical Expertise d2, Perception d6 / Empathy d8, Performance d6 / Singing d10 / Dancing d8, Survival d4, Unarmed Combat d4

Description: A tall, lithe woman more sultry than beautiful, Louise Boyd is nonetheless breathtaking. She has long, shimmering, jet black hair, with a stunning physique and piercing grey eyes that seem to look right through you as she sings.

Background: Louise Boyd's whole life has been dedicated to her singing career, but despite her charm and talent, true success has eluded her. She keeps to the Rim exclusively for reasons she refuses to share and manages to maintain a decent, if pay check to pay check existence.

SELMA WOODROW

Agi d6, Str d6, Vit d6, Ale d8, Int d10, Wil d8;

Initiative d6+d8, Life Points 14

Traits: Friend in Low Places (Minor Asset), Loyal (Minor Complication), Prejudice: Purple Bellies (Minor Complication)

Skills: Athletics d6, Covert d6 / Streetwise d10, Craft d4, Discipline d6, Guns d4, Influence d6 / Persuasion d8, Mechanical Engineering d4, Medical Expertise d2, Perception d6 / Intuition d8, Survival d4, Technical Engineering d2, Unarmed Combat d4

Description: About as nondescript as a woman can be, Selma has brown hair, brown eyes, and is of average height and weight. She is polite and an active conversationalist during meals, but otherwise keeps out of the way.

Background: While she doesn't broadcast her position on much of anything, she and her husband were obviously Browncoats during the Unification War. Not satisfied with the way the war ended, she and her husband now use more subtle means to strike back against the Alliance by smuggling goods to avoid what they consider to be unfair taxes. The Woodrows as don't see themselves as thugs. Nor are they thieves. They think of themselves as *mer*¹: people who make things happen, people who are going places. Selma is the brains and the spokesperson of the little outfit.

JESSE WOODROW

Agi d8, Str d10, Vit d10, Ale d10, Int d4, Wil d8;

Initiative d8+d10, Life Points 18

Traits: Intimidating Manner (Minor Asset), Mean Left Hook (Minor Asset), Military Rank (Minor Asset), Chip on the Shoulder (Minor Complication), Overconfident (Minor Complication), Prejudice: Purple Bellies (Minor Complication), Things Don't Go Smooth (Minor Complication)

Skills: Athletics d6 / Dodge d8 / Running d8, Covert d6 / Stealth d8, Discipline d6 / Leadership d8, Guns d6 / Pistol d8, Heavy Weapons d2, Influence d4, Medical Expertise d4, Mechanical Engineering d2, Melee Weapon Combat d4, Perception d6, Survival d4, Unarmed Combat d6

Description: Jesse Woodrow is a solid, beefy man. He boldly wears his Browncoat duster proclaiming his support of the Independents and is the only passenger who's wearing a gun and will remain armed unless ordered to either check his weapon or leave it in his cabin. Ever since the Browncoats lost the war, he's lived his life on that thin line most folk occupy just before they draw a gun and shoot someone.

Background: One of the first to volunteer to fight in the Unification War, Jesse survived the war as a decorated veteran. He is bitter and not above letting others know about it, but he usually keeps silent in order to maintain his cover as a merchant.

Gear: Pistol (DMG d6W, RNG 100, ROF 3, MAG 8); Knife (DMG d4W)

¹ "Intermediary"; "go-between"

SHEPHERD GEORGE BURROWS

Agi d6, Str d4, Vit d6, Ale d6, Int d8, Wil d6;

Initiative d6+d6, Life Points 12

Traits: Religiosity (Major Asset), Non-Fightin' Type (Minor Complication), Scrawny (Minor Complication)

Skills: Athletics d4, Covert d4, Craft d6, Discipline d4, Influence d6 / Persuasion d10, Conversation d8, Leadership d8, Knowledge d6 / Religion d10, Medical Expertise d2, Perception d6 / Empathy d8, Unarmed Combat d4

Description: Shepherd George Burrows is dressed in the red robes that, according to Buddhist tradition, are mended together from several pieces of cloth. The Bhikkhu¹ is sporting the shaved head of his faith. Shepherd Burrows is tall and almost painfully thin, but his eyes twinkle as if he is aware of something amusing that no one else knows. His faintly amiable grin conveys that impression as well.

Background: A devout monk for many years, Burrows has vowed to visit every inhabited planet in 'Verse and to bring the teachings of the Buddha to as many people as wish to hear them.

FEDERAL MARSHALS

Agi d8, Str d8, Vit d8, Ale d6, Int d6, Wil d6;

Initiative d8+d6, Life Points 14

Traits: Wears a Badge (Major Asset), Loyal (Minor Complication), Overconfident (Minor Complication)

Skills: Athletics d6 / Dodge d8, Covert d6 / Stealth d8 / Surveillance d8, Discipline d6 / Interrogation d8, Guns d6 / Pistol d8, Influence d4, Knowledge d6, Mechanical Engineering d2, Medical Expertise d2, Melee Weapon Combat d6, Perception d6, Technical Engineering d4, Unarmed Combat d4

Description: Federal Marshals are law enforcement officers whose bearings are very military. They live in a totally disciplined world where obedience is paramount and the will of the Parliament is mainly unquestioned. They deal with crimes that are outside the jurisdiction of local law enforcement. The primary mission of the Federal Marshals Service, however, is to protect and defend the 'Verse against terrorist threats, to uphold and enforce the criminal laws, and to provide leadership and criminal justice services to local law enforcement agencies.

Gear: Submachine Gun (DMG d6W, RNG 60, ROF 3², MAG 35); Pistol (DMG d6W, RNG 100, ROF 3, MAG 8); Stun Baton (DMG d2S); 2 Grenades, Flashbang (DMG 2d6B); Plate Vest (AR 4W, -1 Agi); Squad Helmet (AR 4W, -2 Ale)

¹ Fully ordained male Buddhist monastic

² Can fire single shot, burst, or autofire

SECURITY OFFICERS

Agi d6, Str d6, Vit d6, Ale d8, Int d6, Wil d6;

Initiative d6+d8, Life Points 12

Traits: Military Rank (Minor Asset), Loyal (Minor Complication), Overconfident (Minor Complication)

Skills: Athletics d4, Covert d4, Discipline d6, Guns d6 / Pistol d8, Influence d6, Knowledge d6 / Military Regulations d8, Mechanical Engineering d2, Medical Expertise d2, Melee Weapon Combat d4, Perception d6, Technical Engineering d2, Unarmed Combat d4

Description: Alliance security officers serve as a combination of soldier and police officer. They patrol sensitive areas, protect dignitaries, arrest law-breakers, and handle tactical engagements. In conflicts, security officers might separate warring factions or settle matters more directly. They are, however, trained to use the least amount of force to resolve a hostile situation.

Gear: Ballistic Mesh (AR 1W); Laser Pistol (DMG d10 W, RNG 100, ROF 3, MAG 10)

REAVERS

Agi d8, Str d10, Vit d10, Ale d8, Int d6, Wil d10;

Initiative d8+d8, Life Points 24

Traits: Fightin' Type (Major Asset), Tough as Nails (Major Asset), Sadistic (Major Complication)

Skills: Athletics d6, Covert d6 / Disable Devices d8 / Open Locks d8 / Stealth d8, Discipline d6, Guns d6 / Pistol d8, Mechanical Engineering d4, Perception d4, Pilot d4, Melee Weapon Combat d6 / Knives d10 / Club d8, Technical Engineering d2, Unarmed Combat d6 / Brawling d10

Description: Reavers are savage, brutal, and primal madmen whose contact with other humans is limited to combat, rape, torture, and murder. They are, however, able to cooperate and act purposefully. In fact, Reavers are known to raid ships and colonies to cannibalize, skin and kill anyone they find.

Gear: Pistol (DMG d6W, RNG 100, ROF 3, MAG 8); Knife (DMG d4W); Club (DMG d6B)

Special Notes: Reavers ignore the effects of Stun damage and do not suffer Wound penalties.

BOATS AND SHIPS

REAVER TRANS-U

Polaris Class Cargo Liner

Dimensions (L x B x H): 396 x 262 x 101 feet

Tonnage: 35,000 tons

Speed Class: 3 cruise / 7 hard-burn

Crew Complement: 15

Crew Stats: Attribute d8 + Skill d6

Crew Quarters: One double, fourteen single cabins

Fuel Capacity: 700 tons (400 hours)

Cargo Capacity: 21,000 tons

Armament: Four 200-pound long range missiles (d8 W). Twelve 100-pound medium range missiles (d6 W). Two magnetic grapplers.

Price: 420,000 Credits

Agi d6, Str d8, Vit d4, Ale d2, Int d2, Wil d6;

Initiative d6+d2, Life Points 14.

Traits: Fast Throttle (Major Asset), Gas Guzzler (Minor Complication), Ugly as Sin (Minor Complication).

Skills: Perception d2, Pilot d2.

Complexity: low; Maintenance Cost: 42,000 Credits per year.

ALLIANCE SHORT RANGE ENFORCEMENT VESSEL

ASREV

Dimensions (L x B x H): 83 x 48 x 20 feet

Tonnage: 40 tons

Speed Class: 5 cruise / 7 hard-burn

Crew: 5

Crew Stats: Attribute d8 + Skill d8

Crew Quarters: 4-seat cockpit, with 2 cramped bunks located behind

Fuel Capacity: 1 ton (600 hours)

Armament: Two 200-pound medium range missiles (d8 W). Six 100-pound short range missiles (d6 W). Twenty 10-pound short range missiles (jammers and decoys). One 1-pound point blank range autocannons (d6 W vehicle-scale).

Price: 3,400 Credits

Agi d10, Str d2, Vit d6, Ale d6, Int d4, Wil d4;

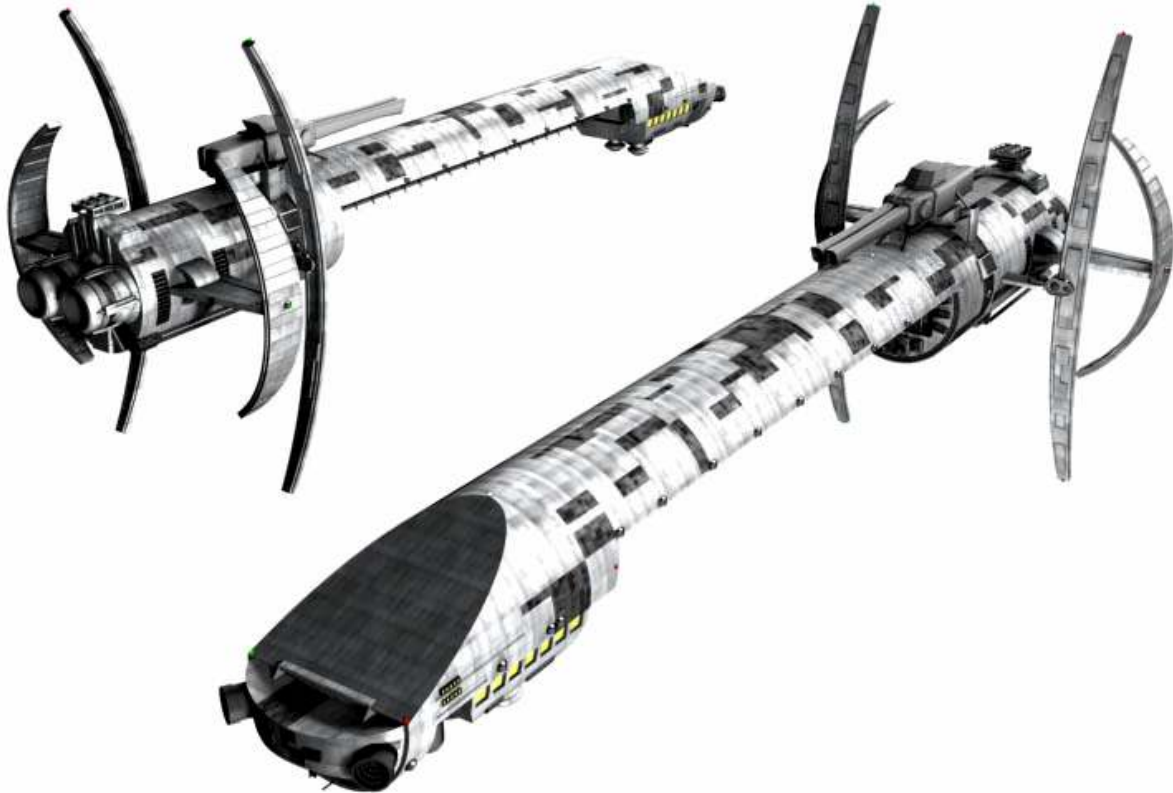
Initiative d10+d6, Life Points 6.

Traits: Everybody Has One (Minor Complication).

Skills: Perception d4, Pilot d4.

Complexity: average; Maintenance Cost: 80 Credits per year.

I.A.V. MIDDENBURG



Longbow Class Patrol Cruiser

Dimensions (L x B x H): 2,200 x 700 x 900 feet

Tonnage: 640,000 tons

Speed Class: 3 cruise / 5 hard-burn

Crew Complement: 24,000

Crew Stats: Attribute d8 + Skill d8

Crew Quarters: 1,500 eight-bunk dorms, 2,000 quad cabins, 2,000 double cabins, 15 single cabins

Fuel Capacity: 24,000 tons (1,200 hours)

Cargo Capacity: 24,000 tons

Passenger Quarters: 550 quad cabins, 500 double cabins, 20 single cabins

Armament: Two hundred and eight 100-pound long range missiles (d6 W). One hundred and sixty 200-pound medium range missiles (d8 W). One thousand two hundred and eighty 10-pound short range missiles (jammers and decoys). One 200-pound short range cannon (d8 W spacecraft-scale). Twelve 1-pound point black range autocannons (d6 W vehicle-scale). Armor 4W. Eighteen *Warhammer*-Class Interceptors. Six ASREVs.

Price: 48,160,000 Credits

Agi d6, Str d10, Vit d8, Ale d6, Int d8, Wil d10;
Initiative d6+d6, Life Points 20.

Traits: Fuel Efficient (Minor Asset), Memorable (Minor Complication).

Skills: Athletics d4, Perception d4, Pilot d4, Heavy Weapons d4.

Complexity: very high, Maintenance Cost: 3,072,000 Credits per year.

When the Alliance wishes to maintain a serious presence in an area without dedicating a full-blown Alliance Cruiser, it will send a Longbow Patrol Cruiser and several supporting vessels. The ship has the speed and manoeuvrability of a much smaller vessel, as well as the armaments and fighter screen to fulfil many roles. Commander Akana's cruiser is on standard patrol duty when the automated distress call is intercepted.

ALLIANCE LIFEBOAT

Dimensions (L x B x H): 17 x 15 x 13 feet

Tonnage: 10 tons

Speed Class: 1 (reaction thrusters only)

Crew: None

Life Support: 42 man-days

Fuel Capacity: 1 ton (1,200 hours)

Passenger Capacity: 6

Price: 150 Credits

Agi d2, Str d2, Vit d6, Ale d4, Int d6, Wil d2,

Initiative d2+d2, Life Points 4.

Traits: Sharp Sense: Radio (Minor Asset), Short Range (Minor Complication), Slow Throttle (Major Complication).

Skills: Perception d6, Pilot d6.

Complexity: very low, Maintenance Cost: 8 Credits per year.

ALLIANCE SHUTTLE

Short-Range Shuttle

Dimensions (L x B x H): 25 x 13 x 10 feet

Tonnage: 20 tons

Speed Class: 1 cruise / 3 hard-burn (reaction thrusters only)

Crew: Pilot, Copilot

Life Support: 20 man-days

Fuel Capacity: 1 ton (1,000 hours)

Passenger Capacity: 8

Price: 480 Credits

Agi d8, Str d2, Vit d6, Ale d2, Int d2, Wil d4;

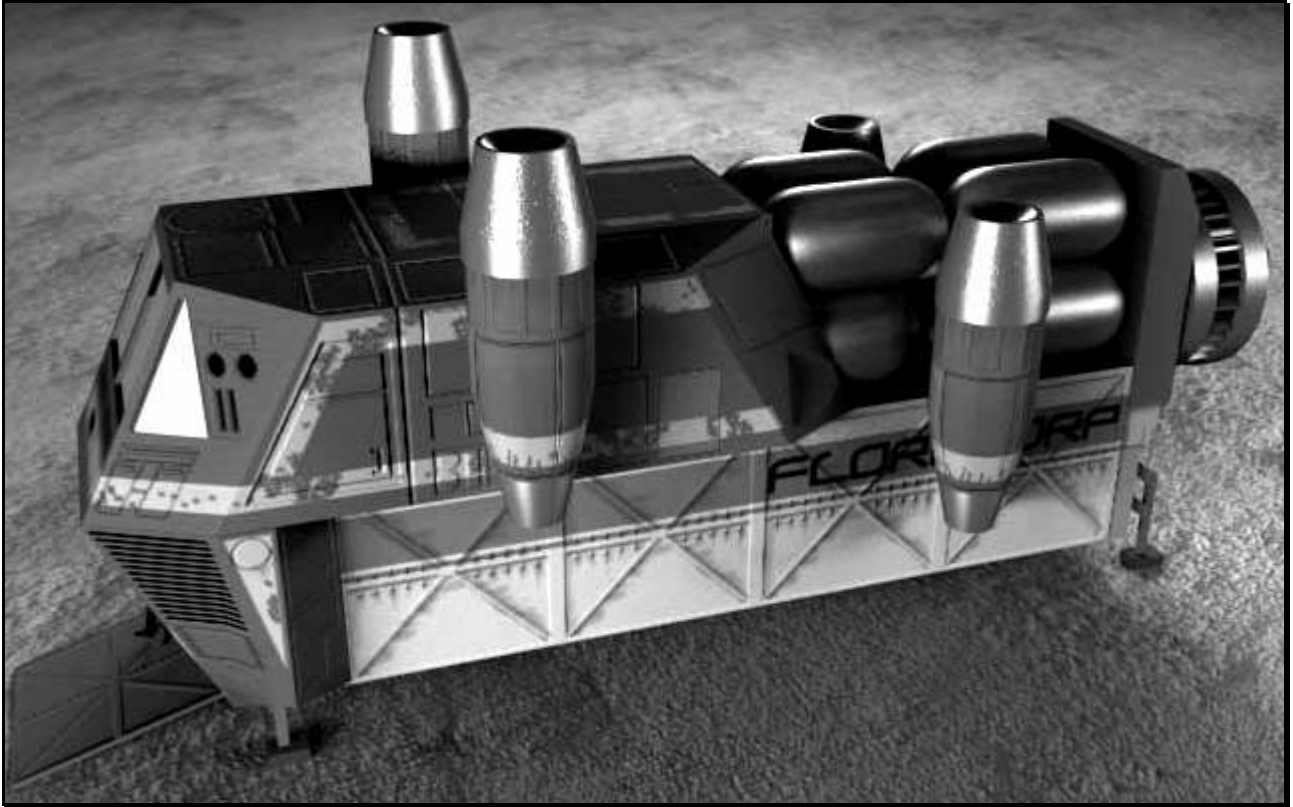
Initiative d8+d2, Life Points 6.

Traits: Healthy as a Horse (Minor Asset), Short Range (Minor Complication).

Skills: Pilot d4.

Complexity: very low, Maintenance Cost: 16 Credits per year.

REAVER SHUTTLE



Heavily Modified Wren Class Transport

Dimensions (L x B x H): 60 x 25 x 20 feet

Tonnage: 100 tons

Speed Class: 4 cruise / 8 hard-burn

Crew: Pilot, Copilot

Fuel Capacity: 10 tons (400 hours)

Passenger Capacity: 4

Armament: Two 50-pound short range missiles (d4 W). One 20-pound cannon with 100 rounds (Basic damage only).

Price: 11,800 Credits (including ammunition)

Agi d4, Str d4, Vit d6, Ale d4, Int d2, Wil d4;

Initiative d4+d4, Life Points 8.

Traits: Fast Throttle (Major Asset), Gas Guzzler (Minor Complication), Seen Better Days (), Ugly as Sin (Minor Complication).

Skills: Perception d2, Pilot d2.

Complexity: very low, Maintenance Cost: 120 Credits per year.

Special Notes: Reaver ships run "hot". They operate without engine core containment and leak harmful radiation. Exposed characters suffer d2 Stun damage each day. When Stun reaches a character's maximum Life Points, he begins to suffer d2 Wound damage each day.