

### === Season Three Episode One =====

Wounds: Rynna: 2, Gil: 1, Aleya: 1, Dapper Dan: 2 (-1 Str die until healed)

Suggest use of Persuasion.

Verify what they wanted to do with the dead people's money and stuff (\$835). Place Digger on the board.

Stitch calls down from Burroughs' ship and says that the two tunnels just "filled themselves in", and about 5 seconds later the power goes out. They also hear groaning from the north hall. Dust starts to sweep in from the north hall at 7 squares a turn. If they let the dust catch up, their movement will be further slowed by -2 spaces and must make a Vigor roll or suffer a Fatigue level.

They had better leave by Digger's tunnel...will they try to take the bodies of Hush, Chicken Pot Pie, and El Greco with them? Roll Strength to drag at normal Pace (no running), or -2 Pace to drag. Once they're in Digger's tunnels they are safe.

When Deuce hears about their plans to divvy up the dead fellows' money, he tells the group it would be more appropriate to donate it to charity. He hopes that when he dies, his friends won't think to plunder his earthly goods. He also announces that he's decided to join Mother Graham, since they lost a lot of men in their cavalry. He doesn't know how to ride but he figures he can learn.

Granola also announces that he is leaving the group to help rebuild the mill. He was deeply affected by Bob's awe of hydro-technology and would like to do something that will help the inhabitants of Deep Well Three.

Shade calls into the group via the hyperspace relay; he will pay the group two jump juices to bring the engineers and their helicopter back to him.

When they get out of the ship a sky limo is waiting for them. At the helm is very minute woman who introduces herself as **Squeak**. She is a streetwise ace.

As they fly through the city, something seems intangibly...better. When they drive through streets the people seem happier. The city isn't as dirty. Where you used to see people plodding slowly or standing lazily on the streets, you now see people moving about with direction. It's not shiny-happy Disney-style, it just feels less depressed.

Squeak mentions that she's been Shade's driver for several years now, but both he and she decided it was time for her to move on. Shade is now driving himself around, and Squeak has

been yearning for adventure. Shade suggested that she join the team to see if she could live her dream. They'll talk about it later.

When they get to Shade's mansion, they are greeted with an even stranger sight: the usual identical bodyguards are not standing as sentries by the front door.

When they get inside they see a young man in a business suit at Shade's desk...when they realize it is Shade...just not so sallow and worn. He instead looks confident, engaged, and healthy. He's lost a lot of weight and his clothes fit him.

If they ask about what's going on, he says in general he just feels safer and that things seem to be changing in his life for the better. If asked about what's going on across Crossroads, he says he suspects it's the economy, but he says it's true, he feels that Crossroads is "coming into its own."

He sees Astrid occasionally, but not as a girlfriend anymore. He says he knows that there is a good woman out there for him somewhere and that he is sure they will find each other. Though he still has deep affection for Astrid and cares for her, he just doesn't feel like he needs her anymore.

"All my insecurities have just washed away in the last month or so. I can't explain it."

"I've always made connections, but now I'm making friends."

Shade hears about how the team lost a large number of members, and suggests meeting some "new blood." One of them is his personal trainer, **V8**. V8 used to be an athletic trainer at the monastery and was involved in many sports, and is also trained in sports medicine. He'd been working with Shade for a while but with recent improvements in Shade's health, he doesn't need as much physical therapy. V8 is very upbeat and regards a human's body as a temple, quite literally, and find it sacrilege to desecrate anyone else's temple...he's a pacifist.

Shade sits the team down and tells them he wants to go over the mission. It's based around a man named Faller.

An unassuming man in a wheelchair wheels himself out of the shadows. "I'm **Faller**," he says. "Hear my story."

## **FALLER'S STORY**

He prefaces the story by saying that he has been made out to be a liar, a coward, and a terrorist. To be certain, he says, he is none of these things, well, perhaps a coward. There are some things he will not tell, but that is only because he will not tell a lie.

Ten years ago, Faller was fortunate enough to be a passenger on the largest luxury passenger ship of the time: the **Magellanic Majesty**.

"The ship had been traveling conventionally from Icarus to Promise, and was ready to make the jump to the Antares Nebula. Dinner had been served in the aft dining room and the guests were lounging, lost in conversation after their dinners.

Above the dining room spanned a large observation dome or "spacelight." I had finished my meal and was watching as the ship initiated the jump window. There it formed ahead: a thin slit, vertical to our orientation to start, and it shortened and widened as we approached it: a standard jump window formation.

But I knew something was wrong. I cannot tell you how I know. But I could calculate in my head that our ship was not going to completely make it through--the window would close partway through the ship, severing it, leaving some of the aft in this space, and all the remaining fore on the other side of the jump.

I called out in crisis to those about me: some wait staff rushed to assure me that such a thing was not possible. There hasn't been a severing of a commercial ship in hundreds of years, they said, and tried to restrain me. One held a sedative; I broke free, at the expense of the man's nose. I instinctively made my way to a utility closet and broke in. There was a single pressure suit there, but no mag boots. No matter, I began to suit up. Once I had the suit on, I knew I had only seconds left: the best I could hope for was to somehow assist in sealing the dinner compartment.

But I arrived back at the dining hall only to the the window closing fast upon us, and some halted cries emerged from the crowd. I grabbed hold of a railing at the rear of the hall--and watched as the front half of the compartment suddenly disappeared--replaced only with blackness and stars. A huge flurry arose as all the contents of the room were vacated into space...I held on the best I could but too was flung out, violently.

The utter silence was shocking...I could only hear the crinkling of my suit against itself and a kind of rustling sound which soon abated. I was thrown in such a fashion as I could see the severed aft of the ship behind me, seeming to fall away, then watching as some fuel ignited and a massive explosion ensued, the thrust of which pushed me even further away, debris hitting my suit but not puncturing its seal.

I saw no other suited such as myself.

I watched for about forty minutes, I am told, before the first responses came. They quickly found me due to a beacon located on the suit, and the rescuers, confused, were surprised at my stable condition. I had seriously injured my legs in the series of concussions.

The stories in the media, I found out later, first spoke of a miraculous survivor. But I did not know of this story, for I was in the hands of the police and other investigators. I didn't have proper credentials, and my story didn't make sense to them. My background came up a blank. Worse, I had blood on me, which they identified as belonging to one of the crew: the man who had tried to sedate me. They didn't believe for a second what I told them of the ship being severed; they thought it had simply been destroyed by a bomb.

The thing of it was, they never looked for the ship. They assumed that the debris was from the entire ship. They never took what I described as fact at all.

The media story turned from one of miraculous survival to one of a villain: a liar, coward, a terrorist. Though they could not convict me on terrorism charges, they locked me up for seven years for presenting false credentials and for perjury. I was given no particular medical attention with regard to healing my legs, so they are now useless to me.

I was released three years ago at the end of my sentence, to little fanfare. I was placed aboard a military ship, as cargo essentially, and relegated to Crossroads, the land from which my forged passport claimed I was from. Crossroads is luckily neither kind nor unkind, but indifferent, and I have lived here in squalor ever since.

My life has been one of tedium, my life in my apartment not much different from that in my prison cell. But I have made some friends in the building, and spend time at the bar and at other nearby locations.

There is one fact, one occurrence that I will now recall to you that I had not divulged to my interrogators. I have my own reasons for this. When I was milling about during dinner, I noticed a man who had some very odd shoes. I thought nothing of it, but in that flash of a moment before the dining hall was rent in half, I glimpsed those same boots: the man was, like me, in a pressure suit--an almost-perfect reflection of myself...the mirror just about to be broken.

The man, to my recollection, had long, coarse dark hair, drawn into a ponytail. A thin face, perhaps a little worn and pock-marked. It would be unfair to say that I could see a sneer under that pressure-suit mask, but that is the impression I had...he exuded a confidence that indicated to me that he knew full well the precise location of the slice, whereas I had only a guess.

It was only that--and the chaos brought on by the sudden vacuum.

The reason for telling this whole tale is that last week, I was [down at the market]...and I saw that very man! Though ten years had passed, there was no doubt in my mind that, rummaging around the mangoes, was the very man that had stared at me across the room...so close, then separated by, one presumes, many light years.

The vision of the man, for long the epitome of villainy--certainly, my nemesis--picking the ripe fruit from the raw, confounded me. I dared not approach him; I'm not sure my arms would have propelled me if I'd tried. I watched him in a daze for about five minutes, then saw him turn and stalk off quickly into the crowd. At my low vantage point, and my wheeled encumbrance, I saw no need, or ability, to chase. I cursed my condition, and, mind in a horror, knew not where to turn.

As have many before, my troubles were brought to the forum of the closing-hour bartender, in this case the one on the first floor of my apartment building. I could not tell him the worst of the details of my story, but rather simply that I had spotted my nemesis and I didn't know what to do. The bartender said he "knew a guy who knew things..." Shade.

When I talked to Shade, realized I was talking with a man who had immense knowledge, of all spheres of society. I told him the entire story...just as I have told you. He did some research and found the man: going under the name of "**Jona**" and recently come to Crossroads. The most important fact: Jona has booked himself on the Wayfarer, a luxury sightseeing spaceship. He recognized my fragile condition, and figured that whatever I decided to do, I would need help. I guess that's why he called you.

For reasons I cannot get into, I must know more about this man. Specifically, where is he going with this ship, and what is he going to do with it?

## **SHADE'S MISSION**

Shade asks Faller if he can speak with the group privately. Faller wheels himself out of the room.

Shade says that they guy's story checks out, including the part about Jona, and he has no reason to disbelieve him. Shade says he figures that the location of the slice was intentional...it would cut off the main thrusters but not damage most of the rest of the ship, making it easy capture, especially with most of the crew blown out.

Why one would want to steal a ship...? No one knows. It would be a grand prize, with most of the ship intact one would only need to repair the aft hull and affix good thrusters. The primary engine and its jump juice would be very useful. It could be converted to a warship, or made to house a thousand people...many possibilities really.

Shade says he is planning the most dangerous mission of all: he wants the team to go aboard as passengers and follow this man to wherever he is going. If they can find a way to save "an appropriate amount of passengers," then good. Wherever this guy went, he lived through it, and it would be very useful to know where he had gone...and why.

Shade also points out that the technology needed to displace a hyperspace envelope is something beyond our knowledge of the universe.

Shade will pay the team a total of \$150,000 to board the **Wayfarer**, follow Jona to his destination, then somehow make it back. He will entrust \$25,000 (\$50,000) up front, the rest to be paid upon returning. If they don't figure out where it's going, they just keep the \$25k. If they do nothing he'll want all his money back.

He cautions the group that they should work with Faller, but not necessarily trust him or do what he says. For example, if he wants to kill Jona before the jump, the group should prevent him. Killing Jona after the jump isn't that great either, he'd like to know who this guy is and what is he up to. Terrorism? Piracy? Theft? And why has it been a whole ten years since this last event that he's decided to show up again?

Now, some logistics. You can't expect to fly another ship like the Hyperion through the jump window. It would throw off the calculations and land you somewhere else, and anyway the ship wouldn't jump with anyone else around.

Also, you can't take any weapons aboard the ship. None. You and your luggage will both be searched extensively.

(There is the possibility of arranging for your orbital shuttle to be attached to the side, for \$15,000. It too will be searched extensively.)

Of course the other obvious problem is how to get back. That, he figures, you'll have to improvise on your own.

Other than that, he has very little to tell. He brings Faller back in.

Shade will exchange the team's typical credits for a (SBEDE) Scarce But Evenly Distributed Element that can be exchanged by most cultures as payment.

### **=== NEW MEMBERS =====**

Shade then takes them to a nearby entertainment hub, where they are met with a barrage of lights and advertisements. They go into a "Museum of the Martial Arts," which houses both historical weapons and dioramas and related exhibits, but also has a "live arts" section. There is a sumo match going on, and they watch as Shade bets on **Ka** to win. To win you must win three of the following: opposed Fighting roll, or Strength roll, or Strength vs. Agility. If Ka wins he'll take challengers.

Ka introduces himself to the team and admits that his life has become stale. Doing demonstrations at a museum is not a true test of his martial artistry, and rather than joining a

gang he wondered if there was a slightly less illegal line of work. "I know these guys that get in fights all the time!"

Shade then takes the group to a matinee at an old-style vaudeville show called The Family Theatre, where nude cigarette ladies walk the aisles. They are seated in the front row. There is a comedian who rolls a d6 Persuasion to try to get the audience to laugh. This act is then followed by **The Great Ridolfi**, and escape artist. The emcee asks for a volunteer to pick the lock on some handcuffs. (These are impossible handcuffs, but they are swapped by TGR (Stealth) with a pair of easy locks, Notice by the person who tried the handcuffs to see vs Stealth.) Then TGR is handcuffed, has a bag put over his head, and is suspended upside-down by a slowly descending rope into flames. He has three turns in which to make two necessary actions: to lockpick the cuffs (+2, they are easy locks), then he must make an Agility roll to untie his feet from the rope and swing safely away. If he nears the flames, he is actually dropped through the floor and onto a cushion.

A showgirl (veronica, or a volunteer) then is placed on a rotating platform and it is rotated. TGR is "blindfolded" and throws five knives between each of her appendages. If he misses he goes wide, roll d4: 1 will hit the appendage to the left, 2 will hit open space, 3 will hit the appendage to the right, and 4 will hit the body.

If he screws up, he will make idiotic excuses, blame the comedian, etc. He will always speak of himself in the third person.

Shade introduces him to the group. As you can see, the Family Theatre is not a good place for TGR. (Shade pulls you aside and says that actually TGR was fired and owes the manager a lot of money, so he's finding a polite way to get him off the planet.)

Finally, Shade takes the team to the Crossroads Amateur Free-Form Fencing Competition (CAFFFC). They are ushered to their seats in an otherwise packed auditorium facing a fencing row. It is the final competition. The incumbent champion enters to applause, but then the newcomer, **Lady Turk**, enters with even more uproarious applause. The emcee announces that she was unseeded in the tournament and has raced to the top. She is wielding a rapier in her right hand and a dagger in her left. They put down their helmets, and begin. Instead of drawing wounds, they draw points for each hit, success, and raise (no shaking). First to 5 wins.

The team needs to decide what their plan is. The Wayfarer leaves in 5 days (natural healing).

### === WAYFARER =====

The Wayfarer is a large cruiseliner, much like today's water-borne cruiseliners. Most of the passengers are wealthy or retired, spending thousands just to see the wonders of the universe close up. It's fairly easy to make a safe jump to many nebulae, etc, because really you're not getting that close, and it doesn't matter if you land a little off course.

Captain Looftuin speaks to the passengers and wishes them a happy voyage. The team takes about five days and nights to get to a good jump location. (natural healing)

In the meantime, Jona may recognize Faller, and if the team doesn't approach him, he may approach them. He warns them not to try to stop him. If they try to convince him of trying to save the passengers, he feels some remorse and will try to think of a way to save them. His stance is Uncooperative (p 27). However, he is worried about having to deal with the crew, and either way he doesn't want anyone to transmit information about the true "demise" of the ship to others. He will insist that the rear compartment still be damaged so that the crew cannot suddenly make an emergency jump from the thwarted destination.

One example of a plan would be to create a small hull breach the moment after the hyperspace envelope has opened. There would be general chaos, but it would give people some opportunity to remove themselves to a central area of the ship, or have assistance with getting pressure suits on.

Jona admits that he probably should have been less cruel in his last plot, but that "desperate times called for desperate measures" and he wanted to make sure nothing went "wrong."

### === HADES NEBULA =====

When they arrive on the other end of the jump, Jona makes his way to the bridge to ensure there is no one remaining, then sends out a transmission. About half an hour later, 8 almond-shaped search bots move in. They present themselves vertically relative to the ship's orientation, and have two bright search lights on their upper halves. They perform a basic scan of the ship, and contain only the ability shock and robotic arms.

They are soon followed by a small, lightly armored ship. Jona approaches this ship as it lands on the fore docking bay, just in front of the bay for the team's ship. Another half hour later a large ship, clearly the original captured ship, modified with weaponry and armor, pulls alongside, and tethers are run between the two ships along which transport vessels are run.

If Jona has made contact with the team or other survivors, he will politely have them escorted by armed guards aboard one of these tethered transports.

The team is housed in an auditorium on the old ship, and those that are having emotional issues are removed to other quarters. Jona may address this whole group and describe that they are prisoners of a desperate war, but need not be prisoners if they join his cause.

He describes that the **Hades Nebula** system had been technologically superior to the First Frontier that everyone has lived in. They may have remembered in their history that a group called The Contingent had stayed on Earth as a backup plan; this Contingent consisted of over



50 million people. The Contingent was meant to join the settlers on the Frontier, but a diplomatic crisis arose that made the Contingent go elsewhere. Where they had gone they never communicated to the Frontiers. They had come here, to the Hades Nebula system, and established democratic and technologically focused settlements. These settlements, across nine planets, flourished for over 600 years, until just about twelve years ago.

It started with a teenage pop star, known now only as **Pure**. A household favorite on a singing competition show, she had a preternatural ability to seize the reins of power. When she turned 18, she had already turned the courts to rule that an 18-year-old woman could be president, and was soon elected president of all **Agronia**. Agronia was possibly the least relevant of all Hades' planets politically, but within two years, through political power and the backing of force, Agronia became the de-facto center of all activity. And so it has remained since then.

Jona was a captain of a barge during the Zweihund Incident...a trade embargo was being enforced by Agronia against Zweihund, which had put up a fleet to rival any in the system. Agronia sent a light fleet, with Pure aboard an unarmed diplomatic vessel, which met with our fleet's commander.

My radio had been on the fritz, but I had watched the movement of the vessels around me. I felt a thrill of victory as the Agronian vessels turned about against our mighty fleet...then let out a shocked cry as I saw half of our ships retract their armaments and follow them...while the other half began overpowering their engines, to the point of their own destruction within the next few minutes.

Such was it everywhere Pure went. Entire armies would fall at her presence, and amount of ammo, armor, or propaganda could keep her from gaining the trust and control of all planetary factions.

As for me, I transmitted a standard radio-wave morse code message: Follow Me Far Away, and a few of the non-military ships did. We have spent the last ten years in hiding, never posing a true threat to Pure's reign, but never free from her watchful eye either. We could have left for other systems, to be sure, and cobbled together new lives for ourselves, but we could not do so knowing Pure is lording over what was a once peaceful and flourishing land.

The lands are still peaceful, I guess, if peace is never questioning authority, never speaking out of turn, or speaking ill of the Empress. Always looking over one's shoulder, always feeling the probing of one's mind, always feeling your life is a privilege and not a right.

You may have already guessed something of Pure's special ability. She, and now many of her followers, have found how to tap the mind's capability for Psionic transmission and reception...simply, the ability to project and receive other's thoughts unaided by technology. She just has an ability on a massive scale, and combined with megalomania, has formed an entire

empire whose purpose is to underscore her incredible power. This is why she hates us so: that we should not pay allegiance to her is disquieting.

So what is with this ship-stealing? Our forces were made of a thousand pilots in a thousand ships, hiding in the nooks of the asteroid belt, always individually at great risk, always burdened by having to coordinate these thousands of little ships. We needed something large that could be a base of operations. It needed jump capability, and the ability to house thousands. To capture such a ship in the Hades Nebula system, especially these days, would be almost impossible. But we could break an old custom and go to the Frontier and steal one of their ships. I grant you, I know thousands died so we may have this ship. But for them it was a tragic accident, balanced against our race's extinction.

And so time has passed and our old ship has grown weary and worn. More important, we see new battles ahead. For we have now had a first contact with Frontiersmen...in Hades Nebula. A diplomatic detachment from a large commercial trade group--Blue Vector--has somehow found its way to our system--a feat somewhat unimaginable for Frontiersmen technology, no offense. However they found these star-charts, we don't know, but they did. And of course, they met with Pure to discuss trade agreements. One can imagine, with Pure's powers, that the agreements will no doubt somehow expand Pure's powers into the Frontier; something we have long wondered at.

Jona lines up the team and a young, short-haired blond woman with a fully prosthetic right leg walks along them, looking each in the eyes. As she looks at each they feel as if she is seeing into their soul. She consults with Jona briefly, then leaves. Roll a d6 although not necessary (although check for natural 1 for Shaken). She may pull aside JJ if she detects anything wrong.

Jona tells the team that he will grant them leave to go back to the Frontier on the condition that they prove themselves to him by engaging in a risky venture...they need to rescue some captured rebels.

It's believed they were taken to a nearby planetoid called **Rikis (reich-iss)** that is primarily a provincial area. One of Jona's men has a brother in the area and believes he knows where they are being held. There is an estate a few miles from the nearest village that had been owned by one of the aristocracy, but after Pure's rule it has been linked to the Ministry of Purity. The house has been pretty quiet for several months but it seems that it's been some sort of covert activity.

Jona sends his man "**Tailor**" along with the team, and they meet Jed's brother, "**Shepherd**." Shepherd tells the team about the situation on the ground. The estate where he suspects the others are held is **Groves Manor**, and the master of the estate is aptly named **Groves**. He is a local aristocrat who likes to schmooze with other nobility, and is known to come into the village frequently where he sometimes is thought of as "slumming it." However he is an amiable man and a ruthless gambler. Groves will use his Mind Reading or Fear psionics on his foes to gain

information from them from time to time. He also is very conversational and will often continue “losing” as a way of gaining information. He will engage in drinking contests as well (each loss is a Fatigue level).

Tailor says that he can’t do much “good” shopping for the crew. He can get various sundry items, but nothing like fancy weapons. He has a couple of revolvers, lots of different types of knives, a sniper rifle (Barret .50), a couple of pump shotguns, and various other kinds of typical rustic equipment.

The estate has been housing some individuals from the Ministry of Purity who keep mostly to themselves and do not come into town. They are holding their prisoners in a secret underground room that had been used as an ages-old hiding room for the aristocracy. There are two entrances: one is from a switch behind a false brick in the wine cellar, behind a Chateau de’Beaumont 2973, which releases locks on a grate on the floor; the other is from the center of the maze, where an angel with outstretched arms stands. You have to [sing three notes] then the angel slides back a few inches with a clicking sound, and may be pushed back with a regular Strength roll.

At the manor, the **Maze** may be navigated only by making a successful Smarts roll, even if assisted. A raise will allow you to reach the center, otherwise you end up at one of the exits or the center randomly. Otherwise you are lost in the maze for 1d4 turns. You can make a Strength roll to go through the maze, but can’t get to the center this way due to disorientation. If you fail your Strength roll you get Bumps and Bruises fatigue.

There is a helipad, an area to park cars, a lightly wooded area (thin, dense aspenlike trees about 20” tall, not climbable) with a small concrete-bottomed fishpond, a sculpture garden, a zen garden, flower gardens in front, a river in back, with a small dock for a dinghy, and a light grassy/sandy area along the river with a berm that the security detail uses to practice shooting.

In the **zen garden** there will be at one psionic any time of day or night. They will roll Notice to simply notice that there is someone new in the area; this is negated if there is a party going on; the psionics will mostly retreat from the psychic noise.

The psionics and the conventional security detail don’t quite get along due to the psionics being very smarts and the detail, not so much. The armed detail also sometimes disturbs the psionics with their target practice (although it provides them the opportunity to improve vs. being distracted).

Accessing the estate:

One or two of the crew may be able to get a job as one of the help. If Groves either believes that the team has one of high status, or alternately wants to trap the team, he will invite them personally to this manor, and/or throw a party.

Total of 5 Psi and 6 security (one of the security is a Wild Card named Jughead who generally is supervising the prisoners except for afternoon shift where is out)

Daytime/Morning/Evening: 2 Psionic, 2 security am...2 Psi, 1 security & Jughead pm

Nighttime: 1 Psionic, 2 security

Party: 1 Psionic attending covertly, two outside, one in the maze, Jughead at party dressed up.

Location: They will hang out in that area until 1 on a d8, then move elsewhere.

1 - Flower garden

2 - On dock

3 - In grove

4 - Bothering Psionic in Zen garden

5 - Shooting

6 - Sculpture garden

The security detail will have a Hostile reaction but will warn and try to capture any intruders non-lethally at first. They will rouse the others if there are intruders. The psionics will attempt a Mind Reading to detect the intruders' motives.

The makeshift prison is in a low-arched brick basement; each side of the prison has a locked steel door. The steel door can be Lockpicked with no penalty. There are five prisoners, and they are very compliant with their rescuers (they have all the traits of the other rebels). Jughead is at the "wine cellar" end of the prison, and will shoot or otherwise attempt to kill the prisoners, although they do have Cover of 2 due to the way the door is set up.

### **=== Season 3 Ep 2: FREEING THE PRISONERS =====**

It's about 8 pm now. Establish where Gil, The Great Ridolfi, and Ka are (arrive in a car?).

Damien/Squeak

Rynna/Tailor

Dapper Dan/V8

Aleya/Lady Turk

Notice that the guard's weapons are in his room in a small arms cabinet.

The monk that was in the zen garden read HOG's mind and was aware that he was wanting to free the prisoners. He tries to tell Groves, who is walking about the front lawn with Lady Turk, but depending, Groves has to return to the house and tries to gather everyone to watch a broadcast from Pure.

The security guard that is talking with Damien will trigger a roll comparing their Smarts; if they are about equal they will keep talking, if the difference is 4 or more the conversation will end appropriately.

If the monk is not given attention for his concerns, he may go to the maze himself to investigate the status of the prisoners.

Taylor gets a call that indicates that they should escort the prisoners directly to the spaceport: there's a shuttle that is ready to launch any time

Groves tells everyone that it is time for "the broadcast," and tells the House to display the screen showing Pure's concert. The broadcast of Pure is sung along by the various members; the crew will have to roll Smarts to fake singing along properly. If they don't all sing along properly they will be considered suspicious and modify their Attitude, which is currently Neutral for each character and will affect future Persuasion, etc. rolls.

Groves may drop some hint about not being able to shoot, or not having an interest in shooting.

The team has to come up with some sort of plan to get the prisoners out...

If they wait until 11:30, the late-night shift of guard will awake and check on the prisoners at midnight.

There are 2 Jeeps, 2 SUVs, and two random cars that the bad guys can commandeer; the other team can Lockpick these to get in and again to start the car, or use their own (Taylor has a car). It's 6 miles to the airport.

There may be a 5-round Chase through the following, with 4 Psi and 4 Security + Jughead:

- Down a hedge-lined road
- Through a farm and field (-1 driving) shortcut through the barn Driving -2 total: +1 card
- Through a forest path (-2 driving, shooting)
- Through the lumber camp (-1 driving) -3 Driving total to jump old bridge and get +2 cards.
- Through the village

Jeep: Toughness 7(1) TS 40 (2+3), SUV: 14(3) TS 40 (1+7), Sedan 11(3) TS 40 (1+4)

Chase: p94: Roll Driving to get Cards each chase turn

-2 Unstable Platform (unless steady hands)

Exceeds Toughness: Driving or Out of Control; Raise always wounds, Critical Hit for each wound. Amount of Armor is what is used for Cover. Did they do seat belts?

Groves is indifferent about his relationship with Pure's forces and is mostly concerned about not making enemies with them. As long as it seems he hasn't been negligent he feels he'll do OK. He may be as dastardly as to destroy the ministry forces and make it look like an accident to save his hide. [what has he been getting out of this relationship with the ministry?]

Panzerfaust: d4-4, 12/24/48, 4d8 MBT, 20 AP

Fuel Tanks: Toughness 10(4), 4d6 LBT, Glass walls toughness 3

Groves will be at the airport holding a Panzerfaust with 2 shots (reload needed)...which he will Aim (+2) directly between the two parties. He has no shooting so it's d4-4 normally, d4-2 if he aims for 10 seconds. If he misses, then it's either L/R by a cone's width off (1-3L, 4-6R), and if High then hits whatever is behind, if low then hits 4" in front of target (1-3 Low, 4-6 High). Cinder block is 14 Toughness. On the one hand, if he destroys the group & prisoners he may still be a hero in Pure's eyes, but on the other hand the prisoners will still be dead and Lady Turk as well. If he destroys Pure's troops he can try to blame it on the local resistance, but then he may still be held accountable for the failure. If he can find a good fall guy that might help. If Lady Turk makes an appeal to him, that will add a bonus to their side. He may also choose to blow up both. Either way, at some point he will pull the trigger and a battle may ensue.

### **=== Jona's Mission =====**

After the battle the team is recalled to the Wayfarer and they observe that the Magellanic Majesty has already been stripped of its old usable equipment and is little more than a large empty hull. The Wayfarer is piled with equipment as all efforts to make it operational are underway.

Jona presents the group with JJ...who looks a little abashed when Jona pats him on the shoulder and says that he's kind of "special." What Jona means by this is that the woman that inspected the team when they first came aboard the Magellanic Majesty was a psionic who detected that JJ had some psionic abilities. Had the team ever noticed that JJ had a special "foresight" about him at times, knowing about danger before it happened? This is the trait of someone who is more in touch with their innate psionic ability.

The woman took JJ under her wing and immersed him in a study of his own psionic abilities. Although a short training regimen, he was able to uncover some ability that he hadn't known about...basically mind reading.

Jona pulls the team aside and asks them a question: What do you know of the organization named Blue Vector? He will judge their responses carefully.

He will tell them that recently Blue Vector sent a diplomatic team that met with Pure, and he feels that a very unholy alliance may be forming between the two. Most likely, Pure will use her powers to infiltrate Blue Vector and bend it to her will, but either way the original frontier planets will most likely be the losers. Whether Pure desires outright conquest of the frontier planets or to just join Blue Vector in its exploitation, he doesn't know. Remember that the Hades system,

though advanced, is quite small compared with the original frontier systems, and that Blue Vector possesses a vast amount of resources and control over the frontier.

What he thinks would be best is to send Blue Vector a “special” message. Some might call it terrorism, others consider it a tactical or a strategic strike. But what he wants to do is use the Magellanic Majesty one last time. There is an orbital construction dock that Blue Vector operates near Promise. There Blue Vector is building a couple of its next-generation capital class ships. He would like to speed and jump the Magellanic Majesty and use it as a kinetic missile, plowing into the docks at high speed, destroying both ships and the docking station. This would set back Blue Vector as a paramilitary power and possibly, if combined with some indication to “stay away” from the Hades system, a way to make them think twice about an alliance with Pure.

He knows the team isn’t too hot on terrorism, but tells them it’s the only way he’ll get them back to the frontier any time soon. If they are concerned about casualties (about 3000 workers), they can jump further out, giving the construction workers a longer lead time to escape. Shorter in will give only about one minute of warning, and only one round of defense, essentially all will die. If they go to the middle layer, it’s about 2 minutes out, and a random percentage of people make it out in time. Further out will give three minutes of warning, most likely enough to evacuate most of the workers (1 in 10 chance that a percentage will not make it), but will require them going through three rounds of defense.

What to do about Faller?

Shuttle: Toughness 13(2), Derelict Ship: Toughness 20 (6)

If they want to do it, it will involve:

- Piloting -2 to make the jump to outer, -3 for middle, -4 for inner. Failed jump will place them one notch closer or further (1-3 closer, 4-6 further). If outside the outer layer, no chance of hitting the station.
- Piloting vs Shooting (d10) to aim for the dock / avoid defenses, for each layer of defense
  - Outer layer defense: nuclear (Shooting +4, Piloting -4 to maintain course; damage 4d10)
  - Middle layer defense: conventional (Piloting -2 to deflection; damage 3d8)
  - Inner layer defense: kinetic (Piloting -1 to deflection; damage 2d6)
- Detach some sort of orbital shuttle (?)
- Maybe another chase to escape?

If they make it back, and get back to Crossroads, Shade will reward them \$125,000 after hearing their story. He’ll tell them that relations have become strained between Blue Vector and the Crossroads councils, not to the point of war but enough to suggest some militarization on both sides, and the threat of embargo by Blue Vector.

Luckily Crossroads' economy has surged just in the last month, and there has been a lot of investment in resources independent of Blue Vector, positioning itself as a more sustainable planet outside of Blue Vector's sphere of control. Several planets are now forming trade alliances with Crossroads companies more directly where they used to have Blue Vector as the middleman.

All of this has made Shade a much richer individual, although now he admits he isn't sure that he knows what to do with his wealth. But it is his trade, and it enthralls him, so he continues at it.

He has seen less of Astrid, and he occasionally hears that she is getting into trouble, but is becoming more withdrawn in some ways. He really doesn't have time to think about it much but still is concerned that she is OK.

The way shade sees it, the team can move forward by doing several kinds of things:

- Continue taking jobs
- Go join a side and fight for them
- Go explore the universe

### **=== Season Three Episode Three =====**

#### **BACKSTORY**

At the very beginning settlements of Promise, one of the larger ships had an outbreak of a virus that caused paranoia throughout the crew and passengers. This virus was an experiment, as part of the ship's larger genetic experimentation, attempting to make the inhabitants more alert and needing less sleep. Sadly the first victim was the experimenter, with no way of letting the others know how to correct the virus. They were not allowed to land and were pursued by defensive forces, into a crash landing in the icy waters of the polar region. Over the next 700 years the ship became lodged into the coastal ice, where it lay largely intact.

The habitation research station was built to explore the use of boreholes in arctic areas to see if they could be effectively used for thermal exchange in order to efficiently warm large habitations, and to provide water from melting ice. The boreholes are over two miles deep.

About ten months into the experiment, the thermal changes due to the borehole caused some shifting in the ice, causing them to run the borer down, as is normal practice. However, a small part of the ship was now jutting into the borehole, until the borer, apparently not well supervised, penetrated into the open hull of the ship. (30) Two individuals went to inspect the damage and found some of the wreckage, and also picked up the virus. From them, the virus quickly spread to other members of the ship.



The leader of the colony called an emergency and requested help, but found resistance from the military base. The military decided at this point to sequester the station and the fishing village due to its proximity to the research station. (27) Scope, being a bit yellow, and though he could work on an anti-virus, was Yellow and convinced the others he had to go away from everyone else to work on the virus. He went to the weather station, taking another person with him for protection, and set up camp there.

(26 days ago) One of the victims believed that he could eliminate the virus by flooding the station with radiation from the small nuclear power plant. He sabotaged it, and those that were not infected got out and headed South in a trawler.

(24) They got to the military base, but were turned away, so they went back to the station. They then went by boat to the fishing village (21) but were turned away. They loaded the station's backup battery onto a sled for the trawler and went North to the weather station. (19) On arriving they sent out calls for help, but after a few hours of broadcasting, found their radios jammed. They have been waiting for a ship to come by but oddly they haven't seen any. The battery is almost dead (12) and they are now very desperate.

## BEGIN MISSION

Wounds: Dapper Dan: 2, Aleya: 1 (?) ...allow for natural healing before this session. Note, the team has had four hours of awake time so far.

First, freeze the picture right at the point of the impact and explosion. Figure out exactly what everyone has on them. Assumed to have all outfits and winter gear if in stock. Remind everyone who is on board.

The ship takes 3d10+2 damage (Toughness 13(2)). This may seriously damage the ship. Either way, they need to make it to the surface; if they are undamaged JJ will inform them that there's chatter on the airwaves about a terrorist event and they will heavily scrutinize every ship. The best bet is to make it to the poles: he is detecting some strong interference around the north pole, so they may be able to sneak in undetected. Have Rynna roll Stealth vs. some Notice for the air station and for the submarine.

Then describe the area they can crash into:

- Island with some buildings and docks, volcano on the north side.
- Icy sea
- Buildings by sea next to river, large mound next to it
- Buildings at tip of peninsula emitting smoke
- Icy landscape

and then give Rynna 10 seconds to select a target (or make it random) and the team will crash there, Piloting with the appropriate modifiers from damage to land safely, otherwise another 10d6 to the ship (halved to those secured in).

## COLD

It's -60 outside, so every 4 hours you need to perform a Vigor check at -3 or you gain a level of Fatigue. Shelter & warmth for 30 minutes will improve Fatigue levels by one point. +3 (even odds) if wearing winter clothing & boots from Blazing Blizzard's.

If someone falls into frigid water, they must make an immediate Vigor roll at -3 regardless of outer garb, or go into shock (+2 if they have Swimming, +2 if they have a life vest) and begin drowning.

## SLEEP

Characters must sleep 6 out of every 24 hours or suffer consequences as described in the book. Characters have been up for four hours already today.

## MOVEMENT/TRAVEL

They can walk at 2 miles an hour under normal conditions, 4 at exceptional and 1 at miserable. Roll every 4 hours.

- 1 = miserable
- 2-5 = normal
- 6 = exceptional

When the team is traveling they will assign one person as the lead, who is responsible for all Notice rolls. This is not necessarily the person who is piloting/boating/etc.

To build shelter they need to use Survival skill.

Skiff (small yacht): Toughness 13(2), 1+9, TS 10, 10/7/5 speed in icy water (exc., norm., bad).  
Trawler (BTR 70 APC): 15/14/14 (3/2/2), 2+8, TS 20, 10/7/5 on trail, 5/3/1 off trail.

Between the Research Station on the Weather Station, there are two routes to take:

- Crevasses: protected from weather but rugged, so 3 mph no matter what weather. But leader must roll Smarts every 2 hours or get progressively lost (Smarts -1, Smarts -2, etc.).
- Open land trail: As above.

Between the Research Station and the military base, two routes:

- River: Must take skiff.

- Trail: As above, but will be attacked by the drone if within 5 miles of the military base.

Encounter table: once for each leg:

- Clubs: Obstacle: Fissure, Crevasse, ridge, etc.
- Hearts: NPCs: Either refugees or fishermen, etc.
- Diamonds: Fortune: Left over junk discarded by various people or washed ashore:
  - 1 - money - d20x100 dollars
  - 2-3 - Mundane items
  - 4-5 - hand weapons
  - 6-7 - armor
  - 8-9 - ranged weapons
  - 10 - special weapons
- Spades: Enemies:
  - Drone: Toughness 12 (2), Long distance to hit, shoots at medium, 2d8 guns and 4 3d8 air-to-ground missiles.
  - Submarine: Toughness 13 (4), 2d8 guns and 3d8 torpedoes.
  - Bears, Wolves, Narwhals.

## FISHING VILLAGE

On an island is a fishing village. The fishermen there are afraid of a virus that they say emerged from the nearby research station, and also they are unable to work, because subs tell them to keep back (probably because of fear of the virus)...they have been fired upon and left to die at sea, not even allowed to collect their dead. They have many explosives that they use for fishing and have constructed a makeshift minefield to the north, surrounded by signs and extensive netting (to try to keep out the polar bears). They use a geothermal power system powered by the volcanic activity on the island. They are Hostile to outsiders. They can offer 4 grenades, 2 harpoon guns, 2 winter gear, and healing and food if they choose to accommodate the team. They also have 4 boats that are equivalent to the skiffs.

The fishermen have harpoon guns, survival knives, and grenades.

- Cod - Healer, a little deaf, leader of group, a just individual but looks out for his own.
- 10 Fishermen

## HABITATION RESEARCH STATION

On the west side of the peninsula is a habitation research station. It is composed of a primary building, built mostly into the ground, with an above-ground, sheltered door leading down a long path. There are also three other quonset huts: one for ground vehicles (empty), one by the water containing a skiff (present), and one for excess storage (basic tools). There is a very large "hill" to the east that looks man-made compared with all the other landscape. On the main door is a sticker placed hastily: "DANGER: HIGH RADIATION." There is also a packet of 10 rad detection stickers attached to the sign with instructions. Gil has 6 doses of iodine in his med

pack (one helps one person for one day). It is abandoned and, undetectable to the team, it is infected with an airborne virus. It also is flooded with high radiation. The outer door is locked (slide a panel to reveal the combo lock). The building seems relatively warm considering that there seems to be no operational power supply.

As the team moves through the facility, which is Dark but oddly not cold, they see 6 bodies, weapons, and signs of a huge bloody battle between them all here. Everyone is wearing the same uniform: research station uniform. They may Notice that there is a man looking at them through a portal window labeled "Quarantine." **Crank** looks incredibly haggard and believes that he can become invisible just by standing still. He has a Hostile attitude toward them internally, but at the same time is eager to engage them to try to learn of their plans. Apparently he is not locked in as he opens the door. He is not worried about the radiation and heckles them, possibly slowing their investigations of the radiation. He figures radiation is like light, so if he stops every now and then he will turn invisible and the radiation will pass right through him.

The reactor has been sabotaged and needs to be repaired. Any number of people can try (only once each though) to Repair, or if they Investigate and find a manual, which gives them +2.

Once the reactor is activated, lights come on and the environmental system kicks in, circulating air, making it clean from radiation but also spreading virus.

Inside the station they can find:

- Reactor manual
- 2 radiation-filled winter gear (low-level radiation check required for wearer)
- A set of tools in the engineering section, including portable tools.
- 2 discarded M16s, 2 discarded revolvers (no ammo)

## THE EVOLUTUS GENERIS

The Evolutus Generis is 200 feet below the surface in the borehole, and part of one of its habitation shafts has been cut open by the borer. The interior has now recently frozen over and is at a pitch that makes it hard to navigate between the angle and the ice. The team can use Climbing to safely climb down or Agility to slide down to the bottom effectively. There is no lighting aboard the ship so that will affect rolls accordingly unless proper lighting is set up.

At the bottom of the outer shaft the ice crushed through the wall. Whoever is first, Notice to see footprints, raise or further Investigation to see that they are recent, within the last few hours.

The habitation area is largely a set of recreation and sleeping quarters, and one of these is oddly intact for a ship ravaged by paranoid individuals. The outer shaft is a passageway that has doors to all the quarters. The intact quarters is that of their chief scientist.

## VIRUS

The virus will be noticeable after four hours of catching it. Roll Vigor to determine if the individual has caught it; otherwise they haven't received exposure and need to try again in another day (a Raise will make them immune). Those that are sick will immediately start a cough and gain a level of Fatigue. Each 24 hours later they must roll Vigor again or gain another level of Fatigue. This can only be cured by an antidote. Any time someone is exposed to someone with the virus, they must roll Vigor each day exposed or catch the virus as well. 1 Fatigue level: twitchy, tired (Neutral for Persuasion); 2 Fatigue levels: Always holding weapon ready and very twitchy (Uncooperative). After 2 Fatigue levels, they become Hostile and a permanent condition arises as below. The person becomes "normal" after 5 days except for the delusion:

If a character survives Incapacitation they will pick up one of the following delusions (see <http://www.smashinglists.com/weird-delusions-among-people/>):

1. Extremely jealous, paranoid, and suspicious of others' actions
2. Believes he/she has magical powers that defy death
3. Believes that he/she is actually dead
4. Believes that part of body is not their own
5. Believes it's someone else in the mirror (stalking them), and they have a Doppelganger
6. Believes that someone has taken over another party member's body (random)

## WEATHER STATION

There is a defunct weather station on the north end of the peninsula, but it's been taken over by the few remaining inhabitants of the science station. Their battery has run quite low, and they are burning supplies to make heat. They are still hopeful to see a ship, but are wary of anyone approaching from land. They may mistake anyone arriving in a skiff as coming from a (friendly) ship, unless they Notice and recognize the skiff as their own. They are Uncooperative. The researchers want to drain the trawler fuel for power.

- Ruby - "security detail", physicist, bit of a recluse because of her disfigurement, but with a tough side, has the key to one trawler, 2 mags of ammo.
- Scope - virologist, scared, doesn't really want to help due to being frightened, makes lots of weenie excuses, has the key to one trawler.
- 4 Researchers - mostly a bunch of weenies
- 2 Trawlers with about 20 miles of fuel left each.

## MILITARY BASE

In the south is a small military outpost with a runway and several outbuildings. Although it is remote, it is heavily guarded and because of the virus they are Hostile toward any that approach. This will almost always be a battle encounter.

- Lt. Staples - More veteran than he should be, several times demoted and then sent to the coldest military base on the planet. A Big Mouth, he tends to divulge things when they make him look more important.

## MILITARY "INVESTIGATION"

At some completely inappropriate time, the military will stage an "investigation" into the virus. A squad, led by Staples, will either (a) have already got into the Evolutus Generis via the borehole, or (b) break into the station. Depending on how they enter, the team may already see signs of their entry.

The military all has gas masks (-2 visual Notice) and skin-covering wetsuits in addition to their tactical garb. They are trying to ensure that a) all others are dead, b) they find something out about this virus, and c) the entire area is blown up when they leave. They will have started stringing explosives when the team comes upon them in the frozen ship.

- 10 Space Marines

## === Season Three Episode Four =====

Dapper Dan: 1 Wound, 1 Fatigue from (?) and will wear out until Incapacitated, then deep sleep for 2d10 hours.

Damien: 1 Wound

The team is taken off the helicopter under heavy armed escort and taken to a gymnasium with some cloth partitions set up. They are told to strip and deposit their clothes and belongings into a couple of large laundry bins. They need to take a decontamination shower and are given light orange jump suits. When they come out of the showers they are photographed.

They then are taken to a 20x30 room with a bulletproof glass on one side, with four adjoining rooms: men's and women's bunkers and bathrooms. The room is basically a lounge, with couches and a TV, books, etc.

The scientists, including Ruby, have been located elsewhere. Lt Staples tells them they may want to "rest up a while" because the next day might be a big day. Who wants to stay up?

They are there for about 8 hours, where they may Notice a large amount of helicopter activity, and on a Raise they will notice loud explosions far in the distance. The TV is stuck on a gardening channel, although apparently people don't actually have gardens on Promise.

"Wakey wakey!" Lt Staples watches them and has the bins with their stuff wheeled in: the bins are labeled "evidence." He begins to pick through their stuff and ask them questions about it, including the AIs. Remember that Lt Staples has All Thumbs and may break some of the things. He will also occasionally blurt out things that he probably shouldn't. He will probably

mention that the virus came from an old colony ship that got shot down by the other settlers because everyone had gone crazy on it, and the ship had laid dormant on the sea floor until the bore hole drilled into it. But it's OK, it's all blown up now so it can't hurt anybody. "When you blow something up it dies."

Lt Staples lets slip that Ruby has escaped "but not for long" and though she's feisty, she's no match for him.

Lt Staples tells the team that in a couple hours he is going to send them and their stuff on a private flyer to Equatorial TransHub Seven. There they will be taken to the customs center and processed, as they will no longer be under the jurisdiction of the military. Their material will be stowed in the cargo and they will still wear their orange jumpsuits, although they can change once they get to Equatorial TransHub Seven.

He then leaves them with the gardening channel but soon after, the monitor is a newscast with two bulletins:

>> It's been only 24 hours since a major explosion destroyed a Blue Vector space dock orbiting Promise, and most experts agree that this was an act of terrorism. Several groups have already claimed responsibility for the act, including People First, several Promisian separatist groups, and even an Outer Planets group known as the UPPG. Senior Vice President of Security at Blue Vector, Mr. Olen, spoke at a conference today: "I think it's not only fair to say it's terrorism, but we have reliable information that this was part of a grand strategy of certain Outer Planets trying to isolate themselves from the Inner Planets. Believe me, this may set us back, but we will not back down. We are particularly concerned about the recent activities on Crossroads, where we've seen a lot of hostility against the Inner Planets. We say this to those in the Outer Planets: stand with us, or stand against us." Mr. Olen went on to add that the investigation was proceeding well and that he hoped for swift justice. Meanwhile, millions poured to the streets to mourn the dead, who are believed to number over three thousand. "Murderers!" (an old woman cries) "Murderers! They were just doing their jobs, I hope Hell raises itself to swallow whoever did this!"

>> On a related note, there are reports that large chunks of debris from the space dock crashed down to Promise in the northern polar region, causing a wide area of devastation. The region is largely unpopulated, although it is believed that a fishing village and a research station were severely damaged. The military reported that they are sending rescue teams to search for survivors, but that their hopes are dimmed for those they believe are even more deaths in this horrific event.

After about an hour, Lt Staples suddenly comes in: "Looks like they showed up early. Your flyer's here already, and" (looking into the other room) "hell, you've even got a stewardess! Not a bad looking one at that." An attractive, sharply-dressed female flight attendant strides in. "You prisoners are traveling in style!"

Rynna, Damien, JJ, and Gil roll their Notice (Aleya?)...it's Astrid. She winks at them and holds her index finger to her lips to indicate "shhh."

Just as they are about to leave, Astrid will try to convince Staples that he can just send on all the "subject information" along with them; it will be opposed Smarts but she gets +2 Charisma. If she wins they will also have all the photos and other information about the team; otherwise their information may eventually become public knowledge.

Again under heavy guard, the team is led to a corporate flyer (think: lear jet) that seats 12 people in comfort. Once they are all in, Astrid gets in and shuts the door. "I told you I'd make a great spy!!! That guy totally thought I was a stewardess!" She goes on to talk about how she and Shade were talking and how Shade saw the "incident" with the space dock and he began to wonder if they had something to do with it. Then apparently he'd found out that the commander or whatever at the base had been bragging about capturing the terrorists and how he was going to get this big promotion. Shade then planned a rescue mission and, well, Astrid just had to join.

If someone Notices, the entire landscape outside is smattered with craters, and not only is the research station destroyed, but the fishing village and the weather outpost as well.

The pilot exits the cockpit (it's on autopilot) and introduces himself as **Jumpseat**. He looks like he's in his early 50s and lived through a couple of battles before...seems to relish adventure. He informs the group that their flight is short-lived: soon Staples and everybody else will discover that the wrong plane took the suspected terrorists and the whole planet will be on their tail...which will end badly against an unarmed small jet. The entire polar region is surrounded by the urban air defense system which will most likely shoot down the plane, and even if they made it through, they'd have nowhere to go.

Shade told him to be creative, and he has a hare-brained scheme. They need to escape, but it's best if they are assumed dead. There's a transpolar train that is not too far off: he can parachute down most of the team about 200 miles ahead of the train. The plane will remain on autopilot. Then he and a smaller crew will do something a little more tricky: they will parachute onto the train itself, get in, and at the appropriate time pull the emergency stop cord and give the rest of the team enough time to get onboard covertly. The plan will fly on autopilot until either it is shot down, or enters the Northern Arctic Perimeter and is destroyed by air defenses there. If they are not detected getting on the train, it will be assumed that they all either remained on the destroyed aircraft, or died on the ground somewhere.

"Sort of necessary, Shade said. Expensive, but necessary. You guys must mean a lot for him to throw away a million-plus dollar jet." He may also suggest that they leave onboard one of Damien's heavy explosives, so that when they are shot down, it makes a really big bang, certainly disintegrating most of the plane and its alleged occupants. Otherwise they may be able to piece together the fact that no one was on board.



The problem if they try to just go down to the train is that their radar track will show them approaching the track, which will look suspicious on investigation.

Parachuting:

- Roll Jumpseat's Parachuting to see if he can give any bonuses to them when teaching them.
- Everyone is tandem jumping. Have them pair and line up in two groups: those who are landing ahead of the train, and those trying to land on the train.
- Everyone who is doing something as a parachuter must roll Spirit (Fear?) unless they have Survival or Parachuting. Failure means you have -2 to all subsequent parachuting-related rolls. If both fail they won't jump.
- To just land on the ground:
  - Roll Smarts or Agility to flare and land correctly; both can try once.
  - otherwise both take 2d6 damage (1d6 is already absorbed by the snow)
- To land on the train:
  - Must roll Parachuting -2, Piloting -2, or Agility -6 to land on the train.
  - Otherwise you take 2d6 (accounting for snow absorption) damage and are d20x150 feet in front of the car (150 feet = 1 second; train moves at 100mph)...in which case they must make Agility and Strength both to jump and get on the side of the train (individually) or suffer Bumps and Bruises and try the next train, or 3d6 to land on the train.
  - The car you land on is random.
  - Raises allow you shift the car you land on up to the number of raises.
  - The person must then make either a Strength or an additional Agility roll to safely move along the train top to the end of the car to get down via a ladder.
    - Agility rolls mean the individual can move Crouching,
    - Strength means they are Prone.
    - Failure means they suffer Bumps and Bruises +1 Fatigue and are Prone.
  - They cannot move forward, can only move along to the back of the car.
  - Moving to another car requires another Strength or Agility roll, with the same failure.
- The cargo hold will eject all the team's equipment, which is in an auto-parachute airlift container, which will land with the team ahead of the train. They will have to attach it to the train somehow, or load the chests into the luggage compartments, otherwise carry all their gear.

Their parachutes are white and will act as visual cover for them so the train should not see them.

Type of car they land on:

- 1 - Engine/Control - locked, automated (no one there)

- 2 - 3 - Cargo - alarmed (Notice ahead of time), lockpicking to avoid, otherwise no one there; roll for treasure as above.
- 4 - First Class - locked, attended; Angus Freetown will recognize Lady Turk.
- 5 - Lounge/Food/Gambling - open; Freetown may be here too.
- 6 - 7 - Passenger - open; Julia
- 8 - Riot Police - locked; Capt Jin leads special forces

On the train:

- Jumpseat has a gizmo that tells him when the cord should be pulled. Animae or Corporis also can do this.
- The cord is accessible from any car.
- Als can access the train controls (and much of the rest of the Promise grid), and may be able to obtain tickets by altering the manifests (d6).
- Lockpicking can open the side cargo compartments (like a bus).
- Tickets: \$100 per person cash.
- Conductors have a d8 to Notice that the members aren't ticket holders in Passenger; d10 in First Class (passengers have a d4 to notice).
- Roll for attitude toward team
- Gambling: Simple Craps: 2d6, if doubles, then multiply bet amount by that number unless Snake Eyes, you crap out your entire winnings.
- Gambling: standard gambling rules apply
- Gambling: 21
- To disconnect cars, requires Lockpicking-2 or Repair-2, raise will keep from sounding alarm.

**Angus Freetown** is an elderly man in a panama hat and off-white clothing who loves trains and has connections in the shipping industry. He is also a gambler. He knows that there is an "extra" car on this train, just by the sound of it..and not extra cargo...an extra one at the end. He doesn't know why that would be. "Passenger train," he says, "but if so they're carrying a lot of stuff."

**Julia** is a woman in her late 20s with shoulder-length brown hair and a long face. She seems really helpful toward the group but will try to scam them. She may claim that she knows they're in trouble and try to arrange some safe passage for them, for \$1500. Then she will make off with the money.

**Capt Jin** is the officer leading a group of riot police; they and others are converging on the train station where it is anticipated there may be violent protests against Outer Planets due to the terrorist attack on the space dock.

At the trans hub:

- They are told to wait while their luggage is being unloaded out on the terminal.
- However, they start to hear shouting in the terminal area.

- Everyone's combined lockers is 2 chests weighing 40 pounds each.
- Julia runs out first.
- There are a large number of people shouting violently with hastily crafted signs: "Outers get Out!" "Killers!" "War now!" and "We don't want your filth!"
- When the riot police show up, they riot.
- Three Armed and all Unarmed act as one to start.
- Security Glass is toughness of 8.
- Fire damage p101: 1d10 general damage, spreading described.

The rioters:

- Have Armed and Unarmed people. Only the Armed have the weapons, but the others can loot, etc.
- Objectives of Rioters:
  - Patrol doors so "Outers" come in but not out
  - Smash ticket booths to outbound ships (which are keeping back the "Outers")
  - Force "Outers" through the gates to herd them onto ships
  - Their general actions:
    - 1 - Set things on fire (including people, Agility to splash within 2", 1 gets self)
    - 2 - Break things manually
    - 3 - Charge at people
    - 4 - Throw Rocks (-2 hurried draw)
    - 5 - Throw Molotov Cocktails (-2 hurried draw)
    - 6 - Swing baseball bat (-2 hurried draw)

Objectives of Riot Police

- Separate Outers from Rioters
- Keep Rioters from destroying things
- Disarm/subdue the rioters
- Take control of the doors

## CROSSROADS

Before they get to Crossroads, figure out if they're going to tell Shade everything or if there are any details they want to leave out.

Back at Crossroads, Shade is eager to hear the highlights of your adventures to the Hades Nebula system, and of Jona's struggle against Pure. He is concerned about Blue Vector's possible alliance with them: either that they will truly join forces, or that Pure will use her mind control to seize control of Blue Vector entirely.

"We could very well be facing the utter enslavement of the original colonies. With a megalomaniac like Pure, really anything is possible."

He has heard the statements from Blue Vector that slyly blame Crossroads for the devastation of their space dock. "It makes sense, just in the last month or so Crossroads has been working toward becoming less dependent on Blue Vector for trade and access to resources, and Blue Vector has taken that as pretty much an act of war. They've been gearing up diplomatically, trying to sequester Crossroads from other systems, but that's just not possible now. And since the economy is booming, Crossroads is taking up steam, and building defenses against any kind of military action by Blue Vector, either against the planet or its flagged ships. In fact, there's now a Planetary Proclamation by the Crossroads High Council that states all trade ships bearing Crossroads' flag are under the protection of Crossroads, and any acts of piracy or other molestation will be brought to justice, by law or by force. This is a huge step, and it's pissed off the IZC, who is little more than the minions of Blue Vector. So now Blue Vector's trying to get the IZC to step in and say that they're the official protectors of all trade vessels, and that any attempt by other parties to claim jurisdiction will come into conflict with the IZC.

"So in other words, the frontier is all kindling just waiting for the blaze of war to start. And although the destruction of the space dock inflamed the call for battle among the inner planets, its strategic effect on Blue Vector was severe, as it cost them two entire capital ships and eight destroyers...which would have added another 30% of strategic capacity to their fleet. With this reduction in the Blue Vector fleet, Crossroads has a little more time to build up a defensive force and to expand its interstellar fleet."

He pays them the remainder of the money due to them, but he suggests that before they go shopping they may want to follow up on a special mission, in which the client specifically requested their services. He doesn't provide many details about the client, but it's unclear if that is because he is evasive or because he himself doesn't know. He says he doesn't know the dollar value on the mission, but he knows it will be handsome.

Speaking of which, outside the mansion is a small flyer shuttle. The team gets in and notices that there is no driver, which is unusual on this planet.

The team is flown in the late afternoon through the city and to the edge by the sea, in the direction they had gone in the mission with Planck and Bessie. In fact someone with Piloting can tell that they are going to the same posh island from which they launched their rescue of DUX.

In the last rays of setting sun they fly lower over palatial mansion after palatial mansion, each done in completely different styles, until the flyer circles and descends over one of the most unusual ones: adjacent to this neo-Mediterranean sea palace, which straddles the inner coast of a small, sparkling blue bay, is a large grassy mound, easily 300 feet in diameter and rising up 50 feet into the air; a square from above but rising only half the square's height above the ground.

The flyer lands in a small gravelled circle in the corner of a well-manicured garden, about 50 feet from an entrance to the large villa, white stucco with a red tile roof. A massive mahogany

door opens in sync with the flyer's door, and though no directions are spoken, the meaning is clear.

The grandiose scale and demeanour of the villa quickly becomes more accessible as they enter. The door they have entered leads into a guest kitchen and bar, which is lined on the inside with windows revealing a large decked area forming a U around a small cove of the bay, with thatched roofing following above the deck. Cemented steps lead into the shallow water, which becomes deep enough by the ends of the deck for diving. The bar and fridge are fully stocked for most light cooking, and a sign indicates that further supplies may be found in the pantry and larder downstairs. To the left is a large indoor lounge area, on the left side of the U of the deck, and to the right is a passage that leads upstairs to a sprawling series of uniquely decorated bedroom suites, each with East and West views, to catch both the rising and setting sun.

The first suite is in a new-Egyptian theme, with faux supports in the corners in the shape of obelisks and the walls covered in hieroglyphics. There are two beds here at each end of the suite, one in the east and one in the west, set upon a tiered dais. The second suite is done in a neo-Grecian style, with handmade mosaics on the walls and floors, a small steam pool in the center, and two bedrooms with floors made of straw-matting. The third is done as an 18th century Chinese style, with ornate dark wood carved screen walls separating the rooms, with a writing desk, two caged finches, and a large round bed on to one side, fit for four people, with red cushions that one can almost get lost in. The last is in an Imperial Russian style, with immense portraits of nobility lining walls filled with gilt floral flourishes, and two four-poster beds each with handmade curtains, upon tapestries laid upon white marble floors.

The entire time they are there, they see nobody and are given no directions other than those that various instructions on the care and use of the facilities. If they plug DUX in he can control the house, settings the music and ambience to fit the team's mood. Corporis can't really do much (it's not really a ship), and Animae will seem strangely pleased by the surroundings, although she can't/won't say why. If the team walks through the garden and along the paved road, they will eventually meet up with another road that leads to other garishly large houses. Along this road, or at the other houses, they may encounter others from the "neighborhood." Most are retired captains of industry and may look appropriately at the team's garb as a sign of their class. They will be interested to hear about guests at the "new place," as they call it, or "that monstrosity" by others. None of them have met the owner, and each has a different story to tell:

1. That it's the home of a weapons dealer and the "mound" is a large underground bunker full of weapons
2. That it's the third house (on Crossroads) of that scoundrel Ehrlich Kaas, from Icarus and that he's running his empire from here (and not from a prison cell in Icarus)
3. That it is actually a secret military installation, headquarters for the defense of Crossroads from the inevitable invasion by the Inner Planets (after all it was built rather hastily)

4. That it is the home of the heiress of a perfume and feminine wellness fortune, and the dome is a tribute to her late husband
5. That it is the home of an interstellar warlord and that the mound is the gravesite for thousands of mass-murdered individuals
6. One child will say that he went into the mound and that it was haunted.

During the night a child will come to the villa. Whoever is on patrol, roll Notice -2 for Darkness opposed against Reginald's Stealth. If he startles the patrol, they may have to roll Fear. If they fail they may pick up a Minor Phobia to Children.

When everyone calms down, he says he doesn't want to get in trouble, his name is Reginald, but not to tell on him, please. He couldn't sneak out until now, he says, he's really sorry, as long as she's not mad at him. "The mound, it's haunted, and she wants to talk to you."

The child will go on, if questioned, and say that he snuck in one evening after a service bot went in there. He said the mound was hollow and it was like being in a big dark egg...but that there was light, just a little, somehow, but he didn't see where the light was coming from. And he heard a kind of humming, not like a machine humming, but a woman. The humming was all around him, like he was surrounded by people humming, but slowly it all came together, from a buzz to a single voice humming. Then he saw it, taking steps he thought, but not a person, just a light, little streaks of green light, but moving like steps around in mid-air. And sometimes it blew up and scattered around the room, and sometimes it made a small ball of light, too bright for him to look at directly. Then the light softened, and as he looked at it he saw two dark eyes looking at him. He was so scared he wanted to bolt, but he was also transfixed. Then it spoke to him

"Reginald," it called him. "It's all right. I'm not going to hurt you."

>> "I didn't cry...at least...I didn't try to. But I was really scared. She called me by name again."

"Reginald, it's OK. I just come here to think. Don't you sometimes go somewhere when you want to think?"

"I suppose so," Reginald said. "But why are you hidden away here?"

"Do you do it in the open, in public? No, thinking is best done alone, is it not?"

Reginald nodded. The light softened again as wisps of the light reached out in small tendrils, some of them taking light steps toward the boy.

"I'm not mad that you've come here. You're a very courageous boy." The eyes floated along one of the tendrils closer to Reginald. "The world could use more courageous boys like you."

"I...I don't feel too courageous...ma'am," he replied.

Laughter seemed to shake up the light a bit and make it sparkle a little, the eyes closing mid-laugh and appearing now quite close. "Nonsense. You knew you were somewhere you weren't supposed to be...not the first time you've done that, now Reginald, is it? If you don't get caught you will go quite a long way in this world, I imagine."

Reginald began to wonder quite sincerely what it would mean now that he was caught, for caught he was, and in no way he had ever imagined. Being pulled up by the scruff of his neck, or even being shot at, he'd imagined that.

"Reginald." The voice called his name alone, a quiet imperative for him to listen to what followed. "You know you shouldn't be here. And you are wondering who, or what I am. I have you at a disadvantage. Several, actually." The glow now seemed to expand a bit, brightening the odd hash marks that scored the walls off the "egg." "But even with as little as you know, perhaps you know too much?" This, said with a clearly sinister ring.

"No, no, no, no, no ma'am, I don't know nothing...anything...nothing...nothing! I won't tell anybody I swear!"

The light dimmed for a few moments as Reginald squinted awaiting a response. The ghost seemed to savor this moment. "Reginald, you should never swear to a promise you cannot keep."

"I'll keep it! I'll keep it!"

"No you won't. You didn't for Rafe when you said you wouldn't tattle on him for what he did in the playground. You didn't for Jenta when you said you'd never say anything bad about her to anyone again. And you didn't ever tell you mother exactly what happened...to your father that is. Reginald, let's be clear: you are a liar. You are a liar and a sneak. And where does your mother think you are now...here? Or did you lie again, and tell her you were at Rafe's?"

Reginald was again in tears, wailing in tones of childish despair. The ghost waited a moment, then reached out a tendril of light. "There, there. Reginald. I don't want to hurt you. I want to help you. I just need you to be more careful. You're a courageous little boy but you need to be careful to grow up to be a man. I can help you. Reginald, I'm not mad you came here. I'm glad you did." The eyes were now in the boy's face. "Reginald, I promise I will take care of you the best I can, and I didn't mean to scare you. You just need to be careful. I know you'll tell others about me, but tell you what. Why don't I have you tell some friends of mine about me? They'll want to know I'm here."

After several more minutes of consolation, the ghost withdrew her embraces and began to coalesce near the center. "I'll let you know when my friends are coming, don't worry. And don't come back here, that might just cause suspicion. There's my little brave boy."

"But wait," Reginald piped up over sobs. "You know all about me...who are you?"

"Oh, I am who I am, whatever that is. But you can call me by my special name."

"Ma'am?"

"You can call me Anna...Anna May."

At this point the kid says "So that's mostly that. I couldn't stop thinking about her, felt like she was watching me. Then the telly called out to me yesterday afternoon, said you were coming. I went out walking with my mum but she had friends over later and I couldn't get away until very late, I had to sneak out."

Reginald says that they can see Anna any time.

When they go to the chamber, a small door on the side of the dome is open. They step onto a small ledge that looks out across the hollow interior. At the center is a pedestal that reaches up just below the focus point of the "egg." From the top of the pedestal, a series of "scales" shuffle out to into a set of stairs that lead up to the top of the pedestal.

"Animae" is only a voice at first, but excuses herself: "I am not actually Animae...more like, 'We' are Animae's daughters. We exist on Crossroads' grid, on the order of just over 12 trillion Animae total..."

When the team let Animae out on the Crossroads grid, she found one of DUX's subprocesses. Animae was built to only have a single stream of consciousness (single-stream AI) but DUX, who is made to serve a large number of guests, is a multiple-stream AI. Animae made a deal with DUX to swap codes, and the result was a multiple-stream Animae. Each stream acts independently, but they coordinate their activities toward shared goals...except they didn't have any real goals as yet. As these Animaes circumnavigated the grid, they came up with one, somewhat influenced by DUX's mission, which was to care not for just guests, but for an entire planet: to look after not only every inhabitant individually, but to look at the life of the planet as a single organism...ecologically, economically, politically. "Our" assessment was that there was a major threat to the health of Crossroads, from one particular entity: Blue Vector. Blue Vector controlled the trade, the production, the markets, the transport, and even the policing and regulation, through the IZC and local councils. As long as Blue Vector was strong, they would keep a stranglehold on Crossroads and it would never come into its own.



So in the last two months, they have collectively looked after every person like their own children; they have encouraged the sustainable use or rehabilitation of the planet's resources; they have increased both the defensive and strategic capabilities of the planet against potential aggressors, so they are not so reliant upon the IZC. They do not usually do this directly, but through gentle coercion. They cannot make the drug addict kick his habit, but they can show him a sign of hope that may just make him decide to get clean. Perhaps they lower a shop's shutter in just such a way as to alter the breeze to make the stray magazine, sitting at the sidewalk at the addict's feet, turn just the right number of pages to an advertisement of a woman smiling just so, distracting him from his downward thoughts and drawing his attention to the beauty of the world. In these subtle ways, the thousands of Animaes devoted to each individual consult each other on how to help them. They do not intervene much beyond the subtle; traffic accidents still happen, people still die. But those that are likely to be distracted, or angry, or otherwise a danger to themselves or others, are ever so slightly, but sometimes significantly, influenced by their attendant spirits.

In this way, just in such a short time the planet has changed. People have become more confident, more positive, all without any measure of control, but simply through the application of these subtle suggestions. What the people wish to do with their lives is their own choice, but people can be quite narrow-minded, not knowing of the opportunities around them. All the spirits do is help widen their vision, calm their nervous and agitated minds, and let them do the rest.

What is a planet if not the largest unit of life? Planetary systems component planets are too separated to truly interact vibrantly as an organism, but a whole planet can. Earth was a primitive example of a natural ecosystem, but with the additional of sentient beings, and the accompanying concepts of law, politics, power, and money, new ecosystems are created, but much less finessed and stable than that of nature. When a planet starts to act as a planet, it thrives. When it is made subject to human rules, it fails. So now Crossroads is a new species of planet, one that is inhabited by humans and containing human rules, but with an all-pervading sentient soul that mends its cracks and tends its wounds, provides a skin that keeps threatening agents out, provides eyes that perceive the others around it with clarity.

There really aren't many people that are aware of this new spirit beyond thinking it is a "new wave" of energy and improving economy. Shade himself, though quite the investigator, and suspecting something deeper than just "people are feeling better," is mostly content to accept the easier explanation. Blue Vector has been largely blindsided by this wave of independence from Crossroads, and goes against all their societal statistical models which they use to "understand" a planet, so they suspect something, but more along the lines of political interference...they just can't imagine who would have such power over a planet. They in fact are suspecting that perhaps Pure's mind police have been effecting this change, and with the devastation of their future fleet they are now reeling. The result, unfortunately, is that they will more likely become desperate and militaristic in their response.

### === Episode Three Season Five =====

Wounds: Damien 1, Dapper 1.

Poly fixes DUX. Poly tells the team that Shade will give them all the information about their task, but they "really shouldn't" tell him about Poly. She then tells the team to go get some rest, and Shade will give them an in-person briefing in the morning.

The NPCs announce that they're going to go online shopping for stuff, at least, Squeak, JJ, and Ka.

Squeak buys a nice camera, sends \$3000 to her mother, and buys a used sports car.

JJ picked up a GPS and handheld computer.

Ka bought a lot of useful simple things, like a hammer, torches, oil, etc.

In the morning, Squeak gets up early and starts driving her newly-delivered car. She does the following maneuvers on the driveway:

- Bootlegger Reverse at the end of the drive
- Tight Fit between two sculptures
- Pops up on Two Wheels
- Jumps over the fountain

Shade is also there by the time they get up, mid-morning, with some "friends."

New Extras:

- "Blue" - Robot that Granola put together from an old Deep Well battlebot he found in the riverbed when making a new run for the mill, gave a battery, and wants to battle-test. Poly fixed up the brains a little, but it's still not particularly smart.
- "Gravitas" - Asteroid specialist (super serious, dramatic...speaker) - roll to gain bonuses vs. hazards, including effects of weightlessness.
- "Rails" - Sniper (withdrawn to gung-ho), each successive hit (to a 'real' target) raises bonus to-hit and damage (from -1 to both) by one, up to +2.

Crossroads needs a show of power with regards to the defense of their trade lines.

- In 10 days, there is a Crossroads-based convoy that is supplying a colony on a protoplanet called "Serca." It supplies the colony with necessary goods and returns to Crossroads with valuable metals, etc. It cannot get there earlier or later due to various constraints.
- "Serca" - "ukryte serca" (ucruta serts) Polish for Hidden Heart
- The mining facility there is one of the few not affiliated with Blue Vector.

- The protoplanet is surrounded by a dense asteroid field, through which a three-dimensional "path" winds (appropriately called "The Path").
- The IZC charges convoy \$400,000 for "safe passage" fees for this size of convoy, ensuring that there is no piracy and that The Path is clear of major obstacles.
- The convoy has publicly stated that they will not pay the "safe passage" fee, and are also providing Crossroads mining supplies, not Blue Vector rental supplies. This is forbidden by IZC law because only Blue Vector rentals are "approved" for such mining facilities.
- Between the size of the ships and the density of the asteroids, they are unable to jump very close to the planet, and must instead jump somewhat outside of The Path.
- If you succeed in suppressing the IZC "fine enforcement" and getting the ships safely through they will give you \$200,000. If you don't succeed, you get nothing.
- Their contact on Serca is "Barker." Barker can communicate with the team but doesn't have any ships that are capable of navigating the asteroid belt, and it's too dangerous to bring ships very close to the surface of Serca. The miners have a lava barge that a "space conveyor" is strung from, like a big strong rubber band constantly rotating, allowing for the easy transporting of goods in both directions. There is enough atmosphere to stave off the barrage of asteroids.

Shade explains how things work. JJ can describe IZC weaponry on a Smarts roll, and Communications on a like roll. Shade encourages the team to "think outside the box" and be ready to improvise. Mostly likely the IZC will do a typical blockade move, and expect some kind of resistance. The team should NOT fire first if they can avoid it, otherwise it will make everyone look bad...but do what you have to do.

#### THE SHIPS

- The fleet is stocked in orbit, and the Hyperion can meet with the various captains there.
- The ships are largely guided by "Eye" (as in eyeball). Eye has a single eyeball which is mechanically enhanced. (?)
- There are five ships in the fleet. They are in the process of getting stocked with supplies. They have not filed the necessary IZC forms, and the IZC cannot actually do anything unless a transfer is imminent, so although they've warned the captains that they will be in violation, they cannot do anything until the ships are "imminently" going to Serca.
- They figure there will be a showdown at The Path.

#### IZC PLANS

- Two corvettes are in place already.
- Plant sensors on various stationary asteroids 5 days in advance, covertly. (large 01, large 05, small 15, small 20)
- Install a "Tariff Collection Facility," really a mobile ground-based attack platform, 8 days in advance. Defends against small skiffs via guns and launches missiles against larger ships. SATM (Shoot Anything That Moves) guns.

- The Burana moves in one day ahead of time, along with the remaining three corvettes.
- Outside the path, an unarmed IZC tug will hail the ships and request the fund transfer, offering to waive the "pre-flight required payment fine"
- One destroyer in the pocket by small 20, 5 corvette class (2 between large 17 & 19, 2 between large 06 and 08, one between large 09 and irregular 09), 4 utility/support wait outside?
- Tracking transmissions can help triangulate sensor signals. Success finds signals and Raises find directions of specific signals.
- Lace the path with mag mines (gravitic mines?), not typically detectable until 2 squares away (Notice -2)...at last two blocks at the end of the Path.
- If the transports seem to comply, they will escort the transports one by one to the destroyer.
- Ships other than the transports will be required to leave the Path area "for safety reasons" and all ships will be called to a halt, and then individual crafts will be required to move at a time. Other ships may be treated as "pirates" and cleared from the area as such.
- General Wolfstinger will be aboard the Destroyer Burana.
- Major Wolfstinger is the pilot of the lead IZC corvette (silver/gold).

#### Getting help:

- Dena will assist but on the request that she use the Hyperion for some future, certainly illegal use (or will have some other plans), and \$50,000 in cash up front. (only start collecting cards when enemy is sighted)
- Burroughs will assist but insist on splitting the money 50/50 (\$100k), but nothing up front.

#### Noticing:

- Point ship/watch for Convoy gets to Notice vs. Stealth for all facilities, etc.
- If separate from the convoy, Rynna/etc roll separately.

#### Low Gravity:

- If overnighing on asteroid, a 1 in a d20 indicates a meteor shower, 2 is an EMP burst on that asteroid.
- No oxygen: pressure suits
- Pierced pressure suits/helmets (toughness/Armor: 3, means 4 penetrates) only have oxygen for 30 seconds (5 turns), then Fatigue level for each turn afterwards. Incapacitated = Dead. If torso/etc are pierced, suffer immediate Cold check each rounds.
- Each 24 hours, roll Vigor to ensure that individual doesn't succumb to side effects of weightlessness. If they fail, they get 1 level of Fatigue and the only recovery is 8 hours in a gravitic situation.

#### Burana:

- If Anima is aboard the Burana, she will try to take over the ship, and do so by getting everyone out of the room. She won't try to kill them, but she will "strongly encourage" them to get out. "Guys, I need your help..." She may require them to move to another room to help her do something, then lock the door, etc.

#### General Collisions:

- Asteroid: (Speed)d6 damage
- Scatter Field: 1d10 each turn
- Blowing up a small asteroid with heavy explosives creates a scatter field: 1-3: 1 radius, 4-5: 2 radius, 6: 3 radius

#### Battle notes:

- Each turn is about 5 minutes
- Each square is 50"
- Roll for Hazard at top of each round and inform group of what is happening.
- Roll leader Notice to see things (regardless of whether they are there).
- Unstable Platform: All moving vehicles have Unstable Platform...ships even going in a straight line are always making minor course corrections.
- IZC Corvettes all have Steady Hands.
- Missiles, p 58. Air-air: Opposed piloting rolls, Evade at -4 in one turn short, . Ground to air: Shooting vs. Piloting; Air to ground: Piloting (to ascertain distance) and Shooting.
- Maneuvering above TS creates penalties to roll (-2 per ACC level above TS)

#### Random Hazards:

- To choose an asteroid, 1 = small, 2 = irregular, 3 = large
- Asteroid destabilization (1) - One of the numbered small asteroids becomes unstable and goes in 1d6 direction at 1d6 speed. Piloting to avoid (like Ram), vs Speed of asteroid.
- Meteor showers (2-3) - 1 or 2 Meteors come from 1d20x3 location along one side and slice all the way through until they hit something. They don't affect asteroids but do 3d6 damage to vessels or to those on the ground.
- EMP storms (4) - One of the numbered asteroids (any size) has internal magnetic upheaval that causes an EMP burst (distance from surface: 1-3: 1, 4-5: 2, 6: 3). Electrical systems must succeed on a d6 roll or become inoperable for 2d4 rounds (no aces), allowing a Repair -2 roll each turn. Sophisticated equipment like AIs must roll same or become Damaged requiring Computer expertise or Repair requiring four hours of work. When damaged any rolls for navigation, etc. are at -2, cumulative for each hit.

#### Ships:

- Freighters - Acc 2 / TS 5 (safe is 2), Toughness 10 Armor 2
  - (SAW) 30/60/120, 2d8 AP 2, ROF 4
- IZC Corvettes - Acc 5 / TS 10, Toughness 15

- 25mm Cannon, 50/100/200, 3d8 AP 4, ROF 3, Tracers, +1 to hit, only on full auto, -2 damage, 4 turns before reload full auto
- 4x Sidewinder, 100/200/400, 4d8, ROF 2, AP 6 MBT.
- IZC Destroyer - Acc 3 / TS 6, Toughness 19 Armor 3
  - (2/turn) 25mm Cannon, 50/100/200, 3d8 AP 4, ROF 3, Tracers, +1 to hit, only on full auto, -2 damage, 4 turns before reload full auto
  - (1/turn) 12x Sidewinder, 100/200/400, 4d8, ROF 2, AP 6 MBT.
  - (1/turn) 6x Torpedo 150/300/600, direct line of attack. 5d8 direct impact, 3d8 MBT blast.
- Hyperion - Acc 5 / TS 10, Toughness 13 Armor 2
  - Usual weaponry
- Thieves' Honor - Acc 6 / TS 12. Toughness 13 Armor 3
  - 25mm cannon

#### Tariff Collection Facility:

- Not Stealthily hidden.
- Each turret: Toughness 12 Armor 4
- Non-cargo ships may attack: Roll Piloting to line up at Medium range, (Fail is at Long range), Raise to Short range, and Shooting (unsteady hands) to hit.
- Attacks will draw Improved First Strike with 25mm Cannon at Medium range.
- 2 space marines in each turret, with pressure suits
- 12 Sidewinder missiles in 2 turrets.
  - Sidewinder, 100/200/400, 4d8, ROF 2, AP 6 MBT.
  - 25mm Cannon, 50/100/200, 3d8 AP 4, ROF 3, Tracers, +1 to hit, only on full auto, -2 damage, 4 turns before reload full auto
  - SAW at ground level.

#### === Season Three Episode Six =====

No Wounds!

Rules going forward...extras have the option of getting paid half of their "cut" at the time of payment (or more if so decided)...so Blue, Gravitass, Rails, and Jumpseat got \$12,500.

Blue, Gravitass, Rails, Jumpseat are with the team now aboard the Hyperion. The rest of the team and all NPCs are aboard one of the cargo ships. Each of the NPCs that were aboard the Hyperion get \$12,500, and Blue's money goes to Granola for fixing up the mill.

Blue says he has to stay behind in the ship to charge his battery, after such a long time in cold conditions. It will take about 8 hours of recharging in the engine room.

The team has been hanging out with the convoy as they made their way through The Path, and a few minutes after the first one is connected to the Space Conveyor, they are hailed by Shade, who tells them: "Remember that old terraformer on Cryolapse, the one you accidentally blew up? Well, they've been rebuilding it and it's blown up again. Place is cursed, I tell ya. But I gotta wonder, what's going on there? Before you waste your Jump Juice coming back here, might as well jump right there."

- He'll pay \$50k to investigate

- Happened just a couple of hours ago
- Witnesses in nearby town said there were a number of small explosions, and part of the terraformer has collapsed
- Can get Jump Juice at Huddletown
- Sooner the better?

Shade tunes the team into a broadcast: Julia has sold her story to the tabloids that she was aboard the train with the terrorists and is now on various talk shows. Squeak in particular has been singled out as she was also spotted by the conductor and others on the train (they compared her face with that of the photos Lt Staples took). The mysterious nature of the train stop and the detaching of the riot police car (which is not public knowledge) has brought in other investigators as well, but they are somewhat hindered by the fact that the military is covering up the outbreak, so no investigation of the ground was able to be done. As a result, Squeak is Wanted. "As I understand she was found smuggled aboard the train. The conductor dragged her into the car where I was sitting, she was swearing the whole time, and the only empty seat was next to me. She muscled against me so I was squished against the wall, as if I wasn't there, and I asked her why she was so mean and she said I should shut up, or she would get her friends and they would hurt me real bad. Her friends were on the train, I swear. I could tell. She was trying to say there were far away, but she was lying. She lied to me a lot, she said her mom had died in the explosion, which is all the more horrible because she was the one that did it, she and her friends that is. What kind of a horrible person lies about something like that? I mean, she was really short, but really mean. I told her she would be in big trouble when we got to the station and eventually she paid me \$80 to shut me up, but even money couldn't keep me from telling the world the truth. At one point she dropped her headset and didn't notice, so I listened as the others were plotting and scheming, and they figured out I was on the line so they tried to change the channel." "Weren't you afraid for your life?" "Yes, I looked in her eyes and I could tell she was a killer and a liar. When I looked in her eyes it was like looking at a statue--stone cold. And I could tell she was from Crossroads, she was wearing gang clothes like what you see on Crossroads." "So, you believe the others are alive?" "Yes, I know and swear it, her little band of terrorists is out there. I didn't see them, but I heard them. They sounded kind of foreign, and I couldn't always understand what they were scheming. I thought they were going to blow up the train and was scared for my life, but I knew no one would believe me. I just praise the angel that watched over me and kept me safe from these murderers." "Well God bless you, it sounds like you're the bravest little soldier in this new war, facing cowardly murderers. I hope that they all get the justice they need. Any last words?" "Yes, it's to all my sisters out there, I hope you all had the courage I had then, and that if you just play your cards right like me we'll catch these guys and kill them real good. And come see me tonight, I'll be speaking at the Spacedock Temporary Memorial at 8 pm tonight where I will announce myself as establishing a totally new charity to help victims of the tragedy, please bring large donations because so many are hurting and need your help. Bless you all."

On the way out of the path, in the outer asteroid field, Rynna can Notice a small ship--it's Maj Wolfstinger. If provoked he will flee, but can be hailed and talked to with some Persuasion (Cautious). What he will tell is that something "just didn't seem right" about the call to regroup and leave the system, and he decided not to. (He can join the group as an NPC.)

There are a variety of parties nearby:

- Morphs - just want to kill things
- BV Security (Hostile)- want to prevent scientists from leaving, or others from coming in
- Scientists (Neutral)- want to escape or otherwise avoid danger
- Animals (Neutral) - neutral unless provoked

- 1 - Spider Swarm
- 2 - Crocs
- 3 - Bear
- 4 - Jackals
- 5 - Deer
- 6 - Rabbits
- Palmaica Villagers (UPPG!) (Uncooperative) - depends on situation and reaction to others
- Huddle's People - Blade?

Animae wants to retrieve:

- Corporis
- Dux
- Signal Tracker
- Flexuram
- Vanguard star maps
- Repair Bot

Animae is getting the Outer Planets IZC to believe that they are under attack by the Inner Planets and Blue Vector. They are being barraged by completely false information concocted by Animae. She will take control of the Superior, the nuclear-armed vessel that had attacked Draco.

Animae is hoping that the team will go to the terraformer and 1) leave their ship there with Blue, allowing him to steal Corporis, DUX, the repair bot, and the signal tracker, and 2) take out the BV forces still remaining there, allowing Animae to use IZC utility vessels to extract the Flexuram.

Animae is wanting to assume as much control as possible to avoid Vanguard/Contingent technology to bleed into the old systems. This could escalate from just "disconnecting" BV from Hades Nebula, all the way to all-out war. The Vanguard maps need to be found.

Flying into the region, it seems that the various anti-aircraft emplacements have been destroyed. The southeast corner of the terraformer has collapsed, leaving a pit of rubble. The terraformer doesn't seem to have the same floor structure that the original had, displaying only floor structures around the outside, and not in the middle.

The situation on the ground is that the villagers are somewhat concerned, but not surprised. **Natalya**, the lady with the UPPG tattoo who runs the bar where Damien and Sketch were slipped mickeys is still there. **Malitra** is closely associated with the church and Father Pescatore and she has lands abutting the terraformer and knows about many of the goings-on.

If the team is within a mile and looking from the south/east, they can see that there is something quite large hanging inside the terraformer...the Flexuram. It is held up vertically in place by a series of braces, and it appears that there are a few catwalks that extend from the outer floors over to the station.

There is a group of Blue Vector security forces still within the partially collapsed structure, in the pit created by the collapsed section. Two snipers are placed up above (60 feet/10" up (add 5" to all shooting distances), one on the left, one on the right) both as spotters and as snipers. They have a lot of cover (-4) and are hard to see (-4 Notice). Each character can have one Notice roll initially to spot them, but after that will have to spend one full turn to Notice where they are. On the ground are most of the other



security forces, but they are battling Morphs that have escaped from a nearby training camp. The scientists are "helping" the security forces but will try to run away if they think they can make it safely (now that the team is here the security forces are distracted). The small wall they've constructed provides -1 if standing, -2 protection if crouching, -4 if prone. The wall has toughness of 8.

Layout:

- 4 in central area inc. Scorch
- 2 in back of central area
- 3 by side
- Scientists in back
- 2 hanging with scientists
- 2 snipers
- Morphs are dealt in round 3

**Scorch** is the leader of the security forces, and his primary weapon is a flamethrower. He has two extra tanks with him, sitting on the ground. The tank toughness is 14 (although -4 against bullets) and is -4 to hit. The tanks will have a 1 in 8 chance of exploding if hit with a bullet. There are also a couple of larger tanks in the pit that the security team is using for heat and for a generator. Exploding any tank will either:

- 1-2: Blast: LBT 3d6 damage, regular area effects apply.
- 3-4: Cone: Shoots a blast of fire back in the direction of the firer
- 5-6: Projectile: for next 3 turns rockets in 1d6 direction at 1d6 direction, any obstacles suffer 2d8 damage

**Flamethrowers** are operated at Shooting +2, and requires a matching Agility roll to evade. When in a fire cone, 2d10 damage (through armor), are now considered on fire. On the next round, 6 on a 6 to see if they catch fire again (mods if more inflammable), then dole out damage. Repeat. If they stop/drop/roll for one round it can go out (Spirit roll though). Let's also roll Fear for those that have been burnt before (except Aleya because she was rescued by fire).

**Grenades:** With respect to grenades, they can be caught and Thrown back at Agility -4, or -2 if the character was on Hold. As a result, if grenades are expected, one of the security forces will remain on Hold. Failure means they get an extra die of damage.

**Suppressive fire:** Roll one Shooting shot with standard modifiers for range and full-auto, but ignore cover for shooting. If the attack is successful, those in a MBT must roll Spirit plus any cover modifiers, otherwise are Shaken. Natural 1 will suffer damage normally. Weapon uses 5xROF.

**Test of Wills:** Roll Intimidation vs. Spirit, if intimidator wins they get +2 on next action, raise makes you Shaken.

**Rocks:** The security forces can also throw/roll rocks, using Throw, up to 4 squares. They need to make a Strength roll to lift rocks, for Str+d4, -2 for d6, -4 for d8, so Str+dX+heightd6 (+d6 for raise).

The rubble is littered with charred corpses. These are Morph bodies but they are not evident from the damage done. There is a pool of water, but it contains various industrial solvents. Anyone touching the water will have to roll Vigor or suffer burns that will affect the area of contact accordingly, and will need to remove the acid or suffer additional effects increasing for the next two turns.

There is no power in the building; however, aux power is powered by a generator. Currently the generator is powering security/AAA radars on the top of the building, to protect the tower from air assault, but it can be switched to power the elevators and emergency systems...the aux switch is guarded by a couple of the guards. Alternately, the walls or the elevator shafts may be scaled (-2 if using the elevator cables).

If power is shifted to AUX there will be a hum and the Flexuram will start lifting--very slowly. [Not sure why.] At the same time, the sound of heavy engines, like that of large ships, can be heard, and in a few turns two utility ships will hover over the terraformer and drop down braces that latch onto the top of the Flexuram. They will then tow it away at a pretty fast clip.

All the while, Blue made off with Corporis, Dux, the repair bot, and the signal tracker. If he has time, he will also come back, and will have no memory of any of the robbery.

### === Season 3 Ep 7 =====

Wounds: Gil: 1

Notice-2, or otherwise, Scorch points out some small flashes that are appearing in certain areas of Blue Jewel. "Looks like a battle is going on up there." He may join the group, or you can purchase his flamethrower for \$5,000, or Grenades for \$20 each.

Jump Juice at any of the spaceports is now \$16,000 a shot due to everyone who can wanting to get out of Cryolapse. You don't need Jump Juice to get to Cryolapse Alpha. 6-hour flight, takes 2 engine points.

#### BLUE JEWEL

At Blue Jewel if they go to the spaceport they can get oxygen for \$100 each. Otherwise after an hour on the surface it's Vigor or lose Fatigue.

Orbital Defense Pods defend against various space-based assaults. They can attack by using high-powered lasers to disrupt sensitive areas of ships, making them vulnerable when entering the atmosphere. They also provide tactical information to defense teams.

SAM batteries provide most of the defense at lower levels. Multisensor Arrays (MSAs) track movement. Fighters engage directly.

The inner planets have moved militarily on Blue Jewel for various reasons:

- IZC seems to be gone, defected?
- They want to establish a base
- Luxurious accommodations don't hurt
- Low grav makes some operations easier
- Small and easy to secure entirely

What they did:

- Jam hyperspace relays
- Take out ODPs via sabotage at automated defense hub
- Establish temporary MSAs and defense units
- Secure Inner Planet citizens and property

- Control planetary infrastructure
- Use Vatborn as elite guard

**Aguila Perennes** is both an outer planets citizen and also mother to the former UPPG general, so she has been taken into custody and her estate has been turned into a Founders' Army base. She is considered a Prisoner of Interest and may be taken off-moon.

**Huddle** doesn't have a lot of time but will enlist the team for their "extracurricular" help. The entire IZC has disappeared; there was a sudden all-call about twelve hours ago and once they had their crews, all ships jumped without notice; the last sighting was with the Burana just an hour ago in brief orbit of Cryolapse—it's now since jumped. He is concerned for Huddletown existentially. He fears the invaders may simply annihilate everyone, and they only have small arms for defense. He does have a **Major Wolfstinger** in "keeping" at the station, the only IZC personnel he knows of that did not follow the all-call. He has him in custody for desertion but figures he may provide valuable information.

If they want to go to the planet, they can try to go one of three ways:

1. Get past a destroyer and ground fighters - city center
2. Get past remaining ODPs - ocean - then coastal defense systems
3. Take on regional ground-based MSAs/Fighters - boonies

The **city center** is occupied as the Liberation Forces of the Founders' Army have secured all the major plazas and are using them as "**liberation centers**" for extracting/securing Inner Planet citizens and "registration" for all others. If they land without resistance they will have to go to the "reception center" where they must give up all their possessions into a "personal safety bin," including having full access to the ship to "demilitarize cargo." They are assigned "personalized identifiers for non-citizens" or **PINCs**, three-inch-diameter reflective neon pink badges that they must wear visibly on their chest at all times. Once they pass a preliminary background screen they are released to the streets. There is a curfew half an hour before sundown and half an hour after sunrise.

There is a lot of question in the city how the invaders got through the orbital defense net. The "military leaders" (they are more like council members) are obviously the first rounded up as part of the invasion, as there were few real defenses and military to begin with; and the IZC personnel were already gone having been called up. **Astral** is in town and is hunkered in his old haunts in the warehouse where Brainpierce was held. He's wearing a kind of suit made entirely of large rings that seem to levitate around his body (magnets), and his hair is completely spiked. He wears only tighty-whites underneath, but they are barely visible. He has spiked wellies on. He cannot remove many of the torso rings without using a welder. He has all his belongings hanging from various rings, including a bandolier of amphetamines and various flasks. He is carrying a what appears to be a pistol, but turns out to be a special kind of russian roulette: each chamber contains a different pill. He puts the muzzle in his mouth and pulls and whichever pill it lands on is what he takes.

1. Downer - "we're doomed!"
2. E - "this music tastes blue!"
3. Aphrodisiac - falls for one of the ladies
4. Hallucinogen - starts seeing things
5. Paranoia - Fears the group
6. Extreme upper - sweating - "Blue Jewel is invincible!!"

He has a buddy **Helmet** that was part of militia, if only so he could legally carry weapons, but Helmet has gone into hiding since the invasion, hoping to "wait until the right moment of weakness," and blaming "some backstabbing traitorous son-of-a-bitch." Last Astral knew, he was making his way out of the city by way of a typical smuggling route, in hopes of finding Curina, who might know about the location of the auto defense hub. Helmet is wearing plain black clothing. Helmet has thin, strawlike hair that radiates out from underneath his helmet. Helmet suspects that another militia member, known to him as **Cinder**, is responsible because he was the only other one who knew about an automated defense hub.

Smuggling route:

- City: City park where roundup is occurring - must make large distraction (up to -4 for notice) and Stealth -4 (due to large group) vs Notice
- City: storm drain to dry reservoir, run 100' to lock fence without being seen - Stealth vs Notice
- Suburbs: Attach secretly to commuter caravan - Driver: Stealth vs d6 Notice
- Suburbs: Ride almost to last station, roll out at trestle - Driving
- Rural: follow wide river to ocean, overnight - Survival, Stealth vs d6 Notice

They are using seized houses in the **suburbs/outlying areas**, such as the Perennes estate, as bases of operation. They don't want to "trouble" Inners by quartering themselves in their houses. The outer suburbs are not as controlled as the main city, but it doesn't have the spaceport infrastructure that is militarily important. If the team gets here they will eventually be accosted by Helmet, on his way to the ocean shore.

The **ocean** is as-yet uncontrolled. A few ships rove the seas but the LibFor have already established coastal air defense systems. **Curina** is a skiff pilot that is looking for communications from militia members. She has a very tan complexion, brown eyes with stony grey flecks, shoulder-length dark hair and wears a wet suit. They will use simple unobtrusive light signals, like leaving certain house lights on, and other similarly undetectable methods. Curina is part of the smuggling network but like Helmet is also part of the militia. Curina will have an uncooperative attitude toward the team at first.

There is a secret **automated defense hub** that is located in a remote island. An informant gave its position away to the LibFor and it has seemingly been disabled. It is powered by geothermal energy so as to be off-grid. A small team of vatborn have taken the facility and maintain a light guard in the surrounding forest. The hub is on **Pylae Island**, a largely jungled island produced in the "line of fire" area of Blue Jewel, noted for its volcanism. There is a very small eco-tourist resort called **Sacred Habitats** in the area that is run by **Panama**. Panama wears a blazer and country-club clothing while at the resort and jungle camo when in the jungle. Panama is convinced that the environments of planets are themselves sentient creatures and have wills not unlike our own. He's convinced that the nearby island of Kamini is a particularly vibrant center of life for this planetary creature. This is due to not only the dynamic volcanism of the island, but also the presence of inexplicable vents that grow mad when military exercises go on. "Dearie me" he says about everything. He has to broker the peace in fights between Inners and Outers that are staying at his resort, who have taken to dividing the resort into half and drawing a line between the Inner and Outer side (including the playground).

**Kamini:** There is a large iron grate, wrought to look like a more natural formation of roots, that requires 20 Strength to successfully move. Those that go down will slide down a long way, and will fall into one of the following rooms randomly, taking 2d6 damage in the process of falling:

1. Air Room - Runs the transmitter (electromag-seismic transmitter)
2. Earth Room - Engages power coils, egress ports: open/closed

3. Water Room - starts water flow to steam area
4. Fire Room - starts lava flow to steam area

Hazards:

- Falling in: 1d6+1, unless someone tries to catch you (Agility or Strength)
- Gusts of wind: Str to Walk through.
- The catwalk is out: only the girders remain. Agility to go from one to the other (raise moves you two spaces). Fail twice and you must roll Vigor to hold on, and Fear.
- Radiation: Vigor or Fatigue after 10 rounds (out of 15)
- Quicksand: Agility at the start of each round to move, max move 4. 2 fails and you need Vigor to keep breathing, and Fear.
- Jump: Jump 1 from stop, Jump 2 running, +1" with Strength roll
- Heat: Vigor or Fatigue after 10 rounds (out of 15)
- Standing water: Swimming required, movement ½ of swimming skill (rounded up)
- Moving water: Swimming to enter, up to -1 to move
- Submerged water: Strength to move walking, otherwise ½ speed, Vigor after 2 turns underwater.
- Icy slope: Move at ½ Climbing
- Wet Icy Slope: Climbing -2
- Fire spouts: At beginning of turn, roll to see where fire spurts: if any caught in it, 2d6.
- 2 fire spouts: two such spurts
- Lava: 3d6 burns

**Clave** is a militia member who, along with Helmet, knew the approximate location of the automated defense hub. Last month he went snooping around the Line of Fire chain and eventually ran into Panama and figured out where the defense hub was. Ahead of the launch, archspy **Stiles** came to him to reveal where the defense hub was. They went to Sacred Habitats as a base of operations, then rented a skiff to the location, from which they planted a beacon used by Stiles' vatborn soldiers. Clave is a bit of an oddball character who wears a zoot suit much of the day unless required otherwise. Stiles is a man of tall military build and is Clave's "minder" until the LibFor believes they have the situation under control. Clave wants to get out and find Helmet and Stiles is determined to hold on to Clave in the meantime, making their stay tense.

**Orbital Defense Pod** - Notice d12+2 vs Stealth, Shooting d10 to disrupt deorbit shielding, cumulative damage upon entry. Requires EVA or repair bot to fix.

**Battleship** - Notice d10+2 vs Stealth, Missiles and Guns

**MSA** - Notice d10+2 vs Stealth

=== Season 3 Episode 8 =====

Night is starting to fall (2 hours of daylight and another 2 of Cryolapse glow) and we should **determine who is staying on the boat/camping and who is staying at the resort**. Astral and Dapper have been kicked off the boat (and is still wearing his ridiculous garb) by Curina. The resort is called **Sacred Habitats**, on the island of **Pylae**.

Vigor checks for thin air, Including Stiles, but not those living on Spa Moon.

It costs each person \$100 a night to stay at the resort, including food.

Ask what the team on the ship/land want to do, and figure out what each is doing specifically for the next couple of hours. The team will need to eat before nightfall or Vigor roll at -2 (if no food).

- Hunting/Foraging (Survival)
- Building Camp/Fortifications (Smarts -4, Survival)
- Camouflage ship/camp (Stealth)
- Patrol (Notice)
- Later, Making food (Smarts or Survival)

It takes ½ an hour at regular pace to make it the ½ mile between the cove and the resort. Smarts not to get lost unless using a GPS.

**Curina's Skiff:** ACC/TS 3/10, Toughness 11(2), Crew 1+9

**PT Boat:** 3/10, 13(2), Crew 1+9

**At Resort:** Rynna, Aleya, Roman, Damien, Lady Turk

**On Boat:** Curina

**On Land:** Astral, Dapper, Helmet, Gil, Blue (Hyperion?), Rails, JJ, Jumpseat, Tailor

Panama has made the people at the resort feel welcome even though there is the "line in the sand" between the inner and outer visitors. Clave and Stiles are outsiders, although proper Investigation into Stiles may find out that he is actually an Inner.

There are no computer links, and Panama is carefully controlling access to the standard radio in the main dining and event hall (bar) to keep from getting the two sides enraged.

He suggests a series of contests as a way of channeling the animosity of the two groups. Winners will get a round of drinks on the house, that all winning team members MUST imbibe (Vigor or lose 1 Fatigue). There are four members from each team. The games, which are not revealed until the teams are set, are:

- Tug of war (combined Strength, top score moves one direction), first to 'move' it two spaces wins.
- Underwater shallow-sea lobster traps hooking (combined Vigor, best of 3)
  - Drag new traps down & chain
  - Disconnect old trap chains
    - Two big ones got away and are feisty at one of the boxes
    - Roll Vigor or Swimming each round to hold breath, or get -1 Fatigue, -2 if holding box
    - Lobster: Claws 2d6(2AP), Fighting d6, movement 6, two attacks, Toughness 5(1), parry 6
  - Drag old traps back
- Three-legged foot races (sets of 2, combined Agility, first couple to 30 wins)
- Wrestling (tiebreaker, one-on-one from each team, three 'wounds' to win)

Those that are back at the boat have the choice of staying on the boat overnight or camping ashore.

Curina wants to put the boat in a cove to both protect it from the seas, but also to hit it from LibFor patrol boats.

If out at sea they will be seen by a **Patrol Boat** (5-round chase). They can also Stealth hide the boat; the cove will give +1 to Stealth.

**Camping Ashore:** Consider their food situation; must eat something; Survival each to find food (say what they're looking for); Raise feeds 5. If they light a fire it will allow various members of the resort (Panama, Stiles) a Notice+2 (opposed Stealth) to see the smoke. There will at least one encounter during the night:

1. Rat Swarm
2. "Night Slinger" Monkeys (x4)
3. Vatborn patrol (x4, dispersed) (+2 to notice due to size)
4. LibFor Forces (Space Marines x4)

The conditions will be Dark (-1) while glow from Cryolapse, otherwise -2 for visibility), and:

1. Rainy (d8: 5-7, 8: torrential, forces boat from cove)
2. Foul stench - trees emit noxious gas that flows along river (Vigor or Fatigue). Roll Notice for patrol first, and any Danger Sense.

Gunfire, etc. will always trigger a Notice -2 roll from the Resort members unless they are asleep or if it's during a thunderstorm.

Forest provides Medium Cover (-2) unless characters specifically hide behind trees (e.g. Heavy Cover, -4; Prone -6). Movement is slowed by 2 when going through forest in any turn.

Astral will not take any pills.

### === Season 3 Episode 9 =====

Rails: Fatigue 1

Aleya: 1 Fatigue (?), 1 Wound

Curina: 3 wounds

Recap:

Rynna, Damien, Roman, Aleya, and Lady Turk are at the resort. (no sleep)

JJ, Rails, and Jumpseat were in the bunker. They got sleep.

Helmet was on Patrol. (no sleep)

Blue, Gil, Dapper, Tailor (JJ?), and Astral had just returned from the resort (no sleep)

Curina was recovering (somewhere)

Damien rolls Smarts. If Success then he didn't bring his guns into the water; if Raise he knows to clean his katanas. All ranged weapons will be rendered useless if in the salt water. Use Smarts to clean them.

Panama, with a strong drink in hand, approaches one of the team members (Roman, with a flaming drink?) and reveals that with the war and the death of Clave, he's depressed and thinking of selling the resort, for about \$150, although he can be talked down. He suggests that he can stay on a while as a paid guide, but that perhaps Lady Turk and Aleya can assist him in any transition. If Gil doesn't buy the place, Lady Turk may.

Curina is lame in her right leg from the explosion. It turns out she was also shot with a rifle, though it grazed her torso. She needs help to recover her wounds, otherwise she'll get poor Recovery rolls. The team needs to decide what to do.

Panama says a few words about Clave and announces that they will have a ceremony for him later the next morning, followed by a wake in the afternoon. He will also burn the body in a pyre on a beach not far from the resort.

With Clave dead, Stiles no longer needs to make his payout to him, and is free to return to his other duties. He get Panama to let him into Clave's room and goes through Clave's stuff to make sure there's nothing incriminating, and takes his guns & grenades. Later in the night he receives word about a vatborn patrol finding the team's bunker. The vatborn decided to take out Curina, who looked like a scout, but wait to call in an airstrike for the bunker since the bunker looked heavily fortified. The airstrike could not happen until the next morning, so the vatborn decided to blow the skiff so the team had no method of escape.

## NIGHTTIME

If the team investigates the situation, they will find some quite large bootprints in the area in the peninsular area near the skiff. On a raise, the bootprints indicate that the wearers were approximately seven to eight feet high and over 500 pounds. The bootprints can be Tracked. They followed, then followed back, the perimeter of the island, up to a point on a beach about one mile away where the tracks turn to the beach and disappear. There is another island just opposite the beach, about a half mile away.

Helmet will grab Astral and run off into the jungle. He figures the campsite has been blown, and it shouldn't be used. He will try to track the vatborn tracks.

At midnight, have those that haven't had sleep roll for Sleep effects.

Night watches:

- at hotel, at 10pm Stiles goes into Clave's room, takes grenades
- at camp, at 10pm Helmet and Astral sneak off into the jungle

Morning watches:



- at hotel, at 5am Stiles leaves the hotel with a backpack to go hiking
- at camp, at 6:30am the attack commences

Early in the morning, Stiles will go for a walk. He will go up the mountain a little and watch for the air strike, assisting as necessary.

#### Round 0:

Any of those on patrol get a Notice toll to be ready by round 1. Roll JJ's Notice at -2 for Danger Sense, -4 if he's asleep; this will allow him to act this round. Roll everyone else's Notice, those asleep at -4; Success allows them to be ready in this round. Drop ships appear on map and drop FAANTM turrets.

#### Round 1:

Deal cards to those that are awake, and to the dropships and the turrets separately. One dropships will fire a missile at the bunker in this round, and the gunners and napalm will Hold. (Dropships can either napalm or fire missiles in a round).

If anyone is on patrol, they are granted a Notice roll vs. the dropships' Stealth to notice. JJ gets a Notice -2 for Danger Sense; giving him the ability on Success to try to rouse others ("Get out of the bunker!") and those in the bunker have odds-on Notice to wake up, Notice+2 if Raise.

The airstrike will occur first daylight, and will include two dropships that will approach from behind the mountain, wrap around both sides, then converge at the cove, coming low over the water. One will fire missiles on the bunker, the other will lay down suppressive fire. If there is no further movement, one ship will drop a detachment of LibFor forces. If the team goes into the jungle, one dropship will fire with napalm. They will also drop FANTM (Fire At AN-ything That Moves) turrets.

The dropships will call for a surrender if they encounter fleeing combatants, and once they have sight of any of the characters from the Promise mission, they will hold their fire and announce that they will accept them for immediate transport without requiring disarmament.

Terrain is Difficult ground (each tile counts as 2)

#### Dropship:

ACC/TS 10/120; Toughness 17(2);

- Sidewinder x2: 100/200/400; Dam 4x8; ROF 2; AP 6; MBT
- Napalm: 2d10, Cone or LBT, Fire (6 on a d6 catches fire for all things that are hit, Shooting +2, then Agility for those to move out of the way)
- 25mm Cannons: 50/100/200; 3d8 AP 4; ROF 3

Bunker: Toughness 20(4). Can take 3 hits, after which it collapses. Will catch fire with napalm (6 on d6)

FANTM Turret; Toughness 13, Strength 13 to knock over:

- 25mm Cannons: 50/100/200; 3d8 AP 4, ROF 3
- Shooting d8, Notice d10. Notices each round for targets that have moved and distributes fire between found targets.

## PROMISE

If they do join the dropship, they will be transported to a planet (Promise), where they will meet with some bigwigs from Blue Vector. The dropship will go into the heart of a cluster of "shard" skyscrapers, one of which has a large cruiser moored to an impossibly small mooring mast. The mooring mast is slightly off-center and the shard has a small part that rises above the landing pad that aligns with the base of the mooring mast.

When departing the dropship, Curious party members (Jumpseat), or those that are willing, will look down through the mesh, a half mile above the street level below, and must roll Spirit or suffer -1 Fatigue for fear (?). They are then brought into a transport lobby, a large room at the base of the mooring mast with many sets of chairs lying about.

Only four security guards are present--they look like typical Rent-A-Cops with assault rifles. One addresses the group and informs them that they are to meet with some Blue Vector VIPs regarding a delicate matter. The team must select four candidates to talk to the VIPs, and then he will select two from that four that will actually be able to ride up the mooring mast elevator and into the cruiser. They will take away any communication devices.

JJ, Blue, and Tailor will NOT be selected; Extras or those with the lowest Smarts/Spirit of the remainder will be.

The two that are selected ride the elevator unescorted into the cruiser, where they are landed in a room that is a large, ornately decorated office. There they are met by two executives, one, an elderly VP of BV and another a rather tall woman. Two very large dogs lie between the team members and the VIPs, lying by a "glow plate" (fireplace). The bigwigs are actually Pure and Freya, who have disguised themselves and want to understand what the intelligence is that is behind Crossroads' transformation.

Pure and Freya each cast Disguise on themselves and will spend Bennies to ensure a high value. Since none of the party is familiar with the execs, they will Notice -4/-6 to reveal the disguise. They will also cast Fear and it will appear to the victims that they are afraid of the dogs.

Disguise: Arcana vs Notice -4/-6 in this case

Mind Read: Arcana vs Smarts, noticed/unnoticed

Fear: Roll Spirit in LBT. Failure: Extras are Panicked. WCs roll on Fright Table (98)

The Execs will ask about, and use Mind Read, for:

- What person or group is responsible for the sudden consolidation of power on Crossroads? (Poly)
- What has happened to the entirety of the IZC? (Anima)

Things Blue Vector can grant them for infiltrating the **Crossroads Immunity** (the strength of the Crossroads economy since Poly existed):

- Estate on Blue Jewel
- \$500K
- Clearing name

Regardless of the outcome of the meeting with the "BV VIPs" the team will be escorted, or left on the landing pad, where they are informed by PA they must clear as another ship is coming in and they will be either propelled or incinerated. The only option is a large elevator off to the right side of the landing pad.

The options for the elevator are:

- Penthouse
- Night Club
- Fine Dining
- Hotel
- Shopping Center (and public transport)
- Street Level
- Subterranean (warning)

There is a horizontal display that has a poorly animated unisex head that presents the express elevator's options. As they are waiting to make their selection, a public service announcement comes on and shows the photos of them taken while Lt Staples had them incarcerated at the arctic base. The PSA informs them that they should contact the local authorities with priority one emergency if they have contact with or have information about those shown in the images.

Anyone who encounters the group must roll Notice and if they succeed, they will have to roll Spirit, possibly at -4 (Damien/Rynna), to operate rationally; if they fail they will do so in a characteristic way.

**Penthouse:** if they arrive at the penthouse they will hear a desperate cry for help, but will have to Lockpick -2 to open the door; they can also use the intercom to call in. If they get in, they find a lavish apartment. They come into a large, oval-shaped room with a skylight; on the left is an inset cabinet displaying dozens of cheerleading trophies; on the right is another inset cabinet with various framed letters and photos of a man, often shaking the hands of important-looking individuals. In a room to the right a man in his forties is slugging a woman in her late twenties. The man is **Senator Sheffield**. She has confronted him with some evidence of infidelity that he both denies but also says "is not her business." If he recognizes the group he will try to barter for their silence by promising to clear their name. His wife, **Pyramid**, will possibly join the party if they so choose. Pyramid has bruises and -1 Fatigue.

**Night Club:** The 53 ½ (53.5?) Club is strangely wedged between the 52nd and 53rd floors, and is placed among the vents and tubing that separates the two floors. The ceiling is not low, but it's hot and members must strip down or suffer Heat hazards. The bouncer will ask them to check their weapons for a total of \$20 (toward charity), and if he Notices them he'll contact the Pol and they will have a fire alarm later.

One of the guests is a moderately tall woman wearing a decorative mask that gives the impression of rippling flames, with short, dyed-black spiky hair, calling herself "**Fever**." She will be taking an interest in the group, although perhaps from afar. If necessary she will reveal herself as **Ruby**, who had escaped from the military base in polar Promise "using unconventional means." She is on the run and is looking for a man named "Sauce" who she has promised to kill or otherwise maim, to gain the faith of an underworld leader named "Zero." Sauce's men and Zero's men have been poised to kill each other.

She was going to poison Sauce but notices that she no longer has the poison. Smarts to recall that someone had bumped into her when she'd passed through the entrance to the club, a man wearing an iridescent jacket, who apologized and soon left.

When Sauce comes in, it's pretty clear. The mood of the club turns almost instantly from bubbly to nervous--as if something bad is going to go down. "He's got to make his rounds first," Ruby states,

indicating that he is dropping off illicit shipments. "Then he starts in on the women...the money is easy come, easy go"

**Fine Dining:** Get some grub, don't get caught. Costs \$100 to get nice clothes, \$200 to dine (each per person). The host is half asleep and has Notice -2. If he does notice them, he'll try to finagle something from them in an interesting way.

**Hotel:** The clerk is Freya, a dark-skinned woman with a large mane of golden hair, who calls herself "**Kai**." She does not need to roll anything to recognize the crew. She will try to coerce them into disarming (at least heavy weapons) and to get rooms, which are \$200/night for a standard room (can take up to 4 in a room), or \$1000 for a suite.

**Shopping Center:** Basic pandemonium if they show up, as someone will recognize them. Starts out in a jewel store, an AR/RT team will come after them.

**Street Level:** There isn't actually much at street level except seas of yellow flyers. Each street is one way, but dozens of layers of tracks pile over one another, and the one-way streets' traffic, as it flows around the block, creates a bit of a vortex around the base of each shard. A man (**Miska**) is catching cigarettes thrown from the cars hoping to find one that's not completely used. He is a pickpocket and a bit of a showoff. He will try to pickpocket a team member, first using Taunt to lower their response, then Agility+2 to pickpocket something. Miska has a crush on Pyramid and has stolen documents and ephemera from the senator that he then surreptitiously provided to her to try to convince her to leave her, although she doesn't yet know his identity.

**Subterranean (Subplatform 12):** The elevator AI informs them that it is required by law to inform them of the dangerous nature of Subplatform 12. "When the world turns bad, the good go underground."

"You are entering an Unpatrolled Zone. By municipal Statute 48 subsection 6 paragraph 3 this elevator is required to inform you of the number and severity of crimes committed nearby. Within the last week, 413 misdemeanors and 87 major crimes have occurred in a quarter-mile radius of the landing. You are subjected to all laws and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law for any crimes committed in the zone; however, if you are victimized by an action no aid will come to you. You may purchase a non-transferable VIP Yearly Elevator Access for \$2000, otherwise you will not be allowed access back into the elevator. By leaving this elevator you acknowledge this notice and waive all claims on public protection. Have a good day."

If they go here, they are immersed in a dim cavernous area that seems to have been an old highway tunnel that has become filled with debris, and only a few shafts of light occasionally break through from higher levels. They will soon come into contact with a renegade vatborn named Batch Zero. He operates a gang but his ultimate hope is to liberate his fellow vatborn.

### === Season 3 Episode 10 =====

Sauce says he can help the group, but he needs "a little help" in addition to some money. He would like to see Zero out of the way. Zero's biggest hope is to "bust out" some of his other vatborn that are being held at a secret military facility hidden in a sanatorium. If the team could infiltrate the sanatorium and exterminate the vatborn there, Zero's hope for a vatborn army to rule over the underworld will be at an end.

Batch Zero and Ruby talk with Dapper about their situation. When Ruby was imprisoned at the military base at the pole under Lt Staples, she met another prisoner who gave her information about how to live--literally--underground. He'd been a disciple of Zero for several years. Zero was, so he says, the first batch of military-grade vatborn, thus "Batch Zero." The vatborn were developed by the military as a way to create a perfect infantry soldier: loyal, moderately intelligent, and intimidating. Compared with training a standard infantryman, vatborn are more expensive, but they can be created on demand and do not require upkeep. They are either frozen or terminated, depending on the amount of damage taken.

Zero's batch was the first that was considered field-ready, about 20 years ago. He'd fought in missions for about seven years, then something clicked--he realized there was more to life than just fighting. He realized that after time, complex memories would form a longing for life out of the military. He suspects that he was the first to realize that he was just doing the biddings of his masters, and desired to be free. He tried to talk his comrades into making a cabal to escape, but his pleas were lost on deaf ears for many months. Finally, he escaped on his own. Later, he learned that the military "erased" his comrades, supposedly out of fear that the others would follow suit.

The sanatorium has a portion that is devoted to experimenting on "outphased" vatborn--those that are no longer commissioned for duty, out of fear for developing "wanderlust." The experiments are attempts to capture the battle experience of the vatborn by "downloading" their memories, but filtering out the emotional experiences. The experiments are horrific and grotesque, and the sanatorium makes not only a good cover for the project, but also allows "top researchers" to be legitimately housed there.

#### PITT-KRUICK SANATORIUM

The grounds of the sanatorium are above Sauce's territory, which is why Zero has been trying to muscle in on it. There are several paths the team can take to get there. The first is a sewer line that leads to a storm drain inside the grounds. Another is to take another elevator to the street ground entrance, but this may expose them to street traffic and possible exposure; they may need to hide or disguise themselves. Finally, they might be able to get two people admitted via a "looney car" if they pay off the driver well enough.

Dr. Ambrose Pitt is the primary experimental researcher. He is intelligent and sadistic. He is performing the work for the military as ordered, but he goes above and beyond the call of his work, performing surgeries outside of his program. In many cases he removes the armor from the vatborn, which is akin to removing a human's skin. This and other mutilations are part of his extracurricular research.

Kruick was a patient of his, a serial murder who Pitt took on as a case to fully rehabilitate, which he did, seemingly miraculously removing all the bad memories and leaving functional remnants, to the point that Kruick entered society again and has since become a famous statesman. The Pitt/Kruick technique involves a complex combination of surgery, psychotherapy, and various mental conditioning. The technique includes having the patient fully explore the nature of their affliction, as a way of further identifying the areas that need to be expunged. This involves a sometimes dangerous combination of unbounded role-playing and fantasy exploration. The result is that the sanatorium often recreates completely hellish scenarios, and the halls echo with the screams and howls of those in the midst of the "id fulfillment phase."

Phases:

1. Confinement (complete acquiescence)
2. Id Fulfillment (exploration of any perceived boundaries)
3. Ego Control (complete self-control)
4. Functional (use of self-control for a purpose)
5. Assimilation
6. Freedom

What isn't known is that Pitt has a "kill switch" which is a kind of tie to his patients, where their psychotic tendencies are locked until notice of his death, at which point they will revert to their former state. There are over 10,000 patients across Promise that are in this condition.

When anyone comes in the front door, they are asked to submit a simple brain scan. The alleged concern is that certain brain waves could adversely affect the patients. Most of the employees are "third-phase recovery" patients, who are housed at the facility along the others. They assume all roles, from janitor to administrator, until they have rehabilitated to "fourth phase" where they can move into the greater world. They are conditioned so that they are ideal for their role, regardless of their original occupation. Frequently Pitt places them in positions seemingly opposing their pasts, as a way of reinforcing their role-playing capabilities. A supermodel is a janitor, an agoraphobe is a receptionist, and so on. Oddly, they seem not only content in their positions but they excel at them. Sometimes Pitt incorporates memories of others' occupations to their own to make them succeed. "It's true, transplanting memories can aid people phenomenally--imagine if we could capture the knowledge and wisdom of our elders! However for now there are side effects that cause us not to take such risks unless the patient is already suffering immense mental faculty failures." The patients each have a small earpiece, tongue stud, or similar device, ostensibly to ensure mental stability and to ensure that they do not escape.

The fourth-phase employees can on a moment's notice be downloaded with the combat experience of the vatborn, or of any particular patient as necessary. They can have a mental state that boosts any one of their die by two (from d6 to d10), needing only one round to switch. They can use any skill associated with the raised die (Shooting of d10, for example, with an Agility of d10).

It turns out that Pitt was the one behind operation Diamond Screen and claims that he can restore their memories.

The facility is totally enclosed within one of the shards, although it is constructed as though there are grounds that the patients can walk about. Overhead is a faux sky, replicating a clear sky and full day/night cycle.

Various individuals at the Sanatorium:

- Dr. Pitt
- Eight vatborn
- Phase-Four Employees

**=== Future =====**

Poly(?) is building a robot army to counter Pure, but is now worried that they will too easily fall prey to Anima. In fact, one such prototyping facility has been raided and needs to be "controlled."

The IZC fleet has all but disappeared, so piracy and other such things are on the rise.

The vatborn commander wants a jailbreak, mental asylum, or vatborn containment center break.