SERENITY ROLE PLAYING GAME

AND THEY'RE OFF

A TALE OF THRILLING HEROICS IN THREE ACTS

SERENITY
ROLE PLAYING GAME
AND THEY'RE OFF

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HERE'S THE DEAL

For folk what live on the Rim, when they start to hear the words "Have you got what it takes to be a winner?" blanket the Cortex, they know that, once again the time has come for the Moon Hop. For them as what live on the Border Planets or one of those uppity Central Planets what ain't heard of the Moon Hop, the short answer is it's a race, but 'race' just don't come close to explaining what this annual event is really all about. Regardless of what the Moon Hop may or may not be about one thing is very clear, there is a lot of coin to made and as anyone what runs the Black knows, where there is money, trouble is usually not that far behind…

GM'S NOTES

This full length adventure is designed for Veteran level characters. And They're Off consists of three acts of two scenes each, Act One begins with 'An Offer You Can't Refuse' and 'How tough can it be?' Act Two has the characters facing 'Serious Business' and 'The Quick and the Dead,' concluding with Act Three's 'Back Stretch' and 'No Guts, No Glory.' It is possible for characters of greater or lesser amounts of experience to participate in this adventure if the GM adjusts the task difficulties and skills of the NPCs accordingly in order to provide a proper challenge for the PCs and players.

THE MOON HOP

Only on the Rim could such a wild, rough, and tumble event be created or occur. The contestants fly souped up shuttles, heavily modified for speed, in a no holds barred bastardized mix of Earth-That-Was races once known as rally, grand prix, and NASCAR the racers must complete several different phases to win the Moon Hop. Starting on the Rim planet of Athens the contestants must do ten circuits around a track, before heading out to get timed at two points on the ground. At each of the two points the racers get half of the coordinates to know which moon to travel to next, then break atmo and head for that moon where they repeat the process on all four moons. While speed is important, the rally nature of the race has the racers earning points along the way and thus the first contestant to cross the finish line is not automatically the winner. Competition on the Moon Hop is fierce and fist fights or sabotage are frequent, outright violence is not allowed, but when passions run as high as they do sometimes things, despite the monitors along the way, have been known to get out of hand.

The PCs have been down on their luck lately and are in debt to a ruthless, unforgiving woman that has summoned them, which is the only way the icily worded Wave could be interpreted, to her home on Athens. Despite the venue, the Crew knows the visit is any but a social call, but what she tells them they have to do to pay off their debt surprises even the most jaded spacer. It just so happens that in a few days, a very popular local event, the Moon Hop, is about to start. This annual race is the major sporting event of the year on Athens and brings many opportunities to make money during the run up to and the day of the race. The PCs are forced to answer the call of "Have you got what it takes to be a winner?" and enter the race. However, the race is just a distraction for the real job, as it seems their debt holder has learned that a certain business has been noticed to be under protected during the race. The real job is to obtain certain items from that business that

have taken the woman's fancy and the Crew has got to get them at any cost and by any means necessary…

ACT ONE
SCENE ONE
AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE

"There are many a reason why a Crew could get desperate enough to think that goin' to a loan shark is an option. Tryin' to stay flyin' or to keep yer ship outta the hands of some lao bao jun[1] banker is a powerful incentive, but unless ya happen to be the shark. There ain't ever no good end to dealin' with a loan shark. Never forget that if'n ya ever take it into yer head to take a boat into the Black."
– Frankie 'Twice Pipe' Whitaker, information broker, Persephone

While between jobs, the PCs receive a wave from Molly Hatchet, a go between they have done jobs for in the past and to whom they currently owe a large debt. Exactly how the PCs got in debt is up to the GM, but can include something as simple as having borrowed money at her loan shark rates or having had a job they were doing for her go south. Regardless of how the debt was incurred, this offer is a chance to payoff anything from a simple debt of money up to a Deadly Enemy that the PCs otherwise could not hope to do.
Read Aloud:

"Hey Dearies, here's a chance for ya'll to square things between us. I've got a job, straight up gig for a change too. Ya'll ever hear of the Moon Hop?"

It takes a successful EASY Intelligence + Covert / Streetwise or an AVERAGE

Intelligence + Knowledge to know of the rough and tumble Rim race around the moons of Athens. If the PCs reply that they have she continues with:

"Good, good figured ya'll would. Thing is, my usual racer broke his fool leg while tyin' one on last week and can't make the run for me, which, is damned inconvenient if'n ya ask me, not that ya did. What I need is a pilot to take my idjit's place and that's where ya'll come in. Ya'll run the Moon Hop for me and, win or lose, we're square. You in?"

If by chance none of the PCs manage to succeed in their rolls to have heard of the Moon Hop Molly says:

"Well don't matter none, it's a local thing. Anywho, the Moon Hop is a race. Starts here on Athens and hits all four moons and is one hell of a time in these parts. Thing is, my usual racer broke his fool leg while tyin' one on last week and can't make the run for me, which, is damned inconvenient if'n ya ask me, not that ya did. What I need is a pilot to take my idjit's place and that's where ya'll come in. Ya'll run the Moon Hop for me and, win or lose, we're square. You in?"

As the PCs are no where near a position to pay off their debt, Hatchet's offer is a good one and they should readily agree. If they refuse, Hatchet's tone gets hard when she replies:

"Perhaps ya'll are mistakin' my cheerful nature for bein' some kinda fool. Ya'll are gonna help me or I'll call in every maker I have and ya'll be dead by the end of the

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[1] Old tyrant

week. Ya got six days to get to Athens and race for me. Otherwise, ya'll better start figurin' out somethin' suitable fer yer tombstones."

Despite not liking being ordered about, the chance to settle their debt with Hatchet is an excellent offer and once the debt is paid, they need never see her again.

Six days is more than enough time to reach Athens with a day to spare for a ship with a speed of four or higher. A ship with speed three or less will arrive only a few hours before the race and will put Hatchet in an even fouler mood. The trip to Athens is uneventful unless the GM decides to complicate things with an encounter or other problem along the way.

On landing in Parthenon, the capital of Athens, they are met at the port by several of Hatchet's goons. The thugs are not there for a fight, but will be more than happy to provide one if the PCs decided to resist. The goons were sent as a sign to remind the PCs that they are on her home turf and that she's the one in charge. The Crew are escorted to Hatchet's home, which is attached to a run down warehouse in an equally run down part of Portside. The PCs aren't searched or disarmed, but it is very clear that starting a fight would be an exceedingly bad idea. Despite having a debt holder/debtor, or possibly adversarial, relationship and even if Hatchet is an avowed Deadly Enemy, she greets the PCs warmly, offering them surprisingly good finger food and drinks and exchanges in strained pleasantries. Once everyone is settled, except for the glaringly obvious bodyguards behind her and if the PC's ship was fast enough to get them to Athens

with time to spare, Hatchet says the following: Read Aloud:

**"Okay, here's the deal. Just like I told ya in my wave, ya'll have a pilot and I need one. Ya'll owe me and I'm willin' to forgive that debt if ya run the Moon Hop for me. However, what I may have neglected to mention in my wave is while yer pilot is out makin' me money, I've got another job fer the rest of ya'll. As ya now ken, the Moon Hop is a big thing here on and around Athens. In fact, things get so festive around here that it's pretty much a holiday fer the folk what make these parts their home. Folk gather from all around to watch and most businesses close. Why it's a down right carnival on the day of he Moon Hop.
"It's that 'most businesses close' part where ya'll come in. Ya see, there's this jewelry store on the east side of town that seems to be so into the Moon Hop, that their security isn't what it usually is. Ya'll knock off that store fer all it's bit o'pretty, I'll even let ya keep ten percent of the take, and I'll tear up ya'll's marker."**

If the PCs arrive with only a few hours to spare, the above greeting is far less sociable with no refreshments being offered and Hatchet continues with the following:

"Okay, here's the deal. Since you hun dan[2] don't seem to ken the meanin' of timely, I'll make this quick. Just like I told ya in my wave, ya'll have a pilot and I need one. Ya'll owe me and I'm willin' to forgive that debt if ya run the Moon

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[2] Jerks

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Hop for me. However, what I may have neglected to mention in my wave is while yer pilot is out makin' me money, I've got another job fer the rest of ya'll. As ya now ken, the Moon Hop is a big thing here on and around Athens. In fact, it's pretty much a holiday with most businesses closed. There's a jewelry store on the east side of town that doesn't quite fully shut down fer the Moon Hop, which means while they stay open their security isn't what it usually is. Yer job is to knock off that store. Ya'll manage that without gettin' pinched and I'll tear up ya'll's marker."

While the PCs might not like Hatchet's terms, they are not in a position to negotiate. When they agree to her plan, she smiles tells them where her racing shuttle is parked, hands them a DataDisc with the layout of the jewelry store and the store's security set up. Hatchet stands and it is very clear that the summons over with hers Goons escort the PCs back to their ship. If the PCs were late, the Goons take up a position outside their ship and stand guard until the PCs head out to their assigned tasks.

The PCs now have either 24 hours or less than three hours to plan a robbery. If they only have the three hours, they gain a one-step skill penalty to the following roll. Going over the plans requires a HARD test of Intelligence + Covert / Surveillance or Alertness + Perception / Deduction to find the best means of robbing the store. A success reveals that the normal security has been reduced to allow as many employees as possible to watch the race. However, since one salesman and one guard are inside the store the alarm system is in day mode. In this mode, rather than the system directly calling the police when a breech is detected as in night mode, a panic button has to be triggered to signal the police. This means if the PCs can distract or disable the two employees, no alarm will be sent giving them time to loot the store.

If the PCs fail the above roll, they do not realize the difference in the alarm setting and will believe they will need both a Mag Charge and an Optical Bomb to disable the system. If the PCs do not have these items, it will require a HARD Willpower + Covert / Streetwise test to locate them at the standard cost. An Extraordinary Success will find the items with 10% discount, a Fail will locate the items, but at 10% higher cost, while a Botch will still locate the items, but at 25% higher cost.

Since there are only two employees to subdue, there is no need to resort to excessive violence, as even on a Rim planet like Athens, murder is a bad idea. All the Crew needs to do to complete the job is to bluff their way into the store and overpower the employees. Once the employees are bound and gagged, they can plunder the store at their leisure.

While the rest of the Crew is making their robbery plans, the Pilot will be escorted to the race track to meet with Hatchet's ground crew and shown the racing shuttle. Figuring out the shuttle's characteristics requires an AVERAGE Intelligence + Piloting and an AVERAGE Intelligence + Mechanical Engineering roll. If either or both of these tests fails the Pilot will incur a one-step skill penalty for the first three laps of the first part of the race as they have to gain a feel of the shuttle's performance on the fly.

Once the PCs have checked out Hatchet's shuttle and made their plans for the robbery, go to the next scene.

ACT ONE
SCENE TWO
HOW TOUGH CAN IT BE?

"Hoodwink – Verb, definition: 'To trick, fool, or deceive. Etymology – Earth-That-Was, English - a combination of the words hood and wink. Hood dates to 1592 and simply meant to blindfold someone. Wink dates to 1610 and at the time meant to firmly close one's eyes. As thieves would frequently blindfold or hoodwink their victims, the word took on the figurative meaning of robbing or fooling someone."
– Cortex Entry, Elementary Reader Edition 2518

At this point of this adventure the major elements of the plot split and the GM will have to keep track of the concurrent plots as the two major events begin to play out. The two components are The Race and The Robbery and each will have their own section.

The Race

Just as Molly Hatchet said during her meeting, the run up to the Moon Hop is in a carnival atmosphere. There are performers, food, and a myriad of other forms of entertainment to be found all around the race track and spilling through the streets of Parthenon with the people of Athens clearly enjoying the annual party.

The shuttle ground crew, while not hostile, is not friendly to the Pilot. If the PC wants to get any useful insights, it will require an AVERAGE Intelligence + Influence / Persuasion or Willpower + Discipline / Intimidation roll. If the PC succeeds, the crew chief will reveal that the FēikuàiQiāo3 has been so modified that the controls require constant attention when in atmo. If the Pilot failed to figure this

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3 Very Fast Sled

out with their earlier inspection, they learn it now and avoid the three lap penalty to skill. If the PC rolls an Extraordinary Success, the crew chief pulls the Pilot to the side and says:

"Miss Hatchet had this shuttle so heavily tweaked that it's not stable in atmo. That's why her regular pilot went out and got so fallin' down drunk that he ended up breakin' his leg."

In game terms, the shuttle's flight controls require so much attention that if the Pilot attempts Multiple Actions in a Combat Turn, keeping track of the controls counts as an Action, thus if the Pilot tries two actions, it counts as three with the standard two-step penalty. This also means that the Pilot will be unlikely to be able to make the usually allowed three actions in a Combat Turn. Three Actions will only be possible if the PC has d8 or higher skill in Pilot / Shuttle in order not to have their skilled reduced to zero by a three-step penalty.

If the above roll fails, the crew remains surly and the Pilot doesn't learn anything and only finds out about the penalty to Multiple Actions after the race starts. If the Pilot rolls a Botch, the crew becomes so resentful that they deliberately misalign the engines during the final tune up which causes the shuttle to lose a point of speed for the whole race.

How the PC reacts to any revelations from the ground crew is up to the Player, but there isn't any time to do anything about it as the warning buzzer sounds that signals the racers to move to their start positions. The Moon Hop uses a random lottery start to assign start positions as the shuttles are taxing onto the track. There are a total of twenty-four racers in this year's Moon hop organized in eight

rows of three and the Pilot is informed that he will be in the third row center. The Pilot pulls into their assigned position as the count down begins. There is nothing else for the PC to do but wait for the race to start.

The Robbery

As the Pilot waits, on the other side of town, the PCs that will be involved in robbing the jewelry store will be making their way to their own starting positions. Bluffing their way into the store will only require an EASY Willpower + Performance / Acting or an AVERAGE Intelligence + Influence / Persuasion roll. The players have several means to get bonuses for inventive stories or disguises. Examples of some disguises are: An engaged couple will gain a one-step skill bonus, as will anyone that is finely dressed, like a businessman. These bonuses stack giving the PCs a two-step skill bonus for being disguised as a finely dressed couple.

If the PCs can come up with a believable story that impresses the GM, they should gain a one-step skill bonus for their efforts and the GM should also consider handing out a Plot Point or two for good role playing.

However, if more than two people try to enter the store at once, this puts the NPCs on edge and the PCs suffer a two-step skill penalty. Figuring out keeping the initial approach to no more than two people is an AVERAGE Intelligence + Covert / Surveillance or Alertness + Perception / Deduction. Additional PCs can hide further back out of the store's line of sight with no skill roll.

If the bluffing roll works, the guard allows PC(s) into the store. If the roll fails, the guard is suspicious, allowing the PC(s) into the store, but is alert enough to have his full defense and will force the PC(s) to roll for Initiative if

they try anything. If the PC(s) roll a Botch on their initial bluff, the guard will not open the door and moves his hand to cover the panic button. If this occurs, the Crew is going to have to come up with an alternate plan of their own. However, as a successful robbery is critical to paying off their debt, the use of Plot Points is highly encouraged.

Once inside the store, the PC(s) will have to make a second bluff to fool the salesman, but this is an Opposed Roll pitting the PC's above skill versus the salesman's Alertness + Perception. If the second roll succeeds, the employees are fooled long enough to be completely surprised and will be an EASY target for the PC(s) who get a Free Turn. If the roll fails, the PC(s) will get to move first, but the employees are alert enough to have their full defense. If the second bluff is Botched the PC(s) will have to roll Initiative as the employees are not fooled at all.

The PCs are highly encouraged to subdue the two employees with as minimal amount of force as possible. If the bluff gains a Free Turn or the PCs act first, they will gain a one-step bonus to any Opposed Roll of Willpower + Discipline / Intimidation versus the NPC's Willpower + Discipline, increasing to a two-step bonus if the attempt is made with a drawn firearm.

If the PCs choose to physically subdue the employees. Run the combat as normal using the Security Guard on Page 183 and the Rim Shop Keeper on Pages 185-186 of the Serenity Rules Book for the employees. The security guard is armed with a baton and a pistol, but he instinctively draws his baton first and only goes for the pistol if the PCs do so first. However, the GM should remind the PCs with an EASY Intelligence + Knowledge roll that while armed robbery is frowned on by the

local law enforcement, murder will result in more complications than the Crew needs. In addition, there are enough people in the streets that any gunplay will be immediately noticed. This will be big problem for any PC that has the Memorable Complication as there will be many witnesses as the PCs flee the scene.

Once the two employees are subdued, it is a simple matter to smash open the cases to grab most of the store's merchandise. If the PCs are under the assumption that they need to use a Mag Charge and an Optical Bomb, they can set them off first, with no skill roll, prior to smashing the cases. Gathering the loot is a HARD Complex Action of Agility + Athletics for one character or an AVERAGE task for two or more with each roll having a time increment of 30 seconds. The PCs have the option to simply take the salesman's keys an open the cases, which is an easier task, but will take longer. If the PCs chose this option, decrease the task difficulties by a one-step, but double the time increment.

Unknown to the PCs they only have four minutes to complete ransacking the store before a passerby notices the robbery and runs off to report the crime, which will take another minute. The police will be at the store within five more minutes. Consider the gathering of the loot to use Indirect Assistance, but if any PCs roll a Botch it is treated as per the standard rules. If they should have the bad luck to roll a second Botch, the task may continue, but all progress is lost and the PCs must start again.

Since the store is only at reduced staffing, there isn't as much jewelry on display, but the amount still in the cases is still impressive. If the PCs complete their Complex Action, they will recover €2,500 in fine jewelry, gold and silver. If the Complex Action is interrupted, the GM must prorate the total based on how far the PCs got with their rolls. (Example: if the PCs have a bad time and only manage a 19 out of 35 before having to stop gathering loot, they get 54% of the total or €1,350) Regardless of how well the robbery goes, Molly Hatchet has a completely different agenda on her mind. In actuality, the jewelry store the PCs have been sent to rob is just a secondary target. The real goal has always been a bank on the other side of town with the unsuspecting PCs actually in the role of decoy. The ruthless Hatchet's plan has all along been to inform the police of the PC's activities via an anonymous wave so that the Feds are drawn out of position, which in turn would free Hatchet's own crew to go after the real target while the police are distracted with stopping the expendable PCs. As a result, no sooner do the PCs complete gathering the loot from the store, when they must make an EASY Alertness + Perception / Hearing roll to notice the approach of numerous police sirens.

The GM should only let the PCs know that they can see the police car approaching before awarding 1-3 Plot Points and going to the next scene.

ACT TWO
SCENE ONE
SERIOUS BUSINESS

"Ya know, I've lived more years than I like to admit, but it don't matter if'n I make it ta twice as many years as I've already seen pass. Ya just can't beat the Moon Hop fer pure mindless fun. Ya gets a bunch of souped up shuttles and run 'em between Athens and her four moons - Ahnooie, Argabuthon, Ormuzd, and Whitefall as fast as ya can and ya gots yerself some real live entertainment ta occupy yer time. I ain't much fer most sports, but I ain't never missed a single Moon Hop."

– Pops McMurty itinerant spacer and long time Rim resident

The Race

As the robbers are dealing with the sudden and completely unexpected arrival of the police, the Pilot is in the starting lineup and anxiously awaiting the count down. The timer hits zero and with a roar, the twenty-four shuttles accelerate from a standing start to several hundred miles an hour in seconds. Based on the Pilot's skill rolls, they are either working out how to jockey for position against the other racers or have their hands full trying to control the surprisingly skittish shuttle that seems to have a mind of it's own. The GM now has two options on how to run the race depending on the amount of detail they want to determine the outcome. The more thorough rules are included in a text box at the end of this Scene. The for a more abstracted race can be found in this adventure'S appendix.

The Moon Hop consists of the same three parts: completing ten laps around an oval track, flying to two rally points to obtain the coordinates that reveals which moon to fly to next, and the flight to the next moon with the sequence being repeated for the first two moons. On the third moon the pilots only have to make the ten laps around the track as the last destination is now obvious at this point.

On completing the ten laps, the pilots race to the last moon and complete ten laps on the final moon to the finish line.

In the abstracted form, each leg is represented by a Complex Action of different difficulty levels. The initial ten laps for the PC Pilot is either an AVERAGE (35) difficulty using Shuttle's Agility + Pilot Skill if they learned their shuttle's idiosyncrasies in advance, with the task rising to HARD (55) if they have to

discover the difficulties in flight. Each roll represents thirty seconds of time. If the PC can complete the task in three minutes or less, they score two points and have the lead. Completing the task in three and a half to five minutes scores one point and they are in the front of the pack. Taking more than five minutes puts the PC at the back of the pack and does not score any points. A single Botch increases the difficulty by a step and a Second Botch results in a major malfunction or crash that knocks the racer out of the race. The PC must immediately succeed in a HARD Shuttle's Agility + Pilot to have just suffered a malfunction. If the PC fails this roll, it results in a crash with the difficulty becoming an attack roll doing Basic damage, Botching this saving roll results in a spectacular crash doing Wound damage.

The race to the rally points is another AVERAGE Complex Action using Intelligence + Pilot with each roll representing one minute. Completing the task in six minutes or less scores two points and either puts the PC in the lead or keeps them there. Completing the task in seven to eight minutes scores one point with the PC in the front of the pack, taking nine or more minutes drops the PC to the back of the pack and doesn't score any points. If any Botches are rolled, they are handled as above. When the task is completed the coordinates reveal that the next destination is Ahnooie.

Flying between the moons is a HARD Complex Action of Shuttle's Agility + Pilot Skill with a time increment of ten minutes per roll. If the PC succeeds with a HARD Intelligence + Pilot / Astrogation or Intelligence + Technical Engineering / Astrogation, they gain a one-step bonus to their skill for the Complex Action, an Extraordinary Success earns a two-

step bonus, failing the roll results in a one-step penalty and a Botch causes a two-step penalty. Completing the Complex Action in an hour (six rolls) gives the PC the lead and scores two points, seventy to eighty minutes is worth one point and a place in the front of the pack, ninety or more minutes results in being in the bottom of the pack and will not score any points. If a single Botch is rolled, the task increases by one level. If a second Botch is rolled, the shuttle suffers a complete break down and is out of the race.

The Robbery

The PCs robbing the jewelry store find themselves in a difficult situation, but it only takes an EASY Intelligence + Knowledge roll to know that getting into a blazing gunfight with the police in the heart of the city is an amazingly bad idea, especially given the fact that they are outnumbered no less than three to one. If any of the PCs can succeed in an AVERAGE Intelligence + Perception / Deduction roll, they will quickly conclude that based on the number of police that have arrived means their appearance wasn't just a random event. If the PCs succeed in this test, no further roll is necessary to figure out that Molly Hatchet has set them up. The Crew may not know why, but at the moment, escaping arrest is the far more pressing issue.

The police quickly have the jewelry store surrounded in force and escaping via ground level or the roof is clearly impossible. Any PC that looked at the DataDisc that Hatchet gave them may now attempt an AVERAGE Recall Roll (Intelligence + Willpower) to remember that the store's lower level storage area is right next to the Parthenon city sewer system. While obviously not anyone's example of a good idea, considering their distinct lack of good idea, considering their distinct lack of

other options, it is at least taking a look. Checking out the storage area requires a HARD successful Intelligence + Craft, Intelligence + Knowledge, or Intelligence + Mechanical Engineering roll to find, for a change, the PCs are in luck. The architect that designed this building was aware of the sewer and made the assumption that not even a criminal would be desperate enough to wade through raw sewage for money. As a result, the building's plumbing and the plumbing crawl space were placed directly atop the sewer.

The jewelry store is a very old building and has had a small leak behind the wall for what looks like years, which has severely weakened not only the area around the crawl space, but the top of the sewer as well. An AVERAGE test of one of the above skills will realize that it won't take much force to cause the old infrastructure to collapse. Due to repeated plumbing problems, there is a small tool kit in the storage area that contains a heavy hammer. If a PC climbs into the crawl space and strikes downward with an AVERAGE Burst of Strength (Strength + Strength) they will open a whole large enough to drop into the sewer. They will however have to make an AVERAGE Agility + Athletics roll to not fall into the opening themselves. Failing the roll becomes an attack roll doing Basic damage, but a Botch also adds the embarrassment of landing in the raw sewage.

By the time the PCs have hopefully created their escape route, the Parthenon police have completed setting up their cordon and begin to call for their surrender via loud speaker. The PCs only have to succeed with an AVERAGE roll Willpower + Influence / Persuasion to keep the police talking long enough for the robbers to make their escape from the store. Even

Botching this roll has little effect as the bars on the doors and windows will delay the police's entrance until the PCs have fled. The Robbers have slipped out of the police's snare, but are by no means free and clear yet. In addition, they now know that their employer has set them up. Go to the next scene.

ACT TWO
SCENE TWO
THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

"By the skin of one's teeth – definition: To complete a task at the very last second or to just barely escape disaster. Etymology – Earth-That-Was Biblical reference: Job, Chapter 19, verse 20 in which Job laments his increasingly dire situation. The actual quote in the scripture is 'with' the skin of one's teeth as translated from the original Hebrew."
– Cortex Entry, Elementary Reader Edition 2518

The Race

After arriving on the moon Ahnooie, the Pilot will use the racing rules to complete the ten laps as per the previous Act. Regardless of their standing at the completion of the laps, as they race to reach the first rally point, have the Pilot roll against a HARD Alertness + Perception / Sight test to notice that another racer on a collision course. The PC must succeed in a HARD Willpower + Discipline / Mental Resistance or an AVERAGE Intelligence + Perception / Deduction (Steady Calm applies to either of these rolls) to realize that the imminent collision is a ruse. Such a crash would knock both shuttles out of the race and that the other pilot is trying to fool the PC into a potentially catastrophic panicked overreaction. If this 'gut check' roll succeeds, the PC maintains his course and the other shuttle is forced to swerve to avoid the

collision. If the PC is fooled to taking evasive action, they must roll Shuttle's Agility + Pilot versus a HARD difficulty with the target number becoming an attack doing Basic damage if the Pilot fails the test.

Based on the outcome of collision, if the Pilot's shuttle is still functional, the GM will then use the racing rules to determine the results of the race for the two rally points. On completing this part of the race, the Pilot learns the next destination is Argabuthon, which will lead to the standard rules for plotting and flying to that moon.

The Robbery

The PCs that robbed the jewelry store may have escaped the police's snare, but their situation is decidedly unpleasant. In fact the smells and sights of the sewer is their first hurdle. Each PC must make an AVERAGE Resistance Roll (Vitality + Vitality) to be able to shake off the affects of the miasma. Failing this roll results in a one-step penalty to all Mental Attribute (Alertness, Intelligence, and Willpower) based rolls. A Botch causes a two-step penalty and the PC is unable to hold down their last meal.

After dealing with the initial affects of the sewer, the next thing the PCs have to do is figure out how to get to the port from their current location. An AVERAGE Recall Roll (Alertness + Survival / Appropriate Specialty) will get the PCs moving in the general direction of the port. Escaping through the sewer is a FORMIDABLE Complex Action of Intelligence + Knowledge with a time increment of five minutes. It will take the police thirty minutes to enter the jewelry store and another fifteen minutes to discover how the PCs have fled the building. Failing the Recall roll to figure out the correct way to the

port increases the following Complex Action difficulty to HEROIC.

Once the police enter the sewers, the GM will begin a HARD Complex Action of Alertness + Perception for the pursuers with the same time increment. If the police reach their threshold before the PCs reach theirs, the pursuers have caught up with them. Again, killing police officers is a bad idea, so the PCs are encouraged to figure out another means to subdue their pursuers. If the players can not think of something on their own, the GM will call for an Opposed Roll of Intelligence + Perception / Tactics. If the PCs win, they can set up a hasty ambush where they will get a Free Turn against the three police officers. Use the Frontier Deputy on page 185 for the police officers. If the police win this test, both sides will then roll Initiative and the GM will run the combat as per the standard rules.

As soon as the PCs have either reached their Complex Action threshold or have dealt with their pursuers, they will exit the sewers inside Parthenon's port and can easily reach their ship. However, on reaching their ship, the PCs find that several (1.5 times as many PCs, rounding up) of Molly Hatchet's goons are waiting for them. The lead goon says:

"Whoa doggy but ya'll are ripe. I can see where ya'll might be in a hurry to change clothes and all, but ya'll weren't thinkin' of stiffin' Miz Hatchet of her cut now was ya?"

The goons will not negotiate and if the PCs do not immediately turn over the loot from the jewelry store, they will initiate a fight. The goons start with fists, but if the PCs draw weapons, they will respond in kind with half armed pistols and half with knives (odd numbers will favor knives). Use Bully Boys from page 185, who will break off after half of them have been killed or knocked out. Unfortunately, the fight draws attention and the PCs must complete the fight quickly (15 + d10 Combat Turns) or an overwhelming number Port Authority Security officers will arrive. Even if the PCs defeat the goons quickly, the fight has drawn enough attention, that when the PC's ship lifts, they are pursued by a Customs Cutter.

If by chance the PCs do turn over the loot, they will be allowed to depart by the goons, but as they are powering up their ship, they can see police arriving. Going by the trail they left through and from the sewer, it is obvious that pursuit has caught up with them. Not in time to prevent them from lifting off, but when they do, they are followed closely by a Customs Cutter.

One final note, if the PCs have used excessive violence, especially if they killed a police officer, in addition to the fight with the goons, when they do board their ship, they find there is a lock down in progress. The Port Authority has announcing a lockdown in progress message and all civilian transports have to be inspected prior to being allowed to depart. The Crew will have to act quickly if they are going to get away before the entire facility is under LandLock. Escaping before their ship is shut down requires an AVERAGE Complex Action pitting the Mechanic's Agility + Technical Engineering to quickly jumpstart the ship's engines with a time increment of one Combat Turn. If the PCs succeed, they manage to take off before being locked down and in addition to a furious command from the control tower the PCs will not even need to roll to spot the Customs Cutter that is in hot pursuit.

If the PCs fail to reach the threshold in ten turns, their controls will be LandLocked and they will be unable to escape. As this would result in the adventure ending in a decidedly bad way, the use of Plot Points is very highly encouraged.

The GM should now award 3-6 Plot Points (with a 3 point penalty for excessive violence) and go to the next scene.

ACT THREE
SCENE ONE
BACK STRETCH

"There's all kinds of words ya can use to describe most cops, most ain't fit for polite company, but one of the most accurate is tenacious. Now, I ken that's a ten platinum word fer most folk, and it's a word that can have a different meanin's. Most of them what lives on the Rim would probably use dogged or firm, but stubborn or even mulish fit just as well. Ya see, cops is usually real territorial and ya go snakin' some bit of pretty out of a place they consider theirs and that is like stealin' raw meat from a junk yard dog. They want what's theirs and will chase ya all over hell and gone to get it back. Thing is there's many a smart crook sittin' on a penal moon cause they spent all their thinkin' on how to steal that bit of pretty and not on how to get away. Ya'll ever decide to make a less than honest credit, ya'll make sure ya remember that."
– Frankie 'Twice Pipe' Whitaker, information broker, Persephone

The Race

For the Pilot PC, the Argabuthon leg will be very much like the last leg using the same rules for the ten laps and the first rally point. However, while en route to the second rally point, the PC has to make an AVERAGE Alertness + Pilot roll to feel a problem developing with the shuttle. If this roll fails, the Pilot will have a one-step penalty to skill for the following roll with a Botch causing a two-step penalty, but an Extraordinary Success will gain a one-step bonus. Depending on the PC's success with the last skill check, they either are braced for trouble or are caught by surprise as the heat transfer pump for the aft thrusters shuts down. This is a major problem as the loss of the aft thrusters drops the shuttle's agility by two-steps, added to the already skittish nature of the craft, a loss of so much maneuverability just about makes winning the race hopeless. If the Pilot can successfully roll an EASY Intelligence + Mechanical Engineering, an AVERAGE Intelligence + Piloting, or a HARD Intelligence + Knowledge they will realize among all the extremely complicated flight controls, is a thruster bypass system. A second roll using one of the above skills at the same difficulties will restore the shuttle's maneuverability. Failing the roll doesn't balance the controls properly and the penalty is only reduced to one-step. A Botch leaves the full two-step penalty, while an Extraordinary Success balances the thrusters so well that the shuttle gains a one-step bonus for the rest of the race.

Regardless of how the mechanical problem play out, once the Pilot has obtained the second set of coordinates, the next leg of the race leads to Whitefall with the normal rules used for plotting the course.

The Robbery

Once airborne, the robbers are still in serious trouble. However, two things are working in their favor. One is the Moon Hop itself, which has brought far more traffic to the Parthenon port than is normal and the second is the police's own LandLock threat. The thing is most of that extra traffic consists of two kinds

of Crews, those that would rather not have their ships inspected too closely or those that bitterly resent the outcome of the Unification War and take exception to any form of Alliance authority. As a result, several other ships have lifted just ahead of the threatened LandLock resulting in absolute chaos over the port and in the immediate airspace over and around Parthenon.

In order to prevent the cutter from obtaining a firing solution, the PCs are going to have to take advantage of the confusion to avoid being fired on, and if their luck holds, to escape the rapidly closing cutter. Escaping target lock requires the pilot to dodge under one of the other ships also fleeing the rumored LandLock. This requires a HARD Ship's Agility + Pilot roll. If the roll fails, it is considered an attack doing Basic damage. If the roll is Botched, the damage is severe enough to do an additional d4W damage. If this roll succeeds, the Customs Cutter is unable to fire on the PC's ship for five Combat Turns and for as long as the pilot succeeds in an Opposed Roll of Ship's Agility + Pilot against the Cutter's pilot using the same skills. On an Extraordinary Success, the Cutter is so distracted avoiding the cluttered airspace that the PCs avoid lock on for ten Combat Turns plus the duration of the Opposed Rolls.

Once out of immediate danger, there is still the problem of escaping Athens' airspace once the Cutter figures out what happened to the PCs. How difficult the escape is going to be depends on the speed of the PC's ship. The Cutter has Speed 5 and Hard Burn 7. If the PC's ship is faster at normal burn, escape will be fairly simple. All the PCs have to do is succeed with a HARD roll of Ship's Agility + Pilot for them to avoid the crowded airspace safely. Failing the roll has the same

consequences as the breaking lock on test above.

If the PC's ship is only faster than the Custom Cutter's normal burn at hard burn (the police will NOT use hard burn in atmo), then escape becomes far more interesting than most Crews like to contemplate. Controlling a vessel using hard-burn in an atmosphere is very dangerous, normally requiring a HEROIC Ship's Agility + Pilot test. However, if the PC's Mechanic can succeed with a HARD test of Intelligence + Mechanical Engineering, they can maximize the ship's flight controls for such punishment and this will reduce the piloting task to FORMIDABLE with a normal success and down to HARD with an Extraordinary Success. Failing the roll, provides no change, but a Botch results in a one-step penalty to the ship's agility. If the PCs are unwilling to attempt the admittedly difficult task, almost certainly without their primary pilot, the Crew can choose to use the hide option described below.

If the PCs are unfortunate to have a ship that is slower than the Customs Cutter even at hard burn, they have a serious problem on their hands. Since using hard burn is so dangerous and will not help them, the PCs are going to have to resort to a completely different tactic. As much as they may not like it, with such a slow ship, the PC's only option is to hide. Thus rather than use the time they gained from dodging under other ships and breaking the cutter's targeting lock to make a run for it, they will have to use the time to find a hiding place.

Fortunately for the PCs, the Alliance has helped them again. During the U-War, the major cities of Athens were bombed repeatedly and much of this damage is still not repaired. Finding a bombed out building large

enough to hold their ship depends on the size of the PC's ship and requires a test of Alertness + Perception / Sight. The task is EASY for a ship with a Strength of d2, AVERAGE for a d4, and HARD for a d6. If the PC's ship happens to be larger, the difficulty continues to increase by one level per step in Ship Strength. Setting the ship down in the shell of the building is a HARD test of Ship's Agility + Pilot with the difficulty becoming an attack roll doing basic damage on a failure, add d4W if this roll is Botched. Once settled, the GM should make a few die rolls to keep the players in suspense, but the metal in the framework of the building's structure scatters the Customs Cutter's scanners and the police fail to detect the PCs.

Regardless if the PCs fled Athens or had to find a hiding place, they can signal the shuttle pilot with an AVERAGE Intelligence + Piloting or Technical Engineering roll to learn which moon is the location of the final leg of the race. After learning their destination, go to the next scene.

ACT THREE
SCENE TWO
NO GUTS, NO GLORY

"Snake in the Grass – definition: A metaphorical allusion to treachery, especially by someone that is trusted. Etymology – Earth-That-Was Latin phrase (latet anguis in herba) and first used by the Roman poet Virgil in 37 BCE. The original use referred specifically to poisonous snakes hidden in tall grass. The term's first known use in English was as the title of a book by the controversial Anglican minister known for his outspoken views on Catholicism Charles Leslie in 1696."
– Cortex Entry, Elementary Reader Edition 2518

The Race

As the race reaches the second half, things start to go much faster as there are fewer options. On Whitefall, there are only two legs, the laps and the flight to Ormuzd. The Pilot will use the rules in Act 2 Scene 1 for the oval and once completing their ten laps, there is no need for rally points as the race's final stop is obvious. The Pilot will immediately begin the Complex Action that represents the flight to Ormuzd as per the standard rules. Somewhere between the laps on Whitefall and the flight to Ormuzd, the Pilot will receive a wave from the other PCs asking where to rendezvous. At this range, the two ships are capable of communicating in real time with a successful AVERAGE Intelligence + Piloting or Technical Engineering test. Once both ships know where to meet the GM should switch back to the Pilot for the final leg of the race. On Ormuzd, the last part of the Moon Hop comes down to the final ten laps around the oval. This can be completed as a HARD Complex Action of Shuttle's Agility + Pilot with whoever completes the task first earning three points, second place earning two points, and third earning a point with Botches treated per the above rules on laps. The GM now adds up all the points scored and the winner is the racer with the highest number of points.

The GM has the option of making the final leg of the race more interesting by having the pilots roll against a HARD Shuttle's Agility + Pilot roll and keeping a running tally of the results for each lap with the highest total earning the three points, second gaining two points, and third place getting one point. If pilots roll an Extraordinary Success during a lap, they will gain a one-step bonus to skill for the next lap. A fail causes a one-step penalty with a Botch causing a two-step penalty.

Regardless of how well the Pilot has done during the race, he will be met by the Molly Hatchet's ground crew along with several of her goons (equal in number to the PCs) and, if by some chance the Pilot has actually managed to win the race, Hatchet will also be there in person. If she is, the number of goons increases to twice as many as the number of PCs.

The Robbery

After the Customs Cutter has departed the PCs on their ship will have to plot the course to Ormuzd with a HARD Complex Action of Ship's Agility + Pilot Skill with a time increment of fifteen minutes per roll. If the PC succeeds with a HARD Intelligence + Pilot / Astrogation or Intelligence + Technical Engineering / Astrogation, they gain a one-step bonus to their skill for the Complex Action, an Extraordinary Success earns a two-step bonus, failing the roll results in a one-step penalty and a Botch causes a two-step penalty.

The PCs that fled Athens should be very paranoid about pursuit and the GM should make a few extra hidden rolls as they are rolling their Complex Action to make them feel that their paranoia seem valid. However, the Parthenon police have their hands far too full to chase petty thieves. The PCs will learn why when the Cortex comes alive with a newsflash. The initial header of the message will cause the PCs to feel icy cold with the words "Daring Daylight Robbery!" However, it seems the robbery in question is not a jewelry store, but the main bank in the city. If the players do not figure out the implication on their own, the GM should call for an AVERAGE Intelligence + Perception / Deduction roll. A success will realize that the reason the police showed up

so fast at the jewelry store was that they were being used as a decoy from Hatchet's real goal which was the bank! In fact, the newsflash doesn't even mention a jewelry store robbery. The PCs will have to roll an AVERAGE Intelligence + Technical Engineering to find 'jewelry store also robbed' on the equivalent of page ten of the local newspaper.

How the PCs react to knowing why they were set up by Hatchet is up to them, but regardless of what they might be thinking, they still have a job to complete. Despite the extreme difference in speeds between the PC's ship and the racing shuttle, both ships will reach Ormuzd at nearly the same time, if anyone asks why, it is because the PC's ship is flying a direct course while the shuttle has to go through Whitefall first. The GM should stage the PC's ship arrival to be just as the Pilot parks the racing shuttle in one of the pit stalls.

As the PCs exit the two ships, Hatchet's goons silently move to cover the group. If Hatchet is present, she steps forward with her two bodyguards close by and does the talking. How the PCs are received depends on how well the Pilot competed. If they won the race, Hatchet will be in a cheery mood and, with her bodyguards close by, will shake the Pilot's hand vigorously saying:

"Well damn if'n I ain't fit to be dipped! Who woulda thunk ya'll would go and win this thing? Ya'll have made me some serious coin today, enough to pay off yer debt, in full, twice over. I tell ya what almost bothers me. Since both the 'Hop and a little side venture I had goin' paid off so well, I'm almost inclined to say ya'll are free to go with my blessin'. But I

ain't got where I did by bein' generous. Take 'em boys!"

While the NPCs' leader talks, the GM should call for a HARD (11) Alertness + Perception / Empathy roll. On a Success the PCs realize that they've about to be ambushed and gain a one-step Alertness bonus on the following Initiative roll. An Extraordinary Success increases the bonus to two-step. Failing the roll will not result in any further penalty. The goons use the Bully Boy stats from page 185 with half armed with knives and pistols, while the other half armed with knives and rifles. Hatchet's Bodyguards use the Hired Gun stats from page 186 armed with pistols and sub-machine guns and wearing Mesh Armor with Ceramic Plates. Run the combat as normal with the goons continuing to fight until taking one third casualties before running. Hatchet falls back behind her SMG firing bodyguards as soon as the fight starts, giving her the equivalent of Medium Cover. She will flee if either bodyguard or if one quarter of her goons are felled. The GM must take every step to ensure that she gets away as she will become a recurring villain for the PCs to deal with. However, one thing the PCs will not have to deal with is the law as fights after the Moon Hop are common and Hatchet has paid off the local sheriff, as long as the PCs prevail in the fight, there will be no problems with the law. If Hatchet is not present, one of the goons steps up to say:

"Miz Hatchet is satisfied with your run, but ya knows too much. Kill 'em boys!"

At the start of the ambush, the shuttle and the PC's ship are parked sixty feet apart. The pit area is fairly open, but there is also a fair amount of cover to be found. In addition to the three large tool racks that provide Medium Cover, the stall where the shuttle is parked is surrounded by a waist high one foot thick stone wall that provides Light Cover.

The goons use the Bully Boy stats from page 185 with half armed with knives and pistols, while the other half armed with knives and rifles. Run the combat as normal with the goons continuing to fight until taking one third casualties before running. Since fights after the Moon Hop are common and Hatchet has paid off the local sheriff, as long as the PCs prevail in the fight, there will be no problems with the law.

If one or both of the Pilots can make an AVERAGE Alertness + Pilot roll they will notice that some of the goons are taking up position behind the PC's ship. Since a spaceship's drives put out a considerable amount of heat and over pressure, the pilot can use this devastating engine wash to get rid of a few goons by powering up the ship's engines. Boarding the ship while under fire is an AVERAGE Complex Action of Agility + Athletics with a time increment of one Combat Turn. However, as the fight ebbs and flows, if the PCs do not restart the engine with in six turns, the goons will have moved out from behind the ship. The PC's ship engine wash is obviously larger than that of the shuttle and will hit one third of the surviving goons, while the smaller shuttle will hit one quarter. On reaching the flight controls, turning the engine back wash into an attack is an Opposed Roll of Agility + Pilot.

Avoiding the engine wash attack is Opposed Roll by the goons Alertness + Athletics / Dodge. If the Pilot succeeds the NPCs suffers not only the difference between the rolls in Basic Damage, but also d8 points of Wound

damage if they're standing behind the shuttle and d10 points of Wound damage if they're standing behind the PCs' ship. An Extraordinary Success will increase the Wound damage by one-step. Each goon that wins the Opposed Roll avoids injury, but due to having to dive to safety, they are out of the fight for 1d4 + 1 Combat Turns before they can re-enter the fight.

As this fight is the climax of the adventure, the PCs are advised now is the time to freely use Plot Points to defeat the treacherous Hatchet and her deadly goons. If the fight is going poorly for the PCs, an AVERAGE Intelligence + Perception / Tactics or a HARD Intelligence + Knowledge roll will allow the set up a crossfire gaining a one-step bonus to weapons skills for the duration of the fight. Breaking free of the fight will require another of the above skill tests to successfully slip free of the goons and turn the battle into a steeplechase. Reaching their ship is an AVERAGE Complex Action of Agility + Athletics / Running with a time increment of one Combat Turn. The PCs have 18 seconds (six turns) to reach their ship in time to seal the airlock and escape or the goons will catch them which will restart the fight.

If the PCs are still unable to defeat Hatchet's men and the GM does not want to kill the entire Crew, there are a couple options to save them. First, the PC can flee into the crowded pit in a blind panic. They will reach safely for the cost of gaining the Complication: Coward (minor). In the confusion, the goons will lose track of the number of PCs killed and their ship will be where they left it and unguarded as Hatchet believes the Crew is dead. No skill roll is needed to flee with the ship.

The final, and extremely dangerous, option to avoid being murdered is the PCs can use six

plot points to survive being shot by the goons. This desperate option only applies to a PC that has been knocked unconscious due to Shock Points or a combination of Stun and Wound damage in excess of their Life Points. Any PC that has passed out from taking more Wounds than they have Life Point will bleed out from lack of First Aid. The 'Lazarus' option is not available to a PC that has been killed outright in the fight.

If a character uses this option, they will wake up in the undertaker's workshop several hours later with three life points remaining. Their ship will be where they left it and unguarded as Hatchet believes the Crew is dead. No skill roll is needed to flee with the ship.

Once the surviving PCs have fled, there will be no pursuit, but regardless of how the Crews escaped, they will get a final wave from Molly Hatchet.

"Didn't think ya ma de pi gu4 idjits had it in ya ta get away from my men. Hell, I didn't think ya'll were smart enough ta get away from the Parthenon Cops. Ya'll enjoy that fer now, but I'll get ya one day and ya won't be enjoyin' the reunion. See ya later, Dearies."
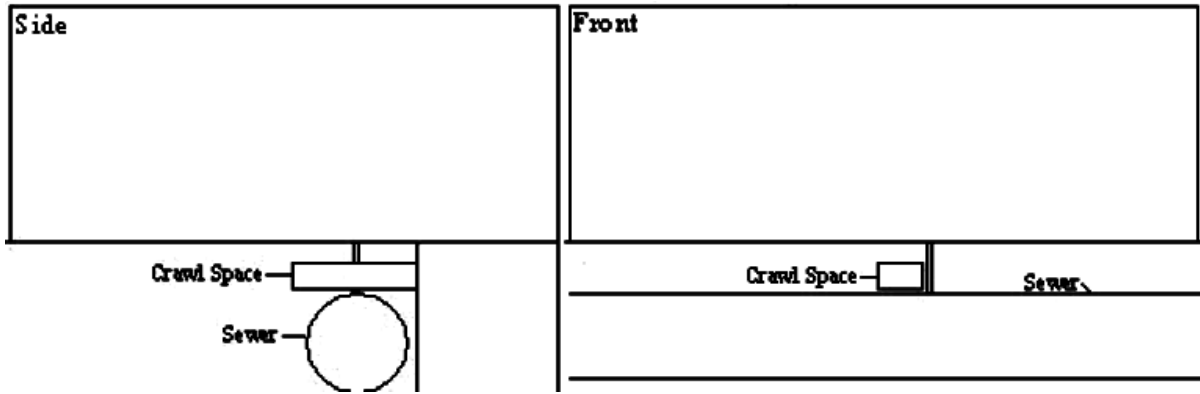
Once the wave ends, the PCs are free to go where ever they choose. The Crew is still flying and may have the jewelry from the robbery as payment for their trouble. On the downside, they have earned a new Deadly Enemy Complication.

The GM will now award 5 Advancement Points and 4-6 Plot Points.

THE END

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[4] Horse's butts

SEWAGE SYSTEM

OPTIONAL RULES

Racing Rules

The Moon Hop is not for the faint of heart as every year there are injuries and fatalities are not rare. The shuttles used in the race are designed for enhanced speed and maneuverability, but pilot skill is as big a factor for a successful race as having a fast shuttle and the following examples show why:

Example 1: Speed 10 Agility d6 Skill d6. Average skill roll is 7 plus Speed 10 equals 17 times 10 for a total score of 170.

Example 2: Speed 4 Agility d8 Skill d12 + d4. Average skill roll is 13.5 plus Speed 4 equals 17.5 times 10 for a total score of 175.

The race starts on Athens with ten laps around an oval course. The score for each lap is the sum of shuttle plus skill roll (*Shuttle's Agility + Pilot*) added together to produce a final total. The highest total wins this leg of the race and scores five points with second place scoring three points, and third scoring one point.

Just before the race starts, the racers are given a set of GPS coordinates. Once they have completed their ten laps, the racers are free to head to the first ground rally point. Reaching this location is an Opposed Roll of (*Shuttle's Agility + Pilot's Skill*) + Shuttle's Speed with the highest roll reaching the rally point first and scoring two points with second place scoring one point. At the rally point, the navigational beacon provides a new set of GPS coordinates for the next rally point and the first half of a set of coordinates that will guide the contestants to the next moon. Racing to the second rally point is another Opposed Roll as above with the same score for first and second place.

The navigational beacon at the second rally point provides the second half of the coordinates that reveals the racer's next destination. Plotting the course to the next moon is a test of *Intelligence + Piloting / Astrogation* or *Intelligence + Technical Engineering / Astrogation*. How well the PCs do with the plotting their course will determine if they get a bonus to their piloting skill for their trip to the next location. AVERAGE = No Bonus, HARD = a one-step bonus to Pilot, FORMIDABLE = a two-step bonus.

The race to the moon is an AVERAGE test of *Shuttle's Agility + Pilot* skill. A success on this roll gets the racer to the next moon, but with no special advantage. An Extraordinary Success puts the racer in the running for being first with the highest skill roll winning and getting three points. Second place gets two points, and third gets one point. A failure on the above roll results in such a delay that the racer will have a two-step penalty to skill for the ten laps at this destination. A Botch on the roll results in a shuttle malfunction or other major problem that knocks the racer out of the Moon Hop. This process is repeated for each leg and each moon with the GM keeping a running tally of points scored with the winner being the racer that scores the most points.

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Chase Rules

As an option to the simple run for it rules provided above, if the GM feels the PCs are up for a bit more of a challenge, the following option is offered to make the scene much more exciting. Both pilots make rolls, using their ship's Agility and their own Pilot Skill. They receive a Skill bonus or penalty based on their ship's current Speed Class:

Speed Class	Skill Modifier	Speed Class	Skill Modifier
1	-4 step	6	+1 step
2	-3 step	7	+2 step
3	-2 step	8	+3 step
4	-1 step	9	+4 step
5	+0 step	10+	+5 step

The Customs Cutter, for example, is not being pushed past her normal limits and is travelling at her normal Cruise Speed of 5 getting no Skill bonus.

The chase starts at Short range. Each turn, the pilots make Opposed Skill rolls. If the player character wins, the PC's ship moves one Range Category further away from the Customs Cutter. On an Extraordinary Success, the ship moves two Range Categories further away. If, however, the pilot loses, the Customs Cutter moves one Range Category closer to the PCs' ship. She moves two Range Categories closer if the PC's pilot rolls a Botch.

The chase ends either if the PCs moves beyond Extreme range and therefore effectively escapes, or if the Customs Cutter moves closer than Point Blank range and is effectively on top of the PC's ship. If the PCs have been rolling this badly, the GM should offer the PCs some hope and rather than immediately opening fire, on the following turn, the cutter tries to dock with the PC's ship. To do so, the cutter pilot must either make a Formidable (15) Skill roll or win another Opposed Roll.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Molly Hatchet

Agility d8, **Strength** d4, **Vitality** d6, **Alertness** d10, **Intelligence** d10, **Willpower** d10;

Life Points 16; Initiative d8 + d10

Traits: Intimidatin' Manner (minor), Nose for Trouble (minor), Things Go Smooth (minor), Branded: Ruthless (minor), Forked Tongue (minor), Greedy (minor)

Skills: Athletics d6 / Dodge d10, Covert d6, Discipline d6 / Intimidation d8, Guns d6 / Pistols d8, Influence d6 / Persuasion d8 / Streetwise d12, Knowledge d4, Perception d6 / Intuition d8, Melee Weapon Combat d4, Unarmed Combat d6

Notes: While Molly is a well known go between for those with the right contacts, no one knows what her real name actually might be. She's quite good at knowing how to arrange a deal, but her reputation is one of being hard-nosed and callous with anyone that she does deal with. Hatchet is a hard woman used to living in hard times and anyone that chooses to work with her had better be aware that her reputation is well earned. Hatchet's main area of influence is centered on Athens and its four moons, but she has extensive connections in the Burnham Quadrant and has contacts throughout the Rim. Hatchet has little contact with the Border Planets and none at all with the Core.

Shuttle Pilots

Hot Shot

Agility d10, **Strength** d6, **Vitality** d8, **Alertness** d10, **Intelligence** d8, **Willpower** d6;

Life Points 14; Initiative d10 + d10

Traits: Talented: Pilot (minor), Overconfident (minor)

Skills: Athletics d6, Covert d4, Guns d6 / Pistols d8, Influence d6 / Persuasion d8 / Streetwise d8, Knowledge d4, Mechanical Engineering d4, Pilot d6 / Astrogation d10 / Shuttle d10, Technical Engineering d4, Perception d6, Unarmed Combat d6 / Brawling d8

Notes: Experienced Moon Hop pilots, eight of the twenty-four entrants use this template.

Rookie

Agility d8, **Strength** d6, **Vitality** d6, **Alertness** d8, **Intelligence** d8, **Willpower** d6;

Life Points 12; Initiative d8 + d8

Traits: Things go Smooth (minor), Overconfident (minor)

Skills: Athletics d6, Covert d4, Guns d6 / Pistols d8, Influence d6 / Streetwise d8, Knowledge d4, Mechanical Engineering d4, Pilot d6 / Astrogation d8 / Shuttle d8, Technical Engineering d4, Perception d6, Unarmed Combat d6 / Brawling d8

Notes: A less experienced Moon Hop pilot, the fifteen other entrants use this template.

SHIPS
Fēikuài Qiāo[1]

Dimensions (LxBxH): 25 x 13 x 10 feet

Tonnage: 20 tons

Speed Class: 8 cruise/10 hard-burn

Crew: Pilot

Life Support: 20 man-days

Fuel Capacity: 1 ton (600 hours)

Cargo Capacity: None

Price: €640

Agi d12, Str d2, Vit d4, Ale d6, Int d2, Wil d2; Init d12 + d6, Life 6

Traits: Allure, Gas Guzzler, Short Range, Skittish[2]

Skills: Aerial Transport Operations/Shuttle d2; Space Transport Operations/Shuttle d2

Complexity: Very low

Maintenance costs €16 per year

Description: A standard shuttle modified for speed and maneuverability.

Customs Cutter

Dimensions (LxBxH): 83 x 48 x 20 feet

Tonnage: 40 tons

Speed Class: 5 cruise/7 hard-burn

Crew: Pilot, Weapons Officer, two Customs Officers

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

Fuel Capacity: 5 tons (2,500 hours)

Cargo Capacity: 4-tons; 4 tons of external weapons

Armament: One 1-pound autocannon with 200 rounds. Up to 8,000 pounds of missiles with a standard load out of 8-100 pound explosive missiles and 16-50 pound explosive missiles

Price: €3,400 plus ammunition.

Agi d10, Str d2, Vit d6, Ale d6, Int d4, Wil d4; Init d10 + d6, Life 6

Traits: Everybody Has One (the only military ship to have this Complication).

Skills: Aerial Transport Operations/Gunship d4; Perception/ Search d4; Space Transport Operations/Gunship d4

Complexity: average

Maintenance costs €80 per year

Description: The Alliance Customs Cutter is a modification of the tried and true Alliance Short Range Enforcement Vehicle or ASREV. The Cutter has a reduced weapons load out in favor of long range fuel capacity. These ships are not popular with their crews as nothing was changed to make the ships more comfortable, so while the Cutter has an impressive range, it is rarely used, as most of these vessels stay close to the planets that they are assigned to patrol.

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[1] Very Fast Sled

[2] Complication - Skittish (minor): The shuttle's flight controls require so much attention that if the Pilot attempts Multiple Actions in a Combat Turn, keeping track of the controls counts as an Action, thus if the Pilot tries two actions, it counts as three with the standard penalty.