

SERENITY  
ROLE PLAYING GAME

SIREN'S  
SONG

A TALE OF  
THRILLING HEROICS  
IN THREE ACTS

# SERENITY ROLE PLAYING GAME

## SIREN'S SONG

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## **HERE'S HOW IT IS**

Life for an independent freighter crew has never been easy. The most difficult part of a life in the Black is finding work. Jobs are always difficult to come by and with times in the 'Verse being hard, jobs are even scarcer than usual. In addition to making ends meet, independent crews have to face no shortage of other threats that come with the life, breakdowns, pirates, Alliance patrols, and Reavers are all known hazards of living in the Black. However, when a new and unknown threat causes ships working the Rim to disappear, the Crew quickly learns that life in the Black is even more dangerous than they realized...

## **GAME MASTER'S NOTES**

Siren's Song is a three act adventure meant for Greenhorn level Crews. In the first act, the Crew learns of some Legitimate Work before facing An Unexpected Loss. Act Two will lead to On the Beam and This Can't be Good, before concluding in Act Three with Slippin' the Noose and Too Gorram Close for Comfort. While this scenario was written with inexperienced crews in mind, the GM can use more experienced crews, but they will have to modify the difficulty level of the tasks as well as adjusting the skills and number of NPCs in order to provide a greater challenge for Veteran or Big Damn Hero level characters.

## **A DANGEROUS FLASHBACK**

There is an old saying that goes 'everything old is new again' and while

the saying sounds quaint and harmless, the new old thing this time is anything but quaint or harmless. Any freighter crew worth the name knows that there are ruthless people in the Black that prey on any easy mark they can snare. The bulk of these scavengers use modern methods like Nets to capture the unwary. However, something new is causing even experienced crews to disappear and while the method seems new, the technique is not. Harkening back to the Earth-That-Was age of sail era, wreckers have made a sudden resurgence. Wreckers used to use lights to lure ships onto reefs in order to loot the wrecked ship. In the modern day version of the ancient trick, wreckers use sabotaged navigation-satellites to lure ships into asteroid fields of the wrecker's creation to cause ships to come to grief and then ruthlessly plunder the wreck.

Always on the look for work, the PCs find themselves caught up in events beyond their control and discover that being on an independent freighter isn't just hard work, it is deadly business.

## **ACT ONE**

### **SCENE ONE**

#### **A LUCRATIVE OPPORTUNITY**

*"Ya know there's old sayin' that there's a fine line between genius and madness. What most folk don't know is that its money what makes the call on where that line gets drawn. Don't seem right*

*that two folk both as feng le1 as they get, that one gets called a genius cause he's got coin, while the other what ain't got two coins to rub together has to live with bein' called crazy."*

– Pops McMurty itinerant spacer and long time Rim resident.

While on the planet Regina, the Crew is trying to find work. The details of their arrival on the planet are up to the GM as the how and why are immaterial to the plot. The Crew can either be finishing up a job, stopping to refuel, exploring a GM plot hook, or for any other logical reason.

After taking care of any pressing business such as delivering cargo or restocking the ship's fuel and provisions, while out and about, the Crew has a chance to hear some news. An EASY (3) Alertness + Streetwise, or a AVERAGE (7) Intelligence + Knowledge learn of shippers with cargoes, but due to being an inexperienced crew, no work goes to the PCs. Using two Plot Points, rolling an Extraordinary Success in the above tests, or using one Plot Point in conjunction with Friends in Low Places, will lead the Crew to a business owner named Mortdechai Kenner that only awards shipping business to people that he considers to be winners. The eccentric Kenner initially made his money as high-stakes gambler and, in addition to retaining an abiding love for games of chance, feels that fate is the determining

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<sup>1</sup> Loopy in the head

factor on whether he does business with someone. Kenner has a cargo of refined molybdenum ingots bound for Three Hills. The exact amount varies based on the size of the PC's ship, but there is enough cargo to completely fill up to a 600 ton cargo hold.

Kenner may have retired from the gambling scene, but he still dearly loves gambling and is an expert at finding ways to mix business and gambling. As is typical whenever he has a cargo, he has devised a competition to determine which Crew will earn the cargo run. Once the PCs hear of the business opportunity from one of the methods listed above, they are sent a wave by Kenner's office that lists the minimum requirements to even enter the competition and the PC's ship does meet the low end of the contest's minimum speed.

The actual contest will, according to the wave, be taking place on planet and will not involve the contestant's ships in order to eliminate any speed advantage. The wave lists a starting location in the small town of Rex where the contestants are to meet early next morning. There can be no more than six crew members, they must land no closer than a kilometer from the coordinates and walking the remaining distance on foot, and they made not be armed with anything heavier than a pistol. The wave makes it crystal clear that any violation of these three rules will immediately

disqualify any contestant caught trying to cheat.

When the PCs arrive at 0500 the following morning at the desolate stretch of desert at the base of an escarpment designated in the wave, it is still dark enough that the Crew is unable to see who else is competing for the cargo. The rendezvous point is deserted and the only thing of note in the darkness is the ramshackle remnants of some sort of wooden building long abandoned..

Approaching the building, the PCs can make an AVERAGE (7) Alertness + Perception / Hearing roll to detect that there are others nearby. If by chance none of the PCs make the roll, they are startled when three other groups emerge from the shadow of the partially collapsed building, which turns out to be what's left of a large barn.

As the four crews eye each other suspiciously, everyone jumps when something rolls out of the barn. In the dark, it is possible for the object to be taken as a threat and if the GM wishes to insert a bit of humor in this scene, any PC or NPC that Botches an AVERAGE (7) Alertness + Perception / Vision, will consider the object enough of a threat to draw a weapon. If that same PC or NPC Botches a second roll of the same skill, they actually fire on the object.

The object proves to be a crude robot of about three feet tall; moving about on

treads, with one crude grasping arm and a single camera 'eye'. The robot comes to a stop ten feet from the assembled group and after a couple awkward seconds, a surprisingly clear holographic projection of a muscular, light skinned black man in his early 40s of less than average height and sporting a thin moustache smiles at the contestants. There is a short crackle as image begins to speak. Read Aloud:

**"Good morning. I hope I haven't startled any of you with my little friend here.\* I am so glad to see that my little contest has generated so much interest. My name is Mortdechai Kenner. Some people have heard of me, but it is likely that for those of you that have heard of me, that my reputation by them as what bothers to be polite is 'eccentric' while for them as can't be bothered with manners label me a 'crackpot' or even worse things outside of my name. I like to think of myself as having a unique perspective on the 'Verse we all call our home, but what to call my idiosyncrasies is not what brought you ladies and gentlemen here.**

**"What brings the crews of the Oddball, Xuan's Hope, <PC's ship>, and Brass Monkey here this fine morning is business, well, the**

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\* If the robot was fired on, change the dialog to "I hope I don't startle any more of you good people." While Kenner glances at the shooter(s) with an amused smirk.

**opportunity to earn some business is closer to what a Shepherd might call the truth. I know all of you have varying degrees of experience, but for those of you that have traveled the Black for more than a day..." At this point, the hologram makes an encompassing sweep of each of the crews; it is only the PC's imagination if the eyes of Kenner's image seem to linger on them longer than the other crews before he speaks again. "Know that most businessmen would have you come to some staid office for an equally staid interview. However, as I am not known for being like most businessmen, I like to do things differently. I have always subscribed to the motto that 'I'd rather be lucky than good' and I prefer the trait of lucky in all my business associates.**

**"What I propose is this ladies and gentlemen, in a few minutes, my mechanical associate here will recite a short riddle. This short bit of doggerel will tell you how to find the location of the second piece of the puzzle. Solving the second clue will allow you to figure out the third and final piece of my little game. Using the three clues, you will be able to find a radio beacon. The first crew to transmit the name of their ship to me wins the cargo. Good luck, good people."**

The crews have just enough time to blink in disbelief before the robot's speaker crackles again, this time in a synthesized mechanical voice:

**"She was once the noble queen of Olympus until her tranquility was soaked in blood, while the bountiful yield of this jealous orb will provide direction to the lost."**

The first part of the riddle should be fairly obvious but, the second half of the riddle is much more obscure. The GM should encourage the players to solve the riddles on their own, offering a reward of Plot Points as an incentive. Each half of the riddle is worth two Plot Points to the first player to solve the riddle. If the players can not figure out the riddle on their own, have each PC roll an AVERAGE (7) Intelligence + Knowledge / History to remember that Hera was the queen of the gods in Greek Mythology and that Hera is the location of Serenity valley, site of the decisive battle of the Unification War. The second part of the riddle requires either a HARD (11) Intelligence + Knowledge or an AVERAGE (7) Intelligence + Piloting / Astrogation (or Intelligence + Technical Engineering / Astrogation) roll to know that one of the chief rivals to Hera's agricultural trade is the planet Harvest. It will take an AVERAGE (7) Recall (Intelligence + Willpower) roll to remember one of the taverns near Rex's spaceport is called Hera's Harvest.

The first real part of the contest the PC's face, apart from solving the riddle, is the kilometer run back to their ship. The race back counts as a FORMIDABLE (75) Complex Action of Agility + Athletics with each roll taking 20 seconds. If a PC rolls a Botch, the first one works as per the rules on page 144, while a second Botch doesn't preclude completing the task, that PC loses all accumulated progress and has their Agility reduced by two steps due to a sprained ankle.

If the any of the PCs calls to have their ship meet them, have them roll an AVERAGE (7) Recall roll to remember the warning that if their ship comes any closer to the rendezvous spot they will be disqualified. Kenner's means of verifying the rules laid out in his initial wave is the robot at the barn, which, while crude, does have an excellent camera and is uplinked to Kenner's office in town. If Kenner detects any violations, he's using the time it takes the crews to reach their ships to scan the video right now, by the time they reach their ship, there will be a wave waiting for them on their Cortex informing them they've been disqualified. If the PCs do try to cheat, the GM can state that the word about Kenner is, while he may be an odd duck, he has an uncanny way of knowing the truth and is almost always three steps ahead of his competition or his business partners.

Once back on their ship, getting the next clue can use any means necessary. The

two of the other three crews reached the rendezvous via shuttle, while the third used their ship, the Oddball, a battered looking Wren-class transport. The most direct route to the Hera's Harvest Tavern is a HARD (11) Ship's Agility + Piloting roll. However, beating the other three contestants to a landing point is a four way Opposed Roll of the same skill with the winner landing closest to the bar and thus the shortest run to the entrance.

*GM NOTE:* Skills are listed under NPCs at the end of the adventure.

The crew with the highest roll lands within 30' of the front door, while each successive roll lands an additional 30' from the entrance. (IE the third highest in the Opposed Roll Test will be 90' from the entrance). Regardless of roll, the street is not large enough for a ship bigger on any dimension than 200 x 150 x 75 feet. Use the standard movement rules on page 151 for how long it takes the PCs to enter the bar. Again, interfering with the other crews is allowed, but deadly force is obviously a bad idea.

Racing into the bar, the Crew finds that the Hera's Harvest Tavern turns out to be a fairly nice place and it quite clear that brawling or other disturbances of the peace will not be tolerated. The barkeeper faces the PCs when they enter, but does not say anything. If the PCs mention Kenner's name, the barkeep hands the Crew a sealed envelop. Inside is a single sheet of paper stating:

**“The sacred chalice of many quests holds the answer for which ye seek. Combine what ye have learned to find thy way.”**

Again, solving the riddle on their own is worth plot points with each half of the riddle being worth two Plot Points to the first player to solve the riddle. Figuring out this second riddle is a HARD (11) Intelligence + Knowledge roll to realize the answer is the Holy Grail, while it takes a second test of the same skill to know that according to the legend, the cup was used to catch the blood of Christ. If none of the PCs can make these rolls, a check with the Cortex will allow a re-roll with a two-step bonus to skill, however, knowing (or learning) of the old Earth-That-Was legend doesn't immediately seem to point to anything obviously useful at the moment. Adding to the pressure of the situation the crews of the Brass Monkey and the Oddball take off before the PCs can figure out the clues.

The critical part of solving Kenner's puzzle is the phrase 'combine what ye have learned.' If the words Hera, Harvest, Holy Grail, and Blood are 'combined' by taking the number of letters in each of the words, the result is 4, 7, 4, 5, 5. If any player can figure out this riddle on their own, this is worth five Plot Points. However, as this riddle is difficult, each PC can roll a FORMIDABLE (15) test of Intelligence + Knowledge to

figure out how to solve this puzzle.

Entering these numbers into a ship (or shuttle's) navigation computer will yield the equivalent of GPS coordinates and the location of the radio beacon.

The coordinates lead to a site roughly an hour's flight south of Rex. When the PCs touch down, they see that the Brass Monkey has just landed! If the pilot can make a HARD (11) Ship's Agility + Piloting roll, the Crew might still have a chance to win. The race to the beacon is a mad steeplechase with unarmed combat allowed (Deadly force however, is not), but, despite their best effort the PCs are preordained to fail. One of the crew of the Brass Monkey quickly proves to be a natural athlete and will win the cargo for the other crew.

*GM NOTE:* it is critical to the plot that PCs lose the contest, even if GM has to fudge rolls to ensure the NPCs win. As soon as the victorious crew broadcast the name "Brass Monkey" the beacon crackles briefly as a small panel opens revealing a camera lens. Read Aloud:

**“Well done my friends, fate has been kind to you and now for your reward. Please have the Brass Monkey report to the spaceport in my humble home town of Rex. You will find the cargo in warehouse nineteen. I will see to all the loading arrangements. To the Crew of the <PC's ship name>, there is an old saying that fortune favors the bold**



**and it seems that despite your efforts, lady luck has smiled on another. If you too will report to warehouse nineteen, my foreman will provide you with a data disc outlining my next contest scheduled to take place in a few days."**

The PCs return to Rex and after obtaining the data disc, they can only watch in envy as the cargo is loaded onto the Brass Monkey and the ship departs. Go to the next scene.

## **ACT ONE SCENE TWO**

### **AN UNEXPECTED LOSS**

*"What can go wrong in the Black? How much time ya got young'un? Even though we been flyin' spaceships for hundreds of years now, most folk just plum forget that the damn things are complicated machines. Ya break any one of a hundred parts and the next thing ya know your boat's on the drift and ya end up all sorts of funny colors. Even if ya gotta genius mechanic, despite what our lovin' government tells us, there are pirates, slavers, chop shops, Reavers, and the Buddha knows what else out there. If ya gotta ask what can go wrong, seems to me that mebbe the Black might not be cut out for ya."*

– Gus Jacobsen, itinerant spacer as interviewed by the author Jiang Hu Long for his highly successful fictional series 'Verse Stories'

Unquestionably disheartened by losing out on the best opportunity for work since arriving on Regina, the Crew continues to look for a job while waiting for word that Kenner's next contest is ready to begin. On the morning of the third day after losing the first contest, the Crew receives a wave. On activating the Cortex, they are quite surprised to see that it is Kenner and he looks visibly agitated. Read Aloud:

**"Ladies and Gentlemen, there has been an unsettling development that forces me to dispense with my usual way of doing business. As the second place finishers of my most recent contest, I would like you to come to my office to discuss business."**

He gives them an address in the business district and closes the connection. Assuming the PCs are at least curious about what has rattled Kenner, the Crew's representative(s) find the given address is ten minutes away by ground vehicle, twenty by public transit, or forty-five on foot. On arrival, at the modest business complex, the Crew is quickly ushered to Kenner's office, which proves to be anything but modest. The desk is of the finest redwood inlay, the walls are covered with intricate tapestries, and the floor is made of rosewood parquet. Behind Kenner's desk are several bookcases filled with actual books, which gives the room an air of sophistication.

Kenner rises and warmly greets each of the Crew by name. He offers refreshments in the form of finger foods and hot tea as he gestures to the PCs to make themselves comfortable before speaking about why he called them. Once satisfied that hospitality has been served, he sighs and begins to speak:

**“As I mentioned a few days ago, fortune favors the bold. At the time, it seemed as if lady luck had smiled on the crew of the Brass Monkey and that is what earned them the cargo. However, as I hope you have already learned, lady luck is a fickle creature and this is what has led me to contact you. Earlier today I received word from an acquaintance of mine that a garbled distress signal from the Brass Monkey was picked up by the local Alliance patrol boat before losing all contact with the freighter.**

**“I’m not sure what stripe you backed during the U-War, but regardless of affiliation, you are no doubt aware of the that the Feds are less that interested in assisting folk on the Rim. That right pretty patrol boat, paid for by us good taxpayers, tagged the message received and went right about its business neat as you please and has left not only me, but my buyer, and the crew of the Brass Monkey hanging.**

**“My proposal is this, since you have proven yourselves resourceful to me**

**by placing second in my little test of skills, I have a two-fold job for you. The buyer on Three Hills is screaming like a stuck pig over needing his Molly-be-damned ingots and in addition needing a ship, I’d like someone to look into what happened to the Brass Monkey. I know work hasn’t been coming your way, but when you rely on making a living by reading a person’s eyes like I did, you get good at figuring out who you can deal with and who you can’t. That is why I asked you here so I could take your measure and I’m wondering if you are interested in helping me out?”**

Kenner goes on to outline his plan. For the first half of his offer, the loss of the initial cargo has put him in a bind and he could only come up with 200 tons of replacement cargo on such short notice. If this is less than a full load for the PC’s ship, he offers to sweeten the deal by paying €300 credits for the run with the standard half paid up front. The PCs can haggle, but anyone with a Trustworthy Gut or Nose for Trouble will realize that Kenner is not in a mood to be pushed very far. One, and only one, PC may attempt an Opposed Roll of Willpower + Influence / Appropriate Specialty against Kenner and on a success he will go as high as €350 for the job, while an Extraordinary Success will get him to go to €400. A failure will earn a smile. Read aloud:

**“Nice try, but let’s keep things the way they are.” However, if the PC Botches, Kenner grows very cold and says: “I’ll give you this, you’ve got gumption, not much sense, but a lot of gumption. If I wasn’t in a bind, I’d find someone else, but here is the deal. You get this done, take your pay and never contact me again.”**

The second half of his offer is in the form of a bonus. If the PCs can figure out what happened to the first ship and recover the original cargo, Kenner offers €2,500 and a little something for their ship for these dangerous times. Namely a Gremlin Mk IV missile launcher, which is an after market bolt on ship’s accessory designed to give crews working the Rim protection from pirates or Reavers and worth €500. In addition, the PCs can count on him for future work, but Kenner makes it clear that because of the time already lost, there is now a crunch to get the cargo delivered to the buyer and getting the cargo delivered is the primary concern. The trip from Regina to Three Hills is 398 hours for a Speed Class 1 ship. The cargo must be delivered in five days (which will give a Firefly-class freighter a 20 hour margin of error). If the PCs manage to figure out what happened to the Brass Monkey and her cargo, but are unable to recover the cargo, Kenner will pay them a €200 bonus.

*GM NOTE:* if the PC’s ship is substantially faster or slower than the baseline Firefly Speed Class 4, the GM will have to adjust travel distance accordingly so that the time to deliver the cargo remains at one hundred hours with a twenty hour margin of error.

Getting their ship ready for the trip is abstracted and would best be visualized as a montage of rapidly changing cut scenes shifting between the various crewmembers going about their specific assigned tasks around the ship. There aren’t times given for the tasks as the only measure of success is how much of their 20 hour margin of error they preserve for later scenes. The tests required to prepare the ship are all at a difficulty of HARD (11). The rolls will be using the following skills: Intelligence + Pilot / Astrogation to plot a course, Alertness + Influence / Leadership to get cargo loaded quickly, and Intelligence + Mechanical Engineering / Appropriate Specialty to ensure the ship is properly prepared for the trip to Three Hills. The results of the rolls are on the following table.

**Ship Preparation Results Table**

<b>Botch</b>	<b>Lose four hours</b>
Failure	Lose two hours
Success	On time
Extraordinary Success	Gain two hours

Each hour delayed comes out of the twenty hours of flexibility they have in their schedule.

As soon as the three skill tests are complete, the ship departs and the GM should now award the PCs 3-5 Plot Points before proceeding to the next scene.

**ACT TWO**  
**SCENE ONE**  
**ON THE BEAM**

*"If history has taught humanity anything it is that the backbone of any society is its economy. One of the core principles that supports this fundamental fact is the ability to move goods freely from one part of the society to another. Ensuring the free flow of commerce is central to the existence of the Federal Alliance of Planets and to guarantee the safety of the transportation of people and goods throughout the 'Verse, the government has spent billions of credits to establish a system of navigation satellites that allow the citizens of the Alliance to move between the many planets that comprise our home. Combining around the clock monitoring and maintenance on this system with the vigilant eyes of the Alliance Navy to enforce adherence to the Rules of Navigation, the citizens of the Alliance can rest assured that their safety is protected during any voyage between any worlds in the 'Verse."*

– Minutes from an Alliance Parliamentary sub-committee meeting on commerce, dated 18 March 2503

Travel in the Black is much more complicated than is typically shown in most adventures and this scene highlights some of the challenges that are part of the independent freighter lifestyle, forcing the Crew to respond to several encounters common in the 'Verse.

After lifting off from Regina, the ship locks in on the nearest nav-sat and begins to follow the course plotted by the Pilot. The GM can omit or vary the number and pacing of the following events in order to best peak their player's interest, to include adding their own encounters.

The following complications are fully outlined as challenges for the Crew: Eighteen hours into their trip, whomever is on the bridge has to roll an AVERAGE (7) Ship's Alertness + Piloting / Scanners or Technical Engineering / Scanners to detect a ship closing on a convergent course. The following table lists the distance to the other ship when it is spotted.

<b>Result</b>	<b>Range Category</b>
Botch	Point Blank
Failure	Short
Success	Medium
Extraordinary Success	Long

The Crew's response to this news can vary, but the most logical action is to attempt to contact the other ship. No roll is required to send a wave, but the other ship does not respond to repeated communications attempts.

A second scanners roll using the above skill will detect that the ship does not appear to be making threatening moves, such as having targeting scanners active, accelerating, or making aggressive maneuvers. How much of a threat the PCs perceive is up to them, but given the typical paranoia of most gamers, they will probably becoming quite concerned.

Avoiding the other ship is a trivial course change not even requiring a roll or the loss of any time, but if the PCs insist on trying to contact the other ship, an AVERAGE (7) Intelligence + Technical Engineering / Communications roll will figure a means to make their ship generate a feedback pulse. This signal creates an ear-splitting squeal that finally draws a sheepish response from a pilot that sounds drunk. He growls an insincere apology and alters course. As the Crew nears the forty hour mark, they receive a wave from a passing Alliance Patrol Boat that orders the PCs to heave to for inspection. The Crew can attempt a Heroic (19) Willpower + Influence / Persuasion roll to be allowed to proceed and if anyone does succeed, they should be awarded a "That was cool!" Plot Point, especially if they can put their story into words. If the roll

fails, the Alliance ship repeats the message to heave to.

The Patrol Boat launches a pair of ASREVs that move to cover the larger ship as it closes with practiced ease with the PC's ship and docks. The Crew hears the muffled clang of the airlocks sealing and can either open the hatch for the inspection team or let them enter on their own.

The four fully armored Alliance purplebellies sweep into the airlock and cover anyone that is waiting with assault rifles at the ready. It is clear they mean business and will fire at the slightest provocation. When the guards in place, a pair of Alliance officers enter, the two are surprisingly polite when they request to see the ship's papers, but as stiff backed and standoffish as is to be expected from representatives of the Alliance.

The Alliance officers have no specific reason to suspect anything about the PC's ship and are simply doing their duty to conduct random inspections, thus how well the inspection goes will be entirely dependent on actions by the Crew. Any open display of Browncoat paraphernalia or deliberate confrontation will each generate a one-step penalty to all Social Skills. As the cargo the PCs are carrying is completely legal, there will be no problems with the Alliance spot check on the cargo itself. All that is needed for the ship's papers to be in order is for, the

captain or one, and only one, PC to succeed in an AVERAGE (7) Intelligence + Influence / Administration test. Under normal circumstances, the entire inspection will cost the Crew one hour of time.

However, if for some reason the PCs have forged papers, the check of the papers will be an Opposed Roll of the forger's Intelligence + Covert / Forgery and the Officer's Alertness + Perception. Obviously, failing such a roll will be serious and the ramifications fall outside the scope of this adventure. If such an event does occur, the GM will have come up with their own resolution, but possible solutions include: making a HARD (11) Intelligence + Performance roll to provide a believable distraction for the Opposed Roll, which will lower the Alliance Officer's skill by one-step, or making a HARD (11) Alertness + Perception / Deduction roll to realize that the senior officer is receptive to being bribed and then succeeding with an immediate Willpower + Influence / Appropriate Specialty roll. Such a bribe will typically be in the €100 range, but can be adjusted based on the Crew's current cash on hand.

The final complication occurs just after the ship has passed the halfway point of their journey. Whomever is monitoring the engine room will have to make an AVERAGE (7) Perception + Mechanical Engineering roll to notice that something is off about how the engine is running. A

HARD (11) Intelligence + Mechanical Engineering roll to detect that the secondary power coupling is starting to seize up. This is a serious problem that will require immediate repair, but typically such repairs are done with the engine shut down. The problem with shutting the engine down is reaching the coupling which is deep within the propulsion system and will take several hours and without a spare on board there isn't much difference in chance of success to jury-rigging the part with the engine running or not.

The Crew has a choice on their hands. They can ensure the safety of their Mechanic by shutting down the engine while they make the HARD (55) Complex Action of Intelligence + Mechanical Engineering with each roll taking 30 minutes, which on average, means the repairs will take four hours. If they keep the engine running, it will require the same roll as before, but the difference between the two options is that if the PC rolls a second Botch while the engine is shut down is per the standard rules. However, if there is a second Botch while the engine is live, the PC making the roll will suffer a scalding attack equal to an Autofire Attack of 15 with the PC only able to use Innate Defense with a two-step penalty to their Agility against the attack.

Regardless of which repair option they choose, they can not reach Three Hills without having the jury-rigged power

coupling replaced. A simple check of the Cortex shows that Skyplex Reno is just five hours away at cruise speed as the repairs will not allow the ship to use Hard Burn.

Once docked at the Skyplex, finding such a common replacement part will only require an AVERAGE (7) Intelligence + Influence roll, while installing the part is an AVERAGE (7) test of Intelligence + Mechanical Engineering and an hour of work.

Making up for lost time will require the pilot to make a FORMIDABLE (15) Intelligence + Piloting / Astrogation or Intelligence + Technical Engineering / Astrogation roll. If the pilot rolls an Extraordinary Success, at the cost of four hours of Hard Burn, the Crew makes up all the lost time. On a regular success, six hours of Hard Burn will put them two hours behind schedule. On a failure, they use six hours of Hard Burn and have a four hour delay, while a Botch will use eight hours of Hard Burn and make them eight hours late.

As soon as they depart from Skyplex Reno and light off their Pulse Drive, go to the next scene.

## **ACT TWO**

### **SCENE TWO**

#### **THIS CAN'T BE GOOD**

*"There are few things more terrifyin' for a Spacer than to hear the hull breach klaxon. One thing that folk what don't*

*take to the Black take for granted is breathin'. Space travel is usually safe enough for a crew to do the same thing, but there are still enough things in the Black that can make breathin' a down right luxury. I can't say what ya'll have seen in yer life, but there just ain't nuthin' scarier in my life than the time I had to escape a hull breach. Like I said, in the Black, breathin' ain't nuthin' ya take for granted. Ya'll make sure'n ya remembers that if takin' out a boat ever strikes yer fancy."*

– Pops McMurty itinerant spacer and long time Rim resident.

Once their ship is free of Skyplex Reno the trip, which had seemed jinxed, finally settles down into a routine that allows the Crew to make up some time. Everything is peaceful until twenty hours after leaving the skyplex when whomever is monitoring the bridge has to make an AVERAGE (7) Alertness + Perception / Hearing roll to notice a very short squeal from the ship's nav beacon. If the roll fails, the PC(s) fail to notice anything. If the roll succeeds, by the time they check their navigation computer they notice that it has cut off briefly as if rebooting. Before pilot needs to do anything, the system reacquires the signal and an AVERAGE (7) Intelligence + Piloting / Astrogation or Intelligence + Technical Engineering / Astrogation roll proves they have a strong signal lock and are right where they are supposed to be, with what they have already been through on this trip

already, the reboot, which, while uncommon, isn't anything to be concerned about.

However, if the pilot rolls an Extraordinary Success on the above test they will notice an anomaly in the restored signal. Making a focused communications scan with a HARD (11) Intelligence + Technical Engineering / Communications roll they will detect a second weaker signal riding on the nav-sat's carrier wave. Failing at any of these rolls, results in a one-step penalty to Piloting rolls as they blunder into an uncharted asteroid field. Success with these rolls will give the pilot enough warning prior to allow them their full skill.

Whether the PCs know it or not, they have been snared by a trap. The slight squeal they might have detected was the interruption of the actual Alliance navigation satellite signal that they were following by the Wreckers. The rebooting of their navigation computer was the ship actually locking onto the fake signal that took them off course and off of regular shipping lanes to lure them in the asteroid field placed for the specific purpose of causing their ship to crash so it can be looted. There are twenty asteroids in the field that the Wreckers have towed into position to build their trap. The reason the field has gone undetected is that the asteroids have had simple ECM devices installed designed to detect scans and reflect

them back slightly out of phase so that it makes each of the individual asteroids nearly impossible to detect. However, due to their being so many asteroids there is enough overlap to cause some detectable interference.

If whoever is monitoring the ship's scanners succeeds in a HARD (11) roll against Intelligence + Pilot / Scanners or Intelligence + Technical Engineering / Scanners they will detect the asteroid field before their ship enters the trap. Avoiding a career ending crash is going to be extremely difficult as the PCs are almost certainly caught completely by surprise with a possible penalty to Piloting as outlined above. Dodging the asteroids is a HEROIC (19) Ship's Agility + Piloting roll to avoid a crash. If the roll fails, treat the difficulty as an attack roll doing Basic damage with the Piloting roll determining how much damage the ship sustains.

If the ship sustains five or more points of damage it has hit an asteroid hard enough to force a complete system shut down, emergency lights and back up life support work, but the ship is otherwise dead in space. A ship that takes one to four points has taken a grazing blow and is still capable of movement and otherwise functioning normally.

*GM NOTE:* As crashing is a bad thing, the use of Plot Points is strongly encouraged to avoid this fate. If however, they PCs fail to avoid the crash, remind them that Plot Points can be used to reduce



damage, but if the initial results indicated a crash, the penalty for crashing means that the damage may not be reduced below three points of damage.

If the crash was avoided, maneuvering out of the asteroid field completely it takes second Ship's Agility + Piloting roll with a difficulty of HARD (11). This test will be treated as another attack roll also doing Basic Damage if the roll is failed with the same consequences of failure as the first Piloting roll.

Whether the PCs crashed or avoided the asteroids, the GM should now call for an EASY (3) Intelligence + Scientific Expertise or an AVERAGE (7) Intelligence + Knowledge test for the Crew to realize that there is no way an uncharted asteroid field can exist on a nav-sat marked shipping lane. The Feds may not care much about most of its citizens, but the Alliance goes to great lengths to ensure that commerce can move unimpeded. Since someone has found a way to tamper with one of the most fundamental parts of the entire Alliance, the network that makes safe travel in the 'Verse possible, maybe the Feds will pay a reward in addition to Kenner's.

At this point the PCs have several options, ranging from continuing on to Three Hills and simply reporting the trap to conducting an investigation in order to earn Kenner's bonus. If the Crew can make a HARD (11) Intelligence + Piloting

/ Astrogation or Intelligence + Technical Engineering / Astrogation roll they will figure they have eight hours to investigate what happened to the first ship. This eight hours counts against the original twenty hours of flight time and does not take into account any other time lost from previous scenes. Successfully avoiding the crash allows the PCs to land undetected on one of the asteroids before investigating the trap.

If the PCs crashed, how long the repairs will take will be based on the amount of damaged sustained. In order to begin work, the Mechanic has to restore power/reboot the system and this is represented by repairing the Ship's Stun Damage. This will require ten minutes of time and a roll of Intelligence + Mechanical Engineering with a difficulty based on the amount of damage.

Stun Points	Difficulty
1-2	EASY (3)
3-4	AVERAGE (7)
5-6	HARD (11)
7-8	FORMIDABLE (15)
9-10	HEROIC (19)
11-12	INCREDIBLE (23)
13-14	RIDICULOUS (27)
15+	IMPOSSIBLE (31)

Once power is restored, the actual repairs are a Complex Action of Intelligence + Mechanical Engineering with each roll representing 10 minutes'

work and using the normal results for a Botch as per the rules on pg144.

Wound Points	Difficulty Threshold
1-2	EASY (15)
3-4	AVERAGE (35)
5-6	HARD (55)
7-8	FORMIDABLE (75)
9-10	HEROIC (95)
11-12	INCREDIBLE (115)
13-14	RIDICULOUS (135)
15+	IMPOSSIBLE (155)

Unknown to the PCs if they do crash or take damage, the Wreckers will send a small prospector's surveyor within ten minutes to check out exactly what their trap has snared, which means, if the Mechanic has been successful with restoring power, the PC's ship's systems will be just be coming active as the Wrecker's surveyor arrives

Once the Crew has decided whether to forego the bonus and continue on to Three Hills, land to investigate the trap, or crash and are immobilized, The GM should now award the Crew 3-5 Plot Points (however, crashing results in a three point penalty) and go to the next scene.

### **ACT THREE**

#### **SCENE ONE**

##### **SLIPPIN' THE NOOSE**

*"While I ain't never had a problem of makin' coin in a way that our tender government don't approve of, as I figure,*

*as soon as the gorram Feds show me they give a tinker's damn about the citizens what make up the Alliance, I'll start carin' about what the government thinks. One thing I do draw the line at is causing folk what don't deserve it to come to grief to make coin. Unfortunately, there's plenty of hun dan<sup>2</sup> out there that don't share my sense of honor. Some of the worse is what they call Wreckers. They run carrion houses what will run yer ship into a trap, kill off any survivors to cut up yer boat fer parts or fix it up and sell it for a tidy profit. No shortage of means to make coin in this here 'Verse and no shortage of folk what will stoop to any level to get it too."*

– Frankie 'Twice Pipe' Whitaker, Information Broker, Persephone

While the Crew has several options based on events from the last scene, this adventure will proceed on the basis that the PCs choose one of the three following courses of action. If they avoided crashing completely, they can "Take a sneak peek." If they sustained minor damage in the asteroid field, their best options is to "Make a fast break." Finally, if they crashed, the only real choice left to them is to "Fight for your life."

##### *TAKE A SNEAK PEEK*

Assuming the PC's ship is undamaged, this gives them the most options for their investigation if they choose to make one, and this option is based on

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<sup>2</sup> Jerks

the PCs using their undetected status to slip into the hidden compound to conduct a covert investigation into the loss of the freighter the Brass Monkey.

Discovering the fate of the missing ship starts with a passive scan of the asteroid field to pin point the center of the trap's operation. This is accomplished with a HARD (11) Ship's Alertness + Piloting / Scanners or Ship's Alertness + Technical Engineering / Scanners roll, that will, on a success, detect a faint heat wash off of the largest asteroid in the field. If this roll fails, the PCs can use an active scan that allows a second roll at a difficulty of EASY (3), but unknown to the Crew, such an overt search will alert the Wreckers and put them on guard, the repercussions of which will be discovered later.

Once the PCs know where the compound is hidden, it is only an AVERAGE (35) Complex Action of Ship's Agility + Piloting that has to be completed within five Combat Turns. Any Botch or failing to land within five turns indicates that the base has been alerted.

After landing on the base asteroid, the best way for the Crew to make a covert entrance is by donning vacuum suits in an attempt to slip into compound undetected. If the Players do not think of this option on their own the GM should call for an AVERAGE (7) Intelligence + Covert roll.

Covering the distance to the compound, is an AVERAGE (35) Complex Action of Intelligence + Survival or a HARD (55) difficulty of Agility + Covert with each roll taking five minutes. Since the standard Vacuum Suit as described on page 77 of the Serenity RPG rulebook does not list how long the air supply lasts, this adventure will proceed on the basis that this baseline suit is good for six hours. If the PCs take more than an hour to reach the compound, they will be detected and the base will be alerted. If a PC should roll a Botch, the first is treated as per the rules, while a second Botch will cause a fall and a torn suit. The PC may proceed with their approach to the compound, but the suit must be repaired with an EASY (7) Agility + Survival or an AVERAGE (7) Intelligence + Mechanical Engineering roll. The affected PC only gets three chances to repair their suit before their air supply is gone and they can either succumb to the effects of "The Black" as listed on page 157 or, if the GM is feeling especially kind, they can begin to suffer the effects of Suffocation as outlined on page 158. This second option may allow for another PC to assist the one with torn suit.

On reaching the compound, the Crew spots the badly damaged Brass Monkey being scavenged, a small surveyor type ship, a second larger ship that is largely obscured by the base, which is obviously the center of operations, consisting of what looks like a survival shelter made from several of what looks to be

standard cargo containers in a cruciform configuration.

The base is built of five standard containers configured as followed:

Central hub: aligned on a North/South axis, the core of the base is essentially a corridor with connections for the other four containers and has two access airlocks.

North Wing: The Operations center for the whole hijacking operation containing the base's communications, scanners, and Nav-Sat Jammer uplink.

South Wing: The base's power generator.

East Wing: Living quarters for twelve in double bunks.

West Wing: The base's common area; kitchen; dining; and lounge, for twelve.

The difficulty of actually entering the facility will depend on whether or not the PCs have done something to cause the base to be alerted. If the Crew has failed to arrive undetected, the penalty for alerting the hijackers will mean that all rolls to Covert or Technical Engineering skills in or near the compound will be made with a two-step penalty.

While there are several space suited figures are working on the Brass Monkey, no one else seems to be visible. The PCs know Kenner's bonus is contingent on the recovery of the original cargo and the damaged freighter should be the focus of their efforts. Since Kenner's bonus doesn't mention the crew

of the Brass Monkey, the PCs are not obligated to even look for them, but such a callous disregard for fellow spacers, even competitors, will come back to haunt the Crew later.

The GM should give the players a few minutes to come up with a viable plan to recover the captured ship. If the players can not devise a plan of their own, one of the PCs can if they succeed with an AVERAGE (7) Intelligence + Perception / Tactics or a HARD (11) Intelligence + Knowledge roll.

The most obvious means of commandeering the Brass Monkey from her captors is to stage a large enough of a diversion to draw away the hijackers long enough to board the ship and escape while they are dealing with the distraction.

The diversion can take many forms and will be largely based on the creativity and armament of the Crew. The largest and most effective diversion is to rig the compound's power generator to explode. Blowing up the generator will require at least four fragmentation grenades, two mining charges, a single Chem-Plast Charge, or any combination thereof. Ensuring the destruction of the generator means the explosives will have to be placed directly on the power source. Placing the explosives outside the shelter will expose that entire section of the base to vacuum, but will only cause a temporary shutdown lasting twenty

minutes. Planting the explosives on the generator will require, an EASY (3) roll of Agility + Covert / Stealth test to reach the base, bypassing the airlock requires an EASY (3) test of Intelligence + Covert or an AVERAGE (7) Intelligence + Technical Engineering, an AVERAGE (7) Agility + Covert / Stealth roll is needed to enter the shelter and reach the generator, an EASY (3) Intelligence + Covert / Sabotage roll sets the timer for the explosives, and a second AVERAGE (7) Agility + Covert / Stealth test is needed to sneak back out of the shelter.

Rigging the generator to overload is similar to the above challenge and only differs in that the Intelligence + Covert / Sabotage (or a HARD (11) Intelligence + Technical Engineering) roll is needed to induce the generator to overload and shut down for several hours.

Planting the explosives outside the shelter is a bit easier only needing an EASY (3) roll of Agility + Covert / Stealth test to reach the base, an EASY (3) Intelligence + Covert / Sabotage roll sets the timer for the explosives, and a second EASY (3) roll of Agility + Covert / Stealth is needed to sneak away from the shelter.

Reaching the Brass Monkey or either of the two unknown ships will require an EASY (3) roll of Agility + Covert / Stealth. Bypassing the indicator on the airlock to enter the Brass Monkey is an EASY (3) test of Intelligence + Covert or

Intelligence + Technical Engineering. On reaching either of the two unknown ships, the PCs will quickly detect they have far superior security and that entering either of these ships is a FORMIDABLE (15) test of the same skill.

Failing any of the above Covert and Technical Engineering tests will result in the base being alerted and an encounter with one of the hijackers. If the failure occurs while the PC is inside the base, the hijacker will be wearing coveralls and carrying a gym bag with assorted personal gear to include a combat knife (does d4W damage). If it occurs outside, the hijacker will be wearing a vacuum suit and will be equipped with a basic tool kit to include a cutting torch at the ready (does d6B damage, but only has four charges).

When the generator blows up or shuts down, the hijackers will be so preoccupied, that reaching the Brass Monkey will not require a skill test, except in the case of if the base was alerted prior to the loss of power, which will require an AVERAGE (7) roll of Agility + Covert / Stealth. Once reaching the hijacked freighter the Crew is able to board without the need for any skill tests, where they discover that the ship has power, life support, and anti-grav. However, before the Crew can see just how bad the damage is on the beat up old Firefly, they find they have company. Three hijackers, two from the aft end of the cargo bay and one on the left

catwalk near the entrance to shuttle number one open fire on the PCs! The three men are armed with rifles, but are not wearing armor. They have the equivalent of Light Cover with the standard +4 to hit modifier. The men fight until two have been killed or rendered unconscious, when the third will retreat aftwards to reappear later.

While the PCs will be wary of an ambush, they reach the bridge without incident. Once there, a quick scan from the helm will find, of primary concern, that the port engine is completely non-functional due to severe damage and it is all too obvious that the loss of the engine will have a serious affect on the ship's maneuverability (two-step penalty to Agility) In addition, thanks to a large jagged rend in the hull, none of the portside cabins are habitable (equals to six Wound Points of damage), and finally, the ship is incapable of Hard Burn.

Anyone heading for the engine room, unless they can make an Opposed Roll of Alertness + Perception / Hearing versus their opponent's Agility + Covert / Stealth, they will be ambushed by the one gunman that fled earlier. If a PC has the Nose for Trouble trait, it will apply to the Opposed Roll. The gunman has Medium Cover and is Covering the entrance to the engine room.

Once this last hijacker has been defeated, the Crew will have control of

the ship. In order to get the damaged freighter flying, one of the PCs will have to succeed in a HARD (55) Complex Action of Intelligence + Technical Engineering test with each roll taking a minute. Thanks to the diversion, the Crew has ten minutes to jury-rig the ship before the hijackers realize something is going on with their prize and ten armed reinforcements can reach the airlock.

While the Mechanic struggles to repair the Brass Monkey, there is the issue of her original crew. The PCs are not required to find them or required to rescue them to earn their bonus, but the Crew could probably use their help as they are most likely too short handed to operate two ships without them, but the question is where to look? An AVERAGE (7) Intelligence + Perception / Deduction roll will figure out that the hijackers would clearly not want any prisoners on any of the ships, so that only leaves one habitable location, the hijacker's base. The PCs have the time it takes the Mechanic to get the ship repaired to try and discover if there are any survivors.

Even though the initial shock of the loss of their power source has worn off, the hijackers are still extremely distracted. This allows any PC heading for the base to remain undetected with only an EASY (3) Agility + Covert / Stealth roll. As there is no power, entering the base requires an AVERAGE (7) Burst of Strength (Strength + Strength) roll to manhandle the airlock open. Even

though primary power is out, there is emergency lighting and the four doors are clearly marked, Operations, Power, Living Quarters, and Common Area.

An AVERAGE (7) Intelligence + Perception / Deduction roll will figure out that any prisoners would have to be held in the living quarters. An AVERAGE (7) Agility + Covert / Stealth test enters the East Wing undetected where they find two women and one man crammed into a small cage at the back of the container. When the captives spot the PCs they glare at them with pure venom in their eyes until they realize that the PCs are not one of their captives. Read Aloud:

**“Shen Sheng de gao wan<sup>3</sup>, I never thought there was any hope of anyone findin’ us. The other four of the crew were killed when the hull breeched in the crash. There ain’t no way we can ever repay ya, but a sure’n my name is Jonathan Callas we’ll split what Kenner was gonna pay us if’n ya get us out of this jam.”**

The PCs can make any reply to the captives they want, but in order to rescue them, they are going to have to get them out of the cage. Fortunately, the lock is mechanical and getting it open is a HARD (11) Agility + Covert / Open Locks roll. Once free of the cage, the Crew faces the larger problem is how to get the captives back to their ship

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<sup>3</sup> Holy Testicles

without any spare vacuum suits. Looking upward for some form of heavenly assistance, they find their answer in the form of a hatch on the top of the container.

A quick communication signal to either the Brass Monkey or their own ship will allow the ship to land (with an AVERAGE (7) Ship’s Agility + Piloting roll) atop the container long enough for the rescuers and the three captives to scramble aboard to safety. Once the Brass Monkey lifts off from the asteroid or from the container the GM should go to the next scene.

#### *MAKE A FAST BREAK*

If the PCs avoided an actual crash, but did sustain damage due to hitting one of the asteroids, they are faced with several choices ranging from immediately fleeing for Three Hills and thus foregoing any chance at Kenner’s bonus in the process and either report the trap to authorities when they get there or not, to conducting their own investigation into the disappearance of the Brass Monkey.

Obviously the damage to their ship will have to be dealt with and that will limit some of their options. The most logical means of conducting an investigation, if they choose to make one is to move their ship to a safe location and use one of their shuttles to look for the missing ship.

Discovering the fate of the Brass Monkey starts with a passive scan of the asteroid field to pin point the center of the trap's operation. This is accomplished with a HARD (11) Ship's Alertness + Piloting / Scanners or Ship's Alertness + Technical Engineering / Scanners roll, that will, on a success, detect a faint heat wash off of the largest asteroid in the field. If this roll fails, the PCs can use an active scan that allows a second roll at a difficulty of EASY (3), but unknown to the Crew, such an overt search will alert the Wreckers and put them on guard, the repercussions of which will be discovered later. In addition, if the PCs manage to roll an Extraordinary Success in either of these rolls, they will also detect a small ship slowly picking their way through the asteroids and heading their way.

If the PCs fail to detect the other ship in the above attempt, they have one last chance to notice the other vessel before their own ship is detected. An AVERAGE (7) Ship's Alertness + Piloting / Scanners or Technical Engineering / Scanners will detect the ship closing on them with the following table listing how close the other ship is when it is spotted.

Result	Range Category
Botch	Point Blank
Failure	Short
Success	Medium
Extraordinary Success	Long

The difficulty of keeping out of sight of this unknown vessel is based on when it is detected. If the PCs picked the ship up via an Extraordinary Success on their first roll, they have enough warning that no roll is needed to avoid the other ship. However, if they wish to remain undetected, their ship is going to have to leave the asteroid field. If the other ship was detected by the last chance roll, escaping detection will require a Ship's Agility + Piloting test with a difficulty determined by the following table:

Range Category	Difficulty
Point Blank	HEROIC (19)
Short	FORMIDABLE (15)
Medium	HARD (11)
Long	AVERAGE (7)

If the Crew is detected, the base will be alerted when the small surveyor flees.

Whether the PCs were detected or not, they must decide if they wish to re-enter the asteroid field in their damaged ship or use a shuttle to conduct their investigation of the compound they detected on the large asteroid in the center of the field. If the PCs decide to leave their ship outside to field, no roll is necessary and the piloting roll for the shuttle is only an EASY (3) test of Ship's Agility + Piloting to land on the base asteroid without being detected, if the PCs remained undetected, HARD (11) if they were spotted. If the PCs do choose to bring their ship into the field, the piloting roll is an AVERAGE (7) test of



Ship's Agility + Piloting to land on the base asteroid without being detected, if the PCs remained undetected, FORMIDABLE (15) if they were spotted.

The results of failure vary based on if the PCs were spotted already or not. If this is the first time they are detected, then the penalty is the base will be alerted. If this is the second time, the base responds more aggressively by launching a second larger ship from the compound with targeting scanners active and attempting to lock on to them. At this point the PCs only option is to flee.

Assuming the Crew successfully avoids detection long enough to conduct an investigation of the base, their specific actions will be based on the number of PCs and whether they choose to concentrate on the investigation, the repairs, or trying to both at the same time.

The PCs should know they have a maximum of eight hours before they must depart if they are to deliver their cargo on time. Regardless of PC choice, repairing the ship is a Complex Action of Intelligence + Mechanical Engineering with each roll representing 10 minutes' work and using the normal results for a Botch as per the rules on pg144. The difficulty is based on the amount of damage and whether the Crew lands for repairs or stays in deep space.

If the PCs land, use the following table, which represents being able to shut down more systems while landed and stationary:

Wound Points	Difficulty Threshold
1-2	EASY (15)
3-4	AVERAGE (35)

If the PCs do not land, use the following table, which factors in the systems that have to remain active while in deep space:

Wound Points	Difficulty Threshold
1-2	AVERAGE (35)
3-4	HARD (55)

Once the PCs land on the asteroid containing the base, the adventure proceeds as per the description in the "Take a Sneak Peek" option.

#### *FIGHT FOR YOUR LIFE*

If due to bad luck, a lack of, or refusal to use, Plot Points the PCs failed to avoid a crash in the previous scene, they are now in a desperate dilatation. While they have the option of using a shuttle to conduct an investigation if they choose, the Crew's primary goal at this point has got to be survival.

The driving factor on their ability to escape with their ship will be just how much damage has the ship sustained. Clearly if the ship has taken more than twice the number of Wound points as the ship has Life Points, then the ship is now

a complete wreck. It is reasonable if the GM should call for everyone on board to make an AVERAGE (7) Agility + Survival or a HARD (11) Resistance (Vitality + Vitality) roll to survive the crash by either donning a vacuum suit or by reaching a compartment that was not breached. However, the GM may decide the loss of their ship is enough punishment for the Crew.

In this extreme case, it is recommended to the GM that the Wreckers approach and contact the PC's ship via a still function vacuum suit or hand held communications gear and make them a simple offer, surrender, or they will open fire and sift through the pieces for anything of value. The PCs should be captured and thrown in a cell with the three survivors of the Brass Monkey. An extremely kind GM can permit the PCs to work out an escape plan that allows them to flee in one of the Wrecker's ships, but such details will have to be worked out by the GM.

If the PC's ship has sustained between five Wound Points and up to twice the ship's Life Points, it results in a crash causing heavy damage. Getting the ship functional enough to escape is going to require a lot of luck as once the PC's ship is spotted by the surveyor, the Crew will have a limited amount of time before the Wreckers return in force.

Since the Crew has restored power to their ship by recovering from the Stun

damage at the end of the previous scene, they will see the surveyor and know that they are working under a time limit. The actual repairs are a Complex Action of Intelligence + Mechanical Engineering with each roll representing 10 minutes' work and using the normal results for a Botch as per the rules on pg. 144.

Wound Points	Difficulty Threshold
1-2	EASY (15)
3-4	AVERAGE (35)
5-6	HARD (55)
7-8	FORMIDABLE (75)
9-10	HEROIC (95)
11-12	INCREDIBLE (115)
13-14	RIDICULOUS (135)
15+	IMPOSSIBLE (155)

While the Crew frantically repairs their ship, the surveyor hovers at long range threatening the Crew via comm traffic with dire consequences if they don't surrender. Since the PCs know it was only ten minutes from when they crashed to when the hijackers arrived, they know that they do not have time to make full repairs. The Mechanic is going to have to come up with a miracle if the Crew is going to avoid capture. The miracle comes in the form of a desperate plan if the Mechanic (or anyone else for that matter) can make a successful AVERAGE (7) Intelligence + Mechanical Engineering roll.

The plan, while simple, is dangerous and will also cause damage to the ship's engine. If the primary fuel line is unhooked from the compression coil and attached to directly to the radion accelerator core, the burst of raw power will jump start the engine and get the ship moving far faster than normal. The downside is that without the compression coil to moderate the fusion process, the surge will cause a tremendous degenerative feedback throughout the entire system that will cause damage that will require a shipyard to repair.

The Crew must now choose between two difficult choices, surrender to the hijackers or inflicting additional serious damage to their ship. If they choose to surrender, the repercussions will fall outside the scope of this adventure and will have to be run by the GM with the above suggestions for if the PCs ship is wrecked by the encounter with the asteroid field.

If the PCs choose the second option, the Mechanic will have to make a FORMIDABLE (15) roll of Intelligence + Mechanical Engineering to put the dangerous jump start into action before the hijacker's second ship arrives. If the roll succeeds, there is an almost human scream from the tortured engine and the ship lurches into motion, stunned by this movement, the small surveyor retreats in panic allowing the pilot to break contact and hide in the asteroid field. If

the roll fails, the ship is still on the asteroid when the larger hijacker ship arrives and the PCs will be reduced to surrendering as above.

The affect of the jumpstart are as followed: the ship permanently loses a point off of its cruise speed and can not use Hard Burn until the ship is fully repaired in an actual shipyard. The cost of these repairs is equal to 2% of the ship's original cost. (IE A basic Firefly originally cost €48,960 when new.  
 $48,960 \times .02 = €979.2$ )

Once the PC's ship has broken contact with the hijackers, they must now keep moving in a deadly game of hide and seek, while they engage in a desperate attempt to repair the ship enough to escape the trap.

The Crew has a couple things that they are unaware of that are working in their favor. First, due to the heavy damage to their ship, their power output is greatly reduced and making them much more difficult to locate, and second, their unknown opponents are hesitant to fire on them as they would prefer to board and capture the PC's ship for the maximum amount of salvage.

The GM should keep up a running commentary of the extreme tension of the moment with cut scenes between the action in the engine room as each repair roll is made and the actions of the bridge crew to avoid detection.

The GM can make this scene as detailed as they like and additional rules are included at the end of this scene for a more detailed Scanner/Search rules, the entire scene can be abstracted with a series of Opposed Rolls pitting the Crew's Ship's Agility + Piloting skill versus the searcher's Ship's Alertness + Technical Engineering / Scanners skill with each attempt representing a half hour of time. Using the repair table above for the ongoing Complex Action of the repair effort, each of the search rolls occurs after three repair rolls giving the entire process the feel of the desperate group effort that it is meant to represent.

Example: Ship sustained 7 Wound Points of damage in the initial crash, consulting the table shows that this is a FORMIDABLE (75) Complex Action. Assuming the Mechanic on this ship has Intelligence d10 and Mechanical Engineering d8, this yields an average roll of 10 for the repairs. Going on the basis of no Botches, the repairs will take a total of eight rolls before the ship is repaired enough to flee. As mentioned earlier, each of the repair rolls represents ten minutes of time or a total time of eighty minutes. The pilot of the ship will thus have to make three Opposed Rolls versus the Wreckers to remain undetected.

The searchers start out of contact and if the PCs win the Opposed Rolls, they will

remain out of contact and hidden within the asteroid field. For each time the Wreckers beat the PCs on the Opposed Roll, they close by one range band, first closing to Long Range, then Medium, and finally Short. If the PCs lose again once the Wreckers have reached Short Range, the Wreckers will attempt to dock with their ship.

The PCs get one last Opposed Roll of Ship's Agility + Piloting versus the Wrecker's same skill. If the Wreckers win, they have successfully affixed magnetic clamps to the PC's ship and will begin boarding within ten Combat Turns. The PC's ship is too badly damage to break away from the larger ship and the PCs will now have to fight and defeat ten well armed boarders in order to escape. If the Wreckers have boarded, run the combat as normal with the results of the fight determining if the Crew escapes. The boarders are well armed, armored, and trained. They will continue to fight until they have sustained 50% loses before breaking off to retreat back to their own ship.

If the PCs remain undetected, or are least un-boarded, or managed to defeat the boarders by the time they complete their repairs, go to the final scene.

**ACT THREE**  
**SCENE TWO**  
**TOO GORRAM CLOSE FOR**  
**COMFORT**

*"What the Code of the Black? Can't say as I know that there is one, but I reckon if there was I guess what comes to mind first is 'Zhen ta ma yao ming. Zhu yi.'<sup>4</sup> The Black is a dangerous place and if'n yer head ain't on a swivel, it ain't likely to stay on your shoulders fer long. Another thing that folk what choose the Black fer a livin' believe is ya always watch the back of whoever ya run with. Cause the only thing ya can find in the way of reassurance these days, short of what a Shepard hands out on a Sunday, is to ken that someone ya trust has got yer back."*

– Gus Jacobsen, itinerant spacer as interviewed by the author Jiang Hu Long for his highly successful fictional series 'Verse Stories'

Breaking free of the asteroid field, regardless of how things went in their investigation, if they even got to make one that is, the Crew is now more than ready to make their escape. Exactly how the climax of the adventure plays out depends on whether the Crew has escaped with both of the ships or just their own. While the players are encouraged to come up with any plausible escape plan of their own, this adventure will proceed on the basis that the PCs use one of the following options to ditch the Wreckers, get back on course to Three Hills, and, if things can finally go smooth for a change, get paid.

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<sup>4</sup> Watch your back

If the PCs rescued the Brass Monkey, they have a couple of options to choose for their escape. The deciding factor between the options is if the PC's own ship is damaged or not, and if so, how badly. If the PC's ship is completely undamaged, it allows the Crew to attempt the best option for escape, but this option will call for the most demanding challenge for the Crew's Pilot.

### *SOME LIKE IT HOT*

As the Brass Monkey was badly damaged by the Wrecker's trap, she will be limited in setting up the escape and that means the PC's ship will have to do the heavy lifting to spring a toasty little surprise for the hotly pursuing Wreckers. Due to her greatly reduced maneuverability at the moment, the Brass Monkey is going to have the play role of lame duck and given her damage, this shouldn't be much of a challenge. The two Wrecker ships, the small Surveyor and their much larger mid-bulk freighter are pursuing the escapees with a vengeance and the worst part is, both of the Wrecker ships are armed and faster than the two escaping ships.

The subterfuge that the whole plan hinges on requires that whoever is piloting the damaged freighter, either a PC or the ship's on pilot of the Crew rescued her own crew, must succeed in an Opposed Roll of Ship's Agility + Piloting versus the Alertness + Perception of both Wrecker pilots. If this

first part works, the Brass Monkey looks convincingly crippled and sets the stage of the PC's part of the plan.

The Crew's Pilot must now succeed in a FORMIDABLE (15) test of Ship's Agility + Piloting to zigzag behind the crippled freighter in a fashion believable enough to look like the PC's ship is trying to shield the Brass Monkey from immanent fire from the Wrecker's, as both escaping ships know targeting scanners are tracking them. If this roll succeeds in the same round that the Brass Monkey's Pilot succeeds the two ships have pulled off their deception and draw the larger Wrecker ship in close enough for the final part of the plan. If the set up rolls fail, the Wrecker's isn't at the optimal range and the pilots suffer a two-step penalty to skill on their next roll.

Once the Wrecker ship has been lured into the Crew's trap, both ships must ignite their Pulse Drive for Hard Burn simultaneously just as the PC's ship seemingly naturally cuts back above and across the path of the Brass Money. This requires both Pilots roll an AVERAGE (7) Agility + Piloting in that next round to initiate their surprise. If this test is successful, the flares from the two Pulse Drives interact and combine into a huge searing blast of heat that catches the Wrecker freighter by surprise and is sent tumbling into the Surveyor in the process, causing both ships to lose control long enough for the PC's ship and the Brass Monkey to escape. If any of the above rolls fails, the timing is off on

the flare and the Wreckers are not damaged.

If the PC's ship was damaged in the asteroid field or if the above trick failed, an easier, but more costly option will be to disable their pursuers by dumping the cargo of the first ship into the path of the pursuing Wreckers.

*FOLLOW THE MOLLY-BE-DAMNED ROAD*  
As the Brass Monkey was badly damaged by the Wrecker's trap, she will be limited in setting up the escape and that means the PC's ship will have to do the heavy lifting to spring a nasty little surprise for the hotly pursuing Wreckers. Due to her greatly reduced maneuverability at the moment, the Brass Monkey is going to have the play role of lame duck and given her damage, this shouldn't be much of a challenge. The two Wrecker ships, the small Surveyor and their much larger mid-bulk freighter are pursuing the escapees with a vengeance and the worst part is, both of the Wrecker ships are armed and faster than the two escaping ships.

How much of the cargo has to be dumped depends on how many crewmembers there are on the Brass Monkey. If there are at least two PCs or NPCs not involved with the piloting and keeping the ship running, they can use the ship's crane to maneuver several pallets of the molybdenum ingots (equal to 50 tons) into the Brass Monkey's bomb-bay hatch. Once the pallets are in

place, the PCs/NPCs will then cut the banding holding the ingots to the pallets. This task is an AVERAGE (35) Complex Action of Strength + Athletics with each roll taking one Combat Turn and the characters attempting this roll can Indirectly Assist each other. If a second Botch is rolled, one of the PC/NPCs has managed to stagger into the way of a dropped pallet. They must immediately attempt a HARD (11) Get out of Harm's Way (Agility + Alertness) roll to avoid injury, where the difficulty is treated as an attack roll and doing d4B damage if the attempt to avoid the pallet fails.

As the cargo is being feverishly readied for the trap, the Wreckers are snarling demands to surrender to the two fleeing ships as (unknown to the Crew) they do not want to fire on the valuable salvage the two ships represent. The Wreckers initially will not fire for two combat turns as they try to get the Crews to give up. If the ships have not slowed down by round three, each Wrecker ship will fire a single missile. It is a straight 50%-50% chance for which ship fires on the Brass Monkey or which fires on the PC's ship (GM roll d6 1-3 Bull fires on Brass Monkey, 4-6 Bull fires on the PC's ship, the Surveyor automatically fires on the opposite ship from the Bull). However, if any character can win an Opposed Roll of Willpower + Influence / Persuasion versus the Wrecker spokesman's Willpower + Discipline, they can stall the pursuers from firing for one more Combat Turn. If the roll fails, the

Wrecker's fire and the GM must run the combat as normal.

When the cargo is in place, the Crew's Pilot must now succeed in a HARD (11) test of Ship's Agility + Piloting to zigzag behind the crippled freighter in a fashion believable enough to look like the PC's ship is trying to shield the Brass Monkey from the Wrecker's fire. If this roll succeeds the two ships have pulled off their deception and draw the larger Wrecker ship in close enough for the final part of the plan.

Once the Wrecker ship has been lured into the trap, the Brass Monkey will open her belly hatch and allow the ingots to fly back into the path of the Wrecker's freighter. This forces the pursuing freighter to swerve wildly, clipping the Surveyor in the process, causing both ships to lose control long enough for the PC's ship and the Brass Monkey to escape. If any of the above rolls fails, the timing is off and the Wreckers are not damaged.

As this trick is an all or nothing thing and the only real chance for two badly damaged ships to escape from two faster armed ships, the GM should encourage the use of Plot Points to give the PCs the best chance for either of these two tricks to succeed.

If these tricks fail, the only hope for the escaping ships, or if the PCs failed to rescue the Brass Monkey in the first

place, the last ditch trick is for the Brass Monkey if she's with the PCs or the PC's ship if they are alone, will have to dump their entire cargo. This final desperate ploy will dump so much material that no roll is needed to cause the freighter to swerve wildly, clipping the Surveyor in the process, causing both ships to lose control long enough for the PC's ship and the Brass Monkey to escape. The downside of resorting to this desperate option will be learned on arrival at Three Hills.

#### *CONCLUSION*

Unless the GM decides to do so, there will be no further encounters on the last part of their trip. When the PC's land at the ramshackle primitive landing field, what they will be paid will depend on how successful they have been during the previous scenes. Essentially there are three outcomes for Siren's Song with each having variations based on how much of Kenner's cargo is recovered and delivered and if it is delivered on time, which if it is late causes a 10% penalty per six hours late for all the options listed below.

The first outcome involves the Crew rescuing the missing freighter and her crew. The variations are if the entire cargo is recovered, if 50 tons of cargo were lost, and if the entire cargo of the Brass Monkey was lost. In the event of a best case situation, Kenner is effusive with his praise for the Crew for not only being lucky, but for being "damn fine

folk that he'll be certain to keep in touch with." In this situation, in addition to receiving the second half of the €300 shipping fee for delivering the cargo they were contracted to carry, Kenner pays the promised €2,500 bonus and the Gremlin missile launcher for recovering his lost cargo, as well as rescuing the Brass Monkey and her crew. In addition, Kenner becomes a contact for later work anytime the Crew returns to Regina.

In the case of the Crew having to sacrifice part of his cargo in order to escape, Kenner is still very enthusiastic in his praise and on top of paying the second half of their €300 for the cargo run, they will receive a €1,500 bonus. Kenner will also become a continuing contact for later work as above.

If their escape forced the Crew to lose the entire original cargo, Kenner is subdued with his praise as the loss of that much cargo has hurt him financially very seriously. He pays the rest of the cargo run credits and a bonus of €200 for saving the Brass Monkey and her crew. He will not become a contact, but if the PCs wish to enter one of his contests for other cargo opportunities, he won't stop them from entering and hold anything against them if they should win.

Recovering the Brass Monkey with her entire cargo, but without her crew is still considered by Kenner to be a job well done, but questions will dog the PCs for failing to come to the assistance of her



crew. As the bonus offered by Kenner did not specify the crew, he is still less passionate about his praise. He pays the rest of the cargo run fee and adds in a €2,000 bonus for saving him from a serious financial loss. He becomes a one time use contact for further work, but will welcome them for any of his contests for other cargo opportunities.

Escaping at the cost of part of the cargo will be exactly as above, but the bonus drops to €1,000. However, if the entire cargo was lost, He pays the cargo run fee and €200 for saving the Brass Monkey, but will not become a contact, or allow PCs to enter any of his contests for other work. If the Crew and the PCs fail to learn fate of Brass Monkey, but do manage to deliver the entire cargo, Kenner will only pay the rest of the shipping fee. He will not speak with the Crew again and bans them from any of his contests for other work.

If complete disaster befalls the PCs and they not only fail to learn fate of Brass Monkey and lost the entire cargo in the process, Kenner is beyond livid. He curses at the Crew for ruining him and not only refuses to pay them the rest of the shipping fee, Kenner swears he will make sure they never get work on Regina again. This last part is represented in game terms as a modified form of the Branded Trait. Anytime the PCs attempt to find work on Regina, they suffer the standard two-step penalty to all Social skills of that trait, but only on

that one planet. Kenner does not become an enemy per se, but he will be very vocal about the Crew's gross incompetence.

If the PCs return to the site of the asteroid trap, they find that the field has been allowed to naturally scatter and the base is completely gone. If by some chance the Crew reports the trap to the Alliance, they next time they land on any Core or Border world, they find they have to pay a €100 fine for making a false report as the Alliance did investigate, but found no trace of the reported trap.

When the Crew has received their payout (or not) from Kenner, they are free to begin the never ending chore of looking for work in a 'Verse where times are hard. If they've been skilled and lucky, they may have some extra money in their pocket and they may or may not have made a new friend. Regardless, of outcome, the scene fades to black.

The GM should now award each PC 4-6 Plot Points and 3-5 Advancement Points based on how well they have performed during the adventure. However, dumping 50 tons of cargo should result in a -1 penalty to both Plot Point and Advancement Point awarded and if the entire cargo was lost, there is a -3 penalty to both.

**下場**  
**THE END**

## DETAILED SCANNER/SEARCH RULES

The Opposed Roll pits the Crew's Ship's Agility + Piloting skill versus the Wrecker's Scanner Operator's Ship's Alertness + Technical Engineering / Scanners skill to detect the Crew's ship. The Difficulty depends on the size of the PC's ship, the range, and as well as the precautions the characters might have taken.

### Size

Strength Die Type	Difficulty
d2	HARD (13)
d4	HARD (11)
d6	AVERAGE (9)
d8	AVERAGE (7)
d10	EASY (5)
d12	EASY (3)

### Range

Range Category	Difficulty Modifier
Point Blank	-2
Short	+0
Medium	+2
Long	+4

### Special Circumstances

Situation	Difficulty Modifier
Ship is running silent <sup>1</sup>	+8
Ship is concealed behind a massive body	+4

All modifiers stack. At short range, for example, it is a HEROIC (21) task to spot a medium-sized ship that is running silent and hiding behind a large piece of debris.

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the fact the PC's ship is running with a greatly reduced power output, the Crew gets this bonus anytime the Wreckers are out of contact with the PC's ship. If the Wreckers manage to close to at least Long Range, the PCs will lose this bonus.

## **NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS**

### **Mortdechai Kenner**

Agility d8, Strength d8, Vitality d8, Alertness d10, Intelligence d8, Willpower d6; Initiative: d8 + d10; Life Points 14

**Traits:** Nose for Trouble (Minor Asset), Talented: Gambling (Minor Asset), Memorable (Minor Complication), Superstitious (Minor Complication)

**Skills:** Athletics d6 / Weight Lifting d8, Covert d6 / Open Locks d8 / Stealth d8, Discipline d6, Guns d6 / Pistols d8, Influence d6 / Persuasion d8, Knowledge d6 / Business d10, Perception d6 / Gambling d10, Unarmed Combat d6 / Brawling d8

### **Crew of Brass Monkey**

#### **Jonathan Callas**

Agility d8, Strength d6, Vitality d6, Alertness d8, Intelligence d6, Willpower d8; Initiative d8 + d8; Life Points 14

**Traits:** Leadership (Major Asset), Crude (Minor Complication), Prejudice: Alliance (Minor Complication)

**Skills:** Athletics d6 / Dodge d8, Covert d6 / Stealth d8 / Streetwise d8, Discipline d4, Guns d6 / Pistols d8, Influence d6 / Persuasion d8, Knowledge d4, Mechanical Engineering d2, Perception d6, Pilot d4, Unarmed Combat d6 / Brawling d8

#### **Alice Higgins**

Agility d8, Strength d6, Vitality d6, Alertness d8, Intelligence d8, Willpower d6; Initiative d8 + d8; Life Points 12

**Traits:** Talented: Astrogation (Minor Asset), Amorous (Minor Complication)

**Skills:** Athletics d6 / Dodge d8, Covert d6, Discipline d4, Guns d6, Influence d6 / Persuasion d8, Knowledge d4, Perception d6, Pilot d6 / Mid-Bulk Freighters d10, Technical Engineering d6, Unarmed Combat d4

#### **Cindy Lao**

Agility d10, Strength d6, Vitality d6, Alertness d6, Intelligence d8, Willpower d6; Initiative d10 + d6; Life Points 12

**Traits:** Athlete: Runner (Minor Asset), Lightweight (Minor Complication)

**Skills:** Athletics d6 / Running d10, Covert d4, Guns d6 / Rifles d8, Influence d6, Knowledge d6, Mechanical Engineering d6 / d10 Repairs, Perception d6, Pilot d2, Technical Engineering d6, Unarmed Combat d4

## Wreckers

### Generic Wrecker

Agility d6, Strength d6, Vitality d6, Alertness d6, Intelligence d6, Willpower d6;  
Initiative d6 + d6; Life Points 12

**Traits:** Friends in Low Places (Minor Asset), Greedy (Minor Complication)

**Skills:** Athletics d6, Covert d4, Guns d6, Influence d6, Knowledge d6, Mechanical Engineering d6, Perception d6, Pilot d2, Survival d4, Technical Engineering d6, Unarmed Combat d4

### Pilots

Agility d8, Strength d6, Vitality d6, Alertness d8, Intelligence d8, Willpower d6;  
Initiative d8 + d8; Life Points 12

**Traits:** Talented: Pilot (Minor Asset), Overconfident (Minor Complication)

**Skills:** Athletics d6, Covert d4, Guns d6, Influence d6, Knowledge d6, Mechanical Engineering d4, Perception d6, Pilot d6 / (Specific Ship) d8 / Astrogation d8, Technical Engineering d6 / Communications d8 / Scanners d8, Unarmed Combat d4

### Boarding Party

Agility d8, Strength d6, Vitality d8, Alertness d8, Intelligence d6, Willpower d6;  
Initiative d8 + d8; Life Points 16

**Traits:** Tough as Nails (Minor Asset), Greedy (Minor Complication)

**Skills:** Athletics d6 / Dodge d8, Covert d6 / Stealth d8, Discipline d4, Guns d6 / Pistols d8, Rifles d10, Influence d4, Mechanical Engineering d2, Melee Weapons Combat d6 / Knives d8, Perception d6, Technical Engineering d2, Unarmed Combat d6 / Brawling d8

Gear: Assault Rifle w/ seven magazines, Pistol w/ three magazines, two Flashbang Grenades, Armored Vacuum Suit (2W and converts rest of damage to Stun as per Ballistic Mesh)

### **Spokesman**

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

Initiative d6 + d8; Life Points 14

**Traits:** Cortex Specter (Minor Asset), Intimidatin' Manner (Minor Asset), Sadistic (Major Complication)

**Skills:** Athletics d6 / Dodge d8, Covert d6, Discipline d6, Guns d6, Influence d6 / Persuasion d8, Knowledge d4, Mechanical Engineering d4, Perception d6, Pilot d6, Technical Engineering d4, Unarmed Combat d4

### **Alliance Forces**

**Soldiers:** Use Alliance Grunt

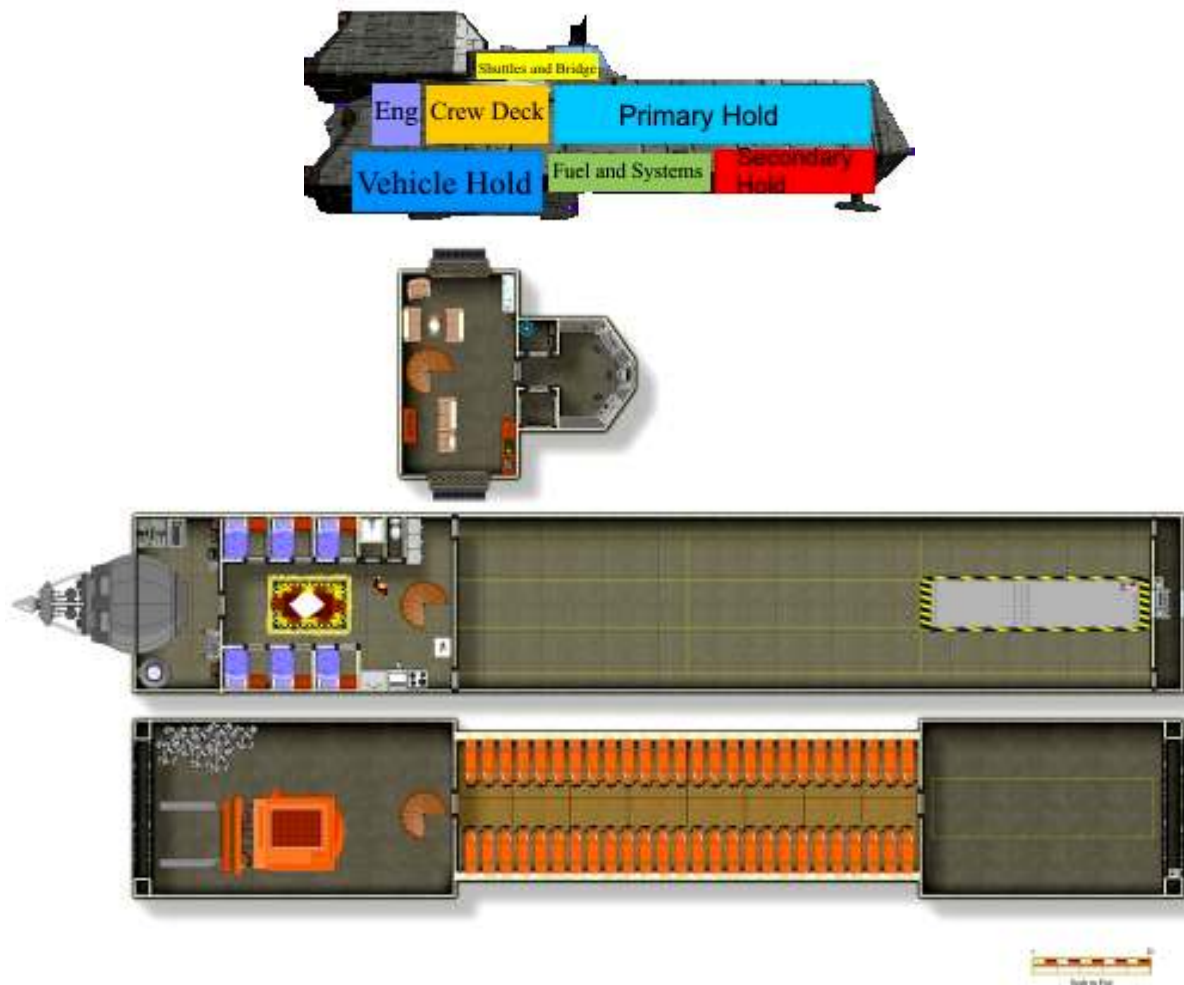
**Officers:** Use Disillusioned Veteran

The Pilot of the Oddball has Piloting d8 and Ship's Agility of d4

The Pilot of Xuan's Hope has Piloting d8 and Ship's Agility of d8

# SHIPS

## Bull-Class Mid-Bulk Transport



**Dimensions (LxBxH):** 200 x 120 x 60 feet

**Tonnage:** 2720

**Speed Class:** 6/10

**Fuel Capacity/Tonnage:** 75 tons, 1600 Hours

**Crew Quarters:** 4 x 8 tons

**Passenger Quarters:** 2 x 8 tons 2nd class cabins

**Cargo Capacity:** 600 tons in loose cargo or 24 standard 25 ton cargo containers

Agility d2, Strength d6, Vitality d10, Alertness d2, Intelligence d2, Willpower d8;

Init: D4+D2, Life Points: 18

**Assets:** Fuel Efficient (m), Fast Throttle (M), Good Name (m), Healthy as a Horse (m)

**Complications:** Everybody Has One (m), Memorable (m), Ugly as Sin (m), Seen Better Days (M)

**Skills:** Mechanical Engineering D4

**Complexity:** Low, **Price:** New – €97,920 with Seen Better Days major €4,896

**Maintenance Cost:** New per year €3,264 (€272 per month) with Seen Better Days €6,528 (€544 per month)

**Craft:** 2 x 20 ton shuttles

**Gear:** Large container fork lift, twenty (15 kinetic, 5 explosive) 100 pound (d6W Spaceship scale damage) short-ranged missiles carried as cargo and launched manually from the primary cargo hold.

**Background:** The official name for this old craft is the "Frontier 500 ton / 24 container self unloading Freighter 01" named by its maker who can build a good ship but were not sales man. Fortunately the control group of captains reported that it had the quirk of bucking and groaning on reentry, and making a groan that "sounds like a bull's roar". Thus it was marketed under the name "Bull" much to the PR department's relief, in this vein, many ships are named after famous rodeo bulls such as White Magic, Big Bucks, Voodoo and Troubadour.

The ships design has been built for 50 years and come from a time where a full space port was a rare thing on the border worlds and most of the Rim worlds just had a cleared bit of dirt. The "Bull" comes as standard with a 35 ton container lift in a dedicated vehicle hold which also has room for a small machine shop. This enables the crane to load and unload cargo and containers up to and including the 40 foot 25 ton standard container from its secondary hold. This secondary hold is equipped with cargo lift up to the main hold which itself has a ceiling mounted cargo crane controlled from a dedicated station in the bow. This combination allows a Bull to fully load or unload containers or other cargo types without any assistance from the landing site. As the advertising brochures used to say when the Bull was originally marketed, A "Bull" is mostly likely the first transport ship to make a deliver to a newly opened world. Capable of landing on a patch of dirt and unloading without assistance, another ship may need a space port, but the 'Bull' does not."

Being an old design, the Bull is a robust and over engineered craft built from old bulky reliable and easy to find parts, not that it needs new parts often as the old tech was built to last. The Bull has five engines which are generally thought to be two more than it needs. However it is these two extra engines that allow a Bull to run all five engines at their most economical setting yet maintains a respectable cruise speed. These extra engines also give a Bull an amazingly fast Hard Burn speed, but at the expense of fuel economy (The Bull loses its Fuel Efficient trait when using Hard Burn). In addition a Bull carries twice the standard load of fuel for a ship of this size as it was designed in an age when refueling stations were few and far between.

But it is not all good news the Bull as the saying goes "is a small ship for its size". The crew cabins are cramped and poorly equipped. The two passenger cabins are identical two the crew's cabins and it would be generous man who describes them as second class. It also should be noted that all these cabins contain only a narrow single bed. There isn't a sitting room, only a large table and six chairs in the crew area. One the upper level behind the Bridge is a large area containing the two shuttle docking rings. This area is fairly large and many captains place sofas and chairs here, but with the main stairwell placed in the center of this area and with room needed to get to the shuttles, makes this a cramped area as well. However, all in all a Bull is a reliable tough and economical vessel.

The *China Shop* is the heart of the Wrecker's operation, as it is capable of easily carrying the five containers of their base and the Surveyor *Argus* that the group uses for scouting.

## Oracle-Class Surveyor

**Dimensions:** (LxBxH): 12 x 12 x 30 feet

**Tonnage:** 43 (+4 tons of armor)

**Speed Class:** 6/8

**Fuel Capacity/Tonnage:** .5 ton (300 Hours)

**Crew Quarters:** 2 cramped (Steerage quality 4 tons each)

**Passenger Quarters:** None

**Cargo Capacity:** 2 tons

Agility D10, Strength D2, Vitality D6, Alertness D8, Intelligence D6, Willpower D6: Init:

D10+D8, Life: 12

Traits: Lightweight (Minor Complication), Ugly as Sin (Minor Complication)

**Skills:** Athletics d4, Perception d6, Pilot d4

**Complexity:** Average

**Price:** New – €2,620 (+ €210 for missile load)

**Maintenance Cost:** New per year €94 (€7.83 per month)

**Gear:** ten – short-ranged 20 pound missiles (d2W Spaceship scale damage); Armor 2W, two escape pods

**Background:** The Oracle was an unsuccessful design by the same company that went on to produce the Alliance Short-Range Enforcement Vessel, the ubiquitous ASREV patrol ship, of the Alliance Navy. Originally designed for short range surveys in high threat environments, the ship was equipped with armor and the best collision avoidance package available to ensure crew survival. While meant to be as survivable as possible, the Oracle failed due to the combination lack of consideration put into crew accommodations, which gave austere a whole new meaning, plus the fact that the 'best collision avoidance package available' turned out to be more complicated than anyone imagined and makes the ship difficult to maintain.

The Wrecker's use the *Argus* primarily used for scouting, but have also equipped it with light weaponry to assist with the capture of ships damaged by their asteroid trap.

## EQUIPMENT

**Gremlin Mk IV missile launcher** (€500 / 2,000lbs / I)

This ad hoc weapon system was created as a means to give unarmed freighters a means to defend themselves against pirate activities out on the Rim. Designed to be as cheap as possible, the Gremlin uses the ship's own sensors to guide one missile at a time. The system contains three short-ranged 100 pound kinetic missiles and is completely self-contained, but the system can not be reloaded outside of a repair shop.