

ABZU'S BOUNTY



A SOLAR SYSTEM SPANNING
ADVENTURE PATH FOR **THE EXPANSE**

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INTRODUCTION

A *Abzu's Bounty* is a six-part series that spans much of the solar system. The core of the story follows the characters as they chase after a sample of the protomolecule stolen by one of the wealthiest men in the Inner planets. How you decide to use this book is up to you. You can tell the story exactly as written, or you can use parts of it to create your own series. The actions of player characters might derail the story as written and require you to take it in a completely different direction, or at least modify things to better suit new developments. Advice is given here, and throughout the book, for how to keep the story on track, but think of *Abzu's Bounty* as a framework for you to tell your series as best suits you and your players.

THE STORY

Abzu's Bounty is about one man's quest to fulfil his deepest desires and childhood dreams, no matter what the cost. Sebastian Pope, the antagonist from *To Sleep, Perchance to Dream* in the adventure in *The Expanse RPG*, is at the center of this story. Pope dreams of traveling to the stars and sees a chance to achieve that dream in the protomolecule.

The player characters are unfortunate enough to be present when a new sample of protomolecule is discovered and are quickly drawn into a web of politics, deceit, and treachery as multiple groups throughout the solar system seek to attain the sample.

- In **CHAPTER 1: Breaking the Surface**, the player characters are on board the ice-hauler *Abzu's Bounty* when an unusual silicate is discovered inside some of the harvested ice. Pirates board the ship and take the sample and the player characters with them before destroying the *Bounty*. The pirates take them to Prometheus where the characters end up at the center of a three-way firefight over the sample. During the firefight, an unknown faction steals the sample, which turns out to be the protomolecule. With all of the pirates dead, the characters are free to take their ship, the *Anne Bonny*. But not before they are contacted by a mysterious woman who wants to track down the protomolecule, and wants their help to do it.

"Posthuman. It was a word that came up in the media every five or six years, and it meant different things every time. Neural regrowth hormone? Posthuman. Sex robots with inbuilt pseudo intelligence? Posthuman. Self-optimizing network routing? Posthuman. It was a word from advertising copy, breathless and empty, and all he'd ever thought it really meant was that the people using it had a limited imagination about what exactly humans were capable of."

— *Leviathan Wakes*

- In **CHAPTER 2: Satellites and Secrets**, the crew heads to Mars to drop off their mysterious benefactor, Diana. En route, they overhear a pirate radio station, known for espousing conspiracy theories, that knows a suspicious amount about the sample of protomolecule found by the *Bounty*. Diana insists that the crew track down the radio station. They do so, but are beaten to the punch every time, leading to the discovery that the *Anne Bonny* has been bugged. After finally finding the pirate radio station, the crew meets a woman who has inside knowledge of the protomolecule. She gives them information that they think might lead to the protomolecule itself, but that leads instead to a stolen suit of Martian powered armor—not a bad haul.
- In **CHAPTER 3: Two Kinds of Prayer**, the crew finally delivers their passenger to Mars and possibly takes time to make repairs and rest. Once there, they attract the attention of the head of a Martian mega-church, who takes a keen interest in them and their ship. It seems the *Anne Bonny* was originally owned by his brother who took it and vanished after the death of his fiancé. While on Mars the crew become entangled in a years-old murder mystery, and are later attacked by a group of mercenaries hired by Pope to eliminate them.
- In **CHAPTER 4: There's OPA and There's OPA**, the crew are recruited on Ceres by Anderson Dawes to investigate several recent bombings. This is mostly a ploy by Dawes, who is aware of their connection to the protomolecule, to get the crew to Ceres so that he can investigate their ship and learn more about them. The crew find the bomber and discover that she is an Earther surgically altered to appear as a Belter, which hints at a wider conspiracy of Earth trying to destabilize the Belt.
- In **CHAPTER 5: The Titan's Ball**, Diana sets a trap for Pope, or at least his cohorts, by putting an item up for bid at the Titan's Ball that she knows Pope won't be able to resist. Pope doesn't show up himself, forcing the crew to figure out who his agents are in the hopes of squeezing them for information about the protomolecule. As the crew closes in on their target(s), the Ball is attacked by the crew of *Anne Bonny's* sister ship, the *Mary Read*—intent on avenging themselves on Pope and his allies. The crew escapes with their target(s) and the information that Pope's protomolecule is in a secret lab on Luna.
- In **CHAPTER 6: Shoot the Moon**, the crew of the *Anne Bonny* arrive at Luna and track down the fixer that Pope uses to smuggle supplies to his secret laboratory. Once they find the fixer, they convince him to help them find the lab and then break into the lab itself. Protomolecule-infected humans are released into the lab and Pope escapes to a luxury liner with the last of the protomolecule sample. With her prize now close at hand, Diana betrays the crew. She makes a grab for it, and aims to eliminate any witnesses. The crew must race to the liner before it breaks orbit from Luna, and deal with Pope's security forces as well Diana and her mercenaries.

THE CREW

The nature of the crew that your players create will have a huge impact on how this story unfolds. *Abzu's Bounty* assumes that the crew will be a mixture of Inners and Belters, similar to the crew of the *Rocinante*, and you may want to encourage them toward that. *Abzu's Bounty* explores a wide array of social settings and locations throughout the system, giving characters from almost any background a chance to shine at some point. The series can still work with a crew made up of entirely Earthers or Martians, but in that case you may want to modify certain sections, or even skip certain chapters. For example, if your crew is entirely composed of Earthers you might want to skip **CHAPTER 4: There's OPA and There's OPA**. During character creation you'll also want to encourage the players to make characters who are eager to answer "The call to adventure." If they make risk averse characters they're not going to get far in this series—caution won't help players put themselves in danger to pursue a dangerous sample of protomolecule across the solar system. One way to encourage players to take more dramatic chances is to help the players select Drives for their characters that are likely to motivate them to pursue the protomolecule.

INTERLUDES & LEVELS

Most of the stories in *Abzu's Bounty* have long periods of downtime between them, offering lots of opportunity for interludes and in some cases possibly even side adventures. The first few adventures offer details on the types of interludes that can be taken, while the later ones offer less detail, leaving things up to the GM and the players to fill in as they see fit.

At the beginning of the series, the player characters are presumed to be 2nd level and they should generally advance one level for each story in the series, meaning that they should be at least 7th level (possibly a little higher if you come up with side adventures) by the time they reach **Shoot the Moon**, the final story in the series.



1: BREAKING THE SURFACE

Breaking the Surface is the first adventure of the *Abzu's Bounty* series for *The Expanse* Roleplaying Game. It is designed to set into motion the series of events that launch the players' crew of characters into an exciting new life of adventure on their own trajectory, involving them in events of great importance to the solar system and the future of humanity.

The solar system is holding its breath as the cold war between Earth and Mars heats up. The Protogen corporation discovered an alien technology—the protomolecule—and deliberately infected everyone on Eros Station with it. The protomolecule transformed and repurposed the biomass of thousands of people, eventually sending the asteroid station hurtling towards Earth. Only the sacrifice and determination of two people was able to steer Eros to crash into Venus instead. There, the alien-infected biomass disappeared beneath the roiling clouds and...something is happening.

Ships from both the United Nations of Earth and the Martian Congressional Republic are on high-alert, warily watching each other and whatever might come up out of the atmosphere of Venus. The Belters, represented by the Outer Planets Alliance, are fighting for a seat at the negotiating table before one side or the other upends it to use as a shield in a war that seems inevitable. The system is a volatile mix of fear, anger, ambition, miscommunication, and old grievances, just waiting for the spark that will touch it off.

OVERVIEW

The ice-hauler *Abzu's Bounty* is one of many of its kind working the routes of the Saturn system, collecting masses of water-ice from the planet's rings and transporting them to processing centers where the water is melted, filtered, and refined for distribution across the thirsty outer planets, where it is an essential element of life. Normally, the work on board an ice-hauler is dull and routine, and most of the people who end up crewing these ships have slid down to the bottom of the spacefaring ladder—or have been pushed.

As **Breaking the Surface** begins, however, things are anything but routine for the crew of *Abzu's Bounty*. Their latest ice haul from the rings of Saturn has turned up something unusual: A chunk of ice containing strange silicates that trigger a reading from the ship's computer. The find matches information the ship's parent company, Krystal Kleer, has flagged in their system. The captain orders the ice containing the unusual material gathered and sealed in an onboard safe, and sends an encrypted message back to the home office. Meanwhile, the *Bounty's* first officer gets in touch with OPA associates

“Anna had walked on a moon of Jupiter. She’d look up through a dome-covered sky at the great red spot, close enough to see the swirls and eddies of a storm larger than her home world. She’d tasted water thawed from ice as old as the solar system itself. And it was that human dissatisfaction, that human audacity that had put her there.”

— *Abbadon’s Gate*

characters) with them. After burning away from the ice-hauler, the pirate ship fires on the *Abzu’s Bounty* and then goes into a hard burn away from the area. In the cabin where they’re held, the crew experience both the acceleration and clear evidence the pirate ship has suffered some damage from the blast.

The voyage to Prometheus is the perfect time for an interlude. When the ship arrives at its destination, the characters are taken by part of the pirate crew to a meeting they’ve arranged on the station with an OPA faction called the Free Fools. The pirates intend to hand over the captives and receive payment for the ice sample, after which they’ll hand over the protomolecule.

Things don’t go as planned, as both the pirate and OPA factions at the meet are ambushed by a third faction, well-armed and prepared to take everyone out. The mystery faction kill off most (if not all) the NPCs and either the characters are victorious, or the attackers withdraw from the area after receiving new orders. The pirate captain lives just long enough to give the crew a hand terminal with command codes to the *Anne Bonny*. If one or more of the player characters dies during this encounter, it’s possible some of the *Bonny* crew survives, either here or in **Scene 4**, to serve as replacement characters.

The crew return to the *Anne Bonny* and discover its remaining crew are dead (or missing) and the ice sample is missing as well. Local station security will likely be investigating the ship soon, following up on the violence involving the clandestine meeting, so the characters have to decide on a course of action. As they are doing so, a newcomer asks to come on board to talk with the characters. She tells them her name is Diana, and that she has a proposal for them. She represents someone interested in employing freelancers and can assist the characters in claiming the *Anne Bonny*, if the characters are willing to consider future employment opportunities. The adventure ends with another interlude as the crew’s ship leaves Prometheus and sets off for Mars and the lead-in to **CHAPTER 2**, assuming the PCs follow Diana’s lead.

RUNNING THIS ADVENTURE

Breaking the Surface is about change and opportunity and the uncertainty that accompanies both. The characters’ lives are about to change dramatically as they become involved in events already set in motion. By the end of this adventure, they have reclaimed control over their own lives—or at least the appearance of it—and have entirely new opportunities that weren’t open to them before.

This adventure establishes several important things for the course of the *Abzu’s Bounty* series:

- It puts a sample of the protomolecule “in play” in the System, held by someone initially unknown to the player characters. This is why it’s important for the protomolecule sample the crew of the *Bounty* discovers to end up stolen by the end of this adventure.
- It gives the crew a ship of their own and the freedom they need to take part in the later adventures in this series, which is why the crew should end up in control of the pirate ship *Anne Bonny* by the end of the adventure.
- It introduces a patron in the form of Diana, the woman the crew meets in the last scene of the adventure, who can help smooth out a number of potential problems. She also serves as an introduction to later adventures in the series and as a key figure in the overall plot. This is why the crew should at least meet Diana at the end of this adventure, even if they are initially resistant to the idea of working with or for her.

ESTABLISHING A CONNECTION

An important element of the early scenes of **Breaking the Surface** is a connection between the player characters and Claire O’Rourke, the captain of the *Anne Bonny*. This connection can save the characters’ lives in **Scene 2** and is pivotal to the

events that follow. Work with the players to determine which of their characters might already know O'Rourke, and in what capacity, keeping in mind the elements of her background from the **Allies & Adversaries** section of this adventure.

Ideally, the connection between O'Rourke and the player character should be a strong one, perhaps even strong enough to qualify as a Bond (see the **Rewards** chapter of *The Expanse* RPG for details). Since this Bond will be short-lived, given the events of the adventure, feel free to award it to the chosen player character as a "bonus" beyond the usual starting Bond. The exact nature of the relationship is up to you and the player: They might have been romantically involved, served together, grew up together, or any number of other possibilities. If any of the characters have connecting backgrounds it's possible that more than one of them could have a connection to O'Rourke. Talk with the players involved and feel free to modify O'Rourke's background a bit to suit whatever ideas you come up with.

PRELUDES TO THE ADVENTURE

The default assumption is that the player characters have reached level 2 by the start of this adventure. You can simply start the crew out at that level, advancing them automatically after character creation, or you may prefer to run some type of prelude adventure to introduce the players to *The Expanse* and give their characters a bit of experience (and the requisite level) before starting this adventure.

One possibility is the starting adventure **To Sleep, Perchance to Dream** from *The Expanse* RPG core book. It starts the crew out on Tycho Station and sends them looking for a pair of missing scientists. This is a particularly good starter adventure both because of its availability (if you have *The Expanse* RPG, then you have the adventure) and because the ultimate antagonist behind that adventure, corporate magnate Sebastian Pope, is also the ultimate antagonist in this series. The key element you might want to change from the adventure-as-written is to remove the crew acquiring a ship from it; for example, their own ship is badly damaged and the characters lack the Income to repair it, forcing them to take up work aboard *Abzu's Bounty*.

Another possibility is the adventure **The Ganymede Insurance Job**, included with *The Expanse* RPG Game Master's Kit. It sends the crew after an insurance scammer on Ganymede who is caught in the middle of a gang war. That adventure is also useful in that it does not require the characters to have their own ship, making way for them to take work on the ice-hauler—particularly if they need to leave trouble in the Jovian system behind for a while.

A third option is the adventure **Cupbearer** from *The Expanse* RPG Quickstart, a free downloadable product available from greenronin.com. This adventure involves the characters in activities on Ganymede looking for the scion of a wealthy corporate family. Cupbearer assumes the crew has a ship to get them to and from Ganymede, but it's possible that ship could be borrowed, or that they might lose it in the course of the adventure, putting them in a difficult situation and in need of employment.

Apart from simply working on board, other reasons the crew might be aboard the *Abzu's Bounty* might include:

- Inexpensive passage to somewhere along the ice-hauler's route. The crew might be paying for their passage or working to help pay it off.
- Since the movements of the crew of an ice-hauler aren't particularly notable, the characters might be using the ship to travel without attracting too much attention, either because they're wanted by authorities, or because they're doing something they'd rather no one noticed.
- Escorting a non-player character who has taken passage on the ship, possibly for either of the previous reasons.
- Pursuit or investigation of a member of the *Bounty's* crew, such as Mitchell and his criminal connections.

In general, ice-haulers require that all passengers work for their passage—living space is limited—so everyone on board is considered to be part of the crew. Work with the players to come up with suitable reasons for their characters to be aboard based on their backgrounds, professions, drives, and goals.

SKIPPING AHEAD

If, for whatever reason, the start of your *Expanse* series simply doesn't fit with the crew being on board an ice-hauler, you can always skip the first two scenes of this adventure, having the discovery and theft of the protomolecule sample and the destruction of the *Bounty* happen "off-stage." Instead, the crew can start with **Scene 3** and the events on Prometheus. They might just happen to be at the small station to resupply or make repairs, in transit to somewhere else, to take up the job of investigating the destruction of the *Bounty*, to serve as proxies for the OPA during the meeting with the pirates, or O'Rourke might hire them as muscle for the meet. Whatever the reason for their presence, the crew shows up in time for the fateful

meeting and the ensuing ambush. They'll have the opportunity to follow up and discover the theft of the protomolecule and the deaths of the crew of the *Anne Bonny*. Then meet Diana as detailed in **Scene 4**, where she looks to hire them.

If the crew already has their own ship prior to this adventure, they might want to use that instead of the *Anne Bonny*. As aspects of later stories rely on the crew having the *Anne Bonny*, do what you can to make sure they take that ship rather than another. Perhaps the *Anne Bonny* is a better ship and the crew might choose to "trade up" and take it, with Diana helping smooth out the various details in a hurry so they don't have to stay and answer a lot of awkward questions on Prometheus.

SCENE 1

MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY

EXPLORATION/SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

The ice-hauler *Abzu's Bounty* makes a fateful discovery in the Saturn system that changes the crew's lives and may affect the future of humanity. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

Life on an ice-hauler is anything but exciting. But then, as people say, if crew members were suited for doing anything other than crewing a hauler, they'd be doing it. Working on the Abzu's Bounty, a hauler mining the rings of the Saturn system for the Krystal Kleer corporation, is certainly no different. At least, it wasn't until recently.

It started with a routine skim of Saturn's rings to gather a new load of ice. Scans of the ice gathered in the Bounty's massive catch-bay turned up some unusual readings, some kind of silicate. That discovery tripped a flag in the ship's computer. In response to a subsequent communique from corporate, Captain Reyes has ordered the crew to isolate the readings coming from a chunk of ice. The captain wants the ice sample tracked down, collected, and put into containment immediately. With her orders given, she personally deletes all records from the ship's log all information about the communique.

Exactly how the player characters are involved in this process depends on their roles aboard the *Bounty*. Decide with the players what roles their characters occupy, keeping in mind the existing complement under **The Bounty Crew** section that follows. Rearrange the existing crew assignments as needed to fit the player characters in, keeping the captain and executive officer where they are, since they play key roles in the upcoming scene.

If their duties allow, have the player characters be the ones to put on vac suits and go into the catch-bay to retrieve the ice sample. With some aid from the ship's sensors and hand-held scanners, they're able to find it: A piece of dirty ice roughly

FILLING OUT THE CREW COMPLEMENT

For a couple of quick tools to fill out the rest of the *Bounty's* crew complement as needed, consider the following:

RANDOM GENERATION

First, you can simply roll some dice to come up with a few random characters, giving them names and one or two distinctive characteristics.

- **Gender:** Roll 1d6, the character is: 1-2 = male, 3-5 = female, 6 = gender-fluid or agender.
- **Age:** Roll 1d6, the character is: 1-2 = young, 3-5 = mature (older for higher numbers), 6 = old.
- **Features:** Roll 1d6, the character's features are predominantly: 1 = African, 2 = Asian, 3 = Caucasian, 4 = Latin, 5 = Mediterranean or Middle Eastern, 6 = South Asian, keeping in mind that almost all Belters have mixed ethnic heritages.
- **Origin:** Roll 1d6, the character is: 1 = an Earther, 2 = a Martian, 3-6 = a Belter.

If you wish, you can also roll the character's attitude randomly on the **Attitudes** table under **Social Encounters** in *The Expanse* rulebook or choose something suitable based on the situation. Assume these background characters have abilities of 0, 2-3 appropriate ability focuses, and no Fortune score.

PLAYER DESIGN

You can also involve the players in filling out the *Bounty's* crew by asking them to describe one or two of their crewmates—other than fellow player characters or the existing crew described in this adventure. Ask each player to describe what that character is like and how their character feels about them. In this way the players may be a little more invested in the crew members they have imagined, giving the scenes to follow more impact. You can even encourage players during character creation to have Bonds with members of the crew other than fellow player characters; these Bonds will likely not last long, but can transition to something else or be replaced. Or, since one player gets a free Bond in O'Rourke, you could give the rest of the free Bonds with members of the crew. See **Changing Relationships** in **CHAPTER 14** of *The Expanse* rulebook for details.

35 centimeters in length and vaguely potato-shaped, with veins or striations of some black material inside it, which registers as an unusual silicate compound. Once the ice is retrieved, the captain orders it placed inside an insulated and cooled containment box from the ship's med-bay. Then the box is locked in a safe in the captain's office. If the player characters are involved in retrieving the sample, Captain Reyes gives them strict orders not to discuss the matter with anyone, but also refuses to tell them what it is or the reasons for her caution.

THE BOUNTY CREW

The *Abzu's Bounty* has a crew complement of 49, including the player characters. Serving together for months at a time on ice-hauling runs, the crew has gotten to know each other well and some of them have served together on the ship for years. The player characters might be relative newcomers or long-time members of the crew. Either way, they should be acquainted with many of their fellow crew members.

About half the *Bounty's* crew is made up of various specialists and officers, including technicians and those crewing bridge or engineering stations. The rest are workers who handle the ice collection process and operate the mechs and drones, as well as doing routine maintenance and other varied tasks on the ship. The *Bounty* works in a three-shift rotation of eight-hour shifts, so each primary role on board has three personnel assigned to it. This allows you to assign player characters to key roles like engineer, medic, or pilot on the second or third shift.

This adventure doesn't go into every member of the *Bounty's* crew. Feel free to make up additional personnel—or encourage the players to do so—to fill out the characters in this scene and in **Scene 2**. The following are key members of the ice-hauler's crew:

Captain Xin Reyes has seventeen years working for Krystal Kleer under her belt, eight of those as captain of the *Abzu's Bounty*. She's on track to be as close as one can get to comfortable retirement out in the Belt in about ten years, and has no desire to do anything to mess that up. Captain Reyes is well known as a "by the book" commanding officer who doesn't like surprises, so it's no wonder she seems tense concerning this unusual development on an otherwise routine run. See the **Allies & Adversaries** section at the end of this adventure for additional information.

Executive Officer (XO) Bart Mitchell is definitely the heavy on board the *Bounty*. While Captain Reyes doesn't like to be bothered with petty disputes or disciplinary matters, Mitchell has no problem being all up in the crew's business when he needs to be. And sometimes even when he doesn't. He's a bit of a bully, but he keeps things running efficiently so the captain overlooks anything that isn't going to cause trouble for her. Rumor has it Mitchell worked for a security corp until he stepped over the line and got canned. See the **Allies & Adversaries** section at the end of this adventure for additional information.

Pilot Raisa Arnova is small-framed, even for an Earther. But she's a capable pilot, and has an impressive capacity of alcohol for someone her size. Arnova washed out of the UN Navy and is still bitter about it.

Chief Engineer Saveen Patel is Belter-born, but never lets anyone forget that his family helped settle Mars. Saveen talks about retiring to Mars eventually, even though he's never actually been there. He and his assistants keep everything running aboard the *Bounty* and, like many engineers, Patel thinks of her as "his" ship—with the captain and crew just driving. Patel likes to cook when circumstances permit and is actually pretty good at it.

ABZU'S BOUNTY (ICE-HAULER)

SIZE Gigantic
HULL 3d6 **CREW** 128
COMPETANCE Average
DRIVE Epstein, Thrusters
SENSORS 0

WEAPONS

None

QUALITIES

None

NOTES

The *Bounty* is a typical ice-hauler: A former colony ship, patched-up and held together, but some of her still a good century old and always in need of maintenance.



Ship's Medic Kat Kowalski is not a fully-licensed medical doctor, but has sufficient training, certification, and experience to deal with the medical issues aboard ship. Like a lot of Belters, Kat learned a great deal from online instruction and experience in the field. She's known for her professional discretion and probably knows more about every member of the crew than anyone else aboard, serving as unofficial "confessor" as well as medic.

Communications Officer Gabriel Olivera is one of those people who is just attractive enough and sufficiently aware of it to have an overdeveloped sense of confidence. He's a flirt, but enjoys drawing out the chase as much as anything else.

TROUBLE BREWING

Once the unusual ice sample is located and secured, things on board the *Abzu's Bounty* mostly return to normal, but it should still be clear to anyone paying attention that something is brewing. Captain Reyes spends more time than usual in her office, communicating via tight-beam messaging with the corporation's home office while rumors run fairly rampant aboard ship. With nothing else to interrupt their routine, members of the crew are free to speculate as to what is going on. Feel free to pass along some of the wilder rumors to the player characters, including:

- The sample is proof there is some contaminant in the ice from Saturn's rings that could seriously affect the company's bottom line, and they're looking to cover it up.
- Not all of the communications off-ship have been going to Krystal Kleer corporate, though they have all been tight-beam transmissions, not broadcasts.
- The captain has made sure the ship's shuttle is supplied and prepped to depart at a moment's notice.
- What they discovered has something to do with what happened recently on Eros, or possibly what is happening now on Venus after Eros crashed there.
- The sample is proof of extraterrestrial life in the Saturn system, and corporate is either looking to cover it up, or to keep the information to themselves.
- The sample is proof of a top-secret Martian bio-weapon experiment that took place on Phoebe and was part of the reason why the Martian navy sterilized the moon with nuclear weapons.

MITCHELL'S SCHEME

Executive Officer Bart Mitchell makes a point of talking to the player characters about the sample and the rumors, particularly if the characters were the ones to retrieve the sample from the ship's hold. Mitchell is more friendly and genial than the characters can ever recall him being, and he pumps the characters for information under the guise of "curiosity" and "just wondering." If a character presses the matter or asks why the XO is so interested, determine Mitchell's attitude toward that character (see **Impressions and Attitude** in the **Social Encounters** section of **CHAPTER 5** of *The Expanse* RPG); If Mitchell is Neutral or friendlier, he risks taking the character into his confidence. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

"Do you know what that stuff is, why the system flagged it...? It's what caused everything on Eros, what the Inner governments are trying to figure out more about. It's why the Martians destroyed Phoebe, but a fragment or something must have found its way into the rings. What are the odds, right? Can you imagine what something like that is worth...?"

Mitchell makes it clear he knows what the protomolecule sample is potentially worth, and that he's equally sure the corporation won't be sharing their largess from the find with the crew of the *Bounty*. Unless the characters give the XO additional reasons to trust them, he's likely to leave it at that, perhaps adding, "It's a shame that the people who take the risks don't get to enjoy the rewards," or words to that effect.

If the characters can improve Mitchell's attitude towards them to at least Friendly through interaction, the XO thinks they could be helpful to him. He confides in them that he sent a message to some "friends" of his who are interested in what is in the safe in the captain's office. Friends who are willing to pay a lot for it, certainly enough to set someone up for life. Of course, that means getting the sample out of the safe and off of the *Bounty* before the ship makes it back.

NEXT MOVES

Just what happens at the end of this scene and prior to **Scene 2: Boarding Party** should be up to the player characters. As should what, if anything, they do about the discovery the *Bounty* has made and the XO's plans for it. The end of this scene can range anywhere from a few tense moments before the approaching pirate ship makes contact with the *Bounty*, to the player characters moving directly against Mitchell before the executive officer can make his move to secure the protomolecule sample and sparking a possible mutiny on the ice-hauler. Leave the next moves up to the players—neither Mitchell nor Reyes is in a hurry and, unless the player characters take action, Captain Reyes doesn't even suspect any trouble from her crew.

SCENE 2

BOARDING PARTY

COMBAT ENCOUNTER

In this scene, the pirate ship *Anne Bonny* intercepts the *Abzu's Bounty* and boards her to take the protomolecule sample. As it turns out, the captain of the *Anne Bonny* knows one or more of the player characters, which creates some complications, particularly because the boarding party is not the one that XO Mitchell is expecting.

Word of the incoming ship doesn't come until well into third shift aboard the Bounty. Captain Reyes is pretty pissed that it wasn't reported sooner, because there's no way that a ship on full burn can sneak up on anyone out here. But what's an even bigger concern is that the ship isn't returning a transponder signal, which can only mean one of two things: Either their transponder is damaged, or it has been illegally modified so it can be turned off. While it's possible their communications systems are damaged and they're just looking for help, the worst-case scenario—that they're pirates—is much more likely. Either way, it's only a couple of hours until intercept.

The incoming ship is the *Anne Bonny*, a modified freighter run by a crew of Belter pirates. Thanks to an intercepted report Captain Reyes provided to Krystal Kleer's head office, the pirates are on instructions from Sebastian Pope to secure the protomolecule sample and turn it over to his people. The *Bonny* is on an intercept course with the *Abzu's Bounty* and there's not much the *Bounty* crew can do about it: The pirate ship is faster and there's nowhere for the ice-hauler to run. Once the *Bonny* is in weapons-range the *Bounty* is a sitting duck, and everyone knows it.

Still, Captain Reyes isn't prepared to surrender immediately. She continues attempting to communicate with the incoming ship and remains on course. She tries to advise corporate of the intercept to ask for further instructions, but the incoming ship appears to be jamming the *Bounty's* communications. In reality, Mitchell has sabotaged the *Bounty's* comms systems, and even if they do get through corporate won't respond.

XO Mitchell doesn't know what is going on either, but he suspects the incoming ship is related to his OPA contacts. After all, who else knows about the sample on board the *Bounty*? It's rare for Belter pirates to attack ice-haulers—their cargo is too difficult to loot and not usually worth the effort—so Mitchell (rightly) believes this isn't a random attack. He just doesn't know there are other factions interested in the protomolecule.

Initially, the XO plays it cool. Unless he and his allies have already moved against Captain Reyes, he sees no reason to start trouble until reinforcements arrive. Still, he does whatever he can to ensure that the *Bounty* doesn't somehow manage to outpace the incoming ship. In fact, Mitchell's influence kept the *Bounty's* initial sensor reports of the incoming ship quiet, until a shift change rotated in a sensors officer the XO hadn't brought into his confidence.

PREPARE TO BE BOARDED

As the incoming ship draws closer, it begins a deceleration burn to match the velocity of the *Abzu's Bounty*, and the ice-haulers receive a tight-beam communication. Simply: Surrender and prepare to be boarded. Ship's sensors make it clear the incoming ship has painted the *Bounty* with weapons-locks and that she has torpedo tubes, meaning they can destroy the ice-hauler at any time. The *Bounty* isn't armed, so there is really no choice but to surrender.

If the player characters are loyal to Captain Reyes or unaware of Mitchell's scheme, they might try and come up with some wild plan for stopping the pirate ship or helping the *Bounty* to escape. Let them try, but Mitchell or one of his loyalists may sabotage their efforts as they think the pirates are allies. Mitchell's interference should confuse matters long enough for the pirates to arrive and dock.

Although Captain Reyes is a realist and not suicidal, she also has an inkling of what it is in her office safe and isn't prepared to give up any possible advantage. She allows the incoming ship to dock with the *Bounty*, but arranges for an armed contingent of the crew—including XO Mitchell and the player characters, if they are still in her good graces—to meet their “visitors” at the airlock.

If Mitchell has already successfully moved against the captain, then he and his allies greet the newcomers at the airlock with the assumption they are allies, which could lead to a tense moment or even a fight once the XO realizes that is not the case.

The *Bounty* does have a weapons locker able to outfit the crew with pistols (2d6 + Per damage) so they are armed to face off against the pirates, although it should be fairly clear they are outgunned.

HELLO AGAIN

A contingent of eight pirates from the *Anne Bonny*, led by Captain Claire O'Rourke, make their way across to the *Bounty*. The pirates wear vac suits and carry rifles (3d6 + Per damage) along with pistols as side-arms, and they have a sealed container for transporting the ice sample containing the protomolecule.

O'Rourke makes it clear to the *Bounty* crew that she prefers to make this transaction as bloodless as possible, but also that she will brook no interference or resistance. The pirates fight, if necessary, but don't start a fight unless the crew resists. When the player characters hear O'Rourke's voice and have the opportunity to see her face through the visor of her helmet, the character acquainted with her realizes who she is. Likewise, O'Rourke recognizes the character (or characters) she knows, although she hides her reaction. The player characters can make a **TN 12 Perception (Empathy)** test to notice the pirate captain's response before she covers it.

The pirate captain demands that the crew of the *Bounty* lower their weapons if they want to avoid a fight. Captain Reyes (or XO Mitchell, if he's in charge) demands first to know what the pirates want. O'Rourke says she wants the sample the crew found in the ice haul. If asked how she knows about it, she replies, “That hardly matters now. I know, I want it, and you're going to hand it over.”

The confrontation is tense, but if Captain Reyes is still in charge, she ultimately surrenders the sample to the pirates rather than risk an all-out firefight and the destruction of her ship. Mitchell, on the other hand, holds out hope of a payoff for handing the sample over to the OPA and may lead the crew in a fight against the pirates if he thinks he stands a chance of winning. If a fight breaks out, the pirates do whatever they can to secure the *Bounty* and their prize from the captain's safe, but retreat back to their ship if they lose more than half of their number.

Either way, Captain O'Rourke tries to keep her player character connection alive and safe if possible. She may choose the character as a “hostage” or request their assistance in retrieving the sample from the captain's office. Even if dubious, her



PROTOMOLECULE: HANDLE WITH CARE

What if the absolute worst-case scenario happens, and someone is exposed to the protomolecule on board the *Bounty*? Well... that's bad, but still salvageable.

First and foremost, everything in the initial scenes of this adventure is designed to avoid such contact: The protomolecule sample is frozen inside a chunk of ice that's as hard as granite, and the characters who discover and retrieve it are, by definition, wearing vac suits. It is quickly contained and locked away, where no one in the ice-hauler's crew can handle it. The pirates who come to take it are well aware that it is a hazardous material they should avoid contact with at all costs, and they only remove it from the safe to put it in an even more secure container and move it to their ship.

Nevertheless, if a sample of the protomolecule does get loose and come into direct contact with a living person, consult the **Threats** chapter of *The Expanse* RPG for details of its effects. Note that any character infected by the protomolecule cannot be saved. Captain O'Rourke has been made well-aware of this and will not allow an infected character to leave the *Bounty* or come into contact with anyone else. A protomolecule outbreak on board the *Bounty* makes taking the player characters along on the *Bonny* and the destruction of the ice-hauler even more imperative to the pirate captain. It also mitigates the destruction of the *Bounty*, since it becomes absolutely necessary if the ship is infected with the protomolecule.

crew doesn't question her orders. If there is an opportunity to speak privately with her connection, O'Rourke quickly tries to communicate: "Trust me if you want to get out of this alive." Otherwise, she relies on the character picking up that she is trying to keep them safe. If you wish, the player of the character with the connection can make a **TN 9 Perception (Empathy)** test to understand this.

THE SAFE

Once O'Rourke knows where the protomolecule sample is, she focuses on retrieving it. Captain Reyes, if cooperating, can simply open the safe in her office. Otherwise, the pirates have to break into the safe, which takes a bit more time and a **TN 11 Advanced Intelligence (Engineering or Technology)** test (success threshold 10). If any of the player characters have the ability focuses, O'Rourke might call on them to assist her crew.

COME WITH ME

Once the sample is secure, the pirates immediately head back to their ship, taking some of the *Bounty* crew with them, including the player characters. O'Rourke does this primarily to help her connection survive, but also focuses on hostages of potential value. If the player characters were the ones to find and retrieve the ice sample, she uses that as the ideal excuse to take them along. Likewise for those characters who were cooperative or helped retrieve the sample from the captain's safe.

The pirates may take along some other non-player characters. This allows you to continue any interesting relationships that might have developed during the start of the adventure and to provide a few "spare" characters for later scenes in this adventure should any of the players need a new character, for example. These other survivors of the *Bounty* might be lost during **Scenes 3 & 4** in this adventure, or could go on to be NPC members of the player characters's crew, as you prefer. Note, there is opportunity for XO Mitchell to appear in a later adventure, **CHAPTER 4: There's OPA and There's OPA**, so you may want to consider having him taken along as well.

THE FATE OF THE BOUNTY

Once the pirates have the protomolecule sample, they retreat back to the *Anne Bonny* with the sample and their hostages in tow, leaving the rest of the crew behind on the *Bounty*. The prisoners are secured in spare rooms aboard the *Bonny* (depending on how many of them there are) and told to strap into the available acceleration couches. You can read or paraphrase the following to the players:

It's not long before you feel the pirate ship detach from the Bounty and the maneuvering thrusters push you away from the ice-hauler, your acceleration couches shifting slightly on their gimbals along the direction of the thrust. Then the force of the ship's Epstein drive igniting hits you like an elephant sitting on your chest as the ship pulls at least two or three Gs, maybe more? You're pressed down into the gel of the couch, lungs laboring for each breath.

Another force rocks the ship! That wasn't acceleration or a course adjustment, but an impact! That's when you hear a high-pitched roaring noise that makes your blood run cold even as a powerful wind pulls at your hair and your clothes. Your eyes follow the paths of swirling dust and small debris towards the fist-sized hole in the bulkhead the atmosphere is rushing out!



BREACH!

The *Anne Bonny* launched torpedoes at the *Abzu's Bounty* to destroy it and provide some cover for their escape, but they were perilously close to the ice-hauler when it went up and some debris struck and damaged the pirate ship. That includes a fragment that holed the compartment holding the player characters.

The characters have to seal the breach, or all of their air evacuates and they suffocate. Fortunately, there is a breach-sealing emergency kit in the compartment—any character who looks for it will find it. Sealing the breach is a **TN 12 advanced** test (success threshold 10). The test must include an initial Dexterity (Free-fall) test to reach the breach and one or more Intelligence (Engineering) tests to seal it successfully. The crew has time for five tests before the air completely evacuates from the room.

Beginning on the third round, characters have to make a **TN 9 Constitution (Stamina)** test each round, with the TN increasing by +1 per round. Failing the test means a character falls unconscious. On the following round, the character's condition becomes dying and the character cannot stabilize until they are able to breathe again. A character stabilized from dying due to suffocation is exhausted. See the **Conditions** section of the *ExpansE* RPG rules for details.

Once the breach is sealed, the room's atmospheric recyclers begin pumping in more air, restoring conditions to normal. If you want to give the characters a last minute save, one of the NPCs with them can assist with the advanced test to seal the breach, or members of the *Bonny's* crew could reach the compartment in time to be of help. Otherwise, the characters are on their own.

INTERLUDE

JOURNEY TO PROMETHEUS

Following the destruction of the *Abzu's Bounty* in **Scene 2**, there is an interlude as the *Anne Bonny* makes its way to the small outpost on Prometheus in the Saturn system. See the **Interludes** section of **CHAPTER 5** of *The ExpansE* RPG for details on handling interludes. It takes the *Anne Bonny* about 24 hours to make the trip at a fairly brisk 1G of acceleration and deceleration.

Generally, interludes are intended to summarize or compress long stretches of time, so it is up to you how much of this interlude to play out in real time and how much to skip over in narrative time. Keep in mind the characters may need some time to rest and recover, making Recovering one of their interlude activities. Other activities depend on the players and their plans and goals. Players being players, there's a good chance they will want their characters to explore either some means of escaping and trying to take over the pirate ship. They may also seek to negotiate with the pirates for their freedom, or try to lull them into letting the crew go before they make their move.

ESCAPE ATTEMPTS

The characters from the *Bounty* are kept locked in rooms aboard the *Anne Bonny* for the duration of the trip to Prometheus. They are six to a room, so you can either have the player characters all be together, or separated and mixed with other characters taken from the *Bounty*. They're not guarded, but the ship's computer monitors the status of the locks and the doors and alerts the *Bonny's* bridge crew if any are opened without authorization.

The pirates feed their "guests" three times a day (simple fare from their galley) and opening the doors to bring them food is the only time they interact with the characters. Two pirates stand outside the door while two others set the trays of food just inside. All four pirates are armed and don't hesitate to use force if the characters become aggressive.

There are terminals in the characters' rooms, but they are locked out of everything except the most basic functions. It takes an **advanced TN 13 Intelligence (Technology)** test (**success threshold 10**) to override the lock-outs and gain access to the ship's computer. Failure on any test alerts the *Bonny* crew. With access, a character may be able to gain some control over ship's systems: This requires additional advanced **Intelligence (Technology)** tests, with a TN of 13 or more and a success threshold of 10 to 15, depending on what the character is attempting.

Overriding the locks on the door takes an **advanced TN 13 Intelligence (Engineering or Technology)** test (**success threshold 10**) and allows the characters to manually open the door. They cannot force the door open with brute strength or any of the resources they have in the room without first overriding the mechanism.

If the characters do make a break for it, feel free to remind them they are outnumbered and outgunned by the pirates, who may have little reason to keep them alive if they prove to be too much trouble. If they persist, the pirates use whatever means at their disposal to deal with the break-out. Captain O'Rourke would prefer not to kill the prisoners (especially the character she is connected with) but will do what's best for her ship and crew. If the pirates still control the systems of the *Bonny*, they can shut off life support or even vent the air from parts of the ship; see the systems under **Breach!** in **Scene 2** for guidelines if they do this.

RECOVERING

Characters who spent Fortune or acquired any injury conditions during the prior scene may need to spend part of the interlude recovering. Each eight hours they do so, characters regain 10 + level Fortune. In the total time of the trip to Prometheus, a character can also attempt to recover from an injury: Roll an **advanced TN 11 Constitution (Stamina)** test (**success threshold 5**). If the character succeeds with a 5 or more on the Drama Die, they can remove the injured condition. Otherwise, they need further recovery. If a character with the Medicine ability focus treats the injured character, they can also roll an **Intelligence (Medicine)** test and the character uses the better of the two test results to recover. If asked, the pirates provide the prisoners with basic medical supplies to treat injuries.

RELATING

Some characters might want to spend time getting to know their fellow prisoners or the members of the *Bonny's* crew, either to ingratiate themselves and gain more information or to seek an opportunity for escape. In particular, the player character connected with Captain O'Rourke might try talking to her. There's no opportunity during this interlude to significantly change or advance the characters' relationships, but you can treat this as a social interaction as found in **CHAPTER 5** of *The Expanse* RPG.

BONNY CREW

The pirate crew's attitude towards the characters is Standoffish, imposing a -1 interaction modifier. If the characters can shift attitude to Open (two shifts), they can find out one of the following pieces of information with a successful **TN 12 Communication** test:

The *Bonny* is going to Prometheus.

The captain has a meeting planned there.

Taking the members of the Bounty crew on board was not originally part of the plan, and it's unclear what the pirates will do with them.

Note that opportunities to interact with the crew during the interlude are limited to a total of four tests.

CAPTAIN O'ROURKE

Claire O'Rourke is also Standoffish to most of the player characters (-1 interaction modifier), but she is Friendly towards the character with whom she shares a connection, granting a +2 interaction modifier. If the connection character asks, O'Rourke speaks with them alone. A **TN 12 Communication** test (effectively **TN 10**, since the character gets a +2 modifier) can yield all of the information under the **Bonny Crew** section previously. O'Rourke also tells them she was hired to acquire the ice sample in a fairly last-minute arrangement, but she has an OPA connection on Prometheus she thinks will pay handsomely for it instead. It should be clear to the character that O'Rourke is in over her head and making up her plan as she goes. Lastly, O'Rourke tells her connection that she will do her best to let them go on Prometheus once the deal is done (and maybe even give them a cut).

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Most other interlude activities are off-limits to the crew while they are prisoners on board the *Anne Bonny*, but the players might come up with other things they need or want their characters to do during the interlude. Feel free to let them pursue ideas that sound reasonable. Note that the pirates won't provide the crew with tools or other equipment of any kind except medical aids, as noted above. Although characters might be able to do something like swipe a piece of cutlery to use as a crude tool—this increases the difficulty of any tests using the makeshift tool by +2.

SCENE 3

THE MEETING

COMBAT ENCOUNTER

The *Anne Bonny* arrives at Prometheus Station with the purloined protomolecule sample and the player characters. Once there, the captain sets up a meeting with an OPA faction to sell them the sample, but a third party crashes the meeting.

Read or paraphrase the following to the players to open and set the scene:

You've been traveling for at least 24 hours and it is clear that, wherever you're going, you've nearly arrived. The ship has definitely executed a deceleration burn that's now nearly done, shedding most of its momentum and able to go to maneuvering thrusters. Given the amount of time and the fact that you haven't been accelerating at particularly high-Gs, you can't have gone that far from the site of the intercept with the Bounty. You know that you're still somewhere in the Saturn system. The only questions are where, and what happens when you arrive?

ARRIVAL AT PROMETHEUS

The *Anne Bonny* arrives at Prometheus Station, a relatively obscure destination in the Saturn system. Prometheus is one of the planet's inner moons, orbiting just inside Saturn's ring system. An elongated potato-shaped mass of ice and rock some 135 kilometers across, Prometheus is the site of a small mining and ice-processing station. It has facilities for docking a small number of ships, but otherwise sees little traffic. The permanent inhabitants on the station are all local workers and their families, and there's a limited transient population.

ON THE FLOAT

Once the *Bonny* arrives, it maneuvers into Prometheus Station's docking bay. From that point on, everyone is on the float, in microgravity, since the station doesn't have spin gravity like some of the larger stations found in the outer planets. It hasn't been worthwhile for anyone to put the resources or effort into spinning up Prometheus, so the whole station operates under free-fall conditions. See **Origin and Native Gravity** in **CHAPTER 2** and **Gravity** in **CHAPTER 13** of *The Expanse* RPG for details on operating in microgravity. Most of the surfaces of the station work in conjunction with mag-boots, allowing visitors to walk around, if they prefer.

AWAY MISSION

About two hours after their arrival at Prometheus, Captain O'Rourke and seven members of her crew come to collect the player characters. The pirates are discreetly armed with concealed sidearms, but not wearing vac suits. O'Rourke tells the player characters they are coming with her and—if they cooperate—they may still survive all of this, but she makes it clear that any attempt to cross the pirates or cause trouble will result in the offender being shot dead on the spot. O'Rourke does not directly threaten the character she is connected to. In fact, she tries to offer reassuring and calming glances without saying anything directly. The connected character can pick up on this automatically if they share a Bond with O'Rourke. Otherwise, a **TN 9 Perception (Empathy)** test does the trick.

For the initial escort with the pirates during this scene, feel free to institute the "Dead-to-Rights" option from **CHAPTER 12** of *The Expanse* RPG: Essentially, so long as the pirates have the drop on the player characters, they cannot spend Fortune to mitigate damage until after their first round of actions during a conflict. This means if the pirates shoot or otherwise attack the characters immediately, they have to use Toughness, injuries, and wounds to deal with the damage before being taken out. Inform the players of this if you institute it. It may make the players a bit more cautious about trying anything right away.

ON THE RUN

Nevertheless, it's possible one or more of the characters might try to make a break for it once clear of the ship and on Prometheus Station proper. Keep in mind the microgravity conditions: Nobody can "run" and any chase through the corridors of the station is more likely to involve Dexterity tests using Acrobatics or Free-fall. The parts of Prometheus the characters traverse range from fairly quiet to all but abandoned. If characters do try to escape from the pirates, run the scene as you see fit, using the **Chases** section of **CHAPTER 5** of *The Expanse* RPG. If the pirates re-capture the characters, they haul them off to **The Meeting** (following). If they escape, you can have the security personnel from **The Firefight** (following) come after them to tie up any loose ends, or simply move on to **Scene 4** if the characters return to the docking bay. Otherwise, you may need to improvise, and Diana may have to find them wherever they are hiding in order to make her offer from **Scene 4**.

THE MEETING

The pirates take the characters to a largely unused area of tunnels off Prometheus Station that are part of a played-out mine. There awaits a group of eight members of the Free Fools OPA faction, led by a man named Hector Cruz. Use the **Anne Bonny Crew Member** stats from **Adversaries & Allies** for these characters as well. Cruz and his people are here to negotiate for the sale of the sample Captain O'Rourke has acquired. The Free Fools are a local splinter faction of the Voltaire Collective. They are not a particularly large or important group, but they recognize this as a unique opportunity and are prepared to go to almost any lengths to acquire the protomolecule. O'Rourke may ask the player characters to recount the story of how the sample was found, but otherwise she encourages them to stay quiet. Neither side takes kindly to the prisoners asking too many questions or interrupting their negotiations. Unfortunately for both sides, the negotiations get interrupted anyway.

The meeting between the pirates and the Free Fools is tense, and you can let it play out for as long as it is interesting. In particular, a few of the things the characters might learn during the meeting are:

- O'Rourke found out about the protomolecule sample from "an inside source," but she refuses to mention who.
- Cruz is working for someone higher up in the OPA who is interested in the sample, but he likewise doesn't name names.
- O'Rourke tries to make the case for either letting the player characters go or, failing that, handing them over to the OPA because their knowledge of how and where the sample was found might be valuable. Cruz would prefer to simply kill them or space them and be done with it, eliminating any loose ends. O'Rourke tries to make letting at least her contact character go a part of the negotiation, somewhat to the surprise of her own crew.

Once negotiations have slowed down, reached an impasse, or the player characters are about to make a move, start **The Firefight**.

THE FIREFIGHT

A group of six attackers wearing flat-black security armor, complete with face masks, ambush the meeting without warning. See the **Ambushers** stats from the **Adversaries & Allies** section of the adventure.

The attack starts off with the ambushers firing a couple of flash-bangs into the midst of the negotiations, then attacking from surprise: Have all of the players immediately roll a **TN 13 Constitution (Stamina)** test for their characters. Those who fail are blinded and deafened for 1-3 rounds (1d6, divided by 2 and rounded up). Those who succeed are unaffected. Everyone at the meeting is surprised and does not get a turn in the first round of the combat, but the ambushers do (see **Surprise** in **CHAPTER 12** of *The Expanse* RPG). The ambushers also have those affected by the flash-bang Dead-to-Rights during the surprise round (see **Dead-to-Rights** in **CHAPTER 12** of *The Expanse* RPG).

Fortunately for the player characters, the ambushers go after the armed pirates and OPA members first, gunning down as many as they can in the initial rounds of combat. A few things to keep in mind as the rest of the firefight unfolds:

- The meeting area is a fairly large chamber, roughly 10 meters square. There are pieces of old ore containers magnetically sealed to the floor, and other debris usable as full cover (**Defense and Cover** from **CHAPTER 5** of *The Expanse* RPG).
- The area is in microgravity, so movement is achieved by pushing off and grabbing onto something to stop or change direction. **Dexterity (Free-fall)** tests may be required to successfully move into the right position. The ambushers have thruster packs allowing them to move at Speed 15 through the area in any direction, and mag-boots allowing them to walk along the surface at Speed 10.



- Because of the microgravity things do not fall to the floor, but ricochet off in whatever direction they are “dropped” or thrown. This includes any weapons belonging to any of the factions. Player characters may have to jump or dive after a dropped weapon in order to grab it—a **TN 13 Dexterity (Free-fall)** test.
- Also because of the microgravity, any unanchored character firing a gun is automatically affected by a Skirmish stunt and pushed 2 meters away in the opposite direction of their shot. They continue moving in that direction until they arrest their movement by grabbing a handhold, which may require a **Dexterity (Free-fall)** test.

AFTERMATH

Run the firefight until the player characters are victorious, eliminating half or more of the attackers, or until it is clear the player characters are entirely outmatched. If the ambushers lose half or more of their number, they retreat, leaving any survivors of the meeting. Likewise, once the situation seems hopeless for the player characters, their attackers suddenly stop and depart—having received word that the work is done on the *Anne Bonny*, they are given orders to withdraw (see **Scene 4**).

Ideally, when the firefight ends the crew should find that both their captors from the *Anne Bonny* as well as the members of the OPA faction are either dead or dying as a result of the attack. They should find Captain O’Rourke still alive, but fatally injured and beyond the characters’ ability to treat in the current situation. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

Blood rises in small, floating globules from O’Rourke’s wounds, and her breathing is ragged and liquid-sounding. One hand fumbles, withdrawing a hand terminal from a pocket and thumbing the screen before handing it to [indicate O’Rourke’s connection, if present].

“Ah ... dammit,” she mutters. “I’m sorry. Here ... this has the command codes for the Bonny. I’ve unlocked it. Tell ... tell my crew I wanted them to help you and show them this. I...” she coughs a spray of crimson that clouds and floats in the air, before she slumps, dead.

SCENE 4

THE FATE OF THE ANNE BONNY

EXPLORATION/SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

Following the events in **Scene 3**, the crew is largely on their own on Prometheus Station to do as they want. However, they're faced with an unknown enemy and left at the site of a massacre. They also don't have any way off Prometheus other than returning to the *Anne Bonny*.

DETAINED

If the player characters linger overly long at the site of the shoot-out, they run afoul of station security, which responds to the reports of gunfire. A squad of a half-dozen security officers with abilities and equipment like the **Ambusher** stats from **Adversaries & Allies** shows up, demanding the immediate surrender of anyone still alive on the scene. If the characters do not comply, the officers don't hesitate to shoot them, and things can potentially turn into another firefight.

If the crew surrenders to station security, either at the site of the shoot-out or afterward, they are detained. Prometheus station security is handled by Andersen Security, Ltd., following the dissolution of Protogen. The crew's treatment depends heavily on the circumstances of their detainment. If there was a fight with station security, then the characters are in for some rough handling and "accidental" injuries in custody sufficient to give at least half of them the injured condition (choose randomly among the characters). If their surrender was fairly peaceful then the security officers treat the characters professionally, albeit as suspects in the recent events on the station.

The simple fact of the matter is, without access to counsel or outside representation, characters who surrender to station security are completely at their mercy and could easily disappear without any questions being asked. At best, the survivors of the *Bounty* would be remanded to Krystal Kleer, their corporate employers, who certainly have questions about the fate of their ship. At worst, Vector Security or another Pope subsidiary or pawn might pull strings to get the crew interrogated and then fed into the station's recyclers to tie up loose ends.

Detainment is an excellent opportunity for Diana to meet and negotiate with the characters. See **Diana's Offer**, following. Rather than aboard the *Anne Bonny*, she comes to where the crew is detained and offers to get them out and put them on the *Bonny*, free and clear (with new IDs if necessary), in addition to the rest of her offer. It certainly puts Diana in a strong negotiating position, since the characters may not have a lot of other options.

BACK TO THE BAY

The crew may wisely want to get away from the site of the shoot-out as quickly as possible and take advantage of Captain O'Rourke's gift to get back aboard the *Anne Bonny*. That means back-tracking through Prometheus Station to the docking bay and getting back on board the ship without drawing attention from station security or running into any more trouble along the way. You can treat this as a challenge test (see **CHAPTER 1** of *The Expanse* RPG) with the following parameters:

CHALLENGE: BOARDING THE SHIP

DIFFICULTY: TN 13 **SUCCESS THRESHOLD:** 15 **TIME PER TEST:** 5 minutes

ABILITY FOCUSES: Communication (Deception), Dexterity (Stealth), Intelligence (Security)

This is a challenge test. Each failure on the challenge test increases the consequence level by one, starting from minor. If the crew eliminates the minor consequence before increasing the level again, then the next consequence is minor as well. Otherwise, another failure elevates it to a moderate consequence.

CONSEQUENCES

MINOR The crew draws some unwanted attention, increasing the TN of their further challenge tests by +2 until they make a separate **TN 13 Dexterity (Stealth)** test to disappear into the crowd again. Success on this test eliminates the TN increase but does not contribute to their success threshold.

MODERATE The crew finds their planned route to the docking bay blocked off by station security. They lose their accumulated success total and have to find a different route.

MAJOR Station security (twice the number of the characters) spots the crew and tries to apprehend them. The scene transitions to either combat (if the crew attacks) or a chase (if the crew flees). The chase is a **TN 12 Dexterity (Free-fall or Running)** test (success threshold 12).

If the crew takes particular steps to conceal themselves and their identities to go unnoticed, you can lower the target number of the challenge test by 1 or even 2 (to 12 or 11). On the other hand, if the crew does anything that makes them stand out, such as walking around in bloodstained-clothing, or carrying obvious and open weapons (particularly rifles), increase the TN of the challenge test by +2 or more.

Success on the challenge gets the crew to the docking bay and back aboard the *Bonny* unnoticed. Go to **Aboard the *Bonny***, following. Failure on the challenge most likely results in the crew being detained by station security. Go to **Detained**, previously. If the characters simply end up in hiding, having failed to reach the docking bay, they can attempt the challenge test again, but start with the effects of a minor consequence and have to begin accumulating success towards their threshold again from 0.

ABOARD THE BONNY

Captain O'Rourke's hand-terminal gives the characters access to the *Anne Bonny* in the docking bay. What the characters find on board the ship makes it clear whoever ambushed them at the meeting has also been here: The remaining crew on the ship are all dead, shot with weapons like those used by the ambushers. A few of the *Bonny's* crew appear to have surrendered and then been executed. What's more, there is no sign of the ice sample from the *Abzu's Bounty* anywhere aboard the ship. If the crew investigates further, a **TN 12 Intelligence (Technology)** test shows the ship's computer has been hacked, and any data involving the past few days, since prior to contact with the *Abzu's Bounty*, has been deleted.

TAKING CONTROL

With the codes provided to them by O'Rourke, the crew can take control of the *Anne Bonny* without any difficulty and operate any of the ship's systems. However, they cannot leave the docking bay without station control withdrawing the docking clamps and providing authorization, which they won't do until both the necessary docking fees have been paid and station security clears ships to leave. If the crew inquires, station control informs them that all departures have been canceled until further notice due to a security alert, and ask them to stand by and wait for updates.

Any gear that was taken from the crew, including hand terminals, weapons, etc. is still safely stowed in the ship's locker. If the crew is in need of replacement player characters, there may be a survivor or two among the characters from the meet or the crew who stayed back on the *Anne Bonny* (see **Scene 4**). Circumstances being what they are, survivors from either faction may not be too choosy about who helps them and gets them off of Prometheus Station alive.

Given the arrival time of the *Bonny* and the events of the shoot-out, it's just a matter of time before station security comes to check out the ship. Fortunately for the crew, another possibility presents itself before that happens. Once the characters have had the opportunity to investigate the state of the *Bonny* and to consider their options, go to **Diana's Offer**.

THE NOT-ENOUGH-ACTION OPTION

If the big shoot-out in **Scene 3** did not provide enough action to suit your game, you can have the crew return to the *Anne Bonny* in time to catch either the last of the thieves or a "clean-up crew" in the act of eliminating the remaining pirates on board, giving the player characters a chance for another fight. Keep in mind that the protomolecule sample should already be gone at this point. Whoever the crew catches on the ship is there to ferret out any remaining survivors or witnesses. This allows you the opportunity to stage another fight (or two) on board as the player characters stalk the commandos and vice versa. Use a number of **Ambushers** from the **Adversaries & Allies** section equal to the number of player characters, or a few less, to tilt the odds in their favor. This option also allows for Diana to make a dramatic entrance by showing up at the end of a fight to shoot one last enemy commando dead, possibly before they can ambush the crew.

DIANA'S OFFER

Once the crew has assessed the situation on board the *Anne Bonny*—or their situation in lock-up, as the case may be—they get a visitor with an offer of help. If they're aboard the ship, a visitor calls in from the airlock, asking to come aboard to talk to them. She explains that she is alone, unarmed, and just wants to talk. Security cameras in the airlock confirm the first two statements. If the crew is in security lock-up, then the mystery woman is escorted in to see them by station security, who leave her alone with the characters.

Once they meet with Diana, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

The woman is smartly dressed, in modified and tailored business attire. Even her mag-boots are high-quality. It's clear she's an inner from her height and build, with a tan skin tone that's likely natural, but probably not from exposure to the sun. Her dark hair is cut short but styled well, and her dark eyes are accentuated by subtle make-up. Everything about her bespeaks a carefully constructed "effortless" look. If she's at all nervous or concerned about the current circumstances, she certainly doesn't show it.

"Hello," she says, looking the group of you over. "I'm Diana. I think you can use my help. Fortunately for you, I find myself in need of a group of people like yourselves. Interested?"

Diana is interested in getting the crew to sign on in order to potentially use them to track down who has taken the proto-molecule sample and where. Though she doesn't tell them that directly. She does what she can to win over the crew's trust or at least their cooperation, but if they become belligerent, much less violent, she doesn't hesitate to leave them to their fate, making it clear they've only got so long to negotiate before station security comes to search the ship.

Diana is prepared to offer the characters the following:

- Full and clear ownership of the *Anne Bonny*, including updating the ship's transponder and changing its name and ID to whatever the crew wants. If they have no preference, she just gives the *Bonny* a clean registry. (The ship is referred to as the *Anne Bonny* throughout the remaining adventures, so you'll need to take that into account if the name is changed.)
- Payment of any docking and resupply fees to Prometheus Station, which will let the ship leave without any problems with a full restock of its supplies.
- Smoothing things over with Prometheus station security so the *Bonny* can leave the station, no questions asked.
- Paying for any repairs the ship currently needs following its most recent misadventure. That can't happen at Prometheus, but can be arranged following...
- A freelance job, transporting Diana to Mars, with the potential for future freelance employment opportunities if things go well. Diana's initial offer to the crew "should more than cover passage" for her on the initial trip.

Diana isn't bluffing about any of her offers and has the resources to do exactly as she promises. Naturally, the crew may have questions or want to negotiate, which Diana tolerates to a point. Potential questions and answers include:

WHO ARE YOU?

"I make...arrangements, and right now I need to arrange to be somewhere other than this rock. I think we can both agree on that."

WHO DO YOU WORK FOR?

"I have a variety of business interests, like any good entrepreneur."



THE SHOOT-OUT EXIT

If, for some reason, the crew refuses Diana's offer of help, pretty much the only way they're leaving Prometheus Station on board the *Anne Bonny* is by shooting their way out of the docking bay. Station security has things locked down and operations are under orders not to allow any ships to leave until they have been investigated in connection with the shoot-out. If station security is allowed on board the *Bonny*, they impound her as evidence and take the player characters into custody as material witnesses, if not suspects (depending on what they've been doing since the shoot-out).

If the crew chooses to make a violent exit from Prometheus Station, they can achieve it. The *Anne Bonny*'s point defense cannons and maneuvering thrusters can break it free and clear the docking bay, although the ship suffers an additional loss from minor damage (see **Losses** in **CHAPTER 6** of *The Expanse* RPG). Hull or maneuverability losses are the most likely. Thereafter, the ship is listed as wanted by the authorities. The crew won't be able to put into any legitimate port without immediately being detained and the ship impounded. You may have to improvise some additional scenes and interludes dealing with the crew's legal problems. Diana (or her replacement) might make another attempt to extend an offer of help to the crew to make their legal troubles go away.

WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?

"As I said, I find myself in need of a crew, and you are in need of some help if you want to leave Prometheus, so I think it's in our best interests to help each other."

HOW DO YOU EVEN KNOW ABOUT US?

"It's my business to know what's going on, and to take advantage of opportunities like this one, which you must agree don't come around often."

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE PROTOMOLECULE?

*"You mean what happened on Eros?" If the crew directly asks Diana about the protomolecule or the ice sample from the *Abzu's Bounty*, she feigns ignorance. At most, she claims to know that the captain and crew of the *Anne Bonny* were apparently looking to sell some both hot and valuable cargo they had stolen, but she says that she doesn't know what it was, or what happened to it, other than their deal clearly went sour.*

In short, Diana poses as a professional arranger, who hints at having business on Prometheus Station—possibly a bidding war or trying to muscle-in on whatever the *Bonny*'s crew was looking to sell. Now, with things on Prometheus too hot for comfort, she's looking to move on and could use both transportation and the assistance of a reliable crew that owes her. She makes it clear to the characters that she won't tell them the particulars of her business—or even her full name—and that it's better for them if they don't know.

Of course, much of what Diana tells the crew is a lie: She is actually a rogue agent of the Martian government working with a secret rogue faction, but she won't reveal that, even under interrogation. Still, her immediate offer to them is genuine, and is by far the crew's best option for getting out of their current situation.

INTERLUDE

MARS OR BUST

In the conclusion of **CHAPTER 1** of *Abzu's Bounty*, the crew has a long trip to Mars in which to contemplate their new situation and to settle into their new home. It takes about 137 hours (close to six days) to travel from Prometheus to Mars at a steady 1G acceleration and deceleration, and Diana isn't in much more of a hurry than that. During that time, the crew can engage in the usual interlude activities detailed in **CHAPTER 5** of *The Expanse* RPG, including:

MAINTENANCE

At least some time will be devoted to maintaining the *Bonny*'s systems and keeping the ship running efficiently. The crew is almost certainly smaller than the one the pirate ship used to have, so there are comparatively more supplies and room, at least initially.

RECOVERING

The characters can recover Fortune and make **Constitution (Stamina)** tests each day (24 hours) to recover from injury conditions. The *Bonny* doesn't have an auto-doc, but a character with the Medicine ability focus can assist others' recovery using the supplies in the med-bay.

RELATING

The trip is an opportunity for the members of the crew to relate, possibly changing their Relationships. In particular, the character who knew Captain O'Rourke might have an opportunity to change or update Relationships. New characters who were not members of the crew of the *Abzu's Bounty* can settle in and get to know the other characters and the crew finally gets some down-time since the events of this story began to process everything that has happened.

Characters might also try relating to Diana on their journey. They find their new patron friendly enough, if cagey and a bit distant. She plays her cards close and doesn't become too involved with any of the crew, spending a fair amount of time alone in a cabin (she claims one for herself early on in the trip).

REPAIRING

The *Anne Bonny* has suffered some damage, so the crew can devote some of their interlude activities to repairs. This is a **TN 11 Intelligence (Engineering) advanced test (success threshold 10)** to eliminate all of the ship's losses.

RESEARCHING

A character who wants to can spend part of the interlude researching, although access to information not contained in the *Anne Bonny's* computers is limited to light-speed communications delays. Looking for information is an **Intelligence (Research)** test with the TN based on how obscure or well-hidden that information may be. Diana is a complete cypher; the characters cannot dig up any information about her beyond what they already know.

TRAINING

The characters should attain 3rd level as a result of the events in **Breaking the Surface**, so they might spend part of the time during the interlude training or developing their abilities. They each gain a new ability advancement, ability focus, and talent improvement.

ADVERSARIES & ALLIES

The following are profiles of the significant non-player characters in **Breaking the Surface**, along with their *Expanse* game stats. For additional stock characters you can use in this adventure, see the **Threats** chapter of *The Expanse* RPG.

AMBUSER (VECTOR SECURITY)

The attackers who ambush the meeting in **Scene 3** of this adventure (and who attack the *Anne Bonny* at the same time) are professional security operatives working for Vector Security, a security corporation owned by Sebastian Pope. That said, the agents in this adventure are on a "black operation" and carry no identification or indication of their affiliation, and Vector will list them all as absent and missing from their work positions in the event they are traced back to them. The Vector ops have specific orders to obtain the protomolecule sample from the *Abzu's Bounty* and to eliminate any witnesses to the operation.

ANNE BONNY CREW MEMBER

These stats can represent the typical member of the *Anne Bonny's* crew. Most are fairly hard-bitten Belter pirates who have found their way into the life due to circumstance, inclination, or some combination of the two. Unlike

AMBUSER (VECTOR SECURITY)

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1 (PISTOLS, RIFLES), **COMMUNICATION 0**,
CONSTITUTION 2, **DEXTERITY 1** (FREE-FALL),
FIGHTING 1 (BRAWLING), **INTELLIGENCE 0**, **PERCEPTION 1**,
STRENGTH 2, **WILLPOWER 1**

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	12	11	4 (2)

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
PISTOL	+3	2D6+1
RIFLE	+3	3D6+1
UNARMED	+3	1D6+2

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Adrenaline Rush, Double-Team, Group Tactics

TALENTS: Pinpoint Accuracy (Novice), Striking Style (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, light armor, pistol, rifle, thruster pack, vac suit

THREAT: MINOR

ANNE BONNY CREW MEMBER

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 0 (PISTOLS, RIFLES), **COMMUNICATION** 0, **CONSTITUTION** 2, **DEXTERITY** 1 (FREE-FALL), **FIGHTING** 2, **INTELLIGENCE** 0, **PERCEPTION** 1, **STRENGTH** 2, **WILLPOWER** 0

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	12	11	2

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
KNIFE	+2	1D6+2
PISTOL	+2	2D6+1
RIFLE	+2	3D6+1
UNARMED	+2	1D3+2

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Adrenaline Rush, Taunt

TALENTS: Fringer (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, knife, pistol

THREAT: MINOR

ABZU'S BOUNTY CREW MEMBER

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 0, **COMMUNICATION** 0, **CONSTITUTION** 0, **DEXTERITY** 1 (FREE-FALL), **FIGHTING** 0, **INTELLIGENCE** 0, **PERCEPTION** 1, **STRENGTH** 0, **WILLPOWER** 0

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	0	11	0

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
PISTOL	+0	2D6
UNARMED	+0	1D3

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: None

TALENTS: Choose two abilities focuses and one of Improvisation (Novice), Maker (Novice), Medic (Novice), or Pilot (Novice), or add two more ability focuses instead.

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, possibly a pistol (if the ship is at alert)

THREAT: MODERATE

BART MITCHELL

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1 (PISTOLS), **COMMUNICATION** 0, **CONSTITUTION** 2 (STAMINA), **DEXTERITY** 1 (FREE-FALL), **FIGHTING** 1 (BRAWLING), **INTELLIGENCE** 0 (SECURITY), **PERCEPTION** 0 (SEARCHING), **STRENGTH** 2, **WILLPOWER** 0

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	15	11	2

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
PISTOL	+3	2D6
UNARMED	+3	1D6+2

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: None

TALENTS: Choose two abilities focuses and one of Improvisation (Novice), Maker (Novice), Medic (Novice), or Pilot (Novice), or add two more ability focuses instead.

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, possibly a pistol (if the ship is at alert)

THREAT: MODERATE

Captain O'Rourke's soft-spot for a particular player character, the *Bonny* crew cares nothing about the player characters, and will gladly sell them off or get rid of them once it's clear it won't get them in trouble with their captain.

ABZU'S BOUNTY CREW MEMBER

Use these traits for the typical member of the *Bounty's* crew, assigning them any appropriate and necessary ability focuses and talents for their role aboard the ship. See **The Bounty Crew** section of **Scene 1** for a few of the key crew members and feel free to create and detail others as needed to suit the story.

BART MITCHELL, XO OF THE ABZU'S BOUNTY

Bart Mitchell—"Mitchell" or "XO" to nearly everyone on board—is the executive officer of *Abzu's Bounty*. Mitchell grew up on Eros, where he went from wayward youth to carrying a badge after he joined Protogen's security force on the station. Mitchell, however, was less interested in law-and-order and more interested in belonging to what he saw as the toughest gang with the biggest opportunity for collecting bribes.

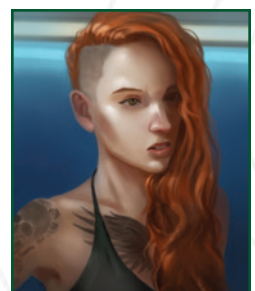
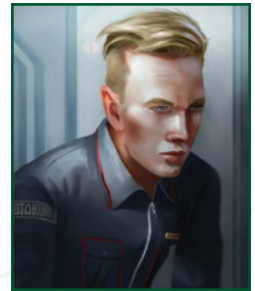
Eventually, his reputation for corruption became too much even for Protogen to overlook and Mitchell was let go. With more than his share of enemies on Eros he needed to leave the station behind, and signing on with Krystal Kleer was the best opportunity. Ironically, having to leave Eros spared Mitchell from sharing the fate of the more than a million people on the station when Protogen used it as a test-bed for the protomolecule. Along with the rest of the system, he watched his old home transform and then fly off to crash into Venus.

Long before that, however, Mitchell made himself at home with Krystal Kleer. His security training and his domineering personality made him good at bossing people around and getting things done, so he was promoted, eventually working his way up to XO of the *Abzu's Bounty*. Captain Reyes knows full well that Mitchell is a bully, but he also handles a lot of things and, so long as he does, she's willing to accommodate his "management style."

Keenly aware of all of the newscasts and speculation about the protomolecule, and with a few old connections with both Protogen (before it was dismantled and thrown to the wolves) and the black market in the Belt, Mitchell is still looking out for number one. He doesn't understand much about the protomolecule other than that it's the most valuable thing in the entire solar system—and his opportunity to cash in.

CLAIRE O'ROURKE, CAPTAIN OF THE ANNE BONNY

Claire O'Rourke, the captain of the *Anne Bonny*, is a bit of mystery. Pick a suitable background that works to connect her with one of the player characters. She's a free spirit and lives outside of society's rules while at the same time looking after her ship and her crew. She has found herself in the midst of events far larger than her little corner of the system and has made a fatal miscalculation in looking to capitalize on the opportunity that has fallen into her lap.



CLAIRE O'ROURKE

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY (PISTOLS) 2, **COMMUNICATION** (BARGAINING) 2, **CONSTITUTION** 1, **DEXTERITY** (FREE-FALL, PILOTING) 1, **FIGHTING** 2, **INTELLIGENCE** 1, **PERCEPTION** 1, **STRENGTH** 1, **WILLPOWER** 1

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	15	11	1
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
PISTOL	+4	2D6+1	
UNARMED	+2	1D3+1	

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Group Tactics, Cards on the Table

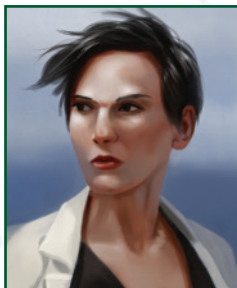
TALENTS: Command (Novice), Fringer (Expert), Pistol Style (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, pistol

THREAT: MODERATE

DIANA, THE CREW'S PATRON

"Diana" poses as a black-market fixer but she is, in fact, an agent of the Martian Secret Service loyal to a breakaway faction of the Martian Republic. That faction wants the potential represented by the protomolecule and will do whatever is needed to acquire it, and to ensure it doesn't fall into the hands of their rivals. Diana is cultivating the crew as potential assets she can use to ferret out the stolen protomolecule sample. She's a skilled "handler" and willing to be patient enough to move all of the pieces into place to achieve her goals. While Diana can appear friendly and even-handed, the only thing she cares about is fulfilling her mission. She will gladly sacrifice the crew if it's necessary to achieve her goals.



DIANA

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1 (PISTOLS), **COMMUNICATION** 3 (BARGAINING, DECEPTION, INVESTIGATION), **CONSTITUTION** 1, **DEXTERITY** 2, **FIGHTING** 2, **INTELLIGENCE** 2 (CURRENT AFFAIRS, CRYPTOGRAPHY), **PERCEPTION** 3 (INTUITION), **STRENGTH** 0, **WILLPOWER** 3 (SELF-DISCIPLINE)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
12	20	12	0
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
PISTOL	+3	2D6+3	
UNARMED	+2	1D3	

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Take Cover, Double-Team, Lightning Attack

TALENTS: Agent (Expert), Contacts (Expert), Fringer (Master), Intrigue (Expert), Misdirection (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, pistol

THREAT: MAJOR

XIN REYES

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1, **COMMUNICATION** 1 (LEADERSHIP), **CONSTITUTION** 1, **DEXTERITY** 1 (FREE-FALL, PILOTING), **FIGHTING** 0, **INTELLIGENCE** 1 (NAVIGATION), **PERCEPTION** 0, **STRENGTH** 0, **WILLPOWER** 1

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	10	11	1
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
PISTOL	+1	2D6	
UNARMED	+0	1D3	

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Cards on the Table, And Another Thing

TALENTS: Know-It-All (Novice), Pilot (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, pistol (when the ship is on alert)

THREAT: MINOR

XIN REYES, CAPTAIN OF THE ABZU'S BOUNTY

Xin Reyes had dreams once, hopes of striking it big with some mining opportunity out in the Belt. Like a lot of rock-hopper pilots, her dreams ended in considerable debt and the loss of her ship when the loan company repossessed it. She also lost touch with her crew, feeling she had failed them.

Still, her skills made her a useful hire for a company like Krystal Kleer, and for more than a decade and a half Reyes has settled into the routine of working an ice-hauler, eventually working her way up to XO and then to captain of a ship again. Even if it isn't her ship, per se. These days Reyes is focused on the much smaller dream of keeping her job and her position and eventually earning enough to retire and live out the rest of her life in relative peace, but even that seems unlikely now.

Xin Reyes is a middle-aged woman of primarily Chinese and Latin heritage. What she lacks in height she makes up for in no-nonsense presence. Aboard the *Abzu's Bounty*, she's known for being all-business and getting the job done. She's fair, but also isn't the kind to fraternize with the crew overly much. The bridge crew of the *Bounty* knows the captain best, but even they don't know her especially well.





2: SATELLITES AND SECRETS

Satellites and Secrets is the second adventure of the *Abzu's Bounty* series for *The Expanse* Roleplaying Game. While news of the protomolecule on Venus spreads like wildfire throughout the system, this adventure continues the crew's search for the protomolecule that was stolen from the *Abzu's Bounty* during the first adventure.

During **Breaking the Surface**, the crew of the *Abzu's Bounty* discovered a strange silicate structure in the ice they mined. This led to a chain of events that resulted in pirates stealing the sample and eventually with the player characters in control of the pirates' ship, the *Anne Bonny*. Unfortunately for the pirates, a far more powerful figure, Sebastian Pope, was eager to get his hands on the protomolecule and the pirates became victims of their own greed. With any luck, by the end of that first adventure, the crew now have a powerful sponsor in the form of the mysterious Diana, and **Satellites and Secrets** begins with the player characters transporting their patron to Mars aboard the *Bonny*. The events in **Breaking the Surface**, specifically the discovery of a new sample of protomolecule, have set into motion a system-wide game of hide-and-seek as Pope tries to keep his sample to himself while other forces, from the OPA to a secret group within the Mars government, try to take it from him. Rumors are rampant, and sometimes clues can be found in the most unlikely of places.

OVERVIEW

While en route to Mars, Diana has been paying careful attention to the newsfeeds and keeping an ear out for anything that could help them track down the current location of the protomolecule. It's Diana who discovers that a pirate radio station known for broadcasting conspiracy theories and bizarre stories has put out several missives related to the protomolecule, all of which seem to be true. What's even more unusual is that they are beating more conventional news outlets to these scoops.

Most of the public has written off the pirate radio station, but key individuals, including Diana, have taken notice. The news station is getting its information from a mole in Jules-Pierre Mao's organization: Alina Vasquez Chang. Vasquez Chang was a childhood friend of Julie Mao, Jules-Pierre Mao's daughter, and that connection helped her get the job. However, Julie Mao's defection to the OPA inspired a change of heart in Vasquez Chang as well. She has since learned that Mao is trying to obtain this new sample of protomolecule. His own researchers are running low on the sample they obtained and believe they can create an even more powerful weapon with a second, distinct sample. Further, he doesn't want Pope to be able to perform his own research: Mao believes Pope is attempting to make a weapon of his own and doesn't want to lose the advantage. Terrified of the potential of the protomolecule, Vasquez Chang knows how dangerous

Mao would be with both samples and is doing her best to stop it him from obtaining it.

Diana insists that the crew reverse course to look into this potentially minor but still interesting lead. A recent story called out a long-abandoned outpost on Jupiter's moon Himalia as holding a gravely dangerous item, which Diana believes to be the protomolecule. The player characters take the *Anne Bonny* to the outpost, but what they find is far from an abandoned supply stop. Instead, the outpost has been trashed and the door trapped by somebody quite recently. The crew also finds evidence that the protomolecule was recently housed here.

With proof that the pirate news station is on to something, Diana looks into the station itself. With help from both the crew and her own MSS resources she locates a satellite relay station that always routes broadcasts from the pirate station. Diana asks the crew to investigate the satellite, and when they arrive they find another ship just leaving, and the satellite disabled. If they engage the ship, it fights back, but it's not as well equipped as the *Anne Bonny*. When the crew investigates the actual satellite, they discover the location of the news station.

The crew heads for the news station, only to find they've been beaten here as well. This time, the opposing team has taken the staff of the pirate radio station hostage, demanding to know the identity of the informant. If the player characters can take out the assailants, they can try to get the identity of the informant themselves.

When the crew return to their ship, there is an odd malfunction with the ship's computer system. The player characters can trace the source and discover that the *Anne Bonny* has been bugged. A successful Intelligence test leads the crew to discover the manufacturer

The crew can locate the manufacturer, who is located in Lovell City on the Moon. By infiltrating the factory, whether through sneaking in, hacking in, posing as customers, or just kicking the door down, the crew can get access to the factory's records and learn who bought that unit: Sebastian Pope, on behalf of Vector Securities.

Freed of the tracking equipment, the crew can track down the news station's informant, Alina Vasquez Chang, who works on Earth. She is currently at one of Jules-Pierre Mao's facilities as a supply chain manager. If the crew can earn her trust, she tells them that she's trying to release enough information to stop Mao from obtaining another sample of protomolecule.

Vasquez Chang gives the characters specific information about an upcoming ambush: Mao recently hired a team to attack a transport ship hired by Pope which Vasquez Chang believes might be carrying the protomolecule. If they hurry, the crew can intercept the transport ship before Pope's team does. Unfortunately, the intel is wrong and there is no protomolecule on board. The crew does, however, find a stolen suit of Martian powered armor.

RUNNING THIS ADVENTURE

This adventure sends the player characters journeying all over the solar system, following clues about a mysterious news operation. With obvious signs that someone is following them and, in fact, preceding them to various locations, the crew should start to feel suspicious or paranoid. If they don't suspect that their ship itself is bugged right away, they might start to suspect Diana, another of their NPC contacts, or even each other. Pope has access to the movement of the ship as well as external communications, though not recordings of the conversations on board the *Anne Bonny*. Consider using specifics from the crew's conversations with external contacts to feed the sense of paranoia.

There are several important developments that should happen during this adventure:

- The player characters learn that the *Anne Bonny* is bugged and may learn that Sebastian Pope is responsible.
- The player characters find out about an informant within Jules-Pierre Mao's organization, Alina Vasquez Chang, and can potentially earn her trust.
- If the characters do begin an arrangement with Vasquez Chang, she can be a source of information as needed throughout the rest of the story. Mao and his cronies have intelligence on all of the factions involved, so she might be able to help them out with information on any of the crew's adversaries.
- If the characters earn Vasquez Chang's trust, she tells them about a planned ambush of a transport ship hired by Pope. If the crew gets there first, they can get the transported cargo themselves: a stolen suit of Martian powered armor.

Prior to working for Avasarala at the UN, Bobbie had never even heard of Mao-Kwikowski Mercantile, or if she had, she hadn't noticed. She'd spent her whole life wearing, eating, or sitting on products carted through the solar system by Mao-Kwik freighters without ever realizing it. After she'd gone through the files Avasarala had given her, she'd been astonished at the size and reach of the company. Hundreds of ships, dozens of stations, millions of employees. Jules-Pierre Mao owned significant properties on every habitable planet and moon in the solar system.

— *Caliban's War*

ORDER OF SCENES

The scenes in this chapter, although presented in linear order, may take place in a different order depending on the actions and decisions of the player characters. A key turning point is when the crew find out about the bug, as **Scenes 2 and 3** play out very differently if Pope doesn't have tracking information on the *Anne Bonny*. Further, the crew might choose to find the informant before following up on the bug manufacturer and may not even choose to do both. **Scene 6** is dependent on **Scene 5** happening first.

The last scene of this chapter could vary between **Scenes 4, 5, and 6**; so the ending could be learning the identity of who bugged the *Anne Bonny*, reaching an arrangement with an informant from within Mao's conspiracy, or intercepting a ship they believe to be carrying Pope's sample of the protomolecule.

SCENE 1

BEATEN TO THE PUNCH

EXPLORATION ENCOUNTER

Diana asks the crew to investigate a site mentioned by a surprisingly accurate pirate news station, but someone beats them to the site. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

You are just passing Jupiter's orbit, heading toward Mars, when Diana asks to meet with all of you in the mess.

"Are you familiar with the Pyramid News Network? I wouldn't be surprised if you're not; it's not exactly a reputable source. But I've caught something unexpected about their latest stories related to the protomolecule: they have solid intel. Not only that, their reporting is coming out before more reputable news sources. I'm not sure what's going on, but I think it's worth looking into. Their latest bulletin says that a stolen protomolecule sample is being held at an abandoned mining outpost on one of Jupiter's moons: Himalia. We may have lucked out this time. If we change course now, we can be there in just a few days."

The characters can ask Diana any questions they have, but there isn't much more to tell. While Pyramid News has always had conspiracy-laden stories about the protomolecule, it's only recently that they seem to be accurate, and the most recent stories indirectly reference the theft from *Abzu's Bounty*.

The crew have no reason to be aware that Sebastian Pope has the *Anne Bonny* bugged, and he quickly notes their course change. Realizing that the crew are now on a course directly for Himalia, it's not much of a guess for him to figure out that they're headed for the outpost because of the protomolecule. He immediately sends an urgent message to his employees there to move it off site—and soon after, begins his own search for the Pyramid News Network.

OUTBOUND JOURNEY

During the journey to Himalia, the crew can listen to past broadcasts from Pyramid News Network. The stories are, for the most part, completely outlandish:

- Undersecretary Crisjen Avasarala is under the influence of aliens looking to gain control of Earth's forces.
- Earth's moon is home to a massive stock of nuclear weapons in a secret underground base.
- An older broadcast states that the protomolecule isn't real, but is a hoax propagated by the OPA to provoke war between Earth and Mars.
- In the same broadcast, another story states that the protomolecule is real, but is actually a peaceful entity, and the broadcast claims to interview a survivor of Eros.
- Major distributors of canned fruits are lacing their products with mind control drugs.
- Famous singer Johnny Damji has been replaced with an android.

ABANDONED OUTPOST

After just shy of a week, the characters reach the outpost at Himalia. The outpost was a supply waystation for early mining operations. Himalia itself is too small to support a colony, so the waystation had to be resupplied frequently from other Jovian colonies. As the mines in the area shut down, the outpost did as well. It's been officially shuttered for twenty years.



It is immediately obvious that there has been activity far more recently. While there are no ships or personnel currently visible, the landing pad bears recent signs of use, and there is a trail cleared in the dust going back and forth to the outpost's entrance. Someone else has been here.

Before leaving the premises, Pope's employees who were guarding the protomolecule sample at the outpost rigged the airlock to explode. Have the characters attempt a **TN 12 Perception (Seeing)** test. Success means that the crew notice the telltale signs of tampering with the airlock. If any characters choose to examine the airlock before going in, a **TN 9 Intelligence (Demolitions or Engineering)** test reveals the same thing. Disarming the explosive requires a **TN 12 Intelligence (Demolitions or Engineering) advanced test (success threshold 10)**. Failure triggers the explosive, as does opening the airlock without noticing or attempting to disarm the explosive. The airlock explodes, dealing 2d6 damage to all characters near the airlock, though characters may attempt a **TN 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** test to take half damage, rounded down.

Read or paraphrase the following to the players once the crew have entered the outpost:

The interior of the outpost is not merely empty, it's trashed. Computers and electronics have been removed and those built into the structure of the facility have been smashed. The life support system is not only deactivated but ripped apart, requiring hours to repair. Pieces of debris from broken and shattered equipment float freely.

Whoever was here did not want to be found out.

After the trapped door, there are no other physical dangers to the characters and they can take their time exploring the site. Any portable computers were removed, but some hard drives were built into the facility's structure. The hard drives have been wiped, but technical characters might be able to get some information.

Characters who succeed at a **TN 14 Intelligence (Technology) advanced test (success threshold 10)** to try to restore the computer can find the last incoming message that the facility received and learn that this encrypted message was received only a couple of days ago. Failure on the test wipes the computer completely and the crew can't get the message. A character who succeeds at a **TN 14 Intelligence (Cryptography)** test to decrypt the message finds orders to abandon the facility because the location has been compromised.

Characters who search the outpost carefully find scrape marks on the ground where a large container was dragged out of the facility. Characters who succeed at a **TN 10 Perception (Seeing)** test find scraps of a container that bears a shipping label from the *Abzu's Bounty*—the same container that was used by Reyes back on the *Abzu's Bounty* to secure the proto-molecule sample.

When the crew reports back to Diana on board the *Bonny* they should have evidence that the protomolecule was actually held at the site, but that they are long gone—likely they heard the same newsfeed report on PNN and pulled up stakes. Diana isn't quite sure what to make of the news that Pyramid News Network was on to something real. She says that she'll investigate and suggests that the player characters should as well, but she sees this as the best possible lead for tracking it down.

TRACING THE SIGNAL

Diana puts her team at MSS to work trying to find the source of the Pyramid News Network broadcasts. The crew can also attempt to track the source and potentially find out useful information sooner, or can spend the next few days as an interlude. If any characters were injured by the door, they may wish to take time for recovery.

If any characters choose to attempt to trace the signal of the broadcast, they can attempt a **TN 15 Intelligence (Cryptography or Technology) advanced** test (**success threshold 15**). Each character working on tracking the signal can attempt one check per day. Diana's team takes four days to locate the relay station.

If the characters suspect tracking equipment on board their ship and begin looking for it, proceed to **Interlude: Who can be Trusted?**

Once Diana or the characters successfully trace the signal, read or paraphrase the following:

The Pyramid News Networks broadcasts are relayed through many different locations throughout the Belt to hide their origin. The original source of the signal can't be determined, but the route of the signal can be traced back to the same relay station for every broadcast. This could be property of the Pyramid News Network and investigating the actual satellite could lead to the source of the original broadcast.

If the crew report this information to Diana, she congratulates them on tracing the signal so quickly and insists that they proceed immediately to the satellite to see what they can learn.

If Diana's team succeeds at tracing the signal first, present the information in the read-aloud section as coming from Diana. Of course, Sebastian Pope has his own team working on the same task.

SCENE 2

RELAY SATELLITE

SHIP COMBAT/SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

The *Anne Bonny* arrives at the location of the relay satellite only to find another small ship, a rockhopper, already there. After dealing with the crew of the other ship they investigate the satellite and learn the true origin of the signal.

NOT ALONE

The crew find the relay satellite exactly as they hope. However, they are not the only ones on the hunt for the satellite—and the news station. When the *Anne Bonny* arrives, the *Rockhound* is already there. Pope hired a mining scout vessel that was close to the satellite already, allowing them to beat the *Anne Bonny* to the site. The mining company is owned by Pope through a shell company, and the word came to the *Rockhound* through their higher-ups so they aren't aware that Pope is ordering the mission. The company also warned the crew of the *Rockhound* that pirates are active in the area and gave them a description of the *Anne Bonny*, so they are paranoid and on high alert when the crew arrives.

The *Rockhound* immediately suspects the *Anne Bonny* of being a pirate ship. They don't attempt to hail the *Bonny*, but answer if the *Anne Bonny* hails them. If the *Anne Bonny* reaches Close Range without opening communications, the *Rockhound* attacks. If the crew open communications with the *Rockhound*, they must convince the mining scouts that the

MODIFICATIONS

If the crew traced the signal themselves, beating Diana's team, they reach the satellite slightly sooner, and the *Rockhound* is still disconnecting from the satellite. If combat breaks out, the *Rockhound* cannot make any Piloting maneuvers for the first two rounds of combat as they complete the job.

Anne Bonny is no longer crewed by pirates. This is challenging as the miners are understandably suspicious, and requires a **TN 15 Communication (Persuasion)** test. If the characters succeed, the *Rockhound* simply finishes its task and backs off. If the characters ask questions, see the **Interrogation** section for responses. Even if the crew succeed at persuading the *Rockhound* that they aren't pirates, the *Rockhound* attacks if the crew try to stop the *Rockhound* from completing their mission.

If combat breaks out, the *Rockhound* open fire with its PDCs if the *Anne Bonny* is in Close Range. Otherwise, it tries to navigate away from the more powerful *Anne Bonny*. If the *Rockhound* is Taken Out, (see **Taken Out** in **CHAPTER 6** of *The Expanse* RPG) proceed to the **Interrogation** section if the characters wish to board it or question the miners over the ship's comms. The miners have little desire to respond if the crew can't convince them of their good intentions. Alternatively, the crew might leave the incapacitated *Rockhound* be and proceed straight to the **Satellite Interface** section. However, Pope notifies the MCRN of a potential ship at risk if the *Rockhound* doesn't report back, either due to being incapacitated or destroyed. If the player characters take too long to get data from the satellite then the MCRN ship, the *Coronet*, finds them.

THE ROCKHOUND

SIZE Medium (25 meters long)

HULL 1d6 **CREW** 3 (6)

COMPETANCE Capable

DRIVE Epstein, Thrusters

SENSORS 1

WEAPONS

Point Defense Cannon (Close Range, 2d6 Damage)

QUALITIES

Hull Plating

INTERROGATION

If the crew **Take Out** the *Rockhound*, they have an easy time boarding the small vessel. If the ship is still moving, this requires the *Bonny's* pilot to succeed at a **TN 12 Dexterity (Piloting)** test. The crew have another opportunity, either over the ship's comms or in person once on board the *Rockhound*, to attempt a **TN 15 Communication (Persuasion)** test to convince the mining scouts that they aren't pirates. If they don't succeed, the mining scouts fight back once the ship is boarded. There are six crew members who hide around the ship. The captain of the *Rockhound* is Elsa Njoku, and she takes the lead in talking to the characters. As a civilian ship, the crew are a mix of Lunars, Martians, and Belters.

If successfully convinced of good intentions or later subdued in combat, the crew of the *Rockhound* answer the crew's questions to the best of their abilities. However, they don't know very much. Potential questions and answers include:

WHO ARE YOU?

"This is a mining scouting vessel. We're looking for ice and natural resources on the asteroids out here."

WHO DO YOU WORK FOR?

"Gray Savannah Extractions. It's Luna-based."

A character who does some research and succeeds at a **TN 15 Intelligence (Business)** test learns that this is a subsidiary of Sebastian Pope's, though this test shouldn't be prompted until the crew knows about Pope's involvement.

WHY DID/DO YOU THINK WE'RE PIRATES?

"We heard there are a lot of pirates in the area, and your ship matches the description we were given." If the name of the ship hasn't changed, she adds, "Plus, come on, it's called the Anne Bonny!"

WHAT ARE YOU DOING AT THIS SATELLITE?

"We got word from HQ about a small side job with big bonus pay. Apparently, the owner of the satellite says it's malfunctioning and asked us to run a bunch of diagnostics and send them back the data. Cheaper than sending their own crew out since we were in the area. We were all pretty happy to make a little extra money."

WHAT DID THE DIAGNOSTICS SHOW?

"We didn't look at the results. We didn't write the programs—we were just supposed to run them and send the results back to HQ to send on to the owners. Saves them a trip out here, you see? They'll have to send their own repair folks out; that's definitely more than we could do, but they'll bring the right people and tools."

WHO OWNS THE SATELLITE/HIRED YOU TO CHECK OUT THE SATELLITE?

"HQ didn't say and we didn't much care, as long as the pay was good."

If the characters ask to see the diagnostic results, the crew of the *Rockhound* initially refuses. However, they make no attempt to stop the characters from doing their own analysis of the satellite, and bribery or succeeding at a **TN 15 Communication (Bargaining)** test could convince the *Rockhound* to let the crew copy their results. Bribing the crew of the *Rockhound* requires a **TN 18 Income** test.

SATELLITE INTERFACE

The characters should have an easy time docking with the satellite unless the *Anne Bonny* was damaged in combat with the *Rockhound*. In that case, the crew's pilot must succeed at a **TN 12 Dexterity (Piloting)** test in order to dock. Each attempt takes ten minutes, and failure increases the TN by 1.

Once the ship is docked, the crew can attempt their own analysis of the satellite, or, as a last resort, download as much information as possible and send it back to the *Bonny* to sort out later. The latter option takes six hours but does not require a test to accomplish. The satellite is small and looks like an amateur job, lending credence to the idea that the Pyramid News Network placed it themselves.

Analyzing the satellite's software requires a **TN 12 Intelligence (Technology) advanced test (success threshold 10)**. Each attempt represents one hour of work. After three failed attempts, the system shuts down, and takes five hours to come back online.

If the characters Took Out the *Rockhound*, Pope alerts the MCRN, who arrive after ten hours. They send a spaceship, the *Coronet*, though the crew can see it coming on their sensors. This ship is ordered to find out what happened to the *Rockhound*, and is much more heavily armored. The crew has been specifically told that the *Anne Bonny* is a pirate ship and they can't be dissuaded. They order the *Anne Bonny* crew to surrender and allow their ship to be boarded. If the characters refuse, then the *Coronet* attacks. Assuming Diana is on board, she advises against fighting the *Coronet*, insisting that she will be able to sort things out even if they get arrested.

The characters might instead leave as soon as they see the *Coronet* approaching. If the crew couldn't analyze the satellite's software, download the information without analyzing it, or get the information from the *Rockhound* before leaving, then they'll have to wait twelve hours for the *Coronet* to tend to the *Rockhound* and leave again.

If the *Anne Bonny* manages to Take Out the *MCRN Coronet*, then the crew have as much time as they need to finish their task with the satellite. Of course, this could lead to serious consequences down the line, since the *Coronet* will almost certainly have alerted the MCRN fleet and the *Anne Bonny* will now be one of the most wanted ships in the system.

If the *MCRN Coronet* Takes Out the *Anne Bonny*, the MCRN officers on board arrest the characters and hold them back on Callisto. See the **MCRN Prison** in the **Journey to Callisto** interlude for how to proceed from there.

If the crew succeed at analyzing the data from the satellite, read or paraphrase the following. If the crew don't succeed but get the information to Diana, this information comes from her:

While nothing in the satellite's software calls out the name of the Pyramid News Network, the registry information does have one useful piece of information: an address in Port Hampton on Callisto.

INTERLUDE

JOURNEY TO CALLISTO

Once the crew know the location of the Pyramid News Network station, they can head to Callisto. The trip takes just a few days, so the characters have time to engage in activities like training or ship maintenance.

If the characters now suspect tracing equipment on board the ship and begin to look for it, proceed to **Interlude: Who can be Trusted?**

MCRN CORONET (FRIGATE)

SIZE Large (45 meters long)

HULL 2d6 **CREW** 4 (16)

COMPETANCE Capable

DRIVE Epstein, Thrusters

SENSORS 1

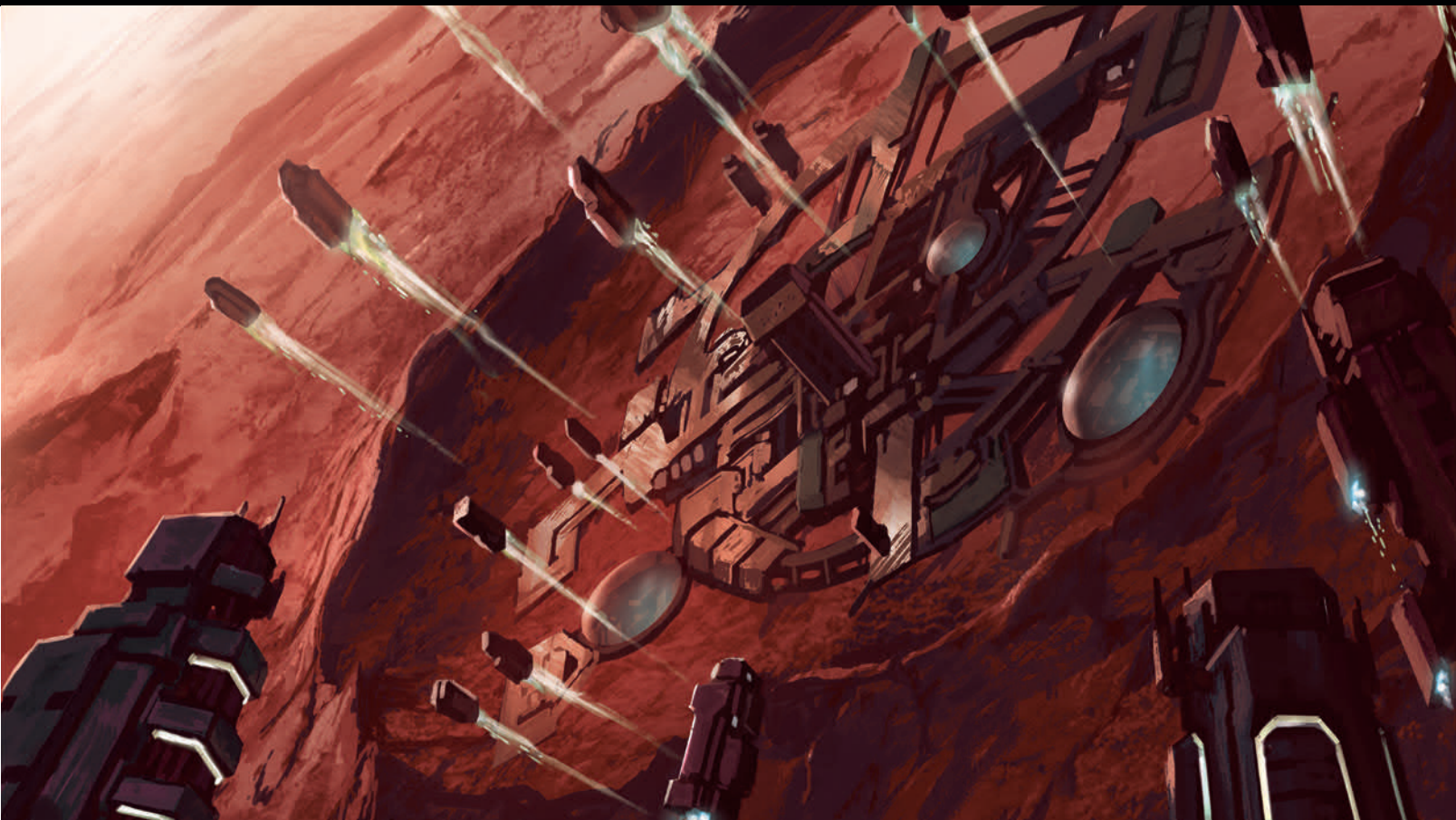
WEAPONS

Two Torpedo Tubes (Long Range, 4d6 Damage)

Point Defense Network (six cannons, Close Range, 2d6 Damage)

QUALITIES

Advanced Sensor Package, Good Juice, Hull Plating, Improved Stores, Medical Expert System.



SCENE 3

SHOWDOWN AT THE PYRAMID NEWS NETWORK

COMBAT ENCOUNTER

As soon as he gets the diagnostic information from the *Rockhound*, Sebastian Pope sends a team of Vector Security agents to the Pyramid News Network's headquarters in Port Hampton on Callisto. They enter guns blazing and take the small team hostage, demanding to know where they've been getting their information about the protomolecule. Once again, Pope sends a team that is close to the location and can arrive quickly.

FINDING THE STATION

Read or paraphrase the following once the crew are in Port Hampton:

The only city on the moon Callisto in the Jovian system, Port Hampton is built in the walls of a large crater. Enormous supply ships move in and out of the city, bringing critical resources to the shipyards, which is the only location capable of manufacturing huge, 700-meter Donnager-class ships. This particular settlement is under the thumb of Mars, who buy the ships and mined ore that come from this moon. The city itself has a reputation as a place where both military and miners on shore leave come to blow off steam, and the people of Port Hampton are very good at separating them from their money.

Once in Port Hampton, Diana sends the crew to find the PNN while she claims to have some other business to attend. The characters quickly discover that the address they have isn't sufficient to locate the Pyramid News Network station. The address is actually a small complex with all manner of fringe businesses: gambling,

MODIFICATIONS

Pope likely knows the location of the Pyramid News Network's headquarters because the crew of the *Rockhound* relays the diagnostic information from the satellite. If the characters stopped the *Rockhound* from sending the information, then he may figure it out from the course the *Bonny* takes, or through any number of other contacts he has throughout the system. Either way, the Vector Security team not only know that the *Anne Bonny* is likely coming to the same location, thanks to Pope's digging they have pictures and short dossiers on each of the characters. If any of the crew had personal conversations over the compromised communications system of the *Anne Bonny*, Pope knows their personal details and includes such information in the dossiers.

MCRN PRISON

If the MCRN arrests the crew, then **Scene 3** plays out very differently. Diana is released almost immediately but the crew must spend twenty-four hours in prison in Port Hampton before she can work with her contacts within the MCRN to get them released. During that time, Diana is able to get the exact location of the Pyramid News Network studio through a combination of analyzing the crew's data from the satellite.

Once the crew are released Diana sends a message to them at the prison, detailing the network's address. She is annoyed with the characters for having to break her own cover and does not hide her irritation, though she does not reveal her MSS affiliation to the characters. Because this message does not get to them via the *Anne Bonny*, Pope does not intercept it, so he is unaware when the crew are released from prison. Because the characters are in prison, the Vector Security Agents have extra time once they enter the Pyramid News Network station and Gregory Carranza may be dead by the time the crew arrive, since the agents have instructions to kill him if necessary, to prevent anyone else learning the identity of the informant. However, the crew can still find the name of Gregory's informant in his computer once they arrive. The agents are still at the site waiting to ambush the characters.

illegal augmentations, prostitution, and so on. The crew have to ask around to discover the location of the news station. Most of the passerby are drunken marines and miners on leave looking for fun who aren't going to know much. It's tricky to find a local and even trickier to get them to talk. This can be run as a challenge test. A failure requires that the crew find a new person to talk to, which resets the accumulated success.

CHALLENGE: FIND THE STATION

DIFFICULTY: TN 11

SUCCESS THRESHOLD: 10

TIME PER TEST: 5 minutes

ABILITY FOCUSES: Communication (Deception), Communication (Persuasion), Intelligence (Security)

This is a challenge test. Each failure on the challenge test increases the consequence level by one, starting from minor. If the crew eliminates the minor consequence before increasing the level again, then the next consequence is minor as well. Otherwise, another failure elevates it to a moderate consequence.

CONSEQUENCES

MINOR People think it's weird that the crew are asking about the news station and find it suspicious. The characters must succeed at a **TN 12 Communication (Etiquette)** test to assuage their concerns or a **TN 12 Communication (Disguise)** test to change appearance enough to avoid suspicion when finding a new person to talk to.

MODERATE A drunk miner finds the crew suspicious or irritating enough to start a brawl. While not a major threat to the characters, fighting draws unwanted attention. The crew can calm the miner down with a **TN 14 Communication (Persuasion)** test or restrain him with a **TN 14 Fighting (Grappling)** test. Failure to do either results in a brawl. Use the statistics for a **Hooligan** from **CHAPTER 13** of *The Expanse* RPG.

MAJOR Someone alerts the MCRN, and three junior officers arrive to question the crew. Unless the crew can talk their way out of the situation with a **TN 14 Communication (Persuasion)** test or convincingly argue they aren't doing anything illegal with a **TN 14 Intelligence (Law)** test, the MCRN arrests the characters. If the crew choose to fight, use the statistics for a MCRN officer from the **Adversaries & Allies** section of the adventure. Further attempts to ask for help have a TN increased by 2. If the characters get arrested, see the **MCRN Prison** sidebar in the **Journey to Callisto** interlude.

If the characters reach a success threshold of 15 they not only learn where the office is, but they also hear that there was some kind of commotion there just a short time ago—if Pope's team successfully arrived first.

Once they have located the building, the crew find it squeezed between a tattoo parlor and a refurbished electronics shop. The sign on the door simply says "Ortiz-Kendrick Media." The door is unlocked, but there are no windows. A character who succeeds at a **TN 10 Perception (Seeing)** test notices that the hinges on the door are damaged, as though someone had broken through the door, then closed it. If the crew ask either neighboring business what happened, they both report that they heard from passerby that there was some kind of incident, but neither business saw exactly what happened. Either business will confirm if asked that Ortiz-Kendrick Media is the Pyramid News Network. The neighbors can also point out that the studio itself is soundproofed, so it's hard to hear much going on from outside.

If the characters choose to look around the building for a back entrance, they must succeed at a **TN 12 Intelligence (Engineering)** test to figure out which of the unlabeled fire exits go with the right business. The fire exit is only used in emergencies and is therefore alarmed, so the crew must succeed at a **TN 12 Intelligence (Security or Technology)** test to disable

the alarm. Failure causes the alarm to go off and the police to arrive in 2d6 minutes. You can use the stats for **Police** in the **Adversaries** section of **CHAPTER 13** of *The Expanse* RPG. The door is unlocked and leads into the **Back Offices**.

AMBUSH IN THE LOBBY

The front room of the PNN is a small and unassuming lobby, with uncomfortable-looking furniture, an unattended receptionist's desk, and restrooms off to one side. Two doors, one labeled "Studio" and with a red light on above it, lead out the back.

If the characters were alerted by the locals, or by noticing the door was broken, or are particularly cautious as they enter, they can attempt a **TN 11 Perception (Seeing or Hearing)** test to notice that two Vector Securities agents are crouched behind the desk waiting to ambush anyone who enters. The agents are wearing flat black security armor, complete with face masks (notably similar to the ambushers from **Breaking the Surface**). If the characters simply walk in without caution or fail the test to notice the agents, they are surprised for the first round of combat. If playing with the "Dead-to-Rights" rule (see **Dead-to-Rights** in **CHAPTER 12** of *The Expanse* RPG), it would be appropriate for the ambushers to have surprised characters Dead-to-Rights for the first round.

If the characters investigate the hand terminals that the agents are carrying, they can bypass the security with a successful **TN 13 Intelligence (Technology)** test. The crew then discover pictures and short biographies of themselves, including snippets of conversations made using the *Bonny's* ship's comms. There are also details based on information gleaned from intercepted communications from the *Anne Bonny* over external comms. These hand terminals were specific to this mission and contain no information on who the agents are or who they work for.

BACK OFFICES

The unlabeled door opens into a cubicle-lined hallway that makes a right-hand turn at an office pod. Bullet holes are scored into one of the walls and steady footsteps come from the offices, along with terrified murmurs.

Two more agents are holding most of the office staff at gunpoint. The agents have to keep an eye on the Pyramid News Network staff, who are held in the offices at the end of the hallway, and thus can't watch the door as carefully. If the characters can succeed at a **TN 14 Deception (Stealth)** test, they can potentially ambush these guards.

The two guards have sixteen hostages who have their hands bound with zipties. None of the staff of the Pyramid News Network is competent at fighting, even if unbound. The agents focus on attacking the crew and don't deliberately attack any of the staff during the combat, though they may use them as hostages or human shields. Once the characters kill or subdue the agents, they can release the hostages and find out what happened.

These agents carry hand terminals just like those in the lobby.

Sonya Dang, the manager of the Pyramid News Network, is a middle-aged woman of predominantly Korean descent and answers the characters' questions. Possible questions and answers follow:

IS THIS THE PYRAMID NEWS NETWORK?

"Yes, it is. We use the Ortiz-Kendrick Media name to keep a low profile. Between people looking to sue us and some overzealous fans who believe everything we print and want to act on it, we've learned it's better to be hard to find. Ortiz and Kendrick were the two founders, but they just run the company from a distance now."

DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THE STORIES YOU PUBLISH?

"No, not at all. But it's what we get paid to write. It's all just entertainment, really."

HOW DID YOU FIND OUT THE INFORMATION ON THE PROTOMOLECULE?

"Someone got in contact with Greg. He's been writing all those stories. We didn't really think it was more truthful than anything else we print, but it's gotten a lot of attention and increased our listeners. Greg is the only one here who really wanted to be a journalist."

WHAT HAPPENED WITH THESE FOLKS IN BLACK?

"They stormed in a couple of hours ago with guns and made everybody get on the floor. They asked about those stories with the protomolecule. Greg eventually admitted he wrote them, and then they took him away and left the rest of us here. We heard the studio door open—maybe he's in there?"

DO YOU KNOW WHO HIS INFORMANT WAS?

"No idea. Greg kept his sources pretty secret. Plus, we figured it was some crank, anyway. Who would come to us with real information about the protomolecule?"

Sonya has a key to the studio that she'll give to the crew if they ask for it.

The characters might attempt to interrogate the Vector Security agents, but this shouldn't be fruitful. The Vector agents are specifically trained on how to resist interrogation and know that giving information to the crew would result in deadly consequences from their employer. The agents refuse to give their names or employer at all costs.

IN THE STUDIO

The soundproofed door labeled "Studio," which is locked, goes into the Pyramid News Network sound stage where they film their segments. The red light is on, but the cameras inside are not currently running. They can only be turned on from inside the studio. If the characters rescue the hostages from the back offices before going into the studio, they can get a key from the manager of the Pyramid News Network. If not, they must succeed at a **TN 14 Intelligence (Security)** test to open the lock. Either way they must succeed at a **TN 14 Deception (Stealth)** test to open the door quietly enough to ambush the agents inside. A failed attempt to open the lock makes enough noise that the guards cannot be surprised.

Three agents are interrogating Gregory Carranza, a writer for the Pyramid News Network. Gregory wrote the stories on the protomolecule based on information from an informant. The agents are trying to get Greg to reveal his source.

Note: Torture should only be in play here if all players are comfortable with its presence in the game. Otherwise, the interrogation should simply be intense questioning of the news writer.

THROWDOWN

If the players can surprise the agents, then the agents cannot act in the first round of combat. The crew could even have the agents Dead-to-Rights if using that rule in the game. The agents spend the second round firing at the crew. If the characters seem powerful, then during the third round one of the agents shoots Gregory, preferring to see him dead than in the hands of opponents. However, the shot isn't immediately fatal and it's possible for a character to stabilize him with a **TN 10 Intelligence (Medicine)** advanced test (**success threshold 10**), though such ministrations need to be performed immediately. Each check takes fifteen seconds (one round of combat), and if he isn't stabilized within one minute, he bleeds out.

WHO TOLD YOU?

Once the agents are subdued or killed, if the characters have saved Gregory Carranza (or if he was never shot) they have a chance to try to get him to reveal his informant. If rescued, Gregory he is immensely grateful and immediately opens up. He admits that he was contacted by a woman who claimed to work for Mao-Kwikowski Mercantile as a supply chain manager and that she knew of a hunt for a protomolecule sample on the loose. Gregory has no idea why she would reveal this information, nor was he able to verify if any of it



was true. He knows that she works on Earth and says that she seemed honest, and she provided private details about Mao and his businesses that Gregory was able to verify as true.

If Gregory is killed, the crew can instead investigate his computer—though the staff only give them access if Gregory is dead. Breaking into his computer requires a **TN 10 Intelligence (Security)** test, or they can get the password from Sonya Dang. Once in his computer, they find emails from a woman named Alina Vasquez Chang with information about the proto-molecule that appeared in his news stories. Researching the name eventually finds a match: an employee at Mao-Kwikowski Mercantile working as a supply chain manager.

CHECK-IN

Diana is waiting for the crew by the time they get back to the ship. If they were able to uncover the name of the informant, Diana is thrilled. She suggests that they try to meet with Alina and get more information from her. If the characters share that the mysterious agents had dossiers on them, Diana grows extremely concerned but doesn't comment other than to mutter, "We need to be very careful from here on out."

INTERLUDE

WHO CAN BE TRUSTED?

Eventually, the characters should notice that someone (they may or may not yet know that it is Pope) always seems to know they're coming. From the message at the outpost, to the description of the ship given to the *Rockhound*, to the dossiers with the ambushers at the Pyramid News Network station, it should become clear that their opponents aren't merely working on the same task, but actively tracking the crew and what they are doing. If possible, add other references based on specific conversations that the characters have had over the *Bonny's* internal and external comms.

BUG HUNT

By now, the crew should believe there is a mole in their midst, or they might suspect that Diana is a double agent. But the *Bonny* has, in fact, been bugged. If a character suspects that the ship has tracking equipment on board, it requires a **TN 15 Intelligence (Engineering or Technology) advanced test (success threshold 15)** to locate the tracker. Each test represents an hour of work. However, even if they don't begin a search, when the crew leaves Callisto the communications equipment starts to malfunction, which sets off alerts in the ship's computer system that there is a problem. A character who succeeds at a **TN 9 Intelligence (Engineering or Technology)** test recognizes that the malfunction is characteristic of equipment that has been bugged. At this point, locating the tracking equipment only requires a **TN 12 Intelligence (Engineering or Technology) advanced test (success threshold 10)**, since there is specific evidence of such equipment. Each check still takes an hour, but the crew should realize by now that they can't say anything sensitive over the comms system until they find the bug.

Once the tracking equipment is found and removed, the communications systems of the *Anne Bonny* are free from surveillance, though the characters may perform further investigations to be sure of that, or even start encrypting their transmissions.

Analyzing the tracking equipment once it's been removed requires a **TN 9 Intelligence (Engineering, Security, or Technology)** test to reveal the manufacturer: Caracara Electronics. The unit is very high-end and quite expensive. The crew can easily look up more information on Caracara Electronics and find that it's located on Luna.

If the characters choose to go to the Luna to investigate Caracara Electronics, proceed to **Scene 4**. This scene is completely optional, and they may be happy with removing the bug and going about their business.

INTERLUDE

THE JOURNEYS

The characters have choices to make about **Scenes 4, 5, and 6**, and which order to do them in, if they do choose to do all of them. All three locations require some travel, so the crew have the opportunity to train, perform maintenance on the ship, communicate their findings to Diana, or go on side treks related to their backgrounds. **Scene 6** has an urgent timeline, but **Scenes 4 and 5** do not.

SCENE 4

THE BUG'S MAKER

EXPLORATION/SOCIAL OR COMBAT ENCOUNTER

This scene occurs sometime after the characters locate the tracking equipment on the *Anne Bonny* and notice the manufacturer, Caracara Electronics, labeled on the equipment. The crew travels to Luna to investigate Caracara Electronics and see if they can discover who purchased the bug.

RECONNAISSANCE

If the crew do initial research into Caracara Electronics on their way to Luna, they can find the following:

The company is located on Luna, in Lovell City, and sells high-end surveillance equipment, supplying not only military customers, but also wealthy private citizens.

Succeeding at a **TN 12 Intelligence (Research)** or **Communication (Investigation)** test during their initial investigation also reveals the following:

The founder of the company, Marjorie Louie, still works every day on site and often meets personally with prospective customers, even though she's wealthy enough off the company's success to let subordinates handle client sales.

The facility has extremely good surveillance, using many of their own products on site.

If the characters stake out the facility and succeed at a **TN 12 Dexterity (Stealth)**, **Intelligence (Security)**, or **Perception (Seeing)** test, they learn the following:

They can spot the locations of some of the security cameras around the premises, and note the usual external guard location.

They can track what times various employees arrive and leave, including Marjorie Louie, and can recognize some of the relatively well-known customers.

Sebastian Pope doesn't own Caracara Electronics, but he has ties with the owner, Marjorie Louie, and invested heavily in the founding of the company. The crew are unlikely to discover this information unless they specifically search to discover if Pope is involved. Even so, this is very difficult information to find out from a public search and requires succeeding at a **TN 18 Intelligence (Business)** test.

The crew have several different options for how to approach the facility to find out who purchased the tracking equipment they found. They could attempt to sneak onto the premises, they could pose as potential customers, or they could simply ask for assistance. If all else fails, they can always raid the facility with guns blazing. Choose the challenge test most appropriate to the approach that the characters wish to use. They can attempt another approach after one goes poorly, though it may be appropriate to increase the TN in such a case, depending on how the previous attempt failed.

SNEAKING IN

The crew can attempt to sneak into the building, bypassing security systems and avoiding armed guards. This approach requires stealth and technological aptitude. Ultimately, the characters must get to an employee's work station to try to gain access to their sales records.

CHALLENGE: SNEAKING IN

DIFFICULTY: TN 14

SUCCESS THRESHOLD: 15

TIME PER TEST: 10 minutes

ABILITY FOCUSES: Dexterity (Stealth), Intelligence (Security)

This is a challenge test. Each failure on the challenge test increases the consequence level by one, starting from minor. If the crew eliminates the minor consequence before increasing the level again, then the next consequence is minor as well. Otherwise, another failure elevates it to a moderate consequence.

CONSEQUENCES

MINOR The crew set off motion sensors, flooding their location with light. The characters must succeed at a **TN 13 Intelligence (Technology)** test to deactivate the motion sensors, or the TN of their future challenges increases by 1.

MODERATE The crew are spotted by a guard during normal rounds. They must scramble away quickly, succeeding at a **TN 13 Constitution (Running)** or **Strength (Climbing)** test, or the TN of their future challenges increases by 2.

MAJOR A group of security guards, alerted by the single guard who spotted them, catches up to the characters. See the section **Call for Security**.

If the characters did well during reconnaissance, the TN for this approach could be lowered if the crew take advantage of what they learned, such as avoiding the areas known to have cameras, coming at night when there are fewer employees, or avoiding the guards' known routes. Each precaution taken by the characters can lower the TN by 1, to a minimum of 11.

If the crew are successful, they sneak in and find a computer terminal in an employee's office. Proceed to the section **Who Did It?**

POSE AS CUSTOMERS

Another way for the crew to get in is through the front door, posing as customers. This approach requires subterfuge and subtlety. If they can convince an employee that they are serious customers, they can potentially get access to an employee's office—and their sales records.



CHALLENGE: POSE AS CUSTOMERS

DIFFICULTY: TN 14 **SUCCESS THRESHOLD:** 15 **TIME PER TEST:** 10 minutes
ABILITY FOCUSES: Communication (Deception, Disguise, or Etiquette), Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)

This is a challenge test. Each failure on the challenge test increases the consequence level by one, starting from minor. If the crew eliminates the minor consequence before increasing the level again, then the next consequence is minor as well. Otherwise, another failure elevates it to a moderate consequence.

CONSEQUENCES

MINOR The initial employee the characters speak to doesn't think the crew can afford the expensive equipment that Caracara Electronics sells and tries to brush them off. The crew must succeed at a **TN 13 Communication (Deception)** or **Income** test to come across as actually having the ability to buy such an expensive piece of equipment, or they must start over with a different employee, losing their accumulated success.

MODERATE An employee suspects something is off about the crew's presence and asks them to leave the building. If the characters can't succeed at a **TN 14 Communication (Deception)** test to convince the employee that they are honest, they have to exit the building completely and try again. The TN for future challenges is increased by 2 and they lose their accumulated success.

MAJOR An employee catches the crew trying to hack into an employee computer and calls the guards. See the section **Call for Security**.

If the characters did well during their initial investigations and reconnaissance, they might put that information to good use, such as arriving when Marjorie Louie isn't there and name-dropping her, saying the company was recommended by one

of the known customers, or bringing in the tracking equipment they took from the ship and claiming that their existing unit malfunctioned. Each specific detail that the characters exploit can lower the TN by 1, to a minimum of 11.

If the crew are successful, they can get access to an employee's office and try to break into the computer while no one is watching. Proceed to section **Who Did It?**

ASK FOR ASSISTANCE

The crew might just want to be straightforward and ask Caracara Electronics for the name of who was spying on them. The company didn't reach its status by giving up its clients easily, however, and getting the name of their opponent will take either smooth talking or harsh threats.

CHALLENGE: ASK FOR ASSISTANCE

DIFFICULTY: TN 14

SUCCESS THRESHOLD: 15

TIME PER TEST: 10 minutes

ABILITY FOCUSES: Communication (Bargaining or Persuasion), Intelligence (Law), or Strength (Intimidation)

This is a challenge test. Each failure on the challenge test increases the consequence level by one, starting from minor. If the crew eliminates the minor consequence before increasing the level again, then the next consequence is minor as well. Otherwise, another failure elevates it to a moderate consequence.

CONSEQUENCES

MINOR The employee laughs in the characters' faces for their audacity in asking for another client's identity, and they must succeed at a **TN 12 Communication (Persuasion)** test to even keep the conversation going with the employee. If they fail, they must start over with someone new and they lose their accumulated success.

MODERATE The employee thinks that this is a trap, perhaps from senior management or one of Sebastian Pope's people there to see if they'll give up client information. If the crew can't succeed at a **TN 13 Communication (Persuasion)** test, the TN of further challenges increases by 2 due to the employee's increased paranoia.

MAJOR The employee grows furious with the characters and calls for security. Several armed guards show up. See the section **Call for Security**.

If the characters did well during their reconnaissance, they may want to use that information to make a stronger case, such as by insisting on speaking to Marjorie Louie when they know she is in, bringing in the unit they took from the ship to prove that they were being spied on, or looking up relevant local laws that might help their case. Each specific supporting detail the crew use can lower the TN by 1 to a minimum of 11. If a character wants to use **Communication (Bargaining)**, they must offer something of value to the company.

If the characters are successful, the employee gives them the information on who purchased the tracking equipment. See Section **Who Did It?**, but the characters do not need to break into a computer.

CALL FOR SECURITY

If the characters reached major consequences from any of the approaches, they find themselves facing down a quartet of armed security guards (see **Caracara Electronics Security Guards** in the **Adversaries & Allies** section). They could attempt to run away, which would lead to a chase scene; they could go willingly with the guards, who turn them in to the Lunar police, necessitating a call to Diana; or they could try to fight the guards off. If the characters are turned over to the police, Diana can successfully get the characters released from prison, but the lunar authorities insist on the characters leaving Luna immediately, which prevents them from being able to try a different method of getting into the facility. If the crew instead fight off or escape the guards, they may be able to try again with a different approach and with a higher TN.

KICK DOWN THE DOOR

It's possible that the crew won't want to bother with stealth, subterfuge, or sweet talk, and instead simply raid the building. Alternatively, the crew may have had a non-violent approach fail, and need to kick down the door as a last resort. In either case, the characters must fight off two groups of guards like those described in **Call for Security**, and another pair of guards shows up every two minutes during the **Who Did It?** section, making it more difficult to finish the task.

WHO DID IT?

Once the crew have access to a computer terminal, they can attempt to access the sales records. First, logging in to the computer without a password requires a **TN 12 Intelligence (Technology)** test. If the characters fail three times the computer locks out and the characters must get to another terminal, which might require an ability test as appropriate for the method the characters used to get access. Once logged in, the crew must find the appropriate sales records, requiring a **TN 13 Intelligence (Business)** test. Each attempt takes one minute and failing more than four times might draw the attention of someone, depending on how the crew got to this position.

The sales records reveal that the serial number of the tracking equipment they found on the *Anne Bonny* was purchased by Vector Security, and the order was personally placed by Sebastian Pope.

When the crew report this to Diana, she looks very grim. She explains, if the characters don't know yet, that Sebastian Pope was behind the theft of the protomolecule. She tells them some of the information that she has on Pope and on Vector Security. You can find detailed information on Pope in the **Adversaries & Allies** section of **Shoot the Moon**.

SCENE 5

THE INFORMANT

EXPLORATION/SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

This scene can only occur if the crew were able to find out the name of the informant, Alina Vasquez Chang, from Gregory Carranza at the Pyramid News Network. It might occur before or after **Scene 4: The Bug's Maker**, depending on what order the characters follow leads in.

Diana urges the crew to make contact with Alina. "A mole inside Mao's organization would be invaluable! Make sure to handle this carefully—you don't want to spook her."

If the characters do further research on Alina Vasquez Chang, they find the following:

She has been employed with Mao-Kwikowski Mercantile since graduating high school, starting as a personal assistant, but getting training and eventually becoming a supply chain manager.

She attended an extremely prestigious high school on Earth.

She has no siblings, and her parents owned a high-end textile company before it went bankrupt. The assets were purchased by Mao-Kwikowski Mercantile.

If the characters attempt to call or send messages to Alina, she ignores them. If they mention the protomolecule or Gregory Carranza she blocks them, though she does not report the obvious leak to anyone. The only way to speak with her is to show up at her workplace or her home.

FINDING ALINA

Mao-Kwikowski Mercantile is an enormous company with many locations. The branch that Alina works at in New York City spans an entire city block, but still keeps security tight. This information is easy to find and does not require a test.

The crew could also attempt to contact Alina at her home, though that address is far more difficult to locate, requiring a **TN 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** test. If the crew show up at Alina's home, she tries to call the police unless they can succeed at a **TN 15 Communication (Persuasion)** test.

If the crew show up at Alina's workplace, they must first get into the facility. They might approach this in different ways, similarly to **Scene 4: The Bug's Maker**. If the characters are not going to do **The Bug's Maker**, then an appropriate challenge test from **The Bug's Maker** could be used here. Alternatively, a simple ability test is sufficient to avoid redundancy with the previous scene.

The crew might talk their way into the facility with a **TN 14 Communication (Deception or Persuasion)** test, break in through a side entrance with a **TN 14 Intelligence (Security or Technology)** test, pretend to be someone who should be there with a **TN 12 Communication (Disguise)** test, or find a legitimate reason to be there with a **TN 14 Intelligence (Business)** test. Failure prevents the characters from entering the facility in that particular way, but they can try another approach

UNDER SURVEILLANCE

It is expected that the crew find out that the *Anne Bonny* is bugged before they reveal Alina's name over the compromised communication systems. If they do say her name without dealing with the bug, or if the characters deliberately reveal her name in order to draw out their opponents, then rival agents from Vector Security try to locate Alina and kill her. When the characters arrive to talk to Alina, four Vector Security agents also show up to try to kill her. If the characters can save her, she is very grateful, but she must also leave her position since her status as a mole is compromised. She'll give the characters the information she currently has but won't be able to help them much in the future.

JULES-PIERRE MAO

While not in the top ten companies operating in the Belt, Mao-Kwikowski Mercantile is solidly in the top fifty—making Jules-Pierre Mao one of the richest men in the solar system. An owner of Mao-Kwik and a major shareholder in Star Helix Security, Mao operates out of his eponymous station in Luna's orbit with a luxury yacht, the Guanshiyin, at his disposal. Handsome, middle-aged, and dignified with bright blue eyes, Mao has several children with his wife, Ariadne Mao: Clarissa Melpomene, Petyr, twins Michael and Anthea, and Juliette Andromeda—now better known as Julie Mao of the OPA and the Eros Incident.

Jules-Pierre Mao and Mao-Kwikowski were able to successfully argue their way out of prosecution after the Eros Incident despite their close involvement: they were one of Protogen's major suppliers, and Mao's estranged daughter was patient zero in the protomolecule infection on Eros. Mao and his company claimed they didn't know what their equipment and supplies were used for and were allowed to continue business as usual. However, it's more likely that Mao escaped consequences because of his friends in high places—in two different governments. Few in the United Nations or the Martian Republic are aware of Mao-Kwikowski's top-secret government-funded experiments with humans and the protomolecule—both before and after Eros.

For more on **Jules-Pierre Mao**, **Mao-Kwikowski Mercantile**, and their work with the protomolecule, see *The Expanse* RPG.

to get in. Excessive failures may draw the attention of security. Use the statistics for guards from **Caracara Electronics** in the **Adversaries & Allies** section, if needed.

Once the crew reach Alina's office, they must make contact without overly frightening her. They must succeed at a **TN 10 Communication (Persuasion)** test to calm her down or a **TN 12 Strength (Intimidation)** test to cow her into not calling security before the crew can fully explain the situation. Mentioning the name of Gregory Carranza lowers the TN by 2.

THE MEETING

Whether the crew show up to her home or office, Alina wants to meet them at a different location to discuss her involvement with the Pyramid News Network, and she won't admit to anything until the later meeting. She suggests meeting at Vista Park that evening. Characters who succeed at a **TN 14 Intelligence (Current Affairs)** test know that Vista park is in a bad part of town. It's dangerous, but there is unlikely to be surveillance, which is likely what Alina is counting on. The crew can propose an alternate location if they have one. Alina refuses to meet with them on the *Anne Bonny*.

When the crew arrive at the park, Alina will speak with them and answer questions honestly. Possible questions and answers follow:

WHO ARE YOU? HOW DID YOU GET YOUR JOB?

"I grew up in the area. I went to school with Juliette Mao—we were close friends growing up. Her dad, Jules-Pierre Mao got me the original job with the company. I've been there ever since."

JULIETTE MAO? LIKE FROM THE NEWS? VENUS?

"Yes. She left here long ago, though; she really believed in the plight of the Outer Belt. I would never have enough courage to leave like that."

HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT THE PROTOMOLECULE?

"I really wasn't supposed to. But I heard Mr. Mao talking with some other people, and someone mentioned it before they all got really quiet. And then, well, I did something I shouldn't have done. I still knew how to get access to some of the executive email accounts from when I was a personal assistant. I found out about this other protomolecule that's out there somewhere, and Mr. Mao wants to get his hands on it."



WHY DOES MAO WANT THE PROTOMOLECULE IF HE ALREADY HAS SOME?

"Apparently, his researchers think they can do something really big with another sample. I don't know exactly what, but it doesn't sound good...a super-weapon of some kind. I think he also doesn't like the idea of anyone else having one. Mao doesn't like competition."

WHY DID YOU GO TO THE PYRAMID NEWS NETWORK WITH YOUR INFORMATION?

"I knew I needed to tell somebody. I just kept thinking of all the stuff Juliette used to say, and then the terrible things that happened to her, and I couldn't just let it happen. I didn't really want to go all Jim Holden myself, though. I tried to talk to more reputable journalists, but they just didn't believe me. I know the Pyramid News Network isn't exactly reliable, but Gregory Carranza was the first person who took me seriously."

WHY DO YOU STILL WORK FOR THE COMPANY?

"I'm not really sure. I'm still getting information, I guess? I'm not sure what else I would do if I quit."

DO YOU KNOW WHERE THE PROTOMOLECULE IS NOW?

"No, I don't. The email accounts I can get into have gotten a lot more careful about revealing information. They've noticed the broadcasts from the Pyramid News Network, and are being much more cautious with security. I've had to be careful myself, since they suspect a leak in the organization. Though I don't think that they suspect me. Yet."

ARE YOU WILLING TO SUPPLY US WITH INFORMATION?

"I guess the whole point of getting information to the press was so someone could stop Mao from getting the protomolecule. Now it seems like that's you. I can give you the same information I gave Gregory. I just hope you're able to do something with it."

CAN YOU TELL US ANYTHING ABOUT SEBASTIAN POPE?

"Yes. He's the one who has the protomolecule now. I think Mr. Mao has an idea where, but I haven't been able to find out yet. Oh, there's one thing that might be useful: Mr. Mao mentioned in an email that Pope almost never shows his face in public, but he attends the Titan's Ball every time, without fail. It only takes place every three years, but maybe that's something you can use?" (If anyone asks about the Titan's Ball, you can find more information about it in the Titan's Ball section of this book. Alina can tell them all about it since it's sort of an obsession of hers.)

The accumulation of people with expensive gear gets the attention of locals, and during or just after the meeting, a gang approaches the meeting to demand money and gear. The characters can attempt to scare off the group with a **TN 13 Strength (Intimidation)** test, but otherwise, the gang attacks. You can use the **Vista Park Gang Members** stats in the **Adversaries & Allies** section of this chapter. Alina isn't any good at hand-to-hand combat, but she is surprisingly good with a pistol she keeps on her. ("My dad insisted I learn how to use one. He wanted me to be prepared.")

If the crew insisted on another location, this fight does not happen.

A FINAL CLUE

After the fight or simply at the end of the meeting, Alina offers up a final, key piece of intel.

Alina shifts uncomfortably, clearly unused to the espionage lifestyle. "There's something that might be of use to you. Pope is apparently about to transport something—something he wants kept quiet. But Mr. Mao has learned about it and hired a team to intercept it. I don't know for sure it's the protomolecule, but Mr. Mao seems to think so. Maybe you can beat them to it?"

Alina gives the crew coordinates to where Mao's mercenaries are supposed to intercept Pope's team. And then, not knowing what else to do, bids the crew good night.



SCENE 6

THE HANDOFF

SHIP COMBAT/COMBAT ENCOUNTER

This scene can only occur if the characters successfully located and reached an arrangement with Alina Vasquez Chang. Based on her information, the crew knows about an impending ambush of a team transporting stolen goods for Pope by a team hired by Mao. If the characters are successful, they can intercept the mysterious package....

STOPPED ON THE DOTTED LINE

Diana is thrilled by the intel they received from Alina and urges the crew to take this last step to locate the protomolecule—to intercept the *Dotted Line* and obtain this mystery package being shipped by Pope:

“Even if it’s not the protomolecule it’s a chance to give Pope a black eye and show him we mean business. And I certainly don’t want Mao getting his greedy little mitts on whatever it is that Pope is shipping, especially if it is the protomolecule.”

Now the crew just has to decide how to approach the mission.

The truth is, Pope hired a supply ship called the *Dotted Line* to transport a suit of stolen Martian powered armor from Mars to Luna. This time, he opted to use a different team rather than a Vector Security because he’s concerned that Vector might be on the MCRN’s radar and he doesn’t want them caught transporting stolen MCRN property. Mao found out about the transport through informants and hired a mercenary ship, the *Scrimshaw*, to intercept the *Dotted Line*. The crew of the *Bonny* can get to the *Dotted Line* first, but if they don’t deal with the transport ship quickly, they must tangle with the better equipped *Scrimshaw* at the same time.

ON THE CLOCK

From the time the crew reaches the *Dotted Line*, they have 10 minutes until the *Scrimshaw* arrives. The *Dotted Line* defends itself to the best of its ability and tries to escape if possible. The *Scrimshaw* has no hesitation in attacking both the *Dotted Line* and the *Anne Bonny*.

If the characters attempt to board and take prisoners, the crew of both ships fight back. Unfortunately for the *Dotted Line*, the powered armor is in pieces and in no condition to be used (and they don’t even know what’s in the crate they’re carrying). The crew of the transport ship hired by Pope are capable fighters, but not exceptional ones, and surrender as soon as one member of their crew is killed or goes down. The captain of the *Dotted Line* is Hugo Hanssen. The mercenaries hired by Mao, on the other hand, are very good fighters and don’t back down easily. They are led by Erin Lee.

INTERROGATION

If the characters successfully take any prisoners from either ship, they may wish to perform an interrogation. Neither group knows anything about the protomolecule. Possible questions and answers for the transport crew follow, and Hanssen answers questions on behalf of the crew if he is alive:

WHO HIRED YOU? WHAT WAS YOUR ASSIGNMENT?

"I'm an independent contractor. I was delivering a private shipment to a storage facility on Luna."

WHAT'S IN THE CRATES?

"I don't usually ask too many questions about things like that."

DO YOU KNOW WHERE THE PROTOMOLECULE IS?

"The what? Like on Venus? What does that have to do with anything?"

Possible questions and answers for the *Scrimshaw* crew follow, and Lee answers questions on behalf of the mercenaries if she is alive:

WHO HIRED YOU? WHAT WAS YOUR MISSION?

"We were hired by an anonymous employer. Pretty common in our line of work. We were supposed to intercept that transport ship and grab a crate."

WHAT'S IN THE CRATE?

"You look in there and tell me."

DO YOU KNOW WHERE THE PROTOMOLECULE IS?

"How would I know where a thing like that is?"

If the characters succeed at a **TN 13 Communication (Investigation) or Strength (Intimidation)** test, they can get more honest answers out of the mercenaries.

WHO HIRED YOU? WHAT WAS YOUR MISSION?

"All right, all right. They didn't name names, but the up-front payment came through Mao-Kwikowski Mercantile."

THE AFTERMATH

If the crew successfully gets the crate from the *Dotted Line*, they find a suit of powered armor. It's not the prize they were hoping for, but quite a prize, nonetheless. The armor is broken down into component parts, but with a day or two of work, the crew could get it operational. The logos make it clear that it was stolen from the Martian Marine Corps, so it has the Wanted property.

If the crew hacks into the mercenary ship's computers, which requires a **TN 13 Intelligence (Computers)** test, they find a couple of video messages. Erin Lee is quite fastidious about deleting old messages, knowing that they could be a security leak, but the most recent communications haven't been wiped yet. The first message is from an unregistered number, but the speaker identifies himself as Cyrus. He tells the *Scrimshaw* the time and coordinates to meet up with the *Dotted Line*. He ends the conversation with: "We'll be in touch with further instructions. We'll need your best efforts on this one; we think the target is hiding in plain sight."

The second message is from Anderson Dawes. "I'm sorry to hear that you're already booked. I've heard great things about your operation. Let me know when you're available and I'll probably have more work for you."

DOTTED LINE

SIZE Large (50 meters long)

HULL 2d6 CREW 4 (16)

COMPETANCE Capable

DRIVE Epstein, Thrusters

SENSORS 1

WEAPONS

Point Defense Cannon (Close Range, 2d6 Damage)

QUALITIES

Improved Stores

QUALITIES

Fragile

SCRIMSHAW

SIZE Medium (45 meters long)

HULL 1d6 CREW 2 (4)

COMPETANCE Capable

DRIVE Epstein, Thrusters

SENSORS 1

WEAPONS

Rail Gun (Medium Range, 3d6 Damage)

Point Defense Cannon (Close Range, 2d6 Damage)

QUALITIES

Advanced Sensor Package, Hull Plating

QUALITIES

Wanted

If asked, Alina can confirm that there is an employee at Mao-Kwikowski Mercantile named Cyrus who works closely with Jules-Pierre Mao. She doesn't know anything specific about Anderson Dawes, but offers to look into him.

THE WRAP-UP

Jules-Pierre Mao learns quickly that something has gone wrong with his operation, as the *Scrimshaw* was meant to check in soon after completing its mission. If they don't, or if they report that the transport ship wasn't there or that the package was already taken, Mao and his team assume that Pope found out about the ambush. If the characters get sloppy, however, Mao's agents could show up in a later story. Pope also finds out fairly quickly that something went wrong when Hanssen's team doesn't deliver the crate to the storage facility on Luna.

The powered armor is extremely difficult to fence—not many people have a lot of use for MMC powered armor. If any of the crew want to keep it, they may do so.

Diana is disappointed that the package wasn't the protomolecule, but she is pleased with the crew's work. But now she's eager to finally get to Mars. She makes a transfer into the character's accounts giving them all +2 Income until the next failed test. It may take a little haggling, but she also agrees to pay for any needed repairs to the *Anne Bonny*, once they get to Mars. She suggests that they take some time for R&R before she has another job for them.

ADVERSARIES & ALLIES

ALINA VASQUEZ CHANG

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 2 (PISTOLS), **COMMUNICATON** 2 (DECEPTION, INVESTIGATION), **CONSTITUTION** 1, **DEXTERITY** 1, **FIGHTING** 0, **INTELLIGENCE** 3 (BUSINESS, TECHNOLOGY), **PERCEPTION** 2 (EMPATHY), **STRENGTH** 0, **WILLPOWER** 2 (COURAGE)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	14	11	0

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
PISTOL	+3	2D6+2
UNARMED	+0	1D3

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Called Shot, Rapid Reload

TALENTS: Contacts (Expert), Intrigue (Novice), Misdirection (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, pistol

THREAT: MINOR

CARACARA ELECTRONICS SECURITY GUARDS

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 2 (PISTOLS), **COMMUNICATON** 1, **CONSTITUTION** 2, **DEXTERITY** 1, **FIGHTING** 2 (LIGHT WEAPONS, GRAPPLING), **INTELLIGENCE** 0, **PERCEPTION** 3, **STRENGTH** 2, **WILLPOWER** 0

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
12	11	12	1

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
PISTOL	+4	2D6+3
TASER	+4	1D6
BATON	+4	1D6+2

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Knock Prone, Skirmish

TALENTS: Protect (Novice), Tactical Awareness (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: baton, hand terminal, pistol, scanner, taser, uniform

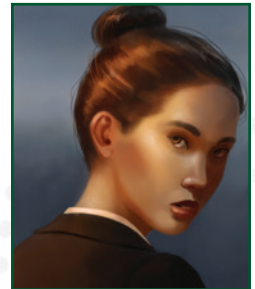
THREAT: MINOR

The following are the significant non-player characters in **Satellites and Secrets**, along with their *Expanse* game stats. For additional stock characters you can use in this adventure, see the **Threats** chapter of *The Expanse* RPG.

ALINA VASQUEZ CHANG

Alina Vasquez Chang grew up the only daughter of wealthy parents who co-owned a high-end textiles company. She was childhood friends with Juliette Andromeda Mao. Her parents' business took a sudden downturn not long after Alina graduated high school, and they were forced to sell the company for a fraction of its former value. Jules-Pierre Mao, out of fondness and sympathy for his daughter's friend, got her a job as a personal assistant with his company, Mao-Kwikowski Mercantile.

Alina proved to have a sharp head for business and later moved to supply chain management. She works at the New York City branch.



CARACARA ELECTRONICS SECURITY GUARDS

Caracara Electronics needs to not only protect their expensive equipment, but also their substantial customer database, often including such information as floorplans, spaceship layouts, and personal information like addresses: necessary files for selling security equipment, but quite appealing to thieves. Caracara Electronics maintains a security staff that is well-trained and extremely well-vetted.

DOTTED LINE CREW

The crew of the supply ship were all hired by Hugo Hanssen for this particular assignment. While none of them have any particular loyalty to the captain, they also don't know anything about their current mission beyond dropping off a crate of cargo on Luna. Some plan to stay on Luna to find their next job while others plan to return to Mars.

DOTTED LINE CREW

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 2 (PISTOLS), **COMMUNICATON** 2 (INVESTIGATION), **CONSTITUTION** 2, **DEXTERITY** 2 (PILOTING), **FIGHTING** 2, **INTELLIGENCE** 0 (ENGINEERING), **PERCEPTION** 1, **STRENGTH** 1, **WILLPOWER** 1

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
12	11	12	2
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
PISTOL	+4	2D6+3	
TASER	+2	1D6	

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Guardian Angel, Skirmish

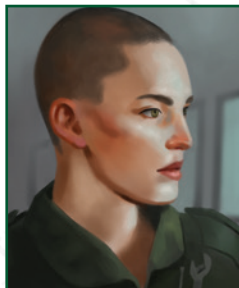
TALENTS: Pinpoint Accuracy (Novice), Protector (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, pistol, scanner, taser, uniform

THREAT: MINOR

ELSA NJOKU, CAPTAIN OF THE ROCKHOUND

Elsa Njoku is a Belter, having grown up on Ganymede. She's a jack of all trades with mechanical skill, some piloting ability, some physical science training, and an easy manner around people. She got hired on by Gray Savannah Extractions to work on scouting ships that look for new mining locations. Her knack for finding promising spots and her ability to outmaneuver pirates quickly earned her a promotion to captain.



ERIN LEE

Erin Lee has made a small name for herself as a reliable mercenary. Dishonorably discharged from Earth's Navy for brawling with other officers, she put her sharp mind and considerable strength to use as muscle for hire. She eventually earned enough to purchase a small spaceship and hire a crew, letting her accept increasingly dangerous but lucrative missions. She never asks more questions than she needs to accomplish a mission, and her discretion is valued among her clients.



HUGO HANSSEN, CAPTAIN OF THE DOTTED LINE

Hugo Hanssen is an Earther, but the first one in his family for generations to get a job. As a kid, he dreamed of flying the large spaceships he saw leaving his large port town. While he wasn't accepted into the Navy he was able to earn his way into civilian flight school, eventually becoming a merchant pilot. He now contracts with many private companies and has been able to afford his own spaceship.



ELSA NJOKU, CAPTAIN OF THE ROCKHOUND

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1 (PISTOLS), **COMMUNICATON** 0 (LEADERSHIP), **CONSTITUTION** 1, **DEXTERITY** 3 (PILOTING), **FIGHTING** 2, **INTELLIGENCE** 1 (EARTH SCIENCES, ENGINEERING, EVALUATION), **PERCEPTION** 1 (SEEING), **STRENGTH** 1, **WILLPOWER** 1

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
12	15	12	1
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
CLUB	+2	1D6+1	
KNIFE	+2	1D6+2	
PISTOL	+3	2D6+1	

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Skirmish, Whatever's Handy

TALENTS: Improvisation (Novice), Pilot (Expert)

EQUIPMENT: flight coveralls, machine tools, makeshift club, pistol, utility knife

THREAT: MINOR

ERIN LEE

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 2 (PISTOLS), **COMMUNICATON** 2 (BARGAINING, LEADERSHIP), **CONSTITUTION** 2, **DEXTERITY** 3 (PILOTING), **FIGHTING** 3 (BRAWLING, LIGHT WEAPONS), **INTELLIGENCE** 1 (EVALUATION), **PERCEPTION** 1, **STRENGTH** 2, **WILLPOWER** 2

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
13	15	13	2
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
COMBAT KNIFE	+5	1D6+3	
PISTOL	+4	2D6+1	

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Armor Crush, Vicious Blow

TALENTS: Command (Novice), Contacts (Novice), Pilot (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: combat knife, pistol

THREAT: MINOR

HUGO HANSSEN, CAPTAIN OF THE DOTTED LINE

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1, **COMMUNICATON** 1, **CONSTITUTION** 1, **DEXTERITY** 3 (PILOTING, FREE-FALL), **FIGHTING** 0, **INTELLIGENCE** 2 (ASTRONOMY, ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY), **PERCEPTION** 1 (SEEING), **STRENGTH** 1, **WILLPOWER** 1

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
13	12	13	1
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
PISTOL	+1	2D6+2	

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Jury Rig, Speed Demon

TALENTS: Pilot (Expert)

EQUIPMENT: pistol, vac suit

THREAT: MINOR

MCRN OFFICERS

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 2 (PISTOLS), **COMMUNICATION 1** (PERSUASION), **CONSTITUTION 1**, **DEXTERITY 2** (DRIVING), **FIGHTING 2** (BRAWLING, LIGHT WEAPONS), **INTELLIGENCE 0** (LAW), **PERCEPTION 2** (SEEING), **STRENGTH 1**, **WILLPOWER 1**

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
12	11	14	1

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
BATON	+4	1D6+1
PISTOL	+4	2D6+2
TASER	+2	1D6-3

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Double-Team, Good Cop/Bad Cop

TALENTS: Observation (Novice), Protector (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: baton, badge and ID, hand terminal, pistol, restraints, taser, riot shield

THREAT: MINOR

GREGORY CARRANZA

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1, **COMMUNICATION 3** (EXPRESSION), **CONSTITUTION 0**, **DEXTERITY 2**, **FIGHTING 0**, **INTELLIGENCE 3** (BUSINESS, CURRENT AFFAIRS, LAW, TECHNOLOGY), **PERCEPTION 2** (SEARCHING, SEEING), **STRENGTH 0**, **WILLPOWER 2** (SELF-DISCIPLINE)

MARJORIE LOUIE

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1, **COMMUNICATION 3** (LEADERSHIP, ETIQUETTE), **CONSTITUTION 1**, **DEXTERITY 2**, **FIGHTING 0**, **INTELLIGENCE 2** (ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY, SECURITY), **PERCEPTION 2**, **STRENGTH 1**, **WILLPOWER 1** (FAITH)

ROCKHOUND CREW

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1 (PISTOLS), **COMMUNICATION 1**, **CONSTITUTION 2**, **DEXTERITY 2** (ACROBATICS, FREE-FALL, PILOTING), **FIGHTING 2** (BRAWLING), **INTELLIGENCE 1** (EARTH SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, EVALUATION), **PERCEPTION 1**, **STRENGTH 1**, **WILLPOWER 1** (COURAGE)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	15	11	1

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
CLUB	+2	1D6+1
KNIFE	+2	1D6+2
PISTOL	+3	2D6+1
UNARMED	+4	1D3+1

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Knock Out, Take Cover

TALENTS: Agility (Novice), Fringer (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: flight coveralls, machine tools, makeshift club, pistol, utility knife

THREAT: MINOR

SCRIMSHAW CREW

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 2 (PISTOLS), **COMMUNICATION 1**, **CONSTITUTION 1**, **DEXTERITY 2** (PILOTING, STEALTH), **FIGHTING 2** (LIGHT WEAPONS), **INTELLIGENCE 0** (ENGINEERING), **PERCEPTION 1** (SEEING), **STRENGTH 2** (INTIMIDATION), **WILLPOWER 1**

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
12	11	12	1

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
CLUB	+2	1D6+1
KNIFE	+2	1D6+2

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Hamstring, Vicious Blow

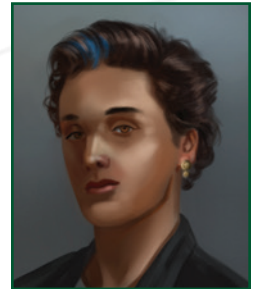
TALENTS: Fringer (Novice), Overwhelm Style (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: flight coveralls, machine tools, pistol, utility knife

THREAT: MINOR

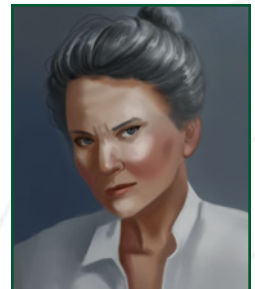
GREGORY CARRANZA

Gregory Carranza was born on Ganymede and grew up in Port Hampton—a local boy in a port town known for fun. His parents worked in the shipyards. He dreamed of being a journalist, but the outer planets don't have a lot of opportunities in that respect. He did some freelance writing for Earth and Mars news outlets, but without an actual byline his chances of growing his career were small. Although the Pyramid News Network isn't known for its journalistic integrity, Gregory genuinely aims for veracity in his stories, trying to make his own name mean something. When Alina contacted him, he saw a chance to actually scoop the large news agencies on a big story. He is keeping Alina's identity a secret, even from the other staffers.



MARJORIE LOUIE

Marjorie Louie is a Lunar native. She studied electronics and security, and eventually founded Caracara Electronics, a high-end security electronics company. She sells alarms, camera systems, surveillance gear, and other technological items. She's rumored to have government contracts for espionage and surveillance gear, but her legendary discretion doesn't allow her to confirm or deny it. Many of the largest Lunar companies use Caracara Electronics for their on-site security systems, and many of the Moon's wealthiest private citizens use their products for home security.



SCRIMSHAW CREW

Erin Lee's crew of mercenaries rotate out with some regularity. She's smart enough to limit the information that they know about any given job. While loyalty

can be limited in the mercenary field of work, Erin's employees generally trust her not to sell them out and they'll generally repay the favor.

MCRN OFFICERS

The members of the Martian Congressional Republic Navy are split into two organizations: the Home Fleet, stationed on Mars, and the Jupiter fleet, which patrols the Jovian system. The Jupiter fleet watches over Mars's interests in the Jupiter system, including Port Hampton on Callisto, where shipyards manufacture enormous spaceships for the MCRN. Their police presence in the town is intended to protect against major threats, and the officers are inclined to let the typical debauchery of a "port" town slide.

SONYA DANG

Sonya was born on Mars to parents in the MCRN. When they were later transferred to the Jupiter fleet, Sonya and her siblings soon found themselves living in the outer planets. An aspiring actress, she eventually settled in Port Hampton, working in the various small theaters throughout the settlement. The Pyramid News Network hired her on as an anchor for their video broadcasts. She liked having a steady gig instead of contract work, and once she was tired of being on screen, she worked her way up the administrative side of the company. Now the general manager, she still doesn't worry about the sensationalist nature of the network's stories, generally regarding their product as entertainment instead of news.



ROCKHOUND CREW

The crew of the *Rockhound* have backgrounds spanning the entire solar system. They all have experience in the mining industry, but have earned spots on this scouting vessel—a much nicer gig than working in an actual mine. The whole crew have worked several assignments together and all respect Captain Njoku.

VECTOR SECURITIES AGENTS

The agents who attack the offices of the Pyramid News Network and ambush the player characters there are similar to those who ambushed them in **CHAPTER 1**. Again, they are dressed in black and do not carry any identification. However, if the player characters access the hand terminals carried by the agents, they find brief dossiers on themselves: pictures, biographies, and known associations. There is also extremely detailed information about the *Anne Bonny*. It should be clear that whoever the agents are with, they are keeping an eye on the characters.

VISTA PARK GANG MEMBERS

The Vista Park gang is just one of many who roam this part of New York City. Known for defending their territory with brutal efficiency, they do sometimes show mercy in exchange for money and valuables. Most locals know to avoid this park at night.

SONYA DANG

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 0, **COMMUNICATION** 3 (ETIQUETTE, EXPRESSION, PERFORMING), **CONSTITUTION** 1, **DEXTERITY** 1 (SLEIGHT OF HAND), **FIGHTING** 0, **INTELLIGENCE** 2 (ART, CURRENT AFFAIRS), **PERCEPTION** 2 (INTUITION, SEEING), **STRENGTH** 1, **WILLPOWER** 1

VECTOR SECURITIES AGENTS

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1 (PISTOLS, RIFLES), **COMMUNICATION** 0, **CONSTITUTION** 2, **DEXTERITY** 1 (FREE-FALL), **FIGHTING** 1 (BRAWLING), **INTELLIGENCE** 0, **PERCEPTION** 1, **STRENGTH** 2, **WILLPOWER** 2

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	12	11	4 (2)
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
PISTOL	+3	2D6+1	
RIFLE	+3	3D6+1	
UNARMED	+3	1D6+2	

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Adrenaline Rush, Double-Team, Group Tactics

TALENTS: Pinpoint Accuracy (Novice), Striking Style (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, light armor, pistol, rifle, thruster pack, vac suit

THREAT: MINOR

VISTA PARK GANG MEMBERS

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1, **COMMUNICATION** 1, **CONSTITUTION** 1, **DEXTERITY** 2, **FIGHTING** 2 (BRAWLING, LIGHT WEAPONS), **INTELLIGENCE** 0, **PERCEPTION** 0, **STRENGTH** 2 (INTIMIDATION), **WILLPOWER** 0

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
12	11	12	1
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
CLUB	+4	1D6+2	
LIGHT CHAIN	+4	1D6+2	
KNUCKLE DUSTERS	+4	1D3+2	

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Shock and Awe, Whatever's Handy

TALENTS: Party Animal (Novice), Hurled Weapon Style (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: knuckle dusters, makeshift club, heavy leathers (or equivalent)

THREAT: MINOR



3: TWO KINDS OF PRAYER

Two Kinds of Prayer is the third adventure of the *Abzu's Bounty* series for *The Expanse Roleplaying Game*. Following the events of **Satellites and Secrets**, it takes the player characters to Mars to finally deliver their passenger and patron, Diana. After demanding passage at Prometheus and detouring the ship to hunt the Belt radio stations broadcasting information about the protomolecule, their relationship and perhaps even their adventures seem at an end.

But there is little in the Solar System that doesn't carry history, and that goes for ships as well as people. The *Anne Bonny*, the crew's ship, began its life in the Martian dockyards of Londres Nova, and its return digs sharply into long-buried wounds of the Guan family, important figures in the upper echelons of the Martian capital's political and spiritual scene. Without meaning to, the crew finds themselves the focus of high society, wined and dined and plied to gain access to their ship and any secrets it contains. A sudden and interested buyer in their ill-gotten ship may even seem like a windfall for characters not yet ready to be done with their adventures.

The crew uncovered Sebastian Pope's bug aboard their ship in their previous adventures, but that doesn't mean the paranoid elite has lost all interest in their travels. If anything, their activities—destruction of his surveillance devices, appearance at the factory, and engagement with pirate broadcasters who know a suspicious amount of information about the protomolecule—have all convinced Pope that the crew knows who he is and will come for him. Pope's longstanding arrangement with the *Anne Bonny's* previous captain, Claire O'Rourke, was far from unique. He has employed various criminals and rabble-rousers across the Belt to harry competitors over the years, particularly violent factions of the OPA who are always hungry for funding and targets. Now that the crew are on the move and may know too much—lulled into ease by the comforts of wealth—Pope enlists the crew of the smuggler ship *Atargatis* to hunt them down and silence them.

OVERVIEW

The player characters have lost little time in making enemies since setting off on their own. At the behest of their enigmatic patron, Diana, they hunted down a suspicious pirate broadcast that seemed far too knowledgeable about the protomolecule they recently uncovered as part of the crew of the *Abzu's Bounty*. Now in command of the *Anne Bonny* and headed to Mars, the crew has already ruffled feathers among the OPA, as well as wandering into the crosshairs of mega-rich entrepreneur Sebastian Pope. The entrepreneur has successfully seized the *Abzu's Bounty* sample of the protomolecule, but now worries

that the crew's interest in the Belter pirate station is a sign they suspect what their lost treasure is, and that Pope now holds it. It's a paranoid assumption on Pope's part, but one that motivates him to brutal revenge. He surmises that, at the very least, eliminating the *Bonny's* crew will wipe away the last evidence of his protomolecule sample's existence.

But the PCs' troubles don't end with their unseen pursuers. A much bigger problem hides in the ship they command. The *Anne Bonny* began its service twelve years ago under the name *Anne Marie*, flown by the Martian merchant Ephrem Guan. Once a wealthy son of a prominent Martian family, Ephrem left Mars under scandal following the disappearance of his fiancé, Anne Marie Sousa. He had confronted his older brother, Beauregard, over the elder's infatuation with his fiancé, and even intended to kill him. Beauregard wrestled the gun away, accidentally shooting Anne in the process. The brothers agreed to take this secret to their graves, paying off a local shady aquaponics farm to dispose of the evidence of their crime and using family connections to stymie the police investigation. Disgusted with himself, Ephrem used his share of their inheritance to buy a ship and name it for Sousa so he would never forget his crime, and set off into the Belt to make a new life for himself as a trader.

The Belt was not welcoming to a dour Martian from a privileged family, and Ephrem quickly fell into smuggling. His Martian manners and family name helped him sidestep the suspicions normally heaped on Belter pilots in stations run by the Inner Planets. An unfortunate encounter with a UN patrol boat left the *Anne Marie* limping into port barely able to hold onto its own oxygen, and a few of Ephrem's contacts introduced him to the OPA—who offered to fund the boat's repairs if Ephrem flew for them. Bitter and desperate, he agreed, and the OPA added better weapons to the *Anne Marie*. Ephrem flew her for years, sometimes smuggling, sometimes running rescue missions, sometimes attacking OPA targets. Guan died in a boarding action four years ago, leaving the *Anne Marie* in the hands of his XO, Claire O'Rourke, who quickly changed the ship's name and much of the crew compliment in order to focus on piracy.

Back on Mars, Beauregard grew his family's wealth and political influence into a massive mega-church—the First Reformed Martian Baptists—making himself a powerful political and spiritual leader in Londes Novo. He heard the rumors of his brother's fall from grace and turn to crime, and used his resources to squash those rumors before they could tarnish the family reputation. As far as Mars cared, Ephrem Guan flew off into isolation after the tragic disappearance of his fiancé, never to be heard from again.

At least, until his ship returned to port.

Beauregard is frustrated enough that his brother has seemingly returned to Mars and fears a confrontation—at least until he learns that the ship is now in the hands of strangers. But the ship's return has reignited the old paranoidias, and Beauregard fears that his brother may have stashed some proof of their crime aboard the *Anne Marie*. His suspicions are correct, as Ephrem kept a private partition in the ship's drive for his personal log—and confessions—which has remained hidden since his death.

As **Two Kinds of Prayer** begins, the crew lands at the Martian capital of Londres Nova to deliver their only passenger, Diana, as well as resupply and look for work. As they settle in, the dockmaster, Carmo Vidal, comments on the ship's history, having helped build the *Anne Bonny* twelve years earlier for Ephrem Guan. This history unfolds as Beauregard Guan, Ephrem's brother, soon contacts them for news about his brother's ship and any news about his estranged brother. While disappointed that the crew has no news about his brother, he offers to let them stay in Ephrem's old penthouse in the high-end Aterpol neighborhood, enjoying the city's luxuries on his behalf and making noises about hiring them for future work. Eventually, Beauregard invites the crew out to dinner and makes a generous offer to buy their ship. During the meal he perhaps lets a little too much information on his and Ephrem's history slip as he grows increasingly nervous about what evidence of their past crimes his brother may have left behind.

As the crew leaves the dinner with Beauregard Guan, Sebastian Pope's assassins catch up with them, likely ambushing the crew while unarmed. With the assailants' origin and purpose unclear, the surviving crew can track the toughs back to an aquaponics farm in the low-rent Martineztown neighborhood. Ashbury Aquaponics has long worked with Mars' organized crime and elite families—Beauregard Guan among them—to help make problems disappear. So once the crew begins investigating, the owner messages Guan about their suspicious activity. Guan, worried the crew are collecting evidence of the murder he and his brother committed, sends his guards to kill them. If the characters survive and continue their investigation they can stumble across the very evidence Guan worried they already possessed.

Finally, the three factions—the player characters, Guan, and the *Atargatis* crew—meet in a final confrontation. A little cleverness from the players can turn their attackers against one another, giving them the opportunity to escape, potentially turn over evidence against Guan, or blackmail him to line their own pockets.

“Holden had once dated a Buddhist who said that death was merely a different state of being, and people only feared the unknown that lay behind that transition. Death without warning was preferable, as it removed all fear. He felt he now had the counterargument.”

— *Leviathan Wakes*

RUNNING THIS ADVENTURE

Two Kinds of Prayer is about guilt and overcorrection creating far more problems than needed. Both of the powerful men targeting the player characters would have little to fear for their old crimes if they didn't force themselves into the lives of unwitting travelers, and ultimately they both lay the seeds for their own destruction.

Two Kinds of Prayer establishes several important things for the course of the *Abzu's Bounty* series:

- It gives the crew a renewed and personal reason to pursue the mysterious oligarch, Sebastian Pope. If they followed up on some leads in **Satellites and Secrets**—after removing the hooks he had in their ship last adventure—they might feel free from his grasp. However, the dispatched crew of the *Atargatis* suggests he knows who they are and wants to eliminate them.
- It provides new opportunities to rebuild their Income if they have thoroughly depleted their savings over the course of the previous two adventures.
- It establishes a history for the crew's ship, the *Anne Bonny*, beyond their personal experience with it.

ESTABLISHING A CONNECTION

Beauregard Liang Guan serves as minister and CEO of one of Mars's largest mega-churches, and Martian characters might be aware of him or his old-money family, who include some of the planet's earliest colonists.

One plot element that appears in **Two Kinds of Prayer** is a hidden partition on the *Anne Bonny's* computer, which the player characters should become aware of some time before the adventure's climax. The crew may discover this hidden partition while sweeping the ship for Pope's bugs, or may stumble across it during their long flight to Mars—particularly if any player character selects the Maintenance activity for that interlude. The partition predates any of Pope's bugs by a decade and contains the ship's original registry—listing its name as the *Anne Marie* and its owner as Ephrem Xiong

Guan—as well as heavily encrypted logs. The crew may discover the partition's password ("Camellia") during the adventure, or they may wish to attempt to decrypt the files themselves. Decrypting the files is best handled as a plot device, but you may also run it as a **TN 17 Intelligence (Decryption) advanced test (success threshold 15)** with an increment of one day.

It's possible that the crew have known about the partition for weeks if you use this option, and the plot-twist it contains can spoil parts of the adventure. In this case, you may elect to have the partition be its own small, independent system that doesn't connect with the rest of the ship's systems and only activates when the nav computer reads that the ship is approaching Mars. You may instead rule that decrypting the partition requires long-outdated legacy drivers that are hard to find on any public networks and must be recovered from Mars. Ephrem ultimately wanted his confession found, but couldn't face the consequences of it during his lifetime, so he didn't make it impossible to find or decrypt, but did tie it to a place to which he swore he'd never return.

MARS AND WEAPONS

While a military-focused society, Mars maintains strict gun control measures for public safety, particularly in any areas where weapon discharge could damage domes or environmental controls. Even law enforcement and security forces generally rely on tasers and stun guns, only falling back on firearms for riot control. Obtaining a private firearms license is expensive and difficult. Firearms are permitted aboard ships, and the port authority generally looks the other way about sidearms, but Londres Nova does not permit open carry of any weapons—lethal or nonlethal—and the PCs will not be able to obtain a license for any firearms during their short stay. Concealing a pistol-sized weapon on their person requires a **TN 14 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** test, assumes the PCs are wearing bulky clothing, and requires a Major action to draw in combat. Anything larger than a pistol is impossible to conceal.

Obtaining a license for stun weapons is much easier and many Martians carry defensive, nonlethal weapons, particularly in the lower levels. But again the PCs will not be able to obtain a license during their short visit (especially as foreigners). They may attempt to conceal a weapon (see above) or forge a non-lethal carry permit with a **TN 14 Intelligence (Security)** test, but such a forgery will not stand up in any official record searches. The same restriction and licenses apply to most melee weapons. Even with a license, stun and melee weapons cannot be carried openly and must be worn inside a jacket or carried in a case, purse, or bag.

INTERLUDE

LONG WAY HOME

The journey to Mars requires several days, giving the crew an interlude to recover from the adventures in **Satellites and Secrets**, develop skills, foster their relationships, or repair damage to their ship. This is an excellent chance to remind players of what they've accomplished so far and Diana's ultimate goal of returning to Mars.

**SCENE I****MY BROTHER'S KEEPER****EXPLORATION ENCOUNTER**

The *Anne Bonny* arrives on Mars after its trip from Luna, the crew unwittingly arriving at its port of origin.

The Anne Bonny slides down through Mars's atmosphere vertically, using its drive for a controlled descent. Her bulkheads groan as she settles into a steady one-third G. She'll need a booster assist to climb back out of the planet's gravity well, but Diana has already assured you she is happy to cover those fees. "Small price to pay to avoid the smell of public orbital shuttles," she mentions while waving away the cost concerns.

The Opportunity Shipyards sit just outside Londres Nova, capital of the Martian Congressional Republic, and bustle with all the energy of Ceres or Ganymede even before counting the frantic scramble around the adjoining navy ships.

"It's been quite the experience," Diana comments as she begins cycling the airlock. Nothing in her voice or face hint if that experience is good or bad. "I'll secure a line of credit for you at the dockmaster's office. It should cover docking fees and your orbital assist, but you'll need to schedule that yourselves. If you feel like sticking around for the next week or so, I might have another lead for you. But Opportunity's also the busiest port on Mars, so I'm sure you can dig up work for yourselves if you'd rather. In the meantime, you're in the shining city on the hill. Hopefully you get a chance to enjoy it."

Most any ship with an Epstein drive can climb back out of a gravity well—even one like Earth's—by generating more than one G of thrust, but firing an Epstein straight down at anything larger than a rock can cause blowback and extensive damage to the drive. Most ships landing planetside depend on shuttles, tugs, or chemical rockets designed for the task to pull them to a minimum safe altitude before firing up their drive and finishing their assisted ascent. On a port as busy as Opportunity, the waits for orbital assist can take days, and the fees for unassisted launches are astronomical (due to the risk of damage to nearby ships and the surface of Mars), and beyond the line of credit provided by Diana.

CARMO VIDAL

CARMO VIDAL, ASSISTANT DOCKMASTER

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 0, COMMUNICATION 1 (BARGAINING, LEADERSHIP),
CONSTITUTION 2, DEXTERITY 1 (CRAFTING), **FIGHTING 1, INTELLIGENCE 2** (ENGINEERING, LAW), **PERCEPTION 2, STRENGTH 0, WILLPOWER 3**

Generally upbeat, Vidal is a proud third-generation Martian from the Martinez-town neighborhood who worked their way up from a mechanic and welder in the shipyards, assisted by a photographic memory they've never quite learned to exploit. They're corruptible, but no more than is necessary to maintain their position—they'll call the police before calling in any mob legbreakers, but would rather avoid calling either. They speak a spattering of Belter Creole thanks to the volume of Belter traders that roll through the port, and generally look on Belters more favorably than most of their colleagues.

SHE'S A FINE SHIP

If the crew approaches the dockmaster's office to arrange for an orbital assist, the harried Assistant Dockmaster Carmo Vidal, mechanically recites the schedule and estimates five days as they begin looking over the ship's registry. After a few moments their eyes brighten up, and in a more personable tone they say, "You flew in on the *Anne Marie*? Well *damn!* how's Ephrem been holding up? Never thought we'd see him again."

Vidal remembers Ephrem fondly, having worked with him to originally outfit and modify the *Anne Marie*. Helping manage the port is monotonous, so Carmo is always happy for a few minutes of friendly chitchat if the crew is curious. Potential questions and answers include:

YOU MUST BE MISTAKEN. WE FLEW IN ON THE ANNE BONNY, NOT THE ANNE MARIE.

"So Ephrem finally changed the name, eh? I told him naming your ship for an ex was asking for more heartache. But check out that custom nav array. Built that by hand! You don't forget work like that. Bet the inner port airlock door is still sticky, too. That's from a frame misalignment."

WHAT EX?/WHAT HEARTACHE?

"Ephrem ordered a ship after his girl left him. Seemed pretty done with Mars. There were some vicious rumors back then that he'd...y'know...and that's why no one's heard from her since. But Ephrem just never seemed like the type, y'know?"

HOW DO YOU KNOW OUR SHIP?

"I helped build her. Must've been a good twelve years ago now. Base design's a stock freighter, but Ephrem wanted high-end environmental systems, decent kitchen...y'know, a few comforts of home."

WHO'S EPHREM?

"Ephrem Guan? Your captain? Or judging by your confusion...maybe the man you bought her from?"

WE DON'T KNOW EPHREM.

"Huh.... Didn't think he'd ever sell the Anne Marie. I guess time heals all wounds. Hope he's doing okay, wherever he settled down."

Carmo can't move up the orbital assist, but is more apologetic now that they recognize the ship, and they promise to keep a close eye on her on the crew's behalf.

BARREN FIELDS

If the crew looks around the port for work, they have trouble. The war with the Belt and the recent destruction of Deimos have hit the Martian economy hard and work isn't as readily available as it was just six months prior. A **TN 10 Communication (Bargaining)** or **Intelligence (Business)** finds that the MCR Navy is looking for trawlers to help tow the moon's remains into a stable ring orbit—slow, dangerous, and poorly-paid work the *Anne Bonny* isn't well-suited for—but that most of the other

available work goes to ships with a reliable route and schedules. No one seems eager to take a chance on unknowns until the economy turns around.

If the crew can make some direct contacts with local businesses, they can likely scrounge up new work, but doing so will require visiting Londres Nova proper and meeting local businesses face-to-face rather than just posting to the local gig economy partitions.

Opportunity Spaceport doesn't offer housing accommodations unless the crew wants to sleep in their own ship, but does host several cafeterias—offering various flavors of artificial, shaped foodstuffs as well as a small selection of authentic food—alongside a dozen bars and twice as many brothels. If the PCs hope for somewhere to stay besides their ship, they find that most of Londres Nova is more expensive than the Belt—a visitor's lifestyle counts as one level lower than their Income would suggest (characters with an Income of 4 would have a Basic lifestyle in Londres Nova, for example). The easiest place to find Impoverished and Basic accommodations is Martineztown, the industrial neighborhood closest to the port.

ARRANGEMENTS TO MEET

Beauregard Guan has had several worms in the port computers for years to keep track of his brother's ship and alert him should it come close. He took notice when the *Anne Bonny* flew to Luna, and was ready for the vessel to return to Mars. He dispatched his bodyguard, Syeda Yoosamran to investigate and bring Ephrem—or whoever is flying his ship—back to Beauregard's office. For more information on Syeda Yoosamran, see the **Adversaries & Allies** section at the end of this adventure for more information.

Once the crew gets tired of exploring the port, Yoosamran approaches them.

A tall woman, stout enough to be an Earther, approaches you and nods politely. "I am seeking the crew of the Anne Bonny," she states more than asks. "I represent Mr. Beauregard Guan, a local businessman who is eager to learn whatever he can regarding your travels. If you would see fit to visit his offices in Aterpol, he would be very appreciative."

She hands you a stack of transit cards, as well as a business card listing the offices of "The Honorable Beauregard Guan, Minister of the First Reformed Martian Baptists Congregation."

A **TN 13 Intelligence (Security)** test recognizes the gait, posture, and demeanor of a bodyguard in Yoosamran, while a **TN 13 Perception (Seeing)** test spots a stun-gun in a concealed shoulder holster under her coat. She has no interest in taking the crew by force or otherwise threatening them, and is willing to answer questions, but is frank about having other business for the day and only knows so much about Mr. Guan's interests. Potential questions and answers include:

WHY DOES MR. GUAN WANT TO SEE US?

"Mr. Guan's brother, Ephrem, last left Mars aboard your ship, and has not been heard from in over a decade. He understands you may not know Ephrem's whereabouts, but he is sentimental and eager to learn whatever he can about your vessel's history."

WHO IS MR. GUAN?

"Mr. Guan is the minister of the city's First Reformed Church of Martian Baptists, and an investor supporting many local businesses. He has a number of friends in the Martian economic and political communities."

A **TN 11 Intelligence (Business or Current Affairs)** test will reveal this same information.



AN OFFER THEY CAN REFUSE

The adventure assumes the crew—without contacts or funding on a strange planet—follows up on Beauregard Guan's offer to meet, but they are by no means required to do so. If they ignore the offer, Guan assigns Yoosamran to follow them for a few days to watch for strange behavior, but assumes they know nothing about his past. The player characters will need to find their own way around Londres Nova, possibly inserting themselves into the middle of other small trials and dramas of human life. The crew of the *Atargatis* will attack them in a few days' time (see **Scene 3**), being unconnected to Guan's own machinations, which may still lead the crew to the events of **Scene 4** to investigate the attack.

Even if the PCs don't meet with him, Guan takes the liberty of boarding their ship to search it and their computer for clues his brother may have left behind, leading to less context in **Scene 5**, but the events there remain a three-way standoff.

CAN'T WE JUST MESSAGE MR. GUAN?

"Mr. Guan prefers discretion in his family dealings. But once he has taken your measure himself, he may be willing to discuss matters remotely."

WILL MR. GUAN PAY US FOR OUR TIME?/DOES MR. GUAN HAVE ANY WORK FOR US?

"I am not authorized to bargain on Mr. Guan's behalf, but he has a reputation for generosity few in Londres Nova would dispute."

The transit cards Yoosamran offered the crew are tied to prime transit accounts, allowing them to not only use the city's tubes, but also call courier carts if they don't wish to travel among the masses. A courier cart is private, but also slower and requires a ten-minute wait for pickup.

THE GENEROSITY OF MR. GUAN

Beauregard Guan's offices occupy the top two floors of Guan Tower, a 70-story skyscraper in the Aterpol neighborhood. This wealthy governmental district sits under its own dome—the second-largest in Londres Nova, after the agricultural dome in Salton—and supports comfort and wealth few Martians ever actually experience.

The building security has been told to expect the crew and so don't bar them even if they have Belters or Earthers among their number. Syeda Yoosamran meets them in the lobby and asks them to leave any weapons with the front desk, though she isn't especially concerned—expecting her security crew to be able to handle anything a ragtag band of traders can muster.

The golden-butterscotch sky of Mars shines through the transparent far wall of this palatial office, overlooking Aterpol's wide streets and parks below. The neighborhood drapes itself in the weight of history, even though its actual tenure is as airy and fragile as the oak trees growing spindly in the light gravity. The building rises up from the subterranean levels and shares airspace inside the dome with only four other structures, providing a gods'-eye view of the slowly-evolving Martian terrain.

Behind a carved mahogany desk sits an empty high-backed chair of dark brown leather. A clink of glass and ice in another corner heralds a tall man in suit and tie, hiding behind a highball glass and an easy smile. He steps toward you, one hand outstretched. "Mighty glad y'all could do me the pleasure of stopping by! Beauregard Liang Guan. Pleased to make your acquaintance!"

While his rich office and disciplined security suggest a serious man, Beauregard Guan works to cultivate an informal, "everyman" personality that people generally trust. He offers the crew whatever they'd like from his office bar—including several Earth varieties of scotch and tequila and Martian icemelt water, which he proudly boasts, "Ain't been liquid in fifty million years." While he comes across as accommodating and friendly, behind the mask Beauregard begins this encounter with a Standoffish attitude; keep track of his attitude as it may shift and affect later scenes. Beauregard's attitude cannot be shifted more than one step in either direction in this scene, short of actually attacking him.



Beauregard tries to put the crew at ease—though Yoosamran remains in the room and five guards stand ready in the next office—and assures the crew up front that he has no interest in reporting anything they tell him to the authorities, or in seizing their ship. “I understand the frontier is a might treacherous, and a decent man’s gotta do what he’s gotta do to get by. God will be your judge, not me.” Instead, he’s curious where the characters obtained the *Anne Bonny*—the *Anne Marie*, as he keeps calling it—and if the player characters know anything about his missing brother, Ephrem. He appreciates good manners as “right proper” and calls out rudeness as “balls” with a tone of respect. The crew is free to leave whenever they like, but in the meantime they can learn the following:

Ephrem has been missing for about twelve years, and that he left after his fiancé, Anne Marie Sousa, disappeared. Beauregard insists Ephrem couldn’t handle the humiliation of his love leaving him and the judging stares of the community, but a **TN 15 Perception (Empathy)** test recognizes that Beauregard is holding something back. Confronting him about this, or a separate **TN 14 Communication (Investigation)** test later reveals that rumors suggested Ephrem killed Anne in a lover’s quarrel and fled from his guilt, though no evidence exists.

Ephrem and Beauregard parted on bad terms, after a falling out shortly after their parents—Liang and Matilda—died in a crash shortly before Anne left.

Ephrem used his share of the inheritance to purchase and refit the *Anne Marie*, while Beauregard invested his in the family’s church, helping it grow considerably and eventually becoming minister for what is now one of the biggest mega-churches on Mars.

In addition, the PCs can coax additional information from Beauregard with a good show of manners and a successful **TN 12 Communications (Etiquette)** test:

Beauregard has heard rumors of the *Anne Bonny* being used for illegal activity as part of his efforts to contact Ephrem, but doesn’t believe them. He would appreciate the crew’s discretion on the matter, to protect his brother’s legacy.

Though Beauregard’s primary business is serving as his church’s minister, he uses his family fortune to invest in small companies owned by congregation members. He has several business contacts who may be interested in working with a flexible ship and crew.

As the discussion winds down, Beauregard seems to have taken a shine to the crew for one reason or another and makes them a generous offer:

“Y’all are basically like family, taking care of Ephrem’s baby like you are. Ever since my brother ran off, I been keeping his place just the way he left it in case he came home. You promise to show it proper respect, y’all’re welcome to stay there free of charge, long as you like. Now I won’t take no for an answer. You go get yourselves settled in and we’ll see if we can’t scare up some work for you. In the meantime, you need anything, you just call Syeda. She’ll take good care of you.”

Ephrem’s old home is a penthouse seven blocks from the Guan building and overlooking one of the neighborhood’s nicer parks. The spacious apartment features a living room, kitchen, dining room, three bedrooms, four bathrooms, and a terrace garden thick with blooming camellias. The building does not impose water rationing on residents; two of the bathrooms even include large tubs for bathing, and the building includes a bathhouse and pool for residents—unheard of luxuries anywhere but Earth. Syeda also arranges for a respectable line of credit with several nearby food and entertainment vendors, allowing the crew to live a Wealthy lifestyle (though this credit account only extends to lifestyle needs, and does not affect the character’s Income score or actual purchasing power).

INTERLUDE

MY BURDEN IS LIGHT

Living in the lap of luxury, the characters have an interlude they can spend enjoying the finest elements of Martian culture: music, shows, literature, fine liquor, and discrete company. The PCs have at least 24 hours before moving on to **Scene 2**, though you can extend this to two or three days if any member of the crew wants to pursue any particularly lengthy activities.

INVESTIGATING THE PENTHOUSE

The penthouse has obviously seen little use: all its furnishings are a decade out of style, no food can be found in the cupboards, and the basins and fixtures are dry from disuse. Guan pays a cleaning service to tidy once a month so nothing is dusty or falling apart, but nothing about the apartment feels lived-in.

Three obvious security cameras sit inside small domes mounted in the ceiling in the public areas—common fixtures throughout the building—and can be deactivated with a **TN 11 Intelligence (Technology)** test, or spoofed into running old video files with a **TN 13** test. A more discrete audio bug requires a **TN 15 Perception (Searching)** test to discover in the master bedroom, though it is an old model, likely as disused as the rest of the apartment (it is left over from Beauregard and Ephrem's inheritance feud, and is unrelated to any of the bugs the crew may have found on their ship last adventure).

Beauregard had most of Ephrem's personal effects placed in storage, though a large family portrait—including a teenage Beauregard and Ephrem as well as their parents—still hangs on the living room wall and a framed photograph of a pretty, dusky-skinned woman wearing an expensive dress and an expensive smile sits on an end table in the living room: Anne Marie Sousa.

INVESTIGATING BEAUREGARD GUAN

Beauregard Guan is a public figure in Londres Nova, and much of his life story is available on the public networks. The Guan family stretches back to the first Martian settlers. They were early investors in the city's domes, making them a part of the first generation of the Martian "air barons" who sold open space at a premium when the planet began to escape from the cramped, underground tunnels. The Guans were already a family associated with the Martian division of the Baptist church, but Beauregard himself found religion as a young man and eventually became minister of the First Reformed Congregation of Martian Baptists—a popular religion among Londres Nova's upper and middle classes. His mega-church counts over 3,000 worshippers who regularly attend the weekly services. He is married, with three children, though sparse information exists about his family.

A successful **TN 13 Intelligence (Law or Research)** test can uncover more details, including an overturned conviction for tax fraud seven years ago, several citations for public drunkenness, and an assault charge from his college days. A **TN 15 Communication (Investigation)** test also uncovers rumors from twelve years ago that suggest Beauregard had an affair he paid considerable sums to cover up, and that it ties to his falling out with Ephrem.

INVESTIGATING EPHREM GUAN AND ANNE MARIE SOUSA

Like his brother, Ephrem was a public figure and much of his life is public record, including a long list of youthful rebellions in his teenage and college years—mostly fighting and drugs. He settled down in his twenties and took on more responsibility for Guan Financial, the family business, from their mother. He returned to drugs and public confrontation following his parents' fatal crash on a business flight from Mariner Valley, which seemed to destroy his relationship with his brother and fiancé. Once Anne left, he spent what money he had left on a ship and took off for the Belt. What little remained of Guan Financial was transferred to Beauregard after three years, and was a paltry sum compared to Beauregard's own net worth.

Anne Marie Sousa was likewise a child of privilege and spent her youth clubbing, doing drugs, and fighting, before settling down to take over family responsibilities in her twenties. She met Ephrem in college, and they vacillated between friendship and sex for years before officially becoming a couple at their parents' urging. She disappeared twelve years ago, a few months after the deaths of the senior Guans. Official police reports still list her as a missing person, though rumors suggest she was either killed by her fiancée or traveled to Earth where she died of disease.

A **TN 13 Intelligence (Research)** or **Communication (Etiquette)** test reveals that Ephrem and Anne had a troubled relationship, with Ephrem demanding complete fidelity from her while philandering and maintaining various mistresses. A **TN 15 Communications (Investigation)** test uncovers one mutual friend of the brothers, Simon Patel. If they talk to Patel, Simon confirms seeing the brothers together after their falling out, when Ephrem arrived in a fury while Simon was visiting Beauregard. Though Simon slipped out before learning anything juicy.

INVESTIGATING THE ANNE BONNY

Learning anything else about the *Anne Bonny's* history requires hacking into low-security MCR government records. This requires a **TN 15 test** with both **Intelligence (Technology)** and **Communications (Bargaining or Deception)** to secure basic

user credentials. Succeeding at both checks uncovers unremarkable construction records and early trade contracts, as well as UN records of an altercation with a patrol boat nine years ago, though the record is incomplete and does not reference the nature of the incident. After that, the records only list docking times at various Belt stations with suspiciously little detail as though the records were scrubbed. In truth, Beauregard has been paying a contact in the police to expunge records of his brother's ship of anything remotely suspicious or criminal. Also, Diana had much of the ship's record scrubbed when they took command of the *Bonny*.

SCENE 2

AS GOLD IS TESTED

SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

After the crew tires of exploring Mars's capital, they receive a message from Beauregard inviting them to dinner. The restaurant—the Palea—is posh, and reservations are typically booked out a month in advance. The restaurant has a dress code, which Beauregard politely points out in his message, but he arranges for respectable clothing to be delivered to the suite that afternoon.

THE PALEA

Nearly a century old, the Palea is a supper club specializing in Martian ingredients—mostly rice, seafood, and local varieties of Earth spices engineered to flourish in the Martian atmosphere. Their specialty is *Ilaeb*, a staple of early Martian settlers who combined several Earth cuisines into something new and unique. Slow-cooked, with rice and various ingredients and spices, its closest Earth analogues are Spanish paella, Middle Eastern tagines, or the biryani of India. Poorer versions use spice, soy protein, fungus, and beans, but more sophisticated dishes incorporate Martian seafood and vegetables as well (and cost an order of magnitude more). They also offer a rich variety of vegetable and fruit dishes—rare luxuries on Mars—as well as tuna, salmon, and shellfish.

The Palea is almost indulgently large, its high ceilings draped with gauzy fabric to diffuse the lights. A water feature dominates the floor, with most of the tables facing it. A small band behind the fountain strums the rich, moody chords of Martian folk revival. The overall atmosphere—between the music, the trickling water, and the scent of rich spices—feels comforting and indulgent, and despite its nods to traditional Mars culture, few Martians could afford to even walk through the front doors.

DINNER CONVERSATION

Beauregard makes polite conversation at first, asking how the crew has found Mars so far and what they've been up to around Londres Nova, as well as telling a humorous story about he and a local businessman talking past each other, ultimately ending with him buying seven crates of clapping monkey toys. After the appetizers and a few drinks, however, his questions become more pointed.

Beauregard takes the opportunity to grill the characters on what they know, his congenial façade never *quite* slipping unless irritated. Though his attitude shifts with the flow of the conversation, depending on how the crew handle their own end of the conversation. If the player characters answer in a way Beauregard generally likes, it automatically counts as a success. But how the characters respond is just as important as their actual answer, and characters delivering an answer he doesn't like but with grace or wit can still earn a success.

Each question lists Beauregard's ideal response as well as two more challenging responses that can be salvaged with a successful skill check of the listed type and TN. Only one character needs to respond to any given question, but everyone can participate in the dinner conversation. Players can choose to ask the GM about their answers before their character responds to Beauregard; on a success at a **TN 11 Perception (Empathy or Intuition)** test, they learn whether their honest response would be Ideal, Challenging, or Antagonizing; on a failed test, their character blurts out the answer to Beauregard and they must succeed at the appropriate test normally. A character who succeeds at this Perception test may instead attempt a **TN 13 Communication (Deception)** test to tell Beauregard exactly what he wants to hear, counting as a success.

For example, when Beauregard asks how the crew likes the meals, they automatically succeed if they respond with, "As good as my mama ever made," or succeed with a successful Perception (Tasting) test and they respond, "The rice is amazing. Is that coriander and nutmeg?" If the crew isn't sure about that response, they can ask the GM how they *think* Beauregard



will react to commenting about the flavors; If they succeed at a **Perception (Empathy or Intuition)** test, the Game Master tells them their answer is **Challenging**—not terrible but not perfect, and will require an Ability test—and they can either respond that way or use a **Communication (Deception)** test to instead tell Beauregard exactly what he wants to hear. If they fail the **Perception** test, it's assumed their character simply blurts out the response without knowing how Beauregard will respond, and they must make the **Perception (Tasting)** test normally.

Every successful check improves Beauregard's attitude by one shift, beginning with wherever his attitude was at the end of **Scene 1** (Standoffish by default), while every failed response worsens his attitude by one shift.

"HOW Y'ALL FINDING THE MEAL?"

- **Ideal response:** A folksy but generally positive response about the food and/or music.
- **Challenging Response:** **TN 12 Intelligence (Evaluation)** or **Perception (Tasting or Smelling)** test. Commenting on the distinct qualities of the food and/or wine. Discussing the overall value of the experience.
- **Antagonizing Response:** **TN 15 Communication (Persuasion)** or **Willpower (Courage)** test. Expressing discontent with the food. Criticizing the excess of the restaurant.

"I'VE ENCOUNTERED ALL MANNER OF TROUBLE TRYING TO TRACE THE ANNE'S OWNERSHIP. WHAT CAN Y'ALL TELL ME REGARDING HER PREVIOUS CAPTAIN?"

- **Ideal response:** Ironically, telling the truth about Claire O'Rourke and her piracy satisfies Beauregard. However, he asks that the crew be discreet about this fact.
- **Challenging Response:** **TN 12 Communication (Bargaining)** or **Intelligence (Business)** test. Telling the truth about O'Rourke's ownership but spinning it the best possible way, such as describing her as a trader, salvager, or rugged entrepreneur.
- **Antagonizing Response:** **TN 15 Communication (Deception)** or **Communication (Expression)** test. Making up a new owner or history for the *Anne Bonny*. Refusing to answer the question.

“AND WHAT LINE OF BUSINESS DID Y’ALL SAY YOU WERE IN?”

- **Ideal response:** Trading and/or cargo hauling, especially if it’s discreet.
- **Challenging Response:** **TN 12 Communication (Persuasion)** or **Intelligence (Business)** test. Discussing the violence and/or pirate-hunting they’ve engaged in. Still describing themselves as water haulers.
- **Antagonizing Response:** **TN 15 Intelligence (Security)** or **Strength (Intimidation)** test. Describing themselves as mercenaries or pirates. Evading the question.

“NOW I KNOW A POLITE DINNER SHOULDN’T COVER POLITICS OR RELIGION, BUT NO ONE HAS ACCUSED ME OF BEING A POLITE MAN. WHAT SORT OF GOD DO Y’ALL NOD TO?”

- **Ideal response:** Expressing faith in any sort of Judeo-Christian, vaguely protestant faith other than Mormonism.
- **Challenging Response:** **TN 12 Communication (Persuasion)** or **Willpower (Faith)** test. Expressing faith in a non-Judeo-Christian faith, such as Buddhism, Hinduism, or Wicca. Expressing general agnosticism. Polite refusal of the question.
- **Antagonizing Response:** **TN 15 Communication (Etiquette)** or **Perception (Intuition)** test. Expressing atheist beliefs. Rudely refusing the question. Expressing faith in Mormon beliefs.

“EPHREM WAS ALWAYS A MIGHT PECULIAR. HE LEAVE ANYTHING UNUSUAL IN THAT SHIP OF HIS?”

- **Ideal response:** Mentioning the secret computer partition, but admitting they haven’t cracked the encryption.
- **Challenging Response:** **TN 12 Communication (Persuasion)** or **Intelligence (Engineering)** test. Saying they haven’t found anything. Discussing the excellent kitchen. Talking about engine upgrades. Talking about the hidden compartments.
- **Antagonizing Response:** **TN 15 Communication (Bargaining or Etiquette)** or **Intelligence (Technology)** test. Talking about the after-market weapons. Mentioning the secret computer partition and implying they know what’s on it.

ENDLESS INTERRUPTIONS

In-between his various questions, Beauregard is interrupted by life. If the characters handle these interruptions badly, they lose one accumulated success, but if they are discrete or helpful they can learn more about Beauregard and possibly accumulate a new success.

A HARRIED CALL

Beauregard’s terminal chimes and after a quick glance, he apologizes and says he needs to take an important call. His own responses are very vague—rarely more than a single word—and he ends the conversation with: “I’m sure you’ll be fine, but I am happy to send someone to help you find peace of mind.” If characters are rude about Beauregard taking the call, his attitude toward them worsens by one shift. The characters may instead attempt a **TN 15 Perception (Hearing)** test to overhear the other half of the conversation, in which a panicked man starts talking about smugglers trashing ‘the farm’ and asking questions about Beauregard’s guests. He doesn’t mention it, but the caller is Haskel Pereira—proprietor of the Ashbury Aquaponics fish farm—who has just been assaulted and questioned by the crew of the *Atargatis* (see **Scene 3**).

GOD BOTHERED

Toward the end of the evening, a well-dressed elderly couple approaches Beauregard’s table to make conversation, presenting an unwelcome distraction from the private conversation. How the crew respond to the interruption—from an unwelcome but important member of his congregation—can potentially affect how the minister sees the crew. A **TN 12 Intelligence (Current Events)** test recognizes former Martian congresswoman Paatalavati Hunjan and her husband Ademar, a staunch social conservative who lost her seat to a younger candidate more outspoken about Martian superiority. She compliments Guan on last week’s sermon and begins asking prying questions about his dinner companions. A successful **TN 11 Perception (Empathy)** test recognizes that she is trying to insinuate herself into the rest of the evening and that Beauregard would rather she not. The crew can rudely turn the former congresswoman away with little effort, but doing so worsens Beauregard’s attitude by one shift. Turning Hunjan away politely requires a successful **TN 13 Communications (Persuasion)** or **Willpower (Faith)** test and improves Beauregard’s attitude by one shift. If the crew does not get involved, Beauregard listens for a few more minutes before assuring the politician that he will contact her first thing tomorrow, and his attitude toward the crew remains unchanged.

BRANDY AND CONVERSATION

As dinner turns into drinks, Beauregard's final attitude helps shape the final outcome of dinner:

FINAL ATTITUDE	RESPONSE
Very Friendly	Beauregard has taken a genuine shine to the crew and genuinely hopes to work with them in the future. Depending on how characters handle future encounters, he could potentially become a permanent contact (or frenemy). He offers a financial windfall that translates into a permanent +1 increase in Income, or a temporary +2 increase (good until the character fails an Income test). After a few drinks, his ramblings about Ephrem turn into praise of Anne Sousa and her charms, and how Ephrem used to refer to her as his "Camelia."
Friendly, Open	Beauregard likes the crew well enough to offer praise and minor gifts, translating into a windfall of a temporary +1 increase to each character's Income (good until the character fails an Income test). As the evening winds down and he reflects on Ephrem's and Anne's troubled relationship, he notes that his brother did feel some genuine affection for her, even if he was a flawed man, and often referred to her as his "Camelia."
Neutral, Standoffish	Beauregard is social, but it's obvious he's being diplomatic rather than displaying any genuine warmth. His discomfort with the crew's manners, lifestyle, or general attitude is obvious to anyone looking close.
Hostile, Very Hostile	Beauregard politely implies they have overstayed their welcome and asks them to remove their things from the penthouse he has offered them. In this case, he will turn to Martian courts to obtain possession of the PCs' ship rather than offering to purchase it, though this is mostly a description of a looming threat and a potential lead for future adventures or complications; it does not affect the course of the adventure.

AN INTERESTING OFFER

So long as the crew maintain Beauregard Guan's attitude at Standoffish or better, the evening concludes with him making an offer to buy their ship. His exact proposal depends on how much he likes the crew, ranging from a generous offer made with good faith promises if he is Very Friendly, to an offer below market value accompanied by threats of taking the matter to the authorities if he is Standoffish. Whatever his approach, and whatever the crew's immediate response, he concludes by saying, "Seems to me serious business chatter upsets the digestion, so take the night to think it over. We can work out the details in the morning." In truth, he realizes he's had too many drinks to barter effectively and wants to sober up.

SCENE 3

NOW THE SERPENT

COMBAT ENCOUNTER

While the crew has wine and dined, Sebastian Pope's machinations have slowly pursued them. Pope hired the crew of the *Atargatis*—a smuggling ship he uses to run blockades and occasionally assault or kidnap rivals' assets—to eliminate the crew of the *Anne Bonny*. The *Atargatis* makes regular runs between Mars and Ceres Station, ostensibly carrying farmed Martian seafood to the Belt. By sheer chance, they frequently work with Haskel Pereira of Ashbury Aquaponics, who knew Beauregard Guan was putting the player characters up and treating them to dinner. The *Atargatis* crew roughed Pereira up and made some messes at his fish farm to learn what he knew, then set out to ambush their—hopefully unarmed and drunk—targets.

A few birds—confused by the city lights—chirp cheerfully in the empty nighttime street. Londres Nova is quiet enough to hear the hum of utility lines and the rumble of excavation equipment far below, which is almost drowned out by the susurrus of wind in the trees as you pass a small park. The drum of shoes on pavement is almost deafening as six spindly women step into the light, wearing utility overalls and wielding wrenches, chains, and short lengths of pipe.

"Well," sneers the woman in the center, "you've certainly leaped in over your heads. Hope you can swim."

Six members of the *Atargatis* crew (see the **Adversaries & Allies** section) have waited at a dark, parkside stretch of road between the Palea and the nearest tube station for over an hour by the time the characters head home. They've also disabled

the nearby security cameras. They don't want to make noise or be detained by hard-nosed Martian authorities, so they've left their firearms with the ship and are only wielding various tools and collapsing batons as weapons (1d6 + Dex damage). If they manage to incapacitate the crew, they don't want to leave bodies lying around for Londres Nova security to stumble across. They'll haul their quarry back to Ashbury Aquaponics via electric utility truck and dump them into the water tanks—no blood to clean up—over Pereira's strenuous but ultimately unenforced objections. This provides the crew a chance to recover, either en route or at the fish farm, and either escape or surprise their captors in turn.

CAUGHT WITH THEIR PANTS DOWN

Caught after a fancy dinner, without armor or weapons, and possibly drunk, the crew is at a major disadvantage in this fight. If they stay and fight, they can try to disarm the *Atargatis* crew, or grab makeshift weapons—there are sandwich boards for local businesses, branches from park trees, and a castoff bicycle lock that can be wielded as makeshift light or thrown weapons (1d6 + Str or Dex damage). Heavier objects—such as a length of utility piping, a heavy park seat, or a charging kiosk—count as heavy weapons (2d6 + Str damage), but require a **TN 12 Strength (Might) test** to pull free first.

The crew can try to keep the *Atargatis* assailants talking while they figure out what to do. This requires a successful **TN 12 Communications (Deception or Persuasion) or Strength (Intimidation) test**, with the TN increasing by +1 for each round that passes.

The crew are as likely to flee this encounter as stand and fight, initiating a Chase scene. The first round conditions for a Chase are either Ideal or Rough (depending on whether the crew runs down the street or into the park), but the difficulty can vary as they hit different parts of the park, streets, back alleys, or late-night clubs. The *Atargatis* crew have just landed in the past few hours, and are still getting their “land legs,” imposing a -1 penalty to any Constitution (Running) tests. If the player characters gain at least an 8-point advantage, they can attempt to hide or blend into a crowd (and can watch the assailants split up to meet back at Ashbury, giving the crew a chance to interrogate one or follow them back), and if they manage a 10-point advantage they can escape outright. Following the pursuers requires an opposed **Dexterity (Stealth) vs. Perception (Seeing) test**.

FOLLOWING UP

If you would like locating Ashbury Aquaponics to be more of an investigation, you can have the *Atargatis* crew wear street clothes instead of their ship jumpsuits. In this case, the crew must examine any captives (or bodies) with a **TN 10 Perception (Searching) test**. They find the first clue (fish scales) on a successful test and each additional clue by every point by which they exceed the initial test. Each clue also lists an ability test to learn an important detail about it. Analyzing the clues is an advanced test (success threshold 10), with the identity of Ashbury Aquaponics finally revealed by the combination of factors.



ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR...

If your crew aren't particularly gifted at investigation, you can simplify tracking the attackers by simply having the assailants still wear their ship jumpsuits, listing the name *Atargatis*. Asking around with a **TN 13 Communication (Investigation) test** or hacking the port records with a **TN 13 Intelligence (Business or Technology) test** reveals both that the *Atargatis* recently landed and regularly does business with the Ashbury Aquaponics fish farm in the Martineztown neighborhood. Any captives can likewise point the crew toward Ashbury, where Pereira told them how to find them. None of them know why exactly they're supposed to kill the crew of the *Anne Bonny*; Captain St. Croix handles the “weird contracts” for assault and harassment, and they don't know where she went after landing.

Fish scales on their clothing: **TN 11 Intelligence (Science)** test. The scales come from a combination of bluefin tuna, anchovies, and smelt.

Transit card: **TN 12 Intelligence (Navigation or Research)** test. The serial number on the transit card indicates it was purchased in the Martineztown neighborhood.

Gravel in their boot treads: **TN 13 Intelligence (Science)** test. The gravel is aragonite—often used in large aquariums and water tanks—and crushed mussel shells.

Fresh stains: **TN 14 Intelligence (Evaluation)** or **TN 11 Perception (Tasting)** test. The stains are from a distinctive pumpkin-flavored instant noodle bowl only available through a Snaktastic brand vending machine.

The clues ultimately point to Ashbury Aquaponics, a fish farm that grows bluefin tuna, as well as anchovies and smelt as feeder fish, and uses mussels as a step in their filtration process. The farm is located in the Martineztown neighborhood and is the only fish farm in Martineztown that subscribes to Snaktastic Vending Services.

SCENE 4

TAKEN IN AN EVIL NET

INVESTIGATION ENCOUNTER

Ashbury Aquaponics has changed hands and names several times in its sixty years of operation, with Haskel Pereira owning it for sixteen years now. The farm specializes in raising bluefin tuna for local consumption, which can grow up to 2 meters long and weigh 300 kg in their captive conditions. Because a single bluefin can take a decade to reach maturity, Ashbury also sells smelt and anchovies (raised as feeder fish) and red algae and mussels (used in the filtration process) to the Belt market to help cover expenses. Bluefin are notoriously hard to raise in farms and reviewing the business's public records with a **TN 13 Intelligence (Business)** test suggests that the Ashbury barely makes ends meet due

to high fish mortality rates, yet Haskel Pereira lives surprisingly well in the Breach Candy district. Pereira began supplementing his profits years ago by helping Londres Nova's crime syndicates—and later, wealthy patrons—dispose of unwanted bodies by crushing them in the chum grinder and feeding the evidence to his ravenous tuna.

The fish farm isn't kept in good repair—the equipment is functional, but clearly patched and in need of cleaning—and the smell is overwhelming. The facility itself is built entirely underground—using full-spectrum LEDs to support the fish and algal colonies—but is quite large. Access doors are open during daytime hours but are kept locked (**TN 15 Intelligence (Security)** test) at night. Walkways over the tanks allow access for feeding, cleaning, and extracting fish. The tuna themselves aren't dangerous or aggressive, but panic if someone falls into the water with them; their thrashing inflicts 1d6+4 damage every round and increases the difficulty of **Constitution (Swimming)** checks to escape the tanks or remain afloat to **TN 15**. The fish are only spooked if someone falls in, and do not thrash if someone enters the water gently (such as to search it for clues).

Pereira is nursing a broken hand after the *Atargatis* crew roughed him up, and is more skittish than usual. He retreats if confronted, and attempts to call his most influential patron—Beauregard Guan—to send help if he thinks anyone is snooping around. He's not much of a fighter, but keeps a pistol in his desk; he only fights back if he fears his life is in jeopardy. He begins the encounter with a Hostile attitude.



Investigating the fish farm requires **TN 13** tests, revealing new information depending on the focus used:

Communication (Investigation): Several of the shipping crates and barrels bound for the Belt have false bottoms or hollows, likely intended for smuggling.

Constitution (Swimming): Mixed among the substrate lining the bottom of the tank are several pieces of what can appear to be human bone and teeth. A **TN 15 Intelligence (Medicine)** test or an autodoc can confirm this.

Intelligence (Science): Some of the blood inside the chum grinder is clearly from a mammal. An autodoc or a character with the proper equipment and a **TN 9 Intelligence (Medicine)** test can confirm that it is human blood.

Perception (Searching): A false vent in Pereira's office holds a handwritten paper ledger containing names, dates, weights, and reference numbers (see **The Ledger and the Ring**). The fact that paper is rare and expensive anywhere but Earth suggests the ledger must hold some significance.

Strength (Intimidation): Pereira admits that some criminals occasionally force him to dispose of evidence, though he insists he must do it or they'll kill him rather than the arrangement being both willing and profitable.

By the end of their investigation, the crew will likely have determined that the fish farm serves a grisly second purpose, though its relationship to their attackers seems entirely random.

AN UNFAMILIAR DANCE

As the crew begins winding down their initial investigation, Beauregard Guan's bodyguard, Syeda Yoosamran, arrives with five of Guan's guards to respond to Pereira's call for help (see the **Adversaries & Allies** section for both of these statblocks). Yoosamran had no idea Guan's new guests were responsible for the break-in, but once she sees them at Ashbury she fears they know his guilt in Anne Marie Sousa's death and does not hesitate to attack. She doesn't mince words, ordering her guards to gun the crew down, but she uses her actions the first round of combat to call Guan and apprise him of the situation; PCs can overhear this call with a **TN 13 Perception (Hearing)** test:

"Mr Guan, it seems your new guests knew more than they cared to share. We're dealing with the situation now.... No, no one will ever know what happened here."

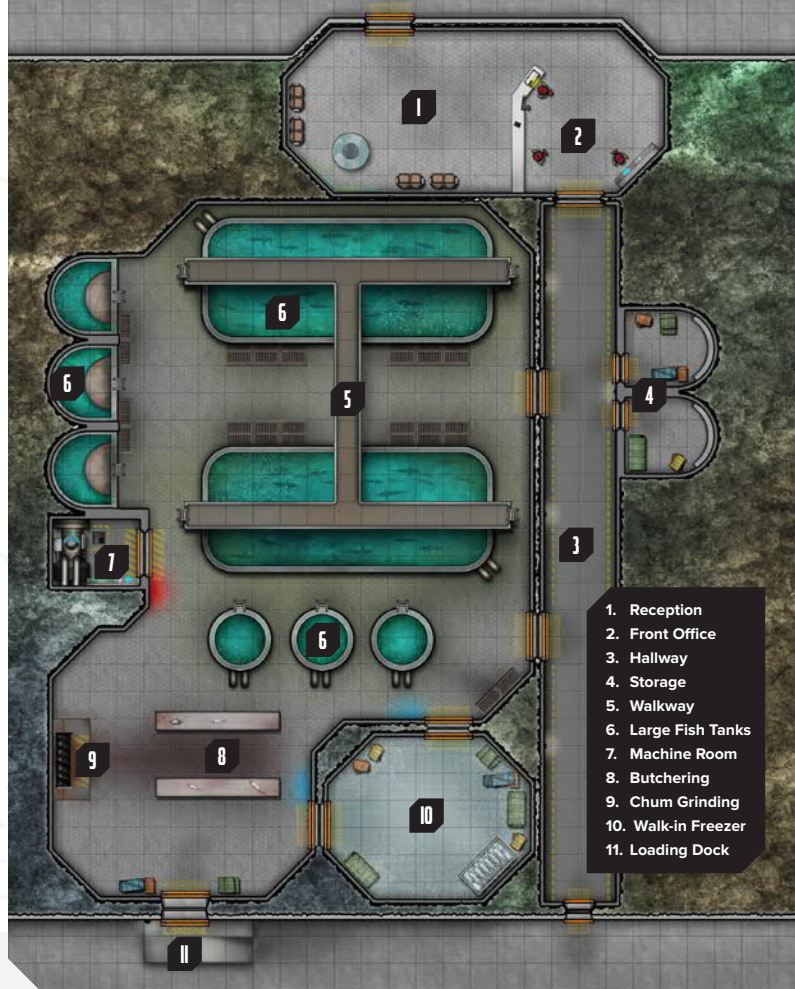
THE LEDGER AND THE RING

If the crew didn't find Pereira's ledger in the false vent as part of their investigation, he offers to trade it if they just let him escape, promising no one will see him in Londres Nova ever again. If they already found the ledger, Pereira simply tries to flee during the violence.

The ledger itself seems mundane, if strange. The address of a small self-storage business—SurSafe—is written inside the front cover, along with a storage unit number and key code. The rest is nothing but lists of dates corresponding with names, weights, and numbers. Beauregard Guan's name appears once, twelve years ago, along with "62.6 kgs" and "#112."

The SurSafe storage unit is only a few blocks away, and the key code opens it without difficulty. Inside is a rough-worn old storage organizer with numbered drawers, each holding minor but easily-traced valuables—all of them taken from

ASHBURY AQUAPONICS



WHERE DID DIANA GO?

After the crew arrives on Mars, Diana reports back to Commander Duarte and spends the next several days being debriefed and learning more about the current political and military state of affairs. She is generally unavailable as an active resource for the duration of **Two Kinds of Prayer**, but you may elect to have her move behind the scenes to minimize any problems the crew causes. She can bury any legal proceedings, turn security force's attention elsewhere long enough for them to get away, arrange for important evidence to be "lost," or bail them out of prison after a night. Diana isn't a genie, however, and recruited them because they are active problem solvers themselves. Anything she does takes time, and she can only help so many times before she exhausts her resources or risks being exposed, leaving the crew on their own.

bodies Pereira disposed of over the last fifteen years. The ledger and the storage unit have been his insurance policy, ensuring that he doesn't go down without indicting some of Londres Nova's movers and shakers for his, and their, crimes. Drawer #112 contains an antique engagement ring inscribed: "To Anne, with all my love, B." The distinctive ring can be traced with a **TN 13 Intelligence (Evaluation or Research)** test to old photos of Matilda Guan, mother of Beauregard and Ephrem; the crew may even recall it from the Guan family portrait in the penthouse.

While their armed confrontation with Beauregard's guards has suddenly made him a dire enemy, the ring and ledger give them extraordinary power over one of Mars's most important spiritual leaders.

INTERLUDE

FAR FROM THE LIGHT

Within two hours of the crew's actions at Ashbury Aquaponics, rumors on the local partitions start talking about "Belter mercenaries" wanted for questioning in connection with two violent attacks—Ashbury and the street brawl with the *Atargatis* crew. Guan changes the access codes to the penthouse before the crew can

finish investigating Ashbury, and they won't even be able to access the building if they try to return. Gaining entry by other means reveals a few uniformed security operatives investigating anything the player characters may have left in the apartment before visiting the fish farm. Their ship is likewise under a police lockdown, with guards posted and no one allowed in or out for the time being until authorities determine the crew aren't a flight risk.

Beauregard Guan has used his influence with the community to spin the characters' recent activities as dangerous—possibly politically-motivated—Belter violence, hoping overzealous Martian security will target the crew as terrorists and shoot on sight, allowing him to make a claim on their ship. Diana's own influence with local security has allowed her to temporarily downgrade the PCs' involvement to "persons of interest."

If the crew aren't the types to monitor newsfeeds or social media, eventually a message buzzes on their hand terminals from Diana:

"I don't know whose toes you stepped on or why, but someone wants you shot on sight. I've convinced the authorities that you should only be beaten on sight, so for now just try not to be seen while I clear up the rest of it. If nothing else, I can get security lockdowns removed from your ship in the next day or two. Provided you're interested in picking up a little work to repay the favor."

-Diana"

Hiding out on Mars means retreating deep into the poverty-stricken underground levels, far from the weak light of the domes. The Innis Deep and Innis Shallows neighborhoods are especially thick with Belters with no interest in speaking to Martian authorities, but the difference between these neighborhoods and Aterpole is stark. The Innis neighborhoods are carved with machines in mind more than humans; the walls are rough, the streets are poorly lit and dirty, and the air scrubbers chug day and night to clean up the stink of too many humans pressed too close. Crew from the worst slums of Ceres or Eros may feel at home among the dark corridors and brazen criminal activity.

The crew have an interlude while they wait for news from Diana. This is an especially good time to recover, advance their relationship with any criminal groups, or try to find quiet work, though most academic and professional skills aren't in high demand in the poorer districts.

SCENE 5

THE HEART IS DECEITFUL ABOVE ALL THINGS

COMBAT/SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

Both Guan and the *Atargatis* crew resolve to watch the *Anne Bonny*, hoping the crew will return. If they don't, Beauregard opts to simply board the ship and begin searching it, confident the crew has gone to ground and won't notice. He doesn't begin any formal legal proceedings to seize the ship, worried that would draw too much attention to his involvement with

the crew. He likely would've avoided all notice if the Assistant Dockmaster, Carmo Vidal, didn't take a personal interest in the *Anne Bonny*. After being questioned by security about the ship, Vidal is uneasy when he watches people in suits board the ship, but ultimately decides to risk alerting the crew.

As the scene begins (unless the crew have holed up in their own ship), their hand terminals buzz with a new message.

"Hey all. It's Carmo Vidal, back at the dockmaster's office. Not sure I'm supposed to be doing this, y'know, on account of security asking a lot of questions about you, but there's someone rifling through your ship right now. Well-dressed types, but not cops or military. Never seen 'em around before, but they looked like they were on a mission from God."

Beauregard Guan himself is on board the *Anne Bonny*, leading the search, along with five Guan guards (see the **Adversaries & Allies** section for these stats) and Syeda Yoosamran if she survived **Scene 4**. If the crew rush to their ship, Beauregard doesn't especially want a fight. He thinks the characters have evidence of his past crimes. He never states his crime directly, but implies the crew knows "What happened to her," and that he "Won't let grease-monkey rockhoppers ruin me." Beauregard holds back his guards because he worries any evidence is hidden; if the player characters didn't find the ledger and ring in **Scene 4**, they'll need to bluff Beauregard into believing they know more than they do. If Beauregard believes they don't have anything they can use to blackmail him, he immediately orders his guards to attack to clean up loose ends.

Either midway during the conversation or as Guan orders his guards to attack, five members of the *Atargatis* crew arrive with their own captain, Imani St. Croix (see the **Adversaries & Allies** section for these stats) and immediately attack. This time the *Atargatis* crew is loaded for an all-out assault with rifles. Guan believes these new arrivals are backup recruited by the player characters, and a three-way firefight breaks out. Pair off opponents however seems most fitting, but clever characters might be able to use **Communications (Deception)** or **Intelligence (Tactics)** into tricking Guan's and St. Croix's goons into attacking each other.

Not being much of a fighter, Guan relies heavily on cover, hiding behind ship's panels, bulkheads, and his own guards during the fight. He drops his gun and surrenders if the guards are killed, though if the crew left a positive impression on him during dinner (Open attitude or better), he'll open fire on the *Atargatis* crew once it becomes obvious they're gunning for the player characters—possibly creating an awkward scenario where he saves their lives at the last second.

BLACKMAIL IS SUCH AN UGLY WORD

If Beauregard survives the violence, he begs the heroes to just leave him be.

"Please. Please just leave me be. I've built so much, and I already lost a brother and a lover over this unpleasantness. None have suffered more than I, and you can't begrudge a man his fear when he's seen such evil in the world. Surely you can spare a man of God on his knees."

Beauregard's accounting of his involvement is obviously more than a little skewed—that much should be obvious to the crew if they spent much time investigating Ashbury Aquaponics. If called out, his tone and demeanor changes from humility to professional arrogance, and he begins negotiating.

"I see then. You are vulgar sorts, wanton in the ways of the devil. That I can work with. Tell me, what does silence cost these days?"

If the heroes want Guan to be held accountable for his crimes, they'll need to turn over the evidence they have to the authorities and hope for the best (see **The Wheels of Justice**). If they'd rather Guan buy their silence, he demands any evidence they have. The negotiation is a challenge test. The ledger and the engagement ring from **Scene 4** each provide a +1 bonus on tests in the PCs' negotiations. If the crew found at least three additional clues at Ashbury Aquaponics besides the ledger, they gain an additional +1 bonus. If they have cracked the password on Ephrem's partition (see **The Hidden Confession**), or decrypted it, they gain yet another +1 bonus during negotiations.

As negotiations begin, Assistant Dockmaster Vidal messages the crew to tell them that security forces are on their way, and that they'll need to settle whatever's going on in the next five or six minutes. Guan tells them he can call off the police whenever he wants, if they can reach a deal. The following challenge test helps chart the crew's progress and final results if they commit to negotiating with Beauregard (though you may elect to roleplay this interaction instead).

A HIDDEN CONFESSION

Ephrem's hidden partition can be unlocked, and his personal logs opened, with his old nickname for Anne Marie Sousa: "Camellia". Most of his logs are the ramblings of a man growing accustomed to the transient gravity and long silences of space travel, but a highlighted file contains his confession for killing Anne Sousa:

A man bearing a strong resemblance to a younger Beauregard Guan—with a beard three days older and hair three months shaggier—bobs in zero-G as the camera comes to focus. He licks his lips awkwardly two, then three times before finally finding his words:

"I need to say this now. I need to say it out loud, somewhere I hope people will eventually hear it.

"I was.... I was furious when I found out she'd been seeing him behind my back. He was furious when he discovered she wouldn't leave me for him. We argued and shouted. Anne tried to stop us and he hit her. Then God help me, I pulled daddy's gun from the desk. Pulled a gun and was prepared before God and heaven to shoot my own brother. He tackled me.

"I don't know which of us aimed. I don't know which of us pulled the trigger.

"But I know where that bullet ended up. We watched Anne die instead of finding her a doctor. And...and Beau said he'd take care of it. Told me only God could judge us.

"I tried to play the heartbroken divorcee after that, but couldn't find my peace. So I packed it all up and came out here, hoping to find God or the devil. Ain't found either. Ain't found forgiveness, either.

"My name is Ephrem Guan. Don't let me die with anyone thinking that was the name of a good man."

CHALLENGE: POSE AS CUSTOMERS

DIFFICULTY: TN 15

SUCCESS THRESHOLD: 10

TIME PER TEST: 1 minute; maximum of six minutes

ABILITY FOCUSES: Communication (Bargaining), Intelligence (Evaluation), Strength (Intimidation), Willpower (Faith), Willpower (Self-Discipline)

This is a challenge test. Each failure on the challenge test increases the consequence level by one, starting from minor. If the crew eliminates the minor consequence before increasing the level again, then the next consequence is minor as well. Otherwise, another failure elevates it to a moderate consequence.

CONSEQUENCES

MINOR

Beauregard asserts control over the negotiations and starts running the conversation in circles, increasing the time per test to 2 minutes until they can re-establish control with a **Communication (Etiquette or Leadership)** test opposed by Guan's **Willpower (Self-Discipline)**.

MODERATE

The crew must give up one piece of collected evidence—likely the ledger or the ring—as a show of good faith, losing the associated +1 bonus.

MAJOR

As time begins to tick away, Guan's confidence in his local influence shakes the crew into trading their remaining evidence away in exchange for him calling off the police.

If time runs out before the crew reaches the success threshold, Guan negotiates them into a substandard deal: they exchange their evidence for a temporary +2 bonus to Income for a single character, which disappears after the next Income check it is applied to.

If the crew reach the success threshold of 10 before the six minutes expire, then they agree to hand over all their evidence to Guan—and ostensibly keep quiet about his crimes—and each crew member receives a permanent +1 increase to their Income. If they reach a success threshold of 15 or higher before time runs out, they shake Guan to his core and he digs deep, granting every crew member a permanent +2 increase to their Income.

If the PCs reach a deal with Guan, the authorities arrive at the break-in, and Beauregard waves them away, explaining to the officers that "friends of my dear brother" have protected him from vicious assailants (the *Atargatis* crew). He introduces the crew to several of the officers by name, mentioning they are part of his congregation, and explains to the arriving police that the earlier misunderstanding was a result of these "braggadocio Martian heroes" dismantling a local OPA operation. The crew's safety on Mars is secured, as is Beauregard's, who will likely never face any consequences for his old crimes.

GET YOUR ASS OFF MARS

While the crew have likely foiled any attempt to besmirch their good names—and possibly even made a profit in the process—they have still passed out a few black eyes among Martian elites, criminals, and authorities. Leaving the planet

THE WHEELS OF JUSTICE



The adventure assumes the player characters try to profit off the misery they’ve stumbled through, but should your group lean more “Holden” than “Miller”, the crew can hand their evidence over to the Martian authorities and any reliable media and let the wheels of justice roll over Beauregard Guan. The crew may even retain some of their evidence on Guan (or not yet have discovered his brother’s confession), and both blackmail him for money and turn over evidence to the authorities, though any given bit of evidence can only be applied to one or the other.

There are four distinct pieces of evidence the crew can uncover and turn over: Pereira’s ledger (see **Scene 4**), the engagement ring (see **Scene 4**), a thorough investigation of Ashbury Aquaponics (locating at least three clues in addition to the ledger; see **Scene 4**), and Ephrem’s video confession in the *Anne Bonny*’s computer (see the **A Hidden Confession** sidebar). The more evidence the player characters turn over, the greater the likelihood Guan is held accountable for his crimes.

EVIDENCE TURNED OVER	CONSEQUENCES
0	Laughable. Without any evidence, security doesn’t even bother to file a report; no one takes the word of a few drifters over one of the most respected men on Mars.
1	Gossip. The crew’s evidence is enough to reopen the cold case of Anne Sousa—still considered a missing persons case—and reignites old rumors about Ephrem and Beauregard. Beauregard’s congregation shrinks by 10% and he loses some of his most influential flock.
2	Embarrassment. The evidence provided confirms that Anne Sousa is dead—easing up many legal battles for her family—but doesn’t indict Beauregard directly. The damage is done, however, and he loses about half his congregation and influence on Mars.
3	Financial Woe. Beauregard Guan’s name becomes associated with “Getting away with murder thanks to whoever’s gravity well you fell out of.” Guan is arrested and ultimately defends himself in court, but is humiliated and loses his position as church leader. His fortune dwindles over the next five years to less than a quarter his former net worth.
4	Prison. Beauregard is arrested and eventually convicted for Anne Sousa’s murder and his relationship with the Ashbury Aquaponics disposal racket. He serves eight years of his 25-year sentence and retires from the public eye with his much-depleted fortune. One or more characters associated with the investigation gain the Honorable “Giantkiller,” associating them with taking down criminals who rarely suffer consequences thanks to their wealth or associations.
5	Death. The evidence against Beauregard is damning enough that a coterie of Ashbury Aquaponics clients—organized by the Sousa family—have Guan quietly killed in his cell while awaiting trial, making his death look like a suicide. One or more characters associated with the investigation gain the Honorable “Giantkiller,” associating them with taking down criminals who rarely suffer consequences thanks to their wealth or associations.

Characters with extraordinary influence, such as Membership in a Martian security corp, an extraordinary Reputation for crime solving or integrity, or Master rank in the Intrigue talent may increase or decrease Guan’s consequences by one step.

is their best choice at this point, and as luck would have it, Carmo Vidal will have an orbital assist ready for them in the next few hours.

At worst, Diana arranged to help delay the authorities long enough for the crew to escape the local gravity, though this option leaves the crew as fugitives on Mars and may lead to complications with MCRN patrols in the future.

If the PCs want to follow up on the *Atargatis* before they leave, breaking the ship's electronic locks requires a **TN 14 Intel-ligence (Encryption)** or **Intelligence (Security)** test, and a thorough search uncovers connections to not just the OPA, but to the Voltaire Collective, a violent faction of the Outer Planets Alliance involved in terrorist violence against Inner planets and their sympathizers. Their cargo hold contains several smuggling crates and barrels from Ashbury Aquaponics, with traces of explosives and ammunition inside. The *Atargatis* has clearly been smuggling weapons from Mars to Ceres—a lead that Diana asks the crew to follow up on if they don't decide to do so themselves. This could be used as a possible lead-in to the next adventure, **There's OPA and There's OPA**.

ADVERSARIES & ALLIES

The following are profiles of the significant non-player characters in **Satellites and Secrets**, along with their *Expanse* game stats. For additional stock characters you can use in this adventure, see the **Threats** chapter of *The Expanse RPG*.

ATARGATIS CREW MEMBER

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1, COMMUNICATION 1 (DECEPTION),
CONSTITUTION 1, DEXTERITY 2 (FREE-FALL),
FIGHTING 1 (LIGHT WEAPONS), **INTELLIGENCE 0**, **PERCEPTION 0**,
STRENGTH 0 (MIGHT), **WILLPOWER 3** (COURAGE)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
12	12	12	1

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
IMPROVISE WEAPON	+3	1D6+2
RIFLE	+1	3D6+1
UNARMED	+1	1D3+2

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Lightning Strike

TALENTS: Carousing (Novice), Improvisation (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: drugs, illegal rifle, ship's jumpsuit, toolkit

THREAT: MINOR

BEAUREGARD LIANG GUAN

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1, COMMUNICATION 4 (DECEPTION, ETIQUETTE,
PERSUASION), **CONSTITUTION 1** (TOLERANCE), **DEXTERITY 1**
(INITIATIVE), **FIGHTING 1, INTELLIGENCE 3** (BUSINESS, CURRENT
AFFAIRS), **PERCEPTION 3** (EMPATHY, HEARING), **STRENGTH 0**,
WILLPOWER 4 (FAITH)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	24	11	1

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
PISTOL	+1	2D6+3
UNARMED	+0	1D3

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Benefit of the Doubt, Cast Out, Group Tactics

TALENTS: Contacts (Expert), Inspire (Expert), Intrigue (Expert
[Etiquette])

EQUIPMENT: bible, hand terminal, pistol

THREAT: MODERATE

ATARGATIS CREW MEMBER

Smugglers working for the OPA, the *Atargatis* crew have largely been flying with Imani St. Croix for the last years, running explosives and guns to Ceres and dabbling in piracy and war scavenging. They're a mix of lowlifes from Mars and the Belt who like easy money and a sense of superiority more than they believe in any given cause.

BEAUREGARD LIANG GUAN

The Guans helped define Mars, and especially Londres Nova. As early "air barons" who funded and then sold back the open tunnel spaces and agricultural domes of the newborn colony, their fortunes have been intertwined with Mars and their dramas and whims have helped several of the planet's political history. Even after the Epstein drive opened up all of the solar system to humanity, they remained influential and wealthy within their own city.

Devout Christians—combining a blend of American-style southern Baptism and the Chinese Three-Self Patriotic Movement—they were one of the founding families of the First Reformed Martian Baptists church, and have persisted for generations as both business figures and religious leaders.

Beauregard was born into a family legacy of righteousness, and consequently knew all he did was righteous. Using the influence of his church to pressure the Martian Congress was righteous, because Mars should be a city on a hill and held to a higher standard. Helping his congregants conceal their moral failings was righteous, because God alone could judge them. And when he fell in love with his brother's fiancé, that too was righteous.

Somehow.

Anne Marie Sousa was far from the perfect woman the Guan boys wanted her to be, but both believed she could salvage their souls and confusion. Ephrem Guan thought that no matter how far he strayed,



having Anne's bright light at home meant he could always find his way back. But Beauregard saw his brother made happy by a beautiful woman, and wondered why his own wife consistently failed to bring him happiness. He fixated on Anne, and Anne's own passions spun those feelings into an affair—a fling for her, but a sign of her true devotions in Beauregard's eyes. Beauregard proposed to Anne with his mother's own wedding ring, promising to leave his wife, but Anne rejected the offer and Ephrem stepped in to confront his brother's betrayal. As they fought over a pistol, an accidental shot hit Anne.

Beauregard knew about Haskel Pereira's body-disposal business at Ashbury Aquaponics as a way to help his rich friends dispose of embarrassing bits of evidence. He told Ephrem to leave Anne to him, and Pereira made sure there was little left of Anne save a catalogue entry and Beauregard's rejected ring. Disposing of Anne is the only thing Beauregard truly feels guilty over—not killing her, as he still blames Ephrem for that—and the idea that anyone will find out what he did haunts him enough to track Ephrem's ship whenever possible.

Beauregard is a dangerous man who believes himself right with God. He knows in his heart that he does not deserve to suffer or wilt in some prison, and that God in his infinite wisdom will see fit to forgive his transgressions. In the meantime, he still enjoys the comforts of wealth. He loves rich food, adoring company, and liquor. The only thing he fears, beyond being held accountable for his actions—is that Ephrem died somewhere in the universe without them ever reconciling.

GUAN GUARDS

Beauregard Guan hires guards with an eye toward discretion—both he and his closest contacts discuss important business and matters of state, and so security forces who know when not to listen are invaluable. He contracts all his guards directly, not trusting an outside agency to fully respect his need for privacy, and as such most of his guards are former MCRN—friends and contacts of Syeda Yoosamran's. While most of the Guan guards generally rely on tasers and intimidation, they have access to sidearms as well.

HASKEL PEREIRA

Owner of Ashbury Aquaponics, Haskel Pereira makes ends meet by contracting with local organized crime and respectable families, using his fish farm to dispose of bodies and other digestible evidence. Little of a human is identifiable after being run through the chum grinder, and even less remains after being fed to ravenous fish, save for bits of bone or teeth that settle in the bottom of the tanks.

Haskel isn't an especially vicious man, just a man who grew up in the slums of Innis Deep seeing humans as little more than meat for another system. As far as he cares, if the elite of Londres Nova want to drop money on his operation from the ivory domes after killing each other, he's all too happy to collect. He also works with several OPA-linked smugglers, as the strong stench from the fish paste and nori he sells to the Belt help conceal chemical odors from customs inspections, and has been helping the Voltaire Collective in particular move decommissioned Martian explosives to Ceres for almost a year.

Haskel is practical, and has always survived by watching his own back. He's jumpy and sweats too much even when he isn't under pressure—both traits that make him a far worse gambler than he's willing to admit.

GUAN GUARDS

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 2 (PISTOLS), **COMMUNICATION 0**,
CONSTITUTION 2, **DEXTERITY 1**, **FIGHTING 2** (GRAPPLING),
INTELLIGENCE 0, **PERCEPTION 2** (SEEING),
STRENGTH 1 (INTIMIDATION), **WILLPOWER 2** (SELF-DISCIPLINE)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	15	11	4

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
MARTIAN TASER	+4	1D6+2
PISTOL	+4	2D6+2
UNARMED	+2	1D3+1

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Blockade, Hidden Message, Seize the Initiative

TALENTS: Observation (Novice [Seeing]), Protector (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: cheap suit, concealed armor vest, hand terminal, impressive sunglasses, pistol, taser

THREAT: MINOR

HASKEL PEREIRA

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 0, **COMMUNICATION 2** (DECEPTION, GAMBLING),
CONSTITUTION 1, **DEXTERITY 0**, **FIGHTING 0**,
INTELLIGENCE 2 (BUSINESS, SCIENCE), **PERCEPTION 1** (SEEING),
STRENGTH 0, **WILLPOWER 1**

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
10	10	10	1

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
PISTOL	+0	2D6+1
UNARMED	+0	1D3

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: And Another Thing, Duck and Weave

TALENTS: Intrigue (Novice [Deception]), Misdirection (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: emergency pistol, keyring

THREAT: MINOR



IMANI ST. CROIX

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1 (RIFLES), **COMMUNICATION** 3 (LEADERSHIP),
CONSTITUTION 2 (STAMINA), **DEXTERITY** 3 (FREE-FALL, PILOTING,
SLEIGHT OF HAND), **FIGHTING** 2, **INTELLIGENCE** 1,
PERCEPTION 0, **STRENGTH** 0, **WILLPOWER** 3 (COURAGE)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
13	17	13	2

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
RIFLE	+3	3D6
UNARMED	+2	1D3

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Double-Team, Taunt

TALENTS: Carousing (Expert), Pinpoint Accuracy (Expert)

EQUIPMENT: glasses, hand terminal, illegal rifle, ship's jumpsuit

THREAT: MINOR

SYEDA YOOSAMRAN

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 2 (PISTOLS), **COMMUNICATION** 1 (ETIQUETTE),
CONSTITUTION 3, **DEXTERITY** 3, **FIGHTING** 3 (BRAWLING),
INTELLIGENCE 0 (BUSINESS, SECURITY),
PERCEPTION 4 (INTUITION), **STRENGTH** 2 (INTIMIDATION),
WILLPOWER 2 (SELF-DISCIPLINE)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
13	21	13	5

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
SMG	+4	2D6+4
UNARMED	+5	1D6+2

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Guardian Angel, Knock Down

TALENTS: Observation (Novice), Protector (Expert), Striking Style (Expert)

EQUIPMENT: concealed armor vest, expensive suit, gum, hand terminal, Martian submachinegun (2d6 damage, automatic)

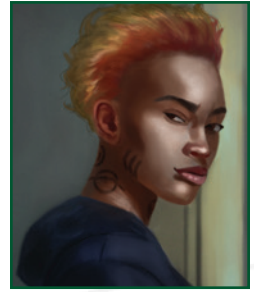
THREAT: MODERATE

Descended from a mix of early Martian colonists, Syeda shares both East and South-Asian features. She is tall enough and broad enough for a Martian woman that most locals assume she was born on Earth, but she has never left her homeworld's gravity well.

IMANI ST. CROIX

Imani St. Croix isn't an idealist any more. She may have been when she was younger, but the war—watching Martian brutes put bullet after bullet through her friend's ship and her friend's lungs—put a stop to that. Now she just wants people to hurt as much as she does, and she's passionate enough to make others want the same thing. While she once proudly supported the Outer Planets Alliance, she now pays only enough lip service to the cause to collect payment as she runs guns and explosives for the most extremist elements.

Her willingness to work for a bottom line brought Captain St. Croix and the *Atargatis* into Sebastian Pope's employ. Imani doesn't especially care if the guns she runs end up perforating an Earth corp or a Martian base, and she doesn't especially care which Inner Planet billionaire suffers where the *Atargatis* seizes a ship. If one of them wants to pay her to pick targets, and even help with the paperwork, then she's fine working with them for now.



SYEDA YOOSAMRAN

A former MCRN marine, Syeda Yoosamran liked a simpler chain of command than the one the military offered, and went into private security after her enlistment ended. She eventually settled into fulltime work with the Guan family, and redoubled her dedication to duty when the old money family supported her transition into a woman. The change ended her aggressive insubordination and eventually helped hone her discipline and awareness of the world around her. She became an exceptional guard, and soon graduated to managing Beauregard Guan's personal security.

Syeda is privy to all of Beauregard's indiscretions, large and small, and while she often disagrees with her employer, his morals, his priorities, and his family's loyalty to her has secured a lifetime of loyalty from her in turn.





4: THERE'S OPA AND THERE'S OPA

There's OPA and There's OPA is the fourth adventure of the *Abzu's Bounty* series for *The Expanse* Roleplaying Game. It allows the characters an opportunity to spend time on the iconic station of Ceres in the Belt while experiencing the politics and tensions between the Outer Planets Alliance's many factions—some of which have their own designs on the dangerous and unpredictable protomolecule.

If characters are advancing through *Abzu's Bounty* in order, they will have already encountered the OPA in their first adventure **Breaking the Surface**, and the Voltaire Collective in the previous adventure **Two Kinds of Prayer**. Even the attitudes and opinions of characters with OPA backgrounds may have been affected or changed by these recent encounters. If the OPA has been a significant part of your crew's series, it may be a good idea to discuss what the characters know of the organization so far and their opinions on the group and some of the leading figures before starting the adventure.

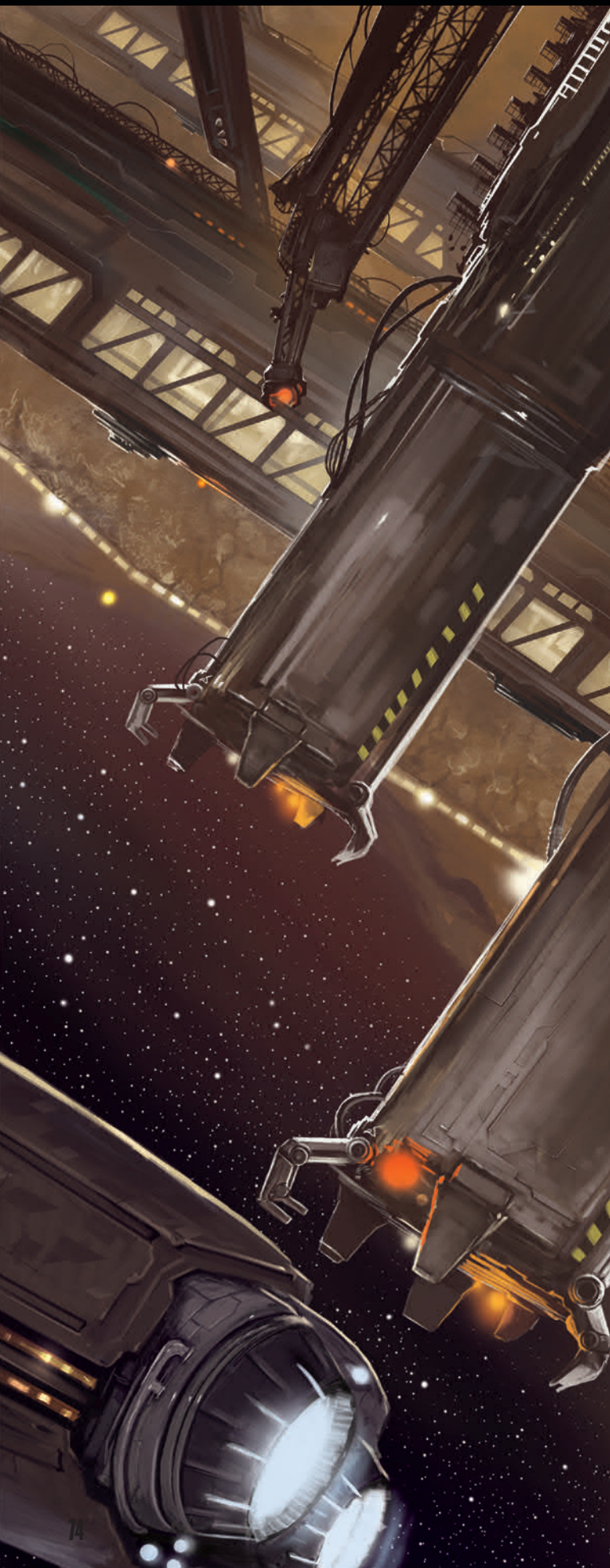
OVERVIEW

As the crew prepares to plot a new course coming out of their most recent adventure or interlude, a tightbeam message from Ceres comes in on a secure channel. An OPA contact is reaching out on behalf of Anderson Dawes—recently made governor of the station after the Eros incident. The *Anne Bonny's* reputation has preceded them: Dawes would like to speak to them about a contract on Ceres. He offers both compensation for their time on the station and the use of the Ceres repair docks if their ship is in need of maintenance.

The contract is an odd one for a ship's crew: Dawes wants an outside party to investigate a rash of bombings targeting Inners. He needs a group that can be viewed as neutral to those that live on the station. The bombings are quite real and a threat to the station's stability, however they only provide a convenient pretense to bring the *Anne Bonny* to Ceres. Anderson Dawes is far more interested in the protomolecule and what her crew might know about it. XO Bart Mitchell of the *Abzu's Bounty* from **Breaking the Surface** contacted Dawes when the initial sample was found by the *Abzu's Bounty*, and he's been trying to track both it and

"Jesus," he said. "What scares the OPA?"

— *Leviathan Wakes*



them down ever since. He offers whatever he can to get the crew to come to Ceres.

When the crew arrives on Ceres, their OPA contact takes them on a tour of the bombing damage in the 'Inner' parts of the station before taking them to meet with Anderson Dawes. Dawes gives them the basic information on the bombings, some possible suspects including a cell of the radical Voltaire Collective, and tries to get a sense of what the crew knows about the protomolecule sample. After meeting with Dawes, there is a perfect spot for group and individual interludes.

Identified by the Voltaire Collective from their recent run-in with the crew of the *Atargatis* on Mars in the adventure **Two Kinds of Prayer**, the characters find themselves in a clandestine meeting with the Ceres cell, who deny all but one of the bombings and are convinced they're being framed. Depending on the relationships that the crew develops with the Collective, the meeting could end more or less violently.

The crew heads back to the *Anne Bonny* in her berth only to discover a Belter in the process of tossing the ship. After chasing down and subduing the trespasser, they find her hiding a data cube containing the *Anne Bonny's* logs and any information they have regarding the *Abzu's Bounty* and their activities there. The trespasser reveals little except that there's a bomb on the station, and this time the target is Katria, head of the Voltaire Collective.

The characters locate Katria in a popular section of the commons and must find and defuse the bomb, and possibly evacuate the area before it detonates. If they succeed, they have evidence that may possibly exonerate the Collective and find the bomber.

Along with Katria, the crew brings their evidence to the governor's office, where it becomes clear there is some serious distrust between factions in the OPA. When the characters sort it out, it turns out the thief on the *Anne Bonny* has worked for Dawes in the past and is part of the reason the Voltaire Collective suspects the governor of framing them for the bombings. It appears there is a third party behind the attacks on Inners.

Whether the crew hands their prisoner over to Ceres security or not, they are able to discover that she is a former UN soldier supposedly gone missing years ago, genetically and surgically modified to look like a Belter to get revenge for her family's death at the hands of OPA terrorists. If the characters choose to dig, they can find evidence pointing toward Jules-Pierre Mao... and the UN itself.

Again, the crew can turn in their prisoner or deal with her themselves as they see fit. They can also confront Dawes about the *Anne Bonny* break in—which he does not deny, further betraying his level of interest in the characters and their actions. The adventure ends with another interlude as the crew prepares to leave Ceres Station and move on to their next job. Diana contacts them with another opportunity for them that will lead into Titan's Ball.

RUNNING THIS ADVENTURE

There's OPA and There's OPA is an adventure about the intrigues, infighting, and distrust that distract from the goals of the OPA and indeed any organization. The characters already have some experience with the OPA and their time on Ceres should provide a deeper understanding of some of the difficulties the Alliance has in working together to represent and protect Belters' best interests.

There's OPA and There's OPA adds a few important things to the course of the *Abzu's Bounty* series:

- It introduces the crew to Anderson Dawes and Ceres Station, newly in OPA hands. The crew's visit to Ceres also confirms Dawes' interest in tracking down the protomolecule sample, which is why the characters should learn Dawes was behind the search of the *Anne Bonny*, if not the bombings themselves.
- It gives the characters a possible positive connection to the Voltaire Collective—a radical OPA faction known for their skill with and use of explosives—who they last encountered on Mars under Sebastian Pope's influence and direction. The latter why the crew should at least speak to members of the Collective, for better or worse.
- It further ties the conspiracy around the protomolecule sample to Jules-Pierre Mao, and now to the UN. It also gives the crew a better idea of the scope of the plot of the series, and the lengths Mao-Kwikowski and the UN will go to in order to destabilize the Belt.
- It provides a glimpse of developing Belter culture on a station that is transforming into the first real home for a people who have been nomads in their own environment for generations.

CONNECTIONS & REPUTATION

One or more characters should have a solid OPA connection for **There's OPA and There's OPA** to work well as an adventure for your crew. If there are no obvious options, some possibilities follow:

- Any characters with OPA Rank (see the **Rewards** chapter of *The Expanse* RPG) will have at least heard of former OPA liaison and new governor Anderson Dawes and know of his reputation. If characters have reached Rank 2 or above, they may have a relationship with Dawes, either from afar via OPA political dealings and debate or more personally. For characters with appropriate backgrounds and stats, it's also possible to know Katria, the head of the Voltaire Collective from past interactions. Discuss what makes sense for the characters and the story so far, whether a casual acquaintance or an additional Bond.
- In the first scene of the adventure, the characters are contacted by an OPA associate via secure tightbeam. If your group has played the adventures in order and Bart Mitchell, former XO of the *Abzu's Bounty*, survived **Breaking the Surface**, that connection would be a good one to use here—particularly if one of the characters has a Bond with Mitchell (see the **Rewards** chapter of *The Expanse* RPG and the **Allies & Adversaries** section of **Breaking the Surface** for details). If Bart Mitchell didn't survive, assume any references to him in this chapter actually refer to his younger brother, Eric Mitchell. Some sections that are meant to be read aloud to the players may have to be modified to suit this change.
- Any characters with Reputations in the True OPA vein will make the crew's time on Ceres much easier (again, see the **Rewards** chapter of *The Expanse* RPG for details). As Ceres has gone over to the governorship of the Outer Planets Alliance and Anderson Dawes, the more rebellious and violent factions of the organization have gravitated to the station. While these characters are used to suspicious and derisive looks from Inners elsewhere, they are figures of respect to the large population of Belters on Ceres sympathetic to the cause.

SKIPPING AHEAD

If your interludes or other adventures in your *Expanse* series have already taken the crew to Ceres, you can easily modify **Scene 1** to have the crew run into their OPA contact while out and about on the station. If there's no specific contact to use, a message from the governor to a character's hand terminal works just as well.

THE OPA: MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PRIVILEGES

Even in an organization as disparate, disorganized, and disinclined to cooperate as the OPA, it pays to be on the inside. Membership and Ranks in an organization are detailed in the **Rewards** chapter of *The Expanse* RPG. Characters likely haven't advanced beyond Rank 1 at this point in the series, though some particularly dedicated to the cause may have managed to become Respected in the OPA. Membership at either Rank provides benefits that would not otherwise be provided, at the GM's discretion: greater cooperation and deference, better quarters, drinks on the house (your-money's-no-good-here-coyo).



The adventure can also start out on Ceres for an experienced or brand-new crew. An experienced group of characters could be in port at Ceres for repair or resupply, a bit of R&R on station, or looking for work, while a brand-new crew could be brought together by Dawes specifically for this investigation. If it's the latter, talk to the players about why they might be chosen for the task—even if it's because they'd be bad at it. An experienced crew should get the **Scene 1** message together, but a new group of characters should each get their call to the governor's office individually so they can react to the meeting request and decide how their character feels before the next Scene begins.

If your crew doesn't yet have a ship of their own, Dawes has control of Ceres Station and the might and terror of the OPA to wield at will. A ship will be found and the transponder codes will say whatever he would like them to say.

SCENE 1

MESSAGE FROM CERES EXPLORATION/SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

The crew of the *Anne Bonny* is offered a job on OPA-held Ceres Station—a job both potentially lucrative and dangerous. While looking for the next course to plot, a tightbeam message comes in from Ceres, from an OPA contact close to the crew. The contact is reaching out on behalf of Anderson Dawes, the OPA liaison-made-governor of Ceres Station after the Eros incident. Dawes wants to hire the crew of the *Anne Bonny* and has sent along a message to tell them just that.

Read or paraphrase (if Bart Mitchell is dead, that part will need to be changed) the following to your group:

The screen shows a man who seems to have the lean and long frame of Belters. His face is scarred by acne, and he takes his time, speaking seriously.

"Crew of the Anne Bonny, my name is Anderson Dawes, governor of Ceres. The station is undergoing some unrest during our transition and I was hoping you might consider helping us out. We've had a number of bombings targeting Martians and Earthers over the last few weeks, and—well, I've known Bart Mitchell for longer than I'd like to admit, and your reputation precedes you. Security here isn't appropriately motivated to investigate, and a crew representative of both the Inners and the Belt, or at least from outside of Ceres, could be seen as more...neutral. Despite what some may believe, stability and safety has always been my goal on Ceres."

He smiles.

"Of course, you'll be fairly compensated for your time and you can have access to Ceres' facilities during your stay, including our repair docks. I'll send on the offer details separately. Until we hear otherwise, we'll keep a berth warm for you, Anne Bonny."

DAWES' OFFER

Dawes has also sent an exorbitant contract for their time on the station, with lodgings included as well as the aforementioned use of the Ceres repair docks—at a discount—if their ship is in need of maintenance or damaged. Dawes must really need their help, or Mitchell (somehow, sometime, somewhere) had some very complimentary things to say. Or Dawes has a hidden reason for why he's very interested in getting them to Ceres.

In truth, Dawes is aware of both the *Anne Bonny* and the protomolecule's existence because he is the OPA member that Bart Mitchell contacted about the sample while aboard *Abzu's Bounty*. Though Dawes has been doing his best to get a hold of a sample for the OPA, he lost track of the protomolecule after the incident at Prometheus and on the *Anne Bonny*. Given the characters discovered the sample while aboard the *Bounty*, Dawes believes they are his best source of information on its nature and that they might lead him to its whereabouts. The bombings have provided an

WHAT IF YOUR CREW IS LESS DIVERSE THAN THE ROCKINANTES?

If your crew complement is less representative of the Inners and the Belt than the *Roci*'s, Dawes can have other reasons for choosing them for the job. If any of the characters were particularly well liked by Mitchell, Dawes can rely entirely on the former XO's recommendation whether they're Belters or Inners—which is more or less what's happening anyway. In this situation, Mitchell should be fairly present through the adventure, possibly even sitting in on the first meeting with the crew and Dawes.

With a group from the Inner Planets, Dawes could suggest they may be better able to protect and support their fellows in an hour of great need than Belters. There are a number of Earthers and Martians who have remained on the station, still living and working alongside Belters despite the tensions—Ceres is their home. A ship of MCRN or UN Marines might be particularly susceptible to such an argument, though perhaps not as diplomatic as a less martial crew. Even with a solid OPA contact, Inners continue to be met with distrust from Belters on Ceres—take Fred Johnson as an example, even after decades of dedication to the cause.

With Belters, Dawes is more likely to imply that they can provide a legitimate (or "legitimate") outside investigation that ensures the pinche Inners don't cause any problems with their new station. Ceres is an important step in establishing legitimacy for the OPA and for Belters in general, and though Mars and Earth currently have bigger problems than Ceres, it wouldn't take much for the station to be surrounded by firepower that the OPA can't match. It's to the OPA's benefit to wrap up the investigation cleanly, even if only to prove they can handle their business.

opportunity for Dawes to bring them to Ceres under reasonable pretenses, possibly search the *Anne Bonny*, and try to find out what they know.

NEXT MOVES

What happens in the rest of this scene and before **Scene 2: The Rebel Governor** is up to the players and their characters aside from answering one question: do they accept Dawes' offer, and if so do they ask for anything else?

Given clues and leads from the last adventure, **Two Kinds of Prayer**, the characters should want to take Dawes up on his offer to get to Ceres, but they may want to discuss how they want to respond to it. Especially if they have further requirements or demands, or any restrictions they wish to impose on providing aid. If they find the offer too good to be true or its timing suspicious, Diana can suggest Dawes may have some knowledge about the protomolecule. She can confirm that conclusion, if necessary, by admitting to monitoring OPA communications. If the crew proves reluctant to go at all, a ship malfunction is a good push in that direction—but it's also a good idea to ask the players what is stopping them or their characters from responding to the "call to adventure."

Characters can also look into Dawes, Ceres itself, and the OPA factions they might encounter there via newsfeeds and other readily accessible media with an **Intelligence (Research)** test with the TN based on how well known or obscure the information might be.

Some of the information characters might find:

Maps, deck plans, and most other publicly available information about Ceres Station. This could include station personnel, registered guests at hotels, leisure facilities, restaurants, and bars. See the sidebar **Welcome to Ceres** in this adventure, and the **Ceres** section in **The Belt** chapter of *The Expanse* RPG for more about the station. Other information is up to GM discretion.

Recent newsfeed broadcasts from Ceres, or older ones of Dawes and others on the station. These could include protests, news reports from tragedies or events, interviews, and documentaries. See later scenes and the **Adversaries & Allies** section of the adventure for information.

Chatter and gossip about Ceres and the OPA factions that exist there on the message boards throughout the system. See later scenes, the **Voltaire Collective** section, and the **Adversaries & Allies** section of the adventure for some information that may be found, as well as the **Ceres** section in **The Belt** chapter of *The Expanse* RPG. Other information is up to GM discretion.

Other ships currently in dock or in repair on Ceres. If the crew has friends or rivals, this could be a fun way for them to meet up for a side plot or an adventure before or after this one. This is entirely up to GM discretion.

The crew can also contact Bart Mitchell (or his brother Eric if Bart is dead) to get more information about the job and Dawes himself out of their former XO. If Mitchell's last attitude toward the characters is Friendly or better (or if there is a Bond, as above in **Connections & Reputation**), he will be inclined to tell them more about the situation on Ceres, what he knows of Dawes, and how keen Dawes is to meet them all (see **Impressions and Attitude** in **Social Encounters** in **CHAPTER 5** of *The Expanse* RPG).

SCENE 2

THE REBEL GOVERNOR

SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

In this scene, the *Anne Bonny* docks at Ceres Station, newly owned and operated by the Outer Planets Alliance. The characters get an opportunity to take stock of the station and its governor, Anderson Dawes—who seems to be awfully interested in them.

Landing at Ceres is remarkably easy. They are expecting you, but still—no waiting in queue for other ships yet to dock or for an available port. The station control directs the Anne Bonny to an empty berth, staying on the line to guide you in until the seals are green on the docking tube's link to the ship's airlock. As the ship begins to turn along with the station, you feel the gentle weight of its gravity. "Docking complete," Station Control says cheerily. "Welcome to Ceres." And whether you're prepared for another welcome or not, there is one waiting for you once you've made your preparations and cycled the airlock door: someone you haven't seen in a long while.

FAMILIAR FACES

The crew's welcoming committee will be their OPA contact—possibly their former XO, Bart Mitchell. Whoever it is, this should be an opportunity for the crew to “catch up,” and get a sense of how far they've come from their initial encounter with this character. Their contact meets them to bring them to Dawes directly, explaining that the governor thought it would make the crew more comfortable to be greeted by someone familiar. Whether this is the case or not is beside the point.

While they may say “directly,” their contact takes their electric cart on a route that does not end up being anywhere near the direct one to Dawes' office. Observant characters or those with a knowledge of station topography can make a **TN 11 (9)** for characters familiar with Ceres) **Perception (Intuition)** test to catch on to the detour. It does, however, take them past the sites of most of the bombings to date—all on the upper levels, where the lighting and grass replicate the sort of environment most Belters have never even seen; levels where the wealthy Inners used to live, and where those still on Ceres remain.

The targets were all public locations: clubs, restaurants, and bars, along with one food stall. Though Martians and Earthers mostly frequented them—according to the crew's escort—bombing any one of them without harming Belters seems impossible.

If the crew wants to ask their contact to give them some details about Anderson Dawes along the way, determine the contact's attitude toward the character asking (see **Impressions and Attitude** in **Social Encounters, CHAPTER 5** of *The Expanse* RPG). If their attitude is Friendly or better, they're inclined to share their own impressions of Dawes, and also the fact that the governor is very pleased to have them on the station.

The characters are brought to Dawes' office but their contact leaves them there, promising to be of assistance if the crew needs anything.

STRANGE TIMES MAKE FOR STRANGE ALLIANCES

The office is as unassuming as the man in it.

Once OPA liaison on Ceres, he became its governor when the OPA seized control in the wake of the Eros incident. Along with Fred Johnson, the UN war hero he personally recruited to the cause, he is the face and voice of the OPA. To many Belters, he is the OPA. And he wanted to meet you all personally.

“Thank you for coming as soon as you docked,” he says as he stands to greet you. “And welcome. I'm sorry to get right down to it, but I'd rather avoid any further damage than what you've already seen. If you'd like to sit?”

Dawes is very apologetic over offers of coffee or other refreshment, but he really doesn't waste any time in running down the situation from his perspective. The bombings have been occurring for about a month and have all been on the upper levels, in locations popular with Inners—leading to the assumption that they're being targeted. There have been no claims of responsibility from any factions within or outside of the OPA.

Dawes would prefer not to suspect his comrades in the OPA, but given the decentralized nature of the cells and the deep divides between some factions he can't say it wouldn't happen without his knowledge. Dawes is also very aware that his association with Fred Johnson can be more of a liability than an asset in some parts of the OPA. If the characters themselves do not suggest the Voltaire Collective as possible bombers from their run-in with them on Mars, Dawes does so. He notes

WELCOME TO CERES



The largest known asteroid, the only dwarf planet in the inner solar system, and the first asteroid discovered by humanity, Ceres is the most important port in the Belt. With a population of approximately six million permanent residents and a transient population of one million or so passing through the station at any given time, up to a thousand ships are docked every day, swarmed by Belter dockhands and watched by a million eyes.

Once governed by the UN and private security, the OPA seized governorship of the station in the aftermath of the Eros Incident, claiming *de jure* what was already a *de facto* situation. The split circle OPA symbol, omnipresent on the lower levels between layers of graffiti, has crept up to the upper levels of the station to claim it for the cause. There is a sense of giddy anticipation and pride among the Belter population here: Ceres is the only land the OPA has ever held. Long displaced in their own territory with only ships to call their own, Belters now have a new place to call home. See the **Ceres** section in **The Belt** chapter of *The Expanse* RPG for more.

that there is a cell of them on Ceres—now in hiding—and that they're the most obvious suspects in the bombings, and may have gone underground because of their involvement.

WHO IS ANDERSON DAWES?

Meanwhile, Dawes take the opportunity to discuss Bart Mitchell and the *Abzu's Bounty* to get an idea of how much the crew knows about the protomolecule, what happened to it, and where it might be now. He is very cautious and calculated in his questioning, but the need to secure the protomolecule sample for the good of the Belt may make him less so than usual. Characters can pick up on the direction of his interest with a **TN 15 Perception (Empathy)** test.

Dawes' primary interest in the crew is their knowledge of the protomolecule. Unless they have spent previous adventures making a name for themselves as enemies of the Belt and the OPA, he is fairly neutral toward them otherwise. In this scene, there is a chance for characters to establish a relationship with Dawes and get a sense of what he knows as well. He is more willing to trade information than offer it freely, even in a situation where he is employing the crew. You can find more on Anderson Dawes in the **Adversaries & Allies** section of the adventure.

When the meeting comes to an end, Dawes sends directions to their quarters, via their hand terminals, and asks that they report in when they have something new.

CHALLENGE TESTS/INTERLUDE

SURVEYING THE TERRITORY

Following the meeting with Dawes in **Scene 2**, there is an opportunity for the crew of the *Anne Bonny* to spend some time off the ship—possibly for the first time in weeks or months. There's also an opportunity for them to start sticking their noses where they're being paid to stick them. Characters can now make one of two challenge tests:

CHALLENGE: HACK THE CERES NETWORK

DIFFICULTY: TN 13**SUCCESS THRESHOLD:** 15**TIME PER TEST:** 30 minutes**ABILITY FOCUSES:** Intelligence (Technology), Communication (Persuasion), Intelligence (Cryptography)

This is a challenge test. Each failure on the challenge test increases the consequence level by one, starting from minor. If the crew eliminates the minor consequence before increasing the level again, then the next consequence is minor as well. Otherwise, another failure elevates it to a moderate consequence.

CONSEQUENCES

MINOR

The Ceres system has custom encryption, increasing the **TN Intelligence (Cryptography)** tests by +2 until the characters can succeed at an **Intelligence (Research)** test to track down information on its differences.

MODERATE

The OPA user credentials the characters are using are blocked, and they must secure new ones before they can resume their attempts to breach the system.

MAJOR

Station security is alerted to a network breach on the station level on which the hack is occurring. With a successful **opposed Intelligence (Technology)** check, security can track the characters' exact location on the station. They have ten minutes to clear their space of incriminating evidence and get off the level before a four-person security team sweeps the area for potential hackers.

If successful, the crew will gain access to all station information, including ship flight plans and security logs. They retain access to the secure network and files for the rest of the adventure. Actually searching the data the characters gain access to will require an **Intelligence (Research)** test with the TN based on the amount of data the character needs to sift through and how well hidden it may be. This can include searching video logs and other recordings of the bombing locations for suspects or other evidence. A **TN 15 Intelligence (Cryptography)** test can decrypt any encrypted files or communications. Gaining access to any station systems (docking, security, life support, etc.) would require advanced **Intelligence (Technology)** tests with a **TN 15** or more and a **success threshold of 10 or more** for each system.

CHALLENGE: INVESTIGATE THE BOMBINGS

DIFFICULTY: TN 13 (15 if the characters is an Inner)**SUCCESS THRESHOLD:** 15 (20 if the characters are all Inners)**TIME PER TEST:** 1 hour**ABILITY FOCUSES:** Communication (Investigation), Communication (Persuasion), Perception (Empathy)

This is a challenge test. Each failure on the challenge test increases the consequence level by one, starting from minor. If the crew eliminates the minor consequence before increasing the level again, then the next consequence is minor as well. Otherwise, another failure elevates it to a moderate consequence.

CONSEQUENCES

MINOR

The characters offend a minor figure in the Ceres community. All **Communication (Persuasion)** tests are increased by +2 until the offense can be corrected or another community leader can be convinced to support them.

MODERATE

An employee suspects something is off about the crew's presence and asks them to leave the building. If the characters can't succeed at a **TN 14 Communication (Deception)** test to convince the employee that they are honest, they have to exit the building completely and try again. The TN for future challenges is increased by 2 and they lose their accumulated success.

MAJOR The character that failed the roll triggering the Major Consequence is denounced by the OPA and has to “lay low” for the remainder of the investigation. They can still be involved in the adventure, but all OPA members on Ceres will have a Hostile attitude toward the character until they are able to change the attitude or leave the station (see **Impressions** and **Attitude** in the **Social Encounters** section of **CHAPTER 5** of *The Expanse* RPG).

If successful, characters can learn the information in **The Voltaire Collective** section and the **Katria** and the **Voltaire Collective Member** stats in the **Adversaries & Allies** section in this adventure. Also, the crew can arrange the meeting with Katria and the Collective in **Scene 3** via intermediaries instead of being taken by surprise in the bar. Characters can also make connections with the current OPA security staff, mostly Loca Gregia members (see **OPA Ceres Station Security** in the **Adversaries & Allies** section as well).

As it will take some time for these challenge tests, characters can also complete some interlude actions during this time. Remind players that their characters may need some time to rest and recover from the last adventure, making Recovering a possible interlude activity. Other activities will depend on their plans and goals. Before **Scene 3**, the crew can engage in a few of the usual interlude activities detailed in **CHAPTER 5: GAME PLAY** of *The Expanse* RPG, including:

MAINTENANCE

Some time spent on the regular maintenance of the *Anne Bonny's* drive and systems is always required, but with the ship in dock these tasks are less onerous than usual. Some systems checks can even be run remotely through the Ceres network via hand terminal. Dawes has offered this work at a significant discount—adjust the percentage depending on how flush (or how broke) your crew is at this point in your series.

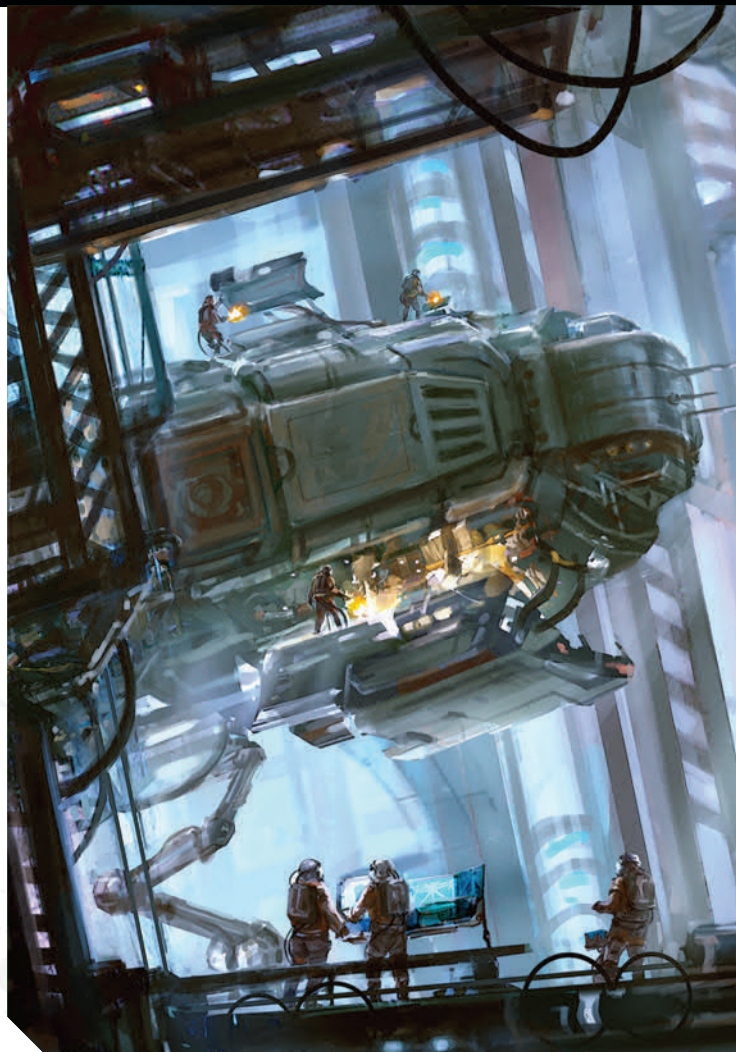
RELATING

The time on Ceres can be a chance for the crew to relate in the relaxed atmosphere of the station's bars, casinos, and brothels. This could provide some time to process the events of their most recent adventure, or possibly change Relationships. If any new characters have joined the crew of the *Anne Bonny*, this is a good occasion for them to get to know the other characters and establish their place in the group. This could also be an opportunity for characters to catch up with their OPA contacts, particularly if they have a Bond.

Spending some time with Dawes is also an option if a character wants to, or if the GM would like to emphasize his interest in the protomolecule. If Dawes wants a private conversation, he often appears, as if by magic, at the next stool at a bar or outside someone's hole or their ship's airlock as they're coming home. If the characters seek him out, he is more than accommodating.

REPAIRING

If the *Anne Bonny* has suffered damage, the crew can devote some of their interlude activities to repairs. They will have the aid of the fully equipped and staffed Ceres docks which provide a +2 to all **Intelligence (Engineering)** tests. Due to the upheaval during the transition to OPA governance, the station is operating at diminished capacity; if the crew returns to Ceres at a later date, the bonus should go up to a +3. Again, Dawes is offering this work at a significant discount while the crew is on contract.



RESEARCHING

Ceres' network is fast, but secure. Characters that would like to research can do so, but Dawes' trust does not extend so far as to give the crew access to anything that might pose a security risk...or be personally incriminating. Searching the news-feeds and other media is an **Intelligence (Research)** test with the TN determined by the GM based on the obscurity of the information.

UPKEEP

The crew is in an unusual position. Their spacious quarters and docking fees are being paid and they are on a generous contract. The characters have the opportunity to live a little beyond their means and they may be tempted to do so. You can get pretty much anything you want on Ceres—for the right price.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The characters are technically **Working** during this time as well, but if players come up with something else they want to do that sounds reasonable, feel free to go with it. There may be some Golgo players in the crew, and there's always a game to be found on Ceres!

SCENE 3

MEETING THE VOLTAIRE COLLECTIVE

SOCIAL/COMBAT ENCOUNTER

When the crew has begun to make the rounds of the station in earnest, it's time for the Voltaire Collective to identify them from their run in with the Collective cell on Mars. Katria and her Belters force a tense clandestine meeting that could go very well...or very poorly.

If the crew has succeeded in the **Investigate the Bombings** challenge test, they have arranged the meeting below and can prepare for it as they see fit. Adjust the location and other scene setting details as necessary.

Read or paraphrase the following to the players to open and set the scene:

You've been on Ceres for a few days now and it's taken about that long to get your bearings even if you've been before. The station is ever changing, but there's also a difference here—deeper than the OPA graffiti that has crept up from the lower levels. Belters stand taller, take up more space, speak louder. The stalls are shifting to different foods: red and white kibble, dhejet and egg curry, cow-style noodle bowls. Belter Creole is more common than any other language. It's all a sign, in big red letters and symbols: Ceres is ours now. If you don't like it, there's the airlock.

You're in a bar that you've heard is an OPA hangout hoping to overhear some gossip or meet a contact when you notice—maybe while you were talking amongst yourselves or looking at your beer a moment too long—the place has cleared out. There's no one but your crew left and the door has been closed and locked. There isn't even time to speak before a group files out from the back, led by a slight, Belter woman with sharp, piercing eyes. She's grinning, but not pleasantly. "Sa. Heard you ran into some friends of ours on Mars and now you turn up looking for us," she says. "Willing to hear an explanation, but it better be good."

THE VOLTAIRE COLLECTIVE

Known as ideological provocateurs and "mad bombers," the Voltaire Collective is one of the many groups at the radical fringe of the OPA. A militant branch resisting inner-planet control of the Belt from the early days of the insurgent movement, most Belters respect them as fierce fighters. They are also unpredictable, uncontrollable, and violent, which can make more "respectable" branches of the OPA...nervous.

Their leader (or one of them) is said to be Rosenfeld Guoliang, a thin dark-skinned Belter whose casual demeanor is at odds with both his bright and ready smile and his sense of barely contained violence. He has tattoos of the logo of the Voltaire Collective—a knifelike V—alongside the split circle of the OPA and a number of his comrades have followed suit.

Members of the Voltaire Collective tend to be the extremists of the OPA and those most comfortable with violence as a response—first, last, or only. Most members have some basic skill with improvised explosives—either brought to the Collective or learned once they proved themselves trustworthy.

Basic **Voltaire Collective Member** stats are in the **Adversaries & Allies** section of the adventure and can be used as a template for Voltaire Collective NPCs in this and other adventures for *The Expanse* RPG.



MEETING KATRIA AND THE CELL

This is the Ceres cell of the Voltaire Collective, five members led by the woman who just spoke: Katria. Though they haven't drawn their weapons, they each carry a pistol (2d6 + Per damage) and Katria usually has one small bomb on her person (3d6 damage, 2 meter radius).

Katria has been sent photos and brief descriptions of the crew from the Mars cell, along with a rundown of events from **Two Kinds of Prayer**. She is not exactly a charmer and her compatriots are less so, but they are upfront if questioned about the bombings. The first, a surgical strike with quality workmanship and not a Belter harmed, was their doing. *"The rest are overkill, sloppy—even if they are using our detonators,"* Katria tells them derisively. *"Do you think we waste material if we have to?"* The Collective isn't sure who is behind the other three bombings, but they believe they are being set up to take the fall—part of the reason they are a bit paranoid about anyone asking questions. Security has been particularly diligent about policing her people in recent months, and they are known as explosives experts.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS

Despite the crew's history with the Voltaire Collective cell on Mars, Katria and the Ceres cell's attitude toward the crew is Standoffish to Neutral according to GM discretion: they are not interested in creating more problems for themselves (see **Impressions and Attitude** in the **Social Encounters** section of **CHAPTER 5: GAME PLAY** of *The Expanse* RPG). The characters can make the shifts required to bring Katria onside through **social maneuvers**, in a **grand gesture**, or with the **Making an Offer** social stunt (see **Detailed Social Interactions** in the **Social Encounters** section in **CHAPTER 5** of *The Expanse* RPG). If Katria's attitude can be shifted to Open or above, she can be convinced to hand over one of the Collective's detonators to make a comparison to the others.

FIGHTING THE COLLECTIVE

Or things could go less smoothly. Katria and her cell are generally violent—as with most Voltaire Collective cells—but also extremely aggressive towards Inners, especially right here and right now. If there are hotheads in the crew likely to start

HAVEN'T WE MET?

Observant fans of *The Expanse* series that have read as far as *Persepolis Rising* may note that a Voltaire Collective cell leader named Katria becomes instrumental in future events. We're not necessarily saying this Katria is that Katria Mendez—she doesn't give the crew her last name, after all—but anything is possible in an *Expanse* series. If one of your players notices, just say, "That's an interesting question," and feel free to award them 1d6 bonus Stunt Points they can use on their next success.

trouble, be prepared for a fight. **Katria** and the **Voltaire Collective Member** stats are in the **Adversaries & Allies** section of the adventure. A few things to keep in mind if it comes to violence:

- Katria and the Voltaire Collective like a good ol' fashioned fistfight, and will not escalate to guns or knives unless the characters do first. You should make it very clear they're not drawing their guns even if they're packing for protection: they're not trying to kill anyone, just teach the Inners some respect. (They do fight dirty though.)
- However, as the fight is happening in a bar, a few smashed bottles and thrown barstools as improvised weapons are almost necessary.
- Presenting as a worthy opponent will earn the Collective's respect: they appreciate those able to stand up for themselves and their people. Katria and the Collective's attitude can be shifted to Open.

SCENE 4

IT'S SABOTAGE! OR IS IT?

COMBAT/SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

Just as they come out of the meeting with the Voltaire Collective in **Scene 3**, the crew is immediately alerted to a breach of the *Anne Bonny's* data systems. There was no entry alarm or any other indication that someone had broken into the ship, but it seems there's an intruder onboard regardless.

UNAUTHORIZED ENTRY

When the characters get to the *Anne Bonny's* berth, they find a Belter still tossing their ship. Once she realizes she's discovered, she'll try to make a run for it (see **Shira Shortridge** in the **Adversaries & Allies** section). If characters can succeed in a **Grapple** stunt attack, they can stop her from darting out the airlock and prevent the ensuing chase (see **Stunt Attack** in the

Taking Actions section of **CHAPTER 5** of *The Expanse* RPG).

If the thief on board the *Anne Bonny* is able to get away, the chase through the docks and corridors of Ceres is a **TN 11 Dexterity (Running)** test with a **success threshold** of 10 (see **Chases** in the **Action Encounters** section of **CHAPTER 5: GAME PLAY** of *The Expanse* RPG). Success means that the crew have caught up and cornered her, but she will have acquired the **Fatigued** condition in the chase (due to her medical modifications) and can no longer put up much of a fight. The crew should be able to either subdue the saboteur or convince her a fight won't help her condition any.

INTERROGATING AND INVESTIGATING

The crew can bring the saboteur back to the ship for questioning, but they can as easily bring her to their quarters on Ceres...or to station security, if it occurs to them. She seems to be young, in her late twenties at most, dressed in a nondescript manner with an OPA split circle tattoo on her forearm. If the characters search her, they find a data cube containing all of the *Anne Bonny's* logs and any information they have from or on the *Abzu's Bounty* and their activities there... along with a Voltaire Collective detonator. She can be found in station records as Jen Wong, a Belter born on Tycho and associated with a splinter group of the Voltaire Collective, the Free Fools—last seen by the crew on *Prometheus* in **Breaking the Surface**. How did she get on the ship? Who would want that information? Were the *Bonny's* logs and files the main purpose of the break in? Did Katria send the thief while she met with the crew in the bar?



WHAT IF SOMEONE STAYS ONBOARD?

If any characters remain on the *Anne Bonny* while the others meet with the Voltaire Collective, ask them where they are on the ship to find out where they can intercept the thief. She has entry codes to the airlock from Ceres, so raises no alarm when boarding—and unless she's spotted on the way to the bridge, she only raises the alarm when accessing the system. If a character is in a position to spot her before she can access the system or intercept her while she's downloading the ship's logs, you can cut to the chase. Literally. Characters can attempt to stop her and/or give chase as in **Scene 4** on their own, though any interrogation should wait for the rest of the crew.

Characters with the Doctor talent can make a **TN 12 Intelligence (Medicine)** or a **TN 13 Perception (Seeing)** test to notice that certain things about the thief's facial and bone structure are unusual for a Belter, but it's not something they've ever seen before. Running ship scans and systems checks rules out sabotage, explosives, or any tampering with the airlock. Questioning the thief provides little information until Katria or the Voltaire Collective are mentioned.

The OPA woman laughs with a high manic edge and spits on the deck at the name. "Live by the sword, die by the sword. Katria will be gone soon enough. They'll all be gone soon enough. You need a bomb to get rid of roaches."

This is where access to the network via the **Hack the Ceres Network** challenge test comes in particularly handy. With a **TN 13 Intelligence (Technology)** test (**success threshold 10**), characters can access the security system to scan for active explosives—or can simply run the scan if they have already gained access to that system. It locates explosives in the commons area of the station. Alternately, a **TN 15 Communication (Persuasion)** test (**success threshold 10**) eventually convinces the woman to come clean: she's planted a bomb on the station that will kill Katria—and many, many other people, if she's done her job right. If characters have made contacts with station security earlier in the adventure, alerting them directly is another possibility.

Still, there's a bomb on Ceres that could go off at any minute. And the crew might be the only people that know about it.

SCENE 5

COUNTDOWN

EXPLORATION ENCOUNTER

If the crew hasn't located the bomb or Katria through the Ceres system, they can locate her via OPA or security contacts established in the **Investigate the Bombings** challenge test or with a **TN 13 Communication (Persuasion)** test (**success threshold 10**).

Katria only has one spot she's known to frequent at any time: a table in the commons near a shaved ice cart she likes. Unfortunately, it's a good location to both get rid of the cell and cause maximum damage.

The characters must manage a few different tasks as quickly and calmly as possible:

Find and warn Katria and the Voltaire Collective that someone—possibly one of their recruits—is trying to kill them.

Find the bomb in the area around the food cart, requiring a **TN 13 Perception (Searching)** test, **success threshold 10**.

Defuse the bomb. This will require an advanced **TN 13 Intelligence (Technology)** test, **success threshold 12**.

The characters have time for 10 tests to find and diffuse the bomb before it explodes. If the characters are too ill equipped (or nervous) to defuse the bomb themselves, Katria offers her help—if only to get evidence to track down the people framing her.

If the crew are concerned with failing to defuse the bomb or would like to avoid casualties, evacuate the area. A **TN 11 Communication (Leadership or Persuasion)** test will get people out of the blast radius in a calm and efficient manner. Funny how mentioning explosives can clear a room.

AFTERMATH AND EVIDENCE

The characters succeed in defusing the bomb...or succeed in getting Katria to help them in defusing the bomb if things come down to the wire. Not only have they saved a number of lives on Ceres, but they now also have evidence of an attempt to harm and frame the members of the Voltaire Collective, and a bomb that may match the chemical makeup of the last three. There's only one way to find out—ask station security, under Anderson Dawes.

SCENE 6

OPA VS. OPA

SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

Right after saving his station from another bombing, it's time for the crew and Katria to visit Anderson Dawes. Since they saved her life, the Voltaire Collective cell leader confides in the crew that she is suspicious of Dawes and believes he is the one who is attempting to frame them and get them off his station. "Dead or alive," she points out sourly. Katria says Dawes has been working with an OPA freelancer new to Ceres who is good with explosives—and though it might not make sense to bomb his own station, she wouldn't put much past Anderson Dawes or his friend, Fred Johnson, "The Butcher of Anderson Station."

VISITING DAWES

Dawes is more than pleased to hear that disaster has been averted, even if the crew has involved Katria and brought her to his office. The characters are able to relay most of the story to Dawes and get him to agree to send the bomb off for testing against the others, but Katria is unable to stay quiet. She accuses Dawes of having someone steal the Voltaire Collective's detonators and of working with the freelance OPA bomber she mentioned to the crew. Dawes denies everything—but Katria's description of the bomber matches that of the woman on the *Anne Bonny* exactly. A woman who had one of the Collective's detonators and a data cube full of information from the crew's ship.

If the characters show a photo or video of their prisoner to Katria and Dawes or otherwise describe her, Katria identifies the woman as the freelancer in question. Dawes hides his initial reaction: characters can make a **TN 12 Perception (Empathy)** test to notice that he both recognizes the woman and is annoyed to see her outed before he can cover it up. He reluctantly admits to hiring her for "A few odd jobs," but swears he was not aware of any part she had in the bombings.

"Frankly, Katria, if I wanted to have you killed there are cleaner ways to do it that don't involve destroying my station and terrorizing the populace. There are airlocks," Dawes says dryly. "And they are always available. If I wanted you dead I would have done it long before now."

This is the sort of logic that goes straight to the soul of a woman like Katria; she can see immediately that it is genuine, from one ruthless extremist to another. "Dui. Fair enough."

They do not trust each other. But each would know if the other truly wanted them dead.

The prisoner on the *Anne Bonny* is an OPA bomber and spy that worked for Dawes and wants Katria and the Voltaire Collective dead. Does this mean Dawes is behind the search of the *Anne Bonny*? And who is this woman and why is she bombing people on Ceres?

SCENE 7

REVELATIONS

EXPLORATION/SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

The crew is left with only one thing to do—go back to the *Anne Bonny* to get some answers from their prisoner. The ones they get will be far more surprising than they may expect.

THE PRISONER'S SECRET

If the characters turned their prisoner over to station security, getting access to her again will be difficult at best—even if they're working for Dawes. Depending on what the OPA thinks the characters are more likely to believe—or buy—they claim either access is limited by top secret organizational clearance, or simply that the prisoner died by suicide. Dawes may seem like an obvious suspect in hiding or murdering the prisoner, but further research can turn up other culprits. However, if the characters have kept the spy reasonably secure during their time off the ship, she's right where they left her.

Whether they've turned her over or not, they can still look for her records. Searching photo and medical databases for the woman requires a **TN 14 Intelligence (Research)** test (**success threshold 10**) but when they do find her the results are quite telling: their OPA bomber is not a Belter. Though she has a full false identity as a Belter born on Tycho and a member of the OPA, and has been surgically and genetically modified to look like a Belter, she is most definitely from Earth. The woman's photo and DNA can be matched in several databases to that of Shira Shortridge, a former UN officer supposedly gone missing just over six years ago. A **TN 15 Intelligence (Technology)** test (**success threshold 12**) is enough to get into



her accounts and find that her payments from the UN never stopped. In fact, they increased after her disappearance and over the ensuing years.

CONFESSION

If Shira is still on the ship, she finally talks when confronted with what the characters have found. If there are Inners on the crew, she appeals to their sympathies in particular.

Adjust and paraphrase the following based on your crew complement:

“Do you know what it’s like to have spent years living out here, as one of them? Like...parasites on a host, crawling all over these stations, out in the vacuum. It’s unnatural, makes them wrong. They bombed a transport of families moving back from the Belt—my folks didn’t even want to be out here anymore. But why does that matter to them? So when they gave me the chance to hurt the people who had killed my parents...of course I said I would. Wouldn’t you? Wouldn’t anyone?”

Who exactly they are, she won’t say. But she only worked for Dawes to maintain her cover, and was working for him when she raided the *Anne Bonny*—he gave her the override code to get onto the ship. But she has no idea what he wanted from the data, only that her UN contacts asked for it as well when they learned she had it. The Voltaire Collective detonators? She smirks and points out that she was in the OPA and the Free Fools for years, fake Belter or not. “It wasn’t difficult.”

If the characters are interested in how she came to look so much like a Belter, she says she remembers very little of the transformation, but another **TN 14 Intelligence (Research)** test can turn up bone growth and drug technology patented by Mao-Kwikowski Mercantile that could have very likely been used for these purposes. This suggests Jules-Pierre Mao (and possibly someone at the UN) has been interfering with the stability of the Belt since long before the protomolecule appeared on the scene.

THE PRISONER'S FATE

The decision to bring the prisoner to Dawes or not is up to the crew. Technically, her crimes happened on Ceres so she should go into the custody of station security, but there’s an old Earther saying: finder’s keepers. They could bring her to Katria, or dispense their own justice by airlock or otherwise, but it must be said—Holden would turn her in.

The crew can also confront Dawes about searching the *Anne Bonny* before they leave Ceres. He won't deny it—he admits that his curiosity simply got the better of him given all the interesting situations they've been in and people they've associated with. He apologizes, but he doesn't sound as sincere as before.

Whether they confront him or not, Dawes lets the crew know that the lab testing proved that the chemical makeup of the last bomb was the same as the three bombs not accounted for by the Voltaire Collective. When the *Anne Bonny's* flight plan is filed for their next destination, Dawes sends their payment in full and a gracious note with thanks for their help. He signs off: "Good hunting, *Anne Bonny*."

INTERLUDE

LEAVING CERES

As **CHAPTER 4** of *Abzu's Bounty* concludes, the crew has some time on Ceres to wrap up any loose ends before Diana contacts them to attend the titular Titan's Ball in **CHAPTER 5**. Before she does, the crew can devote some time to interlude activities (see **CHAPTER 5: GAME PLAY** of *The Expanse* RPG) including:

ADVANCEMENT

Ceres is now home of the OPA, a place where information and reputations spread from the station out to the Belt. Any OPA members that have done well for themselves and the organization in this adventure can be advanced a level.

RECOVERING

If characters have any injuries, they can still take advantage of the Ceres facilities. They can recover Fortune and make **Constitution (Stamina)** tests every 24 hours to recover from injury conditions.

RELATING

The crew can spend some time relating in the wake of the adventure, or may want to change their Relationships with Dawes, Katria, or their OPA contact. It's possible these relationships have advanced to the point of a Bond—if you think so, feel free to award one to the appropriate characters (see the **Rewards** chapter of *The Expanse* RPG for details).

REPUTATION

The crew helped stop the terrorist bombings on Ceres Station and save lives. There may already be video of them out there—evacuating the commons or attempting to defuse the bomb. Given their current mission, the characters may want to find ways to downplay their exploits or otherwise keep a low profile. It could lead to some entertaining scenes or an interesting side adventure in which the crew finds ways to convince the Ceres media to keep recent events quiet—or even make someone else the hero. However, if the characters do want to try to spin the media to their advantage, it wouldn't be the worst time to try.

TRAINING

Characters that have attained a new level due to the events of **There's OPA** and **There's OPA** can spend part of the interlude training or developing their abilities.

WORKING

There is no lack of work on Ceres, should the *Anne Bonny's* crew want to add to their accounts. Katria and her cell may have a job for the ship—transport off Ceres. Even if the Voltaire Collective and Dawes have come to an understanding, it doesn't mean they necessarily want to live on a station under his rule. Another possible job is transporting or escorting guests to the Titan's Ball, the location of **CHAPTER 5's** adventure.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

If the trip to the Titan's Ball in **CHAPTER 5** has time for any other interlude activities, they can be permitted at the GM's discretion.

ADVERSARIES & ALLIES

The following are profiles of the significant non-player characters in **There's OPA** and **There's OPA**, along with their *Expanses* game stats. For additional characters you can use in this adventure, see the **CHAPTER 13: THREATS** chapter of *The Expanses* RPG and previous chapters of this book.

ANDERSON DAWES

Anderson Dawes was born and raised in the Belt, named after the company that his parents worked for: Anderson-Hyosung Cooperative Industries Group. His name was an attempt to gain their bosses' favor, and as futile as most such attempts by Belters. When he was fifteen, his sister died during a mission on an asteroid outside Eros because he'd failed to check the seals on her suit properly. He didn't know anything was wrong until she twisted sideways to pull up a rock spur: there was a pop on the comm link and she was gone. He didn't make the same mistake again with his other three sisters, but he still had to check the seals and send them out into the vacuum. Hoping he did it right each and every time.

For better or worse, Dawes is the man who recruited Fred Johnson to the Belt's cause and backed the Earther's rise to the de facto position of spokesperson for the OPA. Along with Johnson, Dawes has banded together several OPA cells with the common goal of an independent Belt, hoping a unified front will lead to a legitimate government. Dawes' vision for the OPA is to see it become a faction at parity with the UN and the Martian Republic, with equal decision-making power—and he is perfectly comfortable with the use of force to reach his goals. If Earth and Mars can have their navies, surely the Belt is entitled to some form of defense.

When the UN withdrew from Ceres, Dawes took on its governorship. It is a position for which he is better suited than even he expected, given the OPA's prominence on the station for decades. While he is taking some time to settle into the new role, even this small victory has sparked Dawes' ambitions for the Belt. Acquiring a protomolecule sample would change the power balance in the solar system drastically, and even as Dawes still coordinates with Fred Johnson on their political options, he is—as always—quickly preparing a Plan B.

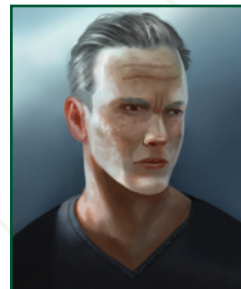
KATRIA, HEAD OF THE VOLTAIRE COLLECTIVE CERES CELL

Katria is the leader of the Ceres cell of the Voltaire Collective and like most of her faction she is a bomb maker and counts herself as among the more violent and radical elements of the OPA. She is not an easy woman to get to know, but like many Belters she is fiercely proud of the Belt and of the Belter's home on Ceres, suspicious of Inners, and cannot abide wastefulness. Katria is what Martians call a "straight shooter"—despite assumptions made about her OPA affiliation, she is honest about what and who she is, and to whom she is loyal.

Again, this may or may not be the Katria Mendez of future adventures in *The Expanses* novel series. She never gives a last name.

OPA CERES STATION SECURITY

Responsibility for OPA security shifts between cells and factions, depending on who's in charge and who's in favor with the current leadership. Right now,



ANDERSON DAWES

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1, COMMUNICATION 3 (DECEPTION, PERSUASION), **CONSTITUTION 1, DEXTERITY 1** (STEALTH), **FIGHTING 0, INTELLIGENCE 3** (LAW, TACTICS), **PERCEPTION 4** (EMPATHY, INTUITION), **STRENGTH 0, WILLPOWER 3** (SELF-DISCIPLINE)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	27	11	1
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
PISTOL	+1	2D6	
UNARMED	+0	1D3	

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: When A Plan Comes Together, Just a Shadow, Hidden Message, Let's Make a Deal

TALENTS: Command (Novice), Contacts (Novice), Intrigue (Expert), Improvisation (Expert)

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, pistol

THREAT: MODERATE

KATRIA

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1 (PISTOLS), **COMMUNICATION 0, CONSTITUTION 2** (RUNNING), **DEXTERITY 2** (FREE-FALL), **FIGHTING 1** (BRAWLING), **INTELLIGENCE 2** (DEMOLITIONS, SECURITY), **PERCEPTION 0, STRENGTH 1** (INTIMIDATION), **-WILLPOWER 1**

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
12	15	12	2
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
PISTOL	+3	2D6	
UNARMED	+3	1D3+2	

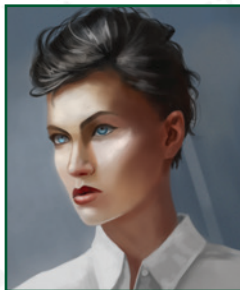
SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Whatever's Handy, Frugal

TALENTS: Fringer (Novice), Improvisation (Novice), Maker (Expert)

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, pistol, small explosive

THREAT: MODERATE



SCRIMSHAW CREW

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 0, COMMUNICATION 1, CONSTITUTION 0, DEXTERITY 0 (FREE-FALL), FIGHTING 1 (BRAWLING), INTELLIGENCE 0, PERCEPTION 0, STRENGTH 0 (INTIMIDATION), WILLPOWER 0

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	0	11	0

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
PISTOL	+0	2d6
UNARMED	+0	1d3

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: None

TALENTS: Pick two ability focuses and two of the following: Fringer (Novice), Striking Style (Brawling, Novice), Contacts (Novice), or Fighting (Brawling, Novice).

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, pistol

THREAT: MINOR

SHIRA SHORTRIDGE

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 2 (THROWING), COMMUNICATION 1 (DECEPTION), CONSTITUTION 1 (RUNNING), DEXTERITY 2 (STEALTH, FREE-FALL), FIGHTING 0, INTELLIGENCE 2 (DEMOLITIONS, ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY), PERCEPTION 2, STRENGTH 0, WILLPOWER 1 (COURAGE, SELF-DISCIPLINE)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	15	11	1

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
UNARMED	+2	1d3+1

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Collateral Damage, Cover Your Tracks, It Wasn't Me

TALENTS: Contacts (Novice), Fringer (Expert), Intrigue (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, explosives, toolkit, light body armor

THREAT: MODERATE

VOLTAIRE COLLECTIVE

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 0, COMMUNICATION 0, CONSTITUTION 0, DEXTERITY 1 (FREE-FALL), FIGHTING 0, INTELLIGENCE 0 (DEMOLITIONS), PERCEPTION 0, STRENGTH 1,

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	0	11	0

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
PISTOL	+0	2d6
UNARMED	+0	1d3

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: None

TALENTS: Pick two ability focuses and two of the following: Fringer (Novice), Improvisation (Novice), Maker (Novice), or Fighting (Brawling, Novice).

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, pistol

THREAT: MINOR

that's the Loca Greigia. Use the traits above for station security, assigning them any appropriate ability focuses and talents if they should take on any specific role. See **CHAPTER 7: FUTURE HISTORY** of *The Expanse* RPG for more on the OPA.

SHIRA SHORTRIDGE, FAKE OPA SABOTEUR

Shira Shortridge was born and raised in the Gatineau-Montreal-Saint-Laurent Communal Interest Zone, an area with strong ties to United Nations service. Her family—her fathers, brother, and sister—had its problems like any other, but they were still loving and close-knit. While her brother and sister went on to become a doctor and a biologist, when Shira graduated she surprised everyone by deciding to enlist in the UN's officer training program.



While Shira was in officer training, one of her dads accepted a management job on Tycho Station—since all the children had “left the nest.” They saw it as something of an adventure and an opportunity for lifelong Earthers to see what it was really like to live in the Belt. Both her parents had sympathies for the situation of Belters if not the OPA; her other dad, a history professor, often said sadly that the Belt's tale had been told many times in humanity's existence.

Shira had a rather different opinion, but it wasn't one she liked to share with her dads. But as she progressed through her training and went on her first missions, it was confirmed: any sympathy for the OPA, maybe even the Belters themselves, was misplaced. No matter what they tried to do, how decent they tried to be, the Belters hated the UN soldiers. They were seen as invaders, “squats,” lower than dirt, when they were just trying to keep people safe. They thought all Earthers were lazy junkies living on Basic, too ignorant and wasteful to live. Why were they even trying? When her father's contract came up on Tycho and he sent a message to say they were going back down the well, Shira barely suppressed the urge to say “I told you so.” Her brother and sister were going to finally visit the station just to help pack up, but then they'd all go home together. She tried to get leave to join them, but the threat level had been increased and all leave had been restricted. She was furious with both the UN and herself when she got the alert, as if she could have stopped it by being there. The transport her family took from Tycho to Earth was bombed by the OPA. At least, whoever bombed it claimed responsibility for the OPA. There were no survivors.

Shira was put on bereavement leave and sent to military counseling. One day when she was supposed to meet her therapist, she instead found a well-dressed older man who looked like a politician sitting in his chair. The man asked her if she would like to hurt the people who killed her family and Shira said that she would like that very much. And not very long after that, Shira died, and a Belter was born.

VOLTAIRE COLLECTIVE MEMBER

Use the traits above for the members of the Voltaire Collective, assigning them any appropriate ability focuses and talents if they should take on any specific role in the cell or with the crew. See **Scene 3** for more on Katria's cell and feel free to adapt and create any members of the Collective as needed to suit the adventure.



5: THE TITAN'S BALL

The Titan's Ball is the penultimate adventure for the *Abzu's Bounty* campaign series for *The Expanse* Roleplaying Game. The crew learned way back in *Secrets and Satellites* that Pope makes one of his rare personal appearances at the Titan's Ball every year. With all other leads to locate the protomolecule having run dry, this seems like the best hope. This adventure is a social-based heist that points the player characters toward the explosive conclusion of the series, **Shoot the Moon**. It should be entirely possible for the characters to completely avoid combat if they bribe, schmooze, and steal well enough. By the end of this adventure, players should have enough information to lead them to Pope's hidden location, and to the protomolecule.

OVERVIEW

The Titan's Ball takes place on Titan, Saturn's largest moon. Titan is home to some of the wealthiest resort domes in the galaxy and is a hot spot for the upper crust of the upper class to mingle as they watch the beautiful methane rains. The Delos Dome Resort and Spa is one of the largest on Titan and specializes in having grand ballrooms and space for invitation-only shows and conventions. Every three years many elites from around the solar system gather for an elaborate party with the highlight being an exclusive auction where curios, collectibles and fantastic works of art (some of it illicitly acquired) are sold to the highest bidder—no questions asked. Many executive-types and other movers and shakers use the Ball as an opportunity to make private deals and share information.

These events are hosted by a mysterious board of directors who invite fewer than a hundred of the system's most powerful and influential people. Several people of the highest tier, such as Sebastian Pope and Jules-Pierre Mao, have standing invitations—others come and go as their fame and fortune rises and falls. Diana believes that the Ball is the perfect opportunity to set a trap to corner or capture Pope and finally learn where he is hiding the protomolecule. She secures enough invitations for the crew to attend, posing as contractors for the MCRN (and their assistants). Unfortunately, at the last minute Diana and the crew learn that Pope won't be attending for the first time in over 15 years.

"The ship name. It's unusual. I swear, if I board one more ship named after someone's kid or the girl they left behind after that magical weekend on Titan, I'm going to start fining people for general lack of creativity."

— *Leviathan Wakes*

TITAN



Titan is home to more than three dozen dome resorts just like Delos that offer pampering and exclusive vacations. Each dome is a large resort that occupies a significant amount of space, and due to the environment are all connected by skyways and tunnels. These resorts are filled with multi-room suites, business centers, conference rooms, and exhibit halls that make businesses, trade shows, and conventions feel at home, but with an added level of opulence.

The domes on Titan deal almost exclusively with the rich and powerful, though in recent years some domes have attempted to make options available to the more budget-minded to bring in a wider range of clientele. Unfortunately, the enormous cost of travel still makes it wildly prohibitive to everyone but the upper echelon. On Titan, those not of the rarified classes are often looked down upon, shunned, and are even barred from certain parts of the domes by exclusive membership requirements.

Companies and executives who perform independent operations, under the table deals, or engage in espionage often meet at some of these more private and exclusive places under the guise of personal vacations. Charon's Retreat, Dome of Divinity, and the illustrious Pallas Park all have penthouse suites meant exactly for these purposes.

Some of the domes are built tall, and due to Titan's atmosphere they can be much taller than skyscrapers back on Earth. Other domes are built into the ground, although they tend to avoid the ethane and methane lakes, which can be hazardous and unstable.

Outside of the domes, Titan is dangerous and uninhabitable—surrounded by an orange haze composed mostly of nitrogen with a small amount of methane that falls from the sky like rain. Titan has three major sea-sized bodies of liquid ethane and methane that are named after mythical creatures—Kraken Mare, Ligeia Mare, and Punga Mare—and numerous smaller bays and lakes.

Thinking fast, Diana comes up with a new trap. She arranges for an item, irresistible to Pope, to be put up for auction: *Opportunity*, one of the first Mars Exploration rovers. She's certain that he will not be able to resist this lure and will at least send a trusted agent to bid for him. All the crew has to do is figure out who has the most interest in the Rover, and that person is almost certainly their target. With any luck, that agent will know something that that can lead them to Pope's protomolecule sample.

Everything goes according to plan until the auction takes place, at which point the Titan's Ball is crashed by a group of pirates—the crew of the *Mary Read*, the sister ship of *Anne Bonny* seeking revenge on Sebastian Pope for the murder of their cohorts back on Prometheus. All hell breaks loose, and the player characters must not only kidnap their quarry, but keep them alive before the pirates kill them.

RUNNING THIS ADVENTURE

The Titan's Ball offers an inside look at the wealth disparity in the solar system as well as exploring themes of revenge and resentment through the lens of the *Mary Read*'s crew—hell-bent on vengeance, both on those responsible for their crewmates' deaths and on the ultra-rich responsible for the wider suffering that indirectly led to those deaths, and so many others. With any luck, this adventure also leads the player characters one step closer to the quarry, Alexander Pope and his protomolecule, and by the end they should know where to find him.

This adventure is designed to lead to the finale of the *Abzu's Bounty* series, and by its close a few things should be accomplished:

- Foremost, the crew learns that Sebastian Pope has taken the protomolecule to a secret location on Luna where he is conducting experiments with it. They may also learn more about Pope and gain some insight into why he obtained the protomolecule.

- The crew also has a chance to meet and interact with some of the movers and shakers in the system, people they might never have had such an opportunity to meet. These contacts could lead to employment or future adventures beyond *Abzu's Bounty*.

COMPLICATIONS

Successfully completing **The Titan's Ball** requires that the player characters, at least some of them, have good social skills and some ability to put on a mask and pretend to be wealthy elites. This might not work for some groups, especially if they are more combat oriented. If this is the case, there are a few options:

- Have Diana join them and take the lead, allowing the player characters to pose as her assistants or bodyguards. You lose a lot of the social aspect of the story, but at least the crew can be a part of it from beginning to end.
- Rather than going in undercover, perhaps the crew of the *Mary Read* makes contact with the crew, or the *Bonny's* crew learn about the assault and join them, but with the intention of getting information or capturing Pope instead of just killing him. The social aspect of the adventure is gone, but it could be a fun fight as the crew battle their way into the auction and hopefully escape with their prize.
- Finally, you could skip this chapter entirely and Alina Vasquez, or another contact they have made (maybe even Anderson Dawes), could contact them and let them know about the secret lab on Luna.

CONNECTIONS & ATTITUDES

Because **The Titan's Ball** takes place in such an upscale setting, with high-income clients, the social relationships between the player characters and the NPCs is very important. Almost all of these relationships start with a Neutral Attitude unless otherwise noted and can be improved or lowered by a number of different factors. Certain characters have special triggers that raise or lower their Attitudes with the crew—but it's also possible for various **Communication** and even **Intelligence** checks to raise or lower an attitude (see **Impressions and Attitude** in the **Social Encounters** section of **CHAPTER 5** of *The Expanse* RPG). Also see the **Adversaries & Allies** section at the end of this chapter for a more in-depth look at the secrets and lives of the attendees, as well as details on actions that might affect their attitude. Because there are so many NPCs to keep track of, and their attitudes can be important to the success (or failure) of the adventure, a chart is provided so that you can track the current attitude of each.

SCENE I

WELCOME TO TITAN

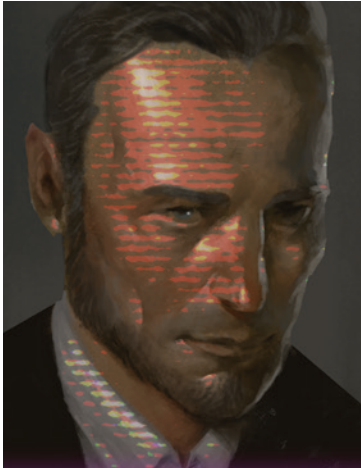
EXPLORATION/SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

Diana has arranged for the crew to attend the Titan's Ball, one of the most exclusive social events in the solar system, in the hopes of abducting Sebastian Pope and learning the location of his protomolecule. When you're ready to begin the adventure read or paraphrase the following:

Titan is home to the exclusive Titan's Ball, where the richest of the rich come to play and socialize. Diana believes this to be the perfect opportunity to finally corner Sebastian Pope, maybe even abduct him, and learn the location of his stolen sample of protomolecule. Over the past few months, she has been laying plans and making arrangements so all of you can attend the event undercover. Unfortunately, at the last minute, she has learned that Pope declined his invitation this year. Not to be deterred, Diana comes up with a new trap. Pope is known to be an avid collector of space exploration relics and several years ago he lost out on a bid to acquire one of the first Mars rovers: Opportunity. Rumor has it Pope was furious at the loss, and Diana has arranged for Opportunity to be put up for bid during the exclusive auction held during the Titan's Ball. She believes this guarantees that even if Pope doesn't attend personally, he'll send a representative to bid on the rover. All you have to do is figure out who that agent is....

The plan is for the crew to go in undercover, possibly even using disguises, and locate Pope's representative and see if they can learn anything about the protomolecule from them. Diana believes that acquiring *Opportunity* is important enough that he'll use someone from his inner circle—hopefully, someone close enough to know where they can find the protomolecule.

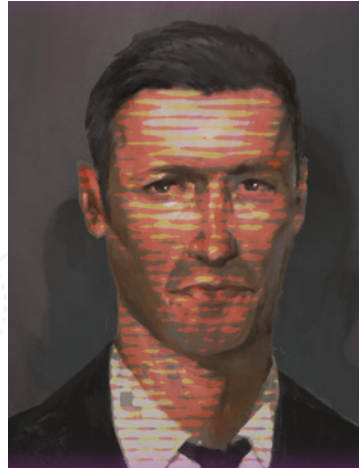
Diana stresses to the crew the importance of maintaining the cover and provides them with IDs and invitations of several high-level MCRN contractors. Work with the players to establish the details of these covers. Depending on their comfort level



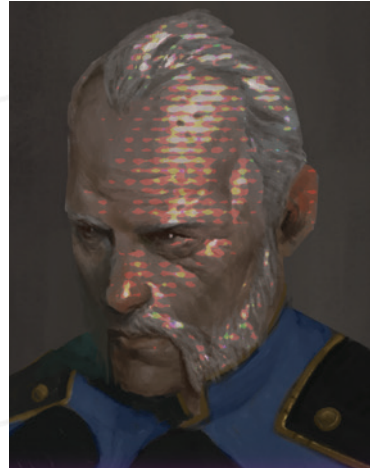
Anton Oliva



Caralynn Bouilly



Randall Khan



General Avery Agimat

for maintaining a cover as a powerful executive, some of the crew might be given covers as attachés or assistants. While it's unusual for guests to the Titan's Ball to bring employees, it's also not entirely unheard of. Some execs can't live without their personal assistants and the excursion is sometimes used as a reward for particularly valuable employees. Diana supplies them with just about any gear they request, as well as appropriate clothing and even disguise kits. She also pays to have the exterior of the crew's ship modified (including changing transponder codes) to look more like something that would be transporting important businesspeople from Mars.

Finally, she supplies dossiers on the four people she suspects as the most likely proxies for Pope, and recommends that the crew focus their investigation on those four:

The first is **Anton Oliva**, the inheritor of a large fortune with ties to Krystal Kleer. Anton is in his late 30s, bald, and has an iconic gold watch with sapphire hands.

Caralynn Bouilly is an heiress to her family's manufacturing fortune and the CEO of a hot new media corporation, The Bouilly Network. The company grew quickly and quietly, but has already had an impact. She is always wearing a necklace with her company's logo.

Randall Khan, known for always wearing a pinstripe suit and walking with a cane, is a notorious playboy and freelancer who trades in secrets. He's also known as something of a fixer in corporate circles.

Finally, **General Avery Agimat** is an arms purchaser for the UNN. Avery has a large scar on the palm of their hand that runs up to the wrist.

Diana notes that while it's possible one or more of these might express some interest in the rover, she expects Pope's agent will go to the wall to acquire it.

THE ORGANIZERS OF THE TITAN'S BALL

These organizers of the Titan's Ball are part of a board of directors who plan, fund, and execute the Ball. The organizers meet regularly during which action items and policies are voted on, requiring a majority vote to pass. This includes replacing members who retire or pass away. Everything about the board and its decisions are kept secret, including their identities, but members have been known to leak information, or let slip that they are a board member when it suits their interests. All of them, except Hale, can be found mingling in the Ball.

Alexander Dewford is the newest member of the board of directors and has helped the board run several of the events in the past. **Dewford** is the President of Delos Dome Resort and Spa, but keeps this information classified so his appearance as auctioneer is not seen as a conflict of interest.

Khari Avanic is the founder of Vault Bank, a Mars-run investment firm. She is retired from the day-to-day work of the bank and now focuses on private entertainment investments and the Titan's Ball.

Geoffery Pearce is a multi-Gold-Medal-winning athlete across several different competitions. Now that he has aged out of these contests, Geoffery has used the connections he made from his fame to secure some lucrative investments. His wealth and connections are what led him to be selected as a board member for the Titan's Ball.

Dinah Kanigher backs numerous small gangs and even funds several OPA factions all over the system, although she maintains a more legitimate front as a securities investor.

Hale is an incredibly secretive UNN Agent that has invested in dozens of corporations involved in the Titan's Ball, including some of Pope's, but maintains an alias and only communicates on scattered channels and never in person.

GETTING WEAPONS INTO THE BALL

Weapons are not permitted at the Titan's Ball, or anywhere else on Delos Dome Resort & Spa for that matter. Diana informs the crew that she has arranged for them to bypass the traditional security scanners (a few people on Titan owe her favors) and that they can pack small arms, but they're well advised to keep them out of sight.

ARRIVAL AT THE BALL

The host is a tall, broad man with long blond hair, wearing a tight black tuxedo. He introduces himself to you with gusto: "Welcome to the Titan's Ball. Most of the guests have already arrived but I'll lead you to the Atrium where you'll find your friends and colleagues mingling. My name is Vernon and I'll be curating your experience at the Delos Dome Resort & Spa. If you have want for anything, just let me know." Vernon leads you through a side door which bypasses the usual security protocols. The guard stations at the door nod silently to Vernon as he steps past. Beyond the hangar the lights are bright and beautiful, and the walls of the corridors display oil paintings with old oak framing and ornate gold trim. The distant whisper of live music fills the otherwise empty corridor.

Vernon stops in front of a set of dual wooden doors, and the sounds of conversation and music drifts from the other side. With little effort, he pulls one of the doors open with a single hand, then gestures for you to enter with the other hand. Inside is a wide room with a podium immediately to your left, and a bar spanning the entirety of the wall beyond, and a piano at the far end. The rest of the room is littered with small, circular tables with two or three high-backed chairs at each. Dozens of people clad in tuxedos, extravagant dresses, and all manner of fashion talk in hushed voices. Opposite the bar is an alcove with a small set of doors secured by a muscular woman in a black pantsuit whose eyes slowly scan the crowd.

Vernon reminds the crew to just ask if they need anything, and then leaves the crew to their own devices in the Atrium. Vernon is Diana's contact on Titan, although he does not reveal this unless pressed or needed. The crew can now begin their mission in earnest.

At this point, the players can choose their approach: they can engage one or more of their targets right away, or they can mingle and socialize to get the lay of the land. If the players engage one of the four targets, proceed to the appropriate Social Encounter in **Scene 2**. This part may bounce back and forth between **Scenes 1** and **2** depending on how they want to engage the targets, socialize with others, or explore the room. If players want to forgo socializing and just identify the four targets, they must succeed at a **TN 13 Perception (Searching)** test if they just wander the crowd, or **TN 15 Communication (Investigation)** test if they choose to ask around. Additional tests can be made but each test takes 10 minutes. They have approximately 2 hours before the auction begins.

SERVANTS OF THE BALL

The staff of the Delos Dome Resort and Spa give the guests of the Titan's Ball their full attention. Two dozen servers and just under a hundred guests all mingle in the room serving various delicacies or drinks on silver platters with towels draped over their arms. There are a handful of other named characters that can help the crew, provide information, or may return later. It should be noted that the servants expect guests to maintain proper protocol and breaking protocols is a good way to arouse suspicion. For example, servants at this type of exclusive resort are not permitted to accept tips. If a character is about to commit a faux pas you can allow them to make a **TN Communication (Etiquette)** or **Intelligence (Current Affairs)** test.

SYLVIA SUPITAYAPORN

Sylvia Supitayaporn is the most experienced bartender in the resort and expertly mixes drinks for the guests who belly up to the bar. She is assertive, focused, and has a quick wit for anyone who spends time chatting with her. She keeps up-to-date

GETTING CAUGHT

This adventure is grounded in deception and modeled after heist stories. If any security or servers have reason to suspect the characters aren't who they say they are, have one of them attempt a **TN15 Communication (Deception)** test. The Difficulty goes up by 1 each time this test is made with the same NPC. This can be substituted for **Disguise**, **Etiquette**, **Persuasion** or something else if the crew gets creative with their lies (such as using **Intelligence (Engineering)** if the players are trying to sound like they know what they're talking about as ship manufacturers). If this is successful, the NPC's suspicions are assuaged.

The first time this test is failed, all staff become suspicious of the crew (the attitudes of all staff are reduced by one level) and they keep a close watch on the crewmembers. Extra security may even be assigned specifically to keep an eye on them. If a second test is failed, the crew are detained: they are politely asked to return to their ship and remain there for the rest of the Ball. Two security guards keep watch outside the hangar for the remainder of the event. Of course, if the crew hasn't come up with a means to escape on their own, the arrival of the pirates from the *Mary Read* should give them ample opportunity. If necessary, Vernon may be able to get them back into the dome, although they'll have to remain extremely low-key and may need to resort to new disguises.

on all the popular media as well as other subjects such as art and contemporary and classical music. She can provide a great deal of detailed information about the other servants and servers in the dome (use the information on the NPCs from the **Adversaries & Allies** section at the end of this chapter) and even a few tidbits about many of the guests. She'll give up information on one of the targets (and point them out, negating the required test) with **TN 13 Communication (Investigation)** test. Provide the following information when the crew ask Sylvia about their targets:

ANTON OLIVIA: "He's already more than a little tipsy, having visited the bar three times. He seems to be in a nostalgic mood. Keeps mentioning his dead father."

CARALYNN BOULLY: "She's a social butterfly and is clearly trying to make as many connections as she can. She currently has half a dozen people vying for her attention."

RANDALL KHAN: "He presents himself as a family man—keeps talking about his wife and kids—but there's clearly more to him than that. He's been nursing a single drink for over an hour."

GENERAL AVERY AGIMAT: "All business and no pleasure. It's clear he doesn't really want to be here, but looks like he feels he has to. He doesn't have any love for Martians, I can tell you that. And he isn't drinking at all, unless you count the decaf coffee—he's currently on his second cup. I'm guessing he gave up caffeine pretty recently."

Sylvia begins with an Open attitude. It increases by one level if a character expresses interest or knowledge of mixology or orders a particularly interesting drink. It automatically lowers one level if a character doesn't specify a drink and asks for her "specialty" or tries to hit on her. She happily divulges information about one of the four targets, but if asked about more than one, she automatically moves down one attitude level and the character must make a **TN 15 Communication (Deception)** test to avoid her becoming suspicious (see the **Getting Caught** sidebar).

BARRY MICHAELS

Barry Michaels wanders around the edge of the room keeping a grumpy eye on the guests. Barry has been the resort's Chief of Security for the last fourteen years and has overseen the last four Titan's Balls as well as countless other smaller events. Barry is gruff and non-committal in conversation, so when the player characters first encounter him he has a Neutral attitude.

In order to get his attention a character must make a successful **TN 11 Communication (Etiquette)** test. If they fail, Barry drops an attitude. If he becomes Hostile, he ignores the character's overtures and keeps a sharp eye on them.

Barry used to work for General Avery Agimat and can point them out to the crew with a **TN 13 Communication (Persuasion)** test. If a character gets a degree of success of 5 or better, Barry gives them a personal introduction to the General. He can also provide some details from the General's background (see **General Avery Agimat** in the **Adversaries & Allies** section for pertinent information).



NGAI SHAOQI

Ngai Shaoqi is a security guard standing between the lobby and the auction hall. When someone approaches, she's quick to introduce herself, shake hands, and point guests into the hall. When no one is around, her eyes scan the crowd for trouble or commotion. She begins with a Friendly attitude toward the crew, but any failed Communication test around or with her results in a drop in attitude. Ngai is happy to point out both Caralynn Bouley or Randall Khan to the crew if they ask with a **TN 11 Communication (Investigation)** test. If the crew ask her about the auction, she also introduces them to the Auctioneer, Alexander Dewford.

ALEXANDER DEWFORD

Alexander Dewford is the Auctioneer and the person in charge of the Titan's Ball. Dewford wears a three-piece tuxedo and carries a small violin case with him. Alexander begins with a Standoffish attitude and is hesitant about the crew since he doesn't know them, and is rather private by nature. However, unless he has reason to become suspicious of them, he remains a gracious and professional host.

Dewford's attitude can immediately be increased one level by expressing interest in the auction or the process of auctioneering, and can be increased another level by expressing knowledge of early classical music or requesting he play. It automatically reduces by one if anyone refers to him as "Alex."

If Dewford's attitude is increased to Friendly or greater he happily talks about the auction and the items to be bid on. If the *Opportunity* rover is brought up, he divulges that there has not been as much interest as he expected, but three of the target guests have inquired about it:

ANTON OLIVIA: He seems to have a sincere love of early space travel, but Dewford doubts he has the funds to compete.

CARALYNN BOULLY: She thinks it could be useful as some sort of promotion for her social media platform. She could probably afford it, but it's probably just a flight of fancy for her.

GENERAL AGIMAT: The General is curious for its historical implications. Pushing or asking for too much detail requires a **TN 15 Communication (Deception)** test to avoid Dewford becoming suspicious.

SCENE 2

PERSONS OF INTEREST

SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

In this scene, the player characters investigate the four different targets Diana has given them.

THE TARGETS

This scene is broken into four different parts—one for each target, and not necessarily the order in which they are approached. How the crew decides to approach their targets is entirely up to the player characters. They may split up, approach them together one at a time, or any possible combination. As the GM, you need to be prepared to be flexible and to bounce back and forth between scenes to give all of the players equal time.

You'll find information on how to introduce and deal with each of the targets individually, their starting attitude, and notes on their personality to help guide the conversations. Given that there are two agents, the player characters should be able to pick up on at least one of them working for Pope—and if they're lucky, both.

OTHER GUESTS OF THE TITAN'S BALL

The guests of the ball all have upper class backgrounds. Here are a handful of sample guests you might want to integrate into your adventure as the crew encounters various socialites who aren't the targets. Each of these guests should start with an Open attitude. Some could even become red herrings if the crew seems to be narrowing in on their target too quickly.

- **Silas Strange Jr.** is an Earth judge with significant connections to the corporate world, especially for someone so young. (Silas is in his mid-30s.) Lots of other guests gather around Silas—who prefers to go by Junior—in an attempt to win his good graces in case they need something from him in future.
- **Harry Mann**, Director of the Martian Private Library System, is particularly eager to meet people of his caliber. This is Harry's first invitation to Titan after building the Private Library System from the ground up, and he's very proud of what he's accomplished.
- **Veronica Archer** is, at 22, likely the youngest person at the ball. She represents her parents' company, Archer Industries, a Luna-based construction company usually filling public contracts.
- **Nora Donato**, system-famous author, writes military crime thrillers and has ties to plenty of corporate and military leadership. Her invitation is a status icon for many of the other guests enamored with Nora's stories. She's especially eager to meet General Agimat.



ANTON OLIVIA

Anton is a hotshot young philanthropist who travels to major social gatherings as a means of distracting himself from his personal problems (especially those with his family). When the players have identified and want to engage with Anton, read or paraphrase the following:

Light music fills the otherwise barren corner of the large room behind the bar. Notes echo from a grand piano where a woman in a white sequined dress lazily runs her fingers across the keys, seemingly effortlessly bringing forth ethereal music. Anton Olivia sits in a chair with his eyes locked on the pianist, his hand wrapped around a small glass containing an amber liquid. He's wearing a white, button-down shirt with onyx cuff links underneath an expensive gray sports coat. As you approach, his eyes flick to you and he smiles. "Welcome!" He throws his hands up and waves you over to the table. "This is my friend Julie Graham. Isn't she amazing?" He takes a final gulp of his drink, finishing it off.

Anton Olivia is tipsy and happy to socialize and talk about his past—but is foremost enamored with the pianist, Julie Graham. Anton's attitude begins at Neutral and he wants to keep the conversation light and breezy. If the characters complement Julie's playing or order him another drink his attitude immediately increases to Open. If they keep the conversation light and avoid anything serious a **TN 15 Communication (Persuasion)** test increases it another step to Friendly. If the conversation becomes serious, intense, or about work in any way before he becomes Friendly, Anton goes from Neutral to Standoffish, and Anton makes excuses and moves on to other converse with another guest.

Once Olivia is Friendly, he happily answers anything about his personal life and even goes out of his way to tell the characters about his father's death and how it has impacted his family (details on Olivia's background can be found in the **Adversaries & Allies** section). A successful **TN 13 Communication (Persuasion)** test can get him to share any of the following pieces of information:

The company his father worked for is CarbonCorp. A successful **TN 13 Intelligence (Business)** test allows a character to know that CarbonCorp is a Pope subsidiary.

Olivia first met Pope when he was in middle school, shortly after his father's accident. Pope visited his family to offer his personal condolences. He's sad that Pope didn't make the Ball this year because he enjoys sharing a drink with him. The two share a common interest in interstellar travel and Pope always has suggestions for new articles to read.

Pope mostly sticks to himself when he attends these events, but Oliver has also seen him in the company of Caralynn Bouly and Randall Khan.

CARALYNN BOULLY

Caralynn is the founder and CEO of the Bouly Network, a new social media network that has taken the solar system by storm. When the characters identify Bouly and want to approach her read the following:

Caralynn Bouly is surrounded by half a dozen people and engaging with each of them individually. In one hand she nurses a small glass half-filled with a clear liquid and a lone ice cube. She's wearing a stunning sheer red dress

and around her neck is a short silver chain sporting a medallion imprinted with a stylized version of her company logo. Although petite in stature, she easily commands the crowd around her. When she sees you approach, she locks eyes with each of you and shares a wide smile. The rest of the people slowly scatter and filter away from her as she directs her entire attention on you. She extends a hand. "Good evening, my name is Caralynn Bouly, founder of the Bouly Network. Who are you here with?"

Caralynn starts with a Neutral attitude toward the players characters, but she is incredibly friendly and social—networking is her business. She graciously takes the time to talk to the crew, but also has business to conduct. She built her company from the ground up with her own blood, sweat, and tears, and that includes all the socializing, networking, and favor-calling-in that she had to do. That's something she's very proud of so if the crew don't seem to have anything to offer, she won't spend a lot of time on them.

Expressing interest in or in-depth knowledge of the Bouly Network automatically increases her attitude by one step, and convincing her that they might be of use in increasing her Network's reach or influence increases it another step, but the latter requires a **TN 15 Communication (Deception)** test. She plays her cards extremely close to her chest, but if the crew can get her attitude to Friendly, they can get her to reveal any of the following with a successful **TN 13 Communication (Persuasion)** test:

She'll admit that Pope has been her sponsor and an important figure in the founding of the Bouly Network.

This is her third Ball and it's always a great way to network, but she has some important business this year. If her attitude is Very Friendly a character can attempt a **TN 15 Communication (Persuasion)** test to get her to reveal that Pope has asked her to do something. She won't admit that she's supposed to win the *Opportunity* auction though.

She knows that Khan conducts a lot of business with Pope and is something of a "problem solver." When Pope or other rich and powerful people have a problem, they come to him. She hints that he may, or may not, have helped her out in the past. (He did in fact help her with a smear campaign against a competitor in her early days of founding the Bouly Network, but she won't admit that except under duress.)

While engaged in conversation with the crew, Caralynn receives a message on her hand terminal. A successful **TN 15 Perception (Seeing)** or **Dexterity (Stealth)** test allows a character to catch a glimpse of the message. It reads, "Funds have been transferred to your account. Additional funds can be transferred as necessary. Instructions for transfer are attached. Good bidding!"

A character wishing to steal her hand terminal must make an opposed **Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** test. Her hand terminal is very well secured against hacking and requires an advanced **TN 13 Intelligence (Cryptography or Technology)** test (success threshold 10). Each test requires 1 hour, so it is unlikely they can finish hacking it before the auction begins. Most of the data on her hand terminal is useless although it confirms that Pope has requested that she win the *Opportunity* rover auction—at all costs. The file attached to the last message she received has instructions for *Opportunity* to be shipped to Luna with specific markings on the crate so his fixer there can identify it. There is no information about the identity of the fixer.

Bouly does know that Pope has been spending a lot of time on Luna, working on some pet project of his, but she won't reveal this information except under duress. Additional information about Caralynn Bouly can be found in the **Adversaries & Allies** section.





RANDALL KHAN

Randall is a secret trader, a fixer, a jack-of-all-trades in the corporate world that everyone either knows, or knows someone who knows him. He is renowned for his connections, relationships, and know-how among business insiders. If the characters have asked around about him at all, he has already heard, and avoids the crew until the auction is about to begin. When the crew is ready (and/or able) to engage with Randall, he spots them and approaches first. Read or paraphrase the following:

Many of the men and women mingling have migrated into the auction hall, thinning out the population considerably. The wide room is much quieter as a result, with those who remain talking in hushed voices. A tall, handsome man with a slight limp approaches you, leaning on a black cane crowned with a fist-sized diamond. He bows his head and with a deep, calming voice says, "Hello, my name is Randall—I heard you were asking around for me." He extends his free hand. "I've dealt with some of the superiors at the MCRN before, probably not anyone you've dealt with anyway—" he looks over his shoulder—"but don't tell anyone. Who's your contact over there now? Your liaison? Still Alain? I think the last name was Racine? Ranice? Something like that." He gives a coy smile then chuckles. "I don't think I've heard about him from anyone in a while." His voice is soothing, calming, and he makes direct eye contact with each of you.

Randall Khan has been employed by Pope to ferret out any possible traps or enemies at the Ball. Pope was suspicious the moment the *Opportunity* rover went up for bid, but he wants it too badly to risk losing it again. As a precaution he hired Khan to look more deeply into the matter. Fortunately for the crew, Khan has not been given any specific information of them, but he is on high alert and looking for anyone asking around about Pope. Khan's attitude begins as Standoffish—he's suspicious of everyone. If any of the crew have asked about him, he already knows it. This doesn't necessarily affect his attitude since a lot of people ask about him. However, if any of the staff have become suspicious, or if the crew has been asking around openly about Pope, reduce Khan's attitude by one. If the crew have

ingratiated themselves with the staff (increased two or more of them to Friendly attitude) and otherwise maintained a solid cover, increase his attitude by one. Finally, when meeting Khan the crew must be extremely careful. There is no Alain Racine involved with the MCRN, at least not at any upper echelons. A character with MCRN background who makes a **TN 17 Intelligence (Business)** test knows this, or a character can make an opposed **Perception (Empathy)** test to know that Khan's lying. Calling him on the bluff increases his attitude by one level or they can attempt a **TN 15 Communication (Empathy)** test to bluff their way through. Success maintains the status quo, while failure reduces his attitude by one.

If Randall's attitude is Open or better he is easy to talk to, and tells the characters about his travels, his children who are both in school, and anything about his personal life (see the **Adversaries & Allies** section). Khan will only answer questions about his professional life if his attitude is Friendly or better, in which case they can attempt a **TN 15 Communication (Persuasion)** test to get him to divulge any of the following:

He's been friends and sometimes business partners with Sebastian Pope for over a decade.

He'll admit to having helped Caralynn in the early stages of the Bouilly Network, although he won't provide any details.

Randall is attending on behalf of Sebastian Pope specifically to trade some secrets and to root out any opposition and discover if the *Opportunity* rover being auctioned is a trap. He doesn't know that Caralynn is working for Pope as well, but he has his suspicions. He does know that that Pope uses a fixer named Kazi Anand on Luna to get items through customs without question. He also knows that Pope has recently started a major research operation on Luna. Pope hasn't told

him anything specific about the operation, although he suspects it has something to do with life extension or interstellar travel, or both. Of course, he won't divulge any of this information except under duress. All this information can be found on his hand terminal if the player characters think to steal it from him. He can be seen consulting his terminal from time to time although he is far too careful to allow anyone to catch a glimpse of what he is looking at, and even if they do they'll see nothing of consequence. Lifting the terminal from him requires an opposed **Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** test. Hacking into the terminal is an advanced **TN 15 Intelligence (Cryptography or Technology)** test (success threshold 15). Each test requires one hour.

GENERAL AVERY AGIMAT

Avery doesn't care about the connections, the networking, or any of the people around him—this is a job that the General views as a necessary evil. While Avery doesn't mind chatting with people he doesn't approach them, they come to him—the UNN is powerful and Avery flaunts that. When the characters are ready to engage with Avery, read or paraphrase the following:

General Avery Agimat sits alone in a corner away from both noise and people, a scowl on his face. As he lifts a mug of coffee you see a deep white scar running from his forearm to palm. The General makes no indication of noticing you as you approach, but when you settle up to the table Avery looks up at you with solemn, analytical eyes. "MCRN, huh?" The words aren't spiteful or hateful, just cautious. For a brief moment, you're not entirely sure if the General is going to draw a hidden weapon. The General smirks then, and taps the open seats around the table, welcoming you to sit. "Don't worry, we're just talkin', right? The food here sucks and the wine tastes like Belter piss." Avery sips his coffee and then offers, "Us dogs gotta stick together in the middle of all this schmoozing and bribing and business, right? Smart they sent so many of you, that way you'll never get bored of all the corporate hotshots."

General Agimat is a stone-cold military man and UNN Acquisitions Officer. Different enterprises and corporations come up to the General to talk, schmooze, and offer bribes in exchange for various UNN contracts, promises, and businesses—the General is tough, but fair. However, Avery doesn't care one way or the other about what the UNN supports or makes an appearance to support. The end goal is whatever is best and cheapest for the galaxy's largest fleet.

Assuming the crew are using the MCRN contractor covers the General's attitude begins at Standoffish. Depending on your timeline it is possible that Mars and Earth are currently in a shooting war, in which case his attitude begins at Hostile, although he remains civil unless the crew give him cause to be otherwise. If they are using a different cover, his attitude is Neutral. If the player characters keep the conversation to discussions of the military they can attempt a **TN 13 Communication (Deception or Persuasion)** test to increase his attitude. If they show dislike for either Bouilly or Khan his attitude automatically improves one step as he doesn't care for either of them.

If the General's attitude is raised to Open or better they can learn any of the following just by asking:

General Agimat conducts business with Pope both through purchasing ice from Krystal Kleer and some private security work from Vector Security. He doesn't care for the man but he's never had a reason to distrust him.

He doesn't like Khan at all and knows or at least suspects Khan's involvement in criminal activities.

He has nothing but disdain for Bouilly and believes her to be pretentious and arrogant.





SCENE 3

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

In this scene the characters are ushered into the auction hall and witness the auction for the lure Diana planted as a trap for Pope's agent. This is an opportunity for the player characters to confirm any suspicions from the previous scene.

PREPARATIONS

Before the auction begins, the players can take a beat to collect themselves. Characters can go look at the auction lots along with a handful of NPCs, engage with any of the other guests, or scout the area. Preparation should only last a short period—don't let this pause draw on too long as Alexander only lets the guests view the certificate and verification briefly. Once the characters have completed interacting with three of the four possible targets, read or paraphrase the following to set the scene:

The number of guests in the welcome hall has dwindled down to less than a dozen. Vernon, the man who greeted you on your arrival, makes his way through the hall toward you with a grin and a wink, then says: "You may want to make your way to the Auction Hall. The real fun's about to begin." He hands you bidding paddles and leads you inside.

As you enter the Auction Hall, the first auctions are just beginning.

On the platform at the front of the room, Alexander Dewford stands behind a podium and places his violin case underneath. "Ladies and gentlemen, please take your seats. Please try to keep talking to a minimum during the auction—and no hand terminals please."

STALKING THE TARGETS

During the auction, the players may want to keep a particularly close eye on some of the targets. If they want to keep out of sight they may need to perform a **TN 13 Dexterity (Stealth)** test to find a place to sit where they can see their target unobserved. Alternatively, the characters may want to approach the targets, sit with them, and further engage. Trying to peek at other guests can be suspicious and is a good way to lead to staff questioning the player characters or compromising them—especially if the crew fails a Stealth test.

The characters may also want to split up and pursue a number of these options individually for different targets based on their assumptions and education from the previous scene, especially if players have determined that both Caralynn and Randall are Pope's agents. But note that the location of each crewmember becomes extremely important at the beginning of **Scene 4**.

Use the following outlines for interacting with the different targets during this time:

CARALYNN

Caralynn is always the center of attention and she doesn't hide it. She is quickly surrounded by a group of admirers, although if her attitude is friendly with one of the characters she makes room for at least one of them to sit by her. If the characters don't have the appropriate attitude, she simply gives a brief acknowledgement to them and watches the stage.

Regardless, if the players are watching carefully during the auction, they'll notice Caralynn bids aggressively on *Opportunity*, frequently checking her hand terminal. (If her hand terminal has been stolen, they notice her frantically looking for it, especially as the bidding goes above the original amount transferred to her account.) A closer look with a **TN 15 Perception (Seeing)** test

THE BIDDING BEGINS

Of the targets, both General Agimat and Caralynn Bouilly bid aggressively on the rover—Anton makes an early bid but quickly drops out. Caralynn checks instructions on her hand terminal as she bids, and keeps an eye on her bank account. She is not communicating directly with Pope—the light delay is too far for her to communicate directly with him—but rather a proxy who is handling the finances. If her hand terminal is missing by the time the auction starts, she panics when the bidding exceeds her credit limit and she realizes her terminal's gone. Inventive player characters could use this as an opportunity to get closer to her by offering the additional funds needed (this requires an **Income** test of **20**).

Serena Chaplan, an investor from Earth, also bids on the rover, and if Caralynn is not able to secure additional funds, Serena wins. If Caralynn loses the bid, she collapses. The player characters can use this as an opportunity to get close to her, rushing to her aid. However, they only have a few moments before the events of **Scene 4** change things.

If Caralynn wins, she smiles happily (if a player character helped her, she thanks them, maybe even hugging them). She heads immediately toward the host to make arrangements for shipping. However, the events of **Scene 4** intercede before she gets there.

No matter how the bidding on *Opportunity* turns out, shortly after the last bid is made, proceed to **Scene 4**.

(if the character is in the proper position) shows that Caralynn is sending a message requesting an increase in funds.

RANDALL

Randall stands against the back wall of the auction hall watching the guests and the auction like a hawk. Occasionally he nods, smiles, and greets anyone who passes by. Hiding from Randall is tricky and the difficulty of *Stealth* tests to avoid his gaze is increased to **TN 17**.

If the characters interacting with Randall are *Very Friendly*, he invites them to stay in the area. Otherwise, he insists they find a seat in the theater to watch the proceedings. During the auction, Randall slowly makes his way up and down the aisles of the theater seating slowly taking in all the guests and comparing them to images on his hand terminal. With a successful **TN 17 Perception (Seeing)** test the crew can sneak a peek at the image of Diana. Succeed or fail, Randall notices the character snooping and shifts one attitude toward *Hostile*.

GENERAL AGIMAT

In the front row, right near the stage, General Agimat sits attentively, his back straight. It's possible to watch the General from a distance and he won't notice, even if the *Stealth* test is failed. Instead, if the characters want to engage with the General in some way, Avery nods and acknowledges them, but shushes them if anyone attempts to speak.

ANTON

The auction hall contains a mini-bar against the back wall, and Anton can be found leaning against it talking to a young, handsome bartender. If the characters engage, pass by, or fail a *Stealth* test to observe him, read or paraphrase the following:

The smell of alcohol pours off Anton like a distillery. His tie and button-down shirt are both looser than they were before, and as he looks up and sees you a smile spreads across his face. He clutches a glass of whiskey with a single ice cube in his hand as he leans unsteadily against the bar.

Anton only engages with the characters if they buy him a drink or succeed at a **TN 11 Perception (Empathy)** test. If they succeed, Anton buys them a drink and vents about his father's estate—completely ignoring the auction and consuming the time and attention of one of the characters.

THE AUCTION

The crew must sit through a number of other auctions before *Opportunity* comes up. If the characters want to bid on items they can make a **TN 15 Communication (Gambling)** test to win an auction. If they win they must make an **Income** test

THAT'S QUITE A LOT...

It's possible that the crew wants to spend some time looking at the other lots or spend some time scoping out the Auction Hall itself. Given the nature of the Titan's Ball, feel free to improvise other lots up for auction beyond the *Opportunity* rover. This could include classic art, signed memorabilia, or services from a highly recognized member of their industry. But whatever else you add, here are the visible lots displayed around the room:

- A first generation antique hover vehicle.
- Authentic fragments of the hull of the *Wild Sparrow*, a famous pirate ship, destroyed in a famous battle with an MCRN gunship.
- Hand-drawn designs of the original Epstein drive.
- A two-hour business consultation with executives from Selena Logistics.
- And, of course, the *Opportunity* rover.

based on the value of the item (see the sidebar **That's Quite a Lot...** or come up with a TN of your own). Smaller items can be taken possession of right away, or shipping can be arranged for larger items. If the Gambling test is failed, the player can roll again but both the difficulty of the TN and the Income test are increased by one. This can be done as many times as the player wishes.

Finally, *Opportunity* comes up for bid! During the auction, various NPCs bid on the lot. Some are genuinely interested in such a work of art. Mostly, this action takes place between several of the targets and the crew (if they want to get involved).

It's important to note that the goal of the party is not to win the auction. Diana has planted *Opportunity* as a lure for Pope's agent, and the player characters know that. The goal is for the crew to watch who else is bidding, particularly the targets, and make an educated guess on who Pope's agent is. Because of this, if the players feel it's not necessary to bid, feel free to streamline this section and focus only on the characters as they watch the targets.

SCENE 4

VENGEANCE FOR THE ANNE BONNY

COMBAT ENCOUNTER

During this scene the pirate crew of the *Anne Bonny's* sister ship, the *Mary Read*, attack the Titan's Ball, seeking vengeance for the death of the crew of the *Bonny* and at the same time hoping to make off with a big haul.

Moments after the lot closes, there's a commotion in the Atrium that begins as a low grumble. A handful of guests turn around in their seats before a loud bang sets people screaming from beyond the Auction Hall. Barry Michaels and Ngai Shaoqi back into the room, followed by two armed guards wearing tactical gear.

A woman steps forward and announces: "Hello guests of Titan. My name is Gwenda, and we're the crew of the Mary Read. We're here for Sebastian Pope." Tension fills the room. "And anyone involved in the destruction of the Anne Bonny." As if in emphasis Gwenda lifts her rifle, looks down the scope, and aims at one of the waitstaff standing frozen in fear, then pulls the trigger. The staffer falls to floor with a hollow thud as Gwenda steps forward. "I know you're here, friends." She spits the last word with enough venom to kill.

Without missing a beat, Vernon pulls a sleek black pistol from the back of his trousers and aims it at one of the crew of the Mary Read. "You're not welcome here." In response, four more security guards appear as if from nowhere, their firearms trained on the crew of the Mary Read.

In the blink of an eye, the theater erupts into chaos: a smoke grenade, tossed by one of the pirates goes off before guns roar to life and people start running and screaming.

CHAOS ON TITAN

It's completely possible for the characters to avoid this fight since they are being ignored. The players should have the first round all to themselves to decide what to do. If they want to capture Caralynn or Randall (or both) now is the time. Both are fleeing to their ships and will be gone by the time the fight is over. The following are a few actions the characters might want to take:

- **LOCATE ONE OF THE TARGETS:** The room is in chaos, making it difficult to see, but a successful **TN 15 Perception (Searching or Seeing)** test by a character allows them to locate one of the targets (see **Locating the Targets**).
- **NEGOTIATION:** Trying to talk down the crew of the *Mary Read* is fruitless. They're dead set on their mission and don't relent. Calling out to them only makes the crew targets for their violence.
- **RUN:** The attackers aren't particularly interested in most of the guests (including the player characters), so they're free to run unimpeded during their turn. They can run out either of the side stage doors, the door at the back of the stage, or the servants' entrance by the bar at the back of the room. The main door to the Atrium is filled by the *Mary Read* crew and they're likely to perceive anyone running at them as an attacker.
- **HIDE:** The seats aren't that bulky and so provide little cover. If a character wants to hide, a **TN 13 Dexterity (Stealth)** test grants them partial cover crouching behind chairs.

There are many other possible actions that they could choose. As the GM you'll need to be creative and react to the player characters' choices. If the characters have raised Barry Michaels or Ngai Shaoqi's attitude to Friendly, they may be able to get some aid as well.



THE MARY READ

The crew of the *Mary Read* (see **Adversaries & Allies** for details) aren't here to fight blindly. They're aware of Randall, Caralynn, and Anton's connections to Pope. If the player characters make their presence known, they'll also recognize them (they've seen video feeds of the firefight). If the characters didn't attack any of the pirates back in **Breaking the Surface**, the *Mary Read*'s crew avoids shooting at them.

There are fifteen pirates in the dome (you can increase the number up to twenty if it suits your story), but only six storm the Auction Hall. Each of them is looking for Randall, Caralynn, and Anton. The six in the Hall exchange fire with security, while the rest are spread out through the dome, wreaking havoc, and dealing with other security guards.

SECURITY STAFF

Two of the security guards in the Hall are gunned down by the pirates in the first round. That leaves Barry, Ngai, and two guards in the room. Barry and Ngai are well trained but underequipped, while the two nameless guards are undertrained and overequipped—having been trained to protect the guests at the Ball, not for lethal firefights.

The first thing the security guards do is try and pin down the attackers—it's pretty rare that they'll move unless a wounded guest is nearby—in which case they'll move to protect them.

Ngai is a bit more reckless than her colleagues and actively moves between nearby guests and the attackers to safeguard them. This is likely to get her shot, but her priority is the safety of those she's here to protect. After the guests are safe, she moves to kill the attackers.

Barry is more aggressive. Each turn, Barry closes the distance toward the crew of the *Mary Read*. He stops in cover and shoots to kill. Barry never stops to protect or defend a guest unless a player character he has a Friendly attitude toward intervenes.

LOCATING THE TARGETS

Anton Olivia is drunk out of his mind and terrified for his life. He covers on the floor, having soiled himself. As he is near the bar at the back of the room (and not far from the entrance to the Atrium) the pirates locate and kill him on the second round of combat.

General Agimat moves toward the attackers, barreling through the other guests and grabs a rifle from one of the fallen guards. The General is personally affronted by this assault and out for blood. Once he has the rifle, he tries to take cover and exchanges fire with the pirates. Unless the crew get involved he is taken out on the fourth round of combat, but not before taking out one of the pirates.

Randall Khan has decided to run and hide. He immediately bolts for the side door next to the bar. On the way out he grabs a chair and uses it to jam the door shut.

Caralynn makes her way up onto the stage and bolts behind the curtains. It takes her the first round of combat to do it. The following round she is out the door behind the stage.

AND EVERYONE ELSE...

The guests and servants panic and most drop to the ground, covering their heads. Some try to flee out the various doors.

Alexander takes cover behind the podium, draws a pistol from his violin case, and opens fire on the intruders.

Vernon stands in the open with his pistol drawn.

THE CHASE

Assuming they want to catch either Caralynn or Randall, the player characters have to chase after them, convince or coerce them to go with them, and then get their target(s) off Titan without being killed by pirates. To make matters more difficult, the *Mary Read* pirates have already taken control of the dome's security station (although much of the equipment was damaged in the attempt) and parts of the station are malfunctioning. Both pirates and dome security roam the halls, along with panicked guests and staff. The pirates are looking for Caralynn and Randall, and shoot at anyone with them as well. Security is likely to shoot at anyone carrying a weapon. The characters must choose which target to pursue, or split up and go after both, in which case, go back and forth between groups to keep the action flowing for all of the players.

CHASING CARALYNN

Behind the stage is a curtain drawn to cover a door that leads to a dimly lit and narrow service hallway. Caralynn runs and doesn't look back from the gunshots and bloodbath as the crew of the *Mary Read* comes for her. If the characters act quickly, they can catch her struggling to open the door. If not, they'll have to catch her as she flees down the twisting corridors. This is a Chase as described in **CHAPTER 5** of *The Expanse* RPG. Catching her is a **TN 13 Constitution (Running)** test (**success threshold 10**). The success threshold increases by 3 every round that the characters delay. If they wait more than three rounds before beginning pursuit, Caralynn is gone and escapes on her ship. Alternately, the characters could make for her ship, if they know where it is, and confront her there.

If the characters catch up to Caralynn and her attitude toward them is Open or better, she readily agrees to go with them. If they threaten her she also goes with them, but the Difficulty is increased by 1 under **Getting Out**.

CHASING RANDALL

Randall bolted through the side door by the bar and jammed it shut with a chair from the other side. A crowd of servants and guests push desperately at the door, trying to flee. The crew must push their way through the panicked crowd and make a **TN 15 Strength (Might)** test in order to open the door. Catching up to him is also a Chase with a **TN 13 Constitution (Running)** test (**success threshold 13**). The TN increases by 3 for each round that the characters delay (or are delayed by the jammed door). If more than three rounds pass before they begin pursuing Randall he is caught and killed by the pirates.

If the characters catch up to Randall and his attitude toward them is Open or better, he readily agrees to go with them. If they threaten him, he also goes with them, but the Difficulty is increased by 1 under **Getting Out**.



GETTING OUT

Once the characters have caught up to Caralynn or Randall (or both) they have to make it back to their ship in the midst of the pandemonium caused by the pirate attack. They may decide that they want to just hole up and wait out the attack. But if they do so, remind them that the pirates are dead set on finding and killing them and that even if the pirates don't find them, by the time things settle down the ships are likely to be locked down and not able to leave the dock. Their covers will likely be blown, and they may even be detained, especially if they brandished weapons during the attack.

The crew has 30 minutes to get to their ship before security regains control and the dome is locked down. You can treat the escape as a challenge test (see **CHAPTER 1** of *The Expanse* RPG) with the following parameters:

CHALLENGE: GET OUT

DIFFICULTY: TN 15 **SUCCESS THRESHOLD:** 15 **TIME PER TEST:** 5 minutes
ABILITY FOCUSES: Communication (Deception), Dexterity (Stealth), Intelligence (Security or Technology)

This is a challenge test. Each failure on the challenge test increases the consequence level by one, starting from minor. If the crew eliminates the minor consequence before increasing the level again, then the next consequence is minor as well. Otherwise, another failure elevates it to a moderate consequence.

CONSEQUENCES

MINOR The crew draws some unwanted attention, increasing the TN of further challenge tests by +2 until they make a separate **TN 15 Dexterity (Stealth)** test to disappear into the crowd again. Success on this test eliminates the TN increase but does not contribute to their success threshold.

MODERATE The crew finds their planned route to the docking bay blocked off by a security door. The door does not open until dome security lifts the alarm. They lose their accumulated success total and have to find a different route. (If the target accompanying them has been coerced, they take this opportunity to try to escape.)

MAJOR A group of pirates (equal to the number of the crew) spots them and tries to kill the target accompanying them. The scene transitions to either a combat (if the crew attacks) or a chase (if the crew flees). The chase is a **TN 13 Constitution (Running)** test (success threshold 12).

FINAL QUESTIONS

Assuming the crew get one or both of their targets to the safety of the *Anne Bonny*, they can take whatever time necessary to question their "guests." Neither take much convincing to spill everything they know about Pope and his operation on Luna—which is to say not much, but enough to point the crew in the right direction.

Caralynn knows that Pope has a secret operation on Luna and that he uses a fixer to get items smuggled in quietly. She doesn't know the name of the fixer, but she knows that containers are supposed to have a special mark (she knows the mark) so they can identify the goods. She also knows that the *Opportunity* rover is supposed to be shipped to Luna via private courier and that the crate is supposed to bear this mark. It shouldn't take much for the crew to realize they can use this to identify the fixer. If the players don't think of this, Diana does.

Randall is happy to be alive and is willing to trade what he knows for safe passage. "Normally, there's a fee involved, but let's call this one on the house so we can all remain happy with our...current...situation. Does that sound good to everyone?" He knows that Pope has a secret operation on Luna and that the fixer's name is Kazi Anand. He doesn't know exactly what Pope is doing there (he's tried to find out) but believes it to be something to do with life extension (some kind of new anagathics).

THE END GAME

Assuming the crew successfully complete their mission, Diana is extremely happy with them and requests they proceed immediately to Luna. If they fail, you'll have to come up with an alternative means for them to acquire the information, or maybe Diana manages to come up with something through other sources. The trip from Titan to Luna is a long one, and the crew should have plenty of time for an interlude—to heal, train or do any necessary research.

ADVERSARIES & ALLIES

The following are profiles of the significant non-player characters in **The Titan's Ball**, along with their *Expanse* game stats. For additional stock characters you can use in this adventure, see the **Threats** chapter of *The Expanse* RPG.

ALEXANDER DEWFORD

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1 (RIFLE), **COMMUNICATION** 4 (BARGAINING, INVESTIGATION, PERSUASION), **CONSTITUTION** 2, **DEXTERITY** 1, **FIGHTING** 1 (BRAWLING), **INTELLIGENCE** 2 (CURRENT AFFAIRS, LAW), **PERCEPTION** 2 (INTUITION, SEARCHING), **STRENGTH** 1, **WILLPOWER** 2 (SELF-DISCIPLINE)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	15	11	2

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
PISTOL	+3	2D6+2
GAVEL	+1	1D6+1
UNARMED	+3	1D3+1

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Taunt

TALENTS: Command (Master), Contacts (Novice), Linguistics (Novice), Pistol Style (Expert)

EQUIPMENT: pistol, gavel, paperwork

THREAT: MINOR

ANTON OLIVIA

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1, **COMMUNICATION** 2 (GAMBLING), **CONSTITUTION** 3 (STAMINA, TOLERANCE, SEDUCTION), **DEXTERITY** 2, **FIGHTING** 0, **INTELLIGENCE** 2, **PERCEPTION** 1 (INTUITION), **STRENGTH** 1, **WILLPOWER** 1 (COURAGE)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
12	15	12	3

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
THROWN GLASS	+1	1D3+1
UNARMED	+2	1D3

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Take Cover

TALENTS: Contacts (Expert), Improvisation (Expert)

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, whiskey glass

THREAT: MINOR

ALEXANDER DEWFORD, PATRON OF THE BALL

Alexander is a traveling auctioneer who has spent a considerable amount of time on Titan and particularly at the Delos Dome Resort & Spa—and has hosted the Titan's Ball for the last 30 years. With so much experience auctioneering, Alexander is treated like a celebrity in the social circles of the upper classes. But Alexander also understands the darker sides of the business that happen at such meetings, which is why he always carries a rifle with him, tucked into a violin case. His experience with firearms has always been a hobby and passion, but has come in handy several times in his career.



ANTON OLIVIA

Anton Olivia is a trust fund child and has always had a padded wallet since his late father, Simone Olivia, was killed during a work accident. When Anton was young, his father was an architect for various corporations and worked for CarbonCorp. Anton doesn't know exactly how his father died, and has very little interest in the details of his father's professional life, but the family received an enormous settlement after Simone's death. This has led to no end of disputes among his family and Anton has done his best to hold everyone together, but his nerves are wearing thin.

Anton tells people that family is the most important thing to him and that he spends his time taking care of his widowed mother, but the truth is he rarely stays in the family home these days. He spends most of his time at bars and clubs, staying in hotels and traveling while burning through his inheritance.



OLIVIA TRUST FUND

Years ago, Simone Olivia was a contract architect for CarbonCorp and some other smaller companies that Pope ran, and created blueprints for their buildings and expansions. On the worksite, one of Pope's many corporate rivals sabotaged equipment, resulting in Simone's death. Afraid of bad press, Pope buried the story and paid out a generous settlement to the victims—including the Olivias, which afforded them a high-class lifestyle. Anton was in middle school, and didn't recognize the bump in lifestyle, but has always been pampered and spoiled by his wealthy family.

Anton only barely knows Pope but is friends with several of Pope's inner circle. On occasion those people will ask Anton to perform a seemingly mundane task, or he gets invited to a social event. Pope manipulates Anton from a distance using him as a proxy for non-crucial jobs like escorting visiting clients or parading a known socialite at a new club. It was in fact Pope who arranged for Anton to attend the Titan's Ball. Knowing that it was likely that someone might come looking for him there, he figured Anton would serve as a good red herring.

BARRY MICHAELS, CHIEF OF SECURITY

Barry Michaels is a well-trained veteran who has spent time all over the system with various employers, but he started out in the UNN. He has respect for the military, but that life wasn't cut out for him. Barry settled on Titan and became a security guard, then quickly moved up the ranks at Delos Dome Resort & Spa to become the Chief of Security within five years. He always hopes for the best, but prepares for the worst.



CARALYNN BOULLY

Caralynn Bouly is here on business, and that business for her is networking, socializing, and meeting new people. She prides herself on the ability to put two people together to make things happen—whether that's networking or romantically—and that's what led her to creating the Bouly Network. Caralynn is sharp, observant, and quick to make her feelings and thoughts known fiercely. If the characters do any research into her company or program before encountering her, they can indulge Caralynn about her accomplishments. If any character uses the program, or has an account, she looks them up and this brings her attitude one step closer to Friendly—and she makes a point of mentioning how pleased she is.



The Bouly Network was built on the back of Pope's influences and connections and he won't let Caralynn forget it. She is the face and the brains, but without Pope it never would've become as popular or widespread as it is—but making that public would compromise her integrity and the business he has a stake in. That means from time to time Pope calls on Caralynn for a favor.

The Titan's Ball is the perfect job for her, since no one would question why she's there. Pope has given her specific instructions to keep close eyes on the *Opportunity* rover and make sure that she wins the bidding.

DELOS DOME SECURITY GUARDS

The security guards at Delos Dome Resort & Spa are just a step above mall cops in terms of skill. But Titan doesn't hold back when it comes to training and equipment. Barry takes a particular shine to those in his employ, and even attempts to give them the training necessary to fulfill the needs of his employer, but given how infrequently the security guards are actually needed they fall out of practice fairly quickly.

GENERAL AVERY AGIMAT

General Avery Agimat is in charge of the UNN's contracts and partnerships with industry professionals. The General's quick wit and sharp tongue help make those deals happen. The Titan's Ball is a work event for the General, and he

BARRY MICHAELS

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 3 (BOWS, PISTOLS, RIFLES), **COMMUNICATION 1** (BARGAINING, DECEPTION, INVESTIGATION), **CONSTITUTION 1**, **DEXTERITY 1**, **FIGHTING 2** (LIGHT WEAPON), **INTELLIGENCE 1** (SECURITY, TACTICS), **PERCEPTION 1** (INTUITION), **STRENGTH 2**, **WILLPOWER 1** (SELF-DISCIPLINE)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	20	12	3
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
PISTOL	+4	2D6+1	
CLUB	+4	1D6+2	
UNARMED	+2	1D3+2	

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Guardian Angel, Group Tactics

TALENTS: Dual Weapon Style (Master), Medic (Novice), Pistol Style (Novice), Quick Reflexes (Expert)

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, pistol ×2, small club, light armor

THREAT: ??

CARALYNN BOULLY

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1 (PISTOLS), **COMMUNICATION 3** (BARGAINING, ETIQUETTE, EXPRESSION, NEGOTIATION), **CONSTITUTION 2**, **DEXTERITY 1** (RUNNING), **FIGHTING 1**, **INTELLIGENCE 2** (BUSINESS, CURRENT AFFAIRS, EVALUATION, SCIENCE), **PERCEPTION 3** (INTUITION), **STRENGTH 1**, **WILLPOWER 2** (SELF-DISCIPLINE)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	15	11	2
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
PISTOL	+1	2D6+3	
UNARMED	+1	1D3+1	

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Take Cover

TALENTS: Agent (Novice), Contacts (Expert), Intrigue (Expert), Misdirection (Novice), Oratory (Expert)

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal

THREAT: MODERATE

THE BOULLY NETWORK

The Bouly Network is an evolution of a third-rate social media app that connects people based on location and geography and allows people to connect and talk about local businesses, schedule events, and even meet people. It's still fairly new but has become incredibly popular in incredibly short time due to its ease of use and versatility.

The Bouly Network survives mostly on advertising and this is one of the reasons Caralynn is so keen on schmoozing and networking. The more corporations she gets friendly with, the more money they end up spending on ads—and Krystal Kleer is no exception, creating recruitment material Caralynn peddles. She's happy to talk about her sponsors and partners and is keen to talk about how friendly she is with Pope and his marketing team. In fact it was Pope who funded her original start-up that eventually became the Bouly Network, something she is eternally grateful for.

GENERAL AVERY AGIMAT

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 3 (PISTOLS, RIFLES), **COMMUNICATION** 1 (NEGOTIATION), **CONSTITUTION** 2 (STAMINA), **DEXTERITY** 2 (INITIATIVE), **FIGHTING** 3 (LIGHT WEAPONS, GRAPPLING), **INTELLIGENCE** 1 (SECURITY, TACTICS), **PERCEPTION** 2 (TRACKING), **STRENGTH** 1, **WILLPOWER** 1 (SELF-DISCIPLINE)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
12	20	12	2

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
PISTOL	+3	2D6+2
KNIFE	+3	1D6+1

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Adrenaline Rush, Group Tactics

TALENTS: Commando (Master), Fringer (Novice), Pilot (Novice), Pinpoint Accuracy (Master), Pistol Style (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal

THREAT: MODERATE

GWENDA

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 2 (GUNNERY, RIFLE), **COMMUNICATION** 2 (LEADERSHIP), **CONSTITUTION** 2, **DEXTERITY** 3 (INITIATIVE, PILOTING), **FIGHTING** 3, **INTELLIGENCE** 1 (LAW), **PERCEPTION** 2, **STRENGTH** 2, **WILLPOWER** 1 (SELF-DISCIPLINE)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	20	13	6

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
RIFLE	+4	3D6+2
UNARMED	+3	1D3+2

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Take Cover, Vicious Blow

TALENTS: Command (Expert), Fringer (Master), Hacking (Novice), Rifle Style (Master)

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, rifle, medium armor

THREAT: MAJOR

MARY READ CREW

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 2 (PISTOLS), **COMMUNICATION** 1, **CONSTITUTION** 1, **DEXTERITY** 2 (INITIATIVE), **FIGHTING** 2 (GRAPPLING), **INTELLIGENCE** 1 (TACTICS), **PERCEPTION** 2 (SEARCHING), **STRENGTH** 0, **WILLPOWER** 2 (FAITH)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
12	15	12	2

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
PISTOL	+4	2D6+2
RIFLE	+4	3D6+2
UNARMED	+2	1D3

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Whatever's Handy, Double-Team

TALENTS: Burglary (Expert), Fringer (Experienced), Scouting (Expert)

EQUIPMENT: pistol, rifle, padding

THREAT: MODERATE

DELOS DOME SECURITY GUARDS

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 2 (RIFLE), **COMMUNICATION** 0, **CONSTITUTION** 2, **DEXTERITY** 1 (DRIVING), **FIGHTING** 2 (BRAWLING), **INTELLIGENCE** 1 (DEMOLITIONS), **PERCEPTION** 2 (DEMOLITIONS, ENGINEERING), **STRENGTH** 0, **WILLPOWER** 1

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
10	15	13	4

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
PISTOL	+4	2D6+2
RIFLE	+3	3D6+2
UNARMED	+2	1D3

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Group Tactics

TALENTS: Overwhelming Style (Novice), Protector (Master), Self-Defense Style (Expert), Tactical Awareness (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: pistol, light armor, riot shield

THREAT: MODERATE

is always decked out in his formal UNN Naval uniform complete with decorations and medals from his 40-year career. The General has given plenty of business to Pope's various corporations in the past and is aware of his involvement in different companies—which Agimat sees as a convenience. Pope gives the UNN good deals and quality services, and the UNN continues to give Pope major contracts and turn a blind eye to things they might find questionable.

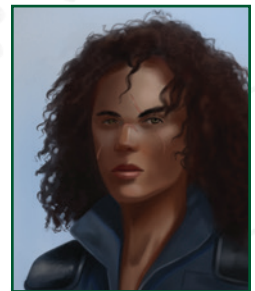
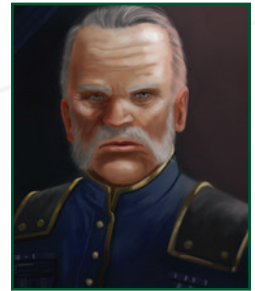
That being said, the General's attendance at the Titan's Ball has nothing to do with Pope or any of his companies.

GWENDA, CAPTAIN OF THE *MARY READ*

Gwenda leads the *Mary Read* running jobs and tasks for anyone willing to pay, including running contraband between planets. The crew of the *Anne Bonny* and the crew of the *Mary Read* were incredibly close and worked together. Gwenda and Claire O'Rourke were lovers and Gwenda was devastated when she heard about the death of the *Bonny's* crew. She devoted all her significant saved up resources to find out who was behind the death of her lover and to get vengeance for her lost friends.

MARY READ CREW

The crew of the *Mary Read* are all on a mission of vengeance to right the wrong done to their friends. While Gwenda is particularly motivated for this mission, the rest of the crew is upset—but more importantly they are fiercely loyal to Gwenda, who has been their wise leader for years. These crew members are well adjusted to the pirate life that surrounds odd jobs and aren't afraid to draw some blood and sweat to make Gwenda happy.



NGAI SHAOQI, SECURITY SPECIALIST

The best two words to describe Ngai Shaoqi are fierce and friendly. As a former UNN Marine she gets along quite well with Barry and is the go-to specialist for security situations at Delos Dome Resort & Spa. Her military training makes her a match for most normal “problems” that come up in the running of the facility. In many cases she’s Barry’s right hand, and she has made her desire to supersede Barry extremely clear.



RANDALL KHAN, FRIEND TO ALL

Randall is always ready for someone or something new. He likes to do things for people so they can owe him later, and he never forgets who owes him. Randall’s reputation is built on secrecy and follow-through, and he uses his reliability to strengthen his relationships.

Randall has done contract jobs for Pope and his dozens of businesses for over a decade—Pope has hired him to do everything from making someone disappear to connecting two people together to manipulate a third. There’s not a thing that Randall won’t do for the right amount of money, and Pope appreciates that level of opportunism and shares Randall’s loyalty to price. Most important to Pope is that Randall doesn’t ask too many questions. Long term jobs are hard to come by, but Randall likes to live it up—taking expenses for travel and lodging as well as payment. When Pope offered such a sizeable amount of money for a quick turnaround and a long voyage, Randall was eager to learn more.

Randall’s instructions were straightforward: keep an eye on *Opportunity* and on Caralynn. He would act as the failsafe if Caralynn couldn’t complete the task of winning the rover and bringing it to Kazi. His main task, though, is to keep an eye open for anyone asking around about Pope. Pope believes the rover may be a trap and he’s hired Randall to take care of problems in case that turns out to be the case.



VERNON, DELOS DOME SPA & RESORT HOST

Vernon is one of the hosts on Titan for the Ball and works at Delos Dome Resort & Spa as one of the event specialists. He is smooth-faced and tall, and lives for the work he does. It’s his job to make sure all the guests of special events are well taken care of. This makes him well-liked by the guests and he goes out of his way to take care of them the best he can. Before the Ball, he was contacted by Diana (whom he owes a few favors) to keep a special eye on the crew, and though he doesn’t quite understand what he’s gotten into with this agreement he makes sure to hold up his end of the deal. You can use Vernon to bail out the crew if they get in over their heads during the course of the adventure, although he tries his best to not reveal any connection to Diana.



NGAI SHAOQI

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 2 (PISTOLS, THROWING),
COMMUNICATION 2 (LEADERSHIP), **CONSTITUTION 1** (STAMINA),
DEXTERITY 2 (INITIATIVE), **FIGHTING 2** (HEAVY WEAPONS),
INTELLIGENCE 1 (DEMOLITIONS, TACTICS),
PERCEPTION 3 (INTUITION), **STRENGTH 1**, **WILLPOWER 2**

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
12	20	12	1
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
PISTOL	+4	2D6+3	
GRENADE	+4	3D6	
UNARMED	+2	1D3	

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Guardian Angel, Lightning Attack

TALENTS: Inspire (Expert), Observation (Master), Pistol Style (Expert)

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, pistol, grenade

THREAT: MODERATE

RANDALL KHAN

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1, **COMMUNICATION 3** (DECEPTION, ETIQUETTE, PERSUASION, NEGOTIATION), **CONSTITUTION 2**,
DEXTERITY 1 (SLEIGHT OF HAND), **FIGHTING 1** (LIGHT WEAPONS),
INTELLIGENCE 2 (ART, BUSINESS, CURRENT AFFAIRS, RESEARCH),
PERCEPTION 3 (INTUITION, TRACKING), **STRENGTH 1**,
WILLPOWER 2 (SELF-DISCIPLINE)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	15	11	2
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
KNIFE	+3	1D6+1	

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Disarm, Take Cover

TALENTS: Command (Expert), Contacts (Expert), Intrigue (Novice), Misdirection (Expert), Socialite (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, knife

THREAT: MODERATE

VERNON

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1, **COMMUNICATION 2** (ETIQUETTE, INVESTIGATION),
CONSTITUTION 1, **DEXTERITY 1**, **FIGHTING 1**, **INTELLIGENCE 2**,
PERCEPTION 2 (EMPATHY, INTUITION), **STRENGTH 0**,
WILLPOWER 2 (FAITH)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	15	11	1
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
PISTOL	+1	2D6+2	
UNARMED	+1	1D3	

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Take Cover, Taunt

TALENTS: Attractive (Novice), Oratory (Expert)

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, pistol

THREAT: MINOR



6: SHOOT THE MOON

Shoot the Moon is the sixth and final adventure of the *Abzu's Bounty* series for *The Expanse* Roleplaying Game. It takes the player characters to Luna for their final confrontation with Sebastian Pope in a final gambit to wrest the protomolecule away from him. Adversaries from the first story—**Breaking the Surface**—make an appearance and Diana, the crew's long-time patron, turns on them to try to get the protomolecule for herself and her employer and ally—Winston Duarte.

Assuming they succeed in attaining the sample, the crew must then make a difficult decision—what do they do with the protomolecule?

OVERVIEW

By the end of **The Titan's Ball**, the crew should have uncovered a new link to Sebastian Pope and a possible secret laboratory on Luna. They even have a name—Kazi Anand—a fixer known to smuggle anything onto or off the moon. The adventure begins with the crew arriving at Luna and setting up a meeting with Kazi.

Arranging the meeting isn't hard. Getting Anand to snitch on one of his wealthiest and most powerful customers is. One way or another the crew learns that Pope's secret laboratory is located in an abandoned aluminum processing plant a few kilometers outside of Lovell City. The crew has to figure out how to get to and enter the underground complex. The most

obvious choices are the long, abandoned transit tunnels or a trek across the surface of the moon. The tunnels haven't been used in decades and contain many hazards, including explosives and sensors set by Vector Security to keep out unwanted visitors. To approach from the surface, the crew must figure out how to get into the facility once they get there. They also face the added hazard of an OPA faction, the Free Fools, that's gotten wind of the protomolecule sample on the moon. The Free Fools try to stop the crew by ambushing them on the surface.

Once at Pope's secret lab, the crew face neurologically-altered scientists and elite Vector Security agents. At this point Diana shows up with some of her mercenaries. She helps the crew, at least at first. And the

"Too many people with too many agendas, and everyone was worried that the other guy would shoot them in the back. Of all the ways to go and meet the God-like alien whatever-they-were that built the protomolecule, this was the stupidest, the most dangerous, and—for Bull's money—the most human."

— *Abbadon's Gate*

OPA fanatics put in an appearance if they weren't dealt with previously. Mayhem breaks loose when protomolecule-infected test subjects are released as a distraction for Pope to escape with the last protomolecule sample.

The crew must then pursue Pope to the luxury passenger liner, the *Prinzessin Victoria Luise*. Diana and her cohorts arrive and turn on the crew in an attempt to eliminate any witnesses, before the bridge is destroyed by Diana's mercenaries, leaving the ship on a collision course for the moon—with the protomolecule on board. It's up to the crew to stop the luxury liner from crashing into the moon and capture or kill Pope, finally recovering the protomolecule sample.

RUNNING THIS ADVENTURE

By now, the player characters should be aware of Sebastian Pope and possibly even his reasons for obtaining a sample of the protomolecule. This being the final chapter of *Abzu's Bounty*, the stakes are high and the danger extreme. The GM shouldn't fear allowing a character or two to die or become seriously injured during the course of the story. If a character dies early on, consider allowing that player to take on the role of another character, possibly an NPC friend or ally of the player characters. Perhaps they run into someone they met in a previous adventure or maybe someone on Luna joins the group? Even Kazi might join in if he learns exactly what it was he smuggled onto the moon. It shouldn't be too hard to come up with someone who can join the group. Even if they are in Pope's laboratory when the death occurs one of the administrators could have a moment of conscience and assist the crew in destroying the protomolecule. Or any number of former acquaintances could be on board the passenger liner.

ADVENTURE GOALS

By the time they reach the end of this adventure, the player characters should have experienced and accomplished a number of things:

- First and foremost, Sebastian Pope should be dead or in custody and the last sample of the protomolecule should be in their hands. Of course, what they choose to do with it at that point is up to them and could lead to an entirely new series of adventures.
- Diana should have betrayed the characters in her bid to get hold of the protomolecule and eliminate any witnesses. Details about her connections to Winston Duarte and a conspiracy within the MCRN may or may not come to light.
- Earth and Luna should be safe from the threat of the protomolecule...for now.

GETTING FROM THERE TO HERE

Presumably, the crew will have obtained information at the end of Titan's Ball that leads them to Luna in search of the fixer, Kazi Anand. If they failed to come up with that lead, the Game Master must come up with another means of getting it to them. Either way, it's a long trip from Titan to Luna, providing the GM with ample opportunity to introduce new stories or to dole out any additional information needed to set up this adventure. This is also the perfect time for an **Interlude**, (See **CHAPTER 5: Gameplay** in *The Expanse* RPG) to give the crew a chance to make repairs, undertake ship maintenance, do some additional research on Pope (or other items of interest), or do some training. The characters should be about 7th or 8th level by the time they get to **Shoot the Moon**. If they aren't quite that level yet, you may want to run a couple adventures on the way to Luna to get them there or adjust the difficulties of the tests and strength of the NPCs as necessary: see the **Beefing Up Adversaries** section of **CHAPTER 13** of *The Expanse* RPG.

SCENE I

WELCOME TO THE MOON

EXPLORATION/SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

Ships arriving at Luna can choose to use the Lovell City spaceport. The spaceport is prohibitively expensive, requiring a **TN 20 Income** test for most independent merchants and traders, but since these docks have retractable seals that allow them to be pressurized they are popular with those who can afford them. The pressurized docks allow crews to make external repairs without the dangers of working in a vacuum. (More information on Luna can be found in **CHAPTER 8: EARTH**, of *The Expanse* RPG.) The other, cheaper, option is to dock at one of the many commercial orbital platforms where ship crews then arrange for cargo and personnel to go down to the moon's surface via shuttle.

FINDING KAZI

The first thing the crew are likely to want to do is to track down Kazi Anand. This turns out to be an easy task since he knows or is known by an incredible number of people. Pretty much anyone with any degree of power on Luna knows that if you want something, legal or otherwise, Kazi is the one to talk to. If he doesn't have access to it, he can probably find it. Characters wishing to learn more about Kazi before arriving at the moon (or perhaps even wishing to make contact with him) can make a **TN 11 Intelligence (Research)** test. A successful research test uncovers the following:

Kazi was born and raised on the moon. There is no record of him having ever left.

He is employed as a foreman for the spacedock at Lovell City spaceport on Luna, where he oversees the 3rd shift.

He has some minor criminal infractions (petty theft, possession of illegal substances), but all of them from over 10 years ago when Kazi was in his late teens to early 20s. His record has been clear for the past decade.

Depending upon the source of the information, the Game Master can provide additional information from Kazi's biography. Kazi's home address on Luna, hand terminal number, or other more personal information can be obtained with a successful **TN 16 Intelligence (Research)** test. Once on Luna (or sooner if they happen to have contacts on Luna) the player characters can begin asking around about Kazi and can learn the following with a successful **TN 14 Communication (Investigation)** test:

Kazi is the person you want if you need to smuggle something onto or off Luna. He works for all types of people, but most of his clientele tend to be among the upscale and affluent residents of Luna.

Kazi requires an introduction from someone he knows before he'll do business with a new client. Convincing one of his existing clients to arrange an introduction requires a **TN 16 Communication (Persuasion)** test. Some player characters might use a different approach and the GM could allow them to use **Communication (Seduction)** or **Strength (Interrogation)**. Lower this difficulty if the client is a contact of one of the player characters or if offered some other incentive, such as a bribe.

Kazi has a personal relationship with the mayor of Lovell City which is a great help in his smuggling activities. They dated briefly when they were in their early twenties (something the mayor has gone to great lengths to obscure) and have remained on friendly terms ever since. He has been arrested several times but has been set free with no charges on each occasion.

The most likely places to find Kazi are at the shipping docks where he works, his apartment, or his favorite watering hole.

GETTING AN INTRODUCTION

The best way to talk to a fixer is to have an introduction. Anyone who deals with anything marginally illegal on Luna has probably done business with Kazi and could offer an introduction. This could be a Contact of one of the PCs or maybe they made some connections while they were on the moon during *Secrets & Satellites*. If all else fails, the crew can spend some time asking around to see if they can find someone willing to make introductions. The GM could decide to make this an entire side adventure in and of itself wherein the crew tries to establish a rep on the moon. Alternately, the GM can have them make a **TN 11 Communication (Investigation)** test to find the appropriate person, followed by a **TN 15 Persuasion** or **Etiquette** test. Success on both tests means that the character has located someone who is willing to vouch for them.

MEETING THE FIXER

Finding Kazi isn't the hard part—the hard part is getting him to talk. The options for how the crew can go about this are fairly open-ended, so the GM needs to be flexible and ready to react to whatever approach the crew decides on. Showing up at his home or at the docks are probably the best ways to get on his bad side. Kazi won't open the door of his apartment for anyone he doesn't know, and even if they bring someone along for introductions he's not going to be happy about having his personal space invaded, and suggests a later meeting at the Crater Saloon. The same applies if he is approached anywhere near his workplace. In either case, unless they have a proper introduction, Kazi's initial attitude

toward the player characters is Standoffish (Neutral if proper introductions are made) and one of them must make a successful **TN 14 Communication (Persuasion)** test to convince Kazi to meet with them. If Kazi refuses a meet, they'll need to seek out a different approach.

Assuming the crew meets with or looks for Kazi at the Crater Saloon, read or paraphrase the following:

The Crater Saloon is much the same as any of thousands of bars and pubs throughout the solar system where working-class folks gather for a quick drink (or twelve) after work. The heavy beat of Belter-synth nearly overwhelms the sound of people talking and laughing, and the long, narrow bar is packed with local workers, most of them Belters or Luna natives. Past the bar is a small room crammed with tables and chairs where small groups gather to share drinks and tell tall tales.

Kazi is likely near the far end of the bar chatting up the bartender. If more than one or two characters approach him at a time, worsen his attitude by one level as large groups of strangers make him nervous. Assuming the crew can convince him they aren't cops, he'll talk to the bartender briefly and then lead them to a private room in the back. This room looks like it's used as a combination meeting room and storage locker. A small table and three chairs are pushed against one wall while the rest of the room contains shelves filled with a wide variety of cheap liquor, packaged snacks, and cleaning products. There's also a bucket with a mop and a broom shoved into one corner.

Kazi is a business man and treats this meeting as such. He's not the type to divulge information about his other clients. How the crew goes about this is up to them but any **Communication (Intimidation or Persuasion)** tests without any additional inducements should be **TN 19** (modified by his current attitude). At the very least Kazi is going to want significant financial compensation but the easiest way to get him to agree is help him out with a small favor.

It should be noted that Kazi is very much an independent freelancer and isn't a part of one of the gangs—he doesn't even consider himself to be a Belter. That said, if a fight breaks out in the bar he does have a lot of friends and a few of them are likely to come to his aid, especially if a group of player characters decides to get rough with him. However, if things turn deadly and guns come out, most of these "friends" disappear just as fast as they came to his aid. You can decide how many bar patrons join in based on how exciting you want things to get, although 2-3 would be a good number (use the Hooligan in **CHAPTER 13: THREATS** of *The Expanse* RPG).

OPA INTRUSION

At some point during their conversation with Kazi, the OPA faction the Free Fools, which the crew encountered in **Breaking the Surface**, shows up at the meeting to kidnap Kazi. They are following the same trail as the crew to locate the protomolecule. Have this attack occur at the most dramatically appropriate moment. If the crew try to speak to Kazi at his home they could attack just as the crew are leaving, or they could strike as the crew are meeting with Kazi in the back room of the Crater Saloon. There should be as many OPA members as there are player characters, plus one. Saving Kazi from the kidnapping attempt immediately increases his attitude by one.

If the Free Fools attack doesn't seem warranted, allow the crew to make **TN 14 Perception (Seeing)** tests. If successful, they notice the OPA members lurking around. Any Belter automatically knows that the Free Fools rarely venture out of their territory and seeing them on the moon is highly unusual. Anyone else can make a successful **TN 13 Intelligence (Current Affairs)** test to know this information. If any of the crew corner the Free Fools or speak to them, they try to slip



away. This can be resolved with an opposed **Perception (Seeing)** test against the OPA member's **Dexterity (Stealth)** or played out as a full chase scene (see **Chases** in **Chapter: 5 GAMEPLAY** of *The Expanse* RPG.) if the crew decide to pursue them.

If any of the OPA members are cornered or captured, they claim to be on Luna for legitimate business. A successful **TN 14 Perception (Empathy)** test reveals they are lying. Of course, if they are captured while kidnapping Kazi they can't use this excuse and just clam up. These OPA members are fanatics, willing to give their lives for the cause. It takes a successful **TN 19 Strength (Intimidation)** test, or something similar, to get them to admit they are after the protomolecule. If pressed, they might also reveal that there are at least a half dozen more Free Fools on Luna, although they don't know where they all are at the moment.

If the crew rescue Kazi, or even drive off the Free Fools, no more negotiation tests are necessary and this is enough to get Kazi to trust them (immediately raising his attitude to Friendly). Having been rescued from fanatical OPA kidnappers, Kazi makes the offer described in the next section, **A Small Favor**. If the crew has really impressed Kazi (or you just want to move directly into the core story) you can skip ahead to **What Kazi Knows** and have him give them the information they want to know about Pope's operations on Luna. This is an especially excellent course of action if Kazi hears the Free Fools talk about the protomolecule. But ultimately, you can use this as a reward for good roleplaying or good dice rolls.

A SMALL FAVOR

The easiest way to get Kazi to talk is to help him out with a little problem. A package he was supposed to intercept (and hand over to a very important client) slipped by and was delivered before he managed to arrange a diversion. The package was delivered to Yabai Imports, a specialty foods company that caters to the wealthy elite on the moon. As far as he knows, the package is currently sitting in the company's warehouse and is going to be delivered to Ming's, an upscale Cantonese restaurant, tomorrow afternoon. Kazi is a fixer and doesn't like to get his hands dirty with things like break-ins or robberies, so the arrival of the PCs seems like the perfect opportunity for him to set things right with his client while still keeping his hands clean. Assuming they take on the job, the crew have two options: they can break into the warehouse and recover the package, or they can intercept it while it's in transit the following day. The package itself is hidden inside a crate full of spices and measures about 30cm x 60cm x 15cm. Kazi can provide a description of the shipping crate as well as its packaging number for easy identification. The package contains cigars, which are contraband on the moon, as are most ignitable or combustible materials.

The Yabai Imports facility isn't the best protected warehouse on the moon and the couriers who make the delivery to Ming's aren't a high-level security detail. The only way the crew are likely to have a problem retrieving the package is if they botch some part of the job and alert Luna security. Since helping out Kazi is only an aside to the main story the GM is encouraged to conduct this caper as a challenge test.

BREAK-IN

This challenge is designed for use if the crew opts to break into the Yabai Imports warehouse to recover the package. **Communication (Investigation)** is used for doing the legwork to learn the best means and time for the break-in. **Dexterity (Stealth)** allows the crew to perform the break-in without being detected. Finally, **Intelligence (Technology)** and **(Security)** are used for bypassing the security on the warehouse.

CHALLENGE: BREAK-IN

DIFFICULTY: TN 12

SUCCESS THRESHOLD: 10

TIME PER TEST: 3 minutes

ABILITY FOCUSES: Dexterity (Stealth), Intelligence (Security), Intelligence (Electronics), Communication (Investigation)

This is a challenge test. Each failure on the challenge test increases the consequence level by one, starting from minor. If the crew eliminates the minor consequence before increasing the level again, then the next consequence is minor as well. Otherwise, another failure elevates it to a moderate consequence.

CONSEQUENCES

MINOR The crew draws some unwanted attention, increasing the TN of their further challenge tests by +2 until they make a separate **TN 15 Dexterity (Stealth)** or **Communication (Deception)** test to throw off suspicion. Success on this test eliminates the TN increase but does not contribute to their success threshold.

MODERATE An employee suspects something is off about the crew's presence and asks them to leave the building. If the characters can't succeed at a **TN 14 Communication (Deception)** test to convince the employee that they are honest, they have to exit the building completely and try again. The TN for future challenges is increased by 2 and they lose their accumulated success.

MAJOR A confrontation with Star Helix security. The crew must overcome several Star Helix officers equal to the number of the crew, although if things go bad they can call in reinforcements. (Use **Police Officer** in **CHAPTER 13: Threats** in *The Expanse* Roleplaying Game, but increase Perception and one other ability to 3, Fortune and Defense to 15, and give them medium armor, providing a +4 Toughness bonus.)

INTERCEPTION

Use this challenge test if the crew decides to intercept the cargo crate when it is being transported from the Yabai Imports warehouse to Ming's. **Intelligence (Tactics)** allows the crew to pinpoint the best location for an ambush or distraction outside the prying eyes of security cameras and other observers. Dexterity (Stealth) is used for setting up the ambush and **Strength (Intimidation)** or **Communication (Deception)** for getting away with the goods. Of course, these tests can be changed if desired, and the scene played out in its entirety if the crew have a specific plan in mind.

CHALLENGE: POSE AS CUSTOMERS

DIFFICULTY: TN 12 **SUCCESS THRESHOLD:** 12 **TIME PER TEST:** 10 minutes
ABILITY FOCUSES: Intelligence (Tactics), Dexterity (Stealth), Strength (Intimidation)

This is a challenge test. Each failure on the challenge test increases the consequence level by one, starting from minor. If the crew eliminates the minor consequence before increasing the level again, then the next consequence is minor as well. Otherwise, another failure elevates it to a moderate consequence.

CONSEQUENCES

MINOR The crew draws some unwanted attention, increasing the TN of their further challenge tests by +2 until they make a separate **TN 15 Dexterity (Stealth)** test to blend in again. Success on this test eliminates the TN increase but does not contribute to their success threshold.

MODERATE The crew is questioned by Star Helix security and must succeed at a **TN 13 Communication (Deception)** test or be taken in for questioning.

MAJOR Confrontation with either Star Helix security or the courier company. There are 2-3 security guards that the crew must overcome. (Use **Security Guards** in **CHAPTER 13** of *The Expanse* RPG, but increase Perception and one other Stat to 3, Fortune and Defense to 15, and give them Medium Armor providing a +4 Armor Bonus.)

With the package safely in hand, the crew can return to Kazi to get the information they need. The box itself is metallic, sealed and locked with anti-tampering measures. If they go to the trouble of opening it, requiring a **TN 15 Intelligence (Security)** test, they discover that it does indeed contain cigars. Of course, Kazi won't be happy if he discovers the box has been tampered with. Completing this task for him automatically raises his attitude to Very Friendly.

WHAT KAZI KNOWS

To get Kazi to spill his guts about Pope requires the PCs to raise his attitude to Very Friendly. Saving him from the Free Fools's abduction attempt and recovering his missing package does this automatically. However, if they somehow screw up one or both of those options, they may need to come up with a different approach. His attitude begins at Standoffish (or Neutral if they had a proper introduction). If they haven't made him happy the crew may have to engage in some social maneuvering to get what they want. This could be an opposed **Communication (Etiquette, Persuasion, or Seduction)** test or something else entirely, depending on what the players come up with. Alternately, the characters could take a different tack and use a more forceful approach. They can also open up to Kazi and tell him all about the protomolecule. A successful **TN 16 Communication (Persuasion)** test convinces him that they are telling the truth and increases his attitude by one level, otherwise he thinks they're full of moon dust (a Lunar colloquialism for "full of crap") and lets them know as much.

The following section details what information Kazi is willing to reveal based on his current attitude.

STANDOFFISH OR NEUTRAL

WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT SEBASTIAN POPE?

"Who? I have no idea who you're talking about."

YOU DELIVERED A PACKAGE TO HIM, DIDN'T YOU?

"Huh? I told you I don't know that guy."

YOU'RE A FIXER, RIGHT? YOU SMUGGLE STUFF ON AND OFF THE MOON.

"Slow down now...I don't know you that well. Why don't you tell me what you're looking for and maybe I can point you in the right direction?"

OPEN OR FRIENDLY

WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT SEBASTIAN POPE?

"What do you want to know? Anyone who's anyone knows who he is? Stupid rich guy...owns like a billion companies...everything from mining to high-tech. Why would you expect a guy like me would know much about someone like him?"

YOU DELIVERED A PACKAGE TO HIM, DIDN'T YOU?

"You're gonna have to buy me a few more drinks before we talk about anything like that."

YOU'RE A FIXER, RIGHT? YOU SMUGGLE STUFF ON AND OFF THE MOON.

"I might be able to help. Tell me a little more about what you need."

WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT POPE IS DOING ON LUNA AND WHERE YOU DELIVER SMUGGLED GOODS TO HIM.

*"Sorry, I'm not in the business of burning clients, especially clients in Pope's league...that's assuming he even is a client. You want to know things like that, we're going to have to get to know each other better." (He eventually brings up the possibility of doing him **A Small Favor**.)*

VERY FRIENDLY

SO, TELL US EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT POPE.

"I'm sure you already know the big stuff...gazillionaire business magnate, tycoon.... Pope has his fingers in just about every business imaginable but specializes in high-tech medical research. He keeps a residence here on Luna but he rarely uses it. Mostly, he lets friends and acquaintances stay there or he uses it for meetings. What you're looking for is his off-site operation. About a year ago Pope bought up an old aluminum refinery from the early days. The thing's been out of commission for over a century. It was shut down after some kind of accident, but he's clearly running some kind of illegal biotech operation out there. Mostly medical stuff, based on the equipment I smuggled in for him."

At this point Kazi fills them in on any information he has. If they have successfully convinced him that Pope is experimenting with the protomolecule Kazi goes out of his way to help in any way he can. Innovative PCs might want to use the fixer's connections to Pope to set up a false delivery or something similar. Unfortunately, Kazi's contact with Pope has always been one way: Pope, or more often one of his flunkies, contacts Kazi to set up a drop. He does know that the old transport tunnels lead out to the old factory, but warns it is probably quite dangerous since they haven't been used for decades. He also might be able to facilitate bribing the Lunar Surface Guides to look the other way during a surface excursion (see **Overland** in **Scene 2**).

SCENE 2

OVER THE MOON

COMBAT/SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

Once they know the location of Pope's secret lab the crew needs to figure out how to get there. The lab is only 10 kilometers from Lovell City, but that's 10 kilometers of hard vacuum since the transport tube there has been long closed. There is no information to be found about how people and supplies are transferred to and from Pope's lunar base. Although the PCs have no way to learn this, Pope recently had a landing bay constructed just outside the laboratory complex, allowing shuttlecraft to dock. (The dock was only just completed, after Kazi helped him smuggle a number of things, including the protomolecule, out to the laboratory, so he doesn't know about it.) Pope keeps two small shuttles there at all times. The authorities have been bribed so Luna flight control never logs the take-off or landing of these shuttles.

Kazi can obtain blueprints for the plant (only parts of which are still accurate), but more importantly he knows that the underground Lunar Transport System (LTS) used to connect to the plant. The access tunnels have been shut off, but they are still accessible via the existing tubes.

TUNNELS

The Lunar Transport System (LTS) connect all of the habitations on the moon. You can catch a transport tube that takes you within a few minutes' walk of almost anywhere you might want to go. Unfortunately, after the accident at the aluminum processing plant the transport tubes there were sealed. If the crew played through **To Sleep, Perchance to Dream**, they'll likely know that Vector Security is fond of using explosives to protect old tunnels and the same is certainly true here. A **TN 11 Intelligence (Computers) or (Research)** test allows the crew to locate the entrance to the abandoned tube under Lovell City. The entrance on the Lovell City end has been welded shut and requires a **TN 13 Dexterity (Sabotage) or Intelligence (Engineering)** test to bypass. The crew might also have to avoid maintenance workers and possibly even security in the service tunnels, depending on how hard the GM wants to make this section.

The tunnels themselves are quite a hazard and involve climbing over fallen debris or even up or down areas where the tube moves vertically, and then of course there are the explosives set by Vector Security to ensure no one uses this entrance. Getting through the tunnels can be treated as a challenge with the following parameters:

CHALLENGE: POSE AS CUSTOMERS

DIFFICULTY: TN 15

SUCCESS THRESHOLD: 20

TIME PER TEST: 5 minutes

ABILITY FOCUSES: Communication (Deception, Disguise, or Etiquette), Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)

The first failure on the challenge test begins at minor. The next increases the consequence level by one to moderate. Each time a moderate consequence is dealt with, roll 1d6. If the roll is less than or equal to the total number of failures proceed to the major consequence.

CONSEQUENCES

MINOR

The crew encounters debris, a vertical tunnel, or some other minor hazard that must be traversed or avoided. This requires a **TN 11 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Climbing)** test from each character to avoid taking 2d6 damage. Alternately, one character might make a **TN 13 Intelligence (Engineering)** test to figure out a safe way around the hazard. If this fails, increase the difficulty for the other tests.



MODERATE The crew comes to an area mined or monitored by Vector Security. You can choose or randomly determine which of the following they encounter (roll 1d6):

D6	ENCOUNTER
1-3	Pressure Plate Activated Explosive: A pressure plate triggers an explosive device. Characters can notice the pressure plate with a successful TN 15 Perception (Searching or Seeing) test. The trigger can be deactivated by a character with a TN 16 Intelligence (Demolitions or Security) test or every character making a successful TN 11 Dexterity (Acrobatics) test. Setting off the trap inflicts 3d6 damage to all characters within 5 meters of the pressure plate.
4-6	Laser Tripwire Activated Explosive or Alarm: A laser tripwire triggers an explosive device or alarm. Characters can notice the tripwire with a successful TN 17 Perception (Searching or Seeing) test. The laser trigger can be deactivated by one character making a TN 15 Intelligence (Demolitions or Security) test or every character making a successful TN 11 Dexterity (Acrobatics) test. Setting off the trap inflicts 3d6 Damage to all characters within 5 meters of the trigger point. If it is an alarm, Vector Security becomes aware that the tunnels have been infiltrated and reacts appropriately. If Vector Security is alerted to intruders, they set up an ambush in in the terminal area that connects to the lab. There are a number of Vector Security equal to the number of characters and they set themselves up in a well-defensible position, using all available cover. They try to capture the crew alive (which can allow for a potential escape scene later). If the alarm is sounded, this also gives Pope ample time to get away—see Protomolecule on the Loose .

MAJOR An explosion further down the tunnel causes a significant portion of the tunnel to collapse. This should be treated as a Murderous Hazard. Everyone in the tunnel takes 6d6 damage from falling debris. The PCs must make a **TN 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** test. If successful, they take half damage, but if the test fails they are trapped under the debris. An additional **TN 15 Intelligence (Engineering)** test followed by **Strength (Might)** test is required to free the character. Failure on either test results in another minor cave-in for 3d6 damage.

OVERLAND

Getting to the Lunar surface from Lovell City is harder than one might imagine. PCs who decide they want to walk or drive across the surface of the moon to Pope's laboratory are going to have to find the means (legitimate or otherwise) of getting out of the city. All moon walks and transportation are strictly controlled by the Lunar Surface Guides (or LSG). Politicians on the moon don't like to see stories about people dying on the surface because they didn't properly secure their suit or take enough air for their return journey. There are also a number of places of important historical significance, including the Apollo 11 landing site, that the ministers of Luna don't want destroyed by wandering civilians. The LSG was formed in the early days of Lunar settlement and they keep a solid hold on all surface exploration. Vac suits and moon rovers can be rented or purchased, but anyone leaving the city must either be in the company of a LSG member or be certified themselves—a process that involves hefty fees and months of training and testing.

The crew may decide to simply land their ship near the laboratory, but ship traffic in the vicinity of the moon is strictly monitored and landing without good reason and authorization is prohibited. There are any number of operations that take place on the moon's surface, from mining to military training exercises, which could be endangered by ships too close to the surface.

Since the facility owned by Pope is only about 10 kilometers from Lovell City it would be impossible to land there without anyone noticing.

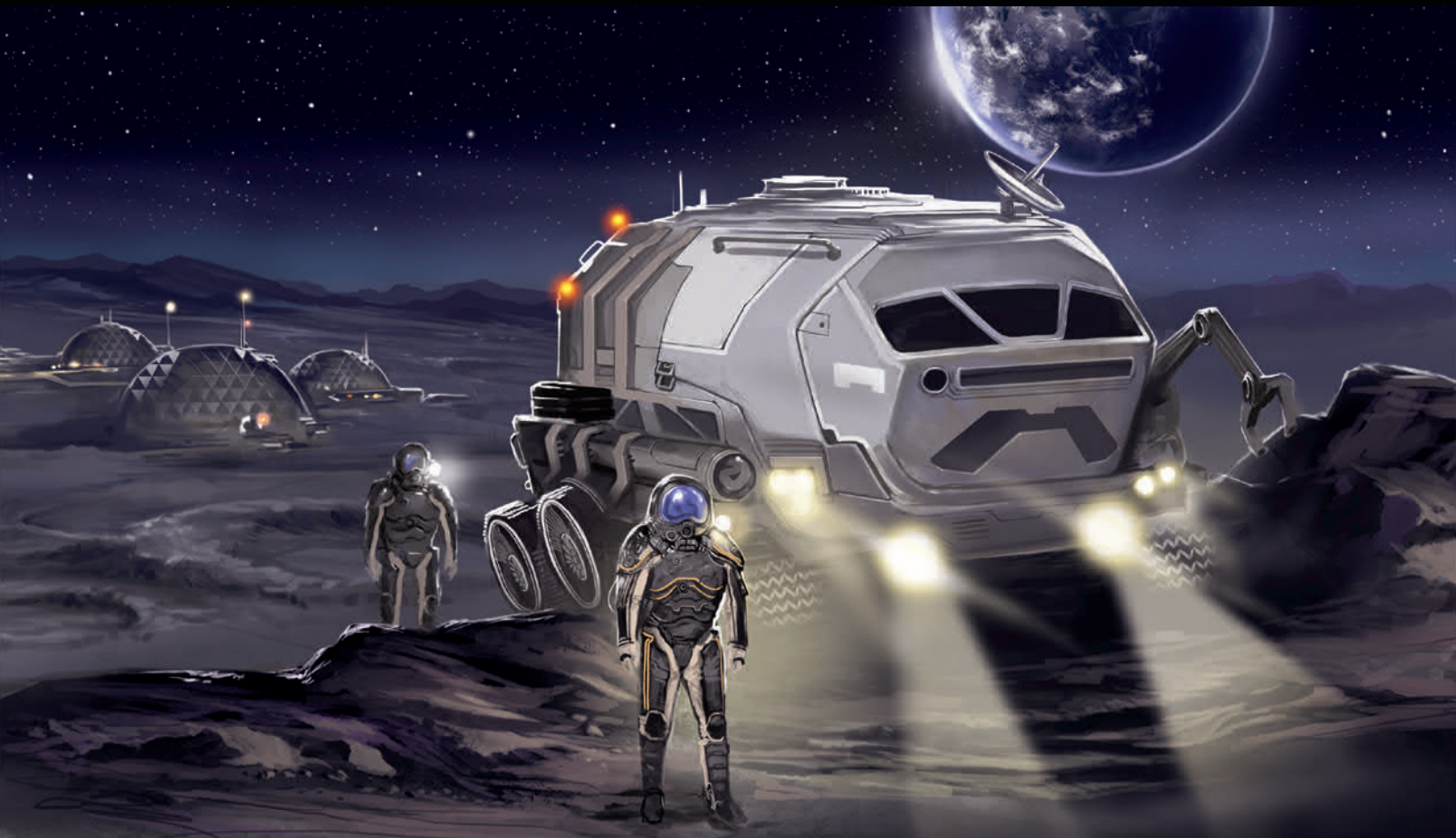
To get outside the city on their own the player characters must bribe a high-ranking member of the LSG, bypass security and sneak out, or steal a lunar rover. Bribing a member of the LSG to get access to suits or a rover is costly, requiring a **TN 20 Income test** and a successful **TN 15 Communication (Bargaining or Persuasion)** test. Of course, seduction or intimidation are other options. If the PCs decide to steal or otherwise illegally obtain the necessary equipment, improvise based on the crew's actions.

Getting outside the city and onto the surface of the moon without being noticed or setting off an alarm requires successful **TN 11 Dexterity (Stealth)** tests by all of the crew (this difficulty is increased to **TN 15** and must be made by all drivers if they take moon rovers) and a **TN 13 Intelligence (Security)** test. If either fails, the crew may find themselves pursued by several armed members of the LSG

MOON ROVER

HANDLING	-1	CAPACITY	4
VELOCITY	25 km per hour		
RAM	2d6	HULL	0
INCOME TN	16		
NOTES			

Advanced Sensor Package,
Good Juice, Hull Plating,
Improved Stores, Medical
Expert System.



who insist they return to the city at once. Once back, they are likely arrested and then fined (each character must make a **TN 16 Income** test) before being released.

BITTER RIVALS

The Free Fools faction of the OPA have been searching for the protomolecule since first learning about its existence during **Breaking the Surface**. They have followed the trail just as the player characters have, though by a different route, and have come to the same conclusion that the protomolecule must be at this base. Having noticed the crew in **Scene 1**, unless they have taken extreme measures to keep their activities unnoticed (in which case some opposed roles might be in order) they have kept tabs on the crew ever since. Fearing the crew might beat them to the protomolecule, they ambush them on the surface of the moon using hijacked mining rovers.

There is one OPA member for each player character and they have two mining rovers; one rides inside each mining rover while any remaining OPA members hang onto the outside of the rovers and use guns.

UNEXPECTED HELP

If the player characters are about to be overrun and defeated in combat, Diana and a team of her elite mercenaries can arrive just in time to save the day. Optionally, you can have Diana arrive before a combat scene and offer her assistance. (Just before breaching the Pope laboratory is a possibility.) Depending upon the scene and how much combat remains until the final chapter, most or all the mercenaries should be killed off. Even if the player characters don't need assistance, Diana and her mercenaries should show up at some point during their raid. How has she been tracking them and how did she know they're here? Leave that a mystery. She won't answer and ultimately there are any number of ways she could know where they are. Having a specific ship tracked isn't very hard if you have the resources to devote to it (which she certainly does), and if the crew trusts her they may have even told her where they were going. After all, she insisted they update her on any news about Pope.

MINING ROVER

HANDLING -2 **CAPACITY** 1

VELOCITY 20 km per hour

RAM 3d6 **HULL** 2

INCOME TN 20

WEAPONS

Grinders 5d6

NOTES

These are larger, heavier duty versions of the moon rovers that are used for surface mining. Huge grinders tear into the lunar surface and the suck up the material into hoppers on the back of the rover.

SCENE 3

INTO THE LAB

SOCIAL/COMBAT ENCOUNTER

Pope's research lab on Luna is an old aluminum refinery abandoned for decades after an act of industrial sabotage rendered it inoperable. This being one of Pope's most secret research labs, great care was taken in obtaining the location and making it all but impossible to trace its ownership and operation back to Pope or Pope Enterprises. The only real link is that members of Vector Security are occasionally assigned here, but they are all carefully vetted, and aren't even told the location of their assignment.

The research station is home to approximately 60 people at any given time: 30 scientists, 18 administrators, and 12 security. They all operate in shifts meaning that at any given time, one-third are working, one-third are engaging in leisure activities, and one-third are sleeping. The altered nature of the scientists (see the **Altered Scientists** under **Adversaries & Allies**) means that, despite this routine, half or more of them can be found actively working at any given time.

THE LABORATORY

The main lab is built in and around what had formerly been the main smelting and processing center for the refinery. Huge tanks that once held molten aluminum dominate the room, but vast amounts of high-tech equipment has been built in and around them. A new grated floor has been installed over the previous floor, covered in aluminum from where one of the tanks breached. This new flooring is cluttered with tables and countertops overflowing with computers and all kinds of scientific equipment and medical devices. Several medical cots, covered in monitoring devices, line one wall of the room. Three of the cots are currently occupied. Two sealed, coffin-like chambers are located in the center of the room. These sealed chambers are made of a transparent material, allowing for easy viewing of the occupants; both are adult males, apparently in their late fifties, currently unconscious or asleep. Both have a faint blue glow emitting from their skin, and one appears to have a crystalline substance emitting a faint glow from where it's growing over his left eye.

There are 10-15 (9 + 1d6) scientists in the lab at any given time. They are all unarmed and tend to ignore the arrival of any newcomers unless someone interferes with their work.

When the PCs enter the laboratory, but before they are noticed, read or paraphrase the following:

The room is abuzz with noise and activity and reeks of sulfur and other less pleasant odors. Several people in white lab coats bustle about, leaning over electro-microscopes, poring over streams of data on terminals, and excitedly discussing their findings or debating theories with one another. As they move about, their feet clang on the grated metallic floor covering what appears to be hardened, molten aluminum. Tables and countertops are jammed to overflowing with all sorts of electronic and medical equipment. There are several medical cots—some of which are occupied—scattered about, and two sealed chambers that resemble glass coffins covered in a myriad of blinking lights rest in the center of the room. Around the perimeter of the chamber are four massive tanks that were probably once used for smelting aluminum, but now sit unused.



LUNAR ACCESS DOME

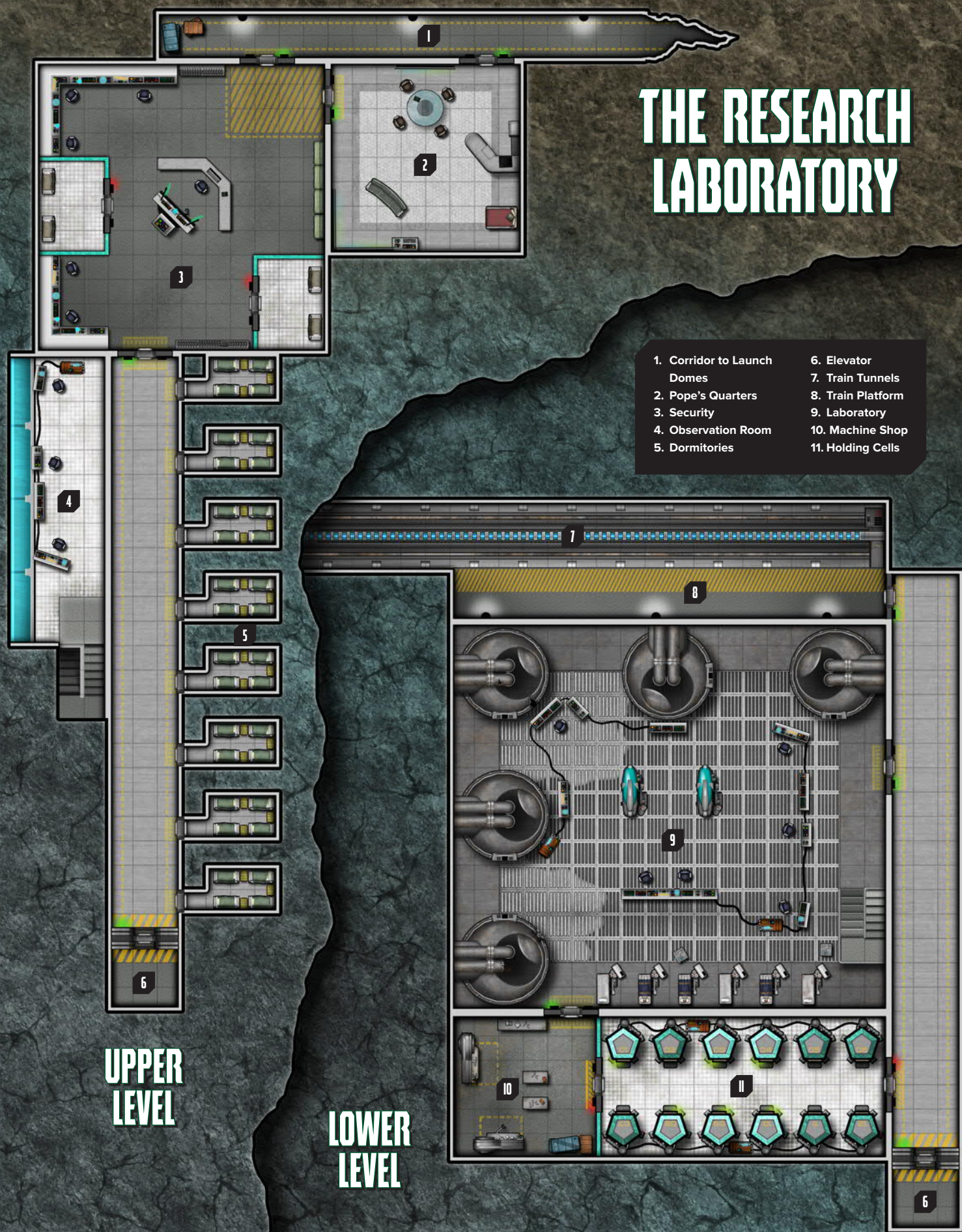
The access dome is new construction and not part of the original facility. Domes are not usually used for living structures on the surface of the moon due to dangers from radiation and meteorites. However, in this case, the dome was constructed simply as a location to house rovers (providing some protection against meteorite strikes) and as a docking facility for landing shuttles.

THE RESEARCH LABORATORY

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Corridor to Launch Domes | 6. Elevator |
| 2. Pope's Quarters | 7. Train Tunnels |
| 3. Security | 8. Train Platform |
| 4. Observation Room | 9. Laboratory |
| 5. Dormitories | 10. Machine Shop |
| | 11. Holding Cells |

**UPPER
LEVEL**

**LOWER
LEVEL**



DORMITORIES

The scientists and administrators share communal quarters in one of two former storage facilities. Bunk beds line the walls and fill the center of each room. Each bunk has two cargo trunks for clothing and storage of personal belongings. The trunks belonging to the scientists contain little more than spare jumpsuits and personal hygiene items. Those belonging to administrators often contain a few personal items: different styles of clothing, jewelry, printed photographs, or other memorabilia from their previous lives. Despite sharing the same living quarters, the administrators have made some effort to claim a part of the room for their own. Some of the area has been separated with flimsy pre-fab walls and even sheets hanging in doorways. A few of the administrators have made a minimal attempt to decorate and a few pieces of art or photos of family members hang on the walls in this area.

The second dormitory is a smaller converted storage facility where the security officers sleep.

POPE'S QUARTERS

Pope's quarters are a set of rooms just past the security room, formerly used for factory personnel who had to stay on-site for multiple days. The once spartan rooms are now luxuriously appointed and make up a small suite: office, bedroom, and meeting room. Pope maintains these quarters for his occasional visits when he wants to personally check up on progress. He also uses it as a private meeting place while on the moon.

OBSERVATION ROOM

The entire wall on one side of this room is a large window looking out over the Laboratory. There are several desks and computers scattered about, the majority of them located near the observation window. Most of the administrators conduct their business here while being able to oversee the experiments going on below without interrupting the scientists.

HOLDING CELLS

These holding cells were constructed from pre-fab materials and installed inside what were formerly storage areas. There are a total of twelve cells, six of which are currently holding people in various stages of infection from the protomolecule. If the security chief or Pope has already released the infected, they are likely elsewhere, roaming the station. If any player characters are captured, they are imprisoned in one of the remaining holding cells.

The cells can be unlocked using passcodes keyed to hand terminals belonging to Pope, the Security Chief, Head of Admin, and the Lead Scientist. Anyone possessing (and having access to) one of these hand terminals can easily open the cells. Otherwise, a **TN 16 Intelligence (Technology or Security)** test is required to open the cells.

The room is continuously monitored by security cams displayed in both Security and in the Laboratory, and each of the chambers is equipped with a "failsafe" acid spray to dissolve any biological matter inside. It can be triggered from a control panel just inside the door of the holding cell area, or from the hand terminals used by Pope or the Security Chief. Anyone inside a cell when its failsafe is activated takes 2d6 damage per round. If the door is still open, a character in the cell can roll a **TN 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** test to take half damage.

SECURITY

The door to this room is locked and can only be opened using a passcode and thumb scan from a member of Vector Security. Alternately, a character can attempt to bypass the lock with a **TN 16 Intelligence (Technology or Security)** test.

There are always two guards on duty here, monitoring the security cameras.

PROTOMOLECULE ON THE LOOSE

Sometimes the best way to keep a secret is in plain sight. Pope hasn't survived as long and gotten as far as he has in the cutthroat world of business without always having a back-up plan. In this case, Pope knew multiple groups were trying to find his protomolecule sample, so he was prepared to evacuate in case things went wrong. Either he, or one of his assistants escapes in the emergency shuttle and docks with the passenger liner, the *Prinzessin Victoria Luise*, owned by a subsidiary of Pope Enterprises.

Diana's mercenaries are tracking the whole situation and dispatch a ship after Pope. They make a forced breach near the *Victoria Luise*'s bridge in an attempt to take control of the luxury liner, but things don't go according to plan. The bridge crew is killed and the bridge destroyed in the process, with the ship sent spinning into a collision course with the moon!

The following is a likely timeline of events:

- 1 As soon as an alarm sounds on the station, Pope begins making his way toward the shuttlecraft. (You can assume he already has the sample aboard the shuttle, so if he is killed or captured on the way, one of his assistants gets away with the sample.)
- 2 The shuttle proceeds to the *Prinzessin Victoria Luise*.
- 3 When Diana learns a sample of the protomolecule has been taken to the *Prinzessin Victoria Luise* she contacts other agents to have them intercept it.
- 4 Diana's mercenaries manage to board the ship before it departs, leading to a firefight on the bridge.
- 5 Damage to the ship's bridge causes the liner to careen out of control, heading for a collision with Luna.

"MEETING" SEBASTIAN POPE

If circumstances warrant it, at some point during their incursion into Pope's lab he attempts to negotiate with the crew. He likely waits until he is safely on board an escape shuttle or at least nearby. Pope uses his hand terminal to interface with the lab's communications system so his voice can be heard almost anywhere the characters may be. Comm terminals are located on the walls of most of the rooms (usually just inside the door) and at all of the lab work stations, so the crew can communicate with him through those. Have him make this announcement at a dramatically appropriate moment once the crew's presence has been discovered. This could be while they're sneaking down a corridor to create a sense of being watched, or even during a firefight.

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

The speakers of every comm station in your vicinity crackle to life and a voice speaks loudly.

"This is Sebastian Pope speaking. Of course, if you're who I think you are, then you already know that. You've been pursuing me and my protomolecule from one end of the solar system to the other and what has it gotten you? Strife, injury, even death? Why not choose another path? Let's end this conflict once and for all. Let's talk.... You might find it profitable."

Of course, Pope has no interest in honoring any arrangement and is only buying time to escape. He keeps the characters talking for as long as possible and if they agree to discuss the situation, he has one of his chief scientists approach to talk while the elite Vector Security agents on the station move into position to take them out. Pope uses every second to get closer to his escape on board the *Prinzessin Victoria Luise*. This is likely the first time the crew actually gets to speak to Pope and he should come off as haughty and arrogant, but also reasonable and willing to negotiate. He's a master communicator and uses every trick in the book to keep the characters talking while he makes his escape.



CONTINGENCIES

It's possible that the player characters do something so drastic (or so effective) that Pope would never have a reasonable chance to get off the moon. Perhaps they decide to suffer the repercussions and nuke the site of the laboratory from orbit. Or maybe they are just so stealthy Pope never has a chance to realize they are in the base before they take control of everything. At this point, you have two choices: let the adventure conclude here or fudge things a little to allow Pope or at least the protomolecule sample to escape to the *Prinzessin Victoria Luise*. If Pope is captured before he can evacuate, assume the protomolecule was already loaded onto one of the shuttles and that one of Pope's assistants takes it to the liner, with similar results.

ALLIES TURNED ENEMY

At some point during the story Diana and her mercenaries turn on the player characters. Remember, it is Diana's ultimate goal to secure a sample of the protomolecule for her superior, Winston Duarte. Once that is accomplished, or she feels it's within reach, she needs to eliminate any witnesses. The mostly likely time for this is when the characters learn that a sample of the protomolecule has been taken to the *Prinzessin Victoria Luise*. She may already be with the crew at the lab, in which case she and her mercs accompany them until the time is ripe. It's also possible only Diana joins the characters at the lab, keeping the mercenaries in reserve. No matter what, she won't try to take the crew on by herself and instead contacts her mercenaries before making a move.

SCENE 4

ENDGAME

SOCIAL/COMBAT ENCOUNTER

MERCENARY SHIP

SIZE Large

HULL 2d6 CREW 4 (16)

COMPETANCE Capable

DRIVE Epstein, Thrusters

SENSORS 1

WEAPONS

Point Defense Network (Close Range, 2d6 Damage)

QUALITIES

Hidden Compartments, Maneuverable

FLAWS

High Maintenance

Once they realize Pope, or an assistant, has taken the protomolecule sample to the *Prinzessin Victoria Luise* the crew will almost certainly want to set out in pursuit. By the time the characters learn the fate of the protomolecule, the *Prinzessin Victoria Luise* is breaking orbit to begin its long trek to Tycho Station. The crew have to figure out how to get to the luxury liner and then how to board the ship. They probably have two choices readily available to them: they can take one of the shuttlecraft from the lunar base or they can use their own ship. If they have captured Pope, they can force him to spill his guts on everything he knows about the protomolecule, including the fact that there is a sample on board the *Prinzessin Victoria Luise*.

Time things so the mercenary ship under Diana's command finishes transferring the mercenaries to the *Prinzessin Victoria Luise* and undocks just as the crew's transport approaches. The mercenary ship does everything within its power to stop the crew's ship (or shuttle) from docking with the liner, which likely means a fight between ships. If the PCs choose to take one of the shuttles, they may find themselves in a tight spot, although they may be able to slip by the mercenary ship through stealth—this requires the pilot to make a series of **TN 17 Dexterity (Piloting)** tests to get lost among the ship traffic around Luna. Or, they could bluff their way on board by pretending to be a legitimate shuttle from Luna with late-arriving passengers, requiring at least a **TN 17 Communication (Deception)** test. The GM must be ready to improvise depending on what kind of hare-brained scheme the characters come up with.



The PCs should arrive at the *Victoria Luise* just after the firefight on the bridge between Diana's mercenaries and the bridge crew. The ship does not respond to hails and moments after the PCs board it begins moving erratically and makes a sharp turn, causing the ship to hurl directly toward the moon. The crew can still dock with the massive ship but this requires a successful **TN 15 Dexterity (Piloting)** test. Failure means their ship scrapes against the larger vessel while docking causing 2d6 damage to their ship. Once docked, they'll need to make a **TN 11 Intelligence (Technology or Security)** test to remotely open the liner's airlock.

ON BOARD THE VICTORIA LUISE

The player characters must decide the best course of action to keep the *Prinzessin Victoria Luise* from crashing into the moon, and maybe rescue as many of the passengers as they can. Probably the best thing they can do is to head to the engineering section and try to take control of the ship. Of course, they're also going to want to get to Pope and the protomolecule as quickly as possible, meaning the group is likely to split to try to solve both problems at once. If the **Up the Ante** option (see page 128) is used then they'll only need to worry about keeping the liner from crashing—it being too late for the passengers—unless they just want to exact vengeance on Pope.

You may want to adjust this based on exactly where on the luxury liner they choose to board, but when the PCs first board the *Victoria Luise* read or paraphrase the following (adjust as necessary if using the **Up the Ante** option):

As soon as you step onto the ship you are engulfed in chaos: klaxons are sounding, alarms are flashing, and passengers and crew alike are running about in a state of panic. Terrified passengers try to push past you to get onto your ship and suddenly the gravity lurches as the ship's rotation shifts causing people and objects to go flying into the far wall. The screams and cries as people slam into the wall and each other are deafening.

The sudden lurch isn't enough to dislodge anyone wearing magnetic boots, but anyone not wearing them must make a **TN 16 Dexterity (Acrobatics or Free Fall)** test or take 2d6 damage from slamming into a wall. Characters who go to the ship's bridge find all of the crew and instrumentation equally dead. It looks like a grenade (or two) went off on the bridge. A character can make a **TN 11 Intelligence (Technology or Computers)** test to get a terminal active enough to realize the ship is careening toward the moon. Of course, they probably already knew this before they boarded. They can only hope, if they want to stop the catastrophic descent, that the engineering section is intact and the ship can be controlled from there. A character can access the *Victoria Luise*'s main computer from just about any terminal on board to try to discover Pope's location. A successful **TN 15 Intelligence (Computers)** test reveals Pope has a permanent stateroom on board and the system indicates he is currently in residence.

Assuming the crew splits into two groups, one to get to engineering and the other to get to Pope, you can use the same challenge test for each group. From the time the characters board the *Victoria Luise* they have 30 minutes until the ship crashes into the moon.

CHALLENGE: MOVING AROUND THE SHIP

DIFFICULTY: TN 15 (increase to 17 if using **Up the Ante**) **TIME PER TEST:** 1 minute

SUCCESS THRESHOLD: 30 (to get to engineering from the bridge) 20 (to get to Pope's quarters from the bridge)

ABILITY FOCUSES: Dexterity (Stealth), Intelligence (Engineering), Intelligence (Security)

This is a challenge test. Each failure on the challenge test increases the consequence level by one, starting from minor. If the crew eliminates the minor consequence before increasing the level again, then the next consequence is minor as well. Otherwise, another failure elevates it to a moderate consequence.

CONSEQUENCES

MINOR The PCs attract the attention of the ship's security. They can confront them directly or make a separate **TN 15 Dexterity (Stealth)** test (or come up with some other means of escape) to lose them. Or the PCs come to a dangerously damaged part of the ship (exposed power cables or even escaping air due to a hull breach) and must deal with the hazard or suffer a +2 difficulty to future tests. This could be a separate **TN 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** or **Intelligence (Engineering)** test. Success on this test eliminates the TN increase but does not contribute to their success threshold. If the **Up the Ante** option is being used the PCs encounter an area of the ship taken over by the protomolecule. The same tests can be used (at a +2 difficulty) to avoid direct contact with the protomolecule.

MODERATE The crew finds their planned route blocked by a large crowd of passengers (the escape pods in this part of the ship are malfunctioning and they are panicking as they try to escape) or security doors have slammed shut and locked. They lose their accumulated success total and have to find a different route. If the **Up the Ante** option is being used use the same as described above but there are also protomolecule-infected passengers or that area of the ship is too badly damaged to make it through.

MAJOR A group of Vector Security (or mercenaries if Diana has already turned on them) spots the crew and attacks them. The scene transitions to either a combat (if the crew attacks) or a chase (if the crew flees). The chase is a **TN 12 Dexterity (Free-fall or Running)** test (success threshold 15). If the **Up the Ante** option is being used, replace this with protomolecule infected passengers (or mercenaries).

OPTIONAL: UPPING THE ANTE

GMs who want to make this encounter especially memorable can decide that in a last bid for immortality Pope releases the protomolecule on board the *Prinzessin Victoria Luise*. This increases the pandemonium on board the ship exponentially as the modified protomolecule infects the passengers and crew. Not only does the crew have to deal with the panicking passengers, but they may also have to fight off protomolecule-infected passengers or pass through areas infested with the protomolecule.

The PCs must wear vac suits (or environment suits of some kind) to have any chance of surviving a direct encounter with the protomolecule. The protomolecule that is loose on the *Victoria Luise* has become extremely efficient in assimilating organic hosts and spreads quickly throughout the ship. If a player asks if there is any apparent reason behind the movement of the protomolecule have them make a **TN 17 Intelligence (Physics or Engineering)** test. If they are successful, they note that it appears to be moving toward the aft of the ship. If they succeed at both tests, they realize it is moving toward the ship's reactor.

Emergency vac suits can be found throughout the *Victoria Luise* and (assuming they didn't bring their own) the GM is advised to allow the crew to suit-up before they encounter the protomolecule. Note that the protomolecule can infect a



character who has even the smallest tear in their suit. Damage overcome by Fortune does not necessarily mean that the suit has been breached. However, if a character suffers an injured or wounded condition, you can assume their suit has been breached. Most suits come with quick patch repair kits which can patch most rips and tears with a Major Action.

If the protomolecule has been released, one of the ranking crew members has enacted a contagion protocol which disables all of the ship's escape pods, making it impossible for passengers and crew to escape. However, since the protomolecule is spreading aft, the forward third of the ship is safe and free from infection, for the time being.

CONFRONTING POPE

Ideally, this should occur at Pope's quarters. He maintains a permanent suite on this liner for himself and other high-ranking members of his company. If Diana hasn't shown up yet, and is still alive, she should arrive just about now, likely leading to a three-way shootout. Even if Diana has already been killed her mercenaries show up and attempt to acquire the protomolecule.

The exterior door to Pope's quarters has additional security and structural reinforcement requiring a successful **TN 17 Intelligence (Technology or Security)** test to bypass the lock or a **TN 19 Dexterity (Sabotage)** or **Intelligence (Engineering)** test to destroy the door. Once inside, there are two Elite Vector Security agents waiting for them (or more if the GM wishes to create a challenge). There is also a motion-activated taser turret that targets anyone not wearing the proper RFID tag.

The suite consists of a large living/entertaining area, dining area, has a full bar, and there is an attached kitchen stocked with a wide variety of exotic foods. Two bedrooms are attached to the living area, each with its own bathroom, complete with shower and soaking tub (an incredible luxury on a ship). Every room is luxuriously appointed with gold filigree furniture (some of it even made of real wood), overstuffed (real) leather couches and chairs, thick carpets, antique lamps, and other curios from Earth (all carefully secured). One wall is almost entirely covered with an immense display screen creating the illusion of a window out to space and usable for entertainment purposes as well.

TASER TURRET

The turret is motion-activated, has six shots, and will not target anyone wearing a special RFID tag—which both Pope and Vector Security officers wear. Pope activates the turret as soon as he gets to the suite. The turret makes a ranged attack with a +4 bonus, doing 2d6-2 penetrating damage if it hits. It is a small object (TN 13 to attack) with Toughness 5. If any damage gets past its Toughness, it stops working.

Pope is hiding in the master bedroom of the suite, clutching the canister containing the protomolecule. He tries to negotiate with any PCs who make it into the bedroom, offering them pretty much anything they desire to let him go—even giving them the protomolecule. He knows this is the end game and he doesn't have any moves left. Besides, there are certainly other samples of the protomolecule out there. At this point he just wants to get out of this alive. Pope has his fingers on the release mechanism for the canister so shooting him outright isn't really an option, unless the characters want to risk releasing the protomolecule onto the ship. Ultimately, how the players choose to deal with this is up to them and the options are almost limitless. Here are a few possibilities.

ACCEPT OFFER

It's possible the crew decides to accept Pope's offer of untold wealth and a life of luxury to let him go. In this case, you're well within your rights to have Diana (or one of her agents) show up (or wake up) and shoot Pope in the head. In this case, go to **Just Shoot Him**.

NEGOTIATE

The PCs can come to some kind of arrangement with Pope. He is reluctant to release the protomolecule canister unless he is allowed certain assurances (possibly summoning more security to escort him to safety). Convincing Pope to believe them, or more likely bluffing him, should require some very difficult opposed social tests.

JUST SHOOT HIM

Pope is overconfident and believes the characters won't shoot him while he holds the canister, making him an easy target. The canister is only about half a meter long and 10 centimeters in diameter, so it doesn't offer anything in the way of cover. A character can make a **TN 13 Accuracy (Weapon Type)** test to shoot Pope at this range and you can consider him "Dead-to-Rights," meaning he cannot spend Fortune to reduce the damage (see the **Dead-to-Rights** sidebar in



Each attempt takes one minute and increases the difficulty by one, not to mention bringing the ship closer to its destruction. This test would normally be easier, but piloting the ship from engineering is more difficult and the liner has sustained considerable damage.

SCUTTLE THE SHIP

If you are using the **Up the Ante** option, the PCs may decide that the best option is to scuttle the ship and set the reactor to self-destruct. To set the reactor to self-destruct requires a **TN 13 Intelligence (Computers or Engineering)** advanced test with a success threshold of 7 and a time increment of 1 minute. Once complete, the crew can set the self-destruct sequence for whatever time they want (hopefully before the ship hits the moon) but with enough time to get off the ship.

CONCLUSION

There are many possible outcomes for the conclusion of this adventure. The best possible outcome is the characters successfully get the protomolecule from Pope and he is arrested or killed. Of course, even if they are successful in obtaining the protomolecule and saving the *Victoria Luise* they are going to have to deal with UN Marines who storm the luxury liner shortly after the crew gets things under control. They almost certainly broke a lot of laws getting to this point—some of which they may have to answer for. Though saving the *Victoria Luise*, Luna, and probably Earth itself may mean they get some leniency. Unless they pull off a miraculous escape from the *Victoria Luise* and remain undetected, the crew are likely to find themselves as the star guests at a closed-door UN Hearing and may even meet the likes of Deputy Undersecretary Chrisjen Avasarala herself! (See Avasarala's write-up in **CHAPTER 7** of *The Expanse* RPG for details.)

Where the story goes from here is entirely up to you and your players. What the crew decides to do with the protomolecule is probably the most important factor here. You and your players may need to decide how closely you want to follow

CHAPTER 12 of *The Expanse* RPG). The PCs can also rush him and try to wrest the canister from him. This requires an opposed test using **Fighting (Grapple)**. If Pope is shot (or a grab fails) the canister drops from his hands and the characters have one chance to grab it before the protomolecule is released. Successfully catching and resealing the canister requires a successful **TN 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** test. Failure means the protomolecule is released, so you may wish to remind the players they can spend Fortune on this test! Information on the effects of the protomolecule on characters can be found under **Protomolecule Effects** in **CHAPTER 13** of *The Expanse* RPG, but it basically means an inglorious end for the crew.

SAVING THE VICTORIA LUISE

The engineering section has been abandoned by crew members trying to escape the ship before it's destroyed. The chief engineer stayed behind, but fried herself when trying to bypass systems to override the bridge controls and the ship made a high-G maneuver. The ship's engineering computers do not allow just anyone to make alterations to their systems. Getting control of the ship to keep it from crashing into the moon requires two parts:

First the characters must gain access to the ship's computer. This is a **TN 15 Intelligence (Computers)** advanced test with a success threshold of 12 and a time increment of 3 minutes. Second, they must repair the systems that were damaged by the chief engineer. This requires another **TN 13 Intelligence (Engineering)** advanced test with a success threshold of 15 and a time increment of 1 minute. Both of these tests can be performed concurrently, or characters can help one another to complete the tasks consecutively. Once the crew has repaired and gained control of the ship's systems, the ship's course can be altered by making a successful **TN 13 Dexterity (Pilot)** test.

canon because if the protomolecule falls into the hands of the UN, this drastically alters the course of the story as told in *The Expanse* novels. However, it's your game and your universe, whatever happens.

There are many threads to pick up the story from here and carry on. Over the course of *Abzu's Bounty* the crew has made many friends and enemies. They are also squarely in the sights of Winston Duarte and he's probably none too happy with them. On the other hand, Duarte might also be impressed with the abilities the crew has demonstrated and look to recruit them, falling back on eliminating them as a security risk if they refuse.

ADVERSARIES & ALLIES

The following are profiles of the significant non-player characters in **Shoot the Moon**, along with their *Expanse* game stats. For additional stock characters, see the **Threats** chapter of *The Expanse* RPG.

ALTERED SCIENTISTS

The scientists at Pope's Lunar station have all undergone the same medical procedure as those in *To Sleep, Perchance to Dream*. This procedure has altered structural elements of the brain, creating a deep sociopathy amongst the researchers, granting them extreme abilities to focus on results-oriented research while freeing them of any moral or ethical constraints. This also makes all of the scientists prone to violent outbursts if they are disturbed while working. The GM can feel free to play this out however they wish, but none of them are interested in leaving, and get agitated, angry, or even violent if anyone interrupts their work. If Pope or any of the security staff order them to attack, they grab medical implements and do so as a frothing, angry mob.

DIANA'S MERCENARIES

These mercenaries work for Diana and, through her, Winston Duarte. They are almost uniformly Martian and have mostly been recruited from the Mars Secret Service (MSS) and the Martian Marine Corps (MMC). Some of them know that they work for a separatist faction within the Martian government and are fanatically loyal to Duarte. Others don't care who they work for as long as they get paid. While Duarte does have agents within the Martian military and secret service, all of those the characters encounter have left the service. They are all experts in their field (feel free to adjust stats for various types of specialists) and always maintain a professional demeanor. They usually wear plain clothes or paramilitary gear.

KAZI ANAND

Kazi is a man of the moon. He was born on Luna and has never travelled anywhere else. He is a descendant of one of the original engineers who laid the foundations for the first habitats on the moon and is part of a long line of engineers and mechanics. Despite his lineage, he lacks any technical skills—instead he has learned how to manipulate and build networks of people.

Unlike many of those born and raised on Luna he has never had the desire to go down the well to mother Earth. His parents arranged for him to take bone-strengthening meds as a youth, but he stopped taking them

ALTERED SCIENTISTS

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1, COMMUNICATION -2, CONSTITUTION 2, DEXTERITY 2 (CRAFTING), FIGHTING 0, INTELLIGENCE 4 (CHOOSE THREE: ENGINEERING, TINKERING, BIOLOGY, MEDICINE, TECHNOLOGY), PERCEPTION 1, STRENGTH 0, WILLPOWER 4 (COURAGE)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
12	5	10	0

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
KNIFE	+0	1d6
MAKESHIFT WEAPON	+0	1d6-1

SPECIAL FEATURES

TALENTS: Expertise (Choose one Intelligence focus, Expert)

EQUIPMENT: weak makeshift weapon (random medical implement), some have knives

THREAT: MINOR

DIANA'S MERCENARIES

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 3 (PISTOLS, RIFLES), COMMUNICATION 1, CONSTITUTION 3 (STAMINA), DEXTERITY 2, FIGHTING 2 (BRAWLING), INTELLIGENCE 1, PERCEPTION 1 (HEARING), STRENGTH 2, WILLPOWER 2 (COURAGE)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
12	23	12	5

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
KNIFE	+2	1d6+2
PISTOL	+5	2d6+1
RIFLE	+5	3d6+1

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Covering Fire, Group Tactics, Skirmish, Short Burst, Strafe, Take Cover

TALENTS: Command (Novice), Rifle or Pistol Style (Expert), Tactical Awareness (Expert)

EQUIPMENT: light body armor, pistol, rifle, knife

THREAT: MINOR

KAZI ANAND

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 1 (PISTOL), COMMUNICATION 4, CONSTITUTION 0, DEXTERITY 2, FIGHTING 1, INTELLIGENCE 3, PERCEPTION 1, STRENGTH 0, WILLPOWER 1

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
12	5	10	0

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
PISTOL	+1	2d6+1
UNARMED	+1	1d3

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Cover Your Tracks, It wasn't Me, Take Cover

TALENTS: Carousing (Master), Improvisation (Expert)

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, pistol

THREAT: MODERATE

OPA (THE FREE FOOLS)

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 2 (PISTOLS, THROWING), **COMMUNICATION 2**, **CONSTITUTION 1**, **DEXTERITY 2** (FREE-FALL, SABOTAGE), **FIGHTING 2** (BRAWLING, LIGHT WEAPONS), **INTELLIGENCE 0**, **PERCEPTION 1**, **STRENGTH 2** (INTIMIDATION), **WILLPOWER 1**

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
12	15	12	3

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
PISTOL	+3	2D6+1
UNARMED	+3	1D3+2

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Adrenaline Rush, Double-Team, Whatever's Handy

TALENTS: Contacts (Novice), Finger (Expert)

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal, light armor, pistol

THREAT: MODERATE

PROTOMOLECULE INFECTED

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 0, **-COMMUNICATION 2**, **CONSTITUTION 5**, **DEXTERITY -2**, **FIGHTING 1**, **INTELLIGENCE -2**, **PERCEPTION -1** (SEARCHING), **STRENGTH 4**, **WILLPOWER 2**

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	20	11	6

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
BITE	+3	1D6+3
UNARMED STRIKE	+3	1D6+8

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Grapple, Skirmish

BURST OF SPEED: When an infected takes a Run action it moves five times its Speed, rather than double.

REGENERATION: The infected recovers quickly from any damage that bypasses Toughness. At the start of each of its turns, roll a die for SP for a special stunt: the infected can remove an injured condition (3 SP), remove a wounded condition (4 SP), or recover Fortune Points for every 2 SP spent in any combination. The infected cannot regenerate on the round immediately after taking burning damage, such as from acid or fire.

TALENTS: Grappling Style (Novice), Overwhelm Style (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: None

THREAT: MODERATE

SEBASTIAN POPE

Sebastian Pope was born fifty years ago to a family of means on Earth in the city of London where he attended the best schools. After graduating from university, he took over his ailing father's business, Pope Investments. Pope was a financial genius and in under a decade he multiplied the wealth of his father's small investment firm many times over, using the money to invest in new companies. Within ten years he was one of the most powerful business magnates in the solar system.

Despite being consumed with his businesses and growing his wealth and power, Sebastian Pope was a dreamer. From the time he was a young boy his greatest pleasure was staring up at the stars and daydreaming of visiting another world. He was an avid reader of science fiction and speculative science manuals, especially anything dealing with alien worlds. This dream stayed with him throughout his life, and having attained an incredible fortune he set his sights on attaining his dream—before he died, he would walk on a distant world in another solar system.

when he turned 18, knowing in his heart that he would never have any desire to visit Earth.

The moon, Lovell City in particular, is filled with people of great wealth who tend to think the rules don't apply to them. Security in Lovell City spaceport is alert for illegal items being smuggled in, but Kazi has the knowledge and connections to make sure the right items find their way to the right people for the right price.

Kazi maintains a "day job" as a dock worker, loading and unloading cargo, an occupation that puts him in the perfect position to smuggle goods on and off the station. He also maintains a wide network of well-bribed station personnel: low-level security guards, customs officials, and others who can turn a blind eye when he needs a package to make it through without being inspected too closely.



OPA (THE FREE FOOLS)

The Free Fools are a group of the Voltaire Collective who believe in getting things done, no matter the cost. "We must tend our garden," is their credo and they stick to this in their words and actions. They do not intend to stand around and wait for politicians to make life better for the Belters, they are going to do it themselves. This particular group got wind of a sample of the protomolecule on the loose during **Breaking the Surface** and they have popped up time and time again as a foil to the PCs. This is their last desperate bid to get hold of the protomolecule.

PROTOMOLECULE INFECTED

Fortunately for the PCs these are not the monstrous Project Caliban Hybrids created by Jules-Pierre Mao, but rather humans infected with the protomolecule as test subjects for Pope's hibernation and life-extension experiments. They are more controlled than randomly-infected "vomit zombies," but less dangerous than hybrids designed as living weapons. Most of the infected have been kept in stasis and have just been released by Vector Securities as a last-ditch effort to kill the player characters. They are still recognizable as human beings—it's even possible to ID the person they were before infection—but their eyes glow with a sickly blue light, and pulses of light are sometimes visible beneath their skin, especially when active. They no longer maintain any sense of self and seek to take out their pain and anger on any living thing around them.

For the past few years, Pope has diverted vast portions of his enormous wealth and power toward devising a means of attaining his dream. With the only possible means of travel between the stars being generation ships such as the Navoo, he decided his best bet was to come up with a viable means of suspended animation or cryo-sleep. This would allow his body to lie in stasis while he traveled the immense distance between the stars, ultimately allowing



him to wake under a distant sun. Pope's most recent endeavor was illegally using human test subjects to try and come up with a successful means of suspended animation, as detailed in *To Sleep, Perchance to Dream* in *The Expanse* Roleplaying Game core rulebook. The Eros incident occurred shortly before the destruction of his illegal laboratory on Herculina, and Pope diverted his attention to learning about the protomolecule—and trying to get hold of a sample. He suspected, correctly, there had to be more of the protomolecule out there somewhere, and after learning about its effects on the human body he desperately hoped to find another. He sent out feelers, filtered research data, and monitored whatever communications he could...just in case. *Abzu's Bounty* begins with Pope learning about a recent find of a strange mineral that he suspects is the protomolecule and his subsequent actions to obtain it.

Sebastian Pope owns numerous holdings, most through his umbrella company: Pope Enterprises. These include Vector Security and Pope-Sanchez Shipping. He has devoted massive quantities of his wealth and resources to his secret project, so much so that he has had to leverage quite a bit of his business interests. In short, he is running out of time. If he doesn't have a breakthrough soon, someone is going to notice many of his companies have been gutted for their resources and all hell is going to break loose. He's getting desperate, and desperate men make mistakes.

Pope spends most of his time at his family estates on Earth. He isn't exactly hands-on in his business dealings, but checks in regularly with his leading CEOs and scientists. He is currently single. Although he has been married twice, neither of his partners could deal with Pope's obsession. These days, most of his focus is on medical research concerning the protomolecule. His scientists have informed him that not only might it be possible to modify the protomolecule to induce a form of hibernation, but it might in fact lead to a breakthrough in human immortality.

VECTOR SECURITY, ELITE

These are the elite members of Vector Security. They are the best-of-the-best and just a little stronger, faster, and more skilled than their counterparts the crew have encountered in previous adventures. A single elite can probably hold their own against any but the most combat-focused player character.

SEBASTIAN POPE

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 0, **COMMUNICATION** 4 (BARGAINING, ETIQUETTE, LEADERSHIP), **CONSTITUTION** 1, **DEXTERITY** 0, **-FIGHTING** 1, **INTELLIGENCE** 4 (BUSINESS, CURRENT AFFAIRS, EVALUATION, LAW), **PERCEPTION** 1 (EMPATHY), **-STRENGTH** 1, **WILLPOWER** 3

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
10	20	10	1
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
UNARMED	+0	1D3-1	

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Take Cover

TALENTS: Contacts (Master), Executive (Master), Expertise: Business (Master), Intrigue (Master),

EQUIPMENT: hand terminal

THREAT: MAJOR

VECTOR SECURITY, ELITE

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 3 (PISTOLS, RIFLES), **COMMUNICATION** 2 (INVESTIGATION), **CONSTITUTION** 2, **DEXTERITY** 1 (STEALTH) **FIGHTING** 3 (BRAWL, GRAPPLE, WEAPON), **INTELLIGENCE** 0, **PERCEPTION** 1 (SEARCHING), **STRENGTH** 2, **WILLPOWER** 2 (COURAGE)

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
12	22	12	5
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
CLUB	+2	1D6+1	
KNIFE	+2	1D6+2	
PISTOL	+4	2D6+1	

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Guardian Angel, Short Burst, Skirmish

TALENTS: Fringer (Novice), Quick Reflexes (Novice)

EQUIPMENT: club, knife, pistol, light body armor

THREAT: MODERATE



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