

CEPHEUS JOURNAL

Issue #012

In this issue:

Socially Unacceptable

Medivac!

Disease

Physician Career

And More...



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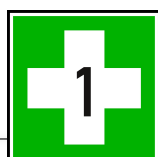
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From The Editors

Welcome to our twelfth issue. The theme for this issue is medical. We hope that you will enjoy it.

Sickness, illness, disease, injury and medication are often a part of our every day lives, and your characters should have the likelihood of going through some of the things your players have had.

If you have any sort of combat in your games then your characters will have injuries, both minor and major, needing meds or even surgery. This issue is going to explore this theme and open up ideas you can try in your games.

Kicking off the articles is Socially Unacceptable by Jo Jaquinta, and exploration of a leprosy like disease that can plague (literally) your characters. Nicole Beach then explores various diseases and how they can affect your characters.

Medivac by Timothy Collinson is a short adventure that was originally written as an Amber Zone entry, with the players attempting to escape a world after an injury occurs, rewritten for Cepheus Deluxe. We also have an adventure seed called Deliver Medicine from our own P-O Bergstedt, who has also been busy creating art for this issue using MidJourney.

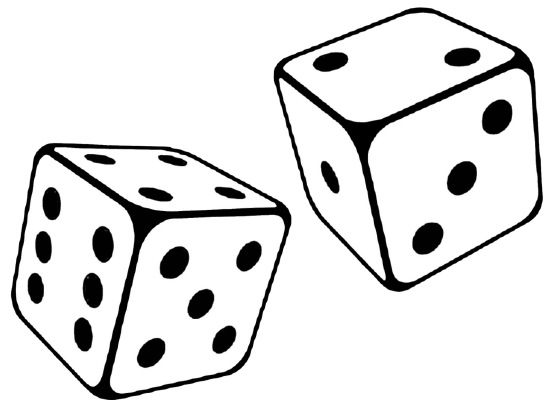
Rounding out the medical articles I've written up the Physician Career for Cepheus Deluxe. Also in this issue Jo Jaquinta gives intrigue on the frozen world of Polhishe, as well as part 6 of his Raider's Lament.

David McIntyre gives the Hospitality Career for the Clement Sector, while Neil Lucock rounds out the issue with a good look at idiot NPCs and how to play them.

Due to illness, work and vacations it's taken four months for our editorial team to get this issue out, hopefully we can return to our two month cycle for issue 13.

As always, dig in, roll those dice and have fun reading/playing!

Brett Kruger



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Socially Unacceptable

or The Case for Leprosy By Jo Jaquinta

In many settings and campaigns, disease plays no role. Either magic can cure it, technology has solved it, or the players have the knowledge to avoid it. Yet there has been much human drama historically over the contagion, suffering, and fear of disease. There are many rich plot lines and inspiration that can be used if disease exists as a factor in your game.

It is all very well for there to be magical or technological disease cures. There are a lot of less-interesting aspects of having disease around that don't add much to a game. So, in order to strategically use disease as an element, it needs to be a special disease. One that, very specifically, is not curable by elements within the game.

The actual disease can be a hyper-active form of cancer, replicating rogue nanobots, a self-replicating curse, or something more imaginative. For the purpose of this article, we will call it "leprosy".



In the modern world, leprosy carries a lot of cultural baggage which very succinctly communicates exactly the sort of fear and dread you wish to inspire in your characters. We are not simply creating game mechanics for the various diseases that have been called leprosy in the real world. We are just borrowing that name and applying it to a concept.

So, let's look at some aspects that such a disease needs to have, and ways it can be used in a game.

Aspects of the Disease

Symptoms.

Classical leprosy is a progressive skin disease, with lighter patches spreading over time. The exact manifestation you choose isn't important. What is important is that the symptoms are clear and obvious to anyone observing the person. It should be hard to hide, and hard to deny once examined or revealed.

Progression.

This is not a fast or immediately debilitating disease. It can take years, or even a lifetime to progress to the point of actually killing someone. It should have some sort of progressive effect, such as tiredness, weakness, an impact on the ability to use magic, or extreme sensitivity to exposure to radiation (such as sunlight or in space). Extremities may wither, lose function, or be prone to infection. It does not, however, affect the mental faculties. A person's body may be decaying around them, but they are perfectly cognizant.

Transmission.

Leprosy is transmittable by close association or contact. But it is not easily transmittable. Since the effects are so



calamitous, many people behave as if it is. After an adventure where someone has been around a person with leprosy in anything less than a hazmat suit, they should roll 2D. If they roll snake-eyes (2), then they have contracted leprosy. (Note: a referee may wish to have the player roll one dice, and they will roll the other dice secretly. It may take months or years for the disease to manifest. So having the player suspect, but not be sure, may provide an interesting campaign element.)

The Leper

Anyone with leprosy automatically has a Social Standing of 0. It doesn't matter what [it] was before. Lepers occupy the lowest possible social rung in any society. In many places anyone who contracts leprosy is considered legally dead. All goods, property, and relations are forfeit.

Most societies require those with leprosy to wear obvious tokens, dress in expected clothes, or otherwise broadcast to those around them that they are lepers. Failure to do so is considered a severe public health crime and is draconically punished.

Most people shun lepers. Even those who know, intellectually, the low transmission rate, are highly likely to avoid any contact or interaction. More superstitious cultures consider those with leprosy to be damned by the gods and will have rituals and fetishes to protect against even the sight of lepers.

As such, there are very few jobs that a leper can perform. Nobody wants to be near them. Nobody wants anything they've touched. Most lepers have to subsist on charity. This is rarely regular, and more lepers die of malnutrition, neglect or depression than from their disease.

Leper Colonies

Because of the universal ostracization of lepers, their only real sense of community is to gather together in their own groups. Wherever they came from before, they are all lepers now. Those who have suffered for a long time can help those who have just contracted it, adjust, mitigate symptoms, and provide some solace to the social distancing they've had to suffer.

It also makes it easier for the societies that lepers exist in if they can shuffle anyone with leprosy into one place. In many places there is a balance between charity towards lepers as an act of generosity, and charity towards them as an act of containment. If just enough food and goods are provided to a group of lepers to discourage them from roaming and seeking their own fortune, then there is less for everyone else to worry about.

Some leper colonies have their own token coinage, as anyone outside will refuse to handle money touched by a leper. This allows for basic commerce to take place. Often a religious order will handle the interface layer between the colony and the outside world. These may be holy people doing it for charity, or they may be less scrupulous, doing it for attention.





Adventure Hooks

The existence of an incurable disease can be an interesting background element of a game. It can add depth and color to the society you are creating, without ever actually being plot relevant. However, it is an interesting tool to be used when crafting adventures in your world. We outline a couple of ways here to consider.

The Informant

A highly placed member of society from a number of years ago contracted leprosy. They were subsequently stripped of all titles, wealth, and property. There was even a funeral held for them, and they have hardly been mentioned since. (Social elites don't like to be reminded that they are mortal!)

Present day, in whatever mystery the players have been investigating, there is a key and crucial piece of information they need to solve the puzzle. Unfortunately, it appears to be irrevocably lost, until one of their last leads mentions they know someone who would know that, but they are dead.

They then explain that they only mean "dead" in the legal sense, and they reveal the informant contracted leprosy. Last known they had been exiled to a nearby leper colony, and they may still be alive.

The players can seek out the leper colony, navigate their way to an audience, and make contact with their informant. Although physically deteriorated, they are all there mentally, and can remember the exact information the players need. They no longer care about the political repercussions, since no one else cares about them. Even money is mostly meaningless in their new life. All they ask for is some creature comforts that are hard to come by in the leper colony.

The Curse

To accomplish some great deed, a player must undergo a curse. Perhaps it comes with wielding a great artifact, or dispelling the magic guarding a fabulous horde, or the price from some villain in exchange for a valuable piece of information. Whatever the campaign needs that requires a great sacrifice.

The curse is, of course, leprosy. The player can know in advance, so they have a difficult decision to wrestle with. (Or a difficult choice between the players as to who will be cursed.) Or you can just telegraph that it's something horrific they can't imagine. The important part is that an incurable disease that results in ostracism is a real penalty that afflicts characters in a much more visceral way than a simple game mechanic like "-1 on all stats".

Because the disease only progresses slowly, it isn't the sort of thing that will have an instant deleterious effect on them. And their compatriots probably won't treat them any differently. But, over time, as the visible effects become more obvious, anyone they come into contact with will react accordingly. And, of course, compatriots will have to start rolling monthly to see if they contract it!

The Disguise

To enact some caper, the players have to infiltrate somewhere. They may come up with the idea, or someone might suggest to them that they might dress as a leper. They have a characteristic dress, and a characteristic complexion. It's not a hard disguise.

Wherever they go, people take note, but not too closely. Certainly no one is going to ask for ID! Neither are they likely to be physically ejected from any location. Ranged weapons may be threatened,



but they are unlikely to want to deal with the problem of having to dispose of a leprous body. Most likely the security guard who drew the short straw will be volunteered to yell at them from a distance or try to bribe them to leave with some form of charity.

Although their identity might be preserved, the attention might make it difficult to accomplish their goal. Unless, of course, their goal is to be a distraction! A particularly bold character might co-opt an actual group of lepers and take a chance of not contracting it.

For an interesting turn on things, the characters might find themselves infiltrated under the guise of a group of lepers.

The Cure

The whole role of leprosy in the campaign is that it is a disease that cannot be cured. But players are often tasked with achieving the impossible. Much like acquiring a rare artifact, or priceless cargo, such a cure should be the culmination of a long, arduous quest. And, like many such things, several side quests might be involved to get various ingredients, elixirs, please niche gods, or sequence rare plants with unique genomes. All required for the solution.

The cure itself should probably be such that it is only effective for the one individual concerned. Unless you've had your fun and are happy to banish leprosy from your campaign, then it can be a revolutionary new approach that can cure anyone. Or, as a variation of The Curse, the "cure" might be to transfer the leprosy from one person to another.

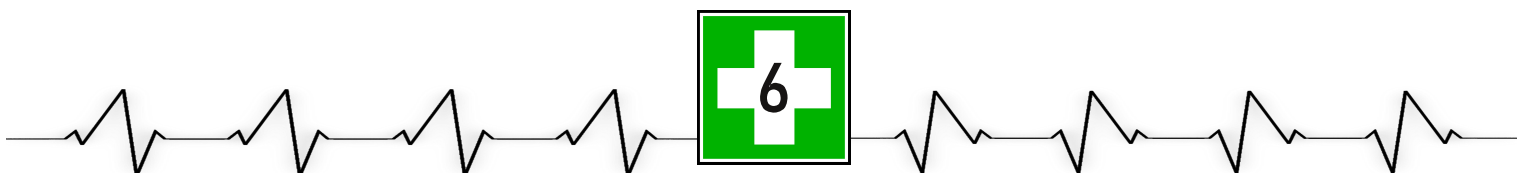
Convenient Disposal

Anyone contracting leprosy is damned to a life apart from society. Anything touched by a leper becomes something that no one ever wants to touch again...

Inventive players may find ways to use this to their advantage. If there is a difficult succession with war brewing over it, or a dangerous rebel stirring up the countryside, it would really, really, be just too bad if they contracted leprosy. Kind of a very macabre version of "get thee to a nunnery!"

Similarly, if there is a McGuffin that everyone is fighting over, a finely crafted sword, or stunning piece of artwork, and it is handed off to a leper, that may drastically reduce its potential. Of course, such could be sterilized, blessed, or otherwise rid of the disease. But given the stigma around lepers, all will look on it with much distrust.

And, as a turnabout, the referee might consider doing this to their players. Just as they are closing in on that long sought after quest item, it ends up in the hands of a leper. What risks are they really ready to take?





Disease in Sci-Fi Games

By Nicole Beach

There are 6 levels of Disease that can be encountered.

First roll for the environment the party/character is in to determine the Environment modifier to apply to the Disease Severity roll.

Environment Mod:

Arctic	-2
Clear	0
Desert	-2
Forest/Woods	0
Jungle/ Rainforest	+2
Open Ocean	-3
Plain/Prairie/ Temperate	-1
Savannah	-1
Swamp	+3

To determine the Disease Severity Level, roll 1d6 + Environment Mod.

1. – Severity Level 1
2. – Severity Level 2
3. – Severity Level 3
4. – Severity Level 4
5. – Severity Level 5
6. – Severity Level 6

All forms of treatment will require access to a variety of drugs and medical equipment.

Severity Level 1:

Description:	Minor illness. Similar to a cold or hay fever
Incubation Time:	2d6 Days
Contagious:	Yes. Roll 1d6: 1 - Yes 2 - 6 No
Possible Symptoms:	Headaches, Itchy eyes, Runny nose
Damage Done:	-1 Str for Recovery Time
Can it be Treated:	Yes
Skill Required to Treat:	Medical-0
Effects of Medical Treatment:	Recovery Time reduced to 1 hour
Recover Time w/o Treatment:	1d6-End Mod in Days Possibility of Death: N/A





Severity Level 2:

Description:	Minor illness. Similar to the Flu
Incubation Time:	2d6-3 Days
Contagious:	Yes. Roll 1d6: 1 – 2 Yes 3 – 6 No
Possible Symptoms:	Headaches, Itchy eyes, Runny nose, Joint aches
Damage Done:	-1 Str for Recovery Time -1 End for Recovery Time
Can it be Treated:	Yes
Skill Required to Treat:	Medical-0
Effects of Medical Treatment:	Recovery Time reduced to 3 hours
Recover Time w/o Treatment:	1d6 Days Possibility of Death: 3 on 3d6

Severity Level 3:

Description:	Illness. Similar to Covid, or Sars
Incubation Time:	1d6 Days
Contagious:	Yes. Roll 1d6: 1 – 2 Yes 3 – 6 No
Possible Symptoms:	Headaches, Itchy eyes, Runny nose, Joint aches Difficulty in breathing
Damage Done:	-2 Str for Recovery Time -2 End for Recovery Time
Can it be Treated:	Yes
Skill Required to Treat:	Medical-1
Effects of Medical Treatment:	Recovery Time reduced to 3 days
Recover Time w/o Treatment:	2d6+3 days Possibility of Death: 3 to 5 on 3d6

Severity Level 4:

Description:	Illness. Similar to Yellow Fever or Hantavirus
Incubation Time:	1d6-2 Days
Contagious:	Yes. Roll 1d6: 1 – 3 Yes 4 – 6 No
Possible Symptoms:	Headaches, Itchy eyes, Runny nose, Joint aches Difficulty in breathing Rash/Visible blemishes
Damage Done:	-3 Str for Recovery Time -3 End for Recovery Time
Can it be Treated:	Yes
Skill Required to Treat:	Medical-1
Effects of Medical Treatment:	Recovery Time reduced to 7 days
Recover Time w/o Treatment:	2d6+7 days Possibility of Death: 3 to 5 on 3d6





Severity Level 5:

Description:	Illness. Similar to Smallpox, Black Plague
Incubation Time:	3 Days
Contagious:	Yes. Roll 1d6: 1 – 5 Yes 6 No
Possible Symptoms:	Headaches, Itchy eyes, Runny nose, Joint aches Difficulty in breathing Bleeding from eyes, ears Rash/Visible blemishes
Damage Done:	-3 Str for Recovery Time -4 End for Recovery Time -2 Int for Recovery Time
Can it be Treated:	Yes
Skill Required to Treat:	Medical-2
Effects of Medical Treatment:	Recovery Time reduced to 10 days
Recover Time w/o Treatment:	3d6+2 days Possibility of Death: 3 to 13 on 3d6

Severity Level 6:

Description:	Illness. Similar to Ebola
Incubation Time:	1 Days
Contagious:	Yes. Roll 1d6: 1 – 5 Yes 6 No
Possible Symptoms:	Headaches, Itchy eyes, Runny nose, Joint aches Difficulty in breathing, Bleeding from eyes, ears Rash/Visible blemishes
Damage Done:	Organ Damage -5 Str for Recovery Time -6 End for Recovery Time -2 Int for Recovery Time
Can it be Treated:	Yes
Skill Required to Treat:	Medical-2
Effects of Medical Treatment:	Recovery Time reduced to 14 days
Recover Time w/o Treatment:	5d6+2 days Possibility of Death: 3 to 15 on 3d6



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Polhishe

By Jo Jaquinta

"It's a bitch of a world. Covered in ice but for a few hot spots deep down. The ice melts and gasses out these long tunnels.

Phols. At the right depth there is a reasonable air pressure. They are too deep for bombardment and impossible to storm so they've kept their independence.

They're mostly full of criminals and malcontents. They spend too much time fighting one another for Polhishe to be a problem that anyone wants to deal with anytime soon." – The Chief, Raider's Lament

The mainworld of a star system is the place of commerce, contact, population, government... in short, civilization. However, every star system is vast, with bodies too remote or worthless to be of much interest to anyone. Or anyone with honest intentions.

The world of Polhishe is a world for people without honest intentions. It's designed to be a simple drop in that you can place in almost any setting or campaign. It's a lump of ice that can be an outer moon of a giant, a rogue in a planetoid field, the leftover flotsam at the edge of a system, or even in the Oort cloud. It is up to you and the necessities of your campaign.

The important thing, plot wise, is that it is a world of no great resources, but whose geography makes it hard to own or hold. This it can exist, largely independent and removed from the larger politics of your game world. This, of course, makes it a great setting for all sorts of plot points of an adventure.

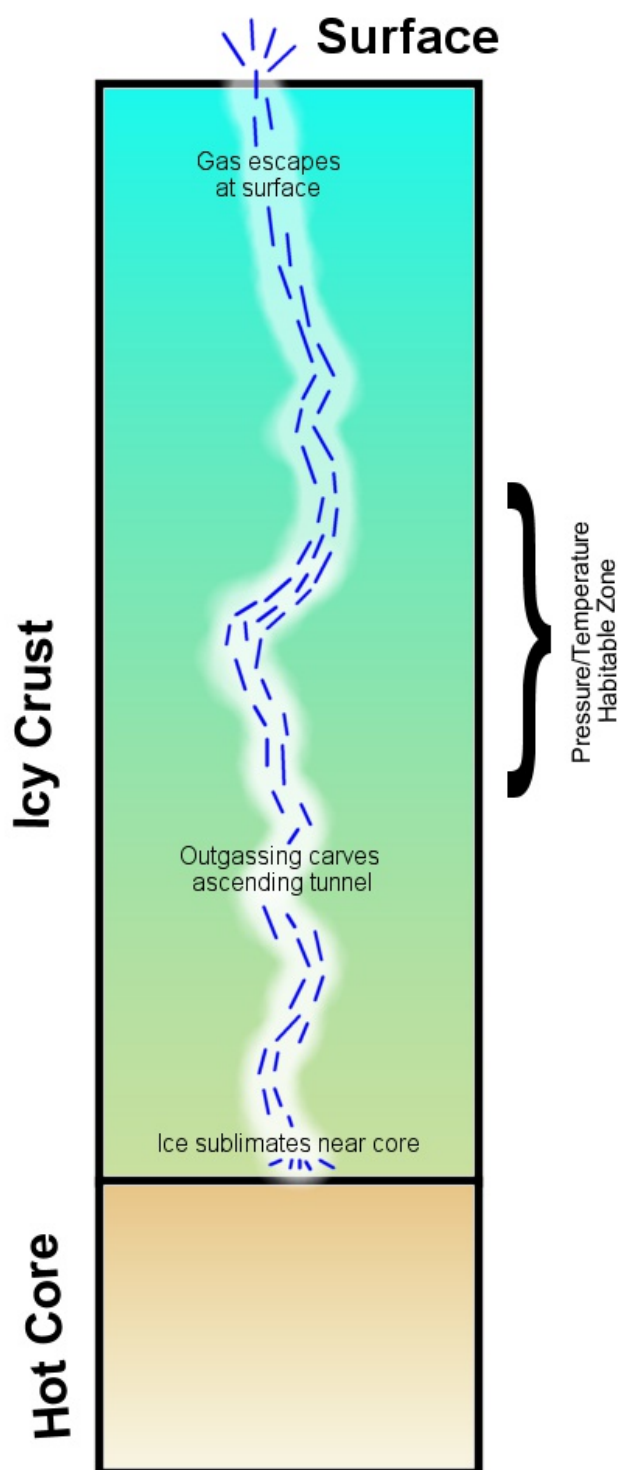
Geography

Polhishe is a small to medium sized body, largely composed of ices. It's a leftover remanent of planet formation that might have been a garden world, but for capricious nature which left it in a far orbit where the bulk of what would have been its atmosphere froze solid.

The rocky core of the planet still retains the heat of its collapse. Some places are more conductive of heat than others, and there the temperature along the solid/ice boundary raises high enough for the frozen atmosphere to sublime back to gaseous form. The pressure then pushes this through the crust, exploiting weaknesses, broadening cracks, or melting its way through. Eventually it reaches the surface and is released. Some of it re-freezes and falls as snow in the further reaches of the planet, much of it escapes into space, free of the planet at last.

The twisting passages creating by the outgassing elements are called "phols" by the natives. They follow a torturous route through the crust, following weak points, but also changing over time like meanders in a river. The gas cools as it rises, and the pressure changes over the course of the route depending on how constricted the passage is. But in many phols there is a point where the pressure and temperature are close enough to allow for human habitation without a heavy requirement for environmental supplements.

It's never pleasant. The temperature at no point is above freezing, otherwise the ices would melt. The pressure fluctuates a lot, and a bad meander can threaten a



Society

The buffeting winds and twisting passages of the phol aren't navigable without specialist knowledge. That and the several kilometers of crust above them make in a difficult process to bring any sort of force, short of meson guns, against the phols. Their relative paucity of resources hasn't made it worthwhile for any polity to do so. And, so, the phols can generally operate independent of any law or government which may surround the space around them.

By and large, the best armed and most aggressive do the best in each phol. The worst of them are in complete anarchy. But most have fairly settled dependency hierarchies within them. These are rarely stable in the long term. So, even though the short term is usually static, different elements are always ready to exploit an advantage to change how things are run.

From the outside, it appears as gangs of armed criminals extorting people and fighting each other. But it is more nuanced than that. Food, energy, air and maintenance are all things that require expertise other than bullying to produce and are as essential as force projection. A batch of bad food, equipment that faults at a critical time, or a badly timed power outage can unseat any would-be absolute dictator. So, the power struggles take place on many levels. The result is a web of critical dependencies that bind all members of society in complicated ways. Most large changes are due to cascading effects from the unexpected consequences of small perturbations.

Industry

Polhishe has no great stock of resources. It has barely enough to keep itself going at a sustainable level. The raw industry that exists is almost entirely for home

whole settlement. But the temperature differentials allow for thermoelectric energy generation almost anywhere. And the ice itself contains sufficient trace minerals and water for hydroponics. So, life may not thrive, but it can exist.





consumption. Rare goods, and especially high-tech consumables, need to be imported.

What Polhishe does have is a willingness to ignore any laws or the area it is in. Breaking a sealed cargo canister because it might incur criminal penalties is irrelevant to them. Copying software, duplicating engineering diagrams, creating genetic duplicates, or minting coinage are all considered reasonable activities. Because of this there is a class of experts with specialized skills in things that are illegal in most other places.

Another profitable local activity is the transshipment of goods. There is no such concept as contraband. Throughout space there are goods traded airlock to airlock. Those are still subject to local law, even though they may be hard to trace, and there has to be a degree of trust and knowledge between the sides. Exchanging goods on Polhishe means the parties need know less about each other, which is better for that transaction. And, if the goods are stored for a time, they need never meet at all. Everything can be brokered through third parties.

An unusual type of transshipment is that of people. Not necessarily slaves (although they don't have much of a problem with that). But there are always people who need to get away from the authorities. Either for a time, or for good. Criminal networks outside of Polhishe who use it for business, also find it a safe destination for people when they get too hot. Some are temporary guests. Others are prisoners. And some just go native and immigrate. It's not a pleasant life, what they left behind could be worse.

Commerce

The standard currency of your setting doesn't carry much weight with the natives of Polhishe. It will be accepted, but never

at good rates. Locals are far more interested in commodities that are rare, locally. There isn't a definitive list, and it changes over time and from phol to phol. Finding an insider who can alert a visitor ahead of time what is currently the hot thing there is wise. Although that information will come at a cost. You are much more likely to get a better deal offering to pay in something that is locally desired.

If, as a referee, you are looking for something more structured, one suggestion is for "computer processing units" to be the scarce supply du jour. The 386, 486 and 586 models are compatible with most current local machinery. You can assign campaign specific values to them in increasing denominations and make negotiation easier for players who don't get a thrill out of haggling for hours.

Adventuring Considerations

Almost any adventure involving Polhishe will require navigating certain obstacles. We present them here collectively, rather than scattered through the other adventure ideas.

Getting Down a Phol

The twisting tunnels carved by the outgassing winds of the phol are treacherous. High winds and sudden turns make piloting extremely difficult. The varying transparency of the ice to radar, and quickly changing pressure makes instrumental navigation difficult. Players may attempt it on their own, but they are going to have to make both piloting and navigation rolls at DM-4 each kilometer to avoid a mishap.

Each phol does have a small landing field near the top. There will be pilots here who will offer to either ferry people down into the phol, or else to pilot their ship down for someone. Ferry trips are 100Cr per person,



and piloting is 10Cr per ton of hull (max 10,000t). They also offer secured parking on the surface for 10Cr per 100t.

If they players ask about return services, they will be happy to take their money for those at a 50% discount. If the players press, they will haggle. The quoted prices are about 4x higher than what they are willing to take (and what the players can get if they make direct contact with people in the phol). One advantage of the surface pilots is they will more readily take credits rather than local commodities.

Parking

If they secure a pilot, or ferry service, they will barely be undocked before the pilot starts to offer them special rates on berths. There are many docks a ship can land in, of various sizes. But each are under the control of a different faction. Some are more honest than others. The pilot claims to know the most honest ones and can negotiate a special price. This will come in at 1-4Cr per ton of hull, but there can be much bargaining.

Similarly for a ferry, there are many landing places. As soon as they are off the deck, the players are on their own, and many visitors get jumped right after disembarking. But this pilot is an honest pilot, and definitely does not get kickbacks for delivering tourists to bad quarters. For something around 10Cr per person, they will be delivered to a brightly lit dock side with perimeter protection.

Local Guides

Wherever the players land or disembark, there will be people waiting to offer their services.

Protection of various sorts can be hired. For the equivalent of 10Cr per person they can get a badge to wear that will indicate they are under the protection of a certain

faction and are not to be messed with. That will work most place, but not everywhere. And where it doesn't work, is hard to explain to a non-native. That will lead into suggesting they hire a guide. Actual armed bodyguards cost 100Cr per day in locally needed commodities. They're there to project force, not fight on the player's behalf. If the players provoke something, or go where they aren't advised, the bodyguards feel no compulsion to save them. (Without further inducement, that is.)

Guides follow a similar spectrum. At the cheaper 10Cr/day side, they will get a com-link with a dedicated guide on the other end to act as a concierge on the other end, to explain things to them or make suggestions. For a physical guide to accompany them, that can rate up to or around 100Cr/day. They will be affable and cheerful and will do a good job at getting them much better prices than they would on their own (the cost of their kick-back included) but will hint heavily that a good tip at the end is very motivating.

Plot Hooks

The setting itself is ripe for inclusion in just about any adventure. Whenever the players need "dirty deeds, done dirt cheap", someone might tip them off to the existence of Polhishe. Once discovered they may come up with their own reasons for coming back.

Inconvenient Witness

There is nothing worse than committing the perfect crime and having an inconvenient witness. Players, caught in rash actions, often do rash things. Killing innocent bystanders often causes problems that spiral out of control, so out with the chloroform, sleep drugs, the pistol whip, and then dump the body in the low berth and worry about it later.



But then later comes. Many players fall in that ethical boundary where they don't want to kill someone in cold blood, just because they were inconvenient, but they will contemplate kidnapping them. (And if your players don't fall into that category, this plot hooks can be a "favor" someone else asks.)

Polhishe is a good place for people to disappear into. There are no immigration regulations. And if someone is dumped there, they're very unlikely to be able to get off world. Most of the essential jobs do not require specialized skills, and although the living isn't great, it isn't terrible. It can make an adventurous choice for people wrestling with an ethical problem.

Neutral Ground

If your players end up in hard ball negotiations with powerful entities, and desire to keep the discussions out of the limelight of the law or the press, Polhishe is a place to consider.

They don't exactly have great conference facilities, but for the right payment, local autocrats are willing to provide secure locations where neither side is likely to have compatriots ready to burst through the doors and add unexpected leverage to the bargaining.

It could be a hostage exchange, a under the table delivery of goods, a ransom payment, drug deal or smuggling. The locals won't care as long as they are paid something they value. And word is very unlikely to get out.

Of course, if one side or the other decides it is worth paying even more, it is also a great location for a double cross, hijacking, or assassination.

Change of Identity

Sometimes the heat gets too hot, and a name just wears out. Other times there's undercover work to be done, and a new identity is needed that's off the books.

Where there's a need, someone sees an opportunity. Whatever the authentication hardware needed, someone, at some point, has imported it to Polhishe. They have no qualms about producing extremely authentic identities for a number of authorities. Some even see it as an art form.

The particularly bold might even seek to have identities proving there are natives to Polhishe itself. It can be a convenient place to claim to be from since nothing can be verified. And it can be a good starting point for initiating an immigration process to somewhere more reputable.

Adventure Hooks

If you are looking for an adventure seed, rather than an adventure hook, a few ideas are outlined here of plots or shenanigans revolving around Polhishe.

Half Dressed

As a reward for a previous adventure, or as an unexpected find in a salvage operation, or even a random bid for the contents of a disused space locker, the players have legally acquired a suit of battledress armor. This is the ne plus ultra of armor. The pinnacle of accomplishment for any character party.

But it doesn't work.

The suit's software is locked down, and it will not obey any commands until unlocked. It could be that the last user left it that way. Or someone flubbed their engineering roll and did a factory reset on it. Or that the hardware, manufactured once, and the software, updated



regularly, are licensed differently. The software for battledress is as heavily regulated as the armor and would be nearly as costly to acquire as the original suit.

For whatever reason you choose, the players are stuck with a very impressive statue, and nothing more. While bemoaning their fortune at a local dive, a shady character, down on their luck, offers to help them, if they clear his drinking tab. (DM's choice for how big it is.)

If they do so, he will tell them about Polhishe. If they don't believe him, he'll pull up an adventure documentary on his hand-held computer. (It's exaggerated and dramatic but should be enough to confirm it is a real place.) He'll dodge any questions of why he has personal knowledge of the place, but he will give them a name: Kira Kaminska. She's excellent at facilitating people with software problems. If she's still alive.

If the players take the bait and fly off to Polhishe, they will reach their first dilemma: which phol? The drunk in the bar didn't mention one, and there are 8 to 12 of them. The landing field's pilot will be happy to look things up... for a price.

A suitable guide will be able to local Kira Kaminska, or KK as she is known locally, easily. She's old, but still alive. She'll shake her head at the player's dilemma, thinking the whole idea of locked down software is silly. She has a replacement patch for their make and model, up to date as of last year. It also has it's update subroutines hacked so that it won't bug them to update to the latest version next year. She does that for free as a point of honor.

She says she would normally charge the equivalent of 20,000Cr to hack this, but since she already has it hacked, she'll give it to them for 10,000Cr. Unless they happen to have a case of a particular brand of crème filled chocolate eggs. She's rather fond of them, and they are nearly impossible to get on Polhishe. A case is about 50Cr in a normal starport. The players may actually consider going back, getting a case, and returning, just for the steep discount!

Heir to the Throne

Years ago, in a hereditary feud between the children of a monarch, the child with less guile and connivance ended up marooned on Polhishe. It was important that they weren't killed, because lie detectors are very good, and you never know what the future may hold.

And there's the rub. The future did not turn out so well for the heir by force. They were neither luck in cards, nor lucky in love. They died, childless, after being caught cheating in a high stakes gambling game. On their death bed they repented of their misdeeds and revealed the location of the missing princess.

The players can either be agents of the crown, or a 3rd party hired by them. (A referee who wants to mix things up may have one player paid off by the Democratic resistance to turn the missing into confirming her death, rather than recovering her.) All the players know is that she was dumped on Polhishe 15 to 20 years ago.

You can play the "which phol" game, if you like, and have the players, as in the previous adventure, spend time working out which phol she was dumped in. Or you can be generous and give them the name where she was left.



Once they arrive there, they have a daunting task. There are about 10 to 20,000 people in a phol, there's no directory or index, and all they have to go on is a picture, a name, and possibly a decoded genome (for final verification).

Their looking may lead them in unexpected directions.

One person will say they recognize and remember her, as she was a good friend. However, neither of them was well off, and they had to live in the worst possible locations. Last they lived together was in a burrow that was being undermined by a meander of the phol. It collapsed while she was off shift, and she was never seen since. Her friend presumes she died. They will happily accept an honorarium for providing this information, and for further payment, will lead them to the precarious remains of the dwelling. It's somewhat dangerous to examine closely, and if they do so, and survive, and no evidence is found, her "friend" will say that bit must have fallen down the phol.

Once word gets around that they are looking for someone, they will be approached by someone who is an "expert" at finding evidence of people. They'll note all of their information, make a few calculations, and give them a rate card. From the items on the rate card, it's clear that the services they are offering are not to actually find someone, but to manufacture evidence of that person's existence, with a high enough quality to pass genetic screening. Blood-stained weapons, jewelry with evidence of long wear, or even a cremated corpse are possible, for the right price.

A long line of people may appear wherever they are staying, all claiming to be the lost princess. If they try them all, every few hours there will be one with a partial match. After a few days, the matches get better and better. If they look into it, they will find out that someone with a genetic replicator is paying off people to make the claim and spraying them down with genetic markers. As they get partial positives, they refine their fakes.



If they don't look into it, after a few more days they will find a match. The person may be completely implausible (wrong age, ethnicity, or gender) but will match.

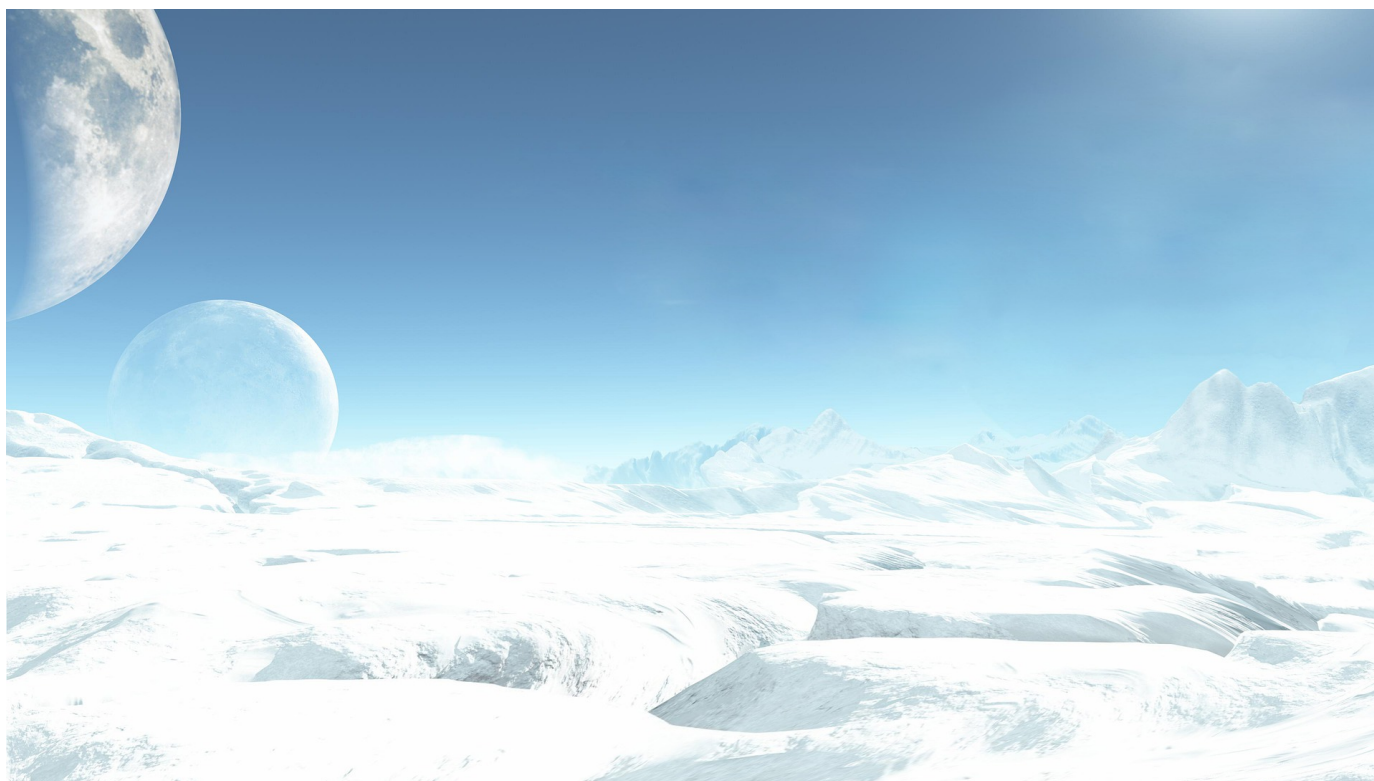
Where is the real princess? You can choose your own ending. (And make the others more red herrings!)

Ending one: Living quietly alone somewhere the princess lives her life. She's shunned by most, since they consider her a bit wrong in the head. She's given up trying to prove to people she's a princess. She does some menial job and makes enough to live on in bad accommodation. She's come to believe that she really is delusional, and thinks the characters are just making fun of her when they find her.

Ending two: Using her skill and knowledge of court intrigue, she has played the power broker on Polhishe. She has risen in the ranks and is now highly placed in a

powerful faction. She'll probably eventually haul the players in and interrogate them to find out what they are up to without revealing who she is. Maybe she'll go back and rule with the iron fist she's learned (and no few choice compatriots from Polhihe). Maybe's she'll decide she likes life better here. Maybe she'll counter-bribe the players for all they're worth to let them take a genetic sample and a letter of abdication.

Ending three: Someone comes forward with some personal items that test positive for a genetic match. The owner has died, but she did have two children. They are more than happy to leave Polhishe for a life of royal living. But it's clear they don't really like each other and there is almost certain to be another cycle of sibling warfare.





Medivac!

By Timothy Collinson

An adventure for 1-6 players on a world at tech level 3-14 and a population of 6+. A balkanized world (Government Code 7) would work well but any world where rebels or insurgents against the world's government are possible would also be an option. Cepheus Engine rules have been used (specifically Cepheus Deluxe) but this should be easy to convert to classic 2D6 roleplaying games. A slightly shorter version can be found at <https://amber.zone/2019/09/24/amber-zone-medivac/> where this adventure was first published as an Amber Zone competition entry.

The Referee should determine how off-worlders are marked as different to locals. Options include: clothing (Easy), mannerisms (Average), accent (Average), facial features (Difficult), body-morphology (Formidable) or any combination of those (Impossible) – pick or use 1D. Use the task difficulties for a Deception throw (unskilled: DM 0 instead of -3) to disguise a PC at ranges down to 5m; use one difficulty level higher for encounters closer than 5m.

Note the Law Level of the world and how the PCs are armed, if at all, outside starport environs.

Players' Information

One of the PCs has injured their little finger in cargo loading. One of those freak accidents where no one is to blame, it just got caught awkwardly. (Alternatively, the accident occurred during R&R in an aquapool on a slide, or during sports activity, or combat). At first, it simply appears to be a sprain but within 24 hours has swollen nastily and is heavily bruised.

Fortunately, it is the little finger, on the non-dominant hand and the PC isn't a concert pianist.

For best effect, treatment is required within a week to ten days although depending on the world's model of medical care this may or may not be easy to achieve particularly if other, more serious trauma cases are arriving thick and fast.

Referee's Information

Select a PC randomly, or have players make a DEX throw and take the lowest score as the 'victim'. Medicine 3 will be able to tell from the lack of pain in the palm and other indications that it's most likely broken, and treatment is required, Medicine 2 will be suspicious of this, Medicine 1 will be unsure without further tests. In fact, x-rays or scanning tech will reveal it is not only broken but requires surgery to mend. Assuming the PCs don't have access to a fully equipped surgery and a Medicine 3, DEX 8+ surgeon, then a visit to the local Accident & Emergency unit/hospital will be necessary. If one of the PCs is such a surgeon, then consider 'randomly' selecting that PC as having the injury. Also, consider their specialism. A hip specialist on duty in the Fracture Clinic may not think surgery is required at all; a hand specialist may disagree.

AT TL3-5 there's a 50% chance treatment will result in such damage that amputation is necessary, or that the only 'treatment' is strapping it to the next finger and hoping it heals with some degree of future use (DEX-1). Note that anaesthetics only appear at TL4 and can





be assumed to be primitive, risky and possibly ineffective even at TL5. At TL6-10 treatment involves a day surgery operation under general anaesthetic to repair the break with two small (2mm) pins and some soft tissue repair with a 97% chance of near full recovery (roll 2 on 2D for DEX-1). At TL11+ tissue and bone reconstruction are an hour long outpatient appointment under local anaesthetic and full recovery.

Diagnosis is by a preliminary examination, x-ray and basic strapping with referral to a Fracture Clinic and specialist review within 1D days. The Referee may extend this by another 1D days if desired as the Fracture Clinic declines to recommend the patient for local surgery due to being an off-worlder and needing to use a starport facility where essentially they will start over. The Fracture Clinic will arrange a Day Surgery date and time (TL6-10) or a hospital stay of 1D+1 days (TL3-5). Surgery and Day Surgery will involve a complete fast from food after 7am and liquids after 10am. Day Surgery will be scheduled for a morning session or an afternoon session and will involve a 1D hour(s) wait in surgical gown – most likely with other patients describing what their procedures are going to be in all too graphic detail. Referees can make as much or as little as they wish of the world having

- free health care at point of need;
- free health care at point of need but only for certain individuals (e.g. planetary inhabitants);
- pay per use health care;
- or some form of subsidized cost.

Payment, if required, may not be in cash but could be in services rendered, barter, or community service.

The Princess Iphigenia Hospital

The Princess Iphigenia Hospital, known locally as Pee Eye, is a general hospital serving around half a million sophonts, with

some 7000 staff, 600 volunteers, 1200 beds and 28 theatres.

The hospital is shown in an approximate plan of four of its levels which should not be considered exhaustive. Despite the simplicity of the main corridor architecture, the indicated units, wards, surgical areas and so on may be quite labyrinthine entities by themselves with their own receptions, waiting rooms, consultation rooms, curtained cubicles, offices, nursing stations, storage rooms, cleaning facilities, alcoves, etc. At TL3-5 there will only be stairs, at TL6-9 there will be stairs and lifts, at TL10-14 there will be gravlifts and possibly stairs. Assume lifts/stairs in each corner and near the end of each cross-corridor (i.e. six in total). Additionally, some may be staff only and sized for stretchers or gurneys but may not traverse all floors.

At low Law Levels with limited Government control there may be a small cadre of volunteer protection officers with access to tech level appropriate weapons.

At TL3-5 PI is a monolithic building built in the grand style

At TL6-10 PI is a ferrocrete brutalist structure that once won a design award but is now hopelessly out of fashion and aging badly

At TL11-14 PI is a sleek, glass-fronted building (and at TL14 may be a gravity hospital, constantly in motion, serving the populace where the need is greatest). At these tech levels assume Level A is the top floor of the building served by gravitic patient/visitor and emergency vehicles landing on the roof.

At tech levels beyond this, hospitals may become a thing of the past with personal and immediate care a basic sophont right.



Referees might wish to add other units as they see fit: Rheumatology, Diabetes & Endocrinology, Orthotics & Blood Tests, Dietetics & Nutrition, Neurophysiology & Urology, and Renal are just some possibilities. Higher tech level options might include cancer day treatment, nerve refusion units, cloning and genetic engineering. Lower tech levels may preclude some units or only have them with very basic facilities (e.g. Limb Regeneration as simply prosthetics).

The PCs may be able to speed or smooth the way by offering assistance with their own skills: Admin, Leadership, Medicine or perhaps even Deception or Liaison. Science type skills in the life sciences should probably count as negative DMs on interactions as medical staff feel their professionalism is being questioned or impugned. Fighting their way through The System will be hampered by two complications. One minor, one major.

It's Complicated

The first is that on this world, medical staff are divided into Guilds (TL3-5), Divisions (TL6-10) or Cohorts (TL11-14). Surgeons, anaesthetists, nursing staff, radiologists, service staff are all very clearly demarcated by any or all of dress, badges, language (i.e., jargon), even when socialising outside the hospital. Unfortunately, at PI relationships have broken down between these groups and they're barely functioning, never mind being a smooth-running entity. Pay structures are complicated and surgeons begrudge cleaners being paid more in certain circumstances, trade union talks have broken down and news media is getting wind of the near total breakdown of staff relations and are beginning to ask questions. Recovery rates for patients are at rock bottom. A Difficult SOC roll may allow the PC to avoid much of the game

playing and obstruction that is going on. Note the Effect for a later task. Spectacular Success will result in the PC being treated like nobility – perhaps they are a noble (SOC 11+). Spectacular Failure will result in the PC at the back of every queue, spoken to quite rudely, and dealt with peremptorily.

The second complication is that either forces from a neighbouring polity on a balkanized world, or rebels on a unified government world have decided that this is the moment to make their move in terms of starting a war or making a stand to gain whatever objectives they may have. They've chosen PI as a strategic target to take and hold. Perhaps there's a comms tower on the roof to enhance this value (TL3-5 heliograph or semaphore telegraph tower, TL6-10 radio mast, TL11-14 satellite substation). Any local protection cadre will be overwhelmed or only able to hold out in pockets.

The opponents may be attacking other targets in the city or surrounding territory as well. The Referee can determine when this attack takes place in relation to the PC's progress to mend their finger or can use the table below.

1D. PC situation

1. A&E visit
2. Fracture Clinic
3. Day Surgery waiting room
4. Day Surgery
5. Day Surgery recovery
6. 2-week follow-up examination

If this is not being run as a solo adventure with one Referee and one Player, the other PCs should either be visiting, waiting with, delivering/fetching the PC, or perhaps delivering food or clothing for an extended stay. The stage in the process will determine the PC's incapacity. From 1-3 the damage is still there but the hand



fairly free to function cautiously; 4 the PC will be unconscious; 5 the PC will be conscious but groggy and hand incapacitated (DEX-3); 6 the PC will have heavily bandaged hand with some limited use (DEX-2). Adjust as appropriate for other tech levels as noted in treatment descriptions.

The PCs will hear various rumours to focus their attentions. The Referee may use as many as desirable and should determine if they are true or not.

1D. Rumour

1. All off-worlders are being rounded up and shot
2. All off-worlders are being rounded up and taken for interrogation
3. All off-worlders are being rounded up and held captive
4. The troops are only looking for children
5. The troops are only looking for those with certain blood types
6. Demolitions experts have been seen in the basement

Note the location of the PCs, most obviously in the Orthopaedic & Fracture Clinic or the Day Surgery, but possibly in the restaurant, reception or one of the cafés.

Evacuate!

One of the first three rumours above should be, or if not true, at least apparently true to any direct observation by the PCs and should encourage them to aim to leave the building. They can do this via any of the Entrances but will face an Impossible task throw unless they have some means of either fighting their way out or using some subterfuge. Assume there are 50 troops, four officers and one commander somewhere in the building – mainly clustered at key points such as entrances/exits but also at key points such as the Chief Administrator's Office or the

comms controls. Assume they will be at the PC's present location within five minutes and track the time the PCs take for decisions, any negotiations with staff, and tasks. Rather than track them individually, use the following tasks:

To traverse a main corridor or move between floors using a lift without encountering opponents: Formidable (12+) DEX (1D seconds x 10).

To move between floor using a stairwell without encountering opponents: Difficult (10+) STR (1D seconds x 10).

To traverse a floor using 'inner' routes without encountering opponents: Average (8+) END (1D minutes); BUT add (or subtract) the Effect of the earlier SOC roll to reduce/increase the time if staff are helping or hindering.

Other possibly useful tasks:

To gain the assistance of staff from one guild, division or cohort: Difficult (10+) Leadership/SOC (1D minutes + 5).

To locate clothes for a disguise (or the injured PC if in gown): Easy (6+) INT (2D minutes). Time may be reduced if assisted by staff.

To create limited amount of explosives with material on hand: Easy (6+) INT or EDU (1D minutes x 2).

To create a large explosion with materials on hand: Difficult (10+) Demolitions/INT or EDU (1D minutes x 3). (This can be one task level easier if assisted by staff to find materials.)

To speak convincingly like a medic for one minute: Difficult (10+) SOC (1 minute, INT). (This can be one or even task levels easier if assisted by staff briefing, but the briefing will take twice the length of the performance).

Weapons, if required, may be taken from overpowered soldiers, taken from cadre or a hospital supply, or be the PC's own gear.

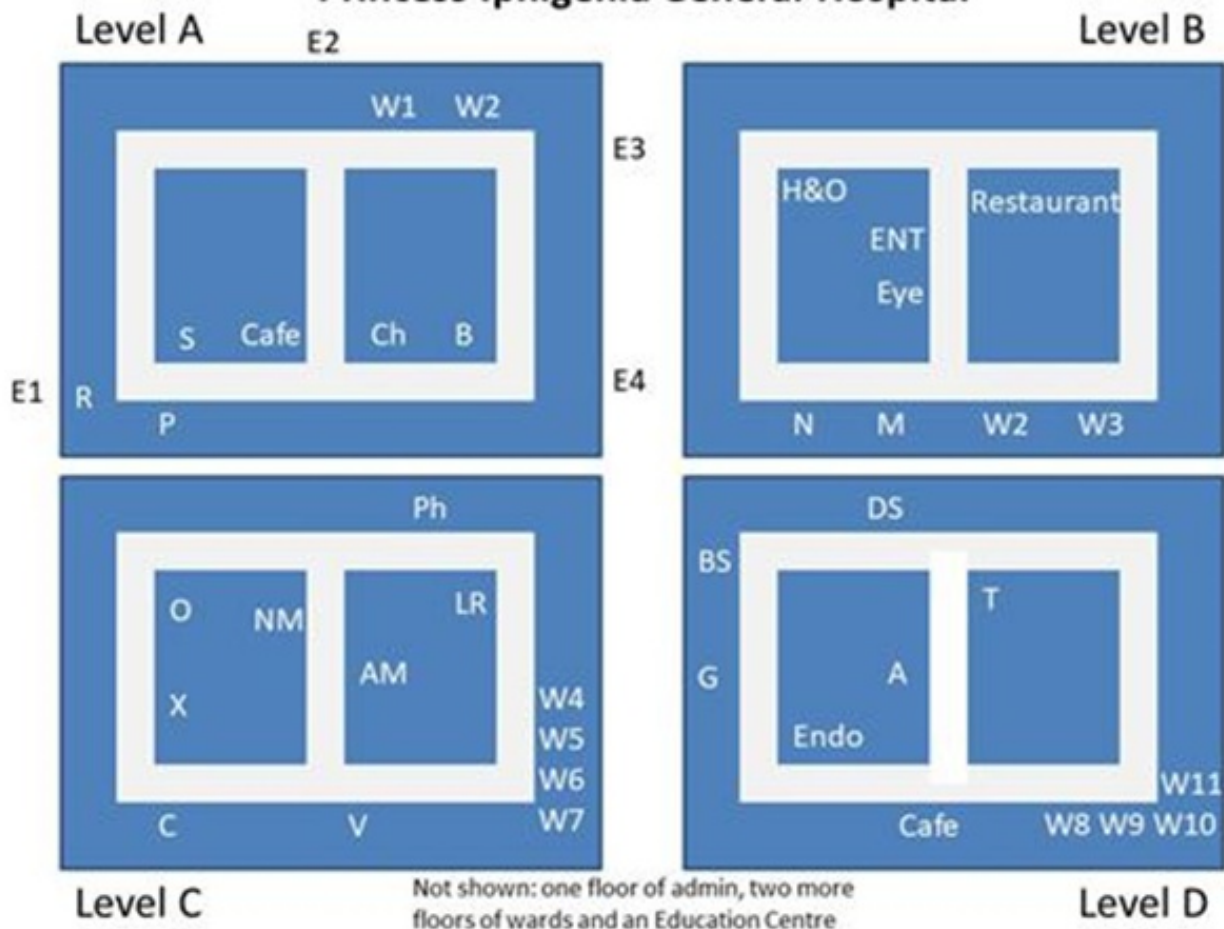


The climax of the adventure may be a fight for the exit or a tense deception. If the PCs can make it from the hospital in a vehicle or on foot, assume they can make good their escape to the starport although depending on the exact situation, there may be a heavier security presence at the starport gate. To add to

the complications and further the theme of conflict, the PCs may only have 'escaped' to face the larger reality of a looming or erupting interstellar war between neighbouring polities (e.g. the Fifth Frontier War) and need to escape the planet and/or the system.



Princess Iphigenia General Hospital



Level A

E1 Main Entrance
E2 North Entrance
E3 A&E Entrance
E4 East Ent (staff)
R Reception
S Shop
Ch Chapel
B Bereavement Services
P Pediatrics

Level C

O Orthopaedic & Fracture Clinic
X X-ray
NM Nuclear Medicine
C Cardiology
Ph Pharmacy
LR Limb Regeneration
AM Alien Medicine
V Vascular Tests

Level B

N Neonatal
M Maternity
H&O Haematology & Oncology
ENT Ear, Nose & Throat
Eye Eye Unit

Level D

BS Breast Services
G Gynaecology Outpatients
E Endoscopy
DS Day Surgery
A Audiology
T Theatres
All Floors: W Wards



Raider's Lament Part 6

By Jo Jaquinta

Chapter 8

Heleni pressed the “soft knock” button on the cabin door. She wore the Raider's Lament blazer and carried a tray of food. After a moment the entry light lit, and she went in. “Good evening, Lady Ritva,” she said, placing the tray on the nearby table. One wall of the room was lit up with a racing game set in a snow field, currently paused. “We were able to stock up on a wider range of food while at Port Newark. I hope the variety meets your approval.”

“Thank you,” she said.

“I see you like the snow games. Elise has thousands. Not to mention her own personal mods. Did she give you access to them all?”

“Yes.”

She finished arranging the dishes. “Do they remind you of your home?”

Ritva looked at her suspiciously. “They do.”

“I know you are from somewhere in the outback. But I can't place the accent.”

“You've been outside the 40 Worlds?” she asked.

“Yes, I've been lucky to travel a lot. I've lived on Pampa, Mon-Khmer, and Manokwari. Visited several more.”

“You were a scout” she asked levelly.

“Yes,” she said reluctantly. “I was.”

“Spies for the imperialists. Stealing wealth from naive peoples, undermining governments not to their liking and annexing sovereign states by force.”

“They also bring medicine, education and social justice.” Ritva didn't seem moved. “And I'm not one anymore. There were too many policies I did not agree with.”

Ritva snorted but seemed more mollified.

“Sounds like you've had some bad experiences with the outreach program.”

“Yes.” She picked at her food.

“Do you mind if I ask which is your world?” Heleni bit her lip.

Ritva stared through her for a moment. “Ukkola. It used to be called Ukkola.”

“Thank you,” said Heleni, and quietly left.

* * *

“And there is a close linguistic similarity between 'Ukkola', the indigent name of the planet and 'Eskola' the family name of Ritva's uncle,” Heleni said, almost stammering. She looked very uncomfortable standing in the captain's office, flanked by Else and the Chief. The room was rich with wood and velvet. Several bookshelves with printed books were built into the walls. “The planet is now called 'Free Fennia' and is ruled by the revolutionary council that overthrew the previous warrior aristocracy. They are recognized by the 40 Worlds. Her



animosity towards the scouts, her uncle's name, and what we know of him make it not an unreasonable scenario that he was a member of the ruling class that fled following the revolution."

"She's certainly arrogant enough," said the Chief.

"Yes," added Elise. "Normally when we step, fetch, and carry for the few passengers we've had they have the good grace to thank us and act impressed. She does not."

"Well," said Seldon. "It seems we have learned of some possibilities. No hard facts. It doesn't change our mission. But it might give us an idea as to where to keep our eyes open."

To Heleni he said, "Our job is to protect our cargo, not spy on our passengers. Another passenger who was as wary, but more aware of their rights might have lodged a complaint at your 'interrogation'." Heleni opened her mouth to protest. "Rightly or wrongly. As Captain I would be expected to terminate your contract at the next port of call."

He stood and put his hands behind his back, "But in our business, we sometimes need to protect ourselves from our customers. And knowing more about our customers, especially when they are reticent, can be illuminating." He paced across the small room. "But we're also paid for privacy. 'No questions asked.' The contract doesn't say it in so many words, but a violation of the spirit is almost as damaging to our reputation as a violation of the words would be in court." He pointed at Heleni with a finger. "It is a very fine line." The color drained slightly from her face. Seldon resumed pacing. "But today I do not think you have crossed it. We are

informed. And forewarned is forearmed." He turned back to her. "But I do want to be sure you are aware of the fineness of that line."

She swallowed heavily. "Yes sir," she said. Barely a whisper.

"Very well. You may return to your duties." She left quickly.

When the door fully closed the Chief sat in one of the chairs chuckling. "You love giving them the 3rd degree, don't you Seldon?"

Seldon turned, holding three crystal glasses and a carafe of brandy. "Anything to maintain discipline," he said, filling the three glasses.

"You always were a sadistic bastard," the Chief said fondly, lifting the glass.

"Is that envy I hear?" said Elise lifting hers. "I've seen your engineering schedules."

Seldon inhaled deeply from his glass. "So, what do you think we should do with our little problem child?"

"She's very perceptive," started Elise. "I was already on to the outback connection. But I hadn't put all the pieces together the way she had."

"That's one thing the Scouts select for: curiosity," said the Chief, taking a mouthful of the amber liquid. "That can be a good thing, or a bad thing. Sounds like she's already gone native."

"Actually, I'm quite impressed with Ms. Heleni," said Seldon, finally taking the smallest of sips. "I was referring to our erstwhile passenger, Ms. Ritva."



"I think she needs a good spanking and a shift of scrubbing the decks," said the Chief.

"A walk down the plank too, no doubt," said Elise. "One wonders if she is so embittered towards the 40 Worlds whether she is working in their interest or not."

"Are you appealing to our patriotism?" asked the Chief. "I don't have to work in the government's interest anymore."

"But we do have to work within their laws. If she is part of a deposed regime there may be a warrant out for her arrest," said Elise. "We definitely know there is one out for her uncle."

"All we know now," said Seldon, "is that she is a passenger. And that we have a shipment. I've served in the armed forces as well, but they have the benefit of a chain of command to answer difficult questions like this. We do not. It is up to our own judgment. And until we have more evidence, I'm inclined to withhold judgment."

"I'll drink to that!" said the Chief.

* * *

Wind buffeted the Raider's Lament with rocking waves of turbulence. Captain Seldon held the ship barely within the guidewires as it circled above the ice blasted surface of Polhishe. Venting from the phol blew upwards condensing into ice crystals which drifted off in radar hazing chunks. "What have you got on deep scanners?" asked Seldon.

"Too much mass to see past too many of the turns," said Heleni. Her fingers danced over the controls, trying to make sense of her readings. "It goes down. It twists.

Worse: I can't get a reading on the wind. It gets narrow in places and there's clearly a lot of buffeting."

"The local landing field keeps offering us pilot services," said Elise, monitoring communications. "8,000 talents."

"I don't think I can plot a course through this," said Heleni. "Maybe we'd better take it."

"I don't like being held ransom," said Seldon. "When there is only one bidder, the price is never good."

"Do you think you can fly through this with no course?" asked Elise. "Winging it in combat is one thing, but you can't intuit the weather."

A barest hint of aggravation crossed Seldon's face. "We could land the ship and take the dory down," said Kwok from the turret. "It's more mobile."

"That would split the crew," said Elise. Seldon nosed the ship down again into the funnel of the phol. It lurched from one side to the other and he backed it back up again and resumed circling.

"Do we have radio contact between the surface and the inhabited portions of the phol?" asked Seldon.

Elise scanned some frequencies. "I'm picking up chatter. Some interference, but not a lot. With a boost I could probably keep a carrier wave going between us and the dory."

"That won't be necessary. Just pick a few general frequencies and give me an open mic." She made a few gestures and signaled that he was on.





"This is Captain Seldon of the Raider's Lament. We are currently opening bidding for pilot services from surface to phol dock. The current high bid is 8,000 talents from the landing field on the surface. Is there anyone on this frequency with a lower bid?"

Heleni smiled. Elise started monitoring multiple channels at once. "Well that really upset the one on the landing field. But I've got other bids coming in."

"Give them ten minutes and take the best," said Seldon.

* * *

Ice crystals flew upwards as the Raider's Lament settled down onto a docking chamber carved into the side of the wide cylindrical phol. They had bargained a price down to 1600 talents, but it had taken another 500 to persuade the pilot, en route, that they did not want to dock at his cousin's dock and shipyard, they did not need his nephew's guards for the ship, nor his granddaughter's guide services.

The name they had been given of Valio Eskola's guardian did seem to garner great respect and the pilot offered, with no additional inducement, to let him know he had visitors immediately. "I'm sure he expects to be paid at the other end," said Elise to the crowded galley. With the table folded up and only half the seats deployed the entire crew could fit into the room.

"This is a dangerous place," began Seldon. "The Chief has seen action here and it wasn't pretty. It's not in the 40 Worlds and it's not in the outback. There is no law. We're going to have to be very alert and on our toes at all times." He looked around the room. "Comments?"

"Are we going to get shore leave here?" asked Vikhagen. Everyone laughed.

"I assure you, Ms. Vikhagen, that everyone will get full leave in our first port of call after this little adventure and the first round will be on me." There was a rousing chorus of cheers. "Elise, please fill us in on our status."

"An agent of Eskola has contacted us and bid us welcome. He has offered us the freedom of his complex to stay in for as long as we want. Further he offers us his protection and has made it known that we are his guests. This seems to count for something."

"From the chatter you picked up it sounds like it's not just the phols who fight one another," said Heleni.

"It's a rough port," said Juanita. "So, who is going in?"

"That's a hard choice," said Seldon. "I hate to split the crew, but I hate to leave the Lament on its own."

"I'll stay and watch the ship," volunteered Heleni.

"No, I'm afraid you've already proven yourself far too effective an observer," said Seldon. "And, besides, you don't have a pilot's training. You can't fly the ship if needs be."

"Aw crap," said Vikhagen.

"Yes, that's right. Though your bladework is to be commended, I'm afraid you are one of those who must stay aboard the ship." Kwok poked her in the ribs and laughed, to her displeasure. "Not so quick, Mr. Kwok. Your bladework is nowhere near the amount of enthusiasm you show and



without active guns there is not much this ship can do. You also get the short straw." There were cries of consternation from both Kwok and Vikhagen.

"Everyone else dress for duty and report to the armory. Ambient temperature is -40°C so dress appropriately."

"What about our passenger?" asked the Chief.

"She's already made her wishes known. Since there is no passport control on this world, we cannot stop her leaving the ship. She will be coming with us and the cargo."

"At least I'll only be babysitting one," muttered Vikhagen.

Chapter 9

The crew formed up in the cargo hold. Vikhagen and Kwok moved rapidly around people, strapping thick cloth armor over heavy clothes. Blades were strapped on over these followed by large greatcoats. "We look a right bunch of snowmen," commented the Chief, doing deep squats and checking his flexibility.

"It's a good look," said Vikhagen, barely dodging the Chief's swing.

Seldon drew his saber and returned it to his sheath repeatedly, trying to smooth out whatever small resistance he still felt. Elise was busy pinning medals, remote sensors, and two very large, very faux pistols on the outside of her greatcoat. Juanita was helping Heleni with her straps and trying to teach her how to walk with a sword.

Ritva came down the ladder in the middle of all of this. She wore a tan coat made of animal skin and lined with dense fur. Heavy knit material with more fur covered her head and hands. "At least one of us came prepared," remarked Juanita.

Seldon motioned everyone together. "I will take point. Elise is to flank me to my left and Heleni to my right. Lady Ritva, please fall in behind me. The Chief and Juanita will take either side of the cargo palette. In case of trouble draw swords and form up on the palette. Heleni and Lady Ritva are to move to the center. We will attempt to make good our escape, the rest of us forming a cordon and Heleni being responsible for Lady Ritva's personal safety. If necessary, we leave the cargo." He looked from eye to eye to get confirmations from everyone. "Don't let anyone get too close. Certainly, no closer than your blade can reach. If someone presses you stop immediately, then we all stop and deal with it."

He nodded and secured his final straps. "Vikhagen, though it fills me with trepidation, you are in charge of the ship," she let off a cheering howl. Seldon assumed a strained look. "Keep us on the monitors and see to it that we have a ship to return to." He gave Kwok a level stare, "There may be no law here, but try not to use lethal force with the anti-personnel weapons." Kwok grinned at him. "OK. To your station. Vikhagen, if you could be so kind as to man the cargo bay door."

Everyone formed up around the palette and Vikhagen powered the hatch. The temperature immediately dropped several tens of degrees and a howling wind filled every corner of the hold. They all tightened their clothes around themselves and followed Seldon down the ramp.

A small crowd of curious onlookers and hawkers stuck to the fringes of the bay. A tightly bundled person stepped out from the rest and presented herself to Seldon. They exchanged words lost to the wind and he motioned the rest to follow.



Once off the main deck, the atmosphere became much warmer. Strange cries and music echoed through the carved tunnels. Patches of ice shone through where the crude spray on insulating foam had failed. People stared at them from between mufflers and scarves. Merchants cried to them from a surprising number of shops and bazaars. Beggars asked for alms but kept clear of the burly bundled companions that had sprung up in a cordon around them.

"It's quite the market they have going here," noted Heleni.

"This isn't a black market," said Elise, "it's a black economy."

"Let's not get distracted," reminded Seldon. "We can shop later."

"And drink!" added the Chief, noting what was unmistakably a bar.

* * *

They were led to a rough hall decked in the ubiquitous insulating foam and walled in heavy fabric tapestries. A number of space heaters fueled by burning volatiles roared away in corners. A man covered in many furs sat in a large chair at one end. As they entered, he rose and met them halfway.

"Valio Eskola, may I presume?" asked Seldon.

The man did a short bow. "Captain Seldon?" Seldon returned the bow.

"May I present you with your niece." Seldon bowed, turned again, and let Ritva walk forward. They looked at each other hesitantly for a moment. Then she opened her arms and he moved forward to clasp her.

She said something formal to him in a harsh language. A moment later her voice echoed in their ears. "I bring you pardon from your brother."

"I took the liberty of pulling up translation software for Ukkola," said Elise's voice in their ears.

Valio took a step back and looked at her again. "I did not leave the family in a state of high grace," he said.

"But we wish your return to that state," she said. He smiled briefly, then signaled for chairs to be brought and hot drinks for the guests. The crew mingled together around the crate giving them an illusion of privacy.

"How is my brother?" he asked with some concern.

"He needs you," she said earnestly. "Have you had news?"

"Yes, I follow what I can read through the propaganda. The imperialists," he paused to spit, "have been celebrating a rebellion against the throne. Is he well?"

"We need an army," she said. "To take back the throne." The Chief coughed hard at this, but quickly recovered. "We need you to lead them."

He sat back and shook his head. "I haven't led an army in a long time." He waved his hands dismissively, "Just these small bands of hooligans."

"We just need a core of good fighters. The rest will rally to the brother of the King if he comes." It was Elise's turn to cough.

"They did not last time" he said levelly. There was an awkward silence.



"The fate of our people is at stake. The Imperialists wish to take our people and turn them into compliant cattle. This is not what they are. They know this and will support us."

He hesitated. "My brother asks this of me?"

"He spoke your pardon and told me to seek you."

"You cannot create an army from nothing. Our people are under their thumb and these here would not follow me to some outback world. I do not want to refuse my brother, but I do not see how I can do this."

"We did not leave the palace empty handed," she said. He looked from her to the cargo palette. "Here we have the means to raise an army to fight the invader." She smiled vengefully. He returned her smile and stood up, looking towards the crate.

"It's all there?"

"The wealth of our world," she said.

He cheered. "With that I can raise a tremendous army! The arm of the 40 Worlds may be strong, but their fingers are easily bribed." He drank deeply and started mental calculations. "Where is he? What does he hold? How many troops did he bring out with him?"

Ritva's smile vanished.

"What? Did only a few escape? No matter. Even if he had to flee the world, we can fight our way to landfall."

"He would not surrender the palace," she said.

"What are you saying?"

"He would not surrender the palace." Her eyes grew moist. "He held it until they bombarded it to slag from orbit."

"My brother is dead?"

"Yes."

"The King is dead." He dashed his mug to the ground and stamped twice.

"We must avenge him," she said.

"It is hopeless!" he cried. "Who will they rally to?"

"His last words to me were to find you and enlist your aid. He is counting on you."

"Was, Ritva, was. He is dead. They will not celebrate the return of the traitorous brother."

"By law, I am their Queen. I am them. I will celebrate your return."

He laughed in her face. "We haven't had a Queen in centuries. That's the last thing they need now. If you had been exposed, according to tradition, or I had succeeded..." he shook his fist.

"You would be king now," she finished. "I know our history. I remember the last time I saw you. When my nanny took the sword aimed for my heart and they dragged you from the hall." He glowered at her. "And yet I am here bringing you my father's pardon."

"I don't care for his pardon," he said angrily. "I acted because he would not. Even then the imperialists had gotten into his brain. And look where his lack of backbone led him?"

"The past is the past. We need to move forward."



He shook his head. "Our people are dead. They are gone. There is no going back."

"We can!" she insisted. "We have the means" she gestured at the crate.

"Yes," he said. "That I will take from my brother. If he had done what was right it would be my birthright, and so I claim it."

"It is not for you," she protested. "This is for our people."

"Enough. Our people are no more. You never should have been, and I am all that is left. My claim is just. Take your chaperones and go."

She drew her dirk and faced off with him. Seldon and his crew stopped pretending to not be paying attention and closed ranks. The bundled guards of Valio shifted uneasily. "You will not take our people's hope from me," she said.

"And you will stop me?" he said, bristling.

Seldon drew his blade and touched it to the ground next to Ritva's feet. "I'm afraid I really was telling the truth, my Lady, when I said I could not resist a damsel in distress. We will escort you, and your cargo, back to the ship." There was a slight ringing as the rest of the crew drew their blades as well. And to Valio, "Must we fight our way out or can we be civilized about this?"

Valio looked at them in astonishment. Then he laughed. He laughed long and hard as he turned his back to them, walked back to his seat and sat down heavily. His laughing subsided into chuckles, and he made a motion to his guards around the room. They drew back their coats and brought to bear wide mouthed, short-barreled carbines.

"Aw, crap," said Juanita.





Hospitality Worker

A Career for Clement Sector By David McIntyre

One of my favorite things about Clement Sector is the wide array of available careers. However, one particular career choice I have found to be missing – those who work in hospitality and food service. The skills set includes chef, as well as bartending as a trade. One of the skills options for college is chef. So, it seems a natural that there would be a career for these.

Science fiction has a long history of character both famous and lesser known who work in hospitality.

Star Trek, in particular, has a rich variety of characters in hospitality, including Guinan, Quark, Neelix, Star Wars has Wuher the bartender at the The Mos Eisley Cantina of Star Wars. One of my all-time favorite characters from science fiction is Emile Khadaji of Steve Perry's Matador series, a revolutionary who was trained to use bartending as a cover career. Even the great Issac Asimov wrote at least one story about a chef.

As someone who cooks in a professional kitchen for a living, the skills involved may come as something of a surprise. While some seem natural, others less so. Aside from obvious skills, people in these jobs tend to amass a variety of other useful skills. For example, cooks tend to acquire mechanical and electrical or electronics skills, as it is not uncommon to have to repair broken equipment - for example when the walk-in cooler breaks down in mid service on a Saturday night and a maintenance tech isn't available until Monday morning, it needs to be fixed

NOW. In addition, people in these lines of work are notorious for their bad habits - as Anthony Bourdain chronicled so well in his memoir Kitchen Confidential, the industry has a rather shady and at times, criminal, element to it.

And, finally, this career is a natural companion to the recently released Clement Sector source book

Port of Entry, which, in part, provides some details of the hospitality industry. So, here is a career for hospitality workers in Clement Sector.

Hospitality Worker

The hospitality industry consists of workers accommodations and food service establishments - restaurants, cafés pubs, bars, hotels, and other similar businesses. These workers specialize in providing customers and guests with a place to sleep, quality food and drink, and generally providing a comfortable and enjoyable experience.

There are four assignments in the Hospitality career: Culinary, Server, Bartender, and Hotelier. Culinary consists of the people who prepare food in the kitchen – usually called the “back of the house”. Servers are the people who deal with customers and serve the food. Servers are usually referred to as the “front of the house”. Bartenders mix and serve drinks, typically alcoholic, and may serve other intoxicants. Hoteliers operate hotels and other lodgings.



Qualification:

End 6+

If the character's apparent age is 40+, take a -2 modifier to this roll. Take a -1 modifier for each career you have entered before this one.

Assignments:

Culinary – You prepare and cook food to be served in a restaurant, bar, or catered event.

Server – You work in a restaurant or bar waiting on customers and serving food and drinks.

Bartender – You mix and serve drinks, usually alcoholic, and possibly other intoxicants, in a bar.

Hotelier – You work in a hotel taking care of the guests and rooms.

Career Progress:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Survival</u>	<u>Advancement</u>
Culinary	END 8+	INT 7+
Server	END 8+	END 8+
Bartender	INT 8+	CHA 8+
Hotelier	INT 8+	INT 7+

Mustering Out Benefits

<u>ID</u>	<u>Cash</u>	<u>Benefit</u>
1	None	Ally
2	Cr 1,000	Contact
3	Cr 2,000	End +1
4	Cr 5,000	Dex +1
5	Cr 5,000	Cha +1
6	Cr 10,000	Knife Kit
7	Cr 20,000	Business Share

Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Development	Service Skills	Advanced Education
1	Gambling	Etiquette	Mechanic
2	Dex +1	Carouse	Language (any)
3	End +1	Discipline	Trade (bartender)
4	Streetwise	Streetwise	Admin
5	Language	Deception (Lie)	Science (Biology or Chemistry)
6	Jack-of-all-Trades	Persuade	Broker

Roll	Assignment: Culinary	Assignment: Server	Assignment: Bartender	Assignment: Hotelier
1	Chef	Etiquette	Trade (Bartender)	Trade (Housekeeping)
2	Streetwise	Persuade	Streetwise	Language
3	Deception (Lie)	Streetwise	Carouse	Streetwise
4	Carouse	Carouse	Persuade	Persuade
5	Leadership	Language	Science ¹	Diplomat
6	Discipline	Diplomat	Melee ²	Admin

1.(Philosophy or Psychology)

2.(Unarmed or Bludgeon)



Rank	Culinary Rank Title	Benefits	Server Rank Title	Benefits
0	Porter	Chef 0	Busser	Etiquette 1
1	Commis	Carouse 1	Food Runner	
2	Line Cook	Chef 1	Server	
3	Lead Cook	Leadership 1	Captain	
4	Sous Chef		Maître d'	Diplomat 1
5	Chef de Cuisine		Floor Manager	Admin 1
6	Executive Chef	Admin 1	General Manager	

Rank	Bartender Rank Title	Benefits	Hotelier Rank Title	Benefits
0	Barback	Trade (Bartender) 0	Housekeeper	Discipline 1
1	Bartender	Trade (Bartender) 1	Porter	Etiquette 1
2	Bartender	Streetwise 1	Front Desk Clerk	Admin 1
3	Bartender	Science (philosophy) 1	Supervisor	Diplomat 1
4	Bartender		Concierge	
5	Asst. Bar Manager	Admin 1	Assistant Manager	
6	Bar Manager		Hotel Manager	

Mishaps

- 2d6 Mishap
- 2 Severely Injured. Roll twice on the Injury table (p. 136).
 - 3 Your negligence injures a customer. Lose 2 benefit rolls and gain an enemy.
 - 4 A critic gives you a terrible review and you quit in a fit of rage. Gain an enemy.
 - 5 Your establishment fails a local health and safety department inspection and gets closed down. Your reputation is destroyed and you are forced out of hospitality. Take -2 CHA and lose 1d3 benefit rolls.
 - 6 The stress of the job takes its toll and you are burnt out. You need a new job. Lose 1 benefit roll. Roll 1d6. On a roll of 1-2, you have gained an addiction to a drug or alcohol to deal with the stress.
 - 7 Injured. Roll on the Injury table (p.136).
 - 8 Hard times cause your establishment to close. Lose 1 benefit roll.
 - 9 There is a serious fire in the establishment. You escape but get burned and end up scarred. Roll on Injury Table. (p.136)
 - 10 A continuing rivalry with someone in your establishment causes friction. In a fit of anger, you decide to leave the career. Gain a Rival.
 - 11 You have contracted a life-threatening illness. Lose 1d3 END.
 - 12 Your negligence causes a serious injury to, illness in, or death of a customer. Lose all benefit rolls and gain the customer or their surviving family as an Enemy. Roll Advocate (Legal) 8+. If you succeed, you are unemployable in hospitality and must choose a new career. If you fail, enter the Prisoner career for 1d3 terms.

Events

- d66 Event
- 11 Disaster! Roll on the Mishap Table, but you are not ejected from this career.
 - 12 You spend time maintaining the equipment in your establishment. Gain a level Mechanic.
 - 13 You find a mentor who takes you under their wings. Gain an ally, a level of any skill from your assignment skill table, or +2 to your next advancement roll.

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- 14 Your establishment thrives. Gain +1 to all benefit rolls.
- 15 Your crew parties hard! You gain a level of Carouse. Roll 1d6. On a roll of 1-2, you have become addicted to drugs or alcohol.
- 16 Your establishment has a rough reputation! You break up fights and gain a level Melee(any).
- 21 The establishment manager has been skimming profits. Lose 2 benefit rolls.
- 22 You are rewarded for your hard work and diligence. Gain DM+2 to your next Advancement check.
- 23 A gang of organized criminals wants to use your establishment as a front for a criminal business or as a headquarters.
If you refuse, gain the gang as an enemy. Roll 1d6. On a roll of 1-2, take a -2DM to your next survival roll. On a roll of 3-5, gain the gang as an enemy. On a roll of 6, you take a beat down and roll on the injury table (pg. 136).
If you accept, gain the gang as an ally. Roll 1d6. On a roll of 1 the enterprise is shut down by the police and you must take the Prisoner career in your next term. On a roll of 2-5, things go smoothly. Gain a level of Streetwise. On a roll of 6, things go very well and you become deeply involved in the organization. Automatically enter the Organized Crime career as an Operator.
- 24 You are betrayed by a co-worker. One of your Contacts or Allies betrays you, ending your career. That Contact or Ally becomes a Rival or Enemy. If you have no Contacts or Allies, then you gain an enemy or rival.
- 25 Kitchen accident! Throw Dexterity 8+ to avoid a throw on the Injury Table.
- 26 A critic gives your establishment a superb review. As a result, business booms. Gain 2 benefit rolls.
- 31-36 Life Event. Roll on the Life Events Table (pg. 137).
- 41 You spend time working in a restaurant serving an ethnic specialty food. Gain Language level 2 with a specialty in any language that you do not already speak.
- 42 Your work frequently brings you in contact with seedier elements. Gain a level of Deception (any), Gambler, or Streetwise.
- 43 You write a book about the business. Gain a level of Art (Writing). Roll 1d6. On a 1, the book is a disastrous flop and you lose money on it. Lose 1 benefit roll and take a -2 DM on your next advancement roll. On a 2-3, the book does poorly. Take a -2 DM on your next advancement roll. On a 4-5, the book does well. Gain 2 benefit rolls. On a 6, the book is a huge success. Gain 2d6 x 50,000 Hub Federation Credits. You automatically spend your next term in the Celebrity Career as a Star (see p.209).
- 44 If you are in the culinary assignment, you learn how to carve elaborate garnishes fruit and vegetable and decorative ice carvings. Gain a level of Art (Sculpture). If you are in another assignment you are working in a themed establishment where the staff give performances. Gain a level of Art (Acting or Dance).
- 45 You spend time studying a classical haute cuisine. Gain a level of chef and a level of French, Italian, Turkish, Russian, Chinese, Thai, Japanese, Arabic, Pashto, Hindi, or Bengali.
- 46 Your establishment is investigated by the local health department. Cooperate and gain a co-worker as an Enemy. Refuse and roll 1d6. On a roll of 1, the business is shut down. You must leave this career. On a roll of 2-5, the establishment passes, but you gain the inspector as an Enemy. On a roll of 6, the establishment passes with flying colors and the boss gives you a big bonus. Immediately make 2 cash benefit rolls.

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- 51 You have taken a job aboard an interstellar cruise liner. Gain a level in Suit (Vacc Suit) or Survival (Freefall).
- 52 You get tasked with taking care of the food and beverage orders and other paperwork. Gain a level of Admin.
- 53 Your establishment is featured on a popular holo vid program. Roll 1d6. On a 1, the show depicts your establishment in a terrible light. Lose 2 benefit rolls. On a 2-3, the show is a failure but quickly forgotten. Take a -1 DM to your next survival roll. On a 4-5, the show is a moderate success. Business improves for several years. Gain 2 benefit rolls. On a 6 the show is a grand success. The business become very popular. Gain 3 benefit rolls and take a +2DM on your next survival roll.
- 54 You work at an establishment that specializes in wild foods. You spend time learning how to forage for foods and hunt wild game. Gain a level of Survival (Desert), Survival (Forest), Survival (Jungle), Survival (Mountains), Survival (Plains), Survival (Ocean), or Survival (Swamp).
- 55 You rise to a position of power in the establishment. You are automatically promoted to the next rank.
- 56 You are invited to become a partner in a new establishment. If you refuse, take a -2DM to your next advancement roll. If you accept, roll 1d6. On a 1, the business fails. Lose 3 benefit rolls. On a 2-3, the business does OK. Gain 2 benefit rolls. On a 4-5, the business does quite well. Gain 1d6 business shares. On a 6, the business is a smashing success. Gain 2d6 business shares and take +2 on your next survival roll.
- 61 You work at an establishment that grows its own food or operates a farm. Gain a level of Animals (Farming), Trade (Gardening), or Trade (Hydroponics).
- 62 Hospitality work requires flexibility and the ability to multi-task. Gain a level of Jack of All Trades.
- 63 You have been chosen as a contestant on a cooking or hospitality competition holo vid reality game show. Roll Chef, Etiquette, or Trade (Bartender) 8+. If you fail, you lose terribly and in an embarrassing manner. You lose 1 benefit roll and take a 2DM to your next survival roll. If you succeed you have done well on the show.

Roll 1d6.

- 1 You do well enough to make it through the first few rounds and become a moderately popular contestant. Gain +1 CHA.
- 2-3 You take second place in the contest and win 2d6×1,000 Hub Federation Credits.
- 4-5 You win the contest. Gain 2d6 x 10,000 HFCs and a +2DM on your next survival roll.
- 6 You not only win but are considered to be one of the best contestants to have appeared on the show. Gain 1d6 x 50,000 Hub Federation Credits, a +2DM on your next survival roll, and +2 CHA. If you desire, you may automatically join the Celebrity career (Clement Sector, p.209) as a Star.
- 64 An establishment patron takes a special liking to you and tips very well. Gain 2 benefit rolls.

- 
- 65 You have been offered a chance to endorse and advertise a product being sold on your world. If you decline, nothing happens. If you accept, you are paid 10,000 Hub Federation Credits.

Roll 1d6.

1 The product is a complete failure and your association makes you a laughingstock. Take a -2DM to your next survival roll and -1 CHA.

2-3 The product is a moderate success but its plebeian nature leads to professional ridicule. Lose 1 benefit roll.

4-5 The product is a success. The producer pays you an additional 1d6 x 1,000 HFCs.

6 The product is a huge success and you are offered several additional endorsement opportunities. You receive a 25,000 HFC bonus. In addition, gain 2 Benefit rolls.

- 66 You have won a highly prestigious hospitality award. You receive 50,000 Hf Cs. to further your work. In addition, gain +2 CHA and 3 benefit rolls.

New Benefits and Equipment Explanations:

Knife Kit: This is a kit consisting of 1d6 x 1,000 Hub Federation Credits worth of high-quality chef's knives and other culinary tools, contained in a knife roll or bag made of leather or similarly sturdy material. If you roll this benefit again, you may take an upgrade to a kit worth another 1,000 Hub Federation Credits or gain a level of Chef skill.

Business Share: This is a 1% share in a restaurant, bar, shop, or other food or hospitality related business. The value of this share is 2d6 x 10,000 Hub Federation credits.





Idiot NPCs

By Neil Lucock

There are some people who go beyond incompetence and into total stupidity. This is a suggestion for NPCs. Ideally, they will have authority over the PCs, so a local ruler (or their offspring), a client whose business you need to retain or even the civilian or military commander who has been promoted because of family ties.

These NPCs have negative understanding. Most people admit that they don't know how to do something, such as how to tune a guitar or speak German, but the NPC-idiot (NPC-i) is characterized by massive confidence and ego; they will never admit that they don't know something. If they try and fail, it is never their fault. So the guitar is at fault or the dialect the native speaker is using is not how Standard German works.

This is an attempt to make idiot NPCs behave in a consistent manner. It is intended to add flavour to their stupidity, as not all stupid people act the same way.

The world of the NPC-i (Non-player Character, idiot)

Roll up the usual characteristics, if they have INT or 3 or lower, you have an NPC-i. All of these descriptions are assumed to have an Int score or 2 or 3.

You can roll the following extra characteristics to help you make each NPC-i unique. Whenever an NPC-i interacts with a PC, roll under Ego, TE or Ethics to see if they behave in a particularly stupid manner.

Another option is to make one or two of their skills negative. So instead of having Admin -2, the skill score is subtracted from the dice roll.

Ego 2D6

People with high ego scores don't like to be told they are wrong. Ever. Their usual behaviour is to blame other people or to lie or to blame the equipment. Roll under the Ego score to act in a selfish way.

High Ego combined with a low Education score is someone who believes all sorts of nonsense, they have no critical thinking ability and will accept anything they are told if it suits their purpose.

High Ego combined with high Education is someone who knows a lot and lets you know it, all the time. They are always trying to impress you with references from history, art, literature, philosophy and culture. They will lecture you on anything that they please. They dislike anyone who knows more about a subject than they do but will often have a faulty understanding of the subject.

High Ego with low Social Standing (SS) is someone who might try to convince you that they are part of the nobility, adopting airs and graces, slavishly agreeing with anything said by people with high SS. They may well be a social climber, trying to flatter high SS people, trying to get invites to their social events (and pretending to have attended even if they have not).

High Ego and High SS is "the rich idiot", if you are not part of their in-crowd, you are no one. They will constantly put anyone and everyone down, protected by their contacts in high places. For them, actions have no consequences.

TE 2D6

Another characteristic is "Thinking Emotionally" (TE). People with high TE scores behave without thinking about the outcomes. If you oppose them in anything, they will react. High TE scores



can mean someone is bad tempered. If something doesn't go their way they lose their composure.

Use: roll 2D6, if they get under their TE score, they do something that is an emotional reaction to the situation, even though the consequences may be disastrous.

High TE and low Education gives someone who dislikes anyone more clever than they are. If you know the way to fix something, the NPC-i knows a better way and will oppose you if you dare try and do it your way.

High TE with high Education is dismissive; you are clearly inferior in knowledge and should keep quiet as you need to learn something.

High TE and high SS is rich spoiled brat; they do whatever they like and no one can tell them otherwise. If they want to trash a restaurant because the staff are "not good looking", they will. The police will arrest them, but a call to the chief of police by their parent and a generous donation gets them released. The parents will pay for the damage to the restaurant.

High TE and low SS, is still spoiled, but this time they are a thug. They will harm anyone if they oppose them, they don't pretend to be a decent person. They hit first and ask questions after.

Ethics 2D6

Ethics; whether they are a nice person or otherwise. Roll over their Ethics score to break the law or act in a criminal way.

High Ethics and low Education gives a decent person who gets things wrong because they don't know. They are trying to be helpful but try fry the steak in engine oil as "all oils are the same". They set back projects as their help is usually misguided, but not malicious.

Low Ethics and low Education, is someone who will cheat and steal, but their lack of planning means they always get caught. So any crimes they try fail because they don't think through, like booking into a hotel room with a credit card, then trying to steal the TV from the room.

High Ethics and high Education, is someone who knows a lot, but doesn't think in any original way. They will always be decent people, perhaps a high ranking civil servant or church official, good at following set rules and procedures but unable to innovate.

Low Ethics and High education, someone who uses their position for insider dealing, they pass secrets on for money or goods, but are rarely considered a risk as most people think they wouldn't know anything useful. Their low INT score means that they might be a useful source of information but are unsuited as a project leader.

High Ethics and High SS is inbred nobility; they have a decent behaviour, they are thick but their connections enable them to do well. They are often given ceremonial roles, where they just have to turn up, say a few rehearsed words and shake hands with dignitaries.

Low Ethics and low SS is a back streets thug, they will do any job that pays; such as debt collection or breaking legs. They are useful as hired muscle when accompanied by someone with ability.

NPC-i Miriam Connor

STR 9	DEX 12	END 5
INT 2	EDU 5	SS 10
Ego 11	TE 3	Ethics 12

Daughter of a rich family (minor nobility), Miriam didn't learn a lot from her tutors, but her behaviour is obsessively honest. Honesty has become her personal crusade, in that she expects everyone she meets to be scrupulously ethical. Her position in society includes a responsibility to show those less well-born how to behave. She will give short lectures on the behaviour she expects. She will inform the authorities about any irregularity with paperwork and any behaviour that is not exactly honest. Drop some litter on the starport and she will film you and send it to the police for urgent action.

This can cause friction when the people filmed realise she's part of the PC's group. The only thing that makes her bearable is that her low Education and Intelligence means she sometimes fails in her quest, so the video of someone dropping litter in front of a starport business is sent to Ichika's Cookies a local business, not the Starport Cleaning Services. Miriam has a low TE score, she thinks carefully about what she is doing and is completely without malice in her actions.

Miriam can be given any skills that suit the situation. A couple of levels of Admin or Broker might make her the most useful and compliant clerk you ever employed, or your worst nightmare if they are the customs agent you have to deal with.

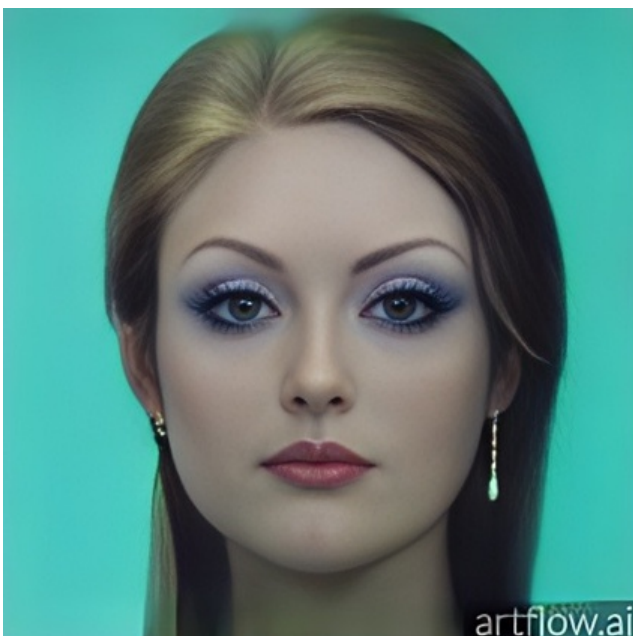


NPC-i Martin Ibanez

STR 9	DEX 10	END 9
INT 3	EDU 4	SS 5
Ego 10	TE 11	Ethics 6

Martin is a bad-tempered thug. He's employed by a large fast-food place on the starport, his job is to take out the trash, carry deliveries, clean the floor and do anything that requires muscle rather than brains. He thinks that he's the most important person there, and reacts badly to anyone challenging him, or even giving him instructions. He is on a final warning for threatening an assistant manager who asked him to collect some supplies, but Martin knows that with his superb skill set and talent, he will easily walk into any management job he wants. He only does his present job as he likes the place and knows it will not survive without his continued help. Martin takes bribes when it suits him. He won't steal money but has a nice income from selling cleaning supplies.

Artwork generated using Artflow AI





Deliver Medicine

Adventure Seed by P-O Bergstedt

Client : Scientist, Doctor, Executive

Required Skills: none

Required Equipment: starship

Players' Information:

The group is contacted by Roland von Sylt, an executive of the local *KemKom* chemical plant. He explains to the group that a terrible (but not deadly) disease has broken out at a nearby mining planet. His R&D team has just developed a cure and a vaccine, and now this needs to be delivered as soon as possible to the unlucky planet.

Unfortunately, there is currently no *KemKom* ship in the system, so he hopes the group can deliver this, and if possible also help to distribute the cure. The group will be paid Cr. 100,000 for this delivery of 5 tons of cargo, and an additional Cr. 10.000, if they can help distributing the drugs.





Referee's Information:

The real reason that *KemKom* wants to stop the disease is that they have caused it, but so far only a few local *KemKom* employees from von Sylt's R&D department know that. That is also the reason that they don't want *KemKom* personnel to be connected in any way with distributing the cure.

1. All is as represented, except that at last minute, a medical doctor is boarding the ship. The doctor has come along to help the group deliver the medicine.
2. As 1, but the disease is actually deadly, and among the mining population a few people has already died. The doctor will tell the starport authority about the disease, (but not what caused it) and they will close down the starport until everyone is cured.
3. As 1, but when the ship arrives at the mining planet, they receive a message telling them that they are not allowed to land since the planet is quarantined. The doctor will try to convince the group to land anyway.
4. As 1, except that the disease was not caused by an accident. The miners has been used as guinea- pigs by the *KemKom* R&D team.
- 5, As 4, except that the groups cargo doesn't contain a cure. It contains a poison that will slowly kill the miners, so that they cannot tell anyone about how they were used. The doctor will try to convince the group that they also has been infected, and need to take the cure.
6. There is no disease. The *KemKom* executive is actually helping his friend the mining director to shanghai the group as miners, and to steal their ship.

In all cases the referee should determine the flow of subsequent events.



Physician Career

By Brett Kruger

While Cepheus Deluxe has the Scholar career where you can generate a doctor, I have enough players who specifically want to play a physician that I created a career for them.

Physician:

You were a medic, doctor, or surgeon.

Service Skills	Specialist Skills	Advanced Education
Admin Computer Medicine Liaison Investigation Science	Athletics Driving Grav Vehicles Gun Combat Jack of All Trades Medicine	Xeno-Medicine Steward Medicine Admin Gun Combat Leadership

Rank	Title	Bonus Skill	Mustering Out Benefits		
0	Student	Medicine-1	1D6	Cash	Materials
1	Intern		1	5,000	Contact
2	Resident		2	10,000	+1 SOC
3	Fellow		3	15,000	+1 INT
4	Physician		4	20,000	High Passage
5	Specialist	Xeno-Medicine-1	5	30,000	+1 EDU
6	Professor		6	60,000	Vehicle



2D	Physician Event
2	Injury. Roll on the Injury table, but you are not ejected from your career.
3	Cybered! Your academic institute pays for advanced cybernetic implants. Gain Cr6,000 worth of cybernetics.
4	Breakthrough! You make a medical breakthrough. Gain DM+2 to one Benefit roll.
5	Combat. You serve in a front-line unit. Gain a level in Survival or Gun Combat.
6	Immoral Conduct. You are offered an opportunity to engage in immoral, potentially illegal, medical services. Accept, and gain a level in Science, Deception, or Medicine; refuse, and you do not receive this skill; blow the whistle and gain the leader as an Enemy.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Event table.
8	Confidential Project. You work on a secret project for a powerful organization. Keep your mouth shut and gain a level in Science, Liaison, or Medicine. Sell the results to a rival company and gain an extra Benefit roll but the organization as your Enemy.
9	Plagiarism. You have an opportunity to steal another physician's break-through. Exploit it, and receive an extra Benefit roll, but gain your victim as an Enemy; avoid the temptation, and you gain nothing but integrity.
10	Talent Grab. An enemy organization decides to kidnap you and force you to work for them. Try to escape and throw DEX 8+ to avoid Injury; jump ship and gain an extra Benefit roll from your new employer but gain your former employer as an Enemy.
11	Mentor. You work with a prominent and famous specialist in your field. Gain them as a Contact.
12	Advancement. Your pioneering techniques have been phenomenally successful. Gain a rank, and a free skill level.

Xeno-Medicine: Training in the medical sciences, from diagnosis and triage to surgery, that deals specifically with alien sophonts.







What's New

By Brett Kruger

The following products were released during the months of June through September.
Lots of goodness here again.

FSpace Publications

The Meshan Saga issue 1
Supplement M10 Meshan Sector Serkur in The New Era
The Meshan Saga issue 4
Supplement M8 Meshan Sector Tibushi in The New Era
Supplement M9 Meshan Sector Ironside in The New Era
The Meshan Saga issue 3
The Meshan Saga issue 2
Far Encounters Hyperion Game & Hellfire Landing

Michael Brown

Mission to Mirador
Crossed Swords
The Claws of Ifrinn
Under Western Skies: 2D6 Adventure on America's Frontier
Captivity of the Reason
Burst Transmissions: Compendium

Old School Role Playing

The Path
Chaos Rift
Dark Matter
Deja Vu
Rogue

Parts Per Million

Solo, Contain, Protect
Cozy, Murder, Solo
Brute! Solo - For Use With Barbaric!

Stellagama Publishing

Random Character Generation for Cepheus Deluxe
Terra Arisen
Cepheus Deluxe RPG [BUNDLE]

Thunderegg Productions

Robots for Cepheus Deluxe
Flight of the Phaeton- A Ship for Cepheus Engine
JetSet Solo Cepheus Rules





Zozer Games

Orbital Platforms
Hostile Solo
Price of Freedom

Donovan D. Corzo

100 Sci-Fi Cargos-List
Sci-Fi Outpost Generator D100

Independence Games

Famous Characters of the Old West
Port of Entry: Starports in Clement Sector

CZRP

Wyvern Island

Felbrigg Herriot

Repo Man

First Age Entertainment

Always Be Prepared - a Cepheus Adventure

Free League Publishing

Extended Solo

Long Shadows Press

Járnheimr: 2D6 Post-Ragnarökr Viking Adventure

Menagerie Press

Westlands Pre-Generated Characters

MNEME World Generator

Game in the Brain

Moon Toad Publishing

Quick Ship File: Kambala Class Freighter

Ordo Arcanorum

Opus Magi: Anima Machinae

Pelgrane Press

ESO Solo

The Earl of Fife Games

Earl of Fife Newsletter [August 2022]

Third Eye Games

Solo Pip





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