

# ALTERNITY<sup>®</sup>

SCIENCE FICTION  ROLEPLAYING GAME

## QUICKSTART GUIDE



**BAKER • NOONAN • SCHUBERT**

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SCIENCE FICTION  ROLEPLAYING GAME

## QUICKSTART GUIDE

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *ALTERNITY*, the science fiction roleplaying game where you choose your own future! This playtest packet provides the core elements you need to run a quick RPG session:

- About Your Character
- Skill Descriptions
- Gear Descriptions
- The Core Mechanic
- Combat Rules
- *Wreck of the Magellan*, a short adventure
- Adversaries for the adventure
- 6 pregen PCs

We aren't including any character creation information in this guide, since we just want to provide a demonstration of how the system plays. Character creation is described in the *ALTERNITY* Core Rules.

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended to serve as a bare-bones rulebook and sample adventure for the *ALTERNITY* Demonstration Pack. If you're just getting started, we suggest beginning with The Institute introductory adventure (the other PDF in this pack).

We think you are an experienced RPG player. In this guide we're not going to try to explain how you have a talky encounter with a NPC or fully define skills and special abilities—we're providing the bare minimum for a sharp player like you to infer the details. For example, our *Athletics* skill description notes that you use that skill for climbing things, but we're not going to tell you much more than that because it's not important for trying out the system. So, don't be alarmed if some things like detailed skill definitions have been left for later.

## HOW TO GET STARTED

Pick out someone in your group to be the Gamemaster (GM). The GM should read through the rules and the sample adventure ahead of the game session.

Other players should pick out one pregenerated character each. Each player should read through the "Your *ALTERNITY* Character" section of this guide, and then review their character sheet and the skill and gear descriptions as needed.

If you've got the time, it wouldn't hurt for the players to become familiar with the Core Mechanic and Combat sections too. But things should work okay if players just pick up the mechanics and combat rules by playing through the adventure.

## YOUR ALTERNITY CHARACTER

This section explains how to read the information provided on each of the pregen character sheets included in this guide. Choose one of the characters and refer to the sheet as you read this section—it'll help you make sense of this part of the packet.

### NAME, ARCHETYPE, STORY

The basic introduction of your character. Feel free to change the name if you like, or come up with a different story. Archetype describes your heroic role in the party: Are you the muscle, the brains, or the everyman who steps in to make a difference? You probably don't think of yourself by your archetype name, since it's not your career or profession. It's more of a way of describing the role you're going to play in the action movie you're starring in.

All the characters are Level 1, but that doesn't mean they're barely heroes. We assume that any *ALTERNITY* PC is already a hero capable of handling a mook (or three) in a brawl or a shootout. Higher levels mean moderately better skill scores, more training to spread around, and some new talents. You're not going to be ten times tougher at 10th level.

### ABILITIES

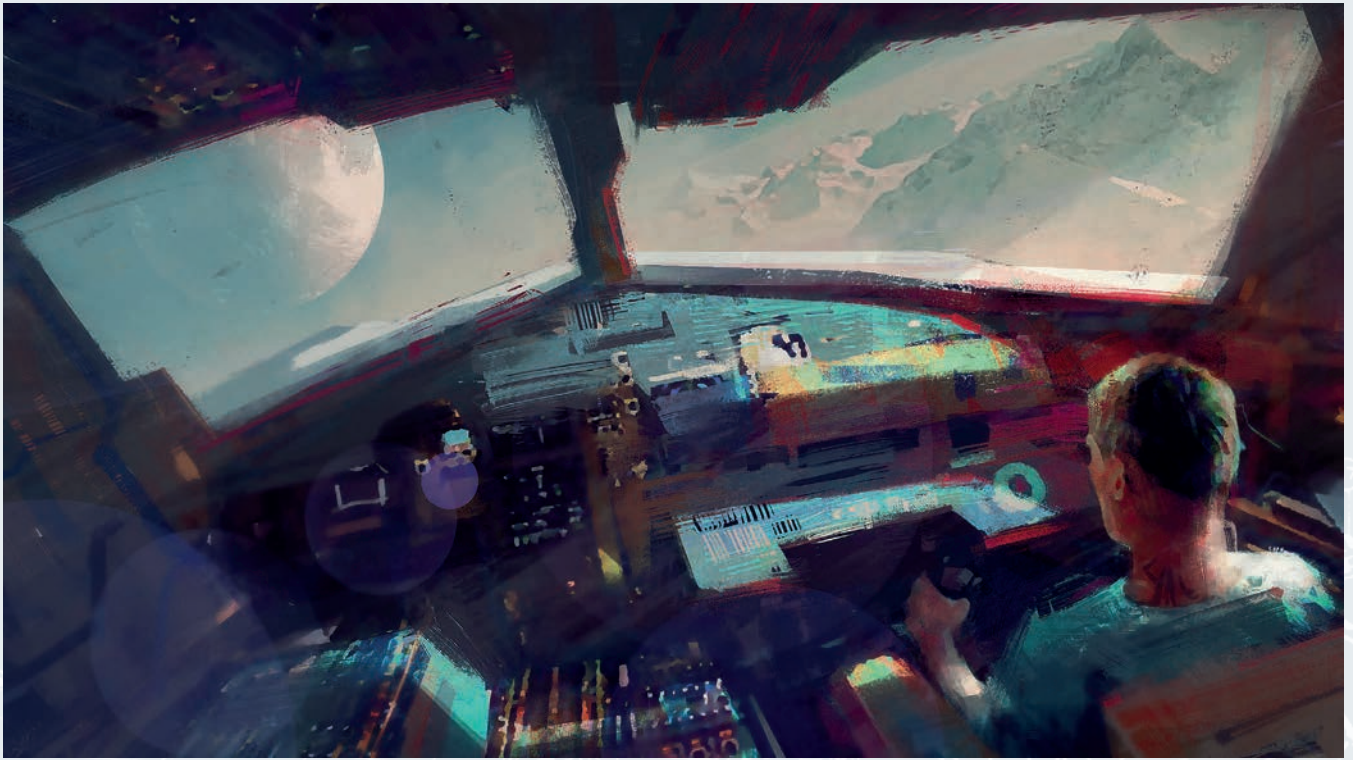
Your character's natural strengths and weaknesses are described by six Ability ratings. These are: Strength, Agility, Vitality, Intelligence, Focus, and Personality. Scores range from 0 to 10, with a typical human having a score of 2 to 4 in each Ability.

**Strength** measures raw physical power and basic athleticism. It's good for hand-to-hand combat as well as climbing, running, jumping, and other physical challenges.

**Agility** represents hand-eye coordination, balance, and flexibility. A good Agility is helpful in ranged combat, initiative checks, and for getting out of the way of blasts or similar threats.

If you have questions—ones we can answer briefly—during your game, send us a message on facebook/twitter: facebook.com/SasquatchGameStudio or @Sasquatch\_Games





*Pictured: Sasquatch game designers launching a new game.*

**Vitality** represents your health, endurance, and physical resilience. It contributes to your character's overall durability (the ability to absorb damage and keep going), and your ability to fight off or resist the effects of poison, radiation, partial vacuum, and other hazards you're exposed to.

**Intelligence** is a combination of your reasoning ability and your education. It's good for invention, mechanics, sciences, and skills of that sort. It doesn't often come up in combat situations, but a good Intelligence score might be handy for improvising defensive measures or disabling foes by making good use of the environment around you.

(In case you're curious, most animals have an Intelligence of 0. Animals with significant "language" ability or sophisticated group behaviors have an Intelligence of 1. Any human child older than four or five has an Intelligence of at least 2. This is not a linear scale.)

**Focus** is a measure of awareness, resolve, determination, and the ability to "zero in" and concentrate on tasks that demand your full attention. A good Focus rating helps with marksmanship, initiative, noticing concealed danger, and resisting efforts to distract you.

**Personality** describes your natural persuasiveness, charisma, likeability, and talent for leadership. It's the key ability for interacting with NPCs or exercising effective command.

## SPECIES

**ALTERNITY** characters might belong to any number of unusual species—denizens of alien worlds, cyborgs, androids, mutants, vampires, and so on. The choices available to you depend greatly on what sort of setting your Gamemaster has created for your game. For right now, we're keeping it simple: Your **ALTERNITY** character is human.

## HERO POINTS

Your hero points represent extraordinary luck, resilience, or perseverance. You can spend a hero point to improve the success of a skill check you make by one level (see the Core Mechanic). For example, you can change a Failure to an Average success.

You can also use a hero point to reduce the severity of a wound you receive. You can change a mortal or critical wound to a serious wound, or a serious, moderate, or light wound to a graze.

You can use 1 hero point during the sample adventure.

## INITIATIVE

At the beginning of an action scene, you make an initiative check to determine when you get to take your first turn. To make an initiative

*Your ability ratings are a lot like playing a d20 game using your ability modifier without a score attached. A '3' is about the same as a 10–11 in a d20 game.*

*Intelligence scores for game designers are left as an exercise for the reader.*



check, roll d20 and compare it to your initiative score. Some characters also gain a difficulty die bonus when they make an initiative check. If your initiative says “+1 die step,” you’ll normally roll d20+d4 when you roll for initiative. We’ll cover difficulty die steps in the Core Mechanic section.

## WEAPONS

This section of the sheet notes the weapons or attack forms you’re likely to have available and your attack bonus with each. The numbers also tell you how much damage you inflict with each weapon on an Average or Excellent hit (so a light pistol deals 1d6+1 damage on an Average hit, or 1d6+5 damage on an Excellent hit). If you get a Stellar hit, you deal Excellent damage twice. The type of damage a weapon inflicts is usually physical or energy. We’ll cover grades of success in the Core Mechanic section.

## DURABILITY

Your character’s durability describes how much physical punishment you can take and keep on going. When an enemy successfully attacks you, its weapon deals a single box of damage ranging from 1 to 16 (or more) in severity.

You subtract your armor’s resistance value from the damage dealt by the enemy attack; armor is rated for its effectiveness against physical or energy damage.

After reducing the damage of the attack for your armor, you mark off 1 box in the corresponding injury band. If you have no boxes available for a wound of that severity (usually because of previous injuries you sustained), mark off a box in the next highest severity with an open wound box.

The description for the wound categories notes the amount of penalty you take for having a wound of that kind. For example, if you have a serious wound, you take a –2 die step penalty on all skill checks you make. Just use the worst one that applies—these penalties don’t stack.

If you have to mark off your last (highest) wound box, you’re incapacitated: unconscious, dying, or dead. See the Combat section for more information on taking damage.

## TALENTS

Your talents are special abilities, weapon tricks, or advanced tactics that give you an edge in an action scene. Your archetype provides a variety of talent choices, but for this playtest document we’ve picked out a few for the pregen characters. The descriptions of your talents are simply concise summaries providing just enough information to use them in play—we describe them more carefully in the Core Rules.

## CHARACTER SKILLS

The right-hand column of your character sheet lists all of the skills in the core module of the *ALTERNITY* game. Each skill has a key ability, which tells you which ability (or two abilities) serve as the basis for checks against that skill. The Points column lists the number of skill points your character has assigned to each skill. If you don’t have any points assigned to a skill, you’re untrained in it, which means you’re no better or worse than any average person in trying to use that skill. The **skill score** shows the target number for your skill check when you use that skill: for example, 12/17/22. The first result is an Average success; the second is an Excellent success; and the highest number is your threshold for a Stellar success.

## GEAR

Special protective gear, weaponry, or handy items your character typically carries are listed here. You can assume that you also have whatever might be typical for the average person in the street—a shirt or blouse, pants or skirt, belt, shoes, light jacket or coat, wallet, key ring, and a personal communication device (whatever the future version of a smart phone turns out to be).

*We’ll explain average, excellent, and stellar in more detail later, but for now, suffice it to say that the better your attack roll, the more damage you’ll do.*



## SKILLS

Since the *ALTERNITY* game is a skill-based game system (mostly), your skills are your primary tool for interacting with the world around you and overcoming dangers. In the complete rules, each of these skills has a better description with notes about what's an easy or hard skill check. For purposes of this packet, we're just providing a minimal description. Use your best judgment about what a skill entails, and move on with the sample adventure.

**Key Ability:** Each skill is tied to one or two key abilities. Your skill score is equal to d20 – your skill bonus (your skill ranks + the key ability), plus or minus a difficulty die. If a skill lists two key abilities, you can choose whichever is best for you when you figure your skill score. (We did this already for the pregen characters.)

**Untrained:** If you don't have any skill points in a skill, you're effectively untrained in it. You know as much about it as any typical person on the street would know (so, if you have no skill points in *Computers*, you can still turn on a computer and use a word processor program or do a basic web search). Likewise, you can drive a car even if you don't have any specific training in *Driving* because most people can. But you can't fly a helicopter without points in *Piloting*, because most people can't.

If you need to make a check with an untrained skill, your skill bonus is your key ability (you have no skill points to add, but you may have some natural aptitude).

## SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

The skills that appear on the pregenerated character sheets are described below.

**Academics (Intelligence):** You have studied a "soft" science such as archeology, anthropology, history, linguistics, political science, or sociology. Choose one field as your specialty; you gain a +1 die step bonus when you make checks related to your special field.

**Acrobatics (Agility):** This skill covers balance, tumbling, tightrope walking, tests of contortion or flexibility, and moving in zero-G environments.

**Armor Training (Strength or Intelligence):** Your training in the use, maintenance, and repair of heavy armor. Powered or unpowered, heavy armor generally impedes your movement and fighting ability, but you can overcome these penalties with Armor Training. And using advanced powered armor definitely requires some specialized training.

At rank 1, 3, and 7, reduce your armor's penalty to movement skills by 1 step.

At rank 2, 5, and 8, reduce your movement penalty by 2 meters.

**Athletics (Strength):** Your skill at climbing, jumping, throwing, swimming, and general feats of strength. Throwing grenades is an *Athletics* skill check. If you need to make a check for something that seems to be a test of physical strength or power and you don't know what other skill to use, it's probably an *Athletics* check.

**Awareness (Focus):** Your ability to notice that something's wrong or out of place in your environment. Usually, the GM asks you to make this check.

**Coercion (Personality):** You know how to get other people to do what you want through bullying, threats, or sheer weight of authority. Use this skill to intimidate a thug, interrogate a prisoner, or insist on priority service.

**Computers (Intelligence):** Your training in advanced computer use. Anybody can run ordinary software or do a basic online search, but if you have skill points in *Computers*, you're good for programming, customizing hardware, hacking, and fixing the Blue Screen of Death.

**Culture (Personality):** You're familiar with the language, customs, history, and popular culture of a particular species or country (depending on the scope of your campaign).

*Whether you're trained or untrained, a good rule of thumb is to ask for a skill check only when success and failure are both a) possible; and b) interesting. If that isn't true, don't roll.*

## ABILITIES AND CHECKS

In the *ALTERNITY* game, most checks you make are based on your skills, not your raw ability ratings. If you're not sure what kind of check to make, here's a quick guide.

- Use *Athletics* for general Strength tests such as attempts to break something, pick up something, or resist someone else pushing you.
- Use *Dodge* for general Agility-based tests, such as getting out of the way of something dangerous (a "save vs. explosion," basically).
- Use *Endurance* for general Vitality tests, such as resisting poisons or the effects of serious injuries.
- Use *Science* for broad Intelligence tests such as decoding alien symbols or solving a tough math problem in your head.
- Make an *Awareness* check for general Focus tests, such as noticing a hidden danger or ignoring a distraction.
- Use *Influence* for Personality tests such as an attempt to persuade someone to do something you ask them to or believe something you say.



Each time you spend a skill point in *Culture*, you can pick another species or country. Make a *Culture* check to identify useful contacts or as part of an interaction challenge scene.

**Deception (Personality):** If you're trying to convince someone of something that's fundamentally untrue, it's a *Deception* skill check. Lies, bluffs, impersonations—they're all covered by this skill.

**Dodge (Agility):** Your ability to get out of the way of things. Usually you don't make a *Dodge* check on your turn—you attempt a *Dodge* check when the GM tells you that something is exploding near you, falling on you, or speeding in your direction.

Characters who are highly trained in the *Dodge* skill gain more benefit from the evade action modifier. If you have at least 5 skill points in this skill, enemies attacking you while you're dodging take a –2 step penalty instead of a –1 step penalty; if you have 10 points in this skill, the penalty is –3 steps.

**Driving (Agility):** Your training for challenging driving such as high-speed chases, street races, or serious off-roading. Most people can drive in routine conditions without any particular skill in *Driving*.

**Empathy (Focus or Personality):** Your ability to draw out information from people you're interacting with or pick up subtle social cues. This might cover broad efforts to gather information by talking to lots of people in an area, interrogating a hostile prisoner, or helping a confused witness to recall a potentially vital clue.

**Endurance (Vitality):** This skill represents your physical conditioning and acclimatization to challenging environments. You can't breathe vacuum, but a great *Endurance* check means you might survive exposure a few seconds longer than most people and perhaps give yourself a chance to shut the airlock or repair a damaged suit. Like *Dodge*, this is a skill you usually make when the GM asks you to make a check against it.

**Energy Weapon (Agility or Focus):** Your training in the use and maintenance of personal energy weapons ranging from laser pistols to plasma rifles. They're a little different from firearms because they generally don't have much recoil, don't require you to lead the target or account for a drop over distance, and operate on completely different mechanisms if you need to repair them. When you assign a skill point to this skill, choose a specialty: pistols, rifles, or assault weapons. You gain a +1

die step bonus on attacks when you use your specialty energy weapon.

**Engineering (Intelligence):** Your knowledge of applied technology such as systems, installations, power plants, construction, demolitions, and starships. In general, *Engineering* lets you operate and maintain systems, while *Mechanics* lets you do hands-on work or jury-rig improvised repairs.

**Extreme Sports (Agility or Vitality):** Your skill with sports or activities that most people consider to be daredevil or stunt work: double-diamond skiing, hang gliding, big-wave surfing, extreme mountain biking and dirt jumping, that kind of stuff.

**Firearm (Agility or Focus):** *Firearms* covers any repeating projectile weapon with cartridge-type ammunition—anything from a Colt .45 revolver up to a 21st-century bullpup-design assault rifle. When you assign a skill point to *Combat: Firearms*, choose a specialty: pistols, rifles, or assault weapons (SMGs and shotguns). You gain a +1 die step bonus on attacks when you use your specialty weapon.

**Hand to Hand (Strength or Agility):** Your ability to attack effectively at very close quarters. This covers unarmed styles like brawling or martial arts, as well as small weapons that basically serve as extensions of your hands (knives, brass knuckles, etc.). When you assign a skill point to *Combat: Hand to Hand*, choose a specialty: brawling, martial arts, knives, wrestling. You gain a +1 die step bonus on attacks when you use your specialty style.

**Heavy Weapons (Strength or Intelligence):** Your training in heavy weaponry such as mortars, rocket launchers, crew-served machine guns, flamethrowers, or other such implements of mayhem. As with other combat skills, choose your specialty: heavy energy, heavy firearm, or indirect fire weapons. You gain a +1 die step bonus on attacks with your specialty.

**Influence (Personality):** Your ability to convince someone to do something you want them to do, or adopt a particular attitude toward some person or situation. You might influence people through persuasion, flattery, sincerity, or seduction—all that matters is that you can influence their actions or attitudes.

**Mechanics (Intelligence):** Your knowledge of motors, vehicles, small machinery, basic chemistry, and mechanical repair and fabrication. You know how to use most machine-shop tools, including various types of cutting torches

You flipped straight  
to the combat  
skills, didn't you?  
DIDN'T YOU?!!



or welding kits. This skill covers jury-rigging and improvisation, such as sabotaging a power conduit to electrocute bad guys nearby or triggering the fire suppression system to cover your escape.

**Medicine (Intelligence):** Your medical training. If you only have a skill point or two in *Medicine*, you probably have some good first aid training. Using *Medicine* to help someone in an action scene is a complex skill check—you must accumulate a number of successes over the course of several skill checks to accomplish your task. Choose the Use a Skill action when your turn comes up and make a *Medicine* check; you accumulate 1, 2, or 3 successes for an Average, Excellent, or Stellar success. The total number of successes you need to treat a wound depends on its severity.

If you have a med pack, you can treat (uncheck) a light wound with 1 success, a moderate wound with 2 successes, a serious wound with 3 successes, or a critical wound with 6 successes. If you don't have a med pack, you can treat a light wound with 1 success.

**Melee (Strength or Agility):** Your skill with handheld striking or stabbing weapons like clubs, swords, spears, or axes. When you assign a skill point to *Melee*, choose a specialty: light blade, heavy blade, striking weapon, or energized weapon (sci-fi powered melee weapons like laser swords or energy maces). You gain a +1 die step bonus on attacks when you use your specialty weapon.

**Misdirection (Personality):** Your ability to deceive, distract, or misinform another person. You can also use *Misdirection* to “fit in” with your surroundings and look like you belong where you are. In combat, a successful *Misdirection* check can make your enemy Distracted.

**Performance (Personality):** Your ability to entertain others with some kind of performance—acting, dancing, juggling, singing, or maybe even a really blue stand-up routine. Your check result is a good indication of the quality of your act.

**Piloting (Agility or Intelligence):** Your ability to fly or pilot craft such as helicopters, light planes, multiengine planes, orbiters, or starships. The *Piloting* skill includes navigation, comm procedures, and the use of weaponry or special systems you'd normally expect the pilot to handle from the cockpit.

**Primitive Weapon (Agility or Focus):** You've studied bows, slings, throwing weapons, or

some other type of primitive ranged weapon. When you assign a skill point to *Combat: Primitive*, choose a specialty: bow, sling, bola, javelin. You gain a +1 die step bonus on attacks when you use your specialty weapon.

**Profession (any):** Your education and practical experience in a specific trade or profession not otherwise covered by this selection of skills. For example, if you want to be a highly skilled lawyer, assign some skill points to *Profession (lawyer)*. Other professions might include interstellar trader, criminal, or businessperson.

**Resilience (Vitality):** Your ability to fight through or minimize injuries with sheer willpower and a high pain tolerance. As an action in a combat scene, you can attempt a *Resilience* check to reduce the skill check penalty for a wound you've suffered by 1/2/3 steps for an Average/Excellent/Stellar success. You suffer the normal penalty for being wounded when you make the check. When you reduce a wound penalty, you don't un-check the wound box; you just ignore some of the penalty. You can only attempt a *Resilience* check once per action scene.

**Science (Intelligence):** You're trained in a science such as astronomy, biology, chemistry, genetics, physics, or planetology (a combination of geology, meteorology, and environmental science). Choose a field to specialize in; you gain a +1 step bonus on checks related to that specific field of study.

**Security (Agility or Intelligence):** Knowledge of alarms, detectors, locks, and monitoring systems, both physical and electronic. Burglars and safecrackers take this skill to be good at opening things, while security professionals and law enforcers take this skill to set up systems criminals can't get through.

**Stealth (Agility or Focus):** The ability to not be noticed. In a natural setting, this involves making good use of cover and camouflage, staying downwind of one's target, and avoiding noisy twigs on the ground. Trying to not be noticed by “fitting in” with an urban setting should be a *Misdirection* check, not a *Stealth* check.

**Survival (Vitality or Focus):** Knowledge of survival techniques and training for difficult environments. Freezing cold or days without water might call for *Endurance* checks, but a successful *Survival* check means you avoid that risk of exposure from freezing cold or find a way to get water before you're actually threatened with harm.

*This is a game without a dedicated magic healer, so the Medicine skill matters. Even a point or two can make all the difference in the world.*

*Science works best when you exclaim it loudly as you roll the dice: “Science!”*



**Willpower (Focus):** The ability to concentrate or maintain one’s determination in the face of distractions, as well as resist unusual influences or mental attacks (in settings where that sort of thing can happen). Like *Dodge* or *Endurance*, your GM will tell you when a *Willpower* skill check is called for.

## GEAR DESCRIPTIONS

Every character must be properly outfitted for adventure. This playtest provides a selection of weapons, armor, and other gear for PCs.

### ARMOR

Armor ranges from 20th-century Kevlar vests to various advanced-material garments and suits of powered or unpowered plate armor.

**Physical and Energy:** The amount of damage reduction the armor provides against this type of damage.

**Move:** The reduction in the wearer’s movement speed. Armor Training reduces this penalty.

**Armor Penalty:** Some physical skills are harder to perform in heavy or bulky armor (for example, Initiative checks, Acrobatics, Athletics, Dodge, Extreme Sports, or Stealth). Armor Training reduces this penalty.

### SPECIAL ARMOR DESCRIPTIONS

**Carbon Fiber Plate:** This armor offers excellent physical protection, but degrades in effectiveness with repeated hits. Each time the wearer is hit for 10+ damage before the armor’s resistance is applied, reduce the armor’s resistance values by 1.

**Exoskeleton:** Actuators in the suit boost the wearer’s Strength to an effective 9 for purposes of lifting and carrying things. The wearer’s unarmed damage increases to 1d8+0/3 physical.

## WEAPONS

Weapons range from simple melee knives to high-powered energy rifles. The tables below list the following attributes for each weapon:

**Skill:** Which combat skill you use to attack with the weapon.

**Type:** When you choose a weapon skill, you can choose a weapon type to specialize in. This indicates what specialty the weapon falls under.

**Range:** The maximum effective range is indicated for each weapon. From nearest to furthest, the ranges are Adjacent, Close (20m), Medium (50m), Long (200m), and Very Long range (500m). Some weapons might have special properties that make Very Long range longer.

**Mag:** Indicates how many shots the weapon can typically take before requiring a reload action.

**Speed:** The number of impulses it takes you to make an attack with this weapon (see Initiative in the Combat section for more information).

**Damage:** There are two levels of weapon damage that correspond to the varying degree of success of an attack, separated by slashes in the damage expression. For example, 1d6+1/5 indicates that the weapon’s damage is 1d6+1 for an Average success or 1d6+5 for an Excellent success. A Stellar success deals two wound boxes using the Excellent damage roll. Weapon damage has a “type” such as physical or energy, which may result in the damage being reduced by the target’s armor rating.

### SPECIAL WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

**Diskos:** It’s a hyper-sharp circular saw on a 1-meter handle. (Hat tip to William Hope Hodgson.)

**Flechette Gun:** The flechette gun shoots a pattern of small but lethal darts. It has the Brutal property: When you hit a target at Close range, roll damage normally but mark off one extra wound box.

### ARMOR STATS

Armor	Physical	Energy	Move	Penalty	Special
DuraWeb Coat	1	3			
Hardmesh Uniform	2	2			
Polymer Mail	4	2	–4 meters	–2 steps	
Carbon Fiber Plate	6	3	–4 meters	–2 steps	Degrades 1 after reducing hit of 10 or more
Exoskeleton	5	4	–2 meters	–3 steps	+2 steps on Strength checks

## HAND-TO-HAND AND MELEE WEAPON STATS

Weapon	Skill	Type	Speed	Damage	Special
Unarmed	Hand	Brawl	3	1d4 + 0/2 physical	
Combat Knife	Hand	Knife	3	1d6 + 1/5 physical	
Shock Glove	Hand	Brawl	4	1d6 + 2/3 energy	Endurance check or stun
Tactical Baton	Melee	Striking	3	1d4 + 0/4 physical	
Diskos	Melee	Powered	4	1d8 + 3/9 physical	

## RANGED AND HEAVY WEAPON STATS

Weapon	Skill	Type	Rng	Mag	Speed	Damage	Special
Light Pistol	Firearms	Pistol	M	10	3	1d6 + 1/5 physical	
Heavy Pistol	Firearms	Pistol	M	10	4	1d8 +1/6 physical	
Shotgun	Firearms	Assault	M	5	4	1d8 + 0/5 physical	Brutal
Assault Rifle	Firearms	Rifle	VL	20	3	1d8 + 2/8 physical	
Sniper Rifle	Firearms	Rifle	VL	5	4	1d8 + 2/9 physical	+1 step accuracy
Laser Pistol	Energy	Pistol	L	10	3	1d6 + 0/6 energy	+1 step accuracy
Laser Rifle	Energy	Rifle	VL	15	4	1d6 + 1/8 energy	+1 step accuracy
Sonic Bore	Energy	Assault	C	10	4	1d8 + 0/5 energy	2 adjacent targets
Flechette Gun	Firearms	Assault	M	10	3	1d6 + 1/5 physical	+1 step accuracy, Brutal
Plasma Pistol	Energy	Pistol	M	5	3	2d4/2d8 energy	
Plasma Rifle	Energy	Rifle	L	10	4	2d6/2d12 energy	
Rail Rifle	Heavy	Direct	VL	20	5	1d8+4/8 physical	Armor Piercing 3
Grenade, Blast	Athletics		*		4	1d8 + 4(0) energy	Blast 3(6) m
Grenade, Thermal	Athletics		*		4	1d8 + 6(2) energy	Blast 3 (6) m, Ignite

**Grenade:** You can throw a grenade up to 20 meters.

**Blast Grenade:** A simple high-explosive bomb.

**Thermal Grenade:** A target hit by a thermal grenade begins taking damage over time (fire). At the end of the action round, the target makes a *Dodge* check as a free action. On a success, the fire goes out. On a failure, the target suffers 1 wound in the least severe open box and must check again next round.

**Lasers:** Lasers are very accurate. When you attack with a laser, you gain a +1 die step bonus on your attack roll.

**Rail Rifle:** The rail rifle is armor-piercing. Reduce the target's physical armor value by 3 when you roll damage for your rail rifle attack

**Shock Glove:** When you hit a target with a shock glove, the target must make an *Endurance* check with a +2 die step bonus or be stunned for 1 round. If you got an Excellent

success on your attack, the target's *Endurance* check is at +0 steps. If you got a Stellar success on your attack, the target's *Endurance* check is at -2 die steps.

**Shotgun:** The shotgun has the Brutal property. When you hit a target at Close range with a shotgun, roll damage normally but mark off one extra wound box.

**Sonic Bore:** You can attack two targets at the same time with this weapon, provided the two targets are adjacent to each other. Make separate attack and damage rolls.

## OTHER GEAR

We'll cover more tools and special items in the Core Rules. Here are a couple of sample items mentioned on the pregen character sheets.

**Com Set:** A light hands-free headset that gives you radio comms with a range of 50 km or phone comms if there's any local communication net.

*This is just an appetizer for all the weapons that you'll find in the full-fledged ALTERNITY game. We love our fictional guns, power armor, and power-tools-repurposed-for-combat around here.*

*The sonic bore is hideously LOUD.*





**Datapad:** A portable handheld computer with a touch-screen interface and a number of useful apps. It's got satellite-datalink capability so it can draw on the ship's computer from anywhere in the same hemisphere (and the ship's computer has a local clone of the world internet).

**Geoscanner:** A handheld ground-penetrating radar. You can see up to 10 meters into or through a surface such as earth, rock, dirt, or even water to find buried or sunken objects. You can detect open spaces inside the surface (a cave or cavity) but you can't see what's in them.

**Med Pack:** You can treat a wounded character as a 3-impulse action. When you do, roll a *Medicine* skill check (see the *Medicine* skill description for details). A med pack can treat 10 wounds before it's expended.

**Repair Kit:** An assortment of tools needed to repair broken gear: wrench, pliers, hammer, screwdriver, fasteners like nails, bolts, and screws, power meters, replacement wiring, and so on. Also includes a laser cutting torch.

**Survival Pack:** A light backpack containing two 1-liter water bottles, a water purifier, a 2-person tent, a highly compressed sleeping bag, 5 kg of rations (sufficient for 7 days), a firestarter, 30 meters of light nylon cord (strong enough to support 200 kg), a compass, a small knife, and a roll of duct tape.

**Thruster Belt:** You can jump or fly up to 60 meters in a short burst. This requires 2 impulses (see The Action Round), so you can't jet and attack at the same time. If you don't alight on a solid surface within 60 meters, you'll fall from whatever height you're at when the jets cut out.

**Wound Gel:** This tube contains goo filled with healing nanobots. Applying the gel heals a graze, light wound, or moderate wound; reduces a serious wound to moderate; or reduces a critical wound to serious. You don't need any medical training to use wound gel. A tube contains a single dose.

## THE CORE MECHANIC

In the *ALTERNITY* Roleplaying Game, your Gamemaster presents a narrative that features a variety of mysterious, challenging, or dangerous situations. You decide how your character interacts with the story the GM presents: Do you follow the drug lord's courier, or do you stay hidden and continue your stakeout? Do you try to sneak past the sentry 'bot, convince it that you have the proper authorization to pass, or simply blow it to bits with your plasma pistol?

Sometimes the GM simply incorporates your decision into the narrative, and then describes what happens next. But in situations where failure is a real possibility and comes with serious consequences—for example, failing to stop an orbiter from crashing or losing a gunfight—the narrative can't go forward until you find out whether your character succeeds or fails in the scene at hand.

**Checks:** To determine whether your character's action succeeds or not, you'll make a check of some kind. Usually this will be a **skill check**. To make a check, roll a d20 and compare it to your character's **skill score**. If your die roll equals or exceeds your check score, you succeed on the check.

## FIGURING YOUR SKILL SCORE

Your skill score is equal to 20 – (your key ability + your skill training). For example, if you have Strength 5 and 4 skill points in *Athletics*, your *Athletics* skill score is (20 – 9) 11. Whenever you make an *Athletics* check, you're trying to roll an 11 or better to get an Average success.

## THE DIFFICULTY DIE

Your check scores are the same each time you test them—if your Strength is 4, your untrained Strength skill score is 16 whether you're trying to break down a wooden panel door, bust through a steel fire door, or kick open an armored hatch in a spaceship. Clearly some Strength checks are easier than others. To represent the difficulty of the specific check you're attempting, the GM assigns a difficulty die to your check.

Tests that are easier than normal allow you to **add** a difficulty die to the result of the d20 you roll when you make a check.

*Depending on your campaign setting and tech level, characters might not benefit from a med pack if a med pack was recently applied to that character. Effective frequency may be limited to once per combat, once per hour, or even once per day. For this playtest, there is no such restriction.*

*To put it another way, the target DC for any skill check is 20. Roll d20 and add your ability score and your skill points. It's the exact same math, it's just a matter of whether you want to figure out your target die rolls ahead of time as skill scores or record your check bonus instead.*

Tests that are harder than normal require you to **subtract** a difficulty die from the result of the d20 you roll when you make a check.

The sum (or difference) of the d20 and your difficulty die is your check result. Compare this to the check score you're testing to see if you succeed or fail.

Difficulty	Die Modifier
Piece of cake	+d20
Extremely easy	+d12
Very easy	+d8
Easy	+d6
Moderately easy	+d4
Ordinary	—
Moderately hard	−d4
Hard	−d6
Very hard	−d8
Extremely hard	−d12
Brutal	−d20

**Design Note:** A trained character has about a 50–50 shot of succeeding on a check of Ordinary difficulty. If you think the test is something a trained character should have about a 75% or 80% success rate on, make it Very Easy or Extremely Easy. If you think the trained character shouldn't really fail the check, don't make a check at all. The GM can stipulate success in routine tasks.

Untrained characters only have about a 20% chance to succeed on an Ordinary check. They'll probably fail unless they can find a way to make the check easier.

## THE DIFFICULTY SCALE

Not every advantage or disadvantage is created the same. The difference between a specific difficulty level and the next is referred to as a die step. A minor complication might be worth only a 1-step penalty, but a major impediment to your intended action might deserve a 2- or 3-step penalty. You might also find that multiple small complications “add up” to make an otherwise straightforward skill check extremely hard, or that the advantages and disadvantages offset (a +1 die step bonus winds up being canceled out by a −1 die step penalty).

You normally begin at an Ordinary level of difficulty (no bonus or penalty with a difficulty die). As the GM applies a bonus or a penalty

for the circumstances of the check, you effectively move up or down the “scale.”

**Example:** *Martin Ramirez finds himself in a gunfight in the middle of a nightclub that's on fire. He draws his pistol and targets the nearest thug, who's half-concealed in the doorway to the kitchen. The GM decides that the thug's cover is worth a 1-step penalty to the attack, and the thin smoke filling the room is worth another 1-step penalty. The attack goes from Ordinary difficulty (no bonus or penalty) to Hard (a −d6 difficulty die).*

*The next time Martin gets to shoot, that thug is suddenly badly distracted by the fact that his clothes just caught on fire. When you attack a distracted target you gain a +1 die step bonus to your roll. This offsets some of the previous penalty, making this next attack only Moderately Hard (a −d4 difficulty die).*

In general, assigning the difficulty die and deciding which factors merit increasing or decreasing the size of the die are up to the GM. Some common penalties or bonuses in combat situations are summarized in the next section.

## SUCCESS LEVELS

When your check result exceeds your check score by a wide margin, you not only succeed—you succeed with better than normal results.

If your check result is equal to or better than your skill score, you achieve an Average success.

If your check result is at least **5** more than your skill score, you achieve an Excellent success.

If your check result is at least **10** more than your skill score, you achieve a Stellar success on this check.

The exact effects of Excellent and Stellar success vary with the skill you're using. If you're attacking, a better grade of success usually results in more damage. If you're working your way through some kind of challenge scene, a high success grade might mean that you make better progress in climbing the wall, solving the puzzle, completing the surgery, or whatever it is you're trying to do.

*If it's a key check you're making, talk with the GM and briefly “negotiate” for positive steps depending on the environment, the tools at hand, and other circumstances that may be in your favor. That conversation is the heart of the game, and it sets you up for a dramatic die roll.*

*One of the great things about success levels is that you can improvise a bit and model degrees of success, depending on the Average/Excellent/Stellar result.*



## COMBAT

Characters in the *ALTERNITY* game aren't routinely wading into the science-fiction equivalent of dungeons and chopping up hordes of aliens with laser swords (although sometimes that sort of thing can happen). Combat scenes are intended to serve as important obstacles and challenges in the typical *ALTERNITY* adventure. They're situations in which the characters are in real danger of getting hurt or killed as the story unfolds. Most *ALTERNITY* adventures feature at least a few combat scenes as the heroes encounter dangerous aliens, fight their way through a crime boss's thugs, or resort to force to stop a master villain from doing something terrible.

## THE ACTION ROUND

When you find yourself in a combat situation, it's important to figure out which character—hero, villain, or alien—acts in what order. Combat is therefore organized into **action rounds**. An action round is in turn broken into eight **impulses**. The best way to think of the action round and the impulses is like a clock. After you complete impulse 8 of one round, you begin impulse 1 of the next round—and characters that act late in the round might not act again until impulse 2 or 3 of the new round.

*As you play, plan ahead! Know when you'll act next on the wheel — and what can go wrong between now and then.*



## INITIATIVE

At the beginning of a combat scene, the GM asks all players in the scene to make an Initiative check. (The GM makes one check for each separate group of enemies in the scene.) A character or creature's initiative score works just like a skill score—the character rolls a d20 and adds or subtracts the appropriate difficulty die. This provides a Stellar, Excellent, Average, or Failure result for the character's initiative roll.

Combatants that succeed on their initiative check can take their first action in Impulse 1.

Combatants act in order of initiative success on the first impulse of a combat scene (so a Stellar result goes first, then an Excellent result, then Average results). In subsequent rounds, combatants act as described below.

Combatants that fail on their initiative check can take their first action in Impulse 2.

It's not unusual for multiple characters from either side in the combat to have an action available in the same impulse. When this happens, combatants act as follows:

When two combatants have the same level of success on their initiative checks and both are taking their first action in the scene, the highest actual total serves as the tiebreaker.

In later impulses, use a "First-In First-Out" priority. In other words, the first character whose prior action places him in Impulse 5 (for instance) gets to act in Impulse 5 before the second character whose prior action placed her in Impulse 5, who acts before the third character with an action to take in Impulse 5, and so on.

Combatants who have not acted yet in the scene are considered "First-In" and act before combatants who took 1-impulse actions in Impulse 1.

If there are any environmental effects or timed effects in play (for example, a radiation field slowly killing everything in the compartment), those effects are resolved at the end of Impulse 8, after all heroes and adversaries who act in that impulse have resolved their actions.

## THE NEXT ACTION

When a creature acts in an impulse, the action usually requires 1 to 5 impulses. That means that a character who takes a 3-impulse action in Impulse 2 gets to take his or her next action in Impulse 5. The "next action" wraps around the end of the round, so a creature that takes a 3-impulse action in Impulse 7 acts



*Terrain can be your best ally in combat — or your worst enemy. Get to the good ground first!*

again in Impulse 2 of the next round. We suggest using markers or tokens to keep track of when each character or adversary gets his or her next action in the combat scene.

## ACTIONS AND IMPULSES

Actions in combat (or other time-sensitive scenes) require some number of impulses. A list of common actions appears below.

- **Attack** (3–5 impulses): Use a combat skill to make an attack, and move up to 2 meters. Requires a number of impulses equal to the weapon's speed.
- **Use a Skill** (3 impulses): Use a non-combat skill suitable for an action scene. You can also move up to 2 meters.
- **Move** (2 impulses): Move up to 20 meters.
- **Interact** (1 impulse): Interact with an object. For example, draw a weapon, open a door, enter something on a keypad.
- **Stand or Fall Prone** (1 impulse): Get up from the ground, or throw yourself prone.

In addition, there are three special actions that modify other actions you're taking—aim, charge, and evade (sorry, you can only use one of these at a time).

**Aim:** You take careful aim when you make an attack. You gain a +1 die step bonus on your attack roll if you aim, but you increase the time it takes to make the attack by 1 impulse.

**Charge:** You move up to half your speed and make an attack with a hand-to-hand or melee weapon. Charging requires 1 impulse more than making a normal attack.

**Evade:** You concentrate on not getting hit while you're performing any other action. Enemies attacking you suffer a –1 die step penalty on their attack roll, but you increase the time it takes to complete the action by 1 impulse. For example, if you evade while moving, it's a 3-impulse action. If you are highly trained in the *Dodge* skill, the penalty to attack you could be 2, 3, or even 4 steps; see the *Dodge* skill for details.

*One of the ways SF settings like ALTERNITY differ from their dungeonbound counterparts is that there's a lot more to interact with. Most encounters have computers to hack, buttons to press, and death rays to activate.*

*Two meters? That's inside the room!*



The aim, charge, and evade additions really make tactical combat come alive. Whether you're a player or a GM, remember to use them!

## MOVEMENT AND POSITION

Creatures that are within 2 meters of each other are adjacent. In general, you need to be adjacent to a target to attack it in hand to hand combat or melee combat.

Facing isn't important in an *ALTERNITY* game combat scene—we assume that most creatures can quickly turn to meet any approaching threat, even when it isn't their turn to act. However, there are two times when position is important:

- If two or more allies are adjacent to the same enemy, the allied creatures gain a +1 step bonus on their attacks.
- Cover is often directional—just because you can turn to face the mutant sneaking up behind you, it doesn't mean the wall you're hiding behind moves too. Moving to a spot where you can attack around your enemy's cover is Tactics 101.

If you decide to use miniatures and a grid, hex map, or other such surface to represent tactical positioning, we recommend a scale of 2 meters to a square (or hex). Most people take up a lot less space than that, but in a fight an average human can control about a meter of space all around her.

## ATTACKS

When you try to punch, stab, or shoot an adversary, you're making an attack. An attack is basically a skill check using the skill appropriate for your weapon. (The weapons table in the Equipment chapter lists the relevant skill for each weapon.) Making a weapon skill check is often referred to as "making an attack roll."

Your target's defensive ability or situation is measured by modifying the difficulty die of your attack check. A target that's small, well-covered, or dodging effectively is a tough shot, and might subtract 3 or 4 die steps from your attack roll. A target that you've had a chance to zero in on or that you catch completely off-guard is easier to hit than normal, so you might add a die step or two to your attack roll. Here's a list of common attack modifiers:

+2 steps	Stunned or unaware target
+2 steps	Very big target (elephant, car)
+1 step	Big target (horse and rider)
+1 step	Attacker aimed
+1 step	Target is dazed or distracted
+1 step	Target prone (vs. melee attacks)
-1 step	Target prone (vs. ranged attacks)
-1 step	Target is at Medium range
-1 step	Target has some cover
-1 step	Target is evading
-1 step	Small target (drone, raccoon)
-2 steps	Very small target (rat, soda can)
-2 steps	Target has good cover
-2 steps	Target is at Long range
-3 steps	Target is at Very Long range

**Cover and Evading:** If a target is both evading and behind cover, don't stack the attack penalties. Just use the best one that applies. Either you're trying to hide as much of your body as possible behind the cover, or you're trying to keep moving to avoid being an easy target. You can't really do both at the same time.

## RANGE

In the *ALTERNITY* game, your heroes might mix it up in a knife-fight against an opponent within arm's reach or try to pick off enemies with 500-meter rifle shots—it all depends on the situation. There are five range categories in the game:

- Adjacent (2 meters or less)
- Close (2 to 20 meters)
- Medium (21 to 50 meters)
- Long (51 to 200 meters)
- Very Long (201 to 500 meters)

Some weapons have special characteristics that extend range—a powerful sniper rifle might allow a shot of 1,500 meters or more, while a shotgun firing a rifled slug could attack at Long range.

## BLASTS

If you have a grenade, you're not trying to hit the bad guy with it. You just need to get it near him. The attack roll of a blast weapon measures how close you got. Usually this is a

GMs: At the point where *ALTERNITY* has a GM screen, you can bet these modifiers will be front and center on it.

*Heavy Weapons* skill check for something like a mortar, or an *Athletics* skill check for a thrown weapon such as a grenade.

- On an Excellent or Stellar success, you hit the point you aimed for. That is now the center of the blast. On an Average success, you hit 2 meters from your aim point.
- On a failure, you miss your aiming point by 2d4 meters in a random direction. You might still be close enough to injure your intended target.
- Creatures in the blast radius can attempt *Dodge* checks to escape or hit the deck.
- Any creatures remaining in the area take damage from the blast.

Blasts simply deal a set amount of damage in a radius. For example, a blast grenade deals 1d8 + 4 damage to targets within 3 meters, or 1d8 + 0 damage to targets within 6 meters.

Creatures threatened by a blast are allowed to make a *Dodge* skill check to get out of the blast radius. A successful check increases the creature's distance from the blast center by 2, 4, or 6 meters for an Average, Excellent, or Stellar success. If the threatened creature is now out of the area of the blast, he or she takes no damage. If you successfully dodge out of the area or take damage from the blast, you're now prone. If you're in the blast but take no damage, you're still on your feet.

Hard cover also protects against blasts. A character with cover between him and the center of the blast gains a +1, +2, or +3 die step bonus on the *Dodge* check (for half, three-quarters, or nine-tenths cover). Success increases the effective distance as described above, but you don't actually need to move—you just duck in place and let your cover take some or all of the blast.

## DAMAGE AND DURABILITY

A successful attack deals damage based upon its success level. Each weapon or ability indicates the base damage for Average, Excellent, or Stellar attacks.

**Damage Severity:** The effect of a successful hit is a single wound or injury with a severity of 0 to 16 or more. A laser pistol that hits for 8 damage does NOT deal 8 points of damage—it deals one wound with a severity of 8. These aren't hit points!

Severity	Result
0 or less	No damage
1 to 3	Graze
4 to 6	Light wound
7 to 9	Moderate wound
10 to 12	Serious wound
13 to 15	Critical wound
16+	Mortal Wound

**Armor Resistance:** A target's armor reduces incoming damage. Subtract the armor resistance value from the damage severity to determine the actual severity of the wound the target suffers. For example, if the target is wearing a ballistic vest that has a resistance of 3 and you hit him with a rifle shot for damage 8, the target's armor reduces the injury to a light wound of 5.

**Damage Type:** Damage is described as physical (bullets, blades, impact, etc.) or energy (lasers, radiation, plasma, electricity, and so on). Some types of armor are more effective against one kind of damage than others—a knight's plate armor does okay with physical damage but doesn't help much against energy weapons.

*The effects of losing your last wound box might actually vary with genre. In a gritty post-apocalyptic game, your character might be dead, no questions asked. In a far-future post-Singularity game, your consciousness might instantly download to a clone or artificial body. A "middle of the road" genre might give your character a chance to pull through with medical attention or a great Resilience roll and a chance to die without that sort of help.*

## SKILLS IN COMBAT

Here's a quick summary of the skills you may need in combat:

- Use a weapon skill to make an attack.
- A high Dodge skill makes your evade actions better.
- Dodge also serves as a "saving throw" against area attacks.
- Endurance is your "saving throw" against poison, radiation, disease, or similar deleterious conditions.
- Resilience allows you to minimize the effect of a wound you receive.
- Medicine can allow you to treat the injuries of others.

## THE DURABILITY TRACK

Your hero has a number of wound boxes that correspond to the severity of damage results. These boxes are grouped into damage bands. A typical character has two wound boxes in each band except the top band, where all characters have just one. Some characters might have more or fewer wound boxes based upon their archetype, attributes, and gear.



The distracted condition is a pretty good catch-all for mild physical distress, like sudden zero-G or temporary extremes of heat or cold.

When your character takes damage, mark off a wound box that corresponds to the severity of the damage. If you have no wound boxes remaining in that damage band, then you instead mark off an open box in the next highest damage band.

## TYPICAL HERO DURABILITY TRACK

Band	Wds.	Effects
1–3	□□	No ill effects
4–6	□□	No ill effects
7–9	□□	1-step penalty to all checks
10–12	□□	2-step penalty to all checks
13–15	□□	3-step penalty to all checks
16+	□	Incapacitated

**Example:** A laser blast hits Martin Ramirez for damage 8. His carbon fiber armor provides 3 resistance, so the actual wound severity is 5. Martin's player marks off a wound box in the 4–6 tier. If Martin had no wound boxes remaining in the 4–6 tier, his player would instead mark off the first available box in the 7–9 tier.

## EFFECTS OF DAMAGE

A character suffers negative effects from taking too much damage, determined by the highest band in which the character has a marked wound box (in other words, multiple wounds don't produce stacking penalties—you just suffer the worst penalty you have). A hero can usually shrug off a few small hits, but too many small hits—or one solid shot from an enemy—can seriously affect the hero's actions.

**Incapacitated:** When a character checks off the highest wound box, he or she is incapacitated. An incapacitated character falls unconscious and can take no actions. Instead, he or she immediately attempts a Resilience skill check (do not include the step penalty for injuries). If the character fails the Resilience check, he or she is unconscious and mortally wounded and will not survive the injury without urgent medical intervention. If the character succeeds on the check, he or she is unconscious but stable, and might pull through.

For purposes of this Quickstart Guide, you can assume that an incapacitated character cannot be revived without at least an hour of urgent medical treatment in a trauma center. More detailed death and dying rules appear in the *ALTERNITY* SFRPG Core Rules.

## STATUS EFFECTS

In general, you can attempt to end a condition affecting you by making an appropriate skill check as a 1-impulse action.

**Distracted:** You're not able to pay full attention to your foes for some reason. Enemies attacking you get a +1 die step bonus. Usually you aren't distracted for more than one action, but if the effect is persistent, you can attempt a *Willpower* check to shake it off.

**Grappled:** If you're grappled, you can't move, and you take a –1 die step penalty on all skill checks except hand-to-hand attacks against your grappler or escape attempts. To escape, make an opposed *Hand to Hand* check against your grappler—if you equal or beat your opponent's level of success, you pull free.

**Insane:** You are not in control of your actions. The next time you take an action, roll a d10 to determine what you do:

1–3	Flee, moving away from all other creatures
4–6	Do nothing for 3 impulses
7–8	Attack the last creature that attacked you
9	Attack the closest creature, friend or foe
10	Act normally

After you take the action dictated by your insanity, you can attempt to shake off the condition by making a *Willpower* check (0 additional impulses). If you fail, you're still insane at the start of your next action.

**Prone:** Prone characters have a speed of 2 meters. Standing up from prone takes a 1-impulse action.

**Stunned:** Delay your next action by 3 impulses. If you were evading, you stop evading.

## WRECK OF THE *MAGELLAN*

Welcome to the 26th Century. Human government is in the power of an overbearing Stellar Union bureaucracy and dozens of powerful megacorps, but a few forward-thinkers are dedicated to expanding the frontiers of human space. A leading light in this effort is the Icarus Foundation . . . but now one of the Foundation's survey ships, the *Magellan*, is missing.

### SETUP

The Icarus Foundation has received a “destruction beacon” signal from *Magellan*, a scout cruiser returning from an exploration of H’naal ruins in the Scorpius Sector. Interestingly enough, *Magellan* reported the discovery of an important artifact just before its destruction. Dr. Tharsi and Captain Carr of the drivescout *Simon Fraser* have been ordered to find the cruiser’s wreckage, determine what happened, and recover its cargo.

Hand out one pregenerated character to each player. Encourage your players to share who their characters are and why they’re on board *Fraser*—the party’s been traveling together for days and they’ve had plenty of time to make each other’s acquaintance.

When you’re ready to begin, read the boxed “Introductory Narration” text.

### CHARACTERS

- Dr. Grace Tharsi, Senior Scientist
- Captain Vance Carr, commander of the *Fraser*
- Engineer Omari Temu of *Fraser*
- Specialist Dieter Frank of *Fraser*
- Archeologist Miles Montero, the antiquities dealer
- Agent Masako Wade, Stellar Union Investigative Service

Some additional guidance, if needed:

*Who’s in charge?* Captain Vance and Dr. Tharsi share command. They have about as much authority as any mid-tier managers do, so they can’t legally shoot subordinates for refusing commands (for example).

*What do we know about Magellan?* Do we have a crew list or manifest? *Magellan* is another drivescout, a little bigger than *Simon Fraser*. It had orders to explore H’naal sites around Xi Scorpii A, a week’s travel from Xi Scorpii D. Its crew consisted of Captain Brock; Dr. Ayers, science team leader; scientists Falco, Perez, and Wirt; and crewhands Kemal, Morales, Rogers, and Zhang.

*Is there anything dangerous out here?* Humans haven’t met any other starfaring

### INTRODUCTORY NARRATION

The Icarus Foundation is at the forefront of humanity’s efforts to explore the stars—an expensive effort that Stellar Union bureaucrats are all too happy to outsource to licensed exploration organizations. Icarus operates a dozen survey driveships, but two weeks ago one of them—the *Magellan*—reported its destruction via its automated beacon.

*Magellan* had previously reported the discovery of an important H’naal artifact at Xi Scorpii, a multistar system about 90 light-years from Earth. (The H’naal are a long-vanished alien civilization; humans have found no H’naal sites less than a million years old.) Strangely, the last message *Magellan* sent was almost incomprehensible: “G’nah . . . it calls, it calls, hishnaga zor g’nah . . . help us, for the love of God . . . free us, G’nah!”

Most of you are Icarus employees, the crew and science team of the drivescout *Simon Fraser*. Your mission: Investigate the disappearance or destruction of *Magellan*, and recover the artifact if possible.

species yet, but we’ve run across evidence of older starfaring races that explored this part of the galaxy in the distant past. Human outlaws or corporate conflicts are a possibility closer to inhabited worlds, but Xi Scorpii is a long way from any populated areas. It’s very unlikely that other humans are out this far.

*Do we have a warp drive? How fast can our ship go?* The ship has a FTL drive that can cover about a light-year per day. For in-system maneuvering ships use a reactionless EM drive that can generate about 5G of thrust at full power. (That’ll get you from the Earth to the Moon in about 2 hours.)

### FOR THE GM: THE REAL STORY

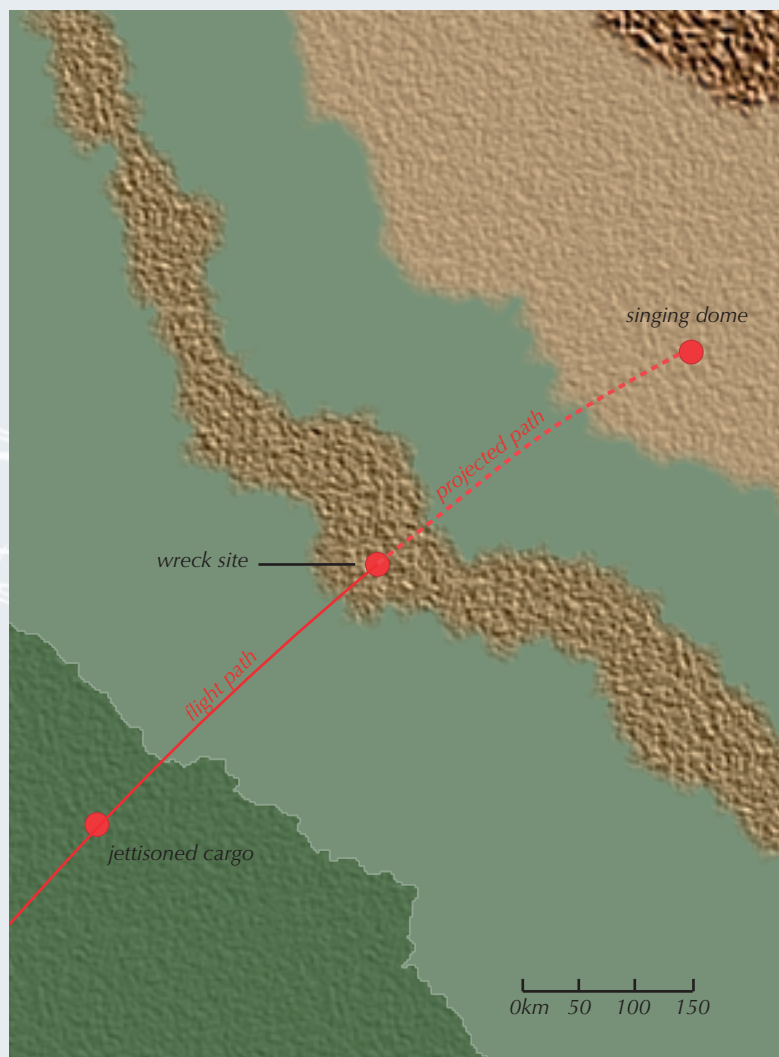
*Magellan* found a H’naal artifact on a barren world orbiting Xi Scorpii A (a different part of this large and complex star system). The artifact was a stasis chamber of some kind; the crew brought their find on board and headed back to civilization to begin the process of carefully salvaging its contents—several similar chambers have been recovered in recent years and usually contain interesting artifacts. Unfortunately, *Magellan*’s chief scientist inadvertently opened the chamber and released

*In the absence of actual Greeks, pronounce it “scorpie-eye.” It sounds more SF that way.*

*If you have a smaller group, encourage at least one player to be either Vance or Grace, and run any unchosen characters as NPCs. They’re still present, even if the PCs aren’t running them.*



## Xi Scorpil D Sites



Without chewing the scenery too much, give Simon a personality of "his" own. The PCs will likely interact with Simon more than any other NPC.

a dangerous alien—a living H'naal anxious to return to its homeworld at Xi Scorpil D.

The H'naal are powerful telepaths. The creature compelled *Magellan's* crew to set course for Xi Scorpil D while clouding their minds to keep them from realizing it had escaped stasis. But controlling the whole crew at once proved too difficult, and in the end the H'naal's control slipped. Two of *Magellan's* crew managed to escape by jettisoning themselves in the ship's cargo pod. *Magellan's* pilot, struggling to resist the alien compulsion, lost control of the ship during planetary approach and wound up crashing hard on Xi Scorpil D-1, resulting in the deaths of most of the crew. However, the H'naal and Dr. Ayers survived the crash. The alien salvaged some materials from the crash site, and set out on foot for the ancient H'naal station it was trying to reach with Dr. Ayers under its telepathic control.

When the heroes arrive aboard their own ship, *Magellan* is wrecked on the surface of Xi Scorpil D-1. Two survivors are hiding out near the hard-to-spot remains of the cargo pod two hundred kilometers away. And the H'naal and its captive are at a long-lost H'naal site hidden in a mountain valley about fifty kilometers from the wreck.

## DS SIMON FRASER

The heroes' ship is a drivescout named *Simon Fraser*, after the Old Earth explorer. The ship is about 80 meters long and 15 meters in diameter. Most of its hull volume is taken up by drives and power plants; the actual living space is a module at the forward end, about the size of decent 3-bedroom apartment. There are ten small private cubicles for personal quarters, plus a cramped captain's cabin and a mission commander's cabin. It carries sufficient food supplies to support a crew of 6 for about 60 days; the journey from the nearest Icarus base to Xi Scorpil takes about 10 days in drivespace.

*Simon Fraser* has no weapons, but it's tough enough to stand up to just about any amount of small arms fire or even light anti-vehicular weaponry. The ship is equipped with aerofoils and heavy landing struts for entering atmosphere and landing on any reasonably clear patch of ground. The ship carries no separate landing vehicles or shuttles.

*Fraser* has a simple onboard computer system (nicknamed Simon, of course) that is about as sophisticated as your typical iPhone. Simon can open and close hatches or safely "button up" the ship when the heroes are absent, but it can't fly *Fraser* on its own.

Finally, *Fraser* does have a drivecomm system that allows contact across interstellar distances. But drivecomms have very limited bandwidth (not much more than an early 20th-century telegram), and it takes several days of "real time" for the message to reach its destination.

## XI SCORPIL D-1

All of the action in this adventure takes place on one planet of this system: Xi Scorpil D-1. The Xi Scorpil star system is actually a five-star system with three stars in one group, and two stars in a second group about 8000 AU distant. Xi Scorpil A is home to a Mars-like world with H'naal ruins (this is the planet *Magellan* was sent to explore).

D and E are a pair of orange dwarfs. Each has several barren rocky planets, but D is also home to a terran-type world with a nitrogen-oxygen atmosphere and a thriving biosphere. This is Xi Scorpii D-1, the scene of the action in this adventure.

D-1 is a little smaller than Earth, with about three-quarters Earth's gravity and prominent highlands. If you have to reduce it to one quick description, call it a "mountain-jungle world" like the Andes Mountains. There are a number of H'naal sites hidden in its rugged terrain, but it will take months of careful survey to discover them all. It would be a good candidate for human settlement, although its native lifeforms are pretty dangerous (as the heroes may learn).

## SCENE 1: ARRIVAL

The adventure begins when the heroes arrive near Magellan's last reported position.

Proceeding to D-1 is routine—no skill checks are needed for just moving around the system. Some other things your players might want to try at this point include:

**Scan for wreckage:** There's nothing in space here. If there's wreckage down on the planet, you'll have to get closer and establish orbit to make a good search and localize the exact source of *Magellan's* distress beacon.

**Look for aliens:** Using the ship's sensors to scan the nearby area is a skill check: *Science* or *Piloting* are most appropriate. However, there isn't anything to see here, so even if the PCs succeed they don't find anything. There are no signs of habitation on any nearby planet, no structures in space, and no other ships in sight.

**Can we explore the system?** Sure, but it's big and empty. Xi Scorpii is enormous, and moving around the system at sub-light speeds takes weeks and weeks. Even searching the asteroid belt or other planets in the vicinity of D will take several days. If there are any survivors from *Magellan*, they might not be able to wait that long.

## SCENE 1: ARRIVAL NARRATION

You cut your drivespace generator and arrive in the Xi Scorpii star system as predicted by your nav systems. You're in a solar orbit around Xi Scorpii D, the fourth of the five stars in this complex system. It's a K-type orange dwarf with three rocky planets in the inner system, an asteroid belt, and two medium-sized gas giants.

*Magellan's* automated distress beacon is continuing to transmit. Now that you're in the same star system, you can localize the signal. It's coming from the surface of Xi Scorpii D-1, the first of the planets. It's a terran-type world that looks like it supports a rich biosphere. It's a couple of million kilometers from your position, a few hours' travel at sub-light speeds.

## SCENE 2: ORBIT NARRATION

Xi Scorpii D-1 is covered in rich green and gold hues, with small burgundy-colored seas. It's a Mars-sized world with striking ten-kilometer mountains and a surprisingly dense nitrogen-oxygen atmosphere. From orbit there are no signs of civilization or obvious wreck sites, but you can tell the distress beacon is transmitting from somewhere in the foothills of a mountain range a little north of the equator.

## SCENE 2: ORBIT

When the heroes approach Xi Scorpii D-1, read the scene narration.

To localize the automated beacon, the heroes must make a careful search with orbital cams and radar. They might also decide to study the planet for other reasons while they're at it.

Ask each player what he or she wants to do while *Fraser* is in orbit: search for *Magellan*, study the planet's conditions and lifeforms, scan for anomalies (basically, looking for anything else), or helping other characters.

**Helping:** Characters who aren't good at operating ship systems can still help. If a character has at least 1 skill point in the relevant skill, he or she can provide a +2 die step bonus to the character he or she is helping. If not, the bonus is only +1 die step (even an untrained character can help by providing a second set of eyes).

*Success in the skill challenge to search for the Magellan is automatic. It's just a matter of how long it takes the PCs to conduct the search.*



**Find Magellan:** Locating the wreck requires a successful skill check with *Science* or *Piloting* at a +3 die step bonus (there's a beacon, after all). The heroes need 3 successes to locate the beacon. An Excellent skill check counts as 2 successes, and a Stellar skill check counts as 3. Each character participating in the search can make 1 check per hour of searching. When the heroes succeed, they find the Wreck Site and can proceed to Scene 3 whenever they like.

When the heroes find the wreck site, read:

*You find a wreck site scattered across the foothills of one of the big mountain ranges. From orbit you can make out a long, plowed impact scar across grassy highlands leading to broken wreckage around a small crater. The ship's in a number of pieces, but it looks like Magellan, and it's clear that the wreck happened recently—not much more than a month ago based on the burned patches of grass and freshly turned-up dirt.*

If the heroes accumulate **5 or more** successes in the search (most likely because multiple characters succeeded, or because the players decided to take a little extra time to be extremely thorough), they also spot the Jettisoned Cargo site (see Scene 4) and can go there when they like.

Read the text below if the heroes spot the Jettisoned Cargo site:

*You discover a large piece of wreckage located in dense jungle 200 kilometers from the primary wreck site, back along Magellan's plotted impact course. It's about the size of a standard cargo module, and must have detached quite a distance before Magellan would have broken up on its own. A quick comparison of the pieces you can observe at the primary wreck site suggests that the secondary site is indeed Magellan's cargo module.*

**Study Lifeforms or Conditions:** Characters who spend time studying D-1's planetology or biosphere from orbit can attempt 1 *Science* skill check per hour. Since there isn't any real end point to this effort, the amount of information the heroes collect is based on the number of successes they accumulate in this effort before they move on to something else. (An Excellent skill check counts as 2 successes, and a Stellar result counts as 3.)

**0:** *It's a Mars-sized planet with a nitrogen-oxygen atmosphere, densely covered with grasslands and forests.*

**1:** *The atmosphere is safe for humans to breathe. It's a little warmer than Earth. Biochemistry appears similar—the plants use photosynthesis, and might be edible.*

**2:** *Large animals are fairly common. You can spot herds of big grazers in the high-latitude steppes and a variety of flying animals above the forests.*

**3:** *The animal life is comparable to Ice Age Earth in size and prevalence.*

**4:** *Biodiversity is surprisingly low—there are a lot of animals, but a smaller number of species than you would expect.*

**5:** *The low biodiversity appears artificial. Either the planet's natural variety was deliberately engineered at some point in the past, or the remaining species represent survivors from a mass extinction caused by intelligent action (or carelessness).*

**6+:** *The mass extinction took place about a million years ago. Many animals and plants were clearly bioengineered before that time.*

If the heroes have the information of at least 3 successes when they land, they gain a +1 die step bonus to initiative checks and non-combat skill checks (for example, *Awareness* or *Survival*) when dealing with the lifeforms of D-1 in Scene 3 and Scene 4.

**Search for Anomalies:** The heroes may study D-1 just to see if anything unusual or out of the ordinary turns up. *Academics*, *Science*, or *Survival* are the primary skills for this kind of search, although a character can also use *Computers* to refine search algorithms and make the best use of Simon's ability to collect and sort data. As before, each search requires 1 hour, and characters earn 1, 2, or 3 successes for an Average, Excellent, or Stellar skill check.

If the heroes collect 3 or more successes, they spot the Singing Dome site from orbit (Scene 5). Read the following:

*Multiple successes are another way to model success above and beyond the norm. In this case it represents thoroughness rather than expertise.*

*Landing the Simon Fraser is pretty routine—the heroes don't have to make any skill checks to put Fraser on the ground. It's just a matter of choosing where to land. The heroes can land as close to a site as they like, although they probably should land at least 100–200 meters away to make sure they don't crush any evidence under their landing struts.*

*At first you don't find much out of the ordinary, but with the help of the ship's computer and some pattern-recognition filters, you spot something interesting—a slightly too symmetrical site in a high altitude plateau near the planet's equator. It lies about a hundred kilometers further along Magellan's final course if you were to extrapolate the ship's intended course from the wreck site. The site consists of a domelike structure about 40 meters in diameter, partially buried by the surrounding soil and scrubby vegetation.*

Characters trained in *Academics* recognize the site's plan as generally consistent with H'naal ruins that have been found on other worlds.

**Next:** The heroes can't do much more from orbit. They'll need to set down at the Wreck Site (Scene 3), or—if they happened to spot it and choose to go there first—the Jettisoned Cargo (Scene 4) or Singing Dome (Scene 5).

## SCENE 3A: THE WRECK SITE

The obvious place to start looking for answers is the main wreck site. Unfortunately, the local wildlife is interested in the site, too.

Begin this scene by asking the players what their characters are doing. If they're investigating the wreck, ask them what they're specifically looking for. Each hour, each character can make a skill check to see whether he or she's found the evidence available.

After 1 hour of searching, interrupt with the Local Denizens encounter (Scene 3b).

**Standing Watch:** No dangerous creatures are in sight when the heroes reach the wreckage. Characters may choose to not participate in the investigation, and instead keep watch for anything dangerous. When you begin the Local Denizens encounter (Scene 3b), characters standing watch have a better chance to spot the mist hunters before they attack.

**Investigate the Wreck:** If your players aren't sure what else they ought to be doing, you can remind them that they're supposed to be looking for survivors and that ships carry "black box"-style flight recorders.

**Find the Black Box:** The black box is usually located near the pilot's station on the bridge, but the bridge sustained a lot of damage in the crash and it's going to take some effort to retrieve the flight recorder. Finding the black box requires 1 success in *Awareness*, *Engineering*, or *Piloting* (+2 die step bonus).

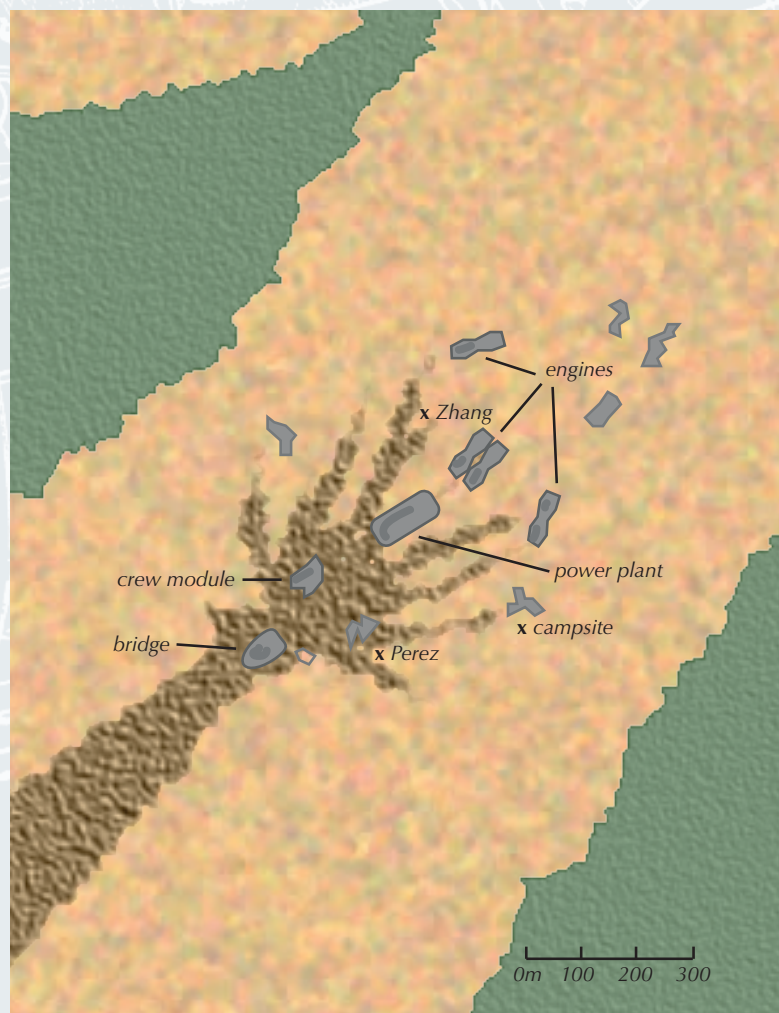
Removing it requires 1 success in *Mechanics* (a repair kit is useful here). The black box can be linked to *Fraser's* computer to access the Flight Record clue (see the sidebar).

## SCENE 3A: WRECK SITE NARRATION

*Magellan's* wreck is scattered over a path roughly 1500 meters long and 300 meters wide, scarring a grassy ridge that rises above dense forest-covered valleys. It looks like the ship nosed in pretty hard at the beginning of the debris field and cartwheeled, breaking up into half a dozen big hull pieces in the process and flinging smaller debris all over the place. The bridge and crew module are near the lower end of the debris field, while the drive, power plant, and stores carried farther up the hillside.

Tattered scraps of mist blow across the site; it's warm and humid out there. Nothing big seems to be moving near the wreck, but your audio pickups relay animal calls and chatter from the forest edge a few hundred meters away. The distress beacon is still transmitting from the sensor and nau module, a short distance from what's left of the bridge.

*Wreck of the Magellan*





## CLUES AT MAGELLAN'S WRECK

The heroes may turn up several valuable clues in their investigation of the wreck site.

**Flight Record:** Analysis of the black box data reveals that Magellan attempted to land, but was piloted with an extreme lack of skill that probably caused the crash. The record also indicates the cargo module was jettisoned shortly before the crash.

**The Campsite:** A short distance from the wreck someone set up a temporary camp. Survival supplies are stockpiled by the remains of a campfire, along with the discarded wrappers of rations. Small pieces of hull debris have been dragged to the campsite and show signs of cutting and welding with a laser torch. Drag marks leading away from the campsite suggest that somebody hauled away a simple sled, heading east (the trail is impossible to follow for more than a few hundred meters).

**Security Footage:** A review of internal security cam footage shows *Magellan's* crew loading a big golden egg-shaped object in the cargo hold about 4 weeks ago. Recording cubes are then missing for the next 6 days, but a few minutes of footage immediately before the crash are still on hand. They show Captain Brock staggering up onto the bridge and initiating the landing procedure, only to stop and start again several times.

*This is likely the first battle. Take your time, but don't sweat the details too much. If the players end this fight with an understanding of the die step system and how damage works, you've done your job.*

**Look for Bodies:** Two bodies are on the bridge; they're easy to find, but they're in bad shape with extensive burns and gruesome crash injuries. Searching the rest of the crew module requires 1 hour, but no skill check is needed to find two more bodies here. Five bodies are not in the wreckage (although characters who scout the area may find two of those).

Identifying the bodies requires careful comparison to medical records provided to *Fraser's* computer back at base. Any character trained in *Medicine* can identify all the bodies recovered with 1 hour of work (no check needed). The two on the bridge are Brock (the captain) and Kemal (a crewhand). The two in the module are Wirt (scientist) and Morales (crewhand). And, if the heroes find them, the two bodies thrown clear from the wreckage are Perez (scientist) and Zhang (crewhand). Falco, Rogers, and Ayers are not at this site.

**Examine the Debris:** A character who studies the debris field can attempt an *Engineering* check at a +2 die step bonus to discover that the ship's cargo module is missing. (If the player tells you he or she is specifically checking to see if all the wreckage is accounted for, success is automatic.) The character can also attempt a *Survival* check to observe that debris has already been moved aside and survival supply lockers are empty (again, if the player specifically tells you

he or she is checking survival stores, they automatically succeed on this check).

**Find the Beacon:** Any character trained in *Engineering* or *Piloting* can find the distress beacon with a little time and effort. It's located in the ship's avionics and nav system bay, just behind the crew module. It triggered automatically on the ship's destruction, and hasn't been tampered with since. It's got its own power supply and runs for another month unless shut off.

**Scout the Area:** A character who searches around the site automatically finds one of the missing bodies (Perez) and can attempt an *Awareness* or *Survival* skill check at a +3 die step bonus. With 1 success, the character finds the Campsite clue. With 3 successes, the outside search turns up another missing body (Zhang) that was thrown completely clear of the wreckage.

**Check the Engines:** Sorry, but *Magellan* is never going to fly again. A successful *Computers* or *Engineering* check reveals that the ship appeared to be in fine working order until it crashed.

**Check the Computer:** *Magellan's* computer system was damaged in the wreck, but a character who jury-rigs a power supply (1 successful *Computers* or *Engineering* skill check) and then searches for something out of the ordinary (3 successes with *Computers* or *Security*) can find the Security Footage clue.

**Next:** The heroes should be able to determine that several of *Magellan's* personnel are not accounted for. They may also learn the cargo module was jettisoned, and that someone at the site left on foot heading up toward the highlands. If the heroes did not find the Jettisoned Cargo or Singing Dome sites in their planetary survey in Scene 2, they may need to return to *Fraser* and conduct a more thorough search (they gain a +3 die step bonus on checks to locate those two sites if they find the Flight Record or Campsite clues, respectively).

## SCENE 3B: LOCAL DENIZENS

The wreck site is not as abandoned as it looks. A pack of mist hunters—dangerous local predators with claws, fangs, and chimpanzee-level intelligence—regard the wreck site as their territory. Initially scared off by the arrival or overflight of *Simon Fraser*, they return in an hour and attack any characters who are engaged in searching the site.

- 4 mist hunters (see Adversaries)

You can assume the party is generally concentrated around the wreckage of the bridge when the pack appears, and that the characters are all within about 40 meters of each other.

**Beginning the Encounter:** Allow any character standing watch to make an *Awareness* check with a +3 die step bonus. On a success, the character on watch spots the pack 90 meters distant. Otherwise, the mist hunters are only 50 meters distant when the character on watch spots them. If no one is on watch, the mist hunters get within 30 meters when the encounter begins.

When the heroes see the mist hunters, read:

*A sudden movement in the drifting mists catches your eye. Something is picking its way through the debris field—a large alien quadruped with taloned feet, powerful jaws, and a leathery crest atop its bullet-shaped head. It looks a bit like a blue-scaled lion . . . and you realize there's a small pack of the creatures trotting toward you, fangs gleaming.*

Have everyone roll initiative. Make one roll for the mist hunters. The hunters are hungry and hostile, and they really can't be reasoned with.

**Tactics:** The mist hunters use their actions to move as fast as they can toward the heroes, relying on their scattering hide to protect them on the way in.

Mist hunters use their claw attack to rake their prey and grab it; if a mist hunter begins its turn with a grabbed target in its claws, it can use its rend attack to maul the target with its fearsome jaws. The hunters are eager to make their own kills and avoid ganging up on the same prey. They split up to attack different heroes if possible.

If three of the mist hunters are incapacitated, the last one flees.

**Retreat:** If the heroes are close to *Simon Fraser*, they might be tempted to run back to their ship. The mist hunters are about twice as fast as the heroes are, so it depends on where the ship landed. You can assume it's about 100 meters from the wreckage of *Magellan's* bridge if the players didn't tell you anything else. However, if the heroes get to their ship, it's simple to close the door. The mist hunters wander off after a few minutes of prowling around *Fraser*.

**Next:** Return to the Wreck Site investigation—the heroes probably have more clues to find.

## SCENE 4: JETTISONED CARGO

Before *Magellan* crashed, two of her crew—scientist Jim Falco and engineer Toshira Rogers—jettisoned themselves in the ship's cargo module to escape from the H'naal. The module's maneuvering thrusters couldn't quite handle the landing, creating a second crash site about 200 kilometers west of *Magellan's* final resting place.

When the heroes locate the cargo module and investigate, read:

*You find the jettisoned cargo module in a dense forest a couple of hundred kilometers from *Magellan's* wreckage. The module is equipped with maneuvering thrusters, but it looks like they couldn't stand up to the impact—the module is badly damaged, lying half-crumpled in a steep-sided streambed surrounded by broken tree trunks. It's a little tight, but there's enough room to set down *Fraser* in the forest clearing provided by the stream.*

No one is at the crashed module, but if the heroes land and investigate, add:

*Inside the cargo module you find a large all-terrain groundcar, still chained down to the deck. The groundcar is pinned in place by the crumpled hull of the cargo module, and can't be extricated now. You also find a strange block of golden metal inscribed with weird hieroglyphs chained in place beside it. The block is about 1 meter by 1 meter, and is about 20 centimeters tall.*

The groundcar's survival kits are missing. (Falco and Rogers removed them after giving up on trying to get the groundcar out of the wreckage.)

The golden metal block is a H'naal artifact; any character trained in *Academics* recognizes the hieroglyphs and the general appearance. A trained character can attempt a skill check to guess at the block's function; on a success, he or she recognizes it as the mechanism of a now non-functioning H'naal stasis chamber.

**The Missing Crew:** No one is around the cargo module site, but heroes searching the area may attempt *Awareness* or *Survival* skill checks with a +3 step bonus. On a success, the searching character discovers a rough footpath marked by tree blazes—small squares of bark cut out of trees alongside the path to mark the way. The path leads about 300 meters up the hillside to a cave (see below).

*Like Anton Chekhov once said, if you put a golden artifact in the first chapter, it has to summon a transdimensional gate by the second or third...*



If the heroes miss the blazes, they might also find the path or the cave by searching the area. An area search requires 1 hour per check, and the heroes must accumulate 3 successes to locate the cave. Each group of heroes searching together makes one check, using the best skill check of any character in the group. If the heroes don't find the cave within 1 hour, they're too late to save Falco and Rogers.

## Jettisoned Cargo: The Cave



## FOUND SECURITY FOOTAGE

If the heroes review the data cubes from Falco and Roger's cave, they're in for a shock. The cubes clearly show a tall alien creature with three tentacle-like arms moving about *Magellan*. It's often seen in the same room as one or more of *Magellan's* crew, but the humans seem to just not notice it. A character trained in Academics recognizes the tentacled creature as a H'naal from what little is known of the aliens' hieroglyphic language.

**The Cave:** The two Magellan crewhands found a cave to serve as a temporary shelter and set up camp to await rescue. However, they've got a big problem: A voracious forest predator is trying to dig them out of their hole when the heroes arrive. If the heroes find the cave in time, read:

*You find a rough new footpath leading about 300 meters from the streambed up to a cave in the forested hillside. A crude barrier of logs and sharpened stakes blocks the mouth of the cave, but between you and the cave mouth stands a big, wormlike creature the size of a small car. The creature is digging steadily at one side of the barrier; you hear human voices shouting from inside the cave.*

If the heroes don't find the cave in time, read:

*You find a rough new footpath leading about 300 meters from the streambed up to a cave in the forested hillside. A crude barrier of logs and sharpened stakes lies on the ground in front of the cave.*

Assuming the heroes are in time, they'll need to deal with the forest worm before they can get to the cave. It's a dumb, hungry brute, and it's more than happy to try to make a meal out of would-be rescuers that present themselves.

- 1 forest worm (see Adversaries)

## THE CAVE

Thick foliage limits line of sight near the cave, so the heroes don't spot the forest worm until they're 30 meters away from the creature. It's possible to lure the forest worm away by enticing it with another meal (say, a PC serving as bait) or to startle it into fleeing with a very loud noise, such as an explosion. Otherwise, the heroes can solve the problem with firepower. Make an initiative check; the worm moves toward the closest character and tries to eat it.

**Survivors:** Two injured *Magellan* survivors are in the cave: Jim Falco and Toshira Rogers. They are delighted to see rescuers and thank the heroes profusely. They explain that they set up camp inside the cave to await rescue after failing to get the groundcar out of the module, only to find themselves under siege from local predators.

When the heroes question Falco and Rogers about Magellan, read:

*"We spent our mission exploring H'naal ruins on Xi Scorpis A-3," Falco explains. "It was pretty routine stuff, but on our last day there we found a big stasis unit that was still running. Well, opening those is a real challenge, so we loaded it on board to take back to base for full analysis and lifted off. But the next day when I went to check on it I found that the stasis field had cut off, and there was nothing inside."*

*"That's when things started getting weird," Rogers says. "Neither of us can remember much of anything about the trip from A-3. You'd find yourself standing in the room with no idea why you were there or what you were doing. Sometimes you'd get this sense that you were being watched, but there was nothing there."*

*"I finally woke up enough to realize that someone had changed our course for this planet," Falco continues. "And I knew that as soon as whatever it was noticed that I was awake that it was going to put me under again. So I decided to get off the ship before we set down. I pulled the ship's security records so that it wouldn't be able to tell what we'd done, then I got Rogers to jettison the cargo module with us in the groundcar. Didn't work as well as I would have hoped, though."*

Both Falco and Rogers are very distressed to learn that *Magellan* crashed and that most of their shipmates were killed. Falco still has the data cubes from Magellan's computer, with the six days of missing footage (see the Found Security Footage sidebar). He has not watched them yet, because he doesn't have anything that can play them.

If the heroes encourage them to keep going or try to draw out details, an *Empathy* skill check is appropriate—Falco and Rogers want to cooperate but it's difficult to sort out for them.

*Who opened the stasis chamber?* "Maybe Dr. Ayers? You shouldn't tamper with them until you get them to a lab, but she spent a lot of time looking at the device. Maybe she opened it by accident."

*Was there an alien on board?* "I don't know. I remember feeling a presence, something that didn't like us, but I can't remember seeing anything. There was something there, though!"

## SCENE 5: SINGING DOME SITE NARRATION

This plateau is high and arid, a desolate spot nearly 6000 meters above sea level. Now that you are closer, you can make out faint hints that some larger complex might have once stood in the middle of this plain—there are fragments of stone walls, odd well-like depressions, and black columns of volcanic glass that clearly don't belong here. At the center of the site stands a domelike structure about 40 meters in diameter, half-buried in the earth. A crude sledge heaped with supplies stands just outside a round door in the side of the dome. Two more doors lead inside, spaced equally around the perimeter. However, one of the other doorways is almost completely buried in the ground.

Your audio feed provides an eerie sighing sound from outside—the wind blowing through odd perforations in the dome.

*How did you wake up?* "I think I was just far enough away for long enough that I came out of it. I was working back in a core-sampling lab a good ways from the crew area."

A thorough medical checkup of Falco and Rogers requires at least 1 hour in Fraser's sick bay. The examining character can attempt a *Medicine* check with a -2 die step penalty; if the check succeeds, the character finds subtle changes in brain chemistry consistent with dreaming or hypnosis, which are now wearing off.

**No Survivors:** If the heroes don't find Falco and Rogers in time, the forest worm kills them, then leaves. Their partially devoured bodies remain in the cave, along with the data cubes. The data cubes hold the six days of missing security footage removed from *Magellan's* computer.

**Next:** If the heroes missed the Campsite clue at *Magellan's* wreck and didn't spot the Singing Dome from orbit, they may believe they're done. Falco and Rogers can fill them in on most of what happened, and Dr. Ayers's fate simply remains a mystery. However, if the heroes realize they need to keep searching, they can return to orbit and search until they find the Singing Dome.

## SCENE 5: SINGING DOME SITE

The H'naal and Dr. Ayers survived *Magellan's* crash by strapping down in the most secure part of the crew module just before impact. Both were injured, but not severely. The H'naal realized that its commandeered ship had crashed just a short distance from its objective—the Singing Dome, a spatial gate in the highlands of D-1.

*The H'naal's ability to erase itself from perception entirely can be played up for horror, if your table is up for it. There's a particular fright when the boogeyman is something others can see, but you cannot.*



## The Singing Dome



What better way to test ALTERNITY's combat than to pit the PCs against each other?

The H'naal kept Dr. Ayers under its control, and with her assistance fabricated a sledge from the ship's debris and set out to reach the Singing Dome. They've been here for about a week now; the H'naal is trying to reactivate the ancient mechanisms so that it can find more of its kind.

When the heroes visit the site, read the opening narration above.

## LEVEL UP!

At the end of the adventure, the heroes gain a level. When you gain a level, you gain 5 skill points to assign. A 2nd-level hero can have a maximum of 6 skill points in any one skill.

You gain 1 hero point.

You can pick a new talent. Here are a couple of sample talents to choose from:

**Alertness:** You gain a +2 step bonus on initiative checks.

**Melee Expert:** You gain a +1 step attack bonus when you use the charge action modifier to attack with a melee weapon.

**Rugged:** Gain bonus wound boxes on the graze and light wound rows of your durability table.

The H'naal is working inside the dome. It's attempting to repair the ancient machinery, while Dr. Ayers stands mutely by in a hypnotic trance. The creature is arrogant and believes humans are no match for it—and it might be right. Its telepathic powers allow the H'naal to simply erase awareness of itself from any mind within 100 meters. When one or more heroes enters the dome, have each player whose character is looking inside attempt a *Willpower* skill check. If the check fails, read:

*The perforated dome covers a strange collection of dull-colored crystals embedded in a column of fluted rock. Most of the floor is sand that seems to have drifted in over the years, and a strange sighing sound—the wind moaning through the dome's openings—rises and falls as the wind shifts. Dozens of fist-sized crystals lay scattered on the floor around the column in the middle of the chamber, along with a collection of tools from a typical ship's repair kit.*

*A single human figure stands silently against the wall; Dr. Regina Ayers. She looks gaunt and her clothing is torn and tattered. She doesn't acknowledge you at all, simply staring blankly ahead.*

If any character viewing the scene succeeds on the *Willpower* skill check, add:

*A strange-looking alien creature stands by the rock column, regarding you with some interest. It's tall, easily two meters or more, and it has three tentacle-like arms and three sturdy, compact legs. It holds a human plasma pistol in one arm. But a moment later it seems to simply vanish, and you realize that there isn't anything here.*

Roll initiative. The H'naal has no interest in more slaves and wants to deal with this interruption as swiftly and ruthlessly as possible.

- 1 H'naal (see Adversaries)
- Dr. Ayers (see Adversaries)

## THE SINGING DOME

Dr. Ayers takes no part in this encounter unless the H'naal makes her, and doesn't even defend herself if attacked. She is virtually catatonic after a week of constant control by the H'naal.

**H'naal Invisibility:** Each time that a player character begins his or her turn, the character must attempt a *Willpower* skill check. On a success, the character sees the H'naal and





*The roar of the liftoff thrusters... sounds like "victory."*

remembers what is going on in this scene. On a failure, the character does *not* see the H'naal and has no memory of the creature at all.

Characters whose minds are clouded in this way can't attack the H'naal directly, but they can do other things like tend to wounded characters, study the surroundings, or possibly even return fire if shot at—although all they see is that plasma bolts appear to be hitting around them, without any clear idea of where they're coming from or who's shooting at them.

**Tactics:** The H'naal begins by using its Mental Command ability to dominate the first hero it sees. It intends to use a hero to kill as many of its enemies as possible without giving itself away. However, if the H'naal is directly attacked, it returns fire with its borrowed plasma pistol. Naturally, it focuses its fire on characters who seem to be better able to perceive it. If an enemy corners the creature in melee, it attacks with its tentacles instead.

If the H'naal decides it needs a distraction, it uses its Mental Command on Dr. Ayers and directs her to attack the heroes. Dr. Ayers is not much of a combatant, but she grabs a heavy wrench from a toolbox and may catch the heroes off-guard.

If the H'naal marks off 5 wound boxes or at least 2 boxes in the 13–15 band, it attempts to flee through the open door. It attempts to

skulk around the site and hide nearby, using the fragmentary walls and old stone columns for cover. It knows that if it moves too far away from the dome it would easily be spotted on the open plain.

**Dr. Ayers:** If a hero tries to bring Ayers out of her stupor, make a *Medicine* check to diagnose her condition. On a success, the character examining Ayers realizes she can be brought around with a stimulant shot. Administering the shot requires a med pack and a 3-impulse action. Ayers is confused at first, but soon comes to her senses and tries to help the heroes against the H'naal.

## CONCLUSION

The adventure ends when the heroes save Dr. Ayers from the H'naal, rescue Falco and Rogers, and recover the black box from the wreck of the *Magellan*. That solves the mystery to the satisfaction of the Stellar Union Investigative Service and the Icarus Foundation. While the chance to communicate with a living H'naal is a lost opportunity, the H'naal in this case cannot be reasoned with—in its time it was a monstrous criminal to its own people, and it sees nothing in humankind that entices it to go along with any effort to establish some sort of friendly relations.



## ADVERSARIES

Adversaries have ability checks, not ability scores. For example, an adversary has Strength 15+ instead of 5. If you need to make a check for an adversary's Strength-based skill, your skill score is 15/20/25.

Adversaries aren't incapacitated until they lose the last wound box in their highest row.

### MIST HUNTER

*This powerful predator is a meter tall at the shoulder and resembles a scaly, saurian lion with a leathery crest instead of a mane. Its scales are a mottled dark and light blue.*

Mist hunters are clever pack predators. They are aggressive and highly territorial. They were engineered as guard-beasts long ago, and their hides have a natural ability to dissipate laser fire.

**Senses** low-light vision, scent

**Awareness** 14/19/24

**Initiative** 11/16/21

**Speed** 40 meters

**Str** 14+, **Agi** 15+, **Vit** 16+,

**Int** 18+, **Foc** 16+, **Per** 17+

#### ATTACK ACTIONS

**Claws** (Speed 3): Melee; 15/20/25; 1d6+1/3 physical. A target hit by a claw attack must make a *Hand to Hand* check or become grappled until the end of the hunter's next turn (or until the target breaks free).

**Rend** (Speed 3): Grappled target; 15/20/25 (+2 step attack bonus); 1d6+2/6 physical.

#### DURABILITY

**Armor** 2 physical, 2 energy (5 vs. laser)

(10+ dmg)	□	incapacitated
(7 to 9 dmg)	□	–2 steps on checks
(4 to 6 dmg)	□	–1 step on checks
(1 to 3 dmg)	□	

**Dodge:** 15/20/25

**Endurance:** 16/21/26

**Willpower:** 16/21/26

#### TRAITS

**Scattering Hide** Mist hunters have improved armor against laser weapons and similar effects (shown above).

#### OTHER

**Skills** Awareness 14/19/24, Survival 13/18/23

### FOREST WORM

*Nearly 6 meters in length and as thickly built as a horse, this multi-eyed, multi-legged creature looks like a gigantic centipede with a gold and green carapace and jaws like bolt-cutters.*

The forest worm is a natural predator of Xi Scorprii D–1. It's hungry and ferocious, if not particularly bright.

**Senses** low-light, infrared

**Awareness** 15/20/25

**Initiative** 13/18/23

**Speed** 16 meters

**Str** 12+, **Agi** 18+, **Vit** 15+,

**Int** 20+, **Foc** 15+, **Per** 19+

#### ATTACK ACTIONS

**Thrash** (Speed 3): Melee, one or two adjacent targets, 16/21/26 (+1 step bonus); 1d8+1/5 physical, and the target is knocked prone.

**Crushing Bite** (Speed 3): Grappled target; 16/21/26 attack (+2 step bonus); 1d8+4/8 physical.

**Tongue Barb** (Speed 1): Close range, one target, 16/21/26 (+1 step bonus); 1d6+0/3 physical, and the target is grappled.

#### SPECIAL ACTIONS

**Drag:** As a 1-impulse action, the worm can pull a grappled target 6 meters closer. The dragged target can attempt an *Athletics* check to resist being dragged.

#### DURABILITY

**Armor** 4 physical, 2 energy

(10+ dmg)	□□□□	incapacitated
(7 to 9 dmg)	□□□□	–1 step on checks
(4 to 6 dmg)	□□□□	–4 meters Speed
(1 to 3 dmg)	□□□□	

**Dodge** 18/23/28

**Endurance** 15/20/25

**Willpower** 15/20/25

#### TRAITS

**Infrared Sight** Forest worms can "see" heat, and can easily find their prey even in total darkness.

#### OTHER

**Skills** none

## H'NAAL

*Dark and rubbery in appearance, this tripedal creature has three stubby legs, a long torso, and three strong tentacles just below its bullet-shaped head. Its three eyes are a baleful red.*

The H'naal were a starfaring species that colonized many worlds in this part of the galaxy more than a million years ago. They were aggressive conquerors with a powerful telepathic ability to cloud or control weaker minds. Only a few remain alive today, mostly hidden in deep refuges or trapped in temporal stasis chambers.

**Senses** low-light, infrared

**Awareness** 13/18/23

**Initiative** 12/17/22

**Speed** 20 meters

**Str** 13+, **Agi** 17+, **Vit** 13+,

**Int** 14+, **Foc** 15+, **Per** 15+

### ATTACK ACTIONS

*Tentacles (Speed 3, make 3 attacks):* Melee; 13/18/23; 1d6+1/4 physical.

*Plasma Pistol (Speed 4):* Medium range; 15/20/25; 2d4/2d8 energy.

*Compulsion (Speed 3):* Close range, one target. The target must make a *Willpower* check; on failure, it becomes temporarily insane.

### SPECIAL ACTIONS

*Mental Command (1 impulse):* Close range, one target affected by compulsion. The H'naal chooses which insanity effect applies to the target's next action. If the H'naal uses this power on a second target while another creature is already affected, the effect ends on the first target.

### DURABILITY

**Armor** 3 physical, 3 energy

(12+ dmg)	□□□□	incapacitated
(9 to 11 dmg)	□□□□	–2 steps on checks
(6 to 8 dmg)	□□□□	–1 step on checks
(1 to 5 dmg)	□□□□	no effect

**Dodge** 15/20/25

**Endurance** 11/16/21

**Willpower** 15/20/25

### TRAITS

**Cloud the Mind** Living creatures that begin their turn within 50 meters of the H'naal must make *Willpower* checks. On a failure, the creature does not see the H'naal and is temporarily unaware of its existence.

**Telepathy** The H'naal can communicate telepathically with any creature it can see within Long range. If they do not share a language, it can only convey feelings and images.

### OTHER

**Skills** Awareness 12/17/22, Coercion 12/17/22, Engineering 11/16/21, Science 11/16/21, Stealth 13/18/23.

## DR. AYERS

Regina Ayers is a confident, assertive scientist who has studied H'naal artifacts her entire career. She is currently so deeply under the H'naal's mental domination that she can take no action unless it thinks to compel her to move.

**Senses** normal

**Awareness** 14/19/24

**Initiative** 13/18/23, –1 step

**Speed** 20 meters

**Str** 17+, **Agi** 16+, **Vit** 16+,

**Int** 15+, **Foc** 17+, **Per** 16+

### ATTACK ACTIONS

*Heavy Wrench (Speed 4):* 15/20/25; 1d6+0/3 physical.

### DURABILITY

**Armor** 2 physical, 2 energy

(10+ dmg)	□	incapacitated
(7 to 9 dmg)	□	–2 steps on checks
(4 to 6 dmg)	□	–1 step on checks
(1 to 3 dmg)	□	no effect

**Dodge** 16/21/26

**Endurance** 16/21/26

**Willpower** 17/22/27

### OTHER

**Skills** Academics 10/15/20, Computers 12/17/22, Culture 13/18/23, Science 12/17/22, Piloting 12/17/22

**Gear** hardmesh uniform, heavy wrench



## LEVEL 1 HUMAN LEADER

A Senior Scientist of the Icarus Foundation, Dr. Tharsi shares command of the *Magellan* Recovery Mission with Captain Carr of the *Fraser*. She is a native of Mars with specialties in life science and medicine. Smart, ambitious, and determined, she worked tirelessly at Icarus to gain her Exploration and Command ratings, eager to make her mark in the annals of discovery.

<b>STRENGTH</b>	3	<b>INTELLIGENCE</b>	6
<b>AGILITY</b>	5	<b>FOCUS</b>	4
<b>VITALITY</b>	4	<b>PERSONALITY</b>	4

<b>Move</b>	20 m	<b>Hero Points</b>	1
<b>Initiative</b>	11/16/21, +3 steps		

**Laser Pistol** 3 impulses; attack 11/16/21 (+2 steps); 1d6+0/6 energy

**Unarmed** 3 impulses; attack 13/18/23 (+1 step); 1d4+0/2 physical

### DURABILITY

Dmg	Description	Wounds
16+	Mortal Wound (incapacitated)	☐
13–15	Critical Wound (–3 steps)	☐
10–12	Serious Wound (–2 steps)	☐☐
7–9	Moderate Wound (–1 step)	☐☐
4–6	Light Wound (no effect)	☐☐
1–3	Graze (no effect)	☐☐

**When you evade:** Attacker takes –2 step penalty

**Armor:** Resist 2 physical, 2 energy

### TALENTS

Dr. Tharsi is at her best with a good team around her. She's a skilled medic and quick-thinking leader.

**Alertness:** You gain a +2 step bonus on initiative checks (included above).

**Medic:** You gain a +1 step bonus on *Medicine* checks during an action scene.

**Prepared Action:** Your first action in an encounter takes 1 fewer impulse. If that reduces it to zero impulses, perform that action and act again immediately.

### GEAR

Hardmesh Uniform (2 physical, 2 energy)

Laser Pistol (Long Range, 1d6+0/6 energy, accurate)

Med Pack (treat wounds; 1 success for Light, 2 for Moderate, 3 for Serious, or 6 for Critical)

Com Set, Flashlight, Datapad, Survival Pack

### SKILLS

Name	Ability	Pts	Skill Score
Academics	Int	3	11/16/21
+1 step with psychology			
Acrobatics	Agi	4	11/16/21
Armor Training	St/In		
Athletics	Str		
Awareness	Foc	1	15/20/25
Coercion	Per		
Computer	Int		
Culture	Per		
Deception	Per		
Dodge	Agi	5	10/15/20
Driving	Agi		
Empathy	Fo/Pe		
Endurance	Vit		
Energy Weapon	Ag/Fo	4	11/16/21
+1 step with pistols (included to left)			
Engineering	Int		
Extreme Sport	Agi		
Firearm	Ag/Fo		
Hand to Hand	St/Ag	2	13/18/23
+1 step with grappling (included to left)			
Heavy Weapon	St/In		
Influence	Per	4	12/17/22
+1 step with all checks			
Mechanics	Int		
Medicine	Int	5	9/14/19
+1 step with treatment			
Melee	St/Ag		
Misdirection	Per		
Performance	Per		
Piloting	Ag/In		
Primitive Weapon	Ag/Fo		
Profession	In/Pe		
Resilience	Vit		
Science	Int	5	9/14/19
+1 step with biology			
Security	Ag/In		
Stealth	Ag/Fo		
Survival	Vi/Fo		
Willpower	Foc	2	14/19/24

## LEVEL 1 HUMAN LEADER

Assertive and confident, Captain Carr is the commander of the drivescout *Fraser*, an exploration vessel in the service of the Icarus Foundation. The Foundation believes in a shared-command philosophy under which the leader of the embarked scientific contingent is responsible for the overall mission while the ship commander is responsible for the safety of the ship. As a result, Captain Carr has a new co-commander for the *Magellan* Recovery Mission: Senior Scientist Grace Tharsi.

<b>STRENGTH</b>	5	<b>INTELLIGENCE</b>	4
<b>AGILITY</b>	5	<b>FOCUS</b>	4
<b>VITALITY</b>	4	<b>PERSONALITY</b>	5

<b>Move</b>	20 m	<b>Hero Points</b>	1
<b>Initiative</b>	11/16/21, +1 step		

**Plasma Pistol** 3 impulses; attack 10/15/20 (+1 step); 2d4/2d8 energy

**Unarmed** 3 impulses; attack 12/17/22 (+1 step); 1d4+0/2 physical

### DURABILITY

Dmg	Description	Wounds
16+	Mortal Wound (incapacitated)	☐
13–15	Critical Wound (–3 steps)	☐
10–12	Serious Wound (–2 steps)	☐☐
7–9	Moderate Wound (–1 step)	☐☐
4–6	Light Wound (no effect)	☐☐
1–3	Graze (no effect)	☐☐

**Armor:** Resist 2 physical, 2 energy

### TALENTS

Vance Carr has an uncanny knack for taking charge in dangerous situations and inspiring the crew. He's also lightning-quick on the draw.

**Commander:** You gain a +1 step bonus on *Coercion* and *Influence* checks made during combat.

**Combat Leader:** As a 3-impulse action, make an *Influence* check to spur your allies on to greater effectiveness. If you succeed, designate an enemy. Your allies each gain a +1 step bonus on their next attack against that enemy in this scene.

**Gunslinger:** You can draw a pistol as a free action when you attack with a pistol.

### GEAR

Hardmesh Uniform (2 physical, 2 energy)

Plasma Pistol (Medium Range, 2d4/2d8 energy)

3 blast grenades (*Athletics* check, can throw up to 32 meters; 1d8+4(0) energy damage in a 3 m (6 m) blast radius)

Com Set, Binoculars, Survival Pack

### SKILLS

Name	Ability	Pts	Skill Score
Academics	Int		
Acrobatics	Agi		
Armor Training	St/In		
Athletics	Str	3	12/17/22
Awareness	Foc		
Coercion	Per	3	12/17/22
+1 step on all checks (+2 steps in combat)			
Computer	Int		
Culture	Per		
Deception	Per		
Dodge	Agi		
Driving	Agi		
Empathy	Fo/Pe		
Endurance	Vit	4	12/17/22
Energy Weapon	Ag/Fo	5	10/15/20
+1 step with pistols (included to left)			
Engineering	Int	4	12/17/22
+1 step with life support or propulsion			
Extreme Sport	Agi		
Firearm	Ag/Fo		
Hand to Hand	St/Ag	3	12/17/22
+1 step with brawling (included to left)			
Heavy Weapon	St/In		
Influence	Per	4	11/16/21
+1 step with all checks (+2 steps in combat)			
Mechanics	Int	1	15/20/25
Medicine	Int		
Melee	St/Ag		
Misdirection	Per	3	12/17/22
Performance	Per		
Piloting	Ag/In	5	10/15/20
Primitive Weapon	Ag/Fo		
Profession	In/Pe		
Resilience	Vit		
Science	Int		
Security	Ag/In		
Stealth	Ag/Fo		
Survival	Vi/Fo		
Willpower	Foc		





## LEVEL 1 HUMAN SURVIVOR

A former merchant spacer with a checkered past, Omari Temu won a job with the Icarus Foundation when she traded repair work on a drivescout's balky nav system for passage out of a station where she was in trouble with the authorities. One mission led to another, and then another, until the Foundation HR team decided to make the position permanent. She's been assigned to the drivescout *Fraser* for six months now, working for Captain Vance Carr.

<b>STRENGTH</b>	5	<b>INTELLIGENCE</b>	5
<b>AGILITY</b>	3	<b>FOCUS</b>	5
<b>VITALITY</b>	5	<b>PERSONALITY</b>	3

<b>Move</b>	20 m	<b>Hero Points</b>	1
<b>Initiative</b>	12/17/22, +1 step		

**Flechette Gun** 3 impulses; attack 10/15/20 (+2 steps);

1d6+1/5 physical (deals +1 wound at Close range)

**Combat Knife** 3 impulses; attack 12/17/22 (+1 step);

1d6+1/5 physical

**Unarmed** 3 impulses; attack 12/17/22; 1d4+0/2 physical

### DURABILITY

Dmg	Description	Wounds
16+	Mortal Wound (incapacitated)	☐
13–15	Critical Wound (–3 steps)	☐☐
10–12	Serious Wound (–2 steps)	☐☐
7–9	Moderate Wound (–1 step)	☐☐
4–6	Light Wound (no effect)	☐☐
1–3	Graze (no effect)	☐☐

**Armor:** Resist 1 physical, 3 energy

### TALENTS

Omari is a scrapper. She's tough, determined, and surprisingly sneaky when she needs to be.

**Commando:** You gain an additional +1 step bonus to attacks and skill checks against enemies who are unaware of you.

**Dirty Fighting:** Gain +3 damage when you successfully attack a distracted or surprised target.

**Gearhead:** You gain a +1 step bonus on any technical skill check you make to maintain or repair a machine, vehicle, ship or installation you've worked on before.

### GEAR

DuraWeb Coat (1 physical, 3 energy)

Flechette Gun (Medium, 1d6+1/5 physical, deals +1 wound at Close range, accurate)

Datapad

Repair Kit (+2 step bonus with *Mechanics*)

Wound Gel (1 dose)

Com Set, Flashlight, Survival Pack

### SKILLS

Name	Ability	Pts	Skill Score
Academics	Int		
Acrobatics	Agi		
Armor Training	St/In		
Athletics	Str		
Awareness	Foc	3	12/17/22
+1 step bonus on all checks			
Coercion	Per		
Compute	Int	3	12/17/22
Culture	Per		
Deception	Per		
Dodge	Agi		
Driving	Agi		
Empathy	Fo/Pe		
Endurance	Vit		
Energy Weapon	Ag/Fo		
Engineering	Int	4	11/16/21
+1 step with power systems			
Extreme Sport	Agi		
Firearm	Ag/Fo	5	10/15/20
+1 step with assault weapons (included to left)			
Hand to Hand	St/Ag	3	12/17/22
+1 step with knives (included to left)			
Heavy Weapon	St/In		
Influence	Per		
Mechanics	Int	5	10/15/20
+1 step with repair, salvage, or vehicles			
Medicine	Int		
Melee	St/Ag		
Misdirection	Per	3	14/19/24
Performance	Per		
Piloting	Ag/In		
Primitive Weapon	Ag/Fo		
Profession	In/Pe		
Resilience	Vit	4	11/16/21
Science	Int		
Security	Ag/In		
Stealth	Ag/Fo	5	10/15/20
+1 step bonus on all checks			
Survival	Vi/Fo		
Willpower	Foc		

## LEVEL 1 HUMAN BATTLER

Something of a jack-of-all-trades on board *Fraser*, Specialist Frank is a cargo handler, mess steward, maintenance technician, and janitor . . . and he's also the ship's resident expert in heavy weapons and combat armor. He's used to providing security for all kinds of scientific expeditions, standing watch with a rail rifle while happy scientists dig, sample, catalog, or observe strange things on planets all over the galaxy. Someone's got to watch their backs.

<b>STRENGTH</b>	6	<b>INTELLIGENCE</b>	3
<b>AGILITY</b>	4	<b>FOCUS</b>	5
<b>VITALITY</b>	4	<b>PERSONALITY</b>	4

<b>Move</b>	20 m	<b>Hero Points</b>	1
<b>Initiative</b>	11/16/21		

**Rail Rifle** 5 impulses; attack 10/15/20 (+1 step); 1d8+4/8 physical (armor piercing 3)

**Diskos** 4 impulses; attack 10/15/20 (+1 step); 1d8+3/9 physical (armor piercing 3)

**Unarmed** 3 impulses; attack 11/16/21 (+1 step); 1d4+0/2 physical

### DURABILITY

Dmg	Description	Wounds
16+	Mortal Wound (incapacitated)	☐
13–15	Critical Wound (–3 steps)	☐☐
10–12	Serious Wound (–2 steps)	☐☐
7–9	Moderate Wound (–1 step)	☐☐
4–6	Light Wound (no effect)	☐☐☐
1–3	Graze (no effect)	☐☐☐

**Armor:** Resist 4 physical, 2 energy

### TALENTS

Dieter can protect his allies and stand up to a great deal of punishment.

**Gunner:** When you use the aim action modifier with a heavy weapon, you do not add a 1-impulse delay to your next action.

**Rugged:** Gain bonus wound boxes on the graze and light wound rows of your durability table (included above).

**Shake It Off:** You can make *Resilience* checks to reduce a wound's penalty as a 1-impulse action instead of a 3-impulse action.

### GEAR

Polymer Mail (4 physical, 2 energy)

Rail Rifle (Very Long, 1d8+4/8 energy, armor piercing 3)

Diskos (Melee, 1d8+3/9 physical, armor piercing)

Survival Pack, Flashlight

### SKILLS

Name	Ability	Pts	Skill Score
Academics	Int		
Acrobatics	Agi		
Armor Training	St/In	4	10/15/20
+1 step with all checks			
Athletics	Str		
Awareness	Foc		
Coercion	Per	4	12/17/22
Computer	Int		
Culture	Per		
Deception	Per		
Dodge	Agi	1	15/20/25
+1 step with all checks			
Driving	Agi		
Empathy	Fo/Pe		
Endurance	Vit	3	13/18/23
+1 step with all checks			
Energy Weapon	Ag/Fo		
Engineering	Int		
Extreme Sport	Agi		
Firearm	Ag/Fo		
Hand to Hand	St/Ag	3	11/16/21
+1 step with brawling (included to left)			
Heavy Weapon	St/In	4	10/15/20
+1 step with direct fire (included to left)			
Influence	Per		
Mechanics	Int	4	13/18/23
+1 step with environmental systems, repair			
Medicine	Int		
Melee	St/Ag	4	10/15/20
+1 step with energized weapons (included to left)			
Misdirection	Per		
Performance	Per		
Piloting	Ag/In	1	15/20/25
Primitive Weapon	Ag/Fo		
Profession	In/Pe		
Resilience	Vit	3	13/18/23
+1 step with all checks			
Science	Int		
Security	Ag/In	4	12/17/22
Stealth	Ag/Fo		
Survival	Vi/Fo		
Willpower	Foc		



LEVEL 1 HUMAN STRIKER

Scientists of the Icarus Foundation represent the best of the best—experts in their fields who are fearless, physically fit, and morally upstanding. Miles Montero is not that kind of scientist. He’s a wildcat hunter of alien artifacts, comfortable with black market deals and collectors who don’t ask questions. But he happens to be one of the few humans familiar with H’naal relics, which is why Icarus paid him well to join *Fraser’s* mission to find the *Magellan*.

STRENGTH	4	INTELLIGENCE	5
AGILITY	6	FOCUS	4
VITALITY	3	PERSONALITY	4

Move	20 m	Hero Points	1
Initiative	10/15/20 (+2 die step bonus)		

**Laser Pistol** 3 impulses; attack 10/15/20 (+2 steps); 1d6+1/7 energy  
**Unarmed** 3 impulses; attack 14/19/24; 1d4+1/3 physical

DURABILITY

Dmg	Description	Wounds
16+	Mortal Wound (incapacitated)	<input type="checkbox"/>
13–15	Critical Wound (–3 steps)	<input type="checkbox"/>
10–12	Serious Wound (–2 steps)	<input type="checkbox"/>
7–9	Moderate Wound (–1 step)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4–6	Light Wound (no effect)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
1–3	Graze (no effect)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

**Elusive:** Medium-range attacks against you take a –1 step penalty  
**When you evade:** Attacker takes –2 step penalty  
**Armor:** Resist 1 physical, 3 energy

TALENTS

Miles wins fights by shooting first and shooting often.  
**Dual Pistols:** If you are armed with two pistols, you can fire them both together at the same target as one action when you attack. Your attack has a –2 step penalty. If you hit, both weapons hit. Roll damage separately.  
**Elusive:** Ranged attacks against you that originate at Medium range (20 m) or longer suffer an additional –1 step penalty.  
**Gunslinger:** You can draw one or more pistols as a free action when you attack with a pistol.

GEAR

DuraWeb Coat (1 physical, 3 energy)  
2 Laser Pistols (Long Range, 1d6+0/6 energy, accurate)  
Geoscaner (Close Range, find buried objects)  
Thruster Belt (jump 60 meters as a 2-impulse action, must land at end of move)  
Com Unit, Survival Pack, Flashlight

SKILLS

Name	Ability	Pts	Skill Score
Academics	Int	4	11/16/21
+1 step with archeology, history			
Acrobatics	Agi	2	12/17/22
Armor Training	St/In		
Athletics	Str	2	14/19/24
Awareness	Foc	2	14/19/24
Coercion	Per		
Computer	Int		
Culture	Per		
Deception	Per	4	12/17/22
Dodge	Agi	5	9/14/19
Driving	Agi		
Empathy	Fo/Pe	3	13/18/23
Endurance	Vit		
Energy Weapon	Ag/Fo	5	9/14/19
+1 step with pistols (included to left)			
Engineering	Int		
Extreme Sport	Agi	3	11/16/21
Firearm	Ag/Fo		
Hand to Hand	St/Ag		
Heavy Weapon	St/In		
Influence	Per		
Mechanics	Int		
Medicine	Int	2	13/18/23
+1 step with first aid			
Melee	St/Ag		
Misdirection	Per		
Performance	Per		
Piloting	Ag/In	2	12/17/22
Primitive Weapon	Ag/Fo		
Profession	In/Pe		
Resilience	Vit		
Science	Int		
Security	Ag/In	1	13/18/23
Stealth	Ag/Fo		
Survival	Vi/Fo		
Willpower	Foc		



## LEVEL 1 HUMAN SURVIVOR

Agent Wade is the only person on board *Fraser* not directly employed by the Icarus Foundation. She serves in the National Investigative Service of the Stellar Union. She's been assigned to investigate the presumed destruction of the driveship *Magellan* and determine whether some race or entity hostile to humanity may have been responsible. Agent Wade has broad authority to require cooperation from Icarus Foundation employees . . . but *Fraser* isn't her ship, and she isn't in charge.

<b>STRENGTH</b>	5	<b>INTELLIGENCE</b>	4
<b>AGILITY</b>	4	<b>FOCUS</b>	6
<b>VITALITY</b>	4	<b>PERSONALITY</b>	3

<b>Move</b>	20 m	<b>Hero Points</b>	1
<b>Initiative</b>	10/15/20, +3 steps		

**Heavy Pistol** 4 impulses; attack 10/15/20 (+1 step); 1d8+1/6 physical

**Shock Glove** 3 impulses; attack 10/15/20 (+1 step); 1d6+2/3 energy and stun (compare your attack success to target *Endurance* check; if your success is higher, target is stunned 3 impulses)

**Unarmed** 2 impulses; attack 10/15/20 (+1 step); 1d6+0/4 physical

### DURABILITY

Dmg	Description	Wounds
16+	Mortal Wound (incapacitated)	☐
13–15	Critical Wound (–3 steps)	☐
10–12	Serious Wound (–2 steps)	☐☐
7–9	Moderate Wound (–1 step)	☐☐
4–6	Light Wound (no effect)	☐☐
1–3	Graze (no effect)	☐☐

**Defensive Stance:** Enemies attacking you with unarmed or melee attacks take a –2 step penalty

**Armor:** Resist 2 physical, 2 energy

### TALENTS

Masako is skilled with small arms and martial arts techniques for taking down dangerous criminals fast.

**Alertness:** You gain a +2 step bonus on initiative checks (included above).

**Defensive Stance:** Enemies attacking you with unarmed or melee attacks suffer a –1 step penalty, or –2 steps if you have at least one hand free.

**Martial Arts, Striking:** Your unarmed damage improves to 1d6+0/4 physical (included above).

### GEAR

Hardmesh Uniform (2 physical, 2 energy)

Heavy Pistol (Medium Range, 1d8+1/6 physical)

Shock Glove (Melee, 1d6+2/3 energy, stun)

2 sets of restraints

Datapad with chemical analysis probe

Com Unit, Survival Pack, Flashlight

### SKILLS

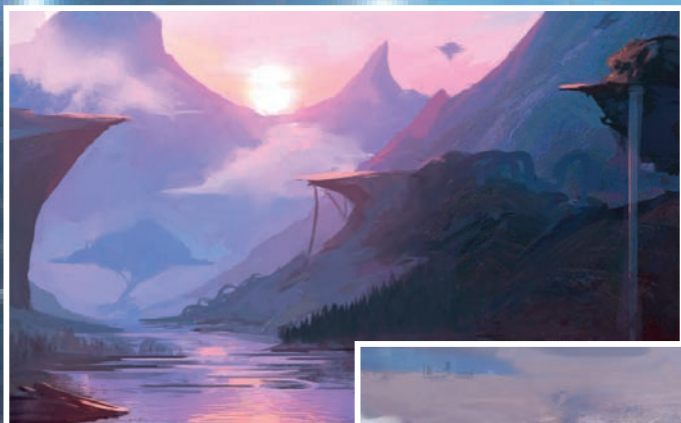
Name	Ability	Pts	Skill Score
Academics	Int		
Acrobatics	Agi		
Armor Training	St/In		
Athletics	Str	3	12/17/22
+1 step on all checks			
Awareness	Foc	4	10/15/20
+1 step on all checks			
Coercion	Per		
Computer	Int		
Culture	Per		
Deception	Per		
Dodge	Agi		
Driving	Agi		
Empathy	Fo/Pe	4	10/15/20
Endurance	Vit		
Energy Weapon	Ag/Fo		
Engineering	Int		
Extreme Sport	Agi		
Firearm	Ag/Fo	4	10/15/20
+1 step with pistols (included to left)			
Hand to Hand	St/Ag	5	10/15/20
+1 step with brawling (included to left)			
Heavy Weapon	St/In		
Influence	Per		
Mechanics	Int		
Medicine	Int		
Melee	St/Ag		
Misdirection	Per		
Performance	Per		
Piloting	Ag/In		
Primitive Weapon	Ag/Fo		
Profession	In/Pe	4	12/17/22
Law enforcement investigations and procedures			
Resilience	Vit	4	12/17/22
Science	Int		
Security	Ag/In	1	15/20/25
+1 step on all checks			
Stealth	Ag/Fo		
Survival	Vi/Fo	3	11/16/21
+1 step on all checks			
Willpower	Foc	3	11/16/21





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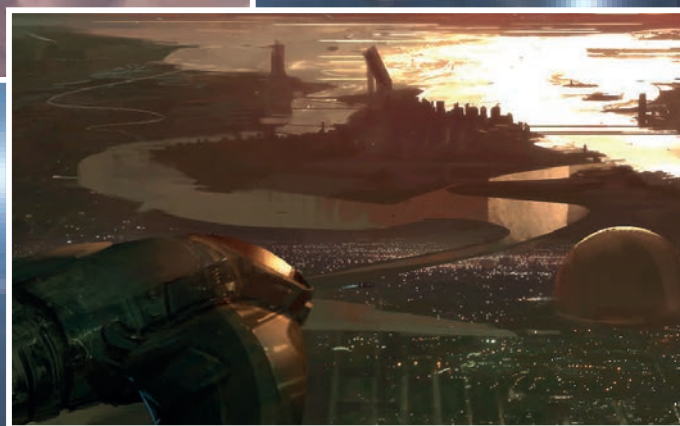
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