

SERENITY ROLE PLAYING GAME

FRAGMENTS OF DESTINY

A TALE IN THREE ACTS

by

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and

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Fragments of Destiny

HERE'S THE STORY

A short message from a known pair of middlemen leads to a job. The work isn't legal, but that's how things are on the Rim. While the deal is good, there are events in motion that will lead to much more of a challenge than was initially presented. The job will require a variety of skills to succeed, stealth; negotiation; contacts; piloting; and as with most things on the Rim, fighting if they are to turn the tables on what is shaping up to be a tough road to getting paid and a double cross is only the first half of the problem.

GAME MASTER NOTES

Fragments of Destiny is an adventure in three acts that will test the mettle of any crew. The timeline of events consists of the initial wave informing the crew there is someone that wants to hire them, travel to Bellerophon, penetrating estate security and escaping. En route back to their contacts, they must evade the surprise their contacts have set for them, namely pirates trying to take the prize they've just taken. Now aware that the item they are holding is the key to an even more valuable treasure, they must travel to an old battle site, penetrate security of one of the biggest companies in the 'Verse, escape with the real reward and discover that things have not been exactly what they thought they would be.

Act one consists of Gettin' the Job and Travel to Bellerophon. Act two leads the crew through Penetratin' Planet Security, It Takes a Thief, and The Chase. The finale in Act three will consist of Deliverin' the Goods, Treasure Hunt, and United Reclamation.

WHAT'S DONE IS DONE

Years ago, Jasper Price, a renowned painter who chose to end his life prematurely, created his masterwork, the holographic painting "Fragments of Destiny." It is rumored that Price hid the key to a long-lost treasure inside the three-dimensional tableau. The fact is, he indeed hid such a key, but all is not exactly as it seems.

Nevertheless, the rumors are so persistent that there are people who would very much like to have a closer look at the painting. Unfortunately, it is not on public display, but was recently auctioned off at a venue in the Core. The lucky buyer, an upper-class art lover named Isaac Vanderbilt, has shipped the painting to his estate on Bellerophon. As far as those who'd also like to take more than just a cursory glance at it are concerned, it will not stay there for long.

ACT 1 Scene 1: Getting' the Job

The adventure begins with one member of the Crew receiving a wave from Beaumonde. Someone who has FRIENDS IN LOW PLACES or, better still, a GOOD NAME will be the most likely recipient of the message. If there is no one aboard your ship who fits this description, the wave should be addressed to the Crew's captain. As soon as you've decided who's the addressee, read the following passage out loud or paraphrase it:

If the wave's digital signature is to be believed, it was sent off round about three hours ago from the Border world Beaumonde, a place called "Maidenhead," to be precise.

As you play the recorded video file, it dawns upon you that the Maidenhead must be some kind of saloon or bar because there's brisk business in the background. You even spot the corner of the counter behind which a bored bartender is standing. Then, however, you direct your attention to the two young men who take center stage and who are about to speak to you. They wear expensive suits and are well-groomed. Apart from slight differences in dress, the identical twins are indistinguishable.

"Ni How," one of the brother says while the other one strokes his thin moustache, "The name's Mingo." He sounds like a lower-class Limey from Earth-That-Was. "It has come to our attention that you and your mates have done a few jobs of the less-than-illicit kind, if you catch my drift".

"Why don't you come see us?" asks his brother, "If you're interested in a lucrative business relationship with us, that is".

"When Fanty says 'lucrative,' he's indeed talking about 5,000 gleaming platinum coins that might change hands," Mingo adds with a friendly smile.

Then the message ends.

It is an AVERAGE (9) task to plot a direct course to Beaumonde (Intelligence + Pilot / Astrogation). The trip will take about 14 days, give or take a few hours depending how successful or unsuccessful the Skill roll is.

When your crew's ship begins her final descent, read:

Beaumonde is a fairly wealthy Border world. Since the heavily industrialized planet is the manufacturing hub of the system, it's hardly surprising that its cities are surrounded by factories that are responsible for Beaumonde's major problem: pollution. In fact, the world's cities are covered in a perpetual haze.

As your ship touches down on the crowded Atoll Plaza amidst a number of other, equally disreputable ships, you notice that the place is filled with every immigrant culture and shop imaginable.

After clearing customs, paying port fees, fuelling up the ship, and performing routine maintenance duties, the Crew may ramble around to get to know Atoll Plaza and its inhabitants. However, it is more far more prudent to head straight to the Maidenhead. Asking for the right direction is an EASY feat (Willpower + Influence) and it should take the Crew only a few minutes to get there. Read:

As you open the bar's entrance door, you not only discover that the big taproom is two stories down, but also that there's a guncheck on the mezzanine. Apparently, it works like a lunch automat: After sticking a gun in a drawer and pulling out a chit, the drawer closes and rotates, revealing another empty one. A large bouncer with a shockrod watches you impassively as you decide whether to lay down your arms or not.

Those who don't want to part with their guns may leave the bar and hide them on their person, making a HARD Agility + Covert / Sleight of Hand Skill roll. If the roll fails, the bouncer will call the characters attention to large sign that reads, "No Firearms. No Explosives. No Acids." Should the character be dumb enough to insist on taking his weapons with him, he'll be thrown out, possibly making the acquaintance with the bouncer's stun baton.

Once every character is disarmed, everyone who makes an EASY (5) Alertness + Perception Skill roll notices the twins. Read:

Large CorVue screens in the taproom's corners that show news reports and advertisements shed artificial, flickering light on the spacious and largely shady room. While you're searching the barroom for your prospective employers, you lay your eyes on close groups of dark tables and booths.

A few moments later, you spot the twins in one of the shadowy booths where they sit at a table, regarding you intently. Once they're sure that you've spotted them, Fanty and Mingo beckon you over inconspicuously.

You walk over and, after being asked to do so, take a seat at the small, round table on which a carafe rests. After offering you a drink, one of the twins says, "Let's talk business."

"Wei¹," his brother falls in, "Two weeks ago Sir Isaac Vanderbilt bought the painting 'Fragments of Destiny' at an art auction on Ariel. One of those bidders whose tender hadn't been accepted contacted us and signified a wish to, well, take the painting into possession despite the auction's unfavorable outcome".

He smirks, while his brother adds, "Exclusive of our 25% share, you'll be paid the tidy little sum of 5,000 platinum if you manage to, shall we say, get possession of the data medium on which the painting is stored and which is currently kept in a comparatively safe place on Bellerophon".

"My brother is a bit of a joker", interjects the other twin, "As it turns out, Vanderbilt was ill-prepared. Most of the fancy security systems he ordered before attending the auction aren't in place yet".

"Dui le²", his brother consents, "Apart from the alarm system most estates on Bellerophon are equipped with, the painting is largely unprotected at the moment. Granted, there are guards, but

¹ Literally, "Yes"

² Literally, "Correct, right"

they're not allowed to inflict deadly violence. In fact, everyone who's not in *you zhi yuan*³ anymore should be able to do this second story job."

After a short pause, the other twin asks, "Do we have a deal or do we have a deal?"

At this point every character should make Intelligence + Knowledge Skill roll, then compare the result to the table below.

Result	What the character knows
EASY	The painting was sold for 20,000 credits.
AVERAGE	Jasper Price, the artist who created the three-dimensional, holographic tableau that depicts the Battle of Sturges, killed himself last year. That's probably one of the reasons why his painting was sold at such a high price.
HARD	Another reason might be that the painter who was born and raised on Shadow has allegedly given a subtle hint to the whereabouts of a long-lost treasure inside the tableau. It is rumored that those who can unlock the painting's secret will become filthy rich.
FORMIDABLE	In fact is, however, that Price, who did not support Unification but was unable to volunteer as a Browncoat due to his unstable mental condition, supposedly knew on which of the countless ships that were destroyed in the battle a large sum of money was stashed. It is said that the ship's precious cargo was badly needed on Hera, the ship's destination.

Fanty and Mingo are cunning businessmen. Pushing up the price is HARD (Willpower + Influence). If someone mentions that the painting was sold for 20,000 credits, a +1 step Skill bonus is granted.

If the Skill roll is successful, they'll agree to pay 5,500 platinum. In case of an extraordinary success, they'll even go as high as 6,000 platinum. If the roll is botched, however, it's time to part with some Plot Points or the adventure ends prematurely.

Act 1, Scene 2: Travellin' to Bellerophon

Plotting a direct course from Beaumonde to Bellerophon is a HARD (11) task (Intelligence + Pilot / Astrogation). The journey takes a ship that has a Speed Class of 1 round about 65 days. Divide by the ship's Speed Class to get the actual travel time.

The Crew is being followed by Finnegan's Reef, a Firefly Class transport. Captain Rollins and his crew were also hired to steal the painting. They know what the characters are going to do and have decided to let them do the dirty work. Rollins has ordered Ned Parker, his pilot, to stay out of sensor range. Every now and then, Finnegan's Reef appears on the sensor readouts, though. It is a HARD (11) task (ship's Alertness + sensor operator's Technical Engineering / Sensors) to notice her and an AVERAGE (7) mental feat (Intelligence + Alertness) to conclude that it is indeed always the same ship that pops up. If the Crew tries to intercept Finnegan's Reef, Rollins will change course, though.

While en-route, the crew may compile the facts they know about Bellerophon. To do that, everyone involved rolls Intelligence + Knowledge. The Game Master then determines how much a character knows by consulting the following table.

Difficulty	Result
EASY	The sparsely populated moon Bellerophon is home to the wealthy. It has both large oceans and an empty area of desert climate, complete with canyons, rock and sand.
AVERAGE	Isis Canyon is probably the most deserted spot on the world. Bellerophon Estates, on the other hand, are large self-contained stately homes that hover above the moon's oceans. They have gracious living, ocean views and state-of-the-art security.
HARD	The wealthy pay well for their privacy and the skies above Bellerophon are patrolled by both the Feds and private security companies.
FORMIDABLE	Visiting the estates is by invitation only. To make things worse, there is a system of satellites in geostationary orbit above the settlements. Landing without being noticed by the network is far from being child's play.

³ Kindergarten

Act 2, Scene 1: Penetratin' Planetary Security

To fly the boat groundside near Vanderbilt's estate without being noticed, the pilot has to make a HEROIC (95) Complex Action, rolling the ship's Alertness and the pilot's Pilot / Appropriate Specialty. Any Botch indicates they've been spotted and will be frightened away by either the Feds or one of the private security companies. There might be some rattling of sabres involved, but the Crew's ship will not be shot down at this point.

Landing in Isis Canyon or one of the other deserted spots on the world undetected, however, is easier. The pilot has to make a HARD (55) Complex Action only. After touching down, the Crew can board their shuttle or hover mule and approach Vanderbilt's estate from below to enter it via the basement. That is an AVERAGE (35) Complex Action.

Act 2, Scene 2: It Takes a Thief

To break into Vanderbilt's house, the estate's security system has to be disarmed. Disabling the motion sensors and security cameras that monitor all the entrances is a FORMIDABLE (15) task (Agility + Covert / Disable Devices). However, to disarm such security devices, the character must be able to reach it. The character must pass through the area it monitors which is an HARD (11) task (Alertness + Covert / Stealth). Since security guards watch the feeds from all the cameras and motion sensors, a failed attempt to approach or to disable the device will probably be noticed.

After disabling the security system, the entrance door's electronic lock has to be bypassed. A character attempting this HARD (11) task (Agility + Covert / Open Locks) must have an electrical tool kit (see Appendix).

There are, however, quieter and more subtle entry options, which can consist of posing as *deliverymen*, *security*, *medical*, or *maintenance personnel* with each options having its strong and weak points. All of the following plans require a few dozen credits to spare as well as a HARD (11) Willpower + Covert (or Influence) / Streetwise to obtain uniforms.

If there is a character who can use programming skills to gain illegal access to the estate's computer network, that hero can put the characters' assumed names on the list of authorized visitors by making a FORMIDABLE (15) Intelligence + Technical Engineering / Hacking Skill roll to defeat the security programs installed to defend the system. If the roll is failed by 4 or more, the security system immediately alerts its administrator that there has been an unauthorized entry. Moreover, the hacker must make a Complex Action (EASY (15) vs. Intelligence + Technical Engineering / Hacking) to add the names on the list. Each roll represents one turn's work. If there is no Cortex buff in the crew, but a crew member has FRIENDS IN LOW PLACES, he may spend using 6 Plot Points to have a buddy with the needed skills.

Afterwards, the characters must bluff their way into the estate. Gaining access, however, issues a vehement challenge because the characters have to fake a valid reason for their visit.

If they pose as *deliverymen*, they may arrive unannounced with flowers, candy, etc., and bluff their way into the compound by making a HARD (11) Alertness + Perception / Appropriate Specialty Skill rolls to glance down the guard's roster and catch a glimpse of a valid resident's or other authorized person's name. The characters have to come up with a plausible story by making both a FORMIDABLE (15) Willpower + Influence / Appropriate Specialty Skill roll and an HARD (11) Willpower + Performance / Appropriate Specialty Skill roll not to appear to be nervous.

If they pose as *security personnel*, they have to create valid credentials before arriving which is a HEROIC Complex Action (95 vs. Intelligence + Covert / Forgery). Deceiving the guards is EASY (3 vs. Willpower + Performance), though.

If they pose as *medical personnel*, they have to forge or buy credentials. It is either a FORMIDABLE Complex Action (75 vs. Intelligence + Covert / Forgery) to fake them or a HARD (11) feat (Willpower + Covert / Streetwise) to buy the identity cards on the black market. Moreover, a character must fake a reason to enter the compound by hacking the estate's computer system (see above). Creating a false medical alert, however, is an AVERAGE (35) Complex action. Deceiving the estate's security guards is an AVERAGE (7) task (Willpower + Performance).

If the crew poses as maintenance personnel, they have to forge or buy credentials. It is either a HARD Complex Action (55 vs. Intelligence + Covert / Forgery) to fake them or an AVERAGE (7) feat (Willpower + Covert / Streetwise) to buy the identity cards on the black market. Moreover, a character must induce a malfunction by hacking the estate's computer system (see above). Creating a malfunction, however, is a HARD (55) Complex action. Deceiving the estate's security guards is EASY (3 vs. Willpower + Performance), though.

To get to the gallery without being noticed by security guards, all the characters have to make a Complex Action, rolling Alertness + Covert / Stealth. This is an AVERAGE (35) task at night or a HARD (55) Complex Action during the day. A Botch rolled increases the Difficulty by one category. Rolling two Botches, however, will alert the guards.

Disabling the painting's hurriedly installed alarm system is a HARD (55) Complex Action (Agility + Covert / Disable Devices). Each roll represents one turn's work. Every turn, the Game Master rolls one six-sided die. If the roll yields an 1, two security guards approach and the player make an Alertness + Perception / Hearing Skill roll to become aware of them in time and to determine how much time they have to hide away.

Difficulty	Number of Turns
EASY (3)	1
AVERAGE (7)	2
HARD (11) or more	3

Each turn beyond the first grants a +1 step Skill bonus to the Alertness + Covert / Stealth rolls made not to be noticed by the guards. A successful roll against a HARD Difficulty, for example, grants a +2 step Skill bonus. Once the guards enter the gallery, they make an Alertness + Perception Skill roll that is opposed by the characters' Alertness + Covert / Stealth rolls. If one of the guards beats a character's total, he has noticed that something is wrong. If a character botched or one of the guards is extraordinarily successful, however, the character in question was spotted right away. In case of an ordinary success, the guards will only draw their stun batons and investigate, making another Alertness + Perception Skill roll against the same Difficulty. This time, however, they are more alert and gain a +1 step Skill bonus. As soon as they notice a character, Initiative is rolled. The second guard's only action will be to draw his walkie-talkie from his shoulder holster and to raise an alarm.

To get out of the estate without being noticed, all the characters have to make another Complex Action, rolling Alertness + Covert / Stealth. This time, however, the Difficulty Thresholds depends on the characters' previous actions and decisions.

Circumstances	Difficulty Threshold
No alarm, night	EASY (15)
No alarm, day	AVERAGE (35)
Alarm was sounded, night	HARD (55)
Alarm was sounded, day	FORMIDABLE (75)

Once the characters have left the estate and boarded their ship, they've completed this adventure's first challenge and should be rewarded 2 to 4 Plot Points, depending on how well they did.

Act 2, Scene 3: The Chase

Again, plotting a direct course from Bellerophon to Beaumonde is a HARD (11) task (Intelligence + Pilot / Astrogation). The journey will take 65 days, divided by the ship's Speed Class.

Finnegan's Reef, the unknown pursuers' boat, is trying to gain on the characters' ship. The Crew's pilot must make a ship's Alertness + pilot's Technical Engineering / Sensors Skill roll to notice the approaching boat in time. The degree of success determines how close Finnegan's Reef came before being detected.

Result	Range Category
EASY (3)	Point Blank
EASY (5)	Short
AVERAGE (7)	Medium
AVERAGE (9)	Long
HARD (11)	Extreme

As soon as Captain Rollins notices that his ship was detected, he'll send a wave.

The wave

"All right you sacks o' gos se, here's the deal. We know ya'lls got your grubby mitts on that piece o' pretty that leads to the Browncoat gold. Ya'll heave to and we don't start punchin' holes in that shiny little boat of yours!"

[The Captain mentions the treasure because we can't assume that the characters made the Knowledge Skill roll at the beginning of the adventure. This is their second and last chance to figure out what's really going on.]

In all likelihood, the Crew won't be willing to hand the painting over to Captain Rollins and he'll order his pilot to dock with the characters' ship. To do that, Finnegan's Reef has to catch up with the Crew's ship, though. Until Finnegan's Reef has docked with the Crew's ship or the characters have shaken her off, both pilots will make rolls using their vessel's Agility and their own + Pilot / Appropriate Specialty Skill. Moreover, they'll receive a Skill bonus or penalty that depends on their ship's current Speed Class.

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

Finnegan's Reef, for example, is being pushed past her normal limits and is travelling at her top speed. Since her hard burn rating is 10, Finnegan's Reef's pilot gets a +5 step Skill bonus.

Each turn, the pilots make opposed Skill rolls. If the player character succeeds, the Crew's vessel moves one Range Category further away from Finnegan's Reef. On an extraordinary success, the ship moves two Range Categories further away. If the pilot fails, however, Finnegan's Reef moves one Range Category closer to the Crew's ship. She'll move two Range Categories closer if the Crew's pilot botched. The chase ends either if the Crew's ship moves beyond Extreme range and therefore effectively escapes her pursuers, or if Finnegan's Reef moves closer than Point Blank range and is effectively on top of the Crew's ship. In the following turn, her pilot will try to dock with the character's ship. To successfully force-dock with the Crew's boat he must either make a FORMIDABLE (15) Skill roll, using Finnegan's Reef's Agility and his Pilot Skill, or, if the Crew isn't inactive, win another opposed roll. This time, however, he's at -2 Skill and Skill Modifiers due to Speed are not taken into account. If Finnegan's Reef's pilot manages to dock with the Crew's ship, both vessels are connected between their main airlocks and Captain Rollins will order Kwok Chan Ming, Jacob Kroger, his mechanic, and Douglas Wong, the mercenary, to board the Crew's ship. Overriding the hatch controls to open, however, will take some time. Kwok Chan Ming, Captain Rollins' first mate, must succeed at a Complex Action (HARD (55) vs. Agility + Covert / Disable Devices) to open the inner hatch. Each roll represents one turn's work. In the meantime, the characters can, for example, prepare an ambush. How they deal with the boarding party is up to the characters.

Now, it should be patently clear to the characters that there's more going on than they know. Even if no one knows that Price allegedly gave a subtle hint to the whereabouts of a long-lost treasure inside his painting, Rollins' not so subtle remarks strongly suggest just that.

If the players don't advance the idea of taking a closer look at the painting on their own, you should suggest to them that they will be paid to deliver it to the twins. No one said they weren't allowed to cast a cursory glance at it. GREEDY characters are most likely to experience this kind of inspiration. It could also cross a FILCHER's mind.

The Painting

"This piece by the late masterful 3-D artist Jasper Price is titled 'Fragments of Destiny' and is the benchmark by which this art form is judged. In this work, Price pays tribute to the gallant participants of the Battle of Sturges and honors the thousands that lost their lives in that dreadful conflagration. The detail present in this stunning triumph of this unique graphical medium is so precise that the only way to get a better view of this tragic reminder of the futility of war is to visit the actual battlefield."

Cortex entry from the Sihnon registry of fine art

To unravel the painting's secret, it's important to remember that Jasper Price was born and raised on Shadow. If the players forgot this seemingly insignificant information, they may make an AVERAGE (7) Recall (Intelligence + Willpower) roll to check whether their characters remember it. It is an EASY (3) feat to remember that the painting is in fact a three-dimensional reproduction of the artist's impressions and that it is freely adjustable.

Moreover, it is a HARD Complex Action (55 vs. Intelligence + Pilot / Astrogation) to take a look at the constellations in the background and to figure out where the devastated world was at the day Price added his signature to the painting. Each roll represents 15 minutes of contemplation.

Once Shadow's location is calculated, however, adjusting the projection in such a way that the world would be directly behind as well as at eye level of the beholder is an EASY task (Intelligence + Technical Engineering).

It is an AVERAGE (7) mental challenge for art loving people (Intelligence + Artistry / Painting) to know what a vanishing point is: a point in a drawing to which parallel lines appear to converge.

If the characters adjust the projection and know what to pay attention to, they'll find it EASY (3) to notice (Alertness + Perception / Sight) that on the painting's vanishing point a small boat floats. If the scale is adjusted, one can even read her name: *You Ling*⁴.

If the players managed to solve the painting's secret without much help, they should be awarded 2 to 4 Plot Point now.

⁴ Literally, "specter, apparition, ghost"

Act 3, Scene 1: Deliverin' the Goods

Fanty, Mingo, and a few goons will meet the Crew at the spaceport, accept the goods, pay the characters and bid them farewell.

Act 3, Scene 2: Treasure Hunt

The former battlefield on which the Battle of Sturges was fought isn't too far away. It's an AVERAGE (7) task (Intelligence + Pilot / Astrogation) to plot a course and to estimate that the journey will take 55 days, divided by the ship's Speed Class.

The Battlefield

"Sturges? Sturges? You want to talk about Sturges? Only hun dan that want to talk about Sturges are them as what wasn't there! What, you're buying? Well hell yes I can talk about Sturges to a fellah buyin' real whiskey!. Not much to talk about really, not even much of a battle, just a raging furball of explosions held together by sheer terror. My story? Not much to that either. We went in fast with half a dozen ships and all six were destroyed. Only reason I'm here to tell you about it is the Buddha is merciful and the missile that hit us was a dud. Damn thing was a monster and even though it didn't explode it cored out our engine room right good and left us on the drift. We punched out on shuttles and caught a ride with what was left of our only frigate. How that flaming hulk managed to hold together long enough for us to escape, I reckon you'll have to ask a Shepherd about that..."

Comments by Browncoat Navy survivor Lester T Scruggs to Alliance Historian William Chou Phd

Finding the gunboat is a HARD Complex Action (55 vs. ship's Alertness + pilot's Technical Engineering / Sensors). Each roll represents 15 minutes' work. Once the Crew has found *You Ling*, however, they'll realize that reaching her might not be as easy as they hoped. In fact, flying through this area that is clogged with debris is a FORMIDABLE Complex Action (75 vs. ship's Agility + pilot's Pilot / Appropriate Specialty). Each roll represents a time increment of one turn. The pilot may make as many Skill rolls as he likes, as long as he takes the according penalties. He may, for example, make three Skill rolls at -2 Skill step and add the results together. In all likelihood, the ship will reach *You Ling* sooner if she moves fast. However, once per turn a collision may occur because the Black is littered with starship wreckage. The pilot must avoid these hazards by making a Skill roll as a free reaction using the ship's Agility and his Pilot / Appropriate Specialty Skill. The obstacle's size, its speed, and its course determine the Difficulty for each Pilot Skill roll. Failing a roll to avoid a hazard means that the ship has collided with the obstacle and will take Basic damage. Although avoiding a hazard does not require an action, flying more slowly to reduce the Multiple Action penalty can be reasonable.

Obstacle Size

d10 Roll	Obstacle Size	Pilot Difficulty	Basic Damage Die Type
1	Colossal	HEROIC (19)	d12
2 – 3	Huge	FORMIDABLE (15)	d10
4 – 5	Large	HARD (11)	d8
6 – 7	Medium-size	AVERAGE (7)	d6
8 – 9	Small	EASY (3)	d4
10	Tiny	0	d2

Obstacle Speed

d8 Roll	Obstacle Speed	Difficulty Modifier	Damage Modifier
1	Very High	+8	+2 step
2 – 3	High	+4	+1 step
4 – 5	Medium	+0	+0
6 – 7	Slow	-4	-1 step
8	Stationary	-8	-2 step

Obstacle Direction

d6 Roll	Obstacle Direction	Difficulty Modifier	Damage Modifier
1 – 2	Moving Toward	+4	+1 step
3 – 4	Moving Perpendicular	+0	+0
5 – 6	Moving Away	-4	-1 step

Example:

To reach the threshold, the pilot has made two Skill rolls at -1 Skill step. After that, an obstacle's size, speed, and course are determined randomly. After rolling a ten-sided, an eight-sided, and a six-sided die, the game master tells the players that a medium-sized piece of debris is moving toward them at high speed. It is a FORMIDABLE (7 + 4 + 4 = 15) task to avoid it. If the pilot fails the roll, the ship collides with the obstacle and takes (d6 increased by +2 step) d10 points of Basic damage.

Buzzing the derelict ship is an AVERAGE (7) task (ship's Alertness + sensor operator's Technical Engineering / Sensors) and will reveal that her hull is breached in several places and that there is no breathable atmosphere inside. Whether they want to or not, the Crew will have to don spacesuits.

Docking with the derelict *You Ling* is a HARD (11) task (ship's Agility + pilot's Pilot / Appropriate Specialty), while the Crew will find opening the airlock's outer hatch to be an EASY (3) feat (Agility + Covert / Disable Devices). Overriding the inner hatch's controls to open despite the fact that a pressure differential exists, however, requires a HARD (11) Skill roll.

Once inside, the Crew will find that it is a HEROIC Complex Action (95 vs. Alertness + Perception) to search the ship. They may, however, assist each other directly by combining their Skill roll results with the total rolled by the others. Each time the players roll their dice, one minute elapses.

Inside the gunboat, part 1

Despite the passage of time, dim red emergency lighting still flicker giving the interior of the ship a ghostly feel that lives up to the ship's name. Frost coats the surface of everything and ice crystals, the final remnants of the ship's oxygen, hang suspended in mid-air. The stillness is that of a sepulcher and the silence is more than oppressive, straining ears can almost pick out the sounds of the ship's last battle. However, that was then and this is now. The cargo hold and the pay off is just beyond this one last hatch.

You Ling's engines are badly damaged. She can't move. Repairing her would be a HEROIC Complex Action (95 vs. Intelligence + Mechanical Engineering / Mechanical Repair). Unless the Crew happened to bring several thousands Credits worth of spare parts, the ship cannot be repaired.

Her computer, however, is still functional. After fixing and restarting *You Ling's* fusion power plant which is a HARD (11) task (Intelligence + Technical Engineering / Technical Repair), the characters can access the computer and make use of its basic functions. Albeit with a -1 step Skill penalty, the Crew can even use *You Ling's* sensors.

Act 3, Scene 3: Unified Reclamation

Five minutes later, a ship will approach. If someone stayed behind on the ship, that person may make a Skill roll using the ship's Alertness and his/her own Technical Engineering / Sensors Skill. Once again, the degree of success determines how close the Unified Reclamation vessel came before being detected.

Result	Range Category
EASY (3)	Point Blank
EASY (5)	Short
AVERAGE (7)	Medium
AVERAGE (9)	Long
HARD (11)	Extreme

Unified Reclamation

“Known throughout the Alliance, Unified Reclamation Corporation provides the vital service of keeping the planets fit and safe for the billions of citizens of the ‘Verse. United Reclamation is also responsible for 87% of all recycled products that fuel the thriving economy that makes our society a shining model of ecological accountability. Unlimited opportunities await potential employees in a myriad of fields as wildly divergent as technical, administrative, production, and security.”

Excerpt from a company brochure

Shamrock IV's current course will take her one range category closer to the Crew's boat. The vessel's pilot will make a Skill roll using his vessel's Alertness and his Technical Engineering / Sensors Skill to detect the Crew's ship. The Difficulty depends on her size, range, as well as the precautions the characters might have taken.

Size

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

Range

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

Special Circumstances

Situation	Difficulty Modifier
Ship is running silent	+8
Ship is concealed behind a massive body	+4

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

If the Crew's ship is spotted, however, Captain Alexander will order his crew to destroy the intruders' vessel. To execute that order, the vessel's magnetic grapples and her cutting torches will be used.

Magnetic grapples do not deal damage to a target. Instead, they pull their target toward the grappling ship. When a magnetic grapple attempts to capture a ship, it is resolved as if a normal attack. As an action, a magnetic grapple can pull an unresisting target toward itself up to two range categories. The magnetic grapple does not have to move its target the full distance. While caught, a starship cannot move. Resisting or escaping a magnetic grapple requires a successful ship's Strength + Pilot's Pilot / Appropriate Specialty Skill roll opposed by the grappling ship's Burst of Strength (Strength + Strength) roll. The pilot's result determines whether his ship can resist or escape the magnetic grapple:

Botch	The caught ship moves two range categories closer to the grappling ship.
Failure	The ship moves one range category closer to the grappling ship.
Success	Current distance is maintained.
Extraordinary Success	The caught ship breaks free and can act normally.

If the Crew's ship is moved closer than Point Blank range, the oversized cutting torches will be activated. Since she can't move, the Crew's boat is an EASY (3) target. The torches deal Basic damage. In other words, subtract three from the attack roll and split the result evenly into Stun and Wounds. Unless the Crew's ship is armed, the only way to chase Shamrock IV away is to manually fire one of the missiles *You Ling* is armed with. Provided that the Crew has already restarted *You Ling's* power plant, this is an EASY (3) task (Agility + Heavy Weapons). On a botch, however, the Crew's ship is hit.

Inside the gunboat, part 2; The nutrient bars

"I swear before God and all the apostles, I seen 'em with my own eyes! <cough, cough> We loaded up so many gold bricks on that You Ling that I don't see how the ship could fly. Had ta be enough gold to pay the entire Browncoat Navy. <Long hacking wheeze> I know I ain't got much time left, but I swear as sure'n I'm dyin' that it was true. God how my Pa coulda used some o' that treasure. I know y'all don't know me, but maybe you can do me one last favor and try and see that Pa gets some of what is jus' floatin' out there in the Black?"

Last words of Jimmy Goyne Browncoat Private.

Regardless of the PCs success to this point, the truth of the lost treasure of the Battle of Sturges is, there isn't really a treasure at all, at least not in the form everyone thinks it does. The rumors of a "lost treasure of Sturges" owes its existence to a misunderstanding.

The Battle of Sturges was fought over a moon, partially terraformed and not yet fit for human habitation as the outbreak of the war prevented the completion of the project. As the moon was not fit for habitation, it made a natural hidden base for Browncoat raiders. Initially, thanks to tight security, the Alliance could not locate the staging area for the raiders that were playing havoc on Alliance supply lines. The success of the Sturges base resulted in the facilities growing in size and eventually, Alliance intelligence discovered the base's location.

Sturges had become such a large and important facility by the time of its discovery that the Browncoats chose to defend their investment, which resulted in the Battle of Sturges.

One of the few survivors of the catastrophic battle was a Browncoat soldier by the name of Jimmy Goyne who helped load a large supply of nutrient bars onto a small Browncoat gunboat prior to the fight. As a raw private from an extremely rural planet, Goyne had never seen the bars before and mistook the gold foil wrapped bricks to actually BE gold bricks. Being naïve as well as ignorant, he told others about the vast amount of gold bricks he'd loaded. "Why it had to be the payroll for the whole dadgummed Browncoat army!"

Word soon spread of the "payroll" but the massive casualties wiped out most of the people who knew about the "treasure" however, as fate would have it, the hick soldier survived the battle to spread the word of the hoard. Goyne was severely wounded in a later battle and Price was nearby when the wounded soldier was brought into a field hospital where Price was in the process of failing his evaluation for service. The medical personal could tell the boy wasn't going to make it, so they tagged him as a lost cause and moved on to assist others. Price took sympathy on Goyne and sat with him during his last minutes. The young soldier lived long enough to mention the gold bricks and the name of the ship he loaded them on before dying, the *You Ling*.

Price used his computer skills after returning home and managed to find that the ship did exist and with rumors of a lost "ship of gold" confirmed by a handful of other survivors that Price interviewed personally, Price was convinced that the story was true. He was able to scan the Sturges battlefield and located the hulk of the wrecked ship, the coordinates of which is what is hidden in the painting.

The nutrient bars are worth 2,850 Credits. However, it is a HARD (11) mental feat (Intelligence + Knowledge / Appraisal) to estimate their value. Selling them at that price is also a HARD (11) task (Willpower + Influence / Barter).

Once the bars are sold, the characters should get 4 to 6 Advancement Points, depending on how well they did.

Appendix

Item	Cost	Weight	Availability	Notes
Advanced Alarm Removal Kit	50 / 125p	5	I	This package contains state-of-the-art intrusion devices such as insertable circuit breakers, a bypass analyzer, microwave reflectors, and micro-manipulator tools. Using the kit grants a +2 step Skill bonus to all Covert and Technical Engineering Skill rolls made against security systems as well as mechanical and electronic locks.

Folks, Rascals, and Boats

Folk

Bellerophon Estate Security Guards

Agi d6, Str d8, Vit d8, Ale d8, Int d6, Wil d6;
Life Points 14, Initiative d6 + d8.

Traits: Sharp Sense [Sight] (Minor Asset), Loyal (Minor Complication).

Skills: Athletics d4, Covert d6 / Stealth d8, Discipline d4, Guns d4, Influence d4, Knowledge d4, Mechanical Engineering d2, Medical Expertise d2, Melee Weapon Combat d6 / Clubs d10, Perception d6 / Sight d8 / Search d10, Technical Engineering d2, Unarmed Combat d6.

Equipment: Ballistic Mesh (AR 1W; all damage is converted to Stun), (Stun baton (d2 S) Walkie-Talkie.

Kurtwood Alexander Captain of Shamrock IV

Agi d6, Str d6, Vit d6, Ale d6, Int d8, Wil d10;
Life Points 16, Initiative d6 + d8.

Traits: Trustworthy Gut (Minor Asset), Straight shooter (Minor Complication).

Skills: Athletics d4, Discipline d4, Guns d4, Influence d6 / Leadership d8, Knowledge d6 / Value d8 / Salvage Operations d10, Mechanical Engineering d6, Medical Expertise d6, Melee Weapon Combat d4 Perception d6 / Sight d8, Technical Engineering d4, Unarmed Combat d4.

Description: A dependable captain that is a company man through and through. Alexander does not take kindly to scabs and will do everything in his power to prevent theft of company property out of sheer frustration over a mechanic that doesn't seem to want to accept that he is in command.

Roscoe Lee Cheung Pilot of Shamrock IV

Agi d8, Str d6, Vit d6, Ale d8, Int d8, Wil d6;
Life Points 12, Initiative d8 + d8.

Traits: Sharp Sense [Sight] (Minor Asset), Twitchy (Minor Complication).

Skills: Athletics d6 / Dodge d8, Discipline d4, Guns d4, Influence d4, Knowledge d4, Mechanical Engineering d6, Medical Expertise d4, Perception d6, Pilot d6 / Sho cheng d10 Technical Engineering d6, Unarmed Combat d6 / Brawling d8

Description: Roscoe is a man caught in a power struggle and just tries to do his job everyday without being drawn into the middle of the test of wills. The captain and the mechanic of the Shamrock have each staked out their claim to be in charge of the ship and neither is willing to flinch. The constant fireworks between Alexander and Song have resulted in a very unhappy ship and an even unhappier pilot.

Kwan-Hak Song Mechanic of Shamrock IV

Agi d8, Str d6, Vit d6, Ale d6, Int d10, Wil d6;
Life Points 12, Initiative d8 + d6.

Traits: Talented: Technical Engineering (Minor Asset), Hooked: Tobacco (Minor Complication).

Skills: Athletics d4, Discipline d4, Guns d4, Influence d6, Knowledge d6, Mechanical Engineering d6 / Repairs d10 / Cannibalization d10, Medical Expertise d6, Perception d6, Technical Engineering d6 / Repairs d10, Unarmed Combat d4.

Description: An old pro that is the stereotypical engineer, namely grizzled, anti-social, cigar chomping, and never happier than working on "his" engine. After all, to Song "The captain may run the ship, but the engine room is *mine!* As long as whoever is telling the boat where to go remembers that, there won't be any problem. I've outlasted four captains and I expect to outlast this new guy, whatever his name is."

Rascals

William "Billy One Eye" Rollins

Captain of Finnegan's Reef

Agi d10, Str d6, Vit d8, Ale d8, Int d10, Wil d12;
Life Points 22; Initiative d8 + d10.

Traits: Leadership (Minor Asset), Tough as Nails (Minor Asset), Two-Fisted (Major Asset), Branded (Major Complication), Dull Sense [Sight] (Minor Complication), Greedy (Minor Complication).

Skills: Animal Handling d4, Athletics d6 / Dodge d8, Covert d6 / Stealth d8 / Streetwise d8, Guns d6 / Pistols d10, Influence d6 / Leadership d8, Knowledge d4, Mechanical Engineering d2, Medical Expertise d4, Perception d6, Performance d4, Pilot d4, Planetary Vehicles d4, Unarmed Combat d6.

Weapons and Equipment: 2 Pistols (DMG d6W, RNG 100, ROF 3, MAG 8); Ship-linked Handset.

Description: Billy is a hard and ruthless man, completely lacking in morals and conscience. He is intelligent, however, and can be very persuasive when he wants to be. He became an outlaw at an early age and has committed almost every crime imaginable. His plan is to steal enough money to set himself up as a king on Londinum. No one knows whether he's serious or not.

Billy has been imprisoned twice for brawling. During one of those barroom brawls, broken bottles were picked up and brawl was turned into an armed melee in which he lost his left eye.

Kwok Chan "Tree Trunk" Ming

First Mate of Finnegan's Reef

Agi d6, Str d8, Vit d10, Ale d6, Int d8, Wil d8;
Life Points 18; Initiative d6 + d6.

Traits: Healthy as a Horse (Minor Asset), Steady Calm (Minor Asset), Loyal (Minor Complication).

Skills: Animal Handling d4, Athletics d4, Covert d6 / Stealth d8, Craft d4, Discipline d6, Guns d6 / Rifles d8, Influence d4, Knowledge d4, Perception d6, Medical Expertise d6, Melee Weapon Combat d4, Unarmed Combat d6 / Kung Fu d8, Survival d4.

Weapons and Equipment: Ballistic Mesh (AR 1W); Knife, Combat (DMG d4W); Rifle (DMG d8W, RNG 225, ROF 3, MAG 30); Ship-linked Handset.

Description: Ming was a farmer who was run off his land by a gang of thugs hired a big landowner. He has since become an outlaw and enjoys making the easy money. However, Ming still thinks of himself as a good person, a victim even. After all, he never would have turned to a life of crime if it had not been for the gorrain landowner. If he is captured, he does everything he can to get the characters to understand his point of view.

Ned "Nose" Parker

Pilot of Finnegan's Reef

Agi d10, Str d4, Vit d6, Ale d8, Int d8, Wil d6;
Life Points 12; Initiative d8 + d10.

Traits: Religiosity (Minor Asset), Nose for Trouble (Minor Asset), Talented [Pilot / Mid-Bulk Transports] (Minor Asset), Branded (Minor Complication), Memorable (Minor Complication), Scrawny (Minor Complication).

Skills: Athletics d6 / Running d10, Covert d6 / Disable Devices d10 / Open Locks d10 / Stealth d8, Guns d4, Knowledge d4, Medical Expertise d2, Perception d6, Pilot d6 / Mid-Bulk Transports d12, Unarmed Combat d4, Technical Engineering d4, Survival d2.

Weapons and Equipment: Helmet, Infantry (AR 4W, -1 Ale); Lock Picks, Electronic; Lock Picks, Mechanical; Pistol (DMG d6W, RNG 100, ROF 3, MAG 8); Plate Vest (AR 4W, -1 Agi).

Description: Nose is a short, skinny man, with a huge nose and whiny voice. He was raised by a devoutly religious mother who filled his head with visions of fire and brimstone. As a result, Nose is constantly nervous and jumpy. He knows he is going to Hell when he dies and this makes him hesitant to take unnecessary risks. Nose is the first to flee or surrender if things go south. He has nimble fingers and specializes in safecracking and lock picking.

Jacob "Fattie" Kroger

Mechanic of Finnegan's Reef

Agi d6, Str d10, Vit d10, Ale d6, Int d4, Wil d6;
Life Points 20; Initiative d6 + d6.

Traits: Mean Left Hook (Minor Asset), Mechanical Empathy (Minor Asset), Tough as Nails (Major Asset), Branded (Minor Complication), Chip on the Shoulder (Major Complication), Portly (Minor Complication).

Skills: Athletics d4, Covert d4, Guns d6, Knowledge d2, Influence d6 / Intimidation d8, Mechanical Engineering d6 / Mechanical Repair d10, Melee Weapon Combat d6, Perception d6, Technical Engineering d6 / Technical Repair d8, Unarmed Combat d6 / Brawling d8.

Weapons and Equipment: Ballistic Mesh (AR 1W); Baseball Bat (as club; DMG d6B); Pistol (DMG d6W, RNG 100, ROF 3, MAG 8).

Description: Fattie is a big, strong man with a round belly. He is a brawler who likes to fight hand to hand. Fattie is also a bully who uses his size to intimidate people.

Douglas "Mental" Wong

Mercenary

Agi d6, Str d6, Vit d6, Ale d8, Int d6, Wil d6;
Life Points 12; Initiative d8 + d6.

Traits: Fightin' Type (Major Asset), Lightnin' Reflexes (Major Asset), Branded (Minor Complication), Sadistic (Major Complication).

Skills: Animal Handling d2, Athletics d6 / Dodge d8, Covert d6 / Stealth d10, Guns d4, Knowledge d4, Medical Expertise d6 / Anatomy d8, Melee Weapon Combat d6 / Knives d10, Perception d4, Ranged Weapons d6 / Throwing Knives d8, Unarmed Combat d4.

Weapons and Equipment: Pistol (DMG d6W, RNG 100, ROF 3, MAG 8), 4 Knives, Combat (DMG d4W, RNG 15).

Description: Douglas fell in with Rollins about a year ago. He grudgingly respects Billy, but holds the others in open contempt. Douglas is not with the gang for the money; he enjoys killing people. Anything they steal is just an added bonus.

Boats

Finnegan's Reef

Modified Firefly-Class Transport

Dimensions (LxBxH): 191 x 128 x 53 feet.

Tonnage: 2,400 tons.

Speed Class: 7 cruise / 10 hard-burn

Crew Quarters: Two double, three single cabins.

Fuel Capacity: 60 tons (600 hours).

Cargo Capacity / Maximum Deck Load: 400/460 tons in hold #1; 200/220 tons in hold #2.

Passenger Capacity: Four double cabins.

Price: 168,000 Credits

Agi d8, Str d6, Vit d8, Ale d4, Int d4, Wil d4;

Initiative d8+d4, Life Points 10. Fuel Efficient (Minor Asset), Fast Throttle (Minor Asset), Everybody Has One (Minor Complication). Perception d4, Pilot d d4. Complexity: average. Maintenance costs 4,800 Credits per year.

At first sight, *Finnegan's Reef* is a basic transport model Firefly, without any fancy thrills. She looks like a battered out-of-date freighter, but there is more to her than meets the eye. Over the years, Rollins and his crew have repaired and modified the ship with whatever parts they could acquire. They have loaded her with so much used hardware that, strictly speaking, she really shouldn't fly anymore. But not only does *Finnegan's Reef* fly, she soars!

Shamrock IV

Sho Cheng-Class Unified Reclamation Salvage Vessel

Dimensions (LxBxH): 142 x 113 x 47 feet

Tonnage: 1,900 tons.

Speed Class: 4 cruise / 6 hard-burn

Crew: Captain, pilot, mechanic.

Crew Quarters: One single, one double cabin.

Fuel Capacity: 12 tons (600 hours).

Cargo Capacity: 500 tons.

Armament: One magnetic grappler. Two cutting torches (point blank range only, basic spacecraft-scale damage).

Price: 45,600 Credits.

Agi d4, Str d6, Vit d8, Ale d6, Int d2, Wil d4;

Initiative d4+d4, Life Points 10. Healthy as a Horse (Minor Asset), Ugly as Sin (Minor Complication). Perception d2, Pilot d2. Complexity: low. Maintenance costs 2,280 Credits per year.

Shamrock IV is an extremely rugged and reliable *Sho Cheng*⁵-class bulk freighter that employs bottom-of-the-line computers. Her sensors, however, are far from being limited. After all, she was converted to a salvage ship that patrols the former battlefield of Sturges to ensure that no one strikes on the idea of running an unlicensed, illegal salvage operation on the massive graveyard that is preserved in the vacuum of the Black.

⁵ Literally, "harvest"



幽灵

Lamprey Class Boarding Ship

Dimensions (LxBxH): 100 x 54 x 37 feet

Tonnage: 550 tons.

Speed Class: 6 / 8 hard burn

Crew Quarters: 1 triple cabin.

Fuel Capacity: 12 tons (600 hours) .

Cargo Capacity: 100 tons.

Armament: Four 50-pound medium range missiles (d4 W spacecraft-scale damage), mounted on external rack.

Price: 36,280 Credits

Agi d10, Str d4, Vit d4, Ale d4, Int d2, Wil d10;

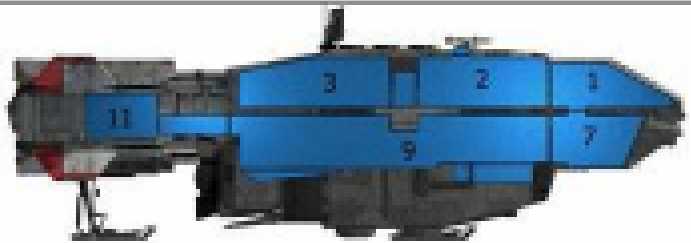
Initiative d4+d4, Life Points 14. Seen Better Days (Major Complication). Perception d2; Pilot d2.

Complexity: low. Maintenance costs 1,320 Credits per year.

The Alliance used Lamprey Class boarding ships extensively in the War for Unification. *You Ling*, formerly known as IAV Ravensberg, however, was captured by Browncoats in the early days of the war. Under the command of Captain Mildred Leung, *You Ling* was subsequently used for intelligence collection in the deep Allied battlespace as well as a blockade runner carrying tons of high-value cargo through Alliance lines. Ironically, she was brought down during her last mission by friendly fire. After *You Ling* had become accidentally embroiled in the Battle of Sturges, Captain Leung couldn't risk blowing *You Ling*'s cover by revealing her boat's true identity or by opening fire at Alliance ships. She could not, however, bring herself to order her crew to start firing at their comrades. *You Ling* and her company went down without a fight while attempting to flee the battlefield.



- You Ling**
1. Flight Deck
 2. Galley
 3. Crew Quarters
 4. Bathroom
 5. Air Lock
 6. Storage
 7. Engineering
 8. Breaching Bore
 9. Hold
 10. Exit Ramp
 11. Engine Room



The crew gets an offer to do a job and what with times being hard, the job ain't what good folk would exactly call legal. A pair of fairly well known underworld contacts asks the crew to take on a risky break in at one of the fancified estates on the world of Bellerophon to steal a piece of pretty. However, what the crew don't know is that word has gotten out to their contacts that during the massive U-War dust up known as the Battle of Sturges, a treasure went missing, a treasure big enough that could buy the crew not only a new ship, but a right shiny moon of their on to park it on. However, in addition to this one double cross, when you deal with twins you should expect twice the trouble and twice the double crossin'. Their contacts are also holding back another important piece of information and this surprise could do more than cheat them, it could kill them