

# THE EXPANSE

## ROLEPLAYING GAME



QUICKSTART



# WELCOME TO THE EXPANSE!

You hold in your hands a gate, if you will, to *The Expanse* roleplaying game, a far-future world based on the exciting series of science fiction novels. Here, you play a character much as you might in a video game, but with pen, paper, and dice, along with friends to play other roles. This is a quickstart: a set of condensed rules and an adventure designed to introduce you to the game, with everything you need to start playing right away. We hope you and your friends will visit *The Expanse* and give the game a try!

*The Expanse* is designed for you to play out adventures and stories set in the solar system described in *The Expanse* novels by James S.A. Corey—a future where humanity has spread out from Earth to settle Mars, the asteroid belt, and the moons of Jupiter and Saturn. Cold-war tensions have existed between the United Nations of Earth and the Martian Congressional Republic for some time, with both great powers surviving off the labor and resources of the Belters, the inhabitants of the Belt and the Outer Planets. The so-called Outer Planets Alliance has agitated for attention and justice from the Inner Planets, but to no avail. Now, the discovery of truly alien technology called “the protomolecule” has changed the balance of power. An unscrupulous corporation has allowed the protomolecule to consume thousands of inhabitants of the asteroid station Eros. Since Eros crashed onto the surface of Venus, the solar system has teetered on the brink of all-out war. What will arise from Venus’s swirling clouds once the protomolecule has done its work?

In the full-fledged *Expanse* game, you and your friends would create a crew of characters and decide what sorts of adventures you want to embark on. For this quickstart, we’ve simplified matters, giving you a ready-made crew (find their character sheets at the end of this book) and a ready-made adventure for them.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

*The Expanse Quickstart* has three parts. The first is a condensed guide to the game rules, including a quick reference sheet players can keep handy during play. The second is an adventure called **Cupbearer**. The third is a crew of six pre-generated characters for the players (referred to as player characters or PCs for short).

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

To play this quickstart you'll need at least two people, though four to seven is best. One person takes the role of Game Master (GM) and the others will be players. You'll also need at least three regular, six-sided dice (d6). Ideally, one of the dice should be a different color or size than the others. You'll also need copies of various parts of this quickstart, but more on that later. Pencils and paper, or electronic means of recording information at the table, are also necessary.

## ABOUT THE RULES

The condensed rules presented in the *Expanse Quickstart* cover the basics, but you should be aware that many rules included in the full game have been left out. None of the character creation rules are included, for example, nor are systems for spaceship combat or the like. Many rules have been simplified or narrowed for use in this single context to ease you into the system. If you run *Cupbearer* with the full *Expanse* rules, expand opportunities you see in the adventure to work with them.

## IF YOU'VE NEVER ROLEPLAYED BEFORE

If you're interested in trying this but have no idea what tabletop roleplaying is all about, that's great! Roleplaying is some of the most fun you'll ever have with your friends, but teaching all of the basics of roleplaying is a bit beyond this quickstart. Start by going online and searching for some basic info. The Wikipedia page “*role-playing game (pen and paper)*” is a little dry, but a decent starting point. Better yet, track down a friend who's done this kind of thing before and rope them into showing you how it's done, or check out online videos of people playing tabletop RPGs. The full *Expanse* game also introduces the concepts of roleplaying, and gives advice to GMs. Trust us, you're going to love it.

## BEFORE YOU PLAY

Before the group gets together to play, the GM should read this whole quickstart, print out one copy of each pre-generated player character, and print out enough copies of the **Quick Reference** sheet for each player to have one. Other players can read the rules section of the quickstart if they want to, but shouldn't read the adventure (spoilers!). It may also help the players get into the world if you print or copy the **Welcome to the Expanse** page (previously) so each player can read that, too, especially if they're not already familiar with it.

## THE CHARACTER SHEET

Everything a player needs to know during the game can be found on their character sheet. Let's start a tour of the *Expanse* character sheet by looking at its backbone: the nine **abilities**.

**Accuracy** measures aim and precision, and measures your ability to hit targets with ranged or thrown weapons.

**Communication** covers social skills and generally making friends and influencing people.

**Constitution** is your character's overall health, fortitude, and resistance to harm, illness, and fatigue.

**Dexterity** covers deftness, agility, and reaction time, affecting how quickly and gracefully you move.

**Fighting** is your character's capability in close combat, ranging from a brawl to wielding weapons.

**Intelligence** measures a character's reasoning, memory, problem-solving, and overall knowledge.

**Perception** is the ability to pick up on and notice things using any of the character's senses.

**Strength** is sheer muscle power and the ability to apply it, from lifting heavy things to feats of athletics.

**Willpower** measures self-control, self-discipline, mental fortitude, and confidence.

Abilities are scored on a numeric scale from -2 (quite poor) to 4 (truly outstanding), though exceptional characters and creatures may have scores outside this range. Your character's ability scores provide a “snapshot” description of the areas where your character is outstanding, above average, average, or poor, and you use these scores to determine the outcome of most actions in the game. A score of 1 is considered average for player characters, who are, after all the main characters of the story. A score of 0 is average for everyday individuals, the sort of folks who avoid adventures and getting into all sorts of trouble.

Some abilities are followed by boxed text. These are **focuses**, areas of expertise that fall under that ability. Focuses are generally self-explanatory. For example, characters with the Persuasion focus are especially good at using their Communication ability to persuade someone. It's important to note that characters don't need to have a focus to try something. A focus is just an added benefit for characters with special aptitude or training. For example, characters without Persuasion can still try to persuade people. They simply use their Communication score without any added bonus.

When abilities and focuses are written out in the rules or an adventure, the focus follows its ability. You might read **Communication (Persuasion)** or **Perception (Seeing)**, for example.

# THE EXPANSE RPG QUICKSTART

Next, you'll notice some other characteristics and numbers on the character sheet.

**Speed** governs how fast your character can move. The Run and Move actions (see the **Actions** section) use Speed to determine how far you can go on your turn.

**Defense** is the target number (TN) your opponent needs to roll to hit your character with an attack. (More on target numbers is coming soon.)

**Toughness** subtracts from the damage of incoming attacks. It's usually a combination of natural ability and any armor or protection your character might have or wear.

**Fortune** is a measure of your character's luck or good fortune, among other things. Fortune can be used to ward off damage, preventing your character from being seriously hurt. It can also help you out in tough situations when your character might otherwise fail. Use it wisely! You've only got so much and, sooner or later, your luck runs out.

**Relationships** are special emotional connections with other characters, and sometimes even with ideas or ideals such as Honor or Vengeance. These give your character extra motivation to succeed. You can draw on your Relationship once per game session to gain extra Stunt Points (SP), which you can use even if you don't roll doubles. (More on Stunt Points in a bit.)

**Income** is how much your character can afford by making an Income test:  $3d6 + \text{your Income rating}$  against a Cost target number.

Furthermore, each character has a background, a profession, and a drive. Your character's background is the lifestyle they grew up with, their profession is how they've gotten along in the world, and their drive is a personality factor that motivates them to do unusual—even dangerous—things.

## CHARACTER TYPES

The *Expanse* doesn't have the character classes used in many other roleplaying games (including its "cousin," the *Fantasy AGE RPG*). As characters develop beyond their backgrounds and professions, they choose their own paths. For efficiency, each sample character has a particular set of skills:

**Addison "Addy" Grant** is an engineer with a zest for life who's good at fixing things and making friends.

**Ade Akintola** is a natural leader with ambition and an eye for intrigue.

**Casey Khatri** is an ex-soldier, good to have in a brawl as well as when it comes to putting things together.

**Chao Sokolov** is a compassionate medic with a criminal past, and the skills to match.

**Izzy Moon** is a smart, self-taught hacker who knows how to make do with what's at hand.

**Nico Velez** is a cynical pilot, trained in the United Nations Navy but not suited for the military life.

You can find their character sheets at the end of this quickstart. Note that each of these characters can have any gender you like, and their names and descriptions are just suggestions; feel free to change them, if you want.

Over time, characters can increase in level, improving their abilities and gaining other benefits. The pre-generated characters are level 1 characters.

Characters also have talents that give them specific benefits based on natural aptitude or specialized training. Talents come in three degrees (Novice, Expert, and Master). The pre-generated characters' talents are all Novice degree (as they are level 1 characters) and their benefits are explained on their character sheets.



ADDISON GRANT



ADE AKINTOLA



CASEY KHATRI



CHAO SOKOLOV



IZZY MOON



NICO VELEZ

## FOCUS LIST

For your reference, here is the full list of focuses found in *The Expanse* rulebook. In these quickstart rules, a character never needs a specific focus to attempt a test.

### ACCURACY

Bows, Gunnery, Pistols,  
Rifles, Throwing

### COMMUNICATION

Bargaining, Deception, Disguise,  
Etiquette, Expression, Gambling,  
Investigation, Leadership,  
Performing, Persuasion,  
Seduction

### CONSTITUTION

Running, Stamina, Swimming,  
Tolerance

### DEXTERITY

Acrobatics, Crafting, Driving,  
Initiative, Piloting,  
Sleight of Hand, Stealth

### FIGHTING

Brawling, Grappling,  
Heavy Weapons, Light Weapons

### INTELLIGENCE

Art, Business, Cryptography,  
Current Affairs, Demolitions,  
Engineering, Evaluation, History,  
Law, Medicine, Navigation,  
Research, Science, Security,  
Tactics, Technology

### PERCEPTION

Empathy, Hearing, Intuition,  
Searching, Seeing, Smelling,  
Survival, Tasting, Touching,  
Tracking

### STRENGTH

Climbing, Intimidation,  
Jumping, Might

### WILLPOWER

Courage, Faith, Self-Discipline

Because of the tight-knit nature of the crew of sample characters and the limited scope of this quickstart, all of the characters have a level 1 Relationship with their fellow crewmates, the other player characters. The assumption is they have been together for a while now, and care about and look after each other, even if they don't always get along. The players can use this Relationship during the adventure for a bonus stunt point, as detailed under **Relationship Stunts** in the rules.

## TESTS

*The Expanse* uses **three six-sided dice (3d6)** for tests of characters' abilities. Two of the dice should be differentiated from the third by color, size, or something else. The differentiated third die is known as the **Drama Die**. You make tests to find out whether your character succeeds or fails when a chancy situation comes up in the game.

## SIMPLE TESTS

To make a **simple test**, the most common kind, roll 3d6 and add the relevant ability score. If you have an appropriate focus for that ability, add +2 more. For example, when attempting to dodge around an obstacle, you roll 3d6, add your Dexterity score, and add +2 if you have the Acrobatics focus. A character may only add one ability score and one focus bonus per test. Always remember that you don't need to have a focus to attempt a test. Appropriate focuses for a given test are listed in parentheses after the ability the test calls for. For example, "an Intelligence (Medicine) test."

The sum of your die roll, ability, and focus bonus are compared to a **target number (TN)** that represents the difficulty of the test. The harder it is to succeed, the higher the TN. If your sum equals or exceeds the TN, then you pass the test and succeed!

### 3D6 + ABILITY SCORE + FOCUS BONUS [+2] VS. TARGET NUMBER

Sometimes the circumstances of a test make it easier or more difficult than normal, giving a bonus or penalty to your total. Such bonuses are rarely greater than +3, and penalties rarely worse than -3. In some cases, it's helpful to know not just whether you succeed, but how well you do. The **quality** of a success is determined by the unmodified result on the roll's Drama Die.

For example, a character trying to blend in at an elite nightclub on a station has to make a Communication (Etiquette) test. Assuming the character succeeds, a Drama Die result of 1 may mean that the character commits some faux pas and looks like they were let in as a favor to someone, while a Drama Die result of 5 or 6 might mean the character conducts themselves well enough to be admitted to a private table. In most cases, the GM determines the exact results of the Drama Die by deciding how things turned out, or in certain cases, allowing points from the Drama Die to be spent on stunts (see later in this quickstart for more on stunts).

## OPPOSED TESTS

Sometimes you pit your character's ability against another character's ability. This is called an **opposed test**. In an opposed test, all parties involve make simple tests simultaneously, but rather than comparing their results to a target number, the character with the highest total wins. If there's a tie, the character with the highest Drama Die number wins. If it's still a tie, the highest ability score wins. The parties in an opposed test sometimes use different abilities. For example, a character attempting to sneak past a guard rolls Dexterity (Stealth) against the guard's Perception (Hearing). If one character has an advantage over their opponent that's not already reflected in their ability or focus, those circumstances may provide a bonus or penalty to the roll. Such modifiers are usually no worse than -3 or better than +3. So if it's dark, the sneaking character might get a bonus to slip past the guard unnoticed.

## ADVANCED TESTS

A test might be so complicated or time-consuming that it is inappropriate to settle it with a single test. Examples include doing in-depth research, navigating a ship through difficult conditions, or competing with another speaker or performer to win a crowd's approval. These situations involve an **advanced test**. Advanced tests are simple or opposed tests that require a series of rolls before success can be achieved. Each individual roll is carried out just like a simple or opposed test.

On a sufficient roll—one that meets the TN or exceeds the opponent's result—the result of your Drama Die is added to a **running total**. On an insufficient roll, nothing is added (or your opponent's running total may increase, for an **opposed advanced test**). Success at the advanced test is achieved when the running total meets or exceeds the advanced test's **success threshold**. Each roll takes a certain amount of **time**—a round, a minute, an hour, or any other increment—depending on the test, so an advanced test can be used to determine how long a task takes. Each roll might also consume some amount of **resources**. So, usually, an advanced test can be failed only if time or resources run out, or if—in an opposed advanced test—your opponent wins the test first.

## COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

When things get violent, action in an *Expanse* game shifts to a **combat encounter**. An order of initiative is determined once, at the beginning of the fight, and then all combatants take turns in that order. Each cycle of all characters taking one turn each is called a round. When each round ends, a new round begins, using the same initiative order.

## INITIATIVE

At the beginning of a combat encounter, each combatant makes an opposed test using Dexterity (Initiative). Rather than one character winning, however, all combatants' test results are ranked. Combatants then act in that order, with higher results going before lower results. Ties are broken the same way as other opposed tests. The GM will usually roll separately for each important NPC, but roll for minor NPCs in groups who all act at the same time, to keep things simple.

## ACTIONS

On their turns, characters take **actions**. There are two types of actions: **major** and **minor**. On their turn, a character takes one major action and one minor action. If the player wishes, however, their character may take two minor actions instead. A character may also decline either or both actions and do nothing.

The most common major and minor actions are listed here. The GM can adjudicate other actions, using these as a guide. Actions even less substantial than the minor actions listed here are **free actions**. Examples might include shouting something simple or looking around. A character can take as many free actions as they wish as long as the GM agrees they have time.

### MAJOR ACTIONS

**MELEE ATTACK:** You attack an enemy within 2 meters of you in hand-to-hand combat.

**RANGED ATTACK:** You attack an enemy by firing or throwing a ranged weapon.

**RUN/CHASE:** You travel up to double your Speed in meters. You must already be in a standing position to do this. If you are running after someone who is also using this action, or they are running after you, you have a chase on your hands. This requires an advanced TN 13 Constitution (Running) test from each participant. Track accumulated points from the Drama Die for each roll. The character with the highest Speed adds +1 on top of the Drama Die result for each successful test. The first character to hit 10 accumulated points in an indoor or urban area, or 15 points in an outdoor or suburban area, may choose to end the chase, either escaping or catching their quarry. If two people in a chase are within 2 points of each other, they are virtually neck and neck. Vehicles and mounts may also be involved in chases, though they use their own ability focuses and get bonuses against slower participants.

**DEFEND:** You gain a +2 bonus to your Defense until the beginning of your next turn.

## MINOR ACTIONS

**AIM:** You carefully plan your next strike. If your next action is a melee attack or ranged attack (even on your next turn), you gain a +1 bonus on that attack roll.

**MOVE:** You move up to your Speed in meters. If you limit your travel to half your Speed, you can also drop Prone (see **Conditions**, following), stand up, or mount or dismount a mount or vehicle as part of your Move.

**PREPARE:** When you take this action, you postpone your major action. You declare one major action and your choice to Prepare it. After you do so, the next person in the initiative order acts, and so on, but at any time until the beginning of your next turn, you can interrupt another character and take your prepared action immediately. If you don't use the prepared action by your next turn, you lose it.

**READY:** You draw a weapon, pull out a tool, or otherwise get ready to use some stowed item on your person. As part of this action, you can also put away something you already had in hand.

## MAKING ATTACKS

When attacking an enemy, you make a simple test. The TN is your target's Defense. On a success, the attacker inflicts **damage**. On a failure, the attack does nothing. Each pre-generated character and NPC stat block has a pre-calculated attack bonus that includes the appropriate ability score, focus bonus, and any other bonuses that always apply. If you need to figure out other attacks on the fly, use the following rules.

### MELEE ATTACK

This is a close-range attack on an adjacent opponent with a weapon such as a fist, knife, or sword. Roll Fighting with a TN equal to the opponent's Defense, and add a +2 bonus if the character has a focus that covers the weapon being used. Add Strength to damage.

### RANGED ATTACK

This is an attack with a firearm or other weapon that's shot or thrown. Roll Accuracy with a TN equal to the opponent's Defense, and add a +2 bonus if the character has a focus that covers the weapon being used. Attacks on enemies farther away than a weapon's Range (but no farther than 1.5 Range) suffer a -2 penalty. Add Perception to damage.

## DAMAGE

Each pre-generated character and NPC stat block lists the damage each of their weapons inflicts. To inflict damage, make that roll and determine a total. Once you've determined the attack's damage, figure out what effect it has on the target:

- Subtract the target's Toughness score—including armor, if any—from the damage.
- If damage remains, spend Fortune to eliminate some or all of it on a 1-to-1 basis: 1 Fortune Point removes 1 point of damage.
- Take an injured or wounded condition to account for remaining damage. Each condition removes 1d6 damage. See **Conditions**, following, for details.
- If damage remains, then the target is taken out of the encounter. The attacker may choose to impose any one condition that is reasonable for the type of attack which takes out the target, usually unconscious or dying.

## BATTLE MAPS AND MINIATURES

*The Expanse* RPG defaults to a descriptive style of combat where the GM and players keep a mental picture of the adventure's evolving battlefield in mind. If you prefer to use a battle map and miniatures, however, the game can accommodate them easily. Square and hex grids work equally well. The best scale is one where each square or hex is 2 meters across.

## CONDITIONS

During game play in *The Expanse*, a number of conditions can affect characters, representing effects imposed by damage, hazards, and so forth. Some conditions are merely bothersome, others far more serious, even potentially lethal. The following is a list with descriptions of some of the important conditions characters may acquire.



**PRONE:** A **Prone** character is lying on the ground. The character cannot take the Run action, and standing up from Prone requires a Move action using half the character's Speed. Melee attack tests against a Prone character gain a +1 bonus, but ranged attack tests suffer a -1 penalty.

**INJURED:** An **Injured** character is hurt. The character has a -1 penalty to all tests and is fatigued, unable to take the Run action. An Injured character who receives an additional Injured condition becomes Wounded.

**WOUNDED:** A **Wounded** character is severely injured. The character has a -2 penalty to all tests and is exhausted, their Speed halved and unable to take the Run action. A Wounded character who receives an additional Injured or Wounded condition becomes Dying.

**UNCONSCIOUS:** An **Unconscious** character is unaware of their surroundings or the passage of time. The character falls Prone and is helpless, unable to take any actions.

**DYING:** A **Dying** character is in danger of perishing. A Dying character loses 1 point of Constitution score each round on the start of the character's turn. When the character's Constitution score reaches -3, the character dies. Successful first aid applied to a dying character stabilizes their condition, making them Unconscious, and Wounded instead.

## STUNTS

**Stunts** are one of the most exciting aspects of *The Expanse RPG*. Whenever you make a successful attack and also get doubles—two or more matching numbers—on the roll, you get **Stunt Points** (SP) you can use to perform stunts. The number of stunt points you get is equal to the number showing on the Drama Die. You must use your SP right away, or they're wasted. You spend SP on the **Combat Stunt Table**. You can choose any combination of stunts as long as you don't spend more SP than you have. (You can spend fewer, but any leftover SP vanish after you do.) You can choose each stunt only once per attack, except for the Skirmish stunt, which can be chosen as many times as you wish. NPCs can perform stunts just like PCs can.

## GENERAL COMBAT STUNTS

SP COST	STUNT
1-3	<b>DUCK AND WEAVE:</b> Gain +1 to Defense per SP spent until the beginning of your next turn.
1+	<b>SKIRMISH:</b> Move yourself or your attack's target 2 meters in any direction for each 1 SP you spend; you can choose Skirmish more than once per turn.
2	<b>DOUBLE-TEAM:</b> Choose one ally to make an immediate attack on your target, who must be within range and sight of the ally. Your ally must have a ranged weapon to attack at range.
2	<b>KNOCK PRONE:</b> Knock your enemy Prone. Melee attacks against a Prone foe gain a +1, but ranged attacks against a Prone foe suffer a -1.
2	<b>TAUNT:</b> Roll Communication (Deception) vs. Willpower (Self-Discipline) against any target within 10 meters of you; if you win, they must attack or oppose you in some way on their next turn.
2	<b>VIOUS BLOW:</b> Inflict an extra 1d6 damage on this attack.
3	<b>BLOCKADE:</b> Move up to 3 meters to position yourself between a foe and something or someone else. Until the beginning of your next turn, that foe must succeed at a minor action Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Might) test vs. your Defense to reach whatever or whoever you're protecting.
3	<b>LIGHTNING ATTACK:</b> Make a second attack against the same target or a different one within range and sight; you must have a ranged weapon to attack at range.
3	<b>SHOCK AND AWE:</b> When you succeed at a non-attack physical feat or take an opponent out, anyone who witnesses it rolls Willpower (Courage) or (Morale) vs. your Strength (Intimidation). If you win, they suffer a -1 to the next opposed roll they make against you, or a -1 to their Defense vs. your next attack against them, whichever comes first.
4	<b>SEIZE THE INITIATIVE:</b> Move to the top of the initiative order until someone else seizes the initiative. You may get to take another turn before some others act again.

## RELATIONSHIP STUNTS

In addition to getting SP by rolling doubles, once per game session you can get as many SP as your Relationship rating to perform any stunt that would be in-character when it comes to that Relationship. You choose this after you see if you succeed on a test. You might use these points to help a friend or lover that the Relationship lists, or battle an enemy noted in the Relationship. If you *also* roll doubles, you can combine Relationship stunt points with the stunt points you earned on the Drama Die.

## EXPLORATION & SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

Of course, lots more happens in *Expanse* stories beyond just fighting. *The Expanse RPG* calls these **exploration encounters** if they concentrate on finding information, dealing with the environment, and general problem-solving. If a scene is mainly about speaking to and otherwise interacting with people, be it to find things out or get favors, the game calls it a **social encounter**. **Mixed** exploration and social encounters are possible as well.

In most cases, using the basic rules and rolling ability tests against target numbers will get you through these encounters. It is possible to use stunts during these types of encounters by rolling doubles or using a Relationship. The tables in this section list a small number of the Exploration and Social stunts available in *The Expanse RPG*.

## EXPLORATION ENCOUNTERS

Exploration encounters can feature a variety of events and challenges. These usually don't happen round by round, but over periods of time determined by the GM. The most common events include the following.

### HAZARDS

Exploration encounters may involve encountering some **hazards**, potential risks from the environment. Characters might contend with fire, vacuum, sudden falls and impacts, mechanical failures, and other perils. Hazards in the game are defined by whether or not they're avoidable, their effects, and how long they last. An avoidable hazard might have a test to avoid

## EXPLORATION STUNTS

SP COST	STUNT
1-3	<b>WHEN A PLAN COMES TOGETHER:</b> You reveal that this test was part of your plan all along, granting a bonus equal to SP spent on one ally's next test during the same encounter to accomplish the same goal. You must make this decision before the ally rolls.
2	<b>SPEED DEMON:</b> You complete your test in half the time it would otherwise take.
3	<b>THE UPPER HAND:</b> If your success leads to combat within a moment or two, you receive a +3 on your initiative roll.
4	<b>WITH A FLOURISH:</b> You impress everyone who watches you with your showmanship. Gain a +1 to opposed tests against them for the rest of the encounter.

## SOCIAL STUNTS

SP COST	STUNT
1-3	<b>IMPRESS:</b> Gain a +1 per SP spent to your next social test against the same target as this test during this encounter.
2	<b>AND ANOTHER THING:</b> Make a second, related test as part of your action, before anyone else has a chance to respond or make any tests of their own.
2	<b>HIDDEN MESSAGE:</b> Your words convey a different message to one person than to everyone else who hears them; the character you choose is the only one who can decipher your true meaning.
3	<b>OBJECTION!:</b> You step in on someone else's behalf. Another character in the scene may use your ability + focus instead of their own next time they oppose a test during this encounter.
4	<b>CLASS CLOWN:</b> Your words lighten the mood, imposing a -2 penalty to all enemies' initiative rolls if a fight breaks out during this encounter.

harm, such as a Dexterity (Acrobatics) test to avoid a fall, or an Intelligence (Engineering) test to fix a mechanical problem. The hazard's effect may be a certain amount of damage—ranging from 1d6 for a minor hazard to 6d6 for a truly deadly one—or imposing certain conditions as detailed under the Damage and Conditions sections. A hazard can be momentary—a sudden fall or an explosion—or can last, such as the dangers of suffocation or a raging storm.

## INTERACTING WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

You may be called upon to sneak past guards, walk across a narrow ledge, or pick a lock. If the challenge is another person, an opposed test is called for. Otherwise, a basic test against a TN representing the difficulty of the action is what you'll use to see if you succeed or fail. Use abilities and focuses that fit the task—Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) to pick a pocket, for example. The GM has the final word on which tests, abilities, and focuses to use. The higher the number on the Drama Die, the better you did, whether you rolled doubles or not.

## INVESTIGATIONS

An **investigation** is a catch-all term for any action where you're trying to get information. Generally, if you need to find a lead to go forward in the adventure, like a matchbook for the club you need to find or footprints leading in the right direction, the GM should automatically provide it. You'll usually use Perception and Intelligence tests, and focuses related to the lead (such as Technology to find information stored on a computer), to get more information out of them—but you can always just try to guess. When you succeed, the GM gives you a clue: a fact about what's going on. You can also use investigation tests to find out information that isn't directly related to the adventure, but may help you in other ways. In those situations, you don't automatically find the lead. You must make a test to discover it in the first place.

## SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

Social encounters work much like exploration encounters, except the focus is on interacting with other people. Social encounters normally use basic tests when you want to make a general impression on a group, or opposed tests when you're trying to influence someone to do or say something that would inconvenience or embarrass them, or seems somehow counter to their interests. Social actions usually use the Communication ability and its focuses, and in opposed tests, are often resisted



ATTITUDES		
3D6 ROLL	ATTITUDE	INTERACTION MODIFIER
3 or less	Very Hostile	-3
4-5	Hostile	-2
6-8	Standoffish	-1
9-11	Neutral	+0
12-14	Open	+1
15-17	Friendly	+2
18+	Very Friendly	+3

by Willpower and its focuses. In situations where you're trying to get results through threats, you may use Strength (Intimidation) to sway an NPC. Social actions intended to find things out can use the same lead and clue format as investigations, at the GM's discretion.

In situations where the NPC's **attitude** toward the character matters, the GM decides what it is (or rolls on the **Attitudes** table if they don't feel like picking) and applies the listed modifiers to your Communication tests to get them to aid or usefully interact with you.

If an opposed test is necessary, the NPC rolls Willpower, with the focus depending on the situation. Willpower (Faith) would be used in situations where the NPC is being asked to set aside their beliefs, for example, while Willpower (Courage) could resist attempts to frighten the NPC. However, if the NPC would be forced to do something self-harming or something they find immoral or disgusting, they automatically win an opposed test to resist the suggestion.

PCs cannot be swayed by social actions, but you can always make tests and use the results as advice to help you decide how your character would act.

## NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

**Non-player characters (NPCs)** use all the same rules that apply to player character heroes, unless otherwise noted. In *Expanse* adventures, NPCs are described with **stat blocks**. **Combatants** have longer stat blocks than characters who aren't likely to be involved in fights (**non-combatants**). Both types have their abilities and focuses listed. Combatants have Speed, Defense, Toughness, Fortune (if any), and attack statistics. NPCs also have a **Favored Stunts** entry, and some have special stunts only they can use. These are suggestions to help the GM keep things moving along briskly, but the GM is free to choose other stunts for them.

## FURTHER ADVENTURES AWAITS!

Hopefully this quickstart whets your appetite for more adventures in *The Expanse*. If you have questions, or want more, *The Expanse Roleplaying Game* is your next stop. It contains everything you need to run adventures for characters of levels 1–20, including an introductory adventure designed to suit many different campaigns. You'll also want to check out the *Expanse Game Master's Kit*, which comes with a reference screen for game-play, stunt reference cards, and an additional adventure.

# QUICK REFERENCE SHEET: COMBAT ACTIONS & STUNTS

## BASIC TEST FORMULA: $3d6 + \text{ABILITY SCORE} + \text{FOCUS BONUS} (+2)$ VS. TARGET NUMBER

You can take a major action and a minor action, or two minor actions on your turn.

### MAJOR ACTIONS

**MELEE ATTACK:** You attack an enemy within 2 meters of you in hand-to-hand combat.

**RANGED ATTACK:** You attack an enemy by firing or throwing a ranged weapon.

**RUN/CHASE:** You travel up to double your Speed in meters. You must already be in a standing position to do this. If you are running after someone who is also using this action, or they are running after you, you have a chase on your hands. This requires an advanced TN 13 Constitution (Running) test from each participant. Track accumulated points from the Drama Die for each roll. The character with the highest Speed adds +1 on top of the Drama Die result for each successful test. The first character to hit 10 accumulated points in an indoor or urban area, or 15 points in an outdoor or suburban area, may choose to end the chase, either escaping or catching their quarry. If two people in a chase are within 2 points of each other, they are virtually neck and neck. Vehicles and mounts may also be involved in chases, though they use their own ability focuses and get bonuses against slower participants.

**DEFEND:** You gain a +2 bonus to your Defense until the beginning of your next turn.

### MINOR ACTIONS

**AIM:** You carefully plan your next strike. If your next action is a melee attack or ranged attack (even on your next turn), you gain a +1 bonus on that attack roll.

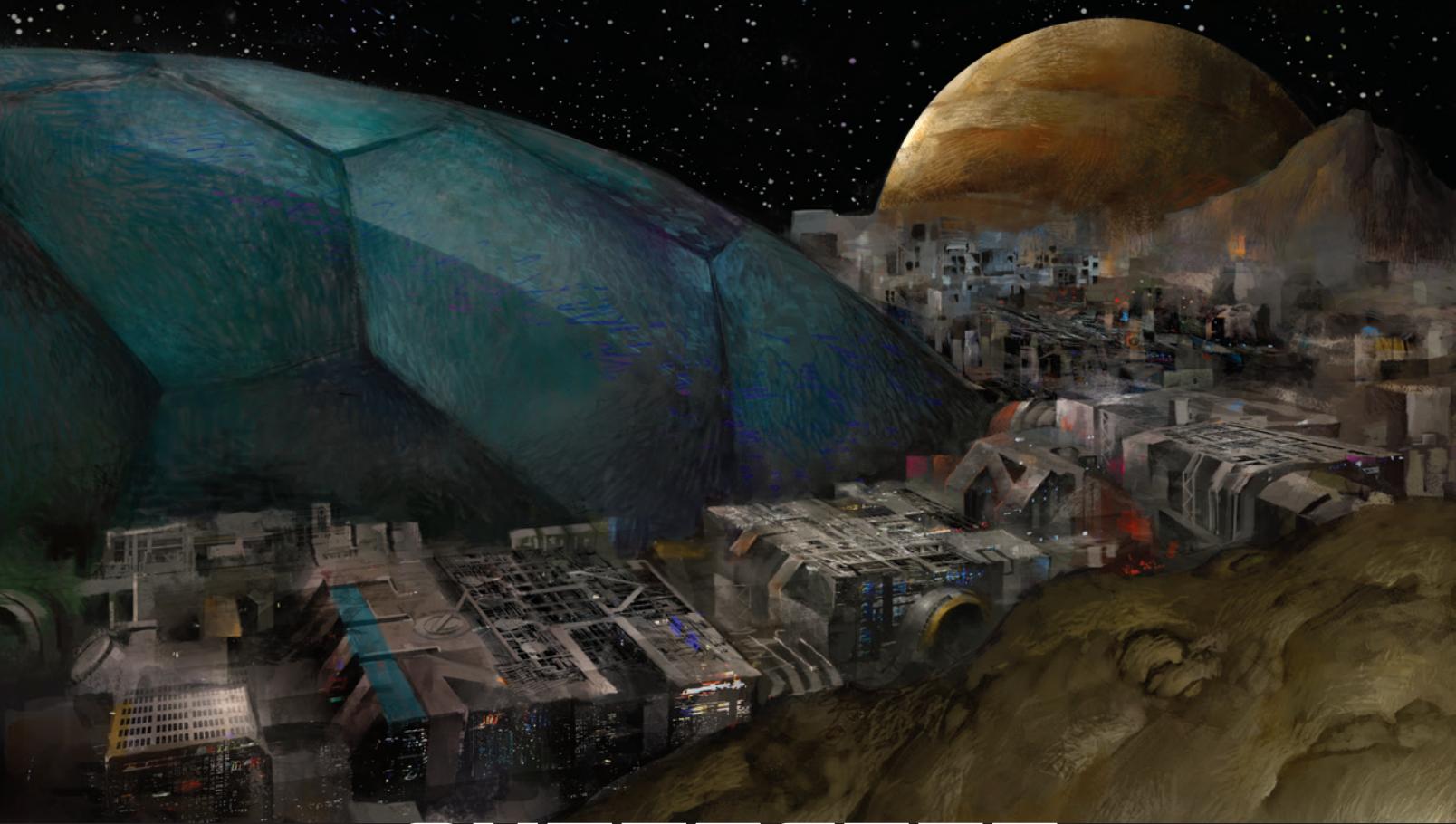
**MOVE:** You move up to your Speed in meters. If you limit your travel to half your Speed, you can also drop Prone, stand up, or mount or dismount a mount or vehicle as part of your Move.

**PREPARE:** When you take this action, you postpone your major action. You declare one major action and your choice to Prepare it. After you do so, the next person in the initiative order acts, and so on, but at any time until the beginning of your next turn, you can interrupt another character and take your prepared action immediately. If you don't use the prepared action by your next turn, you lose it.

**READY:** You draw a weapon, pull out a tool, or otherwise get ready to use some stowed item on your person. As part of this action, you can also put away something you already had in hand.

## GENERAL COMBAT STUNTS

SP COST	STUNT
1-3	<b>DUCK AND WEAVE:</b> Gain +1 to Defense per SP spent until the beginning of your next turn.
1+	<b>SKIRMISH:</b> Move yourself or your attack's target 2 meters in any direction for each 1 SP you spend; you can choose Skirmish more than once per turn.
2	<b>DOUBLE-TEAM:</b> Choose one ally to make an immediate attack on your target, who must be within range and sight of the ally. Your ally must have a ranged weapon to attack at range.
2	<b>KNOCK PRONE:</b> Knock your enemy Prone. Melee attacks against a Prone foe gain a +1, but ranged attacks against a Prone foe suffer a -1.
2	<b>TAUNT:</b> Roll Communication (Deception) vs. Willpower (Self-Discipline) against any target within 10 meters of you; if you win, they must attack or oppose you in some way on their next turn.
2	<b>VICIOUS BLOW:</b> Inflict an extra 1d6 damage on this attack.
3	<b>BLOCKADE:</b> Move up to 3 meters to position yourself between a foe and something or someone else. Until the beginning of your next turn, that foe must succeed at a minor action Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Might) test vs. your Defense to reach whatever or whoever you're protecting.
3	<b>LIGHTNING ATTACK:</b> Make a second attack against the same target or a different one within range and sight; you must have a ranged weapon to attack at range.
3	<b>SHOCK AND AWE:</b> When you succeed at a non-attack physical feat or take an opponent out, anyone who witnesses it rolls Willpower (Courage) or (Morale) vs. your Strength (Intimidation). If you win, they suffer a -1 to the next opposed roll they make against you, or a -1 to their Defense vs. your next attack against them, whichever comes first.
4	<b>SEIZE THE INITIATIVE:</b> Move to the top of the initiative order until someone else seizes the initiative. You may get to take another turn before some others act again.



# CUPBEARER

**C**upbearer is an *Expanse Roleplaying Game* adventure suitable for a crew of three to six characters, levels 1 to 3. What starts out as a fairly simple job to find and recover the wayward son of a wealthy corporate family gets complicated when the crew's target is involved with a powerful crime-lord, and looking for his own way out of an unpleasant situation...one that doesn't involve returning to his family.

## INTRODUCTION

Kai Dardanus' family owns controlling interest in Amalthea Ambrosals, Inc., a company specializing in supplying fine food and drink to a fairly exclusive clientele in the Belt and Outer Planets. They primarily import luxury items from Earth and Mars, as well as producing and distributing high-end goods outside of the Inner Planets. Entirely uninterested in the family business—or his abusive family, for that matter—Kai left their home on Titan and eventually found his way to Ganymede.

Running out of credit and fond of the party lifestyle, the attractive young man took to sex work, finding employment at one of Ganymede's brothels. It was there that he drew the eye of Orn Aquilo, an older man who checked every box of Kai's daddy issues, just as Kai quickly became Aquilo's new favorite. Their mutual attraction led to a passionate affair and Kai moving in with his new lover. He was aware Aquilo was an "influential businessman" on Ganymede, but quickly learned his business included smuggling, theft, extortion, and protection—Orn Aquilo is a powerful figure in the station's underworld. Kai also learned of Aquilo's temper and possessive nature; it quickly became clear he was a virtual prisoner, even more so than in the home he'd left behind.

After Eros and the riots on Ganymede, Kai finally decided he needed to get away from Aquilo, and risked using his knowledge of his family's business to do it. He illegally accessed Amalthea Ambrosals' records and arranged for a shipment of luxury food and liquor to be "lost" in Ganymede's warehouses. He then planned to sell the shipment to one of Aquilo's underworld rivals for the credits he needed to leave and book passage somewhere, anywhere, else. Unfortunately, Kai has failed to reckon with the treachery or ambition of Aquilo's rivals, or with the security of his family's company, which is where the PCs come in.

## THEME

**Cupbearer** is about relationships and the things people do to find them, sustain them, and end them, and the way they drive others to take action. The adventure offers a lot of opportunities for roleplaying and for the crew to take the initiative in choosing their own course of action and how they handle the things they discover over the course of the story. It's also

about making the best of a bad situation (a common element of *The Expanse*) and finding a way to do the right thing in the midst of a lot of people making bad choices.

## INCORPORATING CUPBEARER INTO A SERIES

If you are running *Cupbearer* as an introduction to an ongoing *Expanse* series, then the adventure does offer some opportunities. The crew starts with access to a ship and might even gain clear title and ownership of it, if they play their cards right, making them free agents. They could also acquire potentially valuable contacts on Ganymede, including within Pinkwater Security. Of course, they might end up with more than a few enemies on Ganymede as well. The events of *Cupbearer* can be a lead-in to the *Expanse* adventure *The Ganymede Insurance Job*, if you are looking for a follow-up, and can also lead to involving the crew in the adventure *To Sleep, Perchance to Dream*, (although these adventures may require getting the crew further into the Outer Planets, including to Tycho Station).

Starting the crew off with connections on Ganymede can also become an adventure hook when you decide to kick off the incident that triggers a shooting war between Earth and Mars (detailed in *The Expanse* novel *Caliban's War*). The destruction of the orbital mirrors and damage to the colony might lead the crew to come back to pay back favors, help out friends, and settle old scores, as opportunities allow.

## SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

The plot of *Cupbearer* is somewhat free-form, dictated strongly by what the crew decides to do at any given time. This section outlines the general sequence of events occurring in the adventure with the assumption that the crew does not interfere with them in any way. If (and when) they do, things will likely diverge from this sequence. *Expanse* GMs can use this section, and the details in the following scenes, to determine what happens as a result of the crew's intervention and actions.

Kai Dardanus has arranged for a shipment of luxury food and drink to be “lost” in the warehouses on Ganymede’s docks, giving himself the location and new access codes. He arranged a meeting with Parvati Moneta, a rival of Orn Aquilo, to sell the goods for enough credit to leave Ganymede. Parvati and her crew take Kai prisoner at their meeting, intending to hold him hostage for Aquilo’s cooperation (or potentially to ransom him back to his family, or both).

As the crew lands and begins to investigate, Pinkwater Security becomes aware of unusual activity on the docks and the potential for conflict in the station’s underworld. Aquilo, Moneta, or both may become aware of the crew looking into Dardanus’s activities and whereabouts.

A furious Aquilo arms for war against Moneta’s gang, more concerned about his reputation and appearing weak in front of his own crew than about Kai’s life. Pinkwater begins looking into the matter, but their investigation proceeds too slowly and they don’t learn the particulars until it is too late. Aquilo issues an ultimatum demanding Moneta return Kai or else face the consequences. The kidnapping scheme having backfired, Moneta pretends to agree and sets up an ambush for Aquilo.

The Aquilo and Moneta gangs have a shoot-out in an abandoned section of tunnels in the station that leaves many on both sides dead, including both Orn Aquilo and Kai Dardanus. Moneta seizes control of what remains of both gangs and begins consolidating, hunting down and eliminating any dissenters while avoiding Pinkwater Security investigators.

As with this outline, the scenes given in the rest of the adventure are not necessarily sequential; the crew might skip over some scenes, or approach higher-numbered scenes earlier than lower-numbered scenes, rather than taking them in order. This all depends on what they do in following their investigation and their course of action based on what they discover. Be flexible and keep in mind the goals and activities of the four major factions at work in this story: Kai Dardanus, Orn Aquilo, Parvati Moneta (and their respective gangs), and Pinkwater Security.

## ATLAS OF THOUSANDS

*Cupbearer* is set on Ganymede Station, home to millions of people; a virtual city-state in space. Chances are, the crew isn’t going to interact with more than a handful of the people on the station, and most of those characters will not be anything more than background elements. For occasions where they are not and the adventure does not specify, you can use the following quick tools to define some key things about random characters the crew meets.

GENDER	
1D6	RESULT
1–2	male
3–5	female
6	gender-fluid or agender

AGE	
1D6	RESULT
1	a child
2	a teenager
3–5	an adult (older for higher numbers)
6	elderly

ORIGIN	
1D6	RESULT
1	Earther
2–3	Martian
4–6	Belter

ETHNIC FEATURES	
1D6	RESULT
1	African
2	Asian/South Asian
3	Caucasian
4	Latin/Indigenous American
5	Mediterranean / Middle Eastern
6	Polynesian/ Indigenous Australian

...keeping in mind that many Belters have mixed ethnic heritages.

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



## PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION

Have the players look over the pre-generated crew of characters provided at the end of this book and choose which characters they'd like to play. Allow players to make small modifications to their characters, if desired, particularly changing details like their name, sex, appearance, or bits of their background, so long as they fit the established character traits. You can even—within reason—let players swap around some of the characters' ability focuses, but ideally, the point is to get them set up with characters and playing as soon as possible. You might want to go over the essentials of how tests and other basic elements of game-play work, or allow the players to read through the rules section of this book, if there's time.

Once everyone is ready to play, read the following introduction aloud to the players. Feel free to paraphrase and put it in your own words, so long as they get the essential information.

*Ganymede Station. They call it the “breadbasket of the Belt,” because Ganymede is that rare body in the solar system with its own natural magnetosphere, protective shielding against radiation. It is what has made the moon’s argi-domes—fed sunlight from giant, orbiting mirrors—bountiful enough to supply food to the rest of the Belt and Outer Planets. It is also what makes Ganymede a favored place for Belters to give birth to children, minimizing the potential for birth defects. For generations, Ganymede has grown from one of the first colonies in the Outer Planets to a thriving hub of millions of people, and you are thinking of the challenges of finding just one person in that multitude—like a single, tumbling rock in the vastness of the Belt.*

*You and your crew run the Sommelier, a small cargo ship that makes runs throughout the Belt and Outer Planets, so you’re often bringing or taking shipments from Ganymede. One of your regular clients is Amalthea Ambrosals, a corporation based on Titan that supplies luxury items: wine, cheese, chocolate, and other delicacies from Earth and Mars. They sell mainly to the high-class spas on Titan and to anyone else able to pay what is a month’s wages or more for most Belters for what amounts to an expensive snack. Amalthea is run by the Dardanus family, and it seems they’ve misplaced their heir-apparent.*

*Kai Dardanus took off from Titan not long after his eighteenth birthday and disappeared. His family has been searching for him for a year now, without any leads or much hope of finding him, until Kai’s access codes were used to log into a company system. The login was brief, but traced to Ganymede. With your ship already en route for a delivery, you received an unusual tight-beam transmission, a message from Theo Dardanus telling you that if you*

recover his son and return him to Titan, you will be compensated with enough money to pay off the mortgage on the Sommelier.

Of course, Daddy Dardanus also made it pretty clear that, if you refused, you might find cargo contracts drying up awfully fast, and have trouble paying your docking fees, much less keeping your ship from being repossessed. Although the elder Dardanus didn't say so, one other thing was also clear: Kai is a legal adult, and his family has no right to force him to do anything, but they want him back on Titan no matter what. This is less of a "missing persons" investigation and more of an authorized kidnapping, not that the distinction will matter much to Pinkwater, the corporation that handles security on Ganymede. So it's best to watch your step and be discrete, sa-sa?

## SCENE I

### LOST BOY

### EXPLORATION ENCOUNTER

In the initial scene of **Cupbearer**, the crew of the *Sommelier* arrives on Ganymede Station and begins looking for Kai Dardanus. This is an opportunity to introduce the players to the investigation system in *The Expanse*, as follows:

## FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

An investigation follows a trail. Each step on the trail is a lead, and discovering the significance of a lead unearths a clue and a new lead. Investigators can unearth clues automatically (by following up the lead), by having a suitable ability focus (which lets them automatically unearth the clue), or by making a successful ability test. Following the trail to discover all of the clues produces a reveal, the ultimate truth the clues uncover. The investigative trail leading to Kai Dardanus looks like this:

**LEAD #1:** Dardanus' Amalthea access code was traced back to a bordello on the station called La Cage.

**CLUE:** A successful **TN 11 Communication** test unearths that Kai Dardanus worked at La Cage up until a few months ago. Characters can apply any suitable Communication focus, based on how they approach things. If they learn Kai worked at the bordello, they can also learn the circumstances of his leaving, which is Lead #3 (see **Scene 2: La Cage**).

**LEAD #2:** Amalthea Ambrosials regularly ships through Ganymede, and the crew knows this from their own experience. They might want to look into discrepancies in local shipping.

**CLUE:** A successful **TN 12 Communication (Investigation)** or **Intelligence (Business or Technology)** test reveals that a recent shipment of luxury goods was received on the station, but there's no record of it shipping out (see **Scene 3: The Docks** for follow-up).

**LEAD #3:** Kai left La Cage because he was involved with Orn Aquilo, a local crime boss.

**CLUE:** A successful **TN 10 Communication (Investigation or Persuasion)** test reveals Aquilo was infatuated and quite possessive about his new "acquisition," but such inquiries may also tip off Aquilo about someone asking questions (see **Scene 4: Turning Over Rocks**). This clue also reveals Lead #4.

**LEAD #4:** Aquilo has rivals within the Ganymede underworld. One of those rivals is Parvati Moneta, an OPA member whose criminal activities serve to fund and support her political agenda (see **Scene 5: Testing the Waters**).

**CLUE:** A successful **TN 11 Communication (Investigation or Persuasion)** test reveals that members of Moneta's gang have been unusually quiet of late, suggesting they're preparing for something.

**LEAD #5:** The Moneta gang has gone to ground somewhere and they likely either have Kai Dardanus or know where he is.

**CLUE:** A successful **TN 12 Communication (Investigation or Persuasion)**, **Intelligence (Security or Technology)**, or **Perception (Searching)** test reveals that the gang is operating out of an abandoned section of tunnels and leads to the reveal.

**REVEAL:** Kai Dardanus is being held prisoner by Parvati Moneta and her gang in an area of abandoned tunnels on Ganymede.

Note that the trail might branch and not all leads directly follow one another. This might take the crew through some of the following scenes out of sequence from how they're described here, and that's fine. Likewise, they might skip over some scenes as they connect the clues and figure out who has Kai Dardanus and why. Once the reveal happens, go to **Scene 6: The Purloined Treasure** for where the story might go from there and what the crew's options look like.

## SCENE 2

### LA CAGE

### SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

La Cage is one of a number of licensed brothels on Ganymede. The crew finds it a number of levels down from the docks in a commercial area well away from the residential parts of the station. It is amidst bars, restaurants, and other businesses catering to both visitors and station residents looking for entertainment or a night out. The establishment has a small reception area where visitors pay a nominal cover fee to enter. Beyond the reception area is a main social lounge with a bar and a number of comfortable and intimate seating areas. The rest of the establishment consists of small, private rooms used by the sex workers and rented out to patrons along with their services (which requires a **TN 11 Income** test).

While some of the crew may want to enjoy the pleasures La Cage has to offer, their primary purpose in visiting the brothel is to obtain information about Kai Dardanus. This is a social encounter and an opportunity to introduce the players to that system.

### ROMANCING THE LEADS

In a social encounter, the goal is to modify the attitude of a character or group of characters, in this case the staff of La Cage. Attitudes are measured on a seven-step scale: Very Hostile, Hostile, Standoffish, Neutral, Open, Friendly, and Very Friendly. Given the risks of talking openly about Orn Aquilo's business and violating the confidentiality their profession requires, the crew needs to move the staff's attitude toward them from Neutral to Very Friendly, or three steps.

The characters can make these shifts in a series of social maneuvers, tests reflecting actions they take to improve the overall impression the staff at La Cage has of them, making them sympathetic, or at least willing to cooperate and provide useful information. Each one is a **TN 12** test of a particular ability. Examples of social maneuvers the character can try include:

- Conversation and social interaction using **Communication**, particularly focuses like **Persuasion** and **Seduction**, but Bargaining, Deception, Etiquette, Expression, and even Gambling may be useful, depending on the approach.
- Showing off in various ways to win approval and attention. This could be almost any sort of impressive test, ranging from **Accuracy (Throwing)** to **Communication (Performing)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics)**. Because the effort has to be impressive, the TN is increased by +2 to **TN 14**.
- A display of knowledge of an interesting topic using **Intelligence** with a focus related to the topic, like **Art**, **Business**, or **Current Affairs**, for example.
- A sympathetic ear and a welcoming manner can do a lot as well. This is a test of **Perception (Intuition or Empathy)**.

These are by no means the only options. Let the crew come up with their own approaches and ideas and suggest abilities that would suit them. If they make a good case for an approach, let them try it. There are also two other, less social approaches the crew can take toward getting information: bribery and threats.

### BRIBERY

Money talks, and the crew can substitute an **Income** test for any of the social maneuvers in this encounter, but again their difficulty is increased to **TN 14**.

### THREATS

Characters can also substitute a **Strength (Intimidation)** or **Communication** test focused on threatening the La Cage staff and making it clear they should reveal what they know...or else. This can substitute for a regular social maneuver, but once the crew resorts to threats, they ensure the staff's attitude never becomes truly friendly. If the crew gets three steps of change, they get the information they want, but the staff becomes Hostile to them in the future (unless further efforts are made to improve their attitude) and hastens the arrival of **Scene 4**, as someone rats the crew out to Aquilo.

## SUCCESS

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If the crew is successful in improving the attitude at La Cage to Very Friendly, then Elyse, one of the staff there, arranges to speak with them privately. She tells them Kai is a friend of hers and that he worked at La Cage for a time after he arrived on Ganymede; Kai's young and pretty and, well, he was popular. So popular, in fact, that he caught the eye of Orn Aquilo, who practically became Kai's sole customer, and eventually made Kai his live-in boyfriend. Elyse didn't hear from him much for a while, but then Kai got back in touch, saying he needed a place to stay briefly. He didn't give Elyse details, but it was clear to her that he was scared, nervous, and didn't want anyone to know where he was. She put him up briefly at her place but he also made it clear he had a plan to fix things and move on. She doesn't know what it was, only that she hasn't seen Kai for more than a day. She heard him mention "57-D" on a comm call, but doesn't know what that means.

## OVERSTAYING THEIR WELCOME

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If the crew accumulates six failed tests before sufficiently improving the staff's attitude, everyone at La Cage remains professionally welcoming to them, but also makes it clear they're not going to give the characters any useful information.

If the crew becomes particularly belligerent or at all violent, then three La Cage security personnel look to forcibly remove them from the establishment, subduing them first, if necessary. Use the Tough stats later in this adventure for the security personnel. If things should escalate beyond that, station security gets called in, and the characters get their interview with Pinkwater sooner than they might otherwise. See **Scene 5** for some idea of how this might go.

If the crew leaves La Cage without success, they get another opportunity if they wait around or the next time they're in the area. Elyse gets hassled outside of the club by two of Aquilo's people (see the **Tough** stats from **Allies & Adversaries**) who think she knows something about Kai's disappearance. When she tells them where they can go, they get rough and start to slap her around. If the crew intervenes, they immediately get a friendly reaction from Elyse, and—once the unwelcome guests are dealt with—she gives the characters the information found under Success, previously.

### SCENE 3

## THE DOCKS

### EXPLORATION ENCOUNTER

The crew tracks a mysterious Amalthea Ambrosials shipment to the Ganymede docks, coinciding with an area where Kai Dardanus was seen—or showed on computer records. Unfortunately, Moneta's gang has already nabbed Dardanus from their covert meeting at the docks, and has laid a trap to tie up any loose ends that might result. The following leads can bring the crew here:

- If any of them think to research Elyse's "57-D" reference, a **TN 9 Intelligence (Technology) or Perception (Searching)** test turns out the number in association with a storage area on the Ganymede docks.
- If they befriended staff from La Cage in **Scene 2**, the crew may be able to access the records of the brothel's partition. A **TN 13 Intelligence (Technology)** test turns up a seemingly legit shipping order filed with Amalthea from that computer system, redirecting a shipment to Storage Area 57-D.
- If they looked for discrepancies in local shipping, particularly from Amalthea, as outlined in **Scene 1**, the clues there lead them to Storage Area 57-D.

Other investigations, including simply asking around on the docks for anyone who might have seen Kai, make it clear he was there late the previous night (or longer ago, depending on how long the crew's investigation takes). At that point, any character who knows the "57-D" reference notices it matches the nearby sequence of storage areas with a **TN 7 Perception (Intuition or Seeing)** test.

The storage areas are essentially a long series of sealed rooms with sliding doors and electronic access panels. 57-D is locked, so the crew can only access it by bribing someone in the dockyard shipping office—a **TN 11 Communication (Bargaining)** test, followed by a **TN 10 Income** test—or trying to override the lock, a **TN 12 Intelligence (Security or Technology)** test.

Inside the storage area are several shipping containers marked with the Amalthea Ambrosials logo and labels like "perishable" and "vacuum sealed for freshness." The crates contain luxury items like wine, cheeses, dried fruits, and more, all told worth more than enough to buy someone passage off Ganymede to wherever they'd like to go. While characters could take items out of an open container, moving any of the boxes would require a mech or forklift. Besides, shortly after they enter the storage area, they have other concerns.

## VACUUM SEALED FOR FRESHNESS



A member of Moneta's OPA cell left a program in the dock-yard computer linked to 57-D's access pad. A minute after anyone enters, the door closes and locks, scrambling the access code, and the station's environmental system begins to depressurize the room! This is an opportunity to show off how *The Expanse* handles hazards in the game, as well as an advanced test to overcome it.

### THE TRAP

The hazard is the rapidly evacuating air and subsequent suffocation. Once the trap activates, the storage area's air pumps begin extracting the air, which will take 5 minutes. The crew gets a **TN 9 Perception (Hearing)** test to notice the change in the sound of the air pumps immediately and every 30 seconds thereafter until they succeed. After a minute, the air begins to get noticeably thinner, and it becomes clear to everyone what is happening.

Once all of the air is evacuated, characters can hold their breath for a number of rounds equal to twice their Constitution score. After that, they must make a **TN 9 Constitution (Stamina)** test each round, with the TN increasing by +1 per round, to continue holding their breath. Failing the test means the character is unconscious. On the following round, the character's condition becomes dying and the character cannot stabilize until they are able to breathe again. A character stabilized from dying due to suffocation is exhausted. See the **Conditions** section of the rules for details.

### THE ESCAPE

The crew's escape depends on disabling the trap and opening the door, which will also stop the evacuation of the room. This is an advanced test (as detailed in the Advanced Tests portion of the rules), a **TN 12 Intelligence (Engineering or Technology)** test, with each success adding the result of the Drama Die to reach a success threshold of 10. Each test takes a minute's time, so the crew has time for five tests before the air completely evacuates from the room, assuming they notice the danger immediately. The test represents jury-rigging access to the environmental systems and the door, and hacking the control panel.

Other means of escape are limited. The door and walls of the room are too heavily reinforced for the crew to break through or seriously damage them. If you want—and particularly if the players ask—they might find other supplies or materials in storage sufficient to make a crude explosive to blow open the door. This is a similar advanced test using **Intelligence (Engineering, Science, or Technology)** but with the same result.

## TODAY'S CATCH

If the crew completely fails to escape from the trap and they are all doomed, you have the option of being merciful by having members of Moneta's OPA cell close at hand. Once the characters are all unconscious, they return the air to the room and open up the door in order to take them prisoner. The crew wakes up in Parvati Moneta's custody and has a very different meeting with her based on the material in the One Warning section of **Scene 4**. Alternately, you can have Pinkwater pull the crew out in the nick of time and move on to **Scene 5** and a talk with security about what they were doing there.

Similarly, if you feel the escape scene is too easy, you can always move right along to **Scene 4** and have some of Moneta's people waiting for the crew outside the storage area or nearby, ready to jump them when they emerge.

### SCENE 4

## TURNING OVER ROCKS

### ACTION/SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

Sooner or later, the crew's investigation into Kai Dardanus's whereabouts may draw some unwanted attention from either Orn Aquilo, Parvati Moneta, or both (for the crew's possible brush with Ganymede station security, see **Scene 5**). Both Aquilo and Moneta want to establish what the newcomers to the station know, and what their involvement in all of this is, before they take action. If either of them thinks the crew is getting too close to their business, they'll have some of their gang warn them off with a beat-down, or simply kill them. Of course, such warnings tend to have the opposite of their intended effect on player characters.

The elements of this scene should be distributed between the prior scenes as best suits the flow of the story and the crew's own actions. If they loudly announce their intentions and make it clear to everyone on Ganymede they're looking for Kai Dardanus, then the factions are tipped off early and might come looking for the characters. If they're subtle and circumspect, then it might be the crew coming and looking for Aquilo, or even Moneta, to ask questions. Use the material here and adapt it according to the circumstances.

## TROUBLE IN THE TUNNELS

At any time when the crew's investigation strays too close to either Aquilo's or Moneta's interests, they may send a group of toughs (see the stats in the **Allies & Adversaries** section) to either warn the characters off or simply kill them, depending on what they think they can get away with and the urgency of the situation. If Aquilo or Moneta think the crew knows something of value to them, then their toughs might try to take them prisoner instead, escorting them to a meeting with their boss (covered in the following sections).

At least initially, there will be a group of toughs equal in number to the player characters. They'll use bluster and threats, making it clear the crew is to abandon their search and stay out of any business concerning Dardanus. They don't specify who they're working for beyond "an interested party," although a **TN 9 Communication** test can trick the toughs into naming their employer. Let players specify a suitable ability focus, with Deception being the most common option.

If there is a fight between the toughs and the crew, you can have Pinkwater Security show up. The toughs scatter and run at the first sign of security personnel, who order everyone to stay where they are. This is an opportunity for Pinkwater to take the crew in for the meeting in **Scene 5**. If they run from—or, worse yet, attack—the Pinkwater agents, then the characters find themselves tagged for arrest and prosecution on Ganymede, unless they manage to call in a serious favor or negotiate something with the security agency itself, as in **Scene 5**.

## THE EAGLE'S NEST

Orn Aquilo maintains an "office" on the level of the station not far from La Cage. Characters can find out about it with an appropriate **TN 9** test like **Communication (Investigation)**, **Intelligence (Research)**, or **Perception (Searching)**. The office is in the back of a hole between the commercial and residential areas, and at least two members of Aquilo's gang are on-hand as bodyguards at all times.

Whether the crew comes as petitioners looking to talk with Aquilo or are brought here as prisoners, the guards disarm them before they're permitted into the boss's presence. Visitors have their weapons returned to them, provided things go well. Efforts to force their way past the guards result in them attacking the crew, and calling in a half-dozen reinforcements who arrive 1d6 rounds later.

## NEGOTIATING WITH AQUILO

Orn Aquilo is a proud man in a difficult situation. He cares deeply for Kai, and the possibility that his lover has betrayed him stings deeply. Aquilo would prefer to believe that Kai was lured away and kidnapped against his will (which is only partially true). He certainly has no interest in helping the crew to recover his lover only to hand him over to be brought back to Titan. If it is made clear to Aquilo that Kai abandoned him and sought to flee Ganymede, his “love” turns immediately to a cold and vengeful fury.

Still, even more important to Aquilo than Dardanus’ disappearance is his reputation. He cannot afford any sign of weakness, including a willingness to prioritize Kai’s life above his reputation or business interests. Although he’s torn, Aquilo will ultimately always choose to protect his pride. He has to punish anyone who openly defies him, and that includes both Kai and Moneta.

Although Aquilo initially prefers for the crew to simply stay out of his business, he can be convinced of the value of working with them, particularly since Moneta and others already know Aquilo’s local gang members. The player characters are wild cards, and therefore potentially useful if they agree to share information or help Aquilo to recover Kai and deal with Moneta’s gang in the process. Aquilo’s attitude toward the crew is initially Standoffish. If they can get him to Friendly, he’s at least willing to consider some sort of temporary alliance.

## ONE WARNING

Parvati Moneta’s OPA cell maintains a hideout in some abandoned tunnels on Ganymede. They’re difficult to find without some local insight into the station and its layout. It requires a **TN 13** test like **Communication (Investigation)**, **Intelligence (Research)**, or **Intelligence (Security)** to find them, and that’s only if the crew has some idea to look in the first place.

The hideout is always watched by at least four toughs who are members of Moneta’s OPA cell. Their attitude is Hostile to any intruders, even if the PCs claim to only want to talk; they haven’t survived working with the OPA for this long by being overly trusting.



## NEGOTIATING WITH MONETA

The crew only shows up at the OPA's hideout if they are Moneta's prisoners, brought in by her people following **Scene 3** or **Scene 4**, or if they force their way in after finding the location. In the latter case, take a look at **Scene 6: Purloined Treasure** for a confrontation. If Moneta looks to contact the characters and negotiate with them, she sets something up in neutral territory away from her home base (and Dardanus, who is being held there).

If the characters are brought in as prisoners, Moneta interrogates them as to who they are, what they are doing on Ganymede, and why they are looking for Kai Dardanus. Depending on their answers, she may warn them off, telling them to stop looking and leave Ganymede as soon as they can, or she may decide to negotiate. The OPA leader has gotten in a bit over her head. Taking Dardanus was supposed to provide leverage over Aquilo, but it has only provoked the crime boss and is leading toward a confrontation no one wins.

If Moneta learns that Dardanus' family is willing to pay to get him back to Titan, that's something she can benefit from. It only takes a successful **TN 11 Communication (Bargaining or Persuasion)** test to convince Moneta of the value of cooperating, if the crew is willing to cut her in for a portion of the take, or to contact the Dardanus family about paying a ransom. Moneta wants half of what Theo Dardanus promised the crew, but can be negotiated down from that. A successful **TN 11 Communication (Bargaining)** test knocks 5% times the result on the Drama Die off her desired share, with a minimum of 20% going to the OPA with a successful test and a "6" Drama Die result.

Moneta doesn't mention the luxury goods in storage at the docks and looks to keep those to sell off for additional profit later, but will include them in the negotiations if the crew brings them up. She refuses to tell the characters where Kai Dardanus is, only that he's alive and well and can be handed over to them once their deal is complete. If the crew makes a poor impression or doesn't even try negotiating with Moneta, they're given the brush-off and told to leave, if meeting on neutral ground. If they are the OPA's prisoners, chances are Moneta decides to have them killed; jump to **Scene 6** to give the crew the chance to take action in the confusion.

### SCENE 5

## TESTING THE WATERS

### SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

The Pinkwater corporation holds the primary security services contract for Ganymede. Naturally, they're at least somewhat interested in activities concerning a criminal gang, OPA members involved in illegal activities, and a possible kidnapping operation on "their" station. Player characters being who they are, chances are good of them drawing the attention of security on the station at some point during this story.

Crew members involved in obvious illegality or violence have to deal with a squad of Pinkwater Security Officers (see the **Allies & Adversaries** section) at least equal in number to the known perpetrators. The officers are quick to call for backup if things escalate or they turn out to be outnumbered. They don't immediately resort to lethal force, but use it if the characters do, or to defend themselves.

Even if the crew doesn't draw Pinkwater's attention by outright committing crimes on Ganymede, their investigation might catch the eye of Wendell, the Pinkwater officer who is investigating rumors of something going on within Orn Aquilo's gang (see **Allies & Adversaries** for Wendell's stats and description). Likewise, their investigation into Kai Dardanus' whereabouts and other poking around the station might draw attention. In these cases, Wendell may send some officers to issue an "invitation" for the crew to speak with him at the security station, making it clear they shouldn't say no unless they'd like Pinkwater to come up with a set of reasons to charge and detain them.

### A CONVERSATION WITH WENDELL

Officer Wendell doesn't particularly care what the crew of the *Sommelier* is doing on Ganymede, so long as it doesn't disturb the peace or cause him any problems. He is interested, however, if it looks like the characters would be potentially useful to him in breaking up Aquilo's gang, Moneta's OPA cell, or both.

If the crew is brought in for criminal activity or anything Wendell can charge them with, he interrogates them about who they are and why they're on the station, making it clear he can pretty much throw them in a hole for as long as he wants. If they invoke the names of Amalthea Ambrosials, Theo Dardanus, Kai Dardanus, or Orn Aquilo, they get Wendell's attention. If the Pinkwater

### AREN'T YOU...?

Astute readers of *The Expanse* novels may recall a former Pinkwater employee named Wendell who encounters the crew of the *Rocinante* on Ganymede following the outbreak of hostilities between Earth and Mars. We're not saying that this Wendell is necessarily the same guy, but we're not *not* saying that, either. If any of your players take note or ask, feel free to just smile enigmatically and maybe award the observant player with 1d6 bonus Stunt Points they can use on their next success.

officer arranges a meeting, he's a bit more cordial, but still makes it clear he can make life very difficult for the characters if they cross him in any way. He's interested in any opportunity the crew presents to further his own goals.

While technically, Wendell should be protecting Kai Dardanus from the crew illegally kidnapping the young man and taking him back home to Titan, the security officer considers that a negotiable point, especially if it gets rid of other criminal elements on the station and removes a potential source of trouble. He's willing to look the other way when it comes to the "recovery" mission, even playing along if the crew claims Kai Dardanus wants to go with them.

Feel free to ask the players to make ability tests for social interactions during their conversation with officer Wendell, but they aren't really necessary. They don't have to convince him of much, unless they try to outright lie, and they'll find it easier trying to make the already interested Wendell into an ally.

## SCENE 6

### PURLOINED TREASURE

### ACTION/SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

Matters all come to a head in this scene, where the crew has a chance of getting at Kai Dardanus, one way or another. The characters have followed the investigation trail from **Scene 1** to learn that Kai is being held prisoner by Moneta's gang in a section of old, abandoned tunnels, and they are going to try to negotiate for his release or arrange for his escape, either on their own or in cooperation with another faction. The following are some of the most likely ways things could happen.

#### ON THEIR OWN

Let the crew come up with their own plans for how to get at Dardanus and get him out of the tunnels and off the station. At least initially, the young man is happy for any rescue that gets him away from his captors, and isn't likely to question who the characters are other than to assure himself they don't work for Aquilo. If the crew gets Kai out of the tunnels, they can likely get him back to their ship without any objections from him—at least until he finds out the crew intends to take him back to his family on Titan.

Moneta and eight toughs guard the OPA hideout, with at least two standing guard at the small room where Dardanus is locked up. The OPA members all know each other, so the crew isn't going to be able to slip in by pretending to be anyone else. If half of the toughs or Moneta are taken out, the gang gives up Dardanus to secure their own survival. The crew might also be able to negotiate his release, provided they have enough leverage on Moneta or something else that she wants.

Approaching the OPA hideout undetected takes two tests: a **TN 12 Intelligence (Security)** test to overcome the various sensors placed along the tunnels to pick up on intruders and a **TN 12 Dexterity (Stealth)** test to approach the threshold of the hideout without being seen or heard. Only half of the characters need to succeed on the second test for the group to go unnoticed, and only one character needs to succeed on the first test to overcome the sensors.

#### MONETA'S TRAP

Once it becomes clear Aquilo won't bargain for Kai's life, Moneta instead uses him as bait for a trap, arranging for his lover's location to leak to Aquilo and then ambushing him and his gang when they come to liberate him. She might look to recruit the crew to help set this trap, using them as her stalking horse. They can inform Aquilo about Kai's whereabouts and lead him into the trap, for example. This might be part of a deal the crew cuts with Moneta in **One Warning** in **Scene 4**.

#### THE RAGE OF AQUILLO

In addition to being lured in by Moneta, Aquilo may learn of Kai's location on his own and decide to storm the place with his gang, either to reclaim his lover or to punish his betrayal, and that of anyone helping him. This can happen during negotia-

#### CALIBAN IN THE SHADOWS

Readers of *The Expanse* novels know there are far worse things hiding out in the abandoned tunnels of Ganymede, including elements of "Project: Caliban," which has been abducting and experimenting on children with a rare immune disorder to create protomolecule hybrids. While it's unlikely for the crew to simply stumble upon this secret operation, they might find some small clue or another of unusual activity in the tunnels, like a discarded child's toy or piece of medical lab equipment. This could be a hint of things to come before the Ganymede incident, where a hybrid attacks Martian marines on the surface.

tions with Moneta (especially if they have hit an impasse or she has decided to eliminate the player characters) or while the crew is executing their own plan. For example, they might be sneaking into the OPA hideout through a side tunnel just as Aquilo's gang launches their attack.

Aquilo might also recruit the crew to assist him and his gang in storming Moneta's hideout and recovering Kai. This poses a challenge for the player characters in terms of securing their target and getting him off the station, unless they plan to double-cross Aquilo during the raid.

## PINKWATER CLEANS UP

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At the same time as all of this is going on, Officer Wendell and Pinkwater Security forces might move on Aquilo, Moneta, or both, depending on what they have learned during the course of the crew's investigation and whatever deals the characters might have cut with Wendell. As with the other two factions, Pinkwater might take action in conjunction with the crew or in the midst of some other plan. At the least, if there's a massive shoot-out in the tunnels, Pinkwater will be alerted and arrive to investigate and mop up whatever's left at the end.

Depending on how the characters play it, they might well have a three-way fire fight going on between the gang, the OPA, and security while they try to get Kai out of there alive and back to their ship. In that kind of a dust-up, you don't even have to handle every attack by every NPC; just treat the whole thing as a kind of hazard for the group (see **Hazards** under **Exploration Encounters** in the rules). Have each player roll a **TN 11 Dexterity** test each round to avoid getting hit by stray gunfire, with a failed test resulting in 2d6 damage. No ability focus applies to this test.

## PURSUIT

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You can have the crew get away clean if they manage to leave the scene and get out into the tunnels, much less the main parts of the station, or you can require additional tests to reflect pursuit by one or more of the factions going after the characters and their quarry.



## ROUGH SAILING

If you have *The Expanse Roleplaying Game* rulebook and access to the full spaceship rules, you can add a scene at the end of *Cupbearer* where the *Sommelier* is chased or attacked after leaving Ganymede station, either by one of the two factions (criminal smugglers or the OPA) or someone else, like pirates after the cargo (be it Kai Dardanus, the goods from Amalthea, or both). This is an opportunity to introduce to the players to space combat as well, a topic otherwise beyond the scope of this *Quickstart*. The *Sommelier* has the stats of a Small Freighter from the **Ships** chapter of *The Expanse*. The attacking ship should be fairly lightweight, equal to an armed Drop Shop, since a heavier military vessel would totally outmatch the characters' vessel.

Handle the pursuit like an advanced **TN 12 Constitution (Running)** test with a 15 success threshold. Each pursuing party also makes the test each turn. You can allow some alternate abilities and focuses, if the players describe it well, such as **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** or **Strength (Climbing)**. If the crew reaches the success threshold first, they escape clean. If a pursuer reaches the threshold before them, they catch up to the crew and another combat may take place; roll a new initiative order at that point. In this case, there might even be multiple pursuits before the crew gets away.

## EPILOGUE

*Cupbearer* assumes the crew leaves Ganymede after the confrontation in **Scene 6**, having either gained their objective or not. Chances are, they'll have overstayed their welcome with one faction or another on the station.

Depending on how things went in the last scene, you can either have the crew uneventfully board their ship and leave the station, or have a final encounter where somebody looks to even a score or keep them from leaving. In the latter case, an ally might help the characters out at the last minute.

In the end, the crew either leaves Ganymede with Kai Dardanus or they don't. If they fail to recover their target, their employer is most disappointed and takes other steps, while quietly discouraging anyone from hiring the *Sommelier* or its crew. This might force the characters into some difficult straits and a real need for other work, a definite hook for future adventures.

If the crew does get Kai off Ganymede, they find him less than enthused about the idea of returning to Titan. It's up to you whether he goes along quietly or tries to escape, although there aren't a lot of places to go on board a small freighter outbound from Jupiter to Saturn. They might decide to take him somewhere else, telling his family they couldn't find him. This largely has the same result as failing to recover him, although a grateful Kai might intercede with his family on the crew's behalf.

In the event that Kai Dardanus dies during the adventure, then the crew has made an enemy of Theo Dardanus, unless they can somehow convince him it was someone else's fault and direct his anger at them. Even then, Amalthea Ambrosials blacklists the *Sommelier*, forcing the crew to look for employment opportunities elsewhere.

## REWARDS

If you want to play further *Expanse* adventures with the crew of the *Sommelier*, you can reward them for a successful job by having their employer pay off any debt on their ship, giving them clear title and a new universe of options to explore as free agents. They might even begin the process of refitting and upgrading the *Sommelier* to take on more dangerous jobs than just carrying freight.

## LOOSE ENDS

One or more of the factions on Ganymede may still be around after the events of this adventure, and chances are they'll remember the crew and their interactions. Pinkwater Security is certainly still around, whether or not the particular officers from *Cupbearer* survive, and might take note of the crew the next time they pass through Ganymede.

If they made a good or bad impression on Moneta, that could be passed along to some of her OPA contacts, changing their attitudes toward the characters. Of course, the OPA isn't a monolithic organization, and some of the more moderate factions may take the opposite opinion of characters who helped or hindered Moneta's ambitions.

If Aquilo survives the story, chances are he's not well-disposed toward the crew and looks for an opportunity to get even the next time they cross paths. Still, that may not be until after the Ganymede incident leads to a limited shooting war over the moon. After that, with people fleeing Ganymede, Aquilo might not have the luxury of settling scores should a freighter arrive with much-needed supplies.

# ALLIES & ADVERSARIES

This section contains the descriptions and stats for the major antagonists and potential allies encountered during *Cupbearer*.

## KAI DARDANUS

Kai Dardanus is a beautiful young man barely out of his teens, who has had nearly everything he wanted all his life except for genuine affection and freedom of choice. His life was defined by his family's business and curtailed by his family's expectations, so much so that Kai took his first opportunity to leave home and strike out on his own. He was quick to exploit what he had: his looks, his sensual nature, and his intuitive gift for saying and doing the right things around people. At first, Kai thought snagging Orn Aquilo was the answer to his problems, but now he just finds himself trapped in a different sort of cage than the one he left behind and he wants out.

Kai's goals are survival and escape from Aquilo and Ganymede, in that order, and he'll do whatever is necessary to achieve them. The player characters offer a potential way off the station, which is of interest, but they also work for Kai's family, and he refuses to go back home. If he can cut some kind of a deal with them that gets him what he wants, he'll do it, but the crew shouldn't be foolish enough to trust him too far; if their goals are at cross-purposes, Kai will sell them out in a moment to get what he needs. He's definitely not above using his looks and his considerable social skills to charm or seduce potential allies.



## ORN AQUILLO, CRIME BOSS

Orn Aquilo has always been about what he owns, what is his, and what he can control. It drove him to ruthlessly work his way up through the ranks of Ganymede's criminal gangs, using his unusual strength and size to his advantage. When he was a lieutenant and a leg-breaker for other bosses, people tended to underestimate his intellect and ambition, but few people underestimate Aquilo now. He has an up-and-coming reputation on the station as a man who can make things happen, who can particularly acquire things and get them where they need to be, for a price.

Kai caught Aquilo's eye and the crime boss says and thinks that he loves him, in his own fashion. The thing is, love is just another name for ownership to Aquilo, and Kai is just a prized possession. He wants his paramour back, but Aquilo can't put up with any disloyalty, and if he can't have Kai, then nobody is going to have him.

Orn Aquilo is tall like most Belters but surprisingly broad as well, powerfully muscled, with dark brown hair and a full beard that splits into an easy, savage grin.



### KAI DARDANUS

#### ABILITIES (FOCUSSES)

**ACCURACY 1, COMMUNICATION 2 (SEDUCTION), CONSTITUTION 1 (TOLERANCE), DEXTERITY 1, FIGHTING 0, INTELLIGENCE 1, PERCEPTION 1 (INTUITION), STRENGTH 1, WILLPOWER 0**

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	10	11	1

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
UNARMED	+0	1D3+1

#### SPECIAL FEATURES

**Favored Stunts:** Impress, When a Plan Comes Together

**Talents:** Improvisation (Novice), Intrigue (Novice)

**Equipment:** hand terminal

**THREAT: MINOR**

### ORN AQUILLO

#### ABILITIES (FOCUSSES)

**ACCURACY 2 (PISTOLS), COMMUNICATION 1 (DECEPTION), CONSTITUTION 2 (TOLERANCE), DEXTERITY 0 (INITIATIVE), FIGHTING 2 (BRAWLING), INTELLIGENCE 1 (SECURITY), PERCEPTION 1, STRENGTH 2 (INTIMIDATION), WILLPOWER 1**

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
10	18	10	3

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

#### SPECIAL FEATURES

**Favored Stunts:** Duck and Weave, Shock and Awe

**Talents:** Carousing (Novice), Inspire (Novice), Striking Style (Novice)

**Equipment:** hand terminal, knife, light body armor, pistol

**THREAT: MINOR**

## PARVATI MONETA

### ABILITIES (FOCUSSES)

**ACCURACY 1 (PISTOLS), COMMUNICATION 1 (BARGAINING, DECEPTION), CONSTITUTION 1, DEXTERITY 2, FIGHTING 1 (LIGHT WEAPONS), INTELLIGENCE 1 (EVALUATION), PERCEPTION 1 (INTUITION, SEARCHING), STRENGTH 0 (INTIMIDATION), WILLPOWER 1 (SELF-DISCIPLINE)**

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
12	15	12	2
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
KNIFE	+3	1D6+2	
PISTOL	+3	2D6+1	
UNARMED	+1	1D3	

### SPECIAL FEATURES

**Favored Stunts:** The Upper Hand, Lightning Attack, Skirmish

**Talents:** Contacts (Novice), Inspire (Novice), Pistol Style (Novice)

**Equipment:** hand terminal, knives, light armor, pistol

### THREAT: MINOR

## WENDELL

### ABILITIES (FOCUSSES)

**ACCURACY 2 (PISTOLS), COMMUNICATION 2 (ETIQUETTE), CONSTITUTION 0, DEXTERITY 2, FIGHTING 2, INTELLIGENCE 1 (LAW, TACTICS), PERCEPTION 1 (SEARCHING), STRENGTH 2, WILLPOWER 1 (SELF-DISCIPLINE)**

SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU
11	15	11	4
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
BATON	+2	1D6+2	
PISTOL	+4	2D6+2	
TASER	+4	1D6+2 PENETRATING	

### SPECIAL FEATURES

**Favored Stunts:** And Another Thing, Skirmish, When a Plan Comes Together

**Talents:** Intrigue (Novice), Pinpoint Accuracy (Novice), Pistol Style (Novice), Striking Style (Novice)

**Equipment:** baton, medium body armor, pistol, taser

### THREAT: MINOR

His dark eyes are fiery when he's feeling in good humor or angry. Aquilo is in his late 30s, still a fairly young man, although an elder by the standards for the underworld.

## PARVATI MONETA, OPA CELL LEADER

Parvati Moneta has been a scavenger all of her life, making do with whatever she could find—or steal. It's the way things are. The rich and powerful have and take what they want, and the rest of the system lives off whatever scraps fall from their table. Parvati has learned where to find and collect all of the best scraps, so much so that she can afford to sell some to those able to pay, and maybe have the potential to begin changing the game a little. Like a lot of Belters aligned with the Outer Planets Alliance, Parvati is tired of the exploitation of the Inner Planets, and wants to give the Belters a seat at the table rather than lurking under it.



Moneta's goal is to build her power base on Ganymede Station, sensing that big things are happening. After Eros, chances are good the Inner Planets will go to war at any time, and that will be when the OPA and the Belt can act. Of course, one of the obstacles in Moneta's way is Orn Aquilo's influence over the black market on Ganymede, but now fate has offered her leverage against Aquilo along with some valuable cargo in the bargain. The crime boss's latest boy-toy wants out, and is willing to betray his lover to get it, which suits Parvati just fine.

Parvati Moneta has the tall, thin build of a Belter, her heritage primarily South Asian and Mediterranean. Her straight black hair is worn long on one side, almost completely shaved on the other, and she bears a Belter neck tattoo as well as an OPA split circle on her right bicep. Moneta is lean and graceful and particularly good with a knife in close combat; she always carries at least two concealed on her person.

## WENDELL, PINKWATER OFFICER

Wendell (the only name he gives) is a ranking officer with Pinkwater, assigned to the security company's criminal division. In essence, Wendell and his personnel are the ones assigned to crack heads together when Pinkwater needs it done, all in the name of law and order on Ganymede, of course. Of late, Wendell and his bosses have been paying attention to rumbles of trouble from Orn Aquilo and his gang, and the Pinkwater officer would love an excuse to take Aquilo and his operation down.



Wendell is a beefy Martian with a gravelly voice and a slow drawl, his hair in a very short, military-style cut. His work with Pinkwater is just a job, one that gives Wendell the opportunity to kick some ass legally while getting paid to do it. He's less concerned about law (or "justice") than ensuring that things on Ganymede stay quiet and orderly until his next performance review.

**TOUGH**

These Tough stats fit the members of Aquilo's and Mone-ta's underworld gangs on Ganymede. Feel free to vary their game traits a bit and to come up with names and descriptions as you see fit. See the Cast of Thousands sidebar earlier in the adventure for a quick descriptive resource.

**PINKWATER SECURITY OFFICER**

Pinkwater Security is a private security company holding the largest public safety contract on Ganymede. They are responsible for keeping the peace and enforcing laws in all areas outside of direct corporate control and policing. Their officers are well-trained, but the distance from their Martian overseers, as well as a corporate board always looking to cut costs, allows for not-insignificant levels of graft and abuse of power.

<b>TOUGH</b>				
<b>ABILITIES (FOCUSES)</b>				
<b>ACCURACY 0 (PISTOLS), COMMUNICATION 0 (BARGAINING, DECEPTION), CONSTITUTION 2, DEXTERITY 1, FIGHTING 2, INTELLIGENCE 0, PERCEPTION 1, STRENGTH 2, WILLPOWER 0</b>				
SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU	
11	17	11	2	
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE		
KNIFE	+2	1D6+2		
NUCKLE DUSTERS	+2	1D3+2		
PISTOL	+2	2D6+1		
<b>SPECIAL FEATURES</b>				
<b>Favored Stunts:</b> Knock Prone, Taunt				
<b>Talents:</b> Contacts (Novice), Intrigue (Novice)				
<b>Equipment:</b> hand terminal, knife, knuckle dusters, pistol				
<b>THREAT: MINOR</b>				

<b>PINKWATER SECURITY OFFICER</b>				
<b>ABILITIES (FOCUSES)</b>				
<b>ACCURACY 1 (PISTOLS), COMMUNICATION 1, CONSTITUTION 1, DEXTERITY 1, FIGHTING 2 (LIGHT WEAPONS), INTELLIGENCE 0 (SECURITY, TACTICS), PERCEPTION 2 (SEARCHING), STRENGTH 2, WILLPOWER 1</b>				
SPEED	FORTUNE	DEFENSE	AR + TOU	
0	5	11	5	
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE		
BATON	+4	1D6+2		
PISTOL	+3	2D6+2		
TASER	+3	1D6+2 PENETRATING		
<b>SPECIAL FEATURES</b>				
<b>Favored Stunts:</b> Double-Team, Knock Prone, Vicious Blow				
<b>Talents:</b> Pistol Style (Novice)				
<b>Equipment:</b> baton, medium body armor, pistol, taser				
<b>THREAT: MINOR</b>				

**THE EXPANSE RPG QUICKSTART**

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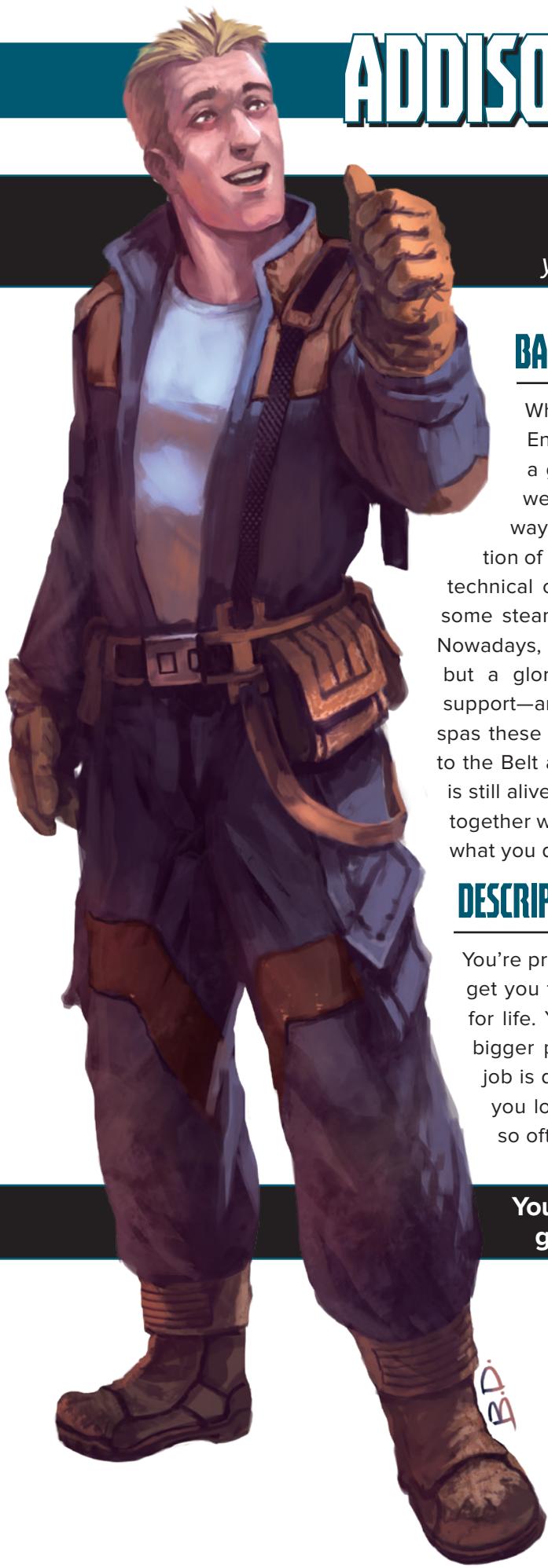
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# ADDISON "ADDY" GRANT

*"I don't know what's in it or where it's from, but I guarantee it'll get you where you're goin'. Want some?"*

## BACKGROUND

What's a Martian, a participant by birth in the Great Endeavor, doing so far out away from home? Just having a good time and putting your talents to use, things that were increasingly difficult to do back on Mars. In some ways, you were born too late. There was a whole generation of Martian pioneers who worked with their hands, tackled technical challenges all day, and liked to unwind and blow off some steam when the work was done. They knew how to live. Nowadays, if you're good at fixing things on Mars, you're nothing but a glorified handyman or superintendent—or worse, tech support—and the old rough-and-tumble bars are restaurants and spas these days. So you found your way out to the new frontier, to the Belt and the Outer Planets, where the pioneer spirit of old is still alive, you're valued for being able to keep a bunch of tech together with nothing but spit and bailing wire, and nobody cares what you do with your off-hours.

## DESCRIPTION

You're proof that blond hair, blue eyes, and a winning smile can get you through a lot, especially combined with a certain zest for life. Your stamina is deceptive, and you have drunk much bigger people under the table. You keep on going until the job is done. You've also learned to take "You're smarter than you look" as a compliment; might as well, since you hear it so often.

**You are an engineer with a zest for life who's good at fixing things and making friends.**

# ADDISON "ADDY" GRANT

ORIGIN: MARTIAN

BACKGROUND: TRADE

SOCIAL CLASS: MIDDLE

PROFESSION: TECHNICIAN

3D6 + ABILITY SCORE + FOCUS BONUS (+2) VS. TARGET NUMBER

## TALENTS

### CAROUSING

NOVICE

When making **Constitution (Tolerance)** advanced tests, you gain a +1 bonus to the result of each Drama Die.

### IMPROVISATION

NOVICE

You can make an ability test requiring a specific focus even if you don't have it.

### MAKER

NOVICE

You can use **Intelligence (Engineering)** to make items with the appropriate tools and materials.

## DRIVE

**ECSTATIC:** Your quality is zest for life and general willingness to try new things. Your downfall is irresponsibility and a tendency to overdo enjoyment at times.

## RELATIONSHIPS

**THE CREW OF THE SOMMELIER 1:** Once per game session you can get as many SP as your Relationship rating to perform any stunt that would be in-character when it comes to helping other members of the crew of the Sommelier. You choose this after you see if you succeed on a test.

## ATTACKS

ATTACK	BONUS	DAMAGE
Pistol	+2	2d6+1
Unarmed	+1	1d3

### DEFENSE 12

### SPEED 12

### TOUGHNESS 2

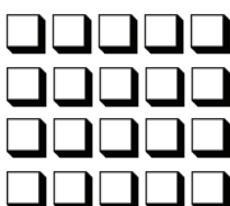
DEFENSE = 10 + DEX

SPEED = 10 + DEX

TOUGHNESS = CON + ARMOR

## FORTUNE 20

## CONDITIONS



## INCOME 2

INCOME TEST = 3D6 + INCOME VS. COST TN

## ACCURACY

2

This ability measures aim and precision, and measures Addison's capacity to hit with ranged or thrown weapons.

## COMMUNICATION

1

This ability covers Addison's social skills and generally making friends and influencing people.

## CONSTITUTION

2

This ability is Addison's overall health, fortitude, and resistance to harm, illness, and fatigue.

**TOLERANCE:** This focus helps Addison to withstand the effects of potentially toxic substances, whether imbibed for recreation or by unwitting exposure.

## DEXTERITY

2

This ability covers deftness, agility, and reaction time, affecting how quickly and gracefully Addison moves.

## FIGHTING

1

This ability is Addison's capability in close combat, ranging from a brawl to wielding weapons.

## INTELLIGENCE

2

This ability measures Addison's reasoning, memory, problem-solving, and overall knowledge.

**ENGINEERING:** This focus helps Addison when making, repairing, and maintaining technological items as well as knowledge of the principles and practicalities of their design and development.

**TECHNOLOGY:** This focus helps Addison with knowledge of the design and operation of technology, particularly computers.

## PERCEPTION

1

This ability is Addison's capacity to pick up on and notice things using any of his senses.

## STRENGTH

0

This ability rates Addison's sheer muscle power and the ability to apply it, from lifting heavy things to feats of athletics.

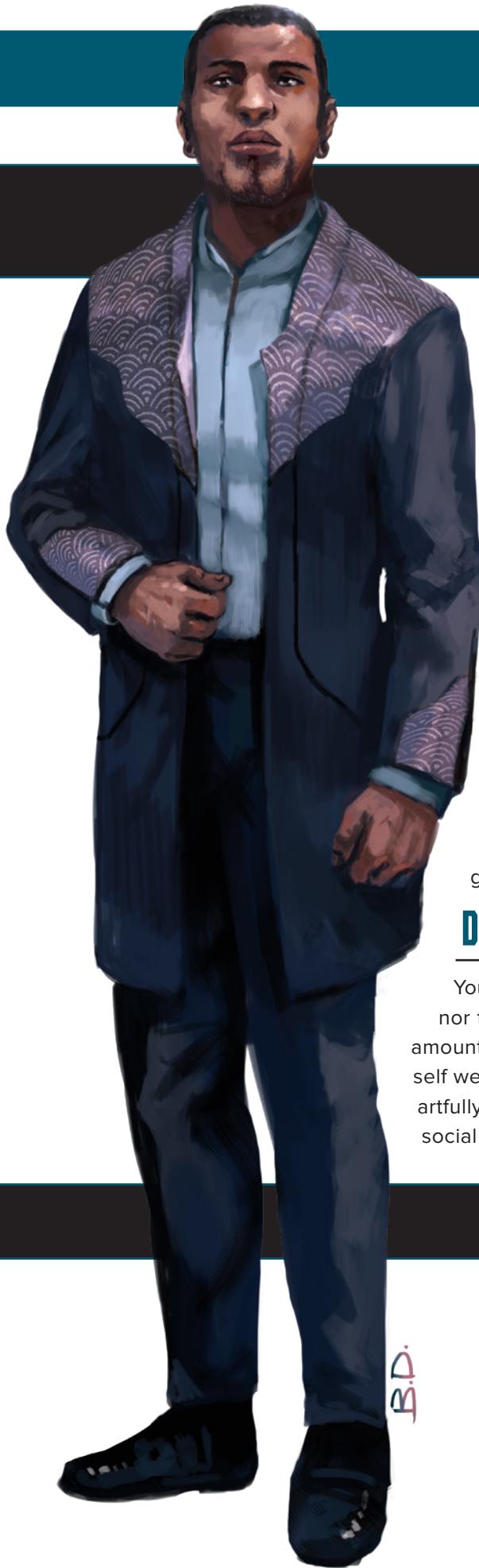
## WILLPOWER

2

This ability measures Addison's self-control, self-discipline, mental fortitude, and confidence.

# ADE AKINTOLA

*"I'm sure if we all just calm down and talk about this, that we can work out something mutually beneficial to us all."*



## BACKGROUND

Born and raised in the Central African Shared Interest Zone on Earth, you experienced a relatively comfortable childhood and youth because of your family's wealth and business interests. That also produced expectations on you: to behave properly, to learn, and to succeed. Although you were given a number of advantages, you were expected to make the most of them. That led to an extended "work study" in the Outer Planets to learn about all of the aspects of shipping and trade, with the largest flow of resources and goods in the system being a closed loop between the Belt and the Outers, and the Inner Planets, particularly Earth. Seeing life away from Earth has certainly been a broadening experience, not necessarily in all of the ways your family intended. Still, you have ambitions of doing well and proving your leadership and management skills, including dealing with those who wrongly assume that you have been given things simply by accident of birth.

## DESCRIPTION

You have the build and musculature of an Earther, no mistaking it, nor the features of your Yoruban African ancestry. You have a fair amount of personal style, and enjoy dressing and presenting yourself well. That said, you tend to "dress down" just slightly on the job, artfully making sure you don't look too good. You're comfortable in social situations and have a natural way with people.

**You are a natural leader with ambition and an eye for intrigue.**

# ADE AKINTOLA

**ORIGIN: EARTHER**

**BACKGROUND: ARISTOCRATIC**

**SOCIAL CLASS: UPPER**

**PROFESSION: EXECUTIVE**

**3D6 + ABILITY SCORE + FOCUS BONUS [+2] VS. TARGET NUMBER**

## TALENTS

### CONTACTS

NOVICE

You can make an NPC with a Neutral or better attitude into a contact with a successful **Communication (Persuasion)** test.

### INSPIRE

NOVICE

If you are conscious and allies are within sight of you, they gain +1 on all **Willpower** tests.

### INTRIGUE

NOVICE

If you fail a **Communication (Deception)** test, you can re-roll and keep the result of the second roll.

## DRIVE

**ACHIEVER:** Your quality is ambition, knowing what you want and going after it. Your downfall is obsession, too focused on your goals to see anything (or anyone) else.

## RELATIONSHIPS

**THE CREW OF THE SOMMELIER 1:** Once per game session you can get as many SP as your Relationship rating to perform any stunt that would be in-character when it comes to helping other members of the crew of the *Sommelier*. You choose this after you see if you succeed on a test.

## ATTACKS

ATTACK	BONUS	DAMAGE
Pistol	+2	2d6+1
Unarmed	+1	1d3+1

### DEFENSE II

### SPEED II

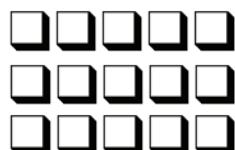
### TOUGHNESS 0

**DEFENSE = 10 + DEX**

**SPEED = 10 + DEX**

**TOUGHNESS = CON + ARMOR**

### FORTUNE IS



## CONDITIONS

## INCOME 6

**INCOME TEST = 3D6 + INCOME VS. COST TN**

## ACCURACY

2

*This ability measures aim and precision, and measures Ade's capacity to hit with ranged or thrown weapons.*

## COMMUNICATION

3

*This ability covers Ade's social skills and generally making friends and influencing people.*

**LEADERSHIP:** This focus helps Ade when guiding, directing, and inspiring others.

## CONSTITUTION

0

*This ability is Ade's overall health, fortitude, and resistance to harm, illness, and fatigue.*

## DEXTERITY

1

*This ability covers deftness, agility, and reaction time, affecting how quickly and gracefully Ade moves.*

## FIGHTING

1

*This ability is Ade's capability in close combat, ranging from a brawl to wielding weapons.*

## INTELLIGENCE

2

*This ability measures Ade's reasoning, memory, problem-solving, and overall knowledge.*

**HISTORY:** This focus helps Ade with knowing important events, places, items, and personalities from the past.

## PERCEPTION

3

*This ability is Ade's capacity to pick up on and notice things using any of his senses.*

## STRENGTH

1

*This ability rates Ade's sheer muscle power and the ability to apply it, from lifting heavy things to feats of athletics.*

## WILLPOWER

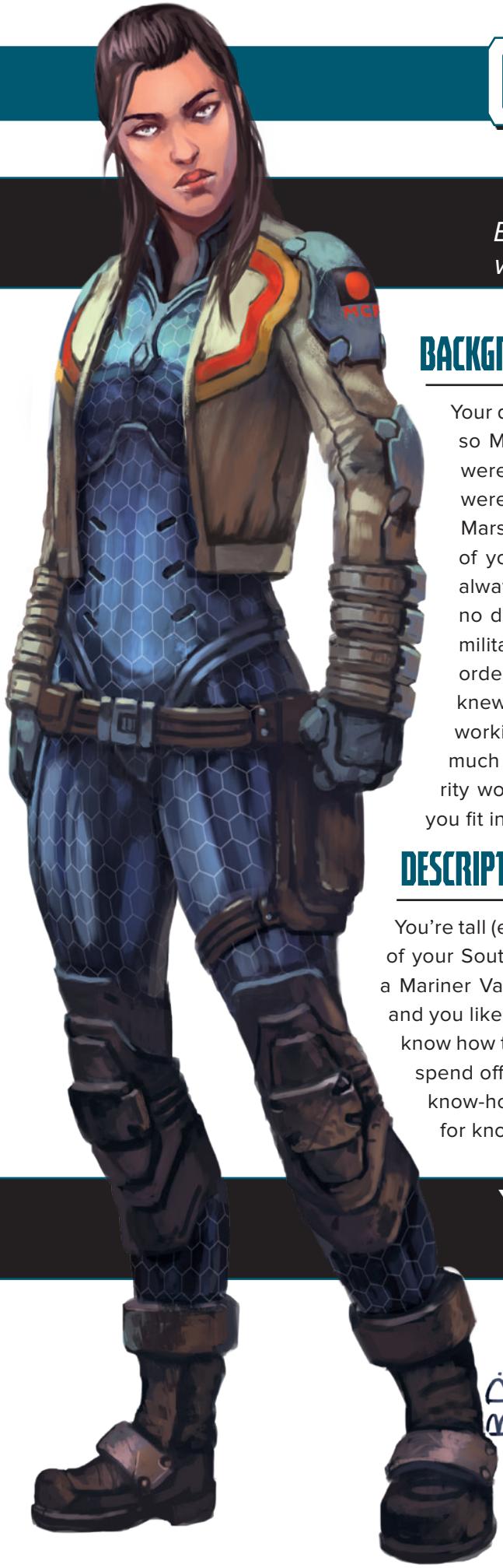
2

*This ability measures Ade's self-control, self-discipline, mental fortitude, and confidence.*

**SELF-DISCIPLINE:** This focus helps Ade when he is trying to focus his mental energy or control his impulses and emotions.

# CASEY KHATRI

*"I wouldn't do that if I were you.  
But then, if I were you, maybe I would  
want to end my miserable existence."*



## BACKGROUND

Your dad used to tell a dumb joke about how your family was so Martian that you bled red, but it's true. Your ancestors were some of the first settlers in the Mariner Valley, and you were raised to be proud of that heritage and everything Mars was looking to achieve. Although earlier generations of your family were technicians and engineers, you were always one of the bigger and stronger kids, and there was no doubt that you were going to sign on with the Martian military. Turns out, however, that military superiors like their orders followed and, well, sometimes you thought that you knew better. After you left the service, you tried your hand working private security in the Outer Planets, with pretty much the same results. So you moved on to freelance security work on various ships, still looking for that place where you fit in.

## DESCRIPTION

You're tall (even for a Martian) and in great shape, with the features of your South Asian Indian ancestors, but the distinctive twang of a Mariner Valley accent by way of Texas. You have an easy smile and you like to think you're friendly, if only people will see that you know how to get things done in the most efficient way. You tend to spend off time either exercising or tinkering, and your technical know-how has helped you out at least as much as your knack for knocking heads.

**You are an ex-soldier, good to have in a brawl as well as when it comes to putting things together.**

# CASEY KHATRI

ORIGIN: MARTIAN

BACKGROUND: LABORER

ACCURACY

2

SOCIAL CLASS: LOWER

PROFESSION: SOLDIER

COMMUNICATION

0

3D6 + ABILITY SCORE + FOCUS BONUS (+2) VS. TARGET NUMBER

## TALENTS

### GRAPPLING STYLE

NOVICE

If you fail an opposed **Fighting (Grappling)** test to avoid being grappled, you can re-roll it and keep your second roll.

### MAKER

NOVICE

You can use **Intelligence (Engineering)** to make items with the appropriate tools and materials.

### STRIKING STYLE

NOVICE

Your unarmed attacks do a base 1d6 damage.

## DRIVE

**BUILDER:** Your quality is organization, figuring out how to structure things so they work. Your downfall is stubbornness, so caught up in structure that you lose flexibility.

## RELATIONSHIPS

**THE CREW OF THE SOMMELIER 1:** Once per game session you can get as many SP as your Relationship rating to perform any stunt that would be in-character when it comes to helping other members of the crew of the *Sommelier*. You choose this after you see if you succeed on a test.

## ATTACKS

ATTACK	BONUS	DAMAGE
Pistol	+2	2d6+1
Unarmed	+5	1d6+3

### DEFENSE 12

12

### SPEED 12

12

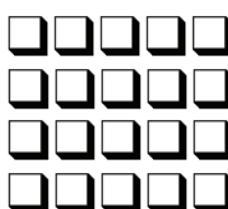
### TOUGHNESS 2

DEFENSE = 10 + DEX

SPEED = 10 + DEX

TOUGHNESS = CON + ARMOR

## FORTUNE 20



## CONDITIONS

## INCOME 2

INCOME TEST = 3D6 + INCOME VS. COST TN

ACCURACY

This ability measures aim and precision, and measures Casey's capacity to hit with ranged or thrown weapons.

COMMUNICATION

0

This ability covers Casey's social skills and generally making friends and influencing people.

CONSTITUTION

2

This ability is Casey's overall health, fortitude, and resistance to harm, illness, and fatigue.

DEXTERITY

2

This ability covers deftness, agility, and reaction time, affecting how quickly and gracefully Casey moves.

FIGHTING

3

This ability is Casey's capability in close combat, ranging from a brawl to wielding weapons.

**BRAWLING:** This focus shows Casey's proficiency in fighting unarmed, from bare-knuckle boxing to various styles of martial arts.

INTELLIGENCE

0

This ability measures Casey's reasoning, memory, problem-solving, and overall knowledge.

**ENGINEERING:** This focus helps Casey when making, repairing, and maintaining technological items as well as knowledge of the principles and practicalities of their design and development.

PERCEPTION

1

This ability is Casey's capacity to pick up on and notice things using any of her senses.

STRENGTH

3

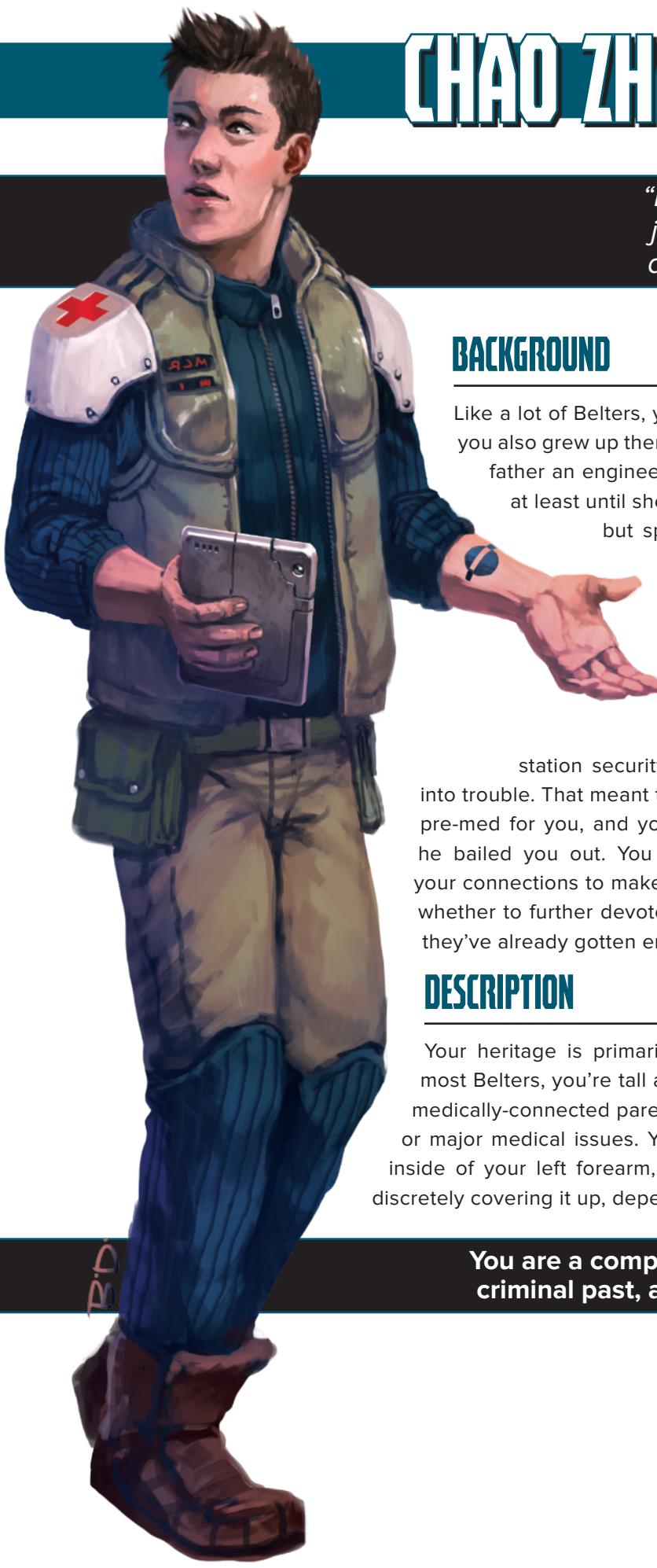
This ability rates Casey's sheer muscle power and the ability to apply it, from lifting heavy things to feats of athletics.

**MIGHT:** This focus helps Casey with feats of raw power, such as lifting or holding up heavy objects.

WILLPOWER

1

This ability measures Casey's self-control, self-discipline, mental fortitude, and confidence.



*“Don’t try to move,  
just lie still. It’ll be  
alright, I promise.”*

## BACKGROUND

Like a lot of Belters, you were born on Ganymede Station, but you also grew up there. Your parents were well-educated, your father an engineering teacher and your mother a botanist, at least until she got sick. You did well enough in school, but spent a lot of time exploring the unused areas of the station. After your mother died, you and your dad kind of drifted apart, and you became more and more involved with Belter political causes, which led you to the Outer Planets Alliance. OPA friends benefitted from your knack for getting around station security, but that didn't keep you from getting into trouble. That meant the end of higher education and finishing pre-med for you, and you and your father haven't spoken since he bailed you out. You left Ganymede behind and have used your connections to make a life for yourself in the Belt, wondering whether to further devote yourself to the OPA cause, or if maybe they've already gotten enough from you.

## DESCRIPTION

Your heritage is primarily Chinese, Siberian, and Russian. Like most Belters, you're tall and thin, although life on Ganymede with medically-connected parents spared you from any childhood scars or major medical issues. You have a split-circle OPA tattoo on the inside of your left forearm, and alternate between flaunting it and discretely covering it up, depending on circumstances and your mood.

**You are a compassionate medic with a criminal past, and the skills to match.**

# CHAO ZHANG SOKOLOV

ORIGIN: BELTER

BACKGROUND: ACADEMIC

ACCURACY

2

SOCIAL CLASS: MIDDLE

PROFESSION: EXPERT

3D6 + ABILITY SCORE + FOCUS BONUS (+2) VS. TARGET NUMBER

## TALENTS

### EXPERTISE (SECURITY)

NOVICE

You have an additional +1 on **Intelligence (Security)** tests to fool or bypass security sensors.

### KNOWLEDGE

NOVICE

When you succeed on an **Intelligence** test with a knowledge focus, you gain an extra piece of information.

### MEDIC

NOVICE

Your treatment allows patients to add +5 to tests to overcome a medical hazard or grants a new test to overcome that hazard, if there is one. This includes saving a patient from dying or reviving an unconscious patient.

## DRIVE

**CAREGIVER:** Your quality is compassion, naturally responding to others' needs. Your downfall is self-sacrifice, a tendency to place those needs above your own.

## RELATIONSHIPS

**THE CREW OF THE SOMMELIER 1:** Once per game session you can get as many SP as your Relationship rating to perform any stunt that would be in-character when it comes to helping other members of the crew of the *Sommelier*. You choose this after you see if you succeed on a test.

## ATTACKS

ATTACK	BONUS	DAMAGE
Pistol	+2	2d6+1
Unarmed	+1	1d3+1

DEFENSE 12

12

SPEED

12

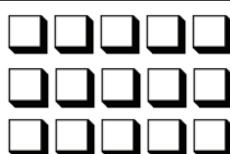
TOUGHNESS 0

DEFENSE = 10 + DEX

SPEED = 10 + DEX

TOUGHNESS = CON + ARMOR

FORTUNE IS



CONDITIONS

INCOME 4

INCOME TEST = 3D6 + INCOME VS. COST TN

WILLPOWER

2

This ability measures Chao's self-control, self-discipline, mental fortitude, and confidence.

**SELF-DISCIPLINE:** This focus helps Chao when he is trying to focus his mental energy or control his impulses and emotions.

# IZZY MOON

*"Savez tech, not people. I do what I know,  
you do what you know, sa-sa?"*

## BACKGROUND

You were born on Ganymede like many Belters, but lived your early life in a tiny ship hopping from rock to rock in the Belt, looking for mining opportunities. You've been at home with technology since childhood and displayed a knack for it, which your family encouraged to the best of their ability. You learned a great deal from online resources, downloads, and trial-and-error but, still, access to higher education was limited for a Belter kid like you. Eventually, you ended up using your burgeoning skills to acquire the information you needed illegally. That brought attention from certain criminal elements who were happy to employ your skills, and you were fine with that until you worried about getting in too deep. Now you're generally looking to stay legit and to find ways to cut your old ties with organized crime, or at least avoid their notice until you can.

## DESCRIPTION

Your heritage is predominantly Korean and Brazilian, and you have the long, lanky build of someone born and raised in microgravity. You tend to dress more for comfort and practicality than style, going for a utility jumpsuit over a T-shirt, for example. You usually have a toolkit close at hand and useful small tools in your various pockets.

**You are a smart, self-taught hacker who knows how to make do with what's at hand.**



# IZZY MOON

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**ORIGIN: BELTER****SOCIAL CLASS: LOWER****BACKGROUND: URBAN [STATION]****PROFESSION: TECHNICIAN****3D6 + ABILITY SCORE + FOCUS BONUS [+2] VS. TARGET NUMBER**

## TALENTS

**HACKING****NOVICE**

Gain an extra piece of info from Intelligence tests involving tech and use **Intelligence (Technology)** for investigation.

**IMPROVISATION****NOVICE**

You can make an ability test requiring a specific focus even if you don't have it.

**MISDIRECTION****NOVICE**

Make a **Communication** test against an opponent's **Willpower (Self-Discipline)**. If you win, your opponent cannot perform stunts until the end of your next turn.

**DRIVE**

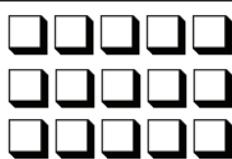
**REBEL:** Your quality is innovation, the ability to look at things from angles no one else has considered. Your downfall is defiance, a dislike of conformity, conventionality, and doing what you're told.

## RELATIONSHIPS

**THE CREW OF THE SOMMELIER 1:** Once per game session you can get as many SP as your Relationship rating to perform any stunt that would be in-character when it comes to helping other members of the crew of the *Sommelier*. You choose this after you see if you succeed on a test.

## ATTACKS

ATTACK	BONUS	DAMAGE
Pistol	+2	2d6+1
Unarmed	+1	1d3+1

**DEFENSE 13****13****SPEED 13****13****TOUGHNESS 0****DEFENSE = 10 + DEX****SPEED = 10 + DEX****TOUGHNESS = CON + ARMOR****FORTUNE 15****CONDITIONS****INCOME 2****INCOME TEST = 3D6 + INCOME VS. COST TN****ACCURACY****3**

This ability measures aim and precision, and measures Izzy's capacity to hit with ranged or thrown weapons.

**COMMUNICATION****1**

This ability covers Izzy's social skills and generally making friends and influencing people.

**CONSTITUTION****0**

This ability is Izzy's overall health, fortitude, and resistance to harm, illness, and fatigue.

**DEXTERITY****3**

This ability covers deftness, agility, and reaction time, affecting how quickly and gracefully Izzy moves.

**FIGHTING****1**

This ability is Izzy's capability in close combat, ranging from a brawl to wielding weapons.

**INTELLIGENCE****3**

This ability measures Izzy's reasoning, memory, problem-solving, and overall knowledge.

**TECHNOLOGY:** This focus helps Izzy with knowledge of the design and operation of technology, particularly computers.

**PERCEPTION****1**

This ability is Izzy's capacity to pick up on and notice things using any of her senses.

**STRENGTH****1**

This ability rates Izzy's sheer muscle power and the ability to apply it, from lifting heavy things to feats of athletics.

**WILLPOWER****2**

This ability measures Izzy's self-control, self-discipline, mental fortitude, and confidence.

# NICO VELEZ

*"Hang on!  
Time for some heavy Gs!"*



## BACKGROUND

Like billions of people on Earth, your family lived on Basic Assistance, getting by living in government subsidized housing in the vast sprawl of Brasilia in the South American Shared Interest Zone. You joined the United Nations Navy as a way of leaving that kind of life behind, and trained as a pilot. The strict rule of military life wasn't for you, however. You managed not to get drummed out (barely) but you weren't looking to sign on for another hitch, either. You took your skills, cashed out, and headed for the Belt. Most of the ships you fly these days aren't as sexy as state-of-the-art military vessels, but you're still flying nevertheless.

## DESCRIPTION

On Earth, you'd be considered a touch below average height, emphasized a bit more by how tall Belters and even Martians tend to be. You have Latinx features and slim, dexterous hands, and some have described your dark brown eyes as "smoldering." You keep your black hair almost military-short, a habit you got into that still serves well on board ships and stations.

**You are a cynical pilot, trained in the United Nations Navy but not suited for the military life.**

# NICO VIEZ

ORIGIN: EARTHER

BACKGROUND: MILITARY

SOCIAL CLASS: MIDDLE

PROFESSION: PILOT

3D6 + ABILITY SCORE + FOCUS BONUS (+2) VS. TARGET NUMBER

## TALENTS

### FRINGER

### NOVICE

Other characters suffer a -2 penalty to test to find information about you or your activities.

### PILOT

### NOVICE

Starting up a vehicle is a free action for you and you can perform **Dexterity (Driving or Piloting)** tests as minor actions.

### PISTOL STYLE

### NOVICE

You gain a +1 bonus to damage with pistols against targets closer than 6 meters.

## DRIVE

**SURVIVOR:** Your quality is preparedness: you survive by being ready for anything. Your downfall is cynicism: you're always anticipating and preparing for the worst.

## RELATIONSHIPS

**THE CREW OF THE SOMMELIER 1:** Once per game session you can get as many SP as your Relationship rating to perform any stunt that would be in-character when it comes to helping other members of the crew of the *Sommelier*. You choose this after you see if you succeed on a test.

## ATTACKS

ATTACK	BONUS	DAMAGE
Pistol	+4	2d6+2
Unarmed	+2	1d3+1

### DEFENSE 13

### SPEED 13

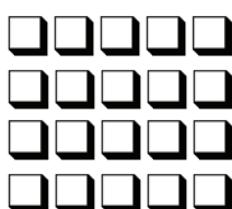
### TOUGHNESS 1

DEFENSE = 10 + DEX

SPEED = 10 + DEX

TOUGHNESS = CON + ARMOR

## FORTUNE 20



## CONDITIONS

## INCOME 4

INCOME TEST = 3D6 + INCOME VS. COST TN

## ACCURACY

2

This ability measures aim and precision, and measures Nico's capacity to hit with ranged or thrown weapons.

**PISTOLS:** This focus shows Nico's proficiency with single-grip, short-barrel ballistic weapons.

## COMMUNICATION

0

This ability covers Nico's social skills and generally making friends and influencing people.

## CONSTITUTION

1

This ability is Nico's overall health, fortitude, and resistance to harm, illness, and fatigue.

## DEXTERITY

3

This ability covers deftness, agility, and reaction time, affecting how quickly and gracefully Nico moves.

**PILOTING:** This focus helps Nico when operating vehicles that move in three dimensions like aircraft, drones, and spaceships.

## FIGHTING

2

This ability is Nico's capability in close combat, ranging from a brawl to wielding weapons.

## INTELLIGENCE

1

This ability measures Nico's reasoning, memory, problem-solving, and overall knowledge.

## PERCEPTION

2

This ability is Nico's capacity to pick up on and notice things using any of her senses.

**SEARCHING:** This focus helps Nico with finding things that are hidden or obscured, such as hidden compartments.

## STRENGTH

1

This ability rates Nico's sheer muscle power and the ability to apply it, from lifting heavy things to feats of athletics.

## WILLPOWER

1

This ability measures Nico's self-control, self-discipline, mental fortitude, and confidence.



JAMES S. A. COREY'S

# THE EXPANSE

## ROLEPLAYING GAME

The *Expanse* Roleplaying Game brings James S.A. Corey's award-winning series of science fiction novels to the tabletop.

Using the Adventure Game Engine (AGE)

rules that power Green Ronin's *Fantasy AGE*, *Blue Rose*, and *Modern AGE* RPGs,

*The Expanse* takes players to a far-future solar system where humanity is divided: Martians, Belters, and the people of old Earth struggle for political power and resources, but older, alien, forces are stirring in the universe, and human history is about to take an unexpected new turn. *The Expanse* RPG applies the fast-playing, stunt-powered AGE system to spaceships, solar colonies, adventure, and intrigue in the far-future, where the actions of the characters may change the course of history!



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WITH THE CORE RULEBOOK**



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We've got the crew assembled and ready. Strap into your ship and go full-burn toward adventure across the solar system. *The Expanse Roleplaying Game* uses the AGE system to explore the science fiction universe created by James S.A. Corey.

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### CUPBEARER

An *Expanse RPG* adventure suitable for a crew of 3-6 characters, levels 1-3.

*What starts out as a fairly simple job to find and recover the wayward son of a wealthy corporate family gets complicated when the crew discovers their target is involved with a powerful crime lord and has devised his own way out—one that doesn't involve returning to his family.*

Using the full rules in *The Expanse Roleplaying Game*, you can continue your adventures beyond this Quickstart mission or devise an entirely new campaign.



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