

The Exodus Protocol

Core Setting (2157 CE)

Humanity discovered FTL travel through "Void Gates" - ancient alien structures that tear holes in spacetime. The first exploratory fleet vanished 20 years ago. You captain the salvage vessel *Meridian*, officially searching for resources, but secretly investigating what happened to the lost fleet.

The Four Races

Humans - Fractured into three factions:

- United Earth Coalition (bureaucratic, diplomatic)
- Free Colonies (independent traders, pirates)
- Void Touched (humans altered by gate exposure, psychic abilities)

Keth'mori - Silicon-based crystalline beings

- Communicate through harmonic resonance
- Built the Void Gates millennia ago
- Now dying race, desperate to preserve their legacy

The Swarm - Hive-mind biological collective

- Individual drones have limited sentience
- Queens are brilliant strategists
- Consuming worlds to fuel their expansion

Phantoms - Energy beings from void-space

- Exist partially in our dimension
- Can possess technology and organic matter
- True motives unknowable

Main Story Thread

Act 1: The Discovery

Your crew finds the derelict flagship *Prometheus* from the lost fleet. Its black box reveals coordinates to five critical locations, but the data is corrupted - you can only fully decrypt 3 per playthrough.

Act 2: The Conspiracy

Each location reveals a piece of the truth:

- **Mining Station Omega:** The fleet discovered something that threatened all sentient life
- **Keth'mori Archive:** Ancient warnings about opening too many gates
- **Derelict Swarm Mothership:** Evidence of a greater threat that united former enemies
- **Ghost Ship *Eventide*:** Logs showing the fleet split into factions
- **Hidden Colony "Haven":** Survivors who know the full truth

Act 3: The Choice

Based on which 3 locations you explored, you learn different aspects of the threat:

- The Void Gates are collapsing reality itself
- The Phantoms are refugees from a dying universe
- The Swarm is running from something worse
- Humanity's government knew the risks all along

Branching Quest Lines

The Diplomat Path

- Forge alliance between Keth'mori and Humans
- Negotiate ceasefire with Swarm Queens
- Unlock: Phantom translation device
- Finale: Unite all races against the true threat

The Warrior Path

- Raid Swarm breeding worlds for bio-weapons
- Steal Keth'mori gate technology
- Capture Phantom essence for ship upgrades
- Finale: Become powerful enough to face threat alone

The Explorer Path

- Map unstable void gates
- Discover pre-cursor civilization ruins
- Find the source of the Phantoms
- Finale: Escape to another dimension/timeline

The Betrayer Path

- Sell information to highest bidder
- Play factions against each other

- Accumulate wealth and power
- Finale: Rule the chaos as everything collapses

Hidden Quests (Unlocked Through Multiple Playthroughs)

"The Last Keth'mori"

- Only appears if you saved Keth'mori elder in previous run
- Reveals gate shutdown sequence
- Changes all endings

"Project Prometheus"

- Triggered by finding specific logs across 3 runs
- Uncover Earth's secret colonization project
- Your crew has been manipulated from the start

"The Void Touched Prophet"

- Requires befriending Void Touched in 2+ runs
- They remember previous timelines
- Reveals the game's meta-narrative: you're in a time loop

"Swarm Queen's Gambit"

- Spare same Queen twice
- She recognizes you across iterations
- Offers to break the cycle

Key Locations

Planets:

- **Kepler-442b "Eden"**: Lush world hiding dark secret
- **Proxima Centauri II "Ashfall"**: Volcanic world with ancient ruins
- **Wolf 359 "Whisper"**: Planet where thoughts become reality

Space Stations:

- **Trade Hub Nexus**: Information broker haven
- **Research Station Pandora**: Illegal experiments
- **Refinery Platform Crucible**: Processes void gate materials

Derelicts:

- **Colony Ship *New Horizon***: 10,000 frozen colonists, but why abandoned?
- **Warship *Retribution***: Crew killed each other, something in the cargo hold
- **Science Vessel *Darwin***: Biological experiments gone wrong

Combat Encounters Tied to Story

- **Swarm Scouts**: Learn their patterns to predict invasion routes
- **Phantom Possessed Ships**: Former allies turned against you
- **Keth'mori Guardians**: Protecting sites you need to access
- **Human Pirates**: Led by someone from your past
- **The Unnamed**: Encounters that change based on previous runs

The Meta-Mystery

Players who complete 5+ runs start noticing:

- NPCs occasionally reference previous playthroughs
- Star positions have shifted slightly
- The Meridian's computer has log entries you didn't make
- Dead characters appear in reflections

The ultimate revelation: The Void Gates don't just transport space, but also time and probability. Every playthrough is canon - you're exploring parallel timelines trying to find the one where reality survives.

Ending Variations

16 possible endings based on:

- Which 3 locations you explored
- Which faction you allied with
- Whether you discovered the time loop
- Your final choice at the Terminus Gate

True Ending (requires 7+ playthroughs):

- Break the cycle permanently
- Save all timelines simultaneously
- Become guardian of the gates
- Or destroy them all and strand everyone in normal space