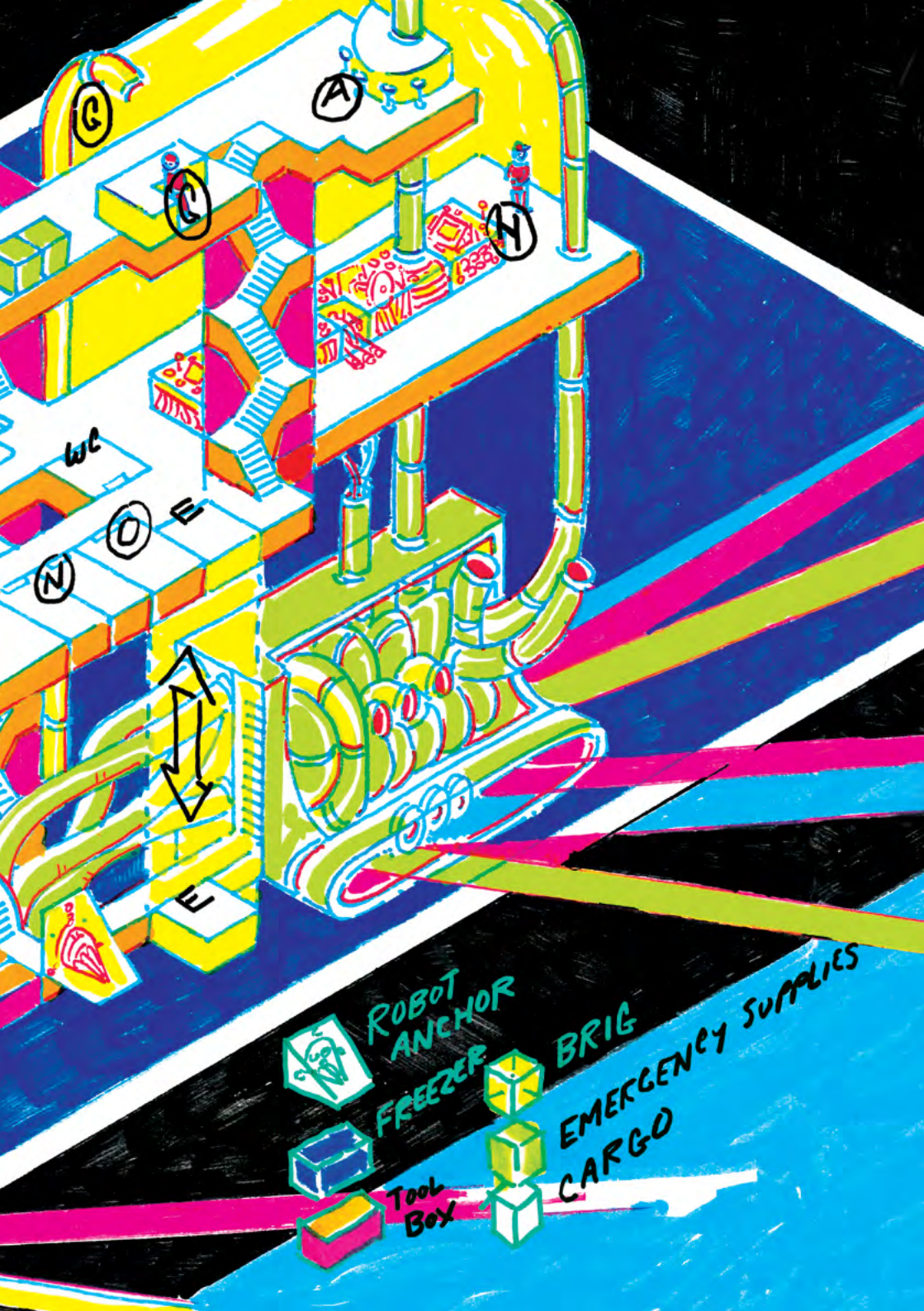


**SLOW SLEIGH TO
PLANKTON DOWNS**

EZRA GLAVERIE





A

G

C

N

WC

Z

O

E



W



ROBOT ANCHOR



FREEZER



Tool Box



BRIG



EMERGENCY SUPPLIES



CARGO

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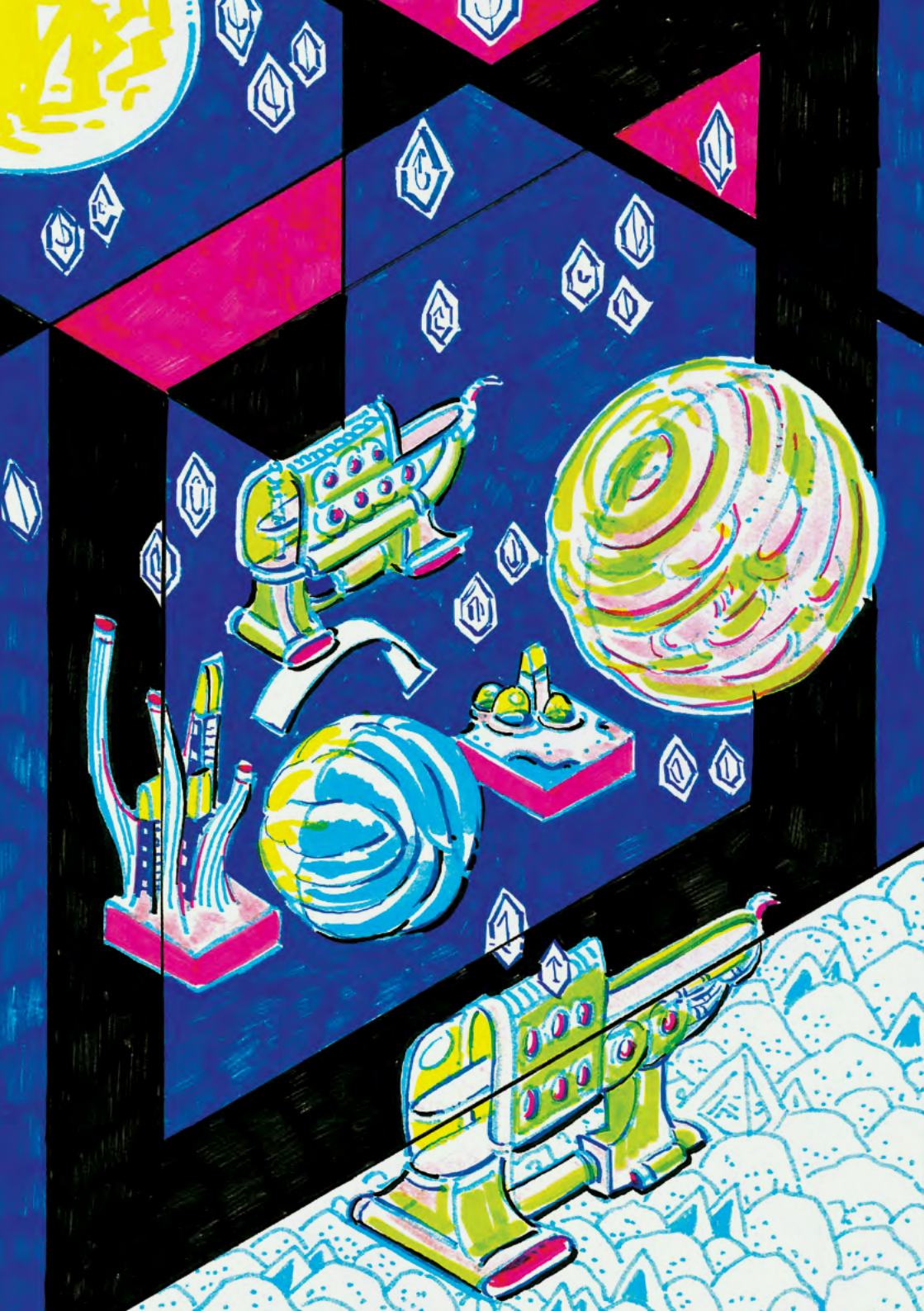
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SLOW SLEIGH TO PLANKTON DOWNS

CONTENTS

Map (with key)	inside front cover
Introduction: Mara's Misstep	1
The Scenario	3
Maxillary Uslurper	5
Understanding Uslurpers	6
The Voyage	7
The Ship	7
The Murders	14
The Crew & Passengers	19
New PC Backgrounds	22
Astropithecus Truckensis	22
Clonal Manumant	23
Displacement Prosthesisist	24
Ice Miner	25
Macramé Owl	26
Misstep Monastic	27
Octopod Headfoot	28
Scud Miller	29
Tapiroid Dunce	30
Maxillary Uslurper	31
Tables	inside back cover



Introduction: Mara's Misstep

Few visit the glaciated world of *Mara's Misstep* except on business, and fewer stay. This moon orbits the gas giant *Big Mara* at right angles to its orbital plane, such that the southern hemisphere of *Mara's Misstep* never experiences darkness.

Nunataks, pyramidal peaks, and arêtes rise above the ice, and in the southern latitudes sprawl polynyas and lakes melted by geothermal vents below. In a scattering of alternately windswept and snow-buried industrial towns live humans, mostly descended from refugees of the Monocerian Emirates. Their economy depends on the mining and export of ancient heavy-water ice (especially $^3\text{H}_2^{18}\text{O}$), popular in the luxury cocktail market.

Water: three billion years old, frozen by the perpetual night at the edge of the Galaxy, compressed into glaciers of midnight blue. Taste the weight of time and solitude, darkness and purity. With Djajadiningrat.

Hear it crackle in your favorite spirit. The sound of time calving into an ocean of premium flavor.

Cut by natural-born hand, never by machine, never by clone.

At night's edge, taste the infinity. Only from Djajadiningrat.

— ADVERTISEMENT IN *ICE TOMORROW* (TRADE MAGAZINE)

Geothermal-, solar-, and fusion-powered aquafarms produce most of this world's food: seaweeds, giant amphipods (locally known as scuds), and jellies (cnidarians, ctenophores, and tunicates). Most people smoke as an excuse to go "snowside," even in the worst of weather.

Shifting glaciers make railroads impractical, and the continual storms endanger aircraft. Low-bodied hovercrafts transport passengers between settlements. Pilots earn better money than all but the managers of the big mines. During storms these vessels heave-to and deploy thermal drills to anchor their hulls in the ice. One of these vessels, *Nantucket Sleigh Ride*, has a middling reputation for punctuality, safety, and comfort, but none beat its price for multi-day hauls.



The Scenario

The characters find themselves on a voyage from *Out of Order*—site of this moon’s space elevator, unfinished now for two centuries—to *Plankton Downs*, a water-farm town. They carry a strongbox to be delivered to the municipal scud-mill. The voyage requires a base of 72 hours, though the weather increases this.

The contents of the strongbox do not matter to this scenario: the GM should make it nigh impossible to open (e.g. composed of strong-force material or having a lock requiring a key with more than three dimensions). It may interest thieves, should the GM desire complications.

Passengers undergo searches for contraband before boarding. Obvious weapons must go into special holding during the voyage (**Map Key F: Operations**).

Some threescore passengers and two dozen crew share the *Nantucket Sleigh Ride* with the characters, as does a **MAXILLARY USLURPER**, an unfortunate former-human who must hack a fresh maxilla (upper jaw bone including teeth) from a still-living human (or human-enough being), which usually kills the donor.

The Uslurper—**Rassophore Garlin**—travels among twenty other Martian Orthodox nuns, returning to their nunnery and algae farm near *Plankton Downs*. She, along with eight of her Sisters aboard the Sleigh, has taken a vow of silence.

This scenario leaves to the GM questions such as where and how **Rassophore Garlin** became so accursed and for how long her crimes have gone undiscovered. Her Sisters do not know of her condition.





Maxillary Uslurper

SKILL:**10** STAMINA:**10** INITIATIVE:**4** ARMOUR:**2**

DAMAGE ROLL➔	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+
Ice Adze	2	2	3	3	5	9	11

POSSESSIONS

- *MONASTIC ROBES.*
- *ICE ADZE* honed to razor-sharpness, concealed beneath her robes.
- 109-knot synthetic-leather Lestovka-style Martian Orthodox *PRAYER ROPE.*
- *YELLOWED PHOTO OF PARENTS.*
- **Battered copy of** *HANDBOOK OF PHYCOLOGY, 7TH EDITION.*

ADVANCED SKILLS

6 Exult Secretly in the Triumph of Jaw Uslurpation

- 4 Horrify
- 2 Ambush
- 2 Dissemble
- 2 Escape

Special

Uslurpers regenerate 2 Stamina every time they hold Initiative except for Stamina lost to flames or *PHOTONIC WEAPONS.*

MIEN	
1	Stoic Resolve for What Must Be Done
2	Fearfully Anticipating Withdrawal
3	Longing for a Specific Person's Jaw
4	Resentful of Non-Uslurpers for their Life of Peace
5	Secretly Grieving Victims
6	Vaguely Regretful

Understanding Uslurpers

Most educated persons consider *MAXILLARY USLURPERS* a tale out of Early Galactic folklore, told to frighten children away from the decommissioned sections of orbital habitats. Most remember four “facts” about **USLURPERS**:

- they possess inhuman strength (true).
- they cannot abide cilantro (true).
- they have mass but do not interact with gravity, so they must weight their clothes to pass for mortal (false).
- only an *EXCIPLEX LASER* harms them (false).

USLURPER skeletons become cartilaginous. This, along with their inhuman strength, allows them to crawl through spaces otherwise too small for an adult human pelvis or skull. The **USLURPER**, with their inhuman flexibility, traverses ventilation and utility conduits, thereby reaching any area of the ship without using the corridors. When traveling this way they move at half the rate of a human walk.

When discarding their old maxilla and cramming a fresh one into the socket, tendrils like bone-eating shipworms secure the new one in place amid a rush of euphoria like that of a first kiss. If an Uslurper goes more than 36 hours without changing jaws the old maxilla begins to putrefy, teeth loosen and their breath becomes fetid. After 48 hours the pains of withdrawal begin, and craving masters the **USLURPER**.

If this craving goes unsatisfied for another 12 hours the **USLURPER** falls into a pseudocoma, unable to move yet retaining sensation, as their tissues begin to deliquesce. Flesh dribbles away until only a hummock of flatulent, spongy bone remains.

A **MAXILLARY USLURPER** may create another **USLURPER** by placing their necrotic maxilla into a suitable wound in a fresh cadaver (say, their most recent jaw-donor). If left undisturbed for 2 hours the cadaver revives and rises as an **USLURPER** at full Stamina, already feeling withdrawal as if un-jawed for 36 hours. **USLURPERS** do not relish competition or the risk of exposure through numbers, so they only create offspring under desperate circumstances.

The Voyage

The trip lasts a base of 72 hours. Roll 2d6 for weather (*inside back cover*) every 2 hours or whenever the situation seems to call for a change.

The Ship

The *Nantucket Sleigh Ride* has three decks. Each staircase and elevator bears a sign reading “Crew Only.” The elevator requires a numeric key to operate. Company regulations forbid passengers on the middle or lower decks.

The upper deck houses passenger quarters and amenities, the middle houses the crew quarters, wheelhouse, and cargo while the lower contains the engines and thermal drill-anchors. Each exterior room has at least one plexiglass porthole to admit light and a shade of adjustable opacity to cover it from 19:00 to 07:00 (this world’s statutory night).

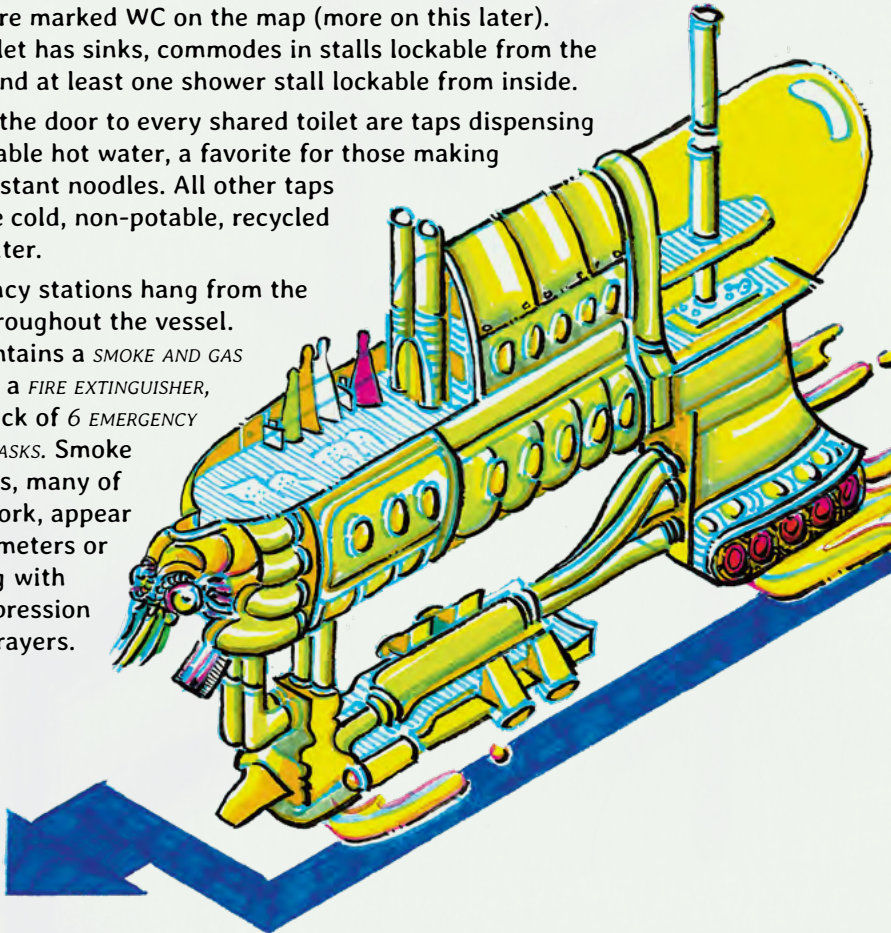
Toilets are marked WC on the map (more on this later). Each toilet has sinks, commodes in stalls lockable from the inside, and at least one shower stall lockable from inside.

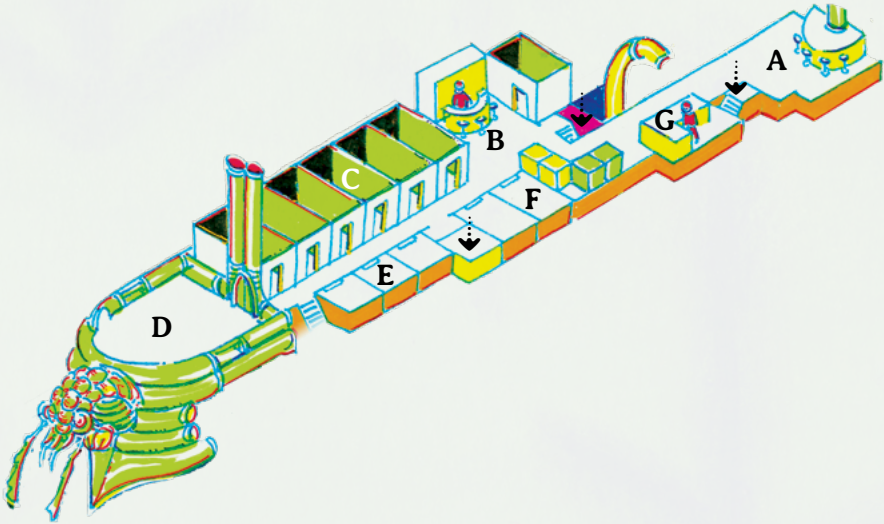
Outside the door to every shared toilet are taps dispensing free potable hot water, a favorite for those making tea or instant noodles. All other taps dispense cold, non-potable, recycled wastewater.

Emergency stations hang from the walls throughout the vessel.

Each contains a *SMOKE AND GAS DETECTOR*, a *FIRE EXTINGUISHER*, and a pack of 6 *EMERGENCY*

OXYGEN MASKS. Smoke detectors, many of which work, appear every 5 meters or so, along with fire suppression foam sprayers.





Upper Deck



A Lounge

A double-layered dome of plexiglass windows covers the lounge and affords views forward and abeam. During severe storms steel shutters roll down to protect against debris. Tables, chairs, and benches, none cushioned, afford passengers places to socialize and enjoy their purchases from the *Café*. Shelves house battered *PAPERBACKS* and *MAGAZINES* (on a take-one-leave-one honor system), as well as *JIGSAW PUZZLES* and various *BOARD GAMES*. The Altairian boardgame renaissance has just reached *Mara's Misstep* but most of these games predate that, and each is missing 1d6 pieces.



B Bar

Here one of legal majority may buy *CIGARETTES*, *BEER* (Ice Storm and Ice Storm Lite in half-liter cans), *ALGAE VODKA*, *HYDROPONIC-MILLET BAIJIU*, *CANNABIS EDIBLES*, and rock-hard *PSYCHEDELIC TRUFFLES*. Signs announce that stewards reserve the right to test anyone's level of intoxication by fingertip-scanner and to refuse service accordingly. No minors are allowed without adult supervision.



C First Class

Private cabins for passengers who can afford a cramped, and likely shared, stateroom. Each has one or more beds and a tiny bathroom (shower, commode, sink) with water payable by coin or mobile. On the walls of this corridor hang framed photos of the early boom years of *Out of Order*, most obviously taken from the internet, printed large and pixelly or with a watermark clumsily erased, cropped out, or sometimes just left in. The CCTV cameras monitoring this corridor all work.



D Observation

Anyone wanting a smoke must bundle up and visit the *Observation Deck* by passing through plexiglass airlock doors. No minors are allowed without adult supervision.



E Second Class

Each of these rooms lawfully houses up to twelve passengers but some buy standing-room tickets and share bunks. Each holder of a second-class ticket gets the use of a locker and a hard sleeping shelf. One may rent a *FOAM MATTRESS, SHEETS, PILLOW, BLANKET, and TOWEL* for the duration of the voyage. On the walls of this corridor hang legally-mandated notices regarding crew safety and union regulations as well as 3D advertising stickers left behind by passengers.



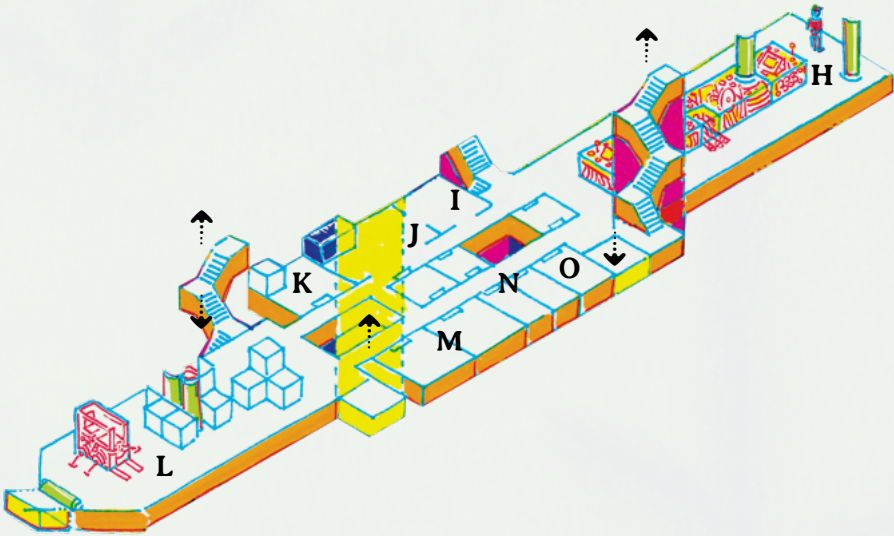
F Operations

Mates hold shift briefings at a conference table marred by mug rings, cigarette burns, and carved caricatures of human anatomy. A plexiglass wall separates the main room from the two cells of the brig. Locked cabinets contain emergency supplies (*BLANKETS, ICE AXES, EMERGENCY STOVES, FIRST AID KITS, and SHOVELS*). A locked, reinforced metal cabinet marked **Passenger Safety** contains *2 CLEAR PLASTIC RIOT SHIELDS (Armour 2), 6 RIOT BATONS, 4 NON-LETHAL STUNN O)))™ PISTOLS in their chargers, 2 18MM SCATTERGUNS, and 2 BOXES OF SHOTSHELLS* for the scatterguns (one box of lethal, one box of non-lethal rubber, 30 shells per box). Within this cabinet is a *SAFE* containing any weapons brought aboard by passengers. The captain, mates, and guards know the key codes to both the weapons cabinet and the safe. Intercoms allow communication with the *Wheelhouse* and *Engine Room*.



G Café

Nobody comes to *Mara's Misstep* for the dining, and this café does not break that tradition. They serve a limited selection of hot food and drink (no alcohol) at limited hours and ready-to-eat snacks (instant noodles, overpriced candy, tunicate jerky) at all hours. Near the counter stands a large, public 3D screen displaying animations of the vessel's progress and technical specifications interspersed with ads.



Middle Deck



H Wheelhouse

Two officers at all times control the vessel's course and important systems via banks of yellowed hard-wired controls and failing touch screens. Radio equipment allows both line-of-sight and skip propagation, as well as satellite navigation. Windows afford the same arc of view enjoyed by the *Lounge*, with the same steel shutters in case of storm. Intercoms allow communication with *Operations* and the *Engine Room* and a public-address system allows officers to address passengers and crew with updates about progress and weather.



I Crew Mess and Rec-Room

Off-duty crew seek escape from bunkmates to eat, gossip, read, or jostle for the game console.



J Kitchen, Crew

Used to prepare crew meals as well as some of the dishes served in the *Café*. Canned goods and other imperishables occupy shelves covering the walls, while walk-in coolers hold perishables. A tank with a bolted lid holds half a dozen torpid, raccoon-sized mEat™ isopods (*Glyptonotus giganteus margii*) for the officers' table. Beside it stands the scud-mill (meat grinder) where the *USLURPER* disposes of the head of her first shipboard victim ("A Murder On the Open Ice" pg 14).



K Storage

Above the brooms, mops, buckets, cleaning fluids, sawdust, paper towels, spare linens, and trash bins in this glorified closet looms a storage cupboard where the *USLURPER* leaves her first shipboard victim's headless body.



L Cargo Hold

The Captain hopes District Regulators don't inspect the *Sleigh* on arrival because they'll find the hold in worse disarray than usual, with commercial freight stowed willy-nilly among checked heavy luggage, little of it properly secured. To the engineers' credit the forklift sits with its wheels properly chocked and lashed. The aft bulkhead opens to allow direct loading and unloading of cargo and is lockable from the wheelhouse.



M Crew Bunks

Here sleep the crew, six to a cabin, their personal belongings in lockers.



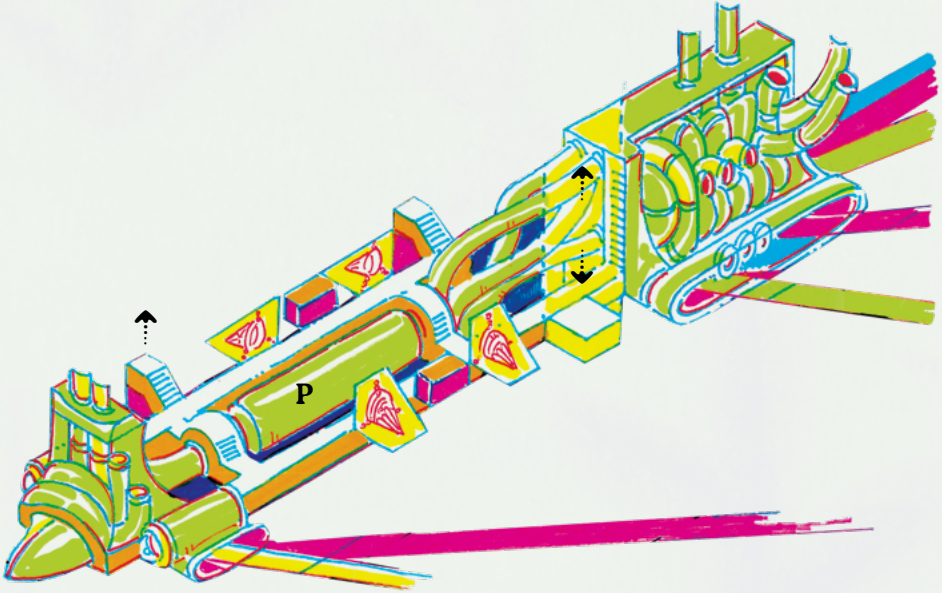
N Mates' Quarters

The First and Second Mates have their own (tiny) cabins but not their own toilets.



O Captain's Quarters

The Captain has his own cabin, nearly as large as the smallest passenger cabin, with its own bathroom.



Lower Deck



P Engine Room

The dim-lit lower deck consists of a single space dominated by the main fusion drive and engines, which bulk to the ceiling. Four robotic thermal drills dangle in their cage-like housings, their burred heads pointing downward, positioned over the hatches through which they crawl in severe weather. Racks of tools and spare parts hang from the port and starboard bulkheads. Only the captain, mates, guards, and engineers have authorization and the keys to visit the engine room: the elevator and two stairways all require authorization codes. Intercoms allow communication with *Operations* and the *Wheelhouse*.



The Murders

Two days before the voyage, **POLICE** find a body with its head and shoulders stuffed into a scud-mill in a local eatery. They suspect **MURDER** due to drag marks and blood on the mill. Reveal this secretly to one or more of the characters only after the first **MURDER** on the ship. The tawdry **HOMICIDE** in a spaceport with a **HIGH MURDER RATE** seemed unremarkable until it found a parallel, shipboard.

A Murder on the Open Ice

Some 30 hours into the trip, at 19:00, a steward discovers the headless body of their fellow steward folded into a cabinet in *Storage* thanks to the blood pooling outside. At almost the same moment the lead cook discovers a bloody, reeking mess in the scud-mill tub. This happens on the *lower deck*, so the characters hear only a ripple of alarm travel through the crew: someone below has suffered an injury, apparently fatal.

The *Sleigh's* security guards have training in combat, crowd control, and first aid but none in forensics or criminology. Before the murder they carried **COLLAPSIBLE STEEL BATONS** but after the Captain breaks out **STUNN 0)))™ SIDEARMS**, issuing one to each guard and one to each mate.

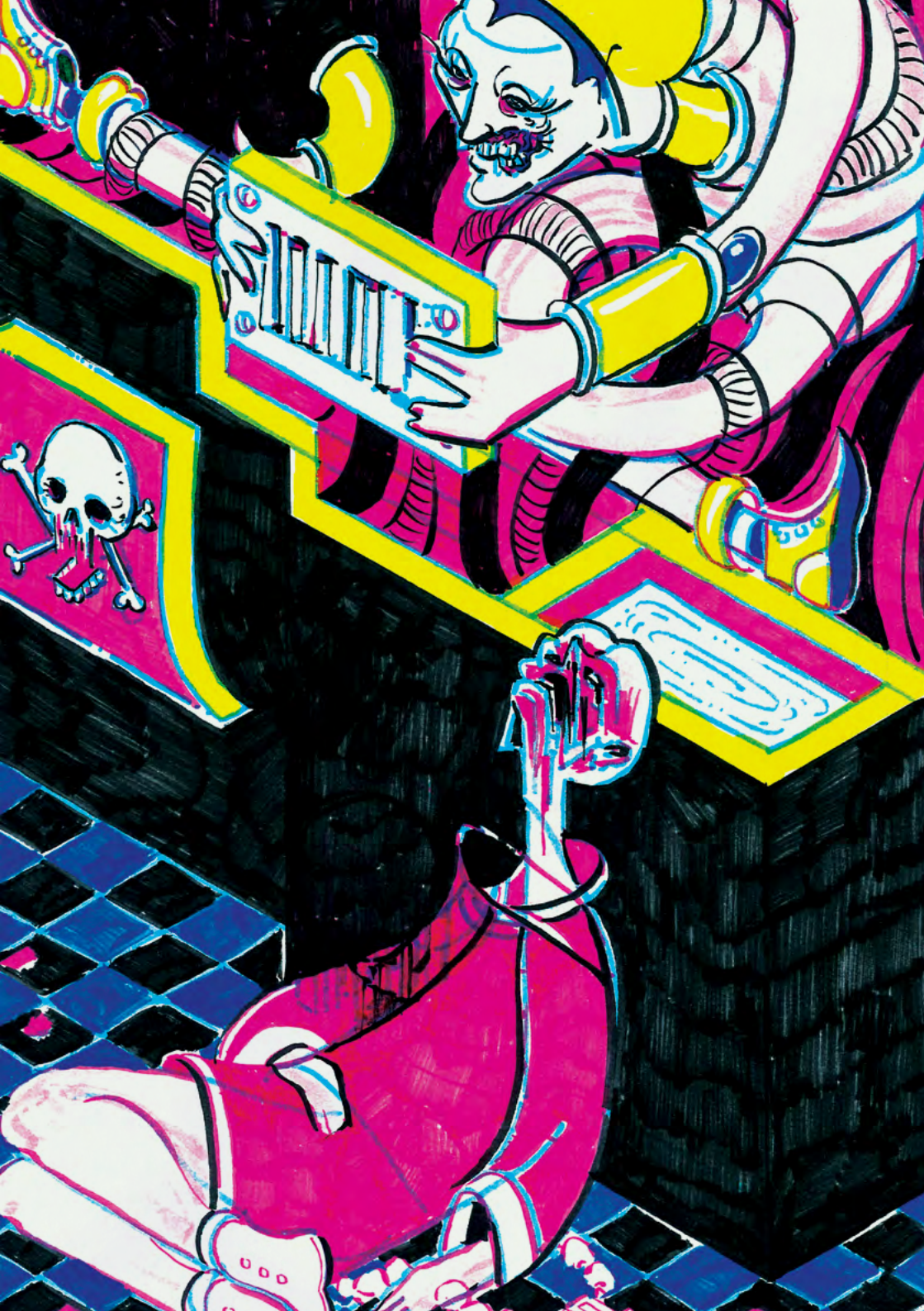
Investigation reveals teeth, hair, and bones in the tub which suggest the murderer threw the victim's head in the **SCUD-MILL** but does not explain the necrotic stench. A careful search reveals an absence: the steward had a *GOLD CROWN* on one of his cuspids but no matter how fine the search, no gold turns up in the bin. From the wounds to the stump of the corpse's neck it appears someone used the *CHEF'S KNIFE* now hanging in the dish rack, freshly washed. No signs of a struggle appear because the *USLURPER* struck her victim from behind with the hammer side of her **ICE ADZE** before setting to work.

The steward had only one potential enemy, a rival for promotion, who has an *ALIBI*: tending bar on the upper deck from the beginning of the voyage, in sight of dozens of passengers. The *ONLY COOK* on duty had gone to *Observation* for a smoke.

More than half of the CCTV cameras on the ship broke years ago, so no video record of this murder exists. (Most cameras keep a red LED burning to give the appearance of duty if inspectors or **POLICE** board.)

The murder sets both crew and passengers on edge, but non-characters do not launch an investigation yet. The captain insists on continuing to their destination as they have come nearly halfway.

Questioning the nuns not sworn to silence reveals that in one of their *eight-bunk berths* (the one in which **Garlin** sleeps) several sisters complained of a vile odor, as of death, while trying to sleep off their hover-sickness.



The Second Murder

Unless the characters accomplish something drastic – find and expose the *USLURPER*, evacuate the ship, or the like – at 01:00 hours another nun finds her sister, **Rassophore Zain**, lying murdered in a locked stall in the *toilet* nearest the *second-class berths*. Someone has hacked her face beyond recognition to remove the maxilla. In the commode lies a necrotic maxilla.

This time CCTV does record evidence: a steady stream of passengers entering and exiting the *toilet*. In the early morning one nun enters the *toilet* and, four minutes later, a second nun enters. One of the nuns exits, running, stumbles against a wall, and vomits. This nun claims that she discovered the corpse. Between the grainy footage and the head-to-toe black of their robes none can tell either woman's identity from the video. When the guards arrive on the scene they find only the corpse inside.

The *USLURPER* entered the toilet via an *air duct* with a loose grille, below which lies clumps of grimy dust that the *USLURPER* scattered when she emerged. Inside the *air duct*, a trail smeared through the dust takes a twisting path through the ship to a shower stall in the *toilet* nearest the *Bar*. To follow this trail, one narrower than a human must crawl through the duct. The engineers have a radio-operated *MAINTENANCE DRONE* that can do the job. The CCTV outside this toilet does not work.

Inspection of the deceased nun's neck reveals bruises left by hands obviously smaller than those of the nun who reported the corpse, strong enough that they crushed two cervical vertebrae. If circulated among the other passengers and crew this detail turns suspicion toward non-humans, including characters.

If the characters begin any manner of investigation, the nuns staying in the *second-class cabin* nearest the *unisex toilet* confide to them the following:

- **Rassophores Huang** and **Tofilat** left the cabin shortly before the discovery of the body after having a heated conversation in whispers (actually a quarrel between secret lovers).
- No one has seen **Rassophore Mertel** (also under a vow of silence) for several hours. She sneaked into the Cargo Hold to meditate in solitude.
- Around the time of the discovery of the second body, **Rassophore Garlin** came into their cabin looking especially beatific and silent (actually euphoric from **USLURPATION**).

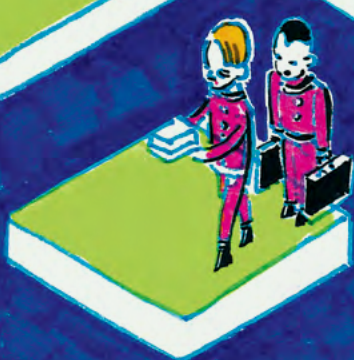
The discovery of this mutilated corpse sends a wave of fright through the passengers. Close inspection of the discarded jaw reveals the *GOLD CUSPID* of the murdered steward. This sends a new if improbable rumor about the ship: a **MAXILLARY USLURPER** lurks aboard.

In 1d6 hours, if the characters take no action to find the murderer, she attacks an officer in their quarters.

Confronting Rassophore Garlin

If the characters confront **Rassophore Garlin** and attempt to inspect her mouth, she breaks her vow of silence, threatening immediate harm in the most vulgar terms if anyone touches her. She sounds as if she's speaking around a too-big mouthful of food due to the unfamiliar teeth and palate.

She cares only about her short-term comfort and freedom, and kills for both. If necessary she kills everyone aboard the ship and awaits rescue, the short-term abundance of victims outweighing later consequences.



The Crew & Passengers

The owner of the ship deliberately understaffs this route—the cleanliness of the ship and quality of both food and service decline over the course of the voyage, as long shifts exhaust even old hands.

The crew, all wearing the livery of Eastern Iceways, consists of the following.



Captain Paiz

SKILL: 4 STAMINA: 3 INITIATIVE: 3

Armour 2 (bespoke Ultra Peacoat by *Om for Men*)



First Mate Ruhian

SKILL: 3 STAMINA: 2 INITIATIVE: 2

Armour 1 (off-the-rack peacoat)



Second Mate Chua

SKILL: 2 STAMINA: 2 INITIATIVE: 3

Armour 1 (off-the-rack peacoat)



Four Guards (Alamsyah, Xu, Perez, and Abdulrahman)

SKILL: 2 STAMINA: 2 INITIATIVE: 2



Four Engineers (Felix, Capriario, Borja, and Uwais)

SKILL: 3 STAMINA: 2 INITIATIVE: 1



Four Cooks (Capino, Mohanchandra, Talsim, and Abdyldaeva)

SKILL: 2 STAMINA: 1 INITIATIVE: 1



Ten Stewards (Suthers, DeBrute, Soofen, Quint, Nora, Lemsbetter, Lane, Che, Morgardt and Nadir)

SKILL: 2 STAMINA: 1 INITIATIVE: 1

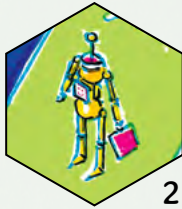
The other passengers consist of the following (SKILL: 1 STAMINA: 1 INITIATIVE: 1):

- 1d6+1 persons of non-human body (Backgrounds pg 22):

PERSON OF NON-HUMAN BODY	
1	Australopithecus Truckensis
2	Displacement Prothesist
3	Macramé Owl
4	Octopod Headfoot
5	Tapiroid Dunce
6	A business traveller resembling a rat-sized beetle larva in a spherical terrarium of dirt, hovering beside a human assistant who communicates with it via text messages.



1



2



3



4



5



6





- 21 **Martian Orthodox nuns** (50% chance each of having taken a vow of silence):
 - 17 **Rassophores** (addressed as sister), dressed in the black inner robe (*ISORASSA*).
 - 4 **Stavrophores** (addressed as mother), dressed in the black outer robe (*EXORASSA*) and veil (*EPANOKAMELAVKION*).



- 24 **water-farmers** and **farm-hands** (8 children and 16 adults).



- 12 **ice-miners**.



- 4 **recent glaciology graduates**, hoping to pay off student loans by hitting the big ice.



New PC Backgrounds



Astropithecus Truckensis

DESCRIPTION

This colonial cyborg of Old Mars is composed of both animal and mechanical parts. A six-wheeled, motorized Standard Habitat Truck, slightly larger than a wheelchair, carries the Astropithecene's memory, central processing nodes, motors, and biota-support tower (sleep slings, mini-refrigerator, chemical latrine). Atop the Truck's roll bar perches an Interpreter Parrot (*Psittacus lunaris*), who speaks for the whole while 2d6 Martian rhesus macaques (*Macaca mulatta tharsis*) maintain the Truck, run errands, and eat anything within reach. Because they can replace parts and biota with ease, every Astropithecus is long lived.

Many have traveled with the leading edge of Earth's spread into the universe, eager to tame new habitats, always exuding a sense of superiority for hailing from the Home Planets.

POSSESSIONS

- *FOOD AND POWER FOR THREE DAYS.*
- *MONKEY SMELL AND STRAY FEATHERS.*
- *TREMENDOUS OFFSHORE WEALTH THANKS TO EARLY INVESTMENTS IN SPACE HABITATS.*
- *VARIOUS MINIATURE HAND AND POWER TOOLS, ERGONOMIC FOR MACAQUES.*

SKILLS

- 6 Annoy
- 4 Cadge
- 3 Inspire
- 2 Solve Engineering Problems
- 1 Occupy Two Places at Once

Clonal Manumant

DESCRIPTION

Under the Rights of Sapient Act, Section 4.2, Paragraph 12, “any clone seized during forfeiture, bankruptcy, or property repossession shall receive legal personhood and Habilitation at District expense.” Not only did the Act upend the cloning industry, it created a generation of physically complete but context-devoid clones of various developmental ages. As most jurisdictions forbid Manumants from contacting their genetic donors or those donors’ descendants, these clones share a nostalgia for even their worst days as District wards coupled with a quiet loneliness.

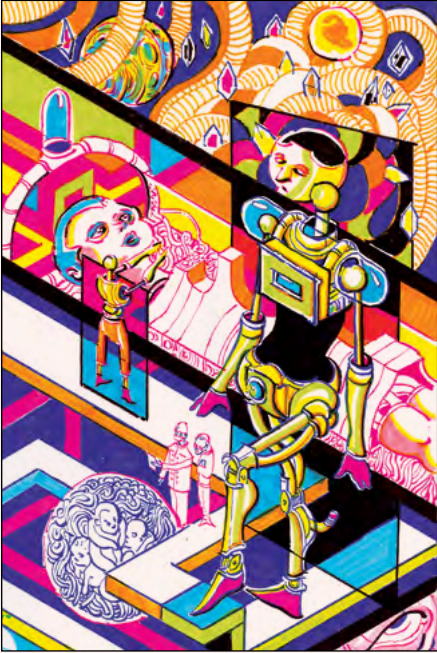
POSSESSIONS

- *TRAVELING BAG CONTAINING COMPLIMENTARY TOILETRIES FROM VARIOUS COMMERCIAL STARLINES, ONE CHANGE OF CLOTHES, AND A THREADBARE T-SHIRT BEARING THE NAME AND MASCOT OF THE CLONE’S HABILITATION CENTER.*
- *DISPOSABLE BANK CARD WITH JUST ENOUGH MONEY FOR EITHER A GOOD MEAL OR A BAD NIGHT’S SLEEP.*
- *CONVENTIONAL MOBILE TABLET BUT WITHOUT A SUBSCRIBER IDENTITY MODULE THAT WORKS ON MARA’S MISSTEP.*
- *SOMEONE ELSE’S AUGMENTED-REALITY GLASSES WHICH THE CLONE FOUND IN A RESTAURANT IN A THIRD-TIER SPACEPORT.*



SKILLS

- 3 Do a Low-Prestige Job Exceptionally Well
- 3 Find a Way Out of a Jam
- 1 Endear Self to Stranger
- 1 Look Perfectly at Home Anywhere
- 1 Repurpose Object



POSSESSIONS

- *HARMLESS, IF DAZZLING, LASER COMMUNICATION DEVICE.*
- *ONE HUMAN GARMENT, WORN FASTIDIOUSLY, WITHOUT WHICH THE PROTHESIST FEELS NAKED.*
- *BACKUP OF PERSONALITY AND MEMORIES, ON MULTIPLE TAPE CARTRIDGES IN THE TERABYTE RANGE OR ONE IN THE PETABYTE RANGE.*
- *SELF-MAINTENANCE TOOLKIT.*

Displacement Prothesist

DESCRIPTION

The Ministry of Human Services' waiting list for new-grown replacement bodies can run decades long. Rather than settling for cryonic estivation, some legally disembodied persons find themselves unable to wait, whether for financial, professional, or religious reasons, and therefore choose an upload into a machine body in the interim. This pushes them further down the list but many grow used to the streamlined palette of perceptions and wants.

SKILLS

- 3 Perform Feats of Robot Strength
- 2 Empathize with the Sufferings of Others
- 2 Focus on Important Goals, Not Trivia
- 2 Repair Self with Improvised Parts
- 1 Receive and Transmit Wireless Communication

Ice Miner

DESCRIPTION

Some born on Mara's Misstep prefer the solitude of unsurveyed glaciers to the crowded warrens of water-farm country. Most would rather drill a thousand boreholes to hit one vein of heavy ice than live in comfort if the latter means having to smell other humans or queue for a wash. Ice Miners make friends slowly, if at all, and prefer a heartfelt "Hope I see you around" to an "I love you" or a "You've made us proud, sweetheart."

POSSESSIONS

- *BIG-BORE REVOLVER.*
- *ANYWHERE: THIS STURDY KNOCK-OFF OF THE WILDLY POPULAR (AND MUCH MORE FRAGILE) EVERYWHERE QUANTUM MOBILE TABLET ADDS SLOTS FOR UP TO NINE SUBSCRIBER IDENTITY MODULES AS WELL AS ANY THREE OF THE FOLLOWING: ADJUSTABLE WRENCH, ARC WELDER, BOTTLE OPENER, ELECTRIC TORCH, LASER RANGEFINDER, SHORT-WAVE TWO-WAY RADIO, AND METAL SNIPS.*
- *SECONDHAND COPY OF 4TH GLACIOLOGICAL SURVEY: SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE, ITS SPINE LONG AGO BROKEN, FILLED WITH MULTIPLE GENERATIONS OF PENCILLED MARGINALIA, MOST CRYPTIC, SOME USEFUL (THE SIXTH GLACIOLOGICAL SURVEY HAS GONE TO PRESS AT THE TIME OF THIS SCENARIO).*
- *WELL-WORN ICE AXE.*



SKILLS

- 3 Exert Oneself Alone without Hope of Assistance
- 3 Navigate
- 2 Assay
- 2 Drink
- 2 Shoot as a Last Resort



POSSESSIONS

- *GIVE-AWAY CANVAS TOTE BEARING THE NAME OF SOME CONFERENCE OR CONVENTION THAT THE OWL DID NOT ATTEND, FILLED WITH PRE-PACKAGED HUMAN SNACK FOODS TO SHARE WITH FELLOW PASSENGERS.*
- *KNOCK-OFF LUXURY WRISTWATCH (STOPPED).*
- *SPARE MACRAMÉ BEADS APPARENTLY COMPOSED OF WOOD BUT ACTUALLY FUNCTIONING AS QUANTUM DATA-STORAGE DEVICES, EITHER (D6) 1-2 BLANK, 3-4 FILLED WITH HOLIDAY PHOTOS, OR 5-6 ENCRYPTED (THE KEYS LOST).*
- *ZIP TIES OF VARIOUS SIZES, MADE OF A SELF-HEALING PLASTIC THAT NO HUMAN TECHNOLOGY CAN SEVER BUT THROUGH WHICH A MACRAMÉ OWL CAN SOMEHOW BITE WITH EASE.*

Macramé Owl

DESCRIPTION

A distinguished and elderly scientist once remarked “any sufficiently advanced macramé is indistinguishable from magic.” To the uninitiated the sight of an Owl made of hemp playing a slot machine or signing for a delivery might suggest magic, but the Owl knows that it abides by the same laws that govern other material beings. It prefers, however, to cultivate mystique. Some claim, falsely, to have traveled back in time to prevent atrocities at which they only hint, while others claim, truly, not to know who created them or why.

SKILLS

- 4 Hold Completely Still
- 2 Fly
- 2 Perform Complex Mathematics Better than Human-Built Computers
- 2 Reconfigure Oneself into a Different Thing of the Same Volume but Also Made of Macramé
- 2 Tie and Untie Knots of Inhuman Complexity

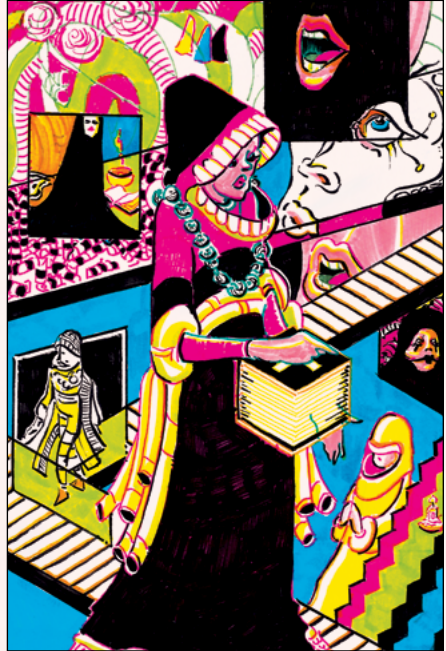
Misstep Monastic

DESCRIPTION

For centuries, Martian Orthodox monks and nuns who take tonsure have come to Mara's Misstep for the solitude and austerity of its glaciers. In the perpetual daylight of the Southern Hemisphere they celebrate the Acoemetae, the continuous divine service, with shifts of choirs singing variously in Liturgical Maraldi, Volapuk, and other languages, in uninterrupted praise of God. When not engaged in devotion or the tending of water-farms, they work in charity to aid refugees, addicts, and those left indigent by mining failures.

POSSESSIONS

- *CHEAP DATA-WATCH CONTAINING QUESTIONABLY SECULAR MATERIAL (HIDDEN).*
- *MONASTIC ROBES.*
- *THIRTY-THREE-KNOT PRAYER ROPE.*
- *ORTHODOX BIBLE IN SPANISH AND KOREAN.*



SKILLS

- 6 Reconcile God's Glory with the Failings of Mortals
- 2 Awe Even the Nonreligious with Devotion
- 2 Have a Parable for Any Occasion
- 2 Know Bits of Many Languages
- 2 Sacrifice Self for Others



Octopod Headfoot

DESCRIPTION

Rumour has it that in pre-Galactic days Earth let the Octopods have Uranus and Neptune in exchange for the Pods' defection from the Jovian Alliance. Some Pods, in their gratitude, formed a secret society that flattered their human creators by imitation despite the Pods' intellectual and technological superiority of those creators. These cultists built humanoid bodies, first crude metal things, then sophisticated androids, riding in the heads to do humanish things: dance, pray, reenact historical battles, walk aimlessly in shopping arcades, and so on. In the present era, self-described Headfoots live and work openly among humans, clinging suckers-out inside the transparent heads of

prosthetic android bodies. Eyes of pure black and a triangular nose-hole (the Pod's main exit) make visible the android's Headfoot nature, but as a matter of custom and modesty all wear hats in public settings.

POSSESSIONS

- *KARAMBIT, WITH BLADE, TANG, AND RING COMPOSED OF STRONG-FORCE MATERIAL (REFLECTIVE, FRICTIONLESS, NON-CONDUCTIVE, AND FUNCTIONALLY INDESTRUCTIBLE) AND A GRIP OF WOOD.*
- *HUMAN CLOTHING FORTY YEARS OUT OF DATE.*
- *HAT (E.G. BALMORAL, CUSTODIAN HELMET, DEERSTALKER, DERBY, FEDORA, MARTIAN TRUCKER CAP, GLENGARRY, HIJAB, KUFI, MONOCERIAN KEFFIYEH, SALAKÓT, TAQIYAH, USHANKA, WIMPLE, AND SO ON).*
- *EVERYWHERE: QUANTUM MOBILE TABLET, LATEST MODEL.*

SKILLS

- 6 Do Everything an Octopus Can Do (but only by exiting its humanoid prosthesis)
- 3 Remember Anything Noted and Not Deliberately Forgotten
- 2 Knife-Fight
- 2 Imitate Human Voice or Mannerism
- 1 Grasp Physics Beyond Human Understanding

Scud Miller

DESCRIPTION

A Miller keeps the works running because the world has to eat. The grease that seams a Miller's coveralls and callused hands, no matter how often they wash, smells of briny life and the machines that grind, filter, and press it into shape. All Millers smoke, but most seem to have just run out of cigarettes. All but the most pious play games of chance for pocket change, meal scrip, and sunshine vouchers.

POSSESSIONS

- *CANVAS ROLL OF HAND TOOLS.*
- *ONE KIT OF GAME PIECES: DICE, DOMINOES, MAHJONG SET, OR PLAYING CARDS.*
- *POWERED MULTITOOL WITH PLASMIC CORE AS ITS POWER SOURCE.*
- *WINDPROOF BRASS CIGARETTE LIGHTER, WON IN A GAME OF FIGHT THE LANDLORD.*



SKILLS

- 2 Bond Over Shared Hardship
- 2 Fistfight
- 2 Fix Anything, Not Necessarily Well, Even with the Wrong Tools
- 2 Recover From Something That Would Kill Most People
- 2 Win at Tabletop Games



POSSESSIONS

- *OFF-THE-RACK SUIT WITH ONE PIECE OF SCHOOL-SPIRIT FLAIR (CLASS RING, EARRINGS IN UNIVERSITY COLORS, NECKTIE WITH UNIVERSITY SPORTS MASCOT, ETC.).*
- *TOO MUCH LUGGAGE FOR SO SHORT A TRIP.*
- *DUTY-FREE SNACKS.*
- *WIRELESS VR GOGGLES FOR COMPUTING AND (LOUD) VIDEOCONFERENCING ANYTIME AND ANYWHERE.*

Tapiroid Dunce

DESCRIPTION

Despite four bifid trunks and six legs this race from the Spinward Reaches resembles the Earth creature after which humans insisted on naming them. Of all the extraterrestrial species Earthers have encountered, the Tapiroids most closely resemble humans in intellect, in the sense that human polymaths resemble Tapiroid middle-schoolers. They avoid humans as a matter of policy and consider lowered-c slow-zones both the best fences and the best neighbors. Rather than euthanizing nymphs born without a license, some Tapiroidal syndicates ship them to universities in human space where most excel, publishing in top-tier journals and securing impressive outside funding.

SKILLS

- 6 Display School Spirit
- 3 Using Jaws, Lift Something Extremely Heavy, Just Not Very High
- 2 Quickly Grasp the Rudiments of a New Field
- 1 Speak Any Given Human Language via a Heavy Throat-Singing Voice
- 1 Use Trunks More Deftly than Human Hands

Maxillary Uslurper

SKILL:**10** STAMINA:**10** INITIATIVE:**4** ARMOUR:**2**

DAMAGE ROLL→	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+
Ice Adze	2	2	3	3	5	9	11

POSSESSIONS

- *MONASTIC ROBES.*
- *ICE ADZE* honed to razor-sharpness, concealed beneath her robes.
- 109-knot synthetic-leather Lestovka-style Martian Orthodox *PRAYER ROPE.*
- *YELLOWED PHOTO OF PARENTS.*
- **Battered copy of** *HANDBOOK OF PHYCOLOGY, 7TH EDITION.*

ADVANCED SKILLS

6 Exult Secretly in the Triumph of Jaw Uslurpation

- 4 Horrify
- 2 Ambush
- 2 Dissemble
- 2 Escape

Special

Uslurpers regenerate 2 Stamina every time they hold Initiative except for Stamina lost to flames or *PHOTONIC WEAPONS.*

MIEN	
1	Stoic Resolve for What Must Be Done
2	Fearfully Anticipating Withdrawal
3	Longing for a Specific Person's Jaw
4	Resentful of Non-Uslurpers for their Life of Peace
5	Secretly Grieving Victims
6	Vaguely Regretful

STORM CONDITIONS cause penalties to anyone trying to do fine work or move gracefully. For every 3 hours of delay, everyone suffers a penalty of 1 when trying to perform any delicate or ticklish work.

2d6	WEATHER
2	Clear with tailwind: -2d6 hours.
3	Clear, no tailwind: -1d6 hours.
4	Clear and gusty: +1 hour.
5	Cloudy and gusty: +1 hour.
6	Sleeting and gusty: +1 hour.
7-8	Light storm: +2 hours.
9	Moderate storm: +3 hours.
10	Heavy storm: +6 hours.
11	Extreme storm: +12 hours as the <i>Sleigh</i> must heave-to and drop anchors.
12	Catastrophic storm: for the next 2d6 hours the <i>Sleigh</i> must heave-to and drop anchors. Each has a 2-in-6 base chance of failing and breaking free (3-in-6 if no engineer present). Roll for each separately; the failure of one increases by 1 the chance of the next anchor failing. If three fail, the thrashing of the ship requires anyone moving at faster than a walk to Test Luck or fall down for the duration of the storm. If all four fail the <i>Sleigh</i> careens laterally for d66 minutes until striking some obstacle and beginning to roll. All characters must Test Luck or lose 1d6 Stamina. The other passengers and crew fare worse: 1d6 x 10% die, and the survivors suffer injury as the ship tumbles, until finally wedging into a crevasse or against a pressure ridge. Rescuers arrive in 1d6 x 20 hours.

2d6	NPC NAME
11	Torres
12	Rivera
13	Jimenez
14	Diaz
15	Rodriguez
16	Castillo
21	Cruz
22	Ortiz
23	Reyes

2d6	NPC NAME
24	Kim
25	Song
26	Gabriella
31	Sierra
32	Mosh
33	Lee
34	Park
35	Saile
36	Oh

2d6	NPC NAME
41	Ledesma
42	Majid
43	Tuluk
44	Abad
45	Galura
46	Dutta
51	Basu
52	Shome
53	Chakrabort


2d6	NPC NAME
54	Syed
55	Mirza
56	Chowdhury
61	Smith
62	Jones
63	Wang
64	Wu
65	Li
66	Yu

2d6	NPC PREOCCUPATION
11	Professional Opportunities
12	Reputation
13	Computer Games
14	Hair
15	Extreme Cleanliness
16	Mortality
21	A Death in the Family
22	The Recent Death of a Friend
23	A Grudge
24	An Unrequited Love
25	An Unrequited Lust
26	Sex, Generally
31	Recent Sexual Awakening
32	Groinal Discomfort
33	Perceived Slights
34	Actual Slights
35	A Grudge
36	Euthanasia of a Beloved Pet

2d6	NPC PREOCCUPATION
41	A Pet in the Care of a Friend
42	Suppressing Indigestion
43	Body Odor
44	Academic Failures in the Past
45	Selling Illegal Drugs
46	Scoring Illegal Drugs
51	A Business Opportunity
52	A Cryptic Threat
53	Hover-sickness
54	A Lingering Head Cold
55	Pain from a Recent Surgery
56	Realization of Own's Mortality
61	A Bitter Dispute with a Friend
62	Seeing More of the World
63	Making New Friends
64	A Financial Woe
65	Binge Drinking
66	Cannabis

2d6	NPC DISTINCTIVE FEATURE
11	Scar on Mouth
12	Crooked Upper Tooth
13	Missing Lower Tooth
14	Trousers Too Long
15	Sleeves Too Long for Jacket
16	Clothes Appear Bespoke
21	Beautiful Like a Model
22	Shorter Than Average
23	Severe Expression
24	Terse Replies
25	Expansive Replies
26	Stammer
31	Halitosis
32	Body Odor
33	Shoes Wearing Out
34	New and Uncomfortable Shoes
35	Short and Stout
36	Tall and Thin

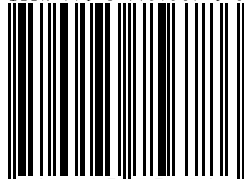
2d6	NPC DISTINCTIVE FEATURE
41	Tall and Stout
42	Short and Thin
43	Flawless, Dazzling Teeth
44	Surprisingly Hairy Knuckles
45	Mellifluous Voice
46	Grating Voice
51	Verbal Tic
52	Perpetual Cough
53	Teeth Yellowed From Smoking
54	Smells of Faint Cat Urine
55	Smells of Garlic Eaten Recently
56	Gorgeous Skin
61	Head Too Large For Body
62	Head Too Small For Body
63	Hands Too Large For Body
64	Hands Too Small For Body
65	Salient Birthmark
66	Vitiligo



A journey to the glaciated world of *Mara's Misstep* lands the players in the middle of a whodunit aboard the *Nantucket Sleigh Ride* as they attempt to uncover the truth behind the mysterious murders plaguing the ship. Will they reveal the culprit or suffer a cold, lonely demise on the face of the unforgiving ice?

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