



# TRANSMISSION BURST

## VOLUME 1



**12 STORY GAMES OF OTHER WORLDS**

# WELCOME TO TRANSMISSION BURST VOL 1!

I love microgames - they're a great way of trying out concepts, mechanics and settings that may not support a 200-page tome but can be perfect for a 200-word side of paper. In this book you'll find 12 games, written monthly thanks to my patreon ([patreon.com/ufopress](https://patreon.com/ufopress)), that cover diplomacy, exploration, action, intrigue, death and holidays and regret and more.

This wouldn't have happened without the support of my Patreon backers, so I'd like to send many thanks to them. I'd also like to thank David Schirduan and Marshall Miller for their [200 Word RPG](#) challenge - the inspiration for this project; Ross Cowman, whose *Fall of Magic* inspired *Edge of the Galaxy* and *Whispers of the Green*; Liz Iles, who was the main designer of *The Holy Mountain*; Clare Jones, who's been tireless in promoting and playtesting these games; Grant Howitt, whose own [microgame patreon](#) was really inspirational; and game-icons.net, an invaluable graphic design resource.

- Mina McJanda

## CONTENTS

### PARASITE VECTOR



Dice



3-5 Players



GM

*Bio-commandos raiding the monastery of the machine-monks.*

### THE HOLY MOUNTAIN



Diceless



1+ Players



No GM

*Pilgrims seeking absolution and gradually revealing their history.*

### GHOST WRITER



Oracle or  
tarot



2 Players



No GM

*A dead author, simulated by their publisher to finish their last book.*

### ILL-GOTTEN REALMS



Dice



3-5 Players



GM

*Long cons and larceny in a fantasy land.*

## ESCAPE



Cards



2 Players



No GM

*One is the Stalker, the other is the Quarry. The hunt begins.*

## STARDUST CONTENDERS



Dice



3-5 Players



GM

*Humanity's first entrants to the space olympics: first contact as sports movie.*

## EDGE OF THE GALAXY



Diceless



1+ Players



No GM

*A spaceship crew discover who they are as they travel off the edge of the map.*

## Whispers of the Green



Diceless



1+ Players



No GM

*Intrepid explorers plunge into madness and dread.*

## ADVENT



Cards



2-5 Players



No GM

*A game about holidays, expectation and belonging.*

## BAG OF BONES



Cards



3-5 Players



GM

*You're ghosts bound together into a bone golem. Will you pull together, or fall apart?*

## VERMIN GODS



Diceless



2+ Players



GM

*Gutter deities see a shot at power, through the eyes of a gifted child.*

## CONCLAVE



Cards



3-5 Players



GM

*Diplomats, negotiators and profiteers meet after a great tragedy.*

# PARASITE VECTOR

YOU ARE BIO-COMMANDOS INFILTRATING THE MACHINE-MONK'S TEMPLE TO RESCUE YOUR LEGION'S WAR-WOMB.

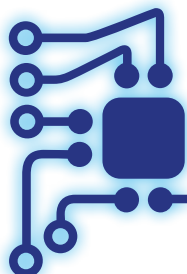
## OBJECTIVES:

1. Deny them the war-womb.
2. Recover the war-womb.
3. Destroy the temple.

One player's the **Machine-Master**, controlling the temple's defences. Roll on these tables and combine results three times to build your defences (e.g. Unaugmented Knights, Mecha-Labyrinths, and Mind-Slaving Bishops).



1	Unaugmented	Knights
2	Flesh+metal	Hunters
3	Mind-slaving	Labyrinths
4	Auto-evolving	Engineers
5	Virtual	Armouries
6	Mecha	Bishops



Baseline humans have no chance. You have certain advantages. Pick a role on the team: Scout, Captain, Bio-engineer, Infiltrator, Champion. Pick one mutation to have 5 points in, one to have 3 points in, and put 4 in the rest:

### GANGLIA

Sever 1 to hypnotise, scry, hack.

Roll [ganglia]d6s to sense environments/coerce others.

### DIGITS

Sever 1 to fire a burrowing projectile.

Roll [digits]d6s to use dexterity/precision.

### BLOOD

Spend 1 to get +1d6/heal mortal wounds.

Roll [blood]d6s to understand/sculpt flesh.

### LIMBS

Sever 1 to use it as an explosive.

Roll [limbs]d6s to use speed/force.

## WHEN ROLLING TAKE THE HIGHEST:

**6:** You succeed at what you were attempting. Give next commando to roll +1d6.

**4-5:** You succeed at what you were attempting. You're drained or vulnerable.

**1-3:** Failure. Reinforcements arrive or you take a mortal wound.

At 0d6: roll 2d6, pick lowest.

The Machine-Master says the Temple's response, gives another commando a threat or opportunity, and asks what they do.

## SALVAGE

When you salvage dead Machine-Monks, restore 1 to a mutation but mark 1:

- You can't hear the squad's thoughts.
- You'll reject further *salvage*.
- The machinery is beautiful.

My first entry in the 200 word RPG challenge of 2017 - expanded here. Parasite Vector was inspired by Grant Howitt's Honey Heist and John Harper's Blades in the Dark on the system side: Honey Heist for the setup of the temple's defences, and Blades for the basic dice mechanic.

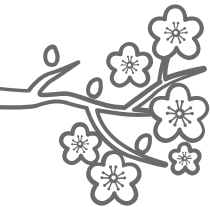
On the fiction side of things, I'd just come off reading Kameron Hurley's The Stars are Legion, an amazing biopunk sci-fi saga of reincarnation, betrayal and survival amid decay. That's where the inspiration for the bio-commando legion came from, and I hope I included enough evocative tidbits to encourage play groups to extrapolate and build up ideas of the legion's culture and way of life. The iOS action/adventure game Severed was also inspirational, with its focus on slicing off the limbs and organs of your enemies and merging them with your own to unlock power. Finally, the cyberscape illustrated on Netrunner cards was key to the aesthetic of the Machine-Monks.

Gameplay of Parasite Vector is intended to be explosive, dynamic and bloody. Think of it as one long blockbuster action sequence, with the protagonists pressing on despite (or because of) their wounds. The Machine Master's role has three parts:

Keep things flowing, rolling from crisis to ever-escalating crisis as the commandos knock down one defence after another.

Make sure to occasionally provide moments of calm where the commandos can rest up a bit, reckon with the damage they've suffered, and express some of their character and motivations.

Ask questions as much as you can. Ask what scares the commandos about this defence, what they've heard about this other one, how they joined the legion, what objectives they're willing to compromise on, and so on. Use the answers to flesh out the game as you go.



# The Holy Mountain

You are pilgrims. You carry burdens, wear concealing clothing, and seek absolution for a transgression.

You climb a mountain, visiting shrines linked by perils.

Pilgrims must not:

- ◇ Speak of life outside.
- ◇ Speak of the trail ahead.
- ◇ Show their face.
- ◇ Invoke their ancestors.

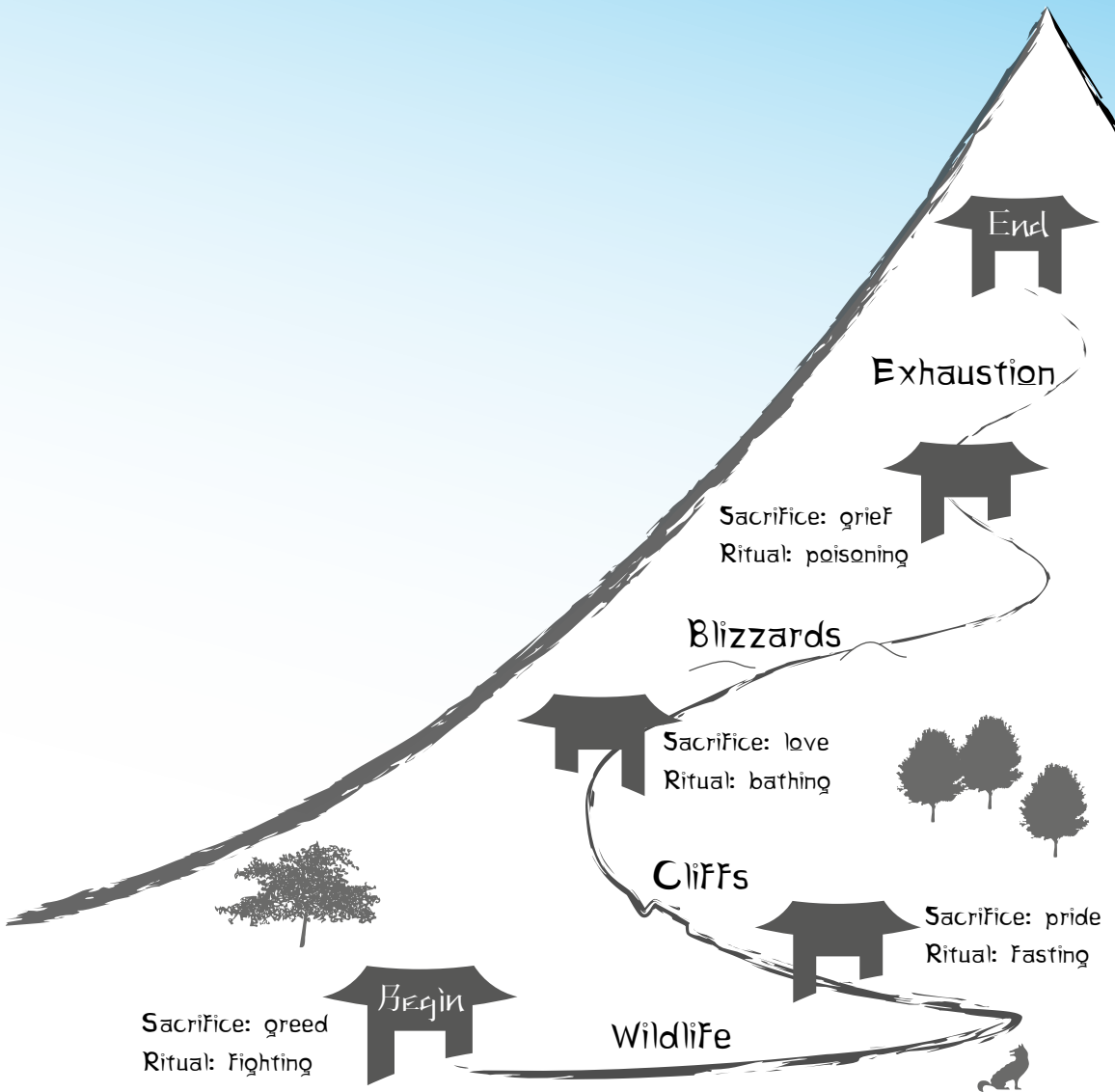
Start at the first shrine. In turn give the shrine keeper something from your pack and say how it fulfills their requirements. Then together perform the purification ritual.

During the ritual you break one prohibition you haven't broken before:

- ◇ **Your life:** Describe your home. Say one thing you regret leaving behind.
- ◇ **The trail:** Warn of danger and say why you turned back last time.
- ◇ **Ancestors:** Receive an otherworldly item, described by the others.
- ◇ **Your face:** Reveal your transgression.

Then you leave the shrine and travel onwards. One pilgrim describes how the next peril endangers them. Another pilgrim describes a skill/tool they use to protect them, and what it implies. Repeat until you reach the next shrine.

When you reach the fifth and final shrine, you may enter or turn back. Pilgrims that enter are never seen again.



Sacrifice: greed  
Ritual: Fighting

BEGIN

Wildlife

Cliffs

Sacrifice: love  
Ritual: bathing

Blizzards

Sacrifice: grief  
Ritual: poisoning

Exhaustion

End

Sacrifice: pride  
Ritual: Fasting

# GHOST WRITER

There are two players. Each player picks a role:

**The Scan:** a flawed AI made by a publisher from brain scans of a deceased author. Describe the genre, premise and main THEME of your unfinished work.

**The Interpreter:** An employee using the Scan to complete the story. Say why there's demand for the book.

Find a story [element] generator: oracle/tarot decks, random word generators, story dice etc.

Start at CHAPTER 1. EVERY CHAPTER:

1 S: select a THEME in play to focus on.

2 I: deal out CHAPTER+2 [elements]. 1

3 S: describe a context for each [element]:  
"Clara is longing for *freedom*". 3

4 I: select CHAPTER [elements].

5 S: combine selected [elements] into a chapter summary that fits the focus THEME and one other. 5

6 I: Generate a new summary by returning to step 4, or write the summary down. Describe a new detail of the Scan's life, death or legacy that supports the THEMES used. 6

7 S: how does the detail make you feel? Add 1 to ACCEPTANCE, DENIAL or ANGER [initial value 0] as appropriate. If CHAPTER<5 start the next CHAPTER, else END. 7

**END: What's highest?**

**ACCEPTANCE:** The book's a success; the Scan is placed in storage.

**DENIAL:** The Scan crashes, corrupting the work.

**ANGER:** The Scan escapes online, causing a scandal for the publisher.

This game is 100% inspired by The Ice-Bound Concordance.  
Check it out at [ice-bound.com](http://ice-bound.com)!

# ILL-GOTTEN REALMS

## LONG CONS AND LARCENY IN A FANTASY LAND

In the world's dungeons and frontiers, adventurers risk their lives for riches and glory. That's not where your skills lie. Instead you'll forge wands, relics and treasures, find a mark too greedy to ask questions, and flog it to them before they see through your deceptions.

### BUILDING YOUR GRIFTER

#### PICK YOUR CLASS

**Thief:** Skilled at *shadowcraft*, sneaking, stealing items and planting objects.

**Artificer:** Skilled at *enchantment*, identifying magic, and building props.

**Bard:** Skilled at *illusions*, getting the mark's interest and allaying their suspicions.

**Seer:** Skilled at *divination*, planning a con, and judging truth and lies.

**Fighter:** Skilled at *martial arts*, fighting, breaking things and guarding.

#### ASSIGN STATS

Divide 8 points between these:

**Grace:** Social skills and keeping your cool.

**Knowhow:** Obscure lore and arcane knowledge.

**Wits:** Quick thinking and rapid action.

**Skulduggery:** Stealth, thievery and ambushes.

#### PICK YOUR DAY JOB

Get +1 dice when your job applies.

Bodyguard, Monster, Smith, Priest, Dungeoneer, Barkeep, Aristocrat, Tailor, Farmer.

#### PICK YOUR RACE

**Human:** Once per con, reveal a ally within the mark's organisation and lower **Suspicion** by 1.

**Dwarf:** With 5 minutes of handling a magic item you understand its enchantment and get +1 dice creating a forgery.

**Elf:** Your refined aura makes people assume you're wealthy and high-class.

**Goblin:** Failures when sneaking about don't raise suspicion - goblins are anonymously shift.

### THE CON

The first step is to get your *mark*. The GM will roll or pick from the table below to build them up:

MARK	DESIRES...	VICE
Lich	Trophies of conquest	Eating souls
High Priest	Paintings	Narcotics
Empress	Holy relics	Wrath
Mobster	Arcane tomes	Domination
General	Elven artefacts.	Gambling
Wizard	Duelling swords and wands	Fine clothing

The mark starts at **Suspicion 1**.

Together you have the skills to take them for all they're worth. Make a plan that uses each class.

### EXAMPLE CONS:

*Get the mark to invest in a joint venture, then let them steal the venture's worthless fruit.*

*Bribe an angel to rig divinations in your favour.*

*Control the sage they use to appraise your forgery.*

*Salt a hoard with genuine treasure to it look valuable.*

*Show an item to the mark, get a 'third party' to talk up its value, then let them buy it from you.*

### GETTING THINGS DONE

When it's your character's turn in the plan, say what you're doing and the GM will say what stat to roll.

1. Roll one six-sided dice per point in the stat.
2. If any dice are on or under **Suspicion**, increase **Suspicion** by one.
3. If any dice are above **Suspicion**, you succeed. The GM narrates what your success looks like, and you hand off to the next member of the crew.
4. If you don't succeed, the GM will say what goes wrong. Say which member of the crew steps in to keep the con running.

The GM may ask you to roll for the actions you take as you set up or move on from your step of the con. These rolls work the same, but don't raise **Suspicion**.

Each class has their own kind of *magic*. When you use it, you can reroll results of 1. If the roll still fails, the GM describes how the magic goes out of control.

If every step is complete, the con succeeds! Narrate what you do with your cut, and either raise a stat by 1 or get a higher-status day job.

### SUSPICION

Here's what each level of **Suspicion** looks like:

- 1: You don't register on the mark's radar.
- 2: They go to a friend or ally for advice.
- 3: They bring in outside experts to advise them.
- 4: They send minions to put pressure on you.
- 5: They threaten you with the law, exile, death etc.
- 6: They cut ties and secure their assets: **con over**.



One player's the Quarry, an interloper where they don't belong. The other's the Stalker, this place's guardian.

### SETUP:

1. Put an index card in the centre of the table, labelled 'The Heart'. Put the Quarry and Stalker's pawns on it.
2. Put a card with 'Escape' written on it some distance away, and put 5 index cards between them.
3. Take a deck of cards (no jokers). Give spades and diamonds to the Quarry, hearts and clubs to the Stalker.
4. Each player shuffles their deck. Answer your question, and start with the Quarry's first turn.

## QUARRY

*You're in the Stalker's lair. Why are you here?*

**Theft:** How does it slow you? Put face cards spent on Speed on the bottom of the Stalker's deck.

**Escape:** How are they tracking you? Put face cards spent on Wits on the bottom of the Stalker's deck.

**Murder:** How have you been hurt? Put face cards spent on Endurance on the bottom of the Stalker's deck.

### ON YOUR TURN

Draw until you have 5 cards in hand.

Put a card on each of the below, and resolve from top down:

#### SPEED

**Face:** You move one location on, ignoring obstacles. Stalker describes the location you find yourself in, and the obstacle that's blocking your exit. Write a description of it on the next blank card.

**6-10:** If there's an obstacle you remove it; say how. Else, you leave here or move one location on. Stalker describes new location as above.

**A-5:** You have to focus on the hazards of this room. Stalker says how they keep you busy.

#### WITS

**Face:** You set a false trail. Secretly write down red or black. When the Stalker tries to enter here reveal your choice. If it matches the card used for Pursuit the card's discarded with no effect.

**6-10:** You bar the way behind you. Describe how and put an obstacle on the location before you.

**A-5:** Your wound, loot or tracker demands attention, stopping you from trying anything tricky.

#### ENDURANCE

**Face:** You feel a burst of energy: say what's motivating you. Put any card from your discard pile on the top of your deck.

**6-10:** You catch your breath. Put any card from your discard pile on the bottom of your deck.

**A-5:** You're struggling. Describe how your character freezes up, panics or collapses to catch their breath.

**THEN PASS OVER TO THE STALKER.**

## STALKER

*You must stop them from escaping. What are you?*

**Inhuman:** You ignore barriers that'd stop others. Say what way you can move that humans can't.

**Deadly:** You're well-armed with tech, magic or natural weapons. Say what your weapons are.

**Indefatigable:** You're tireless and will not stop. Say where your energy comes from.

### ON YOUR TURN

Draw three cards plus 1 per Alert token (starts at 0). Put a card on each available, resolve from top down:

#### PURSUIT

**AVAILABLE WHEN YOU'RE NOT ON THEIR SPACE.**

**Face:** You move a location on, ignoring obstacles. Say what they hear as you close on them.

**6-10:** If there's an obstacle at your location, remove it. Otherwise, move one step closer to them.

**A-5:** You're slowly moving through the location. Broadcast your frustration through the lair.

#### CAPTURE

**AVAILABLE WHEN YOU'RE ON THEIR SPACE**

Play this card facedown; Quarry plays one facedown too. On the count of three, flip both.

**If yours is higher:** You've captured them and win!

**Else:** They give you the slip. Discard both cards.

#### ALERT

**Face:** You increase the lair's agitation. Put this card aside as an Alert token. Add an obstacle to the Quarry's location if it doesn't have one, and describe the new difficulty.

**6-10:** Put this card aside as an Alert token.

**A-5:** The lair stays at its current Alert level.

#### POWER

**Face:** You use your power:

**Inhuman:** Remove an obstacle in your location.

**Deadly:** If you're within 1 step of the Quarry, discard a random card from their hand.

**Indefatigable:** Put this turn's discards on the bottom of your deck.

**6-10:** You can use your power, but if you do it drains you - you can't use it next round.

**A-5:** You're cut off from your resources. You can't use your power next round.

**DISCARD ALL CARDS AND PASS TO THE QUARRY.**

### GAME END TRIGGERS:

#### Quarry reaches the Escape card:

They get away! Quarry says what form their escape takes.

#### Stalker wins a Capture action:

The Stalker takes down their prey. Stalker says how they finally stop the Quarry.

#### Quarry runs out of cards:

They collapse from wounds or exhaustion. Quarry describes their capture.

#### Stalker runs out of cards:

The Stalker loses the Quarry. Stalker says what escape route they find.

# STARDUST CONTENDERS

In the five years after making first contact, nothing surprised us more than an invitation to these once-a-generation Intergalactic Games. We hastily built the FTL drive they sent us and packed a rocket with you: Earth's best diplomats, athletes, anthropologists and game theorists. Make alliances, win their strange games and bring glory to humanity!

## YOU'LL NEED:

- + At least two friends willing to spend about 2 hours on this. One of you will be the GM, the rest will be players.
- + Some six-sided dice.
- + A bunch of index cards.

## HUMANS

*Before contact, humans were just... people. Only having a comparison point showed us how special we were.*

Take an index card and write **'Humanity'** on it. Write down what's special about humanity compared to the other races. Also write down a resource humanity could offer galactic society; discuss about what's currently preventing them from taking advantage of it. These two elements are humanity's **traits**, usable by all characters.

Write down which sport you're bringing with you, and three **tracks**: Athletics, Culture and Politics.

These start at 0 and measure your renown in each sphere: rankings in the Games, humanity's reputation as a backwater or a place of interest, and their influence on other cultures galaxywide.

## ALIENS

*Now we know there's far more out there than just humans, and boy are they weird.*

There's one alien culture per player. Each player grabs an index card, writes a name, and passes it clockwise. The player who gets it writes down the next item and passes the card on:

1. First distinguishing feature.
2. Second distinguishing feature.
3. A possible but unverified weakness.
4. Why they disdain humanity.
5. Why they're curious about humanity.

## THE EVENT

*We could only translate the most basic schedule to give you. You'll have to work out the details once you're on the ground.*

Build up the Games' program. You'll have:

- + The Opening Ceremony.
- + The Closing Ceremony.
- + 1 mystery game for each culture.
- + The sport humanity's brought.

Each player also picks two to add in:

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Bar crawl.         | Trade fair.         |
| Formal gala.       | Art exhibition.     |
| Media interviews.  | Planetary safari.   |
| Diplomatic summit. | Religious ceremony. |

Put the Opening and Closing Ceremonies cards at opposite ends of a line. Shuffle the rest and deal them along the line. Split them into three sets, as equal as you can: these are the three weeks of the Games.

## CHARACTERS

*That's why we picked the best of you.*

Each player takes a card and writes their character's name on it. Rate a defining skill at 3, three others at 2, and the rest at 1. There are three categories of skills:

- |                   |                           |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Sports:</b>    | Speed, Brawn, Tactics.    |
| <b>Science:</b>   | Physio, Tech, Xenology.   |
| <b>Diplomacy:</b> | Presence, Empathy, Guile. |

## INTRODUCTION

Build an intro montage: your character's introduction to the group. Answer each:

- + What background did your come from?
- + What moment made you famous?
- + What secret flaw are you dealing with?

Describe it and sum up each point as a 2-5 word phrase; these are your starting **traits**.

## TAKING ACTION

To do something, take dice equal to your skill and decide if you're boosting this with any relevant **traits**. Humanity's **traits** are always available, but others are spent once used and you must rest to get them back.

## THE GAMES BEGIN

The game begins at the start of the 1<sup>st</sup> week. You've just arrived, found your quarters and unpacked. Each week has two phases: prep and play.

### PREP

Each player gets two actions:

#### RESEARCH

Get details on one event. Say how you investigate and roll an appropriate skill:

- S** The GM explains the event and says an action that'll get you +1 to a track.
- F** As S, but the GM will add one crucial element humans are unsuited for.
- C** It's strangely similar to an Earth event. You're naturals; get +1 to all rolls at it.

#### PREPARE

Train or get resources for an upcoming event. Roll a relevant skill for your plan.

- S** You or a teammate gains a new one-use trait relevant to the event.
- F** As S but you must exhaust a trait.
- C** As S, but the trait is permanent.

#### ALLY

Get an alien to help you out. Say how you make friends and roll a relevant skill:

- S** They'll promote you (+1 to a track) if you do something during an event.
- F** They warn against a course of action; if you do it, take -1 to a track.
- C** You forge a deep bond with them. Get a trait reflecting this.

#### REST

Take a break and refresh all your traits.

Roll the dice and take the highest. Add +1 to its value for each trait used. A 5 or more **Succeeds**, a 4 or less **Fails**, and a 7 or more **Crits** and gets a bonus on top of Success.

### PLAY

Once the team's prepared you run through the week's events in order:

#### 1: MAKE A PLAN

The GM will tell you if this event is Athletic, Political or Cultural. Put together a plan, deciding who'll be the main playmaker and what others are doing to assist them.

#### 2: SET-UP

Everyone assisting in the plan describes their action and rolls an appropriate skill:

- S** You do your part, giving the main actor 1 more dice to their roll.
- F** You fumble - give the main actor -1 to their roll's result.
- C** You can exhaust an extra trait to give the main actor an extra dice.

#### 3: FOLLOW-THROUGH

The main actor makes their roll, modified by set-up. Get -1 to this if the team didn't research the event.

- S** The plan works! Take +1 to this event's renown track.
- F** The plan's not enough. Choose: lose, or transgress to gain victory - get +1 to this event's track but take -1 to another.
- C** You distinguish yourself. Gain a one-use trait representing the prestige earned.

The GM describes the outcome of the event, and you move to the next one.

## WRAPPING UP

At the end of the Closing Ceremony, assess your tracks. For every point above 0, a player can describe one positive result for humanity due to the games. For each point below 0, the GM describes a negative outcome as a result of the team's actions.

Finally, wrap up with a 'where are they now' segment on each character's life after the games. Are they in disgrace, celebrated by humanity, living with the aliens, or something else?

# EDGE OF THE GALAXY

## WHO YOU ARE

You're a starship crew on a long journey to the galaxy's edge. Characters start simple and develop in play.

**Pick a trait for your crew member:**

**Refugee, ace pilot** or **algae-chef** of **The Nomad Flotilla**.  
**Aristo, escaped clone** or **merchant-captain** of **Elysium**.  
**Engineer, worker bug** or **preacher** of **Forgeworld Crax**.  
**Star-seer, AI tech** or **void-fish** of **The Shileen Institute**.  
**Brawler, doctor** or **artist** of **Port Dantalion**.

**Pick a name:**

*Nora, Quill, Glix, Logan, Jasp, Rowan, Baux, Nebula, Candour, Coron, Whit, Fug, Black, Hinda, Li, Klip, Pax.*

Write these down on a notecard: "Klip, **worker bug** of Crax". Pick a token for you character - a meeple, figurine, coin, whatever. Also pick one for the ship.

**As a group, pick a ship:**

The *Polaris*, a **rapid** but **cramped** transport ship.  
The *Durandal*, a **rugged** but **infamous** pirate hunter.  
The *Curmudgeon*, a **hulking** but **ponderous** cargo ship.  
Your job is to fly out to the galaxy's edge, find the ringworld **Esh-Four-Tarn**, place a jump gate there and carve a tunnel back to the heart of galactic civilisation.

## PLAYING THE JOURNEY

You'll follow the path to **Esh-Four-Tarn**, having adventures on the way. You take turns telling a part of the story: on your turn other players can add details, make suggestions, and play characters, but you have final say on what happens.

Your ship starts at **Port Dantalion**. On your turn, pick a scene at the port and put your token on it. Describe what your character sees and experiences, what's going on, and what they're doing there.

Each scene has a **story prompt** - an element that the scene has to include, however you choose to interpret it. There are three special types of prompt:



Give the listed **trait** to your character or another's (with their consent). If there's more than one, pick one. Write it on their notecard.



Change/remove something on your notecard: name, role or **trait**. Describe how the change happens (or is revealed) in the scene.



Use the first option if a **trait** of yours can deal with the prompt; otherwise, use the second.

Once you're done, the next player picks a scene. If all tokens are on the map, they can instead remove all tokens and move the ship on to the next step of the journey.

Each destination is a **scene** and **story prompt** of its own; describe them from the perspective of the ship as a whole, applying any **trait** changes to the ship itself.

# INNER WORLDS

## Port Dantalion

**Preparing to leave.**  
**The Royal Intergalactic Hotel**  
Who you say goodbye to.  
**The Scrap Merchants**  
What might come in handy.  
**Federal Building**  
Why you need the money.  
**The Bazaar**  
☞ Canny  
☞ Addicted  
☞ In Debt



## Deep Space

**The only people in a billion miles.**  
**The greenhouse observatory**  
What's reflected in the glass.  
**Exterior repairs**  
The void's whispers.  
**The canteen**  
Who cooks, who eats.  
**Your quarters**  
A holovid from home.  
**The engine room**  
What you hide there.



## Crax, Forge World

☞ **Asteroids!** (☞ **Rich**/☞ **Battered**).  
**The Foundries**  
A side job is offered.  
**The first church of Christ, Astronaut**  
Confession.  
**The hive mother's den**  
Chemically-induced memories.  
**The volcanic plains**  
☞ Solitary  
☞ Expert  
☞ Daredevil



# AEDES CLUSTER

## The Nomad Flotilla

**Rivals on your quest.**  
**Commons on the Sirroco**  
 Who you weren't expecting to meet.  
**The Comet and Droid**  
 ↳ Getting into a fight  
 (↳ Fierce/↳ Wounded)  
**Voidbike Races**  
 An inadvisable bet.  
**The prison**  
 Saying goodbye.



# GALACTIC FRINGE

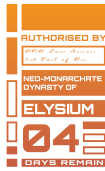
## Hyperspace

**Time and space growing strange.**  
**Emergency external repairs**  
 ↳ Exposed to the rainbow void.  
**The greenhouse observatory.**  
 Who you see reflected there.  
**Your quarters**  
 Who lived here before you.  
**In the medbay**  
 What you take to cope.  
**The engine room**  
 What comes loose.



## Neo-Monarchate of Elysium

**A sponsor to let you land.**  
**The Palace-City**  
 An eternal masquerade.  
**The Clinic**  
 ↳ An enhancement and  
 its cost.  
**The Rose Fields**  
 The clones, made to  
 tend aristo's gardens.  
**Paradise Street**  
 What you cannot afford.



## Ship Graveyard

**A war started here.**  
**Emergency beacon**  
 What they managed to save.  
**The Sword of Mars**  
 Their last moments.  
**Tyrant's Might**  
 Evasive action.  
**Scavenger's scrapyard**  
 Stories around the bar.



## The Shileen Institute

**Entering orbit around a black hole.**  
**The Oracle's Mainframe**  
 A prediction.  
**The Observatory**  
 A hole in the universe.  
**The Fringes**  
 Skeptics and Outcasts.  
**Shallows of the accretion disk**  
 Swimming with void-fish.



## Esh-Four-Tarn

**A constructed world encircling a false star.**  
**The vault**  
 ↳ A message from the builders.  
**The false star**  
 ↳ A revelation (Enlightened/Icarus)  
**In orbit around the ring**  
 ↳ A final confrontation  
 (Redemption/Sacrifice)  
**A messenger buoy**  
 ↳ A message from home.



## Homeward Bound

System adapted from: Ross Cowman's *Fall of Magic*

Setting inspired by: Becky Chambers's *The Long Way to a Small Angry Planet*

# Whispers of the Green

## WHO YOU ARE

After the fiasco of the expedition to the South Pole, Miskatonic has been reluctant to finance any similar ventures, but somehow you have worn them down enough for them to send you to seek out the source of these strange green soapstone tablets.

### PICK A TRAIT FOR YOUR EXPEDITION MEMBER:

An Academic, Closeted Occultist or Arkham Dockworker of MISKATONIC UNIVERSITY

An Artist's Model, Bohemian Musician or Disenfranchised Aristocrat of PARIS

An Affluent Princeling, Wise Heirophant or Travelling Musician of CONSTANTINOPE

A Devotee, Reformed Cultist or Shadow Out of Time of IMLUTHA

### PICK A NAME:

*Billingham, Broadford, Carnation, Chester, Echo, Erasmus, Paisley, Piper, Ward.*

Write these down on a notecard: "Chester, academic of Miskatonic University". Pick a token for you character - a meeples, figurine, coin, whatever.

## PLAYING THE JOURNEY

You'll follow the path to IMLUTHA, having strange experiences on the way. You take turns telling a part of the story: on your turn other players can add details, make suggestions, and play characters, but you have final say on what happens.

You start at ARKHAM UNIVERSITY. On your turn, pick a **scene** at the university and put your token on it. Describe what your character sees and experiences, what's going on, and what they're doing there.

Each **scene** has a **story prompt** - an element that the scene has to include, however you choose to interpret it. If the **scene** has 2 **traits** listed beneath, you gain your choice of them - work that into your narration. If a prompt is marked with a **glyph**, you may change one of your **traits** as part of your narration.

Once you're done, the next player picks a **scene**. If everyone's tokens are on the map, they can instead remove all tokens and move the group on to the next step of the journey.

Each destination is a **scene** and **story prompt** of its own; describe them from the vantage of a remorseful and fearful narrator, painting the things to come with dread.

MISKATONIC UNIVERSITY  
How little we knew, then.

**The Archaeology Department**  
*Things that have been forgotten.*

**The Mathematics Department**  
*Inexplicable angles*

**The Bursar's Office**  
*Securing funding for the expedition*  
**The Library**  
*Forbidden knowledge*  
☞ Wisdom  
☞ Madness

## OUTER MONGOLIA

The trail takes its toll.

**The Death Worm**  
*It is only a myth, yes?*

**Hunting on the steppes**  
☞ *Are you predator or prey?*

**The Silk Road**  
*Why you travel*  
**Cuts in the canvas**  
*No knife made these*

## THE PLATEAU OF LENG

Strange music, strange dancers.

**Friendly natives**  
☞ *Invited to the feast*

**The howling winds**  
*What song do they carry?*

**The elephant shrine**  
*It is only a statue*  
**A restless night**  
*The stars are wrong*

Copyright, 1999, by the National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.  
Engineered and Printed at the Matthews-McHenry Works, Bedford, N. H.  
This Map is shown on YouTube for Online Preparation  
Printed by Latham Press, Inc. 703.229.8118. Patent Office and in Canada No. 98,198

ANTARCTIC  
(SOUTHERN)

### THE HMS ALERT

The joy of setting out.

#### The Captain's Table

*Recalling your first time at sea*

#### Your private cabin

*A moment alone with your thoughts*

#### Gambling with the sailors

*Gossip and rumours*

🌀 Paranoia

🌀 A Small Fortune

#### The Bathosphere

*What lurks beneath the surface?*

### PARIS

The decadence of civilisation.

#### Notre Dame Cathedral

*Whispers amidst the bells*

#### The Alleys of Montmartre

*A strangely familiar painting*

#### Le Cochon d'Etire

*A mysterious menu.*

🌀 Strange Hunger

🌀 Sitophobia

#### The Louvre

*An old confidant, a secret meeting*

### CONSTANTINOPLE

They tried to warn us.

#### The Hotel

*An unexpected visitor at midnight.*

#### The opium den

*Gateway to the underworld.*

#### The bazaar

*Faces in the crowd.*

#### A monkey knife-fight

*These violent delights have violent ends.*

🌀 Bloodlust

🌀 Dread

### THE ORIENT EXPRESS

A strange land glimpsed in dreams.

#### The sleeper cabin

🌀 *Strange dreams.*

#### The dining car

*Meet your fellow travellers.*

#### A visit from the conductor

*His hands are so cold.*

#### An Expired Passenger

*Suspicious abound.*

### THE LOST CITY OF IMLUTHA

Not as empty as it appears.

#### The Streets Paved With Bones

*The things that died here*

#### The Stalking Shadow

*For who does it come?*

#### The House of Many Windows

*The things that lived here*

#### The Pyramid of Imlutha

🌀 *The siren call*

### THE CATACOMBS OF IMLUTHA

The horror, the horror.

#### The carvings so vivid

🌀 *What do they mean?*

#### The soapstone altar

🌀 *What does it whisper?*

#### Your torchlight burns green

🌀 *What does it whisper?*

#### The shape behind the stone

🌀 *What does it whisper?*

# ADVENT

A game about holidays, expectation and belonging.  
To play, you'll need 2-5 players and a deck of playing cards.

A grand holiday is almost on you. As a group draw cards to decide what form it takes and your own character's role.

*Holiday messages are pervasive and inescapable, trying to get you to...*

- ♠ Perform religious observances.
- ♣ Get intoxicated and party.
- ♥ Reconnect with friends/family.
- ♦ Spend, spend, spend.

## Working through the season

There are 10 days to go. Each day, the story focuses on a particular character.

**Focus Character:** Pick an unmarked activity from the list and mark it off. Pick another character you're doing it with and together describe what you're doing.

- Buying supplies.
- Cooking.
- Making gifts.
- Partying.
- Visiting someone.
- Travelling.
- Remeniscing.
- Working.
- Spending time alone.
- Decorating.

Both secretly decide if the message puts you in the spirit of the holiday, or pushes you away. Reveal via thumbs up or down on the count of 3. If you agree, keep the card in the centre of the table. If not, the focus character puts the card in their hand. Describe how your characters bond or disagree over the tradition, then move focus clockwise.

## Holiday is here:

One all 10 have been marked off, the holiday is here. Look at your hand:

*If it holds fewer cards than are on the table you're feeling festive/cozy/cherished.*

*If it holds more cards than are on the table you're feeling alienated/lonely/heartbroken.*

In turn describe a short scene of your character going through the rituals of the holiday.

**You all live in...**

- ♠ A forest hamlet
- ♣ An affluent suburb
- ♥ A ramshackle starship
- ♦ A cyberpunk arcology

**You in particular are:**

- ♠ A community leader.
- ♣ A marginalised community member.
- ♥ An outsider to this culture.
- ♦ An average citizen.

**As you do it,** the other players reveal the holiday message playing in the background. They draw a card for the message's form and content, and work together to describe it to you.

## Form

- ♠ Song
- ♣ Folk tale
- ♥ News report
- ♦ Personal message

## Content

- |    |            |        |             |
|----|------------|--------|-------------|
| A: | Hope       | 8:     | Desire      |
| 2: | Obligation | 9:     | Anxiety     |
| 3: | Joy        | 10:    | Loss        |
| 4: | Reflection | Jack:  | Expectation |
| 5: | Greed      | Queen: | Reverence   |
| 6: | Nostalgia  | King:  | Regret      |
| 7: | Confusion  | Joker: | Betrayal    |

# BAG OF BONES

A terrible necromantic ritual has brought you back to life as a lumbering, clattering skeletal monstrosity. You have a few problems with this.

First, you'd rather be at peace, or at least free of the necromancer's bindings. Second, they jammed whatever bones they could find in here - human, animal, monster, whatever - and twisted them into weapons and tools. The worst part is that there's more than one ghost in this body: **you'll have to share.**

To find peace you'll need to work with your osseous brethren, satisfy the necromancer or break free of their control, and resolve your unfinished business.

**Each player rolls or picks for their ghost, and fills in extra details:**

GOLEM PART	NAME	UNFINISHED BUSINESS
1. Skull	1. Lucretia	1. Get revenge on your killer.
2. Arm	2. Gustav	2. Save a loved one from a curse.
3. Arm	3. Lars	3. Confess unsaid feelings.
4. Leg	4. Angelica	4. Find out what's left of your legacy.
5. Leg	5. Brian	5. Enjoy fine food and exquisite music.
6. Bone Weaponry	6. Elle.	6. Complete a pilgrimage.

The GM tells the ghosts what the Necromancer created the golem to do:

## POSSIBLE NECROMANCER PLOTS

COLLECT A PACKAGE. RAID THE VILLAGE. PROTECT THEM AS THEY TRAVEL. STEAL THEIR SOUL BACK. PRANK ANOTHER WIZARD. PUT ON A SURPRISE PARTY. SCARE THEIR APPRENTICE. DISTRACT AN ARMY.

As a group discuss the area. Where must you go to carry out the Necromancer's will, or your Unfinished Business? What other powers are abroad tonight?

The GM then gets a shuffled deck of cards and deals 5 to each player. These cards are your ghost's willpower. So long as you have any cards, you can hold your bit of the golem together and move it. **Each ghost has final say over one part of its actions:**

**Skull(s):** What it says and where it looks.

**Leg(s):** How it moves and where it goes.

**Arm(s):** How it picks up and uses things.

**Weapon(s):** How it fights.

**If ghosts want the golem to do different things**, on the count of 3 each holds up 0-5 fingers. The one who holds up most gets to act and discards that many cards.

**If you want another ghost to do something for you**, you can ask them or **bribe them**: offer them one of your cards, face-up, and say what you want them to do. If they take it, they have to do what you wanted.

**When the golem does something risky or important** all ghosts must pull together. Each player puts a card facedown in a pile. The GM shuffles it and turns it faceup.

**If the number cards add up to 10 or higher**, the golem succeeds at what it was doing. **Otherwise, it fails:** the body part(s) in charge discard a card. They say why they failed:

TOO HUMAN ☠ TOO MONSTROUS ☠ FAILING BODY ☠ FAILING MIND

**For each face card:** the body part(s) in charge draw a card.

**If a success works towards your Unfinished Business**, draw a card.

**If a success works towards the Necromancer's command**, everyone draws a card.

If you complete your unfinished business and appease (or kill) the Necromancer you pass over. Congratulations! Say what others see as you enter the afterlife.

# VERMIN GODS

The world's divines rule from glorious temples, lofty pantheons and forbidding underworlds, assisted and interpreted by a rare lineage of Channellers. You are not those divines.

You are vermin gods, squabbling for scraps of prayer and devotion in the margins of society. But you've found a Channeller, a child unaware of their heritage.

Can you use them to work your will in the world? Can you put your differences with the other small gods aside? And can you bring salvation to the community you share?

## GAME START

One player is the Channeller, the rest are gods.

### GODS

You're a god of something only the destitute and marginalised would look to for aid: grottos and boltholes, futile spite, unpalatable nutrition, becoming unremarkable. Pick one of the gods to the right or make your own.

You have:

- **An insight.** Each scene, after the Channeller has described the environment, you can add a detail based on your insight.
- **A revelation.** Whenever the Channeller asks the gods a question that fits your revelation, you can answer and have that be the truth.
- **A blessing.** If the Channeller invokes you, you can fade to give them or someone they're touching your blessing.
- **A curse.** If the Channeller invokes you, you can fade to give them or someone they're touching your curse.

When you fade away from the mortal world, you cannot communicate with the channeller except via the other gods. When the channeller leads others in a prayer to you, you are no longer faded.

### CHANNELLER

You're a kid (12-15) living in a slum, tenement block, or on the streets. Decide on your name and your look. What's your goal?

To get out.

To get even.

To get rich.

To get help.

The gods can only perceive the world through you, and only when you call on them. Each time you call on them, say:

- What they see in your immediate area.
- How the last scene has changed you.
- If your goal is still the same.

The game plays as a dialogue: your prayer to the gods, and their responses. As you act in the scene, keep the gods aware of what's happening. If you wish to take significant action, ask the gods if it will go well. They will answer to the best of their abilities, their words carrying the ring of divine truth. End the scene when you stop asking for the god's help.

Play until you've achieved your goal, you've died, or the story's come to some other satisfying ending.

## SMALL GODS

### THE ECHHOACH KING

God of salvage and endurance.



**Insight:** Something that's edible and nutritious.

**Revelation:** How to find enough food and shelter to survive.

**Curse:** An overpowering urge to hide from light.

**Blessing:** Be armoured in shiny chitin.

### THE FOG GULL

God of smog and city air.



**Insight:** Something that's causing illness.

**Revelation:** How to climb tall buildings and avoid notice.

**Curse:** Air they breathe becomes noxious fumes.

**Blessing:** Fly, for a few ungainly flaps.

### THE THOUSAND TEETH

God of strength in numbers.



**Insight:** A hidden connection between the people here.

**Revelation:** How to win someone's loyalty.

**Curse:** Small, furry creatures attack them from all directions.

**Blessing:** Instinctive, wordless co-ordination between allies.

### THE PUS-WHITE GRUB

God of death and consumption.



**Insight:** Someone who's about to die.

**Revelation:** How to hide evidence.

**Curse:** Lose the use of their limbs.

**Blessing:** Consume the dead and gain their strengths.

### THE FRIENDLY MOSQUITO

God of insidious parasitism.



**Insight:** Who's in charge here.

**Revelation:** How to steal someone's strength.

**Curse:** Their body swells to match the wealth they've taken from others.

**Blessing:** Learn a rare and powerful skill from one you're touching.

# CONCLAVE

*You are the representatives of your people. A great wrong has happened, a crisis needs resolving, and what you decide here will impact the lives of millions.*

## COMING TO THE CONCLAVE

Every player picks one word. Put them together to decide your crisis.

*Empire, Colony, Earthquake, Invasion, Starvation, Portals, Homunculi, Refugees, Famine, Ships, Festival, Schism, Disaster, Beasts, Treasure, Plague, Space.*

Decide what role you play:

**Victim:** A group that has suffered great misfortune, now seeking justice or aid.

**Giant:** The faction that dominates the political landscape, looming over the others.

**Destroyer:** The force that kicked off the current crisis, intended or not.

*With 4-5 players:*

**Mediator:** An outside party who have a trusted reputation as a neutral third party. *Describe the meeting site.*

**Profiteer:** A group working within the area trying to get rich off the crisis. *Describe what resources you most covet.*

Also decide who your representative is at the conclave, and draw two cards from a central deck of cards.

**Giant, Victim and Destroyer** form a triangle. Each side of the triangle is a different negotiation:

- **G/V:** *What aid will the Giant give the Victim?*
- **G/D:** *How will the Giant punish the Destroyer?*
- **V/D:** *Will the Destroyer continue the course that caused the Victim's misfortune?*

The **Mediator** and the **Profiteer** aren't direct parties in the negotiations, but are trying to influence them for their own benefit.

## THE NEGOTIATIONS

The Conclave negotiates in rounds. Each round, the faction with the lowest card in front of them is first player - for the first round, it's the Giant. The first player takes an action, then play passes clockwise until each player has performed an action.

When everyone has taken an action, the round ends. The next round's first player describes how their populace is growing restless and rebellious.

## ACTIONS

**GIANT/VICTIM/DESTROYER:** Pick one.

- **Negotiate:** *Put down a card on your side of the negotiation. If it's higher than theirs, make a demand. If it's lower than theirs, make a concession. Then draw a card.*
- **Read the Wind:** *Discard your hand. Narrate a short scene in the homeland of their people, showing what they feel about the state of negotiations. Then draw two cards.*
- **Come to Terms:** *Put down a card whose suit matches both cards on a negotiation. A deal is made and this negotiation is concluded.*

**MEDIATOR:** Replace a card on a negotiation with one from your hand, provided it matches either the number or the suit of the replacement card. Describe how you interfere to keep negotiations progressing.

**PROFITEER:** Pass one of the factions a card, facedown. If they accept it, you can take any other card of your choice from their hand. Each round you can cash in any diamonds, putting them face-up in front of you and replacing them with new cards from the deck.

**Conclude when one of these happens:**

- *All negotiations have been completed.*
- *The deck runs out of cards.*

## CONCLUSION

**Giant/Victim/Destroyer:** For each concluded negotiation, say how you enact the agreement and if your population is happy with the result. For each negotiation that's unfinished, say how your population causes problems for both parties.

**Mediator:** If all negotiations completed, say how your faction makes use of the prestige earned. If any failed, say how your faction suffers misfortune as a result.

**Profiteer:** Count your diamonds.

- **2-:** *You over-extended and don't have the bribes needed to get away with it.*
- **3-6:** *You've walked away with a tidy profit. Say which faction you've impoverished.*
- **7+:** *You own this area now. Say what new structures you set up to enforce your control.*



**THANKS FOR PLAYING!**