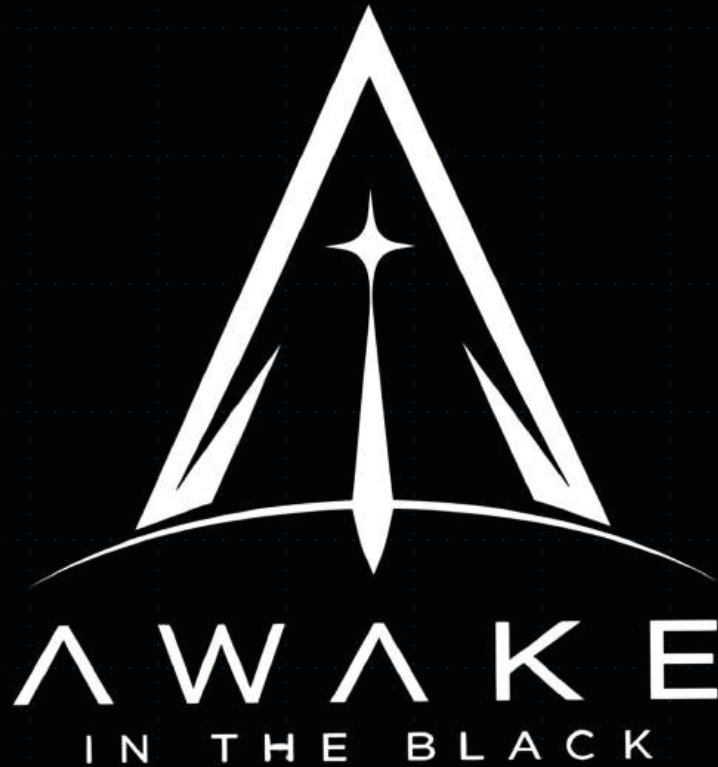




AWAKE IN THE BLACK

PLAYER HANDBOOK

Created by Brandon Sligh

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WELCOME ABOARD

A lean player-facing manual for crew survival.

This handbook contains the player-facing rules needed to build a crew member, understand the basic resolution system, choose a Role, manage strain, use the ship, and play through jobs in a fractured galaxy.

It removes GM scenario tools, NPC libraries, contract design, story arc construction, and other material that belongs behind the screen. The goal is faster table use and faster character creation.

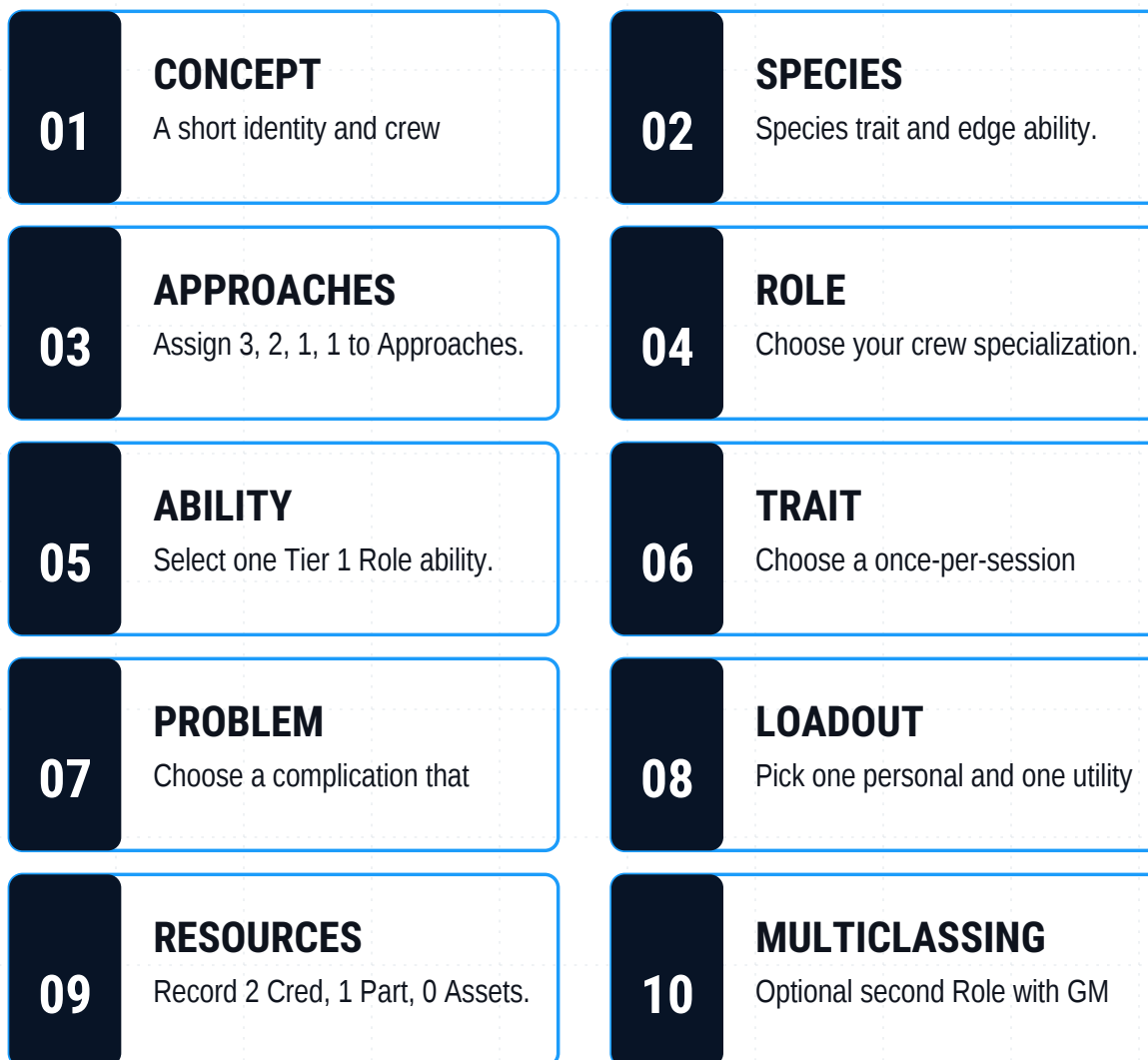
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CREATE A CHARACTER IN 10 MINUTES

Use this page as the fast-start path.

CHARACTER CREATION FLOW



CREW CREATION

HOW THE GAME WORKS

CORE LOOP

Take a job, travel to the problem, make decisions under incomplete information, resolve risk, carry consequences forward. The game does not reset after mistakes; it evolves.

ROLL ONLY WHEN IT MATTERS

Roll when the action has uncertainty and meaningful consequence. If there is no real risk, the action simply happens.

SUCCESS DICE

Success Dice come from your chosen Approach and any valid bonuses. On Success Dice, 4-6 count as Successes and 1-3 count as Advantage.

FAILURE DICE

Failure Dice come from danger, difficulty, opposition, and unstable conditions. On Failure Dice, 4-6 count as Failures and 1-3 count as Strain.

ROLL RESULTS AND PUSHING

SUCCESS OR FAILURE

If Successes exceed Failures, the action succeeds. If Failures equal or exceed Successes, the action fails. Advantage and Strain still matter either way.

ADVANTAGE

Advantage creates positive effects: better position, useful information, help for an ally, reduced future risk, or a new opportunity.

STRAIN

Strain is the cost of action. It may be physical, mental, ship-based, social, operational, or tied to Heat. The cost should fit the fiction.

PUSH

Before rolling, you may Push for +2 Success Dice. After the roll, you take 1 Strain and the GM adds a complication. Bonus dice beyond your base Approach are capped at +2.

APPROACHES

How your character acts under pressure.

STARTING DISTRIBUTION

3**Primary strength**

Assign once at creation.

2**Reliable method**

Assign once at creation.

1**Limited method**

Assign once at creation.

1**Limited method**

Assign once at creation.

FORCE

Direct, aggressive, overpowering action. Use it to break, push, intimidate, endure, or force a system to respond.

FINESSE

Precision, timing, subtlety, and control. Use it to sneak, pilot, bypass, avoid danger, or make delicate moves.

LOGIC

Analysis, technical knowledge, diagnosis, and structured problem-solving. Use it to repair, hack, plan, identify weaknesses, or read systems.

PRESENCE

Social influence, emotional control, negotiation, deception, authority, and reading motives.

CHARACTER CREATION PRINCIPLE

Build for table use first; depth comes through play.

Character creation is designed to be fast, clear, and flexible. Define who your character is, how they approach problems, and what role they play within the crew.

Every choice should reinforce one of those elements. You are not writing a complete biography; you are building a functional crew member who can make hard choices immediately.

// Concept: one focused sentence.

// Species: identity, passive trait, and edge ability.

// Approaches: assign 3, 2, 1, 1.

// Role: choose your crew specialization.

// Starting Ability: choose one Tier 1 ability.

// Trait, Problem, Loadout, and Resources finish the character.

SPECIES QUICK CHOICE

Choose concept first; optimization second.

HUMANS

Passive: Adaptive Instinct

Reroll a single die once per session, whether from the Success or Failure

Edge: Push Through

Ignore one Strain from a roll, but immediately gain one Strain afterward.

DROIDS

Passive: Machine Precision

Gain +1 Success Die on Logic-based rolls. Droids track System Stress

Edge: System Override

Automatically succeed at a simple technical task, but gain one Systems Strain equivalent.

VELARI

Passive: Field Awareness

Remove one Failure Die from detection or navigation rolls.

Edge: Pulse Sense

Detect hidden signals, ships, or anomalies; the GM reveals one hidden element in the scene.

DRATH

Passive: Built to Endure

Reduce incoming Physical Strain by one, to a minimum of zero.

Edge: Unstoppable

Ignore all penalties from Physical Strain for one action, then gain additional strain afterward.

MYRR

Passive: Emotional Read

Gain +1 Success Die on social insight or deception detection.

Edge: Neural Sync

Transfer one Advantage to an ally roll at the cost of one Mental Strain.

ROLE AND STARTING ABILITY

Specialization, not restriction.

Choose your starting Role. Your Role defines your primary specialization within the crew and grants access to a Skill Tree.

This grants a Role Tag, access to abilities, and establishes how your character contributes to the crew. Roles do not limit what you can attempt; they define what you are best at.

Select one Tier 1 ability from your chosen Role. This ability is free at character creation and represents your first meaningful mechanical edge.

TRAIT

Your once-per-session edge.

Choose one Trait that represents a defining strength. Once per session, when your Trait clearly applies, you gain +1 Success Die on a roll.

A good Trait is broad enough to matter but narrow enough that it does not apply constantly. The GM has final approval.

Examples: Cool Under Pressure, Former Naval Cadet, Streetwise, Machine Whisperer, Deadeye, Debt-Hardened, Station-Born, Smooth Liar.

PROBLEM

The complication that follows you.

Every character takes a Problem. A Problem is a source of tension, risk, or complication that gives the GM something concrete to pressure.

If your Problem meaningfully complicates the session, you gain +1 XP at the end of play.

Examples: Owes money to a syndicate, wanted in multiple systems, reckless under pressure, cannot resist a mystery, keeps protecting someone who causes trouble.

CREW CREATION

LOADOUT

Start practical, not rich.

Choose one Personal Item and one Utility Item.

A Personal Item is iconic to the character: sidearm, blade, toolkit, data slate, old uniform patch, lucky charm, or worn flight helmet.

A Utility Item solves problems: med patch, repair kit, scanner, climbing gear, breaching tool, comms relay, fake credentials, or emergency oxygen mask.

Equipment is primarily narrative unless a specific rule says otherwise.

STARTING RESOURCES

Thin margins are the point.

Start with 2 Cred, 1 Part, and 0 Assets.

Cred pays for transactions and services. Parts repair and modify equipment or ship systems.

Assets are temporary advantages gained during play.

These values are intentionally limited. You start with enough to survive, not enough to be comfortable.

ADVANCEMENT AND XP

WHEN XP IS GAINED

At the end of each session, characters gain baseline experience for meaningful participation. Extra XP may come from impactful play, engaging a Problem, or group recognition.

EXPERIENCE CAP

A character may gain no more than 4 XP in a single session. This keeps progression steady and prevents sudden power spikes.

SPENDING XP

Spend XP between sessions or during downtime. You may buy Role abilities, improve Approaches, or branch into another Role by purchasing a Tier 1 ability.

APPROACH LIMITS

Approaches can improve over time, but no Approach may exceed 5. Increasing an Approach costs XP equal to the new value.

PLAYER ROLES

Specialization, not restriction.

Roles define how you contribute to the crew. They do not prevent you from attempting other actions; they define where you are strongest and how you manipulate risk. Each Role has a Skill Tree with five tiers. At character creation, choose one Tier 1 ability from your starting Role. Higher tiers are purchased through advancement.

ROLE TREE //

DRIFTER

ROLE IDENTITY AND PLAYSTYLE

The Drifter survives where plans fail. They are the one who keeps things moving when everything starts to fall apart; the one who acts when there is no clean option left. Where others rely on preparation, the Drifter relies on instinct, improvisation, and a willingness to take risks that no one else will. They don't avoid bad situations; they reshape them. In play, the Drifter thrives in uncertainty. They turn failure into opportunity, trade stability for momentum, and push outcomes in unpredictable directions. They are at their best when the crew is off-balance, when the job has gone sideways, and when the only path forward is the one no one planned for.

ROLES / TREES

TIER 1

Make It Work
Flat Effect
Treat any Approach as if it were 1
higher once per scene
Lucky Break
Conversion
Convert 1 Strain into Success; no
Advantage
Off-Script
Dice Boost
+1 die when acting outside expected
role
Scavenged
Know-How
Flat Effect
Attempt actions without proper tools;
consequences still apply

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

DRIFTER

TIER 2

Reroll
Instinct
Conversion
Reroll 1 die; must accept result
Twist the
Outcome
Conversion
Convert 1 Advantage into a narrative
twist
Unplanned
Entry
Push
Enhancement
+1 die when pushing; introduces
complication

ROLES / TREES

TIER 3

Fail Forward
Conversion
Failure becomes partial success with
complication
Borrowed Time
Flat Effect
Ignore consequence temporarily;
returns worse later

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

DRIFTER

TIER 4

Chaos Engine
Conversion
Swap die results; gain 1 Strain
Unstable
Advantage
Flat Effect
Double Advantage; add major complication

ROLES / TREES

TIER 5

No Plan
Survives
Push Override
Success with 2 Advantage; major complication and strain

ROLE TREE //

ENGINEER

ROLE IDENTITY AND PLAYSTYLE

The Engineer keeps the ship alive when it has no right to be. They understand how everything fits together; more importantly, they understand how it breaks. When systems overload, when damage starts to cascade, and when failure feels inevitable, the Engineer is the one holding it all together long enough for the crew to survive.

In play, the Engineer is about control and trade-offs. They can delay collapse, reroute problems, and push systems beyond their limits, but every fix comes with a cost. Stability is never permanent; it is something they fight to maintain moment by moment. The Engineer doesn't prevent failure; they decide when it happens, and what it costs when it does.

ROLES / TREES

TIER 1

Patch Kit
Flat Effect
Clear 1 Ship Strain once per scene
System Familiarity Dice Boost
+1 die on own ship systems
Quick Reroute
Conversion
Convert Strain to Advantage
Jury Access
Flat Effect
Use damaged systems without penalty

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

ENGINEER

TIER 2

Power
Redistribution
Push
Enhancement
+1 die or extra repair; adds
Systems Strain
Stabilize Failure
Conversion
Prevent escalation on failure
Efficiency Loop
Flat Effect
First repair gains extra effect

ROLES / TREES

TIER 3

Overclock System
Push
Enhancement
Boost system; adds Heat and a
Condition
Ghost in the
Machine
Conversion
Failure becomes partial success
with instability

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

ENGINEER

TIER 4

Total Reroute
Flat Effect
Shift damage between systems
Emergency Sustain
Conversion
Reduce major failure; add Strain

ROLES / TREES

TIER 5

It Still Flies
Push Override
Ignore Conditions temporarily;
system collapse later

ROLE TREE //

FACE

ROLE IDENTITY AND PLAYSTYLE

The Face shapes outcomes before they ever become problems. Where others rely on force or technical skill, the Face relies on timing, perception, and leverage. They read people, understand what matters to them, and use that knowledge to turn conflict into opportunity. A situation that would become a fight for someone else becomes a negotiation in their hands. In play, the Face controls the direction of social encounters and often the flow of entire scenes. They create advantages before action begins, smooth over failures after they happen, and turn small openings into meaningful leverage. Their power comes from influence, but it is never free; every deal creates obligation, every favor builds debt, and every success ties them deeper into the web of relationships that define the galaxy.

ROLES / TREES

TIER 1

Read the Room Flat Effect
 Ask the GM a question about an NPC's intent
 Silver Tongue Dice Boost
 +1 die on first impressions
 Shift the Tone
 Conversion
 Convert Strain into Advantage
 Friendly Angle
 Flat Effect
 Reduce the first social complication

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

FACE

TIER 2

Leverage
Point
Flat Effect
Declare leverage in a situation
Smooth Over
Conversion
Failure becomes partial success
Name Drop
Push
Enhancement
+1 die; adds reputation risk

ROLES / TREES

TIER 3

Bind the Deal Flat Effect
Force a short-term agreement; adds complication
Turn the Blame
Conversion
Redirect consequences to another party

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

FACE

TIER 4

Social
Gravity
Flat Effect
Control escalation within a scene
Debt
Collector
Conversion
Call in a favor; create a new debt

ROLES / TREES

TIER 5

Close the
Deal
Push Override
Force an outcome; major complication
follows

ROLE TREE //

PILOT

ROLE IDENTITY AND PLAYSTYLE

The Pilot decides whether the crew gets out alive. When space turns hostile, when the path forward narrows to a single impossible line, and when hesitation means disaster, the Pilot is the one in control. They read movement, anticipate danger, and push the ship through situations that should not be survivable.

In play, the Pilot controls positioning, pacing, and escape. They are the difference between taking a hit and slipping past it, between getting trapped and breaking through. Their strength is not just speed, but judgment; knowing when to push harder, when to hold the line, and when to risk everything on a single maneuver. A great Pilot doesn't avoid danger; they move through it before it can close.

ROLES / TREES

TIER 1

Evasive
 Maneuvers
 Dice Boost
 +1 die when avoiding damage or danger
 Steady Hand
 Flat Effect
 Ignore minor complications while
 piloting
 Push the Engines Push
 Enhancement
 +1 die on movement; adds Heat
 Situational
 Awareness
 Flat Effect
 Reduce first movement-related penalty

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

PILOT

TIER 2

Tight Vector
Dice Boost
+1 die in confined or hazardous space
Ride the Edge
Conversion
Turn Strain into Advantage while
piloting
Burn Hard
Push
Enhancement
Gain major movement boost; adds Heat
and Strain

ROLES / TREES

TIER 3

Perfect Line
Flat Effect
Negate a major movement complication
Slip Through
Conversion
Failure becomes partial success when
escaping

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

PILOT

TIER 4

Ghost Run
Flat Effect
Avoid detection during movement
Vector Shift
Conversion
Redirect outcome of a movement-based failure

ROLES / TREES

TIER 5

Impossible
Maneuver
Push Override
Automatically succeed at extreme movement; major strain and consequence

ROLE TREE //

GUNNER

ROLE IDENTITY AND PLAYSTYLE

The Gunner is what happens when avoidance is no longer an option. When the situation turns hostile and something has to give, the Gunner is the one who applies pressure until it breaks. They don't just fire weapons; they control escalation, dictate tempo, and decide how far a conflict goes.

In play, the Gunner is about decisive action. They convert opportunity into damage, force enemies into bad positions, and end threats before they can spiral further. But power comes with cost. Every shot builds heat, every escalation narrows options, and every decision to fire commits the crew to a path that is harder to walk back. The Gunner doesn't just solve problems; they make sure those solutions matter.

ROLES / TREES

TIER 1

Target Lock
Dice Boost
+1 die when attacking a marked target
Controlled Burst Flat Effect
Reduce collateral or secondary consequences
Suppressive Fire Conversion
Convert Success into Advantage (control space)
Weapons
Familiarity
Flat Effect
Ignore minor penalties with ship weapons

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

GUNNER

TIER 2

Armor Breaker
Conversion
Convert Advantage into additional damage
Sustained Fire
Push
Enhancement
+1 die on repeated attacks; adds Heat
Threat
Assessment
Flat Effect
Identify weakest target or system

ROLES / TREES

TIER 3

Overload Shot
Push
Enhancement
Deal heavy damage; adds Heat and Systems Strain
Pin Them Down
Conversion
Success creates restriction on enemy action

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

GUNNER

TIER 4

Kill Zone
Flat Effect
Control an area; enemies act at disadvantage
Chain Reaction
Conversion
Damage spreads to secondary targets

ROLES / TREES

TIER 5

End It Now
Push Override
Overwhelming success in combat;
severe Heat and consequence

ROLE TREE //

NAVIGATOR

ROLE IDENTITY AND PLAYSTYLE

The Navigator keeps the crew from walking into disaster blind. They read routes, patterns, and signals that others miss, turning uncertainty into something manageable. Where the Pilot reacts in the moment, the Navigator shapes the situation before it ever reaches that point. In play, the Navigator is about anticipation and control. They reduce risk before it becomes pressure, uncover hidden threats, and create safer paths through dangerous space. They don't eliminate danger; they make it predictable. Their strength lies in knowing what's coming and giving the crew just enough advantage to act before it's too late.

ROLES / TREES

TIER 1

Scan Ahead
Flat Effect
Ask the GM about an upcoming threat
or condition
Route Mapping
Dice Boost
+1 die on travel or navigation
Signal Read
Flat Effect
Detect hidden signals or anomalies
Safe Passage
Flat Effect
Reduce first travel-related
complication

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

NAVIGATOR

TIER 2

Predictive Path
Conversion
Convert Failure into Advantage on
travel
Chart the
Unknown
Flat Effect
Remove uncertainty from a route
Data Sync
Push
Enhancement
+1 die for crew action; adds minor
complication

ROLES / TREES

TIER 3

Thread the Gap
Conversion
Partial success avoids major travel
consequence
Pattern
Recognition
Flat Effect
Identify repeating threats or
behaviors

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

NAVIGATOR

TIER 4

Ghost Route
Flat Effect
Avoid detection during travel
Reroute
Consequence
Conversion
Redirect a travel-based complication

ROLES / TREES

TIER 5

Nowhere to Now
Push Override
Bypass major obstacle entirely;
introduces major complication

ROLE TREE //

OPERATOR

ROLE IDENTITY AND PLAYSTYLE

The Operator ensures problems never become visible. They move through systems, environments, and defenses without drawing attention, removing obstacles before they escalate into conflict. Where others react to danger, the Operator acts early, quietly shaping the situation so the crew never has to face it head-on.

In play, the Operator is about control through absence. They bypass security, eliminate threats, and create openings without triggering escalation. Their success often goes unnoticed, but it changes everything. However, precision comes with cost. Every silent action leaves traces, every bypass creates vulnerability, and every clean solution risks a larger complication waiting to surface later.

ROLES / TREES

TIER 1

Silent Movement
Dice Boost
+1 die when moving undetected or
avoiding notice
Close Access
Flat Effect
Ignore minor barriers like locks,
seals, or basic security
Clean Strike
Conversion
Convert 1 Advantage into a silent
takedown or neutralization
Shadow Presence
Flat Effect
Remain unnoticed unless directly
observed or engaged

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

OPERATOR

TIER 2

Infiltration
Route
Flat Effect
Identify a hidden or less-guarded
path into a location
Disable System
Conversion
Turn a success into a temporary
system shutdown or disruption
Vanish
Push
Enhancement
+1 die to escape detection;
introduces a complication

ROLES / TREES

TIER 3

Perfect Entry
Conversion
Failure becomes partial success;
remain undetected with complication
Controlled
Breach
Flat Effect
Bypass a major barrier quietly;
delayed consequence

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

OPERATOR

TIER 4

Ghost Operative
Flat Effect
Cannot be detected by standard means
during stealth actions
Precision
Collapse
Conversion
Remove a target or system entirely;
significant consequence

ROLES / TREES

TIER 5

One Shot, One
Outcome
Push Override
Automatic success on critical
stealth/elimination; major fallout

ROLE TREE //

SMUGGLER

ROLE IDENTITY AND PLAYSTYLE

The Smuggler doesn't avoid danger; they move through it without being seen. They understand how systems work, where they fail, and how to exploit the space between enforcement and oversight. Cargo gets through, people disappear, and information moves where it shouldn't; all without drawing the kind of attention that leads to problems. In play, the Smuggler is about concealment and misdirection. They reduce scrutiny, manipulate inspections, and turn controlled space into something navigable. Their strength is not in stopping conflict, but in never triggering it in the first place. But nothing stays hidden forever. Every successful run increases attention, builds suspicion, and creates a trail that someone will eventually follow.

ROLES / TREES

TIER 1

Hidden
Compartments
Flat Effect
Conceal items from standard
inspections unless specifically
searched
Low Profile
Dice Boost
+1 die when avoiding attention,
inspections, or scrutiny
Mislabel Cargo
Conversion
Convert 1 Advantage into false
identification or documentation
Routine Run
Flat Effect
Treat common transport situations as
low-risk unless escalated

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

SMUGGLER

TIER 2

False Manifest
Flat Effect
Create convincing cargo records or identities
Slip Inspection Conversion
Failure becomes partial success during an inspection
Quiet Transit
Push
Enhancement
+1 die to avoid detection; increases future scrutiny or Heat

TIER 3

Ghost Cargo
Flat Effect
Certain cargo cannot be detected without specialized methods
Redirect
Attention
Conversion
Shift inspection or suspicion to another target

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

SMUGGLER

TIER 4

Black Route
Flat Effect
Access hidden or illegal transport
routes; introduces risk
Perfect Cover
Conversion
Completely avoid detection in a scene;
adds future complication

ROLES / TREES

TIER 5

Nothing to
Declare
Push Override Automatically bypass major inspection;
generates significant Heat or
long-term consequence

ROLE TREE //

SCAVENGER

ROLE IDENTITY AND PLAYSTYLE

The Scavenger sees value where everyone else sees loss. Wreckage, damaged systems, abandoned sites; none of it is wasted. Where others move on from failure, the Scavenger stays behind long enough to extract something useful. They understand how things break, and more importantly, how to take those broken pieces and turn them into something that keeps the crew going.

In play, the Scavenger is about recovery and conversion. They turn destruction into resources, stabilize bad situations just enough to keep moving, and ensure the crew can survive longer than they should. But there is always risk. The best salvage comes from the most dangerous places, and the more they push for value, the more likely they are to trigger instability, attract attention, or make a bad situation worse.

ROLES / TREES

TIER 1

Scrap Sense
Flat Effect
Identify valuable parts or materials in damaged systems or environments
Quick Salvage
Dice Boost
+1 die when extracting resources under time pressure
Break It Down
Conversion
Convert 1 Advantage into usable Parts or materials
Nothing Wasted Flat Effect
Always recover minimal resources from any wreck or failure

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

SCAVENGER

TIER 2

Efficient
Strip
Flat Effect
Increase yield from intact or partially
intact systems
Risky Harvest
Push
Enhancement
+1 die on dangerous salvage; adds
Strain
Salvage
Insight
Conversion
Failure still yields partial resources
or information

ROLES / TREES

TIER 3

Field Rebuild
Flat Effect
Convert Parts into temporary repairs
during a scene
Chain
Extraction
Conversion
Gain additional salvage from connected
systems

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

SCAVENGER

TIER 4

Deep Strip
Flat Effect
Extract high-value components from
heavily damaged or hostile environments
Resource
Conversion
Conversion
Convert excess materials into a
different useful resource

ROLES / TREES

TIER 5

Turn the Wreck Push Override
Convert a destroyed asset into
significant resources; major
complication or consequence

ROLE TREE //

TRADER

ROLE IDENTITY AND PLAYSTYLE

The Trader understands that survival isn't just about completing the job; it's about making the job worth it. They see value where others don't, recognize leverage before it becomes obvious, and shape deals long before they are finalized. Goods, information, access; everything has a price, and the Trader knows how to set it.

In play, the Trader controls the economic layer of the game. They turn outcomes into profit, secure better terms, and ensure that the crew's effort translates into real advantage. But value always comes with strings attached. Every deal creates obligation, every advantage shifts attention, and every successful transaction places the crew deeper into networks that expect something in return. The Trader doesn't just make money; they decide what things are worth, and who pays the cost.

ROLES / TREES

TIER 1

Appraisal
Flat Effect
Determine the true value of goods, assets, or opportunities
Market Sense
Dice Boost
+1 die when buying, selling, or negotiating value
Trade Margin
Conversion
Convert 1 Advantage into increased profit or favorable terms
Established
Contact
Flat Effect
Access a known buyer or seller in most populated areas

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

TRADER

TIER 2

Bundle Deal
Flat Effect
Combine multiple items for improved
trade value
Hard Bargain
Conversion
Failure becomes partial success in
negotiation
Speculative
Play
Push
Enhancement
+1 die on risky deal; introduces
future complication

ROLES / TREES

TIER 3

Liquid Assets
Flat Effect
Quickly convert goods into usable
Cred or resources
Market Shift
Conversion
Change value or outcome of a deal in
your favor

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

TRADER

TIER 4

Exclusive
Contract
Flat Effect
Secure a deal others cannot access;
creates obligation
Price Control
Conversion
Influence cost of a transaction; adds
risk or attention

ROLES / TREES

TIER 5

Own the Deal
Push Override
Fully control a major transaction;
significant long-term consequence

ROLE TREE //

MEDIC

ROLE IDENTITY AND PLAYSTYLE

The Medic keeps the crew functional when they should already be down. They understand the limits of the body and mind, and more importantly, how to push those limits without crossing them; at least not immediately. When injuries mount and stress begins to take its toll, the Medic is the one deciding who keeps moving and who doesn't.

In play, the Medic controls strain and survival. They delay breakdown, stabilize critical moments, and keep the crew in action long enough to finish the job. But nothing they do is permanent. Every recovery is temporary, every delay comes at a cost, and every life saved carries consequences that must be paid later. The Medic doesn't remove damage; they decide when it matters.

TIER 1

Field
Stabilization
Flat Effect
Reduce 1 Physical or Mental Strain
for an ally once per scene
Triage
Dice Boost
+1 die when treating injuries or
stabilizing under pressure
Pain Management
Conversion
Convert 1 Strain into Advantage for
the target
Basic Kit
Flat Effect
Treat injuries without proper
facilities; consequences still apply

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

MEDIC

TIER 2

Quick Patch
Flat Effect
Remove minor injury penalties for one scene
Stabilize
Collapse
Conversion
Prevent escalation to a higher Strain threshold
Stim Push
Push
Enhancement
+1 die to ally's next action; adds 1 Strain afterward

ROLES / TREES

TIER 3

Keep Them Moving Flat Effect
Ignore Strain penalties for one scene; consequences apply later
Controlled
Recovery
Conversion
Failure becomes partial success when treating serious harm

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

MEDIC

TIER 4

Emergency
Override
Flat Effect
Prevent incapacitation; heavy Strain
afterward
Transfer the
Load
Conversion
Move Strain between characters (with
consent)

ROLES / TREES

TIER 5

Not Today
Push Override
Avoid incapacitation entirely;
maximum Strain and major consequence
later

ROLE TREE //

TECH

ROLE IDENTITY AND PLAYSTYLE

The Tech doesn't just fix systems; they take control of them. Doors open when they shouldn't, sensors report what they want them to report, and networks reveal more than they were designed to. Where others see security, the Tech sees structure; and structure can always be broken.

In play, the Tech controls digital space the same way a Pilot controls movement or a Gunner controls combat. They infiltrate networks, manipulate information, and reshape how systems respond to the crew. But every intrusion leaves a trace. The deeper the access, the greater the response. Security escalates, countermeasures activate, and attention builds. The Tech doesn't just solve problems; they trigger systems that will eventually push back.

TIER 1

System Access Flat Effect
Interface with most digital systems
without specialized equipment
Data Read
Flat Effect
Ask the GM one question about a system,
network, or digital environment
Exploit
Weakness
Dice Boost
+1 die when targeting a known system
vulnerability
Signal Mask
Conversion
Convert 1 Strain into reduced detection
or traceability

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

TECH

TIER 2

Breach
Protocol
Conversion
Turn a success into deeper system access
or control
Ghost Signal
Flat Effect
Operate within systems without
triggering standard alerts
Overclock
Hack
Push
Enhancement
+1 die on digital actions; introduces
trace or instability

ROLES / TREES

TIER 3

System
Override
Conversion
Failure becomes partial success with
limited control and consequence
Data Loop
Flat Effect
Sustain or repeat a digital effect for
one additional action

ROLE TREE CONTINUED //

TECH

TIER 4

Blackout
Flat Effect
Disable or blind a system temporarily;
larger response later
False Reality Conversion
Feed false data into a system; delayed
complication

ROLES / TREES

TIER 5

Total Control Push Override
Fully control a system for a scene;
major trace or consequence

ABILITY USE RULES

EXPANDING ROLE COVERAGE

The core Roles are foundational, but the system supports additional specializations that fill critical functions within the crew. Each Role follows the same design logic: clear identity, crew function, risk-based capability, and meaningful trade-offs.

// Provide a clear function within the crew.

// Offer a distinct method of solving problems.

// Interact meaningfully with the dice system.

// Introduce trade-offs rather than pure advantage.

No Role operates in isolation. Coordinated use of multiple Roles should produce stronger outcomes than any individual action.

WHEN ABILITIES APPLY

Abilities only apply when their conditions are met. Players must clearly state when they are using an ability, and the Game Master confirms whether it applies within the current situation.

This keeps abilities grounded in the fiction rather than applied abstractly.



ABILITY LIMITS AND PASSIVE ABILITIES

ABILITY STACKING LIMIT

A character may apply no more than two abilities to a single roll or action.

This includes Dice Boost abilities, Conversion abilities, Push Enhancements, and any ability that directly modifies a roll or its outcome.

Players may combine different types of abilities, but must choose which two apply before resolving the roll. Any additional abilities cannot be used in that moment.

// Prevents stacking abuse.

// Keeps resolution fast.

// Forces meaningful choices under pressure.

PASSIVE ABILITIES

Passive abilities are always in effect and do not require activation or declaration. Whether they count toward the two-ability limit depends on their impact.

If a passive ability directly modifies a roll, such as adding dice, converting results, or altering success conditions, it counts toward the limit.

If it only provides narrative permission, background positioning, or situational context without modifying the roll, it does not count toward the limit.

If there is uncertainty, the Game Master determines whether the passive ability meaningfully impacts the roll.





RISK, POWER, AND CREW SYNERGY

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY: RISK AND POWER

Every Role ability should create opportunity, shift risk, mitigate consequence, amplify specialization, or introduce a meaningful trade-off.

Abilities are not intended to remove tension from play. Strong abilities should change where pressure lands rather than eliminate it.

CREW SYNERGY

Roles are not designed to function independently. A well-balanced crew relies on interaction between Roles rather than individual dominance.

The system rewards coordination between characters: one Role creates an opening, another exploits it, and another absorbs or redirects the consequences.

FINAL PERSPECTIVE

Roles define who steps forward when pressure peaks. They determine who acts when the ship is breaking apart, negotiations collapse, or the plan fails.

A good Role choice should make the player excited about the kind of trouble they are best suited to handle.



STRAIN AND DAMAGE

PHYSICAL STRAIN

Physical Strain reflects injury, exhaustion, impacts, exposure, and bodily stress. It can limit what you can safely attempt.

MENTAL STRAIN

Mental Strain reflects fear, stress, overload, panic, social pressure, and cognitive fatigue. Droids track System Stress instead.

SHIP STRAIN

The ship tracks its own stress and damage. When the ship suffers, the crew suffers. Repairs cost time, Parts, risk, or opportunity.

CONSEQUENCES

Consequences should persist. A bad deal, damaged system, injured ally, unpaid debt, or rising Heat should remain part of the campaign until addressed.

SHIP BASICS

SHIP AS CHARACTER

The ship is a shared asset and a narrative center. It carries the crew, absorbs consequences, creates opportunities, and records bad decisions.

CORE STATS

Frame, Drive, Core, and Signature define what the ship can endure, how it moves, what powers it, and how visible it is.

MODULES

Modules add function and identity. They can support travel, combat, cargo, medical work, stealth, scanning, or crew survival.

REPAIRS

Repairs usually require Parts, time, access, and sometimes a roll. Under pressure, repairs can stabilize a problem without fully solving it.

SHIP CREATION

CREW DISCUSSION

Build the ship together. Decide what it was, who owns it, what is wrong with it, and why the crew depends on it.

CHOOSE FRAME

Frame expresses scale, structure, and physical durability. It shapes how the ship handles damage and pressure.

CHOOSE DRIVE AND CORE

Drive defines movement and reach. Core defines power, reliability, and what systems can be supported.

CHOOSE SIGNATURE

Signature expresses how noticeable, traceable, distinctive, or suspicious the ship is in the wider galaxy.

GAMEPLAY PHASES

JOB PHASE

The crew accepts a contract, favor, opportunity, obligation, or risky chance at profit.

TRAVEL PHASE

The crew plots routes, faces hazards, deals with limited resources, and watches for complications.

ACTION PHASE

The crew confronts the main problem through negotiation, stealth, repair, violence, investigation, escape, or improvisation.

DOWNTIME PHASE

The crew recovers, repairs, spends XP, pays debts, follows leads, and decides what consequence matters next.

ECONOMY, RESOURCES, AND HEAT

CRED

Cred pays for goods, services, bribes, passage, repairs, gear, and survival. It is always under pressure.

PARTS

Parts repair and modify equipment or ship systems. Parts are often more useful than money when stranded.

ASSETS

Assets are temporary advantages, contacts, gear, access, or information gained during play.

HEAT

Heat measures attention, suspicion, and escalating danger. High Heat means inspections, pursuit, retaliation, or hostile complications.

PLAYER-FACING GALAXY LORE

FRACTURED SYSTEMS

The galaxy is not unified. Systems are isolated, laws are inconsistent, and control depends on who can enforce it.

FACTIONS

Factions want leverage. They may hire, threaten, buy, betray, protect, or exploit the crew depending on reputation and usefulness.

DEBT AND REPUTATION

Debt follows you. Reputation opens doors and closes others. Every job shapes how the next one begins.

LIFE IN THE BLACK

Out here, survival is not about doing the right thing. It is about making the call you can live with.

CONDENSED EXAMPLE OF PLAY

SITUATION

The crew is trying to dock at a failing refinery before a patrol sweep reaches the system. The Pilot chooses Finesse to thread the ship through debris.

ROLL

The player rolls Success Dice from Finesse and the GM assigns Failure Dice for debris, unstable thrust, and patrol pressure.

OUTCOME

The ship reaches the dock, but the roll also generates Strain. The landing gear locks unevenly and the patrol receives a partial sensor trace.

FORWARD MOTION

The crew succeeded, but now the Engineer must stabilize the ship while the Face decides whether to bribe the refinery clerk or move fast.

EXAMPLE

PLAYER QUICK REFERENCE

ROLLS

- // 1. Describe what you do in the fiction.
- // 2. Choose Force, Finesse, Logic, or Presence.
- // 3. Roll Success Dice and Failure Dice together.
- // 4. Success Dice: 4-6 are Successes; 1-3 are Advantage.
- // 5. Failure Dice: 4-6 are Failures; 1-3 are Strain.
- // 6. You succeed only if Successes exceed Failures.

PUSH

- // Before rolling, you may Push for +2 Success Dice.
- // A Push automatically creates 1 Strain after the roll.
- // The GM also introduces a complication into the scene.
- // Bonus dice from abilities and effects cannot exceed +2 beyond your base Approach.

CHARACTER CREATION

- // Concept, Species, Approaches, Role, Ability, Trait, Problem, Loadout, Resources, Optional Multiclassing.
- // Approaches begin as 3, 2, 1, 1.
- // Start with one Tier 1 ability from your Role.
- // Start with 2 Cred, 1 Part, and 0 Assets.

TABLE PRINCIPLES

- // The fiction comes first.
- // Success is rarely clean.
- // Failure should still move the story.
- // The ship matters; damage and decisions carry forward.

CHARACTER QUICK REFERENCE

CREATION CHECKLIST

Concept, Species, Approaches, Role, Starting Ability, Trait, Problem, Loadout, Resources, Optional Multiclassing.

APPROACH SPREAD

Assign 3, 2, 1, 1 to Force, Finesse, Logic, and Presence. No Approach may exceed 3 or fall below 1 at creation.

STARTING ABILITY

Select one Tier 1 ability from your chosen Role. This is your first mechanical edge.

XP REMINDER

If your Problem meaningfully complicates a session, you gain +1 XP at the end of play.

SHIP QUICK REFERENCE

SHIP IDENTITY

Name the ship, define what it used to be, decide what is wrong with it, and identify why the crew cannot simply walk away from it.

CORE STATS

Frame, Drive, Core, and Signature define durability, movement, power, and visibility.

SHIP PRESSURE

Track damage, system stress, attention, and unstable conditions. The ship should carry consequences forward.

REPAIR LOGIC

Repairs require tools, time, Parts, access, and sometimes risk. Under pressure, a repair may stabilize rather than solve.

CHARACTER WORKSHEET

Use this as a scratch page before building in Canva or on a character sheet.

CONCEPT

SPECIES

APPROACHES

Force ____ Finesse ____ Logic ____ Presence ____

ROLE

STARTING ABILITY

TRAIT

PROBLEM

LOADOUT

Personal Item _____ Utility Item _____

RESOURCES

2 Cred 1 Part 0 Assets

OPTIONAL MULTICLAS

WORKSHEET