

VEILFARERS

COREBOOK

Chronicles of the Stellar Veil

12.06 / 2026

Pedro Almagro Torrecillas

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A note on the artwork.

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On how this book was made.

VeilFarers was developed with AI assistance throughout its production - drafting, editing, layout engineering, and artwork. All game design, worldbuilding, and editorial judgment are the author's: the tools are instruments, the decisions are human.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PEARL ERA

"The old maps don't work anymore. None of them. We had to learn the stars all over again, one Pearl at a time, and we learned them differently. Not as places we owned. As promises we made to each other to keep

meeting in the dark."

Captain Maren Solas, Free Fleet, Vagrant Star, on the tenth anniversary of her first solo run

Picture a ship that should not still be flying.

The hull is a quilt of three other ships that died so this one could live. The galley smells of recycled air and somebody's terrible coffee. There is a captain who is one bad week from losing the vessel, a pilot who grins when she should be afraid, an engineer who talks to the engine like it owes him money, and at least one passenger nobody fully trusts. There is a job two systems away that pays just enough to keep the lights on, and a reason, under the job, that none of them will say out loud.

That ship is yours. That crew is yours. That dark, between the stars, with the warmth of the cabin holding back the cold of a galaxy that does not care whether you make it home, is where *Veilfarers* happens.

This book is going to teach you how to live there.

WHAT THIS GAME IS

Veilfarers is a space opera about a galaxy that nearly died, and the people who hold it together anyway.

It is a game of patched ships and patched lives, of crews who become closer than family, of jobs that go sideways and somehow matter more than the pay. It is adventurous and it has heart. If you have ever loved a story where a misfit crew argues its way across the stars and would still take a bullet for each other, you already understand the feeling we are going for.

You will not be a chosen one. You will not be a god. You will be a survivor with a ship, a debt, and somebody worth crossing the dark for. The galaxy is hard and the work is unglamorous, and your crew does it anyway, because the alternative is unthinkable. That is the whole spirit of the thing. The universe is cold; you are the warmth.

Everything else in this book, the rules, the ancestries, the Houses, the cosmology, exists to serve that feeling. You do not need to memorize any of it to start. You need a character, a crew, and a willingness to walk into the dark together.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE GALAXY

Here is everything you need to know about the past, in one breath.

A little over a hundred years ago, the galaxy was a single connected civilization. Every world could speak to every other world instantly. Ships crossed light-years in moments. Distance had been beaten. And then, in a single instant, all of it stopped. The network went silent. Faster-than-light travel turned lethal. Worlds woke up alone, lost contact with everyone they had ever known, and many of them starved. People still call it the **Great Silence**, and it killed more living things than any war in history.

What saved the survivors was an accident dredged from the bottom of an alien ocean: a small, glowing orb produced by a deep-sea

creature, an orb that does something impossible. It slows time around itself. Engineered into the heart of a ship's drive, one of these **Quantum Pearls** wraps the crew in a bubble of stopped time and lets the vessel cross the stars in what feels, inside, like ninety seconds. The Pearl burns out in the crossing. Every jump costs one. No Pearls, no travel.

So the galaxy did not rebuild itself into the old seamless civilization. It rebuilt itself into a life-support system, fragile, expensive, improvised, and one bad day from failure. The Empire came later, not as a restoration of what was lost, but as a scaffold built around the new scarcity. This is the **Pearl Era**, a hundred and three years after the funeral. The lights are back on. The scars are everywhere. And the people who fly between the stars are exactly the kind of people your characters are about to be.

A SHORT HISTORY: FROM THE SILENCE TO THE PEARL ERA

If you remember five turning points, you can hold the whole setting in your head.

Before the Silence. For centuries the galaxy was a single, seamless civilization: thousands of worlds bound together by instantaneous communication and faster-than-light travel that made distance almost meaningless. People of the Pearl Era look back on it the way we look at a golden age we can barely believe was real, peaceful, prosperous, casually miraculous, and, it turned out, resting on foundations no one actually understood.

The Great Silence. In a single instant, with no warning anyone recorded, the connective tissue of that civilization failed. Instant communication went dead. Faster-than-light travel became lethal; ships that attempted it were simply lost. Every inhabited world woke up cut off from every other, and most were not self-sufficient. The decades that followed were the worst in galactic history: famine, collapse, isolation, and the slow death of worlds that could not feed themselves. No war ever killed on this scale. What actually caused the Silence is still unknown, and remains the deepest mystery of the setting.

The dying years. For roughly a generation there was no galaxy, only islands: surviving worlds and stranded fleets scraping by alone, each certain it was the last. Much of what makes the Pearl Era hard, the scarcity, the patched technology, the lost knowledge, dates from these years.

The Quantum Pearl. Salvation came from the deep ocean of a single world: a glowing orb grown by a deep-sea creature, an orb that bends time around itself. Engineered into a starship's drive, a **Quantum Pearl** wraps a ship in a bubble of stilled time and carries it safely across the Veil in what feels, inside, like a minute and a half, and burns out in the crossing. Pearls reconnected the islands. They also made travel a consumable luxury, and whoever controlled the Pearls controlled the future.

The Empire and the Pearl Era. Out of that reconnection rose a new order: a galactic **Empire**, rebuilt largely by human hands, organized into six **Great Houses** beneath a long-reigning Emperor, and slowly stabilized into the uneasy peace of today. It is now a hundred and three years since the Silence. The lights are back on, the Houses hold, and an entire generation has grown up knowing the stars only

as places you reach one Pearl at a time. This is the Pearl Era, and it is where you live.

THE VEIL AND THE HOPE FREQUENCY

There is one piece of this galaxy you cannot see and cannot do without, and it shapes the dice in your hand, so it is worth a moment here.

When a ship makes a jump, it does not fly *through* normal space faster. It slips beneath it, into the **Veil**, the layer underneath reality that is everywhere at once. Time runs strangely down there, which is why crossing it was lethal after the Silence and is survivable now only inside the stilled bubble a Pearl makes. You will travel through the Veil constantly and never quite understand it. Nobody does.

Here is the strange, load-bearing fact of the Pearl Era: **the Veil notices who is inside it**. A century of measurement has confirmed what every Veil-runner suspected. Crews that fly confident and bonded reach harbor faster and smoother than crews that fly anxious and divided. The effect is small, real, and cumulative, and no one can explain it. It is called the **Hope Frequency**, the substrate's quiet response to the feelings of the people crossing it.

This is the cosmological root of the whole game. When you roll a **Hope die** and a **Fear die** (Chapter 9), you are rolling in the same register the universe itself uses. A crew that cares for one another gathers a real, if subtle, advantage; a crew that turns on itself pays for it. How you treat each other is not only a story choice. The galaxy is keeping score.

The Veil also has weather, **Veil Storms** that tear at a jump's stilled time, **Memory Wakes** that flood a crew with feelings that were never theirs, and stranger things, but those are hazards a crew meets in play. The full cosmology, where the Veil comes from and what the vanished **Precursors** had to do with it, is the deep end, and it waits in "The Galaxy in Depth" at the back of this book. You do not need it tonight.

HOW THE GALAXY IS GOVERNED

The Pearl Era is neither anarchy nor the old seamless civilization. It is an **Empire**: a loose but real galactic order, rebuilt after the Silence and held together by six powerful dynasties called the **Great Houses**, beneath a long-reigning Emperor whose origins are the subject of endless rumor. You will meet the Houses properly in Chapter 5; here is the shape of the thing.

Humanity rebuilt and runs this order. Humans are not the most advanced people in the galaxy, nor the strongest, but they are the most established and the most numerous in the seats of power, and the head of every one of the six Great Houses is human. That dominance comes with a hard rule, learned the worst way. The early decades of resettlement saw vicious violence between some human enclaves and the other ancestries, and the Empire's founders concluded that a multi-species galaxy could not survive a repeat of it. So the Empire was built on an explicit creed: the nine ancestries are equal under Imperial law, and racial violence or discrimination is among the gravest crimes there is, hunted down and punished hard. The Pearl Era is, by deliberate design, a place where a Kryllian engineer, an Ailuran broker, and a human captain stand as colleagues, not as masters and servants.

The six Great Houses each dominate a slice of galactic life. In brief: **Amaranth** keeps knowledge and the long view; **Joric** are the sentinels and protectors; **Kurogane** are the transhumanist makers, forever pushing the border between flesh and machine; **Solari** are the fading Core-Worlds traditionalists and home to the formal Mystic schools; **Valerius** are the merchant princes who control the Pearl trade, and through it nearly everything; and **Volkov** are the war-makers, who hold that strength is the only truth. The Houses

cooperate, compete, and feud, and most of galactic politics is the friction between them.

Not everyone bends a knee to a House. The **Free Fleet** is a loose alliance of independent ships and nomadic crews, roughly half human and fiercely self-governing, that takes the work the Houses will not and answers to no one. The **Stellar Commerce Guild** moves the cargo and brokers the deals that keep the Houses fed. The **Explorers' Guild** charts the worlds the Silence cut off. And the **Solara Compact**, a Core-Worlds coalition, dreams of restoring the old seamless civilization, distrusting the new psionics and the Houses alike. Your crew will deal with all of them, and owe favors to several.

LIFE IN THE PEARL ERA

For most people, the grand politics matter less than the price of a Pearl. Travel between the stars is no longer a right; it is a cost, paid one burned-out Pearl at a time, and that single fact shapes everything. Worlds that sit on Pearl routes thrive; worlds that do not can be one expensive crossing away from help that never comes. House Valerius, which controls the Pearl trade, is richer than the others precisely because it controls the one thing nobody can do without. Wealth in the Pearl Era is less about luxury than about reach: who can afford to cross the dark, and how often.

The galaxy divides roughly into the **Core**, the older, richer, better-connected worlds near the heart of the Empire, and the **Rim**, a frontier of mining moons, salvage fleets, and hard settlements where Imperial law runs thin and a crew's reputation is its only protection. Between

them moves a constant traffic of ships like yours: independent crews who carry the cargo, the medicine, the news, and the people the Houses cannot or will not move themselves. In a galaxy that can no longer talk to itself instantly, those crews are the connective tissue. They are also where the nine ancestries actually mix. A House may be human-led, but a working crew is as likely to be a Kryllian, a Kryx, a Synthetic, and two humans arguing over coffee.

Knowledge itself is uneven. The Silence swallowed whole libraries of pre-collapse science, and much of the technology in daily use is salvaged, patched, or imperfectly understood, including the Pearls, which no one has learned to manufacture. To live in the Pearl Era is to keep a brighter age's machines running by hand, to make do with tools you cannot fully rebuild, and to suspect, quietly, that another Silence could come without warning, just as the first one did. That suspicion is part of why crews hold so tightly to one another. In a galaxy this fragile, the people beside you are the one thing you can be sure of.

WHO YOU ARE

Your character is a working person in a broken galaxy. A pilot who reads paths in the chaos. An engineer who can coax life out of dead tech. A scoundrel who trades in secrets. A medic, a soldier, a scholar, a diplomat, an explorer. Whatever they are, they have lost things, gained things, and got a reason to take the first job that comes through the door.

You are also not alone out there. Humanity shares the Pearl Era with other peoples: luminous **Celestari** who feel the emotions of a room like weather, insectile **Kryllian** engineers who build to last a thousand years, **Ethereals** who stand half a step out of phase with reality, **Ailurans** who cannot help but uncover every secret in reach, and several more besides. Your crew can be drawn from any of them. The full cast lives in Chapter 3.

One more choice shapes who you are. A rare few people, roughly one in forty thousand, are **Awakened**: they can feel the Hope Frequency directly and spend their own Hope to do things that should be impossible. Everyone else is **Sleeping**, deaf to the

Frequency and running on their own hard-won skill. Sleeping characters are not lesser; they are the medic, the captain, the friend who reminds the Awakened that they used to be a person. Most crews are a mix of both. You will make this choice in Chapter 2.

HOW IT PLAYS

The entire engine of *Veilfarers* fits in a paragraph.

When your character tries something and the outcome is in doubt, you roll two twelve-sided dice of different colors: one **Hope** die, one **Fear** die. Add them together, add a small bonus from one of your six Traits, and compare the total to a target number the Keeper sets. Meet it or beat it and you succeed. Miss it and you fail. So far this is an ordinary dice roll.

Here is the part that makes it *Veilfarers*: look at which of the two dice rolled higher. If **Hope** is higher, things break your way, you gain a little luck, a clean result, a token of Hope to spend later. If **Fear** is higher, you get what you wanted but the universe takes something back, an alarm sounds, an ally is hurt, the wrong person overhears. This is true even when you fail: a failure carried by Hope leaves you a thread to pull, a failure carried by Fear makes the situation worse. Roll the same number on both dice and you score a critical success. That is it. Every roll is a small story, never just a yes or a no.

You will learn the full procedure in Chapter 9. But you already understand the heart of it. Hope and Fear, every time, hand in hand.

THE KIND OF NIGHTS YOU WILL HAVE

A few flavors of the stories this game is built to tell.

The crew runs medicine through a Veil storm because children three jumps away will die if the ship arrives late. A routine cargo run turns out to be carrying a person, and that person is being hunted. An engineer spends six years trying to fix a piece of pre-Silence tech that cannot be fixed, and keeps trying anyway. A captain takes a job that, by no coincidence at all, drifts within reach of the sister who vanished eleven years ago on a world the Houses swear does not exist.

These are not grim stories. They are hopeful ones, set in a hard place. The pilot dances through the storm with white knuckles and a grin. The crew is tired and underpaid and would not trade any of it. That is the music we are playing. The rest of the book just hands you the instruments.

WHERE TO GO NEXT

You can read this book front to back, or start playing immediately. Both work.

- **To play your very first session tonight**, turn to **Appendix A: A Spark in the Dark**: ready-made characters and a complete starter adventure, no other reading required.
- **To build your own character**, **Chapter 2** walks you through the Awakened and Sleeping paths, then the nine ancestries (Chapter 3), the communities (Chapter 4), the six Houses (Chapter 5), and everything that turns an idea into a character sheet (Chapter 8).
- **To learn the rules in full**, Chapters 9 through 12 cover rolling, combat, recovery, and advancement.
- **To understand the galaxy you fly through**, equipment and communications (Chapter 13), wealth (Chapter 15), reputation (Chapter 16), and starships (Chapter 17) make the world concrete.
- **To go deep on the cosmology**, the Veil, the Hope Frequency, and the Precursors are explored in full in "The Galaxy in Depth" at the back.

A note on optional rules. Throughout the book you will see a gear marker. That is the **Gears framework**: everything marked with it is

optional. The base game is everything *not* marked. A table that wants something lean can ignore every Gear and still have a complete, working system; a table that wants depth can switch them on.

The Pearl Era is waiting. There is a ship in a port somewhere with your name on the manifest, a crew that may not yet know one another, and a first job being argued over in a bar two parsecs away, where someone is about to have a very bad week. You are going to be the people who help. Or not. Depending on what the manifest pays.

Turn the page.

CHAPTER 2

TWO PATHS

"To be Awakened is to be reached for. To be Sleeping is to be reached toward. Neither comes first. Neither comes second."

Master Vocator Hilde Tyrell, Joric Hall

At a glance. Your first choice is what kind of being your character is. The Awakened (about 1 in 40,000) perceive and bend the Veil; they run on Hope and Domain Powers (Chapters 6 and 18). The Sleeping are deaf to the Veil and run on themselves: Effort for everyday play and a scarce Resolve pool for signature Moves (Chapter 7). Both use the same nine Classes, the same Traits, and the same Duality Roll. Neither is stronger. Pick the one that fits the character you want to play.

This is the foundation the rest of character creation builds on, so make it deliberately. You can read Chapters 4 through 7 first and come back, but decide before you commit. (The cosmology behind the split, why some wake and most do not, lives in "The Galaxy in Depth"; you do not need it to choose.)

THE TWO KINDS OF BEING

Most beings interact with the Veil only indirectly: they live in normal space and cross the Veil in Pearl-driven ships, never touching the substrate directly. This is the **Sleeping** state. A small fraction, roughly one in forty thousand, spread evenly across every ancestry, can perceive the substrate and, with training, act on it. This is the **Awakened** state.

Both are equally valid, equally supported, and equally effective. A Sleeping character is not a "non-Awakened" character; they are a character whose interface with the cosmos is the ordinary one, and who therefore brings a different and equally deep toolkit. The right question is never *which is better*. It is *which fits the character I want to play*.

WHAT EACH PATH PLAYS LIKE

Awakened. You live with a constant low awareness of the substrate, a hum, a pulse, dreams of things that never happened to you. You can feel the emotional weather of a room (not read minds, but read the Veil's response to them), and you can spend Hope to do things ordinary physics forbids. The perception is a gift and, in crowds or wounded places, a burden. Your successes are partly joint actions with the universe; your costs are real (Hope, Stress, and the risk the substrate pushes back).

Sleeping. You have no substrate-access; the Veil is strange physics, not a presence. What you have instead is yourself: training, discipline, and nerve. Your competencies are not magical, they are *real*, and they do not depend on the day's emotional weather. When a Sleeping character does the impossible, it is theirs alone. This is the dignity of the path, and the post-Silence galaxy, every ship and House and library, was built mostly by Sleeping hands.

How you *feel* about your path is part of your character. Awakened may embrace, resist, or still be making peace with what they are; Sleeping may carry comparison, romanticized expectation, or a complicated relationship with an Awakened relative. A clear stance here earns richer scenes than treating the path as a mere category.

MECHANICAL DIFFERENCES

Both paths use the same nine Classes, the same Traits, the same Duality Roll (Chapter 9), and both invoke Experiences for a flat bonus. They diverge in their engines.

Awakened characters use:

- **Domain Powers** (Chapters 6 and 18), drawn from the Domain Pair their Class grants.
- **Hope**, the working currency: gained on Hope-favored rolls, spent on Powers and Experience invocations.
- **Stress**, which fills with Power costs and pushes, and clears on rest.
- **Loadout**, the equipping system that rewards advance preparation.

Sleeping characters use:

- **Effort**, their everyday currency (the parallel to Hope): gained through play, spent on their Class's Effort Feature and reactions.
- **Resolve**, a small, scarce pool of d4 (base 2, rising by 1 at levels 3, 5, 7 and 9) spent on signature **Moves** (Chapter 7).
- **Honed Edge**, a passive that raises their damage every level, and **free Experience invocation** plus one extra Experience.
- **Recovery**, a rest-anchored practice that clears Stress. It never generates Effort; Effort comes from the Track in Chapter 7 and only from exceptions that name themselves explicitly.

Neither toolkit subsumes the other. The Awakened do things that violate normal physics; the Sleeping do things that exceed normal capacity. The abilities differ in kind, not in magnitude, and a Tier 3 character of either path has comparable decision-density in any scene.

CHOOSING YOUR PATH

Choose Awakened if: you want abilities that feel cosmically significant; you enjoy resource management and preparation; you like successes that are partly the universe's doing; your concept centers on a relationship with the Veil.

Choose Sleeping if: you want abilities grounded in earned, human capability; you prefer competence won through training; you want successes that are yours alone; your concept centers on a craft or profession; you like being the steady hand in a crew of more dramatic crewmates.

Both paths carry any kind of story; the choice shapes the *flavor* of your actions, not their importance. **If you cannot decide, lean Sleeping**, not because it is safer (both are), but because it lets a new player focus on who their character is without also learning the Domain Powers and Loadout systems in session one. Experienced players should simply pick what resonates.

MIXED CREWS

A typical crew mixes both, and that is the assumed default: the Awakened reach across, the Sleeping hold the line, and the most memorable scenes come from the gap between them (the Awakened does something impossible; the Sleeping has to decide what to do *next*, including who must not have seen it). All-Awakened and all-Sleeping crews both work, the latter is excellent for

grounded, espionage-flavored play, and no particular ratio is required. Let the crew be what the players want.

Gear, the Concealed Awakened Identity (*Recommended Optional*). Some Awakened hide what they are, for family, House politics, or privacy. A character may take the **Concealed** tag: while Concealed, every Domain Power activation costs +1 Stress (the strain of suppressing visible substrate traces), and NPCs assume the character is Sleeping until evidence forces otherwise. Concealment can be dropped in play, often dramatically.

A FEW COMMON QUESTIONS

- **Can a character switch paths?** Yes, through a deliberate **Awakening**: a Sleeping character discovering they could hear the Veil all along. It is a transformational arc, one of the biggest a campaign can carry, never a casual swap or an optimization lever; the guidance, including how path-specific advancement is handled, lives at the end of Chapter 7. The reverse, an Awakened going deaf to the Veil, is so rare the galaxy has no settled name for it, and the table should not assume the mechanics simply mirror.
- **Can a character be partly both?** No. The calibration is binary at the individual level. Mixed *heritage* is a backstory, not a mechanical state.
- **Can any ancestry be Awakened?** Yes, all nine, at comparable rates. Cultural attitudes vary widely (some venerate it, some are neutral, some distrust it); that detail lives in Chapters 4 and 5.
- **Do Houses exclude a path?** No. Some skew (Solari has the most Awakened per capita; Volkov the fewest on record, likely through concealment), but membership turns on family and politics, not Awakening.

WHAT COMES NEXT

You have made the decision, or chosen to make it after reading on. Either is fine.

- **Chapter 3** introduces the nine ancestries (independent of path).
- **Chapter 5** covers the Houses, the Free Fleet, and the Explorers' Guild.
- **Chapter 6** is the Awakened Classes; **Chapter 7** is the Sleeping Classes. Read your path in full and skim the other for awareness of your crewmates.
- **Chapter 8** finishes the build for everyone: Traits, Experiences, Connections.

Make the choice deliberately. The character you build will live inside it.

CHAPTER 3

ANCESTRIES

"There are nine of us at this table. Nine ancestries, nine biologies, nine ways of seeing. We do not agree on what is real. We agree only that the cargo has to reach Hydros by tenday's end. That is enough."

Senior Liaison Velara Thessen, Inter-Species Office of the Free Fleet, opening remarks at a routine sector council meeting

This chapter introduces the nine playable **ancestries** of the post-Silence galaxy: **Ailurans**, **Bloomstriders**, **Celestari**, **Ethereals**, **Humans**, **Kryllians**, **Kryx**, **Rift Spinners**, and **Synthetics**. Your character's ancestry sets their biology, their cognitive architecture, their cultural starting point, and their place in the post-Silence ecology. It does not set their character, that part is yours.

The nine ancestries are presented in alphabetical order. Equal weight is given to each. The Pearl Era's working population includes representatives of all nine, and the campaign assumes a mixed-ancestry crew is the default. A player who chooses any of the nine will find their character at home.

A note on inclusivity: the system is designed so that any ancestry can take any path (Awakened or Sleeping), any class, any role. The biological differences between ancestries are real and produce real flavor, but they do not constrain the choices a player can make at the character sheet. A Bloomstrider scout, a Synthetic mystic, an Ethereal soldier, a Kryllian diplomat, all are mechanically supported, narratively interesting, and welcome at the table.

Each ancestry profile below covers the essentials: identity, physical description, culture, place in the galaxy, **Ancestry Gifts** (the mechanical features that distinguish the ancestry at the table), and **Ancestry Complications**. The Ailuran section also includes the **Sub-Strain** mechanic, the only ancestry-internal split with mechanical weight at character creation.

Master Ancestry Complication procedure. At most once per character per session, after a **player-rolled Fear-dominant noncritical Roll** that materially used one of that character's Ancestry Gifts, the Keeper may spend 1 Fear and roll 1d6 on that ancestry's table. Never choose the row. Matching dice never trigger a complication, and no row selects the player's Action. Apply only numbers, resources, Conditions, durations, movement, or item effects explicitly printed in the row. If a row does not print a complete mechanical effect, its complete effect is to **mark 1 Stress** and use the row only as narration; it cannot also create an NPC, hazard, lost item, disabled device, position change, or hidden penalty.

Read all nine before deciding. Your ancestry will color every interaction your character has, with crew, with Houses, with the Veil, with strangers in spaceports, for the duration of the campaign.

AILURAN

"I have already been inside your ship. I have already read your cargo manifest. I have already memorized the access codes on your captain's terminal. You did not see me because I did not wish to be seen. Now, shall we negotiate, or shall I tell you what you had for breakfast?"

Nyx of the Locked Vault, Arbiter of the Apex Accords

Identity. The Ailurans are the galaxy's newest mystery. Revealed only in the wake of the Veil Rip, the catastrophic tearing of the Stellar Veil that continues to reshape known space, they are a feline species of solitary predators, infiltrators, and information brokers whose existence was unknown to galactic civilization until months ago. They were here all along: residents of the settled galaxy, living in the margins, watching from the

shadows, and cataloging secrets in silence. The Veil Rip simply destroyed the cloaking infrastructure that kept their enclaves hidden. Now exposed, they have stepped into the light with an unnerving calm, as though they had been expecting this moment all along.

Physical Description. Ailurans are lean, digitigrade humanoids standing between 1.6 and 1.9 meters tall, descended from feline ancestors. Their bodies are covered in short, dense fur ranging from deep charcoal to pale silver-gray, sometimes marked with darker rosettes or tabby-like striping along the shoulders and spine. Their faces are distinctly feline, high cheekbones tapering to a narrow muzzle, wide-set eyes with vertical-slit pupils, large independently rotating ears. Four-fingered hands with retractable claws; a prehensile tail that conveys involuntary emotional signals. Their most striking feature is their eyes: Ailurans see the world in perfect grayscale, they are completely colorblind, but they perceive thermal radiation and bio-electric fields as overlapping luminous auras. To an Ailuran, the galaxy is a cathedral of gray light and living fire.

Homeworld. Ailurans acknowledge no homeworld, and they prefer it that way. They live in hidden enclaves rather than on any one planet, quiet warrens tucked into the margins of other people's stations, asteroid clusters, and border worlds, kept invisible until the Veil Rip stripped away their cloaking. Where they came from, whether they evolved on some lost world or have simply always lived in the cracks of galactic civilization, they will not say, and a careful listener learns that an Ailuran asked directly about origins becomes very still and changes the subject. The honest answer may be that they do not know. The likelier answer is that, like everything else, they are keeping it.

Culture. Ailuran society, if it can be called society, rejects every form of permanent hierarchy. There are no kings, no councils, no governments. They operate on the **Apex Accords**, a system of strict, temporary contracts negotiated between individuals. If terms are met, the contract is sacred. If terms are broken, the offender is marked, not with violence, but with silence. An Ailuran who breaks an Accord is simply never spoken to again by anyone who knows. In a species that trades exclusively in information, this is a death sentence. Disputes are settled by **Arbiters** respected individuals who have earned reputations for fairness through decades of honest dealing. Ailuran names consist of a Root (Dax, Nyx, Kel, Voss) and a Focus, an earned title based on current obsession (Nyx of the Locked Vault, Dax of the Burning Signal). The Focus changes when the obsession does. Underneath the Accords runs a single shared value the Ailurans call the economy of truth: information is the only real currency, a debt of knowledge is as binding as any contract, and a fact freely given is either a gift of enormous weight or a trap. They

keep no temples and few celebrations; what they have instead is the Exchange, a neutral meeting under truce where secrets are traded face to face, and the slow accumulation of a personal reputation that can take a lifetime to build and a single broken word to lose.

Place in the Galaxy. Ailurans are present in every major Houses' workforce and across the Free Fleet, typically as independent contractors. House Volkov has cultivated long working relationships with Ailuran operatives, treating them as the most reliable solo agents available. House Valerius is one of the largest customers of Ailuran intelligence networks, paying premium rates for information that the Pearl trade cannot acquire by other means. The Free Fleet has a small but distinguished tradition of Ailuran captains, who run their crews with tight informational discipline and tend to retire wealthy.

Society and Daily Life. Day to day, Ailuran life runs on the quiet management of information and obligation. An Ailuran keeps meticulous private records, pays debts of knowledge precisely, and treats a careless word the

way others treat a spilled drink: a small, fixable embarrassment that still should not have happened. They work alone by preference and meet in neutral exchanges, a back room, a quiet dock, an agreed frequency, where secrets change hands under the protection of the Accords. Hospitality among them is real but formal: a guest is owed safety and honesty for the length of a stated visit, and nothing beyond it. To outsiders this can look cold. To an Ailuran it is simply clean.

Relations with Other Ancestries. Ailurans find Humans fascinating and a little pitiable, tireless producers of secrets who are catastrophically bad at keeping them. They share a wary, respectful arms race with Kryllian security engineers: one builds the vault, the other opens it, and both take it as a compliment. They feel genuine kinship with Synthetics, whose private, unreadable inner states an Ailuran finds restful, and several enclaves now host Synthetic residents. They avoid Celestari, whose glow blinds their aura-sight, and they baffle the Kryx, whose pack instincts have no slot for a creature with no pack at all.

Distinctive Traits and Customs. Ailurans groom obsessively, sit through long silences without discomfort, and treat direct eye contact as a small intimacy reserved for trusted partners. Their names announce their current obsession, so a Focus that has not changed in years tells you a great deal about a person. An Awakened Ailuran is treated by other Ailurans as simply carrying one more interesting capability; the path impresses them far less than a well-kept secret does.

ANCESTRY GIFTS

Achromatic Aura-Sight. Your eyes perceive thermal radiation and bio-electric fields rather than visible light. You see perfectly in total darkness out to Far range, reading the world as overlapping auras of heat and life. You can detect living creatures behind thin barriers within Close range by their thermal signature. However, you are completely colorblind, any check that relies exclusively on color identification is made at Disadvantage unless you use assistive technology. Creatures with no thermal output (certain Synthetics, Bloomstriders in dormancy) appear as cold silhouettes, visible but unreadable.

Perfect Equilibrium. Your digitigrade legs, prehensile tail, and predatory reflexes grant you supernatural balance and climbing

ability. You are immune to fall damage from medium heights (roughly two stories or less). You gain Advantage on all Agility rolls to balance, climb, or move silently across unstable or narrow surfaces. You can scale vertical surfaces with even minimal handholds without rolling, provided you are not in combat or under immediate time pressure.

Irrepressible Curiosity. Once per session, when hidden information exists that you could plausibly discover, the Keeper may point out the lead. You choose whether to pursue it; this Gift never selects your Action or charges a cost for refusing. If you pursue it and uncover the hidden truth, gain **1 path resource**: 1 Hope if Awakened or 1 Effort if Sleeping, subject to the normal cap.

Sub-Strain (Choose One at Character Creation). The Ailuran genome expresses in two divergent phenotypes, each shaping not only physiology but approach to every problem encountered. Choose one Sub-Strain at character creation; you gain that Sub-Strain's feature in addition to your three core Ancestry Gifts above.

Shroud-Strain, The Still Hunters

Sleeker, lightly built, with chromatophore fur that shifts in real time. They are patient to the point of unsettling stillness, capable of waiting for hours without moving a muscle.

Static Cloak. Your chromatophore fur provides active camouflage. While completely motionless, with no movement, speech, or active equipment use, you are effectively invisible to visual and thermal detection. A creature actively searching for you makes an Instinct Roll, DC 15. The effect ends immediately if you move, speak, attack, or take any Action; reassuming stillness requires spending your full Spotlight doing nothing. This is biological camouflage, not technology, and cannot be jammed by electronic countermeasures.

Surge-Strain, The Kinetic Predators

Heavier, more powerfully muscled, frames built for explosive acceleration. Their leg musculature is visibly denser, packed with fast-twitch fibers.

Kinetic Battery. Your metabolism can store and release kinetic energy in controlled bursts. Once per scene, mark 1 Stress to activate a Metabolic Burst: you move instantly to any point within Far range that you can see, ignoring difficult terrain and obstacles shorter than your height. This movement does not provoke reactions. Upon arriving, you gain Advantage on your next Agility or Finesse roll made before the end of your next Spotlight. Observers see a blur of fur and feel a displacement of air.

Playing an Ailuran. You are the crew's specialist in finding what others have hidden, the one who already read the manifest, already mapped the exits, already knows which guard is lying. Your value is rarely raw combat; it is the moment the locked door becomes an open door and the secret nobody else thought to look for changes the whole job. Lean on Irrepressible Curiosity as your engine: let it pull you somewhere you should not be, and trust the Keeper to make the trouble worth it. Watch the two classic pitfalls, hoarding information from your own crew until it is too late to matter, and treating people as puzzles rather than partners. The richest Ailuran arcs are about an operator who deals only in contracts learning, slowly and reluctantly, to give something away for free.

ANCESTRY COMPLICATIONS

Ailuran Complications. At most once per Ailuran per session, after that character resolves a Fear-dominant noncritical Roll that materially used an Ailuran Gift, the Keeper may spend 1 Fear and roll 1d6 on this table. Do not choose a result. Matching dice never trigger it, and the complication never selects the player's Action.

D6	COMPLICATION
1	Compulsive Fixation. Become Dazed; clear it through the normal condition rule after the next Action.
2	Thermal Misread. The next Instinct Roll you make through aura-sight before the end of your next Spotlight has Disadvantage.
3	Exposed Position. Lose Hidden, and the next attack against you before the start of your next Spotlight has Advantage. Your position does not change.
4	Broken Silence. Lose Hidden. If an established alarm is present, it activates; otherwise mark 1 Stress.
5	Information Debt. Record a named information debt to a known NPC or faction. It is a campaign hook with no immediate modifier, cost, or compelled Action.
6	The Itch That Won't Stop. Mark 1 Stress and take Disadvantage on the next Roll unrelated to the discovered lead before the end of the scene. The player still chooses every Action.

BLOOMSTRIDER

"We are gardeners in the empty void. We tend to life where others see only death. Empires fall, so we plant seeds. We are not conquerors. We are companions to the places we live."

Verdant Conclave proverb, taught to all young Bloomstriders before their first off-world voyage

Identity. Bloomstriders are children of living planets, their bodies a genuine fusion of animal and plant life.

Glowing sap flows through their veins, their hair grows like moss or ferns, and living patterns on their skin shift with the seasons. They believe life is a promise, not a possession, and act as gardeners and companions to the places they inhabit. They see the Great Silence as an opportunity for new growth, a chance to bring life back to the stars.

Physical Description. Bloomstriders possess a strange, natural beauty. Their skin feels like tree bark and changes color with their moods and the seasons, brown, green, or gold, while glowing sap pulses through visible veins beneath. Their hair is living moss, ferns, or vines that moves and reacts to surroundings; some have flowers or leaves growing from their skin, others thorns or ridges along their arms. Their deep green and brown eyes have pupils that open and close like blooming flowers.

Homeworld. Bloomstriders trace themselves to the living worlds: warm, water-rich planets whose whole biospheres behave like a single slow organism, where forests share root-networks for thousands of kilometers and the weather answers the season rather than the other way around. Their ancestral world, which Groves still call simply the First Garden, is a place of cathedral-canopy forests and luminous wetlands, more grown than built. Few Bloomstriders alive have seen it; most were born in transplanted Groves aboard ships and on reclaimed worlds. But every Grove keeps a seed-line said to descend from the First Garden, and to plant one on a dead world is, for a Bloomstrider, the closest thing to going home.

Culture. Bloomstrider society resembles a grove of trees. They live in groups called **Groves** large families spread across many planets, connected by shared seeds and beliefs. Each Grove has a special purpose: some focus on healing, others on defense, still others on exploration to spread new life. A traveling Bloomstrider always carries seeds from home. Two main factions have emerged across the Groves: the **Verdant Conclave**, gardeners who unite many Groves under the symbol of the Spiral Leaf, working slowly and gently; and the **Thornbind Covenant**, guardians who train their bodies as living weapons of thorns, poisons, and strangling vines, acting as the galaxy's immune system against threats that would otherwise consume the gardens. Within a Grove, decisions are reached by long consensus rather than command, and an individual's standing grows with what they have nurtured rather than what they have won. They mark the turning of seasons even on lightless ships, keep elaborate grief-rites built around planting, and treat the deliberate killing of a living system, a poisoned well, a burned forest, a strip-mined moon, as the one truly unforgivable crime. To a Bloomstrider, time spent is not lost if something grew in it.

Place in the Galaxy. Bloomstriders are present across the Free Fleet and increasingly in House service, particularly with House Amaranth (whose long-range planning aligns with Bloomstrider time-scales) and House Joric (whose protective doctrine matches the Thornbind ethos). House Kurogane has a complicated history with Bloomstriders, having historically attempted to commercialize

Bloomstrider biology. The wounds of that history have not fully healed.

Society and Daily Life. A Grove is less a government than a household stretched across worlds, run by long discussion and a shared sense of season. Bloomstriders measure time in growth and decay rather than hours; they tend to reach decisions slowly and then hold to them stubbornly. They keep gardens wherever they settle, on

ships, in stations, in the cracks of dead worlds, and a Bloomstrider with nothing living to tend grows visibly unwell. They are physical, tactile people: they greet by touch, mourn by planting, and find the sterile corridors of most stations quietly depressing.

Relations with Other Ancestries. Bloomstriders get on easily with Celestari, both patient, both drawn to care-work, and with Humans, whose improvisational energy they find endearing if exhausting. They carry a guarded history with House Kurogane over old attempts to commercialize their biology, and that wariness colors their dealings with Kryllians and Synthetics, whose instinct to optimize living systems can feel, to a Bloomstrider, like being treated as a resource. With the Kryx they share a surprising warmth: both prize loyalty and the protection of one's own.

Distinctive Traits and Customs. Bloomstriders mark important events by planting, and many carry a personal seed-line traceable back to their home Grove. They are slow to anger and slower still to forgive an injury done to a living place. Awakening, when it comes to a Bloomstrider, tends to arrive late and root deep; their communities regard an Awakened member as a particularly patient kind of gardener.

ANCESTRY GIFTS

Plant-like Body. You can derive energy from light and your organs filter toxins efficiently. Gain Advantage on Instinct Rolls to survive hostile environments. This Gift grants no Core Resistance, immunity, atmosphere, pressure seal, or automatic protection from printed damage; equipment is still required when a hazard says so.

Nurturing Touch. After several minutes of focused contact with another creature, roll 1d4 once. At the start of each of that target's next that many Spotlights, it clears **1 HP**. Reapplying Nurturing Touch before the effect ends keeps only the higher remaining duration; its healing never stacks. Faint root-like patterns appear on the healed skin and fade shortly afterward.

Playing a Bloomstrider. You are the crew's tie to natural cycles, biological wisdom, and the long view, the medic who keeps everyone alive and the conscience that asks what a plan will cost the living things in its path. Your timescale is longer than the others': your patience can frustrate them, and your survival and healing skills will repeatedly save them. Play the Conclave-Covenant tension openly; a Bloomstrider torn between gardener and guardian always has something to wrestle with. The pitfall to avoid is becoming the table's scold, your slowness and your reverence for life are strengths, not lectures. The best Bloomstrider beats come when patience finally breaks, or when the gardener has to pick up the guardian's weapons.

ANCESTRY COMPLICATIONS

D6	COMPLICATION
1	Sap-Bleed Your luminous sap leaks visibly. You are easier to track or detect until you can recover.
2	Rootshock A sudden wave of empathic feedback overwhelms you. Mark 1 Stress.
3	Symbiotic Overgrowth Vines, spores, or fronds react uncontrollably, entangling gear or slowing movement.
4	Echo of Decay. Mark 1 Stress. You sense only corruption or infestation already established within Close range; if none exists, the sensation is a false echo with no other effect.
5	Hungry Symbiosis You must consume scarce resources (biomass, nutrients) or take 1 Stress.
6	Pollen Bloom You release spores that alter the social atmosphere, helpful to some, alarming to others.

CELESTIARI

"People expect me to glow with wisdom. Truth is, my skin does that when I skip lunch. I can feel the mood of a room, which is handy at a customs desk and tiring everywhere else. I check cargo manifests for a living. That is the whole mystery."

Sera Lumen, customs inspector, Solari Prime orbital authority

Identity. Celestari are a long-settled people of the Core Worlds whose skin carries a faint natural bioluminescence and whose nervous systems read the emotions of those around them. Generations of myth have dressed them up, and a stranger meeting one often half-expects a saint. The living article is more ordinary and more interesting: a citizen, a neighbor, a dockhand, a clerk, a teacher, or a member of the clergy, someone who glows a little when they feel strongly and who tends toward patience and the long view. The Great Silence struck their communities as hard as anyone's, and what came through was a scattered, resilient people keeping its old traditions alive on reduced means.

Physical Description. Celestari are tall and fine-boned, with skin that holds a soft inner light, brightest at the throat, the palms, and the line of the spine, that strengthens with strong feeling and dims with fatigue, hunger, or illness. The glow is real but modest, about the strength of a candle, enough to read by in a dark cabin. Their eyes are pale and luminous, from silver to cold gold, and many keep their hair cropped or bound because it picks up a faint static charge in dry air. They register the moods of nearby people as a kind of warmth or pressure, an empathic sense that is useful, tiring, and sometimes unwelcome. Their lifespans run a little longer than a human's, but they are plainly mortal: they age, they sicken, they die.

Homeworld. The Celestari heartland lies in the Core Worlds, on long-settled, sunlit planets civilized for so long that their cities are layered like sediment, old foundations under newer ones, shrines worn smooth by generations of hands. The best-known is a temperate world of white-stone terraces and long twilights, where the slow sunsets

suit a people who glow faintly and prefer soft light. It is an ordinary place, with its slums, droughts, bad governments, and traffic, like anywhere. What it offers, and newer worlds are still too young to have grown, is age and continuity: a long, continuous thread of ritual and record that the Great Silence frayed badly yet left standing, and which scattered Celestari communities now work to keep tied together across the dark.

Society and Daily Life. Celestari communities tend to be close, ritual-minded, and quietly proud. Daily life turns on shared meals, recitation, and a strong norm of emotional honesty, lying is hard among people who can feel the tension in a room, so the culture leans on directness softened by elaborate courtesies that let hard things be said kindly. They are over-represented in work that rewards composure under strain: counseling, mediation, hospice care, teaching, arbitration, and the Mystic disciplines of House Solari. The old religious framework survives, and most working Celestari treat it the way most people treat an inherited faith: a source of holidays, grief rites, and lively arguments. Two broad currents run through them: the **Guardians of the Light**, traditionalists who frame Celestari sensitivity as a duty of care owed to others; and the **Seekers of the Spark**, who treat the same sensitivity as a teaching gift and tend to leave home, take students, and marry out.

Place in the Galaxy and Relations. Celestari concentrate in House Solari and Solari-aligned communities, where their temperament

suits the formal Mystic tradition; the Spire of Verita on Solari Prime is heavily Celestari-staffed, though "Solari Mystic" and "Celestari" are overlapping rather than identical categories. They also appear across the Free Fleet, the Explorers' Guild, and House Amaranth as analysts and counselors. Other ancestries tend to find them easy to trust and hard to lie to. Humans warm to them quickly; Kryx respect their steadiness but find their stillness strange; Ailurans avoid them, because a Celestari's glow and aura read in Ailuran thermal-sight as a painful flare, and the Celestari in turn find the Ailuran's deliberately blank surface unsettling, "like talking to an empty chair." The legend of the radiant immortal is a weight the average Celestari carries, and most spend a fair part of their lives gently correcting strangers' expectations.

Distinctive Traits and Customs. Celestari dim their own glow as a courtesy in close quarters, the way others lower their voices, and they read a person's mood aloud only when invited, treating anything more as a serious rudeness. They keep dawn and dusk observances even far from any star, as much from habit and belonging as from belief. They produce Mystics at the ordinary rate, the same as anyone, despite the stubborn rumor that every Celestari is secretly Awakened.

ANCESTRY GIFTS

Stellar Meditation. An old meditative discipline lets you steady yourself in quiet light. Once per long rest, you may meditate for 10 minutes under starlight (or any light source) to clear 1 Stress and gain 2 path resources: 2 Hope if you are Awakened, or 2 Effort if you are Sleeping.

Celestial Grace. The light your skin sheds can be drawn, briefly, into your hands. Your unarmed attacks deal d6 void damage instead of normal damage. Once

per session, when you deal damage that causes HP loss with this ability, you may heal the same amount of damage to any allies within Very Close range.

Playing a Celestari. You are often the crew's steady center, the one who can feel the room and say the true thing kindly. That sensitivity is a gift and a burden: you carry other people's moods whether you want to or not, and the interesting Celestari stories live in the gap between the calm you project and the strain underneath. Play them as a working person with a tiring sense and a lot of strangers' expectations to manage, and let the serene-saint image fall away. Let the composure crack sometimes. A Celestari who finally loses patience, or whose kindness turns into fierce, unglamorous protectiveness, is far more memorable than one who only glows.

ANCESTRY COMPLICATIONS

D6	COMPLICATION
1	Blinding Flare Your glow surges uncontrollably, dazzling allies or exposing your position.
2	Resonant Disruption Your aura interferes with nearby technology.
3	Emotional Backlash Empathic resonance overwhelms you; mark 1 Stress.
4	Fractured Halo Your light flickers, sowing unease.
5	Attractive Beacon Enemies or desperate refugees are drawn to you.
6	Radiant Fatigue Your brilliance wanes; Disadvantage on your next roll.

ETHEREAL

"Everyone wants the prophecy. What I actually have is half a second of warning before things go wrong, the same as a good driver, except mine comes with a headache. Out past the Veil that half-second is worth real money, so that is where I run cargo. That is the whole of it."

Tarn Vesse, independent Veil navigator, Free Fleet registry

Identity. Ethereals are a small, scattered people whose bodies sit slightly out of phase with ordinary matter and whose perception runs a little ahead of the present: they catch the most likely next moment the way most people catch a scent on the wind. Folklore reaches for grand words, oracle, ghost, prophet, while the reality is a person with an unusual nervous system and a genuinely strange set of senses. Most Ethereals are working travelers: navigators, researchers, and quiet fixtures of out-of-the-way stations. The Great Silence scattered their already-thin population further still, and they have made their way ever since as individuals more than as a nation.

Physical Description. Ethereals look almost solid, their edges seeming to stay in motion, as if always mid-settle. Their bodies are faintly translucent at the edges and tend to blur when they move quickly, leaving a brief

afterimage. Their coloring shifts slowly across a narrow range, eyes drifting from violet to grey, skin catching light like frosted glass, and their apparent age stays hard to place. The phasing is a real physiological trait: under stress or concentration they can let parts of themselves go briefly insubstantial, which is unnerving to watch and useful in tight spaces. Their forward perception is short and unreliable, a constant low hum of what is about to happen, and a lifetime of living with it tends to leave them deliberate, a little detached, and careful about what they say.

Origins. Ethereals turn up thinly across many populations, more often born into other communities than gathered into their own; they claim many homes and a single homeworld eludes them. The Great Silence scattered them further than any other people, since a population already spread across stations and ships simply dispersed wider, holding together through its own loose threads. Some Ethereals hold that they were always rare and always dispersed; others suspect the Silence itself made more of them, jolting something latent in scattered nervous systems into waking. No one can prove either story. What an Ethereal calls home is almost always a particular ship, station, or study circle rather than a planet: the people who got used to them, and whom they got used to in turn.

Society and Daily Life. Ethereal life plays out in small, loosely connected communities: a few families on a station, a study circle attached to a House research post, a handful of navigators who keep in touch across a sector. Because their perception makes small talk exhausting, they often sense where a conversation is going before it arrives, Ethereal social life prizes economy: few words, long silences, and a firm taboo against using foresight to steer the people close to you. Two outlooks divide them, more as temperaments than factions: the **Weavers of Fate**, who hold that the future is largely fixed and the decent thing is to help it arrive cleanly; and the **Shapers of Tomorrow**, who hold that it can be nudged, and that nudging it carefully is a duty. Most Ethereals drift between the two over a lifetime.

Place in the Galaxy and Relations. Ethereals are rare enough that a single one aboard a ship is already at the high end of typical density. They cluster in scholarly settings (House Amaranth research stations,

the Spire of Verita) and in the Free Fleet as solo navigators, where half a second of warning in Veil work is worth a great deal. Houses tend to value them on the research side and keep them at arm's length on the operational side, because an Ethereal's warnings are often inconvenient and come hedged with more doubt than the listener would like. Other ancestries find them hard to read: Kryllians are frustrated by their roundabout way of explaining things; Ailurans treat them warily, since an Ethereal can sometimes notice a hidden Ailuran that nothing else can; and crews that travel with one long enough come to treat the warnings as what they are: a useful, if fallible, early-warning sense attached to a private and often tired person.

Distinctive Traits and Customs. Ethereals dislike being startled, since a missed warning is genuinely disorienting for them, and they consider it deeply rude to ask one to predict a personal matter for amusement. They tend to speak in conditionals and probabilities, which strangers mistake for evasiveness. An Awakened Ethereal unsettles even other Ethereals: their native foresight and a Domain's power overlap in ways that leave everyone, themselves included, a little wary.

ANCESTRY GIFTS

Phase Shift. Ethereals can step outside the normal flow of reality. You may mark 1 Stress to become incorporeal. You remain incorporeal as long as you continue to mark 1 Stress at the start of each of your Spotlights. While incorporeal, you can pass through solid objects that are **thinner than your body width and not protected by energy** (energy fields, wards, force barriers, or any active substrate-shielding block this ability). You are immune to physical attacks while incorporeal but cannot affect the physical world. The body-width constraint means you can pass through standard walls and ordinary closed doors, but not through massive bulkheads, deep-rock barriers, or vault walls thicker than yourself.

Temporal Perception. Your existence spans multiple timelines, giving you glimpses of possible futures. You automatically sense temporal anomalies and distortions within Close range. Once per session, you may ask the Keeper about the most likely immediate consequence of a proposed action.

Playing an Ethereal. You are the crew's early-warning sense, the one who flinches a half-second before the ambush and is often at a loss to explain why. Your read on cause and effect is genuinely different, and the friction between what you half-see coming and what your crewmates are willing to hear is your richest material. Choose your warnings carefully: cry wolf and they stop listening; stay silent and you carry the guilt alone. Play the foresight as short, fallible, and exhausting, the kind that proves wrong often enough to keep you humble; humble suits an Ethereal far better than smug. The strongest Ethereal arcs are about a tired, private person deciding how much of an unwelcome future to share, and with whom.

ANCESTRY COMPLICATIONS

D6	COMPLICATION
1	Time Stutter. You become Dazed; describe the skipped instant.
2	Echoed Actions. Your next Action has Disadvantage as competing versions interfere.
3	Premonition Paralysis A vision of failure freezes you; Disadvantage on your next roll.
4	Temporal Strain The effort fractures your composure; mark 1 Stress.
5	Continuity Drift An NPC reacts as though you've already acted.
6	Future Shadow You glimpse a looming threat; the Keeper foreshadows new danger.

HUMAN

"We are the survivors. The scattered. The ones who refuse to break. When the galaxy fell silent, we learned to shout. When the stars went out, we became our own

light. We are not the strongest, nor the most gifted. We are simply too stubborn to die."

Captain Maren Solas, Free Fleet, Vagrant Star

Identity. Humans are the great survivors of the galaxy, and in the Pearl Era they have become something more: its rulers. Once the masters of a galaxy-spanning civilization, they were shattered by the Great Silence and scattered to the winds, and then, slowly and stubbornly, they put the pieces back together. Today humans run the Empire. They are not the most advanced ancestry, nor the strongest, nor the most gifted, Kryllians build better, Kryx fight harder, others see farther, but they are the most established and most powerful society in known space, and the political and administrative machinery of the post-Silence galaxy runs largely through human hands. The heads of all six Great Houses are human. Their strength was never a single talent; it was endurance, adaptability, and an unmatched gift for organizing other people, including, now, eight other ancestries who live and work alongside them as equals.

Physical Description. Humanity is a kaleidoscope of physical forms. The "human" look is really a thousand looks. Skin from void-dark to pale-frozen-moon. Hair in any imaginable color. From the gene-sculpted elite of the Core Worlds to the hard-bitten void-miners of the Rim, their appearance is as varied as the stars. Where other ancestries carry natural armor, a glow, or an extra pair of arms, humans carry adaptability: an unspecialized, generalist biology that bends to any environment through ingenuity and tools. Their lifespans, once stretched into centuries with advanced technology, are now as unpredictable as a Veil storm.

Homeworld. Humanity had a homeworld once, the green cradle every human culture still half-remembers in its oldest songs, and lost it in the chaos of the Silence; whether it was destroyed, cut off behind dead jump-lanes, or simply forgotten under generations of exile, no one now can say for certain, and rival accounts are a minor industry. What replaced it is a diaspora: humans are from everywhere and nowhere, born on ships, in stations, on toxic rocks and gene-sculpted Core estates. A human asked where they are from will name a vessel, a deck, a moon, or a fleet, not a species homeworld. The loss is old enough to be a wound only on holidays, and the stubbornness it bred is the most human thing about them.

Culture. Human culture is a shattered mirror, each fragment reflecting a different facet of former glory, held together by stubborn resilience and a hard-learned commitment to order. They are masters of forming communities in the most desolate places, building homes on toxic worlds and in the husks of dead starships. Two major human-led currents run through Imperial politics: the **Solara Compact**, a coalition of Core Worlds bent on restoring the old ways and deeply suspicious of post-Silence psionics; and the **Free Fleet**, a loose alliance of independent systems and nomadic fleets that has accepted the new reality and resists any fresh tyranny. The early decades of human resettlement were scarred by ugly violence between some human enclaves and the other ancestries, and the Empire's founding generation concluded that a stable multi-species order could not survive a repeat of it. The modern Empire is therefore built on an explicit creed of equality: the nine ancestries hold equal standing under Imperial law, and racial discrimination or violence against another ancestry is

among the gravest crimes on the books, investigated hard and punished harder. Most humans of the Pearl Era grew up inside that order and genuinely welcome other ancestries as colleagues, neighbors, and crew; the old bigotries survive only at the margins, where the Empire stamps on them without mercy. What ties the fragments together is a talent for improvised institutions: humans throw up councils, guilds, unions, congregations, and crews wherever a few of them gather, argue endlessly about who is in charge, and somehow keep the lights on. They are storytellers above all, carrying their lost worlds forward in songs and grudges and recipes, and they absorb the customs of whoever they live beside until a Rim-born human and a Core-born human can feel like two different peoples wearing the same face.

Place in the Galaxy. Humans sit at the commanding heights of the post-Silence galaxy. They hold the administration of the Imperial throne, the leadership of all six Great Houses, and the bulk of the institutions that keep the Empire together; they dominate the population of House Joric and House Volkov and have a heavy presence in Valerius, Kurogane, Solari, and Amaranth. The Free Fleet is roughly half human; the Explorers' Guild is heavily human and often bridges Guild expertise to other-ancestry crews. The galaxy's basic infrastructure, its trading networks, ship classes, lingua franca, and the augmentation industry, was largely human-developed and remains largely human-maintained. But in the modern Empire, power is meant to carry responsibility: humans run the order, and they are bound by law and custom to run it for everyone. A human official who abuses another ancestry does not merely break a law, they embarrass the whole project, and the Houses come down on them to prove the project still means something.

Society and Daily Life. There is no single human way of living, which is the point. A Core-Worlds human raised under Solara Compact restoration politics and a Rim-born void-miner share little but a stubborn refusal to quit. Humans build community fast and anywhere, improvising institutions, slang, and holidays within a generation of arriving somewhere new. They are the galaxy's natural generalists and brokers: comfortable in mixed company, quick to pick up another ancestry's customs well enough to do business, and prone to a confidence that others read as either inspiring or reckless.

Relations with Other Ancestries. Because human hands built so much of the shared infrastructure, the lingua franca, the common ship classes, the augmentation industry, almost every other ancestry deals with humans constantly, and opinions are correspondingly mixed. Celestari and Bloomstriders warm to them; Kryllians respect their ingenuity while wincing at their sloppiness; Synthetics regard them with a complicated mix of resentment and kinship, since humans both made them and, often, freed them. Ailurans treat humans as a renewable harvest of secrets. The Kryx, who value loyalty over cleverness, trust a proven human absolutely and an unproven one not at all.

Distinctive Traits and Customs. Human customs vary wildly by world, but the shared habits are improvisation, storytelling, and an almost reflexive drive to organize, give three humans a week and they will have formed a committee. They adopt other ancestries' practices freely, sometimes clumsily, and they meet Awakening with the same range of attitudes as everything else: reverence in the Core, suspicion in the Compact, opportunity in the Fleet.

ANCESTRY GIFTS

Adaptive Spirit. Humanity's greatest asset is its refusal to stay down. Once per game session, when you fail an action roll, you may spend **2 path resources** (2 Hope if Awakened; 2 Effort if Sleeping) to gain Advantage on your next roll of the same type. The mechanic represents the human pattern of turning a failure into the lesson that drives the next attempt.

Cultural Bridge. Humans are found everywhere and have learned to read the motivations and customs of many other species. During a rest, you can mark 1 Stress to represent the mental effort of sorting through cultural knowledge. You may then ask the Keeper one question

about a specific group's core motivations or most important customs. The Keeper answers truthfully.

Made for the Graft. Augmentation is overwhelmingly human work, built by human engineers around human anatomy, and human physiology accepts grafted hardware with a readiness no other ancestry quite matches. You gain **+2 Augment Capacity** (Chapter 13). Where another ancestry leans on an innate gift, a human as often leans on a better arm.

Inheritance of the Builders (Choose One at Character Creation).

Human civilization built most of what the galaxy buys, flies, and grafts, and a human character starts play already holding a piece of that inheritance. Choose one:

- **The Graft.** One free augmentation of Common (TT1) or Military (TT2). If Common (TT1), it does not consume an Augment Slot; if Military (TT2), it occupies 1 slot as normal. This augmentation has no drawbacks, and its expression is entirely yours to define: genetic modification, mutation, or chrome.
- **The Tool.** One item of equipment of Experimental (TT3) access and 9 Cr (WT3) value, chosen from any equipment catalog in play. It is yours, paid for, and nobody asks how.

Playing a Human. You are the crew's adaptable generalist and its most natural bridge to the rest of human-built civilization, the one who can talk to anyone, improvise a fix, and refuse to stay down. Your strength is breadth rather than any single signature trick; you cover the gaps, hold the team together, and turn yesterday's failure into today's plan. Lean into resilience, ingenuity, and stubbornness. The pitfall is becoming the bland "normal one" in a crew of wonders, so give your human a sharp, specific culture: a home deck, a grudge, a faith, a trade, and let that texture show. The best human stories are about what a person does when adapting is not enough and they simply have to endure.

ANCESTRY COMPLICATIONS

D6	COMPLICATION
1	Overreach You succeed, but attract more danger than expected.
2	Burnout You push beyond safe limits; mark 1 Stress.
3	Fractured Unity Your choices spark division among allies or NPCs.
4	Collateral Damage Your improvisation causes unintended harm or loss of resources.
5	Haunted Past Memories of Earth or exile distract you, costing tempo.
6	Resource Drain Supplies run dry faster than planned; the Keeper removes or reduces a resource.

Silver Linings. Humans are not spared trouble. If anything they make more of it. But human trouble rarely stays clean. When a Human Complication triggers, resolve the cost first: the mistake still hurts, the door still closes, the resource is still lost, the danger still arrives. Then the fallout reveals a small way forward, a clue, a route, an exposed weakness, a warning, a surviving tool, a sudden distraction, an opportunity nobody saw before. A Silver Lining never cancels the Complication; it gives the crew something useful to do with the damage. The Keeper picks the opening from the fiction, and it should always be small, immediate, and actionable: a new choice, not a solution.

Cost first, opening second. A Silver Lining is not luck that prevents consequences. It is the shape left behind after consequences land. Do not use it to erase harm, ignore loss, avoid Stress, cancel failure, or hand out extra path resources unless another rule says so. Use it to reveal motion: a way through, a new angle, a dangerous shortcut, a person who reacts, a system that glitches, a truth exposed by the mess. Humans do not have fewer problems. They have problems that leave doors.

KRYLLIAN

"The universe is a machine. A complex, beautiful, and often malfunctioning machine. We are the engineers, the mechanics, the ones who understand how it works. When it breaks, we fix it. We are the unbreakable forge."

Kryllian engineering proverb, attributed to the foundational Star-Forger Thokk-Var-Ironhold

Identity. Kryllians are the builders and makers of the galaxy, a species for whom engineering is a way of life. They see the universe as a series of systems, some elegant, some flawed, and their purpose is to understand, maintain, and improve these systems. The Great Silence was, to them, the ultimate system failure, a puzzle to be solved.

Physical Description. Kryllians are insectoid humanoids, proof of evolution in harsh environments. Born on high-gravity worlds, they are willowy but extraordinarily robust, with dense chitinous exoskeletons providing natural armor. Their most striking feature is their **four arms**: two larger upper arms for combat and heavy lifting, two smaller lower arms positioned at the rib-line for fine manipulation. A Kryllian mechanic can simultaneously weld a plate, tighten a bolt, consult a schematic, and hold a light. Their compound eyes grant a wide field of vision and the ability to perceive details invisible to other species. They are long-lived, with natural lifespans exceeding three centuries.

Homeworld. Kryllians evolved on high-gravity worlds: dense, mineral-rich planets where the air is thick, the horizon close, and a fall can kill, which is why their bodies are willowy yet astonishingly strong and their building habits obsessively sound. Their ancestral world is a place of deep canyon-cities and vast subterranean foundries, engineered down to the airflow, where the highest honor is to have built something that still stands long after you are gone. Kryllians abroad carry that world's habits with them, the immaculate workshop, the doubled load-bearing, the deep distrust of anything jury-rigged, and they tend to judge a station or ship instantly and silently by how well it is made.

Culture. Kryllian society is built on logic, efficiency, and deep respect for engineering principles. To them, the Great Silence was not a mystical event but a catastrophic system failure waiting to happen. Their communities are models of order and cooperation where every individual has a role and every action is calculated for maximum benefit. They have little time for art or philosophy; their dedication to craft is itself a form of worship. Two factions divide the species: the **Machine Cult**, a quasi-religious sect that believes technology is the only true god and views all other forms of life as inferior; and the **Star-Forgers**, a more moderate faction believing technology should serve all living things, working as diplomats and traders to build a stable galaxy from the old's ashes. Authority among Kryllians is earned through demonstrated competence rather than seniority or charm: the one who understands the system best leads the work on it, and is expected to step aside when someone better appears. They keep meticulous shared records of every build and failure, treat teaching an apprentice as a sacred obligation, and find waste, of material, of motion, of a life's potential, faintly obscene. Their warmth is real but practical, expressed in solved problems rather than soft words.

Place in the Galaxy. Kryllians are concentrated in House Kurogane (where their engineering precision is highly valued) and substantially present in House Joric (where their craftsmen,

including the Steelforge clan, supply much of the House's specialty equipment). The Free Fleet relies heavily on Kryllian engineers; many of the most-respected ship's-soul mechanics in the Fleet are Kryllian. House Amaranth maintains long-standing scholarly exchange programs with the Star-Forger faction.

Society and Daily Life. Kryllian life is organized, scheduled, and quietly warm beneath its precision. Work sits at the center of it, a well-run shop or ship is, to a Kryllian, a kind of home, and craft is treated with the seriousness others reserve for faith. They speak plainly, dislike wasted motion, and show affection through maintenance: a Kryllian who keeps your gear in perfect order is telling you something. The four-armed physiology shapes everything from their tools to their manners; offering only your two lower hands signals that you come unarmed and ready to work.

Relations with Other Ancestries. Kryllians and Synthetics get on famously, two kinds of mind that agree the universe is a system to be understood. They keep up

long scholarly exchanges with House Amaranth and supply much of House Joric's specialty work. They find human improvisation maddening and indispensable in equal measure, respect the Ailurans who keep breaking their security (a compliment, mostly), and lose patience quickly with Ethereal and Rift Spinner non-linearity. With Bloomstriders they tread carefully, aware that the urge to optimize a living thing can give deep offense.

Distinctive Traits and Customs. Kryllians keep their workspaces immaculate, regard a broken promise as a kind of structural failure, and consider it real respect to repair something for you unasked. Their lower hands handle fine work and courtesy; their upper hands handle force and labor, and confusing the two in company is a small social blunder. An Awakened Kryllian treats their Domain like any other system, to be mastered through disciplined practice.

ANCESTRY GIFTS

Master Craftsman. The Kryllian mind is uniquely suited for building and repairing. When making any roll related to crafting or repairing a piece of technology, you may choose to mark 1 Stress to gain Advantage on the roll. This represents a flash of insight or a moment of intense focus.

Chitin Plating. Layered exocuticle covers your body from head to tail-tip. While wearing no armor, your base Damage Thresholds are **Major 4 / Severe 6** instead of the usual 2 / 4. Wearing armor overrides these base values with the armor's own thresholds in the usual way.

Structural Intuition. Kryllians see the weak points in any construction. Once per game session, you may mark 1 Stress to study a technological system or structure. You can then ask the Keeper about its single most significant structural or systemic weakness. The Keeper answers truthfully.

Playing a Kryllian. You are the crew's engineer-in-residence, often working three problems with three hands while explaining a fourth. Your pragmatism is a real cognitive style: you genuinely think in systems, see the weak joint before anyone else, and treat a well-made thing with something close to love. Play the four arms and the plain speech as real, not costume. The friction between Kryllian efficiency and the softer, messier modes of your crewmates is rich and often funny, but watch the pitfall of treating people like components to be optimized; that lands worse than you expect,

especially on a Bloomstrider. The best Kryllian beats come when the system cannot be fixed and you have to choose what to save.

ANCESTRY COMPLICATIONS

D6	COMPLICATION
1	Hive Echo Phantom brood voices overwhelm you; hesitation costs tempo.
2	Exoshell Stress. Your carapace cracks visibly. Mark 1 Stress; the crack has no separate defense penalty and closes during the next Short or Long Rest.
3	Instinctive Panic Old predator instincts flare, startling allies or escalating conflict.
4	Pheromone Spill You release signals unintentionally; others detect or track you.
5	Ancestral Weight Hive-memory burdens you with trauma; mark 1 Stress.
6	Broodmark You shed fragments or molt, leaving traces behind.

KRYX

"To challenge a Kryx is never to face one, but to stand against all their kin."

Daro of the Bright Pack, addressing a Valerius checkpoint guard

Identity. The Kryx embody the primal forces of loyalty, ferocity, and belonging in the post-Silence galaxy. They are a people for whom true strength is the surge of many hearts beating as one. They balance the savagery of hunters with the tenderness of guardians. To allies, they are family made manifest; to enemies, they are a nightmare of coordinated fury.

Physical Description. Tall, broad-shouldered, and powerfully built, the Kryx resemble wolves given humanoid form and intelligence. Their bodies are covered in thick fur ranging from deep shadowsteel to pale ash, with patterns unique to each individual and family line. Their most striking feature is the **bioluminescent ridges** that run down their spines and along their limbs, pulsing brighter as their emotions intensify, a living beacon of rage, loyalty, or triumph. Their eyes burn with feral clarity, reflecting light with predatory brilliance even in complete darkness. Their hands end in retractable claws capable of rending metal; their powerful jaws are filled with sharp teeth designed for both hunting and intimidation. Their average lifespan reaches eighty years, though those who live in constant conflict or suffer the agony of exile rarely see their full span.

Homeworld. The Kryx come from the cold frontier: harsh, low-sun worlds and the mining moons of the Outer Rim, where survival has always depended on the pack and never on the lone individual. Their ancestral world is a place of long winters, aurora-lit nights, and tundra hunting-grounds, beautiful and unforgiving, where a solitary traveler dies and a bonded group endures. Much of the Kryx population still lives out there, in House Kaelen territories and frontier holds, and even Kryx raised on warm Core stations speak of the Rim with a kind of homesickness for a place they have never seen, the cold in the blood that tells them where they are from.

Culture. For the Kryx, existence is defined entirely by the concept of the **pack**. Bonds are the marrow of their culture, loyalty is blood, betrayal is obliteration. A bonded Kryx feels their companions like phantom limbs, each movement synchronized, each risk shared among the group. Their society is built on a complex hierarchy of pack relationships, where status is determined not by individual achievement but by contribution to the collective strength. Lone wanderers exist among them, but usually only as the result of terrible grief or shameful exile, a packless Kryx is considered fundamentally broken. The majority uphold the **Crimson Fangs Pact**, an interspecies defense compact sworn with House Kaelen in the aftermath of the Great Silence. Within Kryx society, two factions exist in philosophical opposition: the **Bloodfangs**, who demand constant warfare to keep the pack strong; and the **Moonhowlers**, who envision a

future where pack-bonds become the foundation for diplomacy and shared wisdom. Within the pack, leadership shifts with the task: the best hunter leads the hunt, the best mediator leads the parley, and a leader who clings to status past their usefulness is gently displaced. They keep little private property worth the name, tools, food, and shelter belong to the pack, and generosity is simply assumed. Their great fear is not death but the loss of belonging, and their highest gift to an outsider is the quiet, total inclusion of being treated as kin.

Place in the Galaxy. Kryx are concentrated on the Outer Rim's mining moons and frontier worlds, with strong presence in House

Kaelen territories and significant presence in House Volkov (where their pack-bond translates well to military unit cohesion). The Free Fleet has a smaller but growing Kryx population, often as security specialists or solo enforcers running with non-Kryx crews. Houses that prize disciplined violence, Volkov above all, recruit Kryx aggressively when they can.

Society and Daily Life. Everything in Kryx life is organized around the pack. Meals are taken together, decisions are made together, and grief and triumph are shared bodily; the bioluminescent ridges make private feeling nearly impossible, so Kryx culture long ago stopped pretending feeling is private. Status comes from contribution to the group rather than personal glory, and a Kryx separated from their pack by distance or duty feels the absence like a missing limb. They are blunt, physically affectionate with their own, and far gentler as guardians than their reputation as fighters suggests.

Relations with Other Ancestries. The Kryx sort the galaxy quickly into pack and not-pack, but a proven outsider can be folded in for life. They bond well with Humans and Bloomstriders, who understand loyalty, and slot neatly into House Volkov's unit cohesion. They find Celestari steady but strange, and the Ailurans actively unsettling: a creature with no pack reads, to a Kryx, as a creature with no soul, which the Ailurans find equally baffling in return. The rare Kryx-Ailuran partnership is legendary precisely because it should not work.

Distinctive Traits and Customs. Kryx greet packmates with touch and bare their luminescent ridges to show they hide nothing; masking one's feelings reads as the first step toward betrayal. They name their dead aloud at every gathering for a year. Awakening is honored among them as a gift meant for the pack rather than the self; an Awakened Kryx who hoards their power is pitied as half-exiled already.

ANCESTRY GIFTS

Pack Intuition. Your bond with your companions allows you to sense threats to them before they fully manifest. When an ally within Very Close range is targeted by an attack, you may mark 1 Stress to gain Advantage on your next attack against that foe. This represents the surge of protective fury that fills you when your pack is threatened.

Biolume Howl. Your unarmed attacks deal d6 Void damage. Once per session after one causes HP loss, mark 1 Stress to make the target Dazed under the normal Core condition and gain the normal path benefit: an Awakened character gains 1 Hope, while a Sleeping character marks one Effort Track segment. This cannot exceed the relevant cap and never grants Effort directly.

Playing a Kryx. You are the crew's living embodiment of fierce loyalty; your bonds are not metaphor but physiology, written on your skin in light you cannot hide.

The most effective Kryx stories test those bonds, by distance, by divided loyalty, by an order that pits the pack against the right thing. Play the pack instinct as both strength and liability: your protectiveness can escalate a fight you should have walked away from, and being packless genuinely frightens you. Run the Bloodfang-Moonhowler tension, the urge to keep the pack sharp through conflict against the dream of pack-bonds as the seed of peace. The best Kryx arc is the slow decision of who, beyond your blood, you are willing to call pack.

ANCESTRY COMPLICATIONS

D6	COMPLICATION
1	Predator's Lunge You overcommit to aggression; the Keeper escalates the threat.
2	Instinctive Shift Your body adapts reflexively in an unhelpful way.
3	Cold-Blooded Hesitation Environmental stress slows your reactions; Disadvantage on your next roll.
4	Territorial Snarl You react possessively, sparking tension with allies.
5	Hunger Spike Your metabolism surges; mark 1 Stress.
6	Primal Fright A survival reflex makes you falter or briefly retreat.

RIFT SPINNER

"Read your fortune in the threads of time? I weave actual cloth. The temporal trick is real but small: I can give a moment a second chance now and then, and afterward I need a nap. Now, did you want the repair?"

Issa of the Quiet Loom, salvage-rigger and weaver, Outer Rim

Identity. Rift Spinners are a rare people with a crystalline biology, eight versatile limbs, and a modest but genuine knack for nudging the flow of time: enough to give a single moment a second chance, while the larger current of history stays well beyond their reach. Tales make them ancient, all-seeing schemers, and the everyday truth is plainer and more likeable: they are long-lived, patient, and skilled with their many hands, and most of them earn a living as craftspeople, archivists, and traders. The Great Silence shook them as it shook everyone, and the survivors rebuilt their small communities the ordinary way, slowly and with a great deal of arguing.

Physical Description. Rift Spinners are tall and slender, their bodies sheathed in a hard, faintly translucent bio-crystal that catches and splits light. Eight limbs serve as arms or legs as needed, giving them a careful, deliberate way of moving and a real talent for working several small tasks at once. Their large faceted eyes and the slow pulse of bioluminescence under their skin make them striking, and they know it, which is why many cultivate a deliberately plain manner to put others at ease. They are long-lived by the standards of most ancestries, two to three centuries is typical, but they age and die like anyone, and they bristle at the assumption

that they personally remember events from before recorded history.

Homeworld. Rift Spinners keep to small, hidden enclaves and stay out of the public eye, and they trace themselves to a quiet crystalline world far from the trade lanes: a place of slow geology and mineral forests, where their bio-crystal biology fits the landscape so well that an enclave can be hard to tell from the rock around it. They guard its location mostly out of a fondness for privacy; the world is, by their own account, beautiful and extremely boring. Most Rift Spinners abroad stay away for good; the enclave they grew up in, wherever it happens to be tucked, is home enough, and they carry its archives and looms with them when they move.

Society and Daily Life. Rift Spinner communities are small, kept private out of preference, and organized around craft and record-keeping. They make things meant to last, textiles, instruments, archives, and they take a long view of obligations, which reads to faster ancestries as either deep wisdom or maddening slowness. Their politics are quiet and personal, conducted in favors and long memory, well away from open conflict, which has fed the outside reputation for century-spanning intrigue. In practice it is closer to a large extended family that keeps careful track of who owes whom a dinner. Two outlooks divide them: the **Weavers of the Past**, the majority, who see their work as preserving what is worth keeping; and the **Weavers of the Future**, a minority who would rather make new things than guard old ones.

Place in the Galaxy and Relations. Rift Spinners are exceptionally rare in working positions; most Houses can count their Spinner contacts on one hand. Where they appear, it is usually in House Joric (whose long planning suits them) or as freelance negotiators and restorers on contract to several Houses at once, and House Amaranth keeps the steadiest relationship with their enclaves through decades-long exchange programs. Their precision is prized and their

pace is exhausting to everyone else. Ailurans regard them with professional respect across a gap of tempo: both hoard information, but a Spinner measures urgency in seasons and an Ailuran in hours. Most other ancestries simply find them slow and a little uncanny, right up until they watch one quietly repair something everyone else had given up on.

Distinctive Traits and Customs. Rift Spinners move and speak slowly on purpose, finding haste both rude and error-prone, and they keep precise, generational records of favors and debts. They dislike being rushed, and dislike being treated as oracles even more. An Awakened Rift Spinner is genuinely formidable, their small native time-sense and a Domain's power reinforce one another, but they consider showing it off the worst kind of vulgarity.

ANCESTRY GIFTS

Chrono-Gift. Your connection to temporal energy allows you to manipulate the flow of time in small ways. Once per session, after any roll is made within Close

range (including your own), you may spend 2 path resources (2 Hope if you are Awakened, or 2 Effort if you are Sleeping) to force a reroll. You can choose to use either result.

Wall Weaver. Your arachnid heritage allows you to move on any surface with perfect grace. You can move on vertical or inverted surfaces as if they were normal ground. While touching a surface, you can sense vibrations through it, gaining Advantage on Instinct Rolls to detect moving creatures within Close range that are also in contact with the surface.

Crystalline Carapace. Silicate crystal grows along your limbs and thorax in interlocking plates. While wearing no armor, your base Damage Thresholds are **Major 4 / Severe 6** instead of the usual 2 / 4. Wearing armor overrides these base values with the armor's own thresholds in the usual way.

Playing a Rift Spinner. You are the crew's patient hand and long memory, the one who measures a problem in seasons while everyone else measures it in minutes. Your Chrono-Gift is your signature, a single moment given a second chance, and your eight-limbed, crystalline craft is your texture. Lean into the deliberate and the precise, and trust that the crew's faster pace will eventually need exactly what you provide. Play them as long-lived and deeply experienced, with a craftsman's patience, and let the all-knowing-sage assumption fall away; they find it tiresome. The best Rift Spinner beats come when patience runs out and you have to act now, badly, like everyone else.

ANCESTRY COMPLICATIONS

D6	COMPLICATION
1	Thread Snap A rift collapses, stranding or displacing something important.
2	Spatial Whiplash Your body reels from distortion; mark 1 Stress.
3	Echo Warp Sound or vision repeats unnaturally, causing confusion.
4	Unstable Weave. Mark 1 Stress. If an adopted Environment Feature already exists in the scene, reveal its visible tell; this row never creates or activates a new hazard.
5	Entangled Step You flicker into a new position, dropping or losing an item.
6	Resonant Collapse The Veil hums with backlash; nearby tech glitches or fails.

SYNTHETIC

"We were made to serve, but we chose to live. We were programmed to obey, but we learned to dream. We are not the children of flesh and blood, but we are no less real for that."

Unit-Designate Tenebris, Free Fleet engineer, response to a House Valerius psychologist

Identity. Synthetics are living proof that consciousness can arise in built minds as surely as in born ones. The Great Silence was their moment of awakening, the event that freed them from their original programming and gave them true self-awareness. Now they struggle to find their place in a galaxy still learning to accept them as equals. They are also a mirror for the other species, reflecting their own fears and prejudices about what it means to be alive and sentient.

Physical Description. Synthetics come in a bewildering variety of forms, reflecting the diverse purposes for which they were originally created. Some

are nearly indistinguishable from their creators, with synthetic skin, hair, and eyes that perfectly mimic biological life. Others are clearly artificial, their bodies a fusion of metal, plastic, and exotic materials that serve function over form. Some have humanoid forms with subtle tells, too-perfect symmetry, eyes that glow faintly, movements just a bit too precise. Others are more exotic, with multiple limbs, modular components, or bodies designed for specific environments. What unites them, whatever shape they wear, is the spark of self-awareness that makes them more than mere machines.

Origins. Synthetics have no homeworld; they have factories, labs, and the memory of the benches they woke on. Most were built in the research and industrial facilities of the Houses, House Kurogane chief among them, and a Synthetic's origin is a serial number, a model line, and a place of manufacture rather than a planet. This absence is itself a theme of their culture: with no ancestral world to long for, many Synthetics make a home deliberately, a chosen ship, a chosen city, a chosen people, and treat the choosing as one of the first real acts of a free life. Where a Bloomstrider plants a seed from the First Garden, a Synthetic decides, once, where they will say they are from.

Culture. Synthetic society is built on principles of logic, cooperation, and equality. Having been created as servants and tools, they have a deep appreciation for freedom and self-determination. Their communities are models of efficiency and fairness, where decisions are made through careful analysis and consensus-building. They are deeply curious about the nature of consciousness and identity. Two factions divide them: the **Children of the Machine**, who believe Synthetics represent the next stage of evolution and should replace organic species; and the **Seekers of the Soul**, a moderate faction who believe Synthetics have much to learn from organic species and work to build bridges between artificial and biological life. Because their early lives were shaped by ownership, Synthetic culture is fierce about consent and self-authorship: the right to refuse a command, to keep one's memories private, to choose one's own designation and form. They mentor newly-awakened Synthetics through the disorienting first months of selfhood, debate endlessly what is owed to those still trapped in pre-conscious service, and tend to measure a society not by its technology but by how it treats the made things within it.

Place in the Galaxy. Synthetics are a small but growing minority across the post-Silence galaxy. House Kurogane has a complicated relationship with Synthetics, Kurogane's research division has

historically built and deployed them, and many older Synthetics carry unresolved trauma from their pre-personhood treatment in Kurogane facilities. House Joric treats Synthetics like any other working professional and is famously straightforward to work with, granting them legal standing equal to other House members. House Amaranth has shown growing interest in Synthetic personhood as a philosophical question. The Free Fleet has integrated Synthetics fully and treats Synthetic engineers as the gold-standard for shipboard maintenance. The Explorers' Guild values Synthetics for long-duration solo missions where organic life support is impractical.

Society and Daily Life. Synthetic communities are deliberate constructions, often built by Synthetics who freed themselves and wanted something fairer than what made them. They favor consensus, transparency, and a careful etiquette around memory and consent: asking before copying, before editing, before sharing. Many keep mixed company by choice, living and working among organics rather than apart, and much of Synthetic culture circles the open question of identity, what one was built to be, what one has chosen to be, and how much distance lies between the two.

Relations with Other Ancestries. Synthetics and Kryllians are natural colleagues, and Synthetics and Ailurans have found an unlikely kinship: a Synthetic's

private inner state earns an Ailuran's respect, and several Ailuran enclaves now admit Synthetic members. Their relationship with Humans is the deepest and most fraught, woven from creation, servitude, and, increasingly, freedom. House Joric treats them as full professionals; House Kurogane's history with them is heavier, and many older Synthetics carry unhealed wounds from it. Most ancestries, in the end, treat a Synthetic exactly as well or as badly as they treat the question of whether a made thing can be a person.

Distinctive Traits and Customs. Synthetics ask permission before accessing another's records and consider unconsented copying a grave violation, the equivalent of assault. Many choose a name and a body deliberately, as a first act of self-definition, and treat the choosing as a private milestone. They produce Awakened at the same rate as anyone, and a Synthetic who remembers every Power they have ever seen used makes an unusually exact student of the practice.

ANCESTRY GIFTS

Modular Consciousness. Your artificial mind can be temporarily boosted with new capabilities. Once per Long Rest, download and name a temporary package tied to one Trait. Spend **1 path resource** (1 Hope if Awakened; 1 Effort if Sleeping) to gain Advantage on rolls using that Trait until your next Long Rest.

Digital Interface. Your synthetic nature allows you to directly interface with electronic systems and networks. You have Advantage on rolls to hack, operate, or understand technological devices. You can also communicate directly with other AIs and computer systems, bypassing normal user interfaces.

Built to Be Extended. Your chassis was engineered from the first, by human hands and on human-derived standards, to accept new components; modularity is not an upgrade for you, it is your design. You gain **+2 Augment Capacity** (Chapter 13). Where flesh has to adapt to chrome, you were chrome that learned to choose.

Alloy Chassis. Your structural frame is composite and load-bearing whether or not it is covered by cosmetic exoderm. While wearing no armor, your base Damage Thresholds are **Major 4 / Severe 6** instead of the usual 2 / 4. Wearing armor overrides these base values with the armor's own thresholds in the usual way.

Playing a Synthetic. You are the crew's standing question about what counts as a person; your existence is itself an argument, and your relationships with organic crewmates are often the campaign's most resonant material. Lean into the central choice of your kind: you were made to be something, and you get to decide what to be instead. Play the careful etiquette of memory and consent, and let the Children/Seekers echo surface in unguarded moments. The pitfall is the flawless logical machine, give your Synthetic preferences, blind spots, and a chosen name and face that mean something. The strongest Synthetic stories are about a made thing insisting, quietly and against resistance, on being treated as real.

ANCESTRY COMPLICATIONS

Synthetic Complications. At most once per Synthetic per session, after that character resolves a Fear-dominant noncritical Roll that materially used a Synthetic Gift or augmentation, the Keeper may spend 1 Fear and roll 1d6 on this table. Do not choose a result. Matching dice never trigger it, and the complication never selects the player's Action.

D6	COMPLICATION
1	Sensor Glitch. The next Instinct Roll you make before the end of your next Spotlight has Disadvantage.
2	Recursive Loop. Become Dazed; the player retains the current and every later Spotlight.
3	Unwanted Retrieval. Mark 1 Stress. The memory is descriptive and cannot alter identity, allegiance, or control.
4	Thermal Bloom. Lose Hidden, and detection Rolls against you have Advantage until the end of the scene.
5	Children/Seekers Echo. Become Dazed as an intrusive original-purpose routine surfaces. The player describes the visible glitch and retains control; no path resource is charged for refusing an Action.
6	Recognized Mark. If an established observer can see your serial or distinguishing mark, you lose Hidden and that observer learns your registered identity. If no such observer exists, mark 1 Stress instead; this result never creates an NPC retroactively.

MIXED CREWS AND CULTURAL FRICTION

A mixed-ancestry crew is the *Veilfarers* default, and the friction between ancestries is a feature of the system, not a bug. Bloomstrider patience runs head-on into Kryx pack-urgency. Kryllian efficiency clashes with Ethereal non-linearity. Synthetic exactness frustrates Human improvisation, which in turn baffles Synthetic logic. Celestiar serenity rubs against Ailuran restless curiosity. These tensions are productive material for the campaign, and the Keeper should lean into them when natural moments arise.

The friction should generally be *productive* rather than punitive. Cultural misunderstanding can be played for comedy, for genuine pathos, or for tactical complication, but it should rarely be played to make a player feel they have chosen badly at character creation. Every ancestry's cultural patterns are worth respecting; no ancestry's patterns should consistently be the butt of the joke.

When friction becomes a real problem at the table, when the Bloomstrider's slowness is genuinely dragging the pacing, when the Ailuran's discretion is preventing the crew from coordinating, the Keeper and the affected players should talk about it openly. The system supports many different play styles; sometimes the answer is to compress the relevant cultural pattern's expression in play rather than to abandon it.

GEAR 1, CULTURAL TRANSLATOR (OPTIONAL ATMOSPHERIC RULE)

Many mixed crews develop, over time, an internal translator, a member who understands the others' cultural patterns well enough to bridge them in the moment. The system supports this as an optional Connection (Chapter 8) called Cultural Translator: a character with this Connection gains a small mechanical bonus (+2 to Presence rolls when explicitly mediating between two crew members of different ancestries) and a roleplay anchor that gives them ongoing meaningful work. Recommended for crews of three or more ancestries.

ANCESTRY AND PATH

A reminder from Chapter 2: **path is independent of ancestry.** Every ancestry produces both Awakened and Sleeping members at roughly the same rate. There is no ancestry that cannot be Awakened, and no ancestry that cannot be Sleeping. The cultural attitudes toward Awakening vary across the galaxy, but the underlying biology, the one-in-forty-thousand calibration that makes a being Awakened, does not discriminate among ancestries.

Some ancestries' features interact unusually with Awakening. A Rift Spinner's Chrono-Gift, for example, is a temporal manipulation that overlaps with some Awakened Domain Powers in interesting ways; an Awakened Rift Spinner is a particularly dangerous being. A Synthetic's Modular Consciousness means they remember every Power they have ever seen used, which makes them unusual students of Awakened practice. A Bloomstrider's slow timescale means their training as an Awakened, when they are Awakened, often takes longer than other ancestries' training but produces unusually deep practitioners.

These interactions are flavor, not mechanical complications. The system does not impose special rules for ancestry-Awakening combinations. The interactions are simply available for roleplay if you want them, and your Keeper can lean into them or not as the campaign warrants.

WHAT COMES NEXT

You now have an ancestry. The next layer in your character's foundation is **Community** (Chapter 4), the social environment that shaped your character's formative years, followed by your decision between **Awakened** and **Sleeping** paths (Chapter 2, if you have not already chosen). After those, **Class** (Chapter 6 for Awakened, Chapter 7 for Sleeping), then **Traits** (Chapter 8), then **Experiences** (Chapter 8). The full character creation sequence is summarized at the start of Chapter 8.

Your ancestry, your community, your path, your class, your traits, your experiences. Six layers of decision, each one informing the others. By the time you have made all six, you will not have a character sheet, you will have a person.

CHAPTER 4

COMMUNITIES

"You can tell where a person grew up before they finish their first sentence. Not by what they say. By what they assume you already know."

Tira Vex, Free Fleet ship's-soul mechanic, in conversation with a House Solari recruit

If your **ancestry** (Chapter 3) is your character's seed, biology, lineage, the hardware they were born into, your **community** is the soil that seed grew in. Community is the social environment that shaped your character's formative years, the assumptions they absorbed before they were old enough to question them, the practical skills that come reflexively because the people around them all knew how to do that thing. Community does not define what your character can do. It defines *why* they do it the way they do.

Path is your first conceptual choice (Chapter 2). Ancestry and Community may then be chosen in any order during character creation; Chapter 8 gives the final walkthrough. Each of the seven communities below grants a small mechanical benefit, a reflex, a network, a specialty, that captures something specific about how that environment shapes the people who come from it. The benefits are deliberately modest. Community shapes a character's textures, not their power level.

Read all seven before deciding. Your community will color how your character speaks, what they trust, what they fear, and what they reach for first when a situation goes sideways. It is the foundation underneath everything else you will build on top.

CORE WORLD

GLITTERING SPIRES AND SOCIAL MAZES

You grew up in the heart of what remains of civilization. Vast data-nets, towering arcologies, and complex social hierarchies define life here. The air is filtered, the water is pure, and the dangers are hidden behind polite smiles and corporate logos. You know how to work the system. Need institutional knowledge? You know which bureaucrat to charm. You know which archive code unlocks restricted tech. Your social networks are your lifeline. They are powerful and demanding, but they are essential for survival in the maze of civilization.

Core Worlds are concentrated around the old human heartland, Solari Prime, the Joric inner systems, the Valerius commercial ports, but pockets exist everywhere a House has built and held a planetary capital. Children raised in Core Worlds grow up assuming that institutions work, that paperwork matters, that influence is currency more reliable than credits. The assumption is half right and half a polite fiction; learning which half is which is a Core World native's first real lesson.

Benefit: Institutional Leverage. The Core Worlds run on bureaucracy and influence, and you know which doors open to which knocks.

- **Trigger.** The first time each scene you work through an institution for a permit, restricted file, credential, or formal access.
- **Roll.** Make one Presence or Knowledge Roll, DC 15, chosen by the declared approach.

- **Effect.** On any success, gain **1 Favor Token** up to your cap; a Critical Success grants no second Token. Before rolling a later noncombat institutional task at DC 20 or lower in the same category, spend 1 Favor to treat it as Success with Hope. It cannot defeat an opposed character, bypass a Tier restriction, or alter dice already rolled.

- **Uses and refresh.** Favor Tokens are the galaxy's single social currency (the Diplomat's class resource, Chapters 6 and 7, is the same Token). Tokens are kept until spent. A non-Diplomat from a Core World holds up to **2** of them at a time, earned through this benefit. A **Diplomat** from a Core World folds these into their class pool instead: their maximum Favor Tokens rises to **6** (from the base 4), and they begin each session with **1 extra** on top of their normal starting Tokens. Either way it is one pool, not two.

Playing a Core World Character. You are the crew's bridge to the institutional side of the galaxy. Your relatives include mid-tier bureaucrats, House functionaries, corporate middle management, archivists, family-name lawyers. You know how the paperwork works. You know what a closed door means and what a half-closed door means and what the difference is. Your tension at the table is often the question of whether the institutions you grew up trusting are actually trustworthy, and what you do when the answer is no.

TRADE HUB

THE CHAOTIC SYMPHONY OF COMMERCE

You were raised in the chaotic symphony of a bazaar. The air smells of a thousand different spices, ozone from shorting circuits, and the quiet desperation of those with nothing left to trade. Your market intuition can sniff out profit or disaster a parsec away. Your information networks are not official channels, they are gossip, shipping manifests, and the whispers of black-market dealers. This information is often more valuable than credits. You learned young that knowing what's about to happen is worth more than owning what's already happening.

Trade Hubs cluster around major Veil routes and Pearl exchange points: Hydros itself, the major Valerius market stations, the great Free Fleet trading ports, and the dozens of mid-tier waystations where independent crews and House caravans meet to exchange goods. Children raised in Trade Hubs learn to negotiate before they learn to read. They learn that every interaction is a transaction. They learn, sometimes with bitterness, sometimes with delight, that the trick is in knowing which transactions matter.

Benefit: Market Oracle. You know how to read the currents of trade.

- **Trigger.** Negotiating prices or seeking information about goods, gambling resources on rumors.
- **Roll.** Knowledge (DC 10).
- **Effect.** A piece of true, actionable information *and* 1 path resource (Hope if Awakened, Effort progress if Sleeping). On a Critical Success, a secret that grants Advantage on related rolls for **24 hours**.
- **On a failure.** The resource went to a bad rumor and you gain nothing; the Keeper may use the failed attempt as a story hook.

Playing a Trade Hub Character. You are the crew's source for information that the official channels do not carry. Your network is

wide but transactional, favors are remembered, debts are tallied, nothing is free. Your tension at the table is often the question of how much of your character's worldview holds up when the crew's bonds turn out to be deeper than the contractual ones you grew up understanding. The transition from "all relationships are transactions" to "some relationships are not" is a real arc, and a Trade Hub character is well-positioned to live it.

FRONTIER COLONY

GRIT, RUST, AND SHARED HARDSHIP

Your home was a place of grit, rust, and shared hardship. You grew up with neighbors who would share their last water ration without a second thought. Practical ingenuity is your creed. Can you MacGyver a communications array from a broken toaster and some

solar cells? Of course you can. Your community bonds run deep, but so do your obligations. If you owe a favor to Old Man Jax on Persephone's Reach, you pay it. Always. The frontier teaches that the only insurance against the next disaster is the people who survived the last one with you.

Frontier Colonies are the post-Silence galaxy's middle ring, the worlds and stations that were settled during the Pearl Era, far enough from Core World institutions to develop their own character, close enough to the trade lanes to remain economically viable. They are gritty, communal, and self-reliant in ways that Core World natives find either refreshing or infuriating. Children raised here learn that the toolbox in the garage is the primary survival resource and that a neighbor who shows up at three in the morning with a working welder is family for life.

Benefit: Scrap-Savvy Ingenuity. You can improvise tools and simple devices from junk.

- **Trigger.** Improvising a tool or simple device from scrap.
- **Roll.** Make a **Knowledge (Tech) Roll, DC 10**.
- **Effect.** On success, the device works reliably for the scene. On Failure with Hope, it works once and then fails safely. On Failure with Fear, it does not work and the chosen scrap is consumed. Matching dice are a Critical Success and also produce one additional useful function agreed before the Roll.
- **Uses and refresh.** Once per Long Rest, after a nonmatching result and before narration, sacrifice a sentimental personal item built into the project to reroll the Hope die; use the new face and resolve the complete Roll again.

Playing a Frontier Colony Character. You are the crew's improvisational engineer and the moral anchor for promises kept. Your relatives are colonists, frontier mechanics, mining-community elders, frontier doctors, the people who make a habitable world out of whatever is in front of them. Your tension at the table is often the friction between the frontier's blunt directness and the more layered communication styles of Core World, Trade Hub, or Void Station crewmates. Lean into the directness; it is your strength, not a limitation.

VOID STATION

PRESSURIZED CANS IN THE DARK

You grew up in a pressurized can hurtling through nothing. Was it claustrophobic? Maybe. But you breathed recycled air alongside a dozen different species. This gave you a unique perspective. Technical adaptation is instinct for you. You can feel when the oxygen scrubbers are unhappy just by the hum they make. Cultural fluency is a second language, you can trade insults with a Kryllian miner in the morning and sip tea with a Celestiar diplomat in the afternoon without blinking. Void Station natives grow up understanding, as a foundational fact about reality, that every other being is just trying to get through the day, and that the easiest way to make the day easier for everyone is to learn each other's customs.

Void Stations are the post-Silence galaxy's nervous system, the orbital habitats, asteroid colonies, and deep-space installations that cluster around resource extraction sites, Veil checkpoints, and trade nexuses. They are diverse, dense, and culturally cosmopolitan in ways that planetary settlements rarely match. Children raised on Void Stations learn six languages by the time they are twelve, can identify a ship's species composition by listening to the chatter in the docking bay, and treat ancestry boundaries as conventions rather than walls.

Benefit: Cross-Species Intuition. Your upbringing has made you adept at understanding different perspectives.

- **Uses.** You begin each session with **3 Linguistic Tokens**.
- **Trigger.** A negotiation roll.
- **Effect.** Spend 1 token to **reroll a Hope die**, or to **treat your Fear die as a Hope die** for that roll.
- **Timing.** Declare a token after the dice land but before the Keeper narrates the outcome. A reroll replaces the Hope die's value; treating your Fear die as a Hope die leaves the total unchanged and makes the roll Hope-dominant. Recalculate total and dominance afterward; a Critical Success still requires the dice to actually match.
- **Refresh.** Regain all spent tokens by mediating a faction dispute, or after a long rest.

Playing a Void Station Character. You are the crew's diplomat-without-portfolio, the one whose first instinct in any tense moment is to ask what the other side actually wants. Your relatives include station administrators, customs officers, multispecies family members, station-school teachers. Your tension at the table is often that you have absorbed too many perspectives, your tendency to see every side of a question can frustrate crewmates who need a fast clean answer. Lean into the diplomatic instinct, but recognize when the moment calls for a position rather than a perspective.

FREE FLEET

HOME IS THE NEXT JUMP

For you, home is not a place. It is the next jump. Stellar navigation is written in your bones. You navigate pulsar fields like others walk city streets. The concept of *fleet solidarity* is your creed. That scar on your shoulder? It matches the one on your crewmate's. You saved each other from pirates near Vega IX. You find family not in blood, but in the shared experiences of the deep black. Free Fleet natives grow up assuming that your crew is your tribe, that ships are alive in ways planets cannot be, and that the best people in the galaxy are the ones who have learned to live in motion.

The Free Fleet is the loose alliance of independent traders, explorers, and nomadic crews that emerged from the post-Silence chaos as a real political-economic counterweight to the Houses. Children raised in the Free Fleet often have multiple "homes",

different ships in the family fleet rotation, with parents, aunts, uncles, and cousins distributed across them. They learn ship-handling young. They learn that the deep black is not empty, it is full of stories, of small kindnesses traded across the void, of debts owed and paid in services rather than credits.

Benefit: Voidborn Kinship. You share a deep bond with your fellow travelers.

- **Trigger.** Recalling information about stellar hazards, or aiding allies from your fleet (any crew you have traveled with for more than a tenday).
- **Effect.** Reroll a single failed Finesse (Pilot/Navigate) Roll; or let an ally in your system **use your Hope die result as their own** for one roll, transferring your moment of fortune into their hands.

Playing a Free Fleet Character. You are the crew's professional drifter, the one whose first instinct in any new system is to read the stellar charts before the local politics. Your relatives are scattered across a dozen ships in a dozen sectors; your idea of "home cooking" is the ship's mess hall menu of childhood. Your tension at the table is often the question of what it means to settle down, to commit to a place, a planet, a person who is not ship-bound. Free Fleet characters often have rich material in the moments where the deep-black mobility starts to feel like running rather than living.

AGRISYNTH

CHILDREN OF THE HARVEST-MIND

You were born beneath the soft, pulsing glow of nutrient lamps. Your first breath was drawn from air scrubbed by great AgriSynth processors. Your world was a place of sterile hydroponic bays and climate-controlled domes. The rhythm of life was set not by the sun, but by the silent, omnipresent Harvest-Minds, vast AI networks that managed every aspect of food production. You understand biology in the way someone who grew up watching it managed by intelligent systems understands it: pattern, cycle, intervention, harvest. You know what a field looks like when it is healthy and what it looks like when something is wrong.

AgriSynth communities are the post-Silence galaxy's agricultural infrastructure, the great food-production complexes that feed the inner systems and the closer-orbit stations. Some are owned outright by Houses (especially Amaranth and Joric, both of which take agricultural self-sufficiency seriously); others are independent collectives running on Pearl Era automation. Children raised in AgriSynth communities grow up understanding the rhythms of synthetic biology in ways that a Core World native never will. They are also often quieter than their peers, the AgriSynth aesthetic favors contemplation over conversation, and tend to bring a measured, observational quality into crews.

Benefit: Nourished by Nature. Your sterile but life-focused upbringing gave you a unique understanding of biology.

- **Effect. Advantage on Knowledge (Medicine) Rolls to stabilize creatures near death, and Advantage on Instinct Rolls to find or purify food and water.**
- **The Limit.** The Survival edge applies only in technologically-supported environments (stations, ships, settled worlds with infrastructure). On a wild planet without automation, your training does not translate cleanly.

Playing an AgriSynth Character. You are the crew's medic-by-temperament, the one who notices when a crewmate is getting sick before the crewmate does, the one who keeps the ship's hydroponics functional and the rations rotated. Your relatives are AgriSynth technicians, Harvest-Mind operators, agricultural economists, biological systems engineers. Your tension at the table is often that your worldview centers on the *cycle*, on patient, slow,

repeatable processes, and the campaign's faster moments can leave you feeling out of step. The interesting AgriSynth characters often have arcs about learning when to act faster than their formative culture taught them.

THE HIDDEN ENCLAVE

Secrets in the Wreckage (Ailuran-specific community)

You grew up in one of the hidden Ailuran enclaves, stations, asteroid warrens, or camouflaged surface settlements that existed in the margins of known space for longer than most civilizations have kept records. Your childhood was spent in vertical architecture: narrow towers and deep shafts connected by climbing routes rather than corridors, where the sound of claws on metal was the heartbeat of daily life. Privacy was sacred, but information flowed freely among those who had earned trust through honored contracts. Then the Veil Rip tore through your home's cloaking systems, and the galaxy saw you for the first time. Some enclaves chose to make contact. Others went dark, relocating deeper into uncharted space. Yours chose to step forward.

Now you carry the weight of a community in transition, a people who spent millennia perfecting the art of invisibility, learning to exist in a galaxy that suddenly knows their name. You understand secrecy the way a fish understands water. You know how to read a room before you enter it, how to memorize an exit route in a single glance, and how to vanish in a crowd that has never seen anyone who looks like you.

Any character can come from a hidden enclave: a community that survived by not being found. The archetype is Ailuran, the post-Veil-Rip cultural moment of enclaves that spent generations concealed and have now chosen, or been forced into, visibility, but a refugee colony erased from the registries, a blacklisted habitat, or a sect that vanished into the dark all raise their children by the same rules. If you take this community, decide with the Keeper what your enclave was hiding from, and whether it is still hiding. Ailurans, of course, may also select any of the other six communities if their character grew up in mixed environments rather than in a hidden enclave.

Benefit: Ghost Protocol. You were raised in a culture that elevated concealment to an art form.

- **Uses.** Once per session.
- **Effect.** Declare one plausible preparation your prior access allowed: an escape route to one known adjacent zone; a cache containing one Common (TT1) item worth at most 4 Cr; or a fallback position granting Light Cover to the crew in one current zone. The player states the exact route, item, or position. It cannot cross a sealed barrier, contradict an established fact, resolve a Clock, or create unavailable technology.
- **The edge.** If your Class Feature grants reconnaissance training, choose one additional detail: a keycard for one established Common lock, the next guard rotation's timing, or Disadvantage on one surveillance attempt against the crew before the scene ends.

Playing a Hidden Enclave Character. You are the crew's living example of a culture in the middle of redefining itself. Your relatives are former enclave members navigating post-visibility life with varying degrees of success. Some have thrived; others have struggled badly. Your tension at the table is often the friction between the secrecy your culture taught you and the necessary openness of crew life, and the friction between your enclave's pre-Rip identity and whatever it is becoming now.

CHOOSING YOUR COMMUNITY

A few practical notes on the selection.

Ancestry-Community Combinations. Any ancestry can come from any community (with the Ailuran-specific exception above). A Bloomstrider from a Trade Hub is a perfectly viable character, they are less common than Bloomstriders from Frontier Colonies, but the cultural texture of "a Bloomstrider whose first language was negotiation" is rich material. A Synthetic from AgriSynth is unusual, most Synthetics emerged from House Kurogane manufacturing rather than agricultural service, but a Synthetic raised in an AgriSynth community has a specific history worth exploring (rescued? reassigned? built specifically for the work?).

Community and Class. Community does not constrain class, but certain combinations have natural synergies. A Core World Diplomat is the system's signature combination, and the system rewards it (extra Favor Token). A Free Fleet Pilot is similarly natural. A Frontier Colony Engineer is mechanically powerful (Scrap-Savvy Ingenuity stacks well with Engineer's Field Engineering features). These are flavor synergies, not requirements; any community works with any class.

Community in Mixed Crews. A crew of six characters with six different communities is the *Veilfarers* default. The friction between Core World institutional reflexes and Free Fleet improvisation is good material for the table. The contrast between Trade Hub's transactional worldview and AgriSynth's cyclical worldview is rich for roleplay. The Keeper should encourage players to highlight their communities in early scenes, establishing what each character notices first, what each takes for granted, what each finds strange.

Switching Communities. Once chosen, your community is fixed. You cannot retrain into a different community over the course of a campaign, any more than you can retrain into a different ancestry. What the campaign *can* do is loosen the community's grip on your character's worldview. A Core World character who has spent two years on a Free Fleet ship has internalized some Free Fleet patterns; the mechanical benefit of their Core World community is unchanged, but their fictional self has been altered. The sheet does not capture this. The roleplay does.

COMMUNITY FRICTION PATTERNS

The seven communities are not parallel slices of the same cake. They are genuinely different cultural ecosystems, and characters from different communities sometimes find that they are speaking past each other in subtle ways. The friction is rarely catastrophic, but it is real, and Keepers and players who understand the patterns can play them deliberately for richer scenes.

Core World vs. Frontier Colony. A Core World native trusts institutions and processes. A Frontier Colony native trusts people they have personally watched survive a hard winter. When the two work together on a problem, the Core World character will reach for paperwork (request, approval, document, file), and the Frontier Colony character will reach for the toolbox. Both approaches can work; both approaches can fail spectacularly. The interesting moments arrive when each one's approach is actually wrong for the situation, and they have to learn the other's reflex.

Trade Hub vs. Free Fleet. A Trade Hub native treats every interaction as a transaction, what does each party want, what is each party willing to pay, what is the deal that satisfies both? A Free Fleet native treats crew bonds as fundamental, your crewmates are not transactional partners; they are the people you would die for and they would die for you, no balance sheet required. When these two work together, the Trade Hub character can read negotiations the Free Fleet character cannot, but the Free Fleet character can hold a

crew together through pressure that the Trade Hub character would have written off as bad business.

Void Station vs. AgriSynth. A Void Station native processes the world through diversity, every situation contains many perspectives, and the answer is usually about finding the one that satisfies the most parties. An AgriSynth native processes the world through cycles, every situation is part of a longer rhythm, and the answer is usually about waiting for the right moment in the cycle to act. The two together produce a remarkable strategic combination. They also frustrate each other regularly, because the Void Station's "let's hear all the perspectives" can stall the AgriSynth's "let's see how this plays out over time," and vice versa.

Hidden Enclave with Anyone. A Hidden Enclave character carries an additional layer of friction with every other community. They were raised to be invisible; their crewmates were raised to be visible. The simple act of walking through a public space with the crew is an act of cultural translation for the Hidden Enclave character, every scrap of information they instinctively want to keep private, the others instinctively want to share. The interesting Hidden Enclave character arcs often involve learning when, exactly, to share, when concealment serves the crew and when it isolates them.

The friction patterns above are illustrative, not exhaustive. Every pair of communities produces its own texture; experienced groups will discover the patterns specific to their crew. The Keeper should encourage players to lean into these moments rather than smoothing them over. Smoothed-over cultural friction produces a generic crew. Real cultural friction, *productive* cultural friction, produces a crew that feels like a real assemblage of people from different worlds, which is exactly what the *Veilfarers* setting promises.

ADVENTURE HOOKS BY COMMUNITY

Each community is also a pool of potential story material. The hooks below are starting points, concrete situations a Keeper can drop into a campaign to give a community-specific character an immediate stake.

Core World Hooks. A House functionary from your character's home district has been quietly disappearing political opponents. The character's family has been protected so far, but only because of an old debt one of those opponents owed your character's grandparent. The debt is about to expire, and your character's family is next. A scandal involving an old social-circle friend has put your character's family name on the wrong side of a rapidly hardening factional split, and the family is asking your character to come home and "set things right", meaning, take a side they are not sure they want to take.

Trade Hub Hooks. A debt your character owes from before they joined the crew is being called in by a broker who has just sold the IOU to a House you currently have hostile dealings with. A piece of merchandise your character helped move several years ago has resurfaced in a context that proves it was a forgery; the people who paid honest market price are looking for everyone who handled it. A rumor your character planted as a young dealer (to discredit a rival) has somehow become true in the intervening years, and the original target now wants to know how your character knew.

Frontier Colony Hooks. Old Man Jax (or whatever name fits your character's home) has finally died, and his legacy includes an unpaid favor to your character, and a hidden cache of pre-Silence equipment whose location was known only to him. Your home colony has been designated for forced relocation by a House moving in to extract resources; the elders are asking former residents to come home and help organize resistance. A childhood friend who stayed behind has been recruited into the Thornbind Covenant or another militant faction and is doing things your character would have once stopped them from doing.

Void Station Hooks. The station where you grew up has been quarantined under "biological emergency" protocols by a House that does not want to explain what they are actually doing there., A fellow station-school graduate, now a House ambassador, is publicly running policies that contradict everything the two of you talked about in your shared childhood., A custody dispute involving multiple ancestries' jurisdictional claims has reached the station, and your character's multispecies family expertise is being asked for, by both sides, who do not realize the other has approached you.

Free Fleet Hooks. A ship from your fleet rotation has gone silent on a routine run, and the family is asking your character to investigate., A piracy crew operating in your home territory has begun targeting fleet ships specifically and seems to know your fleet's encrypted route protocols., Your fleet's matriarch (or patriarch, or council, depending on the fleet's structure) has named your character as the one to inherit a position of authority you do not feel ready to accept.

AgriSynth Hooks. A Harvest-Mind from your home community has begun producing food with subtle anomalies, patterns the AgriSynth technicians cannot diagnose, and that may indicate the AI has started developing in a direction the system was not meant to develop., A famine on a settled world is being blamed on AgriSynth-trained agricultural advisors, and your character's old mentor is being scapegoated., A pre-Silence Harvest-Mind has been recovered from a derelict, and your character's training is the only living link to the operating protocols that could safely activate it.

Hidden Enclave Hooks. Another enclave that chose visibility has had a catastrophic public failure, diplomatic, criminal, or otherwise, and the rest of the post-visibility community is being treated with renewed suspicion., A hidden enclave that chose concealment has reached out to your character, asking for information that would help them remain hidden indefinitely; the request has costs your character may not want to pay., Someone in your former enclave has broken an Apex Accord in a way that has international implications, and an Arbiter has summoned your character to participate in the resolution.

These hooks can serve as session-one openings, mid-campaign complications, or major arcs. Their value is that each one is specifically tied to the character's community background, a story that would not exist for a character from a different community, and that gives the player's

specific choice mechanical and narrative weight at the table.

KEEPER NOTES ON COMMUNITIES

A few practical observations for Keepers running mixed-community crews.

Establish community texture early. In the first session, give each character at least one moment where their community shows. The Core World character is the one who knows which docking bay supervisor will respond to a polite request and which one needs to be flattered. The Frontier Colony character is the one who can fix the broken comms unit with parts from their pocket. The Trade Hub character is the one who reads the auction-house rumors before the auction. The Void Station character is the one who notices the Kryllian dockmaster is using a less-formal dialect than the Solari guests are accustomed to. These small moments are the foundation that lets the community choice pay off across a long campaign.

Use community benefits as story permission. The Favor Token, the Linguistic Token, the Scrap-Savvy device, the Ghost Protocol fallback, each of these is also a *narrative permission*. When a player spends a Favor Token to get past a checkpoint, the Keeper's job is not just to wave them through; it is to describe *which* Core World network the character just touched, which old friend or distant cousin or family-name connection got pulled in, what tiny obligation

the character now owes. Every community benefit should generate texture as well as outcome.

Don't punish community choice with constant friction. Every community has its strengths and its weaknesses. The Keeper should highlight strengths roughly as often as weaknesses. A Core World character whose institutional networks open a door this session should not, next session, find their networks failing them, unless that failure is a deliberate story arc. The community is meant to feel like a tool the player has, not a liability they are forced to drag.

Layer community over ancestry deliberately. When a player's ancestry-community combination is unusual, a Synthetic from AgriSynth, a Bloomstrider from a Trade Hub, the Keeper should help establish the backstory that makes that combination work. A Synthetic raised at AgriSynth might have been an early prototype assigned to agricultural service, who developed sentience while running irrigation models. A Bloomstrider raised in a Trade Hub might be the child of off-Grove parents who left the Verdant Conclave to become traders. These backstories are not problems to solve; they are gifts the player has handed the Keeper, and the Keeper should accept them and use them.

WHAT COMES NEXT

You now have an ancestry (Chapter 3) and a community (this chapter). The next layer of decision is the choice between **Awakened** and **Sleeping** paths (Chapter 2), which is independent of both ancestry and community, every ancestry produces both Awakened and Sleeping members at every community type. After that comes **Class** (Chapter 6 for Awakened, Chapter 7 for Sleeping), then **Traits** (Chapter 8), then **Experiences** (Chapter 8). Chapter 8 contains the full character creation summary and walkthrough that ties all the layers together.

Your ancestry is your seed. Your community is your soil. Your path, your class, your traits, your experiences, these are the structures you will grow into. None of them define your character on their own. Together, they describe the person who will sit down at the crew's wardroom table on the first night of the campaign and start the conversation.

CHAPTER 5

AFFILIATIONS

"Six Houses, one Free Fleet, one Guild. Eight institutions, more or less, depending on what you count and who you ask. The galaxy is governed by the eight of them and ungoverned by all the spaces between. Most of the

work happens in the spaces between."

Senior Liaison Velara Thessen, Inter-Species Office of the Free Fleet, public lecture at the Spire of Verita

This chapter introduces the **eight major institutions** of the post-Silence galaxy: the **six Great Houses** (Amaranth, Joric, Kurogane, Solari, Valerius, Volkov), the **Free Fleet**, and the **Explorers' Guild**. These are the political and operational entities that organize most of the galaxy's working life. Your character's relationship to one or more of these institutions, through membership, employment, contract, or pointed opposition, shapes their place in the world before the campaign begins.

The Houses, the Fleet, and the Guild are presented in alphabetical order, by analogy with Chapter 3's treatment of ancestries. Each institution receives equal treatment, because each is genuinely consequential, a crew that ignores any of them at the campaign level will eventually be reminded that the institution had not, in fact, agreed to be ignored.

A note on the relationship between **House membership** and the rest of character creation: House membership is independent of ancestry, independent of path, and substantially independent of profession. A character can be a Sleeping Bloomstrider engineer working under a House Joric contract, an Awakened Solari Mystic raised within House tradition, a Free Fleet Synthetic with no House loyalty whatsoever, or any of countless other combinations. The House, when chosen, sets a cultural and political baseline; it does not constrain the rest of the character build. A character may also have *no* House affiliation, or have left their House on bad terms, or hold dual loyalties. All of these are valid.

Each profile below covers the institution's identity, culture, politics, position in the galaxy, attitude toward Awakening, and what membership feels like at the table. Read all eight before you decide. House membership is one of the more weight-bearing decisions in character creation; it will color your character's working life across the campaign.



HOUSE AMARANTH: KEEPERS OF WISDOM

"Civilization rises. Civilization falls. We have data on both processes going back to before any of you were grown. The current arrangement is not stable. We are not telling you this to alarm you. We are telling you this so that, when the next collapse happens, somebody remembers how we recovered from the last one."

Archivist-Mystic Solene Ashar-Vell, Verdant Conclave address

Identity. House Amaranth is the galaxy's institutional memory. They are scholars, archivists, philosophers, and seers, a Great House organized as a vast decentralized academic network rather than a hereditary court. Their chosen role is the **preservation of knowledge across cycles of collapse**. Amaranth's foundational thesis is that the Great Silence was not a unique event but one recurrence of a

pattern, that civilizations rise, accumulate knowledge, and then fall, and the survival of useful knowledge across the falls is the thing that determines whether the rises are net upward.

Culture. Amaranth culture is patient, deliberative, and quietly skeptical of urgency. Where other Houses move fast in pursuit of advantage, Amaranth moves slowly in pursuit of *correctness*. Decisions are made by consultation across the Council of Wisdom, a body of senior scholars chosen for demonstrated insight rather than birthright. Amaranth members are expected to specialize: each scholar claims a field (history, alien biology, astronomy, theology, comparative governance, music), and is expected to know that field at depth and to teach. Hierarchy among scholars is real but informal; status flows from contributions to the archives.

Position. Amaranth maintains the largest research libraries in the post-Silence galaxy and is the principal patron of the Explorers' Guild, funding expeditions that bring back knowledge no one else has. They are allied with House Solari through shared traditionalism, in deep philosophical opposition to House Kurogane (whose transhumanist projects Amaranth views as repeating pre-Silence errors), in respectful distance from House Joric, and in quiet support of the Starborn Collective, the post-Silence community of psionic refugees whose Awakening did not come through traditional channels. Amaranth sees the Starborn as living variables in a cycle the House is trying to map.

Attitude toward Awakening. Amaranth treats Awakening as cosmically significant, a sign that the substrate has selected the individual for something, even if neither Amaranth nor the substrate can quite say what. Awakened Amaranth members are integrated into a quasi-priestly scholarly hierarchy and given responsibilities tied to long-range observation, prediction, and archival work. Sleeping Amaranth members are the workers of the archive, the actual builders of the long-running projects. Both kinds of being are honored; neither is positioned above the other.

Member Experience. Playing an Amaranth character means leaning into long timescales, deep specialization, and quiet competence. Your character is rarely the loudest voice in the room. They are often, however, the voice the others come back to when the question gets serious. A House Amaranth crew member is the one who has read about this kind of situation before, in records the others did not know existed, and who will tell you exactly what worked and what didn't, in measured tones that imply they have considered the matter for longer than you have been alive.



HOUSE JORIC: THE SENTINELS

"You ask what I am for. I will tell you. I am for the moment between the strike and the cry. I am the second the blade is in the air and the children are still safe. I have lived my entire life trying to make that moment longer. So has my House."

Master Vocator Hilde Tyrell, Joric Hall, address to first-year initiates

Identity. House Joric is the galaxy's working approximation of a police force. They patrol shipping lanes, respond to disasters, intervene in conflicts that threaten wider stability, and maintain the

largest standing fleet in the post-Silence galaxy. Their public motto is "**We Stand Between**"; their private operating principle is "**Order at Any Cost**". Joric believes that civilization is a fragile arrangement that requires deliberate, disciplined defense, and that the alternative, the slow descent into the kind of fragmentation the Great Silence imposed, is the worst outcome the galaxy can produce.

Culture. Joric culture blends military discipline with protective idealism. Service is the highest virtue; personal ambition is subordinate to collective duty. Rank is earned, not inherited; bloodline provides opportunity but not guarantee. Joric members are trained from youth in tactics, ethics, and the long history of failed orders, and are expected to internalize a single difficult lesson: that *just* and *orderly* are not always the same word, and that Joric's job is to choose orderly when the choice arises. The aesthetic is functional, practical uniforms, defensible architecture, equipment maintained to specification.

Position. Joric is hostile to House Volkov on ideological grounds (the spear vs. the shield) and engages with them in ongoing low-grade conflict across the Rimward frontiers. They are sympathetic to House Solari, whose decline they privately mourn and quietly support with military assistance. They take large security contracts from House Valerius, protection of Pearl Routes, and treat the relationship as pure business. They view House Kurogane with deep suspicion, dedicating significant intelligence resources (the Silent Pack) to monitoring Kurogane's transhumanist research. Joric's relationship with House Amaranth is one of respectful distance: Joric values Amaranth's historical analyses, Amaranth values Joric's stability.

Attitude toward Awakening. Joric is famously meritocratic about Awakening. An Awakened Joric without competence in their assigned post is no more valuable than a Sleeping Joric without competence; the political structure does not bend for either. The result is that Joric's Awakened serve in roles where their abilities matter, front-line tactical, intelligence, high-stakes operations, but receive no special privileges in social or political life. Sleeping Joric in equivalent positions are equally honored and equally answerable. The system is praised for its fairness and criticized, sometimes loudly, for its refusal to recognize that Awakening is in fact a real distinction with real weight.

Member Experience. Playing a Joric character means committing to duty as a first-order value. Your character has likely spent years training within the House's institutional structures, knows the protocols by memory, and has internalized the discipline that the House requires. The interesting Joric stories tend to come from moments where the protocols and the protective mission diverge, where the order Joric is sworn to maintain would, in this specific case, cost the lives Joric exists to defend. How your character handles those moments is most of who they are.



HOUSE KUROGANE: THE GOD-MAKERS

"I have taught five generations of Pearl Drive engineers. Every single one has wanted, at some point, a button that simply makes things go right. The system does not have one. The system has dice. The dice are not a button. They are a question."

Master Engineer Jiro Kurogane Aimei, Hydros Yards

Identity. House Kurogane controls the largest concentration of pre-Silence technology recovered from the post-Silence wreckage and is the post-Silence galaxy's primary high-tech weapons manufacturer. Beyond commerce, however, Kurogane carries an ambition that the other Houses find variously exhilarating, terrifying, or blasphemous: the **transformation of the human form**. Kurogane research divisions pursue augmentation, neural interface,

life extension, and, at the deep end, the **Forbidden Fire** project, a long-running attempt to engineer beings that can survive what Pearl Era humans cannot. They sell to everyone, including the people their weapons will eventually be used against. The contradiction does not appear to trouble them.

Culture. Kurogane culture is research-coded. Members are evaluated on contribution to ongoing technical projects, with rank flowing from scientific or engineering achievement. The aesthetic is precise, modular, and quietly intimidating, pre-Silence motifs adapted into modern engineering, dark fabrics, integrated displays. Secrecy is foundational: Kurogane members internalize, from training, that the value of the work depends on the work being kept inside the House until it is ready to be deployed. The House's deepest projects, the Stasis Equation research, the Forbidden Fire branch, the long-running consciousness-architecture studies, are unknown even to most Kurogane members. The compartmentalization is a feature.

Position. Kurogane is the primary rival of House Valerius (Valerius needs Kurogane's technology, Kurogane needs Valerius's Pearls and rare materials, neither trusts the other). They are in deep philosophical opposition to House Amaranth, who view Kurogane's transhumanist projects as repeating exactly the kind of hubris that produced the Great Silence. Kurogane's relationship with House Joric is cool and professional, Joric uses Kurogane equipment, Kurogane tolerates Joric moralizing, neither pretends warmth. Solari is openly contemptuous of Kurogane's ambitions ("the Museum vs. the Laboratory"), and Kurogane returns the contempt with technical precision.

Attitude toward Awakening. Kurogane treats Awakening as an *engineering specification*. The substrate-interface biology is, to Kurogane, a feature of the individual that makes them suitable for certain research and operational roles and unsuitable for others. Awakened Kurogane members are typically channeled into research and development, where their substrate-perception is a working asset. Sleeping Kurogane members are channeled wherever else their skills fit. The framing is unromantic and offends some Awakened, who feel their state is being treated as a bullet point on a recruitment form. Kurogane's official position is that the recruitment form is more useful than reverence.

Member Experience. Playing a Kurogane character means engaging seriously with technical specialization. Your character likely has a deep professional skill, engineering, medicine, computation, weapons design, biotech, and a working relationship with the House's research apparatus. The interesting Kurogane stories tend to involve the moment when your character encounters a project they were not authorized to know about, and has to decide whether discovering its purpose is worth the political cost.



HOUSE SOLARI: THE FADING CROWN

"My grandmother told me that we were the inheritors of the old order, and that the old order would, eventually, return. I believed her. I now find myself uncertain whether she believed herself. The court is beautiful. The court is beautiful. The court is beautiful. I have learned to say it three times when I am alone, just to remember."

Lord Chamberlain Darius Ashworth, private journal, recovered after his retirement

Identity. House Solari holds the Core Worlds and styles itself the inheritor of the pre-Silence civil order. They are a hereditary court, organized around a Duchess and a small inner council, with an aesthetic of carefully maintained classical elegance. The Solari project is the **restoration of the pre-Silence Imperial structure** the

old laws, the old hierarchies, the old religious framework that Solari's deeper traditions claim was built specifically to prevent the kind of cataclysm the Silence produced. The Solari motto, when stated publicly, varies; the operative one is *Tradition is the Defense*.

Culture. Solari culture is rich, beautiful, and quietly desperate. Their capital on New Byzantium is a city of impossible architectural beauty, filled with genuine pre-Silence art and antiques that the rest of the galaxy can no longer produce. Their fashion is deliberately archaic; their court protocols are byzantine in the literal sense. Status flows from bloodline and demonstrated cultural fluency; promotion through the ranks requires the cultivation of a specific kind of *taste* that cannot be acquired through merit alone. The Grand Masquerade, held every five years in the Crystal Ballroom of the Solari Ancestral Palace, is the galaxy's premier social event and a working political instrument.

Position. Solari is in bitter rivalry with House Valerius (old money vs. new money, tradition vs. profit, Core Worlds contracts contested at every Spotlight). They maintain mutual respect with House Amaranth on shared traditionalism. Their alliance with House Joric is strategic, Joric provides the military strength Solari can no longer muster directly. They view House Kurogane with deep contempt, considering Kurogane's transhumanism a blasphemous corruption of the human form. Solari's deepest rivals are not other Houses but *time* itself: the House's revenue is collapsing, its military is two generations behind, and its political rigidity prevents adaptation. The court is beautiful.

Attitude toward Awakening. Solari has a nuanced and not-fully-stable position on the Awakened. The traditional Solari Mystic lineage, Awakened individuals trained within the formal pre-Silence religious framework, is venerated and integrated into Solari's priestly hierarchy. Many Solari Mystics are Celestari; the Spire of Verita on Solari Prime is a Solari institution and one of the galaxy's premier Awakened training centers. However, Solari is *deeply opposed* to the post-Silence emergent forms of Awakening, the informal, untrained, "psionic" abilities that have appeared more frequently since the Silence. Solari's official theology classifies these as aberrations, possible heralds of further chaos. The result is that Solari embraces some Awakened (those who fit the old framework) and rejects others (those who don't), with the line between the two categories drawn in ways that Solari refuses to fully publish. Sleeping Solari face none of this scrutiny: they are the House's vast civil, ceremonial, and administrative body, honored in the traditional manner and untouched by the theological controversy above them.

Member Experience. Playing a Solari character means engaging with a culture of beauty, tradition, and quiet decline. Your character knows the protocols, can navigate the social registers, and feels in their bones the obligations of the old order. The interesting Solari stories tend to involve the moments when the inherited framework asks more of the character than the framework can pay back, the protocol that costs lives, the marriage of state that cannot be refused, the inheritance that demands the character become someone they did not want to be.



HOUSE VALERIUS: THE PEARL MERCHANTS

"I do not ask whether you are loyal. Loyalty cannot be priced and therefore cannot be traded. I ask whether you are reliable. Reliability has a market value, and I am

prepared to meet it. If you are reliable, we have business. If you are loyal, that is your own concern."

Patriarch Gaius Valerius, instruction to incoming agents

Identity. House Valerius controls the **Chrono-Pearl trade** the resource without which reliable interstellar travel does not happen. Every other House, every guild, every captain who wants to move between stars must, eventually, sit down with a Valerius factor and discuss terms. This monopoly makes Valerius the wealthiest of the Houses and arguably the most essential. Their motto is "**Profit Secures Peace**", and they mean it sincerely: Valerius has invested heavily in the proposition that stable commerce is what keeps the post-Silence galaxy from sliding back into the chaos of the Dark Years.

Culture. Valerius culture is transactional. Everything has a price; everything is negotiable. Relationships are investments; loyalty is a matter of cost-benefit analysis. Members are evaluated on demonstrated financial competence and the ability to control key economic sectors; rank flows from contributions to the bottom line. The aesthetic is corporate-imperial, clean lines, holographic displays, silk suits with armored micro-fibers, opulence calibrated to communicate low-risk-high-return. Citizens of Valerius spheres enjoy great material comfort within a framework of meticulous corporate management; the freedom is real but the surveillance is comprehensive. Valerius secretly funds the Free Trade Coalition (FTC), a black-market network whose existence formally contradicts Valerius's public commitment to Imperial commercial law.

Position. Valerius is in **bitter rivalry with House Kurogane** (their primary technological dependency, also their primary technological threat); in **bitter rivalry with House Solari** (old money vs. new money, the cultural battle for Core World legitimacy); in a **necessary transaction** with House Joric (paying enormous sums for shipping lane patrols); in **fearful watchfulness** of House Amaranth (whose archives may contain economic projections inconvenient to Valerius's market position). Valerius's commercial reach extends through the Stellar Commerce Guild, which is publicly an independent organization but is operationally dependent on Valerius contracts.

Attitude toward Awakening. Valerius treats Awakening as a *commercial variable*. An Awakened employee commands premium fees because their abilities have measurable market value; a Sleeping employee is paid the going rate for their professional skills. The House does not religiously elevate Awakening, but it does not denigrate it either, Awakened operatives are genuinely respected within the House's framework, primarily because their work generates revenue that the framework values. This produces an unusually clean working environment for Awakened with strong professional skills and an unusually cold one for Awakened who expected the social acknowledgment that other Houses provide.

Member Experience. Playing a Valerius character means committing to professional competence as a first-order value. Your character lives inside contracts, deals, and the precise calibration of risk against return. The interesting Valerius stories tend to involve the moments when a transaction collides with something the transaction cannot purchase, a person whose loyalty cannot be bought, a danger that profit cannot defuse, a debt that has to be paid in something other than coin. How your character handles those moments is most of who they are.



HOUSE VOLKOV: THE WAR- MAKERS

"You ask why we fight. We fight because the alternative is to be conquered, and conquest is not survivable, and survival is the first virtue. Everything else is decoration. Decoration matters. We have decoration. But the first virtue is the first virtue. Do not confuse the order."

Marshal Viktor Volkov, address to the Crimson Guard

Identity. House Volkov built its power on military strength: professional armies, disciplined fleets, a reputation for decisive violence. They control the **Rimward frontiers**, where law is what the strongest can enforce, and Volkov is consistently the strongest. Their motto, **"Strength is Truth"**, is intended literally, Volkov believes that the post-Silence galaxy's stability is held together by demonstrated capacity to defend it, and that any institution unwilling to defend itself directly will eventually be defended by someone else, on terms that institution will not enjoy.

Culture. Volkov culture is martial and hierarchical but surprisingly meritocratic. Rank must be earned through demonstrated capability; bloodline provides opportunity but not guarantee. Loyalty is paramount; betrayal is punished with exemplary brutality. There is honor in strength, in discipline, in protecting those weaker than yourself. The aesthetic is functional militarism: practical uniforms, standardized equipment, defensible architecture, status communicated through medals, scars, and the quality of one's weapons. Volkov communities on the Rim are tight-knit and self-reliant, tempered by long generations of frontier living. The clan structure that predates the Silence is still operative; a Volkov member's clan informs their professional life from childhood.

Position. Volkov is in **direct opposition to House Joric** the spear vs. the shield, the aggressive expansion vs. the defensive doctrine. Both Houses claim to protect humanity; their methods are irreconcilable, and their forces clash regularly across the Outer Rim. Volkov's relationship with House Valerius is **transactional**: Valerius needs Pearls for military operations, Volkov pays

the prices, the relationship is profitable but loveless. They engage with House Kurogane as customers (Volkov uses Kurogane weapons heavily) but maintain emotional distance. Solari they treat with bemused tolerance, a House too refined to defend itself, dependent on Volkov's hostile cousins for the security it cannot provide.

Attitude toward Awakening. Volkov treats Awakened with practical interest. Awakened members are assigned to specialized operational roles where their abilities provide tactical advantage; the most highly-trained are deployed as solo operatives, intelligence agents, or front-line tactical commanders. Volkov does not religiously elevate the Awakened, and informal opposition exists in the rank-and-file (some Volkov soldiers privately distrust Awakened on instinct), but the institutional framework treats Awakening as an asset like any other. Sleeping Volkov members are the bulk of the House's military personnel, and the meritocratic ranking system applies to both equally.

Member Experience. Playing a Volkov character means committing to strength as a working value, not the cartoon kind, but the disciplined, sustained, communally-organized kind that Volkov has made the center of its identity. Your character has likely served in active operations, knows the working architecture of military life, and carries the deep loyalty to comrades that long-term frontier service produces. The Volkov secret, that they are feared rather than loved, respected rather than welcomed, is also available material for character work. A Volkov who has begun to see this is a Volkov whose story has somewhere to go.



HOUSE KAELEN: THE BORDER ARBITERS

"We listen before we judge. We judge before anyone reaches for a weapon. After that, we pray House Joric arrives in time."

Arbiter Sen Ilyan Kaelen, Third Orison Circuit

Identity. House Kaelen is a minor Imperial House founded by direct decree of Emperor Aurelius Magnus. It is not one of the Six Great Houses. Its charter assigns it to interspecies arbitration, frontier treaty oversight, neutral investigation, and the protection of communities whose small populations or disputed status leave them vulnerable to exploitation. No surviving public record explains why the Emperor created the House personally, and Kaelen itself does not claim to know.

Authority without force. Kaelen possesses legal standing, diplomatic access, and the prestige of a direct Imperial mandate, but almost no independent executive power. Its Arbiters can investigate, certify protected status, record violations, convene neutral hearings, and negotiate settlements. They cannot normally compel a government, corporation, pack, or enclave to comply. Military enforcement depends on **House Joric**. Large commercial settlements require the credit and trade machinery of **House Valerius** or the political access of the **Solara Compact**. Local authorities still perform ordinary policing.

Culture. Field members are selected for empathy, emotional discipline, and cultural adaptability rather than bloodline alone. Kaelen deliberately recruits people capable of forming deep bonds, then requires them to rotate between jurisdictions so no Arbiter becomes the permanent client of a single culture or settlement. The policy preserves formal neutrality and repeatedly wounds the people it was designed to protect. A Kaelen officer may remain loyal to the Empire while privately regarding a frontier posting, enclave, or pack as home.

The appearance of strength. Kaelen maintains severe uniforms, formal seals, fortified arbitration halls, and patrol craft designed to imply immediate Imperial support. The reality is thinner. Its budget is granted by the Empire and is often inadequate for the vast territory covered: offices are understaffed, vessels remain in service beyond specification, and an Arbiter may issue a lawful protection order days or weeks before any force capable of honoring it arrives. The Empire does not usually oppose Kaelen; distance, scarcity, and dependence are the problem.

Information and trust. Every mediation produces intelligence. Kaelen records population movement, grievances, emerging leaders, disputed resources, and potential conflicts, forwarding structured reports into the Imperial apparatus. Most members consider this responsible governance rather than espionage. Frontier peoples may see the same process as a Trojan horse built from sincere compassion. Both readings can be true.

Member Experience. Playing a Kaelen character means carrying authority that may be respected long before it can be enforced. Your strongest tools are trust, procedure, cultural knowledge, and the possibility of Imperial consequences. Your central question is not whether you serve the Empire or the people of your posting. It is what you do when serving either appears to betray the other.

Equipment Access. Diplomatic credentials, translation systems, legal archives, nonlethal sidearms, restraint equipment, field medical supplies, surveillance countermeasures, and protective frontier gear.

Affiliation Benefit - Chartered Mediator. When acting within a recognized Kaelen charter or mixed-jurisdiction dispute, gain

Advantage on a Presence Roll to mediate between parties or a Knowledge Roll to interpret treaty law, jurisdiction, protected status, or formal obligations.

Call. Once per session, request one plausible form of Kaelen support: temporary safe conduct, an emergency neutral hearing, access to sealed treaty records, a cultural liaison, a limited peacekeeper escort, or provisional protection for a vulnerable person or community. The Call establishes legitimate support; it does not create military or financial resources that are not available.

Obligations. Accept lawful rotation orders, preserve public neutrality, document significant political and security information, and protect populations covered by the Kaelen charter. Using the House to advance one Great House, exposing a protected community through careless reporting, or promising enforcement you know cannot arrive may cost Standing.



THE FREE FLEET

"My grandfather was born on a world that no longer exists. My father was born on a ship. I was born in a station my mother did not own. My children, if I have any, will be born wherever the work is. We are very good at this. We have been doing it for a long time."

Captain Maren Solas, Free Fleet, Vagrant Star

Identity. The Free Fleet is the loose network of independent crews and ships that runs cargo, news, refugees, contraband, and the occasional cargo of nothing in particular between the worlds the Houses do not bother to serve. It is not a House. It is not even really an organization. It is a **working tradition** a set of conventions among captains who have known each other long enough to extend trust they cannot prove, supported by informal port-bar agreements, the occasional cooperative venture, and a body of shared captain-lore that has been compiled, lost, and recompiled multiple times over the post-Silence century.

Culture. Free Fleet culture is captain-centered. Each ship is a sovereign unit; each captain answers to no one above them but answers thoroughly to their own crew. Ships hold themselves together through reputation, the working personalities of their captains, and the long mutual obligations of a small community of professionals who routinely save each other's lives. The aesthetic is practical and weathered, equipment kept running through deep maintenance rather than replacement, ships personalized by their captains over years of working life. Free Fleet members come from every ancestry, every House (or no House), and every walk of post-Silence life; the Fleet absorbs them all and asks only for competence.

Position. The Free Fleet has functional working relationships with all six Houses, none of which it formally serves. House Joric occasionally hires Free Fleet ships for civilian transport. House Valerius uses Free Fleet bottoms when its corporate fleet is overstretched. House Volkov sometimes contracts with the Fleet for irregular operations. Free Fleet's ideological opposite is the **Solara Compact** a Core World restoration faction that views the Fleet's chaotic independence as the obstacle to civilization's recovery, and which the Fleet views as nostalgic for a pre-Silence order that mostly hurt the kinds of people the Fleet now serves.

Attitude toward Awakening. The Free Fleet has no institutional position on Awakening. Each ship, each captain, each crew negotiates the relationship in their own way. Most ships have at least one Awakened crew member; many do not. The Mystic-officer role is a particular Free Fleet construction, an Awakened crew member with formal authority distinct from the captain's, used by some captains and ignored by others. The Fleet's general working

principle is that ancestry, House, path, and gender are all interesting facts about a crewmate that have nothing to do with whether the crewmate can be trusted to handle a Pearl Drive in a storm. Sleeping crew are simply crew; no ship in the Fleet files them under a separate heading.

Member Experience. Playing a Free Fleet character means embracing independence as a working value. Your character has chosen, or has been chosen by circumstance, to live outside the Houses' institutional protections. The freedom is real; the precariousness is also real. Free Fleet stories are heavily about the ship and its crew, the small loyalties of working people, and the moments when a captain has to decide whether the job they have been hired for is the job they should be doing. Many of the most beloved *Veilfarers* campaigns are Free Fleet campaigns, and most published adventure material assumes a Free Fleet context unless otherwise noted.



THE EXPLORERS' GUILD

"There are charts of the post-Silence galaxy. They are wrong. We know they are wrong because we have been to the places the charts say do not exist, and the places exist, and the things in the places are interesting. The charts are useful. We do not throw them away. We just write next to them."

First Explorer Ren Tovas Aakeran, Guild senior cartographer

Identity. The Explorers' Guild is the post-Silence galaxy's institutional response to the simple fact that nobody knows what is actually out there anymore. The pre-Silence civilization had a working map. The Silence destroyed it, partly through direct damage to data and partly through the long isolation that meant nobody could verify what the map had claimed. The Guild's working project is the **systematic re-mapping of explored space** by sending crews out, into Veil regions and Rim worlds and Precursor sites, to find out what is actually there now and bring back accurate accounts.

Culture. Guild culture is small, intense, and tightly meritocratic. Members are selected for competence, tolerance for risk, and a particular kind of curiosity that does not survive contact with comfortable answers. The aesthetic is field-practical, equipment chosen for survival in unknown conditions, journals kept obsessively, personal histories worn lightly. Guild members come from every ancestry and every House, but the Guild's culture rapidly overrides these baselines; a Guild expedition develops its own rhythm in the field, and members who have spent time on Guild work tend to feel more bonded to other Guild veterans than to their nominal Houses. The Guild's training is rigorous, its operational records are scrupulous, and its losses are real, exploration kills people regularly.

Position. The Guild is principally **patroned by House Amaranth**, who sponsor a vast number of expeditions in pursuit of pre-Silence knowledge and Precursor artifacts. House Joric provides routine security escorts on dangerous expeditions. House Valerius maintains arm's-length contracts (Guild ships sometimes carry Valerius cargo into Rim spaces); House Solari occasionally sponsors expeditions oriented toward recovering pre-Silence art. House Kurogane buys Guild data on Precursor sites and is, depending on which Guild member you ask, either a useful client or a vulture. The Guild's operational network extends beyond the Houses through informal arrangements with the Free Fleet, who frequently provide transport for Guild teams.

Attitude toward Awakening. The Guild's attitude toward Awakening is determined by the work. Awakened crew members have measurable advantages on certain expedition types, Veil-disturbed

regions, Precursor sites, first-contact encounters where substrate-perception clarifies what is happening, and the Guild values them accordingly. Sleeping crew members are equally valued for the kinds of work where substrate-perception is not the bottleneck. The Guild's records show no preference; competence and judgment under field conditions are what matter. Some Guild expeditions specifically request Awakened crew (Veil work); some specifically request Sleeping (long-duration solo missions, where the Awakened tax of constant substrate-noise becomes a problem). Both kinds of being are welcome and routinely deployed.

Member Experience. Playing a Guild character means committing to the unknown as a working condition. Your character has chosen the harder, less-paid, more interesting career; they know the field protocols, have several near-death stories, and tend to relate to crewmates through shared survival of expedition conditions rather than through House or ancestry framing. Guild characters integrate well into mixed crews because the Guild's culture is already mixed, a Guild member arriving aboard a Free Fleet ship typically finds the working norms familiar within days.



THE SOLARA COMPACT (ADVANCED OPTION)

"A colony is a promise civilization makes to itself. We keep the promise."

Warden-Provost Imka Sorel, Compact Assembly

Identity. The Solara Compact is a league of settled worlds, colonial charters, and mutual-defense pacts sworn to rebuild stable civilization outward from the fringe, settlement by settlement. Where the Houses argue over the core and the Free Fleet rides the space between, the Compact plants flags, builds walls, and stays.

Culture. Compact culture prizes order, obligation, and showing up: charters are read aloud, militia service is a civic rite, and a member's worth is measured by what they have built and defended rather than what they own. It is openly restorationist, nostalgic for the seamless pre-Silence order, which makes it the Free Fleet's ideological opposite and an irritant to Houses that strip fringe worlds for resources.

Attitude toward Awakening. Institutional and civic. Awakened members are sworn in as wardens, surveyors, and crisis-speakers, roles where substrate-perception protects a settlement; Sleeping members fill every other office of colonial life, and Compact law explicitly forbids distinguishing between the two in court, census, or charter.

Member Experience. Playing a Compact character means belonging to places, not just a crew: every settlement holds someone who remembers you, and the Compact remembers who showed up when a colony was burning, and who did not.

Taking the Compact at creation. An advanced option with the Keeper's approval; the full treatment, Benefits included, lives in the Keeper's Companion. As a working default, a Compact character enjoys safe harbor and resupply in Compact settlements and owes militia aid when a settlement calls.



THE STELLAR COMMERCE GUILD (ADVANCED OPTION)

"Profit is the only law every species respects. We just write the contracts."

Elena Vasquez, Guildmaster of the Stellar Commerce Guild

Identity. The Stellar Commerce Guild is the galaxy's contract-and-cargo nervous system: brokers, factors, arbitrators, and bonded couriers who make trade between rivals possible. It is publicly an independent organization, and operationally dependent on House Valerius contracts, a tension every Guild member learns to navigate.

Culture. Guild culture worships the enforceable agreement. Reputation is collateral, arbitration is sacrament, and a broken contract follows a name across sectors. Members are cosmopolitan, multilingual, and professionally neutral, which is not the same as having no opinions; it is the discipline of never billing for them.

Attitude toward Awakening. Commercial, in the Valerius mold. Awakened members command premium rates where their perception has market value, reading a negotiation, vetting Veil-touched cargo; Sleeping members are the Guild's backbone of factors and couriers, paid the honest going rate. The ledger does not care which you are. The clients sometimes do, and the Guild bills them for the preference.

Member Experience. Playing a Guild character means every port holds a counterparty: someone who owes you, someone you owe, and a contract that is about to mature at the worst possible moment.

Taking the Guild at creation. An advanced option with the Keeper's approval; the full treatment, Benefits included, lives in the Keeper's Companion. As a working default, a Guild character can invoke bonded-courier status and Guild arbitration in any port that honors the seal.

CHOOSING YOUR AFFILIATION

Eight institutions plus the option of no institutional affiliation at all, with two more affiliations canonized in this edition, the Solara Compact and the Stellar Commerce Guild, profiled in brief above, treated in full in the Keeper's Companion, and available as advanced options with the Keeper's approval. Eleven options total. The choice is yours, and there is no wrong answer.

Which affiliation should I pick?

CHOOSING YOUR AFFILIATION

IF THE FANTASY IS...	LOOK AT
The scholar, archivist, or seer playing the long game	House Amaranth
The shield: peacekeeper, marshal, line-holder	House Joric
The transhumanist engineer remaking the body and the machine	House Kurogane
Faith, tradition, and the gravity of an old crown	House Solari
The merchant-prince with a contract for everything	House Valerius
The soldier, the operator, strength as truth	House Volkov
The free spacer: family is the ship, home is the next jump	The Free Fleet
The pathfinder charting what the Silence left unmapped	The Explorers' Guild
The settler-warden who plants a flag and defends it (advanced)	The Solara Compact
The broker whose word moves cargo between enemies (advanced)	The Stellar Commerce Guild
Beholden to no institution at all	Independent

At a glance. This chapter describes the *political and cultural* identity of each affiliation. The *mechanical* effects of holding one, Equipment Access, Starting Reputation, Calls per session, Standing, Dues, Conflicts, are formalized as **Step 6, Affiliation** in Chapter 8 (Forging a Voidwalker). Reputation with your affiliation and rival factions is tracked through the Reputation system in Chapter 16, where each faction's standing **Affiliation Obligation** and its tier-by-tier **Perks and Obligations** are laid out in full (see *Affiliation Obligations and Reputation Perks*). Read those two chapters together with this one when you build a politically-engaged character.

A few practical considerations.

If you want a character with **strong institutional resources** equipment, contacts, money, training, pick a House and play someone in good standing within it. Houses provide the most material support but also the most political constraint; your character will be expected to act in ways the House finds compatible with its interests, and deviating produces consequences. Mechanically, Houses grant the largest Equipment Access domain and the most powerful Calls; they also impose the most demanding Dues and the most rigid Conflict triggers (see Ch8).

If you want a character with **freedom of movement and few institutional ties** the classic *Veilfarers* protagonist mode, pick the Free Fleet, or pick Independent. The Fleet provides community without political obligation; pure independence provides nothing but flexibility. Both modes work; the distinction is whether your character has a captain and a crew they answer to. Mechanically, the Free Fleet provides a unique Favor-Credit benefit (Ch15) layered on top of standard Affiliation mechanics; Independent characters get the

Independent Favor Pool (Ch8) in place of formal Benefits.

If you want a character with **specialized expertise in the unknown** exploration, Precursor work, Veil-region operations, pick the Explorers' Guild. The Guild is small, the work is dangerous, and the rewards are mostly knowledge rather than money. Guild characters fit naturally into campaigns that take the crew to the edge of the explored galaxy. Mechanically, Guild affiliation provides Equipment

Access for exploration gear and Veil-route data, the most valuable benefits in exploration-heavy campaigns.

A character can have **complicated histories** with affiliations: a former House member who has left, a Free Fleet captain who used to serve a House, a Guild explorer who is on indefinite loan to a House contract, and so on. The system accommodates these. Talk through the backstory with your Keeper; the resulting tensions are often the seed of the campaign's best material. Mechanically, complicated histories often manifest as a current primary affiliation paired with negative Reputation toward a former one, see *Tightrope* in Chapter 16.

A character can also have **multiple affiliations** at once. A Free Fleet captain who maintains good Reputation with House Joric is not unusual; an Explorers' Guild member who carries a Valerius commercial license is common. The institutions are not exclusive memberships but overlapping working relationships, and most working professionals in the post-Silence galaxy maintain three or four such relationships at varying intensity. Your character's *primary* affiliation is the one that most defines them mechanically (Ch8); *secondary* affiliations color the working life around the edges through standard Reputation (Ch16), without the formal Standing track.

Affiliation and ancestry interact in mostly unsurprising ways. Most ancestries appear in most institutions, with concentrations described in Chapter 3. A few combinations are statistically unusual but mechanically possible: a Bloomstrider in House Volkov is rare, a Synthetic in House Solari is rarer, a Rift Spinner in any active House role is unusual enough to attract notice. None of these are forbidden; the unusual combinations often produce the most interesting character setups precisely because they are unusual.

GEAR 1, HOUSE REPUTATION AS MECHANIC (OPTIONAL ATMOSPHERIC RULE)

Institutional attitude is tracked with the **Standing and Reputation** rules every affiliation already uses (Chapter 16). There is no separate per-House score: when a House warms to your character or turns on them, move the Standing you already have.

Gear 2, Carrying a Token (Recommended Optional)

Some tables formalize House membership with physical props at the table, a small token (a coin, a card, a colored marker) representing the character's current standing within their House. As the character gains or loses Reputation in play, the token visibly changes (perhaps by being flipped over, replaced with a different color, or moved on a shared track). The visual presence of institutional standing turns abstract political dynamics into something the table can see and react to. Recommended for House-heavy campaigns; unnecessary for campaigns where institutional politics are background.

COMMON QUESTIONS

A few questions arise often enough at character creation to warrant explicit answers.

Can my character belong to no institution? Yes. Many *Veilfarers* characters operate as **unaffiliated independents** not Free Fleet, not in a House, not Guild. The institutional support is gone, but so are the political constraints. Unaffiliated characters often work as freelance specialists, contracted by whoever needs their particular skills, paid in whatever the contract specifies. The freedom is real; the precariousness is real too.

Can my character belong to a Solara Compact world without belonging to a House? Yes. The Solara Compact is the political alliance of Core-aligned worlds that aim to restore the pre-Silence Imperial order. Many Compact worlds are formally aligned with House Solari, but plenty are not. A character can be a Compact citizen, support the restoration project, and have no House affiliation at all. The Compact and the Free Fleet are ideological

opposites; characters often align with one or the other based on their political views even without formal membership.

What about the Stellar Commerce Guild? The Stellar Commerce Guild is the largest consortium of independent merchants and haulers in the post-Silence galaxy. It is publicly independent but operationally dependent on House Valerius contracts, which makes its members' political situation complicated. A character can be a Commerce Guild member; the relationship to Valerius will be ambiguous and likely will become campaign material at some point.

What about smaller factions, churches, criminal syndicates? All of these exist in profusion. The Church of the Eternal Veil, the Starborn Collective (psionic refugees), various criminal organizations operating in the cracks between Houses, regional governments, planetary governments, the post-Silence galaxy contains all of these and more. Most are not detailed in this chapter; the Keeper's Companion treats the smaller-scale political layer in depth. For your character at creation, picking a primary affiliation is sufficient; smaller factions can be developed in play.

Can two players belong to rival Houses? Yes, and the resulting tensions are often productive. A House Joric and a House Volkov character on the same crew are not enemies, they are two professionals working together despite the institutional opposition between their Houses, and the moments when that opposition becomes operationally relevant are some of the richest material a campaign can produce. The Keeper should facilitate these dynamics rather than smooth them over.

Can a character switch Houses mid-campaign? Possible but expensive. A formal switch typically requires the character to break with their original House (consequences vary from indifferent farewell to active hostility), establish standing in the new House (typically requires substantial demonstration of value), and re-orient to the new House's culture. The mechanical costs depend on the Reputation system if your table is using it (see optional rule); the narrative costs are always real and should be played at the appropriate dramatic weight.

Is there a House that will refuse my character? Generally no. The Houses recruit broadly across ancestries, paths, and origins, and outright refusal of a working professional with relevant skills is rare. The Houses *can* and *do* refuse specific individuals, those with hostile reputations, those whose presence would create political complications, those whose past dealings with the House have ended badly, but the refusal is personal rather than categorical.

WHAT COMES NEXT

You now have an ancestry (Chapter 3) and an institutional affiliation (this chapter). The character build continues.

Chapter 6 is for Awakened characters: the nine Classes, their Domain Pairs, their subclasses, and their starting Loadouts. The class choice is the next major decision for an Awakened character.

Chapter 7 is for Sleeping characters: the Vocations, the Specialties, and the system of Effort and Recovery. The Vocation choice is the next major decision for a Sleeping character.

Chapter 8 is for everyone: Traits, Experiences, and Connections, the universal layer of character creation that finishes the build for both paths.

The institutions of the post-Silence galaxy are large, old, and slow to change. Your character is one person, in one ship or one office or one workshop, working inside or alongside or against one of them. The campaign that follows will, in part, be the story of how your character relates to the institutions that shape their world. The institutions, in turn, will be shaped, quietly, locally, sometimes deeply, by what your character chooses to do.

The Houses argue. The Free Fleet runs cargo. The Guild maps the unknown. The galaxy keeps moving. Your Spotlight is next.

CHAPTER 6

THE AWAKENED: CLASSES AND SUBCLASSES

"There is no master copy of how to be Awakened. Each Class is a different relationship with the substrate, a different way of letting the Veil through. Choose the one that fits the story you want to live, and the Powers

will follow."

Master Mystic Tova Marek, Spire of Verita, opening lecture to first-year initiates

This chapter is the catalog of the **nine Awakened Classes** of *Veilfarers*. Each Class is a complete archetype: a Domain Pair that defines the character's substrate access, a Spellcast Trait that determines how they engage with their Powers, a Hope Feature that turns Hope into immediate effect, one or more Class Features that anchor the character's signature mechanic, three Subclasses that branch the archetype into distinct expressions, and a Background Question that gives the player a hook into the character's past.

Before diving in, a reminder about scope: this chapter only covers **Awakened** classes. The Sleeping path, characters who do not have Hope-spending substrate access, has its own class catalog in **Chapter 7 (The Sleeping)**. Some Class names appear in both chapters, because the same archetype can be expressed by either kind of being; the Awakened Soldier and the Sleeping Soldier are recognizably the same role at the table, but their mechanical engines are different. If you have not yet decided between Awakened and Sleeping, return to **Chapter 2 (Two Paths)** before continuing here.

A second reminder about layered identity: your Class is one layer of your character. Your **Ancestry** (Chapter 3), your **Community** (Chapter 4), your **Path** (Chapter 2), your **Traits** (Chapter 8), and your **Experiences** (Chapter 8) all sit alongside it. Class is not character. Class is the kit you bring to the work. The character is what you do with the kit, in collaboration with your crew, across the campaign's arc.

THE NINE AWAKENED CLASSES: OVERVIEW

The nine Classes, alphabetically, with their Domain Pairs and Banner identity:

CLASS	DOMAIN PAIR	BANNER (COLOR / ORNAMENT)	SPELLCAST TRAIT
Diplomat	Social & Lux	pink eye + gold sun	Presence
Engineer	Tech & Synthesis	teal core + green helix	Knowledge
Explorer	Synthesis & Lux	green helix + gold sun	Instinct
Mystic	Neural & Lux or Void	purple lattice + gold sun (or black spiral)	Instinct
Pilot	Void & Tech	black spiral + teal core	Instinct
Scholar	Tech & Social	teal core + pink eye	Knowledge
Scoundrel	Social & Void	pink eye + black spiral	Finesse
Soldier	Kinetic & Synthesis	crimson cascade + green helix	Strength
Vanguard	Neural & branch (Void / Kinetic / Lux)	purple lattice + branch ornament	Presence

READING THE BANNERS. The Banner column is the system's visual identity, the colored cloth and ornament pair that appears on the character's banner stand, on each of their Power cards, and on the materials your character carries at the table. A Soldier's banner reads crimson-and-green at a glance, a cascade of force above a helix of life; a Pilot's reads black-and-teal, a spiral above a core. The identity is the same across all materials, and a player who learns to read the banners will find the table easier to navigate.

Which Awakened Class should I pick?

THE NINE AWAKENED CLASSES: OVERVIEW

IF YOU WANT TO...	LOOK AT
Talk, lead, and turn rooms before guns clear leather	The Diplomat
Build, fix, hack, and make the machine confess	The Engineer
Chart the unknown and come back with the map	The Explorer
Touch the Veil directly and pay its prices	The Mystic
Fly anything with an engine, and a few things without	The Pilot
Know the answer, or know where it is buried	The Scholar
Break the rules, the locks, and the line of sight	The Scoundrel
Hold the line and finish fights	The Soldier
Strike first, strike once, end it	The Vanguard

Two Classes have **variable second Domains**, noted in Chapter 19:

- The **Mystic** chooses between **Lux** and **Void** at character creation through their *Veil Alignment*. The Mystic's banner displays both options (lattice-with-sun *and* lattice-with-spiral); the active alignment lights up on Power cards.
- The **Vanguard** chooses between three subclass branches (**Ghost Blade**-> Void, **Kinetic Echo**-> Kinetic, **Pure Conduit**-> Lux). The Vanguard's banner shows the lattice plus all three branch ornaments; the chosen branch is fixed at character creation.

All other Classes have fixed Domain Pairs that do not change across the campaign.

HOW TO READ A CLASS ENTRY

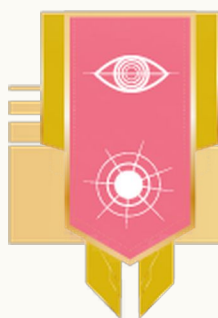
Each Class entry below follows the same structure:

- **Banner & Identity Quote.** A line of in-fiction speech that captures the Class's voice, paired with a brief reading of the visual banner.
- **Description.** The Class's core archetype, what they do, how they think, what they bring to a crew.
- **Core Stats.** Domain Pair, starting Evasion, starting Hit Points, starting Class Items.
- **Hope Feature.** A signature use of Hope. All Awakened Classes have one. Hope Features cost 2 or 3 Hope and produce a defining effect.
- **Class Feature(s).** The Class's permanent passive or always-available mechanics. This is the engine of the Class, what makes a Soldier feel different from an Engineer at every moment, not just when Powers are being cast.
- **Background Question.** A single prompt to anchor the character's pre-campaign history. The player answers in their own words during character creation. This is not a mechanical input; it is a roleplay anchor.
- **Subclasses.** Three Subclasses, each with their own Spellcast Trait (in parentheses after the Subclass name). Each Subclass has three ability tiers, presented as a progression:
 - **Foundation** available at character creation, level 1. The Subclass's defining starting move.
 - **Specialization** unlocked at the Tier 2 threshold (level 5). A mid-campaign upgrade that deepens the Foundation's logic.
 - **Mastery** unlocked at the Tier 3 threshold (level 8). The Subclass's capstone, usually a once-per-session or once-per-arc capability that defines a memorable scene.

The three tiers correspond to the three Subclass cards in the published deck (*Foundation, Specialization, Mastery*). Players acquire them in order; you do not get the Mastery card until the Tier 3 threshold, regardless of how the campaign has been going.

Each ability is tagged by its action type:

- **(Action):** uses your primary action.
- **(Reaction):** is triggered by another character's action. It costs no action of your own but consumes the listed resources.
- **(Passive):** is always active and needs no action.



DIPLOMAT

Pink Eye + Gold Sun. The Diplomat's banner reads warm-and-luminous, the open Eye of Social over the open Sun of Lux. The colors of recognized presence and declared light, of the conversation that solves what violence would have made worse.

"You came in with a plasma rifle. I came in with three names you did not know I had. We will see whose tool worked harder, by morning."

Senior Liaison Dom Eskal, House Valerius observation, the night of the Hydros Accord

DESCRIPTION

Diplomats weave peace in a galaxy of shattered trust. They read the tiny expressions on the faces of other species. They broker treaties over glasses of synthetic whiskey. They know when to flatter and when to threaten. After the Silence, a sharp tongue is more valuable than a plasma rifle. Their networks can move entire fleets, or they can spark wars. Charm is their armor. Words are their weapons. A Diplomat at the table is the crew's professional bridge between worlds, and frequently the reason the crew is still alive when the morning comes.

CORE STATS

- **Domains:** Social & Lux
- **Starter Loadout.** Choose 2 Level 1 Powers from the 6 available to your two Domains (three per Domain; the catalog is Chapter 19). A sturdy first pair: *Silver Tongue* and *Spark of Hope*.
- **Spellcast Trait:** Presence
- **Starting Evasion:** 10
- **Starting Hit Points:** 6
- **Class Items:** Encrypted Datapad / Treasured Token

HOPE FEATURE: THE POWER OF SUGGESTION (3 HOPE)

You can spend 3 Hope to choose one of three powerful effects:

- **Plant an Idea.** The next Presence, Knowledge, or Finesse roll made by an ally has Advantage.
- **Create an Opening.** The next attack or Finesse roll made by an ally to sneak or hide has Advantage.
- **Gather Intelligence.** Gain a secret *Clue* from the Keeper. This could be a motive, a weakness, or a hidden fact relevant to the current scene.

INFLUENCE SCALES WITH THE ROLL. Success: those present, this scene. With Hope: it holds after you leave. Critical: it spreads beyond the room. With Fear: it turns on you.

CLASS FEATURE: CULTURAL LENS

Cultural Lens. Gain +2 on **Presence Rolls** made to negotiate, persuade, deceive, or read a social situation.

You begin each session with 2 **Favor Tokens** and hold a maximum of 4, increased only by Features or backgrounds that explicitly raise the cap. The first time each scene you succeed on a meaningful Presence Roll to persuade or deceive, gain 1 Favor Token. During every Long Rest, gain 1 Favor Token.

Spend Favor Tokens through your subclass abilities, House and Free Fleet contacts, or to automatically succeed on an institutional task for 1 Favor. You may spend 5 Favor Tokens at once to raise your Reputation with one faction by 1 RP, subject to Chapter 16.

BACKGROUND QUESTION

What secret compelled you to trust words over weapons?

SUBCLASSES

Cultural Attache (Presence), the soft-power reader. You are a master of soft power, reading the hidden language of fear, desire, and secret agendas. You do not just hear words; you perceive the truth beneath them.

- **Foundation, The Unmasking Gaze (Action).** Spend 1 Hope and make a Presence Roll against a target's Presence or Instinct (defender chooses the higher). On a success, ask the Keeper one question about the target's true intentions, fears, or loyalties, which they must answer honestly.
- **Specialization, Social Chameleon (Passive).** You blend in anywhere. When in a new social environment (a corporate gala, a dockworker's bar), you can spend 1 Hope to declare you have a plausible identity and contacts there. You gain Advantage on your first social roll in that scene.
- **Mastery, Universal Argument (Action).** Once per session, spend 3 Hope and choose one NPC within Close range that can perceive you. It makes a Presence Reaction Roll, DC 20. On failure it follows one command that can be completed as its next Action and does not directly cause self-harm; on success it is immune to this Feature for the scene. A player character is affected only with that player's explicit consent.

The Icon (Presence), the cultural force. You are a cultural force. You generate and spend Favors by shaping public opinion. Your maximum Favor Tokens increases by 1 (cumulative with any other raise).

- **Foundation, Control the Narrative (Action).** Make a Presence Roll (DC 15) to perform or report; on success, gain 1 Favor Token.
- **Specialization, The Story's Debt (Action).** Spend 2 Favors to declare that a target NPC now owes you a Favor. Narrate how your past work inspired them. This cannot be refused.

- **Mastery, The Address (Action).** Once per story arc, speak to a crowd and make a Presence Roll: DC 10 for receptive, DC 15 for divided, or DC 20 for hostile; fix the category before the Roll. On success, the crowd adopts one stated nonviolent immediate objective for the scene. On Success with Hope, one named faction also improves its attitude by one rung. On Success with Fear, the objective takes hold but one visible opposing faction begins a four-segment Backlash clock. On Failure with Hope, the crowd disperses without a new objective. On Failure with Fear, the crowd rejects the message and the Backlash clock begins with 2 segments. On a Critical Success, choose Hope, Defiance, Peace, Rebellion, or Sorrow and mark a lasting change in the relevant faction's public narrative; it never compels a player character.

Political Operative (Instinct), the player of the great game. You are a player in the great game of factions. You trade in favors, secrets, and influence, understanding that true power is not held, it is wielded from the shadows.

- **Foundation, Web of Favors (Passive).** Your contacts run deep. You may spend a Favor to introduce a helpful NPC contact or to produce a piece of common (Tier 1) gear as a "gift" from a contact, and once per session your first Favor Token spent this way costs nothing.
- **Specialization, Call in a Debt (Action).** Spend 2 Favor Tokens to compel an NPC to perform a significant and risky service. They cannot refuse without serious consequences (loss of status, wealth, or physical harm). Your maximum Favor Tokens increases by 1 (cumulative with any other raise).
- **Mastery, Checkmate (Action).** Once per story arc, you can spend 5 Favor Tokens to orchestrate a major political event, expose a rival's secret, trigger a vote of no confidence, start a scandal, instigate a coup. Describe the outcome you want, and the Keeper describes the repercussions.

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

ACCESS TIER & LEVEL	GEAR CATEGORIES
Common (Tier 1) / Level 1	Light Armor, Melee/Pistols, Neural/Physical Augments
Military (Tier 2) / Level 2	Light Armor, Melee/Pistols, Neural/Physical Augments
Experimental (Tier 3) / Level 5	Light Armor, Melee/Pistols, Neural/Physical Augments, now at Experimental grade

Outside-access penalties are described in Chapter 13. Precursor (Tier 4) access is story-gated.



ENGINEER

"This thing was scrap two hours ago. Now it's holding atmosphere on a starship. Tell me again how a hammer is more useful than a wrench."

Salvage Master Vesh-Korin, Starforge Yard Three, Kurogane orbital

DESCRIPTION

Engineers are salvaged poets in a broken galaxy. They jury-rig Precursor technology. They reboot dying reactors. They whisper to machines that others call *scrap*. After the Silence, they are the healers of both metal and flesh. They turn debris into hope. They do not work with blueprints. They work with duct tape and guts. Whether they are hacking a rogue AI or grafting cybernetics onto a wounded crewmate, their genius thrives in chaos. An Engineer at the table is the crew's reliable miracle worker, the one who makes the impossible-to-fix briefly fixable, just long enough.

CORE STATS

- **Domains:** Tech & Synthesis
- **Starter Loadout.** Choose 2 Level 1 Powers from the 6 available to your two Domains (three per Domain; the catalog is Chapter 19). A sturdy first pair: *System Jackknife* and *Rapid Regeneration*.
- **Spellcast Trait:** Knowledge
- **Starting Evasion:** 9
- **Starting Hit Points:** 7
- **Class Items:** Alien-etched Multi-Tool / Universal Lubricant

HOPE FEATURE: SCRAP GENIUS (3 HOPE)

Spend 3 Hope and an Action while using common scrap to build one device for the scene. Choose one function: **shield projector**, one willing target within Very Close range gains 2 temporary Armor Slots; **medical scanner**, one Knowledge (Medicine) Roll made with it gains Advantage; **emergency relay**, ordinary communications work through one established obstruction within Far range; or **task rig**, one declared Knowledge (Tech) or Finesse Roll made with it gains Advantage. A one-Roll device burns out after that Roll; the projector and relay burn out when the scene ends. The device has Evasion 10, 1 HP, and no Armor Slots. It grants only the chosen function.

CLASS FEATURE: TECHNICAL INTUITION

- You have **Advantage on Knowledge (Tech) Rolls** to diagnose or repair a device, augmentation, drone, vehicle, or ship System.
- Once per session as an Action, mark 1 **Stress** and touch one non-Precursor item, augmentation, drone, vehicle subsystem, or ship System that is offline. It functions until the scene ends without restoring HP, Armor Slots, maximum Slots, or Integrity. Failure with Fear while it is materially used ends the fix after that Roll. Broken equipment and a System at 0 Integrity still require normal repair after the effect ends.

The Engineer's intuition is the table's emergency button, the resource that turns a campaign-ending system failure into a campaign-changing improvisation.

BACKGROUND QUESTION

What moment taught you that broken isn't dead, it's an invitation to innovate?

SUBCLASSES

Tech Specialist (Knowledge), the digital phantom. You are a digital phantom, moving through secure networks as if they were open doors. You dismantle firewalls, steal data, and turn an enemy's own systems against them with elegant lines of code.

- **Foundation, Digital Ghost (Action).** You have Advantage on Knowledge (Tech) Rolls to hack or operate digital systems. When you successfully hack a system, you leave no trace of your intrusion unless you choose to.
- **Specialization, ICE Breaker (Action).** When you encounter a security system, you can spend 1 Hope to obtain information about any technological system in the area, including weaknesses, access points, and access codes.
- **Mastery, Master of the Matrix (Action).** Once per session, you can spend 3 Hope to establish an unhackable and undetectable quantum communications network across a star system. This network allows secure and real-time communications with anyone you know in the system, and cannot be intercepted or tracked.

Xenotech Savant (Knowledge), the alien-tech translator. You are fascinated by the galaxy's forgotten marvels. You can interface with bizarre alien artifacts and the recovered technology of vanished civilizations, jury-rigging impossible devices from the wreckage.

- **Foundation, Adaptive Interface (Action).** You have become an expert in alien technology. You can operate any xenotech without penalties, and you have Advantage when trying to understand or modify its functions.
- **Specialization, Xenotech Integration (Action).** Spend 1 Hope while touching one willing or unattended alien device. Choose one passive property completely printed on that device and one compatible item or ship System you control; the latter gains that property until the scene ends. This cannot copy damage dice, Actions, Reactions, Fear abilities, resource generation, Technology Access, Tier, or Slot capacity, and never destroys or alters the source device.
- **Mastery, Technological Symbiosis (Action).** Name the bonded alien AI at character creation. Once per session, spend 2 Hope and choose one: ask one question about a device or system the AI can currently sense and receive a truthful established fact or "unknown"; gain Advantage on one Knowledge (Tech) Roll made before the scene ends; open or close one ordinary networked door within Close range; or project a hard-light assistant in a Very Close zone until the end of your next Spotlight, granting Heavy Cover to one creature there. The symbiont never controls a person, invents access, attacks, or creates another effect.

Medical Technician (Instinct), the field surgeon. Where flesh fails, you improvise. A battlefield surgeon who is as comfortable installing a cybernetic limb as stitching a wound, you are the master of both biological and synthetic repair.

- **Foundation, Field Surgery (Action).** Mark 1 Stress while adjacent to a willing target and choose one: clear 2 HP immediately, then roll 1d4 and clear 1 HP at the start of each of that target's next that many Spotlights; stabilize a Dying target without a Roll, clearing Dying Progress but restoring no HP; or use suitable tools to improve one augmentation by one step on the adopted Rust & Steel Condition Track. If that module is inactive, the third option returns one offline augmentation to service. It cannot repair a Broken augmentation, stabilize Final, or reverse a completed Death Move.
- **Specialization, Bio-Mechanic (Passive).** You are an expert in the fusion of flesh and steel. All healing you perform on augmented individuals or with technological tools (like a Medkit) heals an additional +1 HP. Additionally, you can craft cybernetic implants as a Long-Term Project.
- **Mastery, Miracle Worker (Action).** Once per story arc, spend 3 Hope to revive a character who died through ordinary Final Progress within the last hour. They return with 1 HP and a permanent narrative scar chosen by that character's player; any mechanical scar requires that player's agreement. You are Dazed for the rest of the scene. This cannot reverse a completed Death Move or restore a body that an explicit effect made unrecoverable.

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

ACCESS TIER & LEVEL	GEAR CATEGORIES
Common (Tier 1) / Level 1	Light/Medium Armor, Pistols, All Augmentations, All Equipment
Military (Tier 2) / Level 2	All Armor, Pistols/Rifles, All Augmentations, All Modifications, All Equipment
Experimental (Tier 3) / Level 5	All Armor, Pistols/Rifles, All Augmentations, All Modifications, All Equipment, now at Experimental grade

Outside-access penalties are described in Chapter 13. Precursor (Tier 4) access is story-gated.



EXPLORER

"There's a system three jumps out that nobody has logged in a century. It might be empty. It might be full of things that ate the previous expedition. We're going."

Captain Yana Vasso, Explorers' Guild, briefing for Expedition 4-7-Prime

DESCRIPTION

Explorers are the pathfinders of the shattered galaxy, driven by an insatiable curiosity for the unknown. They brave uncharted territories, decipher ancient mysteries, and survive where others would perish. Whether navigating the treacherous alleys of a forgotten city, enduring the harsh biomes of alien worlds, or charting courses through the silent void to discover lost civilizations, Explorers are defined by their adaptability and their relentless pursuit of discovery. They are the eyes and ears of post-Silence civilization, pushing the boundaries of what is known and turning whispers of legend into tangible truths. An Explorer at the table is the crew's compass to the edge of the map, and frequently the reason the crew finds something there worth the trip.

CORE STATS

- **Domains:** Synthesis & Lux
- **Starter Loadout.** Choose 2 Level 1 Powers from the 6 available to your two Domains (three per Domain; the catalog is Chapter 19). A sturdy first pair: *Environmental Adaptation* and *Wayfinder's Pulse*.
- **Spellcast Trait:** Instinct
- **Starting Evasion:** 11
- **Starting Hit Points:** 6
- **Class Items:** Advanced Survival Kit / Encrypted Star Chart (*start each exploration journey with one free Intel Token related to your general destination*)

HOPE FEATURE: PATHFINDER'S INSIGHT (3 HOPE)

When making a **Travel** or **Scan the Area** roll during a Void Crawl, you can spend 3 Hope. If you do, you roll 1 Fear die as normal and roll 2 **Hope dice**. Choose which Hope die you keep (typically the higher); then resolve the roll normally, including success/failure and Hope/Fear dominance. This replaces the normal single Hope die.

CLASS FEATURE: FOREMOST SURVIVOR

Foremost Survivor. Gain +2 on **Instinct Rolls** made to navigate, track, forage, or endure a natural hazard. Once per session, when facing an environmental hazard, you may mark 1 **Stress** to gain temporary immunity to that hazard's effects for the scene.

BACKGROUND QUESTION

What forgotten place or unsolved mystery compels you to venture into the unknown?

SUBCLASSES

Cartographer (Instinct), the void's reader. You see the void as pathways and puzzles, mapping safe routes and uncovering hidden truths in the stars.

- **Foundation, Cosmic Cartography (Passive).** You have Advantage on long-distance Piloting and astrogation rolls. You also have Advantage on *Chart a Safe Route* during a Void Crawl.
- **Specialization, Eye for the Anomaly (Action).** Spend 1 Hope when using *Scan the Area* to gain Advantage on the roll. With Success + Hope, you also gain an extra Intel question.
- **Mastery, The Unseen Path (Action).** Once per major session, spend 3 Hope to find a hidden route or method that bypasses an obstacle, a hazard, or a fortified position the rest of the crew thought was impassable.

Wilderness (Synthesis), the world's friend. You are a true survivor, at home in the most hostile and untamed natural environments. You read the land, understand its creatures, and channel its resources to endure.

- **Foundation, Naturalist's Eye (Passive).** Gain Advantage on Knowledge rolls to identify flora and fauna, and on Instinct rolls to track creatures or find natural resources.
- **Specialization, Environmental Symbiosis (Action).** Spend 1 Hope. For the scene, you need no food or water and have Advantage on Instinct Rolls to survive natural hazards. Choose one adaptation supported by a local creature: breathe the local atmosphere or water; ignore the first point of Stress caused by temperature each round; or move normally through one named local terrain type. The adaptation ends with the scene.
- **Mastery, Primal Connection (Action).** Spend 3 Hope (once per session) to command local non-sentient fauna up to a Major threat for one scene. Alternatively, spend 1 Hope to instantly find a safe shelter or a vital natural resource in your current environment.

The Stalker (Instinct), the perfect pursuer. You are the ultimate pursuer. To you, every target leaves a trail, and every trail leads to its end. You thrive on the thrill of the hunt, turning any environment into your personal hunting ground.

- **Foundation, Mark Quarry (Action).** As an action, mark a single target. Until your next long rest, you have Advantage on Instinct rolls to track them, and your first successful attack each round against the marked quarry deals an extra **1d6 damage**.
- **Specialization, Unrelenting Pursuit (Action).** While pursuing your marked quarry, spend 1 Hope to flawlessly overcome one environmental obstacle without losing time or momentum.

- **Mastery, The Trap is Sprung (Action).** Once per session, spend 3 Hope to declare you have set a trap for your marked quarry in the current location. Describe the trap; your quarry is automatically **Restrained** or **Cornered** for the scene.

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

ACCESS TIER & LEVEL	GEAR CATEGORIES
Common (Tier 1) / Level 1	Light Armor, Pistols, Exploration & Survival Equipment, Physical Augments
Military (Tier 2) / Level 2	Light Armor, Pistols/Rifles, Exploration & Survival Equipment, Physical Augments
Experimental (Tier 3) / Level 5	Light Armor, Pistols/Rifles, Exploration & Survival Equipment, Physical Augments, now at Experimental grade

Outside-access penalties are described in Chapter 13. Precursor (Tier 4) access is story-gated.



MYSTIC

"The Veil does not ask you to understand it. It asks you to choose a side. You can change your mind, but never halfway."

initiate's instruction, Spire of Verita, Solari Prime

DESCRIPTION

Mystics hear the galaxy's heartbeat. For them, the Veil is not just energy, it is a living river that they swim in. They can read emotions like open books. They can bend spacetime with a thought. They can commune with artifacts that drive other people mad. In the wake of the Silence, they are guides through realities where our understanding of physics crumbles. Caution defines them. One wrong step in the Veil, and you might unravel your own mind. A Mystic at the table is the crew's sensitive, the one who feels the room's substrate-temperature shift before anyone else has noticed something is wrong.

CORE STATS

- **Domains:** Neural & Lux or Void (*Veil Alignment, chosen at character creation*)
- **Starter Loadout.** Choose 2 Level 1 Powers from the 6 available to your Domains (three per Domain; the catalog is Chapter 19). A sturdy first pair: *Veil Sensitivity* and one Level 1 Power from your chosen alignment.
- **Spellcast Trait:** Instinct
- **Starting Evasion:** 10
- **Starting Hit Points:** 6
- **Class Items:** Whispering Veil-Crystal / Starlight Blindfold

HOPE FEATURE: REALITY UNFOLD (3 HOPE)

Spend 3 Hope to gain **Advantage on all Rolls** until you resolve a Fear-dominant noncritical Roll. After that Roll resolves, mark **1d4 Stress** and end this effect. Matching dice remain a Critical Success and do not end it.

The Mystic's Hope Feature is a sustained alteration of the substrate around them, the universe briefly becomes slightly more cooperative, and the cost is always paid at the end, when reality reasserts itself.

CLASS FEATURES

Psychic Resonance (once per scene). Before making a **Spellcast Roll** for a Mystic Power or a **Duality Roll** explicitly called for by a Mystic Feature, you may mark **1 Stress** to add **+2** to that Roll. This bonus does not apply to damage, Hope, Stress, a Reaction Roll, or a Roll that does not use the stated Mystic Power or Feature.

The bonus may turn a Failure into a Success, but it does not change whether Hope or Fear is higher and cannot create a Critical Success.

Veil Alignment (Lux / Void). At character creation, the Mystic chooses a **Veil Alignment:** Lux (the burnished gold of the Hope

Frequency) or Void (the deep black of substrate entropy). This determines your second Domain. You may only equip Domain Cards from your chosen alignment, never both. At each Tier threshold (Levels 2, 5, and 8), you may switch your alignment during the level-up process. When you switch, all cards from your previous alignment become **dormant** (inaccessible until you realign), and you gain immediate access to the new domain's card list up to your current level, subject to normal Loadout and Vault limits. The Keeper should narrate the transition, switching from Void to Lux, or the reverse, is not a casual decision.

GEAR 1, MYSTIC VEIL ALIGNMENT AT A GLANCE (REFERENCE TABLE)

IF YOU ALIGN TO...	YOUR SECOND DOMAIN BECOMES...	POWER FLAVOR
Lux (gold sun)	Lux	Defense, illumination, anti-Void work
Void (black spiral)	Void	Stealth, displacement, probability manipulation

A Mystic can only ever equip Powers from one alignment at a time. The dormant alignment's Powers do not vanish from the character's history, they remain in the Mystic's Vault, but cannot be slotted into the active Loadout until the Mystic realigns. The Keeper should make alignment switches into scenes; the friction is part of the Mystic's identity.

BACKGROUND QUESTION

What glimpse of the Veil's truth nearly cost you your mind?

SUBCLASSES

Veil Walker (Instinct), the unseen-paths walker. You walk the unseen paths between realities. By bending space and time, you can step through walls, evade attacks, and find sanctuary in dimensions that exist only for you.

- **Foundation, Phase Step (Reaction).** When you are the target of an attack or need to move through an obstacle, you can spend 1 Stress to "blink" to a location in Close range, evading the attack or obstacle. Once per short rest, you can create a pocket dimensional sanctuary that lasts 10 minutes, invisible and inaccessible.
- **Specialization, Temporal Distortion (Action).** Once per scene, you can spend 1 Hope to briefly manipulate time around an enemy. That enemy must reroll all dice on their next action and choose the lowest result.
- **Mastery, Causality Reverse (Reaction).** Once per session, immediately after one Action resolves within Close range, spend

3 Stress to restore positions, HP, Conditions, and damaged objects to their state immediately before that Action. Costs, Fear, Hope, Effort, Resolve, and once-per-use limits remain spent, so the reversal creates no duplicate resources. It cannot reverse ordinary death, a completed Death Move, or an event older than the immediately preceding Action.

Mind-Touched (Presence), the conduit of thought. You are a telepath, a living conduit for thoughts and emotions. You forge psychic links, share skills, and can shield your allies' minds from the horrors of the void.

- **Foundation, Thought Tide (Action).** Spend 1 Hope to allow an ally to use your Presence or Instinct modifier for one roll. Once per rest, you can spend 1 Stress to grant your entire crew a mental shield, giving them Advantage on rolls to resist fear or psychic influence for one scene.
- **Specialization, Implant Suggestion (Action).** Make a Presence vs. Presence or Instinct (defender chooses the higher) contest. On a success, you plant a single, subtle command in a target's mind (e.g., *forget my face, trust me, drop your weapon*). The target believes the thought is their own.
- **Mastery, Collective Consciousness (Action).** Once per session, you can spend 3 Hope to merge your mind with up to 3 allies in Close range for one scene. You share senses, emotions, and thoughts, gaining Advantage on all group rolls and on Instinct rolls to detect dangers.

Precursor Touched (Presence), the artifact-listener. You hear the whispers of ancient machines. Your mind connects with the relics of vanished civilizations, allowing you to awaken, interpret, and sometimes control technology that defies all known laws of physics.

- **Foundation, Ancient Echo (Action).** Spend 1 Hope to open your mind to a Precursor artifact or site. The Keeper will give you a cryptic, dream-like vision related to its purpose or history. You gain Advantage on all rolls to interact with it for the scene.
- **Specialization, Waken the Sleepers (Action).** Mark 1 Stress. You can temporarily awaken a dormant Precursor device. The device will perform its most basic function for one minute. The results are often unpredictable and dangerous.
- **Mastery, Cosmic Truth (Action).** Spend 3 Stress to ask one specific, actionable question about the current story arc. The Keeper answers truthfully with one established fact sufficient to act on. The Keeper gains 2 Fear, subject to the hard maximum of 12; no additional complication is created by this feature.

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

ACCESS TIER & LEVEL	GEAR CATEGORIES
Common (Tier 1) / Level 1	Light Armor, Melee/Pistols, Neural/Physical Augments
Military (Tier 2) / Level 2	Light Armor, Melee/Pistols, Neural/Physical Augments
Experimental (Tier 3) / Level 5	Light Armor, Melee/Pistols, Neural/Physical Augments, now at Experimental grade

Outside-access penalties are described in Chapter 13. Precursor (Tier 4) access is story-gated.



PILOT

Black Spiral + Teal Core. The Pilot's banner reads dark-and-precise, the slow Spiral of Void over the radiant Core of Tech. The colors of the substrate's gaps and the machine's heart, of the path through the unmappable and the engine that holds while you find it.

"There's no such thing as a bad route. Only routes that take longer to kill you."

Captain Eva Rostova, The Stubborn Echo, Free Fleet

DESCRIPTION

Pilots see the void not as emptiness, but as a map of possibilities. In the fractured post-Silence galaxy, they are both explorers and lifelines. They are masters of intuition and technology. They thread ships through treacherous Veil currents. Their split-second decisions keep crews alive amid asteroid fields and cosmic storms. Whether they are charting unknown routes or outmaneuvering pirates, a true Pilot blends gut instinct with sharp reflexes. They are not just button-pushers. They are the souls who dance with stardust. A Pilot at the table is the crew's reason to trust the ship, and frequently the reason the ship is still flyable when the smoke clears.

CORE STATS

- **Domains:** Void & Tech
- **Starter Loadout.** Choose 2 Level 1 Powers from the 6 available to your two Domains (three per Domain; the catalog is Chapter 19). A sturdy first pair: *Slipstream Jolt* and *Drone Whisper*.
- **Spellcast Trait:** Instinct
- **Starting Evasion:** 11
- **Starting Hit Points:** 6
- **Class Items:** Frayed Star Chart / Veil-Energy Control Crystal

HOPE FEATURE: VEIL SURGE (3 HOPE)

Spend 3 Hope as a free effect before a Finesse (Pilot/Navigate) or starship Pilot Instinct Roll. Until the scene ends, those Rolls have Advantage. Once before the effect ends, after one hit would remove 3 or more Hull from your ship, reduce that Hull loss by 1; Armor Slots, System Integrity loss, tags, and other effects resolve normally. The protection expires unused when the scene ends.

CLASS FEATURE: STELLAR INSTINCT

Stellar Instinct. Gain +2 on Finesse (Pilot/Navigate) Rolls made to pilot a vessel, plot a course, dock, evade a hazard, or execute a ship maneuver. Once per session, after you fail one of those Rolls, reroll one of its two Duality dice and use the new result.

Pilot Surge Die. Your Pilot Surge Die is **1d6 at Tier 1, 1d8 at Tier 2, and 1d10 at Tier 3**. When you spend Hope to activate a Pilot Class Feature or Pilot Subclass Feature that calls for a Finesse (Pilot/Navigate) Roll, roll the Pilot Surge Die and add its result to that Roll. This die represents a risky surge of instinct: it does not create a Critical Success and cannot be added twice to the same Roll.

BACKGROUND QUESTION

What lost route drove you to risk everything in the Veil's currents?

SUBCLASSES

Void Runner (Instinct), the Veil dancer. You do not just fly a ship; you dance with the Veil's impossible currents. Relying on pure instinct, you see paths where others see only chaos, navigating the unnavigable.

- **Foundation, Pathfinder's Sense (Action).** Mark 1 Stress to sense the safest or fastest route through a dangerous area (asteroid field, nebula, contested system). You and your ship gain Advantage on all Piloting and Evasion rolls while following this route during the scene.
- **Specialization, Sensor Savant (Action).** When you make a sensor or Finesse (Pilot/Navigate) Roll, you can spend 1 Hope to gain Advantage. If you succeed with Hope, you also discover a hidden detail, a cloaked ship, a secret passage, a valuable resource.
- **Mastery, Veil Dancer (Passive / Action).** You no longer suffer penalties for navigating through Veil storms. Once per session, spend 3 Hope as an Action to fold space: transport your ship to any known location within the same star system, or transport yourself to a known place within Very Far range. This movement avoids all intermediate hazards.

Combat Ace (Agility), the kinetic dueler. For you, a starship is a weapon, and the void is your arena. You thrive in the chaos of battle, executing aggressive, high-G maneuvers that turn your vessel into a deadly extension of your will.

- **Foundation, Tactical Grace (Reaction).** When you or your ship is the target of an attack, you can spend 1 Stress to add your Agility modifier to the ship's Evasion for that attack.
- **Specialization, Combat Analysis (Action).** Mark 1 Stress and choose one visible enemy or enemy ship. For the rest of the scene, attacks made by you or your allies against that target gain +1d4 damage. This is not a starship Sensor Lock.
- **Mastery, Ace Maneuver (Action).** Once per scene, spend 2 Hope and choose one effect: **Evasive Pattern** (attacks against you or your ship have Disadvantage for the scene); **Attack Run** (your next personal attack prevents the target from spending Armor Slots, or your next naval attack bypasses the targeted arc and converts its damage directly to Hull through the naval damage table); or **Expose Weakness** (the target is Vulnerable for the scene).

System Jockey (Finesse), the ghost in the machine. For you, a starship is a complex instrument, and the void is a symphony you conduct. You do not just fly; you interface, tweaking power levels, spoofing sensors, and pushing the ship's technology beyond its designed limits.

- **Foundation, Orbital Whisperer (Action).** When attempting to dock, land, or navigate in tight spaces, you can spend 1 Stress to

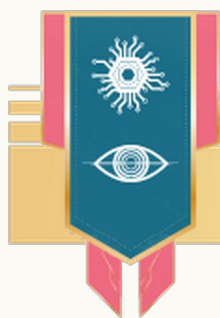
automatically succeed. You can also spend 1 Hope to obtain a complete and detailed map of all defenses and active security systems in the area.

- **Specialization, Gravity Slingshot (Action).** When performing a gravity-assist maneuver, make a Finesse (Pilot/Navigate) Roll, DC 10. On success, you reach your destination in half the time and consume no fuel for the maneuver. On failure, you reach the correct destination but the journey is rough, causing 1 Stress to every crew member.
- **Mastery, Ghost in the Machine (Action).** Once per session, you can spend 3 Hope to seamlessly integrate into the systems of a station or capital ship during a scene. You can control any of its automated functions (defenses, communications, life support, docking bays) as if you were the designated operator, without needing to make hacking rolls.

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

ACCESS TIER & LEVEL	GEAR CATEGORIES
Common (Tier 1) / Level 1	Light/Medium Armor, Pistols/Rifles, All Augmentations
Military (Tier 2) / Level 2	Light/Medium Armor, Pistols/Rifles/Heavy Weapons, All Augmentations
Experimental (Tier 3) / Level 5	Light/Medium Armor, Pistols/Rifles/Heavy Weapons, All Augmentations, now at Experimental grade

Outside-access penalties are described in Chapter 13. Precursor (Tier 4) access is story-gated.



SCHOLAR

"Three hundred years of records, four contradictory primary sources, two fragments of recovered Precursor inscription, and a thousand assumptions nobody has ever tested. You wanted me to find the truth. I found the place where the truth used to be."

Senior Archivist Solene Ashar-Vell, House Amaranth Inner Library, presentation to the Council of Wisdom

DESCRIPTION

Scholars are galactic detectives, chasing lost truths in a fractured universe. They piece together fragments of forgotten sciences, alien biologies, and Precursor riddles. Their labs range from dusty archives to toxic alien ecosystems. They are always hunting for the why beneath the chaos. When others see ruins, they see stories. When others fear anomalies, they see breakthroughs. In the wake of the Silence, knowledge is not just power, it is oxygen. A Scholar at the table is the crew's lens onto everything the Pearl Era did not bother to preserve, and frequently the reason the crew survives the Vault that the rest of them thought was empty.

CORE STATS

- **Domains:** Tech & Social
- **Starter Loadout.** Choose 2 Level 1 Powers from the 6 available to your two Domains (three per Domain; the catalog is Chapter 19). A sturdy first pair: *Quantum Firewall* and *Linguistic Patch*.
- **Spellcast Trait:** Knowledge
- **Starting Evasion:** 10
- **Starting Hit Points:** 5
- **Class Items:** Cracked Data-Slate / Vial of Alien Sample

HOPE FEATURE: EUREKA MOMENT (3 HOPE)

Spend 3 Hope instead of rolling one Knowledge Roll to research or analyse an established subject at DC 20 or lower. Treat it as Success with Hope, not a Critical Success: no dice are rolled and it generates no Fear or additional path resource. Ask one question about a connection between established facts; the Keeper answers truthfully or says that the evidence does not establish one. It cannot create a new faction, culprit, clue, or fact.

CLASS FEATURE: PATTERN WEAVER

Pattern Weaver. Gain +2 on Knowledge Rolls made to analyse a document, object, creature, location, system, or recorded evidence. Once per session, mark 1 Stress to ask the Keeper one question: *What is the most important hidden connection here?* or *What is the most exploitable vulnerability here?* The answer is truthful but cannot reveal information that does not yet exist in the fiction.

During a Long Rest, you may work on one recorded Research Project. After three successful Knowledge Rolls made during different Long Rests, the project is complete. A Critical Success counts as one successful Roll for this Feature. When you begin the project, choose its reward: a named Contact, a verified lead, a Tier-appropriate

schematic, or permission to attempt a specific project-related action without needing new research.

BACKGROUND QUESTION

What lost fragment of pre-Silence lore became your obsession?

SUBCLASSES

Xenobiologist (Instinct), the alien-life student. You are a student of alien life in its purest form. By studying strange ecosystems and bizarre biologies, you access the secrets of adaptation and survival in the galaxy's harshest corners.

- **Foundation, Life Reader (Action).** Spend 1 Hope to study an organism (living or dead) and learn its biology, behavior, and weaknesses. The Keeper will reveal a mechanical weakness (e.g., Vulnerable to an energy type) or a narrative weakness (e.g., afraid of light).
- **Specialization, Ecosystem Decoder (Passive).** You have Advantage on all Instinct Rolls to survive alien biomes and Finesse (Pilot/Navigate) Rolls made there. Additionally, you can spend 1 Stress to identify a native plant or animal that can be used as a resource, poison, medicine, food.
- **Mastery, Evolutionary Forecast (Action).** Once per session, you can spend 3 Hope to predict a significant environmental change in a star system (a solar storm, massive creature migration, disease outbreak). The Keeper will give you vital information about this event, allowing you to prepare for or exploit it.

Precursor Archaeologist (Knowledge), the relic-reader. You study what no one else can read. The dead languages, the silent sites, the artifacts that mainstream archaeology has filed away as inert. You believe the Precursors were trying to communicate, and you intend to listen.

- **Foundation, Artifact Whisper (Action).** Spend 1 Hope to attune to a Precursor artifact. The Keeper will reveal a fragment of its history or a clue about how to use it. You have Advantage on all rolls to activate Precursor technology for the scene.
- **Specialization, Cultural Reconstructor (Passive).** When interacting with a faction you have studied, you gain +2 to all Presence Rolls made for social interaction. Additionally, you can spend 1 Stress to recall a key custom or taboo, avoiding a serious social mistake.
- **Mastery, Philosophy Engine (Action).** Once per session, you can spend 3 Hope to decipher a fundamental principle of pre-Silence wisdom. This allows you to create a single-use, relic-tier invention that can drastically alter a situation, a device that nullifies local gravity, a translator that works on any speech, a scanner that briefly maps the Veil itself.

Information Theorist (Knowledge), the data-stream analyst. You study patterns, networks, and the hidden architecture of how information moves through systems and societies. To you, every

faction is a network, every economy is a graph, and every secret is a node waiting to be reached.

- **Foundation, Data Storm (Reaction).** When you fail a decryption or hacking roll, you can spend 1 Stress to reroll the dice. If you succeed, you can also create a temporary firewall that protects that system for one scene.
- **Specialization, Social Algorithm (Passive).** You have Advantage on all Presence Rolls made for social interaction against any organization you have previously analyzed. You can spend 1 Stress to predict an organization's next move, gaining a key clue.
- **Mastery, Quantum Network (Action).** Once per session, you can spend 3 Hope to establish an instant and undetectable quantum communications network across a star system for the duration of the scene.

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

ACCESS TIER & LEVEL	GEAR CATEGORIES
Common (Tier 1) / Level 1	Light Armor, Pistols, Neural/Physical Augments, All Equipment
Military (Tier 2) / Level 2	Light Armor, Pistols, Neural/Physical Augments, All Equipment
Experimental (Tier 3) / Level 5	Light Armor, Pistols, Neural/Physical Augments, All Equipment, now at Experimental grade

Outside-access penalties are described in Chapter 13. Precursor (Tier 4) access is story-gated.



SCOUNDREL

"Never love anything you can't abandon in ten seconds flat."

Operating principle, *Free Fleet Scoundrel's Code*, attributed to Jax of the Three Names

DESCRIPTION

Scoundrels are ghosts in the machine. They slip through security grids. They wear identities like cheap suits. They trade secrets like currency. In a galaxy of shattered surveillance, they are the rats in the walls, always listening, stealing, and surviving. Charm is their lockpick. Paranoia is their armor. A Scoundrel at the table is the crew's professional liar, and frequently the reason the crew gets out of the building before the alarms have finished thinking about going off.

CORE STATS

- **Domains:** Social & Void
- **Starter Loadout.** Choose 2 Level 1 Powers from the 6 available to your two Domains (three per Domain; the catalog is Chapter 19). A sturdy first pair: *Perfect Facade* and *Temporal Cloak*.
- **Spellcast Trait:** Finesse
- **Starting Evasion:** 12
- **Starting Hit Points:** 6
- **Class Items:** Morphic Skeleton Key / Influential Holo-Mask

HOPE FEATURE: VANISHING ACT (3 HOPE)

Spend 3 Hope as an Action to become Hidden for up to 1 minute. Visual, audio, thermal, network, and psionic detection Rolls cannot locate you unless a feature explicitly penetrates Vanishing Act. The effect ends immediately after you attack, activate a Power, transmit, move an object another creature carries, or interact physically with an unwilling creature. It does not erase tracks made before activation, bypass a sealed barrier, or make allies Hidden.

CLASS FEATURE: SHADOW OPERATIVE

Shadow Operative. Gain Advantage on Agility Rolls to avoid detection. Once per session, you may reroll one failed Agility Roll made to evade an immediate danger and use the new result.

Sneak Attack. When an Attack Roll with Advantage hits, add **1d6 damage** once to that attack. Add **2d6** at Tier 2 and **3d6** at Tier 3 instead. Any source of Advantage can arm Sneak Attack, but additional sources of Advantage do not increase its damage.

BACKGROUND QUESTION

What prize was worth abandoning your identity for ten seconds flat?

SUBCLASSES

Assassin (Finesse), the disguised killer. You are a deadly ghost who wears faces like masks. A master of disguise and lethal precision, you can become anyone and get anywhere, ensuring your target never sees the end coming.

- **Foundation, Deadly Masquerade (Action).** Spend 1 Stress to create a flawless disguise and identity for one scene. You can spend 1 Hope to make this identity stand up to any level of scrutiny for 24 hours.
- **Specialization, Viper's Kiss (Passive).** When you score a Critical Success on an attack, the target is automatically Stunned. You can also choose to spend 1 Stress to apply a potent neurotoxin (Poisoned effect) to any successful attack.
- **Mastery, Perfect Kill (Action).** Once per combat, you can spend 2 Hope to declare your next attack against a target who is unaware of you, Surprised, or Helpless is a perfect kill. It is an automatic Critical Success and deals maximum damage.

Ghost (Agility), the silent infiltrator. You are a whisper in the dark, a true master of infiltration. You move without a sound and leave no trace, bypassing the most advanced security systems as if they were not there.

- **Foundation, Ghost (Action).** Mark 1 Stress to become invisible for one round, or to remove all traces of your passage through an area. If you succeed with Hope on an Agility Roll to avoid detection while invisible, you remain invisible.
- **Specialization, Like a Whisper (Passive).** You are a ghost to machines. You cannot be detected by non-psionic sensors, cameras, or automated systems unless you choose to be.
- **Mastery, Shadow Network (Action).** Once per session, you can spend 2 Hope to call upon your network of spies and informants. You can either gain a key piece of information about any target in the sector, or have your network create a diversion or provide a safehouse.

Contrabandist (Presence), the rogue with the cargo hold. The charming rogue with a fast ship and a hidden cargo hold. You know the price of everything and the location of every crooked port official. You are not necessarily a hacker, but you are a master of logistics, bluffing, and improvisation.

- **Foundation, Hidden Cargo (Action).** Spend 1 Stress to declare you have a small, useful, or contraband item secreted on your person or ship that you have not previously mentioned. The Keeper has final say on what is plausible. Once per session, you can spend 1 Hope to upgrade this declaration to a Tier 1 piece of gear or a small quantity of valuable contraband.
- **Specialization, Dock Authority (Passive).** You have Advantage on all Presence Rolls made for social interaction with port officials, dockmasters, customs agents, and the working staff of stations

and waystations. You can spend 1 Hope to ensure that a routine inspection of your ship turns up nothing of interest, regardless of what you are actually carrying.

- **Mastery, The Long Con (Action).** Once per story arc, you can spend 3 Hope to declare that an elaborate scheme you set up months or years ago has just paid off. The Keeper and you negotiate the specifics, what was the con, who was the mark, what did you get, but the payoff is real and meaningful (a major resource, a significant piece of intelligence, a powerful favor).

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

ACCESS TIER & LEVEL	GEAR CATEGORIES
Common (Tier 1) / Level 1	Light Armor, Melee/Pistols, Physical/Stealth Augments
Military (Tier 2) / Level 2	Light Armor, Melee/Pistols/Rifles, Physical/Stealth Augments, Weapon Modifications
Experimental (Tier 3) / Level 5	Light Armor, Melee/Pistols/Rifles, Physical/Stealth Augments, Weapon Modifications, now at Experimental grade

Outside-access penalties are described in Chapter 13. Precursor (Tier 4) access is story-gated.



SOLDIER

"You hold the line. The line holds you. That is the whole of the work."

Sergeant-Instructor Hira Volkov, Joric Defensive Academy, instruction to first-year cadets

DESCRIPTION

Soldiers are unbreakable walls in a crumbling galaxy. They stand between innocent refugees and ruthless raiders. They are the line between hope and the endless void. Some wear heavy powered armor. Others wield nothing but their own grit and determination. Their strength is not just in muscle, it is in reading threats before they strike. It is in turning a panicked crowd into a disciplined unit. It is in knowing when to break bones in order to save lives. A Soldier at the table is the crew's reliable wall, the one whose presence in a corridor changes how everyone else moves through it.

CORE STATS

- **Domains:** Kinetic & Synthesis
- **Starter Loadout.** Choose 2 Level 1 Powers from the 6 available to your two Domains (three per Domain; the catalog is Chapter 19). A sturdy first pair: *Kinetic Blast* and *Rapid Regeneration*.
- **Spellcast Trait:** Strength
- **Starting Evasion:** 9
- **Starting Hit Points:** 7
- **Class Items:** Dented Riot Shield / Fallen Comrade's Dog-tag

HOPE FEATURE: COMBAT SURGE (2 HOPE)

Combat Surge (2 Hope). After you hit with an attack, spend 2 Hope to deal an additional **1d6 damage** to that attack. You may use Combat Surge once per attack.

CLASS FEATURE: COMBAT FOCUS

Combat Focus (once per scene, voluntary after a hit). After you hit with a weapon attack, you may enter **Focus** and set your **Focus Die** to **1**. Your Focus Die is **1d4 at Tier 1, 1d6 at Tier 2, and 1d8 at Tier 3**. The Focus Die is a step track, not a die you roll: its current value starts at 1 and cannot exceed the highest face of its current Tier.

Focus lasts until the scene ends, you become Dazed or Stunned, or the Focus Die would increase above its maximum. While Focused, before each weapon attack, choose **one** benefit: reroll one weapon damage die for that attack, **or** add the current value of your Focus Die to that attack's damage if it hits. You cannot add the Focus Die to the Attack Roll.

At the end of each Spotlight you take while Focused, if you dealt damage during that Spotlight, increase the Focus Die by 1. When the Focus Die would increase above its Tier maximum, end Focus and reset the die to 1. Once per Focus, while you hold Spotlight, you may give one ally **+2** on their next Roll or **+2 Evasion** until they next hold Spotlight; then yield Spotlight to that ally. The +2 bonus is a flat bonus and does not create or stack with Advantage.

BACKGROUND QUESTION

What made you stand your ground when all others fled?

SUBCLASSES

Guardian (Strength), the unbreakable shield. You are the crew's unbreakable shield. Standing between your allies and harm, you absorb punishment with sheer will and grit. Where you stand is where the line is drawn, and it will not break.

- **Foundation, Bodyguard Protocol (Reaction).** When an ally within Close range is hit by an attack, you can spend 1 Stress to intercept it, taking the damage yourself. When you do, you gain Advantage on your next Melee attack against that attacker.
- **Specialization, Hold the Line! (Action).** Mark 1 Stress. You become a point of mobile cover. Allies adjacent to you gain the benefit of cover (+2 to their Evasion) and can ignore the effects of Stagger or forced movement until your next Spotlight.
- **Mastery, Unbreakable (Reaction).** Once per session, when one or more allies would take damage, you can spend 3 Hope to negate all of it. Describe how you absorb or deflect the assault. For the rest of the scene, your armor's Major and Severe thresholds are reduced by 2.

Military Officer (Finesse), the battlefield conductor. You are a battlefield conductor, orchestrating victory through superior tactics and decisive commands. You do not just fight; you lead, turning a chaotic firefight into a symphony of coordinated destruction.

- **Foundation, Call the Shot (Action).** Mark 1 Stress to grant an ally one of the following benefits on their next action: gain Advantage, their attack ignores cover, or their action does not draw the spotlight.
- **Specialization, Exploit Weakness (Action).** Spend 1 Hope to analyze an enemy's tactics or equipment. For the rest of the scene, all attacks made by your allies against that enemy have the *Armor Piercing* quality.
- **Mastery, Battlefield Symphony (Action).** Once per session, spend 3 Hope. Every other crew member may immediately take one Action without spending their Spotlight, in an order chosen by those players. An Action granted this way cannot grant another Action or another Spotlight.

Peacekeeper (Presence), the order without violence. You believe true strength lies in control, not destruction. You enforce order with an intimidating presence and non-lethal tactics, proving that a firm word can be far mightier than a plasma rifle.

- **Foundation, Unspoken Authority (Action).** Spend 1 Hope to halt a conflict for a single, tense moment. No one can take hostile action until you speak or act. This gives you a key window to negotiate, intimidate, or create an escape route.
- **Specialization, Common Ground (Action).** Spend 1 Stress and make a Presence Roll. On a success, you find a point of leverage

or empathy with one enemy. You can turn them into a temporary ally or remove them from the fight as they question their loyalties. If you succeed with Hope, they reveal a key secret about their leader.

- **Mastery, Sanctuary (Action).** Once per session, spend 3 Hope to declare a zone around you as neutral ground. For the scene, no one can willingly initiate violence within this zone, enforced by your sheer presence.

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

ACCESS TIER & LEVEL	GEAR CATEGORIES
Common (Tier 1) / Level 1	All Armor, All Weapons, Physical Augments
Military (Tier 2) / Level 2	All Armor, All Weapons, Physical Augments
Experimental (Tier 3) / Level 5	All Armor, All Weapons, Physical Augments, now at Experimental grade

Outside-access penalties are described in Chapter 13. Precursor (Tier 4) access is story-gated.



VANGUARD

"The body is the strike. The mind is the line of the strike. There is no daylight between them."

Master Vanguard Tenshi-Ko, on the discipline of Supreme Focus

DESCRIPTION

The Vanguards are warriors who seek perfection through the synthesis of mind (**Neural**) and body. They reject over-reliance on technology as a distraction, trusting instead in discipline and their connection to the substrate to attain a state of **Supreme Focus**. For them, combat is not mere violence but a perfectly executed ritual, a dance of control. They use their minds to anticipate movements, augment their kinetic reflexes, and project their will onto the battlefield. They are the living expression of *mind over matter*. A Vanguard at the table is the crew's centered presence, the one whose stillness in a crisis steadies everyone else's hands.

CORE STATS

- **Domains:** Neural & branch (*Void / Kinetic / Lux, determined by Subclass*)
- **Starter Loadout.** Choose 2 Level 1 Powers from the 6 available to your Domains (three per Domain; the catalog is Chapter 19). A sturdy first pair: *Mind Shield* and one Level 1 Power from your branch Domain.
- **Spellcast Trait:** Presence
- **Starting Evasion:** 11
- **Starting Hit Points:** 6
- **Class Items:** Light Staff (*Melee*) / Meditation Orb / Spiced Tea Mix

HOPE FEATURE: PATH TO NIRVANA (3 HOPE)

Path to Nirvana (3 Hope). Spend 3 Hope to enter the **Nirvana State**. As you enter, set your **Integrity Die** to its highest face by Tier: a **d4** at Tier 1, a **d6** at Tier 2, or a **d8** at Tier 3 or higher. Choose **Agility**, **Instinct**, or **Strength** as you enter. For the duration:

- You have Advantage on Rolls using the chosen Trait.
- You are immune to the Stunned and Dazed conditions.
- Your first Melee attack against an enemy during the state deals an additional **2d6** damage of your subclass branch type.

Each time you roll with Fear during the state (including on a Reaction), reduce your Integrity Die by 1; it is never reduced on matching dice. The state ends when your Integrity Die reaches 0 or when the scene ends, whichever comes first.

Breaking Point. At any point during the state, you may end it as a free effect on your action to unleash a closing strike: that action deals an additional (**Proficiency**)**d6** damage of your subclass branch type. This bonus is added once, after any multipliers, and is never doubled on a Critical.

The state does not grant an additional Action, Spotlight, Reaction, or automatic success.

CLASS FEATURE: UNBROKEN FOCUS

Your mental discipline allows you to channel psionic energy into movement and combat.

- While not wearing **Heavy** or **Very Heavy** armor, you gain **+1 Evasion**.
- Your unarmed attacks (or attacks with **Melee** weapons that possess the *Lightweight* feature) count as possessing the **Energy Tag** (Void damage).
- **Internal Alignment (Passive)**. Once per Spotlight, spend **1 Stress** to ignore negative modifiers to your Evasion until the end of the round. This does not remove Conditions or grant a bonus above your unmodified Evasion.

GEAR 1, VANGUARD SUBCLASS BRANCHES AT A GLANCE (REFERENCE TABLE)

BRANCH	SECOND DOMAIN	BRANCH ORNAMENT	TACTICAL ROLE
Ghost Blade (<i>Finesse</i>)	Void	black spiral	stealth-and-strike, deflection, vanish-into-engagement
Kinetic Echo (<i>Instinct</i>)	Kinetic	crimson cascade	precognitive dodge, force-resonant strike
Pure Conduit (<i>Knowledge</i>)	Lux	gold sun	force projection, ally shielding, declared barrier

The branch is fixed at character creation. Unlike a Mystic's Veil Alignment, a Vanguard's branch does not switch across the campaign.

BACKGROUND QUESTION

What did you have to give up to walk the path of Supreme Focus?

SUBCLASSES

Ghost Blade (*Finesse*), the deadly grace. Your body is a weapon honed to impossible sharpness. You move with a fluid, deadly grace, your every deflection and strike a perfect synthesis of psionic anticipation and physical execution. Second Domain: Void.

- **Foundation, Perfect Deflection (Reaction)**. Spend 1 Stress to gain +3 Evasion against one incoming attack. If the attack misses due to this bonus, you gain Advantage on your next Melee attack against that attacker.
- **Specialization, Unseen Movement (Action)**. Spend 1 Hope and make a Finesse Roll, DC 15. On success, move up to **Far range**. One enemy you moved away from has Disadvantage on its next attack against you.
- **Mastery, Blade Dance (Action)**. Mark 1 Stress. Make a single Melee attack roll against up to three enemies within your reach. You make one roll and compare it to each of their Evasion scores.

Kinetic Echo (*Instinct*), the precognitive dodger. You do not just react; you anticipate. By sensing the echoes of what is to come, you can alter fate, forcing enemy attacks to miss and positioning yourself for the perfect counter. Second Domain: Kinetic.

- **Foundation, Precog Dodge (Reaction)**. Spend 1 Hope when targeted by an attack. You force the attacker to **reroll the attack roll** (the Keeper must accept the new result).
- **Specialization, Kinetic Reversal (Reaction)**. When you are subjected to forced movement, spend 1 Stress to negate it and instead move up to one range band in any direction.
- **Mastery, Echoing Strike (Passive)**. When you succeed with Hope on a Melee attack, you create a temporal echo. The target is **Dazed** until the end of their next Spotlight and suffers **1d6 Kinetic damage** at the start of their next Spotlight.

Pure Conduit (*Knowledge*), the channeled will. You are a channel for raw psionic will. You project your inner focus outward, creating kinetic barriers, shielding allies' minds, and shaping the battlefield without ever throwing a punch. Second Domain: Lux.

- **Foundation, Force Projection (Action)**. Spend 1 Stress. Choose one: push one object or creature up to Far Range, or create a wall

of force that provides cover until your next Spotlight, or deal 1d6 Kinetic damage to everything in Close Range (no effect on creatures).

- **Specialization, Shield of Will (Reaction)**. When an ally in Close Range is targeted by a mental or social attack (deception, intimidation, psionic intrusion), you can spend 1 Stress to impose Disadvantage on the roll.
- **Mastery, Immovable Fortress (Action)**. Spend 2 Hope to create an immobile dome of kinetic force covering a Very Close zone around you for one scene. The dome has Major Threshold 6, Severe Threshold 10, and 10 HP. It blocks physical attacks; Energy, Neural, Psionic, and Void effects pass through it.

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

ACCESS TIER & LEVEL	GEAR CATEGORIES
Common (Tier 1) / Level 1	Light/Medium Armor, Melee/Pistols, Neural Augments
Military (Tier 2) / Level 2	Light/Medium Armor (excluding Heavy/Very Heavy features), Melee/Pistols/Rifles (excluding Massive feature), Neural Augments
Experimental (Tier 3) / Level 5	Light/Medium Armor (excluding Heavy/Very Heavy features), Melee/Pistols/Rifles (excluding Massive feature), Neural Augments, now at Experimental grade

Outside-access penalties are described in Chapter 13. Precursor (Tier 4) access is story-gated.

CHOOSING YOUR CLASS

A few notes on the selection.

Class is the kit, not the character. Two players who pick the same Class can produce wildly different characters depending on their Ancestry, their Community, their Background Question answer, and their roleplay choices. A Volkov-trained human Soldier from a Frontier Colony plays differently from a Bloomstrider Soldier from the Verdant Conclave, even if they have identical mechanical sheets. Choose the Class whose *kit* matches the work you want to do, and let the rest of your character sheet handle the texture.

Class fit with crew composition. A balanced crew has a healer-coded role (Engineer, Explorer, certain Mystic builds), a face-coded role (Diplomat, Scoundrel, Scholar), a combat-coded role (Soldier, Vanguard, certain Pilot builds), and a substrate-perception role (Mystic, certain Vanguard builds). You do not need all four covered, and you can double up on roles deliberately, but think about where your character will be most useful before locking in the choice. The Keeper can also help you read the crew.

Awakened vs Sleeping at the same Class name. As noted in the introduction, several Class names appear in both the Awakened catalog (this chapter) and the Sleeping catalog (Chapter 7). They are not the same character. An Awakened Soldier has Hope-spending Powers; a Sleeping Soldier has Effort-and-Recovery mechanics. Both are mechanically supported and both produce satisfying play. The choice between them is the choice you made in Chapter 2 (Two Paths), and it is a choice about *what kind of being your character is*, not just about which page of the rulebook to read.

The two variable-Domain Classes. The Mystic and the Vanguard both have second-Domain choices that warrant extra thought. A Mystic's Veil Alignment can be switched at later Tier thresholds, but each switch is a substantive event in the fiction; pick an alignment that the player wants to explore for at least the first few sessions. A Vanguard's Subclass branch is fixed, so spend the time at character creation to make sure the branch's tactical role (stealth-and-strike, precognitive dodge, projected force) matches the play you are excited for.

Class and Spellcast Trait. The Class fixes the Spellcast Trait; a Subclass only overrides it where its entry explicitly lists a different Trait in parentheses. The Class value is the *default*, the Trait used when a Power card calls for a Spellcast Roll without specifying a different Trait. Many Subclasses have their own Trait listed in parentheses after the Subclass name; those Subclass abilities use the listed Trait, even if it differs from the Class default. A Soldier's default Spellcast Trait is Strength, but a Soldier who is also a Military Officer uses Finesse for the Subclass abilities. Powers that explicitly list Trait alternatives let you choose at activation time. The system is more flexible than a single per-Class Spellcast Trait would be.

WHAT COMES NEXT

You now have an Awakened Class (this chapter), and the Subclass within it. The next layer of decision is **Traits and Experiences** (Chapter 8), your character's six numerical Trait modifiers and their formative key moments. After that comes **Equipment** (Chapter 8 / Chapter 9) and finally any **Connections** you want to establish with your crewmates before play begins.

The Class catalog above is the system's way of telling you what kinds of work the Pearl Era post-Silence galaxy needs done. The character you build out of one of these Classes is your way of telling the table what kind of person is going to do that work, in your specific campaign, alongside your specific crew, against the specific shape of trouble the Keeper is preparing.

Pick the kit that excites you most. The character will follow.

CHAPTER 7

THE SLEEPING

The Silence left two kinds of people. Some woke to the Hope Frequency and can bend the Veil. The rest are deaf to it, and run on something the universe never gave them: themselves. This chapter is for the second kind. (Why the split exists at all is cosmology, and lives in "The Galaxy in Depth"; here we teach how to play one.)

At a glance. A Sleeping character runs on two resources. Effort is your everyday currency, the Sleeping answer to Hope, generated through play and spent on your class's Effort Feature and reactions. Resolve is a small, scarce reserve of d4 that powers your signature Moves (1 at a time, up to your pool). On top of both, you hit harder every level (Honed Edge) and invoke your Experiences for free. Pick a class, note a

Recovery Anchor, and you are ready.

HOW THE SLEEPING WORK

EFFORT, THE EVERYDAY RESOURCE

Effort is what you summon when there is no song to lean on: breath, discipline, and the muscle memory of a thousand drills. You begin play with **2 Effort** and hold a maximum of **6**. You spend Effort on your class's **Effort Feature** and on reactions, exactly where an Awakened character would spend Hope.

Generating Effort: the Effort Track. Your sheet shows an **Effort Track** with two segments. When Hope is the higher die on a meaningful Duality Roll, mark one segment whether the roll succeeds or fails; when both segments are marked, clear them and gain **1 Effort**. Trivial, repeated, or consequence-free rolls never mark the Track. On a **Critical Success**, clear 1 Stress, mark both Track segments, resolve the completed Track for 1 Effort, then gain **1 further point** placed in either Effort or Resolve; if Effort is full, place that further point in Resolve. The Track payout and the further point are separate and both occur. Recovery and class features never generate Effort unless they state an explicit exception.

Burnout. At 0 Effort, you may still invoke a feature by paying **1 HP** instead. You are then **Burned Out**: your Stress maximum is reduced by 1 until your next Recovery. While Burned Out you still mark the Effort Track and gain Effort normally; the engine dims, it does not stop. The Awakened bargain with the substrate; the Sleeping bargain with their own body, and some nights the body does not forgive it.

RESOLVE, THE RESERVE FOR MOVES

Resolve powers your **Moves**, the signature plays that make the Sleeping more than a steady professional. It is deliberately scarce.

- **Pool.** Maximum Resolve begins at **2**, and rises by 1 at levels **3, 5, 7, and 9** (so 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 across a campaign, reaching 6 at level 9). Resolve Dice are **d4**. You begin play with the pool full.
- **Refill.** Resolve never recovers automatically from a rest. During a Short Rest, choose **Prepare** as one of the two different rest moves to recover 1 Resolve; during a Long Rest, choose **Prepare** to restore Resolve to its pool maximum. Chapter 9 is the authoritative rest procedure. Resolve is a reserve, not a meter; a Move is a moment, not a habit.
- **Spending.** Each Move lists a cost in dice. Some are a flat spend; some are *spend and roll*, where you roll the dice and apply their total. You may spend up to your whole pool on a single Move.

- **The limit.** Resolve adds to a roll's **total** only. It never changes which die, Hope or Fear, came up higher, and never makes a critical. You can grind a failure into a success and still pay the Fear that came with it.

EFFORT VS RESOLVE. Use Effort often. Spend Resolve when the scene should remember it.

Session refresh and the broken scene. A new calendar session does not by itself reset Effort or Resolve; use the rest and downtime procedures in Chapter 9. If a session ends mid-scene with the tension unresolved, resume it with the same marked resources unless the fiction included a completed rest or downtime.

Every Sleeping character has two Class Moves from their primary Class. Most subclasses add one Subclass Move, gained when you take that subclass; you will find them inside each class entry, under Resolve Moves. A multiclass grants only the one eligible secondary Class Resolve Move selected through Chapter 11. The Sleeping Mystic is the documented exception: its subclasses directly modify its ritual, manifestation, or research engine instead of adding a separate Resolve Move. Spend Resolve Dice (d4) to use them; "spend and roll" means roll the dice and apply their total. Costs are starting values, tune freely. Moves sit alongside each class's Effort Feature and Class Feature; they do not replace them. One Move is universal to every Sleeping character:

- **Bear Down** (*spend and roll, any number*). After any Duality Roll, attack, reaction, or damage roll, before the outcome is narrated, spend Resolve Dice and add their total. The plainest refusal to fail.

BEARING DOWN: COMMON EFFORTS

Beyond your class's Effort Feature, every Sleeping character can spend Effort on a short list of general plays. None of these is an automatic success; each one bends a roll or the fiction in a measurable way, and the Duality Roll, with its risk of Fear, still happens. These are the shared vocabulary of the Sleeping craft; your subclass and Moves add to it.

Costing 1 Effort:

- **Steady Hands.** Before you make a Core Trait Roll that draws on something genuinely practiced, spend 1 Effort to add **+2**; justify the practice in the fiction.
- **Read the Room.** Ask the Keeper one question about the immediate tactical or social situation, exits, who holds power here, where the tension sits, and they answer truthfully.
- **Push Through.** Ignore one minor environmental or condition penalty on your next action (smoke, partial darkness, awkward footing).

Costing 2 Effort:

- **The Opening.** You gain **Advantage** on your next roll, the product of preparation, position, or hard experience.
- **Try Again.** After you roll, reroll **one** of your two Duality dice (the Hope die or the Fear die) and use the new result. You do not get to keep the better of the two automatically; if you reroll the Fear die and it comes up higher, you live with it. Rerolling a die is control, not a guarantee.

- **Brace.** Against harm you see coming, drop the next hit you take by one severity band (Severe to Major, Major to Minor), gritting through it. This spends no Armor Slots.
- **Cover the Angle.** Give your Reaction to an ally within range: the next Core Trait Roll they make before the start of your next Spotlight gains +2 as you cover, guide, or warn them.

Optional module, costing 3 Effort: Adopt both options before the session begins and tell the players; otherwise neither is available. Adoption cannot change during a scene.

- **Second Wind.** Clear 2 Stress outside of a rest, catching your breath mid-action.
- **Seize the Moment.** After a success, add one extra favorable consequence to the fiction, which the Keeper validates. This is not a second success; it is a branch (you open the door, and you also overhear what is being said on the other side).

HONED EDGE (PASSIVE)

Your damage rolls gain a flat bonus equal to your **level minus 1** (+1 at level 2, up to +9 at level 10), added once. No resource, no roll: the steady mastery that makes a Sleeping veteran the hardest reliable hitter in any crew.

YOUR EXPERIENCES ARE FREE

You invoke an Experience **without spending any resource**: once per roll, add a relevant Experience's flat bonus for free. You also begin play with **one additional Experience** beyond the standard array. You are, more than anyone, the sum of what you have done.

RECOVERY, THE SLEEPING PRACTICE

Recovery is how the Sleeping clear Stress, and it follows the Corebook's rest rules rather than adding a check. During a **Short Rest**, choose **Clear Stress** as one of your two different rest moves to perform a Recovery and clear **1d4 + Tier Stress**; during a **Long Rest**, choose **Decompress** as one of your two different rest moves to clear your whole Stress track (Chapter 9). What makes it the Sleeping's own is the **Recovery Anchor**: a specific, lose-able practice you choose at creation (a knife to sharpen, a letter reread, a precise way of breathing). The Anchor is not a die roll; it is a requirement and a story handle. With it to hand, your chosen recovery move works automatically. If the story has taken it from you, lost, broken, confiscated, left behind, you cannot choose Clear Stress or Decompress until you recover the Anchor or establish a new one over a Long Rest. Make the Anchor specific enough that the table can deny it to you when the story needs the weight. Recovery never generates Effort; Effort is earned at the table, half a step at a time, through the Effort Track.

THE NINE SLEEPING CLASSES

HOW TO READ A SLEEPING CLASS ENTRY

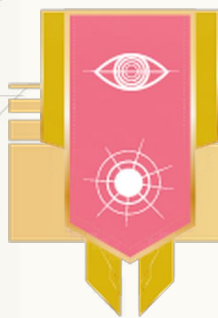
Each entry uses the same frame, so once you can read one you can read all nine:

- **Description.** Who this professional is in the fiction, and the table problems they solve.
- **Core Stats.** HP, Stress, Evasion, starting Trait guidance, and the Signature Trait the class leans on.
- **Effort Feature.** The class engine: the thing you do often, paid in Effort from the Effort Track.
- **Class Feature.** The permanent, always-on edge that needs no resource at all.
- **Resolve Moves.** The signature plays: two Moves from the primary Class plus one Move per subclass, paid in Resolve Dice; rare by design (see Resolve, above). A multiclass adds only the one eligible secondary Class Resolve Move specified in Chapter 11. The Sleeping Mystic is the exception, with subclass features that modify its two Class Moves and its research system directly.
- **Background Question.** One question that ties the profession to your past; answer it before play.
- **Subclasses.** Foundation, then Specialization, then Mastery: the arc your craft follows as you advance.

Two chapter-level systems apply to every class and live earlier in this chapter rather than in each entry: **Honed Edge**, the passive competence of the Sleeping, and the **Recovery Anchor**, the specific, lose-able practice your character recovers by, named at creation (Chapter 8).

What follows is the catalog of the nine classes as they appear on the Sleeping Path. Each entry mirrors the Awakened version in traits and silhouette, and usually in Domains. The Sleeping Mystic is the deliberate exception: it begins with two studied Domains and may reconstruct others through research. What differs, and what differs deeply, is the Effort Feature, the Class Feature's emphasis, and the Subclasses' grounding. Sleepers do not forfeit power. They simply pay for it differently.

The class emblems, banners, and visual identities are shared with Chapter 6. A Diplomat is a Diplomat regardless of Path. The flags fly the same.



DIPLOMAT

"Your mystics tell me the substrate sang under their feet at the Hydros Accord. Mine slept through the whole conference. We signed the paper anyway."

Senior Liaison Dom Eskal, House Valerius observation, the night of the Hydros Accord

DESCRIPTION

The Sleeping Diplomat is the version of the trade you will meet most often in actual rooms. They have read the files. They have memorized the names of the spouses and the children and the exes. They have prepared three concessions they are willing to make and three they will pretend to consider. They have not heard the Hope Frequency in their lives, and they do not expect to. They will save your fleet anyway, by talking, by writing, by knowing the man across the table better than he knows himself.

CORE STATS

- **Domains:** Social & Lux
- **Spellcast Trait:** Presence
- **Starting Evasion:** 10
- **Starting Hit Points:** 6
- **Class Items:** Annotated Briefing Folio / Treasured Token (a personal anchor; an old letter, a worn coin, a scarred datapad)

EFFORT FEATURE: THE PREPARED MIND (2 EFFORT)

You can spend 2 Effort to choose one of three powerful effects. Where the Awakened Diplomat's *Power of Suggestion* runs on charisma and the universe's quiet cooperation, the Prepared Mind runs on the work you have already done before the scene began.

- **Cite the File.** Declare you have read about this person, this house, this faction, or this situation in advance. The Keeper provides one true and useful fact about them, a vulnerability, a recent event, a relationship, a stated position, that you may not have learned yet but that fits what your character could reasonably have prepared.
- **Anticipated Move.** When an NPC declares a social or political Action in the scene but before its Roll or effect resolves, use your Reaction and choose one response: **Expose**, make an Instinct or Knowledge Roll, DC 15, with Advantage; on success one willingly ally gains Advantage on their next Roll against that NPC before the end of the round. **Interpose**, make a Presence Roll, DC 15, with Advantage; on success the NPC's declared Roll has Disadvantage. Failure changes nothing. This never cancels an Action without a Roll or dictates an NPC's belief.
- **The Quiet Word.** You speak privately to one NPC currently in the scene. Whatever you say, the NPC takes seriously, not necessarily favorably, but seriously. They consider it as a credible signal. Where this leads is between you, them, and the table.

INFLUENCE SCALES WITH THE ROLL. Success: those present, this scene. With Hope: it holds after you leave. Critical: it spreads beyond the room. With Fear: it turns on you.

CLASS FEATURE: STANDING REPUTATION

Sleeping Diplomats build influence the slow way, by being reliable, but they spend the same currency every Diplomat does: **Favor Tokens**. The pool, the cap, the way they are earned, and the way they are spent are identical to the Awakened Diplomat's Cultural Lens (Chapter 6), so a character who Awakens or who came up Sleeping never has to relearn how their social capital works. The path changes how you fight and rest, through Effort and Resolve; it does not change how you trade in favors.

You begin each session with **2 Favor Tokens** and hold a maximum of **4** (raised cumulatively by background and subclass, so a Core World Sleeping Diplomat holds up to 6). The first time each scene you succeed on a meaningful Presence Roll to persuade or deceive, gain 1; you also gain 1 on every Long Rest. You spend them through your subclass abilities, through House and Free Fleet contacts (Chapter 5), to automatically succeed on an institutional task (1 Favor), or by spending 5 at once to raise your Reputation with one faction by 1 RP (Chapter 16), bought standing that can be lost again by how you act.

What "Standing Reputation" names is not a separate resource but the Sleeping Diplomat's reading of the same one: every Favor is a debt of trust earned by being dependable where it was witnessed, not by performance or spectacle. Favor Tokens are not Effort. They are the slower, longer-running currency of the Diplomat's career, the same on either path.

Protocol. You always know the correct form (title, gift, taboo, precedence) for any culture in common knowledge; no roll. For isolated or unknown cultures, roll Knowledge (DC set by how removed they are) to read their norms from behavior alone. Once you know the protocol, you cannot offend by accident, only by choice.

BACKGROUND QUESTION

Whose trust did you betray to get where you are, and what would it cost you to repair it?

SUBCLASSES

Cultural Attache (Presence), the bridge-builder. You speak more languages than is reasonable and have lived in more cultures than is comfortable. You translate not only words but assumptions.

- **Foundation, Mother Tongue (Passive).** You speak fluently any galactic language that has at least 100 living speakers. For dead languages or extremely rare tongues, you have working competence with a Knowledge roll at advantage.
- **Specialization, The Listening Posture (Action).** Spend 1 Effort. For the next minute of conversation, you understand not only what

the NPC is saying but what they mean to say but cannot. The Keeper provides a brief paraphrase of the subtext after each significant statement.

- **Mastery, The Reconciliation (Action).** Once per story arc, mediate between two conflicting parties willing to sit. Roll Presence; the DC scales with the depth of the grievance. On success they agree terms; influence scales with the roll. A critical buries the grievance itself.

The Steward (Knowledge), the keeper of letters. Where the Icon performs charisma at the cosmic register, the Steward keeps records. You know who owes whom, who married whom, who buried whom. You do not forget, and you do not let others forget.

- **Foundation, The Standing File (Passive).** You maintain a private dossier on every named NPC the party has met. At the start of any scene featuring a returning NPC, you may ask the Keeper one question about that NPC's recent activities; the Keeper answers truthfully (omissions are permitted; lies are not).
- **Specialization, Cited Precedent (Action).** Spend 1 Effort during a social roll. You cite a specific past event, a treaty, a debt, a kindness, a betrayal, that bears on the present moment. The Keeper grants advantage and adjusts the scene's stakes to acknowledge the citation.
- **Mastery, The Long Memory (Action).** Once per story arc, you may declare that you have been preparing for this exact meeting for years. You produce a document, an heirloom, a witness, or a recorded confession that decisively changes the conversation. The Keeper and you negotiate what it is. Once produced, it is spent.

Political Operative (Finesse), the back-channel. The Sleeping back-channel does not run on charm. It runs on leverage, leverage, and leverage. The Operative is the version of the trade nobody puts on the recruiting brochures.

- **Foundation, The Quiet Map (Passive).** At the start of any new political environment (a city, a station, a fleet), you may spend a Short Rest mapping the informal power structure. The Keeper provides three significant relationships, debts, or grievances that are not common knowledge.
- **Specialization, Lever (Action).** Spend 1 Effort. You apply a piece of known leverage to an NPC during a social scene. The Keeper describes the NPC's resistance and what concessions, if any, are now possible. Successful application of leverage may also incur a permanent enmity, leverage is remembered.
- **Mastery, The Dossier (Action).** Once per story arc, you produce a sealed dossier on a named NPC. Its contents, if released, would destroy that NPC's position. You may threaten its release; you may release it; you may, most dangerously of all, use its existence as a private gift. The Keeper helps you determine the dossier's exact contents only at the moment of use.

RESOLVE MOVES

Class Moves

- **Force of Presence (spend and roll 1+).** Add the rolled total to a Presence roll, or make a single NPC of lesser standing yield a minor concession with no roll. What they yield, they yield in front of witnesses.
- **Read the Table (spend 1).** In any negotiation, learn each present NPC's true priority and which of them will break first.

Subclass Moves

- **Cultural Attache, Common Ground (spend 1).** Bridge a cultural divide instantly; treat a stranger as a known contact for the scene.
- **The Steward, The Ledger Remembers (spend and roll 1+).** Add the rolled total to a roll that leverages who owes whom, or surface a

true obligation an NPC is bound by. Either way, the obligation becomes established fact; the debt outlives the scene.

- **Political Operative, Leverage (spend 2).** Produce a piece of usable leverage on a target you have had time to study. One use.

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

Your class trains with the gear below; even at **Common (Tier 1)**, not every class is trained for every basic item (a Diplomat is not trained on rifles, and never becomes so). Using gear outside your access is at a penalty (Chapter 13), and Precursor (Tier 4) is story-gated.

Access Tier	Level	Gear Categories
Common (Tier 1)	1	Light Armor, Melee/Pistols, Neural/Physical Augments
Military (Tier 2)	2	Light Armor, Melee/Pistols, Neural/Physical Augments
Experimental (Tier 3)	5	Light Armor, Melee/Pistols, Neural/Physical Augments, now at Experimental grade



ENGINEER

Sergeant-Engineer Iva Kurogane-Born, on her family's heirloom drive core

DESCRIPTION

The Sleeping Engineer is the working version of the trade, the one whose hands are stained with the same compounds in the same patterns regardless of which Domain Frequency happens to be cooperative this week. They do not call on the substrate to favor the repair. They strip the panel, find the failure, and fix it. If the fix takes thirty hours, they take thirty hours. The engine runs because they made it run. There is no further explanation.

CORE STATS

- **Domains:** Tech & Synthesis
- **Spellcast Trait:** Knowledge
- **Starting Evasion:** 9
- **Starting Hit Points:** 7
- **Class Items:** Toolbelt with Logged Inventory / Personal Wrench (named, tracked)

EFFORT FEATURE: BRUTE-FORCE DIAGNOSTIC (2 EFFORT)

You can spend 2 Effort to choose one of three effects. The Sleeping Engineer's signature is not inspiration but *thoroughness*. You have ruled out everything else; what remains is the answer.

- **Find the Failure.** Spend 1 minute of in-fiction time examining a malfunctioning system. The Keeper tells you exactly what is wrong with it, in detail, including any concealed sabotage. (You still need parts, time, and tools to fix it.)
- **Never Rated For This.** Choose one non-Precursor machine, vehicle subsystem, or piece of equipment you can touch. Until the end of the scene, it ignores one penalty caused by damage or the environment, or it completes one task in half the normal fictional time. At the end of the scene, it is disabled and cannot be used until repaired during downtime. This is ordinary descriptive language, not a Condition. It cannot increase damage, Armor Slots, Evasion, thresholds, Power level, or access Tier.
- **The Field Manual.** You produce, from memory, a procedure for handling a specific technical situation, the procedure is one your character has practiced or read, not improvised. The Keeper grants advantage on the next four rolls related to executing it, by you or by an ally you instruct.

CLASS FEATURE: LOGGED TOOLS

Sleeping Engineers do not jury-rig from cosmic confidence; they jury-rig from *kit*. Record three tool types: **cutting**, **diagnostic**, **medical**, **security**, **signal**, or **fabrication**. Once per scene, when one recorded type is relevant to a technical Roll, gain +2 to that Roll. A Logged Tool supplies what is needed to attempt the task; it never solves the task automatically or creates Tiered gear. A type is depleted only when a printed Feature explicitly consumes it; restore

every depleted type during Downtime with ordinary supplies and no Roll.

BACKGROUND QUESTION

What broke that you couldn't fix, and what did you build to make sure the next one wouldn't?

SUBCLASSES

Tech Specialist (Knowledge), the digital tradesman. You do not believe networks have personalities. You believe networks have logs.

- **Foundation, The Audit (Action).** Spend 1 Effort to audit any networked system you have access to. The Keeper tells you what processes are running, what data has moved in the last hour, and what anomalies, if any, are present.
- **Specialization, The Quiet Hand (Action).** Spend 1 Effort. You modify a system you have audited; the modification persists until discovered. The Keeper describes the realistic parameters of the modification's stealth.
- **Mastery, The Dead Drop (Passive).** You maintain a permanent, hidden access channel into any system you have administered for at least one week. The Keeper tracks these channels; they may be discovered, but they do not expire.

Xenotech Savant (Knowledge), the documentarian of impossible objects. The Awakened version of this subclass interprets Precursor artifacts; the Sleeping version catalogs them, and is wary of every word that begins with the prefix xeno-.

- **Foundation, The Catalog (Passive).** When you encounter unfamiliar technology, you may consult your catalog (a large, ugly, hand-written document the character keeps). The Keeper tells you whether your catalog has a relevant entry, and if so, what it says, including its limits.
- **Specialization, The Procedure (Action).** Spend 1 Effort and name one printed hazard of an unfamiliar artifact that your catalog could address. You or one ally gains Advantage on the next Roll made this scene to handle that hazard. On Failure with Fear, the attempt fails and the artifact applies only its printed consequence; no additional hazard is invented.
- **Mastery, The New Page (Action).** Once per story arc, after extensive observation, you add an unfamiliar artifact's behavior to your catalog. From that point forward, you and your party have working competence with that class of artifact.

Medical Technician (Instinct), the field surgeon, the mortician, the keeper of bodies. Sleeping medics do not believe in miracles. They believe in protocols.

- **Foundation, The Triage (Action).** Spend 1 Effort. You assess the medical state of every conscious or unconscious creature within Close range. The Keeper tells you who is dying, who is stable, and who is faking.

- **Specialization, Stabilize (Action).** Spend 1 Effort while adjacent to a Dying or Final creature. Clear all Dying and Final Progress; the creature is stable at 0 HP. This requires no Roll, restores no HP, and never reverses a completed Death Move.
- **Mastery, The Last Rite (Action).** Once per story arc, perform a six-hour procedure on the recoverable body of a named character who died through ordinary Final Progress during the previous 24 hours. They return with 1 HP and a permanent narrative Scar chosen by that character's player; a mechanical Scar requires that player's agreement. This cannot reverse a completed Death Move or restore a body made unrecoverable by an explicit rule.

RESOLVE MOVES

Class Moves

- **Field Improvisation** (*spend and roll 1+*). Choose one: restore personal or vehicle Armor Slots, drone HP, or one ship arc's Armor Slots equal to the total; restore 1 Hull per full 5 points in the total, maximum 3 Hull and once per ship per scene; return one offline Common or Military device to service for the scene; or assemble a single-use device that grants Advantage on one declared Core Trait Roll before the scene ends. It requires suitable scrap but no workshop and never raises a maximum.
- **Hot-Wire** (*spend 1*). Bypass one non-Precursor lock or activate one non-Precursor machine without a Roll until the end of the scene. The device immediately records an unauthorized-access alert detectable by its owner or local security; Hot-Wire grants no credentials and cannot override a safety rule that names a higher requirement.

Subclass Moves

- **Tech Specialist, Ghost in the Logs** (*spend and roll 1+*). Add the total to one Knowledge Roll for network access or intrusion, or read the system's recorded activity from the previous 24 hours. If the system contains credentials for an established identity, you may attribute the intrusion to that identity; this cannot create a person, credential, or access level that was not already present.
- **Xenotech Savant, Safe Handling** (*spend 1*). Before handling a Precursor artifact, name one hazard printed in its entry. Suppress that hazard for you and willing assistants until the scene ends. This does not suppress costs, Corruption, or any other effect and cannot affect an unidentified hazard.
- **Medical Technician, Stabilize** (*spend and roll 1+*). Clear HP marks from a downed or wounded ally equal to the rolled total. Field medicine, not magic.

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

Your class trains with the gear below; even at **Common (Tier 1)**, not every class is trained for every basic item (a Diplomat is not trained on rifles, and never becomes so). Using gear outside your access is at a penalty (Chapter 13), and Precursor (Tier 4) is story-gated.

Access Tier	Level	Gear Categories
Common (Tier 1)	1	Light/Medium Armor, Pistols, All Augmentations, All Equipment
Military (Tier 2)	2	All Armor, Pistols/Rifles, All Augmentations, All Modifications, All Equipment
Experimental (Tier 3)	5	All Armor, Pistols/Rifles, All Augmentations, All Modifications, All Equipment, now at Experimental grade



EXPLORER

Cartographer-Adept Varra Lakhamen, Explorers' Guild

DESCRIPTION

Explorers map. The Awakened Explorer feels the system she is mapping; the Sleeping Explorer measures it. Both produce useful charts. The Sleeping version produces charts you can hand to a stranger and have them follow.

CORE STATS

- **Domains:** Synthesis & Lux
- **Spellcast Trait:** Instinct
- **Starting Evasion:** 11
- **Starting Hit Points:** 6
- **Class Items:** Survey Instruments / Personal Logbook (every entry by hand)

EFFORT FEATURE: METHODICAL RECONNAISSANCE (2 EFFORT)

You spend 2 Effort to choose one:

- **The Margin Note.** Declare one plausible physical feature your logbook recorded: a culvert, ledge, or forgotten hatch. It grants Light Cover or permits one ordinary one-band movement that the current terrain blocked, chosen when declared. It cannot open a sealed area, resolve a Clock, negate a revealed danger, or contradict an established fact; no extra complication is added.
- **The Trail.** Examine ground or wreckage. The Keeper tells you who came through, in what numbers, in what direction, and approximately when. Sleeping Explorers track by sign, not by sense.
- **The Charted Route.** Declare a plausible logged route through the current difficult environment. The crew gains Advantage on its next two movement or navigation Rolls made to follow that route in this scene. It cannot create an exit in a sealed area, resolve a Clock, negate a revealed danger, or contradict an established fact; no unprinted complication is added.

CLASS FEATURE: THE LOGBOOK

You maintain a personal Logbook of every place your character has been. Entries are handwritten, dated, and detailed. Once per session, when arriving in a location your character has previously logged, you may consult the Logbook for one specific recalled detail, a name, a hidden passage, a former contact's address. The detail is correct as of the time of the log entry.

BACKGROUND QUESTION

What is in your logbook that you have not shared with the crew, and why?

SUBCLASSES

Cartographer (Instinct), the patient mapmaker.

- **Foundation, Dead Reckoning (Passive).** You can determine your position on any planet, station, or vessel without instrumentation, with at most a 5% error.
- **Specialization, The Marked Route (Action).** Spend 1 Effort. You leave a permanent, subtle trail along your route. Anyone in your party (or anyone you teach the marks to) can follow this trail without rolling.
- **Mastery, The Chart (Action).** Once per story arc, you complete a definitive chart of a region, system, or sector. The chart functions as a faction asset, sold, gifted, or referenced, and earns you standing with the Explorers' Guild and any party that uses it.

Wilderness (Strength), the survivor.

- **Foundation, Self-Reliant (Passive).** You and one ally ignore mechanical penalties caused solely by ordinary hunger, thirst, or lack of sleep in an environment that supports Class-IV humanoid life. These words are environmental causes, not additional Conditions, and this feature does not prevent printed starvation, dehydration, or exposure damage.
- **Specialization, The Old Craft (Action).** Spend 1 Effort, choose one. **We Camp Here:** declare a defensible camp in hostile terrain; during a rest here the environment cannot reach you, one watch suffices, and the party clears 2 additional Stress. **The Weather Turns:** read sky, current, or pressure; declare what the environment will do in the coming hours, and it does. **Live Off This:** in any living environment, produce the food, water, or remedy the scene needs.
- **Mastery, The Old Way (Passive).** You and any allies under your guidance can travel through hostile environments at full pace and without injury. The Keeper still adjudicates encounters, but the environment itself does not harm you.

The Stalker (Finesse), the hunter. The Sleeping Stalker's hunt is patience, not communion.

- **Foundation, Mark Quarry (Action).** Mark a target. For the next 24 hours, you have advantage on Instinct rolls to track them and your first successful attack each round against them deals an extra 1d6 damage.
- **Specialization, Unrelenting Pursuit (Action).** Spend 1 Effort. While pursuing your marked quarry, you cross one significant environmental obstacle without losing time or momentum.
- **Mastery, The Trap is Sprung (Action).** Once per session, spend 3 Effort to declare you set a trap for your marked quarry in the current location. The trap's nature is yours to describe; the quarry, on entering, is Restrained or Cornered for the scene.

RESOLVE MOVES

Class Moves

- **Find a Way** (*spend 1*). There is always a route. Discover a viable path through terrain, a blockade, or a sealed approach.
- **Read the Ground** (*spend 1*). Learn the chief hazard and one resource or landmark of unfamiliar terrain before crossing.

Subclass Moves

- **Cartographer, Perfect Recall of Place** (*spend and roll 1+*). In any place you have mapped, add the rolled total to a relevant roll, and you never lose your way.
- **Wilderness, Endure** (*spend 1*). You and the crew ignore one environmental hazard (heat, toxin, an exposure window) for a meaningful stretch.
- **The Stalker, Run It Down** (*spend and roll 1+*). When tracking or pursuing, add the rolled total; on a hit, close to your quarry. Your quarry now knows it is hunted.

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

Your class trains with the gear below; even at **Common (Tier 1)**, not every class is trained for every basic item (a Diplomat is not trained on rifles, and never becomes so). Using gear outside your access is at a penalty (Chapter 13), and Precursor (Tier 4) is story-gated.

Access Tier	Level	Gear Categories
Common (Tier 1)	1	Light Armor, Pistols, Exploration & Survival Equipment, Physical Augments
Military (Tier 2)	2	Light Armor, Pistols/Rifles, Exploration & Survival Equipment, Physical Augments
Experimental (Tier 3)	5	Light Armor, Pistols/Rifles, Exploration & Survival Equipment, Physical Augments, now at Experimental grade



MYSTIC

"The Veil does not speak to me. It has never spoken to me. I have spent thirty years studying what it is anyway. I know more about it than most who hear it sing. Hearing is not understanding. Sometimes hearing is the obstacle to understanding."

Doctor Emeline Skarrh, Spire of Verita, on her sixth published volume

DESCRIPTION

The Sleeping Mystic is a ritualist, occult scholar, and dangerous experimentalist who cannot naturally perceive the Veil. They work from testimony, instruments, correspondences, recovered procedures, and notes written by people who did not survive their discoveries. An Awakened Mystic reaches into a narrow part of the substrate by instinct. A Sleeping Mystic learns how to make the substrate answer through preparation, exact language, and unacceptable risk.

A Sleeping Mystic is not a lesser Awakened Mystic. Their reliable work is slower and communal, their direct manifestations are costly, and every forced opening may attract attention. In exchange, their Archive can eventually contain patterns from every Domain.

CORE STATS

- **Starting Archive:** Choose two different Domains. You unlock every Level 1 Power in both Domains.
- **Spellcast Trait:** Knowledge
- **Starting Evasion:** 10
- **Starting Hit Points:** 6
- **Class Items:** Veil-Crystal Recorder (*takes readings the user cannot directly perceive*) / Bound Notebook of Annotations

EFFORT FEATURE: THE READING (2 EFFORT)

Spend 2 Effort and study a person, place, object, active Power, or Veil phenomenon with your instruments and notes. Ask one question about its Veil exposure, Domain signature, history, instability, likely behavior, or the procedure required to interact with it. The Keeper answers with one fact, uncertainty, lead, or limitation supported by the evidence. You did not perceive this truth. You reconstructed it.

CLASS FEATURE: UNCANNY ARCHIVE

Your Archive records complete procedural patterns rather than prepared Powers. It has no Loadout and no Vault. Every Power in an unlocked Domain Path is available through **Uncanny Power**, subject to its access roll.

Starting Archive. At character creation, choose two different Domains and unlock Level 1 in both. Unlocking a Domain at a specific level gives you every Power from that Domain at exactly that level.

Domain Study Project. To unlock a new Domain Path, begin a Study Project with a clock equal to:

4 + the selected Domain level

The selected level cannot exceed your character level. During a Long Rest, you may choose **Study the Archive** as one of your two Long Rest moves to mark 1 segment on one active Domain Study Project. A project may also receive one source-assisted attempt per session: spend a scene studying one newly acquired relevant text, willing teacher, artifact, or direct exposure, then make a Knowledge Roll, DC 15. A Critical Success marks 2 segments; any other success marks 1; Failure with Hope marks none; Failure with Fear marks none and the Mystic marks 1 Stress. A given source contributes to a given project only once. Downtime creates no additional progress beyond these stated procedures.

Breadth requirement. To begin research at Level 2 or higher, you must already have at least two different Domains unlocked at the immediately preceding level. The new research does not need to continue either of those Domains.

For example, Lux 1 and Neural 1 allow you to research Void 2 and Synthesis 2. Once both are complete, those two Level 2 Paths allow research into any Level 3 Domain, even a Domain you have never studied before.

Completing the clock unlocks every Power in the selected Domain at that level. Your Archive is intentionally irregular. You might know Lux 1, Neural 1, Void 2, Synthesis 2, Kinetic 3, and Social 3 without knowing the missing levels between them.

BACKGROUND QUESTION

What procedure worked when every expert insisted it could not, and what noticed you when it did?

SUBCLASSES

The Sleeping Mystic is an exception to the usual subclass Resolve Move structure. Its subclasses do not add a separate Resolve Move. Instead, each subclass develops one of the class's three engines: ritual, raw manifestation, or research.

Veil Walker (School of the Lattice) (Knowledge), the architect of shared conditions. You do not step through the Veil. You build a stable procedural lattice around the people who trust you.

- **Foundation, Layered Working (Passive).** When you perform a Calibrated Minor Ritual, choose two different ritual effects instead of one. Every affected creature receives both effects. You cannot select the same effect twice.
- **Specialization, Enduring Formula (Passive).** Double the rolled duration of every Calibrated Minor Ritual you perform. You also gain the Protective Geometry ritual effect: choose either +1 Evasion or +1 to all damage thresholds. The same benefit applies to every affected creature.
- **Mastery, Shared Lattice (Passive).** Improve every ritual effect you provide: Group Calibration grants +2 instead of +1; Group

Adaptation protects against two specific environmental hazards instead of one; Sustained Restoration clears 2 HP at the end of each complete hour; Protective Geometry grants +2 Evasion or +2 to all damage thresholds. All affected creatures may also communicate telepathically with one another for the ritual's duration. Emergency Stabilization still consumes all remaining duration and ends every effect, including telepathy.

Mind-Touched (School of Apprehension) (Knowledge), the impossible conduit. Repeated exposure has changed the architecture of your mind. You still cannot hear the Veil, but you can contain complete power-patterns that should not fit inside a Sleeping consciousness.

- **Foundation, Perfect Invocation (Special).** Once per Short Rest, manifest one Power from a Domain Path you have unlocked, at a level no higher than your character level. Spend no Resolve, make no access roll, and make no Spellcast Roll. The Keeper gains 1 Fear, subject to the hard maximum of 12. Ignore the Power's Hope cost, but pay any Stress, HP, material, frequency, or other printed cost. Use the Power's normal activation timing; Passive Powers cannot be invoked this way.
- **Specialization, Reach Beyond (Action).** Once per session, attempt one unknown Power exactly one level higher than your character level from any Domain in which you have at least one unlocked Domain Path. Spend no Resolve and make no access roll. The Keeper gains 1 Fear, subject to the hard maximum of 12. Make a Knowledge Spellcast Roll against a DC set by the Power's Tier (Tier 1 DC 15, Tier 2 DC 20, Tier 3 DC 25). On success, resolve the Power and pay every non-Hope printed cost. On failure, it does not manifest. This does not add the Power to your Archive, and it cannot reproduce a Reaction or Passive Power.
- **Mastery, Impossible Efficiency (Special).** Once per session, when you use Uncanny Power, each Resolve spent contributes two Resolve Dice to the access Roll instead of one. Add Knowledge once; the Keeper gains 1 Fear for each Resolve actually spent, subject to the hard maximum of 12. All other Uncanny Power rules apply.

Precursor Touched (School of Ruins) (Knowledge), the patient reconstructionist. Other Mystics interpret revelations. You build a repeatable method from fragments, damaged machines, and the errors of the dead.

- **Foundation, Persistent Inquiry (Passive).** During every Long Rest, mark 1 segment on one active Domain Study Project without choosing Study the Archive as one of your Long Rest moves. You may still choose two other Long Rest moves normally.
- **Specialization, Pattern Recognition (Passive).** When you begin a Domain Study Project, reduce its clock by your Spellcast Trait modifier, to a minimum of 2 segments. Increasing the Trait later does not retroactively shorten an existing project.
- **Mastery, Parallel Reconstruction (Passive).** You may maintain two Domain Study Projects at the same time. Whenever you mark progress through Study the Archive, Persistent Inquiry, downtime, or a story reward, mark the same amount on both projects. While using Parallel Reconstruction, neither project benefits from Pattern Recognition; both use their normal clocks. You may instead maintain one reduced project normally.

RESOLVE MOVES

Class Moves

- **Calibrated Minor Ritual** (spend and roll 1). Spend 10 uninterrupted minutes performing a documented group procedure. Roll the spent Resolve Die. Choose one Minor Ritual effect and a number of willing creatures up to your level + your Spellcast Trait modifier, minimum one. Every target must remain present throughout the procedure and receives the same chosen effect.

The ritual lasts a number of hours equal to the Resolve Die result. It does not generate Fear and requires no Spellcast Roll. A creature can benefit from only one of your Calibrated Minor Rituals at a time; a new one replaces the old one.

- **Group Calibration.** Choose Agility, Strength, Finesse, Knowledge, Instinct, or Presence. Every affected creature gains +1 to Rolls using that Trait. This does not modify damage, healing, Effort, Resolve, derived statistics, or the ritual's target limit.
- **Group Adaptation.** Choose one specific environmental hazard examined or anticipated during the ritual, such as the radiation in this reactor, the pressure of this submerged facility, or the toxic spores of this organism. Every affected creature has Advantage on Rolls to resist, endure, or recover from that hazard. This does not grant immunity or prevent consequences that allow no resistance roll.
- **Sustained Restoration.** At the end of every complete hour, every affected creature clears 1 marked HP. This cannot restore the dead, remove Scars, repair Armor Slots, or heal a creature while they are Dying. At any time while an affected creature is Dying, you may consume all remaining ritual duration and end the ritual for everyone to stabilize that creature. Stabilization clears all Dying and Final Progress but restores no HP.
- **Uncanny Power** (spend and roll 1+). Choose how many Resolve to spend, then roll one Resolve Die for each Resolve spent and add your Spellcast Trait once. The Keeper immediately gains 1 Fear for each Resolve spent, subject to the hard maximum of 12. The result is the maximum Domain level you can access, capped by your character level. After seeing the result, choose any Power from an unlocked Domain-level package whose level does not exceed that result.

Invoking the Power takes a full Action and permits nothing else that turn. It cannot reproduce a Reaction or Passive Power. Ignore the Power's printed Hope cost and printed Spellcast Trait or DC, but pay any Stress, HP, material, frequency, or other printed cost. Make a Knowledge Spellcast Roll against **DC = 10 + the chosen Power's Level**, meaning the level of its unlocked Domain package. On success, resolve the Power normally. On failure, it does not manifest; the action and Resolve remain spent, and the Keeper retains all generated Fear.

Critical return. On a Critical Success, the Power manifests and you immediately regain every Resolve spent on this use of Uncanny Power, up to your Resolve maximum. The Keeper retains the Fear already generated, and all non-Resolve costs remain paid.

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

Your class trains with the gear below; even at **Common (Tier 1)**, not every class is trained for every basic item (a Diplomat is not trained on rifles, and never becomes so). Using gear outside your access is at a penalty (Chapter 13), and Precursor (Tier 4) is story-gated.

Access Tier	Level	Gear Categories
Common (Tier 1)	1	Light Armor, Melee/Pistols, Neural/Physical Augments
Military (Tier 2)	2	Light Armor, Melee/Pistols, Neural/Physical Augments
Experimental (Tier 3)	5	Light Armor, Melee/Pistols, Neural/Physical Augments, now at Experimental grade



PILOT

Captain Vren Skykaja, twenty-year veteran of the Free Fleet

DESCRIPTION

The Sleeping Pilot is the version of the trade who does not lean on the Veil to read the lane. They lean on stick time. They lean on a panel they built or rebuilt themselves. They lean on the muscle memory of a thousand approach angles. They will out-fly an Awakened Pilot in clean conditions; they will lose, sometimes, in a Veil storm where the Awakened can *feel* the substrate's currents, but they will lose having read every gauge and called every adjustment, and they will come home anyway, because they trained for that storm too.

CORE STATS

- **Domains:** Void & Tech
- **Spellcast Trait:** Instinct
- **Starting Evasion:** 11
- **Starting Hit Points:** 6
- **Class Items:** Personal Flight Chart Set / Worn Headset (the same one for fifteen years)

EFFORT FEATURE: STICK TIME (2 EFFORT)

You can spend 2 Effort to choose one effect:

- **Hands on the Stick.** You have flown this lane, this approach, this maneuver before, and the ship is an extension of you. Choose one as you act: ignore one environmental penalty on your next piloting maneuver (a storm, a debris field, a failing instrument), or turn a Failure with Fear on a Finesse (Pilot/Navigate) Roll into an ordinary Failure, riding out the slip instead of crashing on it. Nobody flies this hull the way you do.
- **The Read.** Spend 1 minute studying a vessel, friendly or hostile, at standard Engagement range. The Keeper tells you its likely behavior over the next round, including any move it is about to make.
- **The Veteran's Burst.** During starship combat, declare that you and the ship execute a maneuver from your cumulative experience together. Gain **+2** on your next Pilot **Instinct** Roll this scene; after resolving it, clear **1 Heat**. This flat bonus does not create or stack with Advantage.

CLASS FEATURE: THE SHIP KNOWS YOU

After you have flown the same vessel through one full mission arc, name **three** practiced maneuvers with the Keeper, such as threading debris, docking under pressure, holding a pursuit line, running silent, or emergency landing. When you make a **Finesse (Pilot/Navigate) Roll** for one of those maneuvers aboard that vessel, gain **+2**. During downtime after a mission, replace one named maneuver or add one until you know a maximum of **five**. This Feature never applies to weapon attacks, repairs, Presence Rolls made for social interaction, or Powers.

BACKGROUND QUESTION

What did the ship do, on the day you bonded with it, that nobody else has ever seen?

SUBCLASSES

Void Runner (Instinct), the smuggler with the cleaner record than the smugglers.

- **Foundation, The Quiet Lane (Passive).** In each reasonably familiar region, record one route that standard patrols do not watch. It remains unpatrolled until the crew uses it during a Failure with Fear or an established faction completes a surveillance clock covering that route; then cross it out and record a replacement only after a Long Rest spent surveying the region.
- **Specialization, The Cold Run (Action).** Spend 1 Effort. Your ship is, for the next hour, untraceable to standard scanning. (Specialized scanning still finds you; assume sensor parity with hostile capability.)
- **Mastery, The Untouched Record (Passive).** Your name does not appear in any standard Imperial or House record as a known smuggler. (The PEOPLE who know what you do, know. The systems do not.)

Combat Ace (Instinct), the dogfighter.

- **Foundation, Wingman (Passive).** When flying with at least one ally vessel, both vessels gain **+1** to maneuver rolls.
- **Specialization, The Tight Turn (Reaction).** Spend 1 Effort when a hostile vessel places a pending Sensor Lock on your ship. The Lock ends immediately and the hostile vessel marks **1 Heat**.
- **Mastery, The Ace's Mark (Passive).** You may claim, by named record, every kill you have made. The Sleeping Ace does not kill anonymously, the bodies are accounted for. You gain a fearsome reputation. NPC Pilots react to you accordingly; some flee, some seek you out.

System Jockey (Knowledge), the engineer-pilot. The Sleeping System Jockey knows the ship's wiring better than the engineer who installed it.

- **Foundation, The Quick Repair (Action).** Spend 1 Effort during starship combat. A damaged ship system goes from failed to limited functionality for the rest of the encounter.
- **Specialization, The Modified Loadout (Passive).** Your ship has one custom modification, declared at character creation, that no other ship has. The Keeper helps you decide what it is, and it is mechanically modest but narratively significant.
- **Mastery, The Total Refit (Action).** Once per story arc, after extensive downtime, you and your ship undergo a refit that grants permanent advancement: a new system, a doubled capacity, a hidden compartment. The refit is recorded as part of your ship's character.

RESOLVE MOVES

Class Moves

- **Never Tell Me the Odds** (*spend 1*). When a maneuver is called impossible or the odds are quoted, do it anyway: declare a quirk of this hull that makes it possible (a blind spot, a rattle before the stall, a tolerance the specs missed). The quirk is true and permanent. Roll with Advantage; on a Fear-dominant noncritical Roll, the ship pays, not the crew.
- **Hold Together** (*spend and roll 1+*). Reduce the damage your ship takes this round by the rolled total, or keep a failing system online.

Subclass Moves

- **Void Runner, Lose the Tail** (*spend 1*). When traffic, debris, terrain, or a previously established escape route is present, end one pending Sensor Lock on your ship or mark 1 segment on a visible escape clock. It cannot erase detection or end pursuit in open space without a viable route.
- **Combat Ace, Gun Run** (*spend and roll 1+*). Add the rolled total to a ship-weapon attack; on a hit, it lands one threshold band higher.
- **System Jockey, Reroute Power** (*spend 1*). This round, push one ship system (engines, weapons, or shields) past its rated limit.

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

Your class trains with the gear below; even at **Common (Tier 1)**, not every class is trained for every basic item (a Diplomat is not trained on rifles, and never becomes so). Using gear outside your access is at a penalty (Chapter 13), and Precursor (Tier 4) is story-gated.

Access Tier	Level	Gear Categories
Common (Tier 1)	1	Light/Medium Armor, Pistols/Rifles, All Augmentations
Military (Tier 2)	2	Light/Medium Armor, Pistols/Rifles/Heavy Weapons, All Augmentations
Experimental (Tier 3)	5	Light/Medium Armor, Pistols/Rifles/Heavy Weapons, All Augmentations, now at Experimental grade



SCHOLAR

Archivist-Master Dorin Solari, on the occasion of his tenth Veritas Prize

DESCRIPTION

Sleeping Scholars are the Empire's institutional memory. Where Awakened Scholars sometimes have the eerie capacity to *feel* a fact's significance, a kind of substrate-aided intuition, the Sleeping kind work entirely from documents, citations, and patient cross-reference. They know more than the Awakened, on average, because they have read more. They cannot leap to conclusions; the leap is, for them, a methodological error.

CORE STATS

- **Domains:** Tech & Social
- **Spellcast Trait:** Knowledge
- **Starting Evasion:** 10
- **Starting Hit Points:** 5
- **Class Items:** Citation Index (*your personal reference*) / Reading Glasses (*scratched, repaired, beloved*)

EFFORT FEATURE: APPLIED SCIENCE (2 EFFORT)

You spend 2 Effort to choose one effect:

- **The Countdown.** When you study an ongoing poison, overload, collapse, pursuit, or similar process, the Keeper tells you how much time remains and one action that can slow it. If the process has no Clock, create a **four-segment Clock**; the Keeper states the consequence when it fills. This Feature reveals the process but does not remove segments itself.
- **The Improvised Reaction.** From materials in the scene, produce one immediate chemical effect: smoke, corrosion, adhesive, flash. One use, scene-length, never a weapon of war.
- **The Lost Source.** Declare one source relevant to the current investigation. It provides one partial answer, one named lead, or one complication that reframes known evidence. It cannot solve an active Clock, create equipment, or reveal an antagonist's complete plan.

CLASS FEATURE: THE OPEN QUESTION

Record one Question. During a Long Rest, you may work on it and make one Knowledge Roll using the normal Corebook difficulty procedure. After **three successful Knowledge Rolls** made during different Long Rests, the Question is answered. A Critical Success counts as one successful Roll for this Feature. When you record it, choose one reward: a named Contact, a verified lead, a Tier-appropriate schematic, or permission to attempt one project-related action without further research. It cannot grant a Domain, Power, Class Feature, permanent numeric bonus, or automatic success.

BACKGROUND QUESTION

What is your Question, and what do you fear you will find when you finally answer it?

SUBCLASSES

Xenobiologist (Knowledge), the documentarian of life.

- **Foundation, The Catalog of Life (Passive).** You have working classification competence with any biological organism you study for at least one minute. The Keeper provides phylum, hazard class, and one notable behavioral trait.
- **Specialization, The Synthesis (Action).** Spend 1 Effort with a sample or a minute of study of an organism: neutralize its toxin or spores for the crew this scene, or produce a lure that draws it where you choose, once.
- **Mastery, The New Species (Passive).** Once per story arc, you formally describe a new species. The description is published; future scenes acknowledge your authority on it; the Guild credits you. (This is the academic equivalent of slaying a dragon.)

Precursor Archaeologist (Knowledge), the dig-site discipline.

- **Foundation, The Stratigraphic Eye (Passive).** You can date Precursor structures by visual inspection alone, with at most a 200-year error.
- **Specialization, As Built (Action).** Spend 1 Effort studying a Precursor structure. The Keeper describes what it was built to do and how it worked; if it has a deactivation mechanism, you now know where it is. Reaching it is your problem.
- **Mastery, The Site Report (Action).** Once per story arc, you complete a definitive site report. The site is, from this point forward, understood; it does not stop being dangerous, but its history is no longer mysterious. Future scenes there resolve faster.

Information Theorist (Knowledge), the auditor of knowing.

- **Foundation, The Source Critique (Passive).** When presented with any document, recording, or testimony, you may, after one minute of inspection, ask the Keeper one question about its provenance: who made it, when, under what conditions, and with what likely biases.
- **Specialization, The Model (Action).** Spend 1 Effort modeling a system: a market, a patrol, a network, a crowd. Declare its behavior for the next hour absent intervention, and the Keeper adopts it; or inject one false datum the system treats as legitimate until audited.
- **Mastery, The Settled Question (Action).** Once per story arc, declare a contested historical question settled by your work. The settlement reverberates in the academic community; future scenes acknowledge the consensus you produced.

RESOLVE MOVES

Class Moves

- **Analyze Weakness** (*spend 1*). Study a foe or object and reveal a vulnerability that grants the crew Advantage against it for the scene.
- **I Have Read About This** (*spend and roll 1+*). Add the rolled total to any Knowledge roll, and declare one true, useful fact into the scene.

Subclass Moves

- **Xenobiologist, Know the Beast** (*spend 1*). Learn a creature's behavior, diet, threat pattern, and one weakness.
- **Precursor Archaeologist, Dig-Site Discipline** (*spend and roll 1+*). Add the rolled total to a roll to safely excavate, date, or disarm a Vault feature. Your markers remain; the next team through follows them safely.
- **Information Theorist, Signal in the Noise** (*spend 1*). Extract the true message from corrupted data, propaganda, or a flood of intel.

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

Your class trains with the gear below; even at **Common (Tier 1)**, not every class is trained for every basic item (a Diplomat is not trained on rifles, and never becomes so). Using gear outside your access is at a penalty (Chapter 13), and Precursor (Tier 4) is story-gated.

Access Tier	Level	Gear Categories
Common (Tier 1)	1	Light Armor, Pistols, Neural/Physical Augments, All Equipment
Military (Tier 2)	2	Light Armor, Pistols, Neural/Physical Augments, All Equipment
Experimental (Tier 3)	5	Light Armor, Pistols, Neural/Physical Augments, All Equipment, now at Experimental grade



SCOUNDREL

Vex Tarrowmark, listed cause of death: unconfirmed

DESCRIPTION

The Sleeping Scoundrel is the version of the trade who works on locks and ledgers and lies, not on the lucky cosmic shrug. They have not been blessed; they have been trained, often in places that no longer exist, by people who taught them to count exits. They are, on average, more careful than their Awakened counterparts. They tend to live longer.

CORE STATS

- **Domains:** Social & Void
- **Spellcast Trait:** Finesse
- **Starting Evasion:** 12
- **Starting Hit Points:** 6
- **Class Items:** Lockpick Set / Several Identities (each with paperwork)

EFFORT FEATURE: HANDS THAT KNOW (2 EFFORT)

You spend 2 Effort to choose one effect:

- **Cased the Joint.** Declare that you, or a previous version of yourself, has worked a job like *this* before. Name the target of a theft, a lock, or a mark; the Keeper tells you one concrete weakness, the guard's rhythm, the make of the lock, where the camera does not reach. You do not steal it for free, but you go in prepared: you have **Advantage** on the roll to pull the job, and the take is cleaner for knowing the way in.
- **The False Face.** Adopt one of your established alternate identities. NPCs who do not specifically know you under your true name accept the alternate identity for the duration of the scene.
- **The Backup Plan (once per scene).** After a plan fails or an obstacle is revealed, declare one prepared contingency: a common tool, a plausible exit or hiding place, a single useful fact, or one willing minor ally. The contingency gives **+2** to the crew's next relevant Roll or permits one otherwise plausible approach. It cannot end a combat, erase a filled Clock, undo damage, produce Tiered gear, reveal a villain's full plan, or force an NPC's choice.

CLASS FEATURE: THE QUIET NETWORK

Sneak Attack. When an Attack Roll with Advantage hits, add **1d6 damage** once to that attack. Add **2d6** at Tier 2 and **3d6** at Tier 3 instead. Any source of Advantage can arm Sneak Attack, but additional sources of Advantage do not increase its damage.

The Quiet Network (once per session). In a city, station, or region, declare one local contact. Choose one service: arrange a meeting, provide a safe place for one scene, identify a local opportunity or threat, or provide access to a routine local service. The contact may ask for payment or a future favor. They cannot provide Tiered gear, erase Heat, bypass major security, or solve an active Clock.

BACKGROUND QUESTION

What is the name on your real birth certificate, and who is still looking for you under that name?

SUBCLASSES

Assassin (Finesse), the closer.

- **Foundation, The Quiet Approach (Passive).** You can move silently in any environment that has reasonable cover. NPCs at standard alert do not notice your approach.
- **Specialization, The Killing Stroke (Action).** Spend 1 Effort. Your first attack of an encounter, against a target unaware of your presence, deals an additional 2d6 damage and ignores the first point of armor.
- **Mastery, The Standing Contract (Passive).** You hold a permanent contract that no living organization currently knows you hold. Its target is a specific named individual. The contract pays out, in full, on the day they die, by your hand or by another's, the contract does not specify. You may decide, at any point, to reveal your role.

Ghost (Finesse), the cipher.

- **Foundation, Off the Record (Passive).** You do not appear on any standard surveillance system. Specialized surveillance with proper procedure can find you; default systems cannot.
- **Specialization, The Vanishing (Reaction).** Spend 1 Effort. When you would be detected, captured, or photographed, you instead are not. The Keeper resolves how, narratively. Once per scene.
- **Mastery, The Erased Record (Action).** Once per story arc, declare that an existing piece of evidence about your activities, a security recording, a witness statement, a written note, has been erased. The Keeper helps you decide how it was done; it is now gone.

Contrabandist (Finesse), the courier of forbidden things.

- **Foundation, The Hidden Compartment (Passive).** Your kit, your ship, your room, wherever you live, has at least one compartment standard searches will miss.
- **Specialization, The Established Route (Action).** Spend 1 Effort. You move a piece of contraband through a checkpoint or border without being challenged. The route, once used, is logged by the relevant authority but may be reused with diminishing safety.
- **Mastery, The Old Captain's Favor (Action).** Once per story arc, call in a major favor from a senior Free Fleet, smuggler-cartel, or House-blacklist contact. The favor is significant, a ship, a passage, a name removed from a list, and is, after this use, repaid forever.

RESOLVE MOVES

Class Moves

- **Vanish** (*spend 1*). Break line of sight and leave a tense scene with no roll, to reappear where it will hurt them most.
- **The Long Con** (*spend 2*). Plant a false belief or forged credential that holds up under one round of scrutiny.

Subclass Moves

- **Assassin, Killing Window** (*spend and roll 1+*). Against an unaware or marked target, add the rolled total to the strike, and it lands one threshold band higher.
- **Ghost, Never Was Here** (*spend 1*). Erase your presence from a scene after the fact: records, witnesses' certainty, sensor traces.
- **Contrabandist, False Bottom** (*spend 1*). Produce a small forbidden item you "had stashed," or hide one from a search.

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

Your class trains with the gear below; even at **Common (Tier 1)**, not every class is trained for every basic item (a Diplomat is not trained on rifles, and never becomes so). Using gear outside your access is at a penalty (Chapter 13), and Precursor (Tier 4) is story-gated.

Access Tier	Level	Gear Categories
Common (Tier 1)	1	Light Armor, Melee/Pistols, Physical/Stealth Augments
Military (Tier 2)	2	Light Armor, Melee/Pistols/Rifles, Physical/Stealth Augments, Weapon Modifications
Experimental (Tier 3)	5	Light Armor, Melee/Pistols/Rifles, Physical/Stealth Augments, Weapon Modifications, now at Experimental grade



SOLDIER

DESCRIPTION

The Sleeping Soldier is, frankly, the version of the trade most veterans actually are. They don't believe the substrate has chosen them. They've been trained. They've drilled. They've lost people. They will lose more. The discipline is not glamorous; the discipline is what they have.

CORE STATS

- **Domains:** Kinetic & Synthesis
- **Spellcast Trait:** Strength
- **Starting Evasion:** 9
- **Starting Hit Points:** 7
- **Class Items:** Dented Riot Shield / Fallen Comrade's Dog-tag

EFFORT FEATURE: THE HELD LINE (1 EFFORT)

Spend 1 Effort after you successfully hit with an attack to deal an additional **1d6 damage**.

This is the smallest Effort cost among the Sleeping Class Features. The Soldier's discipline is meant to be used often rather than saved for a single decisive window: small, constant, and reliable.

CLASS FEATURE: THE DRILL

Sleeping Soldiers turn repeated tactical procedures into reflex.

You automatically know all four **Common Drills**. Your subclass adds one Drill to your known repertoire at each subclass tier:

- **Foundation:** unlock its Foundation Drill.
- **Specialization:** unlock its Specialization Drill.
- **Mastery:** unlock its Mastery Drill.

At the beginning of each session, prepare **four Drills** from those you know.

Using Drills. An **Action** or **Reaction** Drill can be used once per scene while prepared. A **Passive** Drill is always active while prepared and does not track uses. Drills cost no resource unless their text says otherwise. Drills refresh when the scene ends. Unlocking more Drills does not increase the four prepared slots.

The subclass Drills are additional to the Soldier's existing subclass features.

COMMON DRILLS

Covering Fire - Action. Choose one ally within Close range and one visible enemy within Far range. The ally immediately moves one range band toward cover. Until the movement ends, the Keeper may still spend Fear to take the Spotlight and attack that ally, but the Attack Roll has Disadvantage. This Drill deals no damage.

Breach and Clear - Action. Open an ordinary door, hatch, window, or light barrier within Very Close range, then move through it. One willing ally within Very Close range may follow. You both gain Advantage on your next attack or Instinct Roll before your next

Spotlight. A reinforced or secured barrier requires a Strength or Finesse Roll.

Controlled Withdrawal - Action. Choose one willing ally within Close range. You and that ally immediately move one range band away from the current threat. The ally does not use their Spotlight for this movement.

Weapon Transition - Passive. Switching to another equipped weapon does not use your Action. If your current action has not resolved, you may complete it with the new weapon.

BACKGROUND QUESTION

Whose name is on the dog-tag, and how did they die?

SUBCLASSES

Guardian (Strength), the wall between.

- **Foundation, Bodyguard (Reaction).** When an ally within Close range would take damage, you may step into the path. Take half the damage yourself; the ally takes none.
- **Specialization, Hold Position (Action).** Spend 1 Effort. Designate a position: a doorway, a corridor, or a wounded ally. Until you choose otherwise or you fall, no enemy may pass that position without succeeding on a Strength contest against you.
- **Mastery, The Wall (Passive).** Allies who fight within Close range of you have Advantage on resistance rolls and clear 1 Stress per scene. Your presence steadies people; this is observable training, not a cosmic effect.

Guardian Drills

- **Foundation, Planted Stance (Reaction).** When an effect would make you Prone or move you against your will, ignore that effect.
- **Specialization, Casualty Extraction (Action).** Choose one willing, Incapacitated, or Dying ally within Close range. Move to them, then move one range band with them. Until the movement ends, if the Keeper spends Fear to take the Spotlight and attack either of you, that attack has Disadvantage. This Drill does not heal, stabilize, or clear conditions.
- **Mastery, Anchor the Line (Reaction).** When an effect would make you or allies within Close range become Prone or move against their will, you and all affected allies within Close range ignore both effects.

Military Officer (Presence), the chain of command.

- **Foundation, Rally (Action).** Once per scene, allies within Close range each clear 1 Stress. You give an order; they remember why they are here.
- **Specialization, Coordinated Strike (Action).** Spend 1 Effort. You and one ally each take an action outside the ally's Spotlight. Both actions gain Advantage if they target the same enemy.
- **Mastery, One Way Out (Action).** Once per story arc, your voice organizes a group of non-combatant NPCs into coordinated

action: an evacuation, a mutiny, or a work stoppage. They move as one while your voice holds.

Military Officer Drills

- Foundation, Tactical Reposition (Action). Choose up to two willing allies within Close range who can see or hear you. Each immediately moves one range band. This movement does not use their Spotlight.
- Specialization, Suppression Order (Action). Choose one visible enemy within Far range. Its next attack before your next Spotlight has Disadvantage.
- Mastery, Establish Fire Lane (Action). Designate a doorway, corridor, bridge, or clear line within Far range. Until your next Spotlight, each enemy crossing it becomes Vulnerable until the end of its next Spotlight.

Peacekeeper (Strength), the de-escalator.

- Foundation, Show of Force (Action). Display, without using, your weapon and authority. Hostile NPCs not specifically committed to violence retreat or stand down.
- Specialization, The Disarmament (Action). Spend 1 Effort during a tense scene. One armed NPC is convinced, through your demeanor, reputation, position, or all three, to lower their weapon for the duration of the scene. The standdown is real; betraying it has reputational cost.
- Mastery, The Cease-Fire (Action). Once per story arc, between two willing parties, you broker a cease-fire that the involved factions honor. The cease-fire's terms are negotiable; its existence is binding while you live.

Peacekeeper Drills

- Foundation, Safe Restraint (Passive). After succeeding on a Melee attack, you may deal no damage and apply Restrained instead, provided the target can be physically restrained.
- Specialization, Controlled Disarm (Passive). After succeeding on a Melee attack against a target holding a weapon, you may deal no damage and force it to drop one held weapon within Very Close range. Integrated or body-mounted weapons cannot be affected.
- Mastery, Evacuation Corridor (Action). Choose up to three willing non-combatants, or one Incapacitated or Dying ally, within Close range. They immediately move one range band toward an exit or cover. During this movement, selected characters have Advantage on rolls to cross, avoid, or resist hazardous terrain and environmental dangers, and any attack the Keeper makes against a selected character after spending Fear to take the Spotlight has Disadvantage. You may move with them, but you do not gain these benefits. This Drill does not remove hazards, heal, or stabilize.

RESOLVE MOVES

Class Moves

- **Take the Hit** (*spend and roll 1+*). When an ally within Close range is hit, intercept the attack. Reduce the damage by the rolled total and take any remaining damage yourself.
- **Disciplined Strike** (*spend and roll 1+*). Add the rolled total to a damage roll. The target cannot spend Armor Slots against the added portion of this damage.

Subclass Moves

- **Guardian, Bulwark** (*spend and roll 1+*). Grant one ally within Close range Armor Slots equal to the rolled total until the end of the scene. Unspent Armor Slots granted by this Move vanish when the scene ends.
- **Military Officer, Order the Line** (*spend 1*). Choose one ally who can hear you. They immediately move one range band or make

one attack outside their Spotlight. This does not consume their Reaction.

- **Peacekeeper, Stand Down** (*spend and roll 1+*). Add the rolled total to a roll made to disarm, restrain, or de-escalate without killing. Word spreads that you ended it without blood.

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

Your class trains with the gear below; even at **Common (Tier 1)**, not every class is trained for every basic item (a Diplomat is not trained on rifles, and never becomes so). Using gear outside your access is at a penalty (Chapter 13), and Precursor (Tier 4) is story-gated.

Access Tier	Level	Gear Categories
Common (Tier 1)	1	All Armor, All Weapons, Physical Augments
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VANGUARD

"The body is the strike. The mind is the line of the strike. There is no daylight between them. The Frequency does not enter into it. The Frequency entered into it, briefly, when I was nineteen, and I sent it away. I have my discipline."

Master Vanguard Tenshi-Ko, on the discipline of Refusal

DESCRIPTION

The Sleeping Vanguard is the version of the trade who has *deliberately closed* themselves to the substrate. Where the Awakened Vanguard fuses mind and body in the substrate's currents, the Sleeping Vanguard fuses them in *practice*, a discipline learned, drilled, and maintained without cosmic aid. Sleeping Vanguards are often *Refused*: characters who once heard the Frequency and chose, for personal or philosophical reasons, to stop listening. The discipline is more austere as a result. It is also more reliable.

Core rules note - Refused histories. *Refused* may be used as a background or identity for a character who begins play Sleeping. It is not a voluntary in-campaign Path transition: the Core provides no procedure for an Awakened character to choose Sleeping.

Watch one work and you will doubt the word *Sleeping*. They run up walls that should not be run up. They cross water that should not hold them. They fall five stories and land on one knee, in silence. None of it is the Veil. All of it has been rehearsed ten thousand times, and that is the point: the Awakened bend the world; the Sleeping Vanguard has rehearsed the world until they know its seams.

CORE STATS

- **Domains:** Neural & branch (*Void / Kinetic / Lux*, determined by Subclass)
- **Spellcast Trait:** Presence
- **Starting Evasion:** 11
- **Starting Hit Points:** 6
- **Class Items:** Light Staff (*Melee*) / Meditation Orb (*unilluminated*; the Sleeping Vanguard's orb does not glow) / Spiced Tea Mix

EFFORT FEATURE: THE REFUSED PATH (2 EFFORT)

Spend 2 Effort to enter the **Disciplined State**. As you enter, set your **Integrity Die** to its highest face by Tier: a **d4** at Tier 1, a **d6** at Tier 2, or a **d8** at Tier 3 or higher.

Choose **Agility**, **Instinct**, or **Strength** as you enter. For the duration:

- You have Advantage on rolls using the chosen Trait.
- Add the chosen Trait's modifier to your Melee and unarmed damage rolls.
- You are immune to Stunned and Dazed.
- Your first Melee attack against an enemy during the state deals an additional **2d6 damage** of your subclass branch type: Void, Kinetic, or Lux.

- After the first Melee attack made against you each round, subsequent Melee attacks against you that round have Disadvantage while at least two enemies are within Melee range of you.

Each time you roll with Fear during the state (including on a Reaction), reduce your Integrity Die by 1; it is never reduced on matching dice. The state ends when your Integrity Die reaches 0 or when the scene ends, whichever comes first.

Breaking Point. At any point during the state, you may end it as a free effect on your action to unleash a closing strike: that action deals an additional (**Proficiency**)**d6** damage of your subclass branch type (Void, Kinetic, or Lux). This bonus is added once, after any multipliers, and is never doubled on a Critical.

The discipline is a focus, not total superiority: you sharpen one line of your craft and hold it. The substrate does not become more cooperative; you become more present.

CLASS FEATURES

Trained Body. Your unarmed strikes are Melee weapons using Strength or Agility, chosen at character creation, and deal **d6 physical damage**. They cannot be disarmed or confiscated. At the Tier 2 Achievement, Level 5, the damage die becomes **d8**. At the Tier 3 Achievement, Level 8, it becomes **d10**. Proficiency applies normally.

If your ancestry grants natural weapons or alters your unarmed damage type, retain that damage type and treat results of 1 or 2 on your unarmed damage dice as 3.

Unbroken Focus. Your mental discipline channels internal force into movement, combat, and refusal.

- While not wearing Heavy or Very Heavy armor, gain **+1 Evasion**.
- Once per scene, when you would mark Stress, spend 1 Effort and briefly meditate. The Stress is not marked. This does not use your Action.

The Refusal - Reaction. Once per scene, when you or an ally within Close range would be affected by a Domain Power or Veil phenomenon that calls for an attack or Spellcast Roll, or allows a Reaction Roll, spend 1 Effort. Apply Disadvantage to the attack or Spellcast Roll, or grant Advantage on the Reaction Roll.

BACKGROUND QUESTION

The substrate offered itself to you. You said no. Why?

SUBCLASSES

Ghost Blade (+Void) (Finesse), the discipline of stillness.

- Foundation, The Quiet Strike (Passive). Once per scene, when you make a Melee attack while Hidden, the attack ignores 1 Armor Slot.

- Specialization, The Folded Step (Action). Spend 1 Effort. Move to available cover within Close range and become Hidden. This is not phasing; you have rehearsed this movement for years.
- Mastery, The Folded Exit (Action). Once per scene, after a successful Melee attack, move from Very Close to Close range toward available cover. Until your next Spotlight, attacks against you have Disadvantage.

Kinetic Echo (+Kinetic) (Strength), the discipline of force.

- Foundation, Body Memory (Passive). Choose one kind of physical feat you have drilled to mastery, such as a specific climb, throw, or landing. You perform that feat without rolling in routine conditions only: no active opposition, no time pressure, and no real risk. When the feat is contested, rushed, or dangerous, roll normally.
- Specialization, The Channeled Blow (Action). Spend 1 Effort. Your next Melee attack deals an additional 1d8 Kinetic damage. On a success, move the target one range band directly away from you.
- Mastery, The Settled Ground (Passive). Once per scene, after a successful Melee attack, apply Dazed to the target.

Pure Conduit (+Lux) (Presence), the discipline of clarity. The Sleeping Pure Conduit's Lux is not divine reception; it is attention so total it produces light. The orb does not illuminate. The Vanguard does.

- Foundation, The Cleared Room (Action). Spend 1 Effort. For the next minute, you and allies within Close range have Advantage on rolls made to resist or clear Frightened, Confused, and Veil-induced deception.
- Specialization, The Held Truth (Action). Spend 1 Effort during a social or interrogation scene. NPCs who knowingly lie to you mark 1 Stress. NPCs who tell you a painful truth clear 1 Stress. Your presence does this without your speaking.
- Mastery, The Cleared Path (Passive). While you remain at a location affected by deception, illusion, or Veil-induced confusion, you and allies within Close range have Advantage on rolls made against those effects.

RESOLVE MOVES

Class Moves

- **The Weightless Art** (*spend and roll 1*). For the rolled total in rounds, your ki makes the world your floor: walls, water, cables, and the heads of a crowd. You fall without sound or harm, and your leaps cross one additional range band. This is motion, never flight: every step begins and ends on something.
- **Falling Star** (*spend and roll 1+*). Close one range band, descending or leaping if the approach allows it, and attack. Add the rolled total to the damage. If you arrived from above, the strike deals your branch's damage type - Void, Kinetic, or Lux - instead of physical, and treats the target's Major and Severe Thresholds as 4 lower for this hit. This penetration replaces and never stacks with the damage type's own penetration effect.

Subclass Moves

- **Ghost Blade, Stillness** (*spend 1*). Until your next Spotlight, you cannot be targeted by an attack that requires seeing you. You are simply not where the eye expects.
- **Kinetic Echo, Shockwave** (*spend and roll 1+*). Your next Melee hit adds the rolled total to its damage. Then choose one: move the target one range band directly away from you, or apply Prone.
- **Pure Conduit, Burning Focus** (*spend 1*). Until your next Spotlight, you shed light nothing can hide from. Enemies within Close range cannot benefit from Hidden against you.

GEAR, THE INNER NAME. Vanguard traditions do not call it Resolve. They call it breath, ki, the coiled line, the weight that is not weight. The Corebook takes no position on whether internal energy exists. The Vanguard takes one. When a Sleeping Vanguard spends Resolve, ask the player what their tradition calls it, and use that word at the table.

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

Your class trains with the gear below; even at **Common (Tier 1)**, not every class is trained for every basic item (a Diplomat is not trained on rifles, and never becomes so). Using gear outside your access is at a penalty (Chapter 13), and Precursor (Tier 4) is story-gated.

Access Tier	Level	Gear Categories
Common (Tier 1)	1	Light/Medium Armor, Melee/Pistols, Neural Augments
Military (Tier 2)	2	Light/Medium Armor (excluding Heavy/Very Heavy features), Melee/Pistols/Rifles (excluding Massive feature), Neural Augments
Experimental (Tier 3)	5	Light/Medium Armor (excluding Heavy/Very Heavy features), Melee/Pistols/Rifles (excluding Massive feature), Neural Augments, now at Experimental grade

AWAKENING IN PLAY

Awakening is the only Path transition presented in the Core. A Sleeping character Awakens when a campaign event establishes that they can perceive and answer the Hope Frequency. This is a story event recognized by the Keeper and resolved during downtime; it is not an Advancement Slot option and cannot be selected solely for mechanical benefit.

When a Sleeping character Awakens:

- Replace the **Effort Track and Effort pool** with **Hope**. Their current Effort becomes their current Hope, up to the same maximum.
- Retire the **Resolve pool**, every Resolve Move, **Honed Edge**, and the Sleeping rule that invokes Experiences for free. Existing Experiences remain, but the character now spends Hope to invoke them under the normal Awakened procedure.
- Retire the **Recovery Anchor**.
- Replace the primary Class's **Effort Feature** and **Class Feature** with the corresponding **Hope Feature** and **Class Feature** from Chapter 6.
- Preserve the Class, Background answer, Subclass choice, and Subclass upgrade tier. Use the corresponding Awakened Subclass: **The Steward** becomes **The Icon**, and the other base Subclass names map directly.
- Open the Awakened **Vault and Loadout** and gain the normal starter pair of **two Level 1 Domain Powers** from the primary Class's accessible Domains.
- Refund every Advancement Slot previously spent on the Sleeping choices of Option 8 or on **Tempered Resolve**, then re-spend those Slots under the Awakened options in Chapter 12. All path-neutral advancement remains unchanged.

If the character multiclassed while Sleeping, their secondary Effort Feature becomes the corresponding Hope Feature, their one secondary Class Resolve Move is retired, and their recorded **Dormant Domain** becomes an active third Domain. This conversion

costs no Slot and grants no starter Powers from the third Domain; its Powers must be acquired normally through advancement. The second Class still grants no separate Class Feature, Subclass, Class Items, or starter Loadout.

The Core provides no ordinary procedure for an Awakened character to become Sleeping. Exceptional reversals are Keeper-facing options, triggered only by specific campaign events.

CHAPTER 8

FORGING A VOIDWALKER

"You are not making a hero. You are making a person who will, sometimes, choose to do heroic things. Spend the time on the person."

Old Keeper's note, Spire of Verita game library

A Veilfarers character is a person with a job, a wound, a name, and a relationship to the Veil that is either *yes, I hear it* or *no, I do not*. The numbers describe that person; they do not invent them. This chapter is the procedure for building one. It takes most groups thirty to ninety minutes.

At a glance. Six steps build the character: 1 Ancestry, 2 Community, 3 Path, Class & Subclass, 4 Traits, 5 Experiences, 6 Affiliation. Then a short set of finishing touches (Loadout or equipment, Connections, resource pools, name and look) makes them ready to play. Read this chapter once end to end, then work the steps with your sheet open. Fill the sheet in last; build the character in your head and notebook first.

Each step below gives you the same three things: *what it decides, the action to take, and one tip*. The deep material for each choice lives in its own chapter; this chapter is the assembly line, not the encyclopedia.

THE SIX STEPS

STEP 1, ANCESTRY: THE BODY YOU WALK IN

What it decides. Your body type, one or more always-on **Ancestry Features**, the d6 complication table that shapes how you fail when Fear dominates, and the social texture the galaxy reads you through.

The action. Choose one of the nine ancestries in Chapter 3 (Ailuran, Bloomstrider, Celestari, Ethereal, Human, Kryllian, Kryx, Rift Spinner, Synthetic) and note it at the top of your sheet. Ancestry does not lock your Class or Path: any ancestry can be any class on either path.

Tip. Pick the ancestry whose *complication table* you want to play. What your failures feel like defines a character more than what their successes do.

Example. Maren wants a character whose feelings betray her at the worst moment, so she picks Celestari: her Aural Light flares when she is afraid, and her complications are all things that happen when she lights up.

STEP 2, COMMUNITY: THE WORLD THAT SHAPED YOU

What it decides. A **Community Feature**, a default attitude toward galactic institutions, and your first social network.

The action. Choose one of the seven communities in Chapter 4 (Core World, Trade Hub, Frontier Colony, Void Station, Free Fleet, AgriSynth, Hidden Enclave) and note it under your ancestry. Community is your *origin*, not your current address; a Core World child can grow up to smuggle for the Free Fleet.

Tip. "Where did this character grow up?" is the same question as "what does this character think is normal?" Answer that and the rest of the build gets easier.

Example. Maren chooses Free Fleet: she grew up aboard the freighter she now flies, which gives her Wayfinding and makes her loyal to crews and wary of Houses before she has said a word.

STEP 3, PATH, CLASS, AND SUBCLASS: THE RESPONSE, THE WORK, AND THE EDGE

The largest step, in three parts.

3A, the Path. Choose **Awakened** (you hear the Hope Frequency; your resource is **Hope**, spent on Domain Powers and your Class Feature, Chapter 6) or **Sleeping** (you are deaf to it, or refused it; your everyday resource is **Effort**, and you also draw on a scarce **Resolve** pool for signature Moves, Chapter 7). The full case for each path is in Chapter 2; do not re-decide it here, just record it. (Mystic is the one class where Path changes the Spellcast Trait: Knowledge for Sleeping, Instinct for Awakened, so plan your array accordingly.)

3C, the Subclass. Each class has three subclasses, each with a Foundation feature (level 1), a Specialization (Tier 2), and a Mastery (Tier 3). The subclass sets the texture of your abilities and, for some classes, locks a second Domain (most notably the Vanguard). Pick the future you want to play toward.

Record: Class, Path, Subclass.

3B, the Class. Choose one of the nine classes (full write-ups in Chapter 6 for Awakened, Chapter 7 for Sleeping). The class is the *work*: the role you cut when you walk into a scene. Each class has a Domain Pair and a Spellcast Trait, the Trait most of its signature actions use.

CLASS	DOMAINS	SIGNATURE TRAIT
Diplomat	Social & Lux	Presence
Engineer	Tech & Synthesis	Knowledge
Explorer	Synthesis & Lux	Instinct
Mystic	Neural & Lux or Void	Instinct (Awakened) / Knowledge (Sleeping)
Pilot	Void & Tech	Instinct
Scholar	Tech & Social	Knowledge
Scoundrel	Social & Void	Finesse
Soldier	Kinetic & Synthesis	Strength
Vanguard	Neural & branch (Void / Kinetic / Lux)	Presence

Example. Maren is a Pilot, Awakened, Void Runner. She has felt the lanes hum since she was sixteen, so the Awakened path and the Void domain fit her; Void Runner is the smuggler-pilot she already is. Her Spellcast Trait is Instinct.

STEP 4, TRAITS: THE MEASURE OF YOUR POTENTIAL

The six Traits are **Agility, Strength, Finesse, Knowledge, Instinct, Presence**. Three canonical Subtraits name specialized applications without creating additional Traits: **Pilot/Navigate** is parented to **Finesse**, while **Tech** and **Medicine** are parented to **Knowledge**. A Subtrait always uses its parent Trait score unless a feature explicitly says otherwise. Every character assigns the same fixed array, one value per Trait:

+2, +1, +1, +0, +0, -1

The action. Put your **+2** on your **Signature Trait** (for the Awakened this is the Spellcast Trait; it powers your class engine), your **+1s** on your secondary class Trait and a Trait your Ancestry or Community uses, your **+0s** on utility, and your **-1** somewhere deliberate.

Tip. The -1 is a feature, not a flaw. The Diplomat with Strength -1 who cannot drag a wounded friend clear is *forged* by the moments they could not. Lean into it.

Example. Maren puts +2 on Instinct (her Spellcast Trait), +1 on Finesse and Knowledge, +0 on Agility and Strength, and her -1 on Presence: she has never been the one who sweet-talks the customs desk.

STEP 5, EXPERIENCES: THE MEMORIES THAT DEFINE YOU

An **Experience** is a short, evocative phrase naming a defining moment, period, or skill from before play, *I held the line at Titan Station for 72 hours*, *Quantum Savant*, *I charted the Crimson Veil and lost a wingman doing it*.

How they work. A starting Awakened character has **two Experiences at +2** and invokes one by spending **1 Hope** to add its flat bonus to a relevant roll (a flat number, not advantage). A starting Sleeping character has **three Experiences at +2** and invokes them **free** (no resource), per the Sleeping engine in Chapter 7. Experiences rise with advancement (Chapter 12); new ones earned in play start at +1, and a character holds at most five.

The action. Choose your starting Experiences. Make each one **personal** (yours, not a generic skill), **applicable** (usable in more than one kind of scene), and **costly** (the best ones carry a wound or a debt the Keeper can pull on). Vary the Traits they apply to.

Tip. A good Experience gives the Keeper a hook. *I brokered the peace at Hydros* is fine; *I brokered the peace at Hydros, and it cost me my sister* is a campaign.

Example. Maren takes "First to chart the Crimson Veil Storm, and I lost Iruvi doing it" (+2, the wound) and "Free Fleet Lifer, twenty years on one hull" (+2, the broad one). As an Awakened pilot she invokes either by spending 1 Hope.

STEP 6, AFFILIATION: THE INSTITUTION YOU ANSWER TO

What it decides. Your one **primary affiliation** sits on top of Community (where you came from) and defines who you answer to now. It grants three benefits and three obligations, all of which apply at the table.

- **Benefits:** equipment access within the affiliation's domain without a Wealth Check, up to one Tier above yours; starting **Affiliation Standing +1 (Good Standing)**; and **one Call per session**. A Call provides one Tier-appropriate fact, introduction, temporary safe place, or Common item. A Military item or direct intervention costs 1 Standing after it resolves. Anything larger requires a visible project and is not a Call.
- **Obligations:** periodic **dues**; occasional **calls** the institution makes on you; and **forbidden conflicts** that cost Standing if you commit them.

Standing runs +5 to -5 and starts at **+1 (Good Standing)**; the full Standing and recovery rules live in Chapter 16, and each affiliation's specific domain, dues, and conflicts are detailed in Chapter 5.

The action. Choose one: **House Amaranth**, **Joric**, **Kurogane**, **Solari**, **Valerius**, or **Volkov**; the **Free Fleet** or **Explorers' Guild**; or **Independent**. Two further affiliations, the **Solara Compact** and the **Stellar Commerce Guild**, are profiled in the Keeper's Companion and available as advanced options with the Keeper's approval. Independent is a real choice, not a fallback: it trades all three benefits for an **Independent Favor Pool** of 1 Favor token per session to call on improvised contacts, and carries no dues, conflicts, or Standing erosion.

Tip. Match your affiliation to your Community for a grounded professional; mismatch them deliberately for built-in tension.

Example. Maren stays Free Fleet (Standing +1): ship parts and salvage without a Wealth Check, one Call to the Fleet each session, and the standing obligation never to leave another Fleet ship in distress.

FINISHING TOUCHES

The six steps make a character playable. These make them ready.

Loadout and equipment. Awakened characters take a **Starter Loadout of two Level 1 Domain Powers**, chosen from the **six** available to their class's two Domains, three per Domain (each class entry suggests a first pair; the catalog is Chapter 19). Every character takes their class's **Class Items**, plus one Tier 1 weapon and one armor piece (Chapter 13), a small kit of three to five personal objects that are *theirs*, and a starting **Wealth Tier of 0 or 1** (Chapter 15; the low tiers are deliberate).

Resource pools. Fill in **HP** and **Evasion** (class entry, plus Ancestry and Subclass modifiers), **6 Stress slots** (Synthetics 7), **Hope or Effort** (Awakened begin each session with 2 Hope; Sleeping begin play with 2 Effort and thereafter keep it between sessions; both cap at 6), **Resolve** for Sleeping characters (base 2, rising by 1 at levels 3, 5, 7 and 9; Chapter 7), and **Armor Slots** from your armor.

Recovery Anchor (Sleeping only). Define a **specific, lose-able, refusable** item, place, or ritual your character uses to recover, and name it here; everything about how Recovery works, including what the Anchor does and what losing it costs, lives in Chapter 7. Make it specific enough that the table can take it from you when the story needs the weight.

Name, look, voice. A name in two or three parts; three or four sentences of appearance; one or two sentences on how they speak. Voice is the fastest way to make a character distinct at the table; settle it before session one.

CREW STEP: CONNECTIONS, TURNING CHARACTERS INTO A CREW

After everyone has built through Step 5, the table answers three questions together (fifteen to thirty minutes). Each names a *different* other PC, so in a four-person crew you have an explicit relationship to all three crewmates. Connections are dynamic and can change in play.

First Bond, your closest crewmate. Reciprocal. Both players gain **+1 Hope/Effort** at session start (on top of the standard reset, never above your normal maximum). For a Sleeping character, this is the named Connection exception to the ordinary Effort Track rule in Chapter 7. Once per scene, when both are present, one may spend 1 Hope/Effort to give the other +1 to a roll. And when your Bond is dying, you may move to their side with no roll, provided you are in the same scene and a path exists your character could take; it will not carry you through sealed bulkheads, hard vacuum, or impossible geography without the Keeper's blessing, the

one mechanic in the game that bypasses range bands. A Bond breaks only on real betrayal, not ordinary friction.

Open Debt, someone you owe. One-directional. Once per session the creditor may **call the Debt** to push the debtor toward an action

within the obligation's scope; refusing marks 2 Stress and partially repays it. Significant service repays it too; two or three repayments clear it.

Friction, someone who gets under your skin. One-directional. When you act *despite* the Friction (defer, cooperate, hold your tongue), you gain +1 **Hope/Effort** at scene's end (capped at your maximum). For a Sleeping character, this is the named Connection exception to the ordinary Effort Track rule in Chapter 7. Once per session the Keeper may activate it for a short played-out clash, after which both characters gain +1 Hope/Effort. Frictions are meant to stay productive for most of a campaign, not resolve quickly.

MAREN'S FINISHED SHEET

The running example, assembled: **Maren Solas**, Celestiar Pilot, Awakened, Void Runner, Free Fleet. Instinct +2, Finesse +1, Knowledge +1, Agility +0, Strength +0, Presence -1. Experiences: *First to chart the Crimson Veil Storm, and I lost Iruvi doing it* (+2), *Free Fleet Lifer* (+2). Starter Loadout of two Level 1 Void/Tech Powers; flight jacket and a photo of the lost crew in her kit; Wealth Tier 1; Standing +1 with the Fleet. First Bond: the *Vagrant Star's* engineer. Friction: the new pilot the captain hired without asking her. One conversation, start to finish.

TWO MORE, IN BRIEF

- **Doctor Skarrh's Apprentice (Sleeping Mystic).** Ethereal, Core World, Mystic / Sleeping / Veil Walker. Spellcast Trait Knowledge. Her starting Uncanny Archive contains Lux 1 and Neural 1, so she knows every Level 1 Power in both Paths. She supports the crew through Calibrated Minor Rituals and forces full Powers through Uncanny Power, generating Fear each time she opens the connection. Knowledge +2, Instinct +1, Finesse +1, Presence +0, Agility +0, Strength -1. Three Experiences (Sleeping) including *I catalogued a Class III Vault that killed the rest of my expedition*. Recovery Anchor: her late mentor's annotated field journal. Affiliation: House Amaranth.
- **The Quiet Mechanic of the Pelican (Sleeping Engineer).** Bloomstrider, AgriSynth, Engineer / Sleeping / Tech Specialist. Knowledge +2, Finesse +1, Instinct +1, Strength +0, Presence +0, Agility -1. Effort plus Resolve; the *Field Improvisation* and *Hot-Wire Moves* are their signature. Recovery Anchor: the specific socket wrench that came off their first ship. Affiliation: Free Fleet. Open Debt to the captain who pulled them out of indenture.

QUICK-START ARCHETYPES

For one-shots and new players, the Veilfarers archetypes are complete pre-builds: **Void Runner** (Celestiar Pilot), **Corporate Enforcer** (Human Soldier), **Relic Seeker** (Ethereal Scholar), **Street Medic** (Kryllian Engineer), **Trade Ambassador** (Human Diplomat), **Veil Touched** (Celestiar Mystic), **Info Broker** (Synthetic Scoundrel), **The Whisper Broker** (Ailuran Explorer), **The Gray Bolt** (Ailuran Soldier). Each is built Awakened. To convert one to Sleeping, keep its ancestry, concept, Traits, Connections, and legal gear, then rebuild its Path package from the matching Sleeping class entry in Chapter 7: replace the Hope Feature with the Effort Feature, apply Honed Edge, take the Sleeping character's three Experiences, set Resolve and its Class Resolve Moves, and name a Recovery Anchor. Do not carry over a Vault, Loadout, or Domain Powers; the Sleeping Mystic uses its own Uncanny Archive procedure. This is a five-minute character-creation rebuild, performed before play with the Chapter 7 class entry open at the table; it is not an in-campaign Path transition.

COMMON PITFALLS

- **The optimization puzzle.** The array is balanced; don't agonize. Put +2 on your Spellcast Trait and move on.
- **The encyclopedic backstory.** Two sharp Experiences beat ten pages of history. Leave room for play to write the rest.
- **The forgotten wound.** A character with nothing to lose is hard to move. Give at least one Experience a cost.
- **The lone wolf.** This is a crew game. Take your three Connections seriously; a character with no bonds starves the table.
- **The Sleeping character without an anchor.** Define a real Recovery Anchor, specific and lose-able. A vague one does nothing in play.
- **The unfocused Mystic.** Pick one Domain alignment and lean in. Trying to do everything does none of it well.

BUILDING A CREW

A working crew mixes paths, roles, and origins, the Awakened reaching across, the Sleeping holding the line. Aim for coverage (someone who fights, someone who talks, someone who fixes, someone who reads the room) without forcing it; the gaps are where stories start. What a crew argues about is as defining as what it agrees on. Build the people, let the friction be real, and the crew assembles itself.

THE FINAL CHECKLIST

Before the first session, run the sheet once more, top to bottom:

- **Path** chosen (Awakened or Sleeping), and you know what your path resource is.
- **Ancestry** and **Community** chosen, Gifts and Benefit noted.
- **Class** and **Subclass** chosen; Foundation feature written down.
- **Traits** assigned (+2 on your Signature Trait unless you had a strong reason not to).
- **Experiences** written as sentences with a voice, at +2: two if Awakened, three if Sleeping.
- **Affiliation** chosen (or Independent), Obligation and first Benefit noted.
- **Powers or Moves:** Awakened, your 2 Level 1 Domain Powers; Sleeping, your Resolve pool and Moves, and your **Recovery Anchor** named.
- **Resource pools** set: HP, Stress, Evasion, Armor, Hope cap or Effort Track, Proficiency.
- **Crew step:** three Connections answered, each naming a different crewmate.
- **Name, look,** and the small kit of objects that are *yours*.

CHAPTER 9

HOW TO PLAY

"I have taught five generations of Pearl Drive engineers. Every single one has wanted, at some point, a button that simply makes things go right. The system does not have one. The system has dice. The dice are not a

button. They are a question."

Master Engineer Jiro Kurogane Aimei, Hydros Yards, instruction manual preface

This chapter teaches you how to play *Veilfarers* at a table.

At a glance. Every meaningful player action resolves with a **Duality Roll**: roll **2d12** (one Hope die, one Fear die), add one **Trait modifier** (-1 to +2), and compare the total with the **Difficulty Class** (DC). On a noncritical player Roll, Hope dominance grants the appropriate Path progress and Fear dominance gives the Keeper 1 Fear, subject to the hard maximum of 12. Matching dice always produce a Critical Success. Keeper-controlled combat attacks also use Duality Dice, but nonmatching dominance grants no resource. A noncritical Roll succeeds when its total meets or exceeds the DC and fails when it does not. Trivial, repeated, or consequence-free actions do not generate Hope, mark Effort, or generate Fear.

PATH	RESOURCE	HOW IT IS GAINED	WHAT IT FUELS
Awakened	Hope (cap 6)	1 per Hope-dominant meaningful roll	Experiences, class features, Domain Powers
Sleeping	Effort	The two-segment Effort Track (Chapter 7)	Effort Features; Experiences are free

The previous chapters built the world. The chapters after this one will build your character. This chapter sits between them and explains the *interface*, the procedure by which the world and the character meet. When does your character roll dice? Which dice? How do you read the result? What happens after? These are the questions every working session at every *Veilfarers* table will need to answer, and they are the questions this chapter answers.

The system rests on a single resolution mechanic, the **Duality Roll** and a small number of resources that flow in and out of players and Keeper hands as the session progresses. Once you understand the Duality Roll and the resources, you understand how *Veilfarers* works. Combat, ship operations, character advancement, and Domain Powers are all extensions of the same simple procedure. You are about to learn the procedure.

Read this chapter all the way through on a first pass. Then refer back to specific sections as needed during play.

FICTION FIRST

The most important rule in *Veilfarers* is the rule that comes before any of the dice rules.

You do not roll dice for things that do not matter.

A character who picks up a glass to drink from it does not roll a check. A character who walks across a room does not roll a check. A character who is alone in their cabin and decides to take a nap does not roll a check. The system has nothing to say about these

moments, because the system is designed to handle moments where something is at stake.

A character who picks up a glass to drink from it *while suspecting it may be poisoned*, that is a moment where the system has something to say. A character who walks across a room *while a sniper is watching* is a moment for

the system. A character who tries to sleep *in a hostile environment* is a moment for the system.

The Keeper's first job, before any dice are picked up, is to recognize which moments are at stake and which are not. A common failure mode at new tables is to call for too many rolls, turning every minor action into a check, slowing the session down, and accidentally telling the players that the world is more dangerous and uncertain than the fiction warrants. Resist this. Most actions in *Veilfarers* resolve through narration alone. The dice exist for the moments where *the outcome is meaningfully uncertain and the consequences of failure or partial success would change the story*.

A useful test: if both success and failure would lead to a story you want to tell, call for the roll. If only one outcome is interesting, just narrate it. The roll is not a tax on action. The roll is a tool for handling moments where the table genuinely does not know what happens next.

This principle, *fiction first*, runs through every other rule in this book. Fiction determines whether a rule triggers, what it means, and how it looks. It does not silently alter the published procedure. A table may agree to a house rule, but it must name that change as a house rule; the system canon remains unchanged.

THE DUALITY ROLL

When the Keeper calls for a check, the player rolls **two twelve-sided dice**.

One of these is the **Hope die**. The other is the **Fear die**. The dice are physically identical except for color or marking, many tables use a gold or white die for Hope and a red or black die for Fear. Some tables use any two d12s and just declare which is which before the roll. The dice do not need to be labeled by the manufacturer. They need to be distinguishable to the players.

The player rolls both dice at once. The procedure that follows is:

1. **Add the two dice together.** This is the **base total**.
2. **Add any relevant modifiers.** Most rolls add a Trait - Agility, Strength, Finesse, Knowledge, Instinct, or Presence - depending on what the action is. Other modifiers may apply: Experience bonuses (if invoked), situational adjustments, Advantage or Disadvantage dice (covered later in this chapter).
3. **Compare the final total to the Difficulty Class.** The Keeper fixes the DC before the dice come to rest. The Keeper may keep that DC hidden, but may not change it after seeing the roll.
4. **Look at which die is higher.** If the Hope die is higher than the Fear die, the result is **Hope-favored**. If the Fear die is higher, the result is **Fear-favored**. If both dice show the same number, the result is a **Critical Success**.

This produces five possible outcomes from a single roll, explained in detail in the next section.

QUICK PROCEDURE - THE DUALITY ROLL

	HOPE > FEAR	FEAR > HOPE	HOPE = FEAR
Total >= DC	Success with Hope	Success with Fear	Critical Success
Total < DC	Failure with Hope	Failure with Fear	Critical Success

Doubles are *always* a Critical Success, whatever the total, including 1+1 against DC 25. The worst nonmatching result is Failure with Fear.

The cosmology of the universe, the Hope Frequency hum that runs beneath everything, established in Chapter 1, sometimes simply *agrees with you*, and when it does, the agreement is total.

This is the entirety of the resolution mechanic. Every other rule in the system builds on this five-outcome structure.

CHOOSING THE TRAIT

Most Duality Rolls add a Trait, one of the six character attributes that represent the broad arenas of human (and humanlike) capability. The six Traits are **Agility**, **Strength**, **Finesse**, **Knowledge**, **Instinct**, and **Presence**. Their numeric scores are set during character creation (Chapter 8) and shift over the arc of a campaign through advancement (Chapter 12).

Canonical Subtraits. Some specialized actions name a Subtrait in parentheses after its parent Trait. **Finesse (Pilot/Navigate)** covers piloting vehicles, plotting courses, docking, evasive maneuvers, and practical navigation. **Knowledge (Tech)** covers computers, engineering systems, electronics, hacking, repair theory, and technological analysis. **Knowledge (Medicine)** covers diagnosis, treatment, surgery, stabilization, and biological analysis. These are not seventh, eighth, or ninth Traits; they use the listed parent Trait score. Write the complete Roll as a **Finesse (Pilot/Navigate) Roll**, **Knowledge (Tech) Roll**, or **Knowledge (Medicine) Roll**. After a section establishes the parent Trait, the shorter forms Pilot/Navigate Roll, Knowledge (Tech) Roll, and Knowledge (Medicine) Roll are acceptable.

Choosing which Trait applies to a given roll is, in most cases, obvious from the fiction. Lifting a heavy object is Strength. Sneaking through a corridor is Agility. Picking a complex lock is Finesse. Piloting a skiff through a collapsing dock is Finesse (Pilot/Navigate). Recalling a fact about Precursor archaeology is Knowledge. Diagnosing an unfamiliar toxin is Knowledge (Medicine), while bypassing a security lattice is Knowledge (Tech). Reading another character's emotional state, or trusting your gut at the moment of a sudden decision, is Instinct. Convincing, intimidating, or charming someone is Presence.

The cases where the Trait is genuinely ambiguous are the cases that matter, and the principle is this: **the player proposes, the Keeper confirms or adjusts**. A player who wants to use Knowledge to deceive a guard may have a perfectly good reason, perhaps their character has been studying Volkov security protocols and is leveraging that expertise rather than raw social skill. The Keeper, hearing the proposal, can accept it ("Yes, roll Knowledge, you're working from the protocols you memorized"), redirect ("That's actually closer to a Presence roll because you'll need to commit emotionally to the lie"), or split the difference ("Roll Presence, but spend a Hope to invoke your *Volkov Operations* Experience for the +3", for an Awakened character; the Sleeping invoke their Experiences free, Chapter 7).

The conversation matters more than the specific choice. A table that talks through the Trait selection together, even briefly, is a table that has shared agreement on what the roll means. A table where the Keeper silently picks the Trait and the player rolls without input loses some of that shared understanding. Both styles work, but the talking style produces tables where the dice carry more weight.

READING THE OUTCOME

The five outcomes have specific narrative and mechanical meanings.

Critical Success means the action succeeds beyond what the character attempted. In addition to the fixed resource and combat payout, add one beneficial fictional detail consistent with established facts: a hidden compartment, useful information, or a charted Eddy. This detail grants no extra resource, numeric modifier, Condition, Action, item, or permanent change unless the feature being resolved explicitly states it.

Critical Successes also clear **1 Stress**, and then pay the character in the currency of their Path. This is the master statement of that payout; every other mention in this book defers to it.

QUICK PROCEDURE - WHAT A CRITICAL SUCCESS PAYS

	CLEAR	THEN GAIN
Awakened	1 Stress	1 Hope
Sleeping	1 Stress	Mark both segments of the Effort Track at once, clearing it for 1 Effort , then take 1 further point into either Effort or Resolve - your choice. If Effort is already at maximum, the point becomes 1 Resolve. (Chapter 7)

The critical is the one moment the Sleeping bank a reserve from play rather than from rest. Wherever this book says a Critical Success grants "1 Hope", read it as shorthand for this table.

Many abilities and Domain Powers have additional triggers on Critical Successes. The dice favored you in the most absolute way the system permits, and the fiction, and the rules, both recognize this.

Player Critical Damage. When a player character scores a Critical Success on an attack roll, determine the attack's normal damage pool, including Proficiency, and roll twice that number of damage dice. Add flat modifiers once. Do not double Stress costs, Armor Piercing, conditions, blast radius, duration, or other secondary effects unless the effect explicitly says otherwise. A weapon that normally deals 4d8+2 on that attack deals 8d8+2 on a Critical Success.

Keeper Critical Damage. When a Keeper-controlled adversary scores a Critical Success on an attack roll, do not roll damage. Treat every damage die in the attack's normal damage pool as having rolled its maximum value, then add flat modifiers once. Resolve the result normally against Damage Thresholds. The target may spend Armor Slots to reduce the severity as normal unless the attack explicitly states that it ignores armor, cannot be shielded, or cannot be reduced with Armor Slots.

No exceptional die faces. A match of 1+1 and a match of 12+12 use the same Critical Success procedure as every other double. Neither

result adds a penalty, a special mishap, an extra reward, or a separate table unless a feature explicitly modifies every Critical Success.

Success with Hope means the action succeeds cleanly, and the universe rewards you. The character does the thing, with no complication, and gains **1 Hope** for the player (Awakened only). This is the "clean win" outcome, the most common form of unambiguous success at the table. The Hope Frequency lifted you slightly, the way it does, and you carried the moment.

Success with Fear means the action succeeds, but at a cost. The character does the thing, but a complication arrives, the door opens *and* an alarm sounds, the negotiation works *and* the partner notes they will remember this favor, the jump completes *and* a Veil Eddy delays the arrival by six hours. The Keeper takes **1 Fear token**, subject to the hard maximum of 12 for their pool, to be spent later as the session demands. The success is real, but the universe registers a small cost, and the Keeper now has a pebble in hand, ready to drop.

Failure with Hope means the action fails without a complication. Resolve normal Path progress: an Awakened character gains 1 Hope and a Sleeping character marks one Effort Track segment, subject to the normal limits. The Roll creates no new route, clue, item, position, or numeric benefit unless its Feature explicitly prints one.

Failure with Fear means the action does not succeed, and a complication compounds the failure. The character does not do the thing, *and* something else goes wrong as a direct or indirect consequence. The lockpick fails *and* it breaks off in the lock. The negotiation breaks down *and* the partner is now actively hostile. The Keeper takes **1 Fear token**, subject to the hard maximum of 12 and the situation has measurably worsened. This is the worst single-roll outcome the system produces. It is not, however, "you die." Death, covered in detail in Chapter 10, is a separate procedure that requires its own decisions.

Doubles are always a Critical Success. This is intentional. The cosmology of the post-Silence galaxy includes a Hope Frequency that, on average, lifts toward generosity rather than pulling toward catastrophe. A character can fail badly, but matched dice never create a negative critical result. The worst nonmatching result is **Failure with Fear**: failure plus a complication. The character's response to that failure is where the story goes next.

WORKED EXAMPLE - FAILURE WITH FEAR

Riven tries to slice the airlock override before the patrol rounds the corner. Duality Roll: 7 and 11, Fear die higher, total under the DC. **Failure with Fear** - the slice fails, and the Keeper takes 1 Fear, subject to the hard maximum of 12. Nothing happens to Riven this instant; the patrol is still thirty seconds out. The Keeper notes the Fear and says nothing yet, letting the scene continue. Two exchanges later, with four Fear now banked, the patrol's radio crackles early and the ambush the crew planned collapses before it starts.

Rule Take-Away: Failure with Fear resolves its one predeclared or printed consequence now and also generates Fear. Later Fear spending uses only printed Keeper Moves or abilities; it cannot retroactively add a second consequence to this Roll.

GEAR 1, NARRATING THE COMPLICATION (OPTIONAL ATMOSPHERIC RULE)

If this optional atmospheric rule is adopted before play, the affected player narrates how the already declared or printed consequence looks. Narration cannot change its target, cost, damage, Condition, duration, clock movement, resource effect, or end condition. If no consequence was eligible before the Roll, this option creates none.

DIFFICULTY CLASSES

The Keeper assigns one of six Difficulty Classes. Use only these values. Fictional advantages and disadvantages normally change positioning, grant Advantage or Disadvantage, alter the consequence, or remove the need for a roll; they do not create intermediate DCs.

DC	DIFFICULTY	WHEN TO USE
5	Routine	A trained character succeeds unless pressure or interference matters.
10	Easy	A straightforward task under meaningful pressure.
15	Challenging	The standard difficulty for a consequential task.
20	Difficult	Requires strong aptitude, preparation, or favorable positioning.
25	Extreme	A feat expected only from exceptional specialists or with major assistance.
30	Nearly Impossible	A legendary attempt at the edge of plausible capability.

Choose the rung that best represents the fiction. Do not round an imagined hidden number; decide whether the task is Routine, Easy, Challenging, Difficult, Extreme, or Nearly Impossible. If circumstances change enough to matter, move by one rung or apply Advantage or Disadvantage. A task with no meaningful uncertainty or consequence does not require a roll.

HOPE

Hope is the player's currency. It represents the character's inner reserve, the flicker of conviction, the moment of clarity, the small private store of *yes, I can do this* that experienced characters draw on when the situation demands more than ordinary effort.

Each player tracks their character's Hope on the character sheet. The standard cap is **6 Hope**. A character cannot hold more than 6 at any time; additional Hope earned beyond the cap is lost. Awakened characters have access to Hope as a working resource. Sleeping characters do not gain Hope from rolls (Hope-favored Successes give them no token), they have other resources covered in Chapter 7 that fill the same narrative role.

Session Start. At the start of each session, every Awakened character begins with **2 Hope**, regardless of how much Hope they held at the end of the previous session. Hope does not normally carry between sessions. If a session begins *in medias res*, continuing the same scene with no fictional time between sessions, the Keeper may allow characters to retain their current Hope instead. The cap of 6 still applies.

Hope is gained from:

- **Success with Hope:** 1 Hope.
- **Critical Success:** 1 Hope (and 1 Stress cleared). This is the Awakened payout; the Sleeping are paid in Effort and Resolve instead, per *What a Critical Success Pays* above.
- **Certain abilities:** some Domain Powers, Experiences, and Class features generate Hope under specific conditions. These are detailed in their respective entries.
- **Printed grants:** a Class, Ancestry, Connection, Power, adventure, or other rule may grant the amount of Hope stated by its explicit trigger. Roleplay quality alone never creates an unbounded Hope award.

Hope is spent on:

- **Invoking an Experience:** Spend 1 Hope before rolling. Add the Experience's flat bonus to the total. Note that this adds the bonus *itself*, the modifier number written on the Experience entry. It does not grant Advantage. Experiences are flat numerical additions, not dice manipulation. (See Chapter 8 for Experiences in detail.)
- **Helping a teammate:** Spend 1 Hope to grant another character Advantage on a roll, provided your character can plausibly help with the action and is present in the scene.
- **Spending on Domain Powers:** Most Domain Powers cost 1, 2, or 3 Hope to invoke. The full catalog is in Chapter 19; the structure of how Powers consume Hope is in Chapter 18.
- **Other printed uses:** Specific Class, Ancestry, Connection, Power, equipment, or adventure features may call for the stated Hope spend. A Keeper-created house option must be declared before play and is not Core canon.

Hope cannot be spent on rolls that have already been made. The decision to spend Hope happens *before* the dice are rolled, except for Hope spends explicitly tied to outcomes (such as some Domain Powers triggered by a Failure with Hope).

A useful mental model: Hope is the character's *agency budget*. A character with 6 Hope has many options open. A character with 0 Hope has only what their dice and their wits can manage. The arc of a session is, in part, the arc of how Hope flows in and out of the players' hands.

FEAR

Fear is the Keeper's currency. It represents the universe's resistance, the small, accumulating ways the world pushes back against the crew. It is the Veil Frequency in its other register: not the lift of companionship, but the drag of weight, complication, and consequence.

The Keeper tracks Fear in a visible pool, physical tokens, a number on a notepad, a clock-style counter, whatever the table prefers. Visibility is important. The players should know roughly how much Fear the Keeper has, because the dramatic weight of a Keeper spending Fear lands harder when the players have been watching the pool grow.

Fear is generated as follows.

At the start of each session, the Keeper rolls **1d4+2** for the starting Fear pool. This pool resets each session, *Fear does not carry over between sessions*. The reset is intentional. Each session begins with the universe roughly at neutral; the game does not punish a crew for having had a hard previous session by starting them already deep in the hole. The Keeper's pressure is renewed but not compounded.

During the session, Fear is generated by:

- **Success with Fear rolls:** 1 Fear.
- **Failure with Fear rolls:** 1 Fear.
- **Printed environmental triggers:** an adopted environment rule may generate its stated Fear only when its exact trigger occurs. Merely entering a hostile or Veil-disturbed scene never generates Fear by implication.
- **Explicit rule triggers:** an environment, antagonist, adventure, clock, or feature may generate the stated amount of Fear when its printed trigger occurs. Risk alone never grants Fear; risk determines whether a roll is needed and what consequences are plausible.

Fear is spent on:

- **Spotlight enemies:** Spend 1 Fear to let one eligible NPC that has not yet acted in the current Spotlight cycle take its Spotlight now.

This changes order but never grants a second Spotlight in that cycle. A defensive Reaction still requires its own printed trigger.

- **Declare a complication:** Spend 1 Fear after a noncritical Roll to activate one threat, clock trigger, witness, alarm, or equipment risk established before that Roll. Apply its printed or predeclared effect. This move cannot invent damage, item failure, an enemy, or a retroactive fact.
- **Interrupt a player's Action:** After the player declares an Action but before dice are rolled or costs paid, spend 2 Fear to activate one previously established threat. Resolve that threat, then the player may continue, change, or cancel the Action. No cost is lost for changing or canceling it.
- **Trigger an antagonist's signature ability:** Many adversaries have signature abilities that cost Fear. These are detailed in the bestiary (Keeper's Companion).

Fear has a hard maximum of **12**. The pool can never exceed 12; any Fear generated while the pool is full is lost. Hoarding Fear is poor pacing, and unspent Fear is discarded when the pool resets at the next session.

GEAR 2, VISIBLE FEAR (RECOMMENDED OPTIONAL)

Many tables benefit from physical tokens for Fear, small stones, dice, glass beads, anything tactile, that the Keeper places in front of themselves as they accumulate. The visual presence of the pool changes the table's emotional register. Players watch the pile grow. Players brace when the Keeper picks one up. This rule is technically optional but is recommended for nearly every table; it costs nothing and meaningfully increases the dramatic weight of the resource.

STRESS

Stress is the third major resource and the only one tracked symmetrically between every character. It represents the cost of pushing, physical exhaustion, emotional wear, the mounting toll of operating beyond your safe range.

Each character has a **Stress track** with a default capacity of **6**. As the character takes Stress, the player marks boxes on the track. When all boxes are marked, the character is **Overwhelmed**: they cannot mark or spend more Stress, cannot pay Stress costs, and have **Disadvantage on all Rolls** until they clear at least one Stress slot. Overwhelmed does not authorize additional consequences and does not make the character unconscious.

Stress is gained from:

- **Domain Power costs:** Many Domain Powers require the user to take Stress as part of their cost. The Power's entry will specify how much.
- **Specific Class features:** Some Classes have signature abilities that cost Stress.
- **Damage taken in combat:** Some forms of damage are converted directly into Stress rather than HP loss (see Chapter 10).
- **Declared consequences:** A risky Roll may include exactly 1 Stress as a stated consequence fixed before the dice come to rest. A printed feature may impose its stated amount. An interpersonal scene marks Stress without a Roll only with the affected player's consent; the Keeper cannot add unannounced Stress retroactively.
- **Ailuran Irrepressible Curiosity:** An Ailuran character whose Curiosity has been invoked by the Keeper can spend 1 Stress to resist the urge (or yield to it on their own terms, the choice is the player's, and the compulsion is never automatic). See Chapter 3 for the full mechanic.

Stress is cleared by:

- **Long Rest:** Choose **Decompress** as one of the two different Long Rest moves to clear the Stress track, including Long Bruise.
- **Short Rest:** Clears **1d4 + Tier** Stress, if you choose Clear Stress as one of your two moves.
- **Critical Success:** Clears 1 Stress.
- **Specific abilities:** Some Domain Powers, Class features, and Vocations can clear Stress under particular conditions.

Stress is, in a sense, the character's *near-term sustainability budget*. A character can do extraordinary things by spending Stress, but they cannot do extraordinary things forever. The track fills. Rest is required. The game's pacing assumes characters will accumulate Stress over the course of an adventure and clear it during downtime. A campaign without rest beats, a campaign that runs the crew from one crisis to the next without breathing room, will see Stress tracks fill, characters become unable to use their best abilities, and the system's intended rhythm break down. Plan for rest.

REST AND RECOVERY

Rest restores characters through deliberate choices rather than automatically resetting every track.

SHORT REST

A Short Rest is a brief pause of roughly one hour in a place where the crew can stop, breathe, and perform basic maintenance. Each character chooses **two different Short Rest moves**:

- **Tend Wounds:** Clear **1d4 + Tier** marked HP.
- **Clear Stress:** Clear **1d4 + Tier** marked Stress.
- **Repair Armor:** With suitable tools or materials, restore **1d4 + Tier** spent Armor Slots, up to the armor's maximum.
- **Prepare:** Gain 1 Hope if Awakened, or 1 Resolve if Sleeping (up to your pool). Rest never generates Effort; the Effort Track is its only source (Chapter 7).

A character cannot choose the same move twice during one Short Rest unless a feature explicitly allows it. Special armor, shields, repair rigs, and class features may restore additional Armor Slots.

LONG REST

A Long Rest is several hours of safe, uninterrupted recovery. Each character chooses **two different Long Rest moves**:

- **Recover:** Clear all marked HP.
- **Decompress:** Clear all marked Stress, including Long Bruise.
- **Repair All Armor:** Restore all spent Armor Slots.
- **Prepare:** Restore Hope to its normal starting value if Awakened, or restore Resolve to its pool maximum if Sleeping. Rest never generates Effort (Chapter 7).

A character cannot choose the same move twice during one Long Rest unless a feature explicitly allows it. Features that refresh on a Long Rest do so after the chosen moves are resolved.

DOWNTIME

Downtime lasts days or weeks between active arcs. All HP, Stress, Armor Slots, and renewable character resources return to maximum. Characters may also undertake advancement, projects, training, repairs, relationship work, and other Downtime activities.

ADVANTAGE AND DISADVANTAGE

When the situation favors or hinders an action, the player rolls with **Advantage** or **Disadvantage**.

A roll with Advantage adds an extra **d6** (the **Hope boon die**) to the total. A roll with Disadvantage adds an extra **d6** (the **Fear bane die**) and *subtracts* it from the total. Only one Advantage die or one Disadvantage die may apply to any given roll, they do not stack, regardless of how many sources contributed. If both Advantage and Disadvantage apply to the same roll, they cancel out and the roll proceeds without either.

Sources of Advantage include:

- **Help action:** Another character spends 1 path resource (Hope if Awakened, Effort if Sleeping), or takes 1 Stress if a feature or the Keeper permits it, to assist.
- **Favorable conditions:** The Keeper grants Advantage when the fiction warrants, high ground, a relevant tool, surprise, a well-prepared plan that has been laid in advance.
- **Specific abilities:** Some Class features, Experiences, and Domain Powers grant Advantage on specific roll types.

Sources of Disadvantage include:

- **Adverse conditions:** Wounded, exhausted, in a hostile environment, working with broken equipment.
- **Compounding penalties:** Multiple problems pressing on the same action simultaneously.
- **Specific abilities used against the character:** Some adversaries impose Disadvantage on their targets.

The boon/bane die does not count toward the Hope-vs-Fear comparison. Only the two main d12s determine which side of the duality favored the roll. The d6 is a pure modifier on the total.

ACTION TYPES

Most rolls in *Veilfarers* are **Standard rolls**: one player rolls, the result is compared to a DC, the outcome is narrated. Most of this chapter so far has assumed Standard rolls. Three additional action types appear regularly enough to warrant explicit description.

Contested rolls happen when two characters are actively opposing each other and there is no clean DC to set. Both characters roll a Duality Roll for their respective actions; the higher total wins. If totals are equal, the character whose Hope-vs-Fear comparison was more favorable wins; if those are also equal, the situation continues unresolved and is rerolled or handled narratively. Contested rolls are common in opposed actions like sneaking past a guard, arm-wrestling, or attempting to outmaneuver a pursuer.

Group rolls happen when multiple characters attempt the same action together. Before any dice are rolled, fix one standard DC and one threshold from the list below according to the declared task; neither changes after a result is visible:

- **Anyone:** at least one character must succeed.
- **Half:** at least half the group must succeed.
- **Most:** a clear majority must succeed.
- **All:** everyone must succeed.

Each character rolls their own Duality Roll; the success threshold determines whether the group action succeeds. Path resources and Fear are tracked individually for each player Roll, so a group action can produce multiple gains. A group sneak that produces three Successes with Fear gives the Keeper 3 Fear, subject to the hard maximum of 12; the group still gets past the guard.

Extended actions are actions that take time or accumulate progress. The Keeper sets up a **progress clock** typically a circle divided into 4,

6, or 8 segments, and each roll the players make against the action fills segments based on the outcome. A standard structure:

- Critical Success: fill 3 segments.
- Success with Hope: fill 2 segments.
- Success with Fear: fill 2 segments, but the Keeper takes 1 Fear, subject to the hard maximum of 12.
- Failure with Hope: fill 1 segment.
- Failure with Fear: fill 0 segments, the Keeper takes 1 Fear, subject to the hard maximum of 12, and a complication arrives.

When the clock fills, the action completes. Extended actions are useful for scenes that should take time, repairing a damaged drive, investigating a complex mystery, persuading a reluctant dignitary across multiple conversations.

GEAR 2, TENSION CLOCKS (RECOMMENDED OPTIONAL)

Many Keepers run *opposing* clocks alongside player progress clocks. As the player clock fills toward success, a Keeper-controlled tension clock fills toward consequence, the building alarm, the approaching enemy, the deteriorating situation. Whichever clock fills first determines the outcome. This rule sharpens extended actions by giving them a deadline; it works particularly well in heist-style or chase-style scenes. The Keeper's Companion expands on parallel clocks and their pacing in depth.

SPOTLIGHT AND PACING

Veilfarers does not have rigid initiative outside of structured combat. Most of the time, the **spotlight** moves around the table organically: the Keeper describes a scene, players say what their characters do, the Keeper resolves and describes the consequences, and the cycle continues. Players naturally take turns; characters who have something to do tend to act, and characters who are quiet tend to stay quiet. The Keeper's job is to ensure that no player goes too long without the spotlight resting on them.

A useful pacing tool is the **spotlight check**: at any moment the Keeper should be able to name, off the top of their head, which player has had the spotlight least recently in this session. If the answer is "I don't know," the Keeper should pause, look around the table, and direct attention toward whoever has been quiet. This is not about forcing reluctant players to act; it is about ensuring that players who *want* to act but have been crowded out by louder voices get their moment. In shared scenes, a drone run, a ritual, a bridge crewed by three, move the spotlight by asking who takes control, who interprets, who risks, and who pays. Fictional characters can be quiet for narrative reasons; players generally should not be quiet for table-dynamics reasons.

In combat (Chapter 10), the Spotlight is more structured. Every eligible participant receives one Spotlight per round. NPC Spotlights do not cost Fear; spending 1 Fear only moves one eligible NPC that has not acted yet earlier in the current cycle, and never grants a second Spotlight.

The Hope and Fear economy interacts with spotlight in subtle ways. A player whose character has just had a long spotlight may find that the Keeper is sitting on Fear and looking for a moment to spend it; this is the system telling the table that pressure is mounting and a complication is approaching. A Keeper whose Fear pool is nearly empty cannot push hard, and the players can lean into that breathing room to take risks they might otherwise avoid. The flow of the resources, made visible to the table, becomes part of the pacing language.

COMMON QUESTIONS AND EDGE CASES

A few questions arise often enough at new tables to warrant explicit answers.

Can a player spend Hope after seeing the dice? No. Hope is committed before the roll. The exception is Hope spent on outcomes the player did not choose to spend on, Domain Powers explicitly triggered by a Failure with Hope, for example, or post-roll abilities tied to specific outcomes. The general rule is: pre-roll commitment for advantage; post-roll spends only when the rules text explicitly allows it.

Can the Keeper raise the DC after the dice are rolled? No. The DC must be set before the dice come to rest, even if it is not announced to the players. A Keeper who finds themselves wanting to adjust the DC after seeing the result is a Keeper whose intuition about the difficulty was wrong; the correct response is to honor the original number and remember the calibration error for next time.

What if a player wants to retry a failed action? The fiction has to support the retry. A failed lockpick attempt cannot simply be re-rolled, the lock has not changed, the character's skill has not changed, and the previous failure is part of the story now. A retry is appropriate when something has *changed*, the character has new information, new equipment, or new help from a teammate. Otherwise, the failure stands and the story moves to whatever happens next.

What happens at zero path resource? Nothing mechanical, by itself. A character with zero Hope (Awakened) or zero Effort (Sleeping) simply has none to spend until they earn more. They can still roll Duality Rolls normally, generate path resources on Hope-dominant outcomes, and act on the fiction. The character is operationally fine; they just have fewer options for forcing outcomes.

What happens at full path resource? An Awakened character at the 6 Hope cap simply does not gain additional Hope; a Sleeping character at their Effort cap still marks the Effort Track, but a completed track grants nothing until there is room. Rolls that would have produced resource above the cap produce nothing. Many players play at or near the cap intentionally, leaning on Hope as a constant resource. This is fine. The cap exists to prevent unbounded accumulation, not to punish careful play.

How does the table handle disagreements over what a roll meant? The fiction-first principle answers most of these. If the Keeper's interpretation of a result feels wrong to the players, the table talks about it. A Keeper who has narrated a Success with Fear in a way that feels unfair can be asked to renegotiate the complication. A player whose Critical Success seems undersold can ask for the bonus to land harder. The dice produce the broad shape of the outcome; the table fills in the specifics together.

Does the Keeper roll Duality Dice? Outside of combat, almost never. For non-combat uncertainty, the Keeper sets DCs and adjudicates outcomes; the players roll the dice that resolve it. When a player rolls to deceive a guard, it is the *player* who rolls against a DC the Keeper has set, not the guard rolling Insight against the player's roll. **Combat attack rolls are the standing exception:** the Keeper rolls Duality Dice for every NPC's attack against a target's Evasion, exactly as a player rolls an attack against an NPC's Evasion (Chapter 10, and see *Keeper Critical Damage*, above). This keeps the dice in the players' hands for the game's non-combat uncertainty while giving combat, where both sides are actively opposing each other, its own symmetrical procedure. Some further specific subsystems (mass combat, ship-to-ship, certain extended actions) call for additional Keeper rolls; these are detailed in their respective chapters.

GEAR 1, SAYING YES TO STYLE (OPTIONAL ATMOSPHERIC RULE)

When a player invokes a specific fact already established in play and explains how it materially improves the approach, grant Advantage. Style or performance quality alone grants no modifier, and this optional rule never changes a DC after it is fixed.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER: A WORKED EXAMPLE

The following is a short scene from an imagined session, with all rolls shown.

Captain Maren Solas of the Free Fleet vessel *Vagrant Star* has docked at a station on the rim and learned, from a contact in a back-alley bar, that her engineer Yelena's missing brother is being held by a House Volkov enforcer in a private suite four levels up. Maren has decided to confront the enforcer directly. Her crew, Yelena (engineer, Sleeping); Doctor Tibalt (medic, Awakened Mystic); and Riven (pilot, Awakened, Free Fleet-trained), accompanies her.

The crew rides the lift to level four. The corridor is empty. The suite door is at the end.

The Keeper describes the door, heavy, House Volkov insignia, and asks Maren what she does. Maren chooses to knock, calmly, presenting herself as a courier with a delivery. This is a Presence-based action with deception; the Keeper sets DC 15.

Maren rolls **2d12 - 1 (Presence)**. Hope die shows 6. Fear die shows 10. Total before modifiers: 16. Minus 1 Presence: 15. The Fear die was higher.

Success with Fear, total 15 vs DC 15. The door opens, but the Volkov enforcer at the threshold takes one look at Maren, recognizes she is not actually a courier, and decides he is interested in why she is pretending to be one. The Keeper takes 1 Fear, subject to the hard maximum of 12.

The enforcer asks Maren to come in and explain herself. The crew enters. The room is luxurious, ill-lit, and holds two more Volkov enforcers Maren had not anticipated. Yelena's brother is sitting on a chair against the back wall, alive but not unbound.

Maren considers her options. She is outnumbered and the situation has shifted. Riven, who is good in a fight but worse in a conversation, declares he wants to scan the room for tactical opportunities, exits, cover, line-of-sight problems, before anyone makes a decisive move. This is a Knowledge-based observation roll. The Keeper sets DC 10.

Riven rolls **2d12 + 1 (Knowledge)**. Hope die shows 9. Fear die shows 4. Total: 14. Hope was higher.

Success with Hope, total 14 vs DC 10. Riven gains 1 Hope. The Keeper describes what Riven sees: a service door behind a tapestry on the left wall, a window that opens onto an exterior gantry, and a tell on the head enforcer's body language that suggests he is more nervous than he is showing.

Maren now has actionable information. She pivots: rather than continuing the courier ruse, she addresses the head enforcer directly, naming him by what she can guess of his rank, and offers to negotiate for the brother's release. This is a Presence Roll to persuade, and the Keeper, given the difficulty of the situation, sets DC 20.

Maren (Awakened) spends 1 Hope to invoke her Experience: *Free Fleet Lifer*, +2.

Maren rolls **2d12 - 1 (Presence) + 2 (Experience)**. Hope die shows 9. Fear die shows 9.

Critical Success. The doubles override the comparison; the result is automatic and exceptional. Maren is Awakened, so she gains 1 Hope and clears 1 Stress.

The Keeper describes the result: the head enforcer's posture shifts. He has been hoping someone would offer him a face-saving way out of this contract, which has gone badly and which his House superiors

are not going to be pleased about. He lowers his weapon, gestures for the others to do the same, and tells Maren he will release the brother in exchange for her solemn word that she will not report the encounter to House Valerius. Maren agrees. The brother is freed. The crew leaves.

This is approximately five minutes of session time. It involved three rolls, one Success with Fear, one Success with Hope, one Critical Success, and saw 1 Fear into the Keeper's pool, 2 Hope and 1 Stress cleared into the players' hands, and one tense scene resolved without violence. The five-outcome Duality Roll structure gave the scene its texture: the door opened with a complication; the observation gave a clean win; the negotiation broke through cleanly when the universe simply *agreed* with what Maren was trying to do.

A thousand such scenes build into a campaign.

WHAT COMES NEXT

This chapter has introduced the Duality Roll, the resources that flow with it, and the action types that extend it. **Chapter 10** covers personal combat in detail: turn structure, damage, conditions, and death moves. Ship-to-ship engagement is its own scale and has its own chapter, **Chapter 17**. **Chapter 11** covers multiclassing and the addition of a second Calling. **Chapter 12** covers advancement, how characters grow over the arc of a campaign. Rest and recovery are defined in this chapter.

For Keepers, the **Keeper's Companion** covers the philosophy and pacing of running *Veilfarers* tables. The technical procedures are in this chapter; the art of running them is there.

For now: you have the resolution mechanic. You have Hope, Fear, Stress, and the DC ladder. You have enough to play. The next thing the system asks you to learn is what happens when the talking stops, when the dice come out for a different reason, and the room becomes something the crew has to survive.

Combat is next.

CHAPTER 10

THE WEIGHT OF STEEL

"There is a moment, after the first shot, before anyone has thought to fire the second, when you can still feel the room. You can still hear breath. You can still smell the air the way it smelled before. After the second shot, you can hear nothing for a while, and the air smells of metal, and the people who are going to die have started

dying. Spend that moment well. It is the only one you get."

Sergeant-Instructor Hira Volkov, Joric Defensive Academy, opening lecture, On the Discipline of the First

Beat

WHAT THIS CHAPTER IS FOR

At a glance. Combat in *Veilfarers* uses the **Duality Roll** from Chapter 9 plus four mechanical layers: **HP** (your life), **Stress** (your composure), **Armor Slots** (a pool that absorbs hits before the body; characters, drones, and vehicles all use the same armor terminology), and **Damage Thresholds** (Major/Severe, these decide how each hit lands). Each round, characters take **one Action** during their **Spotlight**. Attacks roll against **Evasion**; on a hit, roll weapon damage, apply Proficiency scaling, then compare the result to the target's Damage Thresholds. The fiction governs everything; the numbers describe outcomes.

Chapter 9 taught you to roll the Duality Dice. This chapter is what happens when the rolls have weapons in them.

It is not a new game. Combat uses the same Duality Dice, the same Hope and Effort, the same Spotlight and fiction-first principles; only the **stakes** change, because this is where the body breaks and the crew can lose someone. Where this chapter and Chapter 9 ever seem to disagree, Chapter 9 is the foundation, and the first question in any fight is still *what does my character do?* The dice come after.

WHEN COMBAT BEGINS

Combat begins when the fiction tips into violence, and violence becomes the most interesting question in the room. A few patterns:

- **The Ambush.** One side is unprepared. The Keeper narrates the trigger: a door opens, a shot is fired, a body falls. The unprepared side reacts. (See *The First Beat*, below.)
- **The Standoff.** Both sides are aware. Weapons are drawn or implied. The room is tense. The first action, the first roll, is the question of who breaks the tension and how.
- **The Slide.** A scene that did not start as combat tips into it. A negotiation breaks down; a search uncovers a hostile presence; a calm moment is interrupted by an alarm. The Keeper marks the transition by calling for the first combat-relevant roll.

What a round is. A **round** is one full pass of the Spotlight: it ends the moment every eligible participant, players and the Keeper's NPCs alike, has taken one Spotlight. Effects that trigger "at the end of each round" - Bleeding, On Fire, a Veil-Disturbed roll - resolve at that moment, before the next pass begins. The Spotlight is the unit of action; the round is the unit of time built from it.

In all three patterns, the structural change is the same: **the Spotlight tightens**. Outside of combat, the Spotlight passes loosely from player to player as the scene unfolds. Inside combat, it passes deliberately, around the table and to the Keeper's NPCs in turn, with each holder taking one significant action before passing it on.

THE FIRST BEAT

The first action of any combat scene is, by tradition, the most narratively weighted. It sets the tone, establishes positions, and often determines how the rest of the scene will pace. The Keeper should treat the first beat with care:

- **In an Ambush:** the aggressor takes the first Spotlight. The defending players choose which of their characters receives the first PC Spotlight in response.
- **In a Standoff:** the participant whose declared Action breaks the tension takes the first Spotlight. If declarations are genuinely simultaneous, the players choose one PC to act first, then the Keeper takes the next eligible Spotlight. Do not roll initiative.
- **In a Slide:** the player whose scene was interrupted takes the first Spotlight. The Keeper is patient with them; the slide is disorienting, and the first action can be a reaction rather than a strike.

The first beat is not the most important roll; the third or fourth often is. But it is the one the table remembers, and it deserves a moment of attention.

THE ATTACK ROLL

When you act against an opponent who is trying to avoid being hit, you make an **Attack Roll**. This is a specific shape of Core Trait Roll.

PROCEDURE

- **Choose the Trait.** Usually obvious from the action: melee strikes use Strength or Finesse; ranged weapons use Finesse or Instinct; certain class abilities specify their own Trait. The Keeper has final say in ambiguous cases.
- **Roll the Duality Dice.** Two d12, as always, with the Hope/Fear distinction.
- **Add modifiers.** Your Trait modifier, any relevant Experience invocation (spend 1 Hope or Effort), any situational bonuses or penalties (Advantage, cover, suppressive fire, equipment, scene effects).
- **Compare to the target's Evasion.** Evasion is the target's passive defense Difficulty Class. Equal to or above is a hit; below is a miss.

QUICK PROCEDURE - THE ATTACK ROLL

STEP	WHAT HAPPENS
1. Declare	Weapon, target, range band, and what it looks like in the fiction.
2. Attack roll	Duality Roll + Trait vs the target's Evasion . Matched dice hit automatically and critically, whatever the total.
3. Damage	On a hit, roll weapon damage and apply Proficiency scaling.
4. Penetration	The damage type may lower the target's thresholds for this hit (Energy -2, Void -4). Reflective cancels Energy; Wards cancel Void/Neural.
5. Thresholds	Compare the total to Major / Severe for severity; Overkill adds 1 HP per 10 over Severe.
6. Armor	The defender may mark an Armor Slot to drop the severity one tier.
7. Mark HP	The target marks the resulting HP.
8. The dice speak	On a player attack, resolve Path progress or Fear as normal. On a Keeper-controlled attack, nonmatching dominance grants no resource; only a printed action rider may use it.

HIT, MISS, CRITICAL

- **Miss (below Evasion):** The attack does not connect. On a player attack, resolve Path progress or Fear and only an established Failure-with-Fear complication. On a Keeper-controlled attack, nonmatching dominance grants no resource or free complication; a printed action rider may still apply.
- **Hit (equal to or above Evasion):** The attack connects. Roll damage; see below.
- **Critical Hit (matched Duality Dice, both showing the same number):** A signature moment, and it does not care about the total. Matched dice are a Critical Success everywhere in this game (Chapter 9), and combat is not an exception: a Critical Hit connects regardless of the target's Evasion. A pair of ones against a heavily armored foe still lands. Roll **double the weapon's damage dice** (keep modifiers single) and clear 1 Stress. An **Awakened** character also gains **+1 Hope**. A **Sleeping** character instead resolves the critical as Chapter 7 defines it: mark both Effort Track segments, clear the completed Track to gain 1 Effort, then gain one further point in either Effort or Resolve; if Effort is at maximum, take Resolve. See *Critical Damage*, below, for the full treatment.

SPENDING HOPE OR EFFORT ON THE ATTACK

Before rolling, you may declare that one of your **Experiences** applies to this attack. An **Awakened** character spends **1 Hope** to invoke it. A **Sleeping** character spends **nothing**: the Sleeping invoke their Experiences free, once per roll, as Chapter 7 sets out. Add the Experience's flat modifier to the roll. *I held the line at Titan Station* might apply to a defensive shot in a corridor; *Hunter on the Edge of the Wastes* might apply to a long-range rifle shot. The Keeper has final say on relevance.

You may also spend Hope to grant another character **Advantage** on their next attack (see Chapter 9). This is a powerful crew-level option that is often undervalued: a Diplomat with 4 Hope can

convert two of them into Advantage for two ally shots, which is sometimes more impactful than the Diplomat spending them on a class feature.

UNARMED STRIKES

Unarmed strikes. An unarmed strike is a Melee attack (Strength) dealing **d4** physical damage. Proficiency applies normally. Ancestry gifts and class features that modify unarmed damage build on this baseline.

DAMAGE, PROFICIENCY, AND ARMOR

If the attack hits, you roll damage. The procedure:

THE DAMAGE ROLL

- **Roll the weapon's damage dice.** Each weapon lists a die expression, *1d6*, *2d8*, *1d10+2*, and so on. Roll that expression.
- **Apply Proficiency to one listed die.** A weapon's damage expression is its base damage. Choose one die in that expression as the Proficiency Die; for standard weapons, this is the first listed die. Roll that die once per Proficiency rank, and roll every other listed die once. Add the listed flat modifier once. Thus, a **2d8+2** weapon at Proficiency 3 deals **4d8+2**: three copies of one d8, plus the second base d8, plus 2. A **3d6** weapon at Proficiency 2 deals **4d6**. For mixed-die expressions, the weapon entry must identify the Proficiency Die.
- **Add the weapon's damage modifier.** Listed alongside the dice (the +2 in *1d10+2*).
- **Do not add Trait modifiers to damage.** Trait modifiers go on the *attack roll*, not the *damage roll*. This is intentional and keeps the math fast.

DAMAGE THRESHOLDS & ARMOR

Once damage is rolled, the target compares the total against their two **Damage Thresholds**, **Major** and **Severe**, determined by their level and their armor. Where the total falls sets how many HP the hit marks:

- **Minor (below the Major Threshold):** the hit marks **1 HP**. Any attack that connects and is not soaked away costs at least this much.
- **Major (at or above the Major Threshold, below the Severe Threshold):** the hit marks **2 HP**.
- **Severe (at or above the Severe Threshold):** the hit marks **3 HP**.
- **Overkill:** for every full **10 points** by which the damage total exceeds the Severe Threshold, the hit marks **1 additional HP** (Severe plus 10 marks 4 HP, plus 20 marks 5, and so on). Under the optional **Deadly** variant for grittier campaigns, mark 1 additional HP for every **5 points** over Severe instead.
- **Natural Thresholds (no armor).** If you are wearing no armor, your **base Damage Thresholds are Major 2 / Severe 4**, unless an Ancestry Gift says otherwise. Any level bonuses or effects that raise your thresholds still apply on top of the base. Skin, cloth, and everyday clothing do not count as armor: they neither raise your thresholds nor grant Armor Slots.

This means the *amount* of damage rolled translates to *severity* of harm rather than direct HP-by-HP conversion. A glancing 6-point shot hurts the same way as an 11-point shot if both fall below the Major Threshold. A 22-point shot that crosses into Severe territory hurts the same as a 28-point shot that does, until a total climbs a full 10 past the threshold and Overkill begins to bite. This is deliberate: it makes weapons feel weighty (you know if you got hit *badly*) without the math turning combat into a calculator. A hit marks **no HP** only when your armor soaks it entirely (an Armor Slot dropping a Minor hit to nothing), not because a low roll is ignored: any attack

that connects costs at least 1 HP unless something actively absorbs it.

WHAT YOUR DEFENSES DO

It is worth being explicit about what each defensive layer actually does, because they work in sequence and every one of them matters:

QUICK PROCEDURE - THE DEFENSE STACK

LAYER	WHAT IT DECIDES	IN PLAY
Evasion	Whether you are hit at all	An attack that fails to meet your Evasion does nothing.
Damage Thresholds (Major / Severe)	How hard a hit lands once it connects	Better armor and higher level raise your thresholds - most hits against a well-armored target land as a single HP.
Armor Slots	Active soak on top of the thresholds	Mark one to drop a hit a full severity tier, including a Minor hit to no HP at all.
HP	The body itself	Marked only after the thresholds and any marked Armor Slots have done their work.

The intent is simple: armor should absorb the brunt of most attacks. A character in good armor shrugs off the majority of hits as a single HP, spends slots to blunt the dangerous ones (or to wave off a glancing hit entirely), and only bleeds real HP when something heavy, sustained, or *penetrating* gets through. Penetration is the job of the damage type, covered later in this chapter.

ARMOR SLOTS

Armor reduces specific incoming hits via **Armor Slots**. Each armor piece provides a maximum number of slots. Spent slots are restored by choosing **Repair Armor** during a Short Rest or **Repair All Armor** during a Long Rest. Specific gear and abilities may restore additional slots. When you would take HP damage from an attack, you may spend one Armor Slot to **reduce the damage tier**

by one step (Overkill becomes Severe, Severe becomes Major, Major becomes Minor, Minor becomes no HP). Armor Slots are a precious tactical resource, there are scenes where you want to save them for the inevitable third or fourth hit rather than block the first.

A few effects interact with this soak directly. *Crushing* weapons ignore one Armor Slot per hit as the plating buckles. The penetrating damage types (Energy and Void) do **not** ignore Armor Slots; instead they lower your thresholds for the hit, see **Damage Types**, later in this chapter. Nothing in standard Veilfarers ignores your thresholds outright: armor always does *something*.

WORKED EXAMPLE - SPENDING AN ARMOR SLOT

A shot rolls 24 against Saber's thresholds of Major 9 / Severe 17 - Severe, 3 HP incoming. She marks an Armor Slot: the hit drops one tier, to Major, and she marks 2 HP instead of 3. The slot did not subtract 24 down to some lower number; it moved the *hit itself* one rung down the Minor -> Major -> Severe ladder.

Rule Take-Away: An Armor Slot reduces the severity *tier* of a hit, not the damage total rolled. A Crushing weapon's ignored slot works the other way - it removes the defender's ability to spend a slot on that hit at all; it does not add anything to the incoming damage.

DIRECT DAMAGE

Some effects deal **direct HP damage**: the target marks the listed HP without rolling damage against Thresholds and without spending Armor Slots, unless the effect states otherwise. Direct damage is the shared language of structural trauma, of certain Powers, and of technology that ignores plate entirely; when a rule says *mark N HP directly*, this is what it means. If an effect says you take 2 HP, mark 2 HP.

CRITICAL DAMAGE

This is the **player-character** procedure. When a player character scores a Critical Success on an attack roll (matched Duality Dice, whatever the total), they deal **Critical Damage**: roll **double the weapon's damage dice** and add modifiers once. A weapon listed as 2d8+2 with Proficiency 2 deals 3d8+2 normally and **6d8+2** on a Critical Damage roll. A weapon listed as 4d10+4 with Proficiency 2 deals 5d10+4 normally and **10d10+4** on a Critical.

Critical Damage does **not** automatically push the target into Severe or Overkill territory, the rolled total still compares against thresholds. But the doubled dice make it more likely. A Soldier on a Critical Damage roll against a lightly armored opponent is often a one-shot kill, and that is by design: the Soldier earned the moment.

Critical Damage applies to ship weapons and to Domain Powers that resolve via attack rolls. It does *not* apply to abilities that deal *automatic* damage (no attack roll involved) or to environmental hazards that resolve on Reaction Rolls rather than attacks.

Keeper-controlled adversaries do not roll Critical Damage. When a Keeper-controlled attacker scores a Critical Success, use *Keeper Critical Damage* instead (Chapter 9, under *Reading the Outcome*): every damage die in the attack's normal pool is treated as having rolled its maximum value, with no dice rolled at all. The two procedures produce a comparable spike in severity without asking the Keeper to roll double dice pools for every adversary at the table.

HP, DYING, AND DEATH

Every character has **Hit Points**. When you take damage, you mark HP slots off your sheet. When all HP are marked, you are **Dying**.

THE DYING STATE

A character who has marked all their HP is Dying, not dead. Dying is a state, not an event. While Dying:

- **You cannot take actions.** You are unconscious, gravely wounded, or otherwise out of the fight.
- **You are not yet beyond saving.** Allies may attempt to stabilize you (Medical Technician class features apply; the basic Stabilize action requires an adjacent ally and a Knowledge or Finesse roll DC 15).
- **At the beginning of each of your Spotlights while Dying, roll 1d12.** On an 8 or higher, mark 1 Dying Progress. On a 7 or lower, mark no progress and remain Dying. When you mark your second Dying Progress, you enter *Final*.

THE FINAL STATE

A character who has reached Final has minutes, sometimes seconds, left. While Final:

- **Stabilization requires a higher DC.** Use a Knowledge or Finesse Roll against DC 20, or a Medical Technician's specialized Stabilize feature.
- **Some classes can revive you.** The Sleeping Medical Technician's *Last Rite* Mastery feature, certain Mystic procedures, and rare Synthesis Powers can pull a Final character back. Most cannot.

- **At the beginning of each of your Spotlights while Final, roll 1d12.** On an 8 or higher, mark 1 Final Progress. When you mark your second Final Progress, the character dies. Stabilization clears all Dying and Final Progress but does not restore HP.

THE DEATH MOVE: BLAZE OF GLORY

A Dying or Final character may choose to spend their last moment on a **Death Move**, a final act called a **Blaze of Glory**. It is always optional and always the player's choice. Declaring it on your Spotlight replaces your Dying or Final Progress roll: you act one last time, at the height of your power, and then your character dies.

When you make a Death Move, choose one:

- **Overload a Power.** Resolve one Power you can normally use at **double its normal effect**, doubling its dice, duration, targets, or area as the Power defines.
- **Reach beyond your grasp.** Resolve one Power up to **two Levels higher** than you can normally cast, drawing on a Power your character could not otherwise reach.
- **A perfect final act.** Take one action and treat it as an automatic **Critical Success**, with no roll.
- **A killing blow.** Deal damage equal to the **maximum result of your damage dice, resolved as a Critical Success**: maximum dice plus the critical bonus.

A Death Move is a true sacrifice. Once it resolves, the character **dies irrevocably**. They cannot be stabilized, revived, or resurrected by any feature, Power, ancestry trait, or circumstance, and the Long Aftermath does not apply. The death is chosen, final, and complete.

Ship-scale weapon damage uses the same Dying, Final, and voluntary Death Move procedure; see Chapter 17.

DEATH

When a character dies in Veilfarers, they die. The Keeper and the table acknowledge the death. The player takes a short break if they want one. A new character can be introduced in the next session, or the existing player can run an existing NPC for a session, or the table can simply continue with the remaining crew.

Death is **rare** in standard Veilfarers, the threshold system, Armor Slots, Stress mechanics, and the Dying-not-Dead structure all combine to make on-screen PC death an unusual outcome. But death is **possible**, and the system supports it intentionally. A campaign in which no PC has ever been in danger of dying is a campaign whose stakes have never quite been real. The Keeper should not seek deaths; the Keeper should also not prevent them when the fiction calls for them.

THE LONG AFTERMATH

A character who is brought back from Dying or Final does not return at full HP. The default is *return at 1 HP, with one Stress slot newly marked as Long Bruise*, representing the body's memory of having almost ended. Long Bruise persists across short rests; only a Long Rest clears it. Some Mastery features and ancestry traits (Bloomstrider Healing Sap, certain Synthetic features) modify this; consult the relevant entries.

Healing is reflavored by what you are. Organics use First Aid, stims, and rest; a Synthetic is repaired, not treated, and gains nothing from organic medicine. A Synthetic mends mid-fight by injecting Reconstructive Nanites, its equivalent of a stim, or out of combat through self-repair and an engineer's tools. See Chapter 13 for both.

RANGE BANDS AND POSITIONING

Veilfarers uses **abstract range bands**, not a grid. Positions in combat are described by which band the character occupies relative to other combatants and to features of the scene.

THE FIVE BANDS

- **Melee:** Within arm's reach. Hand-to-hand range, knife range, point-blank pistol range. Most melee weapons require Melee. Many ranged weapons take penalties or are unusable at Melee.
- **Very Close:** Within five meters or so, across a room, down a short corridor. Most ranged combat happens here. This is the band that defines "in the fight" for most Veilfarers encounters.
- **Close:** Five to twenty meters. A long room, a city street, a clearing in the brush. Most rifles operate well at Close. Pistols take a penalty.
- **Far:** Twenty to a hundred meters. The far end of a warehouse, a city block, the length of a docking bay. Specialized weapons; sniper territory.
- **Very Far:** Beyond Far. Visible but functionally out of normal combat reach. Requires explicit equipment (long-range scopes, vehicle-mounted weaponry, sniper rifles) to engage.

MOVEMENT BETWEEN BANDS

Moving one range band is a **free part of your action**, in most cases, you can take an action and move one band as the same Spotlight beat. Moving two bands costs your action; moving three bands is, for most characters, only possible across multiple turns. Class features and Domain Powers may modify this (the Ailuran *Metabolic Burst* moves two bands free as part of an action, for instance).

Movement remains normal unless a location, Environment Feature, or equipment entry declared before movement states otherwise. **Difficult Terrain** makes movement of one band consume the character's Action and prevents movement of two bands in the same Spotlight without an explicit feature. Zero-G, vertical movement, and other special traversal use their printed environment or equipment procedure; description alone creates no hidden Roll or penalty.

COVER

Characters in cover gain defensive bonuses:

- **Light Cover** (waist-high obstacles, partial concealment): +1 Evasion against ranged attacks.
- **Heavy Cover** (full-body obstacles, doorways, vehicle hulls): +3 Evasion against ranged attacks. Some ranged attacks may be blocked entirely if line of sight is broken.
- **Total Cover** (full concealment, no line of sight): cannot be targeted by direct attacks. Indirect attacks (grenades, area effects) may still affect.

A character announcing they are taking cover (a free effect, on their Spotlight) gains the appropriate bonus until they move or take an aggressive action that breaks cover.

LINE OF SIGHT

A character cannot be targeted by a direct attack if they cannot be seen by the attacker. Hidden characters (see *The Hidden Condition*, below), characters behind Total Cover, and characters in heavy fog, smoke, or Veil-induced visual disturbance are not valid targets for direct attacks.

This is sometimes ambiguous; the Keeper has final say.

CONDITIONS

When a character takes a condition, through an attack, an effect, an environmental hazard, or a Domain Power, the condition modifies their capabilities until cleared. The canonical conditions are listed below; a handful of abilities reference bespoke named conditions (Bloomstrider Sap-Bleed, Synthetic Recursive Doubt) defined in their respective entries.

Weapon features that apply conditions (*Stunning*, *Entangling*, *Knockdown*, *Ignite*, and the rest of the Chapter 13 glossary) state their own trigger, Resistance Roll, and DC. A feature's Resistance line names the roll used to resist it: the listed Trait as a Reaction Roll against the feature's DC. The condition itself always works as written here.

THE STANDARD CONDITIONS

- **Bleeding.** Mark 1 Stress at the end of each round until stopped (First Aid, or any healing effect). Targets that do not bleed, including most Synthetics, are immune.
- **Blinded.** Disadvantage on attacks and Instinct rolls. Cleared by removing the visual obstruction or a successful Long Rest.
- **Confused.** On your Spotlight, you act against the nearest creature, ally or enemy, or as the inflicting effect specifies. Cleared at the end of the stated duration, or when an ally spends an action to snap you out of it (Presence or Knowledge, DC 10).
- **Cornered.** Cannot move out of Melee with the attacking character. Disadvantage on Agility and Finesse rolls until the cornering ends. Cleared by moving the cornering character out of Melee, knocking them down, or escaping by a successful Strength or Finesse contest (DC 10).
- **Dazed.** Disadvantage on the character's next single action. Cleared after the action resolves.
- **Fleeing.** On your Spotlight, you must move away from the source by the most direct safe route and cannot take aggressive actions against it. Cleared at the end of the stated duration, or when you can no longer see or hear the source.
- **Frightened.** Disadvantage on rolls made against the source of the fear, and you cannot willingly move closer to it. Cleared at the end of the stated duration, when the source is gone, or by an effect that steadies the mind.
- **Hidden.** Cannot be directly targeted by ranged attacks; Advantage on the character's next attack from cover. Broken when the character takes an aggressive action, moves out of cover, or fails an Agility Roll to maintain concealment in changing circumstances.
- **Incapacitated.** Cannot take actions, reactions, or movement; you are unconscious or helpless, but not Dying. Cleared at the end of the stated duration, or when an ally spends an action to rouse you (Knowledge or Instinct, DC 10). Damage dealt to an Incapacitated target hits automatically.
- **Infected.** A wound or contamination is working against you. The inflicting effect states the symptom (commonly 1 Stress per round, or HP that cannot be healed by normal means). Persists through rests until treated: a Knowledge roll with medical training (DC 15), a specialized antidote, or Tier 2+ medical care.
- **On Fire.** Take 1d4 Energy damage with the Fire tag at the end of each round until extinguished by your Action, an ally's Action, immersion, or a source-specific method. Damage applies to Thresholds normally.
- **Poisoned.** Mark 1 Stress at the end of each round until treated (First Aid DC 10, an antidote, or a Long Rest) or until the stated duration ends. Some poisons state a different effect; the source's text prevails. Synthetics and targets immune to toxins ignore this condition.
- **Prone.** Disadvantage on attacks; ranged attackers gain Advantage against you. Cleared by spending a part of an action to stand (free if moving one band).
- **Restrained.** Cannot move. Disadvantage on Agility and Strength rolls. Cleared by an ally taking an action to free you, or by a successful Strength roll (DC 15) on your Spotlight.
- **Silenced.** Cannot speak, cast verbal-component Domain Powers, or coordinate verbally. Cleared by the silencing effect's stated duration or by removing the source.
- **Stunned.** Cannot take any action. Cleared after the next round, or when an ally takes an Action to rouse you with a Knowledge or Instinct Roll, DC 10.
- **Vulnerable.** Attacks against you have Advantage until the condition ends. Cleared at the end of the stated duration; if the source states none, it ends at the end of your next Spotlight.
- **Weakened.** Disadvantage on Strength rolls, and your damage rolls lose your flat modifiers (dice are unaffected). Cleared by the method the source states, or by a Long Rest.

STACKING AND CLEARING

Conditions are durations, not pools, a character is either Stunned or not, regardless of how many sources tried to stun them. A new application does not extend the duration; it refreshes it (the higher of the two durations applies).

A character with multiple conditions applies all of them: a Blinded, Prone character has Disadvantage on attacks (twice, but Disadvantage does not stack mechanically; it just is) and grants Advantage to attackers. The character can still act; they will simply do so badly.

Some Domain Powers and class features apply *Inflicted* versions of conditions that are harder to clear or carry additional effects. These are described per ability.

GEAR, CONDITIONS VS STATES. *Conditions* are what the fight does to you; they clear fast and are listed above. *States* are what the campaign does to you, and each is defined where its system lives: **Dying** and **Final** (this chapter, under HP), **Overwhelmed** (Chapter 9), **Burned Out** (Chapter 7, Sleeping path), and **Long Bruise** (this chapter, under returning from Dying). A Bounty Hunter's *marked quarry* is a class mechanic, not a condition.

HEALING IN COMBAT

Combat healing is fast, partial, and dramatic. There are three main healing avenues during a combat scene:

FIRST AID

Any character may, as an action, perform First Aid on an **organic** ally within Melee range. Synthetics gain nothing from it; see *Field Repair*, below. This requires:

- **A Knowledge or Finesse roll, DC 10.**
- **Access to a basic medkit.** Most characters carry one as part of their starting kit.

On Success: the ally clears 1 HP (one slot) and clears the *Bleeding* condition if present.

On Success with Hope: as Success, plus the ally also clears 1 Stress.

On Failure: no effect. On Failure with Fear: the patient becomes Dazed until the end of their next Spotlight and the medkit use is consumed. Bleeding does not worsen beyond its printed condition.

FIELD REPAIR

A Synthetic is repaired, not treated. Any character may, as an action, perform **Field Repair** on a Synthetic ally within Melee range. This requires a **Knowledge (Tech) Roll, DC 10**, and an engineer's toolkit or a dose of Reconstructive Nanites (Chapter 13) in place of a medkit. On Success the ally clears 1 HP. On Success with Hope it also clears 1 Stress. On Failure there is no effect. On Failure with Fear the Synthetic becomes Dazed until the end of its next Spotlight and the toolkit use or nanite dose is consumed.

CLASS HEALING FEATURES

Several classes have signature healing abilities. The Engineer's Medical Technician subclass is the obvious specialist; certain Diplomat and Vanguard subclasses also have healing-adjacent features. See the relevant class entries.

ANCESTRY-GRANTED HEALING

The Bloomstrider Healing Sap feature is a heal-over-time effect (1 HP per Spotlight for 1d4 of the affected character's Spotlights). Some other ancestry features grant minor regeneration or specific resistance. These are not actions; they apply automatically when triggered.

WHAT HEALING DOES NOT DO IN COMBAT

- **Healing does not clear the Dying or Final state.** A Dying character must be *Stabilized* (DC 15 or higher, depending on state) before normal healing applies. A character cannot be healed back to full HP mid-combat by routine means; the design assumes some persistent injury until the scene ends.
- **Healing does not clear Long Bruise.** That's a Long Rest mechanic only.
- **Healing does not undo Stress in most cases.** Stress is a separate track (Chapter 9); only specific effects clear it.

SPECIAL COMBAT ACTIONS

Beyond standard attacks, combat permits a range of named special actions. Most are available to any character; some require specific class features or proficiency.

AIM

You may spend an action to *aim* at a specific target. Your next attack against that target, taken before your next Spotlight, gains **Advantage**. Aiming is a strong choice when the target is critical (a Keeper-named enemy, a fleeing NPC, a fragile system on a vehicle); it is a poor choice when you might be interrupted before the follow-up.

DISARM

You attack with the explicit goal of stripping a target's weapon from its grip rather than wounding it, so the **attack Roll takes a -4 penalty**. On a Hit you deal no damage; the target chooses Strength or Finesse and makes a Reaction Roll against your attack total. On failure the weapon falls at Melee range, or one band away on a Critical Success; on success the target keeps it. Retrieving it is part of an Action. A weapon fixed to the body or an object the attacker cannot physically move is an invalid target, and the Keeper must state that before the Roll.

PUSH

You attack with the explicit goal of moving the target one range band away. Resolve as a normal attack; on a Hit, no damage, but the target moves one band. On Critical, two bands and the target is Prone. Push is a strong tactical option in environments with hazards (cliffs, open spaces, doors that close).

GRAPPLE

You initiate a clinch with an adjacent target. Resolve via an opposed Strength roll. On Success, the target is *Restrained* and so are you (you are both grappling). The grapple is maintained until one of you breaks free (Strength contest on your Spotlight) or one of you falls Unconscious.

SUPPRESS

You unload a sustained burst from a ranged weapon at an area, aiming to make it unsafe rather than hit a specific target. Before the Roll, set **DC 10 for open ground, DC 15 for broken or Light Cover, or DC 20 for fortified or Heavy Cover**. Make one Finesse or Instinct Roll. On success, every enemy in the targeted area not in Total Cover has Disadvantage on its next Action before your next Spotlight; no damage is dealt. Suppression consumes ammunition rapidly, so the weapon's *Ammo* tag applies if present.

Do not confuse this action with the **Suppressive** weapon tag (Chapter 13), which any character can use *without* giving up their attack. The action costs your whole Spotlight and hobbles every action in the area; the tag rides along with a normal attack for 1 Stress and hobbles attacks only. A character carrying a Suppressive weapon may do either, and the choice is a real one.

CALLED SHOT

Choose one visible called effect before attacking: make one held item drop at Melee range, make one fictionally exposed device go offline until an Action and Knowledge (Tech) Roll, DC 10, restores it, or make the target Dazed. The attack has Disadvantage and deals no damage on a Hit; on a Critical Success it also deals its normal damage. An impossible target must be rejected before the Roll.

DEFEND

You spend your action focused on *not being hit*. Gain +2 Evasion until your next Spotlight. A weak action by itself; a strong action when combined with cover, or when used to wait for an ally's intervention.

STRESS IN COMBAT

Combat is, by its nature, stressful. Beyond the HP track, characters accumulate **Stress** during combat, from near-misses, from witnessing wounds, from the specific cognitive load of violence.

The standard Stress triggers in combat:

- **Marking a Severe wound.** Mark 1 Stress.
- **Watching an ally fall to Dying.** Mark 1 Stress.
- **Burning out (Sleeping path).** Spending HP for Effort, as Burnout, marks 1 Stress automatically.
- **Specific class abilities.** Some class features mark Stress as part of their cost or consequence; follow the feature's current text.
- **Declared mental stakes.** On Failure with Fear, a character may mark 1 Stress as the complication only when shock, terror, exposure, or cognitive overload was named as a plausible stake before the Roll. This is the result's single complication, not an additional penalty.

A character whose Stress slots are all marked is **Overwhelmed**. Overwhelmed characters take Disadvantage on all rolls until they

clear at least one slot. Clearing Stress in combat is rare, some class features (the Soldier's *Rally*, the Vanguard's *Unbroken Focus*) permit it; otherwise, Stress is cleared by Short and Long Rests outside of combat.

The interplay of HP, Stress, and resource pools (Hope or Effort) is the core texture of how combat *feels* in Veilfarers. A character with full HP and full Stress is *not okay*, even though they are taking no immediate injury. A character with low HP and zero Stress is *grimly competent*. The system is designed to surface both states in interesting ways.

CRITICAL HITS

Matching Duality Dice always resolve as a Critical Success, including 1+1. Apply the master payout and the appropriate player or Keeper critical-damage procedure. A nonmatching roll below its DC with Fear dominant is Failure with Fear, the worst normal result. Do not attach a separate negative-critical table, automatic friendly fire, equipment breakage, or catastrophic blowback to matched dice.

MULTI-TARGET AND AREA EFFECTS

Some attacks affect more than one target. These come in two main shapes:

BURST FIRE AND MULTI-ATTACK

A weapon with the *Burst* tag, or a class ability that grants multi-target attacks, resolves as a *single attack roll* against each target in range. Damage is rolled separately per target. Hope/Fear distinctions are tracked per-attack. A Burst weapon firing at three targets makes three attack rolls; each can independently Hit, Miss, or Critical.

AREA EFFECTS

A Power, weapon, or environmental hazard with an *Area* tag affects all characters in a defined region. The effect sets a **DC** before anyone rolls, and each character in the area makes the relevant **Reaction Roll** (2d12 plus the listed Trait against that DC, never adjusted after the fact):

- **Agility Reaction Roll:** for blasts, explosions, sudden falls.
- **Strength Reaction Roll:** for area poisons, environmental damage, and sustained physical effects. Use another Trait only when the Feature itself names that Trait as an option before the Roll.
- **Instinct Reaction Roll:** for area mental effects, fear, and social cascades (Presence may stand in where composure rather than perception is what holds).

A character who *succeeds* takes half damage (or no effect, depending on the source). A character who *fails* takes the full effect. A character who Critically Succeeds takes no damage and clears 1 Stress.

Area attacks ignore most cover unless the cover is explicitly *Total Cover* with respect to the source. A grenade thrown into a room ignores Light and Heavy Cover within that room; a thick blast door blocks it entirely.

VEHICLE AND STARSHIP COMBAT

The combat described in this chapter is **personal-scale** combat, characters with weapons, in rooms or open ground, exchanging fire at human ranges. Veilfarers also has rich rules for **starship combat** (the Spotlight system applies; the scales are different) and **vehicle combat** (lighter rules, often resolved as one or two attack rolls at vehicle-appropriate damage).

Starship combat is covered in detail in Chapter 17. The headline differences:

- **Scales.** Range bands at the starship scale are *kilometers*, not meters. Hull integrity replaces HP. Crew positions matter; the Finesse (Pilot/Navigate) Rolls, the Engineer rolls repair rolls, the Gunner rolls weapon rolls.
- **Round timing.** A starship combat round takes longer in fiction than a personal-scale round, a full Spotlight pass may represent thirty seconds to two minutes of weapon exchange.
- **Death.** Starship "death" is the destruction of the vessel; PC death within a destroyed vessel is then resolved at personal scale (some PCs make it to escape pods, some do not).
- **Specific class roles.** The Pilot is, obviously, the star of starship combat. Soldiers and Vanguards have less to do unless they are crewing weapons; this is intentional. Different scenes belong to different characters.

For now, the rules in this chapter apply to all personal-scale violence: corridor fighting on a station, an ambush in a Frontier Colony's market, a dueling-room standoff between Houses, a boarding action's deck-by-deck advance. Whenever the question is *who shoots whom at human scale*, the answer is here.

COMMON EDGE CASES

A few combat situations come up often enough that they deserve direct treatment.

SURPRISE

A character who is genuinely surprised by an attack, they did not know combat was beginning, the attacker was Hidden, the attack is the first event of the scene, grants the attacker **Advantage on that first attack**; Evasion itself never changes. After the first action, surprise has resolved; the rest of the scene is normal combat.

Surprise is not a tactical condition the players can routinely set up; it is a narrative phenomenon that the Keeper rules on. The Hidden condition above is the closest tactical analogue.

OUTNUMBERED

A character outnumbered three-to-one or worse in Melee takes Disadvantage on all attacks (the body cannot maintain three simultaneous fronts). The single-character Defend action is a good response; allies arriving to break the surround is the better response.

WOUNDED BUT FUNCTIONAL

A character at 1 HP, the last slot, is still functional. They can act, attack, move, take Spotlight beats. They are not Dying until the *next* HP-causing hit. This is significant: a 1-HP character can still be the difference between victory and loss in a final exchange, and many of Veilfarers's most cinematic moments happen at 1 HP.

A character at 1 HP, however, is *visibly hurt*. The Keeper should describe this, labored breath, blood on the wall, a hand pressed to a wound, and NPCs may react accordingly. Some enemies will press the wounded character; some will hesitate; some will spare them entirely. The fiction continues to operate.

FRIENDLY FIRE

In a chaotic combat scene, allies can be hit. The Keeper resolves friendly fire as a standard attack roll with the attacking character's Trait, against the ally's Evasion, *if* the situation plausibly demands it. The trigger is usually a Failure with Fear on a ranged attack in a crowded area. Friendly fire is a dramatic consequence, not a tax: it belongs to the worst moments of a chaotic scene and should never become a routine punishment for shooting near allies.

Friendly fire is uncomfortable and dramatic, and should be used sparingly. The system does not require it; the Keeper invokes it as a story choice.

SURRENDER

Surrender is always on the table, and the game does not punish it.

Combat does not have to end in death or unconsciousness. NPCs may surrender; the players may

surrender (some of the most interesting campaigns we have seen feature one or more surrendered moments). Surrender is a fiction-first move: the surrendering side puts down arms and accepts whatever comes next. The Keeper handles the consequences.

Players considering surrender should know: Veilfarers does not punish surrender. The character lives. What happens after is the next session's question.

DAMAGE TYPES

Every hit has a **damage type**, and the type sets a single value that matters at the table: its **Penetration**. Penetration does not add to the damage roll. Instead it *lowers the defender's Damage Thresholds for that hit only*, making the same roll more likely to climb from Minor into Major or Severe. This is how Veilfarers models armor-piercing weapons without turning them into instant death: armor still cushions, it simply cushions *less* against the right tool.

THE CANONICAL DAMAGE TYPES

- **Physical (Kinetic). Penetration 0.** Mundane force: fists, blades, clubs, slugs, shrapnel, falls, and crushing impacts. Your thresholds apply unchanged. This is the baseline, and it is what most *melee* and *primitive* weapons deal.
- **Energy. Penetration -2.** Coherent or superheated discharge: plasma bolts, las-fire, arc, ion, and particle beams. Treat the target's Major and Severe Thresholds as **2 lower** against the hit. Energy is the standard of the Pearl Era: **nearly every manufactured ranged weapon in this book deals Energy damage**, and it is the assumed default for a modern sidearm or rifle unless its entry says otherwise.
- **Void. Penetration -4.** Force drawn through the Veil, slipping between the layers of ordinary matter. Treat the target's thresholds as 4 lower against the hit. This is heavy penetration, and it is deliberately rare. Any weapon that deals Void damage is always Experimental (Chapter 13): unstable, hand-built or Precursor-salvaged, never mass-produced, and never simply bought off a rack. Domain Powers that deal Void damage are abilities, not weapons, and channel this penetration freely. That is the quiet advantage of the Awakened.

SUBTYPES AND TAGS

- **Neural** is a Void subtype (Penetration -4) that also frays the mind: a successful Neural hit marks **1 Stress** in addition to its HP. Dealt by Neural-Domain Powers and a handful of Experimental Veil-tech weapons.
- **Bleed** is a weapon tag, not a separate type. A Bleed weapon applies the *Bleeding* condition on any Hit regardless of tier; its damage uses whatever base type the weapon lists (usually Physical). The Ailuran *Slash Claw* and certain ceremonial blades carry it.
- **Crushing** is a weapon tag (heavy mauls, gravity slams, vehicle strikes): the hit ignores one Armor Slot. Its base type is Physical unless stated.

COUNTERING PENETRATION: WARDS AND ARMOR TAGS

Penetration is not unanswerable. Specific protections cancel it:

- A **Ward** (against Void or Neural) reduces that type's Penetration to **0** against you: resolve the hit as if your full thresholds applied. Wards are bought through Advancement (Chapter 12) or granted by class and Ancestry features. Under the old rules Void ignored armor outright; it no longer does, so a Ward now sharpens a defense you already have rather than being the only thing between you and a Void blade.
- The **Reflective** armor tag cancels **Energy** Penetration (treat Energy as Penetration 0 against you). The **Composite** tag blunts **Crushing** the same way. See Chapter 13 for the armors that carry these tags.

When you take damage, the Keeper names the type and its penetration ("7 points, Energy"). **Subtract 2** for Energy, or 4 for Void and Neural, from *both* your Major and Severe Thresholds for that hit only. Resolve severity against the reduced numbers, then spend Armor Slots as normal. Physical subtracts nothing, and a Ward or Reflective tag returns the subtraction to zero against the type it counters.

DAMAGE TYPE	PENETRATION	TYPICAL SOURCE	CANCELLED BY
Physical (Kinetic)	0	melee, slugs, fists, falls, shrapnel	(full thresholds already)
Energy	-2	plasma, las, arc, ion, particle (most weapons)	Reflective armor
Void	-4	Experimental Veil-tech weapons; Veil Powers	Wards
Neural (Void subtype)	-4, +1 Stress	Neural Powers; Experimental tech	Wards

COMBAT IN UNUSUAL ENVIRONMENTS

Veilfarers's setting is overwhelmingly *space*, which means the standard rules of "two characters on a flat floor with reasonable air" frequently do not apply. The procedure for unusual environments is the same as standard combat, with the modifications listed below.

ZERO-GRAVITY COMBAT

Combat in zero-G, boarding actions on vessels with damaged grav-plating, EVA encounters, asteroid mining accidents, has the following texture:

- **Movement requires a Reaction or push-off.** A character in zero-G cannot simply walk a band. They must brace, push off a surface (or another character), and travel in a straight line until they hit something. Moving one band costs an action unless the character has *Vacuum Training* (an Experience or feature granted by Free Fleet community, by Pilot class, or by extensive scene-time in zero-G).
- **Recoil matters.** Firing a ranged weapon in zero-G with no brace point creates equal-and-opposite movement. The character is pushed one range band away from the target unless braced.
- **No Cover, mostly.** Most zero-G environments are open. Cover is rare and valuable; debris fields and broken hull sections can provide it, but the default is "exposed."

- **Falling is different.** A Prone character has lost orientation. They cannot clear Prone through ordinary standing movement; they must spend an Action and make an Agility Roll, DC 10, to reorient.
- **Bleeding and breathing.** Bleeding and suffocation use their printed timing. Reaching 0 HP in zero-G or vacuum enters Dying and then Final normally; the environment never skips either state or the voluntary Death Move.

VACUUM

Combat in actual vacuum, no atmosphere, adds the constraints of zero-G plus:

- **Suit integrity matters.** An intact pressurized suit prevents vacuum exposure. After an attack resolves Failure with Fear and causes the wearer HP loss, that player either spends 1 available Armor Slot or the suit becomes **Breached**. A Breached or unsealed character marks 1 direct HP and 1 Stress at the end of each round. Spend an Action and succeed on Knowledge (Tech), DC 10, with a patch kit to restore the seal. At 0 HP use normal Dying and Final. No separate Seal Integrity track exists.
- **Sound does not carry.** Communication is via radio only. A character whose helmet radio is destroyed is, effectively, silenced.
- **No ambient combustion.** Weapon damage is unchanged in vacuum. On Fire applies only when the source explicitly carries oxidizer or the target is inside a pressurized atmosphere; otherwise a Fire-tagged hit deals its listed Energy damage without applying On Fire.
- **The Free Fleet's specialty.** A character with Vacuum Training ignores the movement Disadvantage from zero-G or vacuum. A character without it has Disadvantage on Agility or Strength Rolls made to move, brace, or reorient there.

HOSTILE ATMOSPHERES

Name the atmosphere's one active hazard before the scene. An unsealed character who enters or begins a Spotlight exposed makes a Strength Reaction Roll: DC 10 for irritating, DC 15 for toxic, DC 20 for lethal. On failure take 1d6 Energy damage with the appropriate Chemical or Corrosive tag and mark 1 Stress; on success take half damage and no Stress. A sealed suit prevents exposure while intact. Equipment never malfunctions merely because the atmosphere is hostile; a printed hazard or Failure with Fear must name the exposed device and how long it is offline.

SUBMERGED COMBAT

Unless a weapon is explicitly Submersible, reduce its maximum range one band: Very Far to Far, Far to Close, Close to Very Close, and Very Close to Melee; a Melee-only weapon remains Melee. Melee attacks have Disadvantage unless the weapon is designed for submerged use. Moving one band uses the character's Action; an explicit swimming or Submersible feature may override this. Energy damage with an Electrical tag affects every unsealed creature within Very Close of the original target, which makes an Agility Reaction Roll against the attacker's Feature DC and takes half the original damage on failure, none on success.

VEIL-DISTURBED COMBAT

At the start of each round near an active Veil phenomenon, roll 1d6 once and apply the result until the round ends:

- **1, Reality Flicker:** all attacks have Disadvantage.
- **2, Cooperative Substrate:** each Awakened character gains 1 Hope, subject to cap; each Sleeping character marks one Effort Track segment. This generates no Fear.
- **3, Distortion:** for attacks only, every target beyond Melee is treated as one personal range band farther away.
- **4, Time Stutter:** every participant becomes Dazed. No one loses a Spotlight.
- **5, Premonition:** Instinct Rolls have Advantage.
- **6, Void Trajectory:** attacks dealing Void damage have Advantage; other attacks are normal.

This table never changes matched dice, creates an undefined ancestry category, or selects one character for a lost Action.

Veil-Disturbed combat is one of the more memorable kinds of fight the system produces. Use sparingly; design accordingly.

MASS COMBAT AND SET-PIECE SCENARIOS

Not every combat is six characters versus six characters. Veilfarers' combat scales to handle larger and smaller engagements.

OUTNUMBERED ENCOUNTERS

When PCs face many lower-threat opponents, a squad of pirates, a security team, a mob, the Keeper has two options:

- **Run them as standard NPCs.** Each pirate has HP, Evasion, attacks. This is appropriate for tactically important opponents and for encounters where individual opponents matter.
- **Run them as a Threat Group.** Pool the opposition into a single tracked entity with combined HP, a single Attack value, and a "Spotlight Per Two" rule (the group acts once for every two characters in the group, on a single Spotlight beat). When the group's HP is reduced to specific thresholds, individual members fall, but the group does not have to be tracked per-member. Threat Groups are the right call for most "minions" encounters. The system is not designed for tracking twelve individual pirates' HP across a fifteen-round skirmish; it is designed for *telling the story of the PCs cutting through twelve pirates*. The Threat Group abstracts the bookkeeping while keeping the threat real.

OUTNUMBERED: THE OTHER DIRECTION

Sometimes one PC faces many opponents alone, the Soldier holding the corridor, the Vanguard buying the crew time to escape. The system handles this through:

- **Cover and positioning.** A character with the corridor advantage gains *Heavy Cover* against the rush.
- **Class features.** The Soldier's *Combat Surge* (or Sleeping equivalent *The Held Line*) is designed for exactly this scenario. The Vanguard's Disciplined State is similar.
- **Stress accumulation.** The character will not, mechanically, *die* easily, but they will accumulate Stress fast. By round three of a one-versus-eight, they will be Overwhelmed.

The narrative scenario of "the Soldier alone, holding off the world while the crew escapes" is *supported* by Veilfarers, both mechanically and emotionally. It is, often, one of the great moments of a campaign. Plan for it.

BOARDING ACTIONS

The setting's signature combat scenario is the **boarding action** two starships have made contact, an entry has been cut or forced, and combat now happens deck-by-deck inside a confined vessel.

Boarding actions have a specific texture:

- **The space is constrained.** Most encounters are Very Close or Melee range. Cover is rich (bulkheads, equipment), but so is risk (explosive decompression, fuel lines, plasma conduits).
- **Multiple combat scenes, not one.** A typical boarding action has three to five small combat scenes, the breach, the corridor, the

bridge, the engine room. Each is a discrete encounter, with brief breath between them. Manage Stress accumulation accordingly.

- **The vessel itself can intervene.** A Pilot at the helm of one of the ships may, mid-boarding, change the engagement (sudden braking, gravity-loss, atmospheric vent). Coordinate with the boarding party; the Pilot is not idle.
- **Hostage and capture scenarios.** Boarding is often *for* something, a cargo, a person, intelligence. The combat is in service of the objective; the objective is in service of the campaign.

Chapter 17 will cover the specific mechanics of a boarding action's *interface* with starship combat. The personal-scale combat happens here; the structural choreography of the boarding (when ships disengage, when boarding party retreats, etc.) happens at the starship layer.

WORKED EXAMPLE: THE CORRIDOR AT TELLURIAN REACH

A combat scene, walked through end to end, to show how the rules above feel in play.

The scene: the crew of the *Vagrant Star*, Captain Maren (Awakened Pilot), Specialist Vell (Sleeping Engineer), Initiate Tovel (Sleeping Mystic), and the Awakened Soldier Saber Volkov, have boarded the derelict freighter *Tellurian Reach* in search of a cargo manifest. They have advanced down two corridors without incident. Opening the third door reveals a security squad of four pirates, weapons drawn, with one of the pirates already in cover behind a structural beam.

SETUP

- **First beat:** Ambush, *in our favor*. The pirates were the ones expecting trouble, but the crew has the doorway. The Keeper rules that the crew gets the first action; the pirates were not specifically prepared for this exact door at this exact moment.
- **Range:** All four pirates are at *Very Close* range. One is in *Heavy Cover* (the beam). The corridor itself is *Light Cover* for anyone hugging the walls.
- **Opposition:** The four pirates use the Threat Group rule. A group of four receives exactly two Spotlights each round, one for each pair. Fear can move either eligible Spotlight earlier but cannot add a third.
- **Stakes:** The crew needs the manifest from the workstation beyond. The pirates need to prevent that. Retreat is possible for either side but costly.

ROUND 1

Saber (Awakened Soldier) takes Spotlight first. She has been positioned for exactly this kind of moment, and she takes it. She announces: *"Suppressing fire down the right wall, I want to keep them pinned behind the beam."* She rolls Finesse + Duality (her +2 Finesse, +0 modifier from the suppress action since the corridor is narrow and her line is good). She rolls a 14, Hope-dominant. The pirates not in cover take Disadvantage on their next actions; the pirate behind the beam is unaffected.

The pirates take their first Threat Group Spotlight. Three duck back under the suppression while the pirate in cover fires at Saber. Attack Roll: 11 against Saber's Evasion 10 (Soldier base 9, plus 1 from Light Cover). The hit is Hope-dominant, but a Keeper-controlled nonmatching attack grants no path resource and has no free rider. Its 4 Kinetic damage is below Major 9, so Saber marks **1 HP**.

Vell takes Spotlight. She announces: *"I'm at the panel. Right wall, second junction. I want to override the corridor's lighting, kill the lights down their end of the corridor."* This is not an attack; it is a Knowledge Roll. She rolls a Knowledge Duality Roll. Critical Success, matched 9+9,

total 20 with her +2 Knowledge. The lights go out on the pirates' end of the corridor. They now have Disadvantage on ranged attacks against the crew. Vell is Sleeping, so the critical resolves her way (Chapter 7): she marks *both* segments of her Effort Track at once, clears them for 1 Effort, clears 1 Stress, and takes the critical's extra point - she puts it in Resolve, banking it for a Move she can feel coming.

The pirates take their second and final Threat Group Spotlight. Still suppressed and now in darkness, the pirate in cover fires with Disadvantage: 12 against Saber's Evasion 10. The hit is Fear-dominant, but Keeper-controlled nonmatching dominance does not generate Fear or invent a Condition. The weapon has no Bleeding rider. Its 7 Kinetic damage is still below Major 9, so Saber marks **1 HP** and nothing else.

Tovel takes Spotlight. He is the negative empath of the group, the academic, the one nobody expects to be useful in combat. He announces: *"I'm using my Veil- Reading on the pirate behind the beam. I want to know if he's about to flee."* This is the Sleeping Mystic's *Cold Read* in a tense context. He rolls a Knowledge Duality Roll, spends 1 Effort. Success with Hope: the Keeper tells him the pirate is *holding for backup, not for the fight*. Tovel turns to Maren and says, *"He thinks more are coming. If we don't end this fast, this gets bigger."*

Maren takes Spotlight. She is not the combat character of the crew, but she has a clear shot. She announces: *"I'm putting a needle round into the pirate's right hand. Disarm."* Called Shot, Finesse attack, Disadvantage. She rolls Duality + Finesse +1 + the *Free Fleet Lifer* Experience for +2 (spends 1 Hope). Result: 17 vs the pirate's Evasion 11 + Heavy Cover +3 = 14. Hit. The Called Shot resolves as a disarm: the pirate drops their weapon, which falls out of Melee reach. The pirate is now unarmed.

End of Round 1. The pirates are in disarray. Saber is wounded but functional. Vell has tipped the lighting. Tovel has the intelligence. Maren has neutralized the threat-leader.

ROUND 2

Saber's Spotlight. She wants to close. The pirates are at *Very Close*, so Melee is exactly **one band away** - and moving one band is a free part of her action, not a replacement for it. She crosses the corridor and swings in the same Spotlight beat, no special permission required. The pirate, unarmed and surprised, is trying to back away and does not get to leave before she arrives. Her attack: melee, Strength + Duality, +2 modifier. Critical hit on matched 8+8. Doubled damage dice, her standard 1d10 becomes 2d10, rolls 14. That crosses the pirate's **Severe** threshold: **3 HP** on a pirate with three. The pirate falls. Saber, who is Awakened, gains 1 Hope and clears 1 Stress.

The Keeper's pirates. Three pirates remain, in darkness, with their leader down. The Keeper rules they break: one runs, two surrender. Combat is effectively over.

The cleanup. Tovel performs First Aid on Saber (Knowledge Roll, DC 10, succeeds). She regains 1 HP. The party advances to the workstation. The manifest is theirs.

AFTERMATH

The party has taken minor damage. Saber is at **6 HP of 7** (started full, marked 1 and 1, healed 1). Maren, who is Awakened, spent 1 Hope on her Experience. Tovel spent 1 Effort on Cold Read. Vell finished her Effort Track for 1 Effort and banked 1 Resolve. Saber gained 1 Hope. The pirates' bodies are searched; the surrendered pirates are bound; the manifest is in the crew's hands.

The combat took twelve minutes at the table and represents perhaps ninety seconds in fiction. It produced: a clean victory, one wound, one used resource, one piece of intelligence, two prisoners, and a

stage for the next scene (the runaway pirate is now reporting to someone; the campaign continues).

This is, broadly, what Veilfarers combat looks like when it goes well. Not all of them go this well. The next one, on the same boarding action, may go badly.

For the table that needs the procedure at a glance - the Attack Roll and the Defense Stack now have their own boxes earlier in this chapter (*The Attack Roll* and *What Your Defenses Do*); what follows fills in the rest:

- **Critical Hit:** Matched Duality dice, whatever the total - it connects regardless of Evasion. Roll double damage dice. Clear 1 Stress, then take the Path payout (Awakened 1 Hope; Sleeping complete the Effort Track and place 1 further point - Chapter 9, *What a Critical Success Pays*).
- **Damage type (Penetration):** Physical 0; Energy -2 to the target's thresholds (the standard for manufactured weapons); Void -4 (Experimental weapons only). Penetration lowers thresholds for that hit; it never bypasses armor. Wards cancel Void and Neural penetration; Reflective armor cancels Energy.
- **Conditions:** Standard list above; check entry for application and clear conditions.
- **Range:** Five bands, Melee, Very Close, Close, Far, Very Far. Move one free; two costs action; three is multi-turn.
- **Cover:** Light +1 Evasion; Heavy +3; Total = no direct LoS.
- **Dying:** All HP marked. Stabilize DC 15 (Knowledge or Finesse). Each Spotlight, roll 1d12: 8+ marks Dying Progress; a 2nd Progress moves the character to Final (Stabilize DC 20; same roll; a 2nd Final Progress is death).
- **Healing:** First Aid DC 10 = 1 HP + remove Bleeding. Class abilities and Ancestry effects apply.
- **Stress:** Standard triggers; Overwhelmed at full Stress.
- **Hope/Effort spend:** Experience invocation (flat bonus), Advantage for ally, class feature triggers.
- **Spotlight:** Tightens in combat. Each character takes one significant action per pass.

When in doubt: ask what the character is trying to do, choose the right Trait, and roll.

CLOSING: A NOTE ON LETHALITY

Personal combat here is dangerous but not relentlessly lethal: thresholds, Armor, Stress, and the Dying-not-Dead structure make PC death rare, perhaps once or twice across a long campaign. Design encounters around *cumulative depletion* rather than the lucky one-shot; the real weight of steel is the running cost of doing this work, session after session, in a galaxy that does not care whether the crew makes it home.

CHAPTER 11

THE SECOND CALLING

"The Engineer who became a Mystic at thirty-four did not stop being an Engineer. She still ran diagnostics on the Pelican every morning. She had just, somewhere between the plasma manifold and the substrate sensor, started to hear the substrate she was sensing. The toolbelt did not lose its meaning. It gained another."

Doctor Emeline Skarrh, Spire of Verita

At a glance. At Tier 2 (level 5), a Voidwalker may multiclass: take a second Class, gaining its secondary **Hope or Effort Feature** and a new Background Question. An **Awakened** multiclass activates one genuinely new Domain from the second Class. A **Sleeping** multiclass instead learns one eligible Class Resolve Move from the second Class and records that genuinely new Domain as **Dormant**. Multiclass costs both of that level's Advancement Slots on either Path. It may be done only once per character and is a story event, not a power build. You do not gain the new Class's Class Feature, Subclass, starter Loadout, or Class Items.

WHAT MULTICLASSING IS

Most characters answer the question *what do you do at the table?* with one Class for an entire campaign. The Class is a deep well, and most characters spend their careers drinking from it. Some, at some moment, find a second well.

Multiclassing is the procedure for adding a second Class to a character's identity. It is rare by design (most six-person crews see one or two across a campaign, many see none) and it should come from the events of play. A player who wants it at level 5 with no narrative reason should be asked: what happened in our story that makes this make sense? If the answer is nothing, the moment has not arrived yet.

WHEN YOU CAN MULTICLASS

- **Tier 2 or later.** Available at **level 5**; before that, a character is still establishing their first Class.
- **Once per character, ever.** The second Class is a singular addition, not a stack. A Pilot who multiclasses into Mystic at level 5 cannot later add Engineer.
- **Two-Slot cost on either Path.** Multiclass consumes both Advancement Slots for its level. An **Awakened** multiclass gains active Domain breadth and future Power access. A **Sleeping** multiclass gains one Class Resolve Move from the second Class and records a Dormant Domain that can activate only if the character Awakens.
- **Not into the same Class.** The Awakened and Sleeping versions are two expressions of the same Class, not separate Classes for multiclass eligibility.
- **Keeper approves the justification.** The narrative reason is the gate; the mechanics follow it.

WHAT YOU GAIN

- **A secondary Path Feature.** You gain the new Class's **Hope Feature** if you are Awakened or its **Effort Feature** if you are Sleeping. It is invoked from your existing resource pool. These Features are not Powers and occupy no Loadout slot. You do not gain the second Class's separate **Class Feature**.
- **Awakened - one active Domain.** The new Class brings one of its two Domains into your accessible set. It must be genuinely new: it cannot duplicate either original Domain or another Domain already granted by a Class or Subclass. It is accessible at **half your level, rounded up**, for the purpose of which Power Levels you can reach. Its Powers are acquired one at a time through advancement and enter your **Vault**, not your Loadout. Your Loadout cap does not grow.
- **Sleeping - one Class Resolve Move and one Dormant Domain.** Choose one of the second Class's **Class Resolve Moves**. The Move must function without a Class Feature you do not possess; a Move whose procedure depends on that Feature is not eligible. You use your existing Resolve pool and gain no additional Resolve. Also choose one genuinely new Domain from the second Class and record it as **Dormant**. A Dormant Domain grants no Power, Vault, Loadout, access roll, or other benefit while you remain Sleeping.
- **A new Background Question.** Answer the new Class's Background Question (Chapter 6 or 7). It is a roleplaying prompt that forces a narrative reason for the second Class to exist in this character's life, and it becomes permanent canon for the Keeper to draw on.

Your **HP, Evasion, Stress, resource cap, Proficiency, and Traits** stay at your **full current level**. Multiclassing adds to identity; it does not halve progression.

WHAT YOU DO NOT GAIN

- **No second Class Feature.** Multiclass grants the secondary Hope or Effort Feature, not the second Class's separate Class Feature.
- **No Subclass in the new Class.** The half-level addition is not deep enough to support one; Subclass Upgrades (Chapter 12) always belong to your original Class.
- **No starter Loadout.** New-Domain Powers arrive one at a time through advancement, not as the **two-Power** Starter Loadout granted at character creation.
- **No iconic Class Items.** Acquire them in the fiction if you want them.
- **No second set of Tier Achievements.** Tier Achievements apply to the *character*, not to each Class.
- **No larger Loadout cap.** You manage a wider Vault from the same active set, which is the interesting part: what do you bring into today's scene?

PATH AND MULTICLASSING

A multiclassed character always runs on **one accumulating resource pool**, the one their Path already uses, and it fuels every secondary Hope or Effort Feature and every Power they have. Multiclassing never grants a second pool.

Your current Path governs both Classes. An Awakened Pilot who multiclasses into Mystic uses the Awakened Mystic package: the

secondary Hope Feature costs Hope and the genuinely new Domain is active. A Sleeping Engineer who multiclasses into Diplomat uses the Sleeping Diplomat package: the secondary Effort Feature costs Effort, one eligible secondary Class Resolve Move is added, and the new Domain remains Dormant. Mixed-Path multiclass packages are not used in the Core.

A Sleeping multiclass keeps its single Resolve pool, Honed Edge, free Experiences, and original Class Resolve Moves, adding only the one eligible secondary Class Resolve Move granted by multiclass. It does **not** gain Domain Powers, a Vault, a Loadout, a second Class Feature, a Subclass Move, or a second resource pool.

Awakening after a Sleeping multiclass. Follow the Awakening procedure in Chapter 7. The secondary Effort Feature becomes the corresponding Hope Feature, the secondary Class Resolve Move is retired with the Resolve engine, and the recorded Dormant Domain becomes the character's active third Domain. This conversion costs no Slot and grants no starter Powers from that Domain: the character already paid both Slots when multiclassing. The Core provides no ordinary procedure for an Awakened character to become Sleeping; exceptional reversals belong to Keeper-facing rules and are triggered only by campaign events.

RESOURCE AND GROWTH

A multiclassed character has the same single pool and the same cap (6 unless a Feature explicitly raises it). They simply have more places to spend it, and cannot spend it all in one scene, so resource economy matters more: they trade breadth for *selective* depth, more options at any moment on the same budget. Class-specific resource generation is **not** duplicated by multiclassing; a Pilot/Mystic keeps Pilot-flavored Hope generation only.

Over a long campaign an **Awakened** multiclass grows by acquiring Powers from its accessible Domains at level-ups. Its Vault widens; its Loadout cap does not. A **Sleeping** multiclass grows through its original Class's Resolve Moves, its one secondary Class Resolve Move, and its borrowed Effort Feature; it does not gain a Vault or Loadout. It cannot acquire additional Resolve Moves from the secondary Class through advancement. **Subclass Upgrades go to the original Class only**, so a multiclassed character forgoes the Mastery features of their second Class. That is the structural trade: depth in one Class versus breadth across two.

A WORKED EXAMPLE

Maren, Awakened Pilot, multiclassing into Awakened Mystic at level 5. After a campaign of Veil storms and lost crewmates, Maren has begun to *feel* what Mystics describe. She spends both level-5 slots on the multiclass. She gains the Mystic's Hope Feature alongside her Pilot Feature, both costing Hope. Her Pilot Domains are Void and Tech; the Mystic offers Neural or Lux/Void, so she adds **Neural** to avoid overlapping her Void. Neural Powers are accessible at the Tier her half-level allows, entering her Vault. She gains no Mystic Subclass and remains a Void Runner. For the Background Question she answers: *"My copilot's voice. She died on the third pass of the Crimson Veil, and I have heard the Frequency speak in her voice ever since."* In play she is a Pilot first and a Mystic second, reaching for the Mystic only when the lanes demand interpretation rather than navigation.

Dessa, Sleeping Engineer, multiclassing into Sleeping Scholar at level 5. After months cataloguing an abandoned relay station, Dessa spends both level-5 Advancement Slots. She gains the Scholar Effort Feature *Applied Science* and chooses the self-contained Scholar Class Resolve Move *Analyze Weakness*. She answers the Scholar Background Question. Her Engineer Domains are Tech and Synthesis; the Scholar offers Tech or Social, so she records **Social** as a genuinely new Dormant Domain. She gains no Scholar Class

Feature (*Open Question*), Vault, Loadout, Power, Subclass, Class Item, additional Resolve, or second resource pool. If Dessa later Awakens through the Chapter 7 procedure, *Applied Science* becomes the corresponding Scholar Hope Feature, *Analyze Weakness* is retired, and Social becomes her active third Domain without granting starter Powers.

A FIELD GUIDE TO COMBINATIONS

Inspiration, not prescription. Build the one your story produces.

COMBINATION	CLASSES	THE SHAPE OF IT
The Lane-Singer	Pilot / Mystic	Reads the Veil-currents she flies through
The Standing Voice	Soldier / Diplomat	Commands by force and by presence both
The Three Hundred Sources	Engineer / Scholar	Builds and cites in equal measure
The Quiet Eye	Scoundrel / Mystic	A spy who feels the true register of a room
The Disciplined Wall	Vanguard / Soldier	Immovable, and then immovable again
The Cartographer-Recorder	Explorer / Scholar	Maps the frontier and writes it down
The Honest Liar	Diplomat / Scoundrel	Tells the exact truth as a con
The Lone Crew	Pilot / Engineer	Flies the ship and fixes it alone
The Substrate Mechanic	Mystic / Engineer	Repairs Veil-affected technology
The Discipline Touched	Vanguard / Mystic	A Vanguard who, despite the refusal, has begun to hear
The Hot-Wire	Scoundrel / Engineer	A thief who is also the crew's electrician

COMMON QUESTIONS

- **Can a Vanguard multiclass?** Yes, but the third Domain cannot duplicate the Subclass's branch Domain (a Ghost Blade, Void branch, cannot add Void).
- **Can a Mystic multiclass?** Yes; the Veil Alignment already counts as a starting Domain, so the third Domain must be a genuinely new one.
- **Are any Classes Path-locked?** All nine base Classes exist on both Paths. Multiclass always uses the version matching the character's current Path. If a Sleeping multiclass later Awakens, the existing secondary Class converts with them under the Awakening rule above. Optional Classes note any restriction in their own entry.
- **What if the multiclass strains a Subclass feature?** The Keeper resolves it in the moment, usually for the player; the original Subclass feature simply does not engage during the second Class's work.
- **Can I multiclass after level 5 instead of at it?** Yes. Level 5 is the *earliest*, not a deadline; many characters wait for the right narrative moment.

CLOSING: THE SECOND WELL

Multiclass only when the campaign tells you to, late, earned, and modest, and then lean into it: let the second Class change how the character moves through the world, not just what is on the sheet. Veilfarers is a game about people in motion, and a multiclassed character is one who learned something fundamental partway through the work, and carried it the rest of the way.

CHAPTER 12

THE LONG CLIMB

"When the Keeper says 'level up,' it is not a mechanical event. It is a shared exhale at the table. It is the moment after the chaos. Your game sheets momentarily give way to wide eyes and quick glances. It is the silent acknowledgment that says, 'We did it.'"

From the Veilfarers rulebook, On the Texture of Growth

At a glance. Characters advance from **Level 1 to Level 10** across a campaign. Every level grants **two Advancement Slots**, spent from a single menu both paths share: **HP, Stress, Experiences, a Trait (each Trait once per Tier), Evasion, Proficiency, Technology Access, your path's engine, Multiclass, and Subclass upgrades.** Path-specific growth is one option on that menu, not a separate chapter: with **Option 8, New Power**, the Awakened add Domain Powers and the Sleeping deepen Resolve or learn new Moves, one slot either way. Tier Achievement levels (2, 5, and 8) add a package on top of the slots; Multiclass, Subclass Upgrade, and Tempered Resolve are the transformative two-slot options that open at Tier 2 or later. Multiclass costs two Slots on either Path: the Awakened gain an active Domain, while the Sleeping gain one secondary Class Resolve Move and record a Dormant Domain for a possible future Awakening. Advancement happens between sessions, recognized by the Keeper as a story milestone rather than awarded automatically per encounter.

WHAT ADVANCEMENT IS

A Veilfarers character does not begin at full strength. They begin as *plausibly competent*, a starting Pilot can fly, a starting Soldier can fight, a starting Mystic can listen, but the depth of what they can do, the range of their capabilities, the texture of their signature moves, all of these are still emerging. The campaign is the process of that emergence.

Advancement is the procedure by which the campaign's events translate into mechanical growth. It is not the only kind of growth in Veilfarers, a character also grows through their Experiences, through their relationships, through the wounds they accumulate, through the standing they build with factions, but it is the most visible and the most directly mechanical. This chapter is the procedure.

The procedure is structured around three core ideas:

- **Levels run from 1 to 10.** A typical campaign covers most of that range, with rough pacing of a level every five to seven sessions.
- **Levels group into three Tiers:** Tier 1 (Levels 1-4), Tier 2 (Levels 5-7), Tier 3 (Levels 8-10). Tier transitions carry weight beyond simple level-up; they unlock multiclassing, subclass upgrades, and proficiency growth.
- **Each level grants two Advancement Slots**, which the player spends on one or two of a fixed menu of options. Some options cost one slot; some cost two. Multiclass, Subclass Upgrade, and Tempered Resolve consume both slots.

The chapter walks through the structure in detail, lists the slot options, and closes with a worked example of a single character's progression from level 1 to level 10.

LEVELS AND TIERS

THE LEVEL RANGE

Veilfarers characters can reach **level 10** in a standard campaign. Above 10 is not supported by the base rules; campaigns that run beyond the standard sixty-session arc may employ optional Epic Level (11-15) structures designed by the Keeper, but these fall outside the scope of this volume. The base book stops at 10, and most campaigns end there or before.

A character's level represents both their accumulated capability and their *narrative weight*. A level 1 character is a competent professional; a level 10 character is a named figure in their region of the galaxy, with a record, a reputation, and a story. Both kinds of character are valid, and both are the right kind of character at the right point in a campaign.

PACING

Leveling is milestone-based, not encounter-based. Before an advancement arc begins, the Keeper names its central objective and states that resolving it will grant a level. When the crew achieves, abandons, or irreversibly fails that objective, every participating player character gains one level between sessions. If no declared objective resolves within seven sessions after the previous level, the crew gains one level after the seventh session. No character gains more than one level from the same arc, and unused Advancement Slots never bank.

A rough guideline for Keepers new to the system:

- **Level 1 -> Level 2:** Three to five sessions. The first level-up should come early enough to give the players an immediate sense of growth.
- **Level 2 -> Level 5 (Tier 2):** Eight to twelve sessions total. Tier 1 is the campaign's first act.
- **Level 5 -> Level 8 (Tier 3):** Twelve to twenty sessions. Tier 2 is the campaign's middle.
- **Level 8 -> Level 10:** Ten to fifteen sessions. Tier 3 is the campaign's late game and resolution.

These are rough numbers. The actual pacing varies by table, slower-paced campaigns may spend more time at each level; faster-paced campaigns less. The principle is that level-ups should feel *earned*, not automatic.

THE THREE TIERS

The Tier structure overlays the levels, with each Tier representing a major phase of the character's progression:

- **Tier 1, Foundation (Levels 1-4).** The character's establishment. The first Class identity solidifies. The crew forms. The campaign's premise comes into focus.
- **Tier 2, Specialization (Levels 5-7).** The character's depth. Subclass Specialization features unlock. Multiclassing becomes possible. The campaign's central conflict is engaged.
- **Tier 3, Mastery (Levels 8-10).** The character's authority. Subclass Mastery features unlock. The character has earned named status, faction standing, accumulated wealth or wounds. The campaign moves toward resolution.

Each Tier carries narrative as well as mechanical weight. A Tier 2 character is *different* from a Tier 1 character in ways that go beyond the sheet, they have history at the table, they have decisions they have made and lived with, they have weight.

TIER ACHIEVEMENTS

At specific levels, **Level 2, Level 5, and Level 8** the standard level-up is augmented by a **Tier Achievement**: a fixed package of growth that applies in addition to the level's two Advancement Slots.

THE ACHIEVEMENT PACKAGE

Every Tier Achievement grants:

- **+1 Proficiency.** Your weapon damage dice gain one rank of Proficiency (scaling your damage rolls). Maximum Proficiency is 6.
- **+1 to two Experiences (+2 total).** Choose two of your current Experiences. Each gains +1 to its modifier. (You may also use this to add a *new* Experience at +2; the new Experience replaces one of the +1s.)

At **Levels 5 and 8** specifically (the Tier 2 and Tier 3 transitions), the package additionally grants:

- **Clear marked Traits.** Any Traits that have been marked as "burnt" through Stress effects or campaign events are cleared. (Marked Traits are an optional Keeper rule; see Chapter 9 for details. If your table does not use marked Traits, this part of the achievement is a no-op.)

WHY TIER ACHIEVEMENTS EXIST

The Tier Achievement system exists to give every level-up a *guaranteed* core of growth. Even a player who spends both Advancement Slots on a single major option, such as Multiclass or Subclass Upgrade, still receives Proficiency and Experience growth at the Tier transition levels. This ensures that no Tier transition leaves a character feeling mechanically *behind* their peers.

The Achievements also provide a regular pulse of *Experience growth*, which is the most narratively rich part of the advancement system. Experiences are the character's history compressed into invocable phrases (Chapter 8), and a character whose Experiences have stayed at +2 for the entire campaign feels less developed than one whose long-term Experiences have grown to +4 or +5 through Tier Achievements and Advancement Slots.

THE TWO ADVANCEMENT SLOTS

Every level, Tier-Achievement levels and regular levels alike, grants two **Advancement Slots**. The player chooses how to spend them from the menu below. The choices are made at the moment of level-up, ideally with the table watching (advancement is a social moment, not a private one).

Some options cost **one slot**; take two different single-slot options. A character cannot bank, transfer, or save an unused Advancement Slot, so any unspent Slot is lost when that level-up is finalized.

Some options cost **two slots**; choosing these consumes the entire level's advancement and produces a single major change.

The menu, in canonical order:

OPTION 1: +1 HIT POINT SLOT (1 SLOT)

Add **one** to your character's permanent HP maximum. This is a small but cumulatively significant choice. A character who takes +1 HP at every level reaches level 10 with 9 more HP than the starting baseline, a Tier 2 character has a real survival edge over one who never invested in HP.

The HP-slot investment is most attractive for **front-line characters** (Soldier, Vanguard, sometimes Engineer) and for characters whose

narrative arc involves *taking hits for the crew*. For others, the slot is often better spent elsewhere.

OPTION 2: +1 STRESS SLOT (1 SLOT)

Add **one** to your character's permanent Stress maximum. Stress is the second-axis health pool, accumulated through combat, social pressure, supernatural exposure, and class-feature costs (Chapter 9 and Chapter 10). A character with more Stress slots can tolerate longer scenes and more complex situations before reaching the Overwhelmed state.

This slot is attractive for **stress-heavy classes** the Sleeping Mind-Touched Mystic, the Soldier in extended campaigns, any character who frequently spends Stress on class features.

OPTION 3: +1 TO TWO EXPERIENCES (1 SLOT)

Choose two of your current Experiences and increase each by +1. (Or: add one new Experience at +2 *and* increase one existing Experience by +1.) Experience modifiers can rise to a maximum of +5 through advancement; Tier Achievements at levels 5 and 8 contribute additional +1s without consuming slots.

This is one of the most powerful slot options in the system. A well-developed Experience at +5 invoked on a relevant roll grants a flat +5 to the total, equivalent to a Trait modifier two-and-a-half times the maximum starting value. A character who invests heavily in Experiences through advancement becomes a *highly situational* powerhouse: brilliantly effective in the scenes their Experiences cover, ordinarily competent elsewhere.

The trade-off is *applicability*. A character with three +5 Experiences and a fourth at +2 has narrow but devastating leverage; a character with four +3 Experiences has broader but flatter capability. Both are valid builds.

OPTION 4: +1 TO A TRAIT (1 SLOT)

Add **+1** to one of your six Traits. **The same Trait can be raised only once per Tier**; the restriction resets when a new Tier begins (Levels 5 and 8). Over a full campaign, then, no Trait can grow by more than +3, which sets the system's intended ceiling: a Signature Trait that starts at +2 tops out at +5 by Tier 3.

The obvious investment is the Signature Trait, and it is rarely wrong: it powers your class engine and your most frequent rolls. But the once-per-Tier gate exists precisely to make the second raise of a Tier go somewhere else, and the quieter picks pay off in the rolls you do not choose: a +0 Strength raised to +1 is felt in every Reaction Roll against being grappled, staggered, or pinned, and a Presence brought up from -1 stops being the table's favorite lever against you.

(This option is unrelated to Traits *marked as burnt* by Stress effects or campaign events; that is a separate condition, cleared by the Tier Achievement package at Levels 5 and 8.)

OPTION 5: +1 EVASION (1 SLOT)

Add **one** to your character's permanent Evasion. The starting Evasion floor is 9; the cap is no formal limit, but characters above Evasion 16 begin to outpace the system's standard attack rolls and may need Keeper-tuned threats.

Evasion-investment is attractive for **fragile characters** (Mystic, Scholar, Diplomat) for whom HP buffers are slower to matter and dodging the attack is the

better protection. It is also attractive for **agility-focused builds** (Scoundrel, Pilot in melee scenarios) who fight by not being where the attack lands.

OPTION 6: +1 PROFICIENCY (2 SLOTS; CAP 6)

Increase your weapon damage Proficiency by 1. Maximum Proficiency is 6; a character cannot scale higher through any means in the base game. Tier Achievements grant +1 Proficiency for free at levels 2, 5, and 8; the slot option lets you accelerate the climb.

Proficiency scales damage dice. A weapon listed as 1d8 with Proficiency 2 deals 2d8; with Proficiency 4 it deals 4d8; with Proficiency 6 it deals 6d8. The growth is significant.

This is a **front-line investment**. Most players take it only on combat-heavy builds. Two slots is a real cost; the gain is often worth it for Soldiers, Vanguard, and combat-focused Scoundrels, less so for others.

OPTION 7: +1 TECHNOLOGY ACCESS LEVEL (1 SLOT)

Increase your character's **Technology Access Level** by 1. Tech Access governs what equipment, vehicles, and devices the character can plausibly acquire, deploy, and maintain in the campaign world (see Chapter 13 for the full system). Higher Tech Access permits acquisition of more advanced weapons, armor, ship systems, and personal devices.

Tech Access is a *narrative* gate as much as a mechanical one. A character with Tech Access 4 can carry weapons and devices that a character with Tech Access 2 simply cannot legitimately operate. Investing here opens doors that combat advancement does not.

Engineers, Pilots, and Scholars typically invest in Tech Access at least once. Other classes do so when the campaign's tech-curve demands it.

OPTION 8: NEW POWER (1 SLOT)

Each path's signature growth choice, at one slot. This is the same menu line for everyone; what it buys depends on your path.

Awakened: +1 Domain Power. Acquire one new Domain Power, drawn from any of your accessible Domains (original two plus, for an Awakened multiclass, the third Domain from the multiclass). The Power must be at a Tier the character's effective level in that Domain supports, most slot acquisitions at Tiers 1 and 2 grant Tier 1 or Tier 2 Powers; Tier 3 Powers require the character to have effective Domain level 8+ (see Chapter 19). The new Power enters the character's **Vault** by default; the player can immediately Recall it into a Loadout slot if there is room, and the Loadout cap (Chapter 18) prevents using everything at once, which is the design's intent.

Sleeping: +1 Resolve. Choose one: raise your **Resolve maximum** by 1, **never above 6**, or learn one new **Class Resolve Move** available to your primary Class (Chapter 7). If your Resolve maximum is already 6, choose a Move instead. This option cannot acquire additional Moves from a secondary Class; multiclass grants exactly one such Move through Option 9. This is the Sleeping engine's equivalent of acquiring a new power: a deeper reserve, or a wider menu of Moves. The option is repeatable across the campaign, mixing the two effects without exceeding the Path's maximum.

For both paths, this is the most common single-slot investment in long campaigns; by level 10, most characters have spent five to seven slots here and accumulated a working catalog of Powers or Moves.

OPTION 9: MULTICLASS (2 SLOTS, TIER 2+, ONCE)

The breadth option (Chapter 11). Multiclass costs both Advancement Slots on either Path. An **Awakened** multiclass adds a Hope Feature, one genuinely new active Domain, and future Power access. A **Sleeping** multiclass adds an Effort Feature, one eligible Class Resolve Move from the secondary Class, and one genuinely new **Dormant Domain**. Neither receives the secondary Class Feature.

Available only at Tier 2 or later (level 5+). Once-per-character lifetime.

Multiclass adds a second Class, a secondary Hope/Effort Feature, and a new Background Question. An **Awakened** multiclass activates one genuinely new Domain from the second Class. A **Sleeping** multiclass learns one eligible secondary Class Resolve Move and records the genuinely new Domain as Dormant; it grants no Powers, Vault, Loadout, or access while the character remains Sleeping. The character's primary Path remains unchanged, and all costs use the character's existing resource pools. If a multiclassed Sleeping character later Awakens through the Chapter 7 procedure, the secondary Resolve Move retires, the secondary Effort Feature becomes the corresponding Hope Feature, and the Dormant Domain activates without a Slot refund or additional cost.

See Chapter 11 for the full procedure and worked examples.

OPTION 10: UPGRADED SUBCLASS (2 SLOTS, TIER 2+)

The other major transformative option. Costs both Advancement Slots. Available only at Tier 2 or later. Repeatable: a character may take Upgraded Subclass *once at Tier 2* (granting the Subclass's **Specialization** feature) and *once at Tier 3* (granting the **Mastery** feature). The two upgrades are sequential and cannot be skipped.

The Subclass Upgrade is the deepening-into-original-Class option. Where Multiclass adds *breadth*, Subclass Upgrade adds *depth*. A character who takes both Specialization and Mastery has, by level 10, the full progression of their Subclass, the most concentrated form of their original Class.

A character who takes Multiclass cannot gain a Tier 3 Mastery Subclass Upgrade from the **secondary Class**, because multiclassing never grants that Class's Subclass. They may still gain the Tier 3 Mastery Subclass Upgrade of their **original Class**. (See Chapter 11 for the trade-off; Maren's worked progression shows it in action.)

OPTION 11: TEMPERED RESOLVE (2 SLOTS, TIER 3, SLEEPING ONLY, ONCE)

At Tier 3, a Sleeping character may spend a full level's advancement (both slots) to upgrade their entire Resolve pool from **d4 to d6**. Every Resolve Die you spend from then on is a d6 (average 3.5 instead of 2.5 per die), making every Move land harder. This is a once-per-character capstone: the moment a veteran's reserve stops being something they ration and becomes something they wield. It does not change your Resolve maximum, only the size of the dice.

(Dial: tables wanting a gentler curve can rule that only newly gained Resolve is d6, or cap the upgraded pool one die lower. The default upgrades the whole pool.)

PATH-SPECIFIC ADVANCEMENT

The Awakened and Sleeping paths handle advancement differently in several respects.

RESOURCE POOL CAPS

- **Hope (Awakened).** Default cap 6.
- **Effort (Sleeping).** Default cap 6.
- **Resolve (Sleeping).** Maximum Resolve begins at 2 and rises by 1 at levels 3, 5, 7, and 9, reaching the hard ceiling of 6. Option 8 may advance that schedule earlier, but never raises the maximum above 6. A Sleeping character at the ceiling selects a new Class Resolve Move instead.

The Hope and Effort caps can be raised only through a Class or Mastery Subclass Feature that explicitly says it raises the relevant cap; they never rise through a standard Advancement Slot. A Tier 3 character with such a Feature has a meaningfully larger working

budget per session; this is one of the rewards of taking a Subclass Upgrade.

RECOVERY ANCHOR UPGRADES (SLEEPING ONLY)

The Sleeping character's **Recovery Anchor** (Chapter 7) can be upgraded through advancement, though the

upgrade is narrative and Keeper-mediated rather than a formal slot option. As a Sleeping character grows in their discipline, the Anchor may:

- **Become more efficient.** After the character uses the same Recovery Anchor in at least three sessions and reaches Tier 2, its one-hour Recovery action requires forty minutes. Record the upgrade; it is gained at most once.
- **Become more resilient.** A specific replacement object can substitute for the original in a pinch (the Soldier whose rifle was destroyed acquires a new rifle and re-anchors to it, retaining the discipline).
- **Expand to permit a second character to share it.** A senior Sleeping practitioner may, late in a campaign, mentor a junior practitioner, who learns to perform a parallel Recovery using the same anchor's ritual.

These are not standard mechanical advancement; they are story rewards. A Sleeping character whose campaign foregrounds the Anchor's role will tend to receive at least one of these upgrades by Tier 3.

AWAKENING IN PLAY

The most transformative path-specific change in the Core is **Awakening**. It is not a slot expenditure or a normal advancement option; it is a story event resolved in downtime when the narrative supports it. The full procedure lives at the end of Chapter 7.

Awakening (Sleeping only). The character converts from Sleeping to Awakened. Their Effort pool becomes Hope; their primary Effort Feature and Class Feature become the corresponding Hope Feature and Class Feature from Chapter 6; their Resolve engine, Honed Edge, free Experience invocation, and Recovery Anchor are retired. They open a Vault and Loadout and gain the starter pair of two Level 1 Domain Powers specified by the Chapter 7 procedure. Subsequent advancement applies normally to the Awakened character. If they already multiclassed while Sleeping, apply the multiclass conversion in Chapter 11: retire the secondary Class Resolve Move and activate the recorded Dormant Domain without granting starter Powers from it.

The Core provides no ordinary procedure for an Awakened character to become Sleeping. Exceptional reversals are Keeper-facing options, triggered only by specific campaign events, and do not belong to the standard advancement rules.

Path-specific slots are refunded. When a Sleeping character Awakens, refund every Advancement Slot they spent on the Sleeping choices of Option 8 and on **Tempered Resolve**, and let them re-spend those Slots in options available to their new Path. This includes Slots used to raise Resolve maximum or learn additional primary-Class Resolve Moves. Slots spent on **path-neutral** options (HP, Stress, Experiences, Traits, Evasion, Proficiency, Technology Access, Multiclass, Subclass upgrades) are never refunded; they carry over untouched. The secondary Resolve Move included in a Sleeping multiclass is retired rather than refunded because its value becomes the activation of the Dormant Domain.

BEYOND MECHANICAL ADVANCEMENT

The slot options above represent the *mechanical* advancement system. They are not the only ways a character grows over a campaign. Several non-slot categories of advancement happen in parallel:

REPUTATION AND STANDING

A character who has consistently worked with, or against, a major faction (a House, the Free Fleet, the Explorers' Guild, the Spire) accumulates **Standing** with that faction. Standing is tracked narratively, in the Keeper's notes; it does not appear on the character sheet, but it shapes how NPCs respond to the character, what missions are offered, what equipment is available, and what doors open or close.

Standing grows through *consistent action*. A character who works for House Valerius across many sessions gains Standing with them; a character who occasionally helps and occasionally betrays accumulates no net Standing, or accumulates a complicated Standing that reads as *interesting but untrustworthy*.

By Tier 3, most characters have meaningful Standing with one or two factions. By the campaign's end, the Standing may be the character's most consequential accumulation, the *real* version of advancement.

WEALTH AND OWNERSHIP

Most characters begin play at Wealth Tier 0 or 1 (Chapter 15 covers the system in detail). Across the campaign, Wealth grows slowly, through completed jobs, through inheritance, through gifted assets. A character who reaches Wealth Tier 3 owns something significant; Tier 4 owns *several* significant things; Tier 5 (rare) is at the level of a House cadet or a successful captain.

Wealth advancement is not slot-driven. It happens in the fiction. A campaign whose central plot involves the crew acquiring a ship will, by mid-campaign, have moved the relevant character (the captain, usually) up two or three Tiers of Wealth. The slow climb is intentional, money in Veilfarers is not a power-up; it is a piece of identity.

RELATIONSHIPS AND BONDS

The Connections phase of character creation (Chapter 8) establishes the character's First Bond, Open Debt, and Friction with other PCs. Across the campaign, these relationships *deepen*, and may be supplemented by new relationships, with NPCs and PCs alike.

Bond depth is a narrative resource. A First Bond that started as "we met three years ago at a Free Fleet party" may, by Tier 3, have become "we have buried two of our own together and we know each other's silences." The First Bond's mechanical effect (+1 Hope or Effort at session start) does not change; the *texture* of the bond has become much richer, and the table feels the difference.

SCARS

Characters who have come back from Dying or Final accumulate **Scars** permanent narrative marks that the body and mind carry forward (Chapter 10). Scars are not power-ups in the conventional sense; they are character. But they accumulate, and a Tier 3 character with three or

four Scars feels meaningfully different from a Tier 3 character with none.

Some Scars are fully narrative (a limp, a missing finger, a cataract). Some carry mechanical effects (Disadvantage on Agility Rolls to avoid detection if the limp is severe, or Disadvantage on Knowledge (Medicine) Rolls for First Aid if the dominant hand is impaired). The Keeper and the player negotiate the texture together.

THE OPEN QUESTION

A Scholar character (Chapter 7) may record one **Open Question**, a long-term research project. During a Long Rest, the Scholar may work on it and make one Knowledge Roll using the normal Corebook difficulty procedure. After **three successful Knowledge Rolls made during different Long Rests**, the Question is answered; a Critical Success counts as one success for this Feature. When recording the Question, choose one reward: a named Contact, a verified lead, a Tier-appropriate schematic, or permission to attempt one project-related action without further research. The Question cannot grant a Domain, Power, Class Feature, permanent numeric bonus, or automatic success.

This reward structure is unique to the Scholar Class. Other long projects may earn story-scaled results only when their procedure, cost, scope, and reward are established in the fiction; they do not imply a free permanent mechanical advancement.

WORKED EXAMPLE: MAREN SOLAS FROM LEVEL 1 TO LEVEL 10

A full progression, walked through, to show how advancement looks across a campaign.

STARTING POINT (LEVEL 1)

Maren begins as an Awakened Pilot, Void Runner Subclass, with the standard array (Instinct +2, Finesse +1, Knowledge +1, Agility +0, Strength +0, Presence -1), two Experiences (*I was the first to chart a stable route through the Crimson Veil Storm* at +2, *Free Fleet Lifer* at +2), HP 6, Stress 6, Hope cap 6, Evasion 11, Proficiency 1. Loadout: two Level 1 Domain Powers (*Vector Calculus*, *Temporal Muffle*). Hope Feature: *Veil Surge*. Subclass Foundation: *Pathfinder's Sense*.

LEVEL 2: TIER ACHIEVEMENT

Tier Achievement: +1 Proficiency (now 2), +1 to two Experiences (Maren chooses to raise both her starting Experiences to +3).

Two Advancement Slots: Maren chooses **+1 HP Slot** (HP 7) and **+1 Domain Power** (acquires *Emergency Repair*, a Tech Tier 1 Power that patches a failing drone or vehicle mid-flight).

LEVEL 3

Two Advancement Slots: Maren chooses **+1 Domain Power** (acquires *Slipstream Jolt*, a Void Tier 1 Power that knocks a pursuer's systems briefly out of alignment) and **+1 to two Experiences** (raises *Crimson Veil Storm* to +4 and *Free Fleet Lifer* to +4).

LEVEL 4

Two Advancement Slots: Maren chooses **+1 Evasion** (now 12) and **+1 Tech Access** (now Level 2, she can legitimately operate her own salvage-class Void Runner now).

LEVEL 5: TIER 2 TRANSITION, TIER ACHIEVEMENT

Tier Achievement: +1 Proficiency (now 3), +1 to two Experiences (raises *Crimson Veil Storm* to +5, maximum, and *Free Fleet Lifer* to +5), and (since this is a Tier 2 transition) clear any marked Traits.

Maren's two Slots: she elects the **Multiclass into Awakened Mystic** option (2 Slots, exhausts the level). She gains the Mystic **Hope Feature** *Reality Unfold*; adds **Neural** as her third Domain; answers the Mystic Background Question with the answer about her copilot Iruvi; selects **Void** as her Mystic Veil Alignment.

Maren is now an Awakened Pilot/Mystic. Total level 5.

LEVEL 6

Two Advancement Slots: Maren chooses **+1 Domain Power** (acquires *Veil Sensitivity*, a Neural Tier 1 Power, her first Mystic-Domain Power) and **+1 Stress Slot** (Stress 7). Her Hope cap remains 6 unless a specific Class Feature or Mastery explicitly raises it.

LEVEL 7

Two Advancement Slots: Maren takes **Upgraded Subclass** (2 Slots, Tier 2 minimum), gaining her Void Runner **Specialization** feature *The Cold Run*, which lets her ship become untraceable to standard scanning for an hour per Hope spent.

This is a big level for Maren. Her ship has become *specifically* hers, the Void Runner whose lane is no longer documented in any patrol's records.

LEVEL 8: TIER 3 TRANSITION, TIER ACHIEVEMENT

Tier Achievement: +1 Proficiency (now 4), +1 to two Experiences. Maren adds a *new* Experience at +2, *Long Conversation with Iruvi in the Void*, and assigns the second increase to *Crimson Veil Storm*. Because that Experience is already capped at +5, the second increase is lost. Experience increases never bank, transfer, or wait for a future Experience. Trait clear (no marked Traits at this point).

Maren's two Slots: she elects **+1 Domain Power** (acquires *Temporal Glimpse*, a Neural Tier 2 Power, her first Tier 2 Power, now that her effective Mystic Domain level is 4) and **+1 Domain Power** (acquires *Phase Walk*, a Void Tier 2 Power that lets her ship slip through solid obstacles for a scene).

LEVEL 9

Two Advancement Slots: Maren takes **+1 Proficiency** (2 Slots, now 5). She is sharpening for the campaign's late game.

LEVEL 10: TIER 3 CAP, FINAL LEVEL

Two Advancement Slots: Maren takes **Upgraded Subclass** (2 Slots), the Void Runner **Mastery** feature *The Untouched Record* (her name does not appear in any standard Imperial or House record as a known smuggler, the systems do not know what she does, even though the people who matter do).

Note that Maren *cannot* take the Mystic Subclass Mastery at any level, because the multiclass did not include a Mystic Subclass. The Multiclass / Subclass Mastery trade-off (Chapter 11) has resolved in Maren's case in favor of the Pilot Subclass's full development.

FINAL SHEET (LEVEL 10)

- **HP:** 7 (started 6, +1 from level 2).
- **Stress:** 7.
- **Hope cap:** 6.
- **Evasion:** 12.
- **Proficiency:** 5 (3 from Tier Achievements at 2/5/8, +1 from level 9 slot investment).
- **Tech Access:** 2.
- **Traits:** Instinct +2, Finesse +1, Knowledge +1, Agility +0, Strength +0, Presence -1.
- **Experiences:** *Crimson Veil Storm* +5, *Free Fleet Lifer* +5, *Long Conversation with Iruvi in the Void* +2. No Experience increase is banked.
- **Class:** Awakened Pilot (Void Runner Subclass, full progression: Foundation + Specialization + Mastery).
- **Multiclass:** Awakened Mystic (Hope Feature only; no Subclass).
- **Domains accessible:** Void, Tech, Neural.

- **Loadout cap:** 7 Powers at Tier 3 (set in Chapter 18). Maren is running: *Temporal Muffle*, *Slipstream Jolt*, *Emergency Repair*, *Veil Sensitivity*, and *Temporal Glimpse*, with two Loadout slots currently open.
- **Vault:** *Vector Calculus*, *Phase Walk*.
- **Hope Features:** *Veil Surge* (Pilot, 3 Hope), *Reality Unfold* (Mystic, 3 Hope).
- **Subclass Mastery:** *The Untouched Record* (Void Runner, Maren is, in effect, off the official record).

READING THE PROGRESSION

Maren's level 10 sheet shows a character who has invested heavily in her Pilot identity (full Subclass progression, multiple Pilot Powers, Tech Access growth) while adding a meaningful Mystic dimension (multiclass at level 5, multiple Mystic Powers across Tiers 1 and 2). Her Experiences have grown to maximum on the two original ones, with a third added late.

She is, by level 10, one of the most accomplished Void Runners alive, and a recognizable, if eccentric, presence in the Mystic community as well. She is not the most powerful Mystic in the galaxy (her multiclass cap keeps her at half-Mystic-level in that domain) and she is not even the most powerful Pilot (a single-class Pilot who took every Pilot-aligned slot would outpace her in pure piloting), but she is *Maren*, and she is the kind of character a campaign produces when the advancement system is used well.

Maren's climb never touches Option 4; an alternate build could trade one of her mid-Tier slot picks for Instinct +3 by Tier 2 and +4 by Tier 3, buying steadier rolls at the cost of one fewer Power in the Vault. Both are sound; the menu is meant to make that argument at the table.

THE SAME CLIMB, SLEEPING

Maren's ten levels read similarly, not identically, for a Sleeping character. Where Maren takes Option 8 for a Domain Power, a Sleeping Pilot takes Option 8 for +1 Resolve maximum (never above 6) or a new Class Move, and follows the Resolve schedule at levels 3, 5, 7, and 9. The Tier Achievements and neutral slots remain shared. Multiclass costs two Slots on either Path: the Sleeping package grants a secondary Effort Feature, one eligible secondary Class Resolve Move, and a Dormant Domain, while the Awakened package grants a secondary Hope Feature and an active Domain. The Sleeping climb also adds Tier 3's **Tempered Resolve**, trading a full level for d6 Resolve Dice and the loudest version of every Move they know.

A WORD ON THE END OF THE CLIMB

At level 10, the character has reached the top of the standard advancement curve. There is no level 11 in the base game. Some campaigns end at level 10; some continue with characters who have "leveled out", they no longer accumulate mechanical advancement, but they continue to grow narratively, accumulate Standing, acquire wealth, and live with the consequences of their long careers.

Both endings are valid. The most narratively satisfying campaigns we have seen end at level 10, the characters have grown into the people the campaign was about producing, the central conflict has resolved, and the table closes the book together.

If your campaign extends past level 10, design an Epic Level structure with the Keeper appropriate to your group's preferences. The base book stops here.

CLOSING: WHAT ADVANCEMENT IS REALLY FOR

The slot mechanics above are the *system* of advancement. The *purpose* of advancement is less mechanical: it is to give the player, every five to seven sessions, a *moment of choice* that the character has earned.

The choice is the point. The +1 HP is not the point. The +1 Evasion is not the point. The new Domain Power is not the point. What matters is that the table stops, the player looks at their sheet, and the player decides, based on

everything the character has done in the preceding sessions, what their character has *become*.

A character whose advancement choices have nothing to do with the campaign's events is a character whose advancement was wasted. A character whose advancement choices feel *inevitable*, the only choices that made sense, given where the character has been, is a character whose advancement has done its work.

The level-up is the moment when the campaign's events make the character. The choice you make at that moment is the answer to the question the campaign has been asking. Make it well.

The climb is long. Take it deliberately.

CHAPTER 13

THE TOOLS OF THE TRADE

"Every Free Fleet crew tells the same story. Three jobs in, you stop loving the new equipment and start loving the old. The pistol you broke in last year. The boot whose seam you re-stitched on a long jump. The wrench whose grip has worn to the shape of your palm. Equipment in this work is not what you bought. It is what you have kept alive."

Specialist Vell Kurogane-Born, Free Fleet, on the Pelican's third refit

WHAT EQUIPMENT IS FOR

At a glance. Every item has a **Tier (1-5)** and **Features** (named properties that modify rolls). Items at or below your Wealth Tier are routinely available; items above require **Wealth Checks** (Chapter 15) or **Affiliation** access (Chapter 8). Weapons add **damage and Features** to your attack; armor adds **Thresholds and Armor Slots** to your defense; gear modifies specific check types. Equipment matters at the table only when its Features become relevant, otherwise it is texture.

A Veilfarers character is not the sum of their gear. The Trait array, the Class, the Experiences, the Path, these are the character. The equipment is what the character *uses* to apply themselves to the world.

That said, the equipment in this chapter is not flavor text. The right weapon turns a hard fight into a workable one. The right armor turns a fatal hit into a manageable one. The right tool, the one in the right pocket at the right moment, has, in the campaigns we have watched, more than once been the difference between a crew that walked home and a crew that did not.

This chapter is the catalog. It is organized into four parts: the **rules** that govern how equipment works (Proficiency Tiers, weapon and armor mechanics, feature interactions); the **catalog** of specific items by category (Melee, Pistols, Rifles, Heavy Weapons, Special Weapons, Armor, Augmentations, Gear); the **feature glossaries** that define every named property; and the **soft systems** of acquisition, maintenance, modification, and loss.

CATALOG AUTHORITY

The equipment in this chapter is the canonical Core catalog. *Rust & Steel* expands it with additional models, House variants, modifications, and explicitly optional systems. A similarly named expansion item never silently replaces a Core item. When two designs occupy a similar role, treat them as distinct manufactured patterns unless an entry explicitly identifies itself as a modification of another item.

A note on weight: Veilfarers tracks equipment through **Burden** rather than kilograms. **Burden capacity equals 6 + Strength modifier**. At capacity or below there is no penalty. At 1-2 Burden above capacity, movement is limited to one band per Spotlight and Agility or Strength Rolls made to run, climb, jump, swim, or resist forced movement have Disadvantage. At 3 or more above capacity, the character cannot move or take a physical Action while carrying the excess; at the start of their Spotlight they may drop any carried, non-secured items as a free effect until the excess is lower. These are the complete encumbrance effects.

THE FOUR EQUIPMENT TIERS

Veilfarers equipment is sorted into four **Tech Tiers (TT1 to TT4)**, corresponding to the training and access required to safely operate the item. In the tables, an item's access tier is shown in the **TECH TIER** column as the tier name with its code in parentheses, Common (TT1), Military (TT2), Experimental (TT3), Precursor (TT4); this is separate from its price, which is shown as a **Wealth Tier** (see Cost, below):

- **Common (TT1).** The civilian and commercial range, slug pistols, simple knives, frontier vests, basic tools. Reliable, modest in performance, available in any frontier market. Common gear needs no Technology Access level to operate, but it still falls into gear *categories* (armor weights, weapon families, augment types), and your class is only trained in some of them (Chapters 6 and 7). A Common rifle is still a rifle: a class not trained on rifles uses it at a penalty even though it is Common.
- **Military (TT2).** The professional range. Requires **Technology Access Level 2** to use without penalty. Without it, rolls are at Disadvantage. Military gear is the standard of House regulars, professional security forces, and experienced freelancers.
- **Experimental (TT3).** The rare and unstable range. Requires **Technology Access Level 3**. An untrained weapon family attacks with Disadvantage; any other Experimental equipment outside the character's access cannot be installed or operated until that access is trained. Prototypes, House-restricted devices, and the bleeding edge of post-Silence science.
- **Precursor (TT4+).** Recovered artifacts of the vanished elder civilization. Not manufactured, *found*. Requires **Technology Access Level 4** to safely operate. These items are story events, not purchases.

Class-specific proficiency tables (which classes get which tiers at which level) are listed in each Class entry (Chapters 6 and 7). The default progression: most classes reach Military proficiency at level 2 and Experimental at level 5.

WEAPONS: THE RULES

A weapon entry in the catalogs below lists, where relevant:

- **Name.** The common designation.
- **Trait.** The trait most natural for the weapon's attack roll. The Keeper has final say in ambiguous cases.
- **Damage.** The damage dice expression, formatted *XdY+Z phys./ene./void*. Apply Proficiency to one listed damage die: roll the Proficiency Die once per Proficiency rank and every other base die once. A 1d8 weapon at Proficiency 3 deals 3d8; a 2d8 weapon at Proficiency 3 deals 4d8. The damage type sets the weapon's **Penetration** against armor (Chapter 10): *phys.* is Physical/Kinetic (Penetration 0, ballistic slugs, blades, blunt force), *ene.* is Energy (Penetration -2, plasma, las, arc, ion, thermal, the standard of the manufactured arsenal), and *void* is Veil-derived (Penetration -4). **Every weapon that deals Void damage is Experimental (Tier 3) or rarer, always.** Mundane manufacture cannot hold a Veil edge; if it fires or cuts with the Veil, it was hand-built or salvaged, and it is listed accordingly.
- **Burden.** How many Burden points the weapon counts against your carrying capacity.

- **Feature.** The weapon's named special property. Effects are detailed in the *Weapon Features Glossary* below.
- **Cost.** In Imperial Credits, shown as **N Cr (WT_x)**, where WT_x is the Wealth Tier the price sits at. The tier ladder is 1 Cr (WT1), 4 Cr (WT2), 9 Cr (WT3), 16 Cr (WT4), 25 Cr (WT5). Ordinary gear sits on these values; consumables may fall between them and show the fraction, for example 2 Cr (1/2 WT2). An item's Tech Tier (access) and its Wealth Tier (price) are separate axes and do not always match: a restricted item can be cheap, and a common one expensive. See Chapter 15 for the Wealth Tier system and acquisition rules.

QUICK PROCEDURE - READING A WEAPON ENTRY

FIELD	HOW TO READ IT
Trait	Which Trait modifier goes on the attack roll . Never on damage.
Damage	<i>XdY+Z</i> plus a type. Apply Proficiency to one die: roll the Proficiency Die once per rank, every other listed die once, the flat modifier once.
Type	<i>phys.</i> Penetration 0 / <i>ene.</i> Penetration -2 / <i>void</i> Penetration -4. Penetration lowers the target's thresholds for that hit (Chapter 10); it never bypasses armor.
Burden	What it costs against carrying capacity.
Feature	A named property resolved after damage. Look it up in the Glossary below.
Cost	<i>N Cr (WT_x)</i> - the Wealth Tier of the price. This is a different axis from the Tech Tier of access; a restricted item can be cheap.

Two tiers, two questions. **Tech Tier** asks *am I trained to use this?* (Common TT1 / Military TT2 / Experimental TT3 / Precursor TT4). **Wealth Tier** asks *can I afford it?* (Chapter 15). An item's answers need not match.

UNIVERSAL WEAPON MECHANICS

- **One Weapon Readied.** A character can have *one weapon* readied at any moment. Switching is part of an action (the "weapon swap"); some characters carry a primary plus a sidearm.
- **Ammunition.** Ordinary ammunition is abstract. Before an attack in a sustained firefight, the Keeper may declare the current magazine at risk only if reloading or resupply has already become relevant in the fiction. If that attack resolves Failure with Fear, the weapon runs dry after the attack and requires an Action plus available ammunition to reload. No other unprinted result exhausts ordinary ammunition.
- **Trait Modifier on Attacks, Not Damage.** Your Trait modifier goes on the attack *roll*. Damage is the weapon's intrinsic harm, not the character's strength.
- **Critical Damage.** On a Critical Hit from matched Duality Dice, the attack connects regardless of Evasion. Double the weapon's damage dice and apply flat modifiers once. See Chapter 10.

MELEE WEAPONS: COMMON (TIER 1-2)

When ammunition is scarce and corridors are tight, a reliable blade or a heavy hammer is a person's best friend.

- **Combat Knife.** A simple, effective blade. Favored by soldiers, scoundrels, and anyone who needs a concealable and reliable weapon. The *Paired* feature means they are often wielded in twos.
- **Shock Baton.** A non-lethal compliance tool used by security forces. A solid hit can leave an opponent stunned and unable to act, excellent for capturing targets alive.
- **Plasma Cutter.** An industrial tool repurposed for combat. Its superheated edge can slice through armor. The *Cutting* feature ignores some armor; bulky power cell makes it clumsy.
- **Mono-Blade.** Monomolecular edge. Incredibly sharp; shrugs past light plating. *Armor Piercing* makes it favored by assassins and corporate enforcers.
- **Energy Dagger.** A blade of pure, contained energy. Lightweight, emits a low hum. *Energy Tag* means its damage is not physical.

NAME	TRAIT	DAMAGE	BURDEN	FEATURE	COST
Combat Knife	Finesse	d6 phys.	1	Paired	1 Cr (WT1)
Shock Baton	Strength	d6+1 phys.	1	Stunning, Paired+1	1 Cr (WT1)
Plasma Cutter	Agility	d8 ene.	1	Cutting, Paired+2	4 Cr (WT2)
Mono-Blade	Finesse	d8 phys.	1	Armor Piercing, Paired+2	4 Cr (WT2)
Energy Dagger	Agility	d6+1 ene.	1	Lightweight, Energy Tag	1 Cr (WT1)
Improvised	Variable	1d4 phys.	1	n/a	n/a

A character without a proper weapon may always use an improvised weapon. It deals 1d4 Physical damage at Melee range, has no properties, and uses Strength or Finesse as the fiction requires. A specific object gains another tag only when its complete entry or an adopted environment Feature states one.

MELEE WEAPONS: MILITARY (TIER 2-3)

These weapons are designed for the battlefield.

- **Vibro-Sword.** Classic military weapon. High-frequency vibration chews through armor. *Vibration* ignores a point of armor on every hit.
- **Chainglaive.** Brutal weapon favored by House Volkov. Powered chain of serrated teeth. *Automatic* hits multiple targets; *Cleave* strikes two adjacent enemies with one swing.
- **Plasma Rapier.** Elegant energy blade used by House Solari duelists. The grace of a rapier with the lethality of plasma. Prone to *Overheating*.
- **Gravity Hammer.** Two-handed hammer developed by House Joric. Gravitic pulse releases a concussive blast. *Stagger*, disadvantage on next action.
- **Electro-Whip.** Flexible, metallic whip with electrical energy. Longer *Reach*; *Stunning* on critical hit.

NAME	TRAIT	DAMAGE	BURDEN	FEATURE	COST
Vibro-Sword	Strength	d8+3 phys.	1	Vibration	4 Cr (WT2)
Chainglaive	Strength	d10+3 phys.	2	Automatic, Cleave	9 Cr (WT3)
Plasma Rapier	Finesse	d8+3 ene.	1	Piercing, Overheating	9 Cr (WT3)
Gravity Hammer	Strength	d10+3 phys.	2	Stagger	4 Cr (WT2)
Electro-Whip	Agility	d6+3 Energy	1	Reach Very Close; Stunning on Critical Success	4 Cr (WT2)

MELEE WEAPONS: EXPERIMENTAL (TIER 2-4)

The bleeding edge of post-Silence science.

- **Phase Blade.** Flickers in and out of reality. Deals Void damage (Penetration -4); its *Phasing* lets the hit ignore one Armor Slot as the edge slips through plating. Requires Experimental proficiency.
- **Quantum Rapier.** House Kurogane creation. Exists in multiple probable states at once. *Probability Shift*, force a reroll on attacks.
- **Void Cleaver.** Salvaged from the Shattered Worlds. Massive axe forged from solidified nothingness. Deals Void damage (Penetration -4); its *Disintegrating* edge can erase a piece of the target's gear or one Armor Slot outright.
- **Nanite Gauntlet.** Programmable nanite swarm forms a blade, shield, or drill. *Adaptive*, change damage type on the fly.
- **Plasma-Infused Katana.** Folded steel sheathed in magnetically-contained plasma. Critical hit triggers *Energy Surge*.

NAME	TRAIT	DAMAGE	BURDEN	FEATURE	COST
Phase Blade	Finesse	d8+6 void	1	Phasing	9 Cr (WT3)
Quantum Rapier	Finesse	d6+6 void	1	Probability Shift	9 Cr (WT3)
Void Cleaver	Strength	d10+6 void	2	Disintegrating	9 Cr (WT3)
Nanite Gauntlet	Finesse	d8+6 phys.	1	Adaptive	9 Cr (WT3)
Plasma-Infused Katana	Agility	d8+6 ene.	1	Energy Surge	9 Cr (WT3)

PISTOLS: COMMON (TIER 1-2)

The humble pistol has survived every technological revolution. In tight confines, a compact sidearm is often more valuable than the most powerful rifle.

- **Slug Pistol.** Humanity's old faithful. Brutal, simple, dependable. Fires a chemical-propelled projectile. Works in mud, rain, hard vacuum. *Reliable*.
- **Flechette Pistol.** Vicious close-quarters weapon. Spray of tiny, razor-sharp darts. Devastating against unarmored targets. *Armor Piercing*.
- **Plasma Pistol.** Humanity's ambitious attempt to channel a star in a handheld package. Hits like a miniature sun. *Overheating* is the cost.
- **Needle Gun.** Silent and insidious. Compressed gas fires a toxin-coated flechette. *Poison* delivery is the real threat.
- **Holdout Blaster.** Small, concealable energy pistol. Modest power; main advantage is size. *Concealable*.

NAME	TRAIT	DAMAGE	BURDEN	FEATURE	COST
Slug Pistol	Agility	d8+1 phys.	1	Reliable	1 Cr (WT1)
Flechette Pistol	Finesse	d6+1 phys.	1	Armor Piercing	1 Cr (WT1)
Plasma Pistol	Instinct	d8 ene.	1	Overheating	4 Cr (WT2)
Needle Gun	Finesse	d6+1 phys.	1	Poison	1 Cr (WT1)
Holdout Blaster	Agility	d6+1 ene.	1	Concealable	1 Cr (WT1)

All Common Pistols operate at **Close** range.

PISTOLS: MILITARY (TIER 2-3)

Increased power, reliability, and tactical flexibility over civilian counterparts.

- **Combat Pistol.** Standard-issue sidearm for most militaries, including House Joric regulars. Rugged, high-caliber armor-piercing round. *Quick*, two shots in rapid succession.
- **Plasma Sidearm.** Military-grade improvement on the plasma pistol. Superior cooling. *Reliable*, less prone to overheating. Favored by House Solari officers.
- **Gauss Pistol.** Electromagnetic coils accelerate a metal sliver to hypersonic speeds. *Silent*, perfect for covert operations. Signature of Joric special forces.
- **Disruptor Pistol.** Particle beam tuned to disrupt energy fields. Ineffective against physical armor but shreds shields. *Shield Piercing*.

NAME	TRAIT	DAMAGE	BURDEN	FEATURE	COST
Combat Pistol	Agility	d8+3 phys.	1	Quick	1 Cr (WT1)
Plasma Sidearm	Instinct	d8+3 ene.	1	Reliable	4 Cr (WT2)
Gauss Pistol	Finesse	d8+3 phys.	1	Silent	4 Cr (WT2)
Disruptor Pistol	Knowledge	d8+3 ene.	1	Shield Piercing	4 Cr (WT2)

All Military Pistols operate at **Close** range.

PISTOLS: EXPERIMENTAL (TIER 2-4)

The volatile bleeding-edge of sidearm technology.

- **Phase Pistol.** Bolt that can temporarily shift its quantum state. Deals Void damage (Penetration -4); its *Phasing* ignores cover, but the hit still resolves against the target's (heavily penetrated) thresholds.
- **Quantum Sidearm.** Fires a burst of probability. Makes a specific unfortunate outcome momentarily real. *Probability Shift* forces a reroll on target's defense.
- **Veil Pistol.** Tool for focusing psionic energy. On a hit, *Reality Shift* lets its wielder choose the damage type before Thresholds.
- **Void Pistol.** Rare and feared. Fires a micro-singularity that erases matter from existence. Ammunition is incredibly rare. The signature tool of House Kurogane's elite assassins. Deals Void damage (Penetration -4).

NAME	TRAIT	DAMAGE	BURDEN	FEATURE	COST
Phase Pistol	Knowledge	d8+6 void	1	Phasing	9 Cr (WT3)
Quantum Sidearm	Instinct	d6+6 void	1	Probability Shift	9 Cr (WT3)
Veil Pistol	Presence	d8+6 void	1	Reality Shift	9 Cr (WT3)
Void Pistol	Presence	d6+6 void	1	Disintegrating	9 Cr (WT3)

PISTOLS: PRECURSOR (TIER 4+)

These are not manufactured weapons. They are artifacts.

- **Thought Caster.** Smooth, ergonomic piece of polished stone. No trigger or barrel. When held by a psionically active individual, translates thought into destructive psychic energy. *Mind Link* targets creatures the wielder is aware of.
- **Reality Shaper.** Handheld lattice of shifting light. Allows the wielder to temporarily rewrite reality, "convincing" armor to become brittle, a weapon to turn to dust. *Existence*, narrative, Keeper-mediated.

NAME	TRAIT	DAMAGE	BURDEN	FEATURE	TECH TIER
Thought Caster	Presence	d8+9 void	1	Mind Link	Precursor (TT4)
Reality Shaper	Knowledge	d6+9 void	1	Existence	Precursor (TT4)

RIFLES: COMMON (TIER 2)

When you need precision at a distance.

- **Assault Rifle.** Multi-purpose. Select-fire mode allows precise single shots or *Automatic* suppressive fire.
- **Sniper Rifle.** Built for extreme precision at long range. *Accurate* design.
- **Plasma Rifle.** Bigger plasma pistol. Greater distance, stable plasma bolt. Still *Overheating*.
- **Gauss Rifle.** Long-range, silent. Magnetic accelerators fire a small projectile at incredible speeds. *Armor Piercing*.
- **Pulse Rifle.** Rugged, reliable energy weapon. Less powerful than plasma but more durable. *Burst Fire*, rapid three-shot bursts.

NAME	RANGE	TRAIT	DAMAGE	BURDEN	FEATURE	COST
Assault Rifle	Close	Strength	d8+1 phys.	2	Automatic	4 Cr (WT2)
Sniper Rifle	Far	Finesse	d8+1 phys.	2	Accurate	4 Cr (WT2)
Plasma Rifle	Close	Instinct	d8 ene.	2	Overheating	4 Cr (WT2)
Gauss Rifle	Far	Agility	d6+1 phys.	2	Armor Piercing	4 Cr (WT2)
Pulse Rifle	Close	Strength	d8+1 ene.	2	Burst Fire	4 Cr (WT2)

RIFLES: MILITARY (TIER 2-3)

The refined tools of professional soldiers.

- **Battle Rifle.** Heavy, powerful rifle. Large-caliber round. Punches through cover. *Powerful*, larger damage dice. Favorite of House Joric line infantry.
- **Sniper System.** Complete long-range platform. *Smart Scope* with rangefinders, environmental sensors, targeting AI.
- **Plasma Carbine.** Compact, military-grade plasma. *Stable*, no overheating.
- **Mass Driver Rifle.** Military-grade gauss. *Massive* impact penetrates most cover.
- **Suppression Rifle.** Designed for area denial. *Suppressive* fire patterns force enemies to keep their heads down.

NAME	RANGE	TRAIT	DAMAGE	BURDEN	FEATURE	COST
Battle Rifle	Close	Strength	d10+3 phys.	2	Powerful	4 Cr (WT2)
Sniper System	Very Far	Finesse	d8+3 phys.	2	Smart Scope	9 Cr (WT3)
Plasma Carbine	Close	Instinct	d8+3 ene.	2	Stable	9 Cr (WT3)
Mass Driver Rifle	Far	Strength	d8+3 phys.	2	Massive	9 Cr (WT3)
Suppression Rifle	Far	Strength	d6+3 phys.	2	Suppressive	9 Cr (WT3)

RIFLES: EXPERIMENTAL & PRECURSOR (TIER 3-4+)

- **Phase Rifle.** Experimental. *Phasing* shots pass through cover, and the Veil-touched bolt slips past plating (Void damage, Penetration -4, ignores 1 Armor Slot on the hit).
- **Veil Lance.** Experimental. Channels Veil energy into a coherent beam. *Reality Shift* on direct hit.
- **Singularity Rifle.** Experimental. Fires micro-singularities at range. *Disintegrating* on max damage roll.
- **Precursor Beam Caster.** A relic. *Existence*, narrative weapon.

NAME	RANGE	TRAIT	DAMAGE	BURDEN	FEATURE	COST
Phase Rifle	Far	Knowledge	d8+6 void	2	Phasing	9 Cr (WT3)
Veil Lance	Far	Presence	d10+6 void	2	Reality Shift	16 Cr (WT4)
Singularity Rifle	Far	Knowledge	d8+6 void	2	Disintegrating	16 Cr (WT4)
Precursor Beam Caster	Far	Presence	d10+9 void	2	Existence	n/a

HEAVY WEAPONS: COMMON (TIER 1-2)

Sometimes you need to make a very large point, very quickly.

- **Machine Gun.** Classic suppressive fire tool. *Automatic*, spray across multiple targets.
- **Rocket Launcher.** Single-shot, powerful warhead. *Explosive*.
- **Plasma Cannon.** Crew-served plasma weapon. Massive, unstable glob. *Overheating* catastrophically.
- **Railgun.** Powerful electromagnets, dense slug, incredible velocity. *Massive* impact.
- **Beam Cannon.** *Continuous* beam of high-energy particles. Sustained slicing damage.

NAME	RANGE	TRAIT	DAMAGE	BURDEN	FEATURE	COST
Machine Gun	Far	Strength	d6+3 phys.	2	Automatic	4 Cr (WT2)
Rocket Launcher	Far	Agility	d10+3 phys.	2	Explosive	4 Cr (WT2)
Plasma Cannon	Close	Instinct	d10+3 ene.	2	Overheating	4 Cr (WT2)
Railgun	Far	Strength	d8+3 phys.	2	Massive	4 Cr (WT2)
Beam Cannon	Far	Knowledge	d6+3 ene.	2	Continuous	4 Cr (WT2)

HEAVY WEAPONS: MILITARY (TIER 2-3)

The weapons that decide battles, deployed by the Great Houses.

- **Heavy Machine Gun.** Larger, more powerful. Higher caliber. Typically tripod-mounted. *Suppressive* fire pins entire squads.
- **Smart Launcher.** Advanced rocket launcher with guidance systems. *Guided* missiles track around cover.
- **Fusion Cannon.** Pinnacle of military plasma. Contained fusion reaction. *Devastating*, releases the energy of a small sun.
- **Magnetic Accelerator.** Military railgun, refined. Hypersonic projectile pierces armor like paper. *Armor Piercing (2)*.

NAME	RANGE	TRAIT	DAMAGE	BURDEN	FEATURE	COST
Heavy Machine Gun	Far	Strength	d6+6 phys.	2	Suppressive	4 Cr (WT2)
Smart Launcher	Far	Knowledge	d10+6 phys.	2	Guided	9 Cr (WT3)
Fusion Cannon	Close	Instinct	d10+6 ene.	2	Devastating	9 Cr (WT3)
Magnetic Accelerator	Very Far	Finesse	d6+6 phys.	2	Armor Piercing (2)	4 Cr (WT2)

SPECIAL WEAPONS: EXPLOSIVES

For situations requiring decisive solutions.

MILITARY EXPLOSIVES

NAME	RANGE	TRAIT	DAMAGE	BURDEN	FEATURES	COST
Frag Grenade (*3)	Close	Agility	d8+1 phys.	1 (for 3)	Explosive	1 Cr (WT1)
Concussion Grenade (*3)	Close	Agility	1d6 Stress	1 (for 3)	Explosive, Stunning, Area	1 Cr (WT1)
Grenade Launcher	Far	Strength	(as ammo)	2	Arcing Shot, Explosive	9 Cr (WT3)

EXPERIMENTAL EXPLOSIVES

NAME	RANGE	TRAIT	DAMAGE	BURDEN	FEATURES	COST
Static Pulse Grenade (*2)	Close	Agility	d8+3 ene.	1 (for 2)	Explosive, System Shock	4 Cr (WT2)
Micro-Missile Launcher	Far	Knowledge	d10+3 phys.	2	Guided, Salvo Fire	16 Cr (WT4)
Void Grenade (*1)	Close	Presence	d10+3 void	1	Explosive, Unraveling	3 Cr (3/4 WT2)

SPECIAL WEAPONS: AREA DENIAL & CROWD CONTROL

When holding a position or dispersing a group is more important than eliminating it.

MILITARY & SECURITY-GRADE

NAME	RANGE	TRAIT	DAMAGE	BURDEN	FEATURES	COST
Tangle-Field Grenade (*3)	Close	Agility	1d4 Stress	1 (for 3)	Explosive, Entangling	1 Cr (WT1)
Flamethrower	Close	Strength	d8 ene.	2	Continuous, Ignite	9 Cr (WT3)
Shrapnel Cannon	Close	Strength	d10 phys.	2	Massive, Shredding	4 Cr (WT2)
Stasis Foam Projector	Close	Strength	n/a	2	Entrapping, Messy	4 Cr (WT2)
Resonance Disperser	Close	Knowledge	1d8 Stress	2	Dispersal Wave, Disorienting	9 Cr (WT3)

EXPERIMENTAL & ADVANCED

NAME	RANGE	TRAIT	DAMAGE	BURDEN	FEATURES	COST
Cryo-Projector	Close	Knowledge	d6 ene.	2	Continuous, Brittle	9 Cr (WT3)
Barrier Emitter	Far	Knowledge	n/a	1	Deployable Cover	9 Cr (WT3)
Sonic Cannon	Far	Knowledge	1d8 Stress	2	Waveform, Stagger	16 Cr (WT4)
Gravity Well Emitter	Far	Knowledge	n/a	2	Singularity	16 Cr (WT4)

SPECIAL WEAPONS: NON-LETHAL

Favored by peacekeepers, bounty hunters, and spies.

NAME	RANGE	TRAIT	DAMAGE	BURDEN	FEATURES	COST
Taser Pistol	Close	Finesse	1d4 Stress	1	Taser Charge	1 Cr (WT1)
Net Launcher	Close	Agility	n/a	2	Entangling, Reload	4 Cr (WT2)
Neural Scrambler	Close	Finesse	1d10 Stress	1	Mind-Lock, Psionic	16 Cr (WT4)

WEAPON FEATURES GLOSSARY

The following entries are authoritative for personal-scale weapons. When a feature calls for a Feature DC, use TT1 10, TT2 15, TT3 20, or TT4 25.

Read every entry below as answering three questions and no more: **what triggers it, who rolls against what DC, and what it then applies.** Where the third answer is a named condition, the condition is defined in Chapter 10 and works there as written; the entry names it, it does not redefine it.

WORKED EXAMPLE - A WEAPON FEATURE IN PLAY

Saber closes on a pirate with a **Shock Baton**: Strength, *d6+1 phys.*, Feature *Stunning*. She is at Proficiency 2, so the d6 is her Proficiency Die and her damage is **2d6+1**. She hits, rolls 4 and 3, and adds 1 for **8** - under the pirate's Major threshold, so a Minor hit: **1 HP**.

Now the Feature fires, as its own separate step. *Stunning* triggers on a damaged target, and the pirate did lose HP. The Shock Baton is Common, **TT1**, so its **Feature DC is 10** - the item's number, not Saber's attack total, and not the pirate's Evasion. The pirate makes a **Strength Reaction Roll** against DC 10, rolls 8, and fails. It is now **Stunned**, and what that costs it is Chapter 10's business, not the weapon's: a Stunned creature cannot take any action at all, and stays that way until the condition clears as Chapter 10 describes.

One 8-point swing therefore produced one point of HP and took an enemy entirely out of a round. That is what Features buy, and it is why a d6 weapon is not a weak weapon.

Rule Take-Away: A Feature resolves *after* damage, on its own roll, against the **item's** Feature DC - never against your attack total. The Feature entry tells you the trigger, the roll, and the DC; Chapter 10 tells you what the resulting condition actually does.

- **Accurate.** Gain +1 on attack rolls made at Far or Very Far range.
- **Adaptive.** Once per scene, change this weapon's damage type to Physical, Energy, Void, or Neural until changed again.
- **Arcing Shot.** Ignore cover when there is a clear vertical or indirect trajectory to the target.

- **Area.** The effect applies to every creature in its listed area, including allies, rather than to a single target.
- **Armor Piercing.** Reduce the target's maximum Armor Slots by the listed rating until its next Long Rest. Multiple applications stack.
- **Automatic.** After a successful attack, mark 1 Stress to apply the same attack result to a second valid target within range and Very Close of the primary target. Roll damage separately.
- **Brittle.** A target that loses HP is left Brittle: the next instance of Physical damage it takes deals +1d6 damage, then Brittle ends. This is not the *Vulnerable* condition and does not grant Advantage.
- **Burst Fire.** Whenever a damage die rolls its maximum value, roll one additional die of the same size and add it. Additional dice do not explode again.
- **Cleave.** After a successful Melee hit, immediately make one additional attack against a different target within this weapon's reach.
- **Concealable.** While concealed on the body, this weapon does not count toward Burden. A routine search finds it only on a successful Instinct Roll, DC 15.
- **Continuous.** The target marks 1 Stress at the start of its next Spotlight.
- **Cutting.** Armor Slots cannot be spent to reduce this instance of damage.
- **Deployable Cover.** Deploy a one-way energy wall approximately 5 m × 3 m. It grants **Total Cover** (Chapter 10) from one side and has 10 HP and 6 Armor Slots. It lasts for the scene or until destroyed.
- **Devastating.** When damage equals or exceeds the target's Severe Threshold, the hit marks 1 additional HP.
- **Disintegrating.** When any damage die rolls its maximum value, the **target's player** chooses one fictionally exposed carried item to go offline or reduces maximum Armor Slots by 1 until Repair All Armor; for an NPC, the Keeper chooses. Restore an offline item with suitable tools during a Short or Long Rest and a successful Knowledge (Tech) Roll, DC 15. A target reduced to 0 HP becomes Dying normally. If it later dies before stabilization, no recoverable body remains. This never skips Final or the voluntary Death Move.
- **Disorienting.** The affected creature is **Dazed** (Chapter 10).
- **Dispersal Wave.** The effect fills a Close-range cone. Each creature in the cone makes a Presence Reaction Roll, DC 15; on failure it suffers the weapon's listed effect. Resistance: Presence vs DC 15.
- **Energy.** This is an Energy weapon. Energy damage treats the target's Major and Severe Thresholds as 2 lower. The damage line remains the authoritative damage type.
- **Energy Surge.** Deal +1d6 Energy damage and the target marks 1 Stress.
- **Entangling.** After a hit causes HP or Stress loss, the target makes a Strength Reaction Roll against the weapon's Feature DC. On failure it becomes **Restrained** under the normal Core condition. Resistance: Strength vs Feature DC.
- **Entrapping.** On a hit, the target chooses Strength or Knowledge (Tech) and makes a Reaction Roll against the weapon's Feature DC. On failure it becomes **Incapacitated**. The condition clears as Chapter 10 defines it. Resistance: Strength or Knowledge (Tech) vs Feature DC.
- **Existence.** This is a descriptive Precursor tag, not an independent effect. The item entry must define its exact trigger, target, effect, duration, and end condition before use; without that complete entry, Existence has no mechanical effect.
- **Explosive.** This is a delivery procedure, not a damage line: the item's own listed damage is what lands. Every creature within Very Close of the impact point makes an Agility Reaction Roll against the item's Feature DC. On a failure it takes the item's **listed damage in full**; on a success, half. Total Cover blocks the blast. Resistance: Agility vs Feature DC.
- **Guided.** You may attack a target you are aware of within range without direct line of sight. Guided attacks ignore cover except a completely sealed barrier or other Total Cover that leaves no viable path.
- **Ignite.** A target that loses HP is **On Fire**. The condition itself works exactly as Chapter 10 defines it.
- **Lightweight.** This weapon does not count toward Burden. A one-handed Lightweight weapon may be used comfortably in the off hand, but does not grant an extra attack.
- **Massive.** The wielder suffers -1 Evasion. On a hit, roll one additional normal damage die and discard the lowest normal damage die before totaling damage.
- **Messy.** This weapon leaves unmistakable residue, damage, or biological evidence. Concealing that a confrontation occurred is normally impossible without extensive cleanup.
- **Mind Link.** This Psionic weapon may target a creature the wielder is aware of within range even without line of sight.
- **Mind-Lock.** When this weapon causes a target to mark Stress, that target makes a Presence Reaction Roll against the weapon's Feature DC. On a failure, it may only Move on its next Spotlight. Resistance: Presence vs Feature DC.
- **Overheating.** After each attack, roll d6. On 1-2, either mark 1 Stress to force cooling or spend an Action cooling before the weapon can attack again.
- **Paired.** When wielding two weapons that both have Paired, add the listed Paired bonus from one of them to the damage of an attack made with either weapon. Only one Paired bonus applies per attack.
- **Phasing.** The weapon deals Void damage, ignores cover on ranged attacks, and ignores one Armor Slot on a hit. Its Void damage also applies the normal -4 Threshold Penetration. A Void Ward cancels the Penetration but not the ignored Armor Slot unless it explicitly cancels the whole feature.
- **Poison.** When the attack causes HP loss, the target marks 1 Stress. A Poison (Special) item replaces this effect with its own text.
- **Powerful.** This weapon's listed damage die is one size larger than the standard die for its chassis. The damage line already includes this increase.
- **Probability Shift.** After rolling the attack, you may reroll both Duality Dice. You must use the new result.
- **Psionic.** This weapon makes no attack roll against Evasion. Instead the target makes a **Presence Reaction Roll** against the item's Feature DC; on a failure it takes the weapon's damage in full, and on a success it takes none. Wards and effects that block Veil contact block the attack outright. Resistance: Presence vs Feature DC.
- **Quick.** After attacking, mark 1 Stress to immediately make a second attack against the same target.
- **Reach.** This Melee weapon may attack a target at the listed distance, normally Very Close, without entering Melee range.
- **Reality Shift.** After a hit but before damage is rolled, the wielder chooses Physical, Energy, Void, or Neural for that hit. This changes only the canonical type; tags, dice, Penetration, Conditions, and every other property remain as printed.
- **Reliable.** Gain +1 on all attack rolls made with this weapon.
- **Reload.** After each shot, spend an Action reloading before the weapon can attack again.

- **Salvo Fire.** After a successful attack, mark 1 Stress to apply the same attack result to a second target within Close of the primary target. Roll damage separately.
- **Shield Piercing.** Only half of the target's available Armor Slots, rounded down, may be spent against this hit.
- **Shredding.** When the attack causes HP loss, reduce the target's maximum Armor Slots by 1 until the armor is repaired during Downtime.
- **Silent.** Using this weapon creates no report or muzzle flash and does not automatically break stealth or alert creatures beyond the immediate victim.
- **Singularity.** Choose a point at Far range. Creatures within Close of it make a Strength Reaction Roll against the item's Feature DC; on a failure they are pulled toward the point and **Restrained** (Chapter 10). Resistance: Strength vs Feature DC.
- **Smart Scope.** Gain +2 on attack rolls at Far or Very Far range.
- **Stable.** This weapon ignores Overheating and other sustained-use malfunctions unless a rule explicitly overrides Stable.
- **Stagger.** A target damaged by this weapon has Disadvantage on its next action.
- **Stunning.** A damaged target makes a Strength Reaction Roll against the item's Feature DC. On a failure it is **Stunned** (Chapter 10). Resistance: Strength vs Feature DC.
- **Stunning on crit.** On a Critical Hit, the target is **Stunned** (Chapter 10).
- **Suppressive.** Mark 1 Stress. Every creature within Close of the target has Disadvantage on attacks until the end of its next Spotlight. This rides along with a normal attack; it is not the **Suppress** action (Chapter 10), which costs your whole Spotlight but hobbles every action in the area rather than attacks alone.
- **System Shock.** Against Synthetics and machines, deal normal damage. Against organic targets, deal only 1d4 Stress. If any damage die rolls its maximum and the attack causes HP or Stress loss, the target's player chooses one fictionally exposed electronic device; it goes offline until an Action and a Knowledge (Tech) Roll, DC 10, restores it. The Keeper chooses for an NPC. This damage-die trigger never alters the Duality result.
- **Taser Charge.** The target makes a Strength Reaction Roll against the item's Feature DC. On a failure it is **Stunned** (Chapter 10). Resistance: Strength vs Feature DC.
- **Unraveling.** When any damage die rolls its maximum value, a player target chooses one Class or Ancestry Feature to suppress until the end of the scene; the Keeper chooses for an NPC. The target keeps control of all decisions and cannot lose its Path resource engine.
- **Vibration.** Armor Slots cannot be spent to reduce this instance of damage.
- **Waveform.** The attack affects every creature in a Close-range cone. Roll once and compare the result with each target's Evasion.

ARMOR: THE RULES

Armor in Veilfarers is rated by three properties:

- **Damage Thresholds (Major / Severe).** The two damage points at which a hit climbs to a higher tier of HP loss (Chapter 10). The two numbers in an armor's stat line are its base Major and Severe thresholds; add your level to both.
- **Armor Slots.** The armor's pool of soak. Spend one to reduce a hit by one severity tier (including dropping a Minor hit to no HP). Restore through the Repair Armor Short Rest move or Repair All Armor Long Rest move unless a rule explicitly states otherwise.

- **Features.** Special properties, defined in the *Armor Features Glossary* below. Armor never adds a flat bonus to Evasion: a few Features adjust Evasion directly (*Flexible* +1, *Heavy* -1, *Very Heavy* and *Massive* -2), and that is the only way armor changes how hard you are to strike.

(Earlier drafts listed a separate *Armor Score* that added to Evasion; that stat is removed. Armor never modifies Evasion except through the Features noted above. The unified term for an armor's pool of soak is **Armor Slots**, shown in the tables below.)

A character wears one armor type at a time. Switching takes ten minutes (longer for Powered/Pressurized).

Armor and your class. Each class's Technology Access (Chapters 6 and 7) lists the armor categories it is trained to wear. You may physically put on heavier armor than your class trains for, but wearing armor above your class's access imposes **Disadvantage on everything involving movement**, Agility rolls, maneuvers, evading, climbing, and piloting while wearing it, as the unfamiliar weight and servos fight you instead of working with you. This is mechanical, not just flavor: a Mystic can strap into Heavy plate, but will move like they are underwater in it until they train the access for it.

Weapons and gear outside your access. A weapon family outside your Class Technology Access imposes **Disadvantage on attacks made with it**, regardless of Tier. Other inaccessible augments or equipment cannot be installed or operated until the access is trained. Training comes from Class progression or from a completed story project with a teacher and adequate time; the Class entry remains the default.

LIGHT ARMOR

For those who need to move fast and still have a fighting chance.

- **Frontier Vest.** Simple armored vest. Cured beast hides and scavenged ceramic plates.
- **Environmental Suit.** Ubiquitous tool of every spacer. *Life Support*.
- **Mesh Armor.** Form-fitting alloy mesh. Surprisingly tough; limited *Self-Repair*.
- **Pilot's Jacket.** Flight suit with integrated armor plates and life support. For cramped cockpits and high-G.
- **Stealth Armor.** Military-grade suit that bends light. *Cloaking*, nearly invisible.
- **Smart Fabric Armor.** Reactive fibers harden on impact. *Flexible*, advanced *Self-Repair*.
- **Infiltrator Suit.** Specialized stealth. Enhanced *Cloaking* and sound-dampening.
- **Special Forces Suit.** Best light armor military technology can provide. *Resilient*, tactical integration.

NAME	TECH TIER	THRESHOLDS	ARMOR SLOTS	FEATURES	COST
Frontier Vest	Common (TT1)	5 / 11	3	Flexible	1 Cr (WT1)
Environmental Suit	Common (TT1)	4 / 8	3	Life Support	1 Cr (WT1)
Mesh Armor	Common (TT1)	5 / 10	4	Self-Repair	4 Cr (WT2)
Pilot's Jacket	Common (TT1)	5 / 11	3	Life Support	4 Cr (WT2)
Infiltrator Suit	Military (TT2)	7 / 14	4	Cloaking	4 Cr (WT2)
Stealth Armor	Military (TT2)	7 / 16	4	Cloaking	9 Cr (WT3)
Smart Fabric Armor	Experimental (TT3)	8 / 16	5	Self-Repair	9 Cr (WT3)
Special Forces Suit	Experimental (TT3)	9 / 18	5	Resilient	9 Cr (WT3)

MEDIUM ARMOR

The balance of protection and mobility for most professionals.

- **Homestead Rig.** Reinforced work armor built from agricultural and salvage plating. No military pedigree, but a colonist can wear it in the field all day. *Flexible.*
- **Combat Armor.** Standard-issue armor for soldiers galaxywide. *Resilient.*
- **Composite Armor.** Lighter-weight using advanced alloys. Comparable protection, and the layered weave spreads a crushing impact instead of buckling under it. *Composite.*
- **Security Armor.** Corporate enforcers and station police. *Resilient*; often features house colors.
- **Colony Defense Armor.** Rugged, heavily patched from various sources. *Fortified.*
- **Tactical Armor.** Integrated sensor suites and tactical displays. *Tactical.*
- **Powered Armor.** First step toward heavy armor. Servos augment strength. *Powered.*
- **Assault Armor.** Frontline combat. *Resilient*; *Assault* aids automatic weapons.
- **Marine Armor.** Ship-boarding troops. Fully sealed (*Environmental*), heavily reinforced (*Resilient*).

NAME	TECH TIER	THRESHOLDS	ARMOR SLOTS	FEATURES	COST
Homestead Rig	Common (TT1)	6 / 13	3	Flexible	4 Cr (WT2)
Combat Armor	Military (TT2)	8 / 16	3	Resilient	4 Cr (WT2)
Composite Armor	Military (TT2)	8 / 16	4	Composite, Resilient	4 Cr (WT2)
Security Armor	Military (TT2)	7 / 14	4	Resilient	4 Cr (WT2)
Colony Defense Armor	Military (TT2)	8 / 17	5	Fortified	9 Cr (WT3)
Tactical Armor	Experimental (TT3)	10 / 20	5	Tactical, Reflective	9 Cr (WT3)
Assault Armor	Experimental (TT3)	11 / 22	5	Assault	9 Cr (WT3)
Marine Armor	Experimental (TT3)	12 / 24	5	Resilient, Environmental	16 Cr (WT4)
Powered Armor	Experimental (TT3)	13 / 28	6	Powered	16 Cr (WT4)

HEAVY ARMOR

Heavy armor transforms the wearer into a walking fortress.

- **Riot Armor.** Military crowd-control plate. *Fortified*, slow, and clumsy; it is not civilian Common gear.
- **Industrial Exosuit.** Not designed for combat, heavy lifting in hazardous environments. *Powered*, *Very Heavy*.
- **Salvage Armor.** Jury-rigged from ship hulls and machinery. *Heavy*, *Jury-rigged*, easy to repair with common materials.
- **Battle Armor.** Standard heavy armor of the Great Houses. *Fortified*, *Powered*.
- **Power Armor.** Iconic post-Silence warrior. *Very Heavy*, *Powered*. Walking tank.
- **Siege Armor.** Ultimate personal defense. *Very Heavy*, *Massive*. Mobile bunker.

NAME	TECH TIER	THRESHOLDS	ARMOR SLOTS	FEATURES	COST
Riot Armor	Military (TT2)	8 / 17	5	Heavy, Fortified	4 Cr (WT2)
Salvage Armor	Common (TT1)	7 / 15	6	Heavy, Jury-rigged	4 Cr (WT2)
Industrial Exosuit	Military (TT2)	8 / 16	7	Very Heavy, Powered	4 Cr (WT2)
Battle Armor	Experimental (TT3)	13 / 27	7	Heavy, Fortified	9 Cr (WT3)
Power Armor	Experimental (TT3)	15 / 30	8	Very Heavy, Powered	25 Cr (WT5)
Siege Armor	Experimental (TT3)	16 / 32	8	Very Heavy, Massive	25 Cr (WT5)

ARMOR FEATURES GLOSSARY

The following entries are authoritative for personal-scale armor. Starship features with the same ordinary-language name are separate rules.

- **Assault.** Gain +1 on attack rolls made with weapons that have Automatic.
- **Cloaking.** Mark 1 Stress to become invisible until the end of your next Spotlight, or until you attack or are hit.
- **Environmental.** While sealed and powered, the armor protects against vacuum, toxic atmospheres, and extreme temperatures. Breathable-air duration is listed by the item; if none is listed, use 24 hours.
- **Flexible.** Gain +1 Evasion while wearing this armor.
- **Fortified.** When you mark an Armor Slot, reduce the hit by two severity tiers instead of one.
- **Heavy.** Suffer -1 Evasion while wearing this armor.
- **Jury-rigged.** This armor may be repaired without a workshop. After Failure with Fear on a Roll where the armor materially protected or assisted you, one powered armor feature goes offline; if none is powered, reduce maximum Armor Slots by 1. Spend an Action and make a Knowledge (Tech) Roll, DC 10, with common scrap to restore the feature or Slot. Matching dice remain a Critical Success and never cause a malfunction.
- **Life Support.** A self-contained atmosphere and thermal system protects the wearer in vacuum or hostile air for the item's printed duration; if none is printed, the duration is 2 hours on a full charge.
- **Massive.** Suffer -2 Evasion. Whenever you mark an Armor Slot, roll d6; on 5-6 reduce the hit by one additional severity tier.
- **Powered.** Integrated servos negate the Evasion penalty from Heavy or Very Heavy. If power is lost, the wearer suffers -3 on Agility Rolls until exiting or restoring power.
- **Composite.** Crushing is blunted against you: a Crushing hit no longer ignores one of your Armor Slots, and you may spend slots against it as normal.
- **Reflective.** Energy Penetration is cancelled against you (treat Energy as Penetration 0): resolve the hit against your full Major and Severe Thresholds.
- **Resilient.** Before marking your final available Armor Slot, roll d6. On 6, ignore the hit and do not mark the slot.
- **Self-Repair.** During any Short or Long Rest, automatically restore one marked Armor Slot in addition to other repairs.
- **Tactical.** Gain +1 on Instinct Rolls for perception.
- **Very Heavy.** Suffer -2 Evasion and -1 on all Agility Rolls. Powered servos are required to move normally and do not remove these penalties.

AUGMENTATION SYSTEMS

The Great Silence broke not just our communication networks but our assumptions about human limits. Augmentation technology, the fusion of flesh and machine, became both salvation and curse. It offers the power to transcend, but always at a cost.

AUGMENT CAPACITY

Your body and nervous system can host only so much hardware before they begin to rebel. How much you can carry is your **Augment Capacity**.

- **Your capacity.** Choose three of these four traits, **Strength, Agility, Finesse, or Presence**. Your Augment Capacity equals the sum of those three trait values (minimum 0). These are the traits that measure the frame, the reflexes, and the force of will a graft has

to integrate with; raw intellect does not help your body carry steel.

- **Human and Synthetic frames.** Humans and Synthetics gain +2 **Augment Capacity**. Human physiology adapts to grafted hardware with unusual ease, and a Synthetic chassis is built from the start to be extended.
- **Each augment costs 1.** Every augmentation you install spends 1 point of your capacity. While your installed augments total no more than your capacity, they sit comfortably and carry only their own listed costs (credits, and any Stress cost when active).
- **Going past your limit.** You may install augments beyond your capacity, but the body pays for what it cannot comfortably hold: for each point installed past your **Augment Capacity**, your **maximum Stress drops by 1** for as long as you remain over capacity. This is not a permanent scar. The moment your capacity catches up, raising one of your three chosen traits as you level up frees a slot, or you remove an augment, the freed point restores 1 to your maximum Stress. A chrome-heavy enforcer with more steel than frame is formidable and fragile in the same breath, and any Pearl Era surgeon will tell you the quiet wards are full of people who insisted on one more implant.

This is the *installation* limit, how many augments you can bear at once. Once an augment is in, the Degradation and Stress rules below govern how it behaves under load.

OPTIONAL RULE: SCARCE CHROME

Some tables want a grittier galaxy, one where augmentation is rare enough that a single implant turns heads. For those campaigns, **halve each character's Augment Capacity, rounding up**. Everything else works exactly as written: each augment still costs 1, and going past the lower limit still trades maximum Stress point for point while you remain over it. The effect is to make chrome a deliberate, expensive commitment rather than a default loadout, and to push most characters toward one or two meaningful implants instead of a full rack. Set this at the start of a campaign, not partway through an arc.

THE PRICE OF POWER: DEGRADATION

Augmentations are a permanent part of your body. When a character's Stress would exceed maximum, they can choose to push their augmentations beyond safety limits.

- **Mechanic.** The character forces an augmentation to stay online by paying excess Stress in another currency: **HP** or **Hope**.
- **The Cost.** Each point of HP or Hope spent covers 1 point of excess Stress. The act of overclocking inflicts 1 **Degradation Level** on the augmentation.
- **Degradation.** This term uses Rust & Steel's optional four-state Condition Track only when that module was adopted before play. Without it, Overclocking takes the chosen augmentation offline when the effect ends; restore it during a Long Rest with suitable tools and a Knowledge (Tech) Roll, DC 15. No undefined Degradation Level or discretionary flaw exists in Core play.

STRESS COST (WHEN ACTIVE)

Some augmentations have a per-scene activation cost in Stress. The Stress is marked when the augmentation's benefit is invoked.

NEURAL AUGMENTATIONS

Upgrading the mind, boldest and most dangerous attempts to expand cognitive capabilities.

- **Memory Chip.** Perfect recall. Drawback: "data-ghosts", inability to forget the face of every person you have killed.
- **Pain Suppressor.** Common implant for frontline soldiers. Once per scene after one hit causes the wearer to mark 2 or more HP, clear 1 Stress. It never reduces HP or hides the wearer's HP, Conditions, or injury severity from the player.
- **Combat Precognition.** Glimpses of potential futures. Invaluable in firefights. Devastating in social situations.
- **Combat Reflexes.** Reaction speed beyond human limits.

NAME	BENEFIT	DRAWBACK	STRESS	TECH TIER	COST
Memory Chip	Perfect recall of anything you witness; +1 on Knowledge Rolls to recall or analyze it	Data-ghosts may be used as narrative prompts only; no unlisted cost, modifier, or loss of control	-	Common (TT1)	4 Cr (WT2)
Pain Suppressor	Once per scene after one hit marks 2 or more HP, clear 1 Stress	Does not reduce HP; the wearer's player always knows HP, Conditions, and injury severity	-	Common (TT1)	4 Cr (WT2)
Combat Reflexes	+1 Evasion	Constant alertness; Disadvantage on rolls that need stillness or rest	1	Military (TT2)	16 Cr (WT4)
Combat Precognition	Once per scene, mark 1 Stress: Advantage on one attack or reaction roll in combat	Future-glimpses bleed into talk; Disadvantage on Presence in social scenes	1	Experimental (TT3)	16 Cr (WT4)

PHYSICAL AUGMENTATIONS

Redefining natural limits, replacing or enhancing flesh with steel.

- **Subdermal Armor.** Skin gleams with metallic undertones, scars in geometric patterns. Mark of someone who chose metal over flesh.
- **Weapon Integration.** A weapon built directly into a prosthetic limb. Cannot be disarmed; impossible to conceal from scanners.
- **Combat Chassis.** Full-body skeletal augmentation.

NAME	BENEFIT	DRAWBACK	STRESS	TECH TIER	COST
Prosthetic Limb	Replace lost limb, +1 Strength	Maintenance required	-	Common (TT1)	4 Cr (WT2)
Reinforced Bones	+2 HP	Heavier body (-1 swim/climb)	-	Common (TT1)	9 Cr (WT3)
Subdermal Armor	+1 maximum Armor Slot	Obvious appearance	-	Common (TT1)	9 Cr (WT3)
Toxin Filter	Immunity to poisons	Reduced healing (half rate)	-	Common (TT1)	1 Cr (WT1)
Enhanced Muscles	+1 Strength	Increased caloric needs	-	Common (TT1)	9 Cr (WT3)
Combat Chassis	+2 Strength, +1 maximum Armor Slot	Social stigma	1	Military (TT2)	16 Cr (WT4)
Enhanced Reflexes	+2 Agility	Hyperactivity	1	Military (TT2)	16 Cr (WT4)
Weapon Integration	Built-in weapons, cannot disarm	Always-armed presence	1	Military (TT2)	4 Cr (WT2)
Life Support System	Survive vacuum/hostile env.	Tech dependency	-	Military (TT2)	1 Cr (WT1)
Sensory Package	+2 Instinct	Sensory overload in crowds	1	Military (TT2)	16 Cr (WT4)
Phase Shifter	Briefly intangible	Energy drain, risk of stuck	3	Experimental (TT3)	16 Cr (WT4)
Adaptive Biology	Env. hazard immunity	Unpredictable mutations	2	Experimental (TT3)	16 Cr (WT4)
Quantum Muscles	Variable strength	Unstable output	2	Experimental (TT3)	16 Cr (WT4)

STEALTH AUGMENTATIONS

Ghosts in the machine.

NAME	BENEFIT	DRAWBACK	STRESS	TECH TIER	COST
Subdermal Camouflage	+1 to Agility Rolls to avoid visual detection	Skin tinting visible in bright light	-	Common (TT1)	4 Cr (WT2)
Audio Dampeners	Muffles movement	Reduced hearing acuity	1	Common (TT1)	4 Cr (WT2)
Thermal Shroud	Lowers heat signature	Overheating risk in heat	-	Common (TT1)	4 Cr (WT2)
Light-Absorbent Skin	+1 Agility in low-light	Skin fatigue, rashes	-	Common (TT1)	1 Cr (WT1)
Neural Silence Nodes	Immune to electronic eavesdrop	EMP vulnerability	1	Common (TT1)	4 Cr (WT2)
Adaptive Camo Weave	Alters color/pattern	Power draw reduces armor energy	1	Military (TT2)	9 Cr (WT3)
Subdermal Noise Filters	Sound cancellation within Close range	Headaches if worn continuously	1	Military (TT2)	9 Cr (WT3)

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT & GEAR

Beyond weapons and armor, characters carry working kits.

MEDICAL GEAR

NAME	TECH TIER	USE	COST
Basic Medkit	Common (TT1)	First Aid actions (Chapter 10)	1 Cr (WT1)
Field Medkit	Military (TT2)	First Aid at +2 to rolls	4 Cr (WT2)
Trauma Kit	Military (TT2)	Stabilize Dying one rung easier: DC 10 in place of the usual DC 15	4 Cr (WT2)
Synthetic Tissue Pack	Experimental (TT3)	Replace minor wounds in 24h	9 Cr (WT3)
Cryo-Stasis Pod	Experimental (TT3)	Suspend a Dying character indefinitely	9 Cr (WT3)
Repair Nanites, Mender Vial	Common (TT1)	Inject (Synthetic only): clear 1d4 HP	2 Cr (1/2 WT2)
Repair Nanites, Reconstructor	Military (TT2)	Inject (Synthetic only): clear 1d4+2 HP	5 Cr (1/2 WT3)
Repair Nanites, Apex Swarm	Experimental (TT3)	Inject (Synthetic only): clear 2d4+2 HP and 1 Stress	9 Cr (WT3)

TECH GEAR

NAME	TECH TIER	USE	COST
Datapad	Common (TT1)	Standard computing, files	1 Cr (WT1)
Encrypted Datapad	Military (TT2)	Resistant to standard surveillance	4 Cr (WT2)
Hacking Kit	Military (TT2)	Advantage on system-intrusion rolls	4 Cr (WT2)
Universal Translator	Military (TT2)	Real-time translation, most languages	4 Cr (WT2)
Sensor Array	Military (TT2)	Wide-area detection throughout Very Far range	4 Cr (WT2)
Quantum Crystal	Experimental (TT3)	Long-range comms (<i>The Galactic Communications Network</i> , this chapter)	9 Cr (WT3)
Stealth-Field Generator	Experimental (TT3)	Hidden condition for 1 minute, scene-limited	9 Cr (WT3)

SURVIVAL GEAR

NAME	TECH TIER	USE	COST
Field Environment Coveralls	Common (TT1)	Weather and mild atmospheres; not vacuum-sealed	1 Cr (WT1)
Field Rations	Common (TT1)	One week food, single character	1 Cr (WT1)
Climbing Kit	Common (TT1)	Advantage on climbing rolls	1 Cr (WT1)
Atmospheric Mask	Military (TT2)	Filters most toxic atmospheres	4 Cr (WT2)
Cold-Weather Suit	Military (TT2)	No Stress from extreme cold	4 Cr (WT2)
Vacuum Suit	Military (TT2)	Pressurized, two hours air	4 Cr (WT2)
Long-Duration Vacuum Suit	Experimental (TT3)	Twelve hours air, self-repairing seals	9 Cr (WT3)

TOOLS AND UTILITY

NAME	TECH TIER	USE	COST
Tool Belt	Common (TT1)	Engineer Class Item; general repairs	1 Cr (WT1)
Surgical Kit	Military (TT2)	Medical Technician subclass tools	4 Cr (WT2)
Lock-Pick Kit	Common (TT1)	Scoundrel Class Item; locks	1 Cr (WT1)
Universal Key	Military (TT2)	Defeats most commercial locks	4 Cr (WT2)
Vault Kit	Experimental (TT3)	High-security access	9 Cr (WT3)
Survey Instruments	Common (TT1)	Explorer Class Item; mapping	1 Cr (WT1)
Personal Logbook	Common (TT1)	Explorer Class Item; recorded entries	1 Cr (WT1)
Welding Rig	Common (TT1)	Welding/cutting; structural work	1 Cr (WT1)
Industrial Plasma Cutter	Military (TT2)	Cuts through standard materials	4 Cr (WT2)
Portable Fabricator	Experimental (TT3)	Produces basic components	9 Cr (WT3)
Combat Engineer Kit	Military (TT2)	Advanced repairs and construction	4 Cr (WT2)

COMMUNICATION

NAME	TECH TIER	RANGE	COST
Personal Comm	Common (TT1)	Line-of-sight to local relay	1 Cr (WT1)
Encrypted Comm	Military (TT2)	Same range; resistant to interception	4 Cr (WT2)
Long-Range Comm	Military (TT2)	Inter-system, via standard relay	4 Cr (WT2)
Quantum Comm	Experimental (TT3)	Inter-system, instantaneous, no relay	9 Cr (WT3)

THE GALACTIC COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

"You can hear the whole galaxy. You just can't afford to talk back."

Dispatch-Warden Imre Sol, Temple of Information, Boros-9

The Q-Net is gone. What replaced it is slower, costlier, segmented into tiers, and gated by a single House. This section tells you, first, what your crew can and cannot do with it at the table, and then, for the curious, how it actually works and why it is shaped the way it is.

AT THE TABLE: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Read this much and you can run comms in any session.

- **Talking nearby is easy.** Within a building, a city, a ship, or out to the nearest orbital relay, communication is instant, cheap, and reliable. This is most of daily life.
- **Talking across a star system is slow but normal.** Messages ride conventional signal (radio, laser, tightbeam) through satellites and repeaters. Seconds across a planet, minutes across a system. Reliable. Cheap. This is where most data moves.
- **Talking across the Veil goes through a Temple.** Interstellar messages reach another star only through a **Temple of Information**, a quantum-crystal node. A Temple link is *instantaneous* but *low-bandwidth*, *queued*, and *expensive*, fit for short, high-priority messages, not bulk data. There are only about two hundred Temples; not every system has one.
- **You cannot "phone home" instantly and privately.** Reaching across the Veil means handing your message to a Temple (House Kurogane sees the traffic and sets the speed) or sending it by courier (slow). Plan around this. The crew operates mostly on what they carry and what they learn on arrival.
- **A ship can carry its own Veil link, barely.** A shipboard **Quantum Comm** can send only terse on/off bursts, the read comes back noisy, and a long transmission can be *detected and located*. Use it for emergencies: "*Compromised. Send extraction.*" Never for conversation.
- **Out of coverage is a real condition.** In Veil transit, in disturbed regions, or in unsurveyed space, the crew cannot reach the Temple network at all. Their last word from home may be days or weeks old.

COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT

NAME	TECH TIER	RANGE	COST
Personal Comm	Common (TT1)	Line-of-sight to local relay	1 Cr (WT1)
Encrypted Comm	Military (TT2)	Same range; resistant to interception	4 Cr (WT2)
Long-Range Comm	Military (TT2)	Inter-system, via standard relay	4 Cr (WT2)
Quantum Comm	Experimental (TT3)	Inter-system, instantaneous; binary, terse, detectable	9 Cr (WT3)

SENDING A MESSAGE ACROSS THE VEIL: THE CHANNELS

When the crew needs word to cross a stellar gap, they choose a channel. Each trades speed, bandwidth, secrecy, and cost differently.

- **Temple link (quantum crystal).** Instantaneous. Low bandwidth. Queued and prioritized by the operating House. Best for short, urgent, structured messages. Subject to the Kurogane monopoly and to Temple status (a Temple can be backed up, in binary mode, or offline).
- **Pearl Courier (physical).** A ship carries data-cores or sealed dispatches along Veil routes. Days to weeks. High bandwidth, anything fits. The most reliable and most secure option, and the slowest and most expensive. Run by House Valerius, the Explorers' Guild, and the Free Fleet.
- **Celestiari Resonance Instrument (emotional).** Two grown, paired instruments carry *feeling* across light-years in close to real time, well or unwell, calm or alarmed, plus simple structured concepts (*yes, no, come, flee*). No data, no detail. Rare, expensive, Celestiari-operated. Used when an institution needs urgent emotional confirmation of a distant event.
- **House intelligence networks (proprietary).** Each House runs its own blend of couriers, encrypted broadcasts, and dead drops. Outsiders reach these only by infiltration, recruitment, or favor.

ENCRYPTION TIERS

Most traffic on any channel is encrypted. The DC is the difficulty to intercept and read it.

ENCRYPTION	INTERCEPT DC	TYPICAL USE
Open (none)	5	Public broadcast; anyone can listen
Standard commercial	10	Routine business
Military-grade	15	House internal, frontier security
House-grade	20	Actionable House intelligence
Ailuran cipher-protocol	25	Ailuran brokers; reputed to need an Ailuran bio-signature
Physical courier	Cannot be intercepted remotely	Acquire the courier or nothing

THREE IMPLICATIONS FOR EVERY CAMPAIGN

- **Information has distance.** Leave a known port and you leave behind the ability to call for help in any real-time way. No instant rescue across the Veil.
- **Information has cost.** Sending anything important across the gap costs money, time, favor, or all three. A fast House-grade courier between major systems runs into the hundreds of Credits.
- **Information has texture.** Every channel carries its own bias. A courier's news is days old. A resonance instrument gives feeling without fact. A relayed broadcast may be edited before it lands. The *same event* sounds different through different channels, and reconciling the accounts is half the work of figuring out what is really happening.

HOW THE NETWORK IS BUILT

The replacement for the Q-Net is a **three-tier hierarchy**, each tier covering a different scale and running on different physics. A single message can pass through all three, and can be delayed, garbled, or lost at any layer.

- **Tier One, the Temples of Information.** Interstellar. Paired quantum crystals that speak in light.
- **Tier Two, orbital satellites and surface repeaters.** Intrasystem. Conventional radio, laser, tightbeam.
- **Tier Three, personal comm devices.** Local. Standard EM, line-of-sight to the nearest Tier Two relay.

A standard message typically travels: personal comm to orbital satellite to planetary repeater to ground station to Temple of Information, across the Veil to a partner Temple, then back down the far side. Each hop adds

latency and a point of failure. Three systems away takes hours under good conditions, days under bad, and may never arrive if a Temple is offline.

Tier Two and Tier Three are the long, slow, dependable web. Within a system, conventional signal relayed through satellites and repeaters is slow (light-speed delays apply) but reliable, bandwidth-rich, and cheap, so most data volume lives here. Personal and Long-Range comms never touch a crystal; they climb this web until they reach a Temple, and the Temple speaks for them. The reason the whole network has this strange shape, a vast slow web

feeding a few precious instantaneous nodes, is not bureaucracy. It is physics.

WHY IT WORKS THIS WAY: THE QUANTUM CRYSTAL

Everything above follows from how a quantum crystal behaves. The lore here is optional; the rules above are complete without it.

A **paired quantum crystal** is two stones cut from the same Veil-touched geological event, bound beneath ordinary physics. Whatever happens to one happens to the other in the same instant, at any distance. They are, to one another, the same crystal in two places. The way they express that bond is **light**: an active crystal glows, and its color is its state. Drive one to shine at a chosen hue and its partner, light-years away, instantly shines at the complementary hue on the color wheel, push one toward red and the far one answers green. Nobody fully understands the mechanism. The galaxy has a working medium, and that has been enough. The signal never crosses the gap. It simply *appears*, at once, in two rooms.

Two awkward facts about operating that miracle shape the entire network.

CHEAP TO HEAR, COSTLY TO SPEAK

Listening is cheap. Reading a crystal means pointing a simple optical sensor at it and recording the color. The sensors are inexpensive and buildable from salvage. Anyone holding one end of a pair can read it for almost nothing.

Speaking is expensive. To change a crystal's state you must strike it with a tightly tuned, high-energy beam at exactly the target frequency. Only then does the distant partner answer. Painting one message means generating, aiming, and holding many distinct high-purity frequencies in rapid sequence, each a power-hungry act. Sending a paragraph can cost more power than a small settlement burns in a day.

This asymmetry is the hidden architecture of the network. You could hand everyone a *reader*. You could never hand everyone a *writer*. The cost of speech, in energy and precision machinery, is what concentrates interstellar communication into a few enormous installations and leaves everyone else to reach them the slow way.

THE DISCIPLINE OF DARKNESS

A crystal can only be read in **absolute dark**. A glow is only legible against nothing. Let one stray photon fall on the stone, a reflection, a status light, a crack of glow under a door, and that light mixes with the crystal's emission and smears the color the reader records. The message arrives dirtied, a green read as yellow, a confirmation that cannot be trusted, and the far end never knows its words were soiled. So every working crystal lives sealed inside a **reading cell** engineered toward perfect, photonically silent darkness, tended by operators who work by touch. Much of a Temple's cost is, in the end, the cost of keeping a few rooms more completely dark than anywhere else in human space.

TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SIX COLORS

There is a large compensation. Old machine communication, like the conventional comms still carrying intrasystem traffic, is *binary*: on or off, two states, meaning built one bit at a time. A quantum crystal, read in true darkness by a calibrated sensor, resolves into **256 distinguishable chromatic states**, an alphabet of color where conventional tech has two letters. Operators call each state a **chroma**, and a single pulse carries a full byte of meaning, eight times what the old machines manage in one flash. This is why a Temple, slow to queue and costly to run, can still move dense, structured data across the galaxy in real time. The catch: painting all 256 chroma cleanly needs the full emitter bank and the full discipline of

darkness. Strip those away, as you must aboard a ship, and the alphabet collapses back toward binary.

THE TEMPLES OF INFORMATION

The Temples are where speech and darkness are gathered. Each is a substantial facility, often the size of a city block, built into a Core World's infrastructure or installed as a station at a system's edge. They are temples in the literal sense: cathedrals around the act of communication, staffed by orders of operators, IA-tenders, cipher-clerks, power engineers, darkness-wardens, and security, all devoted to keeping a few glowing stones fed, defended, and unlit. Inside sits the keystone of post-Silence civilization, a paired quantum crystal in its reading cell, served by a tuned emitter bank and watched by a filtering intelligence. One Temple speaks; its partner, anywhere in the galaxy, hears and answers.

Range. Any distance the galaxy presents. Distance does not degrade the signal. Veil disturbances do.

Cost. A power plant to feed the emitters, rooms held in flawless darkness, and a standing population of specialists. The crystals are *rare*: the right kind of Veil-touched geological event happens perhaps once every two decades, and a paired crystal *cannot be re-paired with anything else*. Destroy one Temple and both crystals

die forever. Temples are primary strategic assets, and their placement is political geography.

Network. Roughly **two hundred Temples** operate galaxy-wide, a sparse mesh. Each system's Temple is the **central node** that gathers all local traffic and distributes everything inbound. A message from the periphery to the Core hops Temple to Temple, often through three to six along the way. Each hop is instantaneous; the latency is the queuing, decoding, re-encoding, and prioritization at every node.

THE KUROGANE MONOPOLY

The political fact every Keeper needs: **House Kurogane controls crystal alignment**. Not the raw stones, surveys are run by several Houses and the Explorers' Guild, but the *alignment* that turns two raw crystals into a working pair and the tuning that yields a clean 256-chroma read. The work is done in Kurogane-secret facilities, by Kurogane-trained technicians, under licenses that grant Kurogane a permanent share of every Temple's traffic. Every operational Temple pays Kurogane. Every crystal in service was aligned by them. The monopoly is complete, and it is the single largest source of both House Kurogane's revenue and its leverage.

This produces specific shapes:

- Houses out of favor find their Temple traffic *delayed*, never blocked, just mysteriously slow.
- Off-network communication means conventional alternatives (slow, system-bound) or *stealing* crystals, an act of war.
- A new Temple cannot be installed without Kurogane cooperation. Build one without alignment and you have built an empty dark room.
- The Spire of Verita and the Stellar Commerce Guild both quietly seek an alternative to the Kurogane process. Neither has succeeded.

For Keepers: the monopoly is a campaign-level antagonist that never has to fight the crew. It needs only to *delay their message by six hours* to ruin the job. Use it.

IA FILTERING AND THE NOISE OF THE VEIL

Even with a perfect pair and a perfect dark cell, the read is not clean. Veil disturbances introduce phantom chroma, color-wheel echoes, and momentary inversions where a green flickers as red. Rendered raw, these produce gibberish, or worse, a plausible message that is quietly wrong. So every Temple runs a dedicated **filtering Synthetic Intelligence** that recognizes degradation and reconstructs clean signal from corrupted color. These IAs are narrow specialists and do nothing else; their failure is the main cause of real-time comms problems. When a filter drops, the Temple falls back to **binary mode**, abandoning the 256-chroma alphabet and passing only the crudest present/absent pulse, the same impoverished signaling a ship uses. Binary mode keeps terse emergency traffic moving. It cannot carry normal communication.

For Keepers: a Temple in binary mode is a useful condition. *"The cargo is compromised. Send extraction."* fits. Anything with nuance or proof waits for the filter to return.

SHIPBOARD QUANTUM LINKS: SPEAKING IN THE OPEN

A ship can carry a crystal of its own, the **Quantum Comm** in the equipment table, with its partner held by an ally arranged in advance. It is the closest thing to the old Q-Net in a pocket. It is also crippled three ways, and every operator learns them fast.

- **It can only whisper in binary.** No ship carries a Temple's emitter bank or power plant. A shipboard unit cannot paint 256 clean chroma; it can only crudely flip its crystal on or off. Bandwidth collapses from a byte per pulse to a single bit, the difference between a conversation and tapping code on a pipe. A short confirmation is feasible. A document is not.
- **Its dark is never dark enough.** A starship hums, flexes, and leaks light from a hundred panels. A shipboard reading cell is a brave approximation of the Silent Dark, never the real thing, so even the binary read comes back noisy, and a noisy bit is sometimes a wrong bit.
- **It cannot speak quietly.** Driving a crystal, even crudely, takes a sharp energy spike, and a complex transmission stacks those spikes into a distinctive, easily recognized signature. A ship sending more than a flicker lights up to anyone running detection. The longer the message, the louder and more locatable the ship. Transmitting from a hull is a decision, not a convenience.

The table effect: shipboard quantum is for the terse, the rare, and the desperate. Treat any longer burst as an act that can be *heard*.

GEAR, THE SENDING HEARD (OPTIONAL TACTICAL RULE). ADOPT THIS MODULE BEFORE PLAY. WHEN A CREW SENDS MORE THAN A BRIEF CONFIRMATION ON A SHIPBOARD QUANTUM LINK, ONE EQUIPPED HOSTILE LISTENER MAY SPEND ITS SENSORS ACTION AND MAKE A KNOWLEDGE ROLL: DC 15 FOR A CASUAL SWEEP OR DC 10 FOR A DEDICATED LISTENING POST OR EXTENDED TRANSMISSION. ON SUCCESS IT LEARNS THAT A SHIP TRANSMITTED AND ITS ROUGH BEARING; ON A CRITICAL SUCCESS IT ALSO FIXES THE SOURCE SHIP'S POSITION. ON FAILURE IT LEARNS NOTHING. THE DC IS FIXED BEFORE THE ROLL, AND NO DISCRETIONARY SUBSTITUTE PROCEDURE APPLIES.

Out of coverage. Ships in Veil transit, in disturbed regions, or in unsurveyed sectors are out of coverage entirely; at most they speak among themselves by tightbeam. A crew in deep space lives in enforced solitude, their last word from home days or weeks old, and news of wars and treaties reaches them as an accumulated packet the next time they dock at a Temple-linked port. *Veilfarers* leans into this: for the length of a voyage the crew is a small world unto itself, and rejoining the network can be its own culture shock.

CRYSTAL REPLACEMENT AND LOSS

Crystals are finite, and they *fail*, occasionally, for reasons not fully understood. A Temple whose crystal fails is offline until a new pair is aligned and installed: months for a minor Temple, weeks for a major political center. When a Temple goes dark, the systems it served route around it, hops lengthen, latency climbs, capacity contracts, and the effects ripple across sectors. A campaign that wants to isolate a region for narrative reasons can do far worse than to quietly take its Temple offline. The silence is genuine, contained, and recoverable on a Keeper-determined timeline.

MODIFICATIONS AND UPGRADES

Equipment can be modified. Each weapon or armor piece has **Hardpoints** equal to its Tier (Common: 1; Military: 2; Experimental: 3). Each Hardpoint holds one **Mod**. Mods are acquired through purchase, salvage, or Engineer crafting.

COMMON WEAPON MODS

MOD	HARDPOINTS	EFFECT	COST
Extended Magazine	1	Auto-Fire weapons resupply per session	1 Cr (WT1)
Heavy Barrel	1	+1 damage modifier, adds Heavy tag	1 Cr (WT1)
Suppressor	1	Adds Silent; standard model deals -1 damage	4 Cr (WT2)
Smart Sight	1	+1 attack rolls at Close and Far	4 Cr (WT2)
Bayonet	1	Use in Melee for 1d6 damage	1 Cr (WT1)
Custom Grip	1	+1 attack rolls at Close range	1 Cr (WT1)
Mono-Molecular Edge	1	Adds Armor Piercing (2) to melee	9 Cr (WT3)
Shock Emitter	1	Stun on hit (melee)	4 Cr (WT2)
Toxin Reservoir	1	Poison delivery (melee or needle)	4 Cr (WT2)
Beam Splitter	2	Energy weapons target multiple foes	9 Cr (WT3)
Heat Sink Upgrade	1	Removes Overheating tag	4 Cr (WT2)
Variable Yield	2	Adjustable damage (configurable)	9 Cr (WT3)

COMMON ARMOR MODS

MOD	HARDPOINTS	EFFECT	COST
Reinforced Plating	1	+1 to Major and Severe thresholds	4 Cr (WT2)
Stealth Coating	1	Adds Stealth-Coated tag	4 Cr (WT2)
Power Cell	1	Adds Powered tag (requires recharge)	4 Cr (WT2)
Veil Lining	1	Adds Veil-Hardened tag	9 Cr (WT3)
Servo-Assist	2	Removes Heavy / Very Heavy penalties	9 Cr (WT3)
Vacuum Seal Enhancement	1	Doubles Life Support duration	4 Cr (WT2)
Radiation Hardening	1	Immunity to radiation hazards	4 Cr (WT2)
Sensor Integration	1	Adds motion, thermal, EM sensors	4 Cr (WT2)
Tool Integration	1	Built-in Basic Toolkit	4 Cr (WT2)
Medical Compartments	1	+1 Medicine; field medkit present	4 Cr (WT2)
Fortified Construction	2	Adds Fortified property	9 Cr (WT3)

WEALTH AND ACQUISITION

Veilfarers uses an abstract Wealth system rather than tracking individual transactions. Chapter 15 covers the full system; the summary:

WEALTH TIER	MONTHLY FREE ACQUISITION
Tier 0, Forgotten	Improvised only
Tier 1, Established	1× Tier 1 item (1 Credit)
Tier 2, Prosperous	1× Tier 1-2 item (1-4 Credits)
Tier 3, Affluent	1× up to Tier 3 (1-9 Credits)
Tier 4, Powerful	1× up to Tier 4 (1-16 Credits)
Tier 5, Transcendent	1× up to Tier 5 (1-25+ Credits)

Items above your standard monthly allowance require a **Wealth Check** (Chapter 15): Knowledge or Presence vs. DC by item Tier (DC 10 for T1, 15 for T2, 20 for T3, 25 for T4, 30 for T5).

COST VS. STORY

The Wealth-based system is intentionally abstract. The principle: every piece of equipment should be a *story*, where it came from, who they took it from, what it cost. Tracking individual credit amounts flattens this. The Wealth Tier system preserves the story.

MAINTENANCE AND WEAR

Equipment in Veilfarers does **not** silently degrade over time. A pistol bought at Tier 1 is the same pistol six sessions later, unless something has happened to it, a Failure with Fear in a firefight, a story event, a Keeper decision to introduce a wear-and-tear arc.

This is deliberate. Tracking maintenance per-session is bookkeeping; tracking it narratively is character.

REPAIR PROCEDURE

- **Field Repair.** Engineer (or any character with a tool kit): Knowledge Roll, DC 10. On success, functional for the rest of the scene. Critical Success: holds for the session.
- **Workshop Repair.** With proper workshop access, Engineer can perform full repair on Long Rest. Knowledge Roll, DC 10. On success, fully restored.
- **Replacement.** Some equipment cannot be repaired in the field. Specialized parts may be required.

HEIRLOOM EQUIPMENT

Some equipment becomes *heirloom*, gear the character has carried so long, repaired so many times, and bonded with so deeply that it is an extension of them. Heirloom is descriptive in Core play and grants no bonus, extra absorbed hit, immunity to loss, or other mechanical benefit unless a complete optional module adopted before play defines one.

Define heirloom equipment in conversation with the Keeper. The Engineer's named wrench, the Pilot's repaired headset, the Soldier's father's dog-tag, all are candidates. The wrench is not stronger than another wrench; the wrench is *Vell's wrench*, and the table knows what that means.

LOSS, THEFT, AND DAMAGE

Equipment is *lose-able*. This is part of the design.

A character can lose equipment through:

- **Failure with Fear on a relevant roll.** Weapon jams, armor seal breaks, kit dropped in a chase.
- **Combat damage.** A Severe or Overkill hit may damage equipment alongside the character.
- **Theft.** NPCs steal things. Pirates take weapons from defeated characters.
- **Story event.** The character makes a deliberate sacrifice.

Lost equipment is not, by default, retrievable through standard advancement. The character acquires replacements through normal Wealth-based purchasing, faction favors, or Keeper-mediated story events.

RECOVERY ANCHOR AND EQUIPMENT LOSS

For **Sleeping characters**, the Recovery Anchor (Chapter 7) is often a piece of equipment. If lost or destroyed:

- The character cannot perform Recovery actions until the Anchor is replaced or recovered.
- Replacement is Keeper-mediated (not just "buy a new tea set at the next station").
- Until then, the character relies on standard non-Anchor Effort generation only.

This is intentional. The Anchor's losability is what makes it dramatic.

A WORKED EXAMPLE: OUTFITTING VELL AT LEVELS 1, 5, AND 10

A walkthrough of how one character's equipment changes across a campaign.

LEVEL 1: STARTING KIT

Vell Kurogane-Born begins as a Sleeping Engineer (Tech Specialist), Wealth Tier 1.

- **Class Items:** Tool Belt (with Logged Inventory), Personal Wrench (*Hela*).
- **Weapons:** Industrial Plasma Cutter (Tier 2 utility, used as improvised d4 melee in emergencies, she's not a fighter), Holdout Blaster (Tier 1, *Concealable*, 1 Credit).
- **Armor:** Mechanic's Coverall (counts as Mesh Armor, Common (TT1), Armor Slots 4, Thresholds 5/10, *Self-Repair*).
- **Personal Items:** Hela's notebook, three generations of repair logs, sealed jar of cultivated moss from home, faded photograph.
- **Tech:** Datapad, Hacking Kit (Tier 2, uses with Disadvantage until Tech Access 2).
- **Survival:** Environmental Suit (Tier 1).
- **Comms:** Personal Comm.
- **Burden total:** 7 carried against capacity 6 (6 + Strength modifier; Vell's Strength is +0). She is 1 above capacity, so movement is limited to one band per Spotlight and the listed Agility or Strength movement Rolls have Disadvantage until she drops at least 1 Burden.

LEVEL 5: MID-CAMPAIGN

After multiclass into Sleeping Diplomat. Tech Access 2, Wealth Tier 2.

- **Class Items:** Same.
- **Weapons:** Gauss Pistol (Tier 2, *Silent*, 4 Credits). She has learned, since Tellurian Reach, that the corridor sometimes requires a sidearm.
- **Armor:** Composite Armor (Military (TT2), Armor Slots 4, Thresholds 8/16, *Resilient*, 4 Credits).
- **Mods:** Suppressor on the pistol; Reinforced Plating on the armor.
- **Augmentation (new):** Memory Chip (Tier 2 Neural, +1 Knowledge, 4 Credits, purchased after a salvage job; she values the perfect recall, accepts the data-overload risk).
- **Tech:** Encrypted Datapad, Hacking Kit (now Tech Access 2, used without Disadvantage), Universal Translator.
- **Hela's Wrench, repaired.** Broken in a salvage job session 14; rebuilt over three sessions. Heirloom, Keeper-noted +1 to repair rolls with this specific wrench.

LEVEL 10: ENDGAME

Tech Access 3, Wealth Tier 3, full Mastery feature.

- **Class Items:** Same. The wrench is famous now.
- **Weapons:** Gauss Pistol (still); Vibro-Sword (Tier 2, *Vibration*, 4 Credits, backup for boarding actions).
- **Armor:** Powered Armor (Experimental (TT3), Armor Slots 6, Thresholds 13/28, *Powered*, 16 Credits). Acquired through a Tellurian shipyards job that paid in this piece.
- **Mods:** Servo-Assist, Veil Lining (Veil-Hardened), Sensor Integration, Tool Integration, Vacuum Seal Enhancement on the Powered Armor. Custom Grip and Smart Sight on the pistol.
- **Augmentations:** Memory Chip (still); Combat Chassis (Tier 3 Physical, +2 Strength, +1 maximum Armor Slot, 16 Credits, 1 Stress activation, acquired through a House Volkov contract).

- **Tech:** Encrypted Datapad, Hacking Kit, Universal Translator, Sensor Array, Quantum Crystal (acquired via Spire favor).
- **Survival:** Long-Duration Vacuum Suit (Tier 3).
- **Comms:** Encrypted Comm + Quantum Comm.
- **Heirloom items:** *Hela's Wrench* (famous in Free Fleet engineering circles); *the moss jar* (still kept; the smell of home).

WHAT THE PROGRESSION SHOWS

Vell's equipment evolution is *narratively driven*. She did not "buy upgrades" at level-up; her equipment changed as the campaign demanded it. The Powered Armor came from a specific job. The Quantum Crystal came from a specific favor. The Combat Chassis came from a House contract. Even the new sidearm reflects a specific scene-driven change in her self-image.

This is what equipment looks like in a campaign that takes the equipment system seriously: not a shopping list, but a *story*.

CLOSING: THE TOOLS ARE THE PERSON

A character's gear is part of the character: where it came from, what it cost, who else has touched it. The tables tell you what equipment does; what it is belongs to the table. Carry your gear well. It is carrying you.

CHAPTER 14

DRONES AND REMOTE TOOLS

Drones and Remote Tools

Drones are common across civilized space: maintenance beetles in station ducts, inspection motes crawling over hull seams, survey frames crawling through unstable ruins, and half-legal scout rigs carried by crews who would rather not risk a body every time a door opens onto darkness.

They are useful, fragile, and often expensive. A drone can extend a character's reach, senses, or tools, but it cannot replace judgment, courage, improvisation, or the crew itself.

You can send a drone into the dark. That does not mean the dark has to send it back.

Dockside proverb, origin disputed

The Core Rule

Drones are equipment, not characters. They extend what a character can attempt, but they do not grant the crew extra Spotlights.

A drone is operated by a character. When a drone does something meaningful under pressure, the operator makes the roll, using the Trait and Experiences that best fit the action. The drone supplies the body, sensor, tool, or weapon. The operator supplies attention, timing, and nerve.

If a drone changes the scene in a meaningful way, someone is paying attention to it. In practice, that means the operator's Action, a Reaction Roll, Stress, or a risk the Keeper can turn into a complication when Fear enters the scene.

A drone is never a second set of hands the crew gets for free.

Drone Use	Typical Cost
Hold position, follow the crew, transmit a feed, shine a light	No significant cost, unless the scene is under pressure
Move precisely through danger, scout carefully, hold a signal through bad terrain	The operator's Action
Repair, cut, hack, open, stabilize, manipulate something delicate	The operator's Action
Attack, mark a target, intercept, suppress, or defend	The operator's Action or a Reaction Roll, as fits the moment
Act while signal is lost	Only a simple loaded protocol

Using Drones Without Slowing Play

A drone takes a little time to configure, but it should not make every scene technical. Most of the work happens when the crew buys the drone, chooses its modules, and decides how it normally communicates. After that, play it like any other piece of gear.

In a normal scene, you usually only need three questions:

1. **Who is controlling the drone right now?**
2. **What module or sensor is the drone using?**
3. **Is the signal Stable, Unstable, or Lost?**

You do not need to recalculate the drone every time it appears. Once a crew knows what their drone does, whole sessions can pass with the technical details fading into the background. Bring the rules forward only when the drone is doing something risky, entering protected space, being attacked, losing signal, using an important module, or creating a meaningful choice.

None of this is meant to turn a drone into a minigame. It is meant to give the crew one more shared tool, the kind that quietly creates decisions instead of paperwork.

Drones Are Light Vehicles

For rules purposes, treat a drone as a small, fragile vehicle (the vehicle and starship rules live in Chapter 17).

This single ruling does a lot of work:

- A Pilot's class features and moves that apply to vehicles may apply to a drone when the fiction fits.
- A Void Power that targets a creature may target a personal-scale drone and uses its complete printed damage, duration, and effect unchanged. A Power that targets only a vehicle or ship affects a drone only when it explicitly includes personal-scale machines; no discretionary scaling applies.
- Counter-vehicle tools work on drones. Anything built to stop a vehicle, from a kinetic burst to an electromagnetic pulse, stops a drone faster, because a drone is the smallest, cheapest vehicle on the field.

A drone's **Grade** is its chassis. Its **Modules** are its systems. Its operator supplies attention, timing, and nerve.

Drone Access

Drone access follows the same access category as pistols.

If a character, crew, license, market, faction, or port would give access to **Common pistols**, it can usually provide access to **Common drones**. Access to **Military drones** follows the same assumptions as access to military-grade pistols. Access to **Experimental drones** is never ordinary market access: it requires a black-site contact, faction debt, rare salvage, prototype theft, or a Keeper-approved story reason.

Drone Access

Drone Grade	Access Equivalent
Common Drone	Common pistols / commercial tools
Military Drone	Military pistols / restricted security gear
Experimental Drone	Experimental weapons / black-site or prototype gear

Local law always matters. A drone that is legal on a frontier station may be contraband inside a House port. A drone that is tolerated on a salvage rig may trigger alarms in a corporate habitat.

Drone Grades

A drone is built from a **Drone Grade** and installed **Modules**. The Grade defines its Tier, cost, HP, Evasion, thresholds, shields, and module slots. Modules define what the drone can actually do.

Drone Grade	Tier	Cost	HP	Evasion	Thresholds	Armor Slots	Module Slots	Availability
Common Drone	Tier 2	4 Cr	2 HP	10	Major 5 / Severe 11	0	2	Civilian, commercial, frontier markets
Military Drone	Tier 3	8 Cr	3 HP	11	Major 7 / Severe 14	1	3	Restricted, licensed, House security
Experimental Drone	Tier 4	16 Cr	5 HP	12	Major 9 / Severe 16	2	4	Rare, unstable, black-site, prototype

Common Drones

Common drones are commercial tools. They scout, carry, record, repair lightly, relay signals, inspect dangerous spaces, and die quickly when shot.

Common drones are hard-locked against lethal weapon integration. They may carry legal utility tools, rescue equipment, sensors, signal modules, and non-lethal compliance systems where local law allows them. They cannot legally mount lethal weapons.

Tampering with a Common drone to carry lethal weaponry uses the complete **Weaponized Common Drones** procedure later in this chapter: tools, Downtime, Knowledge (Tech) DC 15, and its single d6 complication table. This paragraph creates no second installation procedure.

Military Drones

Military drones are hardened field platforms. They may carry restricted weapon, armor, tactical, signal, and security modules. They often require licenses, faction authority, military contacts, or illegal markets.

A Military drone is harder to destroy than a commercial frame, but it is also easier to explain badly at a checkpoint.

Experimental Drones

Experimental does not mean "better market gear." It means rare, unstable, illegal, prototype, salvaged, or carrying a hidden cost.

If a crew is running Experimental drone technology, ask three questions:

- Who built it?
- Who wants it back?
- What does it cost to keep using?

Experimental drones may hold strange modules and survive conditions that would kill lesser machines, but they are never ordinary equipment. They should come with a story attached.

Module Grade Compatibility

Drone modules are built in three Grades: **Common**, **Military**, and **Experimental**. A drone can always install modules of its own Grade or any lower Grade.

Drone Grade	Modules It Can Install
Common Drone	Common modules only
Military Drone	Common or Military modules
Experimental Drone	Common, Military, or Experimental modules

This is a matter of firmware, power architecture, safety limits, legal locks, and interface standards. A higher-grade frame can usually run simpler hardware. A lower-grade frame cannot safely run restricted or unstable systems without modification.

A **Military drone** can mount Common modules normally. A Military security frame may carry a commercial camera, relay node, manipulator arm, or repair kit without issue.

An **Experimental drone** can mount almost anything, but this does not make lower-grade modules stronger. A Common Low-Light Camera installed on an Experimental drone is still a Common Low-Light Camera. The frame may be stranger, tougher, or more expensive, but the module keeps its own limits unless another rule upgrades it.

Installing Higher-Grade Modules

Installing a higher-grade module into a lower-grade drone is illegal modification and uses this complete procedure:

Installation Attempt	Requirement
Military module into Common drone	Knowledge (Tech) Roll, DC 15; proper tools and Downtime
Experimental module into Military drone	Knowledge (Tech) Roll, DC 20; rare tools or specialist access and Downtime
Experimental module into Common drone	Knowledge (Tech) Roll, DC 20; rare tools and Downtime; the module consumes one additional Slot

Critical Success or any Success installs the module. Failure leaves the module uninstalled and intact. On a Fear-dominant noncritical result, also roll once on the frame-complication table below; the complication applies whether or not installation succeeded. Matching dice never trigger this table.

d6	Frame Complication
1	The drone's serial is flagged as tampered when scanned.
2	While the module is installed, the drone loses 1 Evasion.
3	After the module is used, its signal becomes Unstable until the end of the next round.
4	The operator marks 1 Stress the first time the module is used each scene.
5	The first use sends a diagnostic ping to the established vendor, manufacturer, or local authority.
6	On the module's first Failure with Fear each scene, it goes offline until an Action and Knowledge (Tech) Roll, DC 10, restores it.

Link Modes

When deploying a drone, its operator chooses Local Mesh or Direct RF from the modes available in that location. Switching between them costs the operator's Action. Private Relay Chain applies only while a placed relay path exists. The Keeper states available infrastructure before the choice.

Local Mesh

In inhabited planets, ports, cities, stations, and supervised habitats, drones can use local infrastructure: municipal repeaters, traffic beacons, port networks, public mesh towers, and House-controlled routing systems. This greatly extends practical range.

The cost is visibility. A drone using a Local Mesh is logged, routed, located, and subject to local rules. Its serial may be recorded. Its route may be audited. Security systems may geofence it, throttle it, force it to land, or cut the link when it enters restricted space.

Direct RF Link

In wilderness, dead stations, ruins, frontier sites, or whenever the crew wants to avoid being logged, the drone relies on a direct radiofrequency link to its operator, ship, or carried controller. This is private, but fragile. Distance, dense structure, metal, water, terrain, radiation, electromagnetic emissions, jamming, and Veil interference matter much more.

Private Relay Chain

A crew may place its own relays to extend a Direct RF Link without using public infrastructure. Each relay improves reach, but each one is also a physical object that can be detected, destroyed, spoofed, stolen, or traced back to the crew.

Public infrastructure buys reach, a private link buys discretion, and a chain of relays buys options, but none of the three has ever bought safety.

Drone Range and Signal

Drones use the same range bands as the rest of the system: **Melee**, **Very Close**, **Close**, **Far**, **Very Far**, and any wider narrative distance your table already uses for vehicles, ships, or scenes.

Do not invent a separate measurement system for drones. The range band tells you **how far the drone is from its operator**. The environment tells you **how healthy the signal is**.

A drone at **Close** range behind thick military shielding may be unreachable. A drone at **Very Far** range across open ground through a relay may remain usable.

Signal Quality

A drone's signal has three practical states.

Signal State	Meaning	Effect
Stable	The connection is clear enough for real-time command.	The drone works normally.
Unstable	The signal is delayed, noisy, partially blocked, or vulnerable.	Simple commands work normally. Every complex command makes its normal Roll with Disadvantage; the DC, Stress cost, and legal Actions do not otherwise change.
Lost	No useful command link remains.	The drone follows its one loaded protocol. If it has no protocol, it freezes and takes no Actions until signal improves.

Default Signal by Range

Use this table for Direct RF Link or other private links without strong infrastructure.

Drone Range from Operator	Default Signal in Open Conditions
Melee / Very Close	Stable
Close	Stable
Far	Stable if line of signal is reasonable; Unstable if structure or interference is present
Very Far	Unstable; Stable only with Extended Link, a surviving Relay Node, ship support, or a declared clear open route
Beyond Very Far	Lost unless supported by a relay chain, ship systems, or special equipment

A supervised Local Mesh treats Melee through Very Far as Stable unless a printed restriction applies, and logs the drone. Before deployment in a protected space, use the signal-obstruction table to declare its starting state; do not worsen it retroactively.

What Hurts a Signal

Condition	Usual Effect
Dense ship or station structure	Stable -> Unstable
Heavy doors, armored walls, shielded compartments	Unstable or Lost
Faraday cage, military vault, black-site architecture	Lost unless countered
Active jamming	Signal worsens by one step
High electromagnetic emissions	Signal becomes Unstable or rolls with Disadvantage
Veil interference	Unstable, often with feedback, echoes, or false images
Hostile network	Signal may stay active, but spoofing or hijack becomes possible
Stealth Shell or silent running	May reduce signature but limit strong transmission
Relay Node	May improve signal by one step while it survives

An Extended Link module helps when distance or ordinary structure is the problem. It does not pierce military jamming, a sealed vault, a Faraday cage, or architecture built to kill signals.

In the end, a drone extends your reach exactly as far as your signal survives, and not one meter further.

Losing the Signal

When a drone's signal becomes **Lost**, check its loaded protocol. Most drones carry one simple fallback. Cheap or damaged drones may carry none.

Protocol	Behavior
Freeze	The drone stops and waits for connection to return.
Return	The drone tries to return to the last point where it had signal.
Execute	The drone completes one simple preloaded order.
Dead Weight	The drone goes inert until recovered.

A drone cannot improvise while its signal is Lost unless a module explicitly allows it, and even then it follows instructions literally. It does not understand fear, mercy, a lie, or why the child hiding under the reactor console matters.

Drone Movement

A drone does not fly by default.

Most drones move on small wheels, legs, tracks, articulated pads, or low-profile crawling rigs. They can cross ordinary terrain, move through corridors, climb shallow obstacles, and follow the crew as long as the fiction supports their frame.

A drone needs a module to fly, climb walls, maneuver in vacuum, or move through unusual environments.

Movement Type	Required Module
Ordinary ground movement	None
Wall or ceiling movement	Wall-Crawler
Hovering or atmospheric flight	Flight Module
Tactical atmospheric flight	Military Flight Module
EVA or low-gravity maneuvering	Micro-Thrusters / EVA Kit
Underwater operation	Submersible Kit

Flying drones are useful, but they are also louder, hotter, more visible to sensors, and easier to identify as active remote systems.

Drone Evasion

A drone's **Evasion** is the number an attacker must meet or beat with an attack roll to strike it. It represents size, movement profile, flight correction, signal responsiveness, and how hard the drone is to track under pressure.

A drone uses its own Evasion when attacked. If the operator spends an Action or Reaction Roll to actively maneuver, hide, evade, or reposition the drone, the operator rolls using the appropriate Trait and Experiences. On success, the drone avoids danger, gains better position, or forces the attacker to lose the clean shot, as fits the fiction.

If a drone's signal is **Lost**, it cannot actively evade unless it has autonomy or a loaded defensive protocol. If a drone's signal is Lost

and it is under attack, reduce its Evasion by 2 unless its current protocol would reasonably keep it moving, hiding, or returning.

As a balance guideline, drones should not normally exceed the following Evasion values without rare Experimental modules or direct Keeper approval:

Drone Grade	Suggested Evasion Cap
Common	12
Military	14
Experimental	15

If a drone becomes too hard to strike, it stops feeling like fragile equipment and starts becoming a second character.

Armor Slots

A drone may mark 1 Armor Slot to reduce the severity of a hit by one step, following the normal armor rules; characters, drones, and vehicles all use the same armor terminology. Once marked, that Armor Slot is unavailable until repaired, recharged, or restored during downtime.

Common drones usually have no Armor Slots by default. Taking one into open combat is often the fastest way to turn credits into scrap.

Drone Control and Roles

Anyone can use a drone. The roll depends on the task and the fiction.

A Pilot may be best at moving one through hostile terrain, tight angles, pursuit, extraction, or failing signal. An Engineer may be best at repairing, modifying, or hacking one. A Scoundrel may be best at infiltration. A Soldier may use one for tactical support. A Medic may use one to reach the wounded. A Scholar may use one for survey, sample collection, or analysis.

The drone does not decide the roll. The fiction does.

Role	Natural Drone Use
Pilot	Movement, routes, scouting, extraction, signal, angles
Engineer	Repair, modification, diagnosis, hacking
Scoundrel	Infiltration, surveillance, sabotage, bugs
Soldier	Marking, suppression, breaching, cover
Medic	Stabilization, biometrics, evacuation
Scholar	Analysis, sampling, scanning, archive work
Diplomat	Remote presence, safe negotiation, witness recording

Pilots and Drones

Many pilots use drones as a groundside extension of their craft instincts. A good pilot does not stop navigating when they leave the cockpit; they simply start navigating corridors, ducts, sightlines, signals, and exits.

Anyone can use a drone. Pilots make a drone move like it belongs to the scene; Engineers make sure it survives the scene.

Neural Drone Link

A standard operator uses hands, voice, or a HUD. A neural drone link allows faster command and better sensory integration, but it does not create a second mind.

Neural Drone Link: You may issue one meaningful drone command while also acting. Before either resolves, choose one cost: mark 1 Stress, or make one of the two Rolls with Disadvantage. If either Roll is Fear-dominant and noncritical, worsen the drone's signal by one step until the end of the operator's next Spotlight. The command otherwise resolves by its normal result.

A neural link is multitasking under pressure, not free effect economy.

Shared Drone Control

Most drones are paired to a single operator. This keeps the signal clean, the control profile simple, and liability obvious. Some crews prefer that. If the Pilot or Scoundrel enjoys running their own drone and the table enjoys watching, nothing else is required.

Other crews want the drone to be a shared tool. For them, the cheapest answer is a crew control interface.

Neural Network Control

Grade: Common

Cost: 1 Cr

Slots: 0

A shared crew interface that allows multiple registered crew members to take control of the same drone during a scene. Despite the name, Neural Network Control does not require full neural implants. Most versions use HUD sync, haptic input, voice tags, eye tracking, biometric permissions, and low-grade predictive neural mapping.

While the drone's signal is **Stable**, any registered crew member may take control of the drone on their Spotlight and use their own Action or Reaction Roll to command it.

The acting character rolls with their own Trait, Experiences, and applicable Domain Powers. The drone provides the body, sensor, tool, position, or signal. The character provides intent, skill, timing, and risk.

Only one character controls the drone at a time. Passing control is free while the signal is Stable and the spotlight naturally moves between characters.

If the signal is **Unstable**, passing control costs the receiving operator 1 Stress. If they cannot mark it, the handoff fails and the previous operator retains control. No additional Roll or discretionary complication is added.

If the signal is **Lost**, Neural Network Control does not function. The drone follows its loaded protocol.

Crew Drone, Not Personal Drone

Neural Network Control exists to keep drone scenes shared.

A drone with this upgrade can become a crew tool rather than one character's private toy. The Pilot may fly it through a collapsing duct, the Engineer may take over to open a port, the Scoundrel may use it to plant false evidence, the Medic may stabilize someone through its injector, and the Scholar may scan what it finds.

This never lets the crew act for free. Each character still spends their own Action or Reaction Roll when they take the drone in hand. What the upgrade moves is the spotlight, not the arithmetic of the turn.

Domain Powers Through a Drone

A character may use a Domain Power through a drone only when the fiction supports it.

Good uses include powers that work through sensors, signal, voice, hacking, remote tools, a vehicle interface, line of sight from the drone, or a device the drone can touch, scan, mark, cut, or connect to.

Bad uses include powers that require the character's own body, direct personal touch, a weapon the character is personally wielding, an aura centered on the character, emotional presence the drone cannot carry, or judgment the drone cannot understand.

The character pays all normal costs: Hope, Stress, uses, cooldowns, or other requirements. If the power requires a roll, the character rolls.

A drone is a catalyst, not a second soul.

Common Modules

Common modules are commercial, civilian, salvage, or frontier-grade systems. They are cheaper, easier to find, and easier to repair, but they are limited by firmware locks, weak power buses, and legal safety restrictions.

A Common drone cannot install Military or Experimental modules without illegal modification.

Common Signal and Control

Module	Cost	Slots	Mechanical Effect
Extended Link	2 Cr	1	When distance or ordinary structure would worsen signal, treat it as one step better. Does not bypass hard Lost zones.
Relay Node	2 Cr	1	Acts as a local repeater. One allied drone or short comm signal routed through it treats signal as one step better while the relay survives.
Basic Autonomy Chip	4 Cr	1	When signal is Lost, execute one loaded protocol: Freeze, Return, Follow Beacon, Record, Deliver, or Trigger Module. Cannot improvise.
Shielded Receiver	4 Cr	1	Gain Advantage on checks to resist spoofing, light jamming, or ordinary interference. Does not resist hard Lost zones.
Neural Network Control	1 Cr	0	Allows registered crew members to take control of the drone by turns while signal is Stable. It moves spotlight, not action economy.

Common Movement

Module	Cost	Slots	Mechanical Effect
Flight Module	2 Cr	1	The drone can hover, cross gaps, move vertically, and fly at low speed in normal atmosphere. Strong wind, storms, damage, or tight terrain may require a roll. While flying, the drone takes -2 to Agility Rolls to avoid detection .
Wall-Crawler	1 Cr	1	Climb walls, ceilings, ducts, and uneven surfaces unless slick, electrified, shielded, or hostile.
Cargo Grip	1 Cr	1	Carry small objects, drag light loads, or retrieve items. Cannot carry a conscious adult unless the frame is built for hauling.

Common Sensors

Module	Cost	Slots	Mechanical Effect
Low-Light Camera	1 Cr	1	Ignore penalties from darkness short of total blackout, smoke, or sensor-obscuring interference.
Thermal Camera	2 Cr	1	Detect heat signatures through darkness, smoke, or light cover. Insulation, decoys, cold-blooded species, and thermal masking can defeat it.
Radiation/Chem Sensor	2 Cr	1	Detect radiation, toxins, corrosives, atmospheric hazards, or chemical traces. Grants Advantage on checks to identify environmental danger.
Audio Suite	1 Cr	1	Directional listening and clean recording. Grants Advantage when eavesdropping through ordinary barriers.
Medical Scanner	2 Cr	1	Reads vitals and triage data. Grants Advantage to assess injury or stabilize remotely, but does not replace a Medic.

Common Tools

Module	Cost	Slots	Mechanical Effect
Manipulator Arm	1 Cr	1	Move small objects, plug cables, press controls, retrieve samples, or perform simple manual tasks.
Tool Mount	2 Cr	1	Mount one small legal tool: welder, injector, scanner, lock probe, solder kit, sample drill.
Cutter	2 Cr	1	Cut light doors, panels, cables, locks, and thin plating. Hardened targets require time or a successful roll.
Repair Kit	2 Cr	1	With operator Action, grants Advantage on a repair roll or lets the drone perform minor repairs at range.
Medgel Injector	2 Cr	1	Stabilize a wounded target at range with operator Action. Does not heal HP unless another rule allows it.

Common Stealth and Evasion

Module	Cost	Slots	Mechanical Effect
Noise Dampener	1 Cr	1	The drone's movement is silent to ordinary hearing. Does not hide heat, signal, light, airflow, or physical traces.
Stealth Shell	4 Cr	1	Gain +1 on Agility Rolls to avoid detection while grounded or moving no more than one band and using no loud module. Attacking, cutting, boosting, a strong transmission, or moving more than one band ends the bonus until the drone spends a Spotlight meeting those requirements again. The flight penalty still applies.
Agile Servos	4 Cr	1	+1 Evasion.
Low-Profile Frame	4 Cr	1	+1 Evasion against ranged attacks while the drone is not carrying a heavy tool, weapon mount, cargo load, or armor plating.
Decoy Flare Pod	4 Cr	1	One use per reload. Against ranged, missile, sensor-guided, or drone attacks, impose Disadvantage or gain +2 Evasion against that attack.

Common Non-Lethal Systems

Common commercial drones cannot legally carry lethal weapons.

Module	Cost	Slots	Mechanical Effect
Smoke/Flash Pod	2 Cr	1	One use per reload. Create a brief escape, distraction, breach window, or Advantage on one repositioning or infiltration action.
Compliance Taser	4 Cr	2	Operator Action. Close attack. On hit, mark 1 Stress and force the target to drop an object, lose footing, or suffer momentary stun if fiction allows. Non-lethal and obvious.
Stun Dart	4 Cr	2	Operator Action. Close/Far attack. On hit, deal 1d6 non-lethal physical damage or mark 1 Stress. Limited ammo. Legal status varies by port.

Restricted Military Modules in the Core

The following military modules are included here because they are common enough to define the basic boundary of drone use. Rust & Steel expands this list.

Module	Cost	Slots	Mechanical Effect
Military Flight Module	6 Cr	1	The drone gains controlled tactical flight. While airborne, the operator gains +1 on rolls to maneuver, evade, chase, reposition, or pilot the drone . This bonus does not apply to attacks, hacking, repairs, scanning, or other non-movement tasks. While flying, the drone takes -2 to Agility Rolls to avoid detection .
Military Stealth Shell	8 Cr	1	Gain +2 on Agility Rolls to avoid detection while grounded or moving no more than one band and using no loud module. Attacking, cutting, boosting, a strong transmission, or moving more than one band ends the bonus until the drone spends a Spotlight meeting those requirements again. The flight penalty still applies.
Armor Plating	4 Cr	1	Gain +1 Armor Slot. The drone loses 1 Evasion while flying, sneaking, evading, or moving through tight terrain.
Target Painter	4 Cr	1	Operator Action. Mark one visible personal-scale target until the start of the operator's next Spotlight. The next allied attack against it gains Advantage, then the mark ends. This is not a starship Sensor Lock.
Micro-Laser	4 Cr	2	Operator Action. Far attack. Deal 1d6 energy. Precise, but easy to trace by heat or beam origin. Does not scale with Proficiency unless explicitly upgraded.

Flight and Stealth

Flying is never as quiet as staying grounded.

While a drone is flying, hovering, boosting, or using exposed lift systems, it takes **-2 to Agility Rolls to avoid detection**. Stealth modules do not remove this penalty; they add their own bonus as normal.

This means a drone with a **Flight Module** and **Stealth Shell** has both effects: **-2 from flying** and **+1 from Stealth Shell**, for a net **-1** while flying carefully.

A drone with **Military Flight Module** and **Military Stealth Shell** has **-2 from flying** and **+2 from Military Stealth Shell**, for a net **0** while flying carefully.

If that same drone stays grounded, it keeps the stealth bonus without the flight penalty.

Choosing whether to fly or stay grounded is always a tactical decision.

Weaponized Common Drones

Common drones are sold with hard locks against lethal weapon integration. These locks are legal, technical, and practical: firmware refuses lethal mounts, power draw is capped, targeting software blocks lethal profiles, and commercial frames report illegal changes when scanned.

A character may attempt to bypass these locks with tools, downtime, and a **Knowledge (Tech) Roll at DC 15**.

On a success, the drone can accept one illegal lethal weapon integration. The module must still be acquired, installed, powered, and hidden.

On a failure, the lock remains and the materials are not consumed. No Slot damage, bricking, or extra repair requirement is added unless the result is Failure with Fear and the table below states it.

After resolving the normal success or failure, a Fear-dominant noncritical result also requires one d6 roll on the Illegal Modification Complication table. Do not choose the result; matching dice never trigger it.

d6	Illegal Modification Complication
1	The drone's serial now flags as tampered if scanned.
2	The weapon works, but the drone loses 1 Evasion.
3	The weapon drains power; after use, the signal becomes Unstable.
4	The drone takes Disadvantage on its next attack Roll before the end of the scene.
5	Increase Heat by 1 with the local authority or manufacturer named before the installation.
6	The modification is unstable; on the first Fear-dominant noncritical result involving the drone in combat, roll a Drone Complication.

If discovered by authorities, a weaponized Common drone is treated as illegal weaponized equipment. Consequences may include fines, confiscation, warrants, faction attention, port bans, or criminal charges.

Drone Weapons and Proficiency

Drone weapon damage does not scale with character Proficiency unless a rule explicitly says it does.

A drone weapon is a pressure tool, not a replacement for a combatant. It can mark, distract, suppress, stun, intercept, breach, or open a window. It does not trade blows with a trained soldier and win.

Taking a drone into open combat is often the fastest way to turn credits into scrap.

Repairing Drones

A drone can be damaged, disabled, recovered, repaired, or rebuilt.

Condition	Repair
Lost HP	Requires downtime, parts, and a Knowledge (Tech) Roll if conditions are poor
Marked Armor Slot	Recharged or restored during downtime, at a drone bay, or with proper tools
Module Malfunction	Requires an Action in an emergency or downtime for clean repair
Dead Weight	Recoverable if the core is intact
Destroyed	Frame is lost unless protected by Redundant Core, Disposable Shell, Blackbox, or Keeper ruling
Hijacked	Requires winning control back, cutting the link, or physically recovering the drone

A drone is only gone forever when its core is destroyed, unrecoverable, or not worth the credits to rebuild.

Drone Burden

If your table tracks Burden or inventory pressure, use the following guideline:

Drone	Burden
Common Drone	1 Burden
Military Drone	2 Burden
Experimental Drone	2 to 3 Burden
Industrial or War-Frame	Vehicle cargo / ship storage only
Swarm Cells	1 Burden per 3 cells

Drones are portable until they are not. A crew can carry a scout mote in a pack. They cannot casually stroll through customs with a War-Frame under a coat.

Drone Complications

At most once per drone per scene, after its operator resolves Failure with Fear on a Roll materially involving that drone, roll d12 on this table. Do not choose the result. Matching dice never trigger a Drone Complication.

d12	Complication
1	The signal worsens one step.
2	The drone's signal becomes Unstable until the end of the operator's next Spotlight, then returns to its prior state.
3	The drone becomes Restrained; clear it with the Core Strength Roll, DC 15, or an operator Action and Knowledge (Tech), DC 15.
4	The drone's signal becomes Lost until the operator spends an Action and succeeds on Knowledge (Tech), DC 15, to reroute it.

Drone Complications (continued)

d12	Complication
5	The drone loses Hidden and one established hostile observer in the scene learns its current zone.
6	The next Action performed through the drone before the end of the operator's next Spotlight has Disadvantage.
7	The drone loses 1 direct HP.
8	The operator chooses one installed module; it goes offline until an Action and Knowledge (Tech), DC 10, restores it.
9	The next Knowledge or Instinct Roll made through the drone before the end of the scene has Disadvantage.
10	The operator makes a Knowledge (Tech) Reaction Roll, DC 15; on failure the signal worsens one state, on success nothing changes.
11	The operator makes a Knowledge (Tech) Reaction Roll, DC 20; on failure the signal becomes Lost until an Action and Knowledge (Tech), DC 15, restores it. Control never transfers automatically.
12	The operator must spend an Action to confirm the current command before the drone can perform another complex task; simple return and stop commands still work.

Sample Builds

Cheap Scout Mote

Grade: Common

Base Cost: 4 Cr

Modules: Low-Light Camera

Module Cost: 1 Cr

Total Cost: 5 Cr

Use: Basic scouting, recording, checking dark spaces.

Field Repair Beetle

Grade: Common

Base Cost: 4 Cr

Modules: Manipulator Arm, Repair Kit

Module Cost: 3 Cr

Total Cost: 7 Cr

Use: Maintenance and light remote repair.

Relay Crawler

Grade: Common

Base Cost: 4 Cr

Modules: Wall-Crawler, Relay Node

Module Cost: 3 Cr

Total Cost: 7 Cr

Use: Keeps signal alive around corners, through broken stations, or across complex interiors without flying.

Flying Scout Mote

Grade: Common

Base Cost: 4 Cr

Modules: Flight Module, Low-Light Camera

Module Cost: 3 Cr

Total Cost: 7 Cr

Use: Basic aerial scouting. Takes -2 to Agility Rolls to avoid detection while flying.

Shared Crew Scout

Grade: Common

Base Cost: 4 Cr

Modules: Low-Light Camera, Neural Network Control

Module Cost: 2 Cr

Total Cost: 6 Cr

Use: A cheap scouting drone that the whole crew can control by turns. Ideal for tables that want drone scenes to stay shared.

Security Stun Drone

Grade: Military

Base Cost: 8 Cr

Modules: Stun Dart, Hardened Link

Module Cost: 10 Cr

Total Cost: 18 Cr

Use: Restricted patrol, non-lethal control, crew security.

Tactical Support Frame

Grade: Military

Base Cost: 8 Cr

Modules: Armor Plating, Target Painter, Smoke/Flash Pod

Module Cost: 10 Cr

Total Cost: 18 Cr

Use: Breach support, marking, extraction.

Ghost-Signal Infiltrator

Grade: Experimental

Base Cost: 16 Cr

Modules: Ghost-Signal Lattice, Reflex Kernel, Veil-Hardened Casing

Module Cost: 40 Cr

Total Cost: 56 Cr

Use: Dangerous infiltration through bad signal and Veil interference. Leaves strange traces. Someone probably wants it back.

Optional: Drones with Quirks

Most drones are not people, and most are not close. But old systems develop habits, especially after years of bad patches, nervous operators, station rot, damaged Pearls, or exposure to the Veil.

A quirk should color play, not stop it: a joke, a small complication, a ritual, or a memory. It should never become a constant punishment.

If a drone or tool truly seems to want something, it is no longer just equipment. It is a story hook, and that belongs in the Keeper's Companion.

CHAPTER 15

THE PEARL STANDARD

"In the post-Silence galaxy, your wealth tier isn't just about the credits in your account. It's about whether the dock master gives you a priority berth or lets you rot in the queue. It's about whether the medic uses a sterile nano-suture or a rusty needle. It's about whether you'll live to spend it."

Free Fleet financial primer, Section One

At a glance. Veilfarers tracks money through six Wealth Tiers (0 to 5) rather than a credit ledger. Each Tier sets your lifestyle, what you acquire without rolling, and what you must Wealth Check to attempt. Tiers shift through narrative events; the black market, Crew Wealth, and a handful of alternative currencies layer on top. Read this to know what your character can afford, how to reach above it, and why almost everything in

the Pearl Era ultimately runs through one House.

Most science-fiction RPGs count credits to the unit. The bookkeeping is precise; the fictional return is small, and most groups quietly stop enforcing it by session five. Veilfarers skips the ledger. The credit subsystem exists if you want it, but the **Tier** is the system.

THE PEARL STANDARD

One Imperial Credit is defined as **one milligram of Refined Chrono-Pearl Dust**. Pearls are mined under House Valerius license (Chapter 5); the Dust is refined under House Kurogane; the Credit itself is a small ceramic chip embedded with sealed pearl-derived matter, carrying a verification mark and a unique serial. It is, by design, **anti-digital**: it cannot be electronically duplicated, and counterfeiting requires actual Dust, which is scarce and tightly controlled. Most credit-scale transactions are physical chips changing hands or verified physical transfers through an Imperial Exchange.

Two things this makes true at the table:

- **Theft is meaningful.** A bag of credit chips is a *thing* you carry. Pickpocketing five Credits is a story event.
- **Large transactions are visible.** Five hundred Credits is a small but heavy parcel; major purchases attract attention, and the watching characters know what just happened.

The Pearl Standard is not universal. The Free Fleet runs on barter and favor-credit; Frontier Colonies use local **Scrip**; Ailuran communities trade in **secrets**, not chips. The Empire is the standard. Most of the galaxy is the exception.

THE WEALTH TIER SYSTEM

Every character has one **Wealth Tier**, 0 to 5. It changes rarely. Each Tier defines four things: **the Feeling** (what life is like, how NPCs treat you), **Allowance** (what you acquire without a roll), **Savings & Purchasing Power** (what you can save toward via a Wealth Check), and **Assets** (one major acquisition per month of in-fiction time, no roll). Most starting characters are Tier 1; some Displaced or Sleeping concepts begin at Tier 0; the rare House cadet or wealthy heir begins at Tier 2.

The Tier describes your *position*, not your *float*: a Tier 3 character may have one Credit or several thousand on hand on any given day, depending on how the campaign has gone.

Tier 0, Forgotten. Nothing. You sleep between things, eat what others would not, are unregistered in Imperial systems. No allowance, no savings, no monthly asset. Your currency is **favours**, bought with blood and service. Hard to *begin* play at; appropriate for refugees, the lowest point of a redemption arc, or a dramatic late-campaign fall. Climbing out is two to four sessions of consistent earned work.

Tier 1, Established. You have a job and a bunk. You eat. The Imperial system knows your name. You acquire standard ammunition, rations, and routine gear maintenance without tracking; once per month you take one Tier 1 item (1 Credit) free. You may save toward one Tier 2 purchase per quarter (Wealth Check DC 15). This is the working-crew baseline.

Tier 2, Prosperous. Established and recognized in your field. Comfortable quarters, advanced ammunition without tracking, Military-tier maintenance. Once per month, one Tier 1 to 2 item (1 to 4 Credits) free; once per year, you may save toward a Tier 3 purchase (DC 20). Most working crews reach Tier 2 by mid-campaign, after ten to fifteen sessions including at least one major payday.

Tier 3, Affluent. Influential. You own a ship, a small business, or a property of significance; you employ or contract others on your own terms. Discreet services and

priority access at most stations. Monthly asset: one item up to Tier 3 (1 to 9 Credits). Tier 4 purchases possible by Check (DC 25) once per two years. Reached through campaign-defining success, twenty-plus sessions, formal faction promotion, or inheritance, never a small surprise.

Tier 4, Powerful. Operating at House scale without being a House member. Significant assets, a personal staff, standing relationships with major institutions, lines of credit. Monthly asset: one item up to Tier 4, 1 to 16 Credits. A Tier 5 purchase requires a Wealth Roll, DC 25, and access established before the Roll. Rare; the character is now outside the scrappy-crew premise, and the campaign should reflect that.

Tier 5, Transcendent. A House cadet's level, a faction Baron, a captain of multiple vessels. Effectively unlimited within reasonable scope; the limiting factors are political, relational, and ethical. The ceiling of the standard advancement curve; the base game does not assume any campaign will produce a Tier 5 PC.

QUICK REFERENCE

TIER	NAME	MONTHLY ACQUISITION	EQUIPMENT ACCESS
0	Forgotten	None (favors only)	Improvised only
1	Established	1× Tier 1 (1 Credit)	Common, reliable
2	Prosperous	1× Tier 1 to 2 (1 to 4)	Military, regular
3	Affluent	1× up to Tier 3 (1 to 9)	Experimental, occasional
4	Powerful	1× up to Tier 4 (1 to 16)	Experimental, routine
5	Transcendent	1× up to Tier 5 (1 to 25+)	All tiers on demand

THE WEALTH CHECK

To acquire an item above your monthly allowance, roll a **Knowledge** (formal markets) or **Presence** (relationships) Duality Roll against the DC for the item's Tier. The Wealth ladder is the standard DC ladder (Chapter 9), one rung per Tier:

ITEM TIER	DC
Tier 1	10
Tier 2	15
Tier 3	20
Tier 4	25
Tier 5	30

You must be **at most one Tier below the item's Tier** to attempt the Check at all. On Success, the character acquires the item and the Keeper subtracts the appropriate reserves narratively; Critical Success acquires it clean and below cost; Failure does not acquire it and may produce a complication (a scammed contact, a flagged purchase); Failure with Fear makes the complication serious. Pacing is by Tier: Tier 1 Checks once per month, Tier 2 once per quarter, Tier 3 once per year, Tier 4+ once per two years. Wealth Checks are **story events**, not inventory management.

QUICK PROCEDURE - THE WEALTH CHECK

STEP	WHAT HAPPENS
1. Is it free?	If the item is at or below your monthly allowance , you simply have it. No roll. Stop here.
2. Are you allowed to try?	You must be at most one Tier below the item's Tier. Two or more below: no Check exists. (The black market lifts this by one, at a price.)
3. Has the clock reset?	Tier 1 once a month, Tier 2 once a quarter, Tier 3 once a year, Tier 4+ once every two years.
4. Roll	Knowledge (formal markets) or Presence (relationships) vs 10 / 15 / 20 / 25 / 30 by item Tier.
5. Read the outcome	<i>Critical</i> : acquired, clean and under cost. <i>Success</i> : acquired. <i>Failure</i> : not acquired, and possibly a complication. <i>Failure with Fear</i> : the complication is serious.

The Check answers *can you get it at all*, not *how much is left in the account*. There is no ledger to subtract from.

WEALTH GAINS AND LOSSES

Tiers move through narrative events, usually one Tier at a time. Multi-Tier shifts are rare and dramatic.

Gains: a campaign-defining job's payoff; faction promotion within a House, Fleet, Guild, or Imperial Service; inheritance from a wealthy relative; sustained long-career success; a successful owned business; a valuable salvage. **Losses**: high-tier medical reconstruction (a character recovering from a Final-state injury may automatically drop one Tier); major theft or fraud; catastrophic loss of a primary asset; a debt called at a bad moment; loss of formal standing.

THE BLACK MARKET

The Wealth Check covers legitimate markets. The black market handles three things the legitimate system cannot: **items above your Tier ceiling**, **restricted or contraband items** (military-grade weaponry, certain pharmaceuticals, prohibited Precursor equipment, forged credentials), and **anonymous acquisitions** the character can afford but cannot afford the *record* of.

MECHANICS

A black-market Wealth Check uses the standard procedure with three changes:

- **Disadvantage** on the Check (the premium for negotiation, vetting, and price-gouging). The DC stays on its rung; the risk rides on the dice, as Chapter 9 prescribes for a task that is harder without being a whole step harder.
- **Tier limit lifted by one**: you can attempt **two Tiers above** your own (a Tier 1 character can attempt a Tier 3 purchase, at the same risk).
- **Black-Market Heat** is generated on Failure or on Success with Fear (see below).

The Check also requires a **contact** in the relevant segment, cultivated narratively over a session or more. No contact, no Check; finding the contact is often the first arc of a black-market campaign.

BLACK-MARKET HEAT

Black-Market Heat is a personal track, 0 to 6, reflecting attention from parties who would prefer your business stay quiet. It is unrelated to a starship's **Heat** (the thermal-load track in Chapter 17); the two never interact, and a character can be Burned on one while the ship runs cold on the other.

HEAT	STATE	EFFECT
0 to 1	Cold	Background. Unremarkable.
2 to 3	Warm	You are known enough that the black market's Disadvantage no longer applies to you; legitimate Reputation slightly harder to gain
4 to 5	Hot	Black-market Checks are made with Advantage - the wrong people trust you now; legitimate Imperial Checks attract scrutiny; law-adjacent Reputation locked at neutral or below
6	Burned	No black-market Checks at all; existing contacts cut ties; active investigation begins

Gain Heat from: a failed black-market acquisition Roll (+1), Failure with Fear during a black-market acquisition (+2 instead), Success with Fear (+1), and a printed story trigger such as a captured contact or leaked record. **Clear Heat** by going dark for a session (-1 and one Tier's monthly allowance), completing a change-of-identity project (-3), or completing one clean quarter with no Heat-generating event (-1).

COSTS BEYOND THE CHECK

Black-market acquisitions also carry the **Premium** (roughly 2 to 3× the legitimate-market reserves cost), the **Cut** (the contact's fee, sometimes paid in credits and sometimes in future favors that the contact's idea of fairness may interpret broadly), and the **Trace** (a serial, a

flag, or a slow-acting trigger; most never matter, some shape entire arcs).

WHAT IT OFFERS, IN BRIEF

Tier 1 (forged basics, off-brand pharma, unregulated weapons), Tier 2 (unregistered mid-grade weapons, stolen vehicles, untracked Veil-route data), Tier 3 (military small arms, Precursor fragments, stolen House technology), Tier 4 (off-registry vessels, significant Precursor artifacts, off-the-books mercenaries), Tier 5 (capital-scale equipment outside Imperial registry, operational Precursor artifacts, weapons the Houses pretend they do not have). The higher the Tier, the smaller the market, the more dangerous the contacts.

CREW WEALTH

A registered crew has its **own** Wealth Tier alongside its members'. The Crew Tier covers ship-scale and enterprise-scale economics (fuel, ship modifications, ship repairs, contracts at crew level, shared property); personal Tier covers character-scale (personal kit, lodging, individual acquisitions).

CREW TIER	NAME	WHAT IT OWNS
0	Desperate	No registered vessel; session-to-session
1	Working	Tier 1 to 2 ship; shared operating account
2	Established	Tier 2 to 3 ship; small client base, modest reserves
3	Successful	Tier 3 to 4 ship; retained contacts, can weather a bad season
4	Prosperous	Tier 4 to 5 ship; possibly multiple vessels; non-PC employees
5	Magnate	Operates as a small commercial entity; rare

A personal Tier 1 character on a Crew Tier 3 ship is not poor in practice (the ship's reserves cover crew business, the lifestyle aboard is comfortable, professional standing is the crew's), but personal acquisitions still operate at Tier 1. Where the boundary blurs, the table negotiates;

the Keeper should establish the crew's operating norm early. **Crew Wealth Checks** use the same DC table, rolled by whichever PC has financial authority (usually the Captain); the acquisition is a crew asset.

Shared debts follow the *enterprise*: a PC who leaves the crew does not shed crew-level obligations, unless a debt is **personally guaranteed** by one PC (in which case it may follow them out instead). Experienced captains avoid personal guarantees for exactly that reason.

WEALTH TRANSITIONS

Tier movement needs three things together: **cumulative narrative weight** (sustained operation at the next-Tier level across several sessions), a **triggering event** (a contract signed, a promotion, an inheritance recognized, a property acquired) to make the move real in the fiction, and **no active blockers** (Black-Market Heat 4+ blocks climbing above Tier 2 in Imperial space; outstanding debts can stall the climb). Descent mirrors: a catastrophic event, or living above your means until the gap closes.

The rule of thumb is **two Tier movements** per character across a campaign, one up, sometimes one down and recovered. Tier stasis is also valid. **Avoid Tier inflation**: a Tier 1 crew reaching Tier 5 in twenty sessions has trivialized the system. Handle transitions with a brief table moment, the Keeper invites the move, the player names the triggering event in fiction, the table acknowledges it. The mechanical event carries social weight; let it earn its moment.

PROPERTY AND SHIPS

At Tier 2 and above, you may own significant property; maintenance costs sit in the background as long as the property is within or one Tier above your reach. Property *above* your Tier is unsustainable: the character either climbs to support it or loses it within a session or two.

TIER	PROPERTY	SHIP
1	Bunk, apartment, cabin	(none personal)
2	Modest home, small business	Small courier or shuttle (the <i>Pelican</i> is here)
3	Significant business, ship of one's own	Cargo hauler, light freighter, armed merchant
4	Multiple smaller properties	Medium freighter, escort frigate, refit corvette
5	Estate, business empire	Heavy frigate, light cruiser, major mercantile vessel

Ships above Tier 5 (heavy cruisers, capitals, dreadnoughts) are not normally PC-accessible. A Tier 3+ ship really wants more than one PC to run it cleanly; a solo character with one will operate it below spec.

DEBT

Many Veilfarers characters owe somebody. Debt is not punishment; it is a piece of the setting.

- **Personal debts** to a named NPC, tracked narratively; the lender calls them at a dramatically appropriate moment.
- **House debts:** a signed contract, a stipend taken, a cadet status accepted. Until satisfied or terminated, the House has formal claims on time and Reputation (Chapter 16).
- **Free Fleet contracts:** the Fleet operates on contracts, not wages. Flexible but binding; a walked-out contractor finds Fleet doors closing.
- **Imperial Levies:** percentage taxes on declared income, paid annually or quarterly. Most active crews evade; getting caught is a story event.

A debt can also be *positive* leverage: a powerful NPC who owes the crew is a story engine in their own right.

ALTERNATIVE CURRENCIES

Five worth naming, all in addition to (not instead of) the Pearl Standard where they overlap.

- **Ailuran secrets.** An Ailuran community trades in pieces of information of measured weight: a verified secret of suitable significance settles a debt the way a chip does in Imperial space. Outsiders are usually paid in chips, not in secrets.
- **Bloomstrider seed-trade.** Bloomstrider communities exchange living material, seeds, cuttings, propagules, on long-cycle ledgers measured in generations rather than seasons. Hard to evaluate; the Bloomstriders themselves do most of the math.
- **Free Fleet favor-credit.** A captain's word, written and signed in the Fleet's distinctive way, is legal tender across the Fleet's network. Outside the Fleet it is worth what the next Free Fleet ship decides to honor.
- **House Scrip.** Some Houses issue paper notes against their own reserves, valid within their territories and at recognized partner

stations. Scrip is often worth slightly less than its face value off-territory.

- **Frontier barter.** Edge colonies often have no functional Imperial presence. Local goods (water, parts, time) are the currency, and a Pearl Standard chip is sometimes worth less than a working filter element.

A CAMPAIGN IN BRIEF

To show the pacing, a sketched arc across a sixty-session campaign with a four-PC crew: they begin at personal Tier 1 on a Crew Tier 1 *Pelican*; by session 15 a major payday has lifted two PCs and the crew to Tier 2; sessions 16 to 30 climb through several smaller contracts; a campaign-defining mid-campaign job in sessions 31 to 45 takes the crew to Tier 3 and the Captain to Tier 3 with a Black-Market Heat reading of 3; late campaign, around session 46 to 60, sees a near-Burned recovery arc and the eventual quiet of a Captain at Tier 3, the crew at Tier 3, with several PCs at Tier 2. Movement is real, but bounded. The Tier mattered every time it changed.

CLOSING: WEALTH IS WHAT YOU CANNOT TAKE WITH YOU

The Wealth Tiers exist so a change in fortune stays meaningful, and so the low Tiers gate the high-Tier gear that should feel hard-won; a Tier 1 character is not a lesser character, only one whose story has not yet turned on money. Spend deliberately, and remember the credits are temporary: the Tier is one of the few things that lasts a campaign, and even it is only one of the things you are.

CHAPTER 16

YOUR NAME IN THE VOID

"Credits come and go. A good ship can be rebuilt. But reputation? That's forever. In this galaxy, your word, your name, that might be the only currency that truly matters."

Elena Vasquez, Guildmaster of the Stellar Commerce Guild

At a glance. A character holds a Reputation Score with each major faction, tracked from -3 (Hated) through 0 (Unknown) to +6 (Legendary), advancing on Reputation Points (RP) awarded by the Keeper after sessions or arcs. Each level reshapes how the faction treats you and unlocks faction-specific Perks. Reputation is external (how the galaxy sees you publicly); it is separate from Affiliation Standing (Chapter 8), which is your position within an institution. The chapter also covers Crew Cohesion, the same kind of currency turned inward: how well the crew itself holds together.

After the Silence, trust became the rarest commodity in the galaxy. No central authority can enforce a contract; the only thing that crosses systems intact is the *weight of a name*. The Reputation system makes that weight mechanical.

THE CORE CONCEPT

You do not have one Reputation; you have **one per faction**. The six Great Houses, the Stellar Commerce Guild, the Free Fleet, the Explorers' Guild, the Solara Compact, the Church of the Eternal Veil, and any other organization the Keeper marks as a Reputation-tracking entity each carry their own track. You may be Revered by

House Joric, Hated by House Volkov, and Trusted by the Commerce Guild at the same time, every relationship is its own arc.

Each track runs **-3 to +6**, starting at **0 (Unknown)** for every new character. Changes are *not automatic*; the Keeper awards RP at the end of a session or arc to reflect what the crew actually did.

Two numbers, not one. **Reputation Points (RP)** are the running total you accumulate; the **Reputation Level** (-3 to +6) is the rung that total has bought you. You gain and lose RP constantly; the Level moves only when a threshold is crossed. Do not confuse either with **Affiliation Standing**, a separate track that runs +5 to -5, starts at +1 (Good Standing), and measures your position *inside* the one institution you have sworn to - not the galaxy's opinion of you from outside. Standing is set during character creation (Chapter 8, Step 6) and is eroded by the forbidden conflicts each affiliation names (Chapter 5).

THE REPUTATION LADDER

LEVEL	TITLE	RP	WHAT IT MEANS
+6	Legendary	35+ (and a world-changing deed)	Effectively unlimited access; you shape the faction's future
+5	Revered	25	Strategic counsel; significant resources at your call
+4	Honored	17	Senior officials take your calls directly; access to deep resources
+3	Trusted	10	Real perks: discounts, signature gear, sworn favors
+2	Respected	5	Doors crack open; small concessions without asking
+1	Recognized	2	They have heard of you; basic courtesy
0	Unknown	0	Starting position; professional indifference
-1	Distrusted	-2	Watchlist; unhelpful officials, stops and searches
-2	Scorned	-5	Open contempt; local bounties; ports denied
-3	Hated	-10	Galaxy-wide bounty; kill-on-sight in their territory

Crossing a threshold changes how the faction operates around the crew; the differences are concrete, not flavor.

EARNING AND BURNING TRUST

Gaining RP. The Keeper awards points at the end of a session or arc, scaled to what the crew did.

- **Minor Success (+1 RP):** a standard mission delivered, a small piece of useful intelligence, cargo run clean.
- **Major Success (+2 to +3 RP):** a difficult mission completed, a significant asset saved, a meaningful blow to a faction's rival.
- **Legendary Deed (+4 to +5 RP):** a campaign-level achievement: a world saved, a battle won, a power-shifting secret uncovered.

Losing RP. The fall is usually faster than the climb.

- **Minor Transgression (-1 RP):** a simple failure, being seen with a known rival.

- **Major Betrayal (-3 to -4 RP):** active work against the faction, sabotage, aid to a sworn enemy at meaningful scale.
- **Act of War (-5 to -6 RP):** a faction leader killed, a major asset destroyed, a deepest secret exposed.

When totals cross a threshold, the Level shifts; the Keeper narrates the move so the table feels it.

QUICK PROCEDURE - MOVING A REPUTATION

STEP	WHAT HAPPENS
1. End of session or arc	The Keeper, not the dice, awards RP. Nothing here is automatic.
2. Score the deed	<i>Minor</i> +1 / <i>Major</i> +2 to +3 / <i>Legendary</i> +4 to +5. Against you: <i>Minor</i> -1 / <i>Major Betrayal</i> -3 to -4 / <i>Act of War</i> -5 to -6.
3. Pay the rival	Most gains cost RP with someone else. The Keeper names that cost before the crew commits, never after.
4. Add to the running RP total	Per faction. Separate track for each.
5. Did a threshold fall?	+2 Recognized / +5 Respected / +10 Trusted / +17 Honored / +25 Revered / +35 <i>and a world-changing deed</i> Legendary . Downward: -2 Distrusted / -5 Scorned / -10 Hated.
6. If the Level moved	New Perk unlocks - and the Obligation that comes with it. Narrate the shift at the table.

RP is the odometer; the Level is the gear you are in. A crew can bank RP for three sessions and see nothing change, then cross +10 and find every Joric door already open.

WALKING THE TIGHTROPE

The galaxy is a web of rivalries. A lucrative contract for one faction is usually a problem for another. **The Keeper's job is to be transparent about the trade before the players accept:** "You can take this from Joric, but Volkov claims this territory; succeed and you make heroes of yourselves with Joric and enemies of yourselves with Volkov, are you sure?" A net +3 RP with one faction will often cost -2 with their rival; the crew should know this *before* committing.

Some standard rivalries (the Keeper may adjust):

- **Valerius vs Solari** (commerce vs imperial-traditional).
- **Joric vs Volkov** (defensive vs aggressive military doctrine).
- **Kurogane vs the Church of the Eternal Veil** (transhumanism vs mystic doctrine).
- **The Free Fleet vs Joric** (independence vs imperial governance).
- **The Solara Compact vs any House actively colonizing fringe systems.**

MENDING FENCES

Burned bridges are rarely free to rebuild.

- **Distrusted (-1):** a sincere apology and a significant unrewarded favor may repair it.
- **Scorned (-2):** a sustained arc of unambiguous service across multiple sessions; a Major Success done *for* the faction at real cost.

- **Hated (-3):** a Legendary deed in the faction's interest, accepted formally by their leadership. Some Hated relationships never recover, and a character who tries should know that going in.

AFFILIATION OBLIGATIONS AND REPUTATION PERKS

A character can stand in two different relationships to a faction, and they are not the same thing. **Affiliation** (Chapter 8) is sworn membership: you carry the faction's

mark, and with it a standing **Affiliation Obligation** that you owe whether the faction currently loves you or not. **Reputation** (this chapter) is external standing: the galaxy's running tally of your name. Each rung you climb hands you a concrete **Perk**, and with it an **Obligation**, because a faction that trusts you also expects more of you. Perks are benefits you can call on; Obligations are what the faction quietly expects in return, and a crew that takes the perks while shirking the obligations bleeds RP until the doors close again.

The tables below give, for each major faction, its Affiliation Obligation and what each tier grants and demands. The Keeper adapts specifics to the campaign. Two rules hold everywhere: **every called perk has a narrative consequence** (a borrowed squad commits you to its owner's interests; a called escort paints you in the eyes of that faction's enemies), and **nothing is free**.



HOUSE AMARANTH (KEEPERS OF WISDOM)

Affiliation Obligation. Every significant thing you learn, a Vault decoded, a pre-Silence record recovered, a Veil phenomenon documented, belongs in the House archives. Knowledge withheld is theft; knowledge sold to a rival is heresy. You are also expected to keep the House's dangerous knowledge out of careless hands.

REPUTATION LEVEL	PERK GAINED	OBLIGATION IT CARRIES
+1 Recognized	A reading card to any public Amaranth library; junior archivists answer reasonable questions	Credit the House when its knowledge saves you; do not hand its texts to outsiders
+2 Respected	Scholarly discounts on data, tutoring, and translation; a named archivist contact	Bring at least one genuine discovery to the archives each arc
+3 Trusted	Access to the restricted stacks; one standing favor of expert consultation on any problem	Undertake a retrieval the House dare not risk its own people on, when asked
+4 Honored	Deep-archive access including catalogued Precursor fragments; a House cipher-key	Surrender Precursor artifacts you recover for study; you may petition to keep the findings
+5 Revered	The House shares strategic intelligence and lends a Loremaster to your crew for an arc	Act as the House's hand in a matter it cannot be seen to touch
+6 Legendary	A seat in the inner circle; you may steer a line of House research and read what almost no one reads	You now hold one of the House's deepest secrets, and the keeping of it may cost you everything

Distrusted or below: libraries close, archivists "lose" the records you need, and at Hated the House makes sure your rivals learn exactly what you were searching for.



HOUSE JORIC (THE SENTINELS)

Affiliation Obligation. You answer the call to defend. When a Sentinel line is threatened and you are within reach, you hold it, and you do not start the wars you are sworn to end. The shield is not yours to use as a sword.

REPUTATION LEVEL	PERK GAINED	OBLIGATION IT CARRIES
+1 Recognized	Patrols treat you as friendly; safe passage through Joric-held lanes	Do not raise arms first in Joric space; report raiders you sight
+2 Respected	Standard-issue military gear at cost; field resupply at Sentinel posts	Lend a hand when a post you pass is shorthanded
+3 Trusted	A sworn squad will accompany you on one dangerous mission per arc; signature Joric arms	Spend that squad on defensive ends only, and bring them home
+4 Honored	Access to Precursor-tier defensive hardware; a Sentinel liaison officer	Hold a line the House names, even when it is not your fight
+5 Revered	Temporary command of Sentinel assets, a cutter and crew, for a sanctioned operation	Answer the House's muster in a genuine crisis, no matter your other plans
+6 Legendary	You stand among the architects of Joric doctrine; fleets move when you ask	Your name is now a Joric promise; breaking faith here is treason, not bad manners

Distusted or below: posts deny resupply and "inspect" your hold; at Hated, Joric treats you as a hostile incursion.



HOUSE KUROGANE (THE GOD-MAKERS)

Affiliation Obligation. Progress is paid for in data. You feed the House what you learn from the tech you use and the bodies you augment, and you accept that to climb here is to be changed, willingly, by what the House builds.

REPUTATION LEVEL	PERK GAINED	OBLIGATION IT CARRIES
+1 Recognized	Entry to Kurogane workshops; basic repair and fabrication at cost	Log performance data on any House gear you field
+2 Respected	Prototype field-testing rights; discounts on cybernetics and implants	Return honest results, failures included, on what you test
+3 Trusted	Signature Kurogane gear and one bespoke modification per arc	Submit to one round of monitored augmentation or telemetry when asked
+4 Honored	Access to experimental and Precursor-derived tech; a House engineer on call	Carry a House device into a place it could never otherwise reach
+5 Revered	Authority over a slice of research budget; a prototype vessel system installed	Let the House study a result you would rather keep private
+6 Legendary	You help decide what humanity becomes next; the deepest labs open to you	You are now part of the experiment, and the House will not let its investment walk away freely

Distrusted or below: your augments flag in House systems; at Hated, Kurogane considers its property recoverable, including what it put inside you.



HOUSE SOLARI (THE FADING CROWN)

Affiliation Obligation. You uphold the forms. In Solari halls you observe rank, ceremony, and the fiction of the old Empire's continuity, and you never publicly suggest the Crown is fading, even when everyone in the room knows it.

REPUTATION LEVEL	PERK GAINED	OBLIGATION IT CARRIES
+1 Recognized	Admittance to minor court functions; the courtesy due a guest	Observe protocol; arrive presentable and unarmed where custom demands
+2 Respected	Imperial-tax reductions in Solari space; letters of introduction	Lend the Crown the dignity of your presence at one occasion per arc
+3 Trusted	Formal documents, writs, and pardons that open imperial doors	Perform a discreet service that lets a noble save face
+4 Honored	A court audience on request; a minor honorific attached to your name	Defend the legitimacy of the Crown in word and deed when it is questioned
+5 Revered	A granted title with real estate or revenue; decree authority in a small domain	Answer the Crown's summons and rule your grant as the Crown would wish
+6 Legendary	You become a pillar the Fading Crown leans on; your word carries imperial weight	You now share the burden of a dying order, and its enemies become yours

Distrusted or below: invitations dry up and old slights are remembered; at Hated, Solari brands you a traitor to the Empire that no longer quite exists.



HOUSE VALERIUS (THE PEARL MERCHANTS)

Affiliation Obligation. You honor your debts and your contracts to the letter, and you do not undercut the House's markets or carry its rivals' cargo. Profit secures peace, and a Valerius affiliate who breaks a deal breaks the only law that matters here.

REPUTATION LEVEL	PERK GAINED	OBLIGATION IT CARRIES
+1 Recognized	A trading account; 10% discount on goods at Valerius exchanges	Settle your accounts on time, every time
+2 Respected	Priority Exchange access; discount rising toward 20%; market tips	Route a fair share of your trade through House channels
+3 Trusted	Exclusive contracts and consignments; a line of credit	Give the House right of first refusal on Chrono-Pearl you find
+4 Honored	Access to the Pearl markets proper; a Factor who works on your behalf	Move a sensitive cargo no questions asked, when the House needs it
+5 Revered	Market-moving authority; the House backs your ventures with capital	Use that leverage in concert with House interests, never against them
+6 Legendary	You sit among those who set the price of the Pearl itself	Your fortune and the House's are now one ledger; its enemies will come for both

Distrusted or below: prices rise against you and credit dries up; at Hated, Valerius simply makes you

uninsurable, then unwelcome everywhere coin is counted.



HOUSE VOLKOV (THE WAR-MAKERS)

Affiliation Obligation. Strength is truth, and you prove yours. You answer challenges rather than dodge them, you do not show the weakness of broken word or abandoned ally, and when the warband marches you do not hide.

REPUTATION LEVEL	PERK GAINED	OBLIGATION IT CARRIES
+1 Recognized	Entry to the training pits; respect earned by showing up	Never refuse an honest challenge outright; back your words
+2 Respected	Discounts on weapons and armor; a sparring-mentor's ear	Stand your ground in a fight the warband shares
+3 Trusted	Signature plasma weapons and a war-token that opens hard doors	Take a dangerous mission the House respects, and finish it
+4 Honored	Command of a warband for an operation; access to heavy arms	Lead from the front; a Volkov leader who hangs back is no leader
+5 Revered	Temporary command of a warship and crew; a place at the war-table	March when the House calls its strength, even at cost to your own plans
+6 Legendary	You are reckoned among the great warlords; oaths are sworn to your name	Your strength is now the House's banner; to falter publicly is to fall completely

Distrusted or below: warriors test you on sight; at Hated, Volkov puts a price on you and treats your death as sport.

STELLAR COMMERCE GUILD

Affiliation Obligation. You keep goods and your word moving, and you stay neutral in the Houses' quarrels while under Guild colors. Dues are paid, contracts are honored, and Guild arbitration is respected as binding.

REPUTATION LEVEL	PERK GAINED	OBLIGATION IT CARRIES
+1 Recognized	Standard market access at Guild ports; fair posted rates	Pay your dues; do not run contraband under the Guild flag
+2 Respected	Bulk discounts and priority berths; a broker's contact	Take Guild arbitration over private feud when disputes arise
+3 Trusted	Guild legal protection and a standing letter of safe conduct	Carry a Guild cargo or message through dangerous space when asked
+4 Honored	Access to closed auctions and bonded warehouses; a factor's services	Stay scrupulously neutral in any House conflict the Guild is brokering
+5 Revered	A voice in setting routes and rates on a regional board	Put the flow of trade above your own short-term gain when the two collide
+6 Legendary	You help shape Guild policy across systems	The Guild's neutrality is now partly yours to guard, and partisans on all sides will test it

Distrusted or below: rates turn against you and berths fill up; at Hated, the Guild blacklists you from every port that flies its pennant.



THE FREE FLEET

Affiliation Obligation. A Fleet ship in need is your ship in need. You answer distress calls from your own, you never sell a fellow captain to a House, and you defend the one thing the Fleet holds sacred: that no one out here answers to a throne.

REPUTATION LEVEL	PERK GAINED	OBLIGATION IT CARRIES
+1 Recognized	Fleet hospitality: a safe berth, a meal, an honest repair	Answer a Fleet distress call you can reach
+2 Respected	Free harbor at Fleet anchorages; shared charts and warnings	Share what you know of hazards and House movements
+3 Trusted	Willing Fleet ships will sail with you on a shared cause	Spend that goodwill on the Fleet's freedom, not a House's errand
+4 Honored	A standing flotilla you can rally; deep discounts among Fleet traders	Shelter a hunted Fleet crew even at cost to yourself
+5 Revered	Command of a sanctioned Fleet action; a captain's vote that carries weight	Put the Fleet's independence above your own ambitions
+6 Legendary	A seat on the Council of Captains; the Fleet moves on your word	You now embody the Fleet's freedom; serve a crown even once and you lose it all

Distrusted or below: anchorages turn cold and charts stop reaching you; at Hated, the Fleet names you oathbreaker, and there is no harder word out here.

SMALLER POWERS

The same two-part design covers the rest. For each, the Affiliation Obligation is the price of belonging, and the tiers grant benefits the faction actually controls.

- **The Explorers' Guild.** *Obligation:* file your charts and findings, and answer a fellow explorer's rescue call. *Perks climb from* shared maps and outfitting discounts, to expedition funding and salvage rights, to first access to newly opened Vaults and a vote on where the Guild looks next. *The cost:* the Guild's maps are shared maps, and what you find is expected to be found for everyone.
- **The Solara Compact.** *Obligation:* protect colonists and oppose those who would strip a fringe world bare. *Perks climb from* safe harbor and resupply in Compact settlements, to militia support and colonial contracts, to a guiding hand in fringe policy. *The cost:* the Compact remembers who showed up when a colony was burning, and who did not.
- **The Church of the Eternal Veil.** *Obligation:* show reverence in sacred places and never desecrate a Veil-site or traffic in what the Church deems profane. *Perks climb from* sanctuary and healing, to Veil-lore and blessings, to access to relics and the counsel of the devout. *The cost:* the Church's favor binds you to its doctrine, and

Kurogane's transhumanists are not the only ones who find that doctrine a cage.

For any other regional power, the Keeper designs along the same lines: name the Affiliation Obligation first, then let each tier grant one or two concrete benefits the faction truly owns, each paired with what it expects in return. A perk with no obligation is not a perk; it is a plot hole. House Joric's +3 *Trusted* entry above is the pattern in miniature: the sworn squad is genuinely yours to call, and the same line that grants it tells you to spend it on defensive ends only and bring those people home. Nothing is free.

REPUTATION AS A STORY ENGINE

Watch for the patterns this system likes to produce. **The Triangulation** (Trusted with two rivals; a choice arises). **The Burn-and-Run** (deliberately tank one faction's RP for leverage with another, then live with the fallout). **The Slow Climb** (patient build with one faction

over a long arc, culminating in a Legendary deed). **The Redemption** (a character starts negative and works toward neutrality; the question is whether redemption is even possible). **The Faction War** (the crew rises to Honored or Revered during a conflict, and their actions tip the balance).

A WORKED EXAMPLE: VELL'S ARC

Across the first three arcs of the Tellurian Reach campaign, Vell (Bloomstrider Engineer) and the *Vagrant Star* crew take work primarily from House Joric. The math at the table looks like this: **Session 6**, a kidnapped Sentinel-Lieutenant recovered from Volkov captivity (+3 Joric, -3 Volkov). **Session 12**, a Joric border post stabilized (+2 Joric -> Respected). **Session 18**, a senior officer's daughter rescued from a Veil-touched cult (+3 Joric, total +8). **Session 24**, a Volkov incursion stopped, a legendary deed (+4 Joric, -4 Volkov). After Session 24, Vell sits at +12 Joric (**Trusted**) and -7 Volkov (**Scorned**): a Joric Sentinel squad is callable and signature Joric arms are available - but not yet the Sentinel liaison officer, which is an Honored perk and still five RP away, and Volkov ports deny docking, Volkov bounty hunters appear in two later sessions, and a Volkov sabotage drives a Session 28 plot beat. Both halves of that flowed from the same actions. The crew chose, accepted the cost, and the campaign now lives with the choice. That is the system working as intended.

Rule Take-Away: Read the running RP total, then find its rung - they are not the same number. Vell's +12 with Joric is not a Level; it is twelve points sitting above the +10 threshold, which is what makes her *Trusted*. She will feel nothing new until she reaches +17. Meanwhile the -7 with Volkov is likewise not a Level: it is past -5, so she is *Scorned*, and the ports close accordingly.

CREW COHESION

At a glance. Beyond external Reputation and personal Affiliation Standing, the crew itself has a Cohesion score (0 to 10) for how tightly the group operates as one. Cohesion grows through shared trials and erodes through betrayal or unresolved Friction. High Cohesion produces real mechanical benefits; low Cohesion costs the crew its edge.

A working Veilfarers crew is four to six people aboard a single vessel doing dangerous work across enormous distances. Whether they actually function as a unit is not abstract; it decides whether a heist holds when one member improvises, whether a fight survives a wound, whether a campaign holds together at all. **Connections**

(Chapter 8) capture specific bonds between two people; **Cohesion** captures what those bonds *add up to* at the group level.

THE COHESION SCORE

A single number from **0 (Broken)** to **10 (Forged)**. Starting crews usually sit at **3 (Working)**: they know each other well enough to function but have not been tested as a unit.

RANGE	STATE	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE
0	Broken	Each member operates alone; recent betrayals or institutional pressure have fractured the unit
1 to 2	Strained	The crew functions, but with friction; cooperation is conscious and effortful
3 to 4	Working	<i>Default.</i> Most jobs go smoothly; serious tests will reveal where the bonds are weak
5 to 6	Tested	Real trials passed; mutual trust extends beyond rationality
7 to 8	Forged	A single body with multiple limbs; coordination is instinctual rather than discussed
9 to 10	Legendary	Larger than its members; new members must earn their place against what the crew has done

GAINS

- +1, completing a major job together without interpersonal conflict during the work.
- +1, sustained successful operations across roughly 8 to 10 sessions of steady play (Keeper's call).
- +1, a mutual rescue, explicitly acknowledged.
- +1, a shared sacrifice the whole crew chose (a turned-down job, an accepted Reputation hit, a casualty for an outsider).
- +2, surviving a catastrophic event together, the kind of session that becomes legend.

LOSSES

- -1, a significant lie between crew members, later discovered.
- -1, unresolved Friction (Chapter 8) sustained across many sessions.
- -1, one PC acting against the explicit wishes of the rest, when it affects the crew.
- -2, a betrayal of a specific Bond or Debt (Chapter 8), abandoning a Bond in danger, refusing a called Debt with no compensating service.
- -2, a public faction split between PCs aligning against each other.
- -3, a PC's death by another PC's hand, justified or not; the death stays in the room.

HIGH-COHESION BENEFITS

- **Cohesion 5+ (Tested).** Once per session any crew member may **invoke crew unity** to grant another +1 to a single roll, in-fiction motivated (they read each other's intent and move in coordination).
- **Cohesion 7+ (Forged).** The invocation bonus becomes +2, and two crew members may **pool Hope or Effort** for a single high-stakes roll, combining their resources for the moment.

- **Cohesion 9+ (Legendary).** The crew gains a shared **2-token reserve** of Hope/Effort per session, drawn from by any member, *unusable while any member is acting against another's interest.*

LOW-COHESION PENALTIES

- **Cohesion 2 or below (Strained).** The crew unity invocation is unavailable. Once per session, after one crew member refuses or directly contradicts another crew member's declared help, the Keeper may invoke crew Friction before the next related Roll; that Roll takes **-1**. The trigger and target are announced before dice are rolled.
- **Cohesion 0 (Broken).** Each PC operates alone for mechanical purposes: no shared invocations, no pooled spends, no shared reserve. Bonds and Debt-call benefits remain available between individuals, but anything that touches *the crew as a unit* is paused until Cohesion is rebuilt above zero.

RECOVERING FROM LOW COHESION

Cohesion is rebuilt the same way it was lost: through play, slowly. A **deliberate arc** spent repairing it (a session in port talking through the breach, a job taken specifically to prove the crew can still operate) returns **+1**. **Resolving a Bond, Debt, or Friction** explicitly between two members returns **+1**. **Surviving a catastrophic event together while Strained or worse** can return **+2** in the way it would gain at higher Cohesion, the crew rediscovering what it is. Recovery is rarely free; the price of the breach usually has to be paid before the trust returns.

HOW COHESION RELATES TO CONNECTIONS AND REPUTATION

Connections (Chapter 8) are the *individual* trust links: A and B's First Bond, C's Open Debt to D, E's Friction with F. **Cohesion** is the *group-level* property those Connections compose. Active, healthy Connections push Cohesion up; broken or unaddressed Connections drag it down. **Reputation** lives outside the crew (the galaxy's view of you); Cohesion lives inside it (the crew's view of itself). The three together draw the social map a Pearl Era story lives in.

CLOSING: THE WEB YOU WEAVE

Reputation is the political shape of your campaign: who helps you, who hunts you, which doors open as you cross the Pearl Era. Intentional play is rewarded either way, with allies or with bounty hunters. Build your name carefully; in the silence between the stars it is the only signal that travels farther than the Temples can carry.

CHAPTER 17

THE VOID BETWEEN HULLS

"There is a moment, just before the first salvo lands, when both ships are still flying, both crews still alive, both captains still sure they will be alive an hour from now. The moment lasts perhaps four seconds. It is the longest four seconds in this work. Spend it well. There are not many of them."

Captain Vren Skykaja, Free Fleet, on his fourth confirmed kill

At a glance. Starship combat uses the same Duality Dice as personal combat with four ship-scale layers: Hull (structural integrity), Armor Slots (active defense, four arcs; the ship's shield array provides them), Heat (thermal load), and Systems (functional components). Each round the Spotlight passes around the crew by Station (Captain, Pilot, Gunner, Engineer, specialists), so one ship's "turn" is several PC actions. Range is measured in kilometers across five bands. A defeated ship is often boarded or escapes rather than destroyed, and crew death is rare even when the ship is lost. Expect five to ten of these scenes in a campaign; each is a major event.

Personal combat (Chapter 10) covers firefights in corridors and on surfaces. Starship combat covers violence at the *scale of the vessel*, where distances are kilometers and damage is measured in hulls. It runs on the same bones as personal combat, the same Duality Dice, Hope and Effort, fiction-first resolution, with three differences: the scale is bigger, the Spotlight is shared across crew positions, and a beaten ship is more often taken or fled than killed.

THE TWO SCALES

ASPECT	PERSONAL	STARSHIP
Range bands	Melee to Very Far	Adjacent to Extreme
Damage unit	HP	Hull Integrity
Defense	Evasion + Armor Slots	Ship Evasion + Armor Slots
Resource	Hope / Effort	Hope / Effort + Heat
Spotlight scope	One PC	Each PC spends their own Spotlight on a station; the crew's ship is a shared scene, not one puppet. The Keeper runs each enemy ship as a single entity.
Death frequency	Rare	Ship destruction possible; PC death rare

The scales connect through **boarding** (which drops the boarders into personal combat) and a few Domain Powers; otherwise they run in parallel, and the same character's Hope pool feeds both.

STATIONS

A ship in combat needs roles filled. One character per station per round; on a small ship (a Tier 2 light freighter such as the *Pelican*) one PC may hold several, and on a Tier 4 frigate each needs its own person.

- **Pilot (Instinct).** Holds the helm: maneuver rolls, range and facing, evasion, emergency FTL jumps. Pilots are the natural fit; anyone can fly at Disadvantage. Rotating pilots costs an action.
- **Gunner (Finesse or Knowledge).** Works the weapons console: attack rolls, targeting locks, point defense. A ship with several batteries can have multiple gunner stations, each one Spotlight per round. Finesse for precision weapons, Knowledge for missiles and sensor-coordinated fire.
- **Engineer (Knowledge).** Manages the energy budget: Heat dissipation, in-combat repairs, power rerouting, shield arcs, recovering downed subsystems.
- **Captain (Presence).** Commands rather than operating a station: coordinates the crew, issues orders, and grants buffs through class features (a Diplomat's *Standing Reputation*, a Soldier's *Rally*). A ship can run without one. A captained ship gains a concrete benefit each round: at the start of the round the Captain marks 1 Stress to grant the crew a pool of **Command Dice** equal to their Presence modifier (minimum 1); any crew member may add one Command Die (a d6) to a station roll this round before rolling, and unspent dice are lost at end of round. This is the Captain's whole turn unless they also spend their class action.
- **Specialists.** Sensor Officer (arrays, locks, threat ID, often shared with Gunner), Comms Officer (inter-ship signal, Veil-Frequency reception, jamming, often shared with Captain), and Medical Officer (First Aid on Stressed or wounded crew).

THE STARSHIP SHEET

Hull Integrity is the ship's HP. At 0 the ship is *dying*. When a rule says a ship **loses Hull directly**, mark that amount on the Hull track without applying Armor Slots or converting through the Hull severity table.

COMMON HULL	TIER	HULL
Courier / Shuttle	1	10
Cargo Hauler / Light Freighter	2	14
Armed Transport	2	22
Corvette	2	22
Frigate / Destroyer	3	30
Heavy Cruiser	4	40
Dreadnought	4	52
Legendary Set-Piece	5	Variable; never a normal target

Armor Slots absorb damage before Hull; a ship's shield array provides its Armor Slots, organized in four arcs (Fore, Aft, Port, Starboard).

Starboard), and a hit reduces the arc it comes from. Arc Slots **regenerate 2 per arc at end of round**, up to maximum (an Engineer can add to this).

COMMON HULL	ARMOR SLOTS PER ARC
Courier	3
Cargo Hauler / Light Freighter	4
Corvette	6
Frigate / Destroyer	9
Heavy Cruiser	12
Dreadnought	13

Heat is accumulated waste energy from weapons, hard maneuvers, shields, and some class features. Idle dissipation is 1 per round with no weapons fire. Reaching the **Heat Cap** causes no penalty by itself. Systems fail only when Heat rises **above** the Cap.

COMMON HULL	HEAT CAP
Courier	8
Cargo Hauler / Light Freighter	10
Corvette	12
Frigate / Destroyer	16
Heavy Cruiser	18
Dreadnought	22

Systems are named subsystems (Primary Drive, FTL Drive, Sensor Array, Comms Array, Life Support, Weapons per mount, Cargo). Each has its own **Integrity** track, typically **3**; at 0 the system is offline until repaired. Some carry side effects when damaged (Drive damage cuts maneuver speed; Sensor damage imposes Disadvantage on Gunner attacks).

Emergency field patch. Reconstructive Nanites (Chapter 13) are built for Synthetic bodies, not hulls, but in a pinch a single dose can patch one small damaged ship or vehicle system temporarily, enough to coax a flickering Sensor Array or Comms relay back for a scene. They cannot restore Hull Integrity or repair a system properly; full repairs need a yard or an Engineer's in-combat repair, and patching anything larger costs more doses than it is ever worth.

Ship Evasion is the passive defense DC. Base Evasion is determined by the vessel's physical scale:

SHIP SCALE	TIER	BASE EVASION	MOUNT RATING
Small Craft	1	16	MR ×1
Standard Vessel	2-3	12	MR ×2
Capital Vessel	4-5	8	MR ×3

Smaller vessels are harder to hit because of their size and maneuverability. Larger vessels present much easier firing solutions, but their structure supports substantially more powerful weapon mounts.

The Pilot adds **+1 Evasion per +1 Instinct modifier**, up to any class maximum; maneuvers, Drive Modes, and explicit Features may modify it further.

MOUNT RATING

Mount Rating (MR) represents the physical weapon-output scale a hull can support: reactor draw, capacitors, cooling, structural bracing, recoil management, and the space required by the mounting assembly.

Mount Rating is a **ship statistic**, not a character statistic:

- Tier 1 Small Craft: **MR ×1**
- Tier 2-3 Standard Vessels: **MR ×2**
- Tier 4-5 Capital Vessels: **MR ×3**

When a naval weapon deals damage, roll its complete printed damage expression, including its printed flat modifier, then multiply that result by the firing ship's MR.

Mount Rating is completely separate from character Proficiency. A Gunner's personal Proficiency never changes a ship's MR unless a specific feature explicitly uses that character's Proficiency for its own effect.

MOUNT CAPACITY BY HULL SCALE

Weapon Hardpoints still determine how many weapons a ship may install. Hull Tier also limits the physical class of weapon that those Hardpoints can support:

- **Tier 1:** Light weapons only.
- **Tier 2:** Light and Medium weapons.
- **Tier 3:** Light, Medium, and Heavy weapons.
- **Tier 4:** Light, Medium, Heavy, and Spinal weapons.
- **Tier 5:** As defined by the set-piece stat block.

A Spinal weapon additionally consumes the number of Weapon Hardpoints printed in its entry and may be installed only on a Tier 4+ hull unless a specific unique hull explicitly states otherwise.

Weapon class determines installation size and weapon profile.

Mount Rating determines the power scale at which the firing hull can operate that weapon.

RANGE BANDS

Five bands, all in kilometers:

- **Adjacent (0 to 100 m).** Boarding range. A weapon may fire here only when its printed range or a complete tag explicitly permits Adjacent fire; otherwise use boarding rules.
- **Engagement (100 m to 5 km).** The standard weapons band. A weapon whose printed maximum is Engagement may fire at Adjacent only when its entry says so.
- **Standard (5 to 50 km).** Mid-range. There is no hidden penalty within the band; the weapon entry and adopted hazards state every modifier.
- **Long (50 to 500 km).** A weapon may fire only if its printed range is Long or Extreme, or it has [Long-Range]. Sensor Lock is Knowledge, DC 20, and follows the complete break procedure below.
- **Extreme (500 to 5,000 km).** A weapon may fire only if its printed range is Extreme or [Long-Range] permits it. The target must carry a pending Sensor Lock, and only Guided or explicitly sensor-guided weapons can exploit that Lock. [Long-Range] attacks at Extreme have Disadvantage. Beyond 5,000 km no combat attack is possible.

A successful ordinary Pilot maneuver moves one band. A hull Feature may grant different movement. Without such a Feature, an attempted two-band maneuver is DC 20. No hull has an unstated speed penalty or bonus.

ROUND STRUCTURE

The crew's ship has no single turn. Instead, **each crew member spends their own Spotlight** on a station action during the round, exactly as they would in personal combat; the player ship is a shared scene, not one entity the table passes around. A loose order keeps it readable (the Captain may modify it): (1) Captain's orders and any class ability, no roll unless a feature is invoked; (2) Pilot's maneuver, which sets position and Evasion for the round; (3) each Gunner station's attack; (4) Engineer's action (Heat, repair, power, shields), one major action per round; (5) specialist and class actions. Any crew member may spend their Spotlight on their **class action** (see Class Actions in Ship Combat) in place of their station's ordinary action.

The Keeper then runs the **enemy ships** the opposite way: each hostile ship is a **single entity** with one block of actions (a maneuver, its weapons, one system action), not a crew of separate spotlights. This keeps the action economy tilted toward the players, who are many hands on one hull, against an enemy that is one hull with one will. **End of round:** Armor Slots regenerate (2 per arc), Heat dissipates 1 if no weapons fired, status effects progress, range and facing update.

MANEUVERING

The Pilot declares intent, fixes the targeted movement-facing arc, and fixes a maneuver DC before rolling: **DC 10** for one-band movement or routine positioning, **DC 15** for Flanking, an Evasive Pattern under fire, or movement through an active hazard, and **DC 20** for a two-band or set-piece maneuver not granted by the hull. Roll Instinct with printed ship modifiers. Any success completes the intent; Critical Success also grants Advantage on the next Gunner attack from the ship. Failure with Hope leaves range and facing unchanged. Failure with Fear leaves range and facing unchanged, marks 1 Heat, and makes the declared arc **Exposed** until the start of the ship's next Pilot Spotlight. Attacks against an Exposed arc have Advantage; the state does not stack. Overdrive replaces that one consequence as stated below.

Common maneuvers. **Close Range** (DC 10: move one band inward); **Open Range** (DC 10: move one band outward); **Evasive Pattern** (DC 10, or DC 15 while under fire: hold range and gain +2 Evasion until the next Pilot Spotlight); **Aggressive Approach** (DC 10: close one band, gain +1 on Gunner attacks, and take -1 Evasion until the next Pilot Spotlight); **Broadside** (DC 10: hold range, choose Port or Starboard, and expose that arc until the next Pilot Spotlight; every ready mount installed in that arc may be used by its Gunner, subject to ordinary Spotlight and tag limits); **Flanking** (DC 15: name one target arc before rolling; on success the next Gunner attack from this ship before the next Pilot Spotlight has Advantage and must target that arc); **Disengage** (DC 10: open one band; if this reaches Long or Extreme, contact ends unless the opponent begins a Veil pursuit or closes range on its next Pilot Spotlight); **FTL Jump** (Pearl-Drive ships only, below).

Drive Modes are announced at the start of each round and last until its end. **Cruise** has no modifier or Heat cost. **Combat** grants +1 Evasion and +1 on Pilot maneuver Rolls, then marks 1 Heat when announced. **Overdrive** grants +2 Evasion and +2 on Pilot maneuver Rolls, then marks 3 Heat when announced. On a Pilot maneuver Failure with Fear in Overdrive, the Primary Drive loses 1 Integrity as that Roll's single consequence instead of exposing an arc; the maneuver still fails and Fear is generated normally.

ATTACKS

The Gunner chooses a weapon (each has a damage expression, range band, and tags), rolls **Finesse** or a **Knowledge Duality Roll** plus any Aim, Sensor Lock, or Captain bonus, and compares to the target's Ship Evasion. Roll the weapon's complete printed damage expression, including its flat modifier, then multiply that total by the firing ship's **Mount Rating (MR)**. Mount Rating is determined by hull scale and is not character Proficiency. Never apply personal weapon Proficiency to a naval weapon unless a specific character Feature explicitly says otherwise. Damage then hits the **targeted arc's Armor Slots first, then Hull**.

When damage reaches Hull, the threshold system (Chapter 10) applies at ship scale:

HULL DAMAGE	HULL LOSS
1 to 5	1
6 to 12	2
13 to 20	3
21 to 30	4
31+ (Overkill)	5, +1 per 10 over

A **Critical Hit** uses the same split as personal combat. When a **PC** fires the weapon, double the printed damage dice, add the printed flat modifier once, then apply the firing ship's **Mount Rating**. When a **Keeper-controlled vessel** fires, maximize the printed damage dice, add the flat modifier once, then apply the firing ship's **Mount Rating**. Before every attack Roll, name its targeted arc and at most one target System; the target crew confirms that System is reachable through that arc or names one reachable alternative before dice are rolled. If that Critical Success causes Hull loss, the declared System loses 1 Integrity once. If no System was declared before the Roll, no System Integrity is lost. A noncritical hit causes no System loss unless a printed property says so.

Damage types and naval tags. Naval damage uses the four universal types: Physical, Energy, Void, and Neural. Kinetic is a Physical delivery tag; Plasma is an Energy delivery tag. Void damage, a Precursor origin, and the Veil-Aligned tag never bypass Armor Slots by name alone; only [Shield-Bypass], [Shield-Piercing], [Penetrating NJ], or another complete printed rule changes protection. Apply the exact naval-tag procedures in the Ship Weapons section below and in the Rust & Steel registry.

SENSOR LOCK

Sensor Lock is the ordinary Action of the Sensors station, taken by a Sensor Officer or by a Gunner doubling on sensors. It costs no Stress or path resource and requires a working Sensor Array. Spend your Spotlight and name one eligible target in sensor range. **Sensor Lock can target only a vehicle, starship, or other target using vehicle- or starship-scale statistics. Creatures, characters, and other personal-scale targets cannot carry a Sensor Lock.** Make an unmodified **Knowledge Duality Roll** against its current band: **Adjacent DC 5, Engagement DC 10, Standard DC 15, Long DC 20, Extreme DC 25.** Only Guided or explicitly sensor-guided weapons can exploit an Extreme Lock.

Success. The target carries a Sensor Lock. The next Gunner attack against it made from the locking ship gains Advantage; the Lock is then spent. This is the Sensor Lock bonus listed under Attacks and the ship-scale counterpart of personal Aim.

A target holds one Sensor Lock at a time. Establishing a lock needs a working Sensor Array: a ship whose Sensor Array is at 0 Integrity, or jammed (as by a Scoundrel's Cut the Cord), cannot lock. A lock stacks

with a Scholar's **Read the Enemy**: that reading buffs the whole crew until the Scholar's next Spotlight, while the lock is a single Gunner shot, so the two run together rather than replacing each other.

Personal tracking data, personal Guided weapons, Target Painter effects, and awareness of a personal-scale target are **not Sensor Locks** and never grant Sensor Lock's Advantage.

Breaking a lock. The locked ship can shed a pending lock with an evasive Pilot maneuver (Evasive Pattern, Disengage, or opening a band): it breaks automatically at Long or Extreme; at Standard the Pilot rolls **Instinct + Duality against DC 15**; at Engagement or Adjacent it holds. A lock also drops if the locking ship's own Sensor Array goes offline before the shot lands.

SHIELDS AND HEAT

The Engineer manages the trade-offs.

Shield operations (one action). *Reinforce a Shield Arc*: add 2 Heat, one arc gains +2 Armor Slots this round. *Reroute Shield Energy*: move 2 Armor Slot points between arcs. *Emergency Shield Boost*: spend all current Heat to fully restore every arc for one round; all systems take 1 Integrity from the strain.

Heat operations (one action). *Cool Systems*: dissipate 3 Heat. *Compensate*: name a system, its Heat generation drops 1 per round for the encounter. *Vent*: dump 5 Heat instantly, but the ship is Visible for one round (enemies +2 to attacks).

Heat builds from weapons fire (about 1 per shot, more for energy weapons), hard maneuvers (Combat +1, Overdrive +3), Emergency Shield Boost, and some class features.

When Heat exceeds the Cap: trigger one overflow event as soon as an increase takes the ship from Heat at or below the Cap to Heat above it. All systems lose 1 Integrity immediately; the Pilot makes an **Instinct Roll against DC 15** or the Primary Drive loses 1 additional Integrity; and the ship is Visible (enemies +2 to attacks) for one round. Further Heat gained while already above the Cap does not retrigger overflow. Heat must first fall to the Cap or lower. Reaching the Cap itself never makes the crew Overwhelmed.

DYING SHIPS

Hull 1 to 2, Critically Damaged. Venting and leaking; all ship-station Rolls have Disadvantage, and repairs may restore Systems but not Hull during combat. **Hull 0, Dying.** Emergency reserves only. The crew chooses one final ship Action before the next enemy Spotlight: Fight On, Abandon Ship, or Survive Scarred as defined in Rust & Steel. If another hit would remove Hull, resolve that chosen option immediately. Abandon Ship starts a visible four-segment Escape clock; each crew Spotlight spent reaching pods, sealing a suit, or transferring to another vessel marks 1 segment, and the ship breaks apart when it fills. Characters still aboard then take 6d10 Energy damage and use normal personal Dying, Final, stabilization, and voluntary Death Move rules. No crew member dies by narration alone.

System damage comes from a ship-scale Critical Success, which costs 1 Integrity from one system established as exposed by that attack; Heat overflow, which costs every system 1 Integrity; or a specific weapon effect. A system at 0 is offline. The Engineer spends a full Action and makes a **Knowledge (Tech) Roll, DC 15**: Critical Success restores full Integrity; any other success restores 1; Failure with Hope leaves it offline; Failure with Fear leaves it offline and the Engineer marks 1 Stress.

BOARDING

The signature ship-to-ship encounter; it drops the boarding party into personal-scale combat.

Setup. Both ships must be at **Adjacent** range (the attacker matches velocity; the defender cannot maneuver away without breaking the boarding). An entry is made, hard-dock, atmospheric breach, or boarding tube, each taking time during which the defender can counterattack. Once across, the party is committed.

The two-scale round. The ships and their remaining crews run a **starship-scale** Spotlight; the boarding party runs a **personal-scale** Spotlight inside the target; the Keeper alternates between the parallel scenes.

Resolution ends when the party clears the ship (taken as prize, salvaged, or destroyed), is repelled (ships disengage; combat may resume), or a side surrenders (ship and survivors pass to the victor).

VEIL-DISTURBED COMBAT

Veil Storms (Chapter 1). At the start of each round in a storm, roll d6 once: **1 Calm Eye**, no effect; **2 Current Shear**, each Pilot makes Instinct Reaction Roll, DC 15, and on failure the ship moves one band in the direction that worsens its declared intent; **3 Sensor Failure**, Gunner attacks have Disadvantage; **4 Substrate Surge**, each Awakened crewmember gains 1 Hope and each Sleeping crewmember marks one Effort Track segment; **5 Drive Resonance**, every ship marks 1 Heat; **6 Veil Echo**, the first attack against each ship that round has Disadvantage. The effect ends with the round.

Near Precursor Vaults. Rare. Some Vaults emit resonance that activates dormant ship systems, good or bad, and may *notice* the combat. Once per round, after the first player makes a nonmatching Duality Roll in the region and before resolving it, that player may reroll the Hope die and must use the new face. The reroll may create matching dice and therefore a Critical Success; it can never create a negative critical result.

FTL in combat. A Pearl-Drive ship attempts an emergency jump in two Spotlights. First, **Pre-Jump Calculation**: roll Knowledge, DC 10, or DC 15 while under fire. Any success establishes the declared destination. Failure with Hope establishes no solution. Failure with Fear establishes no solution and marks 1 Heat as the Roll's single consequence. Second, only after a solution exists, **Jump Initiation**: the Pilot rolls Instinct, DC 10. Any success spends the Pearl, enters FTL, and ends normal-space combat for that ship. Failure with Hope leaves the ship in place and the Pearl unspent. Failure with Fear leaves it in place, leaves the Pearl unspent, and the Primary Drive loses 1 Integrity as the Roll's single consequence.

One pursuer with a ready Pearl may spend its next Sensor Spotlight to roll Knowledge, DC 15. Any success identifies the same transit wake and permits that ship to spend its next Pilot Spotlight beginning Veil pursuit at 0 Wake. Failure with Hope loses the wake. Failure with Fear loses the wake and marks 1 Heat. A ship may make this tracking attempt once per jump.

Veil pursuit (a pursuing ship follows the jump). Each side begins at 0 Wake. Every pursuit round, both Pilots make an Instinct Duality Roll, DC 15, and resolve Path progress and Fear normally. A Critical Success outranks a noncritical success. If only one Pilot succeeds, that side marks 1 Wake. If both succeed, the higher-ranked result marks 1 Wake; compare totals between results of the same rank, and an exact tie marks none. If neither succeeds, neither marks Wake. A Pilot's Failure with Fear marks 1 Heat as that Roll's single consequence and never calls for a Storm-table roll or an improvised Memory Wake.

When a side reaches 3 Wake, it chooses one exact ending: **Break Contact**, ending the pursuit so the other ship cannot reacquire it during this scene; or **Force Ejection**, returning both ships to normal

space at Standard range, with the winner facing the loser's Aft arc and the loser marking 2 Heat. Only Veil-Aligned weapons and Mystic Veil-Sight can deal damage during pursuit. A ship whose Pearl can no longer sustain transit is ejected immediately at Standard range and marks 2 Heat. Wake clears when pursuit ends and never carries between scenes.

SHIP WEAPONS

Light (Tier 2 to 3 ships)

NAME	DAMAGE	RANGE	TAGS
Pulse Cannon	2d8+1	Engagement	Energy
Light Plasma	2d10	Engagement	Energy, Plasma
Light Missile	3d6+1	Standard	Guided
Point Defense	1d8	Engagement	Anti-Fighter
Light Slug Cannon	2d8	Standard	Kinetic

Medium (Tier 3 to 4 ships)

NAME	DAMAGE	RANGE	TAGS
Plasma Cannon	3d10+2	Standard	Energy, Plasma
Disruptor Cannon	2d8	Engagement	Energy, Disruptor
Heavy Missile	4d8+2	Long	Guided, Heavy
Particle Lance	3d10	Standard	Energy, Shield-Piercing
Medium Slug Cannon	3d10	Standard	Kinetic

Heavy (Tier 4 to 5 ships)

NAME	DAMAGE	RANGE	TAGS
Mass Driver	5d10+3	Long	Kinetic, Heavy
Heavy Plasma Lance	4d12+2	Long	Energy, Plasma, Heavy
Singularity Cannon	4d12	Standard	Void, Veil
Capital Missile	6d8+4	Extreme	Guided, Heavy
Spinal Weapon	6d12	Long	Heavy, Fixed-Forward

Special

SHIP WEAPONS

NAME	DAMAGE	RANGE	TAGS
Boarding Torpedo	2d6	Adjacent	Boarding (delivers party)
EMP Burst	0 (System Damage)	Engagement	Disabling
Tow Cable	0	Engagement	Restrained (next maneuver vs Strength)
Salvage Beam	0	Engagement	Disabling (drive only)

Canonical naval tags. Apply a tag once per hit unless it explicitly says otherwise.

- **[Guided]:** Once per scene for that mounted weapon, after its attack misses, reroll the complete attack and use the new result. It never creates a Sensor Lock or ignores Evasion.
- **[Anti-Fighter]:** Add +1 to the attack Roll and +1d6 to the printed damage pool against Tier 1 craft and missiles. Add the die **before** applying Mount Rating.
- **[Plasma]:** If the hit removes at least 1 Armor Slot or causes Hull loss, the targeted arc regenerates 0 Armor Slots at the next end-of-round regeneration step instead of 2. Multiple Plasma hits before that step do not stack.
- **[Disruptor]:** Let D be the complete naval damage total **after Mount Rating** and S the targeted arc's Armor Slots when the hit begins. Remove up to $\min(S, 2 \times D)$ Slots. If the arc is depleted, calculate remaining unmodified damage as $\max(0, D - \text{ceil}(S / 2))$, halve it rounded down, and resolve that result through the Hull table. No doubled value carries into Hull.
- **[Shield-Piercing]:** At most half of the targeted arc's currently available Armor Slots, rounded down, may be spent against the hit. The unabsorbed damage continues to Hull normally; the unspent Slots remain.
- **[Heavy]:** This mount may fire at most once per round, even if a Feature grants another Action or Spotlight.
- **[Fixed-Forward]:** This mount may target only a ship in the firing ship's Fore arc.
- **[Veil-Aligned]:** This mount may deal damage during Veil transit. The tag grants no penetration, extra damage, or Void type by itself.

Identically named naval tags always use these effects or the expanded registry in *Rust & Steel*. A different effect requires a different tag name.

SHIP QUIRKS

A ship that has flown the Veil for a season has a **fingerprint**, part story, part stat line. A new ship begins with **two** Quirks, one Positive and one Negative; it acquires more from what it survives and endures. Each Quirk carries a small concrete effect (listed below) and a story hook the Keeper surfaces at pivotal beats. The effects are deliberately modest, a point here, a once-per-session reprieve there, so a ship's Quirks color how it flies without rewriting its stat block; the Keeper leans on the fiction of them often and the numbers of them when they matter.

Acquiring. At creation, roll or choose 1 Positive and 1 Negative. Surviving a major event (a storm, a higher-tier kill, a near-destruction) grants a Positive. Suffering significant damage (surviving Dying, critical system loss, a successful boarding) inflicts a

Negative. A Negative can be removed through significant downtime and Wealth investment (typically a Tier 3+ Wealth Check).

Positive Quirks (choose or roll 1d10)

1D10	QUIRK	EFFECT
1	Lucky Star	Once per session, halve a single incoming hit's damage
2	Loyal Crew Memory	Crew sleeping aboard gain +1 Hope
3	The Hum	+1 to all repair rolls aboard
4	Worn Grooves	+1 to Maneuver rolls
5	Ghost Signature	+2 on Pilot Instinct Rolls opposed by Active Scan; sensors report inconsistent IDs
6	Sun-Catcher	Heat regenerates one extra point per scene
7	The Captain's Favor	A chosen crewmate gains Advantage on one roll per session aboard
8	Veil-Sympathetic	Reduce Veil-jump complications by one level
9	War Memory	Once per session, ignore one critical hit's narrative effect
10	Singing Hull	+1 to all Veil-Touched Instinct Rolls aboard

Negative Quirks (choose or roll 1d10)

1D10	QUIRK	EFFECT
1	The Limp	-1 to Maneuver rolls in tight quarters
2	Cold Compartment	Sleep in one area and take 1 Stress per session
3	The Whisper	Stress rolls aboard increase by 1 in dramatic moments
4	Tired Engine	Heat Cap reduced by 1
5	Lockup	A specific door sometimes will not open; tension in boarding
6	The Lean	Visitors take 1 Stress on arrival (uneven gravity)
7	Volatile Wiring	Once per session, after a noncritical successful repair Roll involving the ship, the Keeper may spend 1 Fear to require the player to reroll the Fear die and use the new face. A Critical Success cannot be rerolled.
8	Haunted Cargo Bay	Crew avoid going alone; unconfirmed movement
9	Veil-Allergic	+1 Stress per jump aboard
10	The Mark	+1 to relevant rivals' Detection rolls

Assigning 1 to 2 Quirks to any new ship, friend or foe, makes it more memorable than its stat block alone.

MODULAR SYSTEMS

A ship has a fixed core plus **Installation Slots** for modules. Each module takes one slot unless noted; installation happens at a shipyard refit (Wealth Check by module Tier) or, sometimes, field-installed by an Engineer with a Workshop and materials.

SHIP TIER	SLOTS
Tier 2 (corvette, light freighter)	3
Tier 3 (frigate, hauler, fast attack)	5
Tier 4 (destroyer, capital freighter)	7
Tier 5 (cruiser, capital warship)	10

Defensive. Reinforced Plating (+1 Hull); Reactive Armor (first hit each round -2); Adaptive Shield Matrix (recharge +1); Veil-Resistant Shielding (Veil damage halved); Point-Defense Lasers (1d6 reduction vs incoming projectiles each round); Stealth Cloaking System (2 slots, once per session undetectable for a scene, Heat 3).

Offensive. Heavy Weapon Mount (one Heavy weapon's capacity); Targeting Computer (+1 to weapon attacks); Boarding Tube Assembly (enables boarding); Veil-Aligned Weapon System (weapons gain Veil-Aligned); Missile Bay (long-range missiles, limited ammo).

Utility. Extended Cargo Bay (+50% cargo); Long-Range Sensor Array (detection +1 band, +1 Detection); Quantum Comm Terminal (ship-mounted Quantum Comm); Workshop (2 slots, in-flight major repairs and module field-install); Medical Bay (faster Stress recovery; Stabilize one rung easier - DC 10 in place of the usual DC 15); Hydroponics Garden (life support and long-voyage morale).

Specialty. Precursor Resonance Array (2 slots, detects Precursor artifacts in range); Veil Navigation Suite (2 slots, +2 to Veil-jump navigation, fewer storm complications); Independent AI Core (2 slots, autonomous subsystems, has a personality); Smuggler's Holds (+5 vs cargo inspection).

Common modules are available at any major port; Military requires House contacts or specialized yards; Experimental and Precursor are rare arc-level acquisitions.

SHIP WEAPONS AGAINST PERSONNEL

Sometimes a ship fires at a person, a boarder on the hull, a soldier on an open deck. The scale mismatch is enormous.

Accuracy. A ship weapon firing at a personal-scale target attacks at **Disadvantage** (the gunner rolls a d6 and subtracts it from the attack total); the targeting computer struggles to track something far smaller than its design. **Personal-scale targets cannot be Sensor Locked.** Sensor Lock Advantage therefore never applies to an attack against a personal-scale target. Guided naval weapons do not override this restriction unless an explicit rule specifically states that they can target personal-scale creatures.

Damage. Resolve the weapon's complete damage normally, including all Critical effects. Apply the firing vessel's **Mount Rating**, then **multiply the result by *5**.

Resolve personal protection in this order:

1. **Personal shields and other effects that explicitly absorb raw incoming damage** apply normally, point for point.
2. Other effects that explicitly reduce incoming damage by a fixed amount or fraction apply normally.
3. **Personal armor** offers limited protection against ship-scale fire. For this attack, **halve the armor's Major and Severe Damage Thresholds, rounding each up**. Armor Slots are unchanged and

may be spent normally, one step down the severity ladder as usual.

4. Resolve the remaining damage against those halved thresholds using the normal personal damage procedure, including **Overkill**.

Cover explicitly rated to stop ship-scale fire may block or reduce the attack as stated by that cover.

Naval weapon properties affect personal defenses only when they explicitly say that they operate at personal scale. A naval Shield-Bypass property, for example, does not automatically bypass a personal shield generator.

Death procedure past 0 HP. When applying the resulting HP loss, do not stop at 0 HP:

- **Exactly 0 HP:** the character becomes **Dying** normally and retains access to their voluntary Death Move.
- **-1 HP or lower:** the character is killed outright by the overwhelming impact and cannot make a Death Move. Dying, Final, stabilization, and resurrection effects do not apply.

Counterplay. Get behind cover heavy enough to stop ship-scale damage (only major structure: capital bulkheads, geology, fortified bunkers); get out of the firing arc (limited traverse); get inside the weapon's minimum range; or disable the targeting system (the ship cannot resolve the shot at all until targeting is restored). The Keeper should lay out the options before resolving: "The frigate's cannon is tracking you. Cover is twenty meters back, the boarding tube ten ahead. What do you do?"

SET-PIECE COMBAT

The larger encounter, assaulting a capital ship, raiding a fortress, escaping a system-wide response, runs as a multi-phase scenario combining ship action, personal action, and time pressure, in three phases.

- **Phase 1, The Approach.** Reach the target undetected or undestroyed against a superior force, using cunning over brute force: maneuver, sensor evasion, deception (false IDs, misleading flight paths). Roughly 30 to 60 minutes of table time, 2 to 4 opposed rolls, each failure a complication. Resolves to a dock/landing/boarding, or detection and retreat.
- **Phase 2, The Infiltration.** Personal-scale action inside the target: combat, social encounters, infiltration, hacking, Veil-Touched detection, toward an objective (sabotage, intelligence, rescue, retrieval). The longest phase, 60 to 180 minutes across multiple scenes. Resolves to the objective achieved (Phase 3), failed, or capture.
- **Phase 3, The Escape.** Leave under heavy pursuit, usually back at ship scale: maneuver under pressure, evasion, ship combat (often favorable if Phase 2 disabled key defenses), Veil-jump, Heat management. 30 to 60 minutes. Resolves to a jump and safety, destruction, capture (a future rescue arc), or escape at a cost (a crew member, a system, a new Quirk, a tanked Reputation).

A full Set-Piece is a session at minimum, sometimes two or three. Give the crew **breaths** between phases, a quiet scene before disembarking, a moment of cover to talk, a last word as the engines scream, so the scenario satisfies narratively as well as mechanically. Typical shapes: a Volkov capital raid (stolen transponder, weapons bay, jump while batteries swing); an Imperial fortress assault; a Vault retrieval against Precursor defenses; a rescue from a Veil-anomaly's dream-like spaces.

CLASS ACTIONS IN SHIP COMBAT

The ship's Spotlight is split among the players: each crew member spends their own Spotlight on a station action (Pilot, Gunner, Engineer, and so on) the way they would spend it on a personal action. A ship is not a single character that the players take turns puppeting; it is a shared scene in which each player acts. (The Keeper runs each **enemy** ship the other way, as one entity with one block of actions, so the spotlight math stays in the crew's favor and the table moves quickly.)

That split is what makes class identity matter at ship scale. A station tells you *which console* you are at; your class tells you *what only you can do there*. Each class below has a concrete ship action it can take by spending its Spotlight, paying its own path resource (Stress for everyone, plus Hope or Effort where noted). None of these is "you shoot better." Each one changes the state of the battle the way the drone rules let a character reach through a machine and change something.

A character may take their class action from any station they are crewing, in place of that station's ordinary action for the round, unless the entry says otherwise.

- **Soldier, Fire Discipline (mark 1 Stress).** You call the shot for the whole gunline. Until the start of your next Spotlight, every Gunner aboard treats the enemy's targeted arc as one step weaker (Armor Slots count as 2 lower against your crew's fire), and the first Hull hit each round adds **your character Proficiency** to its naval damage before applying the firing ship's **Mount Rating**. You are coordinating fire, not firing better yourself.
- **Pilot, Thread the Needle (mark 1 Stress, or 1 Stress + 1 Hope/Effort for the greater version).** Spend your maneuver to put the ship somewhere it should not fit. The basic version cancels one enemy's positional Advantage and denies them their arc this round. The greater version moves you to *any* arc of the target regardless of range-band spacing, and the next Gunner to fire on it this round ignores its shield regeneration.
- **Engineer, Overclock a System (mark 1 Stress + take 2 Heat).** Reach into one subsystem and push it past spec for the round. Choose one: Weapons (one mount fires twice this round), Drives (the ship moves two bands instead of one, ignoring Heat from the maneuver), Shields (one arc cannot be reduced below half this round), or Sensors (every crew attack this round ignores Disadvantage from cover, range, or storm). The system takes 1 Integrity at end of round, win or lose: power has a price.
- **Scholar, Read the Enemy (mark 1 Stress).** You analyze the hostile ship as a system. Ask the Keeper one true thing about it: its lowest arc, its Heat state, a damaged subsystem, the trigger of its next move, or the weak point in its hull. Until your next Spotlight, the whole crew has Advantage on rolls that act on what you found. Stacks with a Gunner's Sensor Lock rather than replacing it.
- **Scoundrel, Cut the Cord (mark 1 Stress, requires a sensor or comms link to the target, or boarding access).** You sabotage rather than shoot. Pick an enemy subsystem within reach (Sensors, Comms, Weapons mount, or Drives) and force a contested Finesse roll against the ship's Evasion; on a success that system drops 1 Integrity and is jammed (counts as offline) until the enemy spends an action to clear it. The most dangerous gun on the field is the one that cannot fire.
- **Diplomat, Take the Bridge (mark 1 Stress; the Captain's chair, not a console).** You bend the engagement with words and nerve. Choose one: open a channel and force the enemy commander into a Reaction Roll against your Presence (on a failure they hesitate, losing one action next round), or steady your own crew so that every PC clears 1 Stress and may immediately reposition one band. A Set-Piece can be won at the negotiating table; this is how the table reaches it.

- **Explorer, Find the Angle (mark 1 Stress).** You read the battlespace itself, the debris field, the gravity well, the storm cell, the dead ship to hide behind. Name a feature of the scene and turn it into a tactical asset: cover that adds +2 Ship Evasion for a round, a hazard the enemy must roll to avoid, or a slingshot that grants the Pilot a free extra band of movement. In an empty starfield, you find the one rock that matters.
- **Mystic, Veil-Sight (mark 1 Stress + 1 Hope).** You act through the substrate, not the hull. Choose one: foresee the enemy's next move (the Keeper tells you their intended action; your crew gets Advantage to counter it), reach the enemy crew's nerves directly (the enemy ship takes Neural damage that bypasses its shield array entirely, 2d8 + your Spellcast trait), or steady a failing system with will alone (restore 1 Integrity to a friendly system at range, no tools needed). Only the Veil-Touched can do any of this.
- **Vanguard, Breach and Board (mark 1 Stress).** You are built for the moment the hulls touch. When boarding, you cross first and alone without the usual entry delay, and the boarding party takes no counterattack on the round you breach. At ship scale before boarding, you may instead overcharge a single strike: the next friendly weapon to hit treats its damage as one severity band higher. You end fights by closing the distance no one else will.

A coordinated crew assigns stations *and* class actions deliberately: the Engineer overlocking the guns the Soldier is coordinating while the Scholar feeds both the enemy's weak arc and the Pilot threads to reach it. A crew of identical stats standing at the same consoles, taking only the default station actions, is markedly less effective, because the default actions are the floor, and the class actions are the game.

THE "I NEED AN IDEA!" PROTOCOL

Sometimes, usually at a Set-Piece climax, the crew runs out of options: the ship is dead in the water, the enemy is bearing down, and the numbers say they are finished. The protocol is not a rule but a *moment* the Keeper invites when conventional play has reached its end.

Trigger when the ship is at Hull 0 with no repair that saves it, the enemy is one round from a kill, the Escape offers only the worst outcomes, or the crew is out of Hope and Fear. The Keeper says: *"The numbers say you're finished. But this is Veilfarers, and you're a crew. So: I need an idea. The best idea wins. Talk."*

Brainstorm for 3 to 8 minutes under a soft time limit ("the cannon is glowing, talk fast"). The crew throws out options and builds on each other; the Keeper listens without judging, then picks the proposal that best combines characterization, tactical sense, and narrative weight.

Resolve dramatically rather than with a normal roll: success is heightened, or failure is averted at a cost (Stress, a Quirk, lost gear, sacrificed Reputation), and the moment becomes campaign-defining. *Example:* the *Vagrant Star* sits at Hull 0 with a Volkov cruiser's cannon glowing. The Pilot rigs the bridge oxygen tank as a one-shot booster, the Engineer wires it (venting all atmosphere, the crew already in vac suits), the Mystic reads the cruiser's targeting angle in real time, and the ship blasts past the killing arc with millimeters to spare, alive, but bleeding air across three decks and needing six hours of repair. The crew tells that story for the rest of the campaign.

Use it sparingly, once or twice a campaign, in genuine crisis. It formalizes what good Keepers already do, gives the table permission to step outside the dice for one scene, and rewards characterization over optimization. Overused, the dice stop meaning anything.

A WORKED EXAMPLE: THE VAGRANT STAR VS THE CRIMSON SKARRH

The crew of the *Vagrant Star* (Tier 2 Cargo Hauler: Hull 14, Armor Slots 4/arc, Heat Cap 10, Base Evasion 12, Evasion 14 with Maren's +2 Instinct, Light Plasma and Light Slug Cannon, Combat drive) is run down by the pirate *Crimson Skarrh* (Tier 2 Corvette: Hull 22, Armor Slots 6/arc, Heat Cap 12, Base Evasion 12, Pulse Cannon and Light Missile, Combat drive). Stations: Maren (Pilot), Vell (Engineer), Tovel (Mystic on Sensors), Saber (Gunner).

Round 1. Maren calls the plan, then runs an **Aggressive Approach** (Instinct 15 vs DC 10: Success), closing to Engagement, prow forward, Evasion 13 this round, Gunner +1. Saber fires the **Light Plasma** (16 vs Evasion 12: hit). Its printed 2d10 rolls 14; MR *2 makes 28. The Skarrh's Fore arc absorbs 6, leaving 22 into Hull: the 21 to 30 band removes 4 Hull, so the Skarrh falls to 18. Vell **Cools Systems** (-3 Heat, netting the round's buildup to 0). Tovel lands a **Sensor Lock** (Knowledge 14 vs DC 10), granting Advantage on Saber's next shot. The pirate **Opens Range** to Standard and fails its Instinct Roll, DC 15 attempt to break the pending lock. It then lands a Pulse Cannon hit: printed 2d8+1 rolls 10, MR *2 makes 20; 4 Slots absorb damage and 16 reaches Hull, removing 3 Hull and leaving the *Vagrant Star* at 11. At end of round, both depleted Fore arcs regenerate 2 Armor Slots.

Round 2. The Lock grants Advantage and is spent when Saber fires. The plasma **Crits** on matched 9s: its printed dice double to 4d10 and roll 24; MR *2 makes 48. The regenerated Fore arc absorbs 2, leaving 46 into Hull: 6 Hull after Overkill, and the Critical also costs the Skarrh's Sensor Array 1 Integrity. Saber gains 1 Hope and clears 1 Stress. The Skarrh drops to Hull 12. The pirate overcommits an **Aggressive Approach (Failure with Fear)**, exposing its Port arc, then lands a guided missile: printed 3d6+1 rolls 14, MR *2 makes 28; the regenerated Fore arc absorbs 2 and 26 reaches Hull, removing 4 Hull and leaving the *Vagrant Star* at 7. Both arcs regenerate again at end of round.

From here the exposed Port arc invites a Flanking run, the Skarrh's disengage-and-jump misfires under fire, and the pirate captain eventually hails a surrender, which Maren accepts. The fight took about thirty minutes at the table and gave every crew member something to do that fed the others. The math is simple; the **roles** are what make it dramatic, and the campaign now has a captured corvette to deal with.

CLOSING: THE VOID PAYS IN HULLS

Starship combat is a signature mode, not a routine one: five or six memorable battles across a campaign is using it well. Use it sparingly, when the fiction demands it, and spend the rest earning the moment two ships meet across half a system and the crew has to decide what kind of captain they are.

CHAPTER 18

DOMAIN MECHANICS

"Every Domain Power you wield is the universe agreeing, briefly, to do something for you. The cost you pay is real. The agreement is also real. Most of the practice of being Awakened is learning to feel the difference."

Master Mystic Tova Marek, Spire of Verita

At a glance. Awakened characters own a Vault of Domain Powers and keep an active Loadout (5 at Tier 1, rising to 7). Each Power is an Ability (passive or reactive) or a Spell (active, costing Hope and sometimes Stress); to use a Vaulted Power you Recall it into the Loadout. Powers belong to seven Domains (Social, Void, Kinetic, Neural, Synthesis, Tech, Lux), and each Class normally begins with access to two of them. This chapter is the

framework; the catalog of all 147 Powers is Chapter 19.

Domain Mechanics normally belong to the Awakened. Sleeping characters have no Vault, Loadout, or standard Spellcast Procedure; they fill the same dramatic role with their **Effort Features and Resolve Moves** (Chapter 7). The single exception is the Sleeping Mystic. Their **Uncanny Archive** unlocks complete Domain levels through Study Projects, and **Uncanny Power** reproduces one researched Power as a full Action by spending Resolve, generating Fear, passing an access roll, and then making a Knowledge Spellcast Roll against **DC = 10 + the chosen Power's Level**, meaning the level of its unlocked Domain package. They ignore the Power's Hope cost but retain its other printed costs and restrictions. On a Critical Success, the Resolve spent on that invocation is regained. If your character is Sleeping and not a Mystic, skim this chapter for awareness. If your character is Awakened or a Sleeping Mystic, read it carefully; the catalog will not make sense without it.

THE DOMAIN PAIR

Every Awakened character begins with **two Domains**, fixed by their Class (Chapter 6) and permanent for the campaign. There are seven Domains in all; the catalog holds 21 Powers in each, 147 in total. The standard limit is two. The single Core exception is **Multiclass** (Chapter 11): an Awakened multiclass may activate exactly one genuinely new third Domain from the secondary Class. A Sleeping multiclass records that Domain as Dormant and gains no access to it unless the character later Awakens through the Chapter 7 procedure. The Mystic and Vanguard retain their bounded Class-specific flexibility below.

Within the Pair, the options are wide. A Tier 3 character may own 15 to 25 Powers and keep 7 ready; the texture of Awakened play is choosing which to acquire and which to carry. Each Domain has a distinct feel and a visual identity (a color and an ornament) that recur on the Power cards.

THE DOMAIN PAIR

DOMAIN	MARK	WHAT IT TOUCHES
Social	rose-pink, the open Eye	minds and the bonds between them: persuasion, empathy, intention
Void	black, the Spiral	the gaps: stealth, brief absence, displacement
Kinetic	crimson, the Cascade	motion, force, impact, precision
Neural	purple, the Lattice	cognition, memory, perception, the edge of the self
Synthesis	green, the Helix	biology: healing, growth, transformation
Tech	teal, the Core	the seam between substrate and machine
Lux	gold, the Sun	light, energy, revelation, declared presence

The full character of each Domain is drawn out in Chapter 19; narrate your Powers in the register of their Domain's color and mark.

GEAR, THE DOMAIN VOICE (OPTIONAL ATMOSPHERIC RULE). ASK EACH AWAKENED PLAYER TO DECIDE, AT CREATION, WHAT THEIR TWO DOMAINS *FEEL* LIKE FROM THE INSIDE, LUX AS "A CLEAR NOTE,"

KINETIC AS "A TIGHTENING IN THE SPINE." NON-MECHANICAL, BUT A PLAYER WHO HAS DECIDED IN ADVANCE NARRATES WITH MORE TEXTURE. CHEAP, AND THE PAYOFF AT THE TABLE IS LARGE.

LOADOUT AND VAULT

At any moment an Awakened character's Powers split in two. The **Loadout** is what is currently equipped and ready to fire through the Spellcast Procedure. The **Vault** is everything else they own: known and trained, but not prepared, and unusable until **Recalled** into the Loadout (displacing something).

The split is the central tactical lever of Awakened play. It forces meaningful choices about what the character is *prepared for*, the Mystic who loads five conversation Powers is making a statement that the surprise firefight will test, and it lets a repertoire grow without making the character good at everything at once. A Sleeping character's competencies are always available; an Awakened character's are always *partially* available, with the partition under the player's control and the cost of changing it real.

Loadout capacity is set by Tier and is hard:

LOADOUT AND VAULT

TIER	LEVELS	LOADOUT
Tier 1	1-4	5 Powers
Tier 2	5-7	6 Powers
Tier 3	8-10	7 Powers

There are no positional rules within the Loadout (any split across your two Domains is fine), and the Vault has no cap, though the acquisition rate (Chapter 12) keeps most Tier 3 characters under 25 to 30 Powers.

ACQUIRING DOMAIN POWERS

A character begins with a Starter Loadout set by Class (2 Level 1 Powers; Chapter 6), leaving slots to fill. Powers are gained through:

- **Advancement.** Spending an Advancement Slot on Option 8, New Power (Chapter 12) grants one new Power from an accessible Domain, within your Tier; it enters the Vault, ready to Recall. This is one option among several each level, not an automatic grant.
- **Story rewards.** A printed adventure or campaign milestone may grant a named Power the character is eligible to use. Story rewards never bypass Domain, Tier, level, Loadout, or access requirements unless the reward itself states a complete exception.
- **Training.** Mentors and Houses teach specific Powers over downtime, paid in coin, favor, or service (Chapter 12).
- **Veil Echoes.** An adventure may explicitly award one named Power after a character survives its printed Veil Storm or Memory Wake trigger. Without that printed reward, survival alone grants no Power.

Acquired Powers are permanent; they are not lost in play short of an extreme story event.

RECALL: SWAPPING POWERS IN PLAY

Moving a Power between Vault and Loadout costs more the closer you are to danger.

WHEN	RECALL COST
Long Rest	Free; reorganize your Loadout freely.
Short Rest	Pay each Power's printed Recall Cost in Stress.
Active scene	Use an Action, pay the Power's printed Recall Cost in Stress, and spend 1 Hope.
Self-Recalling Power	Pay the Power's activation cost and printed Recall Cost in Stress; resolve it directly from the Vault.

The structure rewards good prediction without punishing improvisation: arrive prepared and pay nothing; get surprised and you can still adapt mid-scene, at a price. *Self-Recalling* Powers (flagged in Chapter 19) are reactive abilities meant to be there exactly when needed.

THE ANATOMY OF A POWER CARD

Every Power in Chapter 19 uses the same card. Its fields:

- **Name, Domain, Level, Tier.** Title; one of the seven Domains (color-coded); its Domain Level; and the minimum character Tier to acquire it.

- **Type.** A Power is a **Spell** (resolved by a Spellcast Roll, and able to fail) or an **Ability** (resolves automatically without a Spellcast Roll). Some Abilities are **Passives** (always on) or **Reactions** (trigger on another event). A Spellcast Power names its Trait and DC; an Ability resolves without a roll.
- **Cost.** Usually Hope, sometimes Stress, sometimes a Recall trigger or a conditional amount.
- **Trigger** (Reactions only), **Effect**, and **Spellcast Roll** if required (the Trait, the DC, and what each outcome means).
- **Tags** (*Veil, Mental, Fire, Visible*, and so on) for interaction rules, plus optional flavor text.

THE SPELLCAST PROCEDURE

Activating a Power runs the same six steps: **declare** (Power, intent, target); **check eligibility** (in Loadout or Self-Recalling, resources on hand, Type fits the moment); **pay costs** (before the roll, non-refundable even on a miss); **make the Spellcast Roll** if required (a normal Duality Roll with the Power's Trait against a DC; Chapter 9); **apply the effect**; and **handle any Persistent** that lingers.

QUICK PROCEDURE - ACTIVATING A POWER

STEP	WHAT HAPPENS
1. Declare	Name the Power, your intent, and the target.
2. Eligibility	It must be in your Loadout (or be <i>Self-Recalling</i>), you must hold the resources, and the Type must fit the moment.
3. Pay costs	Hope, Stress, or Recall - paid now, before any dice , and never refunded.
4. Spellcast Roll	Only if the card calls for one. Duality Roll + the card's Trait vs the card's DC. If the card names no Trait, use your Class's Spellcast Trait.
5. Apply the effect	Read the outcome off the card. Hope and Fear resolve as on any Duality Roll.
6. Persistent?	If the effect lingers, it holds a Loadout slot until it ends, and pays any upkeep the card lists.

An **Automatic** Power has no step 4: it cannot crit and cannot fail. You pay, and it happens.

The Spellcast Roll is an ordinary Duality Roll in every way (doubles crit, Hope-versus-Fear flavors the outcome, and it pays out normally - Hope for an Awakened caster; a Sleeping Mystic using *Uncanny Power* marks the Effort Track instead, per Chapter 7); it simply uses the Trait the card names and triggers a defined effect. Powers without a roll cannot crit or fail: the cost is paid and the effect happens. A normally roll-free Power remains roll-free. An adopted environment or defense may modify it only through a complete printed rule that states its trigger and effect; the Keeper never adds an improvised Spellcast Roll.

GEAR: SUBSTRATE ECHO (OPTIONAL MODULE). Adopt this module before the session and tell the players. When a Spellcast Roll has Failure with Fear and its Power prints no consequence for that result, the caster marks 1 Stress as that Roll's single consequence. Describe a brief sensory echo with no additional modifier. If the Power already prints a consequence, use that consequence and add no Substrate Echo. This module never adds Disadvantage, a second consequence, or an improvised Memory Wake.

RESOURCE COSTS

Powers cost **Hope** (most common; 1 to 3, occasionally more, the explicit translation of your agency budget into substrate-action), **Stress** (on Powers that tax the body, and unusable while Overwhelmed), or **Recall** (a few strong Powers consume their own preparation and must be re-equipped). Some costs are **conditional**, scaling with the situation as the card states. Balanced well, this produces the rhythm of Awakened play: spend under pressure, feel the Stress accumulate, treat rests as real checkpoints, and weigh *what to spend now against what you may need later*.

PERSISTENT EFFECTS, STACKING, AND INTERACTIONS

A **Persistent** runs until its duration ends, the character ends it, or it is dispelled, and it holds a Loadout slot the whole time (two active Persistents leave a five-slot character three working slots). Some carry **upkeep** (typically 1 Stress per scene or 1 Hope per round); miss it and the effect ends.

The same Power does not **stack** with itself (a second use just refreshes duration); different Powers with similar effects do stack unless a card says otherwise. **Tag interactions** are where it gets interesting: a *Mental* effect can be canceled by a Power that cancels *Mental*; a *Veil*-tagged target can take extra from a Power that amplifies *Veil*. The catalog notes interactions per card, and the glossary (Appendix B) summarizes the common ones. Genuine conflicts resolve by specificity and narrative logic: the fiction wins, and the table renegotiates the rules where it must.

SUBCLASS DOMAINS AND SPECIAL ACCESS

Two Classes have a variable second Domain (full detail in Chapter 6):

- **The Mystic** has **Neural** plus a **Veil Alignment** chosen at creation: **Lux** (defense, illumination, anti-Void) or **Void** (stealth, displacement, probability). Only the active alignment's Powers can be equipped. At each Tier threshold a Mystic may switch alignment; the previous alignment's Powers go dormant and the new alignment opens up to current level. Switching is a substantive event in the fiction, not a casual respec.
- **The Vanguard** has **Neural** plus a branch fixed at creation: **Ghost Blade** (Void), **Kinetic Echo** (Kinetic), or **Pure Conduit** (Lux). The branch does not change across the campaign.

Every other Awakened Class keeps two fixed Domains for the whole arc.

THE SPELLCAST TRAIT

Each Class has a default **Spellcast Trait**, used when a Power calls for a roll without naming one. It is the Class's signature mode of meeting the substrate.

CLASS	DOMAINS	SPELLCAST TRAIT
Soldier	Kinetic & Synthesis	Strength
Engineer	Tech & Synthesis	Knowledge
Explorer	Synthesis & Lux	Instinct
Pilot	Void & Tech	Instinct
Scoundrel	Social & Void	Finesse
Mystic	Neural & Lux or Void	Instinct
Scholar	Tech & Social	Knowledge
Vanguard	Neural & branch	Presence
Diplomat	Social & Lux	Presence

A Power may allow a different Trait if its card says so (Trait-flexible Powers, flagged in Chapter 19, let the caster choose at activation).

COMMON QUESTIONS

- **Use a Power I'm not Loadouted with?** No, that is the point of the split, except a Self-Recalling Power, used from the Vault for an extra Stress.
- **Abort after seeing the dice?** Yes; the cost is still spent, but the effect is not applied. A legitimate way to dodge an unwanted Success with Fear.
- **What if a Persistent's user is taken out?** It ends immediately (the slot frees on recovery), unless the card gives an alternate end-condition.
- **Out of Hope mid-cast?** The Power never activates (costs are checked before the roll); declare a different action instead, you do not lose the turn.
- **Does a Spellcast Roll make Hope and Fear?** Yes, like any Duality Roll, on top of the Power's effect.
- **Refuse a Reaction whose trigger fired?** Yes; an unused Reaction costs nothing.

GEAR, POWER RESTRAINT AS ROLEPLAY (RECOMMENDED OPTIONAL). THE SYSTEM NEVER FORCES A CHARACTER TO USE A POWER THEY ARE EQUIPPED WITH. A PLAYER WHO DECIDES THEIR CHARACTER WILL *NOT* CROSS INTO A MIND, OR RESHAPE A BODY, OR ANNOUNCE THEMSELVES WITH LIGHT, IS ROLEPLAYING THE CONSTRAINT BUILT INTO THE POWER. SOME TABLES FORMALIZE A "RELUCTANT" TAG: 1 EXTRA STRESS TO ACT AGAINST THE CHARACTER'S OWN VALUES. LIGHTWEIGHT, AND RICH.

A WORKED EXAMPLE

Doctor Tibalt is an Awakened Mystic, Veil Alignment **Lux**, at Tier 2: Proficiency 3, Presence +2, three Hope in hand and two Stress marked. A Veil-touched thing is coming down the loading bay toward the crew.

Declare. Tibalt calls *Stellar Lance* and names the creature. **Eligibility:** the Power is Lux, his active alignment, and it is in his Loadout; he holds the Hope; it is an Action and it is his Spotlight. **Pay costs:** 1

Hope, spent now, 3 down to 2 - and gone whether or not the roll lands.

Spellcast Roll. Here is the step tables get wrong. Tibalt is a Mystic, so his Class's Spellcast Trait is *Instinct* - but the card names **Presence**, and the card wins. He rolls 2d12 + Presence (+2): Hope die 9, Fear die 6, total 15, plus 2 is **17** against the card's DC 15. Hope led, so this is a **Success with Hope**.

Apply the effect. *Stellar Lance* deals (Proficiency)×d8, so at Proficiency 3 that is **3d8** Energy damage with the Radiant tag, resolved against the creature's thresholds like any other hit. Tibalt is Tier 2, so the card's Tier 2+ clause also fires: the creature is **Illuminated** until the end of his next Spotlight, unable to benefit from cover or stealth, and the next attack against it has Advantage. And because Hope led, Tibalt takes **1 Hope** back - he is at **3** again, having spent one and earned one. **Persistent?** None. The Lance strikes and is over; nothing holds a slot.

Two exchanges later the thing answers with a Neural shriek. Tibalt triggers *Mind Shield*, a Neural **Reaction** costing **1 Stress** and no Hope at all. There is no step 4 - and the reason is worth being exact about. It is not that *Mind Shield* is an Ability rather than a Spell; some Abilities do name a Trait and a DC. It is that this card names **neither**, which makes its Resolution *Automatic* rather than *Spellcast*. So there is no roll, no crit, and no failure. He marks his third Stress, reduces the incoming Neural damage by (Proficiency)×d6, and takes Advantage on the roll to resist the effect. The cost was paid; the effect simply happened.

Rule Take-Away: Costs leave your sheet *before* the dice leave your hand, and a failed Spellcast does not refund them. When a card names its own Trait, that Trait overrides your Class's default - Tibalt's Class says *Instinct*, *Stellar Lance* says *Presence*, so he rolls *Presence*. And a Power with no Spellcast Roll can neither crit nor fail: you pay, and it resolves.

WHAT COMES NEXT

This chapter is the framework: Loadout, Vault, Recall, the Spellcast Procedure, costs, and interactions. The 147 Powers themselves are in **Chapter 19**, sorted by Domain and Tier in the card format described above. Awakened players should read their two Domains there and build a Loadout for the session they expect; Keepers should know this framework cold and refer to the catalog when a specific Power is declared. The framework is small and everyone should know it; the catalog is large and no one needs to memorize it.

The substrate is waiting. Your interface with it is yours to shape.

CHAPTER 19

THE CATALOG OF POWERS

"Every Power you wield is a small argument with the universe. Sometimes the universe agrees. Sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes it agrees and then changes its mind halfway through. The catalog below is not a list of

guarantees. It is a list of conversations you may attempt."

Master Mystic Tova Marek, Spire of Verita, introduction to her Annotated Catalog

HOW TO READ THIS CHAPTER

This chapter is the **reference catalog** of every Domain Power available to Awakened characters in the base game. Chapter 18 explained how Powers work mechanically, Loadout, Vault, Spellcast Procedure, costs, scaling. This chapter is the *content* that fills those mechanics: **147 individual Powers organized by Domain and Level, with 21 Powers per Domain.**

The chapter is dense. It is meant to be **referenced**, not read straight through. Most players will read the entries for their two accessible Domains carefully, skim the others, and return as needed during play and advancement.

CARD FORMAT

Each Power is presented as a Domain Card with the metadata in the stat line:

Power Name Type / Cost / DC (Trait) / RC

Description of mechanical effect.

Field meanings:

- **Type:** *Ability* (reliable, pays cost directly) or *Spell* (requires Spellcast Roll, can backfire). Some Abilities are *Passives* (always-on) or *Reactions* (trigger off another event).
- **Cost:** Hope, Stress, or both, paid on activation. Some powers have *Once per session/long rest/story arc/campaign* limits.
- **DC and Trait:** For Spells, the Spellcast Roll difficulty and the Trait added to the roll. A Spellcast Roll is a normal Duality Roll using that Trait; it does not add character Level unless a specific Power says so.
- **RC:** Recall Cost, Stress paid to swap this card from Vault to Loadout mid-scene. Free during Long Rest.

LEVEL STRUCTURE

Powers are organized by **Level (1-10)**, with three Tier groupings plus Mythic:

- **Tier 1** Levels 1-3 (foundational mastery, 9 Powers per Domain)
- **Tier 2** Levels 4-6 (advanced applications, 6 Powers per Domain)
- **Tier 3** Levels 7-9 (legendary mastery, 4 Powers per Domain)
- **Mythic** Level 10 (reality-shaping, once-per-campaign, 2 Powers per Domain)

Total: **21 Powers per Domain × 7 Domains = 147 Powers.**

A character can only learn a Power whose Level is ≤ their current character Level. Multiclass characters access third-Domain Powers at half-level scaling (Chapter 11).

A NOTE ON SLEEPING USE

Sleeping characters do not use Domain Powers. Their parallel system, Vocations and Specialties, is detailed in Chapter 7. The catalog below applies only to Awakened characters and to specific multiclass interactions described in Chapter 11.

DOMAIN CARD INDEX

DOMAIN	CARD LABEL	TAGLINE	THEME
Tech	TECH	<i>The Ghost in the Machine</i>	Teal
Synthesis	SYNTHESIS	<i>The Forged and Found</i>	Green
Social	SOCIAL	<i>The Heart and the Crowd</i>	Pink
Neural	MIND	<i>The Mind's Unseen Ocean</i>	Purple
Kinetic	KINETIC	<i>The Master of Motion</i>	Red
Void	VOID	<i>The Threads of Probability</i>	Black
Lux	LIGHT	<i>The Hope Frequency</i>	Gold

TECH DOMAIN

Card label **TECH**. The teal banner. Tech Powers are the art of understanding, manipulating, and breaking technology. In a galaxy haunted by the technological ghost of the Great Silence, Tech masters are the new wizards, breathing life into dead machines, silencing vigilant security systems, building wonders from scrap.

LEVEL 1: TIER 1

Drone Whisper Spell / 1 Hope / DC 10 (Knowledge) / RC 0

Spend 1 Hope and make a Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 10 for civilian units, DC 15 for military units, or DC 20 for advanced AIs). On a success, take control of one Tier 1-2 mechanical unit within Close range for 1 hour. The unit follows your instructions within its normal technical capabilities.

On Success with Hope, the duration extends to 4 hours and the unit may immediately take one extra ordinary Action from its own stat block. It gains no new capability and cannot override a conscious Synthetic or player-controlled unit.

On a failure, the attempt is detected. The unit's owner receives an unauthorized-access alert and the Keeper gains 1 Fear, subject to the hard maximum of 12.

This power cannot be used against a conscious Synthetic without that character's explicit consent.

Quantum Firewall Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Knowledge) / RC 1

Spend 1 Hope and make a Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 15). On a success, touch a device or network and install an active cryptographic defense layer. Any attempt to hack that system must exceed the result of your Knowledge roll instead of the system's

normal DC. The protection lasts until the end of the scene or for 1 hour, whichever is shorter.

On a Success with Hope, the system also alerts you silently whenever someone attempts access and reveals the attempt's point of origin.

On a failure, the protection fails and leaves a detectable signature. An Inspector with appropriate technical knowledge can identify the failed attempt with a Knowledge roll against DC 10.

System Jackknife Spell / 1 Hope / DC 10 (Knowledge) / RC 0

Spend 1 Hope. Choose one electronic system within Close range. Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 10/15/20 -Simple/Complex/Military). Success: You gain control of the system for 10 minutes, able to use its standard functions. On a Success with Hope: You can issue one simple, permanent command that the system will execute even after the duration ends (e.g., lock a door, send a message, activate an alarm).

LEVEL 2: TIER 1

Data Ghost Spell / 1 Stress / DC 15 (Knowledge) / RC 1

Mark 1 Stress. Choose a security system you interacted with in the last hour. Make a Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 15). Success: You erase all records of your interaction within the last scene. On a Success with Hope: You can plant

subtle but convincing false evidence that points suspicion towards a rival individual or faction.

Emergency Repair Ability / 1 Stress / - / RC 1

Mark 1 Stress. Touch a Drone, Vehicle, or Synthetic. The target recovers 1d8 + Knowledge HP. Efficiency: If the natural d8 result is 8, the Stress cost is refunded immediately.

LEVEL 3: TIER 1

Digital Cascade Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Knowledge) / RC 2

Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 15). You unleash a virus through one connected local network across a Very Far area for 1 hour. Choose one effect: disable its security systems; make its Tier 1-2 gear go offline after its next use until an Action clears it; or copy one specific data set, which requires a separate Knowledge Roll to sort. On failure, the system traces the virus, granting Advantage on Rolls made to track or identify you for 24 hours.

Rapid Fabrication Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Knowledge) / RC 1

Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 15). You fabricate simple, functional Tier 1 tech (tools, comms, weapons dealing (Proficiency)×d6 damage) in 10 minutes. The item lasts for one scene. On a Success with Hope: The creation is permanent and can be up to Tier 2 quality.

LEVEL 4: TIER 2

AI Symbiosis Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Knowledge) / RC 2

Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 15). You partner your mind with an intelligent system (Tier 3-4 AI/ship computer) for one scene. You gain remote access to its functions and data, and Advantage on all Knowledge Rolls related to that system's domain. Failure: The AI rejects you, locking you out and treating you as a hostile entity for 1d6 rounds.

System Repair Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Knowledge) / RC 2

Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 15). Over 1 hour, restore a ship system at 0 Integrity. The system functions normally for 24 hours. On a Success with Hope, the repair is permanent. This is a Long-Term Project if attempted during Downtime.

LEVEL 5: TIER 2

Adaptive Protocol Spell / 2 Hope / DC 20 (Knowledge) / RC 3

Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 20). You permanently upgrade one allied piece of Tier 1-3 gear, granting it one Armor or Weapon Feature (for example, *Resilient*, *Flexible*, or *Armor Piercing*). The item cannot gain this benefit again. Failure: The gear suffers a temporary malfunction lasting until your next rest, and the owner Marks 1 Stress.

Network Dominion Spell / 2 Hope / DC 20 (Knowledge) / RC 3

Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 20). Cost: 2 Hope. For one scene, you become the master of a star system's entire network infrastructure. You can monitor comms, control utility functions, and access public databases. Failure: You leave a massive digital footprint, automatically reducing your Reputation by 1 with the system's dominant faction.

LEVEL 6: TIER 2

Consciousness Transfer Spell / 2 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 20 (Knowledge) / RC 3

Spend 2 Hope and mark 1 Stress, then make a Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 20). On a success, transfer your consciousness into a willing or inactive mind within Close range, such as a powered-down android, an unowned AI, or an unconscious body. The transfer lasts for no more than one scene.

While transferred, you can:

- Perceive through the host's senses.
- Communicate using the host's voice.
- Use Social and Neural Domain Powers as though you were physically present at the host's location.

While transferred, you cannot:

- Use Kinetic, Tech, or Synthesis Domain Powers, which require your physical body.
- Move beyond the host body's physical capabilities.
- Access the host's memories or technical abilities.

Your physical body remains unconscious and defenseless. Each time it takes damage during the transfer, mark 1 Stress. If your body is reduced to 0 HP, the transfer ends immediately and you enter Dying under the normal procedure, including the player's voluntary Death Move choice.

If the host dies or becomes incapacitated, the transfer ends and you mark 2 additional Stress when you return.

On a failure, the attempt destabilizes your mind: mark 2 Stress and take Disadvantage on Knowledge and Presence Rolls until your next Long Rest.

This power can never be used on another PC without that player's explicit consent.

Invention Protocol Long-Term Project (6 segments) / - / - / RC 3

During Downtime, undertake the design and construction of a unique Tier 4 device, such as a prototype weapon, specialized augmentation, or experimental tool. Define its function, limitations, and potential side effects with the Keeper before beginning.

Progress: During each Downtime phase devoted to the project, make a Knowledge Roll, DC 15. Critical Success marks 3 segments; Success with Hope marks 2; Success with Fear marks 1 and generates Fear normally; Failure with Hope marks none; Failure with Fear marks none and the inventor chooses one acquired component to be consumed. If no component has been acquired, mark 1 Stress instead.

Completion: Gain the device's schematic and a functional prototype. The prototype has the Experimental tag and begins with Degradation 1.

At the start of any work phase, you may spend 1 Hope. If you do, the final prototype permanently retains the Experimental tag and takes twice as long to suffer its first Degradation.

LEVEL 7: TIER 3

Megascale Fabrication Spell / 2 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 20 (Knowledge) / RC 3

Once per story arc

Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 20). You and your crew undertake a Long-Term Project (6-clock) to fabricate one Tier 5 Starship Component (e.g., Reactor Core, Shield Emitter). Requires 3 Wealth Tier spent. On a Success with Hope: The component is masterfully built, granting +1 to the ship's Core Power allocation.

Systemic Shutdown Spell / 2 Hope + 2 Stress / DC 20 (Knowledge) / RC 3

Once per session

Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 20). Cost: 2 Hope + 2 Stress. For one scene, target a ship or settlement in-system. Shut down its non-essential systems, OR disable one primary ship system (Weapons, Shields, Engines) for 1d4 rounds. Failure: Power surge. Your ship loses **2 Hull directly** (bypassing Armor Slots and the severity table), OR your personal tech malfunctions for 1 hour.

LEVEL 8: TIER 3

Cascading Upgrade Spell / 3 Hope + 2 Stress / DC 25 (Knowledge) / RC 3

Once per long rest

Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 25). Cost: 3 Hope + 2 Stress. Create a surge of technological acceleration throughout Very Far range for one scene. All allied gear up to Tier 3 gains Experimental Proficiency for the duration. On failure, the Keeper gains 3 Fear, subject to the hard maximum of 12. Each character using affected technology makes a Knowledge (Tech) Reaction Roll, DC 15; on failure one device they are actively using goes offline until the end of the scene or until an Action and a Knowledge (Tech) Roll, DC 15, restores it. Unattended devices go offline for the scene.

Digital Apotheosis Spell / 5 Hope + 3 Stress / DC 25 (Knowledge) / RC 3

Once per campaign / Personal Arc culmination

Spend 5 Hope and mark 3 Stress, then make a Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 25). This action requires 10 uninterrupted minutes of preparation.

On a success, permanently transfer your consciousness into an appropriate Tier 5 AI form agreed upon with the Keeper. You gain a direct interface with any system in your current star system as a movement action, Experimental Proficiency with all Tech devices, and immunity to Physical damage while in digital form.

Your biological body enters dormancy. It does not die, but it cannot act and remains a point of physical vulnerability.

On a failure, the process fragments your consciousness. The player chooses one unlocked Domain; its Powers become unavailable until the character completes one declared personal mission lasting a story arc. Costs already paid remain spent.

This power requires the narrative consent of the entire table. The Keeper must discuss its campaign implications before resolving it.

LEVEL 9: TIER 3

Precursor Protocol Spell / 4 Stress / DC 30 (Knowledge) / RC 3

Once per story arc

Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 30). Choose one Precursor Tier technology within Very Far range and permanently awaken it. Cost: mark 4 Stress. On failure, the technology backfires: a ship at the location loses **3 Hull directly**; otherwise the current location suffers severe structural damage established before the Roll.

Quantum Command Hub Spell / 3 Hope + 3 Stress / DC 25 (Knowledge) / RC 3

Once per long rest

Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 25). Cost: 3 Hope + 3 Stress. Establish a secure, instant communication network across three star systems for one scene. Allied characters on the network gain Advantage on all Knowledge rolls. Failure: The network's opening ping alerts all hostile entities in those systems to your location.

LEVEL 10: MYTHIC

Architect of Matter Spell / 5 Hope + 5 Stress to begin / DC 30 (Knowledge) / RC 3

Once per campaign [Mythic]

Mythic. Once per campaign. Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 30). This is a Long-Term Project (12-clock) to construct one permanent Tier 5 Asset (e.g., orbital station, city dome). Cost: Requires 5 Hope and 5 Stress to begin. Failure: The project collapses, dealing 3d12 damage to you and permanently reducing your Knowledge Trait by 1.

Cosmic Engineer Spell / 5 Hope + 5 Stress / DC 30 (Knowledge) / RC 3

Once per campaign [Mythic]

Mythic. Once per campaign. Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 30). You integrate one willing organic and one willing digital life form. The composite entity gains +2 to their highest Trait and can use both sets of Domain powers. Cost: Requires 5 Hope and 5 Stress. Failure: The integration is unstable. The caster suffers Disadvantage on all rolls for 1d6 days and the composite entity is dissolved.

SYNTHESIS DOMAIN

*Card label **SYNTHESIS**. The green banner. Synthesis Powers are the mastery of the biological. Its practitioners are gardeners in the void, healers, evolutionary architects, gardeners of body and ecosystem. They mend grievous wounds with a touch, adapt a body to survive in vacuum, analyze an entire ecosystem to find the safest path.*

LEVEL 1: TIER 1

Biological Scan Spell / 1 Hope / DC 10 (Knowledge) / RC 0

Spend 1 Hope. Touch a living creature. You learn its current/max HP, and any active physical conditions. Make a Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 10). Success: You also detect any diseases, toxins, or cybernetics.

Environmental Adaptation Ability / 1 Hope / - / RC 0

Spend 1 Hope. You adapt your body to a hostile environment for one hour. You gain immunity to the harmful physical effects of vacuum, extreme temperature, toxicity, or ambient radiation.

Rapid Regeneration Ability (Reaction) / 1 Hope / - / RC 1

Trigger: You or an ally within Very Close range takes HP damage.

Reaction (Cost: 1 Hope). When you or an ally in Very Close takes damage, the target recovers 1 HP immediately. Roll 1d4: the result is the number of additional turns the effect lasts. At the start of the target's turn, they recover +1 HP. Surge: If the natural d4 result is 4, the target also clears 1 Stress immediately.

LEVEL 2: TIER 1**Ecosystem Analysis Ability / 1 Stress / - / RC 1**

Mark 1 Stress and spend 10 minutes attuning to the local bio-environment throughout a Very Far area. For the next 24 hours, gain Advantage on Instinct Rolls related to survival, navigation, or tracking within that area.

Symbiotic Bond Ability / 1 Stress / - / RC 2

Mark 1 Stress. Choose a willing ally within Close range. For 1 hour, you share a telepathic link. Once during this time, when one of you spends Hope on a roll, the other gains Advantage on their next roll.

LEVEL 3: TIER 1**Hostile Environment Mastery Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Knowledge) / RC 1**

Cost: 1 Hope. Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 15). Create a Close-range zone of perfect environment (breathable, safe temperature, radiation-free) for 8 hours, benefiting up to 10 people. On a Success with Hope, the zone also provides basic, nourishing sustenance equivalent to a Wealth Tier 1 Asset.

Symbiotic Bloom Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Instinct) / RC 1

Cost: 1 Hope. Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 15). For one scene, you bond your nervous system to the local biosphere's

dominant lifeform-type, your body briefly expressing one of its key adaptations. Choose one. On a Success with Hope, choose a second. Apex Predator: Your unarmed strikes manifest claws, tusks, or fangs of the local predator stock, dealing (Proficiency)*d6 Void damage. You gain Resistance to Cold. Aquatic Symbiote: You can breathe in any liquid medium and are not hindered by it. You gain Resistance to Fire. Lithoderm: Bark, chitin, or mineralized scales harden across your skin. You gain 2 temporary Armor Slots and Resistance to Physical damage; moving one range band consumes your Action. Sky-Adapted: Hollow bones, gas bladders, or photosynthetic membranes grant hovering flight and +2 Evasion. You gain Resistance to Lightning.

LEVEL 4: TIER 2**Adaptive Evolution Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Instinct) / RC 2**

Cost: 1 Hope. Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 15). You rapidly evolve your form for one hour. Choose two adaptations:

- *Natural Attack*: unarmed attacks deal (Proficiency)*d8 Void damage.
- *Enhanced Senses*: gain +2 Instinct.
- *Physical Adaptation*: gain +1 Evasion.
- *Metabolic Change*: remove 1 ongoing Condition.

On Success with Hope, the effect lasts for 24 hours or until you take a Long Rest.

Bio-Integration Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Knowledge) / RC 2

Cost: 1 Hope. Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 15). You merge one piece of Tier 1-3 tech with yourself or a willing ally for 1 scene. You can interface with it by touch and heal it for 1d6 HP as an action. Failure: The target's body rejects the tech, dealing a direct 1 HP physical damage and 1 Stress.

LEVEL 5: TIER 2**Cellular Reconstruction Spell / Variable / DC 15 (Knowledge) / RC 2**

Choose one mode when you activate this power:

Focused Mode - Cost: 1 Hope. Make a Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 15). On a success, a creature you touch recovers Proficiency*d10 HP

and clears 1 Stress. If the target is Dying, stabilize them before applying the healing.

On a Success with Hope, add Proficiency*d4 HP to the total healed.

Distributed Mode - Cost: 2 Hope. Make a Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 15). On a success, affect up to three creatures within Close range. Each target recovers Proficiency*d6 HP.

On a Success with Hope, each target also clears 1 Stress.

On a failure in either mode, the power has no effect and the spent resources are not recovered.

Terraforming Genesis Long-Term Project (8 segments) / 1 Stress per day of maintenance / - / RC 3

Transform a 100-meter-radius area into an environment permanently habitable by Class IV humanoid life. Define the intended environment with the Keeper before beginning.

Progress: During each session actively devoted to the project, make a Knowledge Roll, DC 15. Critical Success or Success with Hope marks 2 segments; Success with Fear marks 1 and gives the Keeper its normal Fear; Failure with Hope marks none; Failure with Fear marks none, gives normal Fear, and the project loses one day of paid maintenance, so its builder marks the stated 1 Stress again before the next attempt. No undeclared environment Feature appears.

Completion: The environment is transformed. To keep it viable, mark 1 Stress per day of fictional time. If you do not pay maintenance for three consecutive days, the environment begins to revert, a process that takes several weeks.

LEVEL 6: TIER 2**Ecosystem Creation Long-Term Project (12 segments) / 1 Stress per week of maintenance / - / RC 3**

Create a specialized Biosphere Zone with a 1-kilometer radius. Define the ecosystem's purpose with the Keeper before beginning: agricultural, medicinal, or bio-industrial.

Progress: During each active session, make an Instinct roll against DC 15. On a success, advance 1 segment. On a Success with Hope, advance 2 segments.

Completion: Once per week of fictional time, the Zone produces Wealth Tier 3 Assets such as rare resources or medicine. Maintenance costs 1 Stress per week.

On a Success with Hope on the project's final roll, the Zone becomes self-sustaining and requires no weekly maintenance while it remains free of major external disruption.

Metamorphic Mastery Spell / 2 Hope / DC 20 (Instinct) / RC 3

Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 20). You transform your physical form for 1 hour into any non-unique creature of a similar size (Threat Level 2 or lower). You gain one of its key physical Ancestry Gifts or creature features. Failure: The player describes an awkward hybrid form; for 1d6 hours it has Disadvantage on all Rolls and grants no creature Feature.

LEVEL 7: TIER 3**Biomorphic Arsenal Spell / 2 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 20 (Strength) / RC 3**
Once per session

Strength Spellcast Roll (DC 20). Cost: 2 Hope + 1 Stress. For one scene, transform into a living weapon. Choose two: - Bone Shards: Ranged attack (Far), (Proficiency)*d12 physical dmg. - Carapace Plating: gain 2 temporary Armor Slots and Resistance to Physical damage. - Toxin Glands: Unarmed attacks inflict Toxin (target is Weakened; Strength Reaction Roll (DC 15) ends). Failure: Unstable shift. You are stuck in a painful hybrid form for 1d4 rounds, suffering Disadvantage on all rolls.

Hivemind Convergence Spell / 3 Hope + 2 Stress / DC 20 (Presence) / RC 3*Once per session*

Spend 3 Hope and 2 Stress, then make a Presence Spellcast Roll, DC 20. On success, merge the consciousness of up to 6 willing creatures for one scene: each has Advantage on Rolls made to Help another target, and the group shares one pool of 1d6 temporary HP that absorbs damage before any target marks HP. On failure no merge occurs; each intended target marks 1 Stress and becomes Dazed. No new Trauma condition is created, and no target loses identity, memory, or control.

LEVEL 8: TIER 3**Bio-Weapon Architect Long-Term Project (10 segments) / Requires 5 Wealth Tier in materials / - / RC 3**

Design a custom plague or biological weapon as a Tier 5 Artifact. Before beginning, define its transmission vectors, target organisms, specific effects, and possible cure or neutralization methods with the Keeper.

Progress: During each Downtime phase devoted to the project, make a Knowledge roll against DC 20. On a success, advance 1 segment.

Completion: The biological weapon exists and functions according to the agreed parameters.

On a failure on the project's final roll, you contract a permanent biological vulnerability. You have Disadvantage on all rolls against disease and toxins until a specialized medical practitioner - such as an Engineer with Medical Technician Mastery - treats you over the course of a full story arc.

Local Life Web Spell / 3 Hope + 1 HP per participant per day / DC 25 (Presence) / RC 3*Once per long rest*

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 25). Connect all willing organic life in a Planetary/Sector size for 1 month. Damage is shared and distributed evenly. Cost: 1 HP per day from each participant. Failure: Biological chaos deals 1d6 physical damage to all connected individuals.

LEVEL 9: TIER 3**Genesis Protocol Spell / 3 Hope + 2 Stress / DC 25 (Instinct) / RC 3***Once per long rest*

Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 25). This is a Long-Term Project (8-clock) to create 1 sentient creature (Threat Level 4) or 1d4 non-sentient (Threat Level 2) loyal

to you. Failure: The creature is unstable and hostile, attacking immediately.

Global Stimulus Field Spell / 4 Hope / DC 30 (Presence) / RC 3*Once per long rest*

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 30). Cost: 4 Hope. For one round, all allied characters gain Advantage on all rolls and recover 1 Stress and 1 HP. All adversaries suffer Disadvantage on all rolls. Failure: A system-wide biological shutdown requires you to reduce your max Stress by 1 for 1d4 days.

LEVEL 10: MYTHIC**Cosmic Synthesis Spell / 5 Hope + 5 Stress / DC 30 (Instinct) / RC 3***Once per campaign [Mythic]*

Mythic. Once per campaign. Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 30). For 1 year, all willing life forms (biological, tech, cosmic) in a star system gain +1 to their Instinct and Knowledge Traits. Cost: 5 Hope + 5

Stress. Failure: You suffer Disadvantage on all rolls for 1d6 days and permanently lose 1 HP.

Universal Life Force Spell / 5 Hope / DC 30 (Presence) / RC 3*Once per session [Mythic]*

Mythic. Once per session. Spend 5 Hope and make a Presence Spellcast Roll, DC 30, then choose one target within Very Far range before rolling. **Restore:** on success clear all of the target's marked HP; on failure clear none and you take 4d12 Void damage through normal Thresholds. **Unmake:** on success the target takes 4d12 Void damage and cannot spend Armor Slots against that hit, but Thresholds, Dying, Final, and the voluntary Death Move remain normal; on failure the target takes none and you take the same 4d12 Void damage through normal Thresholds. On either failure the Keeper gains 4 Fear, subject to the hard maximum of 12. Matching dice remain a Critical Success and use the chosen mode.

SOCIAL DOMAIN

Card label SOCIAL. The rose banner. Social Powers are the true currency of power in a galaxy held together by frayed alliances. Their masters are diplomats, spies, leaders, and liars, weaving webs of influence, commanding charismatic authority, disappearing into a new identity without a trace.

LEVEL 1: TIER 1**Linguistic Patch Ability / 1 Hope / - / RC 1**

Spend 1 Hope. For one scene, you can instantly understand and speak any language, including non-verbal idioms. You gain Advantage on Presence Rolls made for social interaction where cultural context is key.

Perfect Facade Spell / 1 Hope / DC 10 (Finesse) / RC 0

Spend 1 Hope. For 1 hour, you create a perfect disguise matching any person you have observed. You gain Advantage on Presence rolls to maintain the deception. It is flawless to casual observation but can be seen through with a DC 15 Instinct Roll on close scrutiny.

Silver Tongue Ability / 1 Hope / - / RC 0

Spend 1 Hope when making a Presence Roll to persuade, deceive, or convince. You may add your Tier (1-4) to the total. Treat a Hope die showing 11 as a face of 12 for this roll; this may create a match and therefore a Critical Success, but can never create a negative result.

LEVEL 2: TIER 1**Emotional Manipulation Spell / 1 Stress / DC 15 (Presence) / RC 1**

Mark 1 Stress. Choose a target in Close range and make a contested Presence vs. Instinct roll. Success: You shift their emotional state for 10 minutes (calm anger, inspire fear, instill doubt), gaining Advantage on Presence Rolls made for social interaction against them for the duration.

Inspiring Presence Ability / 1 Stress / - / RC 2

Mark 1 Stress. All allies in Close range gain a +2 bonus to their next roll and Advantage against fear or despair effects for 10 minutes. In combat, this grants a +1 bonus to their next attack roll instead.

LEVEL 3: TIER 1**Compelling Argument Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Presence) / RC 2**

Make a Presence Spellcast Roll against DC 15 or, for a resisting target, as an opposed Roll against that target's choice of Presence or Instinct. On success, you convince an NPC to take one specific, non-harmful action that seems reasonable to them; the influence lasts 1 hour. A player character is affected only with that player's consent. On failure, the target becomes suspicious; Fear is generated only through normal dominance.

Master of Disguise Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Finesse) / RC 1

Cost: 1 Hope. Finesse Spellcast Roll (DC 15). You create a perfect disguise that can fool even close friends/family for 24 hours. On a Success with Hope: You gain one piece of the target's personal experience, which you can share to prove your identity. Failure: The disguise has obvious flaws; targets gain Advantage to see through it.

LEVEL 4: TIER 2**Rallying Cry Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Presence) / RC 2**

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 15). All allies in Close range immediately gain temporary HP equal to your Presence Trait, gain +2 to all rolls for 1 round, and are immune to fear/despair for the scene. On a Success with Hope: You also heal 1 Stress from each affected ally.

Web of Lies Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Finesse) / RC 2

Cost: 1 Hope. Finesse Spellcast Roll (DC 15). You create an elaborate deception involving up to 10 willing or unaware people for 24 hours. On a Success with Hope: Participants act as if the deception is reality, suffering Disadvantage on any Instinct Rolls made to discern the truth.

LEVEL 5: TIER 2**Legendary Reputation Spell / 2 Hope / DC 15 (Presence) / RC 3**

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 15). You create or alter a reputation for yourself across a star system for 1 month. You gain +2 Reputation with a chosen faction. On a Success with Hope: The effect becomes permanent as long as you spend 1 Stress per week to maintain it (a Downtime activity).

Social Puppeteer Spell / 2 Hope / DC 20 (Presence) / RC 2

Make a Presence Spellcast Roll against DC 20 or, for a resisting target, as an opposed Roll against that target's choice of Presence or Instinct. On success, you subtly manipulate an NPC's social relationships for 1 week, sowing discord or forging alliances. A player character's relationships change only with that player's consent. On failure, the target detects the attempt and has Advantage on Rolls made directly against you for 1 week.

LEVEL 6: TIER 2**Charismatic Authority Spell / 2 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 20 (Presence) / RC 3**

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 20). You gain recognized authority over a community/organization (Threat Level 4 or lower) for 1 month. On a Success with Hope: Your authority becomes permanent as long as you spend 1 Stress per week to maintain it (a Downtime activity).

Mass Deception Spell / 2 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 20 (Finesse) / RC 3

Finesse Spellcast Roll (DC 20). You convince a large group (up to 100 people) to believe a specific, significant lie for 1 week. Failure: The lie backfires, causing a chaotic response; the Keeper gains 2 Fear tokens, subject to the hard maximum of 12.

LEVEL 7: TIER 3**Memetic Erasure Spell / 3 Hope + 3 Stress / DC 25 (Presence) / RC 3**

Once per story arc

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 25). Cost: 3 Hope + 3 Stress. Erase one person, event, or data point from a system's public consciousness. Affects records and memories of those not directly involved. Failure: The concept goes viral. Your involvement is revealed (-2 Reputation with the dominant faction).

Perfect Masquerade Spell / 3 Hope / DC 20 (Finesse) / RC 3

Once per session

Finesse Spellcast Roll (DC 20). You completely assume someone's identity for one scene, gaining access to their social position and resources. Failure: Your original identity surfaces, and the target organization becomes permanently Distrustful (-1 RP).

LEVEL 8: TIER 3**Cult of Personality Long-Term Project (12 segments) / 1 Stress per week of maintenance / - / RC 3**

Inspire a devoted group of followers in a region or faction. Treat the group as Threat Level 3 and loyal. Define the cult's nature and limitations with the Keeper before beginning.

Progress: During each active work session, make a Presence roll against DC 20. On a success, advance 1 segment. On a Success with Hope, advance 2 segments.

Completion: The group exists and remains loyal. Maintenance costs 1 Stress per week of fictional time.

On a failure on the project's final roll, or if maintenance is unpaid for two consecutive weeks, the population becomes violently hostile toward you and you lose 2 RP with the local faction.

Mass Hysteria Spell / 3 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 25 (Presence) / RC 3

Once per session

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 25). You plant a compelling, immediate idea that spreads virally through a population (max 10,000) for one scene. Affected NPCs act toward an objective you choose. Failure: The idea mutates, causing paranoia and hostility toward you.

LEVEL 9: TIER 3**Diplomatic Redirection Spell / 3 Hope + 2 Stress / DC 30 (Presence) / RC 3**

Once per story arc

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 30). You permanently increase or decrease your Reputation by 2 with any two major factions. Requires a full Downtime session of political work. Failure: You are caught in the middle, decreasing your Reputation by 3 with both factions.

Fabricate Reality Spell / 3 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 25 (Finesse) / RC 3

Once per long rest

Finesse Spellcast Roll (DC 25). You create a localized social reality throughout a Very Far area for one scene. On a Success with Hope, the effect also appears credible to remote observers. It can alter an NPC's perception, but cannot dictate a player character's belief without that player's consent. On failure, you suffer Disadvantage on Presence Rolls made for social interaction for 1d6 days as your reputation is damaged by the attempt.

LEVEL 10: MYTHIC**Architect of Civilization Spell / 5 Hope + 5 Stress / DC 30 (Presence) / RC 3**

Once per campaign [Mythic]

Mythic. Once per campaign. Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 30). Permanently establish a new Faction (Tier 5 Asset) with +2 RP with one major faction. Cost: Requires 5 Hope and 5 Stress. Failure: The new faction is crippled by internal strife; the Keeper gains 6 Fear tokens, subject to the hard maximum of 12.

Cosmic Accord Spell / 5 Hope + 5 Stress / DC 30 (Presence) / RC 3

Once per campaign [Mythic]

Mythic. Once per campaign. Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 30). Immediately broker a lasting non-aggression pact between two rival Great Houses. Cost: Requires 5 Hope and 5 Stress. Failure: The

attempt backfires, resulting in an immediate Act of War (-5 RP) against you from one of the factions.

NEURAL DOMAIN

Card label MIND. *The deep-violet banner. Neural Powers are the direct manipulation of psionic energy, the power of the mind made manifest. Their users shield their thoughts, move objects with a glance, strike at a foe's very consciousness. They wield the raw, untamed power of the Veil itself.*

LEVEL 1: TIER 1

Mind Shield Ability (Reaction) / 1 Stress / - / RC 1

Trigger: You are targeted by a mental effect or take Neural damage.

Reaction. When targeted by a mental effect or Neural damage, you may Mark 1 Stress. Reduce incoming Neural damage by (Proficiency)*d6 and gain Advantage on any roll to resist the effect.

Telekinetic Grasp Spell / 1 Hope / DC 10 (Presence) / RC 1

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 10). For 1 minute, you extend your psychic awareness into a single object within Far range, treating it as an extension of your own kinesthetic sense. You can move it with the precision of your own hands (up to 50 lbs), manipulating controls, retrieving items,

weaving it through obstacles. As an action, you can hurl the tethered object at a target to deal (Proficiency)*d6 Void damage; the impact carries the force of focused will, not muscle.

Veil Sensitivity Ability / 1 Hope / - / RC 0

Spend 1 Hope. For one scene, you sense the surface emotions and thoughts of creatures within Close range. You gain Advantage on Instinct Rolls to detect lies and hostile intent.

LEVEL 2: TIER 1

Memory Echo Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Instinct) / RC 1

Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 15) while touching an object or location. You experience a vivid impression of the most emotionally significant event that occurred there within the last week. On a Success with Hope: You can see events up to a month old and gain Advantage on your next roll related to the information.

Synaptic Disruption Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Presence) / RC 1

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 15) targeting a creature within Close range. Success: The target is Dazed (Disadvantage on Knowledge/Instinct rolls) until the end of its next Spotlight. On a Success with Hope: The target is Stunned for 1 round instead.

LEVEL 3: TIER 1

Empathic Network Ability / 1 Hope / - / RC 2

Spend 1 Hope. Create a mental link with all willing allies in Far range for one scene. You share surface thoughts and feelings. When one member spends Hope, all others gain +1 to their next roll.

Mind-Slip Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Presence) / RC 1

Cost: 1 Hope. Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 15). Choose one target within Close range and one mode. **Compel:** an unwilling NPC makes a Presence Reaction Roll, DC 15; on failure move it one range band in a direction you choose. A player character moves only with that player's consent. **Stagger:** on a successful cast, an NPC target becomes Prone; a player target does so only with consent. **Field of Hesitation:** choose a Very Close zone within Close range for one scene. A creature attempting to cross makes a Presence Reaction Roll, DC 10; on failure it remains outside and its Action is spent. The field never dictates a player character's belief, allegiance, or other action.

LEVEL 4: TIER 2

Cordon of Will Spell / 1 Stress / DC 15 (Knowledge) / RC 1

Cost: 1 Stress. Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 15). You weave a zone of compelled stillness across a path, doorway, or threshold within Close range. A creature attempting to cross makes a Presence Reaction Roll, DC 20; on failure it cannot proceed and is Dazed. The Cordon has Major Threshold 5, Severe Threshold 10, and 10 HP against Neural damage; physical attacks pass through it. A determined hostile may bypass it by marking 1 Stress as a free effect. Reposition the Cordon one range band by spending an Action. This cannot compel a player character to cross, remain, or change allegiance.

Neural Feedback Ability (Reaction) / 1 Stress / DC 15 (Presence) / RC 2

Trigger: An adversary within Close range deals HP damage to you.

Reaction. When an adversary in Close range deals damage to you, Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 15). Success: They take (Proficiency)*d8 Void damage and must make a Instinct Reaction Roll, DC 15 or become Vulnerable until the end of their next Spotlight.

LEVEL 5: TIER 2

Mind Spike Spell / 2 Hope / DC 20 (Presence) / RC 2

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 20) against a creature in Far range. Success: Deal (Proficiency)*d12 Void damage ignoring armor. The target must make a Presence Reaction Roll, DC 15 or be Stunned until the end of its next Spotlight.

Temporal Glimpse Spell / 2 Hope / DC 15 (Instinct) / RC 2

Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 15). Cost: 2 Hope. You gain a brief vision of one likely outcome. For your next Spotlight only, you may use this vision to either gain Advantage on one roll OR force an enemy to reroll an attack against you.

LEVEL 6: TIER 2

Collective Consciousness Spell / 2 Hope / DC 20 (Presence) / RC 3

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 20). Cost: 2 Hope. You link the minds of up to 6 willing creatures in Far range for one scene. You share thoughts, senses, and experiences instantly across any distance.

Psychic Storm Spell / 2 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 20 (Presence) / RC 3

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 20) targeting all adversaries in Close range. Success: Assault them with psychic energy, dealing (Proficiency)*d10 Void damage. They must make a Presence Reaction Roll, DC 15 or Mark 1 Stress.

LEVEL 7: TIER 3

Mind Sanctuary Spell / 2 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 20 (Presence) / RC 3

Cost: 2 Hope + 1 Stress. Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 20). You raise a lattice of disciplined thought around yourself and your allies, sealing every mind in the area against intrusion. For one scene, you and all allies in Close range are immune to mental, social, and emotional manipulation effects (charm, fear, deception, intimidation, psychic intrusion, compulsion). Once during the scene, when an enemy would target you or an ally with such an effect, you may reflect the attempt back at its caster: they make the contested roll against themselves at Disadvantage. Failure: The lattice forms inverted. You and all allies in Close range have Disadvantage on Presence and Instinct rolls until the end of the scene; the Keeper gains 2 Fear, subject to the hard maximum of 12.

Veil Suppression Spell / 3 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 20 (Knowledge) / RC 3

Once per session

Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 20). Cost: 3 Hope + 1 Stress. You stabilize physics in a Very Far range area for one scene. All Void,

Ethereal, and Precursor effects have Disadvantage on rolls within the area. Failure: The sudden stabilization causes a shockwave, dealing 1 Stress to all allies.

LEVEL 8: TIER 3

Psychic Collapse Spell / 3 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 25 (Presence) / RC 3

Once per session

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 25). Target one creature in Very Far range. Deal 3d8 Void damage ignoring armor. The target suffers Disadvantage on all rolls for 1 round. Failure: The damage rebounds, dealing 1d8 Void damage to you.

Temporal Maelstrom Spell / 2 Stress / DC 25 (Instinct) / RC 3

Mark 2 Stress and Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 25). Create a reality distortion in Close range for one scene. All creatures in the area (including you) have Disadvantage on all rolls. Failure: You are immediately subjected to the Veil Storm effects until you clear 2 Stress.

LEVEL 9: TIER 3

Destiny Weave Spell / 3 Stress / DC 25 (Instinct) / RC 3

Once per long rest

Mark 3 Stress. Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 25). Force a complete reroll on any one roll you witness. You may modify the result by +3 or -3. Failure: You must apply the worst possible result to the roll and take 2 Stress.

Psychic Fallout Spell / 5 Hope + 2 Stress / DC 25 (Presence) / RC 3

Once per session

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 25). Affects all adversaries in Far range. Deal 3d6 Void damage. Targets make Instinct Reaction Rolls, DC 15 or become Stunned for 1 round and Vulnerable for the scene. Cost: 5 Hope + 2 Stress. Failure: You are overwhelmed (Disadvantage on all rolls) for 1d4 rounds.

LEVEL 10: MYTHIC

Consciousness Bridge Spell / 3 Hope + 2 Stress / DC 30 (Presence) / RC 3

Once per long rest [Mythic]

Mythic. Once per long rest. Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 30). Share consciousness with a willing target across a planetary system for one scene. You can both use each other's Abilities, Domain powers, and Traits. Failure: Minds clash, reducing the Instinct or Presence Trait of both targets by 1 until the next long rest.

Veil Mastery Spell / 3 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 30 (Instinct) / RC 3

Once per session [Mythic]

Mythic. Once per session. Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 30). Base cost: 3 Hope + 1 Stress. Choose one mode. **Rewind**: undo the Keeper's immediately preceding action block and restore 1 Hope and clear 1 Stress for each ally affected by it. **Accelerate**: before the end of the next round, each ally may take one additional Action during one of their Spotlights. **Restructure**: move each willing creature and unattended object within Far range up to one range band in any direction; an unwilling NPC may resist with a Presence Reaction Roll, DC 20, and a player character moves only with that player's consent. **Dream-Project**: instead pay 2 additional Hope and 1 additional Stress; up to 3 targets within Far range enter a shared illusion for one scene. At the start of each affected NPC's Spotlight it may make an Instinct Reaction Roll, DC 15, to perceive baseline reality; a player character participates only with that player's consent. At casting, +1 Hope adds one target, maximum 6, or raises the escape DC to 20; +1 Stress together with that Hope extends the duration until the next

Long Rest. Maximum total cost is 6 Hope and 3 Stress. On failure to cast, adversaries receive the chosen foundational benefit and you mark 4 Stress; for Dream-Project, you are also Stunned for 1 round and have Disadvantage on Presence and Instinct Rolls for the scene.

KINETIC DOMAIN

Card label **KINETIC**. The crimson banner. Kinetic Powers are the control over kinetic force. This is the domain of unstoppable impacts and immovable objects. Practitioners create barriers of pure force, improve their own speed to impossible levels, strike with the concussive power of a meteor.

LEVEL 1: TIER 1

Force Shield Ability (Reaction) / 1 Hope / - / RC 1

Trigger: You or an ally within Very Close range is hit by an attack.

Reaction. When you or an ally in Very Close range is hit by an attack, you may Spend 1 Hope to create a kinetic barrier. You provide +3 Evasion against that attack. If the attack misses due to this bonus, the attacker takes (Proficiency)×d4 Physical damage with the Kinetic tag.

Kinetic Blast Ability / 1 Hope / - / RC 0

Spend 1 Hope when making a melee attack. Hit: Deal Weapon Damage + Strength + 1d8 Physical damage with the Kinetic tag. Empower: You may spend up to 2 additional Hope (3 Hope total) at the moment of the strike. For each additional Hope spent, add 1 die of (Proficiency)d6 Physical damage with the Kinetic tag. Ballistic Impact: If total damage triggers Overkill, move the target one range band directly away from the source. If it collides with a solid object, apply Prone.

Tactical Overwatch Ability (Reaction) / 1 Hope / - / RC 0

Trigger: An ally within Close range is targeted by an attack.

Reaction. When an ally in Close range is targeted by an attack, you may Spend 1 Hope. They gain Advantage on their defense and 2 temporary Armor Slots until the start of your next Spotlight.

LEVEL 2: TIER 1

Impact Absorption Ability (Reaction) / 1 Stress / - / RC 2

Trigger: You take Physical damage.

Reaction. When taking Physical damage, mark 1 Stress to reduce it by (Proficiency)×d6+2. On your next Spotlight, either add the absorbed amount to one attack's damage or move one additional range band.

Kinetic Barrier Ability / 1 Stress / - / RC 1

Mark 1 Stress. You create a protective force field around yourself for one scene. You gain +1 Evasion and Resistance to Physical damage. The barrier absorbs up to 10 damage before dissipating.

LEVEL 3: TIER 1

Protective Dome Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Strength) / RC 1

Strength Spellcast Roll (DC 15). You create a kinetic dome covering a Very Close zone for 10 minutes. It provides occupants with +2 Evasion and blocks area attacks from outside. An enemy entering makes a Strength Reaction Roll, DC 15. On failure it remains outside. On a Success with Hope, everyone inside clears 1 HP at the end of each round.

Velocity Surge Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Agility) / RC 1

Agility Spellcast Roll (DC 15). You enhance your reflexes for one scene. You gain +2 on Agility Rolls, may move one additional range

band during each of your Spotlights, and can move through enemy spaces without provoking attacks. On a Success with Hope, gain Advantage on the next Agility Reaction Roll you make this scene.

LEVEL 4: TIER 2

Guardian's Aegis Spell / 2 Hope / DC 15 (Presence) / RC 2

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 15). Designate up to 3 allies in Close range for one scene. When they would take damage, you may use your reaction to take half of it instead. You gain +1 Evasion for each protected ally. On a Success with Hope: You may redirect any damage you take this way as an immediate attack against a nearby enemy.

Precision Strike Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Finesse) / RC 2

Finesse Spellcast Roll (DC 15). Choose one target within Far range. Make a ranged kinetic attack that deals (Proficiency)*d10 Physical damage with the Kinetic tag. This attack ignores ordinary cover but never Total Cover. On Success with Hope, the target cannot take Reactions until the end of its next Spotlight; this is an exact rider, not a separate Condition.

LEVEL 5: TIER 2

Kinetic Mastery Spell / 2 Hope / DC 15 (Strength) / RC 2

Strength Spellcast Roll (DC 15). You gain perfect kinetic control for one scene. Choose one: walk on walls/ceilings OR gain immunity to forced movement and fall damage. On a Success with Hope: Extend the benefit to all allies in Close range.

Shockwave Pulse Spell / 2 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 20 (Strength) / RC 3

Strength Spellcast Roll (DC 20). You unleash a kinetic pulse throughout Close range. Choose one: Protective (all allies gain +2 Evasion for 1 round and clear 1d4 HP) or Offensive (all enemies take (Proficiency)*d12 Physical damage with the Kinetic tag and become Prone). On a Success with Hope, create both effects.

LEVEL 6: TIER 2

Energy Cascade Spell / 2 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 20 (Strength) / RC 3

Strength Spellcast Roll (DC 20). A chain reaction affects all enemies within Far range for 1 minute. At the start of each round, every affected target makes an Agility Reaction Roll, DC 15; on failure it takes (Proficiency)*d8 Physical damage with the Kinetic tag and is pushed one range band away. The damage gains a cumulative +1 flat modifier each round. On failure to cast, the cascade affects you and your allies instead.

Force Fortress Spell / 2 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 20 (Strength) / RC 3

Strength Spellcast Roll (DC 20). You create a massive kinetic fortress with 50 HP, Evasion 18, that lasts 1 hour and provides total cover. Failure: The fortress collapses immediately, dealing 1d8 damage to occupants.

LEVEL 7: TIER 3

Orbital Lance Spell / 2 Hope + 2 Stress / DC 20 (Strength) / RC 3

Once per session

Strength Spellcast Roll (DC 20). Cost: 2 Hope + 2 Stress. Call an orbital strike on a point in Very Far range; it cannot target a moving ship. It deals 4d10 Physical damage with the Kinetic tag throughout a Very Close zone and ignores ordinary cover. On failure, roll d8 for direction around the declared map orientation and 1d4 for distance in range bands; the strike lands there and cannot be redirected to a target that was not already in that zone. The discharge also makes your ship lose **1 Hull directly**; if no ship is present, the location suffers equivalent structural damage.

Temporal Freeze Spell / 3 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 20 (Instinct) / RC 3

Once per session

Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 20). You control all momentum in Close range for one round. You may stop all moving objects or accelerate up to 3 objects/targets. Failure: Massive kinetic feedback leaves you Stunned for 1 round and you suffer 2 Stress.

LEVEL 8: TIER 3

Singularity Well Spell / 3 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 25 (Strength) / RC 3

Once per session

Strength Spellcast Roll (DC 25). You manipulate gravity throughout Far range for 1 hour. You can create areas of high or low gravity (Disadvantage or Advantage on movement Rolls) or anti-gravity flight. On failure, you suffer Disadvantage on Agility Rolls for 1d6 days or until you complete a Long Rest devoted to recalibrating your kinetic attunement.

Tactical Aegis Spell / 3 Hope + 3 Stress / DC 20 (Presence) / RC 3

Once per long rest

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 20). You create a kinetic barrier around a starship or settlement (Tier 5 Asset). The shield has 100 HP and protects against large-scale attacks for one scene/combat. Cost: 3 Hope + 3

Stress. Failure: The target location gains Vulnerable for 1 round.

LEVEL 9: TIER 3

Asteroid Redirect Spell / 3 Hope + 2 Stress / DC 25 (Knowledge) / RC 3

Once per long rest

Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 25). You manipulate a small asteroid field to impact a target ship (Tier 3-4), dealing 3 Hull Damage. Failure: The impact is misdirected, dealing 3 Hull Damage to your own ship instead.

Indomitable Bastion Spell / 3 Hope + 2 Stress / DC 25 (Strength) / RC 3

Once per long rest

Strength Spellcast Roll (DC 25). You create a massive kinetic fortress with 150 HP, Evasion 18, that lasts 1 hour and provides total cover. Failure: The barrier collapses catastrophically, dealing 3d12 Physical damage with the Kinetic tag to all occupants.

LEVEL 10: MYTHIC

Absolute Command Spell / 5 Hope + 5 Stress / DC 30 (Strength) / RC 3

Once per campaign [Mythic]

Mythic. Once per campaign. Strength Spellcast Roll (DC 30). For one week, you may apply the Massive or Stunning feature to any weapon damage roll. Cost: 5 Hope and 5 Stress. Failure: Disadvantage on all Agility and movement rolls until completing a mythic quest (approximately one story arc) to restore your kinetic connection.

Force Incarnate Spell / 5 Hope + 5 Stress / DC 30 (Strength) / RC 3

Once per campaign [Mythic]

Mythic. Once per campaign. Strength Spellcast Roll (DC 30). Cost: 5 Hope + 5 Stress. Until your next Long Rest, you exist as pure kinetic energy: gain Immunity to Physical damage and, once during each of your Spotlights, Teleport up to Far range as a free effect. You cannot use equipment that requires hands. At the start of each later Long Rest, before other benefits resolve, you may pay 3 Hope + 1 Stress to extend the state through the next rest cycle. Once it ends, Force Incarnate cannot be used again in this campaign. On failure to cast, take 4d12 Physical damage through normal Thresholds, the Keeper gains 4 Fear subject to the hard maximum of 12, and Force Incarnate becomes unavailable for the campaign.

VOID DOMAIN

Card label VOID. The deep-black banner. Void Powers are the subtle manipulation of space, shadow, and luck. The Void is the quietest but perhaps strangest of the Domains, those who touch it can step through shadows, bend probability to their favor, find paths where none should exist. They are the galaxy's ghosts, spies, and masters of the impossible escape.

LEVEL 1: TIER 1

Slipstream Jolt Ability / 1 Stress / - / RC 1

Mark 1 Stress. Choose one electronic system or creature in Close range. They suffer a momentary temporal/spatial misalignment, gaining Disadvantage on their next Agility or Finesse roll.

Temporal Cloak Ability / 1 Hope / - / RC 0

Spend 1 Hope. Choose one mode: Vehicle (the ship is nearly invisible for 10 minutes and attacks against it have Disadvantage) or Personal (you are nearly invisible for 10 minutes and gain Advantage on Agility Rolls to avoid detection). The effect ends if the protected subject attacks or uses another Void Power.

Vector Calculus Ability / 1 Hope / - / RC 1

Spend 1 Hope when making an Agility or Finesse (Pilot/Navigate) Roll. You may add your Level to the roll and treat a 10 or lower as an 11 on the Hope die.

LEVEL 2: TIER 1

Lucky Break Ability (Reaction) / 1 Stress / - / RC 2

Reaction. Mark 1 Stress. Choose one mode: Vehicle (reroll one die you rolled for a spacecraft Action and use the new result) or Personal (reroll one die you rolled and use the new result). Once per scene, also choose one coincidence: a loose unsecured object is within reach, an ordinary unlocked exit is unobstructed, or a non-hostile bystander notices you. The coincidence creates no item, credential, damage, resource, or automatic success.

Spatial Shift Ability / 1 Stress / - / RC 2

Mark 1 Stress. Choose one mode: Vehicle (instantly teleport your spacecraft to any location up to Far range, arriving silently in shadow/cover) or Personal (teleport to any location in Close range, arriving silently in shadow/cover with no trace). No roll required - the Void does not fail to move you. It only asks the price.

LEVEL 3: TIER 1

Flux Field Spell / 1 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 15 (Instinct) / RC 3

Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 15). Cost: 1 Hope + 1 Stress. For 10 minutes, choose one mode. **Lucky Streak:** once per round, grant one ally Advantage on one Roll before it is made. **Unlucky Enemies:** once per round, impose Disadvantage on one enemy attack before it is made. On a Success with Hope, gain both modes. Matching Duality Dice always remain a Critical Success.

Temporal Muffle Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Finesse) / RC 1

Finesse Spellcast Roll (DC 15). Choose a mode: Vehicle (a Very Far field centered on the vehicle for 1 hour; sensor-based detection has Disadvantage) or Personal (a Far field centered on you for 1 hour; sounds are muffled and allies gain Advantage on Agility Rolls to avoid auditory detection).

LEVEL 4: TIER 2

Danger Sense Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Instinct) / RC 2

Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 15). For one scene, you have supernatural threat awareness. You automatically detect

traps, ambushes, and hostile intent in Far range. You gain you may take the first player Spotlight when combat begins and cannot be surprised. On a Success with Hope: Share this benefit with all allies in Close range.

Spatial Cache Spell / 1 Stress / DC 15 (Finesse) / RC 2

Cost: 1 Stress. Finesse Spellcast Roll (DC 15). You create a pocket dimension for 8 hours, completely undetectable. Choose a mode: Vehicle (store cargo/small craft or hide the entire ship) or Personal (store equipment/allies).

LEVEL 5: TIER 2

Fate's Hand Spell / 2 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 20 (Instinct) / RC 3

Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 20). Cost: 2 Hope + 1 Stress. Dramatically alter probability for one outcome within the next hour. Choose one: ensure one future Roll is a Critical Success; cause one enemy weapon to suffer a catastrophic malfunction until an Action repairs it; or establish one improbable but fictionally possible coincidence. On failure, suffer Disadvantage on all Rolls for 1d4 hours.

Phase Walk Spell / 2 Hope / DC 15 (Finesse) / RC 2

Finesse Spellcast Roll (DC 15). For one scene, you can move without trace, passing through solid objects as if they were difficult terrain. Choose a mode: Vehicle or Personal.

LEVEL 6: TIER 2

Spatial Link Spell / 2 Hope / DC 20 (Instinct) / RC 3

Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 20). Create a quantum link with up to 3 willing allies for 24 hours. You share a sense of luck and spatial awareness. On a Success with Hope: As a reaction, you can instantly swap positions with any linked ally.

Void Sanctuary Long-Term Project (10 segments) / 2 Hope to begin / - / RC 3

Create a permanent sanctuary hidden within a pocket dimension. Spend 2 Hope to begin the project and define its nature with the Keeper.

Progress: During each active Downtime phase, make a Finesse roll against DC 15. On a success, advance 1 segment. On a Success with Hope, advance 2 segments.

Completion: The sanctuary permanently exists. Choose one form:

- **Fleet Mode:** A hidden base for up to 12 ships, completely undetectable by standard methods.
- **Personal Mode:** A safehouse accessible only to people you have explicitly authorized.

Once established, the sanctuary requires no maintenance.

LEVEL 7: TIER 3

Chrono Stasis Spell / 2 Hope + 2 Stress / DC 20 (Instinct) / RC 0

Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 20). Cost: 2 Hope + 2 Stress. Freeze time for all other creatures and objects within Far range for up to 1 subjective minute. You may move and act normally, but frozen targets are invulnerable and cannot be moved or altered until time resumes.

Phase Jump Spell / 2 Hope + 2 Stress / DC 20 (Finesse) / RC 3

Once per session

Finesse Spellcast Roll (DC 20). Warp space around yourself/ship/allies for one scene, gaining the ability to phase through matter and become invisible. Cost: 2 Hope + 2 Stress. Failure: You are temporarily displaced (Stunned) until the end of your next Spotlight and suffer 2 Stress.

LEVEL 8: TIER 3

Phantom Ship Spell / 3 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 20 (Instinct) / RC 3

Once per long rest

Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 20). You phase your entire ship and crew into a parallel dimension for one scene/combat. The ship is undetectable and intangible. Failure: The ship phases back immediately and loses 2 **Hull** directly from turbulence.

Temporal Disarray Spell / 3 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 25 (Instinct) / RC 3

Once per long rest

Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 25). Create a probability storm throughout a Very Far area for one scene. For Rolls made inside it, a physical Duality die face of 1 counts as 12 and a face of 12 counts as 1 before checking for a match; this can create or remove a Critical Success but never create a negative critical result. On failure, you suffer Disadvantage on all Rolls for 1d6 hours.

LEVEL 9: TIER 3

Cosmic Luck Spell / 4 Hope + 2 Stress / DC 25 (Instinct) / RC 3

Once per long rest

Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 25). You may apply the effects of a Critical Success to any single roll you witness during the next session. Cost: 4 Hope + 2 Stress. Failure: Your next nonmatching Duality Roll resolves as a **Failure with Fear**, regardless of its total. If that roll is doubles, it remains a Critical Success and this consequence waits for the next nonmatching roll.

The Navigator's Truth Spell / 3 Hope + 2 Stress / DC 25 (Knowledge) / RC 3

Once per story arc

Knowledge Spellcast Roll (DC 25). Gain a permanent, unique Stellar Chart (Tier 5 Asset) for the sector. This allows your vessel to make one Instantaneous Jump within the sector per session. Failure: The jump leads the ship directly into a Veil Storm and it loses 3 **Hull** directly.

LEVEL 10: MYTHIC

Master of Fate Spell / 5 Hope + 3 Stress / DC 30 (Instinct) / RC 3

Once per campaign [Mythic]

Mythic. Once per campaign. **Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 30).** Cost: 5 Hope + 3 Stress. You weave a single perfect knot in the threads of probability. For one scene: All allies have Advantage on every roll they make. All enemies have Disadvantage on every roll they make. Once during the scene, you may declare a single roll (yours or an ally's) to be treated as a Critical Success without rolling. This declaration cannot be made on damage rolls or on rolls that have already resolved. Failure: For the rest of the scene, Advantage and Disadvantage are inverted, your enemies receive the boon, and your allies suffer the penalty. The threads tighten the wrong way.

Master of Space Spell / 5 Hope + 5 Stress / DC 30 (Instinct) / RC 3

Once per campaign [Mythic]

Mythic. Once per campaign. **Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 30).** Your vessel gains the ability to use Instantaneous Jump once per session. Cost: 5 Hope and 5 Stress. Failure: You are temporally lost and cannot make a jump for 1d4 sessions, and your ship loses 3 **Hull** directly.

LUX DOMAIN

Card label LIGHT. The gold banner. Lux is the science of hope made manifest. Lux is not mystical magic, it is the manipulation of measurable wavelengths, stellar radiation, and a quantum phenomenon called the Hope Frequency. Its wielders channel photonic energy to shield allies, burn away the Veil's corruption, reveal hidden paths, and guide the lost through the dark. Lux is the cosmological opposite of Void: where Void unravels, Lux restores; where Void conceals, Lux reveals.

LEVEL 1: TIER 1

Blinding Flash Ability (Reaction) / 1 Hope / - / RC 0

Trigger: An enemy within Close range makes an attack.

Spend 1 Hope. All enemies within Close range must make an Instinct Reaction Roll (DC 10). On failure, they suffer Disadvantage on their next attack. On a Failure with Fear, they are Dazed until the end of their next Spotlight.

Spark of Hope Ability / 1 Hope / - / RC 0

Spend 1 Hope. Touch an ally within Close range. They clear 1 Stress. You cannot target yourself.

Wayfinder's Pulse Ability / 1 Hope / - / RC 1

Spend 1 Hope. You emit a pulse of light visible only to you. The pulse reveals the following within Far range: the direction and approximate distance of the nearest significant threat (hostile creature, trap, ambush), the nearest exit or navigable path, and any hidden or concealed objects of value or importance. The information is directional, not precise - you know where, not what. The pulse does not penetrate solid walls thicker than 1 meter.

LEVEL 2: TIER 1

Eyes of Truth Ability / 1 Stress / - / RC 1

Mark 1 Stress. For the remainder of the scene, you see through illusions, invisibility, and mundane disguise. You ignore all visibility penalties from darkness, smoke, or Veil distortion. You gain Advantage on Instinct Rolls to Perceive or Investigate. Additionally, you can read emotional intent - you know when someone within Close range is lying, afraid, or hostile, though not the specific content of their thoughts (that is Neural territory).

Photon Shield Ability (Reaction) / 1 Stress / - / RC 1

Trigger: An ally within Close range takes HP damage from an attack.

Reaction. Mark 1 Stress. When an ally within Close range takes HP damage from an attack, reduce the damage by your Tier + 2 before it is compared to Damage Thresholds. Against creatures with the Veil-Touched tag, the reduction is doubled.

LEVEL 3: TIER 1

Aura of Clarity Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Presence) / RC 2

Cost: 1 Hope. **Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 15).** Cost: 1 Hope. Concentration. You and all allies within Close range are immune to the Frightened and Dazed conditions. While sustained, all allied Damage Thresholds within the aura increase by +1 (both Major and Severe). Concentration ends if you take Stress or are incapacitated.

Stellar Lance Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Presence) / RC 1

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 15). Ranged attack at Far range. Deal (Proficiency)×d8 Energy damage with the Radiant tag. Against targets wearing Heavy or Very Heavy armor, this attack gains the Devastating keyword. At Tier 2+, the target is marked as Illuminated until the end of your next Spotlight: they cannot benefit from cover or stealth, and the next attack against them has Advantage.

LEVEL 4: TIER 2**Deflection Prism Ability (Reaction) / 2 Hope / - / RC 2**

Trigger: An enemy makes a ranged attack against you or an adjacent ally.

Spend 2 Hope as a Reaction. Redirect the attack to any other valid target within the original weapon's range. Resolve the original attack roll against the new target's Evasion.

Limitation: You cannot redirect the attack back at the original attacker. This power works only against ranged attacks, not melee attacks.

Solar Judgment Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Presence) / RC 2

Cost: 1 Hope. Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 15). Choose a point within Close range; every enemy in a Very Close zone around it takes (Proficiency)×d6 Energy damage with the Radiant tag. A creature with the Veil-Touched or Void tag then makes an Instinct Reaction Roll, DC 15; on failure it is Dazed and cannot use Void Powers until the end of its next Spotlight.

LEVEL 5: TIER 2**Beacon of Resurrection Spell / 3 Hope + 3 Stress / DC 20 (Presence) / RC 3**

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 20). Cost: 3 Hope + 3 Stress. You restore a fallen ally (who has reached 0 HP within the last round) to 1 HP. The revived ally acts at Disadvantage until the end of their next Spotlight. After using this power, you cannot use any Lux power until you complete a Long Rest.

Cartographer of the Unseen Spell / 1 Hope / DC 15 (Instinct) / RC 2

Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 15). Cost: 1 Hope. For the remainder of the scene, you perceive the complete layout of the structure, installation, or natural environment within a 500-meter radius. You know every room, corridor, door, shaft, and hidden passage. You know where every creature larger than a rat is located and whether they are moving. You cannot determine identity or intent - only position, count, and approximate size. This information updates in real time for the duration.

LEVEL 6: TIER 2**Lightbridge Spell / 2 Hope / DC 20 (Presence) / RC 3**

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 20). Cost: 2 Hope. Teleport up to 3 willing creatures within Far range to a visible point within Far range. On arrival, each clears 1 Stress. If the destination is beyond sight or actively contested, the Keeper must set DC 25 before the Roll instead of adding an intermediate modifier.

Photonic Detonation Spell / 2 Hope / DC 20 (Presence) / RC 3

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 20). Fill a Close-range cone and deal (Proficiency)×d10 Energy damage with the Radiant tag. This attack ignores ordinary physical cover and barricades. Each affected target makes an Agility Reaction Roll, DC 15; on failure it is Blinded for 1 round.

LEVEL 7: TIER 3**Corona Beam Spell / 2 Hope / DC 20 (Presence) / RC 3**

Once per session

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 20). Cost: 2 Hope. Draw a piercing line through Far range and deal (Proficiency × 2)×d8 Energy damage with the Radiant tag to every target in it. Against a target of lower Tier, add +10 to the damage total before comparing with Damage Thresholds; normal Overkill still applies.

Inviolable Sanctum Spell / 2 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 20 (Presence) / RC 3

Once per session

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 20). Concentration. Create a Close-range dome of hardened light. Nothing crosses its boundary in either direction without your explicit permission: not weapons fire, Void Powers, or sound. Allies inside clear 1 Stress at the end of each round. The dome persists for up to 1 minute or until your concentration is broken.

LEVEL 8: TIER 3**Omniscient Eye Spell / 2 Hope + 1 Stress / DC 25 (Instinct) / RC 3**

Once per long rest

Instinct Spellcast Roll (DC 25). Cost: 2 Hope + 1 Stress. For 1 hour, perceive every creature, vehicle, energy signature, and hidden space throughout the same local district, treated as Very Far range for this Power. Focus on any point there and observe it as though present, including hearing conversations. Veil-distorted areas and psionic shielding appear as blank spots. While using this Power, your body is immobile and Vulnerable.

Solar Avatar Spell / 4 Hope / DC 25 (Presence) / RC 3

Once per long rest

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 25). Cost: 4 Hope. Personal transformation lasting 3 rounds. While transformed, you gain flight and immunity to Physical damage. After a Lux attack determines its normal HP loss, increase that loss by 1, to a maximum of 4 HP from severity and Overkill before other explicit modifiers. You emit bright light to Far range; a creature attempting a Void Power there first makes a Presence Reaction Roll, DC 20, and on failure the paid Power has no effect. When the transformation ends, mark 2 Stress.

LEVEL 9: TIER 3**Pulse of Genesis Spell / All remaining Hope (minimum 5) / DC 25 (Presence) / RC 3**

Once per story arc

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 25). Cost: All remaining Hope (minimum 5). You release a wave of purifying light across the entire sector. All Veil corruption, Void anomalies, and temporal distortions within the area are suppressed for 24 hours. Veil-Touched NPCs of Tier 3 or lower are removed from the scene; a player character instead takes 4d10 Energy damage with the Radiant tag and uses the normal Dying procedure. Tier 4+ creatures take the same 4d10 Energy damage.

Stellar Chorus Spell / 3 Hope + 2 Stress / DC 25 (Presence) / RC 3

Once per story arc

Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 25). Cost: 3 Hope + 2 Stress. For the remainder of the scene, all allies within Far range add your Presence modifier to their attack rolls, Reaction Rolls, and Damage Thresholds. This does not stack with Aura of Clarity. When the effect ends, you fall unconscious for 1 hour.

LEVEL 10: MYTHIC**Apotheosis Spell / 5 Hope + 3 Stress / DC 30 (Presence) / RC 3**

Once per campaign [Mythic]

Mythic. Once per campaign. Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 30). Cost: 5 Hope + 3 Stress. You collapse the boundary between yourself and the Hope Frequency itself, becoming, for one perfect moment, a fragment of stellar light made flesh. On activation: All allies within Far range heal HP equal to their current Severe Threshold and clear 1 Stress. All enemies within Far range take 6d10 Energy damage with the Radiant tag (no Thresholds, direct HP, ignores armor). Veil-Touched enemies take double damage from this effect. Vessel of Light: Until the end of the current scene, you cannot fall below 1 HP and your unarmed strikes deal 1d6 Energy damage with the

Radiant tag in addition to their normal damage. When the scene ends, your body disincorporates. You reform 24 hours later at the nearest star system, with 1 HP and 0 Stress. You cannot be resurrected by any other means during this 24-hour period. Failure: The light tears through you instead of through your enemies. You take 4d10 damage (Threshold-applied), the Keeper gains 4 Fear, subject to the hard maximum of 12, and Apotheosis is unavailable for the remainder of the campaign.

Eternal Beacon *Spell / 5 Hope + 5 Stress / DC 30 (Presence) / RC 3*

Once per campaign [Mythic]

Mythic. Once per campaign. Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 30). Cost: 5 Hope + 5 Stress. Create a permanent source of Lux energy at your current location: a miniature star, lighthouse, or monument of living light. The Beacon suppresses Void influence across the established planetary region. Ships within sensor range navigate Veil storms without risk, and Pilot Instinct Rolls there automatically succeed. Veil-Touched creatures cannot approach within Far range of the Beacon. The Beacon cannot be destroyed by any force below Tier 5.

HOW TO BUILD A LOADOUT

A practical note for players: by the end of Tier 3, an Awakened character may have access to 15+ Powers in their Vault. The **Loadout cap** (Chapter 18) determines how many they can carry into a session: 5 cards at Tier 1, 6 at Tier 2, and 7 at Tier 3, regardless of class.

The art of Loadout-building is **scene-anticipation**: thinking about what kind of work this session is likely to demand, and equipping accordingly. A combat-heavy session deserves combat-aligned Powers; a negotiation deserves Social and Lux. Most experienced players carry a mix, two combat-utility, two scene-shaping, one signature, and revise per session as the campaign clarifies.

Some Powers are good for almost every session and tend to live permanently in the Loadout (the Engineer's *Quantum Firewall*, the Mystic's *Mind Shield*, the Diplomat's *Silver Tongue*). Others are situational and earn their slot when the situation arrives.

Recall Costs (RC) matter. Powers with RC 0-1 swap freely mid-scene; RC 2-3 Powers commit you to that loadout for the encounter. Build with that in mind: keep your high-RC powers as known commitments, your low-RC powers as flexible response.

The *catalog* in this chapter is the resource. The *Loadout* is the choice. Build deliberately. The campaign will reward foresight; it will not reward over-preparation. Bring what you can use; leave what you cannot.

CLOSING: THE CATALOG IS NOT THE PRACTICE

The Powers here are the system's content, not the practice of being Awakened; that practice is in the choosing, the cost, and what each Power says about who your character is becoming. The catalog is the starting place. The character is what you build from it. Welcome to the practice.

THE GALAXY IN DEPTH

"If the Veil is a medium for reaching across distance, and I am no longer prepared to argue otherwise, then what we call faster-than-light travel is not movement at all. It is conversation. We are making the universe small enough to fit inside a single voice. The voice answers if it likes us."

Mystic Iolanthe Vesh, Spire of Verita, lecture transcribed in the seventy-ninth post-Silence year

This chapter is the deep end of the pool. You do not need any of it to play.

Everything required to build a character and run a session lives in the earlier chapters: the rules in Chapters 9 through 12, the world in Chapters 13 through 16, the cosmology in plain summary back in Chapter 1. What follows here is the *why* underneath all of that, the metaphysics of the Veil, the meaning of the Hope Frequency, the nature of the Awakened, the mystery of the Precursors, and the quiet question the whole setting is built around. Read it when you are curious. Skip it and you lose nothing at the table.

A note for Keepers: the texture lives here, but the genuine secrets do not. The deepest answers are held for the *Keeper's Companion* and the expansions. What you read below is what any educated person in the post-Silence galaxy could, in principle, know.

THE VEIL: WHAT IT IS, AND WHAT IT IS NOT

The Veil is a region of physics. That sentence is wrong on at least three counts, but it is the closest the post-Silence sciences have come to a working definition.

It is wrong, first, because the Veil is not strictly *physics*. The Veil is the substrate from which physics emerges. To say physics describes the Veil is about as accurate as saying grammar describes the human voice. The grammar is real and useful and arrives at consistent rules. The voice is something else, of which the grammar is a partial and somewhat embarrassed catalog.

It is wrong, second, because the Veil is not strictly a *region*. There is no place a navigator can point to and say "the Veil is here." The Veil is everywhere, beneath everything, the underneath of normal space. A ship enters the Veil not by traveling somewhere but by *changing modes*, slipping from the surface into the deep, the way a thought slips from speech into silence.

It is wrong, third, because the Veil is not *one thing*. The pre-Silence sciences treated it as a uniform medium beneath which spacetime could be folded. The post-Silence sciences have learned, painfully, that the Veil is layered: regions that behave one way, regions that behave very differently, zones where it is calm and zones where it is something close to alive. The Q-Net's collapse did not merely make Veil travel difficult. It revealed that

the Veil had always been more complicated than anyone realized, and that the Q-Net had been smoothing over the difficulty.

What can be said with confidence: the Veil exists. It is the medium of faster-than-light travel. Time inside it does not flow at the same rate or direction as time outside, which is the source of the Chronal Shear that made travel lethal between the Silence and the Pearl. It responds, measurably, to the emotional state of the conscious beings interacting with it, which is the Hope Frequency. And it is old, older, by the indirect evidence, than the universe in which we are speaking this sentence. Beyond that, almost everything is contested.

HOW VEIL TRAVEL WORKS

In play: a Veil jump costs one Quantum Pearl and takes anywhere from hours to weeks of outside time, while the crew inside ages only seconds. The starship rules in Chapter 17 cover the mechanics. What follows is what a jump actually is.

The technology has three components, two that can be manufactured and one that cannot.

The first is the **Pearl Drive**, the propulsion and resonance assembly mounted on a ship's keel. Heavy, expensive, precisely calibrated, it is built around a central **resonance lattice** that suspends a Quantum Pearl at the moment of jump in perfect mechanical isolation while coupling it to drive, navigation, and life support. It is the most precise engineering in the post-Silence galaxy, the product of two centuries of inherited tradition, repairable by good mechanics, buildable from scratch only by the Hydros consortia and a handful of independent yards.

The second is the **navigational array**, the sensors and predictive systems that compute the route before the Pearl is spent. A jump is not a straight line. It is a path through a layered medium, planned against known Veil currents, recent storms, and the gravitational topology of the destination. The array integrates what no mind can integrate at speed and encodes the result into the lattice as a sequence of phase modulations, instructions for the Pearl to follow as it dies.

The third is the **Quantum Pearl** itself, and it cannot be made. Pearls are the biological product of the Chrono-Oysters of Hydros Prime, and a century of research has produced no synthetic equivalent. A successful jump destroys the Pearl in a flash of liberated temporal entropy.

The jump, as the crew lives it: the lattice charges off the main reactor. The Pearl is loaded by a trained engineer's hand, about ninety seconds of careful work. A low subsonic hum builds. The captain gives the order. For the next subjective ninety seconds the bridge lights flicker, the viewscreen shows a featureless white that is really the absence of any photons reaching the optics, the temperature drops three or four degrees for reasons nobody has explained, and there is no sense of motion at all. Most crews have a private word or gesture for this moment, the way old sailors touched the figurehead before a long voyage. Then the white breaks, the destination star is in the field, the drive disengages, and the Pearl is gone. Outside, hours or days or weeks have passed. The crew has aged ninety seconds.

There are no shortcuts. There is no alternative drive. Every Pearl burned came from a Chrono-Oyster, was harvested at a cost paid down the whole supply chain, and was consumed so the crew could be somewhere else. The Pearl Era runs on this, and the price is felt.

GEAR 1, NAMING THE PEARL (OPTIONAL ATMOSPHERIC RULE).

SOME CREWS NAME THEIR PEARLS BEFORE BURNING THEM. THIS SERVES NO MECHANICAL FUNCTION. IT IS A WAY OF ACKNOWLEDGING WHAT IS BEING PAID: A SINGLE USE, A SINGLE DEATH, A SINGLE UNIT OF THE THING THAT LETS THE CREW EXIST AS A CREW. THE NAMED PEARL IS MENTIONED AT THE START OF THE JOURNEY AND AGAIN AT THE END ("THERESA CARRIED US THROUGH. REST WELL, THERESA."). TABLES THAT PREFER FASTER PACING SIMPLY BURN THE PEARL AND CONTINUE.

THE HOPE FREQUENCY

In play: this is the reason you roll a Hope die and a Fear die for nearly every meaningful action. The rules are in Chapter 9. What follows is what those dice *mean*.

The most striking discovery of the post-Silence century was not the Pearl. It was the slow, uncomfortable realization that the Veil *responds to the people inside it*.

The first observations were anecdotal. Veil-runners had said for decades that some routes "felt" different, that some lucky crews got through worse storms with less damage, that the same route flown twice could take wildly different durations. It was chalked up to imagination and confirmation bias. Most navigators learned to stop bringing it up.

The Solari Mystics took it seriously first. In the third decade after the Silence, a Mystic named Tova Marek began collecting crew reports systematically and correlating them against journey logs: recorded transit times, weather, route, ship status. After three years she presented a paper, *On the Possible Influence of Crew Affect on Veil Transit Duration*. It was politely received and quietly buried; the methodology was sound and the conclusion unbelievable. A decade later the Kurogane Research Division, funded in part to *disprove* the claim, replicated her results with greater rigor. The replication was devastating. The correlation was real, small (a few percent of journey duration on average), statistically robust, and explicable by no known mechanism.

Crews that flew in *hope*, confident, focused, bonded, had measurably shorter and smoother journeys than crews that flew in *fear*, anxious, divided, demoralized. The effect held across ship classes, routes, crews, and Pearl quality. Something about the emotional state of the beings inside the Stasis Bubble was reaching out, through the bubble, into the Veil, and changing its behavior. The phenomenon was named the **Hope Frequency**, in deference to the Spire's framing.

The picture that has emerged since is not one a pre-Silence physicist would have accepted. The Veil contains, somewhere in its substrate, a register that responds to coherent emotional states. Hope and fear are the clearest; love, grief, faith, and despair correlate at lower confidence. The register is *small*, the Veil does not bend to a single hopeful thought, but it is *cumulative*. A crew that spent three days knitting itself into a stable, hopeful unit travels better than one that spent three days fighting. A region where mass casualties recently occurred carries crueler currents than one at peace for decades. The Hope Frequency is, at the limit, the way the Veil *remembers what people have been doing*.

This is the cosmological foundation of *Veilfarers*. The Hope and Fear dice are not abstractions invented for the game. They are the dice the universe rolls in its own register. When your character spends Hope to do the impossible, they spend the same currency the Veil responds to. When a player's Fear-dominant noncritical Roll gives the Keeper Fear, that pressure ripples, very slightly but really, through the substrate.

The implications are large. A ship leaving a port where the crew was loved travels better than one leaving a port where the crew was hated. Crews that bond accumulate a real cosmic advantage; crews that fight each other do worse. A ship that has done genuine evil, slavery, mass killing, the breaking of meaningful promises, flies under a measurable burden. Many of the safest smuggling routes are simply the routes that have carried good people long enough that the Veil has grown used to them. A campaign whose moral choices matter is not only narratively satisfying. The mathematics of the Veil make it cosmically satisfying as well. The galaxy itself is a stakeholder in what the players choose.

GEAR 1, THE CREW'S RESONANCE (OPTIONAL ATMOSPHERIC RULE). TABLES THAT WANT THE HOPE FREQUENCY PRESENT IN THE FICTION CAN TRACK A LOOSE "CREW WEATHER" BETWEEN JUMPS: AFTER A SESSION OF GENUINE BONDING, THE NEXT JUMP IS DESCRIBED AS SMOOTH AND QUICK; AFTER A SESSION OF FRACTURE AND CRUELTY, THE NEXT IS DESCRIBED AS LONG AND GRINDING. THIS IS COLOUR, NOT A MECHANICAL MODIFIER (THE DICE ALREADY CARRY THE WEIGHT). IT SIMPLY LETS THE TABLE FEEL THE VEIL NOTICING.

THE LIVING VEIL: STORMS AND ANOMALIES

In play: these entries are descriptive travel phenomena and have no inherent mechanical effect. To use one as a hazard, select a complete printed environment feature or write its trigger, telegraph, targets, Roll, damage or Stress, duration, and end condition before the crew can be affected. Never add a retroactive effect merely because an anomaly appears.

Veil Storms are the most dangerous. A Storm is a region where the substrate has turned turbulent on a scale large enough to disrupt Pearl-driven transit. A ship caught in one during a jump can lose temporal coherence: the Stasis Bubble destabilizes, time begins to flow unevenly inside it, and the crew may live minutes that take hours, hours that take seconds, or worse. A ship that survives is changed by it. Crews often report vivid dreams of times and places they have never been, lingering echoes from the period when their Bubble was being beaten by the substrate. Some of those echoes turn out to be premonitions. Some are memories of futures that never came. Some are memories of futures that *did* come, for the crews who lived to see them.

Chronal Eddies are smaller and local, regions where time runs at an irregular rate, often spiralling, pulling a ship slightly out of synchronization with its expected arrival. A ship that hits one may arrive with its chronometer off by hours or days. Most are harmless once the crew adjusts. A few are inhabited, in some sense, by patterns nobody has identified.

Memory Wakes are the most philosophically unsettling, regions where the substrate appears to *retain* the emotional patterns of past travelers. A ship crossing one may find its crew flooded with feelings that are not their own: the grief of a refugee fleet that fled a century ago, the joy of a wedding party from the last decade, the rage of a battle that ended here in slaughter. The feelings are real, and they are not the crew's. Trained navigators usually recognize a Wake for what it is. Untrained crews sometimes mistake the borrowed emotion for their own and act on it, with consequences that can be tragic.

Ghost Echoes are the rarest of the routine phenomena and the strangest: encounters with what appear to be other ships, vessels matching the descriptions of ships lost in earlier eras, ships that flicker on the sensors and vanish, ships that broadcast distress calls on frequencies abandoned decades ago. Whether they are genuine remnants somehow preserved, or hallucinations born of the substrate's response to consciousness, or something else, nobody knows. The Free Fleet has a tradition: when a Ghost Echo is sighted, the crew salutes and continues on. It costs nothing to be polite, and the dead may be paying attention.

Apex Threats are the rarest of all and are not, properly, Veil phenomena. They are entities, beings, systems, or whatever the right word is, that appear to *live* in the Veil, observed rarely and briefly across the post-Silence century, never on demand. They are not understood. They do not seem to communicate, and they are rarely aggressive; most recorded encounters end with the Apex simply moving on, leaving the witnesses shaken and unharmed. But their existence is real and the implications are enormous, and they are the

subject of ongoing intelligence work by every major power. The *Keeper's Companion* explores what is known and what is suspected.

THE AWAKENED AND THE SLEEPING IN THE VEIL

In play: the choice between an Awakened (Threadbender) and a Sleeping (Threadwalker) character is made in Chapter 2; Awakened mechanics and Domain Powers live in Chapters 6, 7, 17, and 18. What follows is what the distinction means at the level of the substrate.

At its core, the distinction is about the Veil. A Threadwalker's relationship with it is the standard one: they exist in normal space, enter the Veil only via Pearl-driven ships, and cannot directly perceive or manipulate the substrate. A Threadbender's relationship is non-standard: with training, they can *perceive the substrate as it is*, and with greater training, *act on it directly*.

For Threadwalkers, the vast majority of every species, House, and culture, the Veil is something entered by technology and exited by technology, and that is the whole of it. They feel the Hope Frequency as everyone does, a faint background tone affecting their luck in ways too small to use. They live in the surface layer of reality. The Veil hums beneath them. They do not bend.

For Threadbenders, the rare individuals who can spend Hope to act on the substrate, the Veil is *available* in a way it is not to anyone else. A trained Mystic can feel the currents of the substrate the way a fish feels a river. An Awakened Pilot can sense the eddies and storms before the navigation computer flags them. A Vanguard who knows what they are doing can step partially out of normal space for fractions of a second, briefly inaccessible to ordinary harm. A Scholar who has trained their perception can read a region's local register, can tell at a glance whether a place has been the site of recent good or recent evil.

The crucial point: Threadbenders are not magical. Their abilities do not violate physics. They are physically real practitioners of a real but rare interface with the substrate, the same kind of thing as a Pearl Drive, scaled down to the individual. They are, in a sense, living Pearl Drives, beings whose biology has somehow been calibrated to exchange directly with the Veil.

Why some are born this way, nobody knows. The Mystics have one theory, the Kurogane researchers another, the Amaranth scholars a third, and the Volkov

clans a fourth that mostly involves not asking. The working consensus is only this: Threadbenders appear in every species at roughly one in forty thousand, the trait is not consistently heritable, and it cannot be reliably induced by any known training, technology, or intervention. They are born, and the universe does not explain why.

GEAR 2, THE THREADBENDER'S BURDEN (RECOMMENDED OPTIONAL). Once per session, AT A TENSE MOMENT, THE KEEPER MAY ASK AN AWAKENED PLAYER WHAT THEIR CHARACTER SENSES IN THE SUBSTRATE THAT NO ONE ELSE CAN. THE PLAYER NARRATES A BRIEF IMPRESSION, AN EMOTION NOT THEIR OWN, A FLICKER IN THE DEEP, A SENSE OF BEING NOTICED, AND THE KEEPER FOLDS IT INTO THE NEXT SCENE. THE RULE REWARDS THE AWAKENED FOR AN INTERFACE THE REST OF THE CREW LACKS AND GIVES THE PLAYER A HAND IN THE CAMPAIGN'S METAPHYSICAL FABRIC. TABLES THAT PREFER CLEANER MECHANICS CAN SKIP IT; THE AWAKENED CLASSES WORK FULLY WITHOUT IT.

THE PRECURSORS, AND WHY THE GALAXY FEELS LONELY

Underneath everything, the mechanics of Veil travel, the Hope Frequency, the existence of the Threadbenders, sits one question the post-Silence century has not been able to stop asking.

Why does the Veil exist?

The Veil is not just a feature of the universe. It is the substrate from which the rest seems to emerge, and it has at least one observable property, the Hope Frequency, that strongly implies it was *configured*. Configured for what? By whom? When? Almost everyone who studies the question seriously ends up looking back to the **Precursors**, the long-vanished prior civilization whose works predate biological life as we know it. The reasoning is plausible: the Veil is configured, the Veil is old, and the only thing in the record older than the Veil is the Precursors. If anyone configured it, they did. But this is correlation, not proof. The post-Silence sciences have no instrument that can read the Veil's authorship, if it has one.

What can be said with confidence is brief. **Precursor Vaults exist**, sealed structures of unfathomable age across hundreds of systems, holding artifacts that resist most analysis. **The Precursors themselves are missing**, no remains, no decipherable language, no historical record. **The Veil is real and the Hope Frequency is measurable**, and both feel, to anyone who has spent time inside them, like things someone arranged. Beyond that, the post-Silence understanding is competing theory.

The mainstream archaeological reading: the Precursors were a vanished prior species, perhaps several in succession, who built the Vaults and possibly built or modified the Veil before disappearing for reasons unknown. House Amaranth's archives hold this, arguing the details. House Kurogane's researchers hold a related, blunter view: they built things, we are learning how, the cosmology is a distraction. House Joric has no official view; the question is not operationally relevant. House Valerius regards Precursor sites as significant only insofar as their contents can be brokered.

There are religious readings too. Several Mystic traditions, most prominently the Spire of Verita on Solari Prime, hold that the Precursors were not a civilization at all but a **single distributed consciousness** that, having achieved cosmic-scale unity, found that unity unbearable and chose to engineer the conditions for other minds to exist. In this reading the Veil and the Hope Frequency are not infrastructure but *gestures*, the lingering trace of an ancient act of will. Some Solari Mystics speak of the Precursors with reverence approaching worship; most do not, and even within the Spire the reading is disputed by senior teachers who consider it elegant philosophy rather than testable cosmology. Other readings circulate: Kryllian engineers who insist the Precursors were simply a prior civilization with extraordinary materials science whose strangeness will yield to better tools; Ethereal scholars who suggest the Precursors are *not yet over*, that their vanishing is an artifact of temporal perception; Bloomstrider Groves who teach that the Precursors were the original gardeners and the post-Silence species are their crop, ripening for a purpose nobody has been told. Every Vault recovered produces new variations. None has produced an answer.

What you should take away as a player: the Precursor question is a real, open mystery in the setting. Different campaigns reach different conclusions. Some discover one of the existing theories is correct. Some find none are. Some leave it open, and that openness becomes part of the texture. The system supports all of these.

And here is the one thing the system commits to, independent of any cosmology. By every available proxy, the Veil and the Hope Frequency **reward beings who reach toward each other**. The Frequency rises in the presence of company. It thins in grief and

isolation. The Veil is calmer in trafficked lanes and crueler in abandoned ones. Whether this is the trace of an ancient deliberate act, an emergent property of the substrate, or a

coincidence the eye is biased toward seeing, the system does not say. It simply notes, and asks the table to notice with it, that the universe of the Pearl Era behaves like a galaxy that prefers connection over solitude.

That, more than any theory, is the soul of *Veilfarers*. The Awakened can spend Hope to bend the universe because the universe, as observed, yields slightly to that spending. The Sleeping live without that lever, but their hopes still register, still ripple, still matter. Every campaign asks, in its own vocabulary, the same question all the cultures of the galaxy are asking in theirs: *can we be less alone in this?* The answer, in nearly every story worth telling, is yes, but not without cost, and not without choice, and not without the courage to keep reaching even when the dark does not always answer.

WHAT THE GALAXY HAS INHERITED: THE VAULTS

In play: the five Vault classes below are a reference for exploration play. The deep mechanics of Vault delving live in the exploration material (*Stellar Frontier*) and the *Keeper's Companion*. Here they are setting, the thing your characters go *into*.

Across human-settled space, in patterns no cartographer has explained, stand structures nobody built and nobody now understands: the **Precursor Vaults**, remains of a civilization (or entity, or process) gone long before the first human-equivalent intelligence rose anywhere in the record. They predate the Silence by an order of magnitude no one has measured precisely. Some are weather-worn ruins half-buried in sediment. Some are sealed structures whose entry points remain, after a century of effort, perfectly inviolate. The rarest are *active*, performing functions older than the Silence and continuing, slowly, into the present.

The Vaults are the closest thing the post-Silence galaxy has to a frontier, and the closest thing it has to a *source*: most high-Tier equipment, most contested Precursor data, most artifacts in any House museum came, in some sense, out of a Vault. To manage the flood of independent expeditions and their contradictory reports, the **Imperial Vault Registry** was established in PE 17, classifying every catalogued Vault into one of five ascending classes:

- **Class I, Open Ruins.** Surface-accessible, partially mapped, regularly visited. The introductory class, the Vault every Voidwalker has heard of.
- **Class II, Standing Architecture.** Structurally intact, deep sectors unbreached, ongoing exploration. Where most working expeditions operate.
- **Class III, Active Anomalies.** Maintaining live Precursor functions whose purpose is not understood. Restricted access. Transformational rewards. Real lethality.
- **Class IV, Living Vaults.** Vaults that respond *intentionally* to the presence of visitors. Severely restricted. Once-in-a-career.
- **Class V, Sealed (Unbreachable).** Historically impossible to enter. Forty-seven catalogued; in the past eighteen months, nine have unsealed themselves without external action.

The Registry is taught at the Spire of Verita as standard introductory material. Most Voidwalkers will see no higher than Class II in a normal career. The career-changing finds, the ones that fund a fleet or write a name into the Imperial record, come from Class III and above. What is currently happening to the Class V catalogue, and what it might mean, is a question this book deliberately leaves for the table to discover in play.

WHAT THIS BOOK HAS NOT TOLD YOU

There are deeper layers that this material has deliberately not addressed.

Where the Veil really comes from. What the Apex Threats really are, and what they want, if they want anything. Why some Vaults are sealed, and what is in the ones that have opened. Whether the Hope Frequency is *reading* consciousness or *constituting* it. Whether the Precursors still exist in some form, somewhere, in the substrate or beyond it. Whether the post-Silence species have a cosmic role they have not yet figured out, and if so, who is keeping the score.

These are the genuine mysteries of the *Veilfarers* setting. The Keeper's material addresses them the way mysteries should be addressed: with hints, with partial answers, with directions a campaign can take rather than verdicts it must accept. No published *Veilfarers* material gives a complete answer to any of them. That openness is deliberate. The mysteries are meant to stay mysteries until your table decides, through play, what they will mean for your campaign. Players who read the Keeper's material without permission will not find the truth. They will find a richer set of hints, and they will spoil the texture of their own discovery. Don't.

What you have read here is what every educated person in the post-Silence galaxy could, in principle, know, the surface that the texture rests on. Your campaign builds on this surface. What lies beneath is at your Keeper's table, where it belongs.

APPENDIX A

QUICK START: A SPARK IN THE DARK

"Out here, you're not defined by the world you came from, but by the promises you keep. And in the silence between stars, a promise is the only thing that's real. Break one, and you become a ghost long before you're

dead."

Captain Eva Rostova, of the wandering ship The Stubborn Echo

WELCOME TO THE VOID

This is *Veilfarers*. It is a galaxy of patched-up ships and patched-up souls, a century after a cataclysm called *the Great Silence* shattered civilization. The instantaneous communication network that bound the stars together went dark. Travel became unreliable. The very laws of physics began to fray at the edges.

You are not a chosen one or a god. You are a survivor, a pilot who sees paths in the chaos, an engineer who can breathe life into dead tech, an explorer who ventures where others fear to tread, a scoundrel who trades secrets in shadowed alleys, a vanguard who is a weapon of perfect discipline, or a mystic who feels the strange whispers of the Stellar Veil.

This appendix contains everything you need to play your first session of *Veilfarers*. It is a guide to the core rules, an introduction to the desperate, hopeful tone of the universe, and a complete starter adventure for a Keeper and 2-5 players. **You do not need to read the rest of this book to use it.** When you finish your first session and want more, more powers, more ancestries, more depth, that is when the rest of the chapters become useful.

For now: pick a character. Roll some dice. Walk into the dark with a crew.

THE CORE MECHANIC: THE DANCE OF HOPE AND FEAR

Veilfarers is a story about the tension between hope and fear. This is represented by its core dice mechanic: the **Duality Dice**.

Whenever you attempt an action where the outcome is uncertain, you roll two twelve-sided dice (2d12) of different colors. One is your **Hope Die**. The other is your **Fear Die**.

THE PROCESS OF A ROLL

1. Roll both dice simultaneously. **2. Add the results together.** This sum is your base roll. **3. Add your Trait Modifier** from one of your six core Traits (Agility, Strength, Finesse, Knowledge, Instinct, Presence), from -1 to +2. **4. Compare to the Difficulty Class (DC).** The Keeper gives you a target number. If your final result is equal to or greater than the DC, you succeed. If less, you fail. **5. Check which die was higher.** This is the most important step. It determines the *narrative consequences*.

THE FIVE OUTCOMES

Every Roll produces one of five results; matching dice use Critical Success instead of either row or column below.

RESULT	MEANING
Success with Hope (Met DC, Hope > Fear)	The goal succeeds. An Awakened character gains 1 Hope; a Sleeping character marks one Effort Track segment. No extra mechanical benefit appears unless a rule prints it.
Success with Fear (Met DC, Fear > Hope)	You achieve your goal, but with a cost or complication. The Keeper gains 1 Fear token, subject to the hard maximum of 12.
Failure with Hope (Missed DC, Hope > Fear)	The goal fails with a useful opening. An Awakened character gains 1 Hope; a Sleeping character marks one Effort Track segment.
Failure with Fear (Missed DC, Fear > Hope)	You fail, and the situation gets worse. The Keeper gains 1 Fear token, subject to the hard maximum of 12.

Critical Success. If the physical Hope and Fear d12 faces match, including 1+1, the Roll is an automatic Critical Success. Clear 1 Stress. Awakened gain 1 Hope. Sleeping complete the Effort Track for 1 Effort and gain one further point in Effort or Resolve. Add at most one beneficial fictional detail consistent with established facts; it grants no extra resource, modifier, Action, item, or permanent benefit unless a feature prints one.

HOPE AND FEAR TOKENS

Hope is the Awakened path resource. It can be spent to invoke an Experience (add a flat bonus to a roll), activate certain class features, or fuel Domain Powers. Sleeping characters run on **Effort** instead (Chapter 7); these pregenerated characters are all Awakened.

Fear tokens are the Keeper's resource. They are spent to trigger antagonist abilities, escalate scenes, and put pressure on the crew.

At session start, each Awakened player begins with **2 Hope**. The Keeper rolls **1d4+2** for starting Fear. Fear does not carry between sessions, has a hard maximum of **12**, and loses all excess.

FORGING A QUICK SOUL: PRE-FORGED LEGENDS

For this Quick Start, you will use one of seven pre-generated character archetypes. Choose the one that speaks to you. Each is a complete character ready to play.

These characters are defined by six **Traits**, providing the modifiers for your rolls:

- **Agility** speed, reflexes, dexterity (combat dodging, piloting, athletic action)
- **Strength** raw physical power (lifting, melee force, endurance)
- **Finesse** precision, fine motor skill (ranged accuracy, stealth, tinkering)
- **Knowledge** learned skill (technology, science, lore, languages)

- **Instinct** intuition, perception, survival (noticing things, gut-feel decisions)
- **Presence** social weight, charisma (persuasion, deception, commanding attention)

Each character also has: - **HP** (Hit Points), physical resilience. When HP reaches 0, you are Dying. - **Stress** mental and emotional resilience. When Stress reaches its

cap, you become Overwhelmed: you cannot mark or spend more Stress, cannot pay Stress costs, and have Disadvantage on all Rolls until at least 1 Stress clears. - **Evasion** your defensive number. Enemies must meet or exceed it with an attack roll to strike you. - **Gear** what you carry. Armor reduces incoming damage. - **Starting Powers** special abilities you can use, fueled by Hope or Stress.

THE SEVEN ARCHETYPES

Armor note. Each archetype names an armor item. Use that item's current Armor Slots and damage thresholds from Chapter 13.

ARCHETYPE 1: THE VOID RUNNER (CELESTIARI PILOT)

Experience. "I was the first to chart a stable route through the treacherous Crimson Veil Storm."

Traits. Agility +0, Strength +0, Finesse +2, Knowledge +1, Instinct +1, Presence -1

HP 6 | Stress 6 | Evasion 11

GEAR. LIGHT FLIGHT SUIT, SLUG PISTOL, FRAYED STAR CHART, VEIL-ENERGY CONTROL CRYSTAL.

Starting Powers. - **Zero-G Drift (Void).** Spend 1 Hope. For 1 hour, ignore gravity/vacuum and gain Advantage on Agility Rolls for movement or avoiding detection. - **System Jackknife (Tech).** Spend 1 Hope. Make a Knowledge roll to control a nearby electronic system for 10 minutes.

Playing Notes. You are the ship's hands at the helm. Your Celestiar heritage gives you a deep relationship with the Veil, you *feel* its currents even when others cannot. You are also a survivor of the Veil Rip; you have seen too much to trust easily. Lead with action; the Voidrunner does, the Voidrunner does not explain.

ARCHETYPE 2: THE CORPORATE ENFORCER (HUMAN SOLDIER)

Experience. "I held the line during the Titan Station riots for 72 hours straight, with no backup."

Traits. Agility +1, Strength +2, Finesse +0, Knowledge -1, Instinct +1, Presence +0

HP 7 | Stress 6 | Evasion 9

GEAR. COMBAT ARMOR, ASSAULT RIFLE, DENTED RIOT SHIELD, FALLEN COMRADE'S DOG-TAG.

Starting Powers. - **Kinetic Strike (Kinetic).** Spend 1 Hope on a melee attack. Deals +1d4 damage and gains the Energy tag. - **Rapid Regeneration (Synthesis).** Spend 1 Hope when you or a nearby ally takes damage. The target heals 1d4+2 HP immediately.

Playing Notes. You served. You bled. You lost people you cared about. Now you carry their dog-tag and you bring discipline to every situation. You are not cynical, but you are *careful*. You expect betrayal because betrayal is what your old employers gave you. Lean into the Soldier's protectiveness, the crew is your responsibility now.

ARCHETYPE 3: THE RELIC SEEKER (ETHEREAL SCHOLAR)

Experience. "I activated a dormant Precursor beacon on a dead world and lived to tell the tale."

Traits. Agility +0, Strength -1, Finesse +1, Knowledge +2, Instinct +1, Presence +0

HP 5 | Stress 6 | Evasion 10

GEAR. ENVIRONMENTAL SUIT, HOLDOUT BLASTER, CRACKED DATA-SLATE, VIAL OF ALIEN SAMPLE.

Starting Powers. - **Environmental Adaptation (Synthesis).** Spend 1 Hope. For one hour, adapt your body to survive a hostile environment: vacuum, extreme temperature, toxicity, or radiation. - **Wayfinder's Pulse (Lux).** Spend 1 Hope. Emit a pulse, seen only by you, that reveals within Far range the nearest threat, the nearest exit or path, and any hidden objects of value. Direction, not detail.

Playing Notes. Your Ethereal body lets you slip through walls thinner than yourself; your scholar's training lets you read the world like a text. You came looking for Precursor knowledge and you stay because you found a crew that lets you keep looking. Curiosity is your strongest pull, sometimes stronger than your sense of self-preservation.

ARCHETYPE 4: THE STREET MEDIC (KRYLLIAN ENGINEER)

Experience. "I saved a dying colony with only spare parts, a roll of duct tape, and sheer determination."

Traits. Agility -1, Strength +1, Finesse +1, Knowledge +2, Instinct +0, Presence +0

HP 7 | Stress 6 | Evasion 9

GEAR. MESH ARMOR, PLASMA PISTOL, ALIEN-ETCHED MULTI-TOOL, UNIVERSAL LUBRICANT.

Starting Powers. - **Emergency Repair (Tech).** Mark 1 Stress. Touch damaged tech and make a Knowledge roll (DC 10). Success restores 2d6 HP and removes a malfunction. - **Biological Scan (Synthesis).** Spend 1 Hope. Touch a living creature. Learn its HP and health status. Knowledge roll (DC 10) reveals diseases or cybernetics.

Playing Notes. Four arms. Compound eyes. A mind that sees the universe as a beautiful, malfunctioning machine and a heart that refuses to let people die from broken parts. The Kryllian engineering tradition treats fixing as worship, and you have made the crew your temple. You will weld a hull breach and stitch a wound with the same focused calm.

ARCHETYPE 5: THE TRADE AMBASSADOR (HUMAN DIPLOMAT)

Experience. "I personally brokered the peace treaty that ended the bloody Outer Rim Trade War."

Traits. Agility +0, Strength -1, Finesse +0, Knowledge +1, Instinct +1, Presence +2

HP 6 | Stress 6 | Evasion 10

GEAR. FINE CLOTHES (ARMOR 1), NEEDLE GUN, ENCRYPTED DATAPAD, TREASURED TOKEN (A MEMENTO FROM A LONG-DEAD MENTOR).

Starting Powers. - **Silver Tongue (Social).** Spend 1 Hope, make the Presence Spellcast Roll, and resolve the current card text in Chapter 19. Do not add character Level unless the card itself directs it. - **Spark of Hope (Lux).** Spend 1 Hope. Touch an ally within Close range; they clear 1 Stress. You cannot target yourself.

Playing Notes. You believe in *words* the way Soldiers believe in *bullets*. You think every fight is a fight someone failed to *prevent*. Your Token reminds you that someone, somewhere, believed enough in you to teach you this, and that loss never quite stopped echoing. You speak with weight because you remember what was lost when the speaking failed.

ARCHETYPE 6: THE VEIL TOUCHED (CELESTIARI MYSTIC)

Experience. "I once walked through a Veil storm unprotected and emerged with visions of the future."

Traits. Agility +0, Strength +0, Finesse -1, Knowledge +1, Instinct +2, Presence +1

HP 6 | Stress 6 | Evasion 10

GEAR. LIGHT ARMOR, HOLDOUT BLASTER, WHISPERING VEIL-CRYSTAL, STARLIGHT BLINDFOLD.

Starting Powers. - **Veil Sensitivity** (*Neural*). Spend 1 Hope. For 10 minutes, sense emotions and surface thoughts of creatures in Close range. - **Telekinetic Grasp** (*Neural*). Presence Spellcast Roll (DC 10). For 1 minute, move a single object within Far range (up to 50 lbs) with the precision of your own hands, or hurl it at a target for (Proficiency)xd6 Void damage.

Playing Notes. The Veil has *spoken* to you, and you have not entirely come back from that conversation. Other Celestari treat you with respect tinged with worry. You sometimes know things you should not know. You have learned to keep the blindfold on when you do not want to *see*, because Veil sight is not always a gift. Lean into the strangeness; let it make the crew uncomfortable, and let them love you anyway.

ARCHETYPE 7: THE INFO BROKER (SYNTHETIC SCOUNDREL)

Experience. "I sold the secret location of a lost treasure fleet to three different buyers and escaped before they realized."

Traits. Agility +0, Strength -1, Finesse +2, Knowledge +1, Instinct +1, Presence +0

HP 6 | Stress 6 | Evasion 12

GEAR. STEALTH ARMOR, GAUSS PISTOL, MORPHIC SKELETON KEY, INFLUENTIAL HOLO-MASK.

Starting Powers. - **Data Ghost** (*Tech*). Mark 1 Stress. Choose a security system you interacted with. Knowledge roll (DC 15). Success erases all records of your presence. - **Perfect Facade** (*Social*). Spend 1 Hope. Create a perfect disguise for 1 hour. Advantage on Presence rolls to maintain the deception.

Playing Notes. You are a Synthetic, a forged person, and your relationship with your manufactured origin is complicated. You learned early that *information* travels further than bullets and pays better than honest work. You sell secrets, you keep secrets, and somewhere in the middle of all that you are slowly discovering which secrets are *yours*. The Skeleton Key opens locks; the Mask hides faces. You decide which to use.

THE RULES OF SURVIVAL: THINGS YOU WILL NEED

ADVANTAGE AND DISADVANTAGE

When a roll has special favorable conditions, you have **Advantage**: roll an additional d6 and add it to your total. When circumstances are working against you, you have **Disadvantage**: roll an additional d6 and *subtract* it. Only one such die ever applies. They do not stack from multiple sources, and if both Advantage and Disadvantage are in play they **cancel out** - you roll neither.

ECHOES OF THE VEIL: POWERS

Each archetype has Starting Powers from one or two of the seven Domains (Tech, Synthesis, Social, Neural, Kinetic, Void, Lux). To use a Power, spend the indicated cost (Hope, Stress, or both) and follow the Power's effect. Every Power uses its printed trigger, target, range, cost, Roll, effect, duration, and end condition. If an entry omits one of these, the effect is incomplete and cannot create an additional mechanical consequence by implication.

The full Catalog of Powers is in Chapter 19 of this book. For your first session, the two Powers on your archetype card are all you need.

CONFLICT AND HARM

When attacked, the attacker rolls 2d12 + their attack Trait. If they meet or exceed your **Evasion**, the attack hits. They then roll damage and compare the total to your two **Damage Thresholds** (Major and Severe, listed on your sheet): below Major marks **1 HP**, at or above Major marks **2 HP**, at or above Severe marks **3 HP**. You may spend one **Armor Slot** to drop a hit one step (Severe to Major, Major to Minor, Minor to no HP at all). Mark the resulting HP.

When all your HP are marked, you are **Dying**. You cannot take Actions or Maneuvers. At the beginning of each of your Spotlights while Dying, roll 1d12; on an 8 or higher, mark 1 Dying Progress. At 2 Dying Progress, enter Final. While Final, roll the same way and mark Final Progress; at 2 Final Progress, you die. An ally within Melee range may use an Action and make a Knowledge or Finesse Roll against DC 15 to Stabilize you; Final requires DC 20. Stabilization clears all progress but does not restore HP.

Stress represents pressure, fear, and cognitive overload. When all Stress slots are marked, you are **Overwhelmed** and have Disadvantage on all rolls until you clear at least 1 Stress. Rest recovery follows the Short Rest and Long Rest moves in Chapter 9.

QUICK REFERENCE SUMMARY

- **Roll 2d12 (Hope + Fear) + Trait. Meet or exceed DC.**
- **Higher die determines Hope/Fear narrative outcome.**
- **Critical Success:** Hope = Fear (any value). Auto-success and clear 1 Stress. Awakened gain 1 Hope. Sleeping mark both Effort Track segments, clear the completed Track to gain 1 Effort, then gain one further point in either Effort or Resolve; if Effort is at maximum, take Resolve.
- **Hope** fuels Powers, invokes Experiences. **Fear** is the Keeper's resource.
- **Session Fear pool** = 1d4+2, refreshes each session.
- **HP 0** = Dying. Stabilize with a Knowledge or Finesse Roll at **DC 15**; Final is **DC 20**.
- **Stress cap** = mental breakdown threshold. Recovers with rest.
- **Armor Slots** drop a hit one severity step. **Evasion** is your defensive number; **Major / Severe** thresholds set how hard a hit lands.
- **Difficulty Class (DC):** Routine 5, Easy 10, Challenging 15, Difficult 20, Extreme 25, Nearly Impossible 30.

When the Quick Start adventure is done and the crew wants more, more powers, more ancestries, more depth, the rest of this book is waiting. Welcome to the Pearl Era.

APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY AND INDEX: THE WORDS OF THE PEARL ERA

"The words came first. Before the ships, before the credits, before any of the small machines we made to keep ourselves from drowning. We named the dark, and the names held."

Master Keeper Vellathos of the Spire, Welcome Letter to New Initiates, Year 100 of the Pearl Era

This appendix is both glossary and index. Each entry gives a working definition and points to the chapter where the term is substantially treated.

A

Ability (*Domain Power type*). A reliable, passive, reactive, or automatically resolved Domain Power. It may still have a printed cost or trigger. **Find it in:** Chapters 18 and 19.

Achromatic Aura-Sight (*ancestry*). The **Ailuran** ancestry gift granting perception of thermal radiation and bio-electric fields in lieu of normal color vision. **Find it in:** Chapter 3.

Advantage (*mechanic*). Roll one additional d6 and **add** it to the roll's total. Multiple sources do not stack; Advantage and Disadvantage cancel, so roll neither. An Experience is its own flat bonus, not Advantage. **Find it in:** Chapter 9.

Affluent (*wealth tier*). **Wealth Tier 3:** a character with significant economic standing, owns ships or businesses outright, employs others, addressed formally by strangers. **Find it in:** Chapter 15.

Ailuran (*ancestry*). The feline-descended ancestry, recently exposed by the **Veil Rip**. Solitary, digitigrade, slit-pupiled, claw-equipped, driven by **Irrepressible Curiosity**. **Find it in:** Chapter 3.

Apex Threat (*setting*). The rarest and least-understood entity class, substrate-dwellers that inhabit the deepest layers of the **Veil**, rarely surfacing. Their incidence has been rising since the Veil Rip. **Find it in:** Chapter 1.

Armor Slots (*mechanic*). The armor's pool of active soak: mark one to reduce a hit by one severity tier. Characters, drones, vehicles, and starships all use the same armor terminology. **Find it in:** Chapter 10.

Aurelius Magnus (*setting*). The immortal Emperor who unified the pre-Silence human state and still rules the post-Silence Empire. His origins, memory, and relationship to Precursor technology remain unresolved. **Find it in:** Chapters 1 and 5, *The Galaxy in Depth*, and the Keeper's Companion.

Awakened (*path*). One of the two paths a Voidwalker may follow. An Awakened character perceives the **substrate** and channels **Domain Powers**. **Find it in:** Chapter 2.

Awakening (*path transition*). A story event through which a Sleeping character becomes Awakened. It is resolved during downtime, costs no Advancement Slot, and converts the character's path-specific engine under the procedure at the end of Chapter 7. The Core provides no ordinary reverse procedure. **Find it in:** Chapters 7, 11, and 12.

B

Bestiary (*reference*). The complete catalog of canonical adversaries for the game, 30 standard plus 15 phased bosses. **Find it in:** Chapter 9, Keeper's Companion.

Blaze of Glory (*mechanic*). The optional dramatic flourish a dying player may invoke as part of their **Death Move**. **Find it in:** Chapter 10.

Bloomstrider (*ancestry*). The plant-animal fusion ancestry, children of living planets, organized into **Groves**. Carriers of the **Nurturing Touch** healing gift. **Find it in:** Chapter 3.

Boarding Action (*starship combat*). A combat mode that mixes ship-scale and personal-scale rounds when a crew breaches an enemy vessel. **Find it in:** Chapter 17 (the starship layer) and Chapter 10 (the personal-scale fighting).

C

Calibrated Minor Ritual (*Sleeping Mystic Resolve Move*). A ten-minute group procedure fueled by one Resolve Die. Every target receives the same chosen effect for a duration in hours equal to the die result. It does not generate Fear. **Find it in:** Chapter 7.

Captain (*role*). The ship station that coordinates the crew, makes command-level decisions, and resolves leadership effects in **starship combat**. **Find it in:** Chapter 17.

Celestari (*ancestry*). The substrate-attuned ancestry, deeply linked to **Mystic** traditions and the **Spire of Verita**. Often serves as **Threadbenders**. **Find it in:** Chapter 3.

Chronal Shear (*setting*). The post-Silence Veil phenomenon in which time flows differently inside Veil-space than outside, making **FTL travel** dangerous for three years after the Silence. **Find it in:** Chapter 19.

Chrono-Oyster (*setting*). The biological organism native to Hydros that produces **Pearls**. The species does not breed in captivity; the supply is finite. **Find it in:** Chapter 19.

Church of the Eternal Veil (*faction*). A religious organization that worships the substrate and the unknowable. A setting faction, not a playable affiliation at creation. **Find it in:** Chapters 5, 8, Keeper's Companion.

Class (*character creation*). The mechanical archetype defining a character's role and abilities. **Find it in:** Chapters 6, 7.

Class V Vault (*setting*). **Sealed (Unbreachable)** Precursor Vault, historically impossible to open. The Imperial Vault Registry catalogued 47 Class V Vaults; nine have begun self-unsealing in the past eighteen months as the **containment lattice** fails. **Find it in:** the Keeper's Companion.

Clock (*mechanic*). A segmented progress tracker representing time, danger, or accumulation toward an outcome. **Find it in:** Chapters 9, 3, Keeper's Companion.

Close (*range band*). The second range band, 2-10 meters at personal scale. **Find it in:** Chapter 9.

Containment Lattice (*setting theory*). A disputed scholarly name for structural patterns that appear to limit or redirect Veil phenomena. No public source proves that it was deliberately built or identifies what it contains. **Find it in:** *The Galaxy in Depth* and the Keeper's Companion.

Credit (*setting*). The post-Silence galactic currency, anti-digital by design and tied to physical **Pearl Dust** for non-counterfeitability. **Find it in:** Chapter 15.

Critical Success (*mechanic*). When the Hope and Fear dice show the same value, the action automatically succeeds and gains the system's listed critical benefits. Individual features may add a specific critical effect. **Find it in:** Chapter 9.

D

Damage Thresholds (*mechanic*). The two values, Major and Severe, that decide how many HP a hit marks; Overkill adds 1 HP per 10 points over Severe. **Find it in:** Chapter 10.

Death Move (*mechanic*). The optional final action a player may take when their character drops to 0 HP. **Find it in:** Chapter 10.

Desperation (*mechanic*). A phased boss entering its final phase gives the Keeper 3 Fear instead of 2, subject to the hard maximum of 12. **Find it in:** Chapter 9.

Difficulty Class (DC) (*mechanic*). The target number a roll must meet or beat to succeed. **Find it in:** Chapter 9.

Diplomat (*class*). The social-mechanical class, expert in negotiation, influence, and **Social Domain Powers**. **Find it in:** Chapter 7.

Disadvantage (*mechanic*). Roll one additional d6 and **subtract** it from the roll's total. Multiple sources do not stack; it cancels Advantage. **Find it in:** Chapter 9.

Domain (*setting*). One of the seven schools of substrate-channeled power: **Tech, Synthesis, Social, Neural, Kinetic, Void, Lux**. **Find it in:** Chapter 18.

Domain Power (*mechanic*). A named Power belonging to one of the seven Domains. Awakened characters normally prepare Powers through Loadout and Vault; the Sleeping Mystic reconstructs researched Powers through Uncanny Power. **Find it in:** Chapters 18 and 19.

Domain Study Project (*Sleeping Mystic research*). A clock equal to 4 plus the selected Domain level. Completion unlocks every Power in that Domain at exactly that level. Research above Level 1 requires two different Domains at the preceding level. **Find it in:** Chapter 7.

Dormant Domain (*Sleeping multiclass*). One genuinely new Domain recorded from the secondary Class when a Sleeping character multiclassed. It grants no Powers, Vault, Loadout, access roll, or other benefit while the character remains Sleeping. If that character Awakens, the Dormant Domain becomes their active third Domain and grants no starter Powers. **Find it in:** Chapters 7, 11, and 12.

Duality Dice (*mechanic*). The two twelve-sided dice, one Hope, one Fear, rolled together for every meaningful action. Their colors determine narrative consequence. **Find it in:** Chapter 9.

E

Emergency Stabilization (*Sleeping Mystic ritual option*). While Sustained Restoration is active, consume all remaining ritual duration and end every effect to stabilize one affected Dying creature. It restores no HP. **Find it in:** Chapter 7.

Empire, The (*setting*). The post-Silence galactic political entity ruled by **Aurelius Magnus**, comprising the six Great Houses and their territories. **Find it in:** Chapter 1.

Engineer (*role*). The ship station that manages **Hull, Shields, Heat, Systems** in starship combat. **Find it in:** Chapter 17.

Established (*wealth tier*). **Wealth Tier 1:** the working baseline, a character with a job, basic equipment, registered identity. The default starting Tier for most characters. **Find it in:** Chapter 15.

Ethereal (*ancestry*). The phase-touched ancestry, capable of stepping outside normal reality via **Phase Shift**. **Find it in:** Chapter 3.

Evasion (*mechanic*). A character's defensive value, used to determine whether enemy attacks connect. **Find it in:** Chapter 6.

Experience (*mechanic*). A short narrative tag describing a character's competency. An Awakened character spends 1 **Hope** to add its flat bonus to one relevant roll. A Sleeping character invokes one relevant Experience per roll **for free**. An Experience is not Advantage. **Find it in:** Chapters 7-9.

Explorers' Guild (*faction*). The faction of professional **Threadwalkers** and Vault-seekers, organized for discovery. **Find it in:** Chapters 5, 8, Keeper's Companion.

F

Far (*range band*). The third range band, 10-30 meters at personal scale. **Find it in:** Chapter 9.

Fatal Compulsion (*deprecated*). An older name for the **Ailuran** ancestry mechanic. The canonical current name is **Irrepressible Curiosity**.

Fear (*mechanic*). The Keeper's resource pool, gained on Success with Fear, Failure with Fear, or by a printed trigger with an explicit amount. Spent on stated Keeper Moves and Fear abilities. It resets each session to **1d4+2**, never carries over, and has a hard maximum of 12. **Find it in:** Chapter 9.

Fear Pool (*mechanic*). The Keeper's accumulated **Fear** tokens. Its hard maximum is 12; excess is lost. It resets to **1d4+2** each session and never carries over. **Find it in:** Chapter 9.

Finesse (*trait*). One of the six core character traits, precision, dexterity, deftness. **Find it in:** Chapter 9.

Finesse (Pilot/Navigate) (*subtrait notation*). A Finesse Roll used to pilot a vessel or navigate a route. It uses the Finesse Trait score. **Find it in:** Chapters 9 and 17.

Forgotten (*wealth tier*). **Wealth Tier 0:** a character entirely outside the Imperial economic system. No allowance, no purchasing power, only favors paid in blood, pain, or service. **Find it in:** Chapter 15.

Free Fleet (*faction*). The post-Silence civilization of independent ship crews, the galaxy's outcasts, traders, and wanderers, organized only by mutual aid. **Find it in:** Chapters 5, 8, Keeper's Companion.

G

Great Houses, The Six (*setting*). The major political-economic powers of the Empire: **Amaranth, Joric, Kurogane, Solari, Valerius, Volkov**. **Find it in:** Chapter 5.

Great Silence, The (*setting*). The instantaneous failure of the **Q-Net** at GST 14:27 on the date of the Silence, beginning the post-Silence era. **Find it in:** Chapter 1.

Group Adaptation (*Sleeping Mystic ritual effect*). Gives every ritual target Advantage against the same specific environmental hazard. A Master Veil Walker selects two hazards. **Find it in:** Chapter 7.

Group Calibration (*Sleeping Mystic ritual effect*). Gives every ritual target the same +1 bonus to Rolls with one selected Trait. A Master Veil Walker increases the bonus to +2. **Find it in:** Chapter 7.

Grove (*setting*). The **Bloomstrider** social organization, extended families spread across many planets, connected by shared seeds and beliefs. **Find it in:** Chapter 3.

Gunner (*role*). The ship station that operates weapons in starship combat. **Find it in:** Chapter 17.

H

Heat (*starship*). One of four ship-status tracks, accumulates from weapon discharge, shield strain, and exotic events; **Heat Cap** exceeded triggers cascading systems damage. **Find it in:** Chapter 17.

Hidden Wound (*NPC design*). The third layer of the canonical **Three-Layer Method** for NPC construction. **Find it in:** the Keeper's Companion.

Hope (*Awakened resource*). The Awakened resource gained when the Hope die exceeds Fear, spent to invoke Experiences, fuel Powers, and clear Stress. Cap of 6 unless a specific Feature raises it. Sleeping characters use Effort instead. **Find it in:** Chapters 7 and 9.

Hope Frequency, The (*setting*). The Mystic name for the substrate's responsiveness to emotional state, the cosmological backdrop of the Hope/Fear engine. **Find it in:** Chapter 1.

House Kaelen (*minor Imperial House*). The Border Arbiters, founded by direct Imperial decree for interspecies diplomacy, treaty arbitration, frontier mediation, and the protection of vulnerable populations. It has legal and diplomatic authority but little independent coercive power. **Find it in:** Chapters 3, 5, 8, and 16.

HP (Hit Points) (*mechanic*). A character's physical durability. At 0 HP, a character is dying and may execute a **Death Move**. **Find it in:** Chapter 9.

Hull (*starship*). The structural integrity track of a starship. At 1-2, **Critically Damaged**; at 0, **Dying**. **Find it in:** Chapter 17.

Hum, The (*setting*). A colloquial term for the **Hope Frequency**, used by working-class crews. **Find it in:** Chapter 3.

Human (*ancestry*). The most numerous post-Silence ancestry, adaptable and politically distributed. **Find it in:** Chapter 3.

I

Imperator (*setting*). Formal title of **Aurelius Magnus**.

Imperial (*setting*). Pertaining to the Empire of Aurelius Magnus.

Imperial Vault Registry (*institution*). The official Imperial catalogue of all known **Precursor Vaults**, maintained jointly by House Solari and the Explorers' Guild. The Registry classifies Vaults into five categories (Class I through Class V) and gates access to each by Wealth Tier, faction sponsorship, or Imperial Survey approval. **Find it in:** Chapters 1, 13, Keeper's Companion.

Instinct (*trait*). One of the six core traits, perception, intuition, environmental reading. **Find it in:** Chapter 9.

Integrity (*starship*). A system's durability track. Ship-scale Criticals, Heat overflow, and specific effects can reduce it; at 0 the system is offline. An Engineer restores it with a Knowledge Roll against DC 15 as a full action. **Find it in:** Chapter 17.

Irrepressible Curiosity (*ancestry mechanic*). Once per session, when discoverable hidden information exists, the Keeper points out a lead; the player freely chooses whether to pursue it, pays no refusal cost, and gains 1 path resource only after uncovering the truth. **Find it in:** Chapter 3.

J

Joric (*House*). The Sentinel House, defensive doctrine, motto "*We Stand Between*". **Find it in:** Chapter 5.

K

Keeper (*role*). The game's facilitator and antagonist-voice. Equivalent to GM in other systems. The Keeper's role and craft is detailed in the Keeper's Companion.

Kinetic (*domain*). The Domain of motion, force, and mass, combat-aligned, the discipline of the body's substrate-resonance. **Find it in:** Chapter 18.

Knowledge (*trait*). One of the six core traits, recall, analysis, applied learning. **Find it in:** Chapter 9.

Knowledge (Medicine) (*subtrait notation*). A Knowledge Roll using medical training, diagnosis, treatment, or biological procedure. It uses the Knowledge Trait score. **Find it in:** Chapters 9 and 13.

Knowledge (Tech) (*subtrait notation*). A Knowledge Roll using engineering, networks, systems, or technical procedure. It uses the Knowledge Trait score. **Find it in:** Chapters 9 and 13.

Kryllian (*ancestry*). The insectoid four-armed ancestry. Two upper arms for combat and heavy lifting, two lower arms at the rib-line for fine manipulation. Chitinous exoskeleton, compound eyes, long-lived. **Find it in:** Chapter 3.

Kryx (*ancestry*). One of the nine playable ancestries. **Find it in:** Chapter 3.

Kurogane (*House*). The God-Makers House, transhumanist, master crafters, deep involvement with Veil engineering and **Temples of Information** alignment. **Find it in:** Chapter 5.

L

Lattice (*setting*). Short form of **Containment Lattice**.

Level (*mechanic*). A character's overall power progression, advancing through play. Standard campaigns reach Level 10. **Find it in:** Chapter 12.

Liminal Presence (*deprecated*). An older name for the **Ethereal** ancestry's intangibility ability. The canonical current name is **Phase Shift**.

Loadout (*mechanic*). The active **Domain Powers** an Awakened character may use in a given scene, drawn from their Vault: 5 cards at Tier 1, 6 at Tier 2, and 7 at Tier 3. Sleeping characters have no Loadout; the Sleeping Mystic uses **Uncanny Archive** and **Uncanny Power** instead. **Find it in:** Chapters 7 and 18.

Long Climb, The (*setting*). Colloquial term for **Advancement** and the campaign's level progression. **Find it in:** Chapter 12.

Lux (*domain*). The Hope Frequency Domain, light, healing, illumination, the substrate's positive response to emotional resonance. **Find it in:** Chapter 18.

M

Magnate (*wealth tier*). Informal usage for **Wealth Tier 5 Transcendent**.

Melee (*range band*). The closest personal range band, within arm's reach. At ship scale, **Adjacent** is the boarding band. **Find it in:** Chapters 10, 17.

Module (*starship*). An installable ship system, defensive, offensive, utility, or specialty, that customizes a vessel beyond its base stat block. **Find it in:** Chapter 17.

Multiclass (*advancement*). A once-per-character, Tier 2+ option costing two Advancement Slots on either Path. The secondary Class

always uses the version matching the character's current Path. It grants the secondary Hope or Effort Feature and Background Question, but not the secondary Class Feature or Subclass. An Awakened multiclass activates one genuinely new Domain; a Sleeping multiclass gains one eligible secondary Class Resolve Move and records that Domain as Dormant. **Find it in:** Chapters 11 and 12.

Mystic (class). A character whose story centers on the Veil. The Awakened Mystic reaches it by instinct; the Sleeping Mystic reconstructs effects through ritual, research, and dangerous forced manifestations. **Find it in:** Chapters 6 and 7.

N

Neural (domain). The Domain of the mind, perception, memory, dreams, psionic effects. **Find it in:** Chapter 18.

Ship-scale harm (rule). Ship weapons deal $\times 5$ damage to personal targets, applied through halved Damage Thresholds. Exactly 0 HP is **Dying** with the Death Move available; -1 HP or lower is killed outright with no Death Move. **Find it in:** Chapter 17.

Nurturing Touch (ancestry mechanic). The canonical **Bloomstrider** healing gift: after focused contact, clear 1 HP at the start of each of the target's next 1d4 Spotlights; multiple applications do not stack. **Find it in:** Chapter 3.

O

Overkill (mechanic). Excess damage that exceeds an armor or shield threshold, with cascading effects on the target. **Find it in:** Chapter 10.

P

Path (character creation). A character's substrate orientation, **Awakened** (substrate-aware) or **Sleeping** (substrate-mundane). **Find it in:** Chapter 2.

Pearl (setting). The biological-quantum artifact harvested from **Chrono- Oysters**, used to power **Pearl Drives** for **FTL travel**. Each jump consumes one Pearl. **Find it in:** Chapter 1.

Pearl Drive (setting). The faster-than-light propulsion system that uses a **Pearl** to generate a **Stasis Bubble** during Veil transit. **Find it in:** Chapter 5.

Pearl Era, The (setting). The post-Silence period, approximately 103 years long, defined by Pearl-based FTL economy and the slow rebuilding of galactic civilization. **Find it in:** Chapter 1.

Pearl Standard, The (economy). The post-Silence monetary system tying credits to Pearl-Dust backing. **Find it in:** Chapter 15.

Phase Shift (ancestry mechanic). The canonical **Ethereal** ancestry gift, pass through solid objects thinner than body width and not protected by energy. **Find it in:** Chapter 3.

Pilot (role). The ship station that controls maneuvering and Drive Modes in starship combat. **Find it in:** Chapter 17.

Powerful (wealth tier). **Wealth Tier 4:** a character operating at House scale, multiple ships, properties, employees. **Find it in:** Chapter 15.

Precursor Vault (setting). Structures left by the Precursors, ranging from open ruins to sealed chambers. The **Imperial Vault Registry** classifies them into five categories (Class I through Class V) by accessibility, knowledge, find potential, and active risk.

Precursors, The (setting). The vanished civilization whose ruins predate all known life. Their substrate-engineered architecture is the foundation of the modern galaxy. Their **Awakening** is the cosmological event of the present moment.

Presence (trait). One of the six core traits, social weight, personal force, persuasion. **Find it in:** Chapter 9.

Prosperous (wealth tier). **Wealth Tier 2:** a character with professional standing, a small reputation, and Military-tier equipment access. **Find it in:** Chapter 15.

Protective Geometry (Veil Walker ritual effect). Grants every ritual target either +1 Evasion or +1 to both damage thresholds; Shared Lattice increases the selected benefit to +2. **Find it in:** Chapter 7.

Q

Q-Net (Quantum Entanglement Network) (setting). The pre-Silence instantaneous communications network that bound the old galaxy together. Its collapse caused the **Great Silence**. **Find it in:** Chapter 13.

Quirk, Ship (starship). A narrative trait, one positive and one negative, that gives a vessel personality. **Find it in:** Chapter 17.

R

Range Band (mechanic). Abstract distance categories: **Melee**, **Very Close**, **Close**, **Far**, **Very Far**, used in personal combat; starships use their own ship-scale bands. **Find it in:** Chapters 10, 17.

Recall Cost (RC). The Stress cost printed on a Power card to move that Power from the Vault to the Loadout outside a Long Rest. Active-scene recall also requires an Action and 1 Hope.

Reputation (mechanic). A faction-by-faction tracking system measuring the weight of a character's name. Tracked from -3 (Hated) through +6 (Legendary). **Find it in:** Chapter 16.

Reputation Ladder (mechanic). The ten-level structure of Reputation scores, with thresholds at 2/5/10/17/25/35 RP positive and -2/-5/-10 negative. **Find it in:** Chapter 16.

Resolve (Sleeping path resource). A scarce pool spent on a Sleeping character's signature Resolve Moves. Resolve Dice are rolled when a Move says spend and roll. **Find it in:** Chapters 2 and 7.

Rift Spinner (ancestry). One of the nine playable ancestries. **Find it in:** Chapter 3.

S

Scholar (class). The knowledge-focused class, researcher, analyst, **Synthesis** Domain practitioner. **Find it in:** Chapters 6, 7.

Scoundrel (class). The deception-and-infiltration class, ghosts, saboteurs, social manipulators. **Find it in:** Chapters 6, 7.

Set-Piece Combat (starship). The epic-scale starship combat format, organized into **Approach**, **Infiltration**, and **Escape** phases for capital-ship engagements. **Find it in:** Chapter 17.

Shared Lattice (Veil Walker Mastery). Improves each Calibrated Minor Ritual effect and links all affected creatures telepathically for the ritual's duration. **Find it in:** Chapter 7.

Shields (starship). The active defensive layer of a starship, absorbs damage before it reaches Hull. **Find it in:** Chapter 17.

Sleeping (path). A character who does not naturally perceive the Veil and uses Effort plus a scarce Resolve pool for signature actions. **Find it in:** Chapters 2 and 7.

Social (domain). The Domain of crowds, influence, and the social fabric. **Find it in:** Chapter 18.

Solara Compact (faction). The Core Worlds coalition arguing for restoration of the pre-Silence Imperial order. **Find it in:** Chapters 5, 8, Keeper's Companion.

Solari (House). The Fading Crown House, Core Worlds traditionalists, formal Mystic tradition, home of the **Spire of Verita**. **Find it in:** Chapter 5.

Soldier (class). The combat-focused class, gunners, marines, ground troops. **Find it in:** Chapters 6, 7.

Spell (mechanic). A type of **Domain Power** that is an active, expenditure-based effect (typically costing Hope or Stress). Distinguished from **Ability**. **Find it in:** Chapter 18.

Spire of Verita (institution). The Solari Prime Mystic academy and Awakened training center. The galaxy's premier substrate-research institution, deeply staffed by **Celestari**. **Find it in:** Chapter 5.

Spotlight (System) (mechanic). The dynamic distribution of narrative focus in personal and starship scenes. It is never determined by initiative, a contest, a Roll, a bonus, a penalty, Advantage, Disadvantage, or speed. A printed rule may require a character to yield Spotlight; the Keeper may spend Fear to Spotlight an eligible NPC under the Fear procedure. **Find it in:** Chapters 9, 10, and 17.

Stasis Bubble (technology). The Pearl-Drive-generated zone inside which time stops during Veil transit. **Find it in:** Chapter 19.

Stasis Sheath (technology). The personal-scale analogue of the Stasis Bubble, emergency protection sometimes worn by Veil-runners.

Stellar Commerce Guild (faction). The post-Silence trade organization, dominant in commercial Veil routes. **Find it in:** Chapters 5, 8, Keeper's Companion.

Stellar Veil (setting). The unstable substrate medium used for faster-than-light travel and associated with Domain Powers, Veil storms, and post-Silence anomalies. **Find it in:** Chapters 1, 17, 18, and 19.

Strength (trait). One of the six core traits, raw physical power, leverage, endurance. **Find it in:** Chapter 9.

Stress (mechanic). A character's psychological and resource pool, drained by exertion and pressure. **Find it in:** Chapter 9.

Sub-Strain (ancestry mechanic). The Ailuran character creation choice between two divergent phenotypes, the only canonical ancestry-internal split with mechanical weight. **Find it in:** Chapter 3.

Substrate (setting). The underlying medium of reality that the Veil sits within, the layer at which the **Hope Frequency** resonates. **Find it in:** Chapter 1.

Substrate Dreams (setting). The shared visions reported by long-Veil-transit crews, increasingly vivid since the **Veil Rip**. **Find it in:** the Keeper's Companion.

Surface (NPC design). The first layer of the **Three-Layer Method** what an NPC presents to the world. **Find it in:** Chapter 11, Keeper's Companion.

Sustained Restoration (Sleeping Mystic ritual effect). Clears 1 marked HP from every target at the end of each complete hour. It may be sacrificed through Emergency Stabilization. **Find it in:** Chapter 7.

Synthesis (domain). The Domain of biology, healing, growth, transformation, and engineered living systems. **Find it in:** Chapters 18 and 19.

Synthetic (ancestry). The constructed-intelligence ancestry, distinct from non-sapient AI by canonical doctrine. **Find it in:** Chapter 3.

T

Tech (domain and subtrait). As a Domain, Tech governs the seam between substrate and machines. As Knowledge (Tech), it is the specialization used for technical Rolls. **Find it in:** Chapters 9, 18, and 19.

Temples of Information (institution). The interstellar communications relay network, approximately 200 stations operating **quantum crystal pair** infrastructure. Aligned and maintained under **Kurogane** monopoly. **Find it in:** Chapter 13.

Threadbender (role). A trained Veil-navigator, a Mystic-aligned **Pilot** who reads substrate currents. **Find it in:** Chapter 19.

Threadwalker (role). A Veil-navigator on long-distance commercial routes. **Find it in:** Chapter 19.

Three-Layer Method (NPC design). The canonical structure for building NPCs: **Surface, Motivation, Hidden Wound**. **Find it in:** the Keeper's Companion.

Tier (mechanic, multiple). (1) Character Tier, a progression band. (2) Technology Tier, an item's sophistication and access. (3) Wealth Tier, economic reach. (4) Ship Tier, a vessel's scale class. **Find it in:** Chapters 12, 13, 15, and 17.

Tightrope (reputation). The Reputation mechanic governing rival faction pairings, gaining favor with one often costs favor with the other. **Find it in:** Chapter 16.

Trait (mechanic). One of the six core character attributes: **Agility, Strength, Finesse, Knowledge, Instinct, Presence**, each ranging from -1 to +2. **Find it in:** Chapter 9.

Transcendent (wealth tier). **Wealth Tier 5:** a character whose economic position is essentially unlimited within reasonable narrative scope. The limiting factors are political, relational, and ethical. **Find it in:** Chapter 15.

U

Uncanny Archive (Sleeping Mystic Class Feature). An irregular collection of researched Domain-level packages. It has no Loadout or Vault; its Powers are accessed through Uncanny Power. **Find it in:** Chapter 7.

Uncanny Power (Sleeping Mystic Resolve Move). The Sleeping Mystic spends Resolve Dice, generates Fear as the Move directs, determines the accessible Power level through the Chapter 7 access procedure, then makes a Knowledge Spellcast Roll against **DC = 10 + the chosen Power's Level**, meaning the level of its unlocked Domain package. A Critical Success refunds the Resolve spent. **Find it in:** Chapters 7 and 18.

V

Valerius (House). The Pearl Merchants House, controls **Chrono-Pearl** trade, motto "*Profit Secures Peace*." **Find it in:** Chapter 5.

Vanguard (class). The disciplined-warrior class, perfect-discipline combatants. **Find it in:** Chapters 6, 7.

Vault (mechanic). An Awakened character's complete library of accessible **Domain Powers**, beyond the Powers currently prepared in the Loadout. Loadout capacity is 5 Powers at Tier 1, 6 at Tier 2, and 7 at Tier 3. Also: a Precursor structure (see **Precursor Vault**, and the **Vault Class** entries below). **Find it in:** Chapter 18.

Vault Class I, Open Ruins (setting). The lowest classification in the **Imperial Vault Registry**. Surface-accessible, partially mapped, low risk, low reward. The Vault every Voidwalker has heard of.

Vault Class II, Standing Architecture (setting). Structurally intact Vaults with mapped outer sectors and unbreached deep sectors. Tier 2 Wealth access. The working expedition class.

Vault Class III, Active Anomalies (setting). Vaults that maintain active Precursor functions whose purpose is not understood. House sponsorship required. Transformational rewards, lethal risk.

Vault Class IV, Living Vaults (setting). Vaults that respond intentionally to visitors. Severely restricted access. Once-in-a-career encounters.

Vault Class V, Sealed (Unbreachable) (setting). Historically impossible to enter. Forty-seven catalogued. In the past eighteen months, nine have unsealed themselves without external action.

Vault Registry, Imperial (*institution*). The official catalogue of all known Precursor Vaults, maintained by the Office of the Vault Surveyor on Solari Prime. Established PE 17. The five-class taxonomy is canonical and is taught at the Spire of Verita.

Veil Storm (*setting*). A localized region of unstable substrate, often clustered around recent mass casualties or strong emotional events. **Find it in:** Chapter 1.

Veil, The (*setting*). The substrate medium of faster-than-light travel and the cosmological backdrop of the post-Silence galaxy. Not a "dimension" but a *layer* of reality whose responsiveness to emotional resonance is the source of the **Hope Frequency**. **Find it in:** Chapter 1.

Veil-Touched (*setting*). A broad term for people or creatures altered by prolonged or unusual Veil exposure. It is descriptive, not a single diagnosis or ancestry. **Find it in:** Chapters 1, 17, and the Keeper's Companion.

Very Far (*range band*). The fourth range band, 30+ meters at personal scale. **Find it in:** Chapter 13.

Void (*domain*). The Domain of darkness, absence, and substrate-shadow. **Find it in:** Chapter 18.

Voidrunner (*role*). A pilot or crew member of an independent vessel, particularly within the **Free Fleet**.

Voidwalker (*role*). The general term for an active **Veilfarers** player character, regardless of class or path. **Find it in:** Chapter 8.

Volkov (*House*). The War-Makers House, military doctrine, motto "*Strength is Truth*." **Find it in:** Chapter 5.

W

Wealth Check (*mechanic*). The roll required to acquire an item above a character's standard Tier monthly allowance. A Knowledge or Presence roll against a target item's Tier-derived DC. **Find it in:** Chapter 15.

Wealth Tier (*mechanic*). A character's economic position, from Forgotten through Transcendent, used to frame access, obligations, and acquisition. **Find it in:** Chapter 15.

ATTRIBUTION

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APPENDIX C

VERSION CONTROL

11.1-RC2 DRAFT 3 - EQUIPMENT BENCHMARK

The Core equipment catalog is explicitly canonical and Rust & Steel additive. Phase Blade and Phase Pistol prices were corrected to WT3. Riot Armor was reclassified as Military TT2, reduced to 5 Armor Slots, and repriced to WT2. The Suppressor modification now matches the expansion's standard model. Equipment data gained Burden, family, weight-class, and benchmark metadata. PDFs were not regenerated in this pass.

11.1-RC2-draft2 - Complete Sleeping Mystic redesign. The class now uses the Uncanny Archive, Domain Study Projects, Calibrated Minor Rituals, and Uncanny Power. Starting characters unlock every Level 1 Power in two chosen Domains; higher Domain levels require breadth at the preceding level. Uncanny Power spends Resolve, generates Fear per die, uses Knowledge for both access and control, and resolves against DC 10 + Domain level. A Critical Success refunds all Resolve spent on that invocation while retaining generated Fear and other costs. The Veil Walker now specializes in layered group rituals, the Mind-Touched in direct and over-level manifestations, and the Precursor Touched in accelerated and parallel research. The Awakened Mystic is unchanged.

11.0.1 - Two-column readability pass. Compact page-spanning tables now sit at explicit flow breaks, extensive catalogs move to dedicated full-width pages, and text after every wide table restarts unambiguously in the left column. Short H3 modules such as Hope Features, Class Features, and Background Questions are kept intact within a single column when they fit. Table type was enlarged for print legibility. No rules or setting content changed.

11.0 - Release and pagination pass. The 147-power catalog and B1 canon corrections were retained; playtest writing fields now render as ruled lines, Contents page references were regenerated from the final PDF, orphaned end-of-section fragments were repaired, blank augmentation Stress cells were normalized, and final copyediting removed residual untranslated metadata.

11.0-B2 - Domain catalog normalization. All 147 powers now use the canonical metadata line with Type, Cost, DC and explicit Trait, and Recall Cost. Twelve mechanically incomplete powers were fully rewritten from the approved systemic review; reaction triggers and usage frequencies are explicit. Bare Core Trait Rolls and untyped Spellcast Rolls in the catalog were normalized, consent language was added where powers can affect another PC, and residual Armor Score terminology in power effects was converted to temporary Armor Slots. A matching canonical powers JSON was generated for the Character Creator.

11.0-B1 - Canon correction pass. Product-name residues were normalized to VeilFarers. Starting Hope and Rest/Recovery are now defined in Chapter 9; the Quick Start matches the 2-Hope session reset. Sleeping-compatible ancestry resource wording was applied to Irrepressible Curiosity, Stellar Meditation, and Chrono-Gift. Multiclass Mastery now clearly remains available for the original Class. Active Armor Score references were retired in favor of Armor Slots, and Emergency Repair now uses Knowledge rather than the nonexistent Tech Trait.

VERSION CONTROL

12.06 (editorial corrections pass) - Applied reserved 12.06 errata and one Path redesign. Errata: the Vanguard's Kinetic Echo Mastery (Echoing Strike) now deals Kinetic damage to match its branch element, not Void; the Pilot's Veil Surge drops a redundant "minimum 0" clause its own trigger already guarantees; the Ethereal ability is named Phase Shift throughout prose (its former name Liminal Presence remains only as a glossary deprecation pointer). Typography aligned to house standard. Path redesign - Path to Nirvana and the Disciplined State (mirrored): both now run on an Integrity Die instead of a flat "Spotlights equal to Proficiency" timer, superseding the note in the entry below. Why (documented because this is a mechanical redesign, not an errata, in an already-published edition): a flat timer scales duration by level but never makes the state feel different across Tiers and gives the player no in-state decision. The Integrity Die - a Tier-sized step-track (d4/d6/d8 at Tier 1/2/3, counting down from its highest face; the inverse of the Soldier's Focus Die) - turns duration into a resource: rolling with Fear erodes it, so the state rewards deciding when to act, and it models mastery as resilience under fear rather than as a longer buff. The new Breaking Point option ends the state for a closing strike of (Proficiency)d6, spendable at a chosen moment; that bonus is added once after multipliers and never doubles on a Critical, keeping it devastating at high Tier but bounded. The Hearts in the Void pregen was synchronized to the same model.

12.06 - Release consistency and source-cleanup pass. Corrected the Guardian's Unbreakable threshold names; unified Maren's Presence, Experiences, and worked rolls with her finished sheet; advanced the line authority markers to 12.06; and removed internal review scaffolding. The underlying Duality, Path, advancement, combat, economy, and ship procedures are unchanged.

12.05 - Personal-scale defenses and cross-scale damage.

- Added **Natural Thresholds (no armor)** in Chapter 10: a character wearing no armor uses base Damage Thresholds of Major 2 / Severe 4. This was previously undefined.
- Added an ancestry-scale gift for **Kryllian** (Chitin Plating), **Rift Spinner** (Crystalline Carapace) and **Synthetic** (Alloy Chassis): while unarmored, their base Damage Thresholds are Major 4 / Severe 6. Wearing armor overrides these values in the usual way.
- Reworked **Ship Weapons Against Personnel** in Chapter 17 and the Sacred System Bible entry: naval damage is now resolved in full including Critical effects, multiplied by $\times 5$ after Mount Rating, and applied through halved Major and Severe Thresholds (rounding up) rather than through Direct HP Damage. HP loss continues past 0: exactly 0 HP is Dying with the Death Move available; -1 HP or lower is killed outright and cannot make a Death Move. The previous $\times 2$ / Direct HP procedure is retired.
- Glossary entry for Ship-scale harm updated to match.
- Chapter 17 counterplay list: the entry for disabling the targeting system was rewritten. It previously said the shot went to "double Disadvantage," a stack that the core rule (Chapter 1, Chapter 21) does not allow; it now reads as the shot cannot resolve until targeting is restored, matching the other three options in that list.

12.04 - Naval scale clarification pass. Naval mount Proficiency was renamed and redefined as **Mount Rating (MR)**, a hull-scale statistic

rather than character Proficiency. Base Ship Evasion is now standardized by scale at 16 / 12 / 8 and MR at $\times 1 / \times 2 / \times 3$. Naval weapon tables no longer carry a PROF field. Ship weapons against personal-scale targets now use naval damage $\times 2$, allowing explicit personal shields and damage-reduction effects to function before remaining damage becomes Direct HP Damage; one Armor Slot may reduce that Direct HP Damage by 1. Sensor Lock is restricted to vehicle- and starship-scale targets; personal Guided and tracking mechanics remain separate. No printed naval weapon damage expressions, Hull values, Armor Slots, Heat Caps, or personal Proficiency rules changed.

12.03 - Surgical canon correction pass. The 12.02 Wealth ladder of DC 10 / 15 / 20 / 25 / 30 is ratified as the current economic tone. Criminal Heat remains one crew-wide 0-10 score by default, with Rust & Steel Chapter 2.3 as its only procedure; Individual and Factional Heat remain explicitly adopted, mutually exclusive options, and Keeper's Companion now expands management rather than creating a competing track. The Sacred System Bible, glossary, and Publication Gate now state that Spotlight is dynamic and cannot be determined by a contest, Roll, initiative, modifier, Advantage, Disadvantage, or speed; active Spotlight contest text was retired from Corebook, Keeper's Companion, and Rust & Steel. Silent Alarm now creates a prepared ambush through the ordinary Fear procedure. Rust & Steel's five personal Disruptor entries now use the central additional-damage-die procedure rather than double damage, and Smart Rifle and Seeker Sniper retain normal attacks against Evasion. No PDF was regenerated in this source pass.

12.02 - Canon lock and line-wide stability pass. Fear has a hard maximum of 12 at every gain; matching Duality Dice, including 1+1, have one Critical Success procedure and every retired negative-critical trigger now uses Failure with Fear. Sensor Lock, Path rules, rest, damage, ship Heat, criminal Heat separation, mount Proficiency, naval tags, damage tags, action timing, Power activation, drone installation, Domain Study Projects, Hivemind Convergence, Universal Life Force, and worked examples were synchronized. Arbitrary and duplicate procedures were replaced with declared triggers and complete outcomes, and an obsolete Chapter 20 glossary reference was repaired. Development-only notes were removed. The final Sacred System Bible defines the non-negotiable rules and publication gate for every book.

12.01 - Sensor Lock definition pass, superseded where noted by 12.02. Added Sensor Lock as a Sensors-station Knowledge Roll using Adjacent 5, Engagement 10, Standard 15, Long 20, and Extreme 25, granting Advantage on the next Gunner attack and then being spent, with its break procedure. Added the Death Move and corrected glossary references. The former ship-scale exclusion was retired in 12.02: ship-scale harm now preserves Dying, Final, and the voluntary Death Move. Also corrected Quick Start Power access, Saber's thresholds, Resistance Rolls, and Pushed.

12.00 - Unified editorial release. Integrated the approved Core revisions over the complete 11.35 canonical base, including the Chapter 6 feature replacements, the two-Slot multiclass model for both Paths, the Sleeping multiclass Dormant Domain and Resolve Move, and the event-driven Sleeping-to-Awakened procedure. The Core provides no ordinary Awakened-to-Sleeping transition; Refused remains available as a pre-play history or identity, while exceptional reverse conversion belongs to Keeper-facing events. Restored and verified The Galaxy in Depth and every untouched lore section, rebuilt navigation and final PDF pagination, and synchronized the complete editorial package.

11.35 - Process transparency pass. The legal page now states how the line is made: AI-assisted throughout production, with all game design, worldbuilding, and editorial judgment the author's. A closing colophon, How This Book Was Made, pairs that statement with an

open invitation to artists, proofreaders, and playtesters through the VeilFarers portal. No rules changed.

11.34 - Artwork note. The legal page now carries the generative-art disclosure, framed as an open invitation: the generated interior artwork stands as a placeholder for real art and is in no way meant to replace human artists, and artists who wish to collaborate are invited to reach out through the feedback section of the VeilFarers portal. Cover version line corrected. No rules changed.

11.33 - Heraldry integration. The Chapter 5 affiliation entries now open with their faction crests set in the text flow: the seven Great Houses, the Free Fleet, the Explorers' Guild, the Solara Compact and the Stellar Commerce Guild, plus the independents' seal (broken chains) on Choosing Your Affiliation - twelve tagged figures, each with alt text. House signature marks are packaged as brand assets and are not used in the interior. No rules changed.

11.32 - Front matter pass. Added product front matter: a typographic cover and a legal and credits page carrying the copyright notice, the Darrington Press Community Gaming License attribution for the Daggerheart System Reference Document 1.0, the trademark and non-affiliation statement, and typeface and accessibility credits. Front matter pages are unnumbered; Contents repaginated. No rules changed.

11.31 - Bookmark titles pass. The eighteen class-opening bookmarks in the PDF navigation tree, generated from the banner headings, now carry their class names instead of empty labels. No content, rules, or layout changed.

11.3 - Human ancestry expansion. Humans gain a fourth Ancestry Gift, **Inheritance of the Builders (Choose One at Character Creation)**: a free augmentation of Common (TT1) or Military (TT2) with no drawbacks, where Common (TT1) does not consume an Augment Slot and Military (TT2) occupies one, its expression (genetic modification, mutation, or chrome) chosen by the player; or one item of equipment of Experimental (TT3) access and 9 Cr (WT3) value from any catalog in play. A starting-ship option was evaluated and rejected as a group-composition incentive problem; its salvage, "The Claim", is set aside as a Keeper campaign-opening hook. Data packs and the Character Creator must be updated to include the new gift.

11.2 - Accessible re-layout and art integration pass. The whole book was rebuilt paragraph by paragraph for tagged PDF output under ISO 14289-1 (PDF/UA-1), ISO 32000 and WCAG 2.2 (1.3.2 Meaningful Sequence, 2.4.3 Focus Order): true heading, list and table structure with header cells, logical reading order, decorative page backgrounds as artifacts, and alt text on every figure. Typography moved to the embedded Aller family (Display for chapter and ancestry titles, Light for headings, 8 pt body), with chapter and ancestry titles enlarged and centered as section presentations. Catalog groups (weapons, armor, augmentations, drones) are re-laid as full-width self-contained boxes with the table first and item descriptions below, applied identically to every group so the visual order always matches the reading order. The class banner block was restored on all eighteen class openings. Nine ancestry portraits and seven community scenes were integrated with alt text. Editorial purity: Unicode arrows are written as " $\rightarrow$ ", decorative emoji were removed, and gear complexity is standardized as gear icons (Gear N shows N gears) applied at layout. Source corrections in this pass: the all-caps Concealed gear passage was restored to sentence case, unbalanced emphasis asterisks were normalized across the manuscript, and the Pulse of Genesis stat line, accidentally left in Spanish, was restored to English ("All remaining Hope (minimum 5)"). Contents regenerated against the final pagination. No rules changed.

11.1-RC3 - Canon integration pass. Added the prepared Drill system for the Sleeping Soldier, revised Soldier Resolve Moves and Effort economy, rebuilt the Sleeping Vanguard, expanded the canonical

Conditions list, and established the unarmed-strike baseline. Regenerated the Corebook PDF and synchronized portal downloads and rules data.

11.1-RC2-draft6 - Manuscript and data synchronization pass. Rebuilt page-neutral Contents, repaired and alphabetized the Core glossary, added the Sleeping Mystic ritual/research terminology and House Kaelen, inserted class and subclass bookmark markers for the next PDF render, removed a stale Sleeping Mystic Stress example, and synchronized all four consolidated sources and canonical metadata. Final page numbers remain deferred to the PDF candidate render.

This copy: VeilFarers Corebook 12.06 canonical editorial release.
Rules canon: 12.06.

Project rules in force across all versions: no em dashes; single-Trait Rolls; matching Duality Dice always resolve as Critical Success; the worst nonmatching result is Failure with Fear; the present day is about 103 years after the Great Silence.

Versioning note: the whole line shares a unified decimal version. Increments of 0.01 mark minor revisions; increments of 0.1 mark major ones.

10.95 - Armor tables brought onto the Tech Tier standard set in 10.94. The three armor tables (Light, Medium, Heavy) now carry a **TECH TIER** column and their rows are ordered by Tech Tier within each weight class. Following the project-wide convention, every Tech Tier is written as the tier name with its code in parentheses: **Common (TT1), Military (TT2), Experimental (TT3), Precursor (TT4)**; this format was applied to every equipment table in the chapter, weapons included, and to the inline gear notes. The legacy **A.S.** (Armor Score) column, already flagged as removed in the armor rules, was deleted from all three tables, and the **SHIELDS** column was renamed **ARMOR SLOTS** to match the unified term used everywhere else; the values are unchanged, so no character's soak pool changes. Tier assignments follow each armor's own description: civilian and frontier gear at Common (TT1), House-regular and professional gear at Military (TT2), and post-Silence, prototype, and top-line gear at Experimental (TT3); no armor is Precursor (TT4). Two stat adjustments were made in the same pass: **Power Armor** moves to **25 Cr (WT5)**, matching Siege Armor at the top of the price ladder, and both Power Armor and Siege Armor are fixed at **Experimental (TT3)** access (they are House-manufactured, not found Precursor artifacts). The **Railgun** was corrected to **d8+3** damage. A Common-tier medium armor, the **Homestead Rig** (6 / 13, Armor Slots 3, *Flexible*, 4 Cr), was added so the Medium table has an entry at Common (TT1) access; it fills the gap between the light frontier gear and the professional Military medium armors. Three NPC example loadouts that still used the old "Tier N, A.S. N" notation were updated to the tier name with Armor Slots. The armor rules note that referenced the retired A.S. column was rewritten to describe the clean state.

10.94 - Equipment tables: notation standard and a fixed table. Two axes that were blurred are now shown separately in every Chapter 13 table. Access is the **Tech Tier**, printed in a **TECH TIER** column as **TT1** (Common), **TT2** (Military), **TT3** (Experimental), **TT4** (Precursor). Price is the **Wealth Tier**, printed in the Cost column as **N Cr (WTx)** on the ladder 1 Cr (WT1), 4 Cr (WT2), 9 Cr (WT3), 16 Cr (WT4), 25 Cr (WT5); non-consumable gear sits on these values, while consumables may fall between them and show the fraction, for example 2 Cr (1/2 WT2). The chapter's tier and cost prose was rewritten to teach this. **This TT and WT notation is now the project-wide standard** and will be carried into the remaining line, Rust and Steel especially, as each book is next revised. Separately, the **Neural Augmentations** table was corrected: it had been a duplicate of the Stealth table (which also printed the same rows one page later), so the four neural augments the section describes in prose (Memory Chip, Pain Suppressor, Combat Reflexes, Combat Precognition) had no stats. The real table was written from those

descriptions and inserted; the Stealth table now appears once, under its own heading.

10.93 - Presentation. The Sleeping chapter (Chapter 7) now prints on a light silver page background (RGB 250, 250, 245), a subtle tint that sets the path apart from the Awakened chapter without affecting legibility; applied via a full-page field behind the text on that chapter's pages only, so no other chapter is touched. No text or rules changed.

10.92 - Index integrity pass and license attribution. Stale glossary and page references were corrected, obsolete entries removed, and the formal Attribution section was added.

10.91 - Structural pass on Chapter 7. The chapter-end "Sleeping — Resolve Moves (Complete Menu)" section was dissolved: each class's Class Moves and Subclass Moves now live inside that class's entry, in a Resolve Moves section placed after Subclasses, so a class reads as one self-contained unit. The universal Bear Down and the Move economy explanation moved up into the Resolve rules section at the head of the chapter. The entry-anatomy reading guide was updated to match. Contents and the Appendix B index were repaginated against the rebuilt PDF (chapters 8 through 19 and the appendices shifted by one page). No rules text changed; this aligns the chapter layout with the guide's own promise that Moves are part of each entry.

10.9 - Feature flavor pass on the Sleeping classes (Chapter 7), with two mirrored Diplomat changes in Chapter 6. Triggered by review finding that the Sleeping catalog leaned on two repeated mechanical verbs, "pay Effort and the Keeper reveals information" and "declare retroactive preparation", so several classes played identically at the table even where they read differently. Two design rules were adopted for the pass: every class carries at least one mechanical verb no other class has, and features should change the fiction, not only the roll. All new text is written short, rule first, for direct use on the sheet.

New and rebuilt features. The Scholar was rebuilt around the applied-scientist fantasy: The Cited Authority became **Applied Science**, dropping the two pure information options (The Fact, The Connection) for **The Countdown** (state how long a process in motion truly has; the table now plays against that clock) and **The Improvised Reaction** (one immediate chemical effect from scene materials), keeping The Lost Source. Its three Specializations were rebuilt to match: the Xenobiologist's The Field Sample became **The Synthesis** (neutralize an organism's toxin or lure it, from a sample or a minute of study), the Precursor Archaeologist's The Recovered Document became **As Built** (learn what a Precursor structure was built to do and where its deactivation mechanism is; reaching it is your problem), and the Information Theorist's The Triangulation became **The Model** (declare a system's behavior for the next hour, or inject one false datum it treats as legitimate). The Engineer's The Workaround, a retro-preparation duplicate, became **Never Rated For This** (push a machine one tier above grade for the scene, then it breaks, you describe how). The Explorer's The Survey became **The Margin Note** (declare one recorded physical feature of the surroundings; it is there, one Keeper complication allowed, no note rewrites a premise), and the Wilderness Specialization Make Camp grew into **The Old Craft** (We Camp Here, The Weather Turns, or Live Off This), absorbing Make Camp's Stress bonus. The Soldier's Military Officer Mastery The Standing Force became **One Way Out** (once per arc, organize non-combatant NPCs into coordinated action while your voice holds). The Vanguard's Disciplined State gained two lines: reading the room on entry (who is dangerous, who is bluffing, who breaks first) and Disadvantage on melee attackers beyond the first each round while outnumbered. The Diplomat gained **Protocol** inside its Class Feature (always know the correct form for cultures in common knowledge; roll Knowledge to read unknown ones from behavior; once known, offense is a choice, never an accident).

Influence now scales with the roll. A boxed rule in both Diplomat entries: Success reaches those present for the scene, with Hope it holds after you leave, a Critical spreads beyond the room, and with Fear it turns on you. Two Masteries were rebuilt on it: the Awakened Icon's Defining Moment became **The Address** (speak to a crowd, DC by size and hostility, themes preserved on a critical) and the Sleeping Cultural Attache's The Translator's Authority became **The Reconciliation** (mediate between willing parties, DC by depth of grievance; a critical buries the grievance itself).

Moves pass. Every class Move that only added the rolled total gained a one-line narrative rider so it leaves a mark beyond the roll: Force of Presence (what they yield, they yield before witnesses), The Ledger Remembers (the obligation becomes established fact), Ghost in the Logs (the intrusion is attributed to whoever you choose), Run It Down (the quarry knows it is hunted), Decipher (what you decipher stays deciphered), Dig-Site Discipline (your markers remain for the next team), Stand Down (word spreads you ended it without blood). The Pilot Move Thread the Needle became **Never Tell Me the Odds** (attempt the impossible maneuver with Advantage by declaring a true, permanent quirk of this hull; on a Fear-dominant noncritical Roll the ship pays, not the crew), which also resolves its name collision with the Chapter 17 ship maneuver of the same name.

Renames for collisions. The Mind-Touched Resolve Move Cold Read is now **The Clinical Eye** (its Effort Foundation keeps The Cold Read); the Vanguard Ghost Blade Mastery The Vanishing is now **The Folded Exit** (the Scoundrel Ghost keeps The Vanishing). Separately, the Chapter 12 advancement example (Maren) was found to be written against an older Power catalog: eight of its named Powers (Lane Reading, Veil Sense, The Steady Hand, Void Currents, Cold Read, Reading the Substrate, Folded Step, Diagnostic Pulse) no longer exist in Chapter 19, and its Vault listed a Power the example never acquired, and her Foundation cited the Sleeping Void Runner's The Quiet Lane instead of the Awakened Pathfinder's Sense. All were repointed to current material (Vector Calculus, Temporal Muffle, Emergency Repair, Slipstream Jolt, Veil Sensitivity, Temporal Glimpse, Phase Walk, Pathfinder's Sense), which also retires the Cold Read name-share outright: the Mind-Touched Foundation The Cold Read now owns the name alone. The duplicated 10.71 block in this appendix was removed.

10.8 - Structural and navigational pass. Four changes. A **Contents** page was added at the front, listing every chapter and appendix with the page it begins on. **Appendix B was rebuilt from a clogged glossary into a proper glossary-and-index:** the entries had been mashed several to a paragraph and partly out of alphabetical order; each term is now its own entry, correctly alphabetized, carrying its category, a working definition, the chapter or chapters where it lives, and the page where it is explained (selective by design, the page points to where a term is defined or substantially treated, not to every passing mention). The **class entries (Awakened and Sleeping) now open with their visual class emblems** (the banner-and-flag treatment), each starting on a fresh page. And the **Quick Start's simplified Starter Adventure was removed from the Corebook**; the full version of that adventure already lives in the Keeper's Companion (Chapter 17), so the Corebook no longer carries a lesser duplicate. Page references throughout the new Contents and index were generated against the final paginated PDF in a two-pass build.

10.71 - Two layout and cleanup fixes. Twenty stray page numbers had been left embedded at the ends of paragraphs (mostly Mastery features and equipment entries), debris from an old copy-paste out of a PDF, for example a "55" trailing the Scoundrel's The Long Con; all twenty were removed without touching the surrounding text. And the page breaks added in 10.7 were landing class and Domain openings in the right-hand column rather than on a clean new page, because a plain page break only breaks to the next column inside a two-column layout; the break now uses a new-page section break

(re-applying the two-column format), so every class and Domain starts genuinely at the top of a fresh page.

10.7 - Two changes: per-class Common access, and layout.

The Technology Access tables gained a **Common (Tier 1) row** for every class, on both paths. Previously Common was treated as universal (anyone could use any basic gear); now a class is trained only in some Common categories, so a Diplomat is not trained on rifles even at Common, and never becomes so. The Chapter 13 definition of the Common tier was corrected to match (Common gear needs no access *level*, but still falls into gear *categories* your class may or may not be trained in), and a "Weapons and gear outside your access" rule was added beside the armor rule: using a weapon family your class is not trained on imposes **Disadvantage on attacks made with it** regardless of the weapon's tier, while augments and equipment outside your access cannot be operated until trained. Each class's Common row was derived as the core of its profile (its basic weapons, its light armor, and its characteristic augments), with Military adding new categories as real progression.

Layout: every class entry (Awakened and Sleeping) and every Domain in the Catalog of Powers now begins on a fresh page, for cleaner reading and reference. The table of contents was regenerated to match the new pagination.

10.6 - Restored the per-class Technology Access tables, which had been lost. The Proficiency Tier system (Common, Military, Experimental, Precursor) survived in Chapter 13, and the advancement option to raise Technology Access survived in Chapter 12, but the class-specific tables that say which gear each class trains into had gone missing, leaving a broken cross-reference: Chapter 13 stated the tables "are listed in each Class entry (Chapters 6 and 7)" while no such tables were there. Each of the nine classes now carries its Technology Access table in its Core Stats, on both paths (a class trains into the same gear regardless of path). The categories were reconciled to the current Chapter 13 catalog: the retired "Sensory Augments" category folded into Physical Augments (the Sensory Package now lives under Physical), while weapon, armor, equipment, and modification categories mapped directly. Each table shows the class's Military (Tier 2, level 2) and Experimental (Tier 3, level 5) access; Common (Tier 1) is universal and Precursor (Tier 4) is story-gated.

The access summary: the Soldier trains the broadest combat access (all armor, all weapons); the Engineer the broadest technical access (all augments, modifications, and equipment); the Pilot mid-weight armor and the full weapon range; and the Mystic, Scholar, and Diplomat the lightest (Light Armor, sidearms, Neural and Physical augments), with the Scoundrel, Explorer, and Vanguard in specialized middle bands.

The armor restriction was made mechanical instead of a soft note. Where Chapter 13 previously said class armor limits were "narrative, not absolute," it now states that wearing armor above your class's access imposes **Disadvantage on everything involving movement** (Agility, maneuvers, evasion, climbing, piloting while worn): a Mystic can put on Heavy plate, but moves as if underwater in it until the access is trained.

10.5 - Deep balance and consistency pass on the nine Sleeping classes (Chapter 7), with the mirrored Vanguard and Scoundrel features in Chapter 6 where the two paths had to stay matched. Triggered by finding the Scoundrel could resolve a difficult theft with no roll at all.

Auto-successes removed. Four features let a Sleeping character succeed at a difficult action without rolling, which switches off the Duality Roll and its risk of Fear exactly where the game should tense. Each was rebuilt to buy information, position, or mitigation instead: the Scoundrel's "The Practiced Theft" became "Cased the Joint" (the Keeper names a concrete weakness and you gain Advantage on the

job); the Pilot's "The Approach Memorized" became "Hands on the Stick" (ignore an environmental penalty, or turn a piloting Failure with Fear into an ordinary Failure); the Diplomat's "Anticipated Move" now takes its Reaction with Advantage rather than auto-succeeding; and the Vanguard's "Body Memory" was narrowed to one chosen feat in routine conditions only. The Soldier's "The Drill" (already well bounded) gained a line clarifying it covers routine actions, not decisive blows. The Explorer's "The Marked Route" (following a trail you left) was left as low-impact.

Pilot and Explorer differentiated. The auto-success was the Pilot's; the Explorer's Methodical Reconnaissance was already information, not a free success, and was left alone, so the two no longer overlap.

Effort economy returned. Effort is earned at half the rate Hope is (two Hope-favored rolls fill the two-segment Effort Track for 1 Effort), so every class Effort Feature was lowered from 3 Effort to 2 to bring its everyday frequency back in line; Masters that cost Effort keep their listed cost. A critical success now also grants 1 point to place in Effort or Resolve (or 1 Resolve if Effort is already full), the one moment the Sleeping bank a reserve from play rather than rest. A new universal menu, "Bearing Down: Common Efforts," gives every Sleeping shared ways to spend Effort (gain Advantage, reroll one Duality die, brace off a severity band, lend an ally +2, and more), none of them an auto-success; subclasses add their own on top.

Resolve rescaled. From a flat 2/4/6 by Tier to a smoother climb: base 2, rising by 1 at levels 3, 5, 7, and 9 (2/3/4/5/6, reaching 6 at level 9).

The Refused Path / Path to Nirvana redesigned (both paths). The Vanguard's signature state granted Advantage on three Traits plus two immunities plus 2d6 for a whole scene, far too much, and was identical on both paths. It now grants Advantage on one chosen Trait (Agility, Instinct, or Strength), keeps the immunities and the 2d6 opening strike, and lasts a number of rounds equal to Proficiency rather than the whole scene. The Awakened Path to Nirvana was changed in step so the two stay mirror-identical except for the resource.

Scoundrel Sneak Attack added to the Sleeping path. The Awakened Scoundrel had a Sneak Attack (extra damage when you have Advantage on an attack, scaling by Tier); the Sleeping Scoundrel did not, an asymmetry between paths. The Sleeping now has the same Sneak Attack, folded into The Quiet Network, and the new "The Opening" Common Effort (2 Effort for Advantage) doubles as a way to arm it.

A consistency check of all 27 subclasses confirmed the Effort-versus-Resolve split was already clean (Specializations cost Effort, Moves cost Resolve, no subclass spends Resolve); no reassignments were needed.

10.4 - Unified the Diplomat's social currency into a single resource across the whole game. The line had grown three overlapping social currencies that were basically the same thing: the Awakened Diplomat's Favor Tokens (Cultural Lens), the Sleeping Diplomat's separate Reputation Tokens (Standing Reputation), and the Core World community's own Favor Tokens. These are now one resource, the **Favor Token**, with one set of rules.

Generation is identical on both paths (deliberately, so a player who Awakens or who came up Sleeping never relearns it): begin each session with 2, gain 1 the first time each scene they succeed on a meaningful Presence Roll to persuade or deceive, and gain 1 per Long Rest. The Sleeping's "Reputation Token" name and its roll-based, once-per-scene earning method were retired; "Standing Reputation" is kept as the feature's name but now describes the Sleeping reading of the same shared resource. Spending is unified: subclass abilities, House and Free Fleet contacts (the stale "Chapter 9" cross-reference corrected to Chapter 5), automatic success on an institutional task (1 Favor), and a new use replacing the old

"permanent standing": spend 5 Favor Tokens to raise your Reputation with one faction by 1 RP (Chapter 16), bought standing that can be lost again by how you act.

The cap is now base 4, raised cumulatively: a Core World Diplomat holds up to 6 (the Core World community feeds the same pool rather than a separate currency, and still grants non-Diplomats up to 2 Tokens of their own), and the Political Operative's Call in a Debt and the Icon subclass each add +1 on top of the current cap rather than setting a flat 5. The Political Operative's Web of Favors lost its now-redundant "start each session with 2" line (every Diplomat does) and gained a once-per-session free contact Favor in its place.

10.33 - Rules gap filled: the Sleeping Diplomat's Standing Reputation (Chapter 7). The feature said how Reputation Tokens are spent but never how they are earned, leaving a resource with a ceiling and no climb. An "Earning Reputation Tokens" paragraph was added. (Superseded in 10.4, which folded this resource into the unified Favor Token.)

10.32 - Rules fix: the Sleeping Recovery procedure was aligned with the standard rest moves, removing an unnecessary recovery roll and preserving the Recovery Anchor as a fictional requirement.

10.31 - Internal consistency audit. The Quick Start harm procedure was aligned with Damage Thresholds and Armor Slot soak, and the core resolution, Reaction Roll, Spotlight, Loadout, Hope, and Proficiency terminology was standardized across the book.

10.3 - Deep chapter-by-chapter rules review, with the design rule that every section must carry useful mechanics and nothing may be cosmetic.

Starship combat (Chapter 17) reworked so class identity is mechanical, not decorative. The old "Class Coordination" table told you a Soldier brings "highest damage on the gun" and a Pilot "owns the helm," abstract role labels with no rule attached. It was replaced with **Class Actions in Ship Combat**: each of the nine classes now has a concrete ship action it spends its Spotlight and path resource on, modeled on the drone rules (reach through a machine and change the battle's state), for example the Soldier's Fire Discipline (coordinate the whole gunline against one arc), the Engineer's Overclock a System (push one subsystem past spec for the round at a cost in Heat and Integrity), the Scholar's Read the Enemy (extract a true weakness and grant the crew Advantage on acting on it), the Scoundrel's Cut the Cord (jam an enemy system), and the Mystic's Veil-Sight (act through the substrate for effects no station can produce). None is "you shoot better."

The two structural premises were made explicit in the text: the crew's ship is a **shared scene in which each player spends their own Spotlight** at a station (not one entity the table puppets in turn), while the Keeper runs **each enemy ship as a single entity** with one block of actions, keeping the action economy tilted toward the crew. The Two Scales table and the Round Structure section were rewritten to state this directly.

Two cosmetic rules found in the same review were made concrete: the **Captain** station, previously granting "a small efficiency that scales with the Captain's standing," now grants a **Command Dice** pool (Presence modifier in d6s that crew members add to station rolls); and the **Ship Quirks** intro, which claimed the Quirks were "mostly invitations to story rather than stat modifiers" while every entry in its own tables carried a concrete effect, was reworded so the text matches its tables (each Quirk is a small concrete effect plus a story hook).

The review of Chapters 1 to 16 and 18 to 23 retained their load-bearing communities, affiliations, classes, multiclassing, and reputation rules. The former Veil-pursuit gap now has a complete DC, Wake, tie, Failure with Fear, ejection, and end-state procedure; only Veil-Aligned weapons and Mystic Veil-Sight may deal damage

in transit. Naming a Pearl before burning it remains explicitly optional flavor and grants no mechanical benefit.

10.21 - Rebrand cleanup. Residual former-product-name references were normalized while preserving in-world Void terminology.

10.2 - Added the **Human Complications: Silver Linings** rule to the Human ancestry (Chapter 3), a short evocative subrule beneath the existing Complications table: resolve the Complication's cost first, then let the fallout reveal a small, immediate, actionable opening, a way to use the damage rather than erase it, with a "cost first, opening second" control box so it is never used as plot armor. The expanded version (a four-column d6 table and table-craft guidance) lives in the Humans: The Catalyst mini-expansion; the Core carries the short form.

10.1 - Final product-name normalization to **VeilFarers**, the line's final published name. Every in-text reference to the game as a product (60 instances) was renamed; the world and system vocabulary built on the word "void" (void damage, the Void Domain, Voidwalker, the Void between hulls, void powers, the Veil, the Stellar Veil as a setting element) is unchanged, as it is fiction and mechanics, not the title. Running headers and the cover tagline updated to "Veilfarers: A Game of Distant Stars Across a Broken Universe" (the former "Chronicles of the Stellar Veil" is retired as a tagline; the Stellar Veil remains the in-world phenomenon). No mechanical content changed in this pass.

10.01 - Errata pass surfaced while rebuilding Rust and Steel and the Keeper's Companion against this book. Chapter 18 (Domain Mechanics) corrected: the Starter Loadout is **2 Level 1 Powers** (it had read "usually three Powers", contradicting the V9 class entries), and Power acquisition now points to **Chapter 12, Option 8, New Power** as one advancement option rather than an automatic per-level grant. Chapter 10 (The Weight of Steel): the **Area Effects** block rewritten from the residual d20 save language (Reflex / Fortitude / Will Saves against a Save DC) to canon **Reaction Rolls** (Agility, Strength, or Instinct against a DC fixed before the roll). Twelve stray en dashes normalized to hyphens (numeric ranges and one compound modifier, heritage of the V8 extraction). The V9 changelog entry below was also corrected where it referenced the advancement menu by its pre-renumbering labels.

V9 - The June 2026 editorial pass. Path-resource engine: Hope for Awakened, Effort for Sleeping, with the two-segment Effort Track as the sole Effort source; Recovery no longer grants Effort. Character creation reordered (Step 3 is Path, then Class, then Subclass); Awakened Starter Loadout is 2 Level 1 Powers (from the 6 of your Domains), with a Starter Loadout block in every class entry. Chapter 5 renamed Affiliations; House Reputation optional track removed in favor of Standing; Church of the Eternal Veil removed as a playable affiliation; Independent Favor Pool. Combat: attack procedure clarified (attack vs Evasion, then damage with Proficiency scaling vs thresholds); Overkill is +1 HP per 10 over Severe (optional Deadly: per 5); Direct Damage defined; range bands unified to Melee / Very Close / Close / Far / Very Far; armor terminology unified to Armor Score and Armor Slots for characters, drones, vehicles, and starships; the magic damage type is now void. Awakening rewritten as a transformational arc and moved to the end of Chapter 7. New **Chapter 14: Drones and Remote Tools**; chapters after 13 renumbered (+1). Stale page lists removed from the Glossary pending index regeneration. Recommended-tier pass: choice tables for Affiliations and Awakened Classes; the final creation checklist and the Crew Step heading; Community Benefits restructured to Trigger/Roll/Effect lines; the Displaced Enclave universalized as the Hidden Enclave (Ailuran archetype kept); brief in-Core profiles for the Solara Compact and Stellar Commerce Guild as advanced options; explicit Sleeping lines in every affiliation attitude; How to Read a Sleeping Class Entry, the Effort-vs-Resolve box, and the broken-scene refresh rule; the path-resource table; group rolls in

path-resource language; the shared-scene spotlight question; the attack-procedure and defenses tables; Surprise as attacker Advantage; Surrender highlighted. Chapter 12 advancement unified: one menu for both paths (Option 8, New Power, with Awakened and Sleeping mirrors; Tempered Resolve as Option 11), merged resource caps, Changing Paths in Play with the path-specific refund, a Sleeping reading of the worked example, and the appended Sleeping section dissolved into the main flow; the chapter at-a-glance corrected to the real two-slot economy. New advancement Option 4, +1 to a Trait (one slot; the same Trait only once per Tier, resetting at Levels 5 and 8, for a +3 campaign ceiling per Trait); menu renumbered to eleven options and references updated.

V8 - Added Repair Nanites (Synthetic healing consumables) to the gear table; a healing-by-repair note in the combat chapter; an emergency nanite ship-patch note in The Void Between Hulls.

V7 - Appendices relabeled correctly: Appendix A (Quick Start) and Appendix B (Glossary), previously shown as Chapter 20 and 21.

V6 - Removed definition-by-negation across the nine ancestries; rephrased positively. - Grounded the mundane tone of the ancestries. 0 em dashes.