

THE EXPANSE TRADES OF THE EXPANSE



TRADER/SMUGGLER

TRADES OF THE EXPANSE

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Hauling cargo is a noble profession, but it's filled with unexpected challenges. Moving goods from one place to another promptly and safely might appear mundane, but avoiding the dangers and pitfalls of traveling in space is far from easy. Small-time traders—those who operate a single ship—don't have the luxury of corporate redundancy, maintenance contracts, or passing the buck when things go wrong. An independent trader (or smuggler) must handle ship malfunctions, pirates, the effects of a long haul on crew relations, and so much more, and often all by themselves.

OVERVIEW

A trader needs to know how to make a deal. They need to haggle and bargain with the best of them; more than that, they need to be plugged in and knowledgeable. They need friends to give them leads and a solid understanding of the trends in the great continuum of material transfer. The best traders see what others need before anyone knows the need exists. They have already filled their hold with goods and gotten two weeks into their journey before news of a shortage hits the feeds. Wartime, deprivation, colonization, and mass movement are trends a trader keeps a watchful eye on because fortunes are made (or lost) during those moments.

A smuggler, on the other hand, needs to do everything a trader does while also dodging suspicion. They need to pass through checkpoints without encouraging scrutiny. They need to know the right people to bribe—or avoid—to get by cleanly, and when an inspection does happen, they need to know how to stymie searches, dump the cargo, or make a quick getaway. And that's to say nothing about the shady characters they're forced to deal with. Offloading illicit, illegal, or contraband materials at your destination—even when you have a buyer lined up—is never a simple transaction. There's always the chance this is the job where your buyer or receiver decides you've outlived your usefulness, but that's the risk you take for big rewards.

With the ring network open, there is a wealth of opportunities for traders and smugglers beyond their wildest dreams—no longer are they held to the old, tried and true trade routes. New markets hungry for the necessities of life and ready-to-ship wonders are cropping up everywhere. The governments, corporations, and various militaries are all making their plays or trying to keep order, but with over a thousand new worlds suddenly sprung into existence, the land rush for new colonies has been chaotic, to say the least. All of these need seeds, soil, food, supplies, weapons, and luxury goods (not to mention alien flora and fauna and builder artifacts coming off those colonies). Savvy traders and daring smugglers can make a killing.

"People used to think gold was worth fightin' over, and that shit gets made by every supernova, which means pretty much every planet around a G2 star will have some. Stars burn through lithium as fast as they make it. All the available ore got made at the big bang, and we're not doin' another one of those. Now that's scarcity, friend."

—Cibola Burn



WHO HIRES TRADERS AND SMUGGLERS

This section covers the ways traders and smugglers fill their holds with cargo or their passenger suites with clients. The Trade rules in *Sol System* comprehensively discuss how to buy and sell various types of cargo from locations across space, so the following sections focus on how professional traders and smugglers optimize those economic systems as well as what sorts of jobs organizations might hire traders or smugglers for.

SOURCING CARGO

If your trader or smuggler wants to wheel and deal, find lucrative cargo, and look for a port, they should use the **Merchants Buying** rules in *Sol System*. This allows traders or smugglers to visit the port or settlement's market, shop around, and buy some cargo. They front the money before choosing a destination. Using the **Selling Goods** rules in *Sol System*, traders and smugglers offload the cargo, hopefully with a nice profit margin based on their **Intelligence (Business)** test. However, they assume the cost of the cargo immediately with an Income penalty, and if they lose their cargo or fail to make a deal at

the destination, for whatever reason, they're in the red unless they can replace what was lost or find a new destination for the goods.

If the characters want to identify a hot new market for the commodity they've just loaded, they can attempt a **Find Market** challenge (see the **Doing the Work** section), which, if successful, will identify a location where their cargo is designated a **key import** or even in **desperate need**.

TRADE ROUTES

Like the traders on Old Earth, merchants in *The Expanse* (and freighters hauling cargo) have developed sophisticated routes that take advantage of supply and demand across the Sol system. However, with the addition of the ring gates, smart traders and smugglers have started to develop their own connections and trade routes. Your crew can develop these organically using the new **Find Market** challenge in **Trading and Smuggling Challenges**.

COMMON TRADE ROUTES

EARTH-LUNA-MARS

EARTH: Pick up luxury goods. **LUNA:** Sell part of the goods; load ore. **MARS:** Sell luxury goods and ore; buy luxury goods and entertainment. **LUNA:** Sell everything. Repeat.

CERES-MARS

CERES: Pick up ore. **MARS:** Sell ore; pick up luxury goods. Repeat.

CERES-EARTH

CERES: Pick up Ore. **EARTH:** Sell ore; pick up consumables and luxury goods. Repeat.

GANYMEDE-TYCHO-CERES

GANYMEDE: Pick up food. **TYCHO:** Sell some food; pick up luxury goods and goods from Medina. **CERES:** Sell all; pick up ore. Repeat.

MARS-TYCHO

MARS: Pick up luxury goods. **TYCHO:** Pick up goods from Medina. **MARS:** Sell all. Repeat.

TYCHO-MEDINA

TYCHO: Pick up food and water. **MEDINA:** sell all; pick up alien goods. **TYCHO:** Sell all. Repeat.

MEDINA-COLONY

MEDINA: Pick up food and water. **COLONY:** Sell all; pick up raw materials or alien goods. **MEDINA:** Sell all. Repeat.

WORKING WITH CLIENTS

If a trader or smuggler is doing a pick-up and delivery cargo run rather than making their own purchases, they've likely signed up with a client. Clients come in all shapes and sizes, from wealthy individuals who want to move something quickly and discreetly to government divisions that keep a stable of trusted freelance transporters for long-haul runs. Clients like this will handle taxes, fees, and paperwork, so long as they're above-board themselves, but the margins on these types of jobs are thinner. That's why some traders who take jobs from clients will move a little extra—off the manifest, of course. Smugglers using legitimate work to cover their real business is a time-honored tradition, after all.

To secure client-specific work, you might need to have an appropriate Membership or Reputation. (More details on Honorifics and Memberships can be found in *The Expanse* RPG, **Chapter 14: Rewards**.)

GOVERNMENTS

Government organizations—military or civilian—are more likely to hire traders with Memberships in reputable unions or trading guilds. A license to operate along particular trade routes goes a long way towards convincing a government bureaucrat to hire a ship to move their cargo. Failing a specific licensure, a good reputation might improve the chances of securing work. For civilian operations, that might be acts of service traders have been recognized for, but for military clients, it could be for loyalty to the cause or opposition to the enemy.

Jobs for the civilian government could include the rapid delivery of replacement parts for ailing machinery on a far-flung station or bringing medical and relief supplies to a colony asking for aid. Maybe a diplomat or negotiator needs a fast ship to deliver them to a tense contract mediation or political summit. Military jobs, on the other hand, could include delivering arms or resupply to an outpost or ground force, transporting an intelligence operative to a port held by an opposing military, or dropping an armed scout team off for a mission on a hostile ring world.

CORPORATIONS

Whether we're talking about single-business corporations or multi-planetary megacorporations, the motive is always the same—profit. Even corporations with their own shipping subsidiaries can find work for a reliable trader or circumspect smuggler when the opportunity or price is right. A corporation will often start a new contractor on small, low-risk jobs, giving them more lucrative or delicate missions once they've proven themselves on several runs. A crew that has a solid relationship with some of the more audacious corporations in the vast human network might find themselves moving personnel, materials, or illicit goods that must avoid government scrutiny.

SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTIONS

Universities on Earth, Mars, and Luna or research labs on the outer planets need copious amounts of special equipment, materials, and personnel. Though ideas may flow through the digital space, an agricultural lab still needs vast quantities of soil, a medical lab needs autodoc parts, and a xenobiology department needs specimens. When it comes to standard equipment, scientific institutions are looking for fast and affordable—they always operate on tight budgets, and if it's something they can't wait to be shipped through regular channels on a big barge, then it needs to arrive quickly.

There's another side to working with scientific institutions, though. Some labs need specialized equipment or hazardous materials and can't or don't want to pay the tariffs and fees. Some labs want to study controlled substances or objects, such as builder artifacts or extrasolar flora and fauna. For these types of missions, scientific institutions will often need traders or smugglers to demonstrate they understand the value, challenges, or dangers inherent in transporting such things.

COLONIAL

There are over a thousand new systems to explore and settle, and colonies need a lot of support before they can even hope for self-sufficiency. Traders can make a tidy profit by ferrying needed goods and materials to colonies and then loading up with whatever raw materials those colonies can produce. As with other clients dealing with locations past the ring gates, colonies are a source for exotic trade materials such as builder artifacts and alien biological samples.

Often, just showing up in a colony system is enough to secure a trade deal, though traders should prepare to pay up front or barter for trade goods rather than work on contract.

BLACK MARKET

Any transport job that includes avoiding fees and taxes could be a part of the black market—it's not always weapons, drugs, or more unsavory cargo. It is definitely those as well, though. Hot-ticket items on the black market that will land a smuggler with only a fine are things like Earth-produced perishables (cheese, tequila, etc.) or controlled substances (common drugs, unlicensed food or beverage, etc.). However, things like military focus drugs, stolen goods, dangerous explosives, or human trafficking are serious infractions that, if discovered, would cause a ship to be impounded and an investigation to be launched.

FINDING WORK

When a trader, or trader crew, is looking for work, the GM can play out the search and interactions with potential clients if they wish (especially if the GM has a story hook in mind), or they can ask for a test to randomly see what work is available. If using a test, the characters choose the type of client or market they want to work with (as detailed in this section). The following steps and tables will generate a job opportunity, cargo, destination, compensation (Income bonuses), and level of Risk.

These mechanics are similar to the **Merchants Buying** rules in *Sol System*, except instead of an Income test at a market, each client type has a different method to get a foot in the door.

If the trader bypasses or succeeds on the client-specific test, the next step is to bid for available jobs with an Advanced **TN 11 Intelligence (Business)** test with a time interval of 15 minutes. If the trader is looking to move a specific type of cargo,

WHAT IS RISK?

Risk is an abstract measure of the varied difficulties of any given job and is added to TNs when that risk would make tests or challenges more difficult for the crew. Risk is used explicitly in the Avoid Pirates and Foil and Inspection challenges in **Doing the Work**, but GMs can add Risk to any TNs where it makes sense.

TRANSPORT JOBS
GOVERNMENTS

DRAMA DIE	GOODS	INCOME MODIFIER	RISK
1	Clandestine Ops	+2 Income	+4
2	Equipment	+1 Income	+0
3-4	Personnel	+1 Income	+0
5-6	Supplies	+1 Temporary Income	+0

TRANSPORT JOBS: CORPORATIONS

DRAMA DIE	GOODS	INCOME MODIFIER	RISK
1	Clandestine Ops	+2 Income	+6
2	Equipment	+1 Income	+1
3-4	Personnel	+1 Income	+0
5-6	Goods	+1 Temporary Income	+0

TRANSPORT JOBS: SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTIONS

DRAMA DIE	GOODS	INCOME MODIFIER	RISK
1	Builder Artifacts	+3 Income	+8
2	Xenobiological Samples	+2 Income	+6
3	Scientific Data and Samples	+1 Income	+4
4	Personnel	+1 Income	+0
5-6	Supplies	+1 Temporary Income	+0

TRANSPORT JOBS: COLONIES

DRAMA DIE	GOODS	INCOME MODIFIER	RISK
1	Builder Artifacts	+3 Income	+8
2	Xenobiological Samples	+2 Income	+6
3-6	Raw Materials	+1 Income	+0

TRANSPORT JOBS: BLACK MARKET

DRAMA DIE	GOODS	INCOME MODIFIER	RISK
1	High Ticket Items	+1 Income and +3 Temporary Income	+8
2	Major Stolen Goods	+1 Income and +2-3 Temporary Income	+6
3	Exotic Goods	+1 Income and +1 Temporary Income	+4
4-5	Minor Stolen Goods	+2-3 Temporary Income	+2
6	Avoiding Tariffs on Common Goods	+1 Temporary Income	+0

increase the Target Number to 13. Use the Drama Die on the first successful test to determine the client's needs.

Each **Transport Jobs** table breaks down what's typically available from particular clients or markets.

TRANSPORT JOBS: GOVERNMENTS

To pursue a government job, the trader must possess a suitable Honorific or Membership or else pass a **TN 13 Communication (Etiquette)** test.

EXAMPLE GOVERNMENT CARGO

Clandestine Ops: Spies, Tactical Teams, Sensitive Data

Equipment: Replacement Parts, Industrial Equipment, Weapons, Ammunition

Personnel: Elected Officials, Diplomats, Support Teams

Supplies: Medical Supplies, Fuel Pellets, Food, Water

TRANSPORT JOBS: CORPORATIONS

To pursue a corporation job, the trader must possess a suitable Honorific or Membership or else pass a **TN 13 Communication (Business)** test.

EXAMPLE CORPORATION CARGO

Clandestine Ops: Corporate Espionage, Security Teams, Sensitive Data

Equipment: Manufacturing Equipment, Weapons, Ammunition

Personnel: Corporate Executives, Project Managers, Replacement Teams

Goods: Manufactured Items in Bulk, Entertainment, Food

TRANSPORT JOBS: SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTIONS

To pursue a scientific institution job, the trader must possess a suitable Honorific or Membership or else pass a **TN 13 Intelligence (Science)** test.

EXAMPLE SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION CARGO

Builder Artifacts: Alien Technology

Xenobiological Samples: Extrasolar Flora or Fauna, Extrasolar Microbes

Scientific Data and Samples: Hazardous Substances

Personnel: Research Teams, Grad Students, Foremost Expert in a Field

Supplies: Scientific Equipment, Non-hazardous Substances

TRANSPORT JOBS: COLONIES

There are no specific requirements to initiate a transport job for colonies.

EXAMPLE COLONIAL CARGO

Builder Artifacts: Alien Technology

Xenobiological Samples: Extrasolar Flora or Fauna, Extrasolar Microbes

Raw Materials: Metals (such as Iron, Platinum, or Lithium), Precious Stones (such as Diamond or Emerald)

TRANSPORT JOBS: BLACK MARKET

To pursue a black market job, the trader must possess a suitable Honorific or Membership or else pass a **TN 13 Intelligence (Business or Security)** test.

EXAMPLE BLACK MARKET CARGO

High Ticket Items: Cheese, Dangerous Chemicals, Explosives

Major Stolen Goods: Government Data, Weapons, Well-known Art Items

Exotic Goods: Medical-grade Pharmaceutical Drugs, Business Data

Minor Stolen Goods: Mediocre Art Items, Scotch, Tequila, Vinyl Records

Common Goods: Clothing, Scented Soaps, Jewelry, Entertainment Systems, Fresh Food

FINALIZING THE JOB

Once the crew knows what the client wants to move, we determine where it's going. Choose a destination or roll on the **Cargo Destinations** table to determine how that will modify compensation and risk.

With the details in place, the player(s) need to determine whether a deal is possible—the trader makes a **TN 11 Communications (Bargaining)** test. Success means the crew takes on the cargo, but they won't be paid until it reaches its destination. Failure means the deal falls through, either through bad haggling or lack of confidence on the side of the client, and if the test is failed, another attempt cannot be made with this client until 1d6 days pass.

GETTING PAID

Whether buying low and selling high or moving illicit materials across polities, traders and smugglers get paid on delivery. However, when a client's job carries a high amount of risk, there might be room to negotiate an up-front portion to cover expenses. This usually amounts to a +1 Temporary Income bonus for the crew.

When delivering a client's commissioned cargo to the destination—without complications—the crew is paid the agreed upon income amount. (If the crew needs to find a buyer and sell their cargo, you can use the **Selling Goods** rules in *So/ System*.) If they used the optional **Find a Market** challenge from **Trading and Smuggling Challenges**, their goods might be key imports or desperate needs.



CARGO DESTINATIONS

1D6	DESTINATION	INCOME MODIFIER	RISK
1	Another System	+1 Income	+2
2	Far	+2 Temporary Income	+1
3-4	Medium	+1 Temporary Income	+0
5-6	Short	+0 Income	+0

DANGERS

This section provides an overview of the types of challenges traders and smugglers encounter as they move their cargo from point A to point B. Complications can arise at any point of a deal, from a disagreement during the buy, checkpoints, and inspections to problems in transit or conflicts over the final sale.

PROBLEMS WHEN BUYING

One of the most important things a trader or smuggler needs to convey when lining up a job is competence. They need to be a shrewd negotiator when buying goods and have the ability to convince potential clients that they can deliver on the agreed-upon terms. Sellers that are unimpressed with a crew, ship, or trader might offload substandard goods or charge more if they think they can get away with it. Concerned clients might put contingencies into play, such as a representative

who has to travel with the crew splitting the cargo among multiple ships (reducing the payout of the crew's mission), or they might cancel the deal entirely.

LEAVING PORT WITH CONTRABAND

When leaving a port while carrying illicit goods, the trader or smuggler must pass a TN 11 **Intelligence (Business)** test to avoid inspection. This TN is modified based on the port's location as well as the Risk of the goods or mission. See **Trading and Smuggling Challenges** for the **Inspection Modifiers by Location** table as well as a challenge to **Foil an Inspection**.

INSPECTIONS

All legitimate cargo is outlined on a ship's manifest, and the manifest is used to determine taxes and fees when ships pass through ports and jurisdictions. Port authorities, whether government, corporate, military, or colony, hold the right to search any ships deemed suspicious, checking physical cargo against these manifests. In practice, the governments and

militaries of Earth and Mars are more likely to conduct a search, whereas areas in the Belt, Outer Planets, and ring systems are less likely to bother—and are more likely to accept a bribe. Inspections involve visual searches, technological substance detectors, and crew interviews and might even go as deep as systems diagnostics and forensic accounting.

PROBLEMS WITH THE CARGO

How much should a trader trust their seller or client? Most traders and smugglers will insist on examining all goods before they're loaded onto their ship, but sometimes ignorance is part of the job. Traders and smugglers can expect to be paid a premium for moving cargo they're not allowed to inspect. The problem is, when you don't know what you're shipping, you don't know what sorts of surprises you might run into, and in the space between worlds, it's just you and your crew to deal with emergency situations. Biological agents, alien artifacts, medical experiments, classified weaponry, human trafficking—each type of secret cargo comes with its own opportunities for malfunction or disruption.

PROBLEMS WHEN DELIVERING

When a trader arrives at their destination with the goods, all sorts of situations may change the value of the cargo or the reception they receive. Particularly on long-haul shipping missions where months or even years can pass by, political, legal, or economic changes might affect your payday. Buyers might have received similar goods from other crews, reducing the demand. Or, maybe the buyer just doesn't like the character and decides they can do without the goods—leaving the trader to find another way to unload the cargo. For smugglers, this can be even more dangerous. Contacts might have been killed or arrested. Local law enforcement might be ready to seize the ship and cargo, or a new player in the criminal underground wants a cut of the deal.

COMPETITORS AND PREDATORS

In a profession such as trading or smuggling—one full of making contacts and cutting deals—there's always the potential for rivalries, bruised egos, and brutal competition to arise. Other crews might steal jobs, undermine the trader, or even leak flight plans to criminal groups. But these situations are the exception, not the rule.

When it comes to trading, today's drinking buddy might be tomorrow's competitor. Or customer. Or employer. In many cases, traders buy and sell from each other so a single ship or crew doesn't have to take goods all the way from the point of



production to the point of sale. For example, some traders may be content to buy alien goods at Medina and then transport them to Tycho Station without ever having to visit a colony system. When they drop their goods off at Tycho, they could pick up pharmaceuticals and continue on to Mars, or they could load consumables and head back to Medina.

For that reason, the network of traders and smugglers operates on professional camaraderie, with the understanding that every crew is trying to maximize profits and get the best deal possible. It's bad business to hold grudges when someone undercuts a deal or charges a premium for in-demand goods. They can expect the same on the next round.

However, some traders and smugglers push boundaries even further. It's not unheard of for a trader or smuggler to turn to more direct means of competition when times are lean or they're in a bind. Crews that turn pirate have to be careful of their targets or they might alienate their other contacts, quickly gaining a reputation for skullduggery.

When developing your trader or smuggler, it makes sense to cultivate a list of contacts of varying degrees of morality, influence, and means in all sorts of different locations. Some may be other traders that can pass on job opportunities, and others might be rivals who need to be taken down a peg.

GETTING CAUGHT SMUGGLING

No matter how good a trader is, everyone gets caught. A trader or smuggler needs to understand what the Risk in each job represents. Should they expect additional costs, lengthy legal trials, pirate action, or sanctions? The penalties and consequences depend on who caught the crew as well as on the nature of the cargo. If avoiding tariffs on common goods at a Belter port, a smuggler might be let off with a warning or end up owing the inspector a small favor. If the UNMC caught the ship sneaking military equipment to Earth, the smuggler will probably be arrested and incarcerated to await trial.

The **Penalties for Smuggling** table provides likely consequences based on the cargo's amount of Risk,

PENALTIES FOR SMUGGLING

RISK	PENALTY
0	A small bribe or a personal favor
1-2	A small fine such as a -1 or -2 Temporary Income Penalty
3-4	A large fine such as depleting income by 1
5-6	A minor smuggling charge (see Trading and Smuggling Challenges)
7+	A major smuggling charge (see Trading and Smuggling Challenges)

but the results should be modified based on the authority that apprehended the smuggler as well as the laws and regulation enforcement level where they were caught. Stricter polities like Earth or Mars might levy stronger penalties than the Risk or infraction would warrant elsewhere, and looser organizations such as a small colony or an OPA-friendly port might ignore the infringement or simply default to a fine.

HIGH RISK, HIGH REWARD

Finally, with the opening of the ring gates and the exploration of former builder worlds, there's a lucrative market for transporting builder artifacts and alien flora and fauna—but potentially high rewards come with equally high risks.

Who wants builder artifacts? Universities on Earth, Luna, and Mars are filled with specialists who want to crack alien technology and introduce technological, medical, and agricultural advancements. Governments and militaries—as was seen during the initial conflicts involving the protomolecule—are always going to be involved in anything that could be developed as weaponry. Corporations, private interests, and even religious organizations might all have an interest in builder artifacts.

While transporting builder artifacts or alien flora and fauna, any of the following could serve as complications or developments a trader or smuggler has to deal with when the Churn triggers. Choose something to match your story or roll randomly on the following tables.

MINOR COMPLICATIONS

1D6	TYPE OF PROBLEM	COMPLICATION
1	Technological	Delicate systems are malfunctioning, increasing all tests with them by +1 until actions can be taken to compensate.
2	Technological	Containment around the artifact is partially compromised, and anyone who approaches suffers a Minor (1d6) hazard.
3	Biological	Everyone on the crew develops persistent, flu-like symptoms.
4	Biological	Vegetation on the ship, such as a garden in the galley or a personal plant, grows at an accelerated rate.
5	Metaphysical	The shadows in the ship seem to move erratically as if avoiding something unseen.
6	Metaphysical	Everyone on the crew suffers intermittent migraines.

MAJOR COMPLICATIONS

1D6	TYPE OF PROBLEM	COMPLICATION
1	Technological	The crew suffers a Loss to their ship (see Losses under Space Combat in <i>The Expanse RPG</i>).
2	Technological	The ship transmits an enigmatic signal on all perceivable radio lengths, increasing Risk by +2.
3	Biological	Several crew members suffer a Major (3d6) hazard as painful growths appear on their skin.
4	Biological	Several crew members are afflicted with the blinded, deafened, or fatigued condition.
5	Metaphysical	Crew logs dated 10 hours in the future appear in the computers.
6	Metaphysical	The crew begin to hear each other's thoughts.

EPIC COMPLICATIONS

1D6	TYPE OF PROBLEM	COMPLICATION
1	Technological	A large, organic-looking vessel or station appears without warning, matching the ship's course exactly. It can be approached, but it cannot be escaped.
2	Technological	The ship becomes completely non-responsive until the crew interacts directly with their exotic cargo.
3	Biological	A deadly and difficult-to-find creature is loose on the ship.
4	Biological	A deadly pathogen is released on the ship.
5	Metaphysical	Two or more crew members swap bodies.
6	Metaphysical	The ship is instantaneously moved to an unknown location in space.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Most traders and smugglers are nothing without their ship. Other than their contacts and knowledge, the vessel is their main source of income—and for many varieties of trader and smuggler, it's also their home.

SHIPS

From fast-delivery, small-crew rigs to freighters that resemble scaled up ocean-liners of old, the ships traders and smugglers use to move their goods are incredibly diverse. The jobs that a trader pursues will often determine the best ship choice, and picking a ship profile will specialize the crew towards particular jobs.

A short-distance, quick delivery ship will have powerful engines and a relatively small mass, meaning they also carry smaller loads of cargo. Large ships with massive carrying capacity tend to take medium distance jobs with the ability to rotate crews and cargo in and out at ports. When it comes to long-haul traders though, the concerns are more about the economy of fuel consumption, time, and interpersonal relations.

(Note: Qualities marked with * are detailed in *Ships of the Expanse* while qualities marked with ** are new to this book.)

ADDITIONAL SHIP QUALITIES

Some of the ships that follow make use of one or the other of these new ship qualities.

CARGO SPACE The ship has a greater cargo allowance than standard ships of its size, which helps in negotiations to acquire cargo. Gain a +1 bonus when making an **Intelligence (Business)** Advanced test to locate a seller (see **Merchants Buying** in *Sol System*) or bid for a job with a client.

CHEMICAL MASKER The ship has illicit on-board systems that either neutralize free-floating chemicals inspectors measure to find certain illegal goods or scramble the machinery the inspectors employ.

FORWARD PLATING The ship has heavier hull plating on the front, which provides greater protection when heading directly towards or braking directly away from an enemy ship. In those situations, the ship gains +1d6 when determining its Hull total against damage. Only ships of Medium or Large size can take this quality.

HIDDEN HABITATS The ship has a hidden, segregated life support module that can conceal up to two people for several hours.

MARKETPLACE The ship has an onboard marketplace where it can display goods and amenities for sale. When docked at a population center, a merchant can skip the initial Income test to access a market (see **Selling Goods** in *Sol System*). If they do so, the TN of their **Intelligence (Business)** advanced test to secure a sale increases by +1 as they have to attract customers to themselves.

QUARANTINE COMPARTMENT The ship includes a non-reactive, segregated space that is shielded against signals, radiation, and low-G maneuvers. The space is environmentally controlled, with heat, light, and atmosphere configurable from the ship. These types of compartments have been developed specifically to reduce the risk of transporting builder artifacts.

BULLFROG-CLASS FREIGHTER

A versatile, customizable vessel, *Bullfrog*-class freighters are a reliable frame on which to build a long-haul trading business. With its atmosphere-capable design and generous cargo space, this workhorse of a ship can be reconfigured to handle many types of goods and missions. Because they're



BULLFROG - CLASS FREIGHTER

FACTION	Any	CATEGORY	Large
DRIVES	Epstein, Thrusters	LENGTH	65m
CREW (MINIMUM)	2	HULL	2d6
CREW (STANDARD)	8	SENSORS	0
COMPETENCE	Average-Capable	FAVORED RANGE	Long

ARMAMENT

WEAPON TYPE	RANGE	DAMAGE	ARC
None	-	-	-

FAVORED COMMAND STUNTS

Blinding Maneuvers, Evasive Action, Scrambling Defenses

QUALITIES

Atmosphere Capable, Improved Stores, Reduced Crew Requirements

FLAWS

None

SPECIAL

NOOKS AND CRANNIES: Bullfrogs have been built to a variety of specifications, and many examples of the class have seen multiple uses over their years of service. Tests to find hidden compartments or hidden habitats on a Bullfrog increase their TN by +2.

so easily modified, standardized schematics are almost useless to inspectors when they come to search a *Bullfrog*.

Additionally, the ship has countless hard-to-access nooks and empty spaces that are obscured by internal wiring and electronics, which can interfere with hand-held scanners. Some customs agents complain that the ship may have been designed specifically for smuggling.

OSPREY-CLASS COURIER VESSEL

Commissioned by the MCRN to act as go-betweens on capital ships in active theatres, *Osprey*-class vessels are small, maneuverable, and operate more like a racing pinnace than a military vessel. Because they've been out of service for decades, having been replaced with newer designs, it's not uncommon to find refitted or modified *Osprey*-class vessels acting as fast-delivery couriers in the Jovian and Saturnian systems. These versions have had their advanced military hardware—such as weapons and sensors—stripped out. However, the hardpoints remain after the weapons are removed, making attaching after-market torpedo tubes and PDCs cheaper and easier than with other ships. The ease of adding weaponry and its overall reliability also makes this ship popular with independent pirate hunters and security services. A ship like this would be a boon to any ring colony that needed to have a fast responder for disparate, in-system operations.

PEENIE WALLIE-CLASS SPACE BAZAAR

Born from an open-source project for an affordable mid-sized transport, the current widely-accepted design for



OSPREY - CLASS COURIER VESSEL

FACTION	Any	CATEGORY	Medium
DRIVES	Epstein, Thrusters	LENGTH	23m
CREW (MINIMUM)	2	HULL	1d3
CREW (STANDARD)	4	SENSORS	1
COMPETENCE	Skilled	FAVORED RANGE	None

ARMAMENT

WEAPON TYPE	RANGE	DAMAGE	ARC
None	-	-	-

FAVORED COMMAND STUNTS

Blinding Maneuvers, Evasive Actions

QUALITIES

Agile II*, Improved Acceleration II*, Maneuverable II*

FLAWS

Fragile, Poor Amenities

Peenie Wallie freighters has been touched by professional and amateur shipwrights across the Belt. With their reliance on prefabricated components and baked-in versatility for bulk goods and specialty transportation, *Peenie Wallies* are often used as a roving marketplace, moseying from port to port in the Belt and serving up trinkets, foodstuffs, and entertainment for mining operations, manufacturers, and settlements. With the opening of the ring network, enterprising individuals flying *Peenie Wallie*-class ships have taken it upon themselves to bring luxuries out to colonists before hauling raw materials back to Medina.

The reputation of *Peenie Wallies* for having amiable captains and carrying much-needed (or desired) wares has spread throughout the solar system and beyond, making them extremely popular with new merchants.

VALERIA-CLASS BLOCKADE RUNNER

Built tough and fast, *Valeria*-class ships were designed at the Bush Naval Shipyards to punch through defensive lines and deposit their cargo quickly—whether that cargo involves supplies, munitions, or soldiers. These ships were intended to be attached to capital ships as support vessels during a space station or moon invasion, but with their Epstein drive, they can also be used to deliver goods behind enemy lines in distant theatres away from larger fleet actions.

Although the stock version of the *Valeria* only mounts PDCs for defense, aftermarket torpedo tubes are often added to increase their capability of punching through enemy lines. Higher-rated Sensors to assist with electronic warfare are another common upgrade.

VALERIA - CLASS BLOCKADE RUNNER

FACTION	Earth	CATEGORY	Large
DRIVES	Epstein, Thrusters	LENGTH	34m
CREW (MINIMUM)	4	HULL	2d6
CREW (STANDARD)	16	SENSORS	0
COMPETENCE	Average	FAVORED RANGE	Close

ARMAMENT

WEAPON TYPE	RANGE	DAMAGE	ARC
Point Defense Network	Close	2d6	Fore

FAVORED COMMAND STUNTS

Evasive Actions

QUALITIES

Forward Plating**, Good Juice, Hull Plating, Maneuverable

FLAWS

Poor Amenities



PEENIE WALLIE - CLASS SPACE BAZAAR

FACTION	Any	CATEGORY	Large
DRIVES	Epstein, Thrusters	LENGTH	100m
CREW (MINIMUM)	8	HULL	2d6
CREW (STANDARD)	32	SENSORS	0
COMPETENCE	Poor-Average	FAVORED RANGE	long

ARMAMENT

WEAPON TYPE	RANGE	DAMAGE	ARC
None	-	-	-

FAVORED COMMAND STUNTS

Evasive Actions

QUALITIES

Atmosphere Capable, Improved Stores, Marketplace**, Reduced Crew Requirements*

FLAWS

Fragile

SPECIAL

WHEELING AND DEALING: *Peenie Wallies* have a reputation for good-natured trades and bargains. When making a social test in the ship's marketplace, you may perform the Let's Make a Deal stunt for 2 SP (instead of 3).



DOING THE WORK

The following optional additions to the AGE System rules for *The Expanse* focus on traders and smugglers and their work.

For rules on taking a specialization, see **Specializations** in **Chapter 3** of *The Expanse RPG*.

TRADER (SPECIALIZATION)

Good merchants know how to identify a need and then profit from it, but if you aim to be a true master trader, you value finding a profit or benefit for all parties involved. You don't just buy low and sell high, you prioritize transactions where you build trust and relationships, leading to greater understanding and further opportunities.

SYNERGIES

A Trader-Ace could specialize in daring missions that call for outrunning enemy gunships or pirate crews or delivering on a time crunch—like if a science station were about to be cooked by a solar flare without a piece of crucial equipment. A Trader-Executive could be a high-ranking member of a trade union or merchant guild, or they could be building their own fleet of traders to operate underneath them. A Trader-Pirate (See *Trades of the Expanse: Pirate*) could use their knowledge of trade routes to pick off competition and then move the hot goods as quickly as possible.

TRADER TALENT

REQUIREMENT: Intelligence 2 or higher and the Intelligence (Business) focus.

You get things and people where they need to go, and you make a profit while doing so.

NOVICE

You're good at reading people, and you're excellent at understanding trends. Add +1 to Perception (Intuition) tests.

EXPERT

You're savvy when it comes to finances, loopholes, and opportunities. If you fail an Intelligence (Business) test, you can re-roll it, but must keep the result of the second roll.

MASTER

Once per session when you succeed on an **Intelligence (Business)** test to buy or sell goods or bid for available jobs with a client, you may increase or decrease your Drama Die by 1 without spending Fortune (or increasing the Churn for altering the dice).

SMUGGLER (SPECIALIZATION)

You understand the calculus of risk. Understanding the opportunities and dangers in any transaction, you know how to prop up a mediocre payout with something a little extra. As for morality, you're flexible. Sometimes you move illicit cargo, sometimes you move legal cargo without paying all the standard costs. Knowing how far to push and when to turn down a deal is the mark of a master smuggler.

SYNERGIES

A Smuggler-Commando could specialize in operating behind enemy lines, delivering crucial supplies or intel to operatives, soldiers, or insurgents. A Smuggler-Planetary Surveyor (See *Trades of the Expanse: Planetary Surveyor*) could use their first-on-the-ground status to acquire builder artifacts, rare materials, or scientific finds, bringing them back to markets before news about them even breaks. A Smuggler-Socialite could use their charm and charisma to talk their way through any entanglements while also sourcing jobs from wealthy parties.

SMUGGLER TALENT

REQUIREMENT: Communication 2 or higher and the Communication (Bargaining) focus.

NOVICE

You know how to mitigate risks and maximize profits. Add +1 to all tests where the TN was increased by Risk.

EXPERT

Whenever you acquire cargo, whether by using the Merchants Buying rules in *Sol System* or by using the clients in *Trades of the Expanse: Trader/Smuggler*, you may choose to also take on a small amount of illicit cargo. Your overall flight gains +1 Risk, but if you complete the trade successfully you gain an additional +2 Temporary Income bonus.

MASTER

When you attempt to bribe somebody with an Income test or a **Communication (Bargaining)** test, you may spend one Temporary Income to re-roll it, but must keep the result of the second roll.

You move secret, illegal, illicit, or profitable cargo across contested or monitored borders.

REPUTATION

A trader or smuggler's reputation (see page 217 of *The Expanse* RPG) is their lifeblood. Organizations use reputations to see who they want to work with—who is worth trusting with their goods or needs. A reputation for speed and honesty can get a trader more lucrative jobs with legitimate clients, but trustworthiness—and a reputation for flexible morals—can open doors to high-risk/high-reward jobs for black markets and less reputable organizations. Some of the most common honorifics (*The Expanse* RPG, pages 218–220) for traders and smugglers include the following:

ALL THE BEST STUFF

The character focuses on a particular type of cargo, and they're known for always delivering the highest quality. This could be luxury goods that make life away from Earth or Mars more bearable, or it could be the sleekest, most reliable weaponry that a ship can move across the systems network.

ALTERNATIVES: Gun Runner Extraordinaire, The Cheese Merchant, Old Reliable

EXPEDITED DELIVERER

This character is known for speed. They've got a fast ship or know the quickest ways to skirt delays—from passing inspections to avoiding patrols to moving through dangerous areas others fear. This reputation tends to stick to traders and smugglers with a bit of flair, a lot of luck, and a penchant for daring.

ALTERNATIVES: Fastest Boat Around, Pathfinder, Smooth Talker

EXPERT SMUGGLER

This version of the Expert in the Field honorific represents a smuggler who has the knowledge and skill to move goods without complication. They can avoid scrutiny, bribe officials, and dupe inspections. The interesting challenge with this reputation is that it goes hand in hand with anonymity—having a reputation as an excellent smuggler is only helpful when certain people know it. As soon as it gets out to the wrong groups, the heat is on and everything gets much more difficult.

EXPERT TRADER

This version of the Expert in the Field honorific represents a trader who has negotiated delicate deals, opened new markets, or made themselves comfortably wealthy through their business. This reputation could be achieved through



years of conservative and incremental growth, or it could be the result of a big, notable deal that catches the attention of colleagues and rivals. Whether the reputation is justifiable or not is just a matter of luck and time, because a single bad deal could be enough to bring the myth crashing down.

BAD REPUTATION

Traders and smugglers both rely on reputations for timeliness, dependability, and skill. For a trader, making a bad deal, taking poor care of your cargo, or failing to deliver can cause your reputation to sour. For a smuggler, getting caught, dumping your cargo, or drawing too much attention to operations can cause you to lose trust. Just as a good reputation offers benefits to a character, a bad one imposes penalties. These penalties are described in the same categories as a positive reputation. Characters can get rid of bad reputations by performing Reputation interlude activities (*The Expanse* RPG page 110) or perhaps as a reward for completing a noteworthy mission.

PERSONAL

When an opponent knows the character's bad reputation or invokes it in a conflict, they gain a +1 bonus on an opposed test against the character, particularly in a social encounter.



SUPPORTIVE

When a group of people know about the character's bad reputation and spread that around during an encounter, the character suffers a +2 increase in the target numbers of related tests, essentially making things one category more difficult.

INSPIRED

Tests involving areas where the character has a bad reputation suffer a -1 penalty to the number of stunt points generated.

THE CHURN

The long haul between markets, the inspection queue in ports, and the added frontiers of colony worlds present plenty of opportunities for difficulties. The following are some complications the Churn can present on a trade or smuggling operation:

MINOR COMPLICATIONS

- A contact, official, buyer, or seller is having a rough day; all tests with them increase TN by +1.
- The trader or smuggler's reputation is either negative or unheard of here.
- A rival trader or smuggler might undercut this deal in some way.

MAJOR COMPLICATIONS

- A portion of the cargo is spoiled, sick, or damaged.
- A new regulation, procedure, or hazard is revealed, increasing the Risk of all illicit cargo by +2.

ated on the Drama Die, which can potentially change a roll that generates 1 SP to a roll that generates none.

PASSIVE

Lastly, the character's bad reputation tends to worsen attitudes and generally make some people automatically dislike or mistrust them. It might lead to increased hostility from some factions, such as Earthers if the character is known for bad deeds done while in the employ of Martians, or simply local security who make it clear they are keeping a close eye on the character's actions.

- An inspection or encounter with a pirate is more difficult due to unforeseen technical advantages or expertise.

EPIC COMPLICATIONS

- The cargo is destroyed, lost, or spoiled beyond recovery
- The cargo is not what it appeared to be, and the trader or smuggler is embroiled in a political, military, or business intrigue as various groups attempt to acquire the cargo
- The mission was a ruse to get the trader or smuggler to the destination port, where an old enemy is waiting to get them

TRADING AND SMUGGLING CHALLENGES

The following sample challenges cover several common tasks involved with moving goods, people, and materials across space. Also, many of these can be modified to operate outside of flying spaceships—maybe navigating microgravity on a moon's surface or crossing contested terrain in a warzone.

AVOID PIRATES

After registering flight plans and declaring cargo manifests, traders and smugglers set off on their journey. But while they're getting ready for the long haul, the machinery of criminal enterprise is working. Corrupt port personnel feed information to pirates, and pirate crews pick their targets and ambush points with precision. Through a combination of good contacts, careful research, expert navigation, bribery, and no small amount of luck, traders and smugglers can avoid such nefarious encounters, but it's never without risk. It's also possible that, on a long journey, crews will have to complete multiple **Avoid Pirates** challenges as they pass through different territories.

AVOID PIRATES

DIFFICULTY: TN 9 (modified by Risk)

SUCCESS THRESHOLD: 10 **TIME PER TEST:** 1 day

ABILITY FOCUSES: Communication (Deception, Etiquette), Communication (Investigation or Persuasion), Dexterity (Piloting), Intelligence (Business or Current Affairs), Intelligence (Navigation), Intelligence (Security or Tactics), Perception (Intuition or Seeing)

CONSEQUENCES

MINOR Pirates have been monitoring the crew's activities. The characters may no longer use the discipline that triggered this consequence toward the success threshold.

MODERATE The ship suffers equipment failure that leaves the crew slowed or on the float. Characters must pass an **Intelligence (Engineering)** test or lose half the accumulated successes gained so far.

MAJOR The chase is on. The crew may not have been caught by pirates yet, but they're on the scopes, and the characters have to get to a populated shipping lane or under the protection of some polity before the pirates catch up.

DEFEND AGAINST SMUGGLING CHARGE

Most legal cases will take months to process, and larger, more complicated ones can take years. Progress can be made in the crew's defense by building a legal case, consulting with lawyers, and providing compelling argu-

ments or evidence to be entered for consideration. Precedent, legal loopholes, and many other considerations can change the outcome of a case. When dealing with a minor charge, this process may progress while the crew continues to operate; however, with a major charge, the ship might be impounded, or the crew might be incarcerated until the case is decided. Failing to defend the contested actions can result in a variety of outcomes depending on the severity of the charge and the prosecuting polity—anything from fines and bad reputations to prison time, being banned from a port, or even forfeiting the vessel. Whatever the outcome, the contraband is lost.

DEFEND AGAINST SMUGGLING CHARGE

DIFFICULTY: TN 11 (if this is a major charge increase TN to 13)

SUCCESS THRESHOLD: 10 **TIME PER TEST:** 1 month

ABILITY FOCUSES: Communication (Deception, Etiquette), Communication (Persuasion), Intelligence (Business or Current Affairs), Intelligence (Law), Intelligence (Security or Tactics), Perception (Intuition)

CONSEQUENCES

MINOR The prosecution enters damning evidence or produces a convincing witness. Increase the TN of all **Communication (Persuasion)** tests on the challenge by +1.

MODERATE The crew's legal retainer has run out. The characters must pass a TN 13 **Income** test or they can no longer use Intelligence-based tests on this challenge.

MAJOR Motion to move to another venue. The characters lose half of their accumulated successes unless they pass a TN 15 **Intelligence (Law)** test.

CHALLENGE: FIND MARKET

Following established trade routes is a good way to make a steady income, but if traders and smugglers are looking for the hottest markets and the best deals, they want to keep their ear to the ground for when something becomes a **key import**, or even better, a **desperate need**. Once the cargo is in the hold, the characters can take the time to research markets before they get underway—tracking trends in newsfeeds, calling on contacts, gleaning infor-

mation at markets, and so on—and if they're successful, they'll identify a location where the goods are a **key import** for a limited time. As a **key import**, the value of the goods increases by +1 Income and they have a maximum sale value of +3 instead of +2 (see **Selling Goods** in *SoI System*).

Once the characters have established that there's a promising market, the GM can choose a destination or roll on the Cargo Destinations table in **Finalizing the Job**, further modifying compensation and risk.

CHALLENGE: FIND MARKET

DIFFICULTY: TN 13 (modified by Risk)

SUCCESS THRESHOLD: 15 **TIME PER TEST:** 1 day

ABILITY FOCUSES: Communication (Bargaining or Investigation), Intelligence (Business or Current Affairs), Intelligence (Research or Technology), Perception (Hearing or Intuition)

CONSEQUENCES

MINOR Word about the crew's research has gotten out, and others are interested—rival traders might take the opportunity to offload similar goods. Increase the TN of all **Intelligence (Business)** tests to sell the goods by +1.

MODERATE The preliminary route or flight plan is audited by authorities, leaked to criminals, or obtained by a rival. The characters must pass an **Intelligence (Navigation)** or increase Risk by +2.

MAJOR A promising market turns out to be unsuitable, wiping out half of the crew's accumulated successes.

CHALLENGE: FOIL AN INSPECTION

Corporate, government, and military inspectors have an arsenal of tools available to them to detect illicit cargo or identify smuggling operations. Besides visual inspections, they may also employ substance detectors, smart manifests, and cargo tagging. When their ship is inspected, a smuggler (and their crew) can answer these challenges in a multitude of ways. Technology can be scrambled or blocked, small goods can be quickly moved into better hiding places, or

an academic crewmate can cite relevant legalese to make things move faster. On top of that, officials might be susceptible to bribes, flattery, or intimidation.

CHALLENGE: FOIL AN INSPECTION

DIFFICULTY: TN 11 (modified based on port location)

SUCCESS THRESHOLD: 10

TIME PER TEST: 10 minutes

ABILITY FOCUSES: Communication (Deception or Etiquette), Dexterity (Sleight of Hand), Intelligence (Business, Current Affairs, or Law), Intelligence (Security or Technology), Strength (Intimidation), Strength (Might)

CONSEQUENCES

MINOR The inspectors become highly suspicious, adding +2 to the TN of further tests until the characters can succeed at a **Communication (Etiquette)** test to put them at ease.

MODERATE The characters have been caught meddling with the inspection. They may no longer use the discipline that triggered this consequence until they succeed at a **Dexterity (Stealth)** test to get into a better position.

MAJOR Something is uncovered that causes the inspectors to go back over the information they've already gathered, erasing half of the accumulated successes gained so far unless the characters can succeed at an **Intelligence (Business)** test to smooth over any inconsistencies.

CHALLENGE: RUN A BLOCKADE

Whether flying teakettle and dark against sentry ships or rolling over hard terrain in the dead of night, sometimes traders or smugglers must do whatever it takes to get their cargo past a perimeter. This could be a military blockade halting supplies, a corporate gambit to intimidate workers, or a scientific embargo or quarantine. Characters might rely on stealth, speed, disruption, or intimidation to get them by, and complications could lead to anything from sanctions to investigations to combat.

CHALLENGE: RUN A BLOCKADE

DIFFICULTY: TN 13 **SUCCESS THRESHOLD:** 15

TIME PER TEST: 10 minutes

ABILITY FOCUSES: Communication (Deception, Etiquette, or Persuasion), Dexterity (Driving or Piloting), Intelligence (Current Affairs or Law), Intelligence (Navigation or Security), Intelligence (Technology), Perception (Intuition)

INSPECTION MODIFIERS

PORT LOCATION	MODIFIER
Inners (Earth and Mars)	+3
Medina Station, Colony Worlds	+1
The Belt	0
Outer Planets, Frontier Worlds	-3

CONSEQUENCES

MINOR A change in the blockade's disposition makes getting past it more difficult until the new organization can be understood. All **Dexterity (Driving or Piloting)** tests increase their TN by +2 until the characters succeed on an **Intelligence (Navigation or Security)** test.

MODERATE The next leg of the challenge is going to be physically punishing. The majority of characters must pass a **Constitution (Stamina)** test or the challenge loses 1d6 accumulated successes as another route must be found.

MAJOR The characters are spotted and ordered to halt—they must resolve a chase or combat before they can continue to cross the blockade.

TRADING AND SMUGGLING STUNTS

SP COST

STUNT

- 2 **Hot Market:** Additional buyers are interested in your cargo. You break off your existing deal—possibly gaining a reputation or negatively impacting your previous contact's attitude toward you—to gain an additional +1 Temporary Income when the deal is complete with your new buyer.
- 2-4 **Smooth Sailing:** You've covered your tracks and chosen the safest routes. Reduce this mission's Risk by 1 for each two SP spent.
- 5 **Primera Pinché Heroes:** When you're looking for a market to sell your goods, you identify a port or location that is in **desperate need** of what you have. Add +1 to the goods' Income Modifier, and the maximum sale value of the goods at that location is +4 (see **Selling Goods** in *Sol System*), but the Risk for taking the cargo there is increased by +2.

THE JOBS BOARD

The following are examples of different jobs traders or smugglers might be called upon to complete by a variety of potential clients.

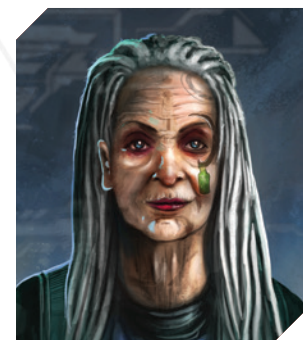
DR. KORE ANIN

SPECIAL INTEREST CLIENT

After an explosion burns over 50% of a corporate-owned agricultural holding, Dr. Kore Anin, the founder of Persephone's Scythe (see **Organizations** in *The Sol System*) contacts the characters to book fast passage away from the port. Carried in their wake are two sullen-looking Belter youths who are dying to fight the good fight against corporate greed and the threats against the Belt.

Unfortunately, the two militant youths have already pushed their plan ahead, thinking they could "lay low" for a while but without a defined exit strategy. GMs should use the **Avoid Pirates** challenge (see **Trading and Smuggling Challenges**) to represent corporate, government, or even bounty hunter pursuit.

Dr. Anin is a brilliant and dedicated leader of an organization growing from researchers into fighters. They are a highly persuasive idealist who has been hardened by the conflict and mission they've accepted.

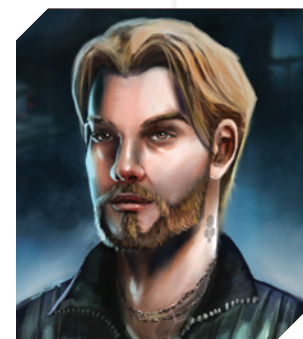


TREVOR ATWOOD

CORPORATE CLIENT

The Atwood Cooperative is a diversified corporation that has moved into contract work in the colony systems. Though focused primarily on infrastructure, the company has growing interests in agriculture, resource extraction, and xenobiology. Trevor Atwood, the recently installed assistant vice president of agriculture in the Cerberus system, has had significant terraforming equipment failures and needs replacement parts delivered quickly.

Cousin to the CEO of the Atwood Cooperative, Trevor owes his current position to nepotism more than any personal accomplishments or skill. Hoping he can prove to his mother and cousin that he's excelling in his new position, Trevor wants this job off the Atwood books and has turned to private merchants and black markets to secure the needed equipment by any means necessary. The crew will have to secure specific machine parts from an open market and then transport them to Augea, a desert planet in the Cerberus system.



Trevor Atwood is a handsome, good-natured Earther who wears a lot of gold jewelry and comes across as hapless and earnest. However, about half of that disposition is a constructed façade which he uses to get people to do business with him—he doesn't really care about people or their troubles, he just knows the right words to seem sympathetic and engaged.

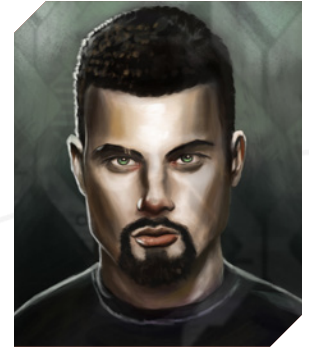
COLONEL VASILY STEVENS

GOVERNMENT CLIENT

Vilna Extraction is a small mining hub station in a labor dispute with their Martian financial backers. VE has ceased operations on their iron and magnesium asteroid mine until their demands for shares and better safety procedures are met. In response, the shareholders dispatched private security firm AnnanSec to negotiate the resumption of business. Two weeks after AnnanSec arrived, an explosion rocked the station and halted talks. VE representatives maintain it was an accident, and AnnanSec claims the explosion was deliberate destruction of shareholder property. The security contractor has since blockaded the mining operation.

Colonel Vasily Stevens of the UNMC contracts the characters to deliver food and medicine to the miners, including desperately needed bone density drugs for the station's minor population. The UN would like to prolong the disruption to Mars' resource gathering, and they don't mind gaining some favor with the mostly Belter miners. What they want to avoid is escalating this into a conflict, so they have hired an independent ship to run the blockade instead of sending UN vessels.

A tall, well-muscled Earther, Colonel Vasily Stevens has a friendly and confident disposition. He has no trouble bending the rules to get a result, and he has a strong moral compass and dedication to protecting civilians. If he was better at following rules and regulations, he might have his own command by now—but he isn't sour about it.



DR. VICTORIA VALDEZ

SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION CLIENT

A field researcher for agricultural interests on Ganymede—with a research grant funded by Pope Enterprises—Dr. Victoria Valdez and her team were gathering alien flora samples for cataloguing and study when one of the junior xenobotanists on the team was infected by one of the test subjects, causing violent, uncontrolled behavior. Valdez and the rest of her small team were able to restrain the xenobotanist and put her into a chemically induced coma, hiding her among their equipment.

When the crew takes the transport job to return Valdez, her team, and their equipment to Medina, they don't know they've been contracted to move a potentially virulent biological agent that is altering the unfortunate scientist's body and mind. If they deliver this package as promised, what have they brought to Medina? If they dispose of the infected scientist or turn anything over to the authorities, they will have made an enemy of Pope Enterprises and Sebastian Pope (see **Organizations** in *The Sol System*).

Dr. Valdez is a stern and demanding leader to her team, boasting several doctorates as well as professional and romantic ties to numerous powerful executives in the constellation of Pope Enterprise corporations. Though initially coming off as severe, she has a wry sense of humor and an unshakeable devotion to the advancement of science at any cost.



WINSTON BROWN

INDIVIDUAL CLIENT

Captain of the *Humble Wagon*, a *Peenie Wallie*-class freighter, Winston Brown can most often be found running the Ganymede-Tycho-Ceres trade route. After suffering engine failure, Brown puts out a distress call and the characters are the closest ship to respond.

Unfortunately for them, Brown has been forced into faking his mechanical problems to lure the player characters and their ship into the clutches of a bounty hunter! Hiding amongst Brown's crew, the bounty hunter has been hired by one of the characters' enemies or rivals. Their mission is either to apprehend one of the characters and get away in a small racing pinnacle or to use the characters' own ship to bring in the entire crew.

Brown is a heavyset belter with a jovial disposition and easygoing attitude. If he can warn the player characters without endangering his own crew, he's happy to surreptitiously do so. If the player characters are able to thwart the bounty hunter's plans, Winston Brown happily agrees that he owes the characters a big favor.





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