

NOMADS

FROM DREAM POD 9

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★ JOVIAN CHRONICLES



"We are nothing more than scavengers and squatters. We live day to day, hand-to-mouth on the garbage of the other Solar nations. We are drifting in darkness, helpless, completely at the mercy of whomever or whatever may chose to bully us, exploit us or destroy us. Unity among the Clans is our only hope. Who will join with us, to stand in the light of a brighter future?"

"Shut up and leave us alone!"

— Denis Trofimovitch Lysenko and Stephen Baker at the inauguration of the Parliament of Clans

The Nomads Sourcebook is a Silhouette game manual on the hardest, most resourceful and independent people in the Jovian Chronicles science fiction game. This manual describes Nomad society and how they not only survive in the Asteroid Belt, but also thrive and prosper. Within these covers you will find:

- A complete overview of Nomads society;
- Information on how to make a living in the Asteroid Belt;
 - Descriptions and plans of five Nomad settlements;
 - Details on eight Nomad Clans;
 - New Nomad Careers and Archetypes;
 - Belt spacecraft and equipment.

DP9-323



www.dp9.com

ISBN: 1-894578-58-9



9 781894 578585

ISBN 1-896776-58-9
PRINTED IN CANADA

JOVIAN
CHRONICLES



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INTRODUCTION

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"You want me to 'do it like a Nomad?' Fine. Would you like it done overcautiously, untrustingly, or ignorantly?"

— Captain Daniel "Cosmo" Blair, Exo-Pilot, CEGA

DRIFTING IN DARKNESS ◀

Twenty-third century pop culture has taken the mystery surrounding the inhabitants of the Asteroid Belt and given the Nomads two completely different faces. To Mercury and the Jovian Confederacy, the Nomads are a nation of hard working cowboys with toolboxes. To Venus and the Central Earth Government and Adminis The Nomads have managed to survive for over a century in the harshest environment of the Solar System. They are descended from the Belt's original miners and laborers, plus massive numbers of refugees fleeing the Tough Times of the 2100s. They are a proud, resourceful and independent people.

There is no single Nomad culture. Their society is a fragmented mass of Clans held together by a thin web of trade and trust. Although represented on the United Space Nations, the Nomads have deliberately isolated themselves from the rest of the Solar System. Outsiders are kept at a distance unless they can somehow earn the Nomads' trust.

However, the Nomad way of life is in jeopardy. Faced with increasing encroachment from aggressive nations and companies, Nomads are losing out on valuable claims. With no organized military to protect their interests, Clans are constantly being forced to pull up stakes and move on. While the Belt is large enough to accommodate everyone, the drain of constant movement on resources is too much for some Clans to bear. Unless something changes, the smaller Clans will perish.



BOOK CONTENT ▼

The Nomads present a unique role-playing situation. Sandwiched between the two major military powers, they have the opportunity to interact with every faction and nation in the Jovian Chronicles setting. Despite their desire to be left alone, they are constantly faced with the military maneuverings of the Central Earth Government and Administration (CEGA) and the Jovian Armed Forces, the intrigues of the Venus corporations and the plots of pirates, terrorists and other riff-raff hiding out in the Belt.

This book contains the resources necessary for both Players and Gamemasters to create stories and adventures based around the Nomads and their isolated culture. It also allows Gamemasters to incorporate Nomads in any ongoing Jovian Chronicles campaign.

Chapter 1, *Introduction*, briefly explains the history of the Nomads and the colonization of the main Asteroid Belt between Mars and Jupiter. It also provides a brief description of the geography of the Belt.

Chapter 2, *Nomads Overview*, goes into greater detail about the Nomads' Clan-based society. Aspects such as trust, general reputation, leadership, crime and trade are fully explored.

Chapter 3, *Clans*, examines six specific Clans of Nomads. Each Clan includes a history, a list of assets and suggestions for creating characters belonging to that particular group.

Chapter 4, *Stations*, presents three basic types of habitats used in the Belt, plus cutaway deck plans. A unique Nomad station, the Morris-Taylor Drydock, as well as the asteroid Vesta are also detailed here.

Chapter 5, *Gamemaster Resources*, contains careers for Nomad characters. Nomad-specific storytelling elements are outlined, including themes, styles and reasons why Nomads would ever adventure together in the first place. Four adventure scenarios are included. A handful of useful non-Player characters are presented, along with a quick reference chart of generic supporting characters. Should Players or Gamemasters wish to create their own Clans, a Clan design system is provided. Finally, the mechanics and effects of Nomad Reputation Perk and Flaw are explained.

Chapter 6, *Technology*, outlines some of the ships and equipment the Nomads have at their disposal, including a selection of mining and survey gear. Game stats are provided for a homemade transport, a survey ship, a survey drone, plus an obsolete exo-armor and exo-suit.

► HISTORY OF THE MAIN BELT



In 2004, the Saratoga Aerospace Corporation touched off a political firestorm by landing a privately funded probe on Eros and claiming the asteroid as property. After two years of prolonged legal disputes, the Global Trade Authority ruled in favor of a time limit on asteroid mineral claims. To prevent any one corporation from staking out all of the best deposits, companies claiming a rock had to start working their claim within two years in order to validate it. However, it would be another twenty-five years before any major corporate presence made it to the Belt. In 2030, the Iyenari Corporation established a base on Vesta, and by 2035 multinational mining conglomerates claimed all twenty-six major asteroids.

Due to the extreme isolation of the bases, these projects were ambitious and costly. To cut operating expenses, the mining bases consisted of little more than a handful of technicians operating large scale automated equipment.

► THE GOLDEN YEARS

In 2038, Ironwheel Station was under construction in the Jovian system and "Road to Jupiter" opened with the flood of workers for that first big project. By 2063, the mining companies had formed a cartel to control all the way stations in the Belt. The traffic through the Belt en route to the Jovian system was ruthlessly exploited for almost thirty years until Freeman Station, the first independent civilian operation in the Belt, opened in 2068.

Within a few years, people were flocking to the Belt. Many of these new immigrants were from the LaGrange and Orbital Colonies. Growing tired of their increasingly crowded home stations, they wandered out into the new frontiers offered by the Belt. Everyone had heard of the massive wealth to be found out on the rocks, and all hoped to strike it rich. In 2070, there were fourteen separate independent civilian operations, only two of which were actually families. By 2079 there were too many to civilians to count. These Nomadic operations ranged from mobile refueling stations to contract surveying-prospecting teams.

The original asteroid mining corporations were at first reluctant to share the Belt with these "freelancers", but quickly realized that the Belt was so lucrative that their profits were not impacted in any way. In fact, having Nomadic contractors in the region gave them somewhere to turn when their automated systems failed. It was cheaper to get the Nomads to jury-rig a fix, then send away to Earth for replacements. In 2080, Ceres base was a city of almost 10,000 people, importing precision components, medicines and other items the Belt inhabitants could not make for themselves.

► THE FALL

The golden years in the Belt lasted for only fifteen years. When the governments of Earth began to collapse in the early 80's, there was a mass exodus throughout the Solar System. People scattered everywhere. Many of those refugees fled to the Belt. Without knowing the demands the environment of the Belt places on its people, a lot of these migrants perished, falling victim to their own ignorance and mistakes.

The outpost cities of the mining companies were overflowing with new arrivals. The cities of Ceres and Pallas were so overcrowded that people were living in half-finished tunnels. When Pallas almost collapsed in 2081, the Iyenari closed Vesta's borders and shot down any refugees trying to land. Back on Earth, the families of those killed were outraged, but with government officials more concerned with self-preservation, there was little the families could do.

As the Earth collapsed, the goods supplied to the mining colonies grew harder and harder to obtain. Desperate Nomads intercepted many of the shipments that did manage to leave Earth before they could reach the corporate cities. By 2089, the original Earth-sponsored mining operations were facing weekly food riots in all of their cities. Faced with a lack of Earth support and Independents' increasing unwillingness to repair the automated machinery, the corporations had no alternative but to cut losses and return to Earth.

THE CERES UPRISING ★

In 2089, the remnants of the Ceres operation attempted to flee the chaos of the Belt back towards the Earth. Nickolay Lysenko was a contracted employee of the Mitsumo operation and was privy to the secret plans to flee the Belt. Outraged that his friends and family were to be abandoned, he led an uprising of the citizens of Ceres and almost all company officials, not just those from Mitsumo, were killed. All of the assets of the mining operations, the ships, the habitats, even the equipment, were distributed amongst the families of Ceres. The Lysenkos were given the largest mining ship and several of the more luxurious executive suites in gratitude for the role they played in the uprising.

HISTORICAL NOTES

THE DARK YEARS ▼

Without the difficult-to-produce precision components and the unsynthesizable medicines from Earth, every day for the Nomads grew harsher and harsher. The outlying Clans became even more isolationist, to the point of opening fire on any one entering their space. In the Pallas Food Riot of 2101, the colony suffered a catastrophic life-support failure and all 2,500 inhabitants died. Every major asteroid, except Vesta, was severely damaged by rioting, and invariably the colonies' hydroponics facilities were damaged. People panicked when they realized there was not enough food to go around. The larger groups of each city banded together, barricading themselves inside the hydroponics areas and leaving citizens without a family or allies to die. Only Ceres survived its riots, every other major asteroid descended into anarchy.

1.2-3

SURVIVAL AND THE SEEDS OF NOMAD SOCIETY ▼

The isolated tribes and Clans of the Belt began to realize that they had to deal with each other. None were self-reliant enough to survive on their own. Cautiously at first, the Clans began to trade amongst themselves. Spare parts, seeds and foods, even tales and stories began to be exchanged. As the Nomads grew more comfortable interacting with each other, many of them sealed alliances and trade pacts through inter-Clan marriages. Although each Clan was still independent of each other Clan, they grew interdependent and more trusting of one another. Once or twice a year an asteroid or region of space would be chosen as a meeting place, one that was convenient for all the Clans involved. As the Clans arrived, the gathering place, or "zocalo" as it came to be known, would transform from an empty region into a bustling marketplace almost overnight.

1.2-4

The surviving Clans of Ceres also began trading amongst themselves and with the outlying tribes. Because the Clans of Ceres tended to be more "grounded" than their outlying brethren, they created a permanent zocalo, which was the largest in the Belt. As things settled down, the Furosha Clan, an amalgamation of the original Vesta families, opened up its radioactives markets to the rest of the Clans. They were generous and fair in all of their dealings with the other Clans and consequently, the Furosha zocalo was never empty. Many of the Clans today have ties with the Furosha, either through blood, marriage or both.

AT THE PRECIPICE OF CHANGE ▼

As the Solar System stabilized, the other Solar nations came to the Belt. The Jovians began to explore the outer regions and the Mercurians came to Ceres and the outlying trade stations. Once the potential of the Belt was rediscovered, the Venus Bank quickly opened a branch on Ceres, right downtown in Piazza, the capitol city. Most of the other Clans were unconcerned, or even unaware, of the non-Nomads in the Belt, but the Lysenkos, the largest Nomad Clan, already centralized on Ceres cashed in on the new trade opportunities. Clan Lysenko triggered a trade war with the Mercurian Merchant Guild and now both are vying for control of the trade with the minor Clans. The Montana Mining Collective, a Venus-backed mining interest, is contesting Clan Furosha's claims on Vesta and the situation is enflaming the minor Clans. The Belt today is still a relatively empty section of the Solar System. Its resources are countless, but spread over such a huge volume of space that most of the region is still "unexplored." Anyone wanting to could avoid human contact for years.

1.2-5

end of section 1.2 history of the main belt

► MAIN BELT GEOGRAPHY



Asteroids and other planetoids are common throughout the Solar System, but the largest concentration, the Main Belt, lies between the orbits of Jupiter and Mars. At one time, the Belt was thought to be the remains of a smashed world, but it is now believed that the asteroids were never part of a planet at all. The massive gravity well of Jupiter would have prevented the formation of said world, and its effects can still be seen today in the Kirkwood Gaps (see next page).

In 1766, the physicist Titius realized that the distribution of the known planets of the Solar System obeyed a simple mathematical progression. When expressed in Astronomical Units, this progression accounted for all the planets known then and became famous as the Titius-Bode Law (after Johann Bode published it in a mathematical treaty in 1778). Few people considered it valid until Uranus was discovered at 19.2 AUs, when the Law suggested a planet at 19.6 AUs out. When astronomers realized this, they all pointed their instruments toward the fifth planetary rank at 2.8 AUs, hoping to discover the missing planet. In 1801, Giuseppe Piazzi spotted a small planetoid which he promptly named Ceres, after the Roman goddess of agriculture. Alas, Ceres was much too small to be the missing celestial body, and when other bodies were discovered in the area the astronomers came to the realization that there was no planet, only a ring of free floating rocks. (As for the Titius-Bode Law, it was later abandoned when neither Neptune nor Pluto matched its predictions.)

▼ BASIC FACTS

The Belt is not a churning sea of rocks bouncing off each other like billiard balls. In fact, the best word to describe the place is "empty." The average distance between sizable rocks (1km+) is five million kilometers; it is estimated that an important collision takes place only every 100,000 years or so. A ship traveling at an average velocity takes days to journey from one asteroid to another; without course corrections, it has a mere one on a hundred million billion (!) chance of striking a rock large enough to damage it while crossing the Belt.

Different parts of the Belt orbit at different speeds. Asteroids on the innermost edge take about three and a half years to orbit the sun; out towards Jupiter, the time increases to eight to eleven years. This changing landscape can be a navigational headache, especially when dealing with new and uncharted rocks. Most ships in the Belt go to great lengths to keep their navigation databases up-to-date.

Some asteroids orbit in "families" of similar types. Once upon a time these groupings were single large asteroids, but were shattered in ancient collisions. Some families are comprised of over three hundred separate rocks. Most actual prospecting in the Belt is done within these families. Almost all asteroids are solitary travelers. Dust clouds accompany some, and a small number even have companion moons. The first asteroid-moon system, Ida and Dactyl, was discovered in 1993. Numerous others have been found since then.

A large number of asteroids do not orbit completely within the Belt: at least two thousand rocks journey from the Belt to near Earth orbit, and a smaller number pass in the other direction, out towards Jupiter. Both the CEGA and the Jovian States devote a great deal of time to locating hidden spy probes on these rocks — and planting their own.

To most people, however, the academic details of the Belt are irrelevant. Only one fact matters: the Belt is the most easily accessible region of mineral resources in the entire Solar System, and almost all of it is free for the taking.

ASTEROIDS ▼

The Belt has one overriding feature: floating rocks. Everything is defined by the presence, number and size of these rocks. Asteroids are classified according to content and albedo, or how much light is reflected from the surface. This identification system requires the asteroid to be surveyed, as albedo alone does not accurately indicate an asteroid's composition. From a distance, ice can appear just as bright as metal. There are fourteen categories of asteroids in the Main Belt, but most are simply variations of three basic types: C, M or S.

TYPE C ASTEROIDS ◇

The most common type, comprising over three quarters of the asteroids in the Belt. They are extremely dark in color, often sooty black, and are difficult to detect visually from long distances. Most Type C asteroids are located in the outer Belt, farthest from the Sun.

The Type C asteroids are vital to Nomad existence. These rocks are a source of hydrocarbons, of use for not only food production but also the manufacture of plastics and rubber. Two thirds of Type C asteroids also possess some form of reclaimable water.

TYPE M ASTEROIDS ◇

Less than five percent of the known asteroids are Type M, or metal-laden. They are almost pure metal, relatively bright and easily seen. There is some rock content, but most of the mass is made of iron, titanium, iridium, platinum and other highly useful metals.

These asteroids are the moneymakers, the ultimate prize of prospectors and surveyors. A single rock of average size can yield more metal in a day than any planetary mining company can produce in a month, and bring its discoverer more money than he could make in a lifetime — if sold to the right buyer.

TYPE SI AND SR ASTEROIDS ◇

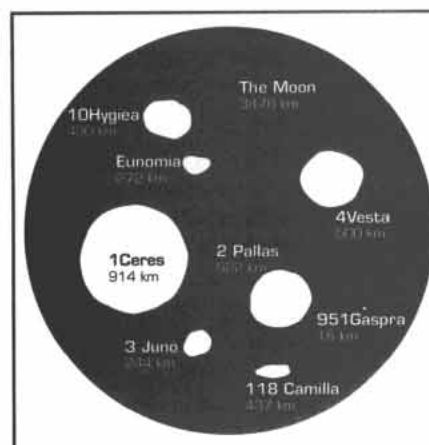
Type SI and SR asteroids make up approximately one fifth of the Belt, but are found mostly in the inner Belt, close to the orbit of Mars. They are darker than Type M rocks, but are still shiny and easily perceptible as far as asteroids go.

The original Type S (silicate) classification includes two very different types of asteroids. As their name indicates, they are mostly composed of rock (silicate). The first is "stony iron" (SI), valued because its metals have collected into rich, easily mined veins. The second type is "ordinary rock" (SR), still high in mineral content but much more difficult and time-consuming to extract.

A MATTER OF SIZE ◇

Most asteroids are quite small as far as astronomical bodies go. There are over two millions charted asteroids. Of these, only twenty-six are larger than 200 km in diameter. Ceres tops the scale at approximately 500 km across; only a few hundred thousand asteroids measure one kilometer or more, and everything else is smaller. If all of the asteroids were to be packed into a single planetoid, it would still measure only a little under half the diameter of the Moon, and its mass would be a mere tenth of that of Earth's satellite. Ceres alone accounts for nearly a third of that.

Obviously, the surface gravity of the average asteroid is quite feeble. A dropped pebble would take hours to fall to the surface, and on the smaller asteroids a strong leap upward is enough to put oneself into orbit. For this reason, tethers, nettings and spikes are crucial tools for the asteroid dwellers.



Besides the asteroids themselves, the Belt is home to a number of planetoids and other astronomical bodies that bring their shares of dangers and rewards.

Not all asteroids are solid. Some are clusters of rocks and dust, barely hanging together by virtue of their weak gravitational fields. From the surface, these rock piles appear solid, but deep scans reveal a subsurface density close to that of water — meaning there is not a lot on the inside. Rock piles are inherently unstable. They cannot be moved or mined conventionally without disturbing their interiors, causing them to shift, fracture or even come apart.

Dust and debris clouds are comprised of the tiny rubble of asteroid collisions. These clouds obscure sensors, but will not damage vessels unless traveling at high speeds. The only real danger comes from vacuum suit punctures, should anyone be foolish enough to venture outside into this environment. Fortunately, these clouds are rare, and most surround larger, easily detected asteroids (see the **Jovian Chronicles Rulebook**, page 150, and the **Jovian Chronicles Companion**, page 89).

Jupiter's deep gravity field affects certain parts of the Belt, slowly pushing asteroids into new orbits closer or farther to the Sun. Over time, gaps that are relatively free of debris have appeared in the Belt. There are several of these Kirkwood gaps (so named after their discoverer), the largest of which lies at 2.5AU, or just over one quarter of the way between Mars and Jupiter. These orbits correspond to simple fraction of Jupiter's own orbital period and are a plain example of gravitational resonance. Many major stations and settlements orbit inside Kirkwood gaps for protection. The effects of Jupiter's gravity are offset by the use of high-efficiency but low-thrust maneuvering engines.

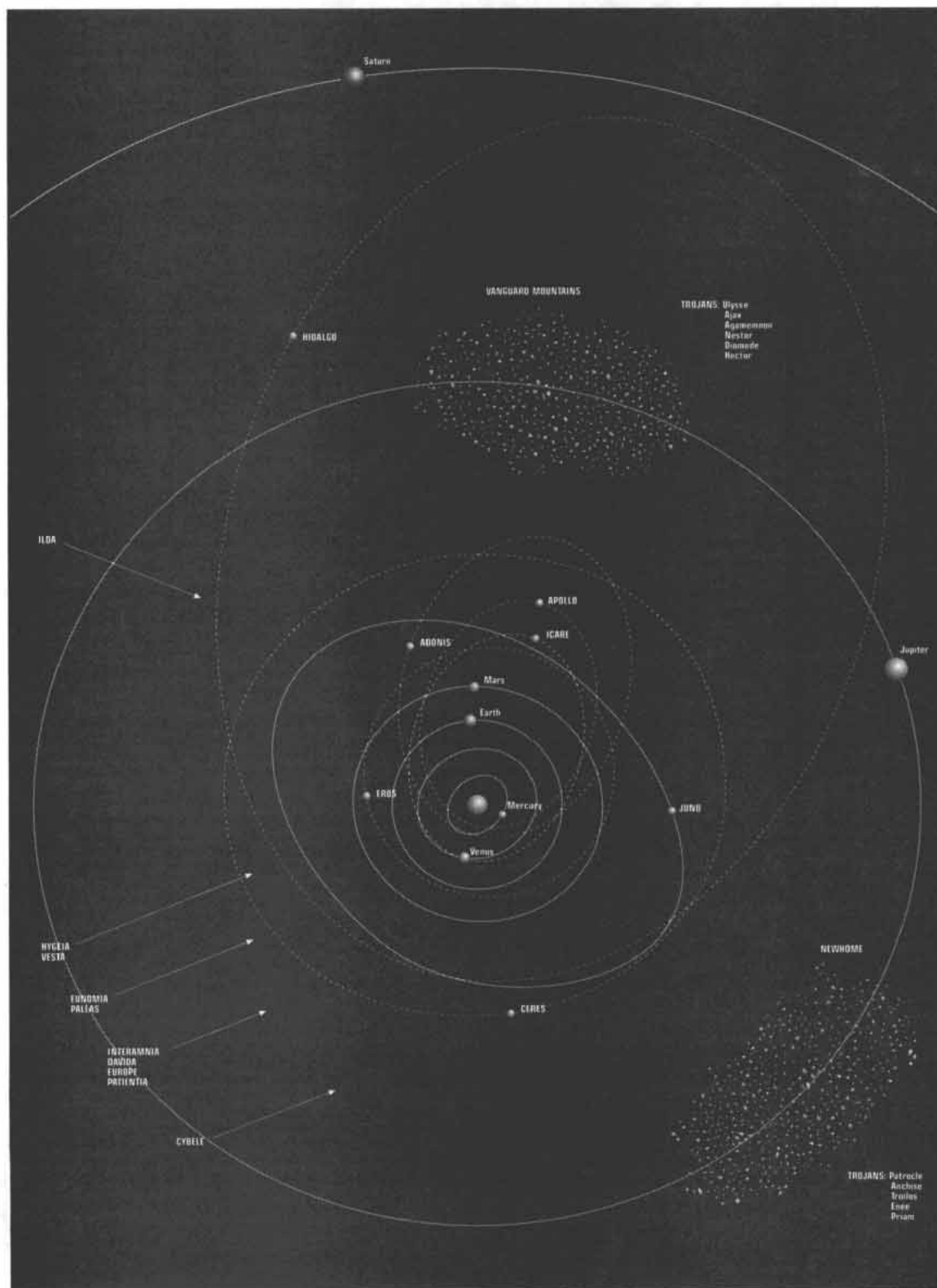
Ceres is the largest asteroid between Jupiter and Mars, containing one quarter of the mass found in the Belt. It is a Type G asteroid, similar in composition to Type C except for being slightly visually brighter. A Cerean day lasts only nine hours, but the asteroid takes 4 years, 7 months and 2 days Earth time to orbit the Sun.

Ceres is home to the Belt's largest population concentration. Most of the asteroid's inhabitants live in Ceres City, or Piazzi, located on the equator. While it is not quite accurate to call Piazzi the capital of the Belt, it is the main nexus for cargo, passengers and communications heading into or out of the region. The Belt's United Space Nations delegates are also based here, along with the so-called Parliament of Clans. A cluster of seven stations also occupies the same solar orbit as Ceres. They are owned and operated by a variety of concerns, but all exist to facilitate cargo and passenger transfers.

Closer to Mars lies Vesta, third largest asteroid in the Belt. It is classified Type "V," similar to a Type SI. Vesta is home to the largest Nomad mining operations in the Belt. An ancient collision exposed Vesta's mineral rich interior, allowing easy exploitation of its buried riches. The asteroid is the traditional holding of Clan Furosha; however, their claim has never been officially registered. A mining company is currently attempting to evict the Clan and gain exclusive exploitation rights.



THE BELT AND ITS SOLAR NEIGHBORHOOD



end of section 1.3 main belt geography

NOMADS OVERVIEW

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"I am always amazed at how people can mistake slavery to survival as freedom."

— Denis Trofimovitch Lysenko, Elder and Leader, Clan Lysenko

LIFE ON THE ROCKS ◀

"Spacing in the Belt isn't easy. The geography is always in motion, there's never enough money to get everything you need, and it may be months until your next big payload. This doesn't seem to deter people. The ore in the Belt has attracted more 'get-rich-quick' schemers than serious, hard working people. Just about anyone with stars in their eyes hopes to find their fortune out on the rocks. They think it's easy doing what the Nomads do, jumping from rock to rock and collecting big payout after big payout.

Everyone who comes to the Belt learns quickly that it ain't as easy as all that. Most quit before it's too late, winding up in the trade stations or even leaving the Belt altogether. Of those dumb enough to stick it out, most die, lost out in the rocks and never heard from again. Only a few are tough enough, smart enough, and stubborn enough to make it. The Nomads have lived on the edge for their entire lives, always knowing that the slightest slip up, the smallest mistake, could leave them breathing vacuum. All day, every day they depend on their equipment, on each other and especially on themselves."

— Richard "Zed" Czerwein, Contract Surveyor



PERSONAL SPACE ▼

"The most personal possession any Nomad has is his slip suit. When not under thrust or in the deepest pressurized area of the rock, a Nomad eats, sleeps and works in his suit, so he always treats it with respect. While under thrust, Nomad families spend all of their time squeezed into the relatively small volume of their ships. Nomad ship designs favor tiny closet-sized sleeping bunks, with larger common areas for public use. Nomads, while in their ships, live and work in tight proximity to the rest of their family and prefer it that way. Under such cramped conditions, politeness and courtesy have become almost mandatory social conventions, while privacy, on the other hand, is dealt with more at a family level than a personal one. The Nomads thrive on what would drive people from other Solar nations into spasms of claustrophobia.

"It is not until the Nomads have arrived at their intended rock that they have any real privacy at all, and then they have too much of it. Once the Clan discovers a suitable rock, every able body has a job to do and a lot of those jobs require direct supervision of remote equipment. As gregarious as a Nomad is under thrust, while on a rock he thinks nothing of spending days, or even weeks, in suit with dozens of kilometers of vacuum between him and the next closest person. As the asteroids get honeycombed with tunnels and sealed, the Nomads create huge zero-g living spaces. Many a zee-gee football star got his start in the recreation tunnels of his childhood.

"No matter how much or how little space a Nomad has to live in, every Nomad has developed certain habits essential to living in the Belt. A Nomad never leaves anything unsecured or unsealed. Every piece of equipment is 'battered down' immediately after it is used. Any loose object or unsealed container is a hazard at the best of times and a potential missile when the ship is under thrust. To the people outside of the Belt, Nomads seem almost obsessively neat, but the Nomads would not have it any other way.

"Another thing that bothers outsiders is the fact that Nomads never use gestures when speaking and can stand perfectly still for hours at a stretch. Waving your hands around in a cramped space is generally a bad idea. You never know what switch or button you'll inadvertently bump or whose face you'll accidentally elbow."

— Shawn Sulma, Lysenko Broker



▼ WORKING HARD

While non-Nomad spacers generally use their time in transit for relaxation and downtime, the Nomads never sit still. They are constantly fiddling with their equipment, their suits, or even the ship itself. Since a Nomad's life is only as secure as the reliability of his equipment, stripping something down and rebuilding it not only keeps him occupied, but also it lets him trust his life to it. To a Nomad, relaxation only comes when he knows that his equipment can be trusted.

Once a mining Clan reaches an ore-bearing asteroid, the seemingly placid Nomads spring into a flurry of activity. Everybody, from the youngsters to the elders, has a vital job to do. An asteroid mining endeavor is a carefully orchestrated dance of equipment and machinery. For the first month or two of being "anchored," nobody sleeps more than a few hours at a stretch. Things slow down as the machinery "gets into the groove" of the operation, but even then Nomads never really take it easy.

Laziness is almost a sin amongst Nomads. To a Nomad there is always something to be done on board ship and they won't tolerate anyone who doesn't pull his own weight. Nomad crewmembers that contract out to non-Nomad expeditions are often at odds with the rest of the crew. Not only do they seem finicky and obsessive to the non-Nomads, but also Nomads are always at work and never seem to take a day off.

▼ PLAYING HARD

Nomads eat, sleep and drink "on alert" twenty-four hours a day, for months at a stretch. Dropping your guard can be fatal out on the rocks, so a Nomad cannot afford to truly relax while in-suit. Back at the zocalos, in a safe, controlled environment with the family to look after them, it is a different story. Those months of bottled-up pressure all come out at once.

Every Clan that hosts a zocalo knows that people come not just to trade but also to blow off steam. Every zocalo has its watering holes, built for folks to cut loose. Though these bars all have unbreakable, bolted down steel tables and chairs, there is always something that gets broken. In zero-g, broken and smashed pieces would float everywhere, so generally, these places are "under spin." Anything broken or destroyed will settle to the floor, which consists of a raised metal grate that liquids and small pieces can fall through.

These bars are the social gathering places for both the young and the old. The young come to meet and flirt with people from other tribes, dancing and partying until they're exhausted. The older Nomads get a chance to mingle with elders of other Clans. Some talk shop, but most go to drink and have a good time. Every Nomad finds their way into these bars at least once during their Clan's stay at the zocalo. With plenty to drink and a cousin, sibling or sometimes even a parent to watch their back, many normally quiet Nomad starts looking for trouble. Fights happen every night, sometimes between rival Clans, sometimes between close family members. Afterwards there are never any hard feelings; this release of pent-up energy is a good-naturedly accepted part of the zocalo.

▼ LIVING HARD

Prolonged exposure to microgravity is a danger to anyone working or living in space. The Solar nations have developed exercise techniques as well as vitamin and nutritional supplements to combat the debilitating effects of exposure. However, the Nomads are isolated from the Solar nations, and do not have access to the entire range of preventative measures available. No matter how prosperous a Nomad may become, sooner or later the harsh conditions of his environment will catch up with him.

Mass-produced calcium supplements are cheap and readily available in the Belt. Clans also enforce a daily regimen of intense exercise for short periods to keep muscles toned and spine and leg bones healthy. Many Clans own electrical stimulators, devices that simulate exercise by using electrodes to invigorate muscle tissue. Clans try to live as much as possible within a gravity environment. If no station is available, Nomads have been known to tether vessels together and spin them around a common center to simulate gravity (see *Webs*, page 52). Over the long term, however, physical decline is inevitable. Nomad physiology tends towards the Light Worlder and ZeeGee body types, marked by a reduced ability to function in gravity. Eventually, the immune system begins to suffer. Cancer is a very real threat, and Nomads are at much greater risk than other space-faring populations, despite advances in modern medicine. Most Nomads prefer not to waste energy dwelling on the future. They see every day of continued existence as a victory, although they recognize that they will ultimately lose the war.

CULTURE ◀

Life among Nomads is rigid by necessity due to the constant struggle for survival. In the close confines of the asteroid colonies, laziness and rudeness are considered the worst of weaknesses. The resulting strong work ethic, coupled with their expertise in jury-rig-style engineering, makes the Nomads highly valued in most of the Solar System, the exceptions being on Earth and Venus, where they are often regarded as little more than barbarians.

Although languages vary among the nomad settlements, all Nomads are taught Spacer's Runic as a matter of course. This language, virtually unchanged since its creation in the mid-twenty-first century, has become a common tongue among Nomads (indeed, among all spacefaring folk), allowing rudimentary communication when spoken language proves to be a barrier. When traveling abroad, Nomads tend to use Spacer's Runic instead of their spoken tongue, which engenders a mistaken impression among Venusians and Earthers that Nomads are mute dullards.



TRUST ▼

Trust is never an easy thing for a Nomad. If he depends on something or someone and it lets him down, he is probably dead. He cannot afford to make a mistake. He trusts himself and he trusts his equipment and he trusts his family. In short he only trusts what he knows and what he sees. If he did not personally fix a piece of equipment, he cannot know it works. If he does not see and work with a person every day, he cannot know whether he can rely on them.

Ultimately, trust forms the basis of all Nomad interactions, both with non-Nomads and Nomads. If a Nomad trusts someone enough to space with him, it means the Nomad is willing to put his life in that person's hands. This sort of trust is hard to come by for a Nomad and is rarely given to a non-Nomad. Even a Nomad from outside the Clan is treated with caution until people see how he handles himself.

What is true for individual Nomads is generally true for Clans. If a Clan has a good reputation, or is personally known to be worthwhile and trustworthy, members of another Clan will generally give it the benefit of the doubt. Nomads may even space with a non-Nomad, if he has a good enough reputation, but until they can watch him in-suit, the non-Nomad will still be treated cautiously. The reverse is also true: if a Clan has a bad reputation, most Nomads will not trust it.

REPUTATION ◇

Because of importance trust plays in Nomad society, Nomads have slowly come to rely on reputation to determine dependability (see *Reputation Guidelines*, page 87). Reputation is a reflection of how a Clan or a person is seen by the whole of Nomad society. Two Clans may have an undying hatred for each other but still both have good reputations because neither threatens the Nomad community.

Reputation can be classified in two ways. The first is personal reputation. People can gain a degree of individual recognition through either extraordinarily good or extraordinarily bad deeds. The Belt, however, is a large place, and word of personal achievement does not spread very far. Nomads are more likely to be defined by the second way, the reputation of their Clan.

The history of a Clan determines its reputation. Good deeds are not forgotten, and old grudges die hard. Current behavior has some moderating influence, but it is not uncommon for Clans to possess reputations they have long outgrown. Without exception, all Nomads are affected by the reputation of their respective Clans. It overshadows even those known by personal reputations, regardless of their fame. Reputations are best known in the areas where Clans have regular contact with each other. A Clan moving into new territory is treated cautiously until something of its reputation is learned. There is little point in lying about a reputation. Nomad society is closely-knit, and sooner or later the truth will come out.



◇ FAMILY TIES

The one group that a Nomad comes to know more than any other is his immediate family. Within a medium-size Clan, there may be ten to twenty family groups. Family members spend their lives together, and are best acquainted with each other's actions and reactions. Each family is usually assigned duties as a unit, with those too old to work left to oversee the apprenticeship of the children. Although families are close, marriage is viewed primarily as a means of forming bonds between Clans, and as such marriages are usually partly arranged. Clans wishing a closer relationship present eligible members to each other at a zocalo. The presentees have final say in whether or not they will marry. Clan elders do not force the issue, as an unhappy marriage reflects badly on both Clans.

◇ STRANGERS

There is a difference between outsiders and Strangers. People who are not Nomads are outsiders, regardless of whether they are trusted Independents or shunned refugees. Strangers are outsiders without trust, either when they have not been properly introduced or because they have proven untrustworthy. The term Stranger is not used lightly, and often carries a mix of caution and contempt when uttered by a Nomad. Outsiders introduced as Strangers immediately acquire a social stigma, and must prove their worth to the Nomads before any business is conducted. Calling a Nomad a Stranger is a serious insult, and implies the Nomad is not only untrustworthy, but is also potentially dangerous.

★ PROPER INTRODUCTIONS

It takes a very long time for Nomads to develop trust. Introductions are an important ritual that allow a level of trust to be placed in a newcomer who has not otherwise earned it. Only a Nomad who knows both the newcomer and those already present may make introductions. The Nomad making introductions is effectively swearing on his own reputation that the newcomer is trustworthy. Should the newcomer prove to be otherwise, any backlash is directed at both the newcomer and his vouching Nomad. Introductions are not necessary for the purposes of conducting trade.

► WORD OF LAW

Individual Clans determine the laws that govern their members. No Nomad is subject to the laws of another Clan unless currently within a holding of that Clan, such as a homestead or a vessel. There are aspects common to the laws of all Clans. Murder and rape are the most serious crimes a Nomad can commit, as both are seen not only as deprivation of freedom but also as damage to a Clan's resources. Manslaughter, slavery and terrorism rank highly for similar reasons. Treason, the betrayal of Clan trust, is also a high crime. Theft is a serious issue since the loss of supplies and equipment potentially places lives in jeopardy: it is the equivalent of attempted murder. Most Clans do not consider disorderly conduct, public disturbances, slander or threats to be matters for the judicial system. Guilty parties are usually blowing off steam, and if anyone takes offense, they always have the option of challenging the offender to a Duel (see page 19).

◇ CLAN COUNCILS

The nature of a Clan's judicial systems depends a great deal on how the Clan is governed. Some Clans are ruled by single leaders who have the final say in all matters. Others are governed by a council of leaders or elected representatives. Some larger Clans have a judicial system completely separate from their leadership. A Clan's judicial system is referred to as the Clan Council, regardless of whether it consists of the entire Clan or just one person. It serves the sole purpose of administering Clan laws. The manner of trial varies, but ultimately the Clan Council must judge and pass sentence.

The most severe sentence a Council can inflict is banishment. The guilty party is not only cast out of his Clan, but also out of Nomad society. He becomes a Stranger, regardless of any good deeds he may have done in the past. No known Clan engages in capital punishment. Execution, like murder, is regarded as a waste. Additional labor, such as assignment to unpleasant work duties or some form of community service, is the other main punishment meted out. Nomads do not incarcerate offenders; doing so reduces the labor force. Offenders unwilling to accept punishment face banishment. If a dispute arises with another Clan, the applicable ruling body usually depends on where the dispute took place. Nomads may agree to submit to the laws of another Clan for judgment and punishment. If the accused refuses to submit, the issue must be taken before a Zocalo Council.

ZOCALO COUNCILS ◇



2.E.2

Zocalos (see page 27) are more than just markets. They are one of the few events that actually bring Clans into physical contact with one another. Councils are held to deal with issues and disputes arising between Clans as part of these events. These Zocalo Councils take place intermittently during the zocalo, and every Clan elder and judiciary has a standing invitation to attend and participate in rendering judgment.

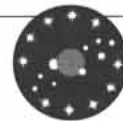
A "trial" takes place in two parts. The first is the presentation of testimony and evidence. All participants in a dispute have an opportunity to tell their side of the story and to call up witnesses. Once all the evidence and testimony is in, the Clan elders vote on judgment and debate punishment, if any. Decisions are usually swift. Most elders know how they will vote by the time they are required to do so. Punishments usually take the form of economic penalties, such as surrendering Clan assets as compensation. In extreme cases, a trade embargo may be placed on a Clan, banning it from contact with other Clans for several months. The Zocalo Council has the power to make this embargo permanent, effectively banishing entire Clans from Nomad society.

Zocalo Councils are hearty food for gossip throughout the Belt. Word of judgment spreads quickly to all Clans involved, and from there to the rest of the Nomad population. Banished or embargoed Clans must travel a long way to avoid their punishments, and even so, it is only a matter of time before word reaches even the most isolated Nomads.

Zocalo Councils have very few rules. Generally, every participant must remain silent when it is not his turn. Witnesses are not cross-examined until it is the cross-examining participant's turn to speak. Evidence presented during a Zocalo Council may only be examined by a neutral party agreed upon by everyone involved. If no agreement can be reached, the evidence is discarded. Each Clan represented on the Council has one vote, regardless of the number of Clan elders that may be in attendance.

Although it does not often happen, there is much room for abuse. Zocalo Councils are based on the assumption that everyone will agree to the procedure and abide by its outcome. If a Nomad or a Clan chooses to be disruptive or ignore the Council, very little can be done to enforce sentences other than embargo and banishment.

THE PARLIAMENT OF CLANS ▼



2.E.2

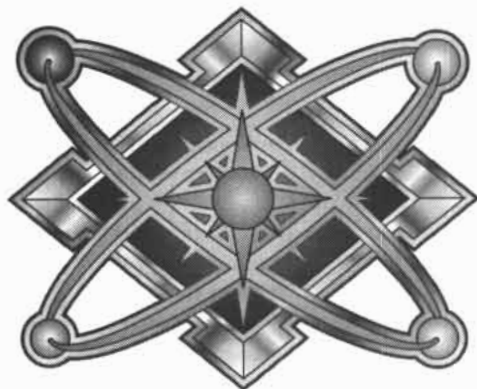
Technically, there is one additional level of government. The Parliament of Clans is supposedly an embryonic central Nomad government. The truth is much more convoluted, and lies concealed within a 13-year bid for power. In 2200, Clan Lysenko petitioned the United Space Nations for official recognition of the Belt as a sovereign region, and asked that the Lysenkos be allowed to represent the Belt in USN affairs. The petition was defeated. The USN felt the Lysenkos were in no position to represent anybody in the Belt save for themselves. The Clan was told that unless the Nomads developed a central government, there was no chance of the Belt being recognized.

This was a setback, but not a defeat for Clan chief Denis Lysenko. He and his elders realized there was no viable way a working parliament could ever be created with all the Clans in the Belt. Instead, Clan Lysenko decided to do it alone. The Lysenkos have always been the largest, most prolific of Clans. At the time, twenty-seven other Clans could either trace a direct lineage to the Lysenkos, or claim affiliation through marriage. In short, the Lysenkos had a very large family, and when the rallying cry went out, the response was overwhelming.

The Unionist Movement was officially born in late 2200. On paper, the movement was impressive. In two years, Clan Lysenko had brought together thirty Clans to form the basis of a new Nomad government. Three of those Clans even had no previous links to the Lysenkos at all. When Clan Lysenko began lobbying again in 2202, the USN took notice.

It took five years for the USN to decide exactly what to do with the Belt. The Lysenkos still did not represent the majority of the Nomads, but the growth of their support was astonishing. Also, a few Council members who knew something of the Nomads suspected the Lysenkos might be up to something, although there was no hard evidence to back up any claims. In the end, a "probationary" status was created which allowed limited recognition of the Belt.

◇ PARLIAMENTARY ORGANIZATION



The Parliament consists of two separate houses. The House of Elders is an assembly of representatives who currently hold (or have held) a governing position in a Clan. Each Clan is allowed to send two elders who are required to reside on Ceres while parliament is in session.

The House of Journeymen consists of Nomads who have been included to represent an "ordinary" point of view. There are no qualifications to sit in this House, save that a Journeyman cannot also have a seat in the House of Elders. Each Clan is permitted two Journeymen, both of whom must also reside on Ceres while parliament is in session. The actual power lies completely in the House of Elders; the House of Journeymen is little more than a rubber stamp for Elder policy.

◇ SHOTGUN GOVERNMENT

As recently as 2211, most Clans considered the Parliament to be a joke — and a very bad one, at that. Clans felt no obligation to obey the Parliament, much less acknowledge it as a central authority. All this changed a year later with the entrance of Venus upon the scene.

The Venusians began actively encroaching on Nomad space, for some reason ignoring the uninhabited regions of the Belt. Most minor Clans did what they had done for generations: pulled up stake and moved on. However, the larger Clans were no longer as mobile, as the ongoing crisis on Vesta demonstrated, and they had much more to lose should they admit defeat. The question was, how could they work out a deal with the Venusians and save their traditional Clan homes?

Clan elders quickly learned that the Venusians would not even talk to a Clan that was not represented in Parliament. This swelled the ranks of representatives over the next two years. Clans with permanent assets now feel they have no choice but to participate in the Lysenko travesty. They are resentful of their forced attendance and quite hostile towards the Unionists — those Clans who originally supported the Lysenkos. More than one session has degenerated into name-calling and even outright brawling.

Clans are still under no obligation to accept the Parliament as their government. However, the alternative means standing alone against Venus.

◇ UNITED SPACE NATIONS REPRESENTATION

The Belt currently enjoys probationary status on the USN Council. Representatives are permitted to attend all Council meetings, and have the right to speak to the Council on any issues relevant to the Nomads or the Belt. However, the Belt Delegation does not have an actual vote. The Solar Police must conduct operations in the Belt jointly with the Belt's own law-enforcement authority; this is a problem, since the Belt has no law-enforcement authority.

The Belt delegation consists of three people: the ambassador, from Clan Lysenko, and two aides, one also from Clan Lysenko and one from the Furosha Clan. The presence of a Furosha is a compromise between the Unionists and the other Clans. The Furosha aide is essentially a showpiece, excluded from most important diplomatic activities.

DUELS ▼

Most Clans have in place a system that allows members to resolve disputes privately. The rigidity of this system depends on the Clan. Some demand trial by combat. Others require a competition of skill. Some even invoke random chance, believing that fate will favor the just. Regardless of the method used, these systems are called Duels. They are used to resolve issues of slander, dishonor or any other disputes of a personal nature. Some Clans require that Duels be used to resolve leadership challenges. Duels are not used to resolve issues of criminal transgression. Any Nomad caught committing a crime is brought before either a Clan or Zocalo Council, depending on the seriousness of the infraction.

Rules of conduct for Duels are defined within each Clan and cannot be applied to a Nomad from outside that Clan without the Nomad's consent. Most Duels have some traditional or ritualistic component to them, such as being required to take place only in certain locations, or only at certain times and so on. Duels may be public events, fought before the entire Clan, or conducted privately with only the Duelists, their seconds and a judge present. Again, the specifics vary from Clan to Clan. Generally, challenges may be made at any time, except during life- or Clan-threatening situations. A Duel is usually limited to two individuals, the challenger and defender. Duels are not group activities, although there are stories of entire factions participating.

If the nature of the Duel is not defined by Clan tradition, it is up to the defender to set the conditions of the Duel. Tests of skill are by far the most common type of Duel. They may involve demonstrations of physical capabilities, such as completing an obstacle course. They may also involve exhibitions of technical proficiencies, with the challenger and defender stripping down and rebuilding a piece of equipment neither has serviced before. Duels to the death are very rare and considered wasteful. Accidental deaths may still result, but if some mishap occurs, the surviving Duelist is not held responsible unless malign intent is suspected.

FEUDS ▼

There are times when all attempts at peaceful resolution fail. One side may feel it has been too greatly wronged, or a Zocalo Council judgment too weak or completely inappropriate. Nomads have long memories, and conflict and hatred built up over generations may boil over into a feud. Feuds are rare and very serious. As word of a feud spreads, the reputations of all Clans involved are affected. Nomad society frowns on those who cannot resolve issues peacefully. Not only do relations between the feuding Clans suffer; other Clans may find themselves taking tangential damage if they do not keep their distance.

Feuds typically stay on a small scale. Violence, when it occurs, is limited to brawls and vandalism. After few months, Clan Elders usually calm down enough to talk rationally. Sometimes the hatred behind a feud runs too deep, and instead of being resolved in a few months, the situation worsens. Vandalism becomes sabotage, brawls become skirmishes and the feud becomes an all-out war. At this point, it is practically impossible to resolve the dispute. Clans not part of the feud leave the area, and even the Mercurian Merchant Guild will stop dealing with the feuding Clans until the conflict is over. With a little luck, the feud will burn itself out with little harm to innocent bystanders. On the other hand, the feud could rage for years, like the Freeman-Metzner Feud, which has gone on for a century, killing families and destroying the reputation of both Clans, with each act of violence only fanning the flames higher.

It takes years to repair the damage to the reputation of a feuding Clan, especially one involved in a shooting war. Nomads believe that a Clan that resorts to violence once will do it again, and are unwilling to rebuild any sort of relationship that could place them in the crossfire. Feuding Clans find they must move to new areas, even if the feud was resolved without a single shot being fired.

THE TROUBLE WITH TRIBALS ★

If relations between two Clans degenerate into a feud, the following changes take place immediately. The Nomads of each Clan immediately acquire the Clan Flaw: Feud (see page 85) toward the opposing Clan (or Clans). The Reputations of all Clans involved drop by 1; if a Clan's Reputation goes below -5, the rating stays there but a Zocalo Council is immediately called to discuss possible banishment. If the feud becomes a shooting war, Clan Reputation drops by a further -2. Any agreements or arrangements with Clans not part of the feud are immediately nullified. Any agreements with the Mercurian Merchant Guild are suspended until the feud ends. With the exception of Guild agreements, all these losses are irrevocable. That is, they are not undone the moment the feud ends. Nomads want no part of the violence and chaos of feuds, and it will be many years before they resume business with feuding Clans.

2.3.4

2.3.5

GAMEMASTER'S NOTE
end of section 2.3 word of law

► THE STELLAR SCENE



The Nomads occupy potentially volatile territory. With CEGA on one side and the Jovian Confederation on the other, the Belt will become a battleground if relations between those two nations deteriorate any further. Currently, the vast majority of the Belt lies unclaimed, but should CEGA and the JAF start carving slices out of the region, the Nomads could be left with no place to run.

The Lysenkos have always used this argument, regardless of its actual validity, to justify their representation at the USN. They feel that as long as there is some recognition of the Nomad occupation of the Belt, it will be much more difficult to dismiss the Nomads as squatters should push come to shove.

Unfortunately, Nomad isolationism has kept the Clans removed not only from system-wide politics, but also from each other. This separation leaves the Nomads vulnerable to non-Nomad pirates, hostile military forces and increasing commercial encroachment by Venus-backed operations.

▼ MERCURY AND THE MERCHANT GUILD



Mercury is represented in the Belt exclusively by its Merchant Guild. The Guild is the largest importer and exporter in the region. Without regular shipments, many of the colonies in the Belt would not be viable. The Guild is also the one foreign power with close ties to the Nomads. Many Clans have made arrangements for the Guild to provide transportation of cargo and vital goods both to and from isolated homesteads and zocalos. These arrangements have left the Guild in possession of some very unique information: the locations of a large portion of the Nomads' homesteads and zocalos. No other organization has as complete a picture of Nomad demographics, not even Clan Lysenko (despite its best efforts). The Guild has gone to great pains to conceal and protect this information to avoid frightening its Clan clientele.

The Guild also has a "Working Contract" relationship with many Clans. The Guild allows Nomads to serve as engineers and technicians on board Guild vessels. The Nomads are paid well above normal Guild wages. The Mercurian crewmembers are not jealous. They see Nomads as an asset and are more than happy to have those stoic workers aboard. Work contracts last anywhere from six months to two years, although they may be terminated any time at the discretion of the Guild.

The Merchant Guild maintains permanent offices at all major trade stations, and tries to send representatives to any zocalos it discovers. Its head offices are located at Ceres City, in the central plaza near the Parliament of Clans. However, recent conditions (see next section) have convinced the Guild that it may better serve the Belt from another location, and it is currently scouting a new site for its Belt operations center.

▼ VENUS



When the Venusian Bank achieved economic dominance, it did not neglect the Belt. VenusBank has some stake in almost every commercial operation, and reaps massive dividends from the refined metals. Since 2210, most major trade stations have a VenusBank branch office. Over the last three years, Venusian interest in the Belt has become much more colonial. Infrastructure to support permanent Venusian mining operations has been slowly put into place, including the construction of several corporate stations around the Belt. Venus scorns Nomads and refuses to recognize any Nomad claims not officially recorded in the Ceres Claim Registry. Clans have been forced to surrender valuable asteroids to Venus-backed mining operations with no compensation whatsoever.

Last year, a record search revealed that the Furosha Clan had neglected to register Vesta in the Ceres Registry. Within a week, a Montana Mining Collective vessel showered the asteroid surface with claim markers and ordered the Clan to leave. The Furosha stayed on Vesta, but the claim is still in dispute and the situation is deteriorating. Despite the Venus-Nomad tension, there have been numerous visits to Ceres by members of the USN's Venus delegation. The purpose of these visits is unknown — the Lysenkos have pulled as much security as they can manage to keep the meetings private.

HISTORICAL NOTE

The Merchant Guild has no problem with Clan Lysenko asserting its right to carry its own cargo. However, the Guild is angered and disgusted by the Lysenkos' attempt to ruin a long-standing and mutually profitable relationship. The Guild has severed all contracts with Clan Lysenko, and discharged any Lysenko Nomads currently serving on Guild ships. The Mercurians are gearing up for a trade war, but considering the Belt's distance from Mercury, the Lysenkos may be in a position to give the Guild a good run for its money.

2.4.3

The Nomads have better relations with the Jovians, who view the Nomads as independent extensions of the Trojan States. After the Odyssey, the USN Belt delegation began to discreetly explore the possibility of a Nomad-Jovian alliance. Over the last year, the delegation has fallen silent on the matter, leaving the Jovians to wonder if an agreement has been reached with someone else.

2.4.4

2.4.5
end of section 2.4 the stellar scene

Independents rely on reputation as much as the Nomads do. There is no special license or badge that marks Independents; word-of-mouth is their only acknowledgement. Nomads refer to Independents as "cousins." For an independent to be accepted, a Nomad must vouch for the reputation of the Independent by making proper introductions. Independents are usually introduced as distant relatives; e.g., "This is Mike Thompson; he's a cousin of mine." The Nomad is taking on responsibility for the Independent in the same way he would by introducing a new Nomad. Any inappropriate actions or behavior by the Independent will reflect poorly on the Nomad as well.

2.4.5

end of section 2.4 the

Newly arrived refugees have no status. Those with money or vital skills can quickly establish a place for themselves. The rest are treated as a labor resource by the non-Nomad inhabitants, to be exploited, used up and thrown away. Nomads shun refugees: those that have not learned how to survive in the Belt are not only a liability, they are dangerous. Refugees have no reputation, save for the stigma of being a refugee. However, that alone is enough to seriously impair a refugee's chances of success. It is possible for a refugee, through hard work over a very long time, to become accepted as an Independent. This is a steep uphill battle, as it is not enough to learn how to live in the Belt. To be accepted, Nomads must be impressed by the refugee's capabilities — a difficult feat to achieve.

► GETTING BY



The Nomads may be isolated in terms of location, but they are at no loss for options for survival. Most Clans prospect and live directly off the resources locked inside the asteroids. A few Clans have found different ways to get by. Some search the Belt for salvage, plundering the misfortunes of others. Some exist only to serve, contracting themselves out as labor to anyone willing to pay. Regardless of the method, Nomads view survival as their primary purpose and pursue it single-mindedly.

The Nomads inhabit only a tiny fraction of the asteroids in the Belt and solar orbits; millions more are available to be mined for resources. Most colonies perform mining operations to some extent in order to generate income, or they transport low priority goods (for those whose home's orbit cross the path of two or more planets). Mercurian Merchant Guild ships pass through pre-arranged pickup points every few months to trade equipment, foodstuffs and water for processed minerals.

▼ STABLE RESOURCES

Asteroids may be the only geographic features of the Belt, but each rock contains a veritable wealth of resources. Depending on the patience and the determination of potential exploiters, a steady supply of enough materials to be reasonably self-sufficient can be achieved. There is much more in the Belt than the Nomads will ever use, let alone any other Solar nation. The only complication is the time- and work-intensive processes needed to refine the materials.

Water is the single most valuable commodity in the Belt. Without a local water source, habitation of the region would be extremely difficult, if not impossible. Despite the ancient proverb, it is possible to draw water from the stones adrift in the Belt, although it may have to be baked out of asteroid material in the form of oxygen and hydrogen. Comets, essentially large balls of ice, are another source. **Hydrocarbons**, found mainly on Type C asteroids, are also critical for life and industry. They are used in the creation of fertilizer, polymers, rubber and lubricants. Of course, **metals** are in abundant supply: iron is by far the most common, followed by nickel. Radioactive isotopes such as uranium and thorium can also be found. The silicate rock of Type S asteroids can be used to create glass and ceramics.

▼ EXPORTS

Nomads really have only two exports that are considered to be of any value outside the Belt: minerals and a specialized labor force. The mineral wealth of an asteroid is much greater than a single Clan can effectively use. After an initial set-up, mined metals are produced almost as a by-product to a Clan's search for water and other volatiles. Nomads are willing to share the excess, for a price. Most extracted minerals do not actually leave the Belt. There is little point shipping them to Jupiter, which has its own asteroids, or to Earth, which can exploit much closer rocks. Instead, they are transported to construction or manufacturing sites within the Belt itself. Metals and minerals are either shipped to their destination by barges or launched via massdrivers or slings.

Nomad expertise is in great demand throughout the Solar System. Technicians can be found aboard most vessels voyaging in the Belt, and quite a few traveling beyond. Even Venusians and Earthers have occasionally acknowledged the value of Nomad crewmembers. Zero-gravity heavy laborers are likewise prized for their skill and know-how. Nomads working abroad are usually doing so for their Clans. Wages are sent home, save for a small allowance to cover living expenses. Some impoverished Clans have no choice but to hire out their members in order survive. Typical contracts last from one to five years, including paid travel time if the job site is outside of the Belt.

SALVAGE ▼

The Belt has been inhabited for almost two-hundred years, more than enough time to accumulate an appreciable level of junk. Derelict vessels and bases can still be found that date all the way back to the original multinational mining operations. Salvaging requires resources, organization and a lot of luck. The few Clans that make a living this way cultivate a large number of contacts, and constantly follow up on leads. Most finds yield little actual value, although occasionally salvagers will come across a wreck of exceptional worth. These bountiful derelicts can generate enough income to keep a Clan operational for months. Eminently practical, Nomad salvage crews operate by one rule: finders, keepers. Belt salvagers have no reason to care about a wreck's previous owners, as most finds are too ancient or too valuable to announce. The Nomads do not feel the need to adhere to the USN Conventions on Space Salvage (see Spacer's Guide), a practice that has caused more than one argument in the USN chambers.

Vessels are taken intact, if possible. Otherwise, they are stripped down to the last bulkhead. Bases are likewise ransacked, although if a facility is in reasonably good shape, salvagers sometimes plant claim markers and take over the installation for their own use. Functioning salvaged equipment is sold on the gray market (see page 30). The rest is melted down and recycled.

The job is not without risks. Salvagers take every opportunity to learn exactly why a ship or facility was abandoned. If it was due to some sort of emergency, the derelict could still be dangerous. Military assets could be booby-trapped. Derelicts are explored with the greatest of care. Space is dangerous enough without wandering blindly through an abandoned hulk.

CONTRACTING ▼

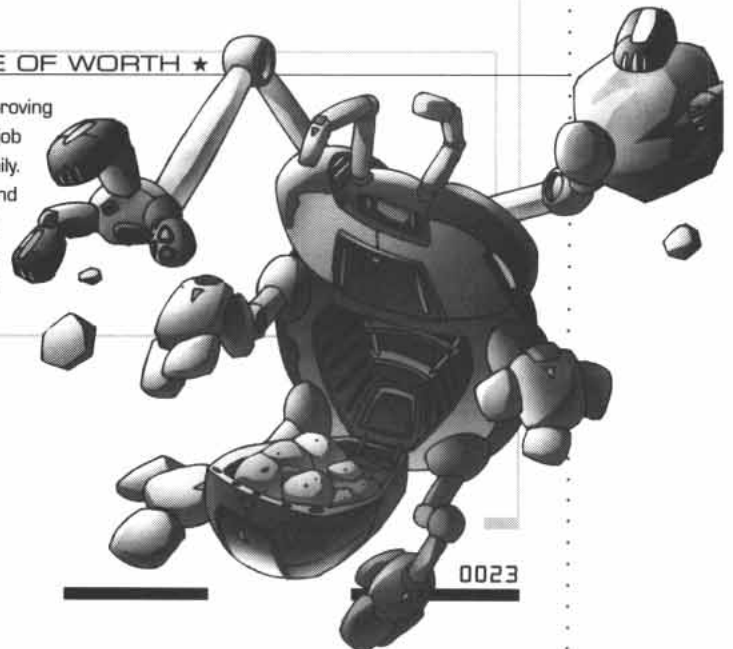
It is not unusual for Nomads to hire themselves out. Within the Belt, there are many opportunities to work for other Clans as surveyors, prospectors or miners. Work arrangements between Clans are fairly informal. Payment is either in raw resources or promises of reciprocal assistance in the future. All Clans make a certain number of their members available for contract work. It is considered a good way not only to interact with other Nomads, but also to learn new techniques that could benefit the Clan.

Nomads take contracts from outside the Belt as well. Recruiting agents from most Solar nations frequent the trade stations, offering employment to any Nomad willing to work abroad. Belt-raised technicians and crewmen are much sought-after, accustomed as they are to cramped living conditions and constant acceleration changes. Many Nomads leave home to work for companies or governments, saving their earnings for use upon their return. The Mercurian Merchant Guild has a special arrangement with the Nomads, allowing them to work aboard Guild vessels as highly paid non-members, although they are restricted to certain common areas of the ships to keep them away from Guild secrets. Caring little for such bizarre ritual, the Nomads are more than happy to take the Mercurians' money. The Jovian Confederacy and the Orbital Colonies also highly prize Nomad expertise.

Nomads generally set the terms of the contracts. There may be some negotiation, but employers usually have no say in the issue. It is usually a "take it or leave it" situation, and there are always other employers willing to take it rather than leave it.

CULTURAL NOTE: A MEASURE OF WORTH ★

Refugees deliberately seek out contract work with Nomads as a means of proving worth. The survey industry is especially targeted, as the demands of the job allow refugees to demonstrate aptitudes in tasks that Nomads perform daily. Refugees never work directly for Nomads. Instead, Independents hire and train refugees before offering contracts to Nomads. There is an implicit understanding that the refugees will not talk about their status. While somewhat deceitful, it does allow the two groups to interact while avoiding social stigmas.



2.5.5

▼ PROSPECTING



Whenever a Clan discovers a rich deposit of ore, the first thing it does is to post a time-stamped personal beacon on the rock. These beacons, called claim markers, are small radio broadcasters, preprogrammed by the Clan to identify itself as the claimant of the deposit in question. These markers are respected by any other Nomad stumbling across them within two months of first being planted. The Nomads assume that if a prospector has not started working his claim within two months, he is either a speculator (and consequently hated), overclaiming (i.e., biting off more than he can chew) or dead. When a Clan posts its beacon it also updates its astronomical maps to include its new claim. Whenever it meets another Clan, they exchange maps and thereby "register" each other's claims. If a Nomad ship encounters another Clan's claims beacon, it updates its maps to include that other Clan's claim. The Nomads will also honor claims by non-Nomads, providing that the claim beacon is time stamped in a Nomad fashion. Any non-Nomad prospector wanting to live a long and uneventful life learns very quickly to respect Nomad claims markers. Dozens of claims are passed back and forth by the Nomads every time they meet. Although it is very dishonorable, occasionally a Clan will bushwhack another and wait for their claims to expire. Although there is no proof, rumor has it that much of the Lysenko fortune was acquired this way.

◇ CLAIMS

Prospecting is a mainstay of the Nomad economy; it is what a lot of Clans do to pay the bills. Almost every Clan needs prospectors, but not everyone has the money it takes to start and maintain a prospecting operation. Some people, typically non-Nomad homesteaders and Nomad Clans down on their luck, try to make ends meet by just mapping and surveying new deposits and selling these claims to others. The value of these claims drops the closer they get to the two-month time limit. Although many Nomads do not use surveyors from outside of their own Clan, there is always work available to anyone with a good reputation. Lately, the Venusian mining operations have become one of the largest purchasers of nearly expired claims, buying them from Independent speculators who acquired them from the original Nomad surveyors.

The Lysenkos have established a Belt-wide claim registry based on Ceres, but most Clans ignore it, choosing instead the traditional methods of laying and registering claims. The Nomads' claim-staking tradition is one of the underpinnings of Nomad society. It ties them socially, keeps them from fighting over good rocks, builds mutual respect and reinforces a sort of code of honor. Clans might not physically defend another Clan's claim, but they will respect it. They do it because they expect others to do it for them. Most Clans can go months without talking to another Clan and many will seek out zocalos just to register their claims.

Venusian corporations have been moving large-scale mining operations into the Belt of late, and have been stepping on a lot of Nomad toes. They blatantly ignore any traditional Clan claim and will only respect claims staked through the central registry on Ceres. The Clans are also getting increasingly annoyed at the Venusians for speculating, staking out huge chunks of space and then attacking Nomad ships when they try to mine the rocks after the claim has expired.

▼ MINING

Although they can be conducted separately, surveying and prospecting are usually the first phases of more involved operations. Nomads are not the only miners in the Belt. Companies from Venus, Mars and the Jovian Confederacy can be found practically everywhere. Despite the diversity of operations, they all follow some common procedures.

2.5.6

2.5.6 MINING (CONT.)

Before any work is done on mineral extractions, the surface of the asteroid must be covered to prevent dust or debris from coming loose and creating hazards. Surface coverings include thin foil, lightweight concrete, or a combination of both. By sealing the surface, the covering also serves to prevent any loss of volatile materials, such as water or carbon dioxide, due to evaporation. Surface preparation also includes the installation of any buildings or structures, such as solar ovens, storage buildings and mineshaft access points. Around these structures, a series of large nets is also put into place as both a safety feature and to permit ease of maneuver to outside workers.

Nomads prefer tunneling methods when it comes to extracting ore. It is difficult to consume an entire asteroid in this fashion, but tunnels can be sealed off, pressurized and used for other purposes. Other mining companies who do not need to live on the rocks may instead choose to work from the outside in, carving off portions of the surface after covering the area with a protective canopy.

There is a wide variety of extraction and refinement methods. The most common involves reducing asteroid rock to a powder. The material is repeatedly filtered and crushed until no large particles remain. Most metals can be magnetically separated from the rest of the debris. The non-metallic leftovers are put into ovens, where volatile materials are literally baked out of the powder and condensed into collection tanks. Solar smelters are another means of extraction. These large, reflective mirrors focus sunlight in the same manner as a magnifying glass lens. They can be used in conjunction with solar ovens to bake out volatiles. In more focused arrays, they can reduce smaller asteroids to molten slag. The liquefied metals separate by spin according to density. The asteroid is allowed to cool and is then mined conventionally. Asteroids with a high percentage of volatiles are baked inside of large, transparent bags to collect the gases.

Regardless of the methods, the process is highly automated. Mining environments pose a significant hazard to human workers. Heavily armored vacuum suits and exo-suits are used, but even so, miners do not like to enter active excavation sites unless they must.

MOVING ASTEROIDS ♦

Nomads regularly transport very small asteroids to their homesteads for processing. In theory, the process is simple: attach large thrusters and move the rock. In practice, the undertaking is a little more complicated. Asteroids to be moved must be thoroughly surveyed. Thrusters can only be put in place over structurally sound regions to avoid fracturing the rock. The surface of the asteroid must be prepared in the same way as for mining, to avoid creating a trail of debris when the asteroid is moved. The sheer mass of the asteroid will produce low rates of acceleration, making transportation a very long process. Most mining Clans have specially designed asteroid tugs to shunt large rocks back and forth. Other Clans simply install modular thruster units, in essence turning the entire asteroid into a ship.

Rock piles present their own problems. Their fractured internal structure renders these asteroids almost impossible to move unless some additional measures are taken. Most Clans will simply use their solar smelters to melt the surface of the asteroid. Some of the asteroid's resources will be lost due to evaporation and outgassing, but when the surface cools, it forms a solid shell that allows the asteroid to be safely moved.

SHIPPING METALS ♦

Clans have several options available to get ore from point to point. Shipping by freighter can be done through either the Mercurian Merchant Guild or any one of a countless number of Independent operations. Transportation fees vary, but freighters are the one certain way of ensuring a cargo arrives at its destination.

Mass drivers are also in use by various concerns around the Belt. Ore "shots" are launched from the excavation or processing site and are retrieved at their destinations by mass catchers. These shots are massive and unmanned. A third option involves employing a tether as a sling, accelerating a shot through minimal power use (see page 96). Sling shots also require mass catchers at the end of their flights. Both mass drivers and slings are cheaper than freighters, but both suffer from a major drawback: should a mass catcher miss a shot, there is usually no second chance at retrieval. Unlike the lunar mass driver, which fires shots into Earth's orbit, there are no large celestial bodies in the Belt for the shots to orbit save for the Sun. Companies who desperately need a missed shot can chase after it; otherwise, they must wait a few years until the shot circles back around.

2.6

► WHITE TRADE

The term "white trade" was first coined by CEGA politicians. At the time, it referred to only those commercial activities in the Belt that were not causing problems. It has grown to encompass any and all legitimate business. To the Nomads, who have no central authority to define what is legitimate, white trade covers any kind of business that does not involve violence, theft, forcible confinement or any other restriction of freedom.

Nomads can produce most necessities from resources in the Belt. There is, however, a small list of things they cannot make, yet rely upon to survive. High-tech parts and equipment top that list: Nomads have been unable to equip their manufacturing facilities with the precision necessary to create items like microprocessor chips, diamond fiber helixes or even midget reactors. The Morris-Taylors are probably the one Clan least affected by this lack, as their Drydock can fabricate some high-tech items. However, the fabrication machinery is old and there are some things that the Morris-Taylors cannot produce.

Complex pharmaceuticals are also beyond the Nomads. In particular, Nomads are dependent upon the chemical compounds that slow or halt the ravages of weightless environments. Even if Nomads had the resources and industry to devote to drug production, they lack the required knowledge and expertise to distill what they need. There are other items that are not universally in demand, but are still vital to some, like high efficiency rocket fuel, specialized food items and even water. The last item can be obtained from other Clans and is rarely imported into the Belt.

▼ INTER-CLAN TRADE

2.6.1

The image of Nomad independence is a myth. No matter how remote a Clan may be, it can never afford to be truly separated from the rest of the Nomads. Trade between Clans is vital, as Clans cannot produce by themselves everything they need to survive. Clans trade freely among themselves commodities that would never be made available to outsiders. Basic resources, such as water and hydrocarbons, are common barter items. Nomads also trade favors, promises of labor or technical assistance. Information is another important trade commodity. Survey and prospecting data, gossip, non-Nomad commercial vessel sightings and activities are all valuable and can be used when bartering.

Some information is considered too important to trade. Homestead, zocalo and asteroid claim locations are freely exchanged as are military patrol routes and locations of known non-Nomad pirate activity. Nomad elders and navigators usually carry portable data terminals to ensure Clan charts are as up to date as possible. Trade is a social aspect, and is conducted constantly. It is almost impossible to have a conversation with a Nomad without some sort of bartering. Trade has even been ritualized in Nomad greetings. Whenever Clans meet, it is considered proper etiquette to ask if the Clan has come to trade. If the Clans have items and are willing to bargain, they can get down to business immediately. This practice has made excellent merchants of the Nomads.

▼ THE BARTER SYSTEM

2.6.2

Nomads have little use for money. The precious metal deposits a Clan can extract over the course of a month is more than enough to make an average person wealthy for life anywhere else in the Solar System. Even if a Clan had a great deal of money, the things it needs — water, food, functioning machinery — are not always available for sale. However, they may be available for trade.

Bartering depends entirely on perceived value and involves a lot of bluffing, with each person trying to determine the needs of the other without revealing his own. The value of a particular item is set depending on how well this bluffing goes. The value can be reduced, but this also depends on the bluffing. No amount of haggling will convince a trader to lower a price if he knows the customer can afford to and is willing to pay.

Deals are usually concluded with a handshake, and items are exchanged immediately. If the merchandise is too large, or, as in the case of brokers, not currently available, a later date can be arranged for the swap. No items will be exchanged until that time. Bartering in bad faith or deliberately misrepresenting the quality of an item is considered a grave social offense to a Nomad. Such transgressions are usually brought before a Zocalo Council.

TRANSPORTING GOODS ▼

Major Clans have enough freighter assets to transport their own goods. A few of the large Clans, such as the Furosha, employ transports belonging to smaller Clans. Smaller Clans usually haul their cargoes only as far as the nearest homestead or zocalo. They cannot afford to spare their ships for long runs and would rather avoid the logistical hassle. Instead, they leave long-range transportation of their goods to others.

The Mercurian Merchant Guild is probably the closest thing the Nomads have to an ally. Clans make arrangements with the Guild for regular cargo pick-ups and drop-offs. Transportation fees are low, and in some cases waived completely in exchange for additional services such as having Guild ships serviced by Clan technicians. The Guild maintains active routes between all zocalos and trade stations, ensuring that Nomad goods will be available to all possible markets.

Independents also ply the gulfs between homesteads. They are typically single-ship operations, although a few have organized themselves into shipping associations. Independents work strictly on local runs, making a circuit of several homesteads plus a zocalo or trade station. Like the Guild, Independents usually waive transport fees if offered favors, although most Independents would rather not let Nomad technicians work on their vessels.

Cargo heading out of the Belt must first be brought to a trade station. From there, Guild or Independent freighters will transport the goods to either a major port like Ceres, or they will take the cargo directly to its destination. Some Clans have homesteaded on Amor or Apollo asteroids. The orbit of an Amor asteroid carries it close to the orbit of the Earth, while an Apollo orbit actually crosses Earth's orbit. These Clans use their homesteads as freighters, carrying cargo and occasionally passengers back and forth between the Belt and Earth. Transport times are very slow — on the order of years — but massive amounts of cargo can be carried for a tiny fraction of normal shipping costs.

ZOCALOS, THE WANDERING MARKETS ▼

The zocalo (pronounced ZOH-ka-low) forms the hub of Nomad society. A combination of carnival and marketplace, it is where Clans meet to trade, share information and resolve inter-Clan disputes. Marriages between Nomads of different Clans also take place, adding to the festive atmosphere. At any given time, there are hundreds of zocalos taking place around the Belt. Organizers are careful to avoid conflicts with other nearby zocalos. Any Clan can host a zocalo. Only two things are required: good communications to inform other Nomads and a station large enough to house them when they come. Several Clans will usually host a zocalo together, pooling resources and sharing the work.

Zocalos are usually held at old anchorages. The station is stripped down to accommodate as many people as possible. Old storage bays and mine shafts are sealed off, pressurized and converted to market areas and warehouses. As many docking bays as possible are extended out from the anchorage, giving the station the appearance of a pincushion. Most of the bays are nothing more than cargo gantries with pressurized interiors. When the conversion is finished, the station consists almost entirely of cargo bays, docks and habitat modules.

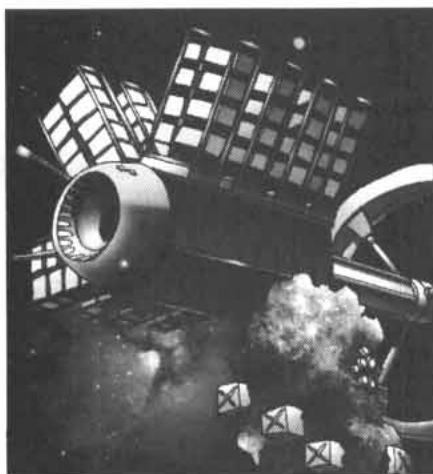
Clans coming to the zocalo with merchandise to trade may rent booths in the market areas. Poorer Clans that cannot afford booths trade "out in the docks," that is, right out of their docking bays. There is little organization in terms of allocating space. Clans rent docks and booths on a first-come, first-served basis, turning the markets into chaotic free-for-alls. Most Nomads have no clue where to find what they need. Fortunately, there are brokers: hardy individuals who are part guide, part matchmaker and part salesman. Brokers make it their business to keep track of where various kinds of merchandise are in supply or demand around the zocalo. The broker locates buyers or sellers, depending on an inquiring Nomad's needs. For a small fee, the broker will make introductions. Brokers will also buy and sell items themselves, as a form of speculative trade.

There really is no such thing as a black market at a zocalo. Most business is conducted unconditionally, although there are a few things Nomads will not trade openly. Nomads who feel there is some risk in dealing their merchandise will barter out in the docks. There is usually a broker or two who can be trusted to not introduce customers who will cause trouble. Zocalos are usually restricted to Nomads only. Independents are welcome, as long as they are with Nomads who can make proper introductions.

Most zocalos last only for a few months. The hosts stockpile resources beforehand, but once those stockpiles run low, they need to return to their regular lives to survive. A few Clans have figured out how to make a living through hosting and operating permanent zocalos such as Greshenko Station.



▼ PERMANENT TRADE STATIONS



Some Independents and private concerns, realizing the vital role of the zocalos, have taken the wandering markets one step further. Where zocalos are small, obscure, temporary and intended mainly for Nomads, trade stations are large, well-advertised fixtures providing a meeting place for both Nomads and the other peoples of the Belt. Nomads find they can do just as brisk a business at a trade station as at a zocalo, with the added benefit of direct access to merchandise from outside the Belt.

Trade stations are the homes of the black market in the Belt. As Nomads and non-Nomads mix freely, it is a logical transfer point for goods illegal in other Solar nations. Brokers with the right connections and enough of a bankroll can find practically anything without leaving the station. Smugglers are able to move cargo with few questions asked. However, pirates — Nomad and non-Nomad alike — are at risk here, and must operate through fences to sell merchandise.

▼ CERES

Ceres is the home of the Nomad Parliament, and is considered the capital of the Belt by those who agree to be ruled. It is also the main trading port for the Belt. Most major mercantile companies maintain their head offices in Piazzis while their cargoes are transferred via the nearby cluster of trade stations. The Venus Bank of Ceres has its headquarters there, and the Solapol office, donated rent-free by Denis himself, is within walking distance of the zocalo. The zocalo itself occupies the entire downtown core. Nomads willing to tolerate the dominance of Clan Lysenko can make a good living on Ceres, either working as skilled laborers or selling Nomad merchandise.

Ceres itself is almost entirely under the control of Clan Lysenko. Very little goes on there that the Clan will not eventually discover. This is not to say that Ceres is run as a totalitarian society. Rather, it is populated almost completely with Lysenko supporters, spies and informants. For this reason, the black market does not exist on Ceres. Due to their position on the USN, the Lysenkos have enforced a zero tolerance policy on the sale of contraband goods. The nearby trade stations, however, are not as regulated. Most smugglers avoid using Ceres trade stations as drop-off points because of their high visibility.

◇ THE MONEY BELT

The market setup on Ceres is entirely the brainchild of Venus Bank. It is essentially an experiment in large-scale remote distance banking. The laser communications array transmits and receives banking data in coded, irregularly timed message pulses. Similar arrays have been installed on twelve trade stations. The net result is a constantly updated set of banking information, allowing the Venus Bank to monitor transactions within hours of them occurring, even if the transaction took place on the other side of the Belt.

The concept behind the system is not new, but many groups are watching with interest, particularly the JAF and the CEGA, who are curious to see how well the system handles large amounts of data over long distances. They are also interested in seeing how secure the whole set-up is.

The system is not without its flaws. Intervening objects may temporarily block the arrays and cause disruptions. There have also been stories of a Nomad hacking into a trade station uplink and transmitting false account data to make himself rich.

◇ BARTERING

As barter is based on perceived value, it is nearly impossible to design a system of rules that could incorporate all possibilities. Gamemasters should assign prices to commodities based on need. An item will only be traded for other items of equivalent or (preferably) greater value. Roleplaying should be highly emphasized. Hagglng Skill Tests are a last resort, and if a Player is unwilling to roleplay, his roll should be penalized to reflect the lack of effort.



▼ GRAY MARKETS

Smuggling and piracy are accepted parts of Nomad society, especially as Nomads depend on the extra flow of materials that these two groups generate. However, the rest of the Solar nations are not as tolerant, and action taken against smugglers and especially pirates is swift and often violent. A level of insulation, the gray market, has developed to protect Nomads seen as being on the wrong side of the law.

The gray market consists entirely of and contacts. Fences buy stolen goods directly, store them for a time and then make them available on the open market. Contacts are information gatherers, people who "know people" and can make introductions. Smugglers and Nomad pirates do not need the gray market when doing business with Nomads. Goods presented for trade at zocalos are treated with respect to quality, not source. Once traded, pirated goods vanish into the depths of the Belt along with their new owners. Only truly stupid smugglers and pirates operate openly on trade stations. There are too many opportunities to fall headlong into a sting operation run by Solapol or other national intelligence agencies. Reputation counts just as much between smugglers, pirates, contacts and fences as it does between other Nomads. Perhaps even more so, as black or gray marketeers who prove to be untrustworthy quickly find themselves out of a job.

◇ FIRST CONTACT

Contacts are the first line of defense. They must be adept at evaluating people in order to separate serious customers from potential troublemakers. Contacts set up the meets and make introductions. They link customers to fences and smugglers, or pirates to fences. Customers are never introduced directly to pirates. Contacts operate out of a "territory" of one or two stations, and are very streetwise about their places of business. They keep careful track of people's comings and goings, and regularly share information with each other. Contacts are paid for their services by both fences and customers.

◇ FENCES

Fences are "merchandise launderers," acting as a middle stage between pirates and non-Nomad customers. Contacts are used to make customer introductions, although a few fences, like Cousin Willy, operate on their own. Fences try to find buyers for the goods stockpiled from various pirates, although some fences take requests from customers to track down items not currently possessed.

Fences are well traveled, frequently crossing back and forth between zocalos and trade stations. Fences never do business with pirates on trade stations. Arrangements are made to examine goods at a remote location, usually at a zocalo or in space well away from any station. Fences pay pirates based on the current barter value of the stolen goods. Fences are not obligated to buy any portion of the cargo, and even established pirates may find themselves with leftovers.

Fences keep pirated goods at central storage locations for anywhere from a few days to a few months, depending on demand and how actively the original owners may be searching for their cargo. Several storage locations are maintained on the off chance that one is discovered by the wrong people. Isolated or mobile homesteads provide ideal storage for stolen and contraband goods.

It is not unknown for entire Clans to function as fences for the gray market. The most infamous example is the arrangement between Clan Greshenko and the Morris-Taylors, detailed in Chapter 3. Gray market Clans are usually more successful than individual fences as the Clans have larger resource pools and greater transportation potential.

★ UNDER THE TABLE OR NOT IN THIS HOUSE

Most zocalo trade is done freely and openly. There is little point in establishing a black market in a society that does not presume to ask a great deal of questions about merchandise. On the other hand, there are some items that Nomads prefer to trade quietly and a few that they will not trade at all. Armaments fall under the "trade quietly" category, especially if weapons are being sought in large quantities. The reasons for such a purchase may be entirely valid, but Clans become apprehensive if they notice one of their neighbors collecting an arsenal. Nomads will not deal in weapons of mass destruction: nuclear, biological or chemical. Radioactive materials are generally not made available to those the Nomads do not trust. Nomads also avoid dealing with indiscriminant weapons such as mines or explosives. Nomads do not tolerate the use or sale of recreational narcotics. The potential threat to safety and resources is considered too great. This does not preclude alcohol, although drinking is restricted to designated "safe" areas, such as bars and pubs.

SOLAPOL IN THE BELT ▼

Solapol has long harbored suspicions as to the true nature of pirates and smugglers in the Belt. It has taken steps to monitor the black market, and has had some success in tracing stolen property. Unfortunately, Solapol has very little authority in the region. The area is simply too large for Solapol or anybody else to effectively police. Clans are not required to recognize Solapol's authority, and the organization sometimes finds itself in the position of having to purchase help from Nomads, especially when tracking fugitives or Edicts violations. More often than not, the Nomads simply refuse to deal with Solapol, bringing to a halt many ongoing investigations.

Poorer Clans are quite willing to work with Solapol in exchange for monetary consideration, extending Solapol's ears directly into Nomad society. Thanks to them, Solapol has been able to cultivate a handful of informants in the gray market that can provide information on the movement of stolen or smuggled goods. Solapol's lack of real presence in the Belt has made it difficult to act on information gathered through these informants, however. Accuracy cannot be verified, and very few arrests have been made. It has not helped that informants have fed false information to Solapol on several occasions with the intent of making trouble for other individuals or Clans. However, as this network is Solapol's only source of information from within the Nomads, it is unlikely that such embarrassments will have any long-term repercussions.

SOLAPOL DEEP COVER OPS ◇

Solapol has taken steps to develop a covert presence in the Belt. This is a small-scale long-term project, as agents must be accepted by Nomad society before any work can actually begin. Solapol has never been able to insert an operative as a member of a Clan. The network of informants is too unreliable to warrant the risk of using it to make introductions. Most agents work as Independents. Budgetary considerations will never allow Solapol to establish a strong covert presence in the Belt. The initial success of its deep cover ops, however, may free up funding for more ambitious operations.

David Liliefeldt and Karen Singh are typical examples of Solapol agents in the Belt. They masquerade as married Independents and have been accepted by several Clans. Their freighter, the *Common-Law*, allows them the freedom to travel and report to Solapol discreetly. They function primarily as intelligence operatives, feeding Solapol information about the black market and pirate movements.

SORE THUMBS ★

The biggest hurdle covert agents need to overcome is their own training. Like any agency operating in space, Solapol agents are conditioned to react instinctively during emergency situations in the hopes that fast reflexes may save lives. Unfortunately, the "instinctive" reaction is based on Solapol survival techniques. This means that in a given crisis situation, all Solapol agents will react the same way. This simple fact has blown more than one covert operation. Solapol is trying to correct the problem in its current agents, but it seems the easiest thing to do is simply vary the training of new agents. Programs have been developed based on Nomad survival techniques in the hopes that not only will agents be less recognizable, one may actually become adopted by a Clan.

MARTIAL ENFORCEMENT ◇

Each Solar nation considers its vessels an extension of its own territory. Anyone setting foot inside a ship is actually stepping into the sovereign space of a national power, and is subject to all the laws of that nation. This reasoning has been used to justify military incursion into the Belt, particularly in pursuit of pirates or so-called terrorists. Both CEGA and Venus are fond of making examples of insidious Nomad pirates. Cruisers are sent on what Solapol contemptuously refers to as 'Nam Missions: a few prisoners are taken and some shots are fired at the locals to emphasize the point. The prisoners are taken out of the Belt for trial and subsequent imprisonment.

Officially, 'Nam Missions were halted the moment the United Space Nations awarded probationary status to the Belt. However, both CEGA and Venus seem to have an abundance of overzealous captains who are willing to take any risks necessary to ensure the safety and security of their respective nations. On the plus side, trials are now closely monitored, and most Nomads do not have enough evidence against them to warrant convictions.

2.7.3

HISTORICAL NOTE

end of section 2.7 black trade



"There is no such thing as 'home sweet home.' A Nomad is at home anywhere, so long as his Clan is with him."

— Dr. Tanya Foubert, Department of Nomad Studies,
University of Olympus

A CLOSELY-KNIT FABRIC ◀

The bond of family is the strongest bond in a Nomad's life. It carries with it an implication of trust. A Clan shares a bond of trust across all its members. It is not simply an extended family, it is a team, a unit dedicated to one purpose: survival.

For most Clans, survival is a daily struggle. They are limited by what resources they can draw out of the rocks, by what they can afford to trade to other Clans and by what other Clans can afford to trade in return. Clan sizes are small and heavily regulated, for fear that even a few extra hungry mouths could bring disaster for everyone.

Some Clans have found a unique resource, or received that lucky break, and have grown to surprising sizes. A very few have been so successful that they have become a dominant force in the Belt. The actions of these major Clans will affect the lives of those living in the Belt, no matter how remote.



MAJOR CLANS ▼

A major Clan is defined by only one aspect: the ability to influence the lives of the rest of the Nomads in the Belt. This influence goes beyond the limited reach of feuds, alliances and business arrangements. Major Clans can affect the prosperity of other Nomads simply by moving into an area — or moving out. The source of this influence varies from Clan to Clan. For some, like the Furosha or the Morris-Taylors, it comes through control of a large or vital piece of real estate. For others, like the Lysenko, it comes from a network of alliances and political affiliations. Each source is unique and irreplaceable. Unlike minor Clans, major Clans will stand their ground and defend their assets, especially if the alternative is a return to the harsh day-to-day survival faced by the minor Clans.

Major Clans can be considered something of a ruling class, although their positions are rather precarious. They exert their influence indirectly through economic pressure and prefer to avoid direct confrontation. Other Nomads respect them only when those Nomads have no other choice. In fact, many minor Clans stay as far away from the major Clans as possible in order to keep free of the larger Clans' influence.

Reputation: There are less than fifteen major Clans. The average population is about a thousand per Clan, and all major Clans have existed in some form for at least a century. Their size and longevity alone practically guarantees recognition by most Nomads, regardless of where in the Belt those Nomads may live. In terms of the Reputation guidelines (page 87), major Clans have Reputations of +3 and higher, or -3 and lower.

Wealth: The size and longevity of the major Clans have allowed them to consolidate large amounts of wealth and raw materials. Survival on a daily basis is no longer a concern. Most major Clans have made some investment in their future through either their own assets or those of allied Clans, ensuring the major Clan will stay a major Clan unless it becomes the victim of a major disaster.

Resources and Assets: Most major Clans own at least one permanent station. This is not just the Clan's home, it is also a zocalo or possibly even a trade station. Major Clans also operate large support fleets and may even own a small number of ancient exo-armors. Some major Clans contract minor Clans to manage assets or perform odd tasks, such as cargo transport or surveying.

MINOR CLANS ▼

If a Clan is not one of the major Clans, it is known as a minor Clan. Obviously, this includes almost every Clan in the Belt. An exact count of the number of minor Clans is almost impossible to determine, as most Clans isolate themselves to such a degree that they rarely encounter each other outside of the zocalos. If a minor Clan perishes in the void, they may never be noticed as missing.

Minor Clan populations average about fifty people, including children. Larger populations are unsupportable, unless a lucky Clan secures a permanent source of prosperity. Minor Clans appear and disappear constantly, although some are just as long-lived as the major Clans. Some minor Clans like the Freeman and Metzner were once of major status, but fell from grace ages ago.



3.1.2 MINOR CLANS CONT.

Reputation: Minor Clans may achieve notoriety in their own local neighborhoods, but it is rare that their reputations become known anywhere beyond those close circles. It is possible, though, for a minor Clan to become as famous — or infamous — as a major Clan without ever reaching major Clan status. In terms of the Reputation guidelines (page 87), minor Clans typically have Reputations of -2 to +2, although any rating is possible.

Wealth: Most minor Clans have few resources left after meeting the demands of their populations. Planning for the future is simply not possible. Clans that do manage to get ahead, like the Greshenkos, are few and far between. More often, a Clan's fortunes will take a turn for the worse, possibly starting a long, slow slide into poverty.

Resources and Assets: All Clans have the means of creating temporary habitats, ranging from prefabricated bases to simply tethering Clan vessels together to form a primitive web station. Minor Clans typically do not occupy permanent stations; they need to be able to pull up stakes and move to wherever they locate new resources. The fleet of a minor Clan will be large enough to transport the Clan population all at once. A great volume of resources is expended to keep Clan ships operational, despite many vessels' advanced age and occasional lack of spare parts. A minor Clan without a large enough fleet is effectively stranded, and if the Clan is stranded, it is effectively dead. Minor Clans do not have unique assets. There may be an occasional lucky find, but for the most part minor Clans are forced to use whatever they can scavenge out of the Belt.

▼ NEW CLANS

New major Clans always come from the ranks of minor Clans, but new minor Clans can appear from any one of several possible origins. Two or more Clans may decide that the benefits of a separate existence are greatly outweighed by the potential of joining forces. If the Clans are "getting married," they are joining as equals. A new identity is created and a new reputation is forged, although the ghosts of the original Clans may haunt it for a while. The people and assets of all Clans involved are freely mixed. If a Clan is "being adopted," it is being absorbed into a larger Clan. The identity and reputation of the smaller Clan are abandoned in favor of those of the larger Clan.

◇ SPLITTING

Every Clan faces times when the population of the Clan becomes too much for Clan resources to support. Population growth is rigidly controlled, but even a simple change of fortune could necessitate a smaller Clan. In these instances, a group is selected to head out on its own. It is allowed to take a portion of Clan equipment, including one or two ships. The two groups may be mutually supportive, but they are now two separate Clans. On rare occasions, some incident or event will polarize Clan members to the point where they can no longer function as a single unit. If the problem cannot be resolved, the Clan may have no choice but to split. Dividing Clan assets becomes a slow, difficult process as each faction struggles for what it considers to be a fair share.

◇ BIRTHING

While not a common event in modern times, groups still move to the Belt and establish themselves as Clans without ever having been a part of Nomad society. Nomads give these "baby Clans" a wide berth, regarding the newcomers as little more than a dangerous collection of refugees. If the members of a baby Clan can demonstrate aptitude and respect for the Nomad lifestyle, they may eventually be accepted as Nomads in a decade or two.

▣ THROWING IN THE TOWEL

If a Clan finds that it can no longer survive in the Belt, there are few options available. Some Clans become adopted or incorporated into larger Clans. Most leave the Belt to start new lives with either the Jovian Confederacy or the Mercurian settlements. The Clan will stay together if at all possible, settling down as a large family. Some individuals may choose to stay behind in the Belt, using the remains of their Clan's assets to establish themselves as Independents.

CLAN FREEMAN, MINOR CLAN ◀

Clan Freeman numbers almost three hundred people. They were the first Nomad Clan, and at one time were one of the largest. They have fallen on hard times — their ongoing feud with Clan Metzner has driven every other Clan away. They have lost ships and people at the hands of the Metzners. Many Clans that trade with the Freeman find themselves under fire from Metzner ships.

Origins: By 2063, the network of resupply stations in the Main Belt known as the “Road to Jupiter” was completely controlled by the mining conglomerates. Traffic to the Jovian frontier was charged outrageous prices to resupply. The contracted employees of the Juno Corporation saw an opportunity, and in 2068, they built their own independent, civilian resupply station. The “Independent Road to Jupiter” was open for business! Since Jupiter and Earth orbit at different rates around the sun, the Freeman were forced to constantly move their station to keep it on the Road to Jupiter. Freeman Station became the permanent home of the employees and their families, making them effectively the first Nomad Clan. Freeman Station was an astonishing success, and by 2079 there were countless independent operations throughout the Belt based on the Freeman model.

In the early 2080s, the Road to Jupiter collapsed under the weight of refugees fleeing Earth. Resources grew scarce as hundreds of hungry people suddenly became thousands. In 2081, Clan elder Morgan of Juno ordered all Freeman holdings to keep their supplies to themselves. Every non-Freeman ship was turned away. When the Metzner Clan, starving and near death, sought aid from Freeman Station, they were denied access. Outraged and desperate, Ken Scrannage-Metzner personally led a raiding party that destroyed Freeman Station. The station was stripped, and everyone on board was slaughtered to keep the attackers’ identity a secret. The Metzners were sloppy, however, and within two years Clan Freeman had begun a series of brutal raids in revenge. Those raids only provoked the Metzners into further acts against the Freeman. Today, over a hundred years later, the Freeman-Metzner feud has decimated both Clans, yet they still fight on.

CLAN DESCRIPTION ▼

Reputation, Resources and Assets: Once a powerful Clan, the Freeman have fallen far over the last century. They own no homestead, and their six ships are constantly on the move. They trade when they can and pirate outsiders’ shipments the rest of the time. In addition, the Freeman are always short of money. War is expensive, and one of the ways they raise money is by hiring themselves out as scouts, surveyors and even crewmen. Unfortunately, other Clans will not hire Freeman Nomads. No one wants to space with people who value anger above survival, and the Freeman reputation for unreliability is known throughout the Belt. Freeman Nomads work entirely for non-Nomad employers. Trading with the Freeman carries risks: the Metzners have been known to attack Clans that have done business with them. Now, most Nomads avoid the Freeman, forcing the Clan to deal with non-Nomads. There is some trade with the Greshenkos and the Morris-Taylors, but it is done secretly at a hidden Greshenko rendezvous.

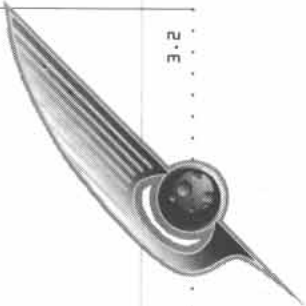
Goals, Aspirations, Machinations: There is a widening gap between the young and the old in the Freeman Clan. The Freeman elders are generally tired of war. They have watched their families, homes and equipment perish; no matter how hard they hit back, the Metzners never give up. The elders are the voice of reason at the Freeman Clan councils. The Freeman juniors, on the other hand, are the voice of action. They lead the assaults on Metzner caches and attack Metzner ships. Lately, the more extreme young Freeman have been talking about stealing a ship or two, turning away from their elders and creating a new Clan. Clan elders openly denounce these extremists, but are worried that the youngsters are gaining support within the group of undecided members.

CLAN FREEMAN DATA □

Clan Reputation:	-3	Base Funds:	30 million credits (population 300)
Perks:	Easy Recognition	Assets:	1 x Armed Inari Passenger Liner, 3 x Armed combat shuttles, 2 x Armed Atlas OTVs
Flaws:	Feud (with the Metzners), Poverty	Stockpiles:	1.1 million credits

FREEMAN CHARACTERS □

Clan Languages:	English, Spacer's Runic	Typical Perks:	Connections (Non-Nomad only)
Typical Skills:	Combat skills	Typical Flaws:	Feud (with Metzners), Infamous, Nemesis, Poor



3.2

2.3.1

end of section 3.2 clan freeman, minor clan



► CLAN GRESHENKO, MINOR CLAN

The Greshenko Clan is medium sized, with almost two hundred and fifty members. Greshenko Station is one of the few truly permanent zocalos, and is also the home of a small Clan freighter fleet. Greshenko Nomads specialize in trade and commerce, and are excellent spacers. They are fiercely loyal to their Clan, and have a reputation for protecting their own. Most Greshenko elders work at their station, but the younger Nomads contract themselves out, both to other Clans and interests outside of the Belt.

Origins: Pasha Greshenko saw the signs of the Collapse of 2080 almost a decade earlier. A rich Romanian industrialist, Greshenko invested in space corporations as a means of protecting his wealth and his family. By 2079, Greshenko was the chief administrator of the Pallas mining consortium, and both he and his family lived on the asteroid itself. Over the next two years, the troubles on Earth grew worse and the Belt was flooded with refugees. Greshenko decided to let Pallas become a refugee haven, but the overwhelming influx of desperate, homeless people strained the colony's capabilities to the limit. When the food ran out and life support began to fail, people panicked.

The Pallas Food Riots killed thousands, including Greshenko, his wife and his daughter. His three sons were trapped at the shipyards when fighting broke out. Leaving Ivano to prepare the escape ships, Bruno and Yuri tried reaching their families. Bruno was in communication with his wife when rioters broke into his apartment, and he could do nothing but listen while his family died at the hands of the mob. Yuri barely managed to drag his brother back to the shipyards. The Greshenkos escaped in two ships and rescued almost ninety other people. The infant Greshenko Clan disappeared into the Belt for over a century. In 2203, the Greshenkos were finally seen again, with four ships, nearly two hundred people and a full cargo of trade goods. They discovered the Morris-Taylor Clan building their Drydock and established a temporary zocalo nearby. Three years later, the zocalo was reinforced and Greshenko Station became a permanent fixture.

During their hundred-year absence, the Greshenkos developed contacts with many pirate Clans. To protect these connections, the Greshenkos made an arrangement with the Morris-Taylors. Cargo "recovered" by pirates is traded to the Morris-Taylors as parts for the Drydock. The Morris-Taylors refit the components with their own Clan identification, and the "laundered" goods are traded back to Clan Greshenko and made available for sale. Nomads trading with the Greshenkos suspect goods may be pirated, but since pirate Clans do not rob other Nomads nobody asks questions.

▼ CLAN DESCRIPTION

Reputation, Resources and Assets: For the past ten years, the Greshenkos have built a reputation as honest but hard bargainers. They are able to get any sort of commodity people need, from medicines to ship components. The Greshenkos have white and black market contacts throughout the Belt, and use those contacts to acquire just about anything. The Greshenko Clan is a major player in the gray market — a fact the Clan takes great pains to conceal from outsiders. Greshenko Station orbits within a few kilometers of the Morris-Taylor Drydock. This permanent zocalo, along with their four freighters, makes Clan Greshenko surprisingly wealthy for their size.

Goals, Aspirations, Machinations: The Greshenkos hope to make themselves rich someday and are well on their way to it. Their zocalo is one of the busiest of the smaller markets in the Belt. Their freighters are never idle — the Greshenkos always have cargo to move. The black market operations are also being slowly expanded. With the increased Venusian presence in the Belt, the Greshenkos have quietly let their black market contacts know there is an interest in tapping this new source of high-tech items.

■ CLAN GRESHENKO DATA

Reputation:	+2	Base Funds:	100 million credits (population 250)
Perks:	Wealth, Agreement — Morris-Taylor Clan	Assets:	Permanent Web Station with zocalo, 4 Mule-Class Bulk Freighters with "alternate" cargo modules
Flaws:	Secret: Black market connections	Stockpiles:	7.28 million credits

■ GRESHENKO CHARACTERS

Clan Languages:	English, Romanian, Spacer's Runic	Typical Perks:	Connections (all markets within Nomad Society)
Typical Skills:	Trade or Commerce-related	Typical Flaws:	None

THE METZNERS, MINOR CLAN ◀

Clan Metzner has one of the worst reputations of all the Nomad Clans in the Belt. They have been heavily embroiled in the longest running feud in history, the infamous Freeman-Metzner Feud. Few Nomads will trade with them and most Clans give them a wide berth if they meet them out on the rocks. Since the time of the first food riots, the Metzner Clan has taken every opportunity to avenge themselves on their despised Freeman enemies.

Origins: According to Clan history, in 2081, when the first food riots were breaking out on the corporate asteroids, Ken Scrannage-Metzner led his Clan on a peaceful exodus away from the violence of their home on Parthenope. When their supplies began to run low, they went to Freeman Station to trade for more, but the Freeman refused to sell them any food or fuel. Not willing to watch his family starve out in the cold vacuum of space while others hoarded their extras, Ken led the Metzners in a raid on Freeman Station. When the Freeman resisted with violence and the Metzners fired back, Ken knew that events were out of control. To save his Clan from Freeman retaliation, Ken ordered a full retreat from Freeman space. For the next ten years, almost half of the Metzner Clan died at the hands of the Freeman. Ken himself died in 2099 during the raid on Bricio Prime.

In the Bricio family of asteroids, the Metzners had joined with the Hiltz Clan and established a semi-permanent web station, Bricio Prime, as their home. When the Freeman learned of this Metzner holding they sent their three most heavily armed ships. In the ensuing battle, one of the Freeman ships was destroyed, but several of the station tethers were cut. The entire station, now out of balance, ripped itself apart, flinging station components into the depths of space. Over two hundred people were lost that day, and Jeremy Hiltz, senior elder of Hiltz Clan, became murderously anti-Freeman. He merged his Clan with the Metzners and forced from them a vow to revenge themselves against the Freeman and their allies. Denise, the sole surviving Metzner elder, knew her Clan now needed the Hiltz Clan just to survive, so she reluctantly agreed to Jeremy's demands and swore the oath for her Clan, forever locking them in their downward spiral of hate.

CLAN DESCRIPTION ▼

Reputation, Resources and Assets: As word spread throughout the Belt of the Metzner vow and their willingness to exact their revenge on anyone dealing with the Freeman Clan, their reputation suffered an irrevocable blow. The Metzner name is now spoken with contempt throughout the region. The Metzner Clan still numbers almost two hundred and fifty people and boasts a fleet of six ships. Three of them are lightly armed Belt liners, housing the entire Clan within their walls. The other three were once badly damaged military patrol boats, now repaired, refitted and rearmed exclusively for combat purposes.

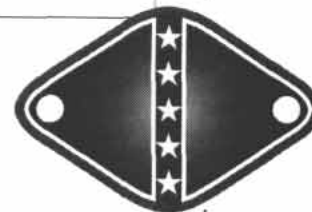
Goals, Aspirations, Machinations: The two main goals of the Metzner Clan are to survive in the face of all opposition and to blast said opposition in the face whenever possible. They hope to ruin the Freeman completely; when the Freeman are gone they can begin to rebuild their lives. The Metzners have not kept any permanent holdings, not since the Raid on Bricio Prime. They live an unanchored life even by Nomad standards. They are one of the few Clans that survive almost exclusively by piracy. After disabling a ship in combat, they sweep the hull with high concentrations of microwaves, killing any remaining occupants and saving themselves the trouble of boarding the ship to clear it. The Metzners have a very high post-combat salvage rate.

CLAN METZNER DATA □

Reputation:	-4	Base Funds:	50 million credits (population 250)
Perks:	Easy Recognition	Assets:	3 armed patrol boats (50 yrsold), 3 armed Belt liners
Flaws:Feud (Clan Freeman), Code of Honor 3 (Vengeance on Clan Freeman)		Stockpiles:	2 million credits

METZNER CHARACTERS □

Clan Languages:	English, Spacer's Runic	Typical Perks:	None
Typical Skills:	Combat skills	Typical Flaws:	Bloodlust, Feud (Clan Freeman), Infamous, Nemesis



3.4.1

end of section 3.4 the metznrs, minor clan

► CLAN VREDE, MINOR CLAN

While its one hundred and four member population barely qualifies it as a medium-sized Clan, the Vrede does have many typical Nomad traits. They live in an anchorage called Volksrust that orbits at 3.15 AU — closer to Jupiter than Mars and currently passing near the asteroid Hygeia. The Clan manages to make a meager living at mining metals and volatiles, but it does scrape enough together to justify a trip or two to the nearest zocalo every few months or so.

Origins: The Clan is about fifty years old, and was born when a group of disenchanted Newhomers pooled their resources and headed to the Belt to start a new life. Approximately half of the population can claim direct lineage to the original settlers. The rest entered the Clan through marriage or were adopted from other Clans to replace those who had died or given up and left.

Volksrust has been the Vrede home for the past two decades. The first thirty years were spent at a location much closer to Jupiter, but increasing JAF patrols made the Clan nervous enough to head deeper into the Belt. Ultimately this proved to be a better decision for other reasons, as the outer portion of the Belt has fewer metal-laden asteroids, and Clans focused on mining must work much harder to make a living.

The Vrede have had a relatively quiet existence, as far as Nomads go. Since coming to Volksrust, there have been only two accidents involving fatalities. In the first, a Belt liner's quarters were punctured by a micrometeor. One occupant died instantly; the other suffocated shortly after. The other, more serious incident took place three years ago. A faulty storage tank bled oxygen into a supply room. A maintenance worker in an adjoining corridor accidentally caused a short in the room's door controls. The resulting explosion killed seven, including a council elder passing through the area.

▼ CLAN DESCRIPTION

Reputation, Resources, and Assets: Clan Vrede has not managed to distinguish itself in any particular manner, and has not earned itself any degree of fame (or infamy). It has become good friends with the only other local Clan, the Standertons, although it owes that Clan a small favor after borrowing some prospecting equipment to confirm the value of the new claim. The Clan also has a good relationship with the Mercurian Merchant Guild, and several Clan members are currently serving on a small Guild freighter operating in the area.

Volksrust is a small anchorage consisting of two asteroids: a Type C and a Type SI. Between the two rocks there are enough resources to allow the Clan a small surplus beyond what it consumes to survive. The Clan has recently discovered another small Type SI asteroid (now called Patersea after one of the Clan founders) and has claimed it in the traditional Nomad fashion. It has not begun to mine the claim, although much of the preliminary setup is complete.

Goals, Aspirations, Machinations: As with most Clans, the Vrede's main wish is to be left alone to do whatever it is they need to do to get by. They despise the Lysenkos and avoid dealing with them whenever possible. They sympathize with the Furosha, but feel the conflict is too far away to be a real problem. They have heard that Venus is behind some of the Nomad claims being jumped, but do not consider their own claim large enough to be noticed. The Vrede believe that they are too small to be any kind of force or target in the universe; only time will tell if they are right.

□ CLAN DATA

Reputation:	0	Base Funds:	20.8 million credits (population 104)
Perks:	Agreement (w/Merchant Guild), Ally (Clan Standerton, Minor Clan), Claim 2 (not reg. at Ceres)	Assets:	Anchorage, 1 x Mule-Class Bulk Freighter, 4 x Belt liners
Flaws:	Debt 1 (owed to Clan Standerton, see above)	Stockpiles:	2.2 million credits

□ VREDE CHARACTERS

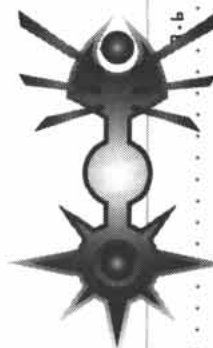
Clan Languages:	English, Spacer's Runic	Typical Perks:	None
Typical Skills:	Earth Sciences, Technical Skills	Typical Flaws:	None

IRMINGER CLAN, MINOR CLAN ◀

The Irminger Clan follows a difficult path: rather than imitate the Nomad example of settling down on an asteroid and taking up a life of mining, they have chosen to make their living seeking out and recovering wreckage and derelict vessels. Very few Clans operate in this way, as the lifestyle is even more uncertain, not to mention more hazardous. Nevertheless, the Irmingers have had enough success to survive through a decade and a half of scavenging and salvage.

Origins: A little over fifteen years ago, Clan Kedway reached a crisis. A significant portion of the Clan population was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with leaders that seemed to be leading them into poverty. They felt they could do better on their own, an attitude that disrupted the Clan enough that the leaders decided to give them their chance. Equipped with several Belt liners and a small stockpile, they set out into the night.

The new Irmingers were not without a plan. Their numbers were too small and their assets too limited to permit them to establish a homestead of their own. The new leaders knew of a small asteroid cluster where the Clan could do some mining to gather some much needed barter materials. On arrival, however, they discovered there had been a small military encounter recently. The collected debris alone would have given the Clan their barter resources, but luck brought them something even better. Close to one of the asteroids, a crippled CEGA patrol boat was found. The Clan stripped it and used the salvage to purchase an aging but reliable Mule-Class freighter. The find was so successful for the Clan they decided to continue hunting down wrecks. The rewards have, at times, been sparse, but with the increase of tensions between Jupiter and the CEGA, this Clan stands to benefit greatly.



CLAN DESCRIPTION ▼

Reputation, Resources, and Assets: The Irminger Clan is a small group, consisting of sixty-two people. They have managed to earn some reputation for themselves as a traveling machine shop and towing service. Several Clans owe them favors for recovering damaged vessels the owners could not have otherwise salvaged. The Clan has developed a special relationship with the Mercurian Merchant's Guild which has allowed many Clan members to train with the Guild's Emergency Search and Rescue division.

Home for the Clan is a large, old Ebiiru named *Clutch* that has been converted into part habitat, part cargo storage and part machine shop. The freighter and its crew have the ability to completely strip and break down small wrecks. Larger derelicts can be towed by securing them to the freighter's modified cargo tree. Despite the search and rescue training, the Ebiiru has only limited medical facilities and Clan elders are not willing to use it as a rescue ship unless the situation is critical. The freighter carries several Belt liners as auxiliary craft. These smaller ships are little more than cargo frames, habitats and thrusters, and are used mainly for hauling debris and salvage back to the main ship.

Goals, Aspirations, Machinations: The Irminger is not a large Clan. Like many of their fellow Nomads, Clan members are focused predominantly on survival and have little time to spend thinking about most long-term issues. However, once acknowledged concern is the prolonged exposure to microgravity. The Ebiiru is equipped with numerous exercise areas, but without any actual gravity sections (save when under thrust) the debilitating environment is taking its toll on Clan members, especially the elderly. The Clan is looking into purchasing a second vessel with a gravity wheel, but anything large enough to accommodate the Clan also comes with a prohibitively expensive price tag.

IRMINGER CLAN DATA □

Reputation:	+1	Base Funds:	12.4 million credits (62 people)
Perks: Agreement (w/Merchant Guild), Favors (2 x 1 point, 1 x 2 points)		Assets:	1 x Heavily Modified Ebiiru, 4 x small Belt liners
Flaws:	None	Stockpiles:	1.9 million credits

IRMINGER CHARACTERS □

Clan Languages:	English, Spacer's Runic	Typical Perks:	None
Typical Skills:	Technical, possibly Search and Rescue related skills	Typical Flaws:	None

3.6.1

end of section 3.6 Irminger clan, minor clan

► FUROSHA CLAN, MAJOR CLAN

Clan Furosha is a Clan on the precipice of change. The elders of this quiet Clan have never wanted to be at the forefront of events, always minding their own business and leaving others to mind theirs. Unfortunately, the Clan has been thrust to the forefront of sweeping events. The Montana Mining Collective (MMC) is actively contesting their traditional Clan holdings on Vesta, and they have also become a rallying point for anti-Lysenko sentiment among the smaller Clans.

▼ CLAN ORIGINS

On July 6, 2030, the Iyenari Mining Consortium established a settlement on Vesta, the first permanent settlement in the Belt. Thirty-one technicians manned an extensive automated facility in Ash Crater, the richest site on Vesta. By 2070, there were over a hundred and fifty Iyenari technicians and their families scattered across the surface, peacefully working and living their lives. In 2080, the nations of Earth began to collapse and refugees flooded into the Belt. In their reports back to the corporate head offices on Earth, the Iyenari technicians spoke of the food riots occurring on the other colonies, and of the rising crime rate as criminals began to take refuge in the Belt. The Iyenari Head Office ordered the technicians to protect the corporate assets and to refuse access to any refugee ship.

In 2081, Dan St. Laurent, using one of the colony's ore-delivery mass drivers, shot down an unarmed refugee transport, killing fifty people. Back on Earth, the Iyenari Corporation's head offices were stormed in protest, and they became one of the first companies to fold during the collapse. Vesta colony completely isolated itself from the rest of the Belt, refusing all contact with the universe outside. The forty families, numbering almost two hundred people, gathered together at the original Ash Crater landing site and christened it "Uchio." This was now their home.

For the next forty years, the families of Vesta helped and supported each other through the tough times as they slowly grew into the Furosha Clan. The Clan today contains over twenty different family names, all descended from the original families. In 2120, the Furosha re-opened its borders and began offering aid to the other Clans of the Belt. They established a marketplace in Uchio that would eventually evolve into one of the busier zocalos in the Belt. The Furosha invited smaller, poorer Clans to help work Vesta, and asked for minimal compensation in return. These minor Clans would work a claim for a few years, then move on when they had made enough money. These Clans were welcomed at all Furosha Clan gatherings and treated like family. Today the Furosha have many ties across the Belt. July 28th is celebrated as the day the Furosha became a Clan; it is the anniversary of the christening of Uchio, and all Clan members on Vesta are invited to a gathering to celebrate that day.

▼ CURRENT CONCERNS

The Furosha Clan is in serious trouble. They depend heavily on minor Clans to help work Vesta, but due to the MMC's active campaign of intimidation, these are abandoning Vesta in large numbers. There are less than twenty remaining, and all are clustered in the northern hemisphere, away from the MMC base. The Thoms Clan stubbornly refuses to abandon their Pyre Mons claim and their allies, the Allison Clan, still support them. The Furosha are near the breaking point and are actually considering the use of force to remove the MMC. Bruce Gilbert, the most senior Clan elder, remains unconvinced. His most vocal opponent in the council of elders, Pavel Strelnikov, is ready to start bombing the MMC sites with the Clan's mass drivers. Both have supporters amongst the other elders, keeping Pavel from retaliating so long as Bruce still objects.

In the Parliament of Clans, the Furosha have become the rallying point for the anti-Lysenko movement. The minor Clans, many of whom are Furosha Clan "in-laws," have been growing increasingly resentful of Clan Lysenko and its heavy-handed ways. With the Unionist faction dominating both the upper and lower houses, the other Clans see the Parliament as nothing more than a Lysenko mouthpiece. There are several opposition groups in the Parliament, all of whom are trying to use the Furosha to muster support.

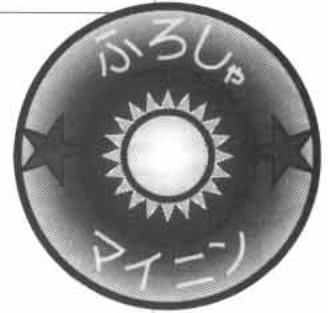
▼ REPUTATION

The Furosha have an excellent reputation amongst the other Clans. Even the Lysenkos will, reluctantly, admit that the Furosha are trustworthy, hard working, loyal and modest. Their elders have a reputation for quiet certainty that lends an air of wisdom to everything they say. Their journeymen and techs are respected for their extensive large-asteroid mining experience.

RESOURCES AND ASSETS ▼

Although the Clan itself numbers only six hundred and fifty people, the Furosha are one of the wealthiest Clans, second only to Clan Lysenko. Their traditional Clan holding, Vesta, is the most mineral rich and easily exploited asteroid anywhere in the Belt. By inviting minor Clans to help them work it, the Furosha have inadvertently built an extensive network of friends and contacts that span the entire Belt. The Furosha have at least twenty solid allies in the rising tensions with the MMC. These are the Clans that have stayed on Vesta and refused to be intimidated by the mining collective. Two of these minor Clans, the Thoms and the Allison, have resolutely held on to their claims and have become the staunchest Furosha supporters.

Furosha ships are generally only lightly armed, and are limited to self-defense at best. The Clan has the original Iyenari Corporation's equipment and vessels, but like true Nomad equipment, all have been refitted beyond recognition. Their large-scale ore refineries and processing facilities are never idle. Cargo haulers bring raw ore in from the minor Clans and send processed goods back to them in trade. The Clan has hundreds of transports and bulk haulers, constantly shuttling between sites on Vesta and beyond. They own almost a hundred exo-suits equipped for mining and cargo hauling, plus three industrial Apollo-Class exos named Laredo, Mojave and Carlsbad, respectively. Uchio and Pyre Mons have the original Iyenari mass drivers and communications lasers, and Pavel Strelnikov has personally overseen their refitting for combat. Both the mass drivers and laser batteries are formidable weapons, should they be turned against the MMC.



GOALS, ASPIRATIONS, MACHINATIONS ▼

When the MMC challenged the Clan's claim to Vesta and established a base at Casus Belli Mons, the Furosha were taken completely by surprise. Since Venus Bank and the MMC only recognize claims registered at the Ceres central registry, the Furosha were forced to join the Lysenko's Parliament of Clans just to make their case. Since signing on, the Furosha have been forced into the spotlight as the center point of the anti-Unionist factions. Bruce Gilbert has avoided tying himself politically with any of them, but Pavel Strelnikov, who also represents the Furosha in the House of Elders, has been doing just the opposite. He is using the anti-Lysenko sentiment to quietly gather armed support for his plans against the MMC. Pavel feels that only Bruce stands in the way.

Today the Furosha are a Clan divided. Many of the elders on the council agree with Pavel and think that it is time to push back at the MMC, while Bruce leads the moderates with a "wait and see" attitude. They fear that if violence does break out between the MMC's operations and those of the Clan, the Furosha will wind up winning the battle but will ultimately lose the war. He and his moderates think that it may be better if the Clan agrees to share Vesta and not risk losing it completely. Unbeknownst to anyone else, Bruce has sent his brother, Frank, to Earth to investigate the possibility that the original Iyenari deeds claiming Vesta may still exist. The Furosha are locked in indecision but it will only take something small, a tiny catalyst to crystallize their resolve.

FUROSHA CLAN DATA □

Clan Reputation:	+4
Perks:	Allies (Thoms and Allison Clans, potentially dozens of others)
Flaws:	None
Base Clan Funds:	650 million credits (population 650)
Assets:	Vesta
	Iyenari corporate assets — too numerous to list
Stockpiles:	100 million credits

FUROSHA CHARACTERS □

Clan Languages:	English, Japanese, Spacer's Runic
Typical Skills:	Earth Sciences, Business
Typical Perks:	Prestige (Example of Anti-Nomad Oppression)
Typical Flaws:	None

3.7.5

end of section 3.7 furosha clan, major clan

► CLAN LYSENKO, MAJOR CLAN

Clan Lysenko is not like other Clans. It is more than just a collection of relatives; the umbrella name actually covers a huge network of families, tribes and Clans. Although most of its assets are centered in the Ceres region, it has people, ships and claims throughout the Belt. The direct descendants of Old Nickolay and the original Lysenko family number over two thousand, but Clan Lysenko can claim allegiance from thirty other Clans and thousands of Independents and others. Dennis Lysenko leads the largest, wealthiest and most influential Clan in the Belt.

▼ CLAN ORIGINS

The origins of the Lysenko Clan are well documented. It all began in the Ceres Uprising, when, in 2090, Nickolay Lysenko led the people of Ceres in an uprising against the Mitsuno Corporation. By eliminating the corporate presence and freely distributing its assets and equipment to the families of Ceres, he was seen not just as a hero, but also as the father of all of the Ceres-based Clans.

The months immediately following the uprising were very hard on Ceres. Much of the tools and equipment, including most of the hydroponic food production, was destroyed in the fighting. Only the people that had family and friends to rely on survived those dark times. Over the next few years, the leaders of the two largest and richest Clans, Nickolay Lysenko and Paul Pitt, worked together to keep as many of the people alive as possible. The Pitt Clan developed an edible by-product from the hydrocarbon deposits of Ceres. It was horrible to smell, taste and even see, but it kept people alive. While the Pitts were feeding the people, Nickolay was organizing them into repair and salvage teams. By 2101, when Pallas colony collapsed and every other major Belt colony was in turmoil, Nickolay had Ceres well on the way to recovery.

The colony still had no way to produce high precision components or medicines, and in 2119 an easily treatable tuberculosis outbreak quickly became an epidemic. Both Nickolay Lysenko and Paul Pitt, each almost 80 years old, fell victim to the plague and died. Nickolay's daughter, Alexis, was sole surviving elder. She picked up the pieces of her shattered Clan and for the next two decades she slowly brought the other Cerian Clans into the Lysenko fold. Alexis created the first, and still the largest, zocolo on Ceres. She organized all of the smaller Clans, scattered across Ceres, into a council of elders with herself as the first elder. Years later this council would become the model for the Nomad parliament.

The Lysenkos slowly grew and expanded their influence beyond Ceres and into the Belt. Their freighters, and those of their allies, plied the Belt shipping goods between the various Clans. Ceres became the main center of commerce and trade, rivaled only by the Furosha Clan zocolo on Vesta. By 2185, the contact between Nomads and the other major Solar powers had been re-established, including the newly formed CEGA. The Lysenkos were pushing for Ceres as the main trading outpost for the Belt, guaranteeing the Clan the lion's share of all trade and commerce.

For the next dozen years, life for the Lysenkos was peaceful and prosperous. Everybody had enough to eat and everybody was making money — too much money, it seemed. As the tensions between the Jovian States and the CEGA rose, both turned their eyes to the wealth of the Belt. The Lysenkos realized that if either one could annex the Belt, the Nomads would be in big trouble. In 2208, the Clan created the Central Claims Registry in an attempt to protect the Nomads' claims from outsiders. In 2211, Jeff Clemens, a Lysenko envoy, quietly met with Ioshi Hirame, a representative of the Venus Bank. The Lysenkos were looking for someone to help them defend the Belt if either the JAF or the CEGA aggressively moved in.

▼ CURRENT CONCERNS

Increased raiding on Lysenko shipping, the growing reluctance of many Clans to mingle with Lysenkos at zocalos and trade stations, and the rise in commerce between the Mercurians and the non-Lysenko trade stations are not unrelated. The Clan elders see these as signs of a growing hostility towards the Lysenkos by the other Clans. Today the Lysenkos are trying to unify the Belt into one political whole. They see themselves as the only Nomad Clan which truly cares about events beyond the Belt. They know that if Nomads do not stand together, the Clans will all fall apart. Denis Lysenko is counting on USN recognition of a Nomad nation to help legitimize the Parliament of Clans in the Nomad's eyes. This would also insure Lysenko dominance of the Belt.

REPUTATION ▼

Clan Lysenko is well known everywhere. Its spacers and techs are as skilled as any in the Belt but to many, the Lysenkos are seen solely as schemers, never getting their hands dirty. Within the Clan, it is an honor being descended from Nickolay and the original Lysenko family, but to outsiders, having Lysenko for a last name raises suspicions.



3.8.3

RESOURCES AND ASSETS ▼

The Lysenkos have become a Clan of Clans. There are twenty-seven families, each a Clan in its own right, which are part of the Lysenko Clan. Together they comprise the Lysenko elder council and all follow its dictates. In Parliament, they are the Unionists and this solidarity gives the Lysenkos Parliamentary control. They have the support of Solapol, for whatever it's worth, since it upholds the law, and the only lawmaker is the Lysenko-controlled Parliament. They have hundreds of Nomads, Independents and others scattered across the Belt, all loyal to Clan Lysenko. They have trade stations and zocalos everywhere and their freighters are constantly shuttling between them.

The clan controls hundreds of transports, dozens of lightly armed Inari-Class liners, fifteen exos and two dozen Wraith-Class fighters. The latter is a recent purchase to deter raids on Lysenko shipping. Of the exos, two Defenders are fitted for armed patrols and the thirteen Hoplites and Apollos can be used for either anti-pirate or industrial use. Seven Inari-Class liners have been quietly refitted for "military" duties.

3.8.4

GOALS, ASPIRATIONS, MACHINATIONS ▼

The Lysenkos are playing dangerous political games. The two Clan USN representatives, Shawn Lysenko and Paul Pitt Jr. (sometimes called Pitt the Younger), have used diplomacy, bribery and once even blackmail to win support from USN representatives. They want the Parliament of Clans recognized as a sovereign government in order to use USN influence to protect Nomad assets during a Jovian/CEGA conflict.

To undermine the Mercurians, the Lysenkos have refitted old Inari-Class Liners as trade stations and supported them with loyal Independent traders. The Clan never intended to start a trade war with Mercury. The Lysenkos were only trying to expand their resources in preparation for when their agreement with Venus becomes too much of a liability. The Clan elders recognize that Venus Bank, not the Guild, is the long-term threat to Lysenko control of the Belt, but they need Venus's support for now.

The loss of reputation among the other Clans is a serious concern to Denis and the Lysenko elders. Although Denis himself does not care what some "cash-strapped rock monkey" on the far side of the Belt may think, he knows it will impact on Lysenko wealth and influence if their reputation is tarnished. By cheaply shipping cargoes for the outlying Clans, the Lysenkos are trying to better their reputation.

3.8.5

CLAN LYSENKO DATA □

Clan Reputation:	-2
Perks:	Agreement — Venus Bank Belt Oversight Committee
	Easy Recognition
Flaws:	Secret — Using Venus to bully the Clans
Basic Funds	1500 million credits (population 1500)
Assets:	Parliament of Clans, USN Representation, Ceres
	Vessel and shipping assets — to numerous to list
Stockpiles:	Approximately 200 million credits (Lysenko Clan only — no Unionists included)

LYSENKO CHARACTERS □

Clan Languages:	English, Russian, Spacer's Runic
Typical Skills:	Bureaucracy, Etiquette, Foreign Language, Law
Typical Perks:	Connections (Unionist Nomads and Independents only), Wealth
Typical Flaws:	Infamous, Social Stigma (Lysenko or Unionist)

end of section 3.8 'clan lysenko, major clan'

► MORRIS-TAYLOR CLAN, MAJOR CLAN

The Morris-Taylor Clan (or MTs) is the only major Clan in the Belt that no longer does any prospecting. For the past fifty years, the Clan has grown wealthy operating the Morris-Taylor Drydock, a combination of shipyard, repair facility and used parts dealership. The Clan has almost five hundred people, over three hundred of which are technicians working on, or near, the Drydock itself. The Clan is well respected both inside and outside the Belt. Even the Mercurians use the Drydock regularly.

▼ CLAN ORIGINS

In the early 2030s, before the mining interests had fully established themselves on the major asteroids, when the Belt was still almost completely uninhabited, it was not economically feasible to operate heavily manned ships or facilities. Several long-range, highly automated refinery ships plied the Asteroid Belt instead.

Nearly twelve years ago, members of the Taylor Clan was surveying in an older, previously mined-out region of space, when they stumbled across the abandoned remains of one of these old refinery ships. The spacecraft had collided with an asteroid and suffered extensive damage. This win-fall was a blessing and a curse; the Taylors were not a very rich Clan and had fallen on hard times. Several years before, they were forced to sell their only mining ship and had turned exclusively to surveying just to get by. There was no way they could take advantage of the ship before someone took it away from them. The Taylor Clan's elders decided to approach another Clan and try to form an alliance. They did not want to get absorbed by a bigger Clan, so they need to deal with one of the smaller Clans.

The Morris was a small Clan that had just gotten a big payoff from a radioactives deposit they recently exploited. The Taylors had enjoyed some profitable dealings with Clan Morris in the past, and hoped that with their recent good luck Clan Morris could afford to repair and refit the refinery ship. The Taylor Clan elders and their Clan Morris counterparts met and agreed to share everything together, not just equally, but as one whole Clan. There was a huge celebration and at least three of the current Clan elders claim to have been conceived that night.

The newly formed Clan began salvaging the ship and restoring the refinery. They kept a low profile until they could arm themselves. If word spread of their find too soon, they would have been in big trouble. Anybody with a well-armed ship would undoubtedly pay them a visit. For the next several months they spent the entire Morris Clan 'fortune' on arms and equipment, but the ship itself was too badly damaged to restore to its original specifications. In typical Nomad fashion, the Clan rebuilt the ship around the original asteroid that the ship had collided with, and converted both it and the rock into a spaceship repair yard and component production facility. Since the Morris-Taylors had armed the facility before announcing it to the other Clans, the one and only raider attack was beaten back with ease. No one has bothered them since.

▼ CURRENT CONCERNS

The Morris-Taylor Clan is very well established and very well defended in its Drydock. All of their goods are highly sought after both within the Belt and beyond. Because the Drydock is such a valuable prize, the Morris-Taylors guard it very carefully. Security is one of their biggest worries; they never have less than three armed ships on patrol around the station, and their contingent of exo-armors is always active. Security inside the Drydock is just as tight. Morris-Taylor Clan members and apprentice technicians from other Clans have unlimited access, but visitors are restricted to specific areas.

MT technicians have an excellent reputation and are highly sought after by the other Solar nations. MT journeyman looking for adventure, travel and a chance to prove themselves, often serve several years onboard Mercurian or even Jovian vessels. The Drydock is always full and there is a sizable backlog of orders. To help with the huge workload, the MTs often take young men and women from other Clans as apprentices. The youngsters learn their trade under the careful eye of Morris-Taylor technicians and engineers. After a few years of practice in a relatively safe and controlled environment, they are ready to go home and care for their own Clan's equipment.

The MTs have never cared much for Clan Lysenko and care even less for the Lysenko's Parliament of Clans. They had stubbornly refused to send a representative until Mackenzie, an elder of Clan Furosha, convinced them of the need to be heard. For two years now, Glenn Crawford-Taylor has sat in the Parliament as the MT representative and listened impatiently to the "over-aged windbags and Lysenko cronies," as he calls them.

REPUTATION ▼

The Morris-Taylor's have an excellent reputation amongst the other Clans. They always produce good quality, reliable equipment and components. No Nomad has ever found reason to complain about MT goods or services. Most Clans are aware of the MT's reputation for refitting salvaged and stolen equipment, but since nothing leaves their facility of less than excellent quality nobody talks much about it.

RESOURCES AND ASSETS ▼

The Morris-Taylor's biggest and most famous asset is their Drydock. This alone would make them a very wealthy Clan. They also own a small selection freighters, ranging from small cargo and passenger shuttles to large multi-bay storage haulers. The MTs have two old Jovian space fighters, an ancient, rebuilt pre-CEGA Bricriu-Class corvette and nineteen Hoplite and Apollo-Class exo-armors, all modified for industrial work. All of their combat ships were originally salvaged from badly damaged hulls and refitted with new (for Nomads) internal components. Since the Morris-Taylor's big concerns are about the defense of their own station, all of their armed ships never range very far from the Drydock.

GOALS, ASPIRATIONS, MACHINATIONS ▼

The Morris-Taylor's are not an intrigue-based Clan and are not prone to subtlety. There is a long waiting list at the Drydock, and a Clan's standing in Morris-Taylor's eyes can speed things up, slow them down, or even grind them to a halt. All in all, the Morris-Taylor's like the situation in the Belt just the way it is and have grown to dislike the interfering Lysenkos. Needless to say, the Lysenko Clan rarely comes to the Drydock.

The Morris-Taylor's have contacts throughout the Belt in the black, gray and white markets. They never question the source of any of the salvaged components, so long as the components are safe to use. They have a very good working relationship with Clan Greshenko, and will generally trust the word of a Greshenko above the word of someone else.



CLAN MORRIS-TAYLOR DATA □

Clan Reputation:	+3
Perks:	Agreement — Clan Greshenko
	Agreement — Mercury Merchant Guild
	Agreement — 2 prospecting Clans
	Easy Recognition
Flaws:	None
Base Clan Funds:	500 million credits (population 500)
Assets:	Morris-Taylor Drydock
	Pre-CEGA rebuilt Bricriu-Class Corvette (68 years old)
	2 IM-4 Charger space fighters (40 years old)
	7 Hoplite and 12 Apollo exo-armors
	3 Ebliru and 4 Mule freighters
	6 Atlas OTVs
	Numerous work pods and Teamster exo-suits
Stockpiles:	122 million credits, mostly in stored ship components

MORRIS-TAYLOR CHARACTERS □

Clan Languages:	English, Spacer's Runic
Typical Skills:	Tinker, any technical or design skill
Typical Perks:	Machine Touch, Photographic memory, Quick Learner
Typical Flaws:	Weak Immune System (coupled with ZeGee body type)

3.9.5

end of section 3.9 morris-taylor clan, major clan



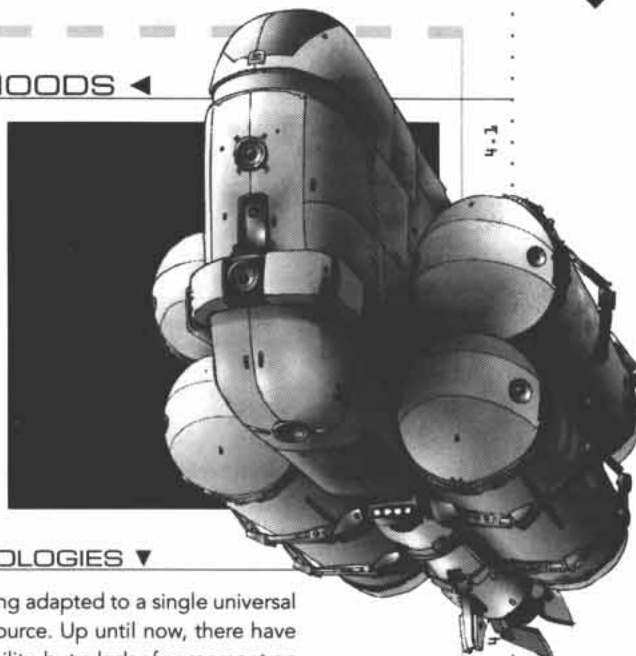
"If anybody on Earth or Mars asked me what space looks like, I would tell them it looks like the inside of a very large rock."

— L.D. Jessee, Prospector, Clan Furosha

LOCAL NEIGHBORHOODS ◀

The Belt is home to practically every conceivable station design. Most are small, semi-permanent structures, like the ones described in the following pages. There are a few larger constructs, including one or two Vivarium-type stations.

Permanent stations are located near or in the Kirkwood Gaps. These gaps are swept relatively free of debris by Jupiter's gravity field, and tend to be the safest places in terms of avoiding micrometeor punctures. Stations in the Gaps make constant orbital adjustments to keep Jupiter from knocking them out of orbit as well. Nomad stations, or homesteads, can be found anywhere in the Belt. Clans prefer isolation, and will rarely set up beside another Clan unless there is an overwhelming reason, such as a large claim or a zocalo.



CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGIES ▼

To boost the chances of survival in the Belt, more and more systems are being adapted to a single universal standard, allowing them to be easily replaced with parts from any other source. Up until now, there have been several "universal" standards, which allow limited parts interchangeability, but a lack of agreement on a single set of guidelines stymied further development. Currently only non-Nomad organizations, such as corporate mining companies, own equipment based on the new standard, but it should take only a few years before the new technology appears on Nomad stations.

Currently, Nomad structures are "modular" only in the sense that they can be assembled or disassembled with relative ease. Clans rely heavily on their technicians to adapt spare parts for use. Universal standards are fairly meaningless, considering most equipment available for trade has already been heavily modified by other Clans. Even brand new parts require some tinkering before they can be used.

TETHERS ◇

Tethers are long cables with diamond fiber composite cores. Each tether consists of a woven mesh of fibre cables, like a long, tubular fish net. Should one of the lengths fail, the rest will bear the weight and the tether will not snap. Tethers perform two functions in microgravity construction. The first is as a simple anchoring line, used to secure objects together or tie objects down. They are rarely used as towing lines due to the difficulty in maneuvering the towed object. Tethers are also used in the creation of temporary rotating structures, connecting habitation modules to a rotation hub. The assemblage is spun, and the modules are "reeled out" in balanced pairs to keep the center of gravity balanced in the hub. Structural reinforcements can be added later, if the station is to become permanent.

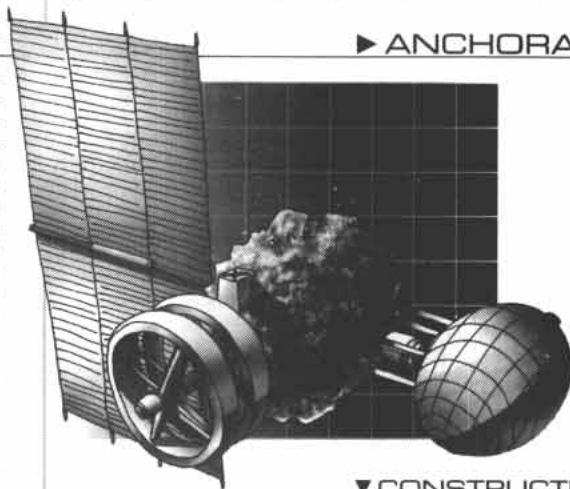
Industrial and construction tethers are reinforced to hold hundreds or even thousands of tons. This strength comes at a price: the tether itself becomes huge. The tethers in a Web station, for example, comprise a large portion of the station's mass. Tethers are used in construction projects all over the Solar System. However, they are used to a greater degree and for longer periods in the Belt. Many Clans cannot afford more solid construction techniques, and tend to use tethered structures that should have been dismantled long ago.

SCAVENGED PARTS ◇

Nomads are not in a position to buy brand new stations. Homesteads are usually at least a few decades old, and maintained with anything the Clan technicians can get their hands on. The most valuable trade items appearing in either the white or black markets are systems that can be adapted for homestead use. Nomads will even scavenge their own resources. It is not uncommon for aging vessels to have their pressurized compartments stripped off and incorporated into a station.

This is not to say that Nomads will indiscriminately use parts without any regard to the source of those parts, however. Nomads take great pains to ensure their homesteads are safe and reliable places. Parts and equipment from questionable sources, like a derelict space ship, will be thoroughly examined and tested before being made available for use. Anything not meeting performance standards is deemed too unreliable, and dismantled further for spare parts.

► ANCHORAGES



The anchorage is the most common form of Nomad homestead, and consists of little more than a collection of small asteroids secured together into a large mass. Habitat structures, including gravity wheels, are set up on the asteroid surfaces. Mining operations are conducted completely beneath the surface in order to avoid kicking up potentially dangerous debris. As tunnels are mined out, they are converted to other uses, such as hydroponics or storage.

Anchorage are almost impossible to maneuver if they consist of more than one asteroid. They are not found in Kirkwood Gaps, unless their owners are planning on a trip through the inner Solar System courtesy of Jupiter.

▼ CONSTRUCTION

The types of asteroids used in an anchorage depend completely on what is available at the site. Generally, the largest asteroid in the area will form the core. Other asteroids are moved in and secured with tethers or structural braces. Nomads will only move those rocks that satisfy the requirements of the Clan, however, and the rest are left alone. A mix of asteroids is preferred, but a Clan will always try to include one Type C asteroid.

Solar arrays are created from initial mining efforts, as are the preliminary surface structures. Gravity wheels are eventually fabricated out of the extracted metals. Until then, the Clan lives in weightlessness. Anchorages are not rotated for gravity due to concerns over asteroid structure and the generation of debris.

▼ KUROSAWA ANCHORAGE

The Kurosawa Anchorage is in the Flora asteroid family, a scattered group that orbits at 2.2 AU, close to the orbit of Mars. Currently the anchorage is only a week's travel from New Halifax. This will change as the anchorage's orbit carries it faster around the sun than the other station.

The foundation of the anchorage is formed from two asteroids; the larger is a Type SI with rich mineral veins. Excavation for profit has not yet begun in earnest. Extracted minerals have been used exclusively for the creation of surface structures, including the gravity wheels. The smaller asteroid is a Type C, a rare find in this part of the Belt. The asteroid has been covered with an aluminum foil sheath to collect any gasses that may evaporate due to heating.

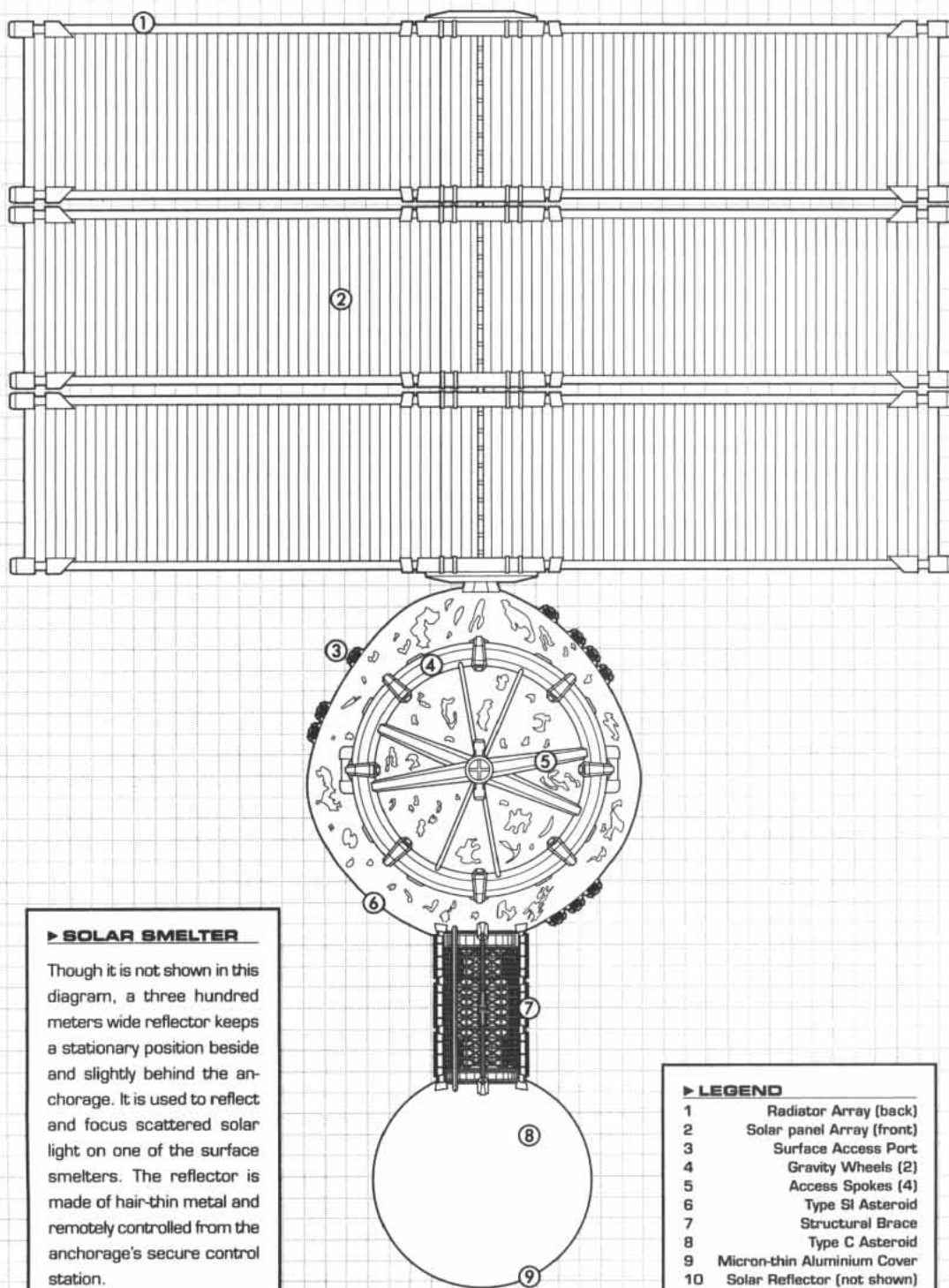
Each asteroid carries a solar oven array. Energy from solar smelters is focused into these structures to bake volatile gasses out of crushed rock. The gases are then collected and distilled into their component elements. Metal is melted in a fusion smelter located between the asteroids. The solar ovens have not yet been reinforced to withstand the heat necessary to liquefy metal. Solar collectors and microfusion reactors power the anchorage. The extra energy generated will eventually be used to support mining operations.

The Clan lives completely within the twin gravity wheels. These spin at two revolutions per minute, fast enough to simulate 0.5 g. The wheels are set to counter-rotate in order to neutralize the effects of their inertia — a single wheel would eventually spin the anchorage in the opposite direction, causing structural damage. Shelters have been dug in the larger asteroid, but they are cramped and intended for use only in emergencies. Elevators provide transportation within the gravity wheels, but outside human power is the only means of travel. A large cargo lift is being constructed in a shaft in the larger asteroid, but it is far from completed.

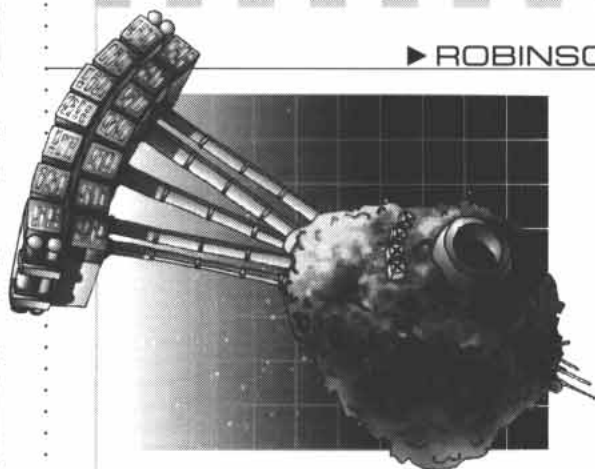
□ NOTES AND HOOKS

Kurosawa anchorage is completely self-sufficient. Mined minerals and volatiles can support the Clan for years, although some difficult-to-produce items will still have to be imported. This design is typical of the Nomad homesteads in the Belt, and can easily be adapted for use with any minor Clan. Some anchorages have fallen into the hands of non-Nomad pirates or other concerns, and have been converted into secret bases. Kurosawa Anchorage is featured in the scenario The Kurosawa Seven (see page 68).

KUROSAWA STATION ▼



end of section 4.2 anchorages



► ROBINSON STATIONS

Robinson stations resemble spinning pendulums. From a central docking hub, a single strut reaches out to habitation modules. These modules are counterweighted by a heavy mass — usually the station's fusion reactors.

Robinson stations are based on old Earth exploration ship designs. These vessels were built long and thin, with the crew quarters located far forward. To simulate gravity on missions, the entire craft was spun end-over-end. These stations are relatively cheap to construct, and are used by Nomads and non-Nomads alike. Clans prefer to use Robinson stations when hosting zocalos as they are much more stable platforms than webs, and are not completely microgravity environments like anchorages.

► CONSTRUCTION

If Robinson stations are constructed with a solid structure, they are usually built from the docking hub outward, with the reactors being the first things completed. The habitation modules are considered secondary, and are usually assembled only to the point where they can be pressurized before the station is set to spin. Internal construction is completed under gravity.

Robinson stations can also be built with tethers. The entire station will be constructed before rotation. The habitat modules will be "reeled out" after the station acquires spin. These types of Robinson stations suffer all the limitations of webs, including the two revolutions per minute rotation restriction. Standard Robinsons can be spun up to four revolutions per minute. At that rate, the habitation modules need to be only 50 m from the central hub to simulate 1 g.

► NEW HALIFAX STATION

New Halifax is a permanent trade station. It orbits at 2.3 AU, in front of the second Kirkwood Gap heading from Mars to Jupiter. It is one of the largest Robinson stations, and one of the oldest, having been built almost 40 years ago. New Halifax houses 4000 people, although one third are non-permanent residents. Several Clans trade at the station, but no Nomad calls the station home.

New Halifax spins at slightly less than two revolutions per minute, but the habitat section is far enough out to simulate 1 g. A secondary living section called the Halfway is located closer to the center of spin for those who have grown unaccustomed to Earth-like gravity. The counterweight for New Halifax is an asteroid named Halliwell. The surface has been thoroughly baked with solar smelters to eliminate any debris that could spin off. The main docking and cargo transfer area is inside a hollowed-out portion of the asteroid. There was an active mining operation on the surface until it was discovered that the excavation was slowly shifting Halliwell's center of mass and affecting the spin of the station.

New Halifax is owned by a partnership of Independents, and does a brisk business with both Nomad and non-Nomad concerns. The station is not a big nexus for the black market, although there are several places where illegal or shadowy business can be conducted privately.

The Halfway is a series of habitat modules located where the simulated gravity is only 0.5 g. It is intended to be a residence for Light Worlders and ZeGees, and has become the main area of business for visiting Nomads. The Knock & Scuffle is one of the popular Nomad bars, this establishment is the scene of all the best aspects of Nomads at play, including hard drinking and hourly brawls.

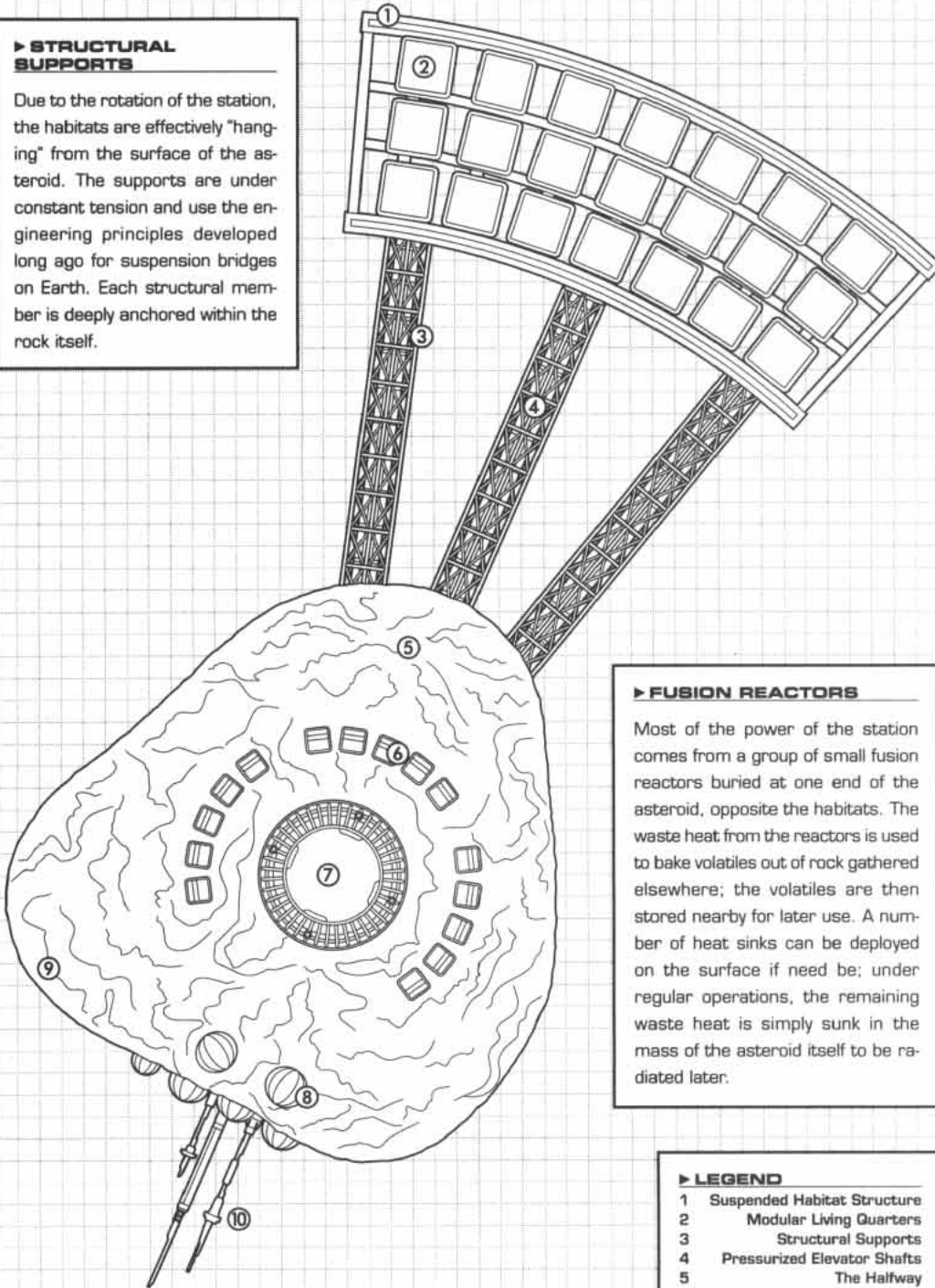
▣ NOTES AND HOOKS

New Halifax is an ideal place for Nomads and Independents to meet. It offers several "neutral" areas where Nomads will tolerate outsiders without much complaint. The station is also fertile grounds for recruiting contract laborers, surveyors and prospectors. Most of the time the station's close proximity to the orbit of Mars causes few problems. However, on those occasions when the station approaches Mars, it is not unknown for CEGA patrol vessels to stop over for supplies. The station is almost completely empty of Nomads during these periods. They know better than to hang around when there are Earthers about.

NEW HALIFAX ▼

► STRUCTURAL SUPPORTS

Due to the rotation of the station, the habitats are effectively "hanging" from the surface of the asteroid. The supports are under constant tension and use the engineering principles developed long ago for suspension bridges on Earth. Each structural member is deeply anchored within the rock itself.

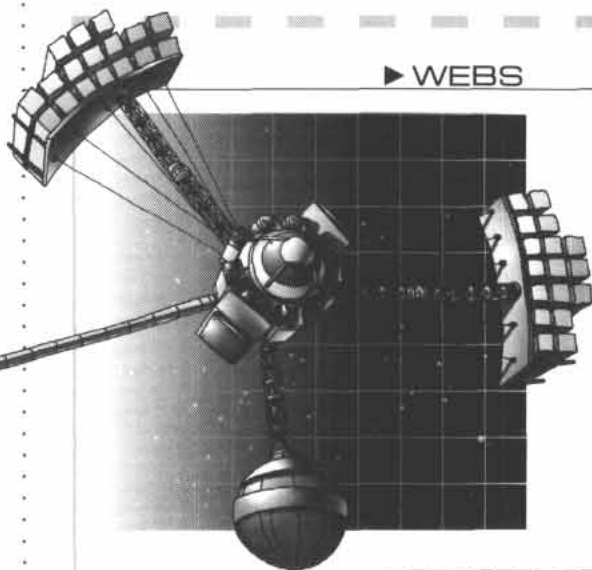


► FUSION REACTORS

Most of the power of the station comes from a group of small fusion reactors buried at one end of the asteroid, opposite the habitats. The waste heat from the reactors is used to bake volatiles out of rock gathered elsewhere; the volatiles are then stored nearby for later use. A number of heat sinks can be deployed on the surface if need be; under regular operations, the remaining waste heat is simply sunk in the mass of the asteroid itself to be radiated later.

► LEGEND

- 1 Suspended Habitat Structure
- 2 Modular Living Quarters
- 3 Structural Supports
- 4 Pressurized Elevator Shafts
- 5 The Halfway
- 6 Surface Storage
- 7 Main Docking Hub/Axis
- 8 Volatiles Storage
- 9 Type S Asteroid, Baked Surface
- 10 Communication Array



► WEBS

Webs are semi-permanent stations that use tethers and inertia to maintain their shapes. Practically anything can be strung together to form a web. Impoverished Clans tether their vessels together and set them spinning to simulate gravity, and even established webs such as Greshenko Station are little more than a rotating collection of odds and ends.

Webs suffer from structural weakness: once set rotating, they cannot be moved. Any disturbance to a web sets up an oscillation in the tethers that would make the modules unstable. The only way to stop the oscillation is to reel in the tethers, stabilize the hub and reel out the tethers again. The process has a complication: as the modules are reeled in, the rate of spin increases. Station inhabitants could find themselves enduring several Gs while the problem is corrected.

► CONSTRUCTION

Modules are attached to a central docking hub. The assemblage is set spinning at the desired revolutions per minute. The modules are reeled out, evenly counterweighted to keep the center of spin at the center of the docking hub. Tether length is adjusted to maintain spin balance. A massive generator, for example, will be tethered fairly close to the hub, while the habitat modules on the opposite side will be farther out.

Each module houses its own power generation and life support systems, although larger webs may interconnect their modules as a form of safety backup. Transportation between modules and the hub is via tether-climbing elevators. Tethers are never spun faster than two revolutions per minute because of the oscillation problem. At that rate, a radius of about two hundred meters is necessary to simulate 1g at the outer levels.

► GRESHENKO STATION

Greshenko Station travels the same orbit as the Morris-Taylor Drydock, about 2.6 AU out from the sun. The station's zocalo was such a success the Greshenkos decided to make the station permanent in 2206. With the help of the Morris-Taylors, the station was reinforced with rigid structural beams. Technically, the station is no longer a web, as most of the original tethering has long since been removed. The station can house a population of 2500, most of which is transient. Greshenko Station spins at two revolutions per minute, giving the outermost sections an environment of 1g. Habitats are located at various radii along the structural spokes, allowing visitors and inhabitants to stay where the gravity is most comfortable.

Most of the station is a combination marketplace and hotel. The central docking hub sees a constant stream of traffic. The cargo bays have recently been expanded to handle an increased number of Clans and merchants trading "out in the docks." Accommodations are available not only for those Clans attending the Zocalo, but also for individuals who have business at the Morris-Taylor Drydock. One of the spokes houses the Greshenko Clan, and access is extremely limited.

Because of the proximity to the Morris-Taylors, the Greshenko zocalo is never devoid of merchandise. It occupies several parts of the station, including a portion of the cargo bays and one of the main spokes. Gray market contacts can be found almost anywhere. The Paprikash is currently the popular Nomad bar. Located near the hub, the gravity is low enough to permit brawls that resemble fight scenes from 20th century martial arts videos. Almost every surface is padded out of consideration to those who may lack proper self-defense training.

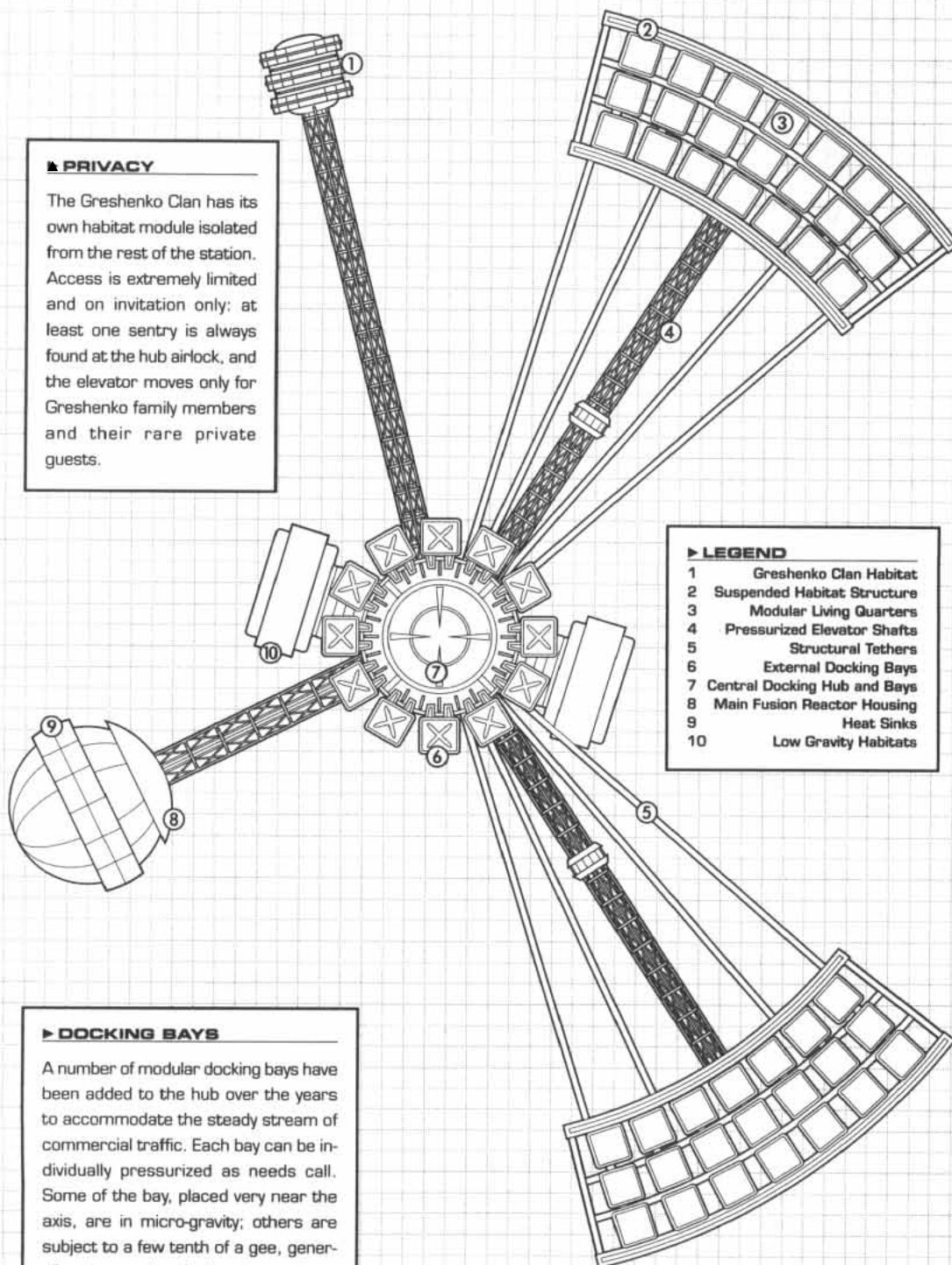
▣ NOTES AND HOOKS

Greshenko Station is crawling with smuggling contacts. Pirates also frequent the place, but only for shore leave or legitimate cargo runs. The Greshenkos actively discourage pirates from doing business anywhere near the station. The Greshenkos currently have several Apollo-Class exos on loan from the Morris-Taylors. The exos are supposedly conducting structural maintenance, but they have been seen escorting freighters well away from the station. The Morris-Taylors have not complained; they either do not know or do not care about what the Greshenkos do with their exos.

GRESHENKO STATION ▼

► PRIVACY

The Greshenko Clan has its own habitat module isolated from the rest of the station. Access is extremely limited and on invitation only; at least one sentry is always found at the hub airlock, and the elevator moves only for Greshenko family members and their rare private guests.



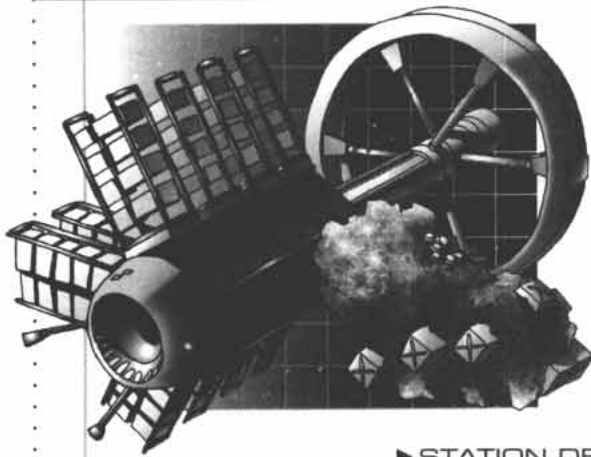
► LEGEND

- 1 Greshenko Clan Habitat
- 2 Suspended Habitat Structure
- 3 Modular Living Quarters
- 4 Pressurized Elevator Shafts
- 5 Structural Tethers
- 6 External Docking Bays
- 7 Central Docking Hub and Bays
- 8 Main Fusion Reactor Housing
- 9 Heat Sinks
- 10 Low Gravity Habitats

► DOCKING BAYS

A number of modular docking bays have been added to the hub over the years to accommodate the steady stream of commercial traffic. Each bay can be individually pressurized as needs call. Some of the bay, placed very near the axis, are in micro-gravity; others are subject to a few tenths of a gee, generally not enough to bother the traders.

► THE MORRIS-TAYLOR DRYDOCK



There are other refineries and repair stations in the Belt, but none are as widely known and respected as the Morris-Taylor Drydock. Since it became operational, the facility has developed a reputation for outstanding craftsmanship that no other operation in the region has been able to match. The station's ability to both process raw materials and fabricate parts has provided a unique flexibility. If necessary, the Drydock could create an entire vessel from scratch.

The station orbits at 2.6 AU, in one of the Belt's highest asteroid density orbits. Commercial traffic in the area is heavy, thanks to both the Drydock and the zocalo at nearby Greshenko Station. Two Clans of prospectors are under contract to ensure a steady stream of raw materials for the Drydock's refinery.

► STATION DETAILS

From a distance, the Drydock looks like a fish with a tumor. The collision that damaged the original refinery ship was centered on the aft portion of the vessel; the refinery and fabrication systems were left almost completely intact, but the original crew quarters were crushed and the drive section was torn away. When the station was rebuilt, the main engines were not replaced. The Drydock can make orbital corrections, but it is effectively immobile.

The Drydock's forward end houses the refinery, fabrication equipment, ship repair bays and the "Iceberg," the asteroid responsible for the original disaster. A collection of smaller asteroids drifts ahead of the station, waiting processing and refining into finished components. The shipyard itself is extended out of the starboard side of the station. Each bay is comprised of an open structure large enough to service most commercial vessels. Several layers of nets are used to catch debris from operations before it becomes a hazard to ships in the area. The Iceberg was used as an anchorage while the Drydock was being rebuilt. It now serves as a combination warehouse and auxiliary vehicle hangar for the Morris-Taylors. There has been talk about processing the asteroid and creating a proper addition to the station, but the backlog of work has put this idea on hold for the foreseeable future.

The habitat section is located at the aft end of the station, well away from industrial operations. The dual gravity wheels easily accommodate the needs of the Morris-Taylor Clan. Guest space is at a premium, however. Unless they have urgent business at the Drydock, visitors are encouraged to rent quarters at Greshenko Station for the duration of their stay.

► SERVICES PROVIDED

The Morris-Taylors offer a wide range of services, ranging from simple maintenance checks to major overhauls and refits. The Drydock is also the only place in the Belt with facilities to repair Nomad exo-armors. Unfortunately, the high quality of work requires a large amount of time. Parts storage is kept well stocked, but components are hand-crafted for maximum compatibility to satisfy the specific requirements of any given vessel. The time factor is also the reason why the Drydock is only occasionally contracted to build new ships. Services can be purchased either through trade or cash. The Morris-Taylors realized long ago that in order to attract business from more than Nomads, they would have to be equipped to deal with the needs of outsiders. Services are traded for either raw materials or claims that can be exploited by the Drydock's contract prospectors.

▣ NOTES AND HOOKS

The Drydock is an industrial complex. The black and gray markets exist here only as much as required by the agreement with Clan Greshenko. Goods are offloaded from Greshenko Station at standard cargo bays and moved to the warehouse modules. A team of Morris-Taylor technicians meticulously opens each crate, removes serial numbers and stamps the Clan seal on to each part. The crates are resealed and shipped back to Greshenko Station. Solapol is aware of the traffic through the Drydock, but is currently unable to stop the shipments. The Drydock is too valuable to the Nomads for Solapol to risk interfering in operations.

THE MORRIS-TAYLOR DRYDOCK ▼

► THE ICEBERG

This is the asteroid that caused the original disaster. It is a mixture of ice and rock, hence the name. It provided some of the early water and mineral resources to the Clan; the mining tunnels are now used as warehouses and auxiliary vehicle storage areas.



► LEGEND

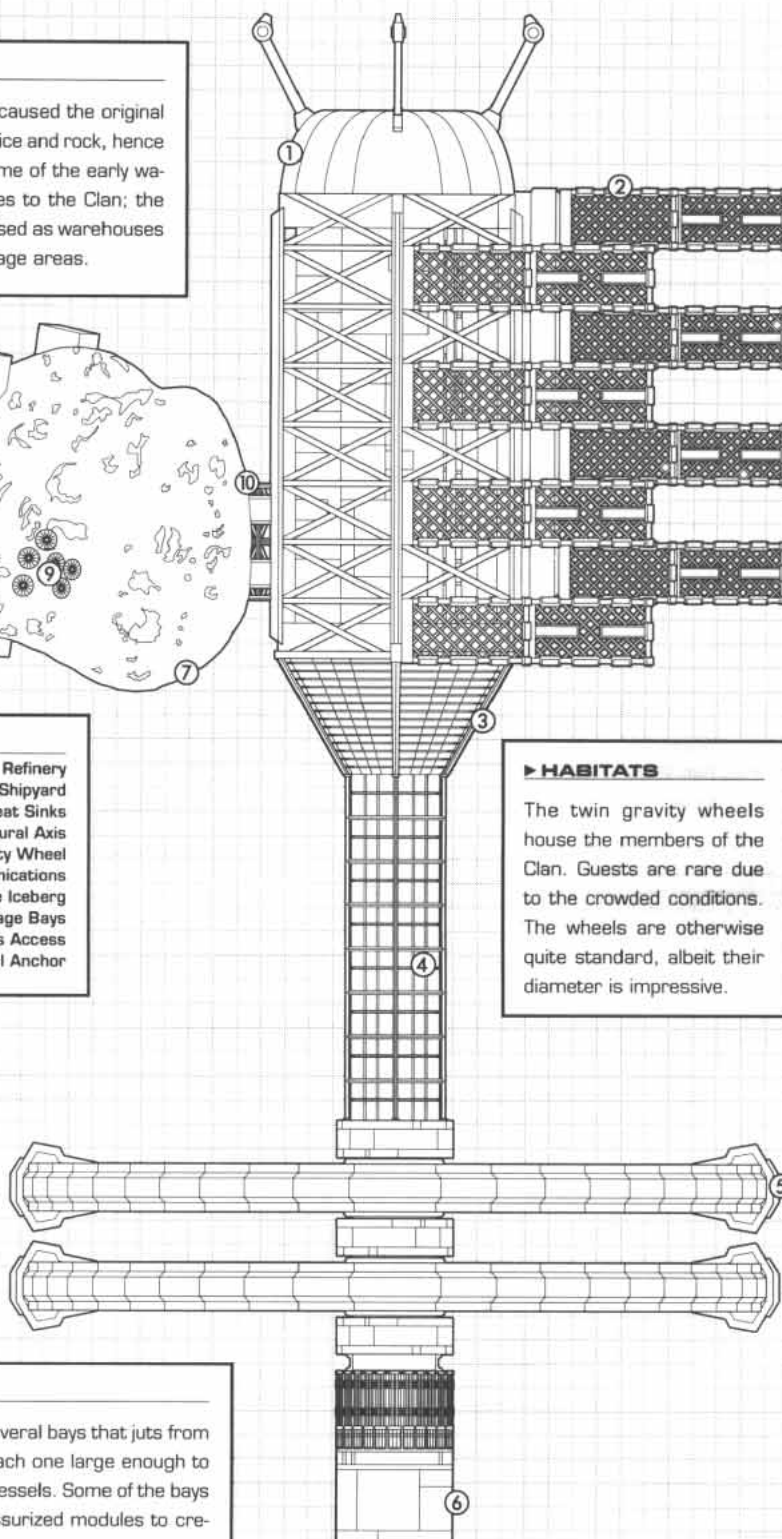
- | | |
|----|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Refinery |
| 2 | Shipyards |
| 3 | Heat Sinks |
| 4 | Main Structural Axis |
| 5 | Gravity Wheel |
| 6 | Engineering and Communications |
| 7 | The Iceberg |
| 8 | Surface Storage Bays |
| 9 | Mineshafts Access |
| 10 | Main Structural Anchor |

► HABITATS

The twin gravity wheels house the members of the Clan. Guests are rare due to the crowded conditions. The wheels are otherwise quite standard, albeit their diameter is impressive.

► THE SHIPYARD

This section is made of several bays that juts from the side of the station, each one large enough to house most commercial vessels. Some of the bays have been filled with pressurized modules to create additional workshop spaces.



► VESTA

Vesta is the Roman goddess of the domestic hearth. Along with Pallas and Ceres, Vesta has always been considered one of the crown jewels of the Belt. Several large impact craters, including the massive Bellum Planitia in the south, provide mining sites where minimal excavation is required to reach metal-laden rock. At some point in Vesta's long past, it was heated to a near liquid state, giving it a core of solid iron. Vesta orbits on average about 125 million kilometers farther out from the Sun than Mars. A day on Vesta lasts five hours and twenty minutes, although it takes three and a half years to make a full solar orbit.

Vesta was settled by the Iyenari Mining Consortium in July of 2030, and has remained in the hands of the company's descendants, the Furosha Clan. In contrast to the symbol of extreme isolation the Iyenari became in the 2080s, the Furosha allows minor Clans down on their luck to stake out claims on Vesta. The only stipulation is the Clan must help maintain Furosha operations, such as the zocalo at Uchio. Most Clans offer labor or a portion of their refined metals.

The dispute with the Montana Mining Collective is no closer to resolution now than when it all started a year ago. The Collective has actually landed and established at base at Casus Belli Mons; it has yet to begin mining operations, but it has intimidated the Clans in the area into moving off the asteroid.

◇ BELLUM PLANITIA

A 258-mile diameter impact crater dominates Vesta's southern hemisphere. The southern pole itself is crowned with a 12 km high peak named Casus Belli Mons. Most of Vesta's mining operations are in this region to take advantage of the thin outer crust of rock.

◇ CASUS BELLI MONS (87°S, 0°E)

The southernmost point of Vesta, this peak is the result of the rock "rebounding" after the impact. The Montana Mining Collective has established a base near the peak of the mountain. The perimeter is well defended, and it appears that the Collective is prepared to remain there for some time. Usually the Collective stays in the base, but occasionally they fly survey missions over Bellum Planitia. The main purpose of these missions seems to be to disrupt as many Nomad mining operations as possible.

◇ ESTIVAL VALLES (35°N, 75°E)

This network of caverns is one of the northern mining claims the Furosha make available for contract work. Until recently, there were three Clans operating in this site, but after a period of extended communication silence, a Furosha team sent to investigate found the region abandoned.

◇ PYRE MONS (8°S, 155°W)

Dubbed "Little Fuji" by the original miners, this is the tallest point on Vesta. Evidence suggests that millennia ago it was an active volcano. Now it is a rich mining site contracted out to the Thoms and Allison Clans, who excavate the area jointly.

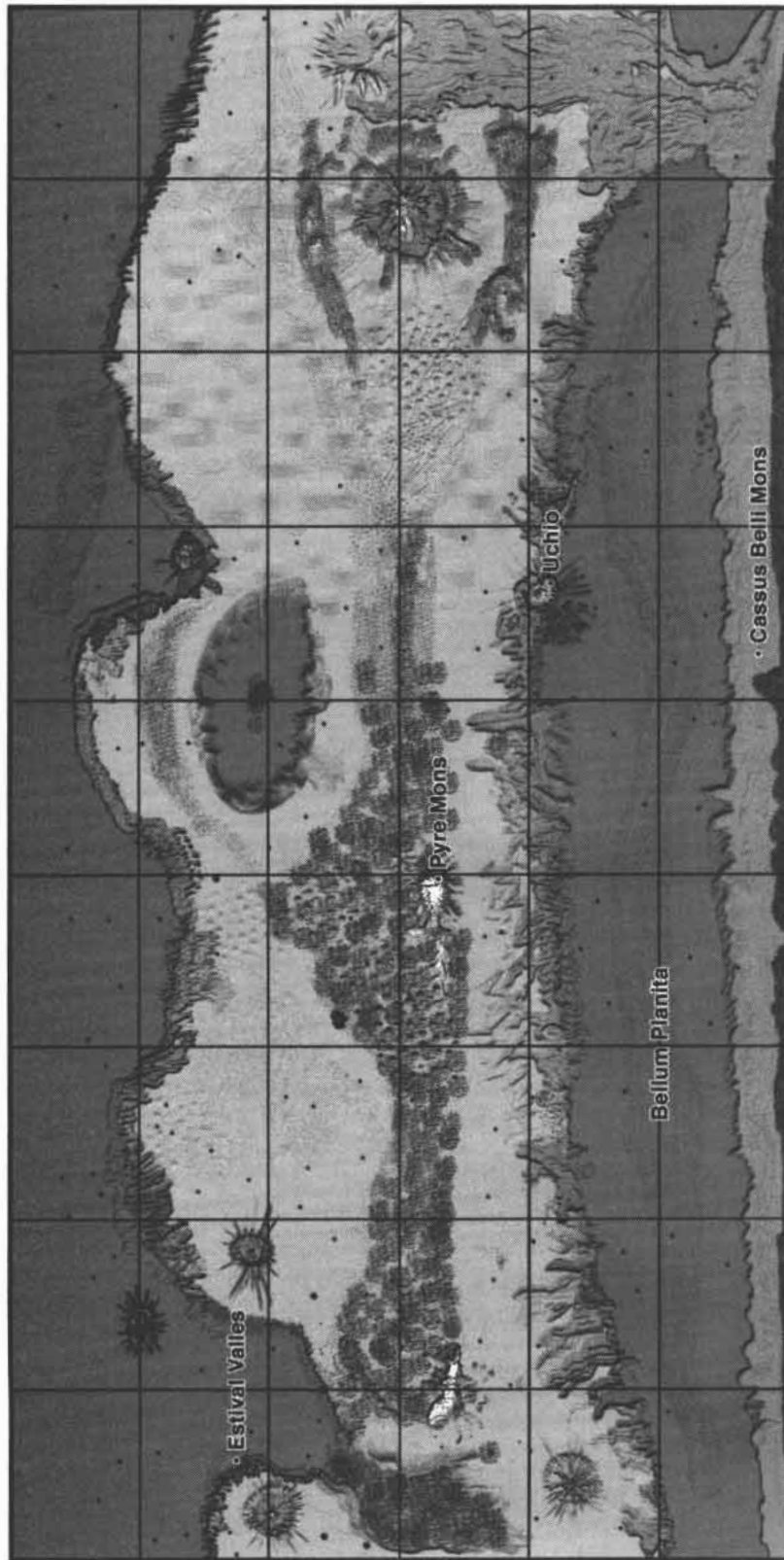
◇ UCHIO (31°S, 88°W)

Uchio means "home" in Japanese, a suitable name for the original Iyenari colony. Situated in Ash Crater, the colony boasts a population of 1020, most of which belongs to the Furoshas and their cousins. A zocalo is located on site, although it has been practically deserted since the MMC landed. The Furosha conduct Clan mining operations from this base. The meteorite impact blasted an even deeper hole in the surface, making it the best mining site on the entire asteroid.

▣ NOTES AND HOOKS

For the time being, the Furosha and the MMC are at a stalemate. The issue of ownership of Vesta is a hotly debated topic in the Parliament, and has been occupying an increasing amount of time at the USN. Unless the Furosha do something decisive, the MMC will continue to erode the Clan's power base, eventually forcing the Clan itself to leave Vesta. Lately there has been a rumor floating around that an actual deed of ownership of Vesta may be locked away in an ancient Iyenari data vault, located somewhere in Japan.

VESTA SURFACE MAP ▼



► SURFACE OF VESTA

The map above is a rectangular projection of the surface of a spheroid. Therefore, the areas furthest away from the equator are subject to the greatest distortion. Refer to the three views at left for a more accurate rendition of the surface.



end of section 4.6 vesta



"This is a hammer. This is a wrench. They both have many helpful applications, but I can use either one to hurt you if I catch you not paying attention."

— Darrin O'Connell, Tech Trainer, Clan Metzner

BORN TO THE BELT ◀

Imagine living in a place where the daytime sky is as marked by stars as the night. Ground is not so much an immovable object as it is a direction. Existence is reduced to two concepts: inside and outside. Inside is crowded, noisy and chaotic. Outside is empty, quiet and serene. Inside is safe. Outside is death.

The Belt is unlike any other place in the Solar System. Devoid of familiar landmarks, it demands a certain mindset to exist there for any length of time. Most refugees and outsiders grow to despise the cramped, crowded conditions. Some become mentally impaired, developing mild claustrophobia or full-blown "cabin fever." Those suffering from the latter are not only useless in the Belt, they are extremely dangerous. Stories abound of demented inhabitants killing themselves in airlocks because they tried to get outside without wearing a vacuum suit.

Nomads are not usually susceptible to such maladies. Weightlessness may wreak havoc with their physiology, but mentally Nomads are very stable. This is not due to any exceptional mental agility; they have simply had an entire lifetime to adapt to conditions that could drive the less experienced mad.



WHAT MAKES A NOMAD ▼

From birth, a Nomad is trained to be a survivor. It is this motivation more than anything else that governs not only his actions, but also the actions of his Clan and even his entire society. There are other motivations common to the Belt: greed, jealousy, lust, ambition and a whole host of other old stand-byes are just as standard in the region as elsewhere. However, no Nomad will ever permit any of these elements to interfere with the basic requirements of survival. Those that do allow interference have lost their way and are a liability.

Such a basic drive dramatically shapes the psychological makeup of adherents. On the surface, Nomads may seem to hold the same values as those from other Solar nations. In practice, though, the application of those values is quite different. For example, Nomads consider the trait of generosity to be common in their society. They will readily give to those they feel are in need. However, a Nomad will never be *overly* giving if it affects his own survival. A Nomad will also never be generous just for the sake of being generous: the recipient must be worthy of the gift, otherwise it would be a waste of resources.

Likewise, the Nomad concept of freedom is not simply the ability to choose. When considering matters of survival, there may not actually be a choice; according to that condition, Nomads are not, by some standards, free. They are rather, as Denis Lysenko puts it, "slaves to survival." Nomads accept the fact that there may be no choice available to them in some situations. For them, freedom also becomes the ability to do what is necessary.

As an example, the Nomads have no problem understanding why the ancestors of the Furosha Clan sealed off Vesta during the Dark Years and shot down unarmed refugee ships that tried to land. They had no choice. If the refugees had been permitted to land, everyone would have perished. No Furoshan has ever been held accountable for the incident. Generally, it is the refugees the Nomads blame, as they at least had the freedom to chose not to land. Modern Nomads admit that, under the same circumstances, they would have done the same.

MAKING A LIVING

Superficially, Nomads share many characteristics with the peoples of the other Solar nations: despite the isolation, their career choices are not unique. They can specialize in jobs involving space or the Belt, such as surveying or asteroid prospecting, but almost any career is available. In addition to the more sensationalized positions like prospectors and pirates, there are Nomad businessmen, doctors and farmers. As there are no Nomad armed forces, military career packages are not available. The only exception is exo-pilot: enough privately owned exo-armors exist in the Belt to make a living operating them.

► CAREER PATHS

5.2

Regardless of Clan or career, all Nomads share certain common factors in terms of training and equipment choice. Only 30% of Nomads have a "normal" body type. Half the population falls under the Light Worlder physiology, while the last 20% percent have been living weightless for so long they are considered ZeeGees.

Every Nomad receives a technical education at an early age. All Nomads automatically have Zero-G Movement and Survival (Space) at 1, regardless of physiology. Nomads also have some computer or technical Skills, and can use vacuum suits. Nomads speak at least two languages: the native language of their Clan and Spacer's Runic. Nomads within a given Clan also share certain common skills, Perks and Flaws. The requirements of each and every Clan in the Belt are far too numerous to be listed here; however, the Clans presented in Chapter 3 include suggestions for typical Clan members.

All Nomads wear slip suits or close fitting garments near constantly. They are also rarely without a personal communicator and a grapple gun. Armament is optional, but if carried it usually consists of hand-to-hand weapons or non-lethal firearms. Other types of weapons are not carried except when serious trouble is expected. Except for a few personal items and his slip suit, equipment possessed by a Nomad actually belongs to his Clan. The equipment listed in the following careers has been issued for personal use, but the Clan can take any or all items back at any time and give them to someone else.

▼ NEW TWISTS

5.2.1

Microgravity Mining: This is a specialization of the Earth Sciences Skill. The Character has training in mineral extraction while in a weightless environment. This includes a basic understanding of the machinery used, but not skill in the actual operation of those machines. Specializations have no prerequisites, but most Characters with this skill also have Zero-G Movement.

Perk - Personal Reputation (Nomad): This is an Acquired Perk — the Character is so good he has acquired a reputation based on his merits alone. Nomads with this Perk are still affected by their Clan's Reputation. This Perk can rise above +2 during game play. Costs 3 per point, Maximum Starting Rating of +2.

Flaw - Personal Reputation (Nomad): This is an Acquired Flaw — it functions just like the Perk, except the Character is known for some ugly events in his past. Characters with this Flaw have difficulty interacting with Nomads, including those of their own Clan. This Flaw can fall below -2 during game play. If it reaches -5, the Nomad may face banishment. Costs 3 per point, Maximum Rating of -2.

Characters with *Personal Reputation* as either a Perk or a Flaw should briefly describe their reputation. For example, Steve Baker of Clan Bruckner has a Personal Reputation (+2) for honesty and loyalty to his friends. The *Prestige* Perk affects how easily people recognize the character, *Personal Reputation* how they react.

▼ INDEPENDENT CHARACTERS

5.2.2

Despite limited social status, Independents have the advantage of being able to take any career package. Active military careers are unlikely, however, as is any job which places a Character's primary loyalty outside the Belt. It is possible that an Independent may once have been a Nomad, but his Clan, for whatever reason, no longer exists. The Nomad is effectively a non-entity unless another Nomad will vouch for his merits.

Independents may have any body type, although their time in the Belt has made the Light Worlder physiology the most common. Independent Player Characters may have "Personal Reputation" as a Perk. The Flaw version is not permitted — there is no such thing as an Independent with a bad reputation. Independents may take Perks and Flaws that tie them to Nomad society, but it is important to remember that Independents are not Nomads.

► REFUGEE CHARACTERS

5.2.3

Any career package is available to a refugee. Refugees with active military careers are considered AWOL (away without leave), essentially on the run from the service. Refugees may have any body type. They have no reputation, and may not take Personal Reputation as either a Perk or a Flaw; instead, all refugees have two Social Stigma Flaws, one at -3 when dealing with Nomads and one at -1 when dealing with all the other Belt residents. Refugees cannot acquire Personal Reputation as a Perk until they have worked off both Social Stigmas. Refugees gain no additional Skill Points from these Flaws. Perks and Flaws other than those mentioned above are not limited, save that a refugee cannot buy any ties to Nomads or Nomad society.

PROSPECTOR ▼

Prospecting is not mining. Anyone can be a miner. The job does not even need the right equipment — anything can be used to shovel dirt. Prospecting requires more. It requires skill to dig where something should be found, luck to dig where something will be found, and determination to dig until something is found. There is an old saying in the Belt: "The smartest prospectors aren't prospectors any more." Most think it refers to those lucky few that made the Big Find and retired with unimaginable wealth. In fact, it is about those who spent years working in airless, claustrophobic conditions, watched every penny earned disappear to pay the operational overhead, finally decided they had enough and quit.

TYPICAL ATTRIBUTES □

AGI	1	APP	0	BUI	0	CRE	0	FIT	0
INF	0	KNW	0	PER	1	PSY	0	WIL	1
STR	0	HEA	0	STA	25	UD	4	AD	3

TYPICAL SKILLS □

Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.
Earth Sciences *	2	0	Hand-to-Hand	1	1	Small Arms	1	1	Zero G Mov.	1	1
Electronics	1	0	Notice	1	1	Survival (Space)	1	0			

* Common Specializations (Pick One): Asteroids, Microgravity Mining, Mineral Survey

Other Possible Skills: Combat Sense, Space Pilot, Zero-G Combat

EQUIPMENT AND COST □

Typical Equipment:	Orpheus Mining suit, portable analyzer and claim markers. May have access to Vulcan exo-suits.
Salary:	Varies. Contracts pay 20,000-40,000 credits a year, not including any profit shares.
Basic Costs:	19 Character Points, 30 Skill Points (28 for Nomads)

ACTION CAMPAIGN USES ◇

There is always someone looking to muscle in on a prospector's claim — especially after the latter has done most of the survey and mining work. Independents usually arm themselves to the teeth; even Nomads have been known to take shots at claim jumpers who threaten a Clan's resources. Prospectors also occasionally run side operations as smugglers. Their irregular flight plans and long excursions make it easier for them to slip into and out of the Belt with illegal cargo or passengers.

INTRIGUE CAMPAIGN USES ◇

It is not uncommon for prospectors to be hired under false pretenses. They may be unknowingly jumping someone else's unregistered claim, or scouting out a Nomad-occupied area. Whatever the reason, it is usually the prospectors who become the targets of those affected. Some prospectors have been well paid to falsify mineral content reports, allowing a company to sell worthless property at grossly inflated prices. That company may later try to silence the prospectors to keep the truth hidden.

POSSIBLE VARIATIONS ◇

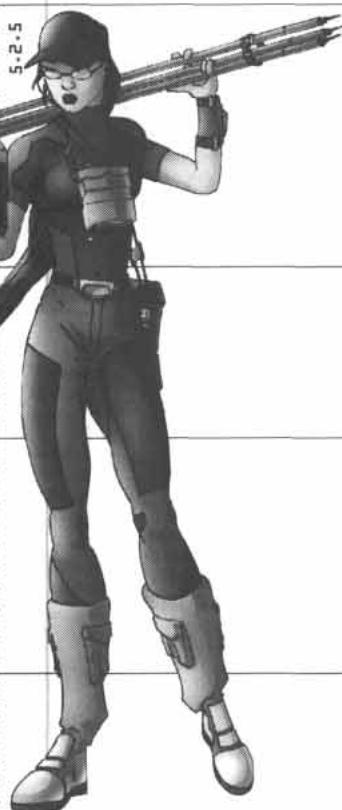
Typically, prospectors operate in teams, pooling resources and contacts. While they may prospect on their own, most teams prefer corporate contracts that will pay them no matter what they find. Nomad prospectors work primarily for their Clans, but they have been known to accept outside contracts. Generally, their time is devoted to whatever serves the welfare of their families. Corporate prospectors are of a rare breed. Outfitted with the latest equipment, they are sent to evaluate company assets and check potential purchases. Their work is done primarily through sensors; hands-on work is rarely required.

POSSIBLE SUBPLOTS ◇

Prospectors share one common motivation: greed. They came to the Belt to strike it rich, and will not leave until they do. Even if prospecting is not a main plot element, a prospector will rarely pass over leads or clues to the Big Find. Depending on the degree of obsession, prospectors can be easy marks for con artists, and might be faced with the unpleasant task of getting their money back from these unscrupulous characters. The lifestyle of a prospector makes it extremely difficult to maintain personal relationships. Even relationships between prospectors will fade when they go their separate ways. Of course, greed, jealousy and paranoia may play a part in ending relationships as well.



S-2-5



▼ SCOUT/SURVEYOR

Scouts and surveyors are eyes-for-hire. They are contracted to explore, examine and map specific pieces of stellar real estate ranging in size from small craters to large asteroids. Scouts and prospectors overlap in several areas. They both chart out unknown territory. Unlike prospectors, scouts do not "get their hands dirty." Rather, they focus on mapping and surveying, and rarely do any mining save for the occasional collection of ore samples. In some ways, it is easier to make a living as a Scout. The contract survey market is booming as new interests move into the Belt. It is harder to "strike it rich" when on someone else's payroll, but the contracts are numerous and they all pay well.

▣ TYPICAL ATTRIBUTES

AGI	1	APP	0	BUI	0	CRE	1	FIT	0
INF	0	KNO	0	PER	1	PSY	0	WIL	0
STR	0	HEA	0	STA	25	UD	4		

▣ TYPICAL SKILLS

Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.
Combat Sense	1	1	Hand-to-Hand	1	1	Survival (Space)	1	0	*(Mineral Survey)		
Earth Sciences*	1	0	Notice	2	1	Zero G Movement	1	0	** (Sensors)		
Electronic War.**	2	0	Small Arms	1	1						

Other Possible Skills: Communications, Electronics, Space Pilot, Zero-G Combat

▣ EQUIPMENT AND COST

Typical Equipment:	Vacuum suit, surface mapper and claim markers. May have access to a survey vessel.
Salary:	Contracts pay 30,000-50,000 credits a year. Bonuses, if any, may add another 20,000-75,000 credits per contract.
Basic Costs:	19 Character Points, 29 Skill Points (27 for Nomads)

◇ ACTION CAMPAIGN USES

Scouts have an unfortunate tendency to end up in the wrong place at the wrong time. Their contracts send them all over the Belt, sometimes right into the middle of a fight or a Clan feud. More than one surveyor has come under fire after being mistaken for a claim-jumper. Occasionally scouts stumble across hidden bases or pirate hideouts. Sometimes scouts become targets not because they do know something, but because someone thinks the scouts know something.

◇ INTRIGUE CAMPAIGN USES

Like prospectors, scouts can be deceived into doing illegal work, or paid to falsify survey information. There have been occasions where scouts have accidentally intercepted pirate or military transmissions. Scouts also have access to more navigational and geographical data about the Belt than almost anyone else. They are required to turn over all information at the end of each contract, but a few scouts like to hang on to a copy, "just in case."

◇ POSSIBLE VARIATIONS

Some scouts do nothing but search out long-lost vessels or bases. The salvage alone can pay the bill of the expedition, but some derelicts carry extremely valuable cargo. Many refugees take up scouting as a means of proving their worth to the Nomads. The risks are great, especially since refugees cannot afford decent equipment. If successful, however, they will earn themselves a place in the Belt's society. Nomad scouts face a unique kind of pressure: their Clan's welfare rests completely on their skill at finding minerals. They thus range farther and are much more willing to deal with outsiders.

◇ POSSIBLE SUBPLOTS

Scouts are well traveled and tend to know people everywhere. Even without the Contacts Perk, scouts always run into friends and acquaintances. This could be a big advantage or a big problem. Most scouts have their own vessels, ranging from glorified shuttles to Scout-Class Explorers. Bank loan payments are the single highest operational cost, leaving most scouts near poverty after paying their monthly pound of flesh. It is possible a scout can knuckle down and eventually pay off the debt after years or even decades of work. It is also possible a scout can take the ship and skip out on the payments — as long as there are no plans to ever set foot on a non-Nomad station again.

5.2.1

AGI	0	APP	0	BUI	0	CRE	2	FTT	0
INF	0	KNO	1	PER	0	PSY	0	WIL	0
STR	0	HEA	0	STA	25	UD	3	AD	3

AGI	0	APP	0	BUI	0	CRE	2	FTT	0
INF	0	KNO	1	PER	0	PSY	0	WIL	0
STR	0	HEA	0	STA	25	UD	3	AD	3

[illegible][illegible]EQUIPMENT AND COST

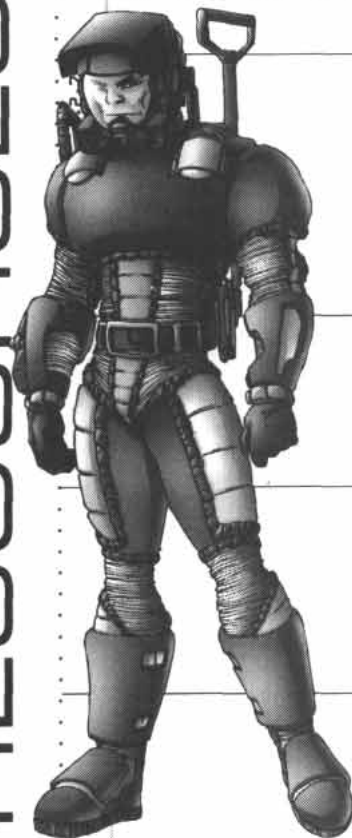
Typical Equipment:	Vacuum suit, portable computer and tool kit. May have a small "pet" robot.
Salary:	Contracts pay 35,000-55,000 credits a year.
Basic Costs:	20 Character Points, 30 Skill Points (28 for Nomads)

Nomads may not crave action and adventure, but in the Belt, even the most sedate Nomad could find himself in the thick of things. Technicians are no exception, particularly those on bases in danger of attack by pirates or claim jumpers. Nomads excel at damage control. Their improvisational know-how astounds any that watch, and their repair times are incredibly fast. Of course, it may take a while to undo the jury-rigging to make actual repairs, but nobody complains if lives are saved.

Nomads would never admit to thievery or piracy, but their technical skills make them natural candidates for underworld recruitment. A Nomad technician's love of technology may blind him to the truth of his employment. He may never be aware of which security systems he breaches, or which databases he hacks, until Solapol arrives to investigate. On the other hand, there may be Nomad techs who are just desperate enough to willingly commit crimes to save their impoverished Clans.

Nomad technicians are highly trained and versatile: some specialize in certain technologies (e.g., nuclear reactors), but the rest know enough to help out almost anywhere. Some Clans rely on robots for mining or to make up for a lack of manpower. Their roboticists are constantly fiddling with designs, and have automated devices to handle almost any task. On rare occasions, an Independent may be trusted enough to be invited to apprentice with a Nomad technician. It is not easy — the apprentice will be training with Nomads half his age — but it is the closest an Independent may ever come to being accepted in a Nomad family.

Nomad technicians see themselves as craftsmen, artists and producers of high-quality work. Unfortunately, this work is also highly unique, and other Nomad technicians are constantly faced with having to decipher equipment modified in ways never before seen. By the same token, Nomad technicians are always looking to develop a particular device, upgrade or technique that will impress other Clan techs enough for them to adopt it as part of their work routine. It is a kind of celebrity status, as the achievement usually bears the creator's name as it is passed from apprentice to apprentice.



▼ ZERO-G HEAVY LABOR SPECIALIST

Two centuries ago, construction workers balanced precariously on the skeletons of the skyscrapers they were erecting. It was called "walking high steel." Above every world in the Solar System, Nomad heavy labor specialists walk the highest steel of all: orbital construction. A life of near weightlessness and technical training has produced a construction specialist of unrivaled skill. Companies are constantly wooing Nomads to come work on their projects or train their crews. The majority of Nomads that do leave the Belt go to work on just these sorts of jobs. Nomad specialists work long, hard hours in a debilitating environment. Despite the danger, stress and long-term health risks, most see their jobs as labors of love.

▣ TYPICAL ATTRIBUTES

AGI	1	APP	0	BUI	0	CRE	0	FIT	1
INT	0	KNO	0	PER	0	PSY	0	WIL	1
STR	0	HEA	0	STA	30	UD	5	AD	3

▣ TYPICAL SKILLS

Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.	Skill	Level	Attr.
Hand-to-Hand	1	1	Navigation, Space	1	0	Survival (Space)	1	0	Zero G Movement	2	1
Mechanics*	2	0	Space Pilot	2	0				*(Orbital Structures)		

Other Possible Skills: Communications, Electronics, Exo Pilot and Zero-G Combat

▣ EQUIPMENT AND COST

Typical Equipment:	Worksuit with backpack MMU, slip suit, tool kit, Steele grapple gun. May have access to Workbee M-Pods or Teamster exo-suits.
Salary:	Contracts pay 30,000-60,000 credits a year.
Basic Costs:	18 Character Points, 29 Skill Points (27 for Nomads)

◇ ACTION CAMPAIGN USES

Nomad specialists work under some of the most stressful conditions known. When they relax, they really cut loose. Bars where construction workers hang out are the roughest to be found. Nearly killed on the site today? Not a problem! Have a few drinks and then burn off all that excess adrenaline by pummeling someone. Stress relief occurs nightly. Fortunately, construction worker health plans not only cover this sort of therapy, they also help the local bars cover the costs of repairs.

◇ INTRIGUE CAMPAIGN USES

Specialists will rarely be in a position to be involved with the sort of machinations that mould destinies. On the other hand, job-site politics more than make up for it. Specialists have to deal with foremen, managers and co-workers who viciously guard their small amounts of authority and responsibility with a near-pathological vigor. This may seem outrageous, but accidents have a way of "just happening" to individuals these people see as threats.

◇ POSSIBLE VARIATIONS

Cargo handlers at any station or port must be skilled at manipulating the massive containers and modules carried on transport vessels. Most operate Workbee pods or modified exo-suits, but a very select few pilot ancient exo-armors. These are reserved for a Clan's elite; no one of lesser stature would ever be permitted piloting privileges, even if only for hauling cargo. Shipwrights are also common in the Belt. Most Clans scratchbuild their own vessels, using techniques not all that different from those used in zero-g construction. Dedicated ship builders such as the Morris-Taylors are always on the lookout for new talent and tend to offer apprenticeships regardless of Clan affiliation.

◇ POSSIBLE SUBPLOTS

Zero-g specialists often spend large amounts of time in a weightless environment and may develop health problems even earlier than other Nomads. Treatments are expensive, time-consuming and could involve the possibility of giving up one's career. Specialists may be respected for their skills, but as Nomads they still bear the brunt of a great deal of bigotry. Earth and Venus are particularly hard environments. In some extreme cases, citizens of those worlds treat Specialists as little more than trained monkeys. Nomads bear the indignities quietly, but occasionally someone goes too far, and then real trouble begins.

ASSEMBLING THE CREW ◀

Nomad teams are generally referred to as "crews," and there are several ways to go about putting one together. The benefits and problems of each are outlined below. Gamemasters should keep in mind long-term plans (if any) when deciding on crew composition. Some crew mixes are extremely limited if they are taken out of a Nomad setting. Players wishing to use pre-existing non-Nomads Characters should be warned that those Characters will have difficulties working in a Nomad setting until they overcome the Nomads' instinctive mistrust of outsiders.

SINGLE CLAN CREWS ▼

This is the easiest set up, but also the most limited: all the Characters are from the same Clan. Everybody knows everybody else, although perhaps not intimately. Because of their pre-established relations, the crew requires minimal effort to assemble, and has immediate reasons to work together. The Clan's communal equipment pool is available to all, and the Clan elders are less reluctant to loan out unique or valuable tools to their own kin. On the other hand, the fortunes of the Clan overshadow the entire crew: Clan Reputation affects all Characters equally. If that reputation is bad, the entire crew will have difficulty in dealing with other Nomads. Also, an impoverished Clan means a lack of resources and limited equipment, not to mention impoverished Characters. Characters also have to overcome Nomad social stigmas in order to deal with refugees or Strangers. Their contacts and resources outside the Nomad community are effectively non-existent unless someone has unusual Perks or backgrounds.

MIXED CLAN CREWS ▼

The Characters are from several different Clans. The backgrounds are more varied, and the Characters are equipped to deal with a larger variety of situations. The reputation of one Clan does not affect everybody, nor does everybody suffer from the same limitations of equipment and resources. The crew, however, will require some excuse to assemble. Clans do not usually conduct joint operations with other Clans, particularly those with bad reputations. Characters may not know each other beforehand, requiring an additional level of trust to be built up within the crew. Characters have to overcome Nomad social stigmas in order to deal with refugees or Strangers. There is also a similar lack of outside contact.

Clans are very reluctant to share communal equipment with Nomads from other Clans. Elders usually insist that Clan possessions be prominently identified and closely monitored. Unique or valuable equipment will almost never be made available unless the need is overwhelming. Elders will also expect other Clans to share equally the burden of equipping the crew.

INTRODUCING OUTSIDERS ▼

Independents with a recognized Personal Reputation should have no problem fitting in to any crew. Their backgrounds provide connections and information not available to a crew comprised entirely of Nomads. Independents are not overshadowed by a Clan Reputation, and are left entirely to their own resources in terms of equipment. Of course, they could prove to be liabilities if their reputations go unrecognized. Clans do not loan equipment to Independents without some form of payment or collateral.

It becomes harder to justify the presence of refugees and outsiders in a crew. Without Personal Reputations, Nomads would never trust either of these groups enough to work with them unless there was no other choice. Refugees and Strangers should provide some element not possessed by Nomads yet still important: this could be anything from particular skills to unique equipment. Nomads will eventually develop a level of trust towards the outsiders, but until they do, there should be another reason for everyone to work together.

NOMADS OUTSIDE THE BELT ▼

A crew comprised mostly of Nomads will encounter a great deal of difficulty working outside the Belt. Their ignorance of other cultures is a large handicap. They also face constant bigotry, especially from Venusians and Earthers. Nomads suffer from bouts of homesickness, loneliness and depression if away from their own kind for too long. On the plus side, Nomads have plenty of excuses to work with outsiders because of their job contracts. Clan Reputation is no longer a factor. Nomads are such a small minority reputations rarely come into play. They are also not required to pool their equipment communally or bargain with Elders to acquire new items, although they are expected to return everything to the Clan once back home.

5.3

5.3.1

5.3.2

5.3.3

5.3.4

end of section 5.3 assembling the crew

► ADVENTURES



With the large amount of material already available on styles of gamemastering, campaign construction and storytelling, there is little need to go into detail here, save for subjects dealing specifically with Nomad adventures. For broader reference material, the companion book to the Jovian Chronicles Gamemaster screen, **Gamemastering Made Easy**, is an excellent reference. The Reality Distortion Level (RDL) controls more than game mechanics. A change in the RDL also affects the atmosphere of the entire game. The default RDL of this game manual is Adventurous. Suggestions for Gritty or Cinematic games are outlined below.

▼ GAME STYLES

Gritty: Survival is all consuming. The best anybody ever hopes for is breaking even; there is no getting ahead in this game. Living in the Belt is a guaranteed death sentence. Lethal mistakes kill the stupid and the careless. The ravages of long-term exposure to weightlessness kill the rest. High-tech materials are rare and highly coveted. Hope is the most precious commodity of all.

This RDL is recommended for the micro-managers and number crunchers. Statistics should be provided for everything, from the exact contents of a homestead's stores right down to the duration of each vacuum suit's emergency reserve. Gamemasters should be familiar with all the rules on atmosphere, gravity and radiation (**Jovian Chronicles Companion** pp. 78-83, **SolaPol Sourcebook** pp. 106-107). It may sound like a depressing style of play, but it is the most realistic depiction of Nomad life.

Cinematic: The lack of central government coupled with the wide-open emptiness of the Belt is the closest thing to the Wild West anyone has seen in three hundred years. The harsh frontier has forged an entire culture of intelligent, resourceful, charismatic characters serving up their own brand of two-fisted justice. The needs of survival are handled expertly by NPCs, freeing up the Player Characters to do whatever must be done. No special rules are needed for this style of play, apart from the basic RDL rules (**Jovian Chronicles Rulebook**, pages 223-224).

▼ ACTION: GET UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Most combat in a Nomad adventure will take place at arm's length. Brawling is the preferred medium of settling disagreements. Armed melee combat is tolerated though less accepted. Gunfights tend to be conducted with non-lethal weapons such as tasers or stunners. Stations in the Belt have strict prohibitions against carrying firearms, particularly those capable of penetrating bulkheads. Clans do cache more lethal weapons, but these are issued only in the face of an extreme threat of violence. Ship-to-ship combat is very uncommon, and rarely results in the destruction of a vessel. More likely a ship will be boarded and incapacitated from within.

Nomads do not engage in large-scale conflicts. There are no clashing Nomad fleets, no epic space battles. Nomads simply do not have the resources, and even if they did, they would prefer to avoid the property damage. As a general rule of thumb, Nomads will never engage in any form of wholesale destruction on any scale. Other inhabitants of the Belt also tend to follow this philosophy, mainly out of the sheer expense of conducting repairs in such an inhospitable environment.

Nomad combat in any form is like a poker game. Each side is not so much trying to win as they are trying to force the other side into backing down before the stakes get too high. Fights start with threats or verbal bravado to give each side a chance to yield. Surrender can be offered at any time, even after actual fighting has started, and when offered it is usually taken. There are always exceptions, such as the Freeman-Metzner feud. In this instance, the hatred on either side runs deep enough to justify any action against the other. Clans and individuals that engage in such extreme behavior quickly acquire bad reputations. They are shunned by Nomads, and may face banishment from Nomad society if they go too far.

NOMAD PACIFISM AND PRAGMATISM ►

Nomads do not seek out combat. They brawl to blow off steam, but avoid anything of a more serious nature. If given a choice, Nomads will always walk away from a fight. They will even avoid battles they would win if they believe the cost of victory to be too great. Survival is most important, and there is no shame in surrender. It is important to remember that Nomads are not pacifists. They avoid combat for purely practical reasons. It often is not worth the risk to personal health or property. There are times, however, when conflicts cannot be avoided.

If forced into combat, Nomads fight with the conviction that their survival depends on victory. This makes them surprisingly vicious warriors with little regard for "gentlemanly" conduct. They are not vindictive, though — most Nomads do only what is necessary to win or escape. Only in extreme cases will they devastate an enemy, and that enemy must first show that it is a problem in need of a permanent solution.

INTRIGUE: A GENERAL LACK OF FINESSE ►

Most Nomads are not very well suited to the sort of intrigue adventures that take place outside the Belt. They are very focused on immediate issues, and tend to be ignorant of the bigger picture. They neither understand nor care about the relations or political climate between the Solar nations, and cannot be bothered to learn. A Nomad's manner is exceedingly honest when compared to non-Nomads, leading to the stereotype of Nomads being easily duped or manipulated. Jokes abound that poke fun at the Nomad lack of sophistication, and it does not help that there is a grain of truth in the cruel humor.

This is not to say that intrigue does not exist within Nomad society, but as with action, Nomad intrigues are based mostly on a personal level, usually within their own Clans. Intrigues develop simply out of the need for a break from the monotony of long months alone in space. Most are petty and childish maneuverings, but occasionally something arises that will seriously affect a Clan, like a leadership challenge. Participants try to settle major disputes quickly, before any serious or lasting damage can be done to the Clan. Machinations get nasty from time to time, but Nomad intrigues rarely produce physical casualties. Damage is aimed at status, privilege and reputation.

There are two groups within Nomad society that prove the exception to the rule. Clan Lysenko has practically abandoned Nomad ideals in their attempt to dominate other Clans. The other group comprises everyone who works in the gray market. The brokers, smugglers and to a lesser extent, the pirates have learned the art of operating in the shadows, well out of sight of the eyes of Solapol or other security agencies. Gray market adventures involving a fair amount of outwitting both the law and outsiders who may be looking to pull a fast one on the "easily duped" Nomads.

CLAN LYSENKO: PLAYING WITH FIRE ►

Intrigue adventures based around Clan Lysenko or any of their followers will be heavily political. The Lysenkos have a deeper understanding of diplomacy and Machiavellian trickery, but they are still newcomers to the political scene. They are well aware of the obstacles they face, and are more willing to resort to extreme measures.

Plot Point — The Lysenkos as Bad Guys: Clan Lysenko is a common antagonist in larger-scale intrigue adventures. Most Nomads see them as bullies, using any means necessary to try to bring the Belt in line with their political agenda. In reality, Clan Lysenko prefers to have its followers do the dirty work. The Nomads, however, are fully aware of who is really calling the shots. The Lysenkos may actually succeed in unifying the Belt, if only in opposition to their heavy-handed tactics.

Plot Point — The Lysenkos as Good Guys: The followers of Clan Lysenko see themselves as the mothers and fathers of statehood, struggling to unify their people against the machinations of the other Solar nations. Intrigue adventures from this perspective involve carrying the torch to the ignorant masses. Interacting with outsiders is common, as are voyages beyond the Belt itself. Lysenko followers often find themselves having to deal with cloak-and-dagger operations conducted by agents who are eminently more skilled. On the other hand, followers are recognized by the USN, and are entitled to whatever little benefits accompany that status.



▼ BRIDGING THE ISOLATION

Nomad Player Characters do not represent typical inhabitants of the Belt. True Nomads are isolationists, living in a world that does not extend beyond their Clans and immediate allies. If faced with a problem that does not affect him directly, a true Nomad simply says, "I don't care," and walks away. Player Characters need reasons to look beyond their Clans and work with individuals they would not normally trust. Situations can be contrived to force characters together, but the easiest point to tackle the question of "why care?" is during character creation.

The careers included in this book all have an atypical degree of independence, and provide a history of frequent travel and contact with non-Nomads. Two careers have a potential for experience completely outside the Belt. If Players want to start the game as typical Nomads, their histories should have some seeds of being able to come to terms with working with outsiders. The same applies even more so to non-Nomad characters that will take part in Nomad adventures. Independents come with ready-made excuses to work with Nomads, but refugees are another matter. Normally shunned, refugees need especially convincing reasons to be in Nomad company.

Characters may develop new bridges over Nomad isolation. This takes time, and unless the effort is particularly compelling it may be stymied by Nomad society. Characters need to develop their excuses to care early. Once they have them, they will do whatever a particular story demands.

▼ SCENARIO SEED: THE KUROSAWA SEVEN

Their reputations preceding them, the Player Characters are recruited to help the Kurosawa Clan fight off a group of pirates. A bit of prelude work needs to be done before running this scenario; the Characters should have individual or group backgrounds which have brought them into contact with the Kurosawa clan, or have worked with each other in some capacity which will lead the group to accept the Clan's request when it is made.

The destitute Kurosawa Clan was in the process of building an anchorage when a pirate vessel arrived. The Clan was given an ultimatum: abandon the anchorage, or the pirates will take it by force. The Clan does not have the means to evacuate their entire population in the time allotted to them. They must fight, but they need help. Yukio Kurosawa, a merchant returning home, caught the distress call on her radio and sped off to recruit some muscle.

◇ SUGGESTED CHARACTERS AND EQUIPMENT

This scenario is open to any career; military characters, however, are unlikely to get permission to fight a private war. On the other hand, this is an excellent opportunity for refugees and Independents to acquire Personal Reputations. Characters should be armed, or have access to armaments they can retrieve on short notice. A vessel is not needed — Characters can hitch a ride with Yukio if need be.

◇ EVENTS

During a span of downtime, one (or more) of the PCs is contacted by an ally/friend/contact, who in turn is connected to the Kurosawa Clan. The contact requests a meeting with the PC, and asks him to bring as many of his friends as he can. Yukio Kurosawa is there with the contact at the appointed time, having called upon Clan connections to arrange the meeting.

She explains the threats made by the pirates, now about three days ago, and apologizes for the fact that her Clan cannot offer monetary or material rewards. What she can offer, however, is the forgiveness of any minor to medium-level debts or favors the PCs may owe the Clan, as well as permanent guest privileges wherever the Clan happens to set up a base. The Clan will also happily repair any damage done to any PC possessions during the fight.

Yukio gives the Characters six hours to assemble their equipment. If they need a ride with her, she gives them the location of her ship and a meeting time. They may attempt to recruit additional NPC fighters, but the short amount of time they have remaining, not to mention the limited transport space, will make this problematic.

EVENTS (CONT.)

On arriving at Kurosawa Anchorage, the Characters will see the pirate ship: a Mule-Class freighter keeping station some distance from the anchorage. It seems to have been modified from factory standard, and its capabilities are unknown, but it is not obviously armed. The Characters will either have to be extremely clever or extremely fast to avoid the pirates and dock at the station.

If the Characters reach the anchorage undetected, they have eighteen hours before the ultimatum runs out and the pirates attack. Otherwise, they have about thirty minutes before the pirates pull up to the anchorage and start shooting. Clan morale is low, and the reception granted to the PCs depends heavily on their previous interactions with the Clan, but the elders will listen to the Characters' advice before making any hasty decisions.

Characters can set up whatever defenses they like, wherever they want. The Nomads have already established barricades around the airlocks, and have improvised bunkers deep within the asteroids of the anchorage. The Nomad arsenal consists largely of old, jury-rigged tasers and carbines. Ammunition is very limited.

COMPLICATIONS ◇

In case Players have read this book, Gamemasters are given some choice as to possible complications for this scenario. Options can be mixed and matched, if desired.

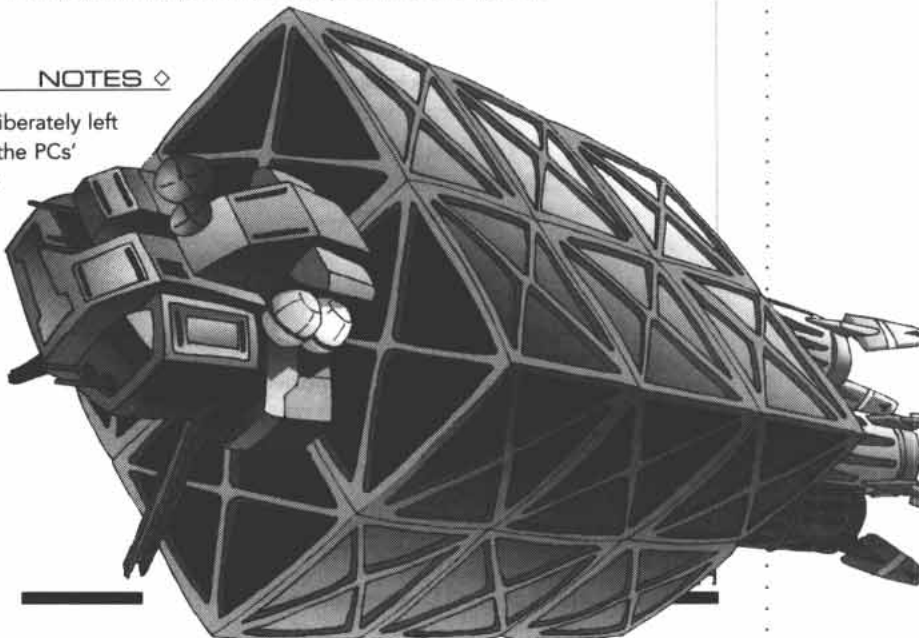
- (1) The pirates are hired guns for a small mining company. If the pirate ship is boarded or captured, damaging evidence may be found inside the first mate's quarters.
- (2) The Nomads have claimed the asteroid where the pirates stashed their last few hauls. The cache is extremely well hidden, and the Nomads do not know it exists. If the pirates cannot capture the homestead, they will try to keep the Nomads pinned while reclaiming their booty.
- (3) The Nomads themselves are pirates, caught with their defenses incomplete and their pirate ships away. The Nomads are better armed than expected, and if Characters wander into the homestead's storage bays, they will find them full of stolen cargo the Clan has not been able to sell.
- (4) The pirates are either partly or completely made up of ex-members of the Kurosawa Clan. They were forcefully turned out six months ago to give the rest of the Clan a chance to survive. If used with (3), the cargo is the primary objective.
- (5) The Nomad arsenal is so old it is nearly useless. Weaponry must be improvised or taken from fallen pirates.

THE PIRATES ◇

Pirates are based on the Mercenary Archetype. All carry knives, pistols and some sort of rifle or shotgun. They want to take the station intact and use it as a base. They will decompress parts of the anchorage to try to isolate the Nomads. The attackers will work both inside and outside, manually decompressing sections or blowing open bulkheads with small explosives. The Pirates would rather not take prisoners, and have no compunctions against killing.

NOTES ◇

Both the Kurosawa Clan and the pirates are deliberately left vague in order for the GM to tailor them to fit the PCs' capabilities. The Clan is clever and innovative, but they are not a ready-made army. In comparison, the pirates are well armed and vicious, but not unbeatable. Unless they are incredibly unimaginative, the PCs should be victorious.



▼ SCENARIO SEED: GOLD RUSH

Walking down a busy hallway in a station, the PCs are accosted by a man in his 50s, with the pungent smell alcohol on his breath, skin and clothes. Grizzled and worn, the man is dressed like the rest of the prospectors who come to the area to booze it up, and his rambling statements — about an unusually rich find in the Brico family, a small asteroid cluster in the outer Belt — seem to match that characterization. He'll careen along the hallway with the PCs for as long as they put up with him, trying to explain exactly what it was he found, but with little success. He reveals that the claim, worth millions, has yet to be registered.

Within moments of that revelation, three members of his crew — a tough looking woman and two equally tough men — come quickly down the hallway to hustle him away. They attempt to throw the PCs off the track, claiming that their captain has been hitting the bottle far too hard lately, and dismissing all of his statements as drunken fantasies. The following morning, an accident occurs on the prospector's ship. The crew is killed, the ship's computers are destroyed, and the ship itself is dangerously irradiated. The claim is now up for grabs. . . if anyone can find it.

◇ SUGGESTED CHARACTERS AND EQUIPMENT

Prospecting and survey crews are best suited to this adventure. Any career can participate, but at least one Character should have the skills necessary to locate and identify a valuable asteroid.

Characters require a vessel outfitted for surveying or prospecting. Portable surveying and mining equipment is also recommended.

◇ EVENTS

Characters have a departure window of about half an hour from the accident time. After that, station security will be detaining and questioning everyone who in contact with the captain the previous night. The GM should determine exactly what supplies the Characters have aboard their vessel. They will not have time to load food or fuel, and may have shortages later on.

The Brico asteroid family lies roughly 731 million kilometers away from the Characters' current position. This gives a travel time of about seven days at an acceleration of 0.4 g. There are twelve asteroids in the family. The largest is two km in diameter and is surrounded by a thin cloud of debris. It can be approached, albeit slowly and carefully. The rest of the asteroids are smaller than one km in diameter, scattered in a line.

The prospector's claim marker is either broadcasting at low power or not transmitting at all. Without its locator signal, the claim marker is next to impossible to locate. This means each asteroid will have to be surveyed one by one.

The adventure is not over when the asteroid is found. The claim must be properly marked, catalogued and registered, requiring a trip to the nearest Ceres Claim Registry uplink. This could take some time, as the station in the beginning of the scenario does not have the communications array necessary to reach Ceres. PCs will have to figure out a way to protect their claim.

◇ COMPLICATIONS

In case Players have read this book, GMs are given some choice as to possible complications for this scenario. Options can be mixed and matched, if desired.

(1) The claim is "salted." The deception is very professional, requiring an Earth Sciences Test against a Threshold of Difficult (6) to note the scam. This test cannot even be made until a complete survey is done and the data analyzed.

(2) The survey team's great "find" is an abandoned JAF waystation. It is well camouflaged, and will be difficult to detect, not to mention enter. The contents of the station are unknown. It is probably empty, but something may have been left behind...

(3) As in (2), except the station is an active CEGA automated spy installation, programmed to passively observe the Jovian Confederacy. The installation failed to self-destruct when first discovered, and now a small CEGA ship is on its way to finish the job.

◇ COMPLICATIONS (CONT.)

(4) The Prospector was a claim jumper who smashed the previous owner's claim markers and replaced them with his own. The rightful owner is a large mining corporation. Its survey ship is still in the area, and has no idea the claim has been stolen. It will investigate the activity going on in the Bricio family, but will arrive some time after the surveying starts.

(5) One of the rival vessels is actually an outsider pirate ship. It is not equipped for survey, and will hang back and wait until it seems like someone has found something.

(6) As in (5), except the pirates are privateers with ties to a Clan affiliated with Clan Lysenko. The explosion that destroyed the Prospector's ship was deliberately set, but the privateers failed to get the claim location from the crew beforehand.

NOTES ◇

The numbers and capabilities of the competing crews need to be determined. Not all their vessels are armed, but that does not prevent them from using other dirty tricks. The Gamemaster must also determine which rock is the Type M asteroid. Since all the asteroids are from the same family, they share similar characteristics, but only one has a valuable mineral concentration. The rest are Type S asteroids.

SCENARIO SEED: THE PACKAGE ▼

During a stopover on a trade station, the crew is unexpectedly delivered an odd package. With only a number-code as the address and no indication of who actually sent it, the PCs must make some hasty decisions, before they get into real trouble!

5.4.9

SUGGESTED CHARACTERS AND EQUIPMENT ◇

Any career can be used, but the Characters should know each other before the start of the scenario. No special equipment is necessary.

EVENTS ◇

Unlike the other scenarios, The Package has a much more free flow of events. What happens is based entirely upon the GM's decision about what is in the package, and who is after it, as outlined in Complications, below.

COMPLICATIONS ◇

Each option outlines a series of events based on the contents of the package. Gamemasters should definitely mix up the ideas presented here.

(1) The package contains a small "black box," a fiendishly complicated computer warfare module adapted for use by a black-marketeering Clan. At irregular intervals, the box hacks into the local Venus Bank uplink and transmits bogus fund transfer instructions. It is a "Robin Hood" job: small accounts get bigger, and big accounts get smaller. In the confusion, a small amount of money is siphoned off, converted to cash and delivered to a drop box by an automated courier. Anyone who performs a thorough examination of both the hardware and software in the box has a chance of figuring out not only how it works, but also where the money is being sent. Needless to say, the Clan that programmed it wants it back.

Possible antagonists include the small black-marketeering Clan, Venus Bank investigators and local law enforcement agents.

(2) As in (1), except the box is an Edicts-violating functioning artificial intelligence (AI) brain module. It has been stealing the money to build itself a humanoid body. The AI can see, hear and speak either through the box or via its internal modem. It has no arms or legs and cannot move about or manipulate objects. It has had itself delivered to the crew to avoid a Solapol Edicts Investigation Team. Once given some way to communicate (audio components, computer uplink, etc.) it will bargain with the crew for a place to hide in exchange for some of the stolen money. Possible antagonists include a Solapol Edicts Investigation Team in addition to those mentioned above.

◇ COMPLICATIONS CONT

(3) The package is small, and contains credit chits and smart cash cards. Each card is full to capacity. There is over a million credits in the box. It is an extortion payment, incorrectly routed to the crew. Shortly after the box arrives, a dangerous-looking man (the payer) will appear and demand his box be returned. The man has connections with local security, and will prevent the crew from leaving until they meet his demands. Soon after, another group of threatening people (the payees) will arrive and demand the money be returned to them. Once law enforcement shows up, things turn bloody.

(4) The package is large, and drips a smelly reddish-brown substance. Opening it reveals a collection of dismembered body parts, mainly arms and legs. These are the remains of some unfortunate refugees who fell afoul of a slavery and organ-legging ring operating out of the station. The parts were supposed to be dumped into recycling. By the time the crew discovers the grisly contents, the slavers will already know they have it and will be taking measures to not only get the package back, but ensure the crew does not go to the local authorities.

(5) As above, but the body parts are sculpted from a synthetic meat protein. The reddish-brown substance is a very tasty herb and garlic barbecue sauce. This is a gag perpetrated by ZONet for its "Cheap and Stupid" Thursday night lineup. The package is covered with carefully concealed cameras and microphones. The crew will be followed by highly trained surveillance teams that record what happens to the parts. If the crew disposes of the package, another one will be delivered to them within an hour. The shipments are anonymous and cannot be traced. This will last for several days, depending on how entertaining the gag becomes. The episode will be broadcast system-wide the following month.

◇ NOTES

The crew should not be in a position to be able to refuse the package. If they will not accept a generic delivery, either address it specifically to one of the crewmembers or sneak it in with their latest cargo or equipment acquisitions.

▼ SCENARIO SEED: SHEEP'S CLOTHING

Three weeks ago, pirates captured a lone freighter. A lucky shot to the bridge killed the crew, but activated security protocols which erased the on-board computers. When the pirates looted the ship, they discovered three complete but unassembled Apollo exo-armors. The pirates lack the expertise to reassemble the exos, but they are more than capable of paying someone else to do the job. Known for their technical skills, the PCs are approached with an offer they shouldn't refuse...

◇ SUGGESTED CHARACTERS AND EQUIPMENT

Characters should either have or be able to fake some skill with exo-armor systems. Solapol deep cover operatives or Venusian agents are ideally suited. Nomads should have the independence to freely accept work contracts.

Characters need electronic or mechanical tool kits, even if only as part of a cover. Surveillance and espionage gear will also be handy, although Nomads rarely possess such equipment. Characters will not be permitted to bring obvious weapons to the work site.

◇ EVENTS

A recruiting agent working for an unnamed employer is offering a one-time technical contract to anyone who has experience with exo-armor systems. The contract is for two weeks, and if it goes well, it may turn into full-time employment. The agent offers any reasonable sum of money to get the Characters to sign on. Once they accept, they have six hours before a chartered shuttle departs for the long trip to the work site.

The work site is a solitary asteroid, about one km in diameter, with a small refinery dug into the surface. The recruiting agent has hired more technicians than just the characters. All have exo-armors or small spacecraft-related skills. Crates containing the three Apollos are secured to the walls inside a large hangar just off the main landing bay. The hangar also houses a remarkable selection of tools and a complete machine shop. Technicians have free run of the hangar, but are prohibited from entering any other area of the station except their quarters.

◊ EVENTS (CONT.)

Several things become apparent over the first two days. First, the nameless employers are on a tight schedule. 'Round the clock shifts begin immediately, and there is a sense of urgency in the station personnel. Second, there are armed guards almost everywhere. The exo-armors are also a mystery. They appear old, but the wear and tear is artificially simulated. The internal components are very new and very modern. These advanced Apollos are probably the equivalent of any exo currently in service.

Characters wishing to sneak into the rest of the station have a lot of security to avoid. With skill or luck, the Characters acquire bits and pieces of information around the station that will reveal the identity of the employers and the intended purpose of the exos.

COMPLICATIONS ◊

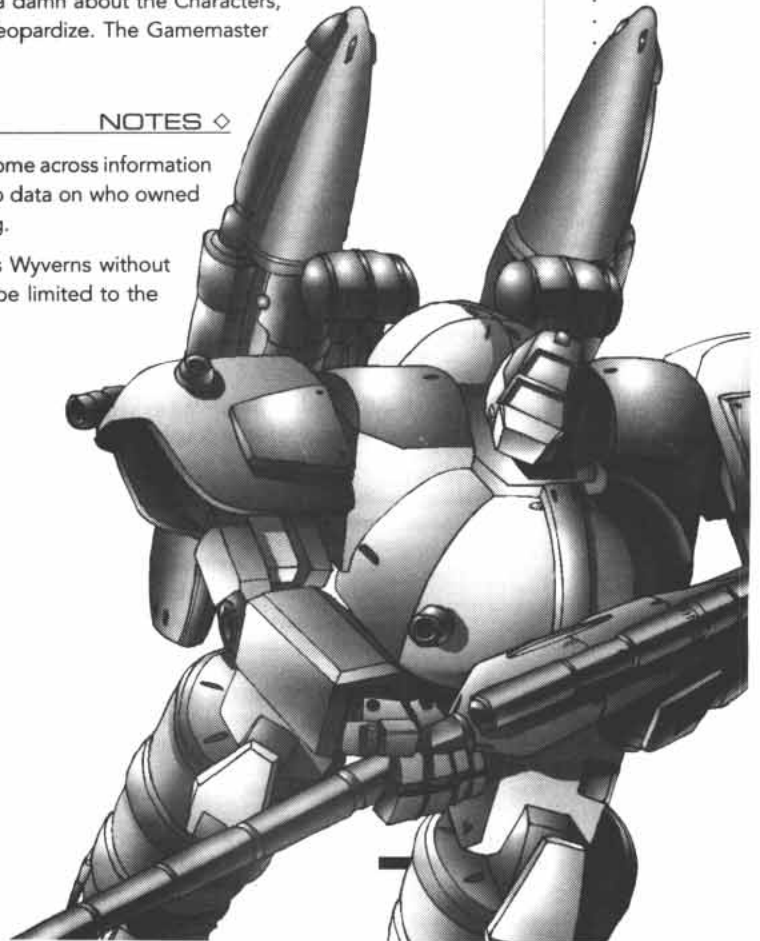
In case Players have read this book, GMs are given some choice as to possible complications for this scenario. Options can be mixed and matched, if desired.

- (1) The mysterious employers are non-Nomad pirates. Their technicians are studying and training on the exos as they are repaired. When the exos are finished, the pirates will kill all the contract techs.
- (2) As in (1), but the Characters discover survivors of the station's original crew being held captive. They are in rough shape, and, without intervention, will not survive the pirate occupation.
- (3) The mysterious employers are the Metzners. They plan on using the exos to ambush Clan Freeman near New Halifax station. When the exos are completed, permanent contracts will be offered to all the techs. All those who refuse will fall victim to a nasty explosive decompression accident on their way back to the station where they were first hired.
- (4) As in (3), but Clan Freeman knows of the plot and launches a pre-emptive strike against the base. The exos are the best defense the base has, if they can be made operational in time.
- (5) As in (1) or (3), except the base comes under attack by an unidentified force. The attackers are piloting the same types of advanced Apollos being rebuilt in the base. The attackers are trying to reclaim or destroy the exos, and will destroy the base and kill everyone inside.
- (6) One of the other hired techs is an undercover intelligence operative. When the exos are near completion, the operative will try to steal one. He does not give a damn about the Characters, and will proceed with his operation regardless of what it might jeopardize. The Gamemaster should choose a nation/group for which the operative works.

NOTES ◊

When the Characters are sneaking about on the station, they may come across information about the pirate attack and the freighter, but there is absolutely no data on who owned the freighter, where the exos came from, or where they were going.

Should the advanced Apollos become operational, treat them as Wyverns without external armament or a Walker mode. Any heavy armament will be limited to the carried exo weapons described in Section 6.9.



► FACES OF THE BELT



Even in the era of the Jovian Chronicles, the Belt is largely unpopulated. Over two and a half million people barely make a dent in the available space. Should someone wish to disappear for a while, there are more than enough opportunities to vanish.

Due to these reasons, it is next to impossible to present a wide selection of Non-Player Characters (NPCs) that will be encountered regularly across the Belt. Instead, the seven individuals listed tend to turn up at the same places, namely New Halifax, Ceres and Greshenko station, with possible additional appearances at nearby zocalos. These NPCs are also a mix between Nomads and Independents, allowing use in a wide variety of situations.

A second listing is provided at the end of this section as a quick reference for generic Supporting Character and Extra Archetypes common to the Belt.

▼ AT ARM'S LENGTH

The Non-Player Characters presented on the next few pages are exceptional individuals. While they may not be recognized outside their usual haunts, almost everyone in the immediate area knows of them. Players are going to seek these NPCs out, especially if they feel that the NPCs could enhance the PCs' personal power or prestige. The Gamemaster has several options to keep the Players' hands out of the proverbial cookie jar.

Most of these NPCs, with the possible exception of Cousin Willy, are fairly difficult to locate, as they travel a great deal. Pearsall in particular is nearly impossible to track down unless he wants to be found. Should the Player Characters locate the desired NPC, there is the question of reaction. Most of the NPCs have aversions to certain careers that tend to be typical Player Character choices. Sergeant Fraser will not do business with criminals. Cousin Willy, Roberts and Pearsall will not do business with obvious law enforcement types. Kepler and Cory will not hire refugees or outsiders. The Gamemaster should not forget to apply any relevant Reputations to the interaction.

The bottom line is these NPCs have their own agendas, and unless the Characters are very careful, the NPCs will treat them as nothing more than troublesome inconveniences.

▼ USING THE CAREERS AS ARCHETYPES

The four careers provided in Section 5.2 (see page 60) can be used as Lead or Supporting Character Archetypes. For Independents, the careers can be used exactly as they are. Ignore any details that pertain only to Nomads.

For Nomads, a little tailoring is required. Each of the Clans in Chapter 3 has information listed which describe features common to most members of the Clan, including languages, Skills, Perks and Flaws. If a new Clan is being used, these features should be defined before adapting a career.

The Archetype speaks all Clan languages fluently, regardless of the number of languages. All the suggested Skills are rated at 1, unless the Skill is already possessed by the career. In that instance, the Skill is at +1 to its current Rating. If a general type of Skill is listed instead of specific Skills (e.g., combat Skills), three relevant Skills should be chosen. They will all have a Rating of 1. Perks and Flaws are unimportant for Archetypes, unless designing a major villain. Clan Reputation should also be recorded.

Equipment is available as listed, although Gamemasters should keep in mind that this equipment belongs to the Clan. If a Player with a character of the same Clan presents a good enough argument as to why he should have a particular item, Clan elders may consider reassigning that item.

CORY R. DEBOIS, INDEPENDENT TRADER ▼

Cory is a surprising mix of contrasts. Her tall, slender frame is typical of many of the Belt's inhabitants, yet her dark skin is a startling change from the usual unhealthy, pallid complexions. Her soft, brown eyes are almost out of character with the hard lines of her face and her severely short-cut hair.

Like most Nomads, Cory has learned to use a minimum of gestures. When she does move, it is with the deliberate grace of a well-rehearsed dancer. She also speaks and thinks like a Nomad: bluntly and honestly. She has little time for pleasantries, and little patience for small talk. People who take their time getting to the point usually find themselves talking to the back of her head as she walks away.



E.S.S.

DESCRIPTION ◇

Cory grew up in the Belt as part of a Clan that spent most of its existence perched on the edge of extinction. By the time she became a young adult, her Clan had finally lost its balance and toppled into oblivion. Most Clan members moved into the Jovian Trojan States, but Cory and a few others chose to remain in the Belt. They liquidated the remaining Clan assets and bought an old Ebiiru-Class freighter, which they fixed up and renamed Cleveland Bay. As the most senior member of the Clan remainders, Cory was chosen to be captain. The early years were difficult for the inexperienced Nomads, but Cory and her crew have managed to build new reputations on the ruins their Clan left behind.

The Cleveland Bay transports cargo for smaller Clans both to and from zocalos and permanent trade stations. Her ship carries two machine shop/repair modules, which are rented out to Clans who may be in need of extra technical support. She accepts payment in the form of fuel, supplies, or parts. The Cleveland Bay also carries two low-power mass drivers concealed in the forward section of the ship. The drivers are primarily a scare tactic for use against pirates. They lack the capability to do any real damage.

Cory is well connected in the gray market. She has never engaged in piracy herself, but has been a merchandise fence for several Belt pirates, including Roberts. At one point she ran regular smuggling missions to Mars for the Free Republic, but that ended when the CEGA increased their military presence in the area.

STATS AND REPUTATION ◇

Cory is based on the Merchant Archetype (**Jovian Chronicles Rulebook**, page 104) with the following changes: she is a Light Worlder, her WIL is 1 and she has the Skills Leadership 1/+1, Survival (Space) 1/+1 and Zero-G Movement 1/0. She has no Clan Reputation, but her hard work and tenacity has earned her a Personal Reputation of +1.

NOTES AND HOOKS ◇

Cory is willing to ship anything anywhere, provided her costs can be covered. She normally travels a circuit of smaller homesteads and zocalos. She can be chartered if quick delivery is desired. Otherwise, cargo will have to wait until she can work her way around to its destination.

Cory takes on new crew only when she must. Permanent crew members must be adopted into her "Clan." She will allow Nomads to book working passages. Independents and non-Nomads are booked only as regular passengers unless they have rare or exceptional skills they are willing to teach to the crew.

Cory can be used to obtain items from the black market, but she prefers to avoid dealing directly with buyers. She transports items for Cousin Willy on occasion, despite her strong dislike of the man. She has an honest reputation as far as smugglers go, although she charges exorbitant fees to sneak things into Mercury, Luna or the Orbital Colonies. There is not enough money in the Belt to convince her to smuggle items to Venus or Earth.

▼ KEPLER, INDEPENDENT SURVEYOR



Kepler is an older man, somewhere in his early fifties. He is tall, thin and crowned with a very short halo of gray hair. His wrinkled skin has the pale tone of one too long away from sunlight, which only highlights his piercing blue eyes. When he speaks, his rumbling baritone carries hints of both English and German accents.

Kepler has spent too much time in weightless conditions. He has some difficulty moving in gravity environments, and normally walks with the assistance of a cane. Nevertheless, he carries himself with a certain degree of dignity. His manner is polite and detached, but his speech reveals a quick-witted and highly educated mind. He is curious and tenacious, but not stubborn. He knows the dangers of being inflexible in the Belt.

◇ DESCRIPTION

Kepler has come a long way from his Martian origins. He was in his early twenties when he lost his family and everything he owned in the endless fighting between the Federation and the Republic. With nothing holding him to Mars, he booked a working passage to Ceres where he spent several years flying a cargo transfer shuttle for the Piazzì Commercial Port Authority. It was not until he signed on board the survey ship *RSS Detroit River* that he began to pay more attention to the Nomads.

His travels over the next twenty years taught him a great deal about that society and what it takes for them to survive in the Belt. He learned to appreciate the dangers that come not only from the hostile environment, but also from the careless or malicious attitudes of the CEGA and the Venus-backed mining companies. The reckless indifference of the latter has rekindled some of his anger over the loss of his family. He knows the Nomads will be the first casualties in any sort of dispute with an outside power, whether military, political, or economical. He does as much as he can to help out the Clans in the face of adversity without becoming directly involved.

Kepler currently contracts his services exclusively to Nomads. He has traveled the Belt extensively and has some of the most complete navigation charts in existence. His ship, the *Hairy Tarantula*, is a long-range cargo shuttle refitted with so many sensor arrays it has taken on a spider-like appearance. Lately, he has been finding excuses to work near Vesta. The situation there looks fairly grim for the Furosha Clan, but he hopes his skills and experience may be of some help.

◇ STATS AND REPUTATION

Kepler is based on the Surveyor Archetype (see page 62) with the following changes: he has a ZeGee physiology, his KNO is 2, his INF is 1 and he has the Skills Navigation (Space) 1/+2 and Space Pilot 1/+1. He has no Clan Reputation, but his devotion to helping out Nomads has earned him a Personal Reputation of +2.

◇ NOTES AND HOOKS

Kepler can be used for a wide variety of purposes. As a minor Non-Player Character, he can be an information source about some of the lesser-known goings-on in the Belt. He has seen some of the hidden Venusian presence, and may be one of the few people who has begun to piece together a larger picture of recent Lysenko activities.

Kepler can also take on the role of the "old mentor," and give new Characters a start in the Belt. He hires only Nomads and Independents, but is willing to train an inexperienced crew. He owns a ship and has the freedom to take the characters anywhere they might need to go — although they may have to justify the expense from time to time. Kepler's relationship with several other Clans puts him in a position to introduce characters to a whole new group of friends. Conversely, his interest in aiding the Furosha may also introduce them to a whole new group of enemies.

ROBERTS, PIRATE ▼

Roberts is a thin fellow, graced with good looks and dark hair. His smile, when he chooses to use it, is devilishly seductive. It seldom makes an appearance any more; his typical expression is more of sadness and loss. The lines around his youthful blue eyes are recent, giving him the look of a boy forced to grow up too fast.

Roberts moves like a man with a lot on his mind. He appears distracted, and seems clumsy or unobservant, especially in microgravity. If something does manage to get his attention, he becomes instantly focused, but should he lose interest, he returns to his introspective state. Conversations with him are difficult and halting unless dealing with personally important issues.



S.S.S

DESCRIPTION ◇

Roberts is one of the rarest breeds in the Belt: an idealistic Nomad. Born into a black market Clan, he was raised on 250-year-old tales of noble pirates, fair maidens and fabulous treasures. He decided that he wanted to be a part of that world, and was not going to let anything stop him, not even reality. Despite his obsession, Roberts was as practical as any Nomad. He assembled a crew, and together they pooled their money to buy an old freighter and refit it with an ancient kinetic kill cannon.

His initial efforts at piracy were highly successful. The automated freighters he attacked were no match for his woeful vessel. Against the advice of his crew, he went after larger targets. Outgunned by the lightest armaments, Roberts suffered defeat after defeat. It is a tribute to his charisma that his crew did not abandon him. However, they have had enough. They are willing to follow Roberts the Freighter Captain, but they will no longer take orders from Roberts the Pirate. This has hurt him deeply, and created some desperation to keep his dreams alive.

Roberts would like people (especially his crew) to buy into the myth of the dashing young pirate, but the truth is his obsession is scaring Nomads away. He has learned hard lessons about pirating in the Belt, but has failed to learn the most important fact: the golden age of piracy has long since past, if it ever existed at all. Roberts earns a better — and safer — income as a cargo hauler, but his dreams of glory keep drawing him towards danger.

STATS AND REPUTATION ◇

Roberts is based on the Bounty Hunter Archetype (**Jovian Chronicles Rulebook**, page 101) with the following changes: he is a Light Worlder and he has the Skills Space Pilot 1/+2, Survival (Space) 1/+2 and Zero-G Movement 1/+1. He belongs to Clan Moore, a small tribe with a Clan Reputation of 0. However, his recklessness and obsession has earned him a Personal Reputation of -2.

NOTES AND HOOKS ◇

Roberts is not self-destructive, but he will take wild chances if he thinks it suits his role as a pirate. He is an excellent captain, but his skills are useless in the Belt without the reputation to back it up. His only saving grace in that instance is his Nomad heritage. Without it, no self-respecting Nomad would ever give him a second chance.

Roberts is willing to contract himself out as a ship captain, and can contain his swashbuckling urges for short-term contracts. He will be eternally grateful to anyone willing to hire him as captain of a pirate vessel, especially a vessel that is reflective of historical pirate craft: fast and well armed. He is willing to operate as a smuggler, although his reputation makes him a target for law-enforcement spot-checks. He has, on occasion, been hired as a diversion. Roberts is given bogus cargo while the real smuggled goods are sent by other means. He is unaware he has been used in this fashion, and would be quite enraged if he ever found out.

Limey is awkward in gravity, but when weightless he has the dexterity of a gibbon. He can contort his body in disturbing ways, and is capable of working in the most awkwardly cramped spaces. Limey is unusually calm, even for a Nomad, and is capable of remaining motionless for long periods of time. He is very mild-mannered, and very rarely angered. By the same token, he also seems impervious to any sense of urgency when dealing with a life-threatening problem. Nevertheless, he is one of the Morris-Taylor's best freelance technicians.

COUSIN WILLY, INDEPENDENT BROKER ▼

Cousin Willy is a short, well-built man with dark hair. His gaze is direct and intense, and he finds the discomfort it causes in others to be highly amusing. He appears to be in his early thirties, although he is in excellent health and has an unusual amount of energy.

Cousin Willy is a very physical person. He makes a great effort to stay in prime shape, despite his constant exposure to weightlessness. He deliberately uses animated gestures when conversing to keep his customers at a comfortable distance. He has adopted the Nomad's blunt manner of speaking, and prefers to let people believe he is as straightforward and honest as any Nomad. He finds it helps not only his credibility but also his volume of sales.



S.5.7

DESCRIPTION ◇

While Cousin Willy refers to himself as a broker, he is, in fact, one of the few Independent gray market fences. Not much is known about him from the time before he began showing up at zocalos. Willy is fairly tight-lipped, and the Nomads, of course, would never ask. Willy's reputation is made completely on his uncanny ability to find just about any piece of merchandise floating around in the Belt. He has a large network of connections with the Nomads and the other Belt populations. He is not particular about his customers, although he does pay attention to reputation, but he prefers to keep his relationships professional and impersonal.

Despite his marketing savvy, Cousin Willy goes through periods of what can only be described as "bad karma," where even the simplest of his schemes develop unexpected complications. Most of Willy's co-workers have learned to take the bad times along with the good, but a select few have had such harrowing experiences they will never work with Willy again. Willy himself no longer deals in guns, radioactives and recreational pharmaceuticals, thanks to a number of these incidents. Fortunately, Willy's customers are never aware of the convoluted paths their goods may travel before reaching their hands.

Willy works a trade circuit based out of Ceres. On any given day he could be on any one of half a dozen stations in the area, trading and speculating. Occasionally he makes trips farther afield to secure rare or unusual merchandise. A crew of five workers constantly accompanies him. They are hired muscle — both the labor and the protective kind. Willy does not often have to deal with unsatisfied customers, but it never hurts to have a well-trained complaints department.

STATS AND REPUTATION ◇

Cousin Willy is based on the Merchant Archetype (*Jovian Chronicles Rulebook*, page 104) with the following changes: his BLD is 1, his FIT is 1 and he has the following Skills: Human Perception 2/0, Streetwise 3/+1 and Haggle 3/+1. He has no Clan Reputation, but success as a broker has earned him a Personal Reputation of +2.

NOTES AND HOOKS ◇

Cousin Willy can be used to provide equipment or supplies from either the Black or White market, provided the requests are reasonable and his price is paid. Willy will work for either cash or barter, and has no problem canceling deals if he smells a double-cross. Given enough time, he can locate and retrieve practically any item, except for guns, radioactives and non-medicinal drugs.

Willy can be used to provide information, but he treats it like any of his other commodities. It has a market value that must be paid before the goods change hands. Willy is not a gossip-monger. He does not actively dig for information; he simply passes on what he has heard.

When working, Cousin Willy prefers to use his own people, but circumstances occasionally force him to hire outsiders to work as bodyguards or transport cargo. He pays well, but is a difficult person to work for. He has no interest in business partners, and if pushed to hard, will simply pack up and move elsewhere.

► SERGEANT FRASER, SOLAPOL MARSHAL



Sergeant Fraser is a young, healthy and handsome example of a SolaPol Marshal. He is clean-shaven and keeps his jet black hair cropped just slightly longer than regulation length. His uniforms are always immaculately pressed and he is rarely seen wearing anything other than Solapol-issue clothing. He is of average height and, while not physically imposing, he demonstrates an amazing dexterity in both gravity and weightless conditions.

Sergeant Fraser seems to be naïve about many things, and despite being a fast learner, he becomes stiffly formal and overly polite when placed in new surroundings. As an officer he is a great believer in doing things "by the book." Although he may take this belief to extremes on occasion, he had one of the best arrest records in his division before being transferred.

◇ DESCRIPTION

Sergeant Fraser is the most overworked individual in the Belt. He is Solapol's lone official representative for the entire region, permitted as little more than a courtesy by the Belt's USN representatives. Until the Belt is fully recognized by the USN, Solapol has no jurisdiction in the area. Technically the job calls for a liaison officer, but Solapol seized the chance to work openly and assigned a Marshal instead.

Fraser was transferred to the Regional Belt Office nearly four years ago, when his tenacious investigation of two USN officials began to embarrass his superiors. Fraser has been so buried in cases he has had little time to continue his inquiry.

Fraser is very rarely in the office. He makes extensive use of his Quickship, the Yukon, to follow up on cases or provide assistance in dealing with incidents of piracy or black marketeering. The ship's technician, Diefenbaker, has made several unauthorized modifications, including upgrading the sensors (treat as +2/2 km). Fraser is not comfortable with the changes, but has found them too useful to discard.

The sheer volume of work is slowly beginning to get to Fraser. There is simply too much for one person to handle, no matter how valiant the effort, and there is no additional help coming from headquarters. In an uncharacteristic move, Fraser has used creative accounting to free up money to hire an "assistant," Catherine Denise. Catherine has only one job: keep the day-to-day administration under control. Fraser fully understands the implications of employing a civilian, but without help his efforts will eventually grind to a halt, mired in paperwork.

◇ STATS AND REPUTATION

Fraser is based on the Solapol Marshal Archetype (see **SolaPol Sourcebook**, page 55) with the following changes: his APP is 0, his BLD is 0 and he has the Skills Investigation 2/+1, Leadership 2/+1, Space Pilot 1/0, Survival (Space) 1/0 and Zero-G Movement 1/+1. His respect of Nomad society and freedom has earned him a Personal Reputation of +1, despite his law-enforcement role.

◇ NOTES AND HOOKS

Sergeant Fraser has the ability to pop up almost anywhere in the Belt, including remote Nomad homesteads. He is known and respected among the local Nomad Clans, although they are still reluctant to offer him any real assistance. He does not have the power to deputize people, but he still needs help from time to time. This can range from simple investigative legwork to backup when making arrests. Fraser can provide information or assistance, but will never take part in an illegal act (or knowingly allow an illegal act to take place). Fraser does not have the necessary performance skills to perform undercover work.

As an antagonist, Fraser can be tenacious and single-minded in his pursuit of criminals. While not psychotic, Fraser never forgets those individuals who have made it into his "bad" books, and will never pass up an opportunity to bring them to justice. Fraser can also be used as a "last resort" by Solapol deep-cover operatives. It may mean blowing their cover, but Fraser will try to be as much of a cavalry as possible in terms of extracting endangered agents.

► THE NAMELESS MASSES

Players are an unpredictable lot, and even the most prepared Gamemaster can find himself suddenly in need of an NPC to handle an unexpected situation. This listing is intended to provide the Gamemaster with anything from a minor supporting character to thugs in an unexpected brawl. There is a much more versatile list of sample NPCs on pages 12 to 15 of the **Jovian Chronicles Gamemastering Guide**. Full Archetypes are listed in the **Jovian Chronicles Rulebook**, pages 101 to 109.

Nomad versions have the Skills Survival (Space) 1 and Zero-G Movement 1 in addition to the skills listed. They also all carry slip suits, communications headsets and small grapple guns.

If a Reputation is listed, it is Personal Reputation only. If the Clan of a generic Nomad has not been created, the Gamemaster should assign a Clan Reputation of between -2 to +2 for minor Clans, -3 and lower or +3 and higher for Major Clans.

▣ BELT CHARACTERS

Type	Non-Zero Stats	Main Skills	Usual Equipment/Features
Brawler, Nomad	AGI 1, FIT 1	Combat Sense 1	Tank of beer
		Hand-to-Hand 2	Horrible breath
		Melee 1	
Elder, Minor Clan	KND 2, PER 1, WIL 1	Bureaucracy 1	Datapad
		Human Perception 1	
		Law 1	
		Leadership 2	
Gray Market Contact	INF 1, KND 1, PER 1, Notice 1	Datapad	
		Human Perception 1	
		Streetwise 2	
Pirate, Nomad	AGI 1, PER 1	Hand to Hand 1	Duraplast Mail
		Notice 1	Big Knife
		Small Arms 1	Sidearm
Pirate Captain, Nomad	KND 1, PER 1, INF 1	Leadership 2	Duraplast Mail
		Streetwise 1	Bigger Knife
		Tactics 1	Sidearm
		Plus Nomad pirate Skills	
Quartermaster, Clan	INF 2, PER 1, WIL 1	Haggle 2	Datapad w/ inventories
		Human Perception 1	
		Intimidate 1	
Station Security	AGI 1, BUI 1, FIT 1	Notice 1	
		Dodge 1	Duraplast Mail
		Intimidate 1	Commo Headset
		Melee 2	Electrified Night Stick
Zocalo Broker	INF 1, KND 1	Small Arms 1	Sidearm
		Haggling 2	Datapad w/ zocalo info
		Human Perception 1	
	Reputation +1	Streetwise 1	

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▼ SELECT CLAN REPUTATION

Minor Clan Reputation ranges from -2 to +2, although any rating is possible. Major Clan Reputation ranges from -5 to -3 and +3 to +5.

If the new Clan is the result of two or more parent Clans combining, the new Clan Reputation is equal to the average of the parent Clans' Reputations, rounded down to the nearest whole number.

If a new Clan is splitting off from an existing Clan, the new Clan Reputation is equal to the average of the parent Clan Reputation minus 1 and divided by 2, rounded down to the nearest whole number.

See page 87 for an explanation of how Reputation works.

▼ PURCHASE CLAN PERKS AND FLAWS

Perks are purchased from a pool of points equal to 5 for Minor Clans, 10 for Major Clans; multiply the pool by 1.5 (rounded up) if the Clan has a Huge-level population. Perk costs are subtracted from this pool while Flaw costs are added. Any unused points are lost. A new Clan must possess at least one Perk and one Flaw possessed by its parent Clans, if possible.

Perks marked (R) have an associated rating. Perks marked (C) may also be possessed by Clan members as character Perks. All Perks may be acquired during play. Flaws marked (R) have an associated rating. Flaws marked (C) may also be possessed by Clan members as Character Flaws. Flaws marked (A) may be acquired during play.

● PERK: AGREEMENT

COST: 1, 5 OR 10

The Clan has a business arrangement with a Clan or non-Nomad organization, and has special access to their information, resources and equipment. This arrangement can be made with any corporate or national presence in the Belt. This is not an alliance, and neither side is obligated to help the other. Agreements with Clans and the Mercurian Merchant Guild cost 1 point. Agreements with Venus or CEGA cost 10. All others cost 5.

● PERK: ALLY

COST: 3/MINOR CLAN, 7/MAJOR CLAN

The Clan has a partnership with another Clan. Clan Reputation is ignored in dealings between these two Clans. This alliance works both ways; either Clan is expected to help the other in times of trouble.

● PERK: CLAIM (R)

COST: 1-5, +1 POINT IF REGISTERED AT CERES

The Clan owns an unexploited claim. The cost of the Perk reflects the value of the claim. One-point claims yield basic survival material, while 5-point claims give the Clan the Wealth Perk once properly exploited. The downside of this Perk is a time limit. The Clan must begin working the claim within 2 months or rights to the claim are lost. This Perk can be purchased multiple times to represent multiple claims. Claims are made on asteroids of less than 1 km in diameter. Larger asteroids are considered major Clan assets.

● PERK: EASY RECOGNITION

COST: 3

For some reason, just about every Nomad knows the Clan and its reputation. Recognition Thresholds are Easy (3) when dealing with this Clan or its handiwork.

● PERK: FAVOR (R)

COST: 1-5

Another Clan owes the Clan a debt. Both parties are aware of the favor. The Perk cost varies depending on the seriousness of the favor. Life debts are 5 points, while owing money or resources are only 1 or 2 points. This Perk can be purchased multiple times, indicating multiple favors.

● PERK: WEALTH (C)

COST: 5

The Clan is in a period of prosperity, having secured several lucrative resources. Nomads of this Clan can purchase the Wealth character Perk up to Level 3. This is not a personal wealth. Rather, it reflects the quality of Clan equipment the character currently possesses. This Perk is not compatible with the Poverty Flaw.

● FLAW: BANISHED (C) (A)

COST: -5

The Clan is outcast from Nomad society. Clan members are no longer considered Nomads and are permanently barred from Nomad stations and zocalos. No Nomad will ever willingly conduct business with this Clan. Individuals belonging to this Clan automatically have Banished as a character Flaw at no cost. Clan Reputation is considered -5 for the purposes of recognition.

● **FLAW: CODE OF HONOR (C)**

COST: -1 TO -3

The Clan is confined to a certain mode of behavior. The nature of this code must be defined when the Flaw is taken. The cost reflects how strict and seriously the code is taken by the Clan. Clan members are not required to take Code of Honor as a character Flaw, but they may be forced to abide by the code when in the presence of other Clan members.

● **FLAW: DEBT (R) (A)**

COST: -1 TO -5

This is the flip side of the Favor Perk. The Clan owes another Clan some sort of obligation, ranging from returning borrowed material to repaying a life debt. Debts and Favors are not mutually exclusive. A Clan can be owed favors and still be indebted to another Clan.

● **FLAW: FEUD (R) (C) (A)**

COST: -1 PER RATING, MAXIMUM OF -5

The Clan is engaged in a dispute with another Clan. A rating of -1 indicates a minor disagreement, while a rating of -5 indicates all-out war. The rating is subtracted from all social and Reputation Tests (except recognition) between the feuding Clans. Both Clans must have this Flaw at the same rating. Members of both Clans automatically have Feud as a character Flaw for free.

● **FLAW: POVERTY (C) (A)**

COST: -5

The Clan has fallen on hard times, and is barely capable of meeting its needs. Nomads of this Clan can purchase Poor as a character Flaw to reflect the slim pickings in the Clan equipment pool. This Flaw is not compatible with the Wealth Perk. Major Clans may not take this Flaw.

● **FLAW: SECRET (R) (C) (A)**

COST: -1 PER RATING, MAXIMUM OF -5

The Clan has a terrible secret that, if revealed, will damage the Clan Reputation. Only characters that know the secret can take Secret as a character Flaw. The rating of this Flaw represents the reduction in Clan and Personal Reputation should this secret get out. If Clan Reputation is reduced below -5, the Clan automatically acquires the Banished Flaw.

PURCHASE CLAN ASSETS ▼

Clan assets are divided into three major categories: vessels, homesteads and stockpiles. The funds available for purchases depend on Clan population, type and prosperity.

Base Clan Funds (in millions of credits) = $0.2 \times \text{Clan population} \times \text{Modifiers (below)}$

ASSETS MODIFIERS □

Major Clan:	x 5
Poverty Flaw:	x 0.5
Wealth Perk:	x 2

Personal equipment for Clan members is considered to be part of the Clan's stockpiles (see below).

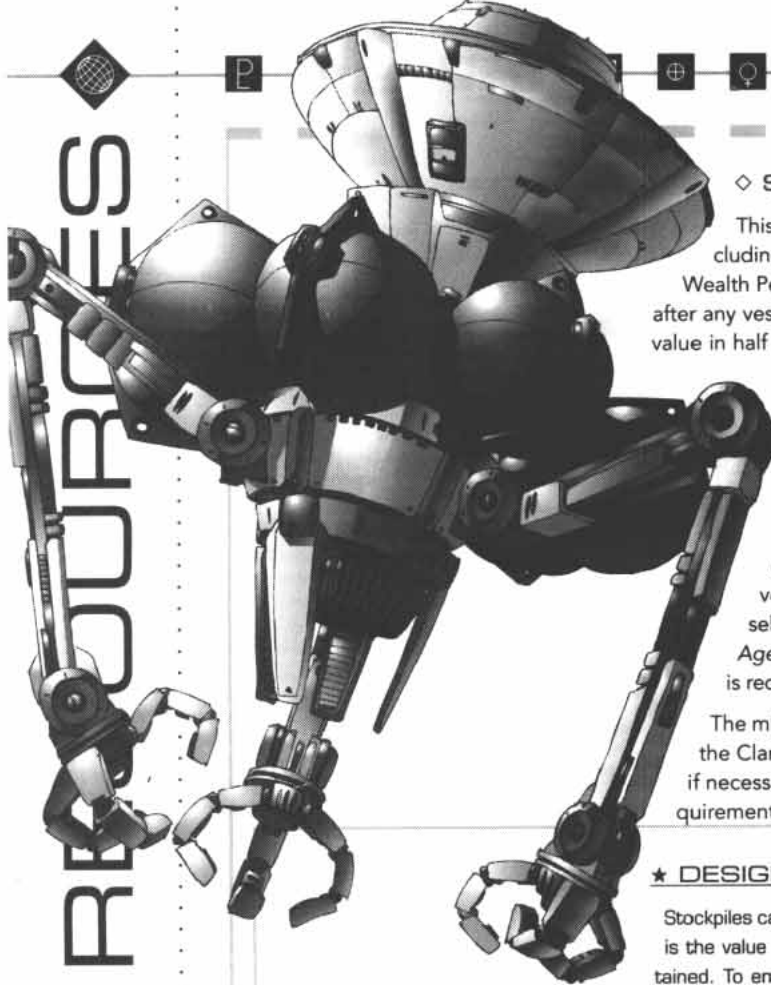
HOMESTEADS ◇

A Clan is not required to purchase a homestead. However, it should be determined whether or not a Clan needs a homestead to operate normally. Station types are described in Chapter 4. The station costs given are for use only when creating Clans, and do not represent the actual price of each station. All homesteads are assumed to be temporary structures designed to house only the owning Clan. Permanent and zocalo stations are larger and modify the station cost.

Station Cost (in millions of credits) = (Basic Station Cost + Population Cost) x Any Function Modifiers

STATION COST □

Basic Station Cost by Type:	Web Station	1
	Anchorage	7.5
	Robinson Station	10
Population Cost:	Clan Population x 0.05	
Function Modifiers:	Hosts a zocalo	x 1.5
	Permanent station	x 2



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◇ STOCKPILES

This represents the average worth of the Clan's remaining assets, including equipment, supplies and trade items. Unless the Clan has the Wealth Perk, the value of the stockpile is equal to half the remaining credits after any vessels and homesteads are purchased. The Poverty Flaw divides the value in half again. Individual items of a personal nature, such as vacuum suits and tool kits, are purchased with these funds. Once Clan creation is finished, the stockpile cannot be converted directly into cash, but it can be used as a monetary equivalent when bartering.

◇ VESSELS

Any type of civilian vessel ever produced in the last hundred years can be purchased. Civilian exo-suits can also be purchased. Military vehicles, exo-suits and exo-armors in general are not available. Vessels are old and have the Problem Prone Flaw (see *Technical Note: Age*, page 94). However, for every rating in that Flaw, the purchase price is reduced by 10%.

The minimum number of operational vessels owned by a Clan varies, but the Clan must be capable of transporting their entire population at once, if necessary. Major Clans and Impoverished Clans are exempt from this requirement.

★ DESIGNER'S HINT: STOCKPILE VALUE

Stockpiles can be rated in the millions of credits, but it should be kept in mind that this is the value of all the remaining Clan assets, no matter how cheaply they were obtained. To emphasize the point, it costs 250,000 credits to provide slip suits for a 250-member Clan. It costs an additional 625,000 credits to provide full vacuum suits for everybody, and that assumes the suits were traded at half-price. That totals to 875,000 credits for personal environmental protection alone!

★ DESIGNER'S HINT: MAJOR CLAN ASSETS

Each major Clan possesses unique items that are the source of the Clan's status. Possible assets include ownership of major asteroids, possession of exo-armors, unique allies and so on. There are no guidelines on what a major Clan may possess — anything within reason is possible, although major military assets are not permitted. The Gamemaster must be careful not to upset game balance. Major Clans are powerful by Nomad standards, but no match for any Solar nation.

▼ FINISHING TOUCHES

The Clan should be named and placed at a specific point in the Belt. A Clan symbol may also be created. There are no restrictions on symbol design, apart from the fact that it should be relevant to the Clan. The Clan is now ready for play.

REPUTATION GUIDELINES ◀

Trust is such an ingrained social aspect that most Nomads react instinctively to a reputation first before using reason. Reputations are given numeric ratings that represent the level of trust Nomad society places in a specific Clan or individual. These also modify social Tests. Reputation ratings are never used to modify rolls against non-Nomads. While there are those non-Nomads who care strongly about reputation, it is a personal interest, and reactions will not be as strong.



5.7

CLAN REPUTATION ▼

Average Clan Reputation ranges from -1 to +1. It can go as far as -5 or +5 through the efforts of outstanding nobility or malevolence. Clan Reputation affects all members of that Clan, regardless of how good or bad each individual may be. Independents do not have Clan Reputation, only Personal Reputation.

Surrogate Clans: Non-Nomad organizations in frequent contact with the Nomads often develop a Clan Reputation. This rating is applied to everyone in the organization. Unless it knows about Nomad culture, the organization will be unaware of its reputation's importance. Organizations with surrogate Clan Reputation ratings include the Merchant's Guild (+3), Solar Cross (+1) and VenusBank (-2).

5.7.1

PERSONAL REPUTATION ▼

Personal Reputation can be either a Character Perk or a Flaw. Initial ratings range from -3 to +3. They can be modified as far as -5 or +5 through roleplaying. Personal Reputation is used in exactly the same way as Clan Reputation. Some Nomads have both Clan and Personal Reputation. For these people, both Reputations may be used as modifiers.

5.7.2

RECOGNITION ▼

Reputations are known between Clans and individuals in regular contact. Beyond this circle, they might not be recognized, and therefore not treated appropriately.

Recognizing someone by reputation requires success on a Knowledge (KNO) Test against a Threshold of Difficult (6). This Test is modified by Reputation (or, more properly, how widespread it is): take the absolute rating and add the number of the Reputation to the result of the Test. For example, someone trying to recognize a Clan that has a Reputation of -3 adds 3 to his roll.

If someone has both Clan and Personal Reputation, one recognition Test is made for each Reputation. If only the Clan Test succeeds, only the Clan Reputation is used. If only the Personal Test succeeds, both Reputations still come into play.

Recognized Reputations are used at their full values. Nomads who are not recognized are treated as if their Clan Reputation is -1. Full Reputation is applied only once their Clan history is verified from a reliable source. Unrecognized individuals possessing only Personal Reputation are treated as outsiders or Strangers.

5.7.3

REACTION ▼

Reputation affects all Tests involving Etiquette, Hagglng, Leadership, Streetwise, Theatrics and Influence (INF). A Nomad must be the target of the Test.

The greater the Margin of Success (MoS), the more likely the Nomad will be influenced in the desired manner. An MoS of 5 or 6 will not change a Reputation, but it will leave a lasting positive impression. The greater the Margin of Failure (MoF), the more likely the Nomad will behave negatively. Initially the Nomad will ignore or avoid the character, but pushing the issue may anger the Nomad.

Reputation does not affect interpersonal Skills like Seduction. Even Nomads are affected by things other than social standing.

5.7.4

5-7.5

▼ CHANGING A REPUTATION

Clan Reputation is not a Perk or Flaw. Spending Experience Points cannot modify it. Attempts to change a Clan Reputation must be roleplayed, and they should be long and excruciating affairs. It may take months or years before the word gets around.

A Player may change his character's Personal Reputation like any normal Perk or Flaw, through roleplaying and the expenditure of Experience Points.

It usually takes longer to improve a Reputation than it does to ruin it. Reputation changes are made based on all of a Player's or a Clan's actions, not just the effort being made to change. This means that, for example, one particularly hideous deed could do a great deal of damage to a Reputation, despite all the efforts being made to improve it.

5-7.6

▼ REPUTATION EXAMPLE

Scott of Clan Thoms is trying to pick up some replacement computer parts. He approaches Cousin Willy. Neither has seen the other before. Both have a KNO of +2. Scott has no Personal Reputation, but his Clan Reputation is -2. Willy has no Clan Reputation; his Personal Reputation is +2.

Scott rolls his KNO, getting a 1 and a 2. The roll is modified by 2 (Willy's Reputation), but neither the final results of 3 nor 4 pass the Threshold of Difficult (6). Scott does not know Willy, so Willy's effective Reputation is -1.

Willy rolls his KNO, getting a 2 and a 4. The roll is modified by 2 (Scott's Clan Reputation, taking the absolute value and ignoring the minus), giving a final result of 4 and 6. As Willy's roll beats the Threshold, Willy knows Scott's Clan. Scott's Clan Reputation is used at its full value of -2.

If Scott likes Willy's parts and chooses to barter, all of Scott's Haggling rolls suffer from a -2 because of Scott's Clan Reputation in addition to all other modifiers.

5-8

► SURVEYING/PROSPECTING GUIDELINES

This is a basic overview of the mechanics of prospecting and conducting surveys. It assumes that characters are conducting operations "by the book," and not relying on advanced or unique abilities or technology. Not every situation is covered, but then again, crews should be adept at improvising.

5-8.1

▼ THE PRELIMINARY SURVEY

Preliminary surveys establish basic information about the target asteroid, such as rotational data, orbital data and density. The surface is mapped and the asteroid is tentatively classified. Detailed scans are needed for proper classification, and are not normally done at this stage.

Surveying vessels use a standard pattern of four mapping passes — two equatorial and two polar. For the duration of the pass, the target asteroid must remain inside active sensor range. The time required to complete each pass is based on the size of the asteroid plus several modifiers. Several ships or survey drones can do simultaneous passes to save time and amalgamate the data later.

▢ SURVEY TIME TABLE

ASTEROID DIAMETER/AVERAGE OF ALL DIMENSIONS	TIME FOR ONE PASS IN COMBAT ROUNDS
Under 70 km	1
70-100 km	2
101-120 km	3
121-140 km	4
141-155 km	5
156-170 km	6
171-185 km	7
186-200 km	8

SURVEY MODIFIERS TABLE

MODIFIERS	AMOUNT
Mapping with Passive Scans Only (just photographing the surface)	x 0.5
Obscurement	x Obscurement Value
Results of Moderate (Threshold 4) Electronic Warfare Test	+ MoS (if MoS = 0, ignore this modifier) or x MoF

The time required for one pass must be a minimum of one combat round. The Laboratory (Survey Sensors) and the Ship Sensors ratings are used with the Electronic Warfare Test.

DETAILED SCANS ▼

Mass detectors are used to map subsurface features and determine potential locations of mineral deposits. The time and methodology is exactly the same as for the preliminary survey, except the final time requirement is multiplied by 5 after in addition to other modifiers. Detailed scans can be done as part of the preliminary survey pass. Total both times to determine the length of the pass. Survey sensors penetrate 500 meters of water-equivalent density per Laboratory (Survey Sensor) rating. If the penetration range is long enough to scan completely through an asteroid, one pass will complete both preliminary and detailed scans simultaneously.

Detailed scans can only be done with Laboratory (Survey Sensors). Standard civilian and military magnetometers and magnetic anomaly detectors are not designed to generate precise subsurface maps.

INTERPRETING SURVEY DATA ▼

The above procedures only acquire raw information. Any interpretation of the data, including identification of mineral types and locations, requires a Challenging (Threshold 5) Earth Sciences Test.

The Quality of Information (Optional): For each preliminary survey or detailed scan pass, an additional Moderate (Threshold 4) Electronic Warfare Test is made. The Margin of Success (MoS) or Margin of Failure (MoF) becomes a positive or a negative modifier, respectively, to any Test made to interpret survey data. If a pass is redone, the quality of information is rerolled. The highest result of all the passes is used.

TAKING SAMPLES ▼

Prospecting and some survey contracts require the collection of mineral samples. Drones or crew in vacuum suits can easily retrieve surface samples. Skill Tests are not needed unless a specific mineral is sought. A Moderate (Threshold 4) Earth Sciences Test is required to visually identify a mineral type. A portable analyzer reduces the Threshold to Easy (3).

Subsurface core sampling requires drilling rigs or bore drones. Vessels equipped with either light or heavy mining gear have the capability of taking core samples directly. Other vessels must use portable sample collectors set up directly on the asteroid surface. A detailed scan of the area must be done first in order to retrieve specific minerals from a specific depth.

Core samples require an Easy Earth Sciences Test to retrieve. A failure means the sample was not collected, and a botch indicates the sampling machinery was damaged in some way.

STAKING A CLAIM ▼

Once valuable mineral deposits are found, they must be marked with a claim marker. Each marker contains all the information necessary to prove ownership, and broadcasts that information locally. No other method of marking claims is recognized. Claims may also be registered in the Registry on Ceres.

Claim markers are almost tamper-proof (Very Difficult Electronics Test), but they are easy to destroy. Prospectors usually conceal one or two other markers in the area. These hidden markers automatically begin broadcasting after a preprogrammed time delay of up to two months. A Camouflage Test is required to hide a marker. The Threshold depends on local terrain: Easy if the marker can be buried in rubble, Challenging if exposed but in rough terrain, or Very Difficult if exposed on smooth rock.

5.6.2

5.6.3

5.6.4

5.6.5

end of section 5.8 surveying/prospecting guidelines



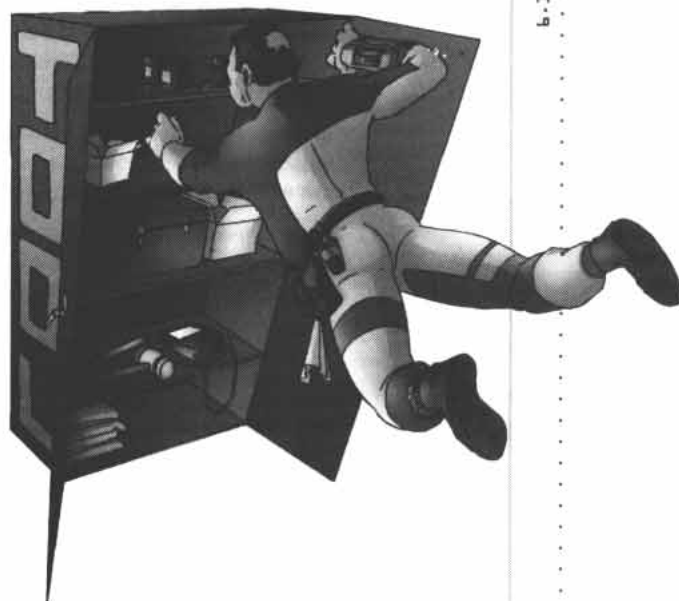
"If the machine needed all these extra parts, they wouldn't have been left over after I fixed it."

— Simon de Boer, Technician, Morris-Taylor Clan

THE RIGHT TOOLS ◀

Nomad technicians constantly complain about how ill-equipped they are to do the job of keeping their Clans alive and functional. Technicians are compulsive tool collectors. Each implement they acquire, no matter how obscure the function, is vital to some aspect of their job. No tool is so expensive the Clan cannot afford to have it, they say.

Regardless of their feelings, Nomad techs are already equipped with their most important tool: their minds. Their technology is based around adaptation and improvisation, and technicians are trained from childhood to break down a machine, deduce its functions and even backwards engineer it to the point where they could build it from scratch, if necessary. In many cases, they do most of these tasks mentally, with only the help of basic diagnostic instruments. This aptitude not only gives them an edge over the more traditionally trained, it provides them with the discipline to work efficiently and effectively under almost any condition. In an emergency, a tech must react as quickly as possible, and may not have the luxury of dismantling the problem device before a solution is needed. There is a popular saying: "Stop the problem now. Solve the problem later."



b.1

STOPPING IT NOW ▼

Nomads are masters of the short-term solution. Any technical problem is dealt with promptly before it can threaten the safety of the Clan. Immediate solutions are jury-rigged, and are really intended only to buy technicians time to either figure out a permanent solution or get everyone out of the danger zone.

Each Clan has a highly unique style of jury-rigging, developed almost like a martial art. Clan technicians are trained to the point where they operate instinctively, focusing their minds completely on the problem at hand. Unfortunately, their jury-rigging is also highly unique and difficult to comprehend. Technicians loath dealing with jury-rigs made by another Clan, as they must first decipher exactly what the other Clan has done. This may add unacceptable amounts of time to resolving crisis situations. Technicians try to familiarize themselves with the techniques of other Clans with which they deal regularly. Unfortunately, this can only take place at zocalos, where technicians from a variety of Clans can sit down and share insights and methods.

b.1.1

SOLVING IT LATER ▼

When the crisis is over, technicians will examine the problem in minute detail and develop a permanent solution. Jury-rigs are never considered permanent solutions. They are replaced as soon as possible in order to prevent the jury-rig itself from becoming a problem. Nomad design engineering styles also vary from Clan to Clan, but they stem from common practices and are much easier to decipher than hastily slapped-together jury rigs. Clan technicians properly document permanent solutions to provide a solid reference base should something with that device malfunction again.

Despite the wide number of engineering methods and styles, Nomads demonstrate a certain technical genius, as new or modern technology is scarce in the Belt. Nomads must make do with whatever they have, and are constantly adapting older equipment to new performance levels or functions. A surprising amount of obsolete or archaic systems have been reworked so effectively they operate almost as well as their modern counterparts. Nomad-owned exo-armors are a good example of this.

Clan workshops are homes to some of the most radical design engineering in the Solar System. Technicians have created everything from vacuum suits to home made spacecraft from spare parts in the stockpiles. Vessels and equipment have been altered to functions in ways never conceived by the original designers.

Nomad technicians do not actively pursue purely scientific innovation. The demands of their Clans keep them too busy for theoretical postulating. However, the efforts of their engineers produce scientific breakthroughs on a regular basis. Unfortunately, the insular nature of the Clans keeps these discoveries from spreading to any great degree.

b.1.2

end of section 6.1 the right tools



► PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

Nomads have access to equipment from practically every manufacturer in the Solar System, including military contractors. Even restricted-access items fall into Nomad hands through salvage or the black market. Equipment condition and availability varies greatly, as does the degree of previous Nomad tinkering. Unless an item is in particularly poor condition, it will function exactly as described.

Players should remember that Nomad Characters do not own their equipment. Everything they have is the property of their respective Clans, including anything they purchase during the course of an adventure. Only small trinkets of a personal nature actually belong to a Nomad.

The equipment below specifically relates to surveying and mining. For other items, Players should consult the Jovian Chronicles rulebook or any relevant sourcebook. The prices below are given for reference. Nomads use a barter system, and their barter "price" varies depending on the demand for and supply of a particular item.

◇ CLAIM MARKERS

Claim markers are small radio beacons used to indicate ownership of a particular asteroid or piece of real estate. Once activated, the marker continuously broadcasts the owner's name and identification code, information on the claim being made (such as the size of the claim and the time it was claimed), and a unique identification code assigned to each marker. The strength of the broadcast can be reduced to protect particularly valuable claims. Markers can also be set to delay broadcasting for up to two months.

Markers are small and easily carried. Most are powered by small nuclear decay batteries with life spans of around five years. A marker is not moved from a claim once that claim is registered — the marker's unique code is used to identify the claim. Nomad Clans make their own claim markers and broadcast Clan identification rather than unique marker codes. Destroying or deactivating an active marker is tantamount to claim jumping.

◇ DENSITOMETRIC IMAGER

This is a semi-portable mass detector, used to determine the properties of an object without core sampling. It is the size of a small automobile and comes mounted on a thruster sled. The imager directs a focused scan in a narrow arc and can penetrate up to five hundred meters of water-equivalent density. Because the arc of scan is fixed, the sled must be physically maneuvered in order to build a profile of an area.

◇ SURFACE MAPPER

Surface mappers are basketball-sized instrument packages mounted on a tripod base. Their space sensor range averages one kilometer, but can be blocked by terrain features. Mappers are used to generate three-dimensional terrain maps. Most mappers employ some form of reflected-signal imaging such as light or radar. To create an accurate map of an area, a mapper must take images from several locations. The raw data is composited into a final map that can be downloaded for use.

◇ PORTABLE ANALYZER

This is a spectral analyzer. Samples are inserted into a small vacuum chamber where they are vaporized by a laser. The analyzer then measures the properties of the resulting gas to determine the type and percentage of its chemical components. It can measure the presence of basic elements only — those found on a periodic table, such as helium, lead or argon. It cannot detect compound materials, such as steel, plastic or organic matter, although some materials do have specific elemental profiles.

An average-quality analyzer has an accuracy of $\pm 5\%$. Better quality machines reduce the margin of error, but cost more. Most users offset the accuracy by analyzing multiple samples of the same item and comparing the results. The analyzer is the size of a lunch box. Samples are inserted at one end, and the analysis results are displayed on a small screen on the side of the machine. Sample sizes are usually 1 cm^3 or smaller.

BORE DRONE ◇

Drones resemble small missiles. They dig by using a combination of thrusters, treads and forward-mounted drilling bits. These machines are mainly employed to take core samples, either by burrowing down to a specific depth and collecting minerals or by constantly feeding samples into a collection pipe as they dig. Drones can also follow veins of minerals, extracting material from difficult-to-access locations. A typical drone can penetrate 1 m of loose rock per minute.

PLASMA FURNACE ◇

Essentially a portable smelter, a plasma furnace is used to melt rock and extract pure metals. The metals are deposited into collection molds and allowed to cool. Once they have solidified, the metals are removed and the molds refilled. Furnaces can be used as collection sites for bore drone mining. They can also be vehicle-mounted and used directly in drilling operations. Most furnaces can be run indefinitely from portable reactors or vehicle power plants.

ORPHEUS MINING SUIT ◇

To fit into the cramped confines of some excavation sites, the Hercules Work Suit has been redesigned to incorporate as many components into the body of the suit itself, reducing any extra backpack and helmet volume. The suit also incorporates a cooling system, allowing it to work near plasma and solar smelters for extended periods (treat as a fire survival suit — see **Jovian Chronicles Rulebook**, page 86).

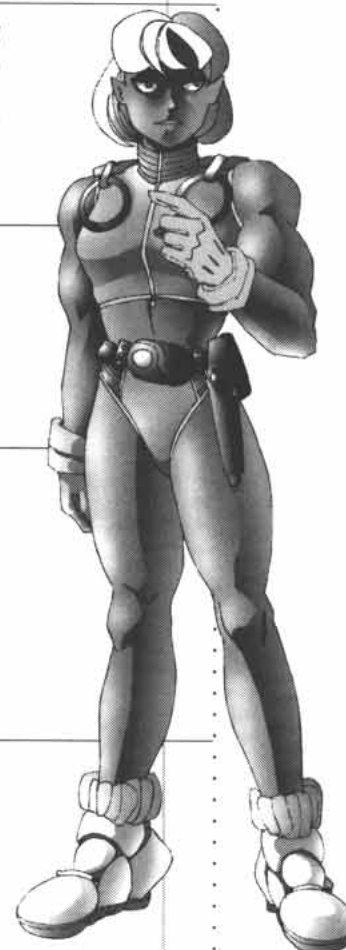
A mining suit is approximately 75% of the volume of a Work Suit, but is much heavier. The reinforced shell sections are equivalent to durashell armor, and carry 1000 rads/hour of radiation shielding. Mining suits have a built-in short-term pack (**Jovian Chronicles Rulebook**, page 88) with an 8-hour oxygen supply.

SLIP SUIT ◇

This is a lightweight emergency vacuum suit, weighing little more than a set of heavy clothes. The suit is called a “slip suit” not only because of the ease of wear, but also because most normal vacuum suits can be slipped on over top of it. The slip suit responds to rapid pressure changes, going rigid to prevent decompression damage. A hood pulls over the head and secures to function as a helmet. If gloves are not worn, hands pull into the sleeves and the cuffs close to form airtight mittens. A short oxygen supply (10-20 minutes) is stored on a Belt unit or contained within the suit, depending on the design.

Slip suits are puncture and tear resistant, but they do not provide armor or radiation protection. They are intended only to give the wearer vital time to move to a place of safety, such as an airlock, a vehicle, or the inside of a proper space suit. If worn, a slip suit can be pressure-sealed in 1 combat round (6 seconds) with a successful Survival: Space Skill Test. If the Test fails, add 1 round. If the test is botched, add 3 rounds. If the slip suit is not worn, a person can put it on in a number of rounds equal to 8 minus his Agility (AGI).

Nomads consider slip suits to be vital to personal safety and wear them almost constantly when not in the inner chambers of the larger settlements. They regard slip suits as a second skin and rarely remove them for any length of time. All Nomad slip suits are individually tailored and decorated. Some Nomads suits have been adorned so elaborately they are veritable works of art.

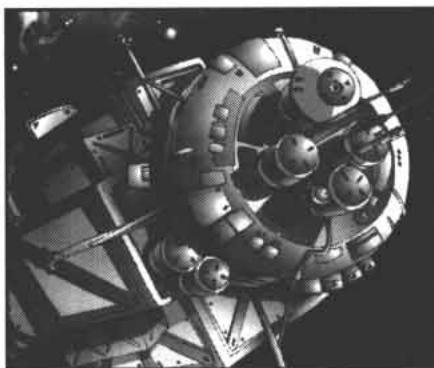


NOMAD EQUIPMENT TABLE □

EQUIPMENT	WEIGHT (kg)	COST (Cr)
Claim Markers	15-30	500-2000
Densitometric Imager	200	50,000
Surface Mapper	2-3	200-500
Portable Analyzer	2	200
Bore Drone	10	1000
Plasma Furnace	200	25,000
Orpheus Mining Suit	20	9500
Slip Suit	1	750-1000

end of section 6.2 personal equipment

► AN OVERVIEW OF NOMAD SHIPS



Clan fleets are floating history lessons. Examples of practically every model of civilian or surplus military vessel built in the last eighty years can be found in service somewhere in the Belt.

Vessels of different Clans have very little in common with each other save that they have been heavily modified from their original configurations. Every vessel is unique, a jury-rigged wonder with its own "personality" of advantages and flaws. The older the craft, the more radically it has been modified. Some vessels are completely new creations, manufactured from the gutted remains of other ships. Regardless of the nature of the changes, there is usually much more to a Nomad ship than meets the eye.

▼ NECESSITY AND INVENTION

Nomads do not have the luxury of regularly replacing old vessels with the latest models. Ships are constantly modified and jury-rigged until age and decrepitude permanently retires them. Once taken out of service, they are dismantled. Working systems are kept as spare parts and everything else is recycled. Every Clan is capable of radically refitting a ship. Major components like engines can be entirely replaced — including altering the vessel's structure. The only limits are the resources of the Clan making modifications.

◇ FLAW: NOMAD-MODIFIED

This new Flaw functions exactly like the *Difficult to Modify* Flaw, but with the following exceptions. This Flaw is applied to any subassembly repaired or replaced by Nomads. It is not available during ship construction, except when building homemade ships (see below). The Clan responsible for making the repair or replacement is recorded. A -1 modifier is applied to all repair and modification attempts unless technicians of this Clan are performing the work. If the responsible Clan is not known, there is a chance it may be recognized through its craftsmanship. Treat the Flaw as if it had a Reputation equal to that of the responsible Clan (see *Recognition*, page 87). The only way to eliminate this Flaw is to have non-Nomad technicians replace all affected systems. Cost: -1 per subassembly, -5 for the entire vehicle

◇ TECHNICAL NOTE: AGE

The ships and vehicles the Nomads use are old. The Nomads' engineering expertise is ineffective when it comes to repairing the wear and tear of decades of use. To reflect the debilitating effects of age, old vehicles in Nomad possession have the Problem-Prone Flaw rated at a minimum of 1. This rating goes up by 1 every year. Any Defects rolled from these extra lemon dice cannot be repaired as they are inherent to the craft. Affected systems can be replaced, although in the case of structural flaws it could be an expensive and time-consuming process.

▼ NOMAD SHIP SYSTEMS

Nomads are well aware of the dangers of prolonged exposure to microgravity. Unfortunately, most of the commercial vessels available lack rotating habitat structures. Gravity is experienced only when the ship is under thrust. Nomads use ship-mounted tether rigs to connect vessels together and spin them as a basic web-type station. Without a central docking hub, personnel cannot transfer from ship to ship unless they climb the tethers. However, two or more ships on extended journeys can provide a simulated gravity environment for their crews.

◇ CREW PROTECTION

Nomads work in areas where debris is a problem. Fast moving rubble can punch through a ship's hull as easily as any mass driver bullet. To counter the threat, Nomad vessels are moderately armored (the vehicle armor rating equals two to two and a half times its size) and the crew compartments are heavily reinforced. Backup communications and life support equipment are present in each section of the ship. Escape pods, if available, are also incorporated into the design.

FUEL ◇

Rocket fuel is an expensive commodity to import to the Belt. Nomads prefer to use hydrogen or water as propellant and fuel for their reactors. Although water is fairly valuable in and of itself, it can be obtained relatively easily when compared to specifically formulated rocket fuel.

ARMAMENT ◇

Nomads arm their ships as a defensive precaution. Vessels are not gun-heavy; few carry more than two or three weapons. Nomad gunners typically have no combat experience, although some Clans occasionally run targeting simulations. All Nomad ship armaments have the Concealed Characteristic. Nomads take great care to hide any weapons their vessels might carry. They prefer to avoid the sort of attention drawn to an obviously armed civilian ship.

Mass accelerators are common weapons in the Nomad arsenal. Ammunition is cheap and easily manufactured, although the guns require some effort to maintain. "Vector pollution" is a concern with these weapons — the projectiles have no effective range limit, and remain dangerous until they hit something.

Nomads prefer lasers. They have a definite range limit and potential for use as tools. However, the cost of these weapons may be more than some Clans can afford.

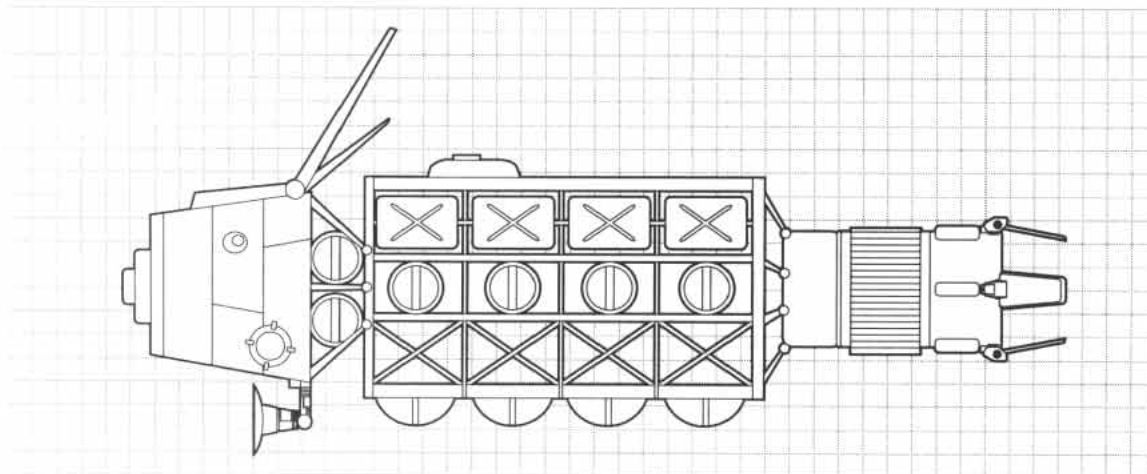
Missiles are rarely ever used. Nomads regard them as a waste of parts and fuel.

HOMEMADE SHIPS ▼

It is relatively easy to create a vehicle from modern modular ship components, although the final results are usually fragile and maintenance-heavy. Only a few homemade ships are sturdy enough to be used as normal space-faring vessels. The rest of these of these "Belt liners" are used as short-range auxiliary craft around homesteads. With the exception of the Morris-Taylors, Clans do not have the resources to manufacture brand-new space ships.

Homemade vessels are built normally using the construction rules in the **Jovian Chronicles Companion**, plus the following guidelines.

- All homemade vehicles use the Scratch-Build production type. All subassemblies automatically and irrevocably suffer from the Nomad-Modified Flaw. Other potential Flaws include Fragile Chassis, Problem-Prone and Exposed Auxiliary or Movement Systems.
- Homemade ships are unstreamlined and cannot enter planetary atmospheres, although they may have a landing gear.
- The source vessels of a homemade ship's components do not need to be determined unless necessary for plot purposes.
- If only part of a vehicle is homemade, the Nomad-Modified Flaw should be used on that subassembly instead.





▼ SLINGS

An offshoot of tether technology, slings are a cheap, low-power alternative to mass drivers. They were in frequent use around the Solar System before the Tough Times, but now only the Clans continue to employ slings to any degree.

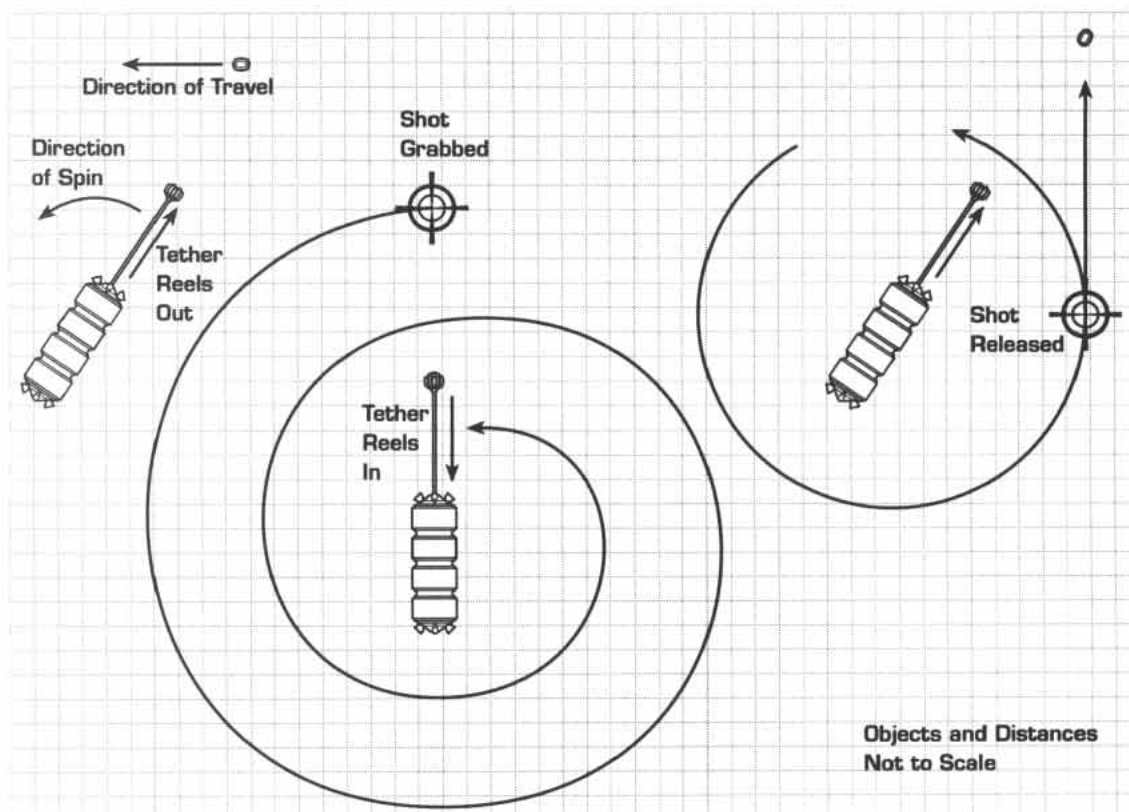
A sling consists of four basic components: a tether rig with a grapple, a mounting superstructure, a massive counterweight and a sling "shot." Thrusters in the superstructure spin the sling end over end, like a giant rotor. Once at operational speeds, the tether is extended to its full length, often dozens of kilometers. Sling "shots" are thousand-ton masses of solid metal, equipped with maneuver thruster arrays, a radio beacon and an anchor for the grapple. A shot is accelerated to the same velocity of the grapple. As the shot passes, the grapple grabs the shot's anchor.

Slings operate on the principle of conservation of angular momentum. The tether is reeled in, bringing the shot closer to the counterweight and causing the sling to spin faster — in much the same way a figure skater spins faster when she pull in her arms. Shortening a tether by half its length quadruples the velocity of a shot. Shortening a tether by three quarters of its length increases shot velocity eight-fold. When the desired velocity is achieved, the shot is released towards its destination. Catching a shot follows the exact reverse of the procedure: the shot passes close to the sling, is grabbed and reeled out to a point where it is moving slow enough to be released and maneuvered by tugs.

In order for the sling to function effectively, the counterweight must be significantly larger than the shot. Typically, shots are only one tenth the mass of the counterweight. As shots increase in size beyond that point, the dynamics of the sling change and the device becomes less efficient.

◇ THROWING STONES

Slings are not effective combat weapons. It takes too long to bring a shot up to launch velocity, and once launched, the shot is unmaneuverable and easily avoided. Shots can be used against a station or otherwise immobile target. In that event, it does damage according to the ramming rules (*Jovian Chronicles Rulebook*, page 154).

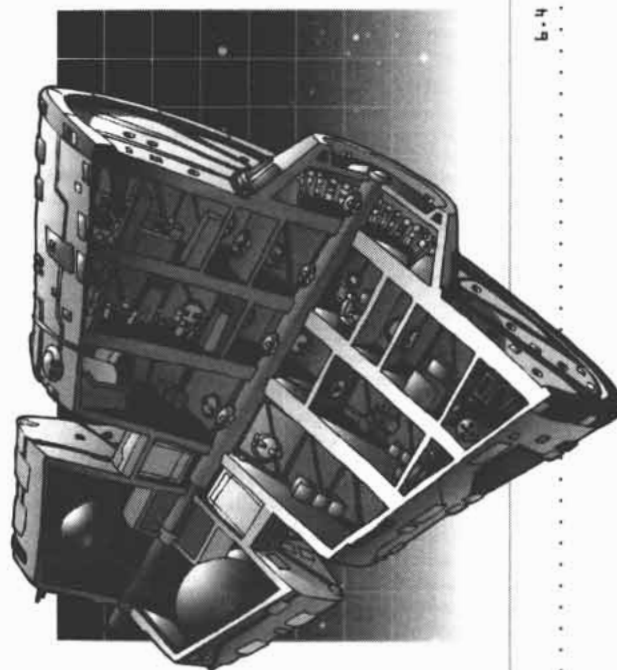


VESSEL COMPONENTS ◀

Modularity and adaptability are two key features of Nomad engineering — no one wants to die because the square air filters don't fit the round ports of the life support system. Nomads spacecraft can share a number of sub-assemblies and generic systems thanks to their modular, jury-rigged nature.

Over the years, specialized components have been developed to face the challenge of life in the Asteroid Belt. Though each piece is individually crafted, they all operate along the same principles and have similar performance profiles. It is a moderately simple matter for a well-equipped technical crew to disassemble and remount one of the followings on another ship or service spacecraft. Blueprints and computer templates are freely available for sales, though each Clan tend to prefer its own home-made model (trusting their own to do a better job, of course).

Nomads sub-systems are often able to function on their own, provided they are correctly supplied with power, datalines and coolant lines. They need to be precisely anchored to the main structure of the spacecraft (especially tether systems) for the loads to be transferred correctly when under acceleration; failure to do so will result in a catastrophic structural failure, one that may be impossible to predict ahead of time.



LABORATORY (SURVEY SENSOR) GUIDELINES ▼

These sensors are designed specifically for survey work, and include mass detectors, surface-penetrating radar, spectrometers and image mapping equipment. When active, survey sensors can map an area of approximately 15,300 km² in thirty seconds at a resolution of less than one meter, assuming a clear and unobstructed view. Survey sensors arrays are insulated and located well away from interference generated by thrusters and unshielded power sources.

For ship construction, survey sensors are covered by the Laboratory Perk specialized in Electronic Warfare (see **Jovian Chronicles Companion**, page 117), although the sensors are designed specifically for survey work. The Perk is noted on the ship construction form as Laboratory (Survey Sensors). Survey sensors have a 360-degree scanning arc, but use the ship's overall sensor rating and range when functioning. Vessels designed or refitted for survey work typically have better than average sensors.

Survey sensors can create density maps of underground structures, as well as identify veins of particular minerals. This assumes that intervening objects are not too dense to block scans. Survey sensors can penetrate five hundred meters of water-equivalent density for each point of Laboratory (Survey Sensors) rating.

As survey sensors are designed to locate masses of metal, the Laboratory (Survey Sensors) Skill Test bonus can be used when searching for vessels in sensor range. However, only the range, direction, size and vector information of detected objects will be revealed. This type of scanning requires active use of the survey sensors. Vessels detected in this manner will not only know they have been scanned, they will also know the location of the ship conducting the scan.

SURVEY DRONE EXTERNAL HARDPOINT □

Cost:

5,000 Credits x Size rating of drone

Many vessels refit for survey duties do not have the internal space to carry drones. An easy alternative is to mount a storage and launch system externally, directly on the ship's hull. These hardpoints can be used to store, program and refuel of drones. Maintenance cannot be conducted through the hardpoint. Hardpoints are not protected by the ship's armor and suffer damage as AUX systems.

▼ SHIP MINING EQUIPMENT GUIDELINES

Mining equipment is described in the Jovian Chronicles Companion, page 117. For microgravity mining, the earth-moving attachments are replaced with large-bore drilling equipment and plasma furnaces. The actual processing method varies, but essentially rock is drawn inside the ship where it is separated into its component materials. Mining equipment also includes anchors to keep the force of drilling from pushing the ship away from the surface.

Space-going mining vessels also have the Cargo Bay Perk as either internal holds or external tanks to store extracted minerals.

▣ SCHALLER SOLAR SMELTER ARRAY

Qty	Name	Fire Arc	DM	BR	Acc	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
1	Smelter	FF X6	2	-3	0	Inf.	-	AP, Min range of 2, Clumsy	4	198	n/a

Solar smelters are little more than huge concave mirrors, used to reflect sunlight and generate extremely high temperatures at their focal point. With the Sun so distant, the Nomads need a reflective surface at least 1 kilometer across in order to collect enough sunlight to heat a small asteroid. The mirror itself is a highly reflective, molecularly thin, metal foil and is unfurled on a telescoping network of thin support arms. Two or three smaller mirrors are sometimes used in an array to increase the sun's energy focused on the surface of the rock.

The smelter is stationary in space and the spinning asteroid is centered beside the mirror, in its focal point. The concentrated sunlight washes across the rotating asteroid, evenly heating the entire surface and slowly penetrating to the core.

Asteroids smaller than half a kilometer generally can be heated within a week. For asteroids over a kilometer, the mirror is used as a solar "drill," focused on a non-rotating point and melting through rock to buried mineral deposits.

▼ TETHER SYSTEMS

Ship-based tether systems consist of three parts: a guided missile grapple, a winch and a connecting tether cable strong enough to support the size of the mounting ship. The tether does not need to be stronger unless it is going to be used as a tow cable — something not normally done. Most Nomad vessels are equipped with tethers to allow the ships to function as primitive web stations.

Tether systems are created using the weapon design system on page 124 of the Jovian Chronicles Companion. They have Entangle, Missile and Winch Characteristics, plus possibly Guided or Seeking to allow the grapple multiple connection attempts. The grapple can be reeled back in should it miss, effectively giving the tether system unlimited ammunition. The base range is the maximum length of the tether.

The grapple has an internal fuel supply, allowing it to remain active for five turns, with one attempt to attach itself per turn. At the end of the fifth turn, the grapple must be reeled in and refueled.

▣ SAMPLE TETHER RIG (FOR A SIZE 25 SHIP)

Qty	Name	Fire Arc	DM	BR	Acc	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
1	Tether Rig	FF	X25	1	0	0	Inf.	Entangle, Missile, Seeking, Winch	7	18,750	n/a

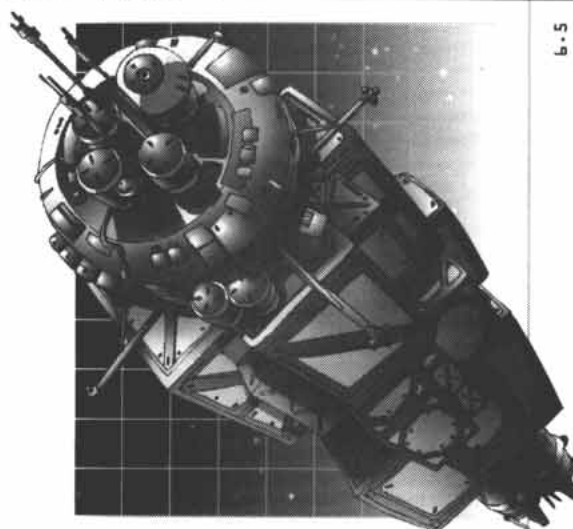
BELT LINER ◀

"Belt liner" is an old name that used to refer to the cheap, modular vessels that brought refugees to the Belt. Now it includes any kind of homemade ship Clan engineers can throw together.

Most Belt liners are designed to be short-range cargo transports. Some are equipped for surveying or mining, but their improvised structures cannot withstand the rigors of any intensive work. Liners are useless in combat and are rarely armed.

Each Belt liner is highly unique, having been built from whatever parts were on hand at the time. A few Clans paint their liners in bright, garish styles, but most ships are left undecorated, save for Clan identification markings.

Reliability is always an issue with these ships. Liners have only a few years of operational use. Their components are already decades old, and even the most vigorous maintenance cannot postpone the inevitable. Because of this, Belt liners are not operated beyond the immediate vicinity of their bases.



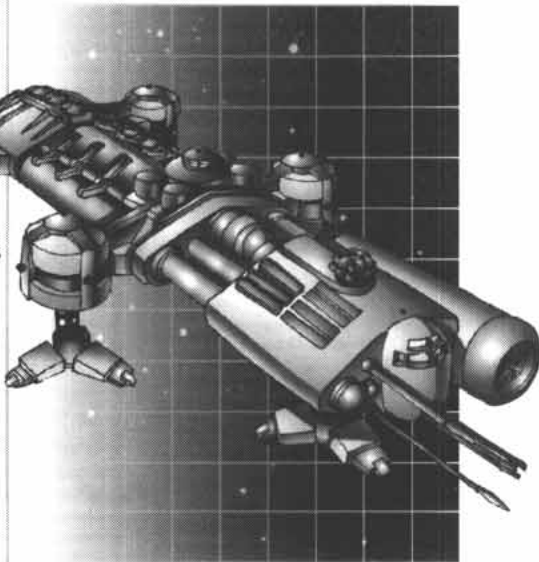
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VESSEL DATA ▢

Threat Value:							3800 (456,000 credits)				
Production Type (Individual Lemon Dice):							Scratch-Build/Homemade(10)				
Crew:							2 (3 Actions)				
Size:							25 (440 tons)				
Armor:							50/100/150				
MOVEMENT DATA											
Movement Mode			Combat Speed			Top Speed			Maneuver		
Space			4 (0.4 g)			8 (0.8 g)			-4		
Deployment Range							200 hours				
Reaction Mass							400 BP				
ELECTRONICS DATA											
Sensors:							-2/2 km				
Communications:							-1/10 km				
Fire Control:							-4				
PERKS & FLAWS DATA											
Name				Rating				Game Effect			
Autopilot				-				Acts as level 1 pilot			
Backup Systems				-				Commo, Fire Control, Life Support, Sensors			
Cargo Bay				-				1000 m³, solids			
Computer				-				CRE -2, KNO 0, PP 2, flexible			
Ejection System				-				Escape pod			
Exposed Auxiliary Systems				-				Aux damage effects 1 stage worse			
Fragile Chassis				-				+1 added to Structural Damage Table rolls			
HEP: Radiation				4				Screen			
HEP: Vacuum				-				Space protection			
Life Support				-				Full			
Nonad-Modified (All systems)				-				Only owning Clan can modify w/o penalties			
Problem Prone				2				2 additional Lemon Dice			
Reinforced Crew Compartment				2				Absorbs first 2 crew hits			
OFFENSIVE & DEFENSIVE SYSTEM DATA											
Qty	Name	Fire Arc	DM	BR	Acc	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
1	Tether Rig	FF	x25	1	0	0	Inf.	Entangle, Missile, Seeking, Winch	7	18,750	n/a

end of section 6.5 belt liner

► RIGEL-CLASS PROSPECTOR



Name:	Rigel
Origin:	Various
Manufacturer:	Various
Type:	Survey Vessel
Control System:	Bridge
Length:	51 m
Width:	24 m
Empty Weight:	194.4t
Loaded Weight:	248.3t
Main Drive:	6.2 MW
Power Plant:	4500 KW
Main Thrusters:	2 x 104,000 kg, 2 x 52,000 kg
Apogee Motors:	20
Acceleration:	1.6 g
Onboard Sensors:	Fire Control Radar, Infrared/Ultraviolet, Lidar, Low-light, Magnetometer, Microwaves, Motion Detectors, Radcounter, Survey Sensors, Telescope
Fixed Armament:	Point Defense System
Additional Armament:	None
Defensive Systems:	Mag Screen
Equipment:	Light Mining Equipment, Onboard Ore Refinery

▼ OVERVIEW

The Rigel-Class prospector is an inexpensive, mass-produced, commercial surveying ship. The craft is originally a Jovian design, but has been licensed for production throughout the Solar System. It has proven popular with both corporate miners and Nomads, and can be found everywhere in the Belt. It carries enough supplies and consumables for several months, although the lack of a gravity section may limit cruise duration. The vessel officially requires a crew of five but it can be operated with as few as three if the crew shares shifts at the survey sensor station and in the refinery.

Although the Rigel's primary purpose is survey, it is designed to be a complete mining vessel in miniature with the capability to completely catalogue a find, including the collection, processing and analysis of core samples. Unfortunately, the onboard refinery is too limited for the ship to be used in a pure mining role. Other vessels, such as the Anopheles mining ship, can process and store larger amounts of materials more efficiently and turn a correspondingly larger profit from such operations.

▼ CAPABILITIES

The Rigel is built around a sturdy structural frame. The crew sections in all areas have been heavily reinforced, giving the ship a remarkably low rate of crew casualties due to micrometeor punctures. In addition, each of the three main ship sections can be completely isolated, allowing each area to become completely self-contained in the event of a mishap.

The landing gear (Rigel actually means "foot") is articulated and can grasp to anchor the vessel during drilling operations. The gear is also equipped with smaller drills to further secure the ship to the surface. The powerful "Round-Eye" sensor suite can penetrate up to one and a half kilometers of water-equivalent density, allowing it to scan to an appreciable depth if not completely through most small asteroids. The ship also carries a complete drilling rig and refinery in the central module. The drill can retrieve samples from a depth of nearly five hundred metres. Refined materials are pumped into the aft tanks: gasses are stored as a liquid slush, while metals are stored as powder. If necessary, the refinery can distill hydrogen for use as fuel.

▼ SERVICE RECORD

The Rigel has been in service for twelve years, but it has been designed in such a way to allow the incorporation of new technology without radically altering the ship. Traditionally, the vessel is the mainstay of the independent surveyor industry. Hundreds have been built, and the older vessels are now quite affordable to anyone with even minimal financial resources. The Round-Eye sensor suite has aged extremely well, though owners of older ships complain about the heavy energy requirements of using older suites at full power.

SERVICE RECORD (CONT.)

The Rigel is also quite popular with claim jumpers. The ship's small refining capacity is less of a liability if the material being refined is not only extremely pure but also extremely valuable. Typically the "claim raiders" will scout for a particularly rich location, then use the vessel's mining equipment to grab as much ore as possible before lifting off. After processing, any worthless material is dumped into space to free up storage room. Because of this, almost all Rigel-based claim jumpers are also wanted on charges of creating navigation hazards.

CREW COMMENTS ▼

"Sorry, fella, but the *Bannock* is not for sale. She and I have quite a history, but if you buy me a drink — and not that cheap Nomad swill — I'll tell you a bit about her.

"Thanks. I bought the *Bannock* second hand about five years ago, and I have to say, it was love at first sight. She had all the right aces in all the right places, if you know what I mean. First, there were those wonderful eyes of hers. She's got that penetrating gaze — penetrating out to fifteen hundred metres. Okay, so that's no big secret. But the image clarity, that's something. You should see it; it's stunning. I've never had to do more than routine maintenance on her, but in half a decade the scan quality is almost as good as when I bought her. It says a lot about the care they put into building her, you know? By the way, I'm empty.

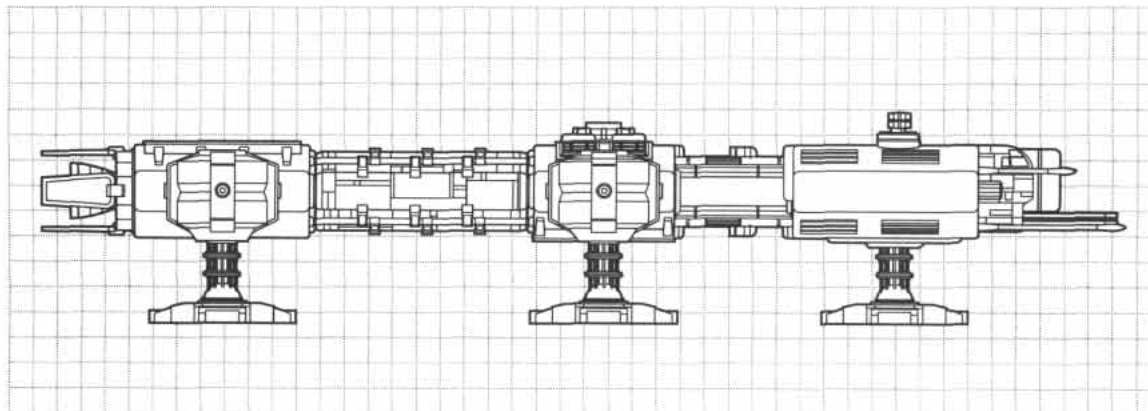
"Thanks. Speaking of quality, doesn't she have beautiful hands? Okay, yeah, technically landing gear is 'feet,' but my feet could never grab anything like that, you know? But take a look; I want to show you something. That's right, there's a lot of backward flexibility in the joints there. See, not only can she grab an asteroid surface, but she can settle right into rough terrain, making her a lot more stable as a drilling platform than if she had to stay balanced on top of small crater rims and rely on her anchor drills to hold her in place. Whoa, empty again.

"Thanks. Good eyes and good hands, but most importantly, good speed. I know you've already decided you want to buy a Rigel, and that's a good choice. But are you sure you've considered all the reasons why it's a good choice? Not too many people looking at getting into the survey business think about how fast their ship needs to be. Most think in terms of scanning ratios, sink resolution, minimal pass grids and they go and buy the best scanning, sampling and mapping package they can afford. Then, on their first trip out, vroom! They're left in the thrusterspray of some hotshot who spent a little less on his scanners and samplers and a lot more on his engines. And guess what? Mister hotshot gets to the rocks faster, which means he has more time to survey, which means he has a better chance of grabbing up the sweet stuff than most people, who were too focused on getting a good pair of eyes. No, I'm not speaking from experience. Well... not from the experience of most people, you know? My girl can pull 1.6 gs, and there're not too many civilian surveyors that beat her in a straightaway burn. Speaking of burns, I'm empty again.

"Oh. No, that's fine. I've had enough, anyway. Well, best of luck to you. I hope you'll find a Rigel that'll make you as happy as my girl *Bannock*'s made me."

— Captain Vance Parker, SS *Bannock*

RIGEL SCHEMATICS ◇





▼ RIGEL-CLASS PROSPECTOR

▼ OVERALL PRODUCTION DATA

THREAT VALUE:	17,000
OFFENSIVE:	2800
DEFENSIVE:	1500
MISCELLANEOUS:	48,000
COST:	10,000,000 credits
PRODUCTION TYPE:	Mass Production
INDV. LEMON DICE:	3

▼ MOVEMENT DATA

MOVEMENT MODE	COMBAT SPEED	TOP SPEED	MANEUVER
SPACE:	7 (0.7 g)	14 (1.4 g)	-4
DEPLOYMENT RANGE:	4000 hrs	(fusion/electric)	
REACTION MASS:	4000 EBP	(hydrogen)	

► MAIN HULL

COST:	4,700,000 credits
CREW:	3
ACTIONS:	2
HULL SIZE:	15
DEFAULT SIZE:	19
STACKING SIZE:	15
INDV. LEMON DICE:	3

▼ SECTIONS

1 X Main Hull	15
1 X Mining/Refinery Section	12
3 X Tank Modules	3 X 5
2 X Drive Sections	14

▼ OFF. & DEF. SYSTEMS

1 X Point Defense System (main hull)

ARMOR:

LIGHT/HEAVY/OVERKILL:	35/70/105
MOVEMENT DATA:	Towed by Drive Section
DEPLOYMENT RANGE:	4000 hrs (fusion/electric)/0 BP
SENSORS:	0/3 km
COMMUNICATIONS:	0/10 km
FIRE CONTROL:	-1

▼ PERKS AND FLAWS

NAME	RATING	GAME EFFECT	NAME	RATING	GAME EFFECT
Autopilot	-	Functions as Level 1 Pilot	Reinforced Crew Compartment	2	Ignores first two Crew hits
Backup Systems	-	Commo, Fire Cntrl, Life Supp., Sens.	Satellite Uplink	-	Commo range x 1000
Computer	2	CRE-1, KNO 0, PP3	Searchlights	-	400 m range, swivel-mounted
Ejection System	-	Escape Pods (10 locations)	1 X Tool Arm	10	Landing Gear Grasper/ Anchor, cannot punch
HEP: Radiation	4	Shielding against 1000 rads/hour	Traceable Emissions	2	While survey sensors are active
HEP: Vacuum	-	Space Protection			
Laboratory (Survey Sensors)	3	Adds to Elect. W. Tests, for survey			
Life Support	-	Full for 10 people			
Passenger Accommodations	-	150 m², 2 singles, 2 doubles			

▼ OFFENSIVE & DEFENSIVE SYSTEM DATA

Qty	NAME	FIRE ARC	DM	BR	ACC	RDF	AMMO	SPECIAL	MS	WC	AC
1	PDS (ranged)	Turret	X8	1	0	5	Inf.	AM, HEAT	10	2300	n/a
	(shield)	Forward	X12	M	0	0	Inf.	Def, E-Shield, HEAT	3	130	n/a

► 1 X MINING/REFINERY SECTION

COST:	2,100,000 credits
CREW:	1
ACTIONS:	2
HULL SIZE:	12
DEFAULT SIZE:	15
STACKING SIZE:	12
INDV. LEMON DICE:	3

ARMOR:

LIGHT/HEAVY/OVERKILL:	30/60/90
MOVEMENT DATA:	Towed by Drive Section
DEPLOYMENT RANGE:	4000 hrs (fusion/electric)/0 BP
SENSORS:	-3/2 km
COMMUNICATIONS:	-3/10 km
FIRE CONTROL:	-5

▼ PERKS AND FLAWS

NAME	RATING	GAME EFFECT	NAME	RATING	GAME EFFECT
Backup Communications	-	Ignores first Aux system commo hit	Life Support	-	Full for 4 people
Backup Life Support	-	Ignores first Aux syst. life support hit	Mining Equipment, Light		Designed for micrograv. mining
HEP: Radiation/Vacuum	4/-	Shielding against 10,000 rads/hour	Reinforced Crew Compartment	2	Ignores first two Crew hits
Laboratory (Refinery)	2	Adds to Earth Sciences Tests	2 X Tool Arm	10	Landing Gear Grasper

▼ OFFENSIVE & DEFENSIVE SYSTEM DATA

Qty	NAME	FIRE ARC	DM	BR	ACC	RDF	AMMO	SPECIAL	MS	WC	AC

► 3 X TANK MODULE

COST:	550,000 each credits
CREW:	0
ACTIONS:	0
HULL SIZE:	5
DEFAULT SIZE:	5
STACKING SIZE:	5
INDV. LEMON DICE:	3

ARMOR:	
LIGHT/HEAVY/OVERKILL:	10/20/30
MOVEMENT DATA:	Towed by Drive Sections
DEPLOYMENT RANGE:	1000 hrs
SENSORS:	n/a
COMMUNICATIONS:	n/a
FIRE CONTROL:	-5

▼ PERKS AND FLAWS

NAME	RATING	GAME EFFECT	NAME	RATING	GAME EFFECT
Cargo Bay (79.5 m³)	-	Enclosed, liquids			
HEP: Vacuum	-	Space protection			
No Communication	-	Cannot communicate			
No Sensors	-	Cannot make sensor checks			

▼ OFFENSIVE & DEFENSIVE SYSTEM DATA

Qty	NAME	FIRE ARC	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	AMMO	SPECIAL	MS	WC	AC
None											

► 2 X DRIVE SECTION

COST:	1,700,000 credits
CREW:	1
ACTIONS:	2
HULL SIZE:	14
DEFAULT SIZE:	15
STACKING SIZE:	14
INDV. LEMON DICE:	3
ARMOR:	
LIGHT/HEAVY/OVERKILL:	30/60/90

MOVEMENT MODE	COMBAT SPEED	TOP SPEED	MANEUVER
Space	3 (0.3 g)	5 (0.5 g)	-5
Deployment Range:	4000 hrs	(fusion/electric)	
Reaction Mass:	4000 BP	(hydrogen)	
SENSORS:		-3/2 km	
COMMUNICATIONS:		-3/10 km	
FIRE CONTROL:		-5	

▼ PERKS AND FLAWS

NAME	RATING	GAME EFFECT	NAME	RATING	GAME EFFECT
Backup Communications	-	Ignores first Aux system commo hit	Life Support	-	Full for 4 crew
Backup Life Support	-	Ignores first Aux syst. life support hit	Reinforced Crew Compartment	2	Ignores first two Crew hits
HEP: Radiation	4	Shielding against 10,000 rads/hour	2 x Tool Arm	10	Landing Gear Grasper
HEP: Vacuum	-	Space Protection	Traceable Emissions	2	Unshielded drive flare

▼ OFFENSIVE & DEFENSIVE SYSTEM DATA

Qty	NAME	FIRE ARC	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	AMMO	SPECIAL	MS	WC	AC

► EMPTY

COST:	-
CREW:	-
ACTIONS:	-
HULL SIZE:	-
DEFAULT SIZE:	-
STACKING SIZE:	-
INDV. LEMON DICE:	-

ARMOR:	-
LIGHT/HEAVY/OVERKILL:	-
MOVEMENT DATA:	-
DEPLOYMENT RANGE:	-
SENSORS:	-
COMMUNICATIONS:	-
FIRE CONTROL:	-

▼ PERKS AND FLAWS

NAME	RATING	GAME EFFECT	NAME	RATING	GAME EFFECT

▼ OFFENSIVE & DEFENSIVE SYSTEM DATA

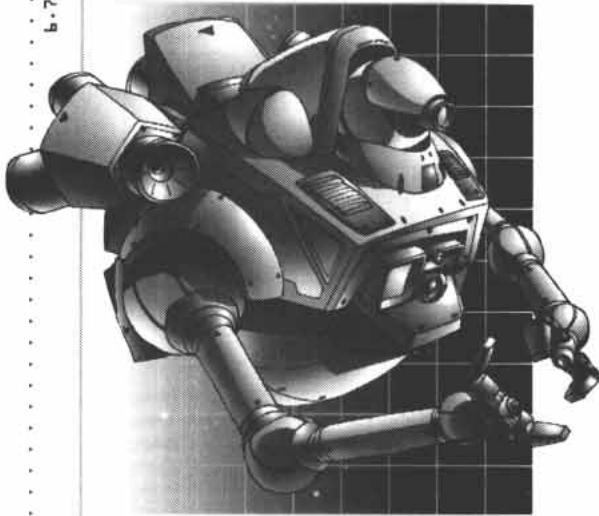
Qty	NAME	FIRE ARC	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	AMMO	SPECIAL	MS	WC	AC

▼ NOTES

★ JOVIAN
CHRONICLES

end of section 6.6 rigel-class prospector

► SURVEY DRONE



Drones are a standard item of equipment on survey missions. Each drone is a mobile, self-contained survey sensor package, and can perform basic mapping and survey functions completely independent of human control. Drones can also be remotely operated to undertake specific operations the internal computer systems are not normally programmed to perform. Two fairly agile manipulator arms allow samples to be gathered for examination via an internal spectral analyzer.

Drones are the cheapest way to refit a ship for survey work. Each drone can evaluate the survey data it collects, eliminating the need for specialized equipment on the base ship. Of course, should a drone be lost, the base ship may suddenly find itself incapable of completing the mission.

Salvage crews also use drones to examine wrecks. Information is gathered remotely to determine possible hazards before any human life is put at risk. If the wreck is too dangerous to enter, drones can retrieve valuable items and debris.

▣ VESSEL DATA

Threat Value:		300 (350,000 credits)	
Production Type (Individual Lemon Dice):		Mass Production (3)	
Crew:		0 (1 Action)	
Size:		3 (895 kg)	
Armor:		2/4/6	
MOVEMENT DATA			
Movement Mode	Combat Speed	Top Speed	Maneuver
Space	5 (0.5 g)	10 (1.0 g)	-2
Deployment Range		120 hours (electric)	
Reaction Mass		200 BP (hydrogen)	
ELECTRONICS DATA			
Sensors:		0/2 km	
Communications:		-1/10 km	
Fire Control:		-4	
PERKS & FLAWS DATA			
Name	Rating	Game Effect	
Autopilot	-	Acts as Level 1 Pilot	
Computer	2	CRE 0, KND 0, PP 2, flexible	
HEP: Radiation	3	Screen	
HEP: Vacuum	-	Space Protection	
Laboratory (Survey Sensors)	1	Adds to Electronic Warfare Tests, for survey use only	
2 x Manipulator Arm	2	Hands, cannot punch	
Fragile Chassis	-	+1 to Structural Damage Table rolls	
OFFENSIVE & DEFENSIVE SYSTEM DATA			
None			

TEAMSTER-CLASS EXO-SUIT

The Teamster is an ancient industrial exo-suit. This once-common giant has now been retired by most orbital construction companies, but it can still be found in the service of many Clans. It is massive compared to modern exo-suits, over three times the size of those currently in production. The pilot sits completely enclosed within the main body. The limbs are completely mechanical, making the Teamster more of a small exo-armor.

In appearance, the suit resembles a headless ape, earning it the nickname "Rocket Monkey." The arms are long and reinforced across the torso to allow manipulation of extremely large objects. The feet are almost as articulated as the hands, allowing the suit to grab hold of objects in order to anchor itself.

Most owning Clans have made adaptations to their Teamsters, but major redesigns require parts not generally available. The Morris-Taylors are the first choice of suppliers, but Independent traders often stock parts for Teamsters as speculative cargo.

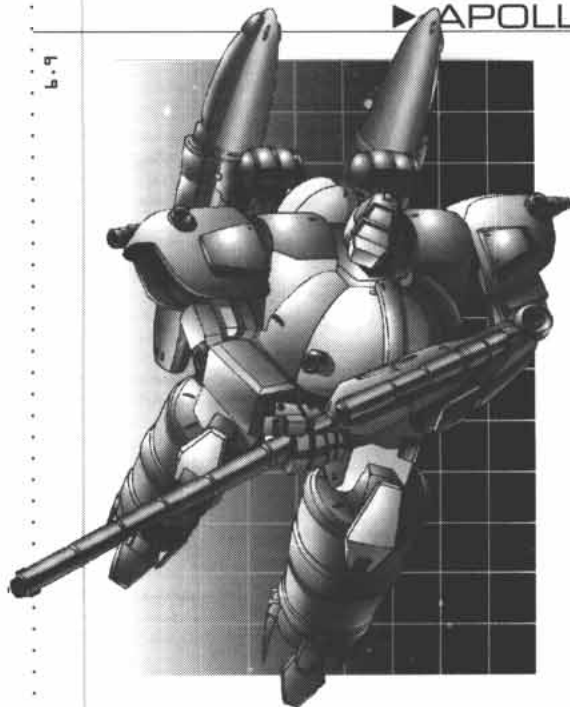


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VEHICLE DATA

Threat Value:		960 (800,000 credits)									
Production Type (Individual Lemon Dice):		Mass Production (3)									
Crew:		1 (2 Actions)									
Size:		6 (7100 kg)									
Armor:		12/24/36									
MOVEMENT DATA											
Movement Mode		Combat Speed		Top Speed		Maneuver					
Walker		2 (12 kph)		4 (24 kph)		-2					
Space		6 (0.6 g)		12 (1.2 g)		-1					
Deployment Range						120 km					
Reaction Mass						300 BPs					
ELECTRONICS DATA											
Sensors:						-2/2 km					
Communications:						-1/10 km					
Fire Control:						-2					
PERKS & FLAWS DATA											
Name		Rating		Game Effect							
Autopilot		-		Functions as Level 1 Pilot							
Backup Systems		-		Commo, Fire Control, Life Support, Sensors							
Computer		2		CRE-2, KNO 0, PP2							
Decreased Maneuver		-		Walker							
Ejection System		-		Escape Seat							
HEP: Radiation		3		Shielding against 1000 rads/hour							
HEP: Vacuum		-		Space Protection							
Life Support		-		Limited							
2 x Manipulator Arm		10		Reinforced to Punch							
Nomad-Modified		-		All systems							
Reinforced Crew Compartment		-		Ignore first Crew hit							
2 x Tool Arm		10		Grasping feet, cannot punch							
Traceable Emissions		2		Heat from thrusters							
OFFENSIVE & DEFENSIVE SYSTEM DATA											
Qty	Name	Fire Arc	DM	BR	Acc	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
1	Laser Welder	Forward	x8	Melee	0	0	Inf	AP	4	180	0
2	Punch	Forward	x10	Melee	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

end of section 6.8 teamster-class exo-suit



▶ APOLLO-CLASS EXO-ARMOR

Name:	Apollo
Production Code:	NEAH-1
Origin:	Jovian Confederation/Nomad Modified
Manufacturer:	Jovian Armor Works (no longer in production)
Type:	Heavy Exo-armor
Role:	Heavy Tug, Zero-G Construction, Anti-Piracy
Control System:	Linear Frame
Height:	15 m
Width:	11 m
Empty Weight:	47.5 tons
Loaded Weight:	47.75 tons
Power Plant:	23 MW
Main Thrusters:	2 x 46,000 kg, 1 x 23,000 kg
Apogee Motors:	18
Walking Speed:	n/a
Acceleration:	2.4 g
Onboard Sensors:	Fire Control Radar, Infrared/Ultraviolet, Lidar, Low-light, Magnetometer, Microwaves, Motion Detectors, Radcounter, Telescope
Fixed Armament:	Laser Welders
Additional Armament:	NM-A "Long Rifle" Mass Driver, NME "Peacemaker" Light Laser
Defensive Systems:	Mag Screens
Equipment:	Varies, see below

◇ OVERVIEW

The Apollo was the JAF's attempt at a close-combat exo-armor. It was designed to close quickly with targets and inflict heavy damage at short range. Unfortunately, the JAF abandoned its close-combat philosophy before the design could be proven in combat. The Apollos were refit as interceptors, a roll that they filled only moderately well. Nevertheless, they served for seventeen years before being retired in 2187.

The Apollo's reinforced structure and extra lifting capacity made it an ideal heavy construction vehicle, and eventually the JAF released the surviving decommissioned exos into civilian use. The exo is a common sight in the Belt, although it is not encountered very frequently elsewhere.

◇ CAPABILITIES

While these exos are showing signs of their age, their solid engineering has allowed the Nomads to keep them operational. Most Nomad-owned Apollos are heavily modified, and perform as well as exos only half as old. Some are so radically altered they are no longer recognizable as Apollos. All have had their basic equipment stripped out and replaced: life support, sensors, communications and the like are as modern and up-to-date as the owners can afford. Unfortunately, exo-specific parts such as actuators are difficult to come by in the Belt. Nomads have been able to synthesize some replacements, but these parts are inferior even to the original Apollo factory components.

A standard conversion for these exos is the replacement of the legs with larger thruster arrays and increased fuel tankage. The extra hauling capacity, combined with their dexterity, makes these exos excellent tugs and zero-gravity construction units. Many units have also been fitted with maneuver "wings," thrusters on adjustable fins, to improve maneuverability when carrying loads.

Nomad Apollos are not usually armed, although the hand-mounted laser welders can be used in close combat. Portable lasers and mass drivers can be carried for anti-piracy operations, but they are either too awkward or underpowered for effective combat use.

◇ VARIATIONS

The statistics given here are "averages." In reality, each exo has been modified so much it is essentially unique, with its own personality and temperament. All the possible modifications to the basic Apollo frame are too numerous to list here. Two common variants are given.

THREAT VALUE:	790
OFFENSIVE:	150
DEFENSIVE:	520
MISCELLANEOUS:	1700
COST:	329,000 credits
PRODUCTION TYPE:	Mass Production
INDV. LEMON DICE:	3

CREW:	1
ACTIONS:	2

SIZE:	12 (45.7 tons)
DEFAULT SIZE:	10
STACKING SIZE:	12
ARMOR:	
LIGHT DAMAGE:	30
HEAVY DAMAGE:	60
OVERKILL:	90

MOVEMENT MODE	COMBAT SPEED	TOP SPEED	MANEUVER
SPACE:	12 [1.2G]	24 [2.4G]	-2
WALKER:	0	0	n/a
DEPLOYMENT RANGE:	300 hrs		[fusion/electric]
REACTION MASS:	500 BP		[hydrogen]

SENSORS:	-2/2 km
COMMUNICATIONS:	-1/10 km
FIRE CONTROL:	-1

[illegible][illegible]

Hephaestus Prospecting Version: Add Light Mining Gear and two 1000 m³ liquid storage tanks. Remove Laser Welders and 300 BP. DR 120 hours. Overall Threat Value is 1400, cost is 700,000 credits.

★ JOVIAN CHRONICLES

► NOMAD GLOSSARY

Airlock: a sealed chamber that can be independently pressurized, allowing movement to and from the vacuum of space.

Albedo: the reflecting power of a non-luminous body on a decimal scale of 0 to 1. A perfect reflector would have an albedo of 1, reflecting 100% of the light aimed at it.

Amor Asteroid: An asteroid with an orbit that comes close to but does not cross Earth's orbit. Amor asteroids orbit between the Earth and the Belt.

Anchorage: A station consisting of several small asteroids joined by tethers or support struts. The anchorage is the most popular type of Nomad station.

Aphelion: the farthest point that a body reaches in its orbit around the Sun.

Apoapsis: the farthest point that a body reaches on an orbit around any other body; the "generic" root of "aphelion" and "apogee."

Apollo Asteroid: An asteroid with an orbit that crosses Earth's orbit (most orbit outside the Earth's orbit).

Asteroid: small celestial body composed of metal, rock, ice, or any combination of the above.

Astronomical Unit (AU): a unit of measure based on the distance from the Earth to the Sun. It is equal to 1,49 x 10⁸ km and is commonly used for interplanetary flight.

Aten Asteroid: An asteroid with an orbit that crosses Earth's orbit (most orbit inside the Earth's orbit).

Attitude: the orientation of a spacecraft to a given frame of reference.

AU: Astronomical Unit. A measurement of distance equal to 149,597,870 km, or roughly the distance between Earth and the Sun.

Axis: an imaginary line around which a body rotates.

Belt Liner: Derogatory term for a homemade vessel, particularly one constructed by Nomads.

Big Find: A large deposit of minerals. When capitalized, it refers to that one-in-a-million strike that will make the discoverers rich beyond their wildest imagination.

Bulkhead: a structural wall inside a spacecraft or station, generally airtight.

C Asteroid: carbonaceous asteroid, rich in organic matter, water-soluble salts, magnetite and clay minerals. They dominate the outer asteroid belt.

Ceres: Largest asteroid in the Asteroid Belt. Home of Clan Lysenko, and generally regarded as the "capital" of the Belt.

Clan: A group of Nomads operating together as a single "family" unit. Clans are named and usually have some sort of unique identifying mark or symbol.

Contact: Information gatherers working in any of the white, black or gray markets. Contacts facilitate the matching of buyers and sellers of goods.

Cousin: Nomad slang for an Independent.

Crew: A group of Nomads assigned to work together on a specific task or vessel.

Delta V: change in the velocity of an object.

Edicts: A universally adopted set of laws severely restricting research into and the development of "dangerous technologies" such as artificial intelligence, bioengineering and nanotechnology.

Elder: Any Nomad holding a position of authority in a Clan. The title does not necessarily indicate advanced age or experience.

EVA: extra-vehicular activity, more commonly known as a space walk; going outside a craft in a space suit (called "going EVA").

Fence: A purchaser of goods, usually from questionable sources. Fences typically work in the gray or black markets.

Gee: A measure of acceleration, the gee (also noted as simply g) is equal to the pull exerted by the Earth at sea level. It is equal to 9.8 m/s^2 , though the rounded value of 10 m/s^2 is used for most calculations.

Heliocentric: an orbit centered about the Sun.

Hohmann Transfer Orbit: an elliptical orbit where one end is tangent to the orbit of the point of departure and the other tangent to the orbit of the point of arrival. It is the lowest energy path from one point to another.

Homestead: Any kind of Nomad settlement, whether it be an asteroid, a station, or several ships docked together in space. Nomads currently occupying a settlement are said to be "homesteading."

Hypergolic Propellants: chemicals that ignite spontaneously on contact with each other; generally used in small maneuver engines or in weaponry.

Igloo: a temporary pressurized chamber (slang term).

Main Belt: The portion of the asteroid Belt that orbits from two to four AU from the sun, between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. The Trojan asteroids of Mars and Jupiter are not considered part of the Main Belt.

Nomads: colloquial term for groups of people that live on asteroids, outside of mainstream human society.

Orbit: the path traced by a celestial body (natural or artificial).

Periapsis: the closest point that a body reaches on an orbit around any other body; the "generic" root of "perihelion" and "perigee."

Perihelion: the closest point that a body reaches in its orbit around the Sun.

Regolith: loose top layer of soil found on airless celestial bodies; it is made up of crushed rock, dust and meteor debris.

Rem: a unit of measure for radiation.

Robinson Station: A type of station resembling a spinning baton or propeller.

Rock Hopper: Derogatory term for a Nomad. Other (printable) terms include rock monkey, dirt moth, gnome and chillbilly.

S Asteroid: stony asteroid, rich in silicates of iron and magnesium, feldspar, iron-nickel alloy and iron sulfide.

Sling: An inertia-based catapult using tethers and counterweights to launch or catch objects.

Sling Shot: A glob of pure, processed metal outfitted with maneuvering jets and a locator beacon. Massive and unmaneuverable, a sling is required to both launch and catch the shot.

Slip Suit: Lightweight emergency space suit worn by Nomads as clothing.

Snowball: slang term for water ice-rich bodies such as comet cores.

SolaPol: Abbreviated name for the Solar Police, the law enforcement arm of the United Space Nations.

Solar Oven: Furnace using the focused energy of the sun to process minerals.

Spacer's Runic: "Universal" language of spacers, named after the written system of runic icons it employs.

Stranger: Any untrustworthy non-Nomad. Also a term of insult when applied to a Nomad.

Tribe: Nomad Clan.

United Space Nations (USN): A chartered organization whose purpose is to promote humanitarian relations between nations.

Vesta: Third largest asteroid in the Asteroid Belt. Home to Clan Furosha and numerous smaller Clans. Ownership is currently being contested by the Montana Mining Collective.

Volatiles: Chemicals that exist as a gas at room temperature, like carbon dioxide, oxygen and hydrogen.

Web: A type of space station using tethers as its main support structure.

Zocalo: A Nomad marketplace and social gathering. Zocalos may be permanent or last as little as a few months.



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CLAN DESIGN WORKSHEET

STEP 1: CONCEPTUALIZING THE CLAN

(1) What does the Clan do survive or earn a living?	
(2) Is the Clan a major Clan? If so, what makes it so important?	
(3) How long has the Clan been in existence?	
(4) How large is the Clan?	
(5) How is the Clan governed? What are its laws?	
(6) What sort of assets does the Clan have?	
(7) What sort of a reputation does the Clan have?	

STEP 2: SELECT CLAN TYPE

Minor	Major
-------	-------

STEP 3: SELECT CLAN SIZE

Size	Number of people*	Size	Number of people*
Small	Less than 100	Large	500-1500
Medium	100-500	Huge	Over 1500

*If the new Clan is splitting off from an existing Clan, the new Clan cannot be larger than half the population of the parent Clan. If the new Clan is the result of two or more parent Clans combining, the parent Clans' populations are totaled to determine the size of the new Clan.

STEP 4: SELECT CLAN REPUTATION

Minor Clan Reputation ranges from -2 to +2, although any rating is possible. Major Clan Reputation ranges from -5 to -3 and +3 to +5.

If the new Clan is the result of two or more parent Clans combining, the new Clan Reputation is equal to the average of the parent Clans' Reputations, rounded down.

If a new Clan is splitting off from an existing Clan, the new Clan Reputation is equal to the average of the parent Clan Reputation minus 1 and divided by 2, rounded down to the nearest whole number.

Clan Reputation	
-----------------	--

STEP 5: PURCHASE CLAN PERKS AND FLAWS

Perks are purchased from a pool of points that are calculated as follows. Fractions are rounded up to the nearest whole number. Perk costs are subtracted from this pool while Flaw costs are added. Any unused points are lost. Perks marked (R) have an associated rating. Perks marked (C) may also be possessed by Clan members as character Perks. All Perks may be acquired during play. Flaws marked (R) have an associated rating. Flaws marked (C) may also be possessed by Clan members as character Flaws. Flaws marked (A) may be acquired during play.

A new Clan must possess at least one Perk and one Flaw possessed by its parent Clans, if possible.

Minor Clan = 5 points	Major Clan = 10 points	Huge Population = x1.5
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PERKS AND FLAWS COST

Clan Perks	Cost	Clan Flaws	Cost
Agreement	1, 5, or 10	Banished (C)(A)	-5
Ally	3/Minor, 7/Major	Code of Honor (C)	-1 to -3
Claim (R)	1-5, +1/Ceres	Debt (R) (A)	-1 to -5
Easy Recognition	3	Feud (R)(C)(A)	-1/r., max -5
Favor (R)	1-5	Poverty (C)(A)	-5
Wealth (C)	5	Secret (R)(C)(A)	-1/r., max -5

STEP 6: PURCHASE CLAN ASSETS

Clan assets are divided into three major categories: vessels, homesteads and stockpiles. The funds available for purchases depend on Clan population, type and prosperity.

$$\text{Base Clan Funds (in millions of credits)} = 0.2 \times \text{Clan population} \times \text{Modifiers}$$

ASSET MODIFIERS

Major Clan:	x5
Poverty Flaw:	x0.5
Wealth Perk:	x2

Vessels: Any type of civilian vessel ever produced in the last 100 years can be purchased. Civilian exo-suits can also be purchased. Military vehicles, exo-suits and exo-armors in general are not available. Vessels have the Problem Prone Flaw: for every point of Rating in that Flaw, the purchase price is reduced by 10%. The Clan must be capable of transporting their entire population at once. Major Clans and Impoverished Clans are exempt from this requirement.

Homesteads: A Clan is not required to purchase a homestead. Station types are described in Chapter 4. The station costs given are for use only when creating Clans. All homesteads are assumed to be temporary structures designed to house only the owning Clan. Permanent and zocalo stations are larger and modify the station cost.

$$\text{Station Cost (in m. of c.)} = (\text{Basic Cost} + \text{Population Cost}) \times \text{Any Function Modifiers}$$

BASIC STATION COST (PICK ONE)

Type	Cost	Used?	Type	Cost	Used?
No Station	0		Anchorage	7.5	
Web Station	1		Robinson Station	10	

POPULATION COST

$$\text{Clan Population} \times 0.05$$

FUNCTION MODIFIERS

Function	Cost	Used?	Function	Cost	Used?
Hosts a Zocalo	x1.5		Permanent Station	x2	

Stockpiles: The average worth of the remaining assets, including equipment, supplies and trade items. Unless the Clan has the Wealth Perk, the value of the stockpile is equal to half the remaining credits after any vessels and homesteads are purchased. The Poverty Flaw divides the value in half again. Individual items of a personal nature, such as vacuum suits and tool kits, are purchased with these funds. Once Clan creation is finished, the stockpile cannot be converted directly into cash, but it can be used as a monetary equivalent when bartering.

STEP 7: FINISHING TOUCHES

The Clan should be named and placed at a specific point in the Belt. A Clan symbol may also be created. There are no restrictions on symbol design, apart from the fact that it should be relevant to the Clan. The Clan is now ready for play.