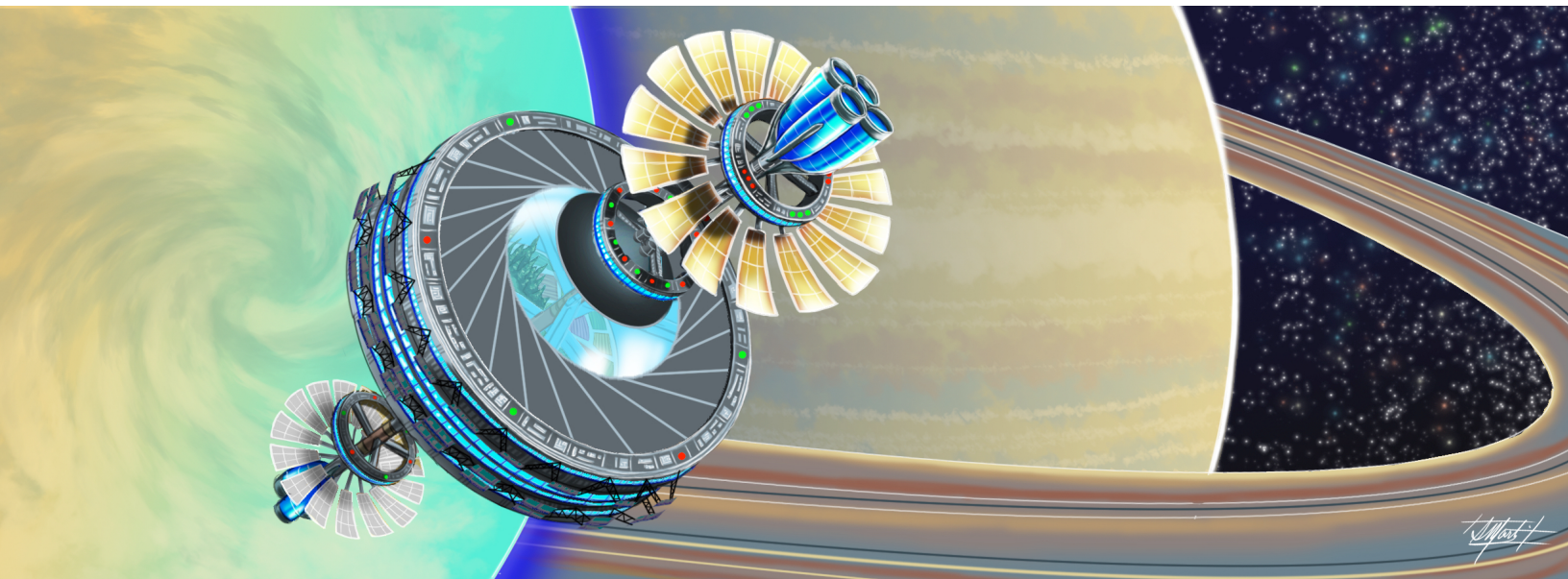


DEATH ON ASCALAON



"Space is the greatest thing, as it contains all things."

- THALES, Greek astronomer, mathematician, philosopher

SENT TO INVESTIGATE A TRAGIC accident on a distant space station, the PCs soon become embroiled in a saboteur's plot and illegal human experiments using ancient alien DNA. Can they stop the saboteur before he destroys the station, and uncover the mystery of the Proteans?

Writing **Aaron Infante-Levy**

Art **Ross McConnell**

The year is 2131. Ascalaon Station orbits Saturn's moon Titan, the greatest readily extractable source of methane clathrate ("methane ice") in the Solar System. The methane ice once served as a compressed package of hydrocarbon fuel, transported by freighter spaceships to major population centers. However, with the advent of fusion energy, the old station gradually fell into disrepair out in the cold depths of space. Now, a task force has assembled to investigate allegations of corruption on the part of the station's owner, Chenzua Corporation.

As members of the team assembled from the military, the Ice Miners Union (IMU), scientists, organized crime, and other groups with vested interests in the station, the characters investigate a

Advancement Level 7

Set in 2131, *Death on Ascalaon* draws inspiration from hard sci-fi horror movies like *Aliens* and *Prometheus*, and the TV show *The Expanse*. It assumes FTL travel hasn't yet been discovered, requiring cryogenic hibernation chambers for long space voyages. Thus, the GM may limit available equipment to items available at AL 6 or 7, including genre A and some genre B items (e.g. rail-guns, spray dressing, mechanoids, respirators, seismic meters, and servobots).

Civilization Data

Civilization mining (M)
Advancement level 7
Wealth average (iii)

Population Data

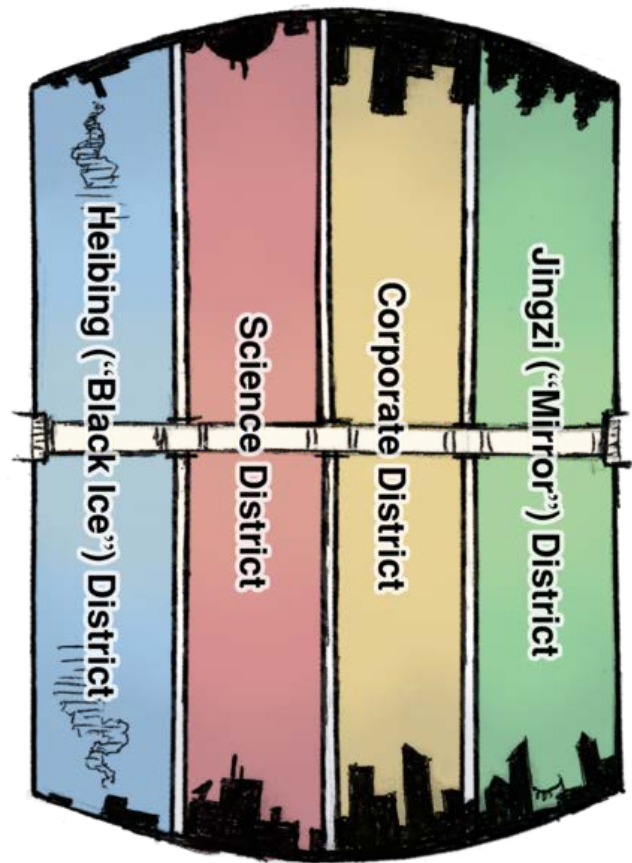
Population 21,365 (4)
Government corporate (cp)
Lawfulness average (C)

Mk1 Class Bernal Sphere

Population designed for 15,000
Diameter 0.47 miles (0.75 km)
Circumference 1.47 miles (2.36 km)
Radius 0.23 miles (0.375 km)
RPM 1.5
Rim speed 136 mph (218 kph)

tragic accident. However, it becomes clear that much more is at stake, with a conspiracy to conceal illegal experiments conducted on the inhabitants of Ascalaon introducing alien tissue into their DNA. Moreover, there are signs of accelerated mutation producing a dangerous hybrid of human and alien adapted to the station's harsh conditions. Tensions between the ice miners, corporate station security, and the Star Marines are magnified when a saboteur detonates a bomb, crippling the station's primary mirror ring, threatening the station with slowly freezing to death unless the saboteur's demands are met.

Secondary explosions caused by the attack soon cause catastrophic damage to the station, which



starts to tear itself apart. With the evacuation clock ticking, the characters' escape is complicated by stopping the saboteur's evolving plans, rescuing trapped personnel, and evading a hostile alien-human hybrid life-form spawned by Chenzua Corporation's illegal experiments.

BACKGROUND

Chenzua Corporation financed Ascalaon station decades ago as a long-term investment in methane ice mining, and despite setbacks it was a resounding success. Initially. However, as the cost of future energies diminished and the demand for methane ice decreased, Chenzua began to rely on cheap labor and skirting space colony regulations to stay competitive. That's when ice miners on Titan discovered it: a cluster of ice crystals arranged in complex geometric patterns impossible for nature to have coincidentally created. Under strict security protocols, Kavan

Cheung and his science team began studying what they discovered was an ancient biocomputer chip created by beings the scientists dubbed “Proteans.” However, they were unable to access the vast data contained within because they lacked the necessary biochemical markers to unlock the chip. Thus began the experiment.

Desperate to keep the old station financially viable, Chenzua Corporation directed Kavan and his team to investigate a way to grow the necessary alien DNA. In an underground facility, Kavan’s team came to the horrific realization that cloned alien DNA could not survive long enough unless it was combined with living human DNA. With intense pressure from Chenzua and implicit corporate approval, coupled with several million credits of financing, Kavan began illegal experiments using live test subjects. Realizing that many ice miners suffered from prolonged methane exposure, Kavan theorized that introducing the alien DNA into a select few miners might actually provide them some level of resistance. Of course, the fact that the ice miners he selected were disenfranchised and sick already undermined any humanitarian justification. Thus began the multi-year study of how the test subjects (victims) responded to the alien DNA.

Over the next 15 years, Kavan’s experiment spiraled out of control even as the political environment on the station degraded. Cost-saving policies like a limit on births to control overcrowding, preferentially cycling the cleanest air through the “upper districts”, and diminishing social services for the ice miners led to growing protests. Moreover, the station’s criminal cartel run by Dagon Timba got ahold of several test subjects who he smuggled from the underground research facility, and has been attempting to devise a manner to transfer the alien DNA from one host to another, like an infection. Slowly, in the dark corners of the station, the “sickness” spread.

Chenzua Corporation)

Size Service (225,000 employees); **REP** 70;

Locate *Trivial* [-]

Sub-groups Operations and intelligence, Management, Public relations, Research and development

Type Corporation; **Traits** excellent equipment, wealthy

Requisition Cap 3,500cr

Forerunners of space colonization initiated in the 21st century by Tsien Hsue-Shen and his contemporaries, Chenzua Corporation pioneered mining asteroids and moons for natural gas and minerals in a cost-effective manner. While officially the corporation is registered with the Chinese government on Earth, its power far exceeds that of any political body, thriving off the poorly regulated environments on mining stations and colonies.

On Earth, Ascalaon Station came to be viewed as a dinosaur, and rumors of corruption spread. However, political forces delayed the investigation until an old induction coil killed several workers and nearly damaged the hull. When news of the tragedy reached Earth, even Chenzua Corporation could not prevent an investigation.



RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

The PCs in this adventure have four main threads to follow. This section describes the overall structure of *Death on Ascalaon*.

Arrival. On their journey to Ascalaon, assassins from Chenzua Corporation will attempt to kill the PCs on their transport and make it look like an accident.

The Investigation. The characters will likely spend the first 48 hours with this thread. This is the issue which initially summons the PCs and which they will, at least at first, spend their time involved with. The PCs will look for information about the induction coil explosion which killed several miners. They may talk to Corbin Mandukhai, Miter Deneh, Dagon Timba, or Lisa Carmichael, or hack the corporate intranet to discover what happened.

The Crisis. 48 hours after the PCs dock at Ascalaon Station, a bomb goes off. This begins The Crisis, a timed series of events. The bomb is set by Cade Moua, a saboteur who hates Chenzua Corporation for being forced to abandon a number of ice miners on Titan, and who (wrongly) believes that station control should be in the hands of the Ice Miner's Union leader, Corbin Mandukhai. For the next 24 hours, a series of times events take place, and the PCs will need to deal with riots, rampaging industrial robots, mutated ice miners, and, eventually, a second bomb.

The Hybrid. Throughout the whole adventure, a hybrid human-protean is acting behind the scenes. Created by Chenzua Corporation's illegal experiments, it was once an ice miner called Vincent Hayes. The hybrid is consumed by the desire to return to Titan, and interferes with the station's operations continually. At first, it is heard echoing in the background of station comms, but eventually it starts a killing spree, and takes control of the station.

ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

The following pages contain these sections:

ASCALAON STATION

This section describes the overall station, and lists several important NPCs.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

This section describes various important parts of Ascalaon Station, along with lesser NPCs who might be found there.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

This is the "prologue" encounter in which Chenzua saboteurs attempt to assassinate the PCs on their transport to Ascalaon.

THE INVESTIGATION

This section details the PCs' first 48 hours on the station, and their investigation into Chenzua's malfeasance.

THE CRISIS

This section contains a timeline which begins with the explosion of Cade Moua's ion bomb, and ends with the destruction of Ascalaon Station. The PCs will deal with events as they arise, possibly catch the saboteur, and escape the station before it explodes.

NEW MONSTERS

Finally, the adventure contains a short section which details the mutated ice miners and the hybrid human-protean.

ASCALAON STATION

A rotational artificial gravity station based on the Bernal Sphere model, Ascalaon Station was one of the first of the series pioneered by Chenzua Corporation. It was designed to provide liveable habitat in the central rotating torus which revolves around a “tram” spanning the zero-gravity axis. This residential sphere is framed by two low-gravity areas — a dome for agriculture, the a torus for cutting and storing methane ice — with a fixed zero-gravity command and control module capping it at the far end. Spaceships dock at the command and control, though ice mining freighters enter through the ice harvesting torus.

Environment. Everything is recycled on the station, from waste to water to food containers, via sophisticated sub-systems including a bio-machine to turn blackwater into potable water and yield a compost tea to nourish the agriculture. Even the air is recycled, though the oxygen imported from the agricultural torus helps to keep it fresh; thus, any airborne toxin introduced to the station would quickly spread. Day and night cycles are simulated with the angle of light delivered through the mirror ring.

Hull. The station’s hull is extremely strong and bulky thanks to the old design standards, with an internal layer causing even projectiles fired from a 36 MJ railgun (standard issue for a heavy weapons platoon of Star Marines) to vaporize. Additionally, its thickness provides passive shielding against space radiation, while a carefully monitored electro-magnetic field provides active static shielding during peak radiation exposure periods.

Interplanetary Internet. A laser-based Internet is accessible throughout the station, though it is prone to outages due to interstellar interference. Delay for the signal to travel from Mars (location of the nearest Internet hub) to Saturn, or vice versa, is approximately one hour or more, depending where the two planets are in their orbit.

Power. Roughly 75% of the station’s power is solar, reliant upon massive photovoltaics and mirrors to gather distant solar energy. Critical systems like life support, electro-magnetic active shielding, and command and control are powered by an early-model compact fusion reactor.

Security. Most station doors are electronically controlled with magnetic locks requiring a key-code. It’s a *Demanding* [21] LOG check to hack them. Cameras monitor activity throughout the station, though with the augmentations made with a growing population there are plentiful blindspots. CoreSec **cops** patrol the residential sphere in small groups, while areas of importance to Chenzua Corporation are guarded by large numbers of **sentry droids**.

ALTO BÁI, CHENZUA EXECUTIVE

Mr. Bái, a **functionary**, is the face of Chenzua Corporation on the station, beholding only to shareholders and the board of directors. It was Mr. Bái who green-lighted Kavan Cheung’s experiments, who spearheaded the cost-cutting measures that have ice miners up in arms, and who made questionable deals with Dagon Timba to keep the extent of the station’s troubles out of the public limelight back on Earth. When he realized the investigation was inevitable, Mr. Bái went to great lengths to cover his tracks and ensure key data-files were conveniently corrupted, though a few loose ends remain to be tied up.

Goal. Minimize damage to Chenzua Corporation during the decommissioning process.

Secret. Though he would claim she was but a prostitute, Mr. Bái cares deeply for the escort, Layla, in his twisted manner and paid for her son’s medical expenses.

Outlook. Life is a game of numbers; we survive or we fall based upon mathematics.

Traits. Mr. Bái is coldly calculating, affecting just enough emotion to conceal his sociopathy, and his cybernetic eyes reflect only pragmatism.

LAUNA CHEUNG, CORESEC

COMMISSIONER

Born on the station along with her brother Kavan, Launa (**cop**) saw her geneticist father Malcolm sink deeper into debt and depression over the course of her younger years that ended in his tragic suicide. At his death, Launa blamed her father's gambling addiction and the criminal ring operated by Dagon Timba, fueling her commitment to working for the station's security. When her father's employer Mr. Tanzo of Chenzua Corporation resolved the family's debts, Launa felt obligated to the corporation and she is complicit in passing along privileged information to Mr. Tanzo and performing other small favors. However, torn between loyalty and her commitment to justice, Launa's relationship with Chenzua doesn't always run smooth. As long as they don't ask too much of her, Launa continues serving two masters.

Goal. Find evidence to bring down Dagon Timba.

Secret. While Launa isn't a gambler or suicidal, she is drawn to taking unnecessary risks and fears there is a bit of her father in her.

Outlook. Good guys are the first to go; better to be smart than good.

Traits. Launa doesn't expect most people to answer straight questions honestly, so she rarely asks any, preferring subtle or leading questions.

KAVAN CHEUNG, CHIEF SCIENCE OFFICER

Kavan (**scientist**) was born to Malcolm and Victoria Cheung, a pair of geneticists employed by Chenzua Corporation. Unlike his sister Launa, Kavan didn't blame anyone for their father's tragic death. Instead he saw it as a fundamental human failing and, ever the dutiful son, continued his father's work, hoping to find a way to prevent any other family from suffering such a tragedy as his own. The breakthrough discovery of the alien biocomputer chip offered hope in Kavan's personal quest, driving him to turn a

blind eye to the shortcuts and amoral approach encouraged by his superiors at Chenzua Corporation. Deep down, however, Kavan knows that the illegal experiments have crossed a line there is no coming back from, and his guilty conscience drives him toward insomnia and an addiction to stims.

Goal. Take responsibility for his criminal experiments.

Secret. Kavan attempts to carry the world on his shoulders, relying on stims to pull long shifts at the lab and stave off the effects of insomnia.

Outlook. Human nature is flawed; only by transcending it can we overcome our lesser selves.

Traits. Kavan is a control freak who can't stand anyone undermining his authority or expertise, or questioning his commitment to the station.

SAMEER YATES, STAR MARINES FIRST LIEUTENANT

A shrewd dictator, the **marine** Sameer is adept at convincing others to follow his directives as if it were in their best advantage. Over 25 years of service with the Star Marines has afforded him a relaxed post away from the front lines, yet he approaches the investigation of Ascalaon with his characteristic professionalism and crisp British sensibilities. Sameer's primary concern is tracking down a cartel of smugglers and pirates operating beyond the Kuiper Belt. Everything else pales in comparison to this duty, including Dagon Timba's petty criminal ring and even (at least initially) the presence of the hybrid protean-human. However, if he is made aware of the threat the hybrid poses and manages to contact his superior officers, Sameer will prioritize hunting down the hybrid.

Goal. Maintain law and order.

Secret. Sameer cut a deal with Dagon Timba, giving Dagon the schedule of marine guard rotation in exchange for current blueprints and pass-codes including the structures that were added to the station since its inception. If made public, this could cost Sameer his career.

Outlook. Virtue is based more in a man's character than in his actions of the moment.

Traits. Sameer is a stickler for tradition, due process, and general civility; nothing infuriates him like being interrupted, circumvented, or spoken to without due respect.

DAGON TIMBA, STATION CRIMINAL KINGPIN

Dagon Timba, a **kingpin**, sees the station as his fiefdom, and has no qualms about telling it to the face of the authorities in his characteristic veiled innuendo. With contacts spanning smugglers and pirates beyond the Kuiper Belt, dealings with Mr. Bái of Chenzua and First Lieutenant Yates, and hidden blackmail material on the Cheung family, Dagon's shadow looms large over the station. However an accident from his years shipping methane ice left Dagon with a degenerative lung condition that no amount of lung transplants or surgery has been able to treat; at best, the lung transplants give him a bit longer to live, but Dagon is looking for a more permanent solution.

Fearful that the underworld elements he holds in delicate balance would shatter in the event of his death, Dagon is leveraging all the blackmail material he's amassed over the years to ensure his organized crime comes out ahead in the transition to Star Marine authority...especially if this means getting rid of the Star Marines.

Timba is usually found in the Night Market, often at a restaurant surrounded by his **thugs**.

Goal. Restore his degrading health using the alien hybrid DNA.

Secret. Dagon has secret plans to orchestrate crowd violence against the Star Marines, hoping to trigger a public outcry that will delegitimize Yates and gives Dagon greater control over the hearts and minds of the station's inhabitants.

Outlook. Power may change hands, but who controls those hands has real power.

Traits. Dagon speaks with a raspy voice, the result of an accident when an old cooler unit exploded and damaged his lungs, but it doesn't stop him from using his voice to dramatic effect.

CORBIN "ICEMAN" MANDUKHAI, ICE MINERS' UNION LEADER

Ice miners have few prospects, but Corbin (**pugilist**) emerged from the methane cthlarate mines by means of his fists, fighting and winning in pit fights where he earned the moniker "Iceman" for his frosty resolve and chilling glare. A walking wall of muscle and tattoos, Corbin honors his fierce Mongol warrior ancestry, yet at the same time he is a man of great insight and temperance. Though Dagon tried to recruit him to crime, Corbin remains wary that the kingpin is attempting to exacerbate conflict between the miners, corporate execs, and Star Marines. Keenly aware of the "sickness" running rampant through the station's Heibing District, Corbin would pay well for a cure. In the meantime, he helps as he is able and tirelessly campaigns for Chenzua Corporation to provide the living and working conditions for its miners that it promised.

Goal. Find a cure to the "sickness" plaguing ice miners.

Secret. To his great shame, Corbin killed a man in the ring, and though his agent at the time swept the story under the rug, it still haunts Corbin and could be used against him.

Outlook. All a man has is the honest work done with his own two hands.

Traits. Corbin never speaks first, preferring to take measure of others; if they're found wanting in courage or honor, there is almost nothing that will get Corbin to open up.



AREA DESCRIPTIONS

What follows is a description of the various areas of Ascalaon Station. It takes the PCs 15 minutes to move from one area to another, and the GM should track time from their arrival.

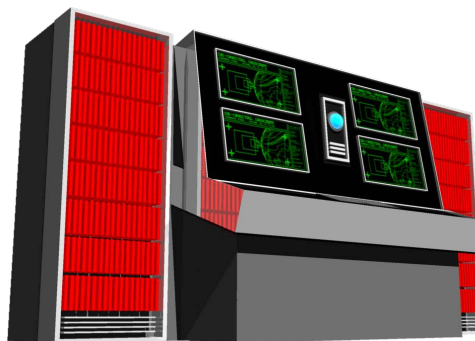
Each location has a shaded box labeled "Crisis". Once the bomb goes off, 48 hours after the PCs' arrival, these boxes tell you what changes occur at that location.

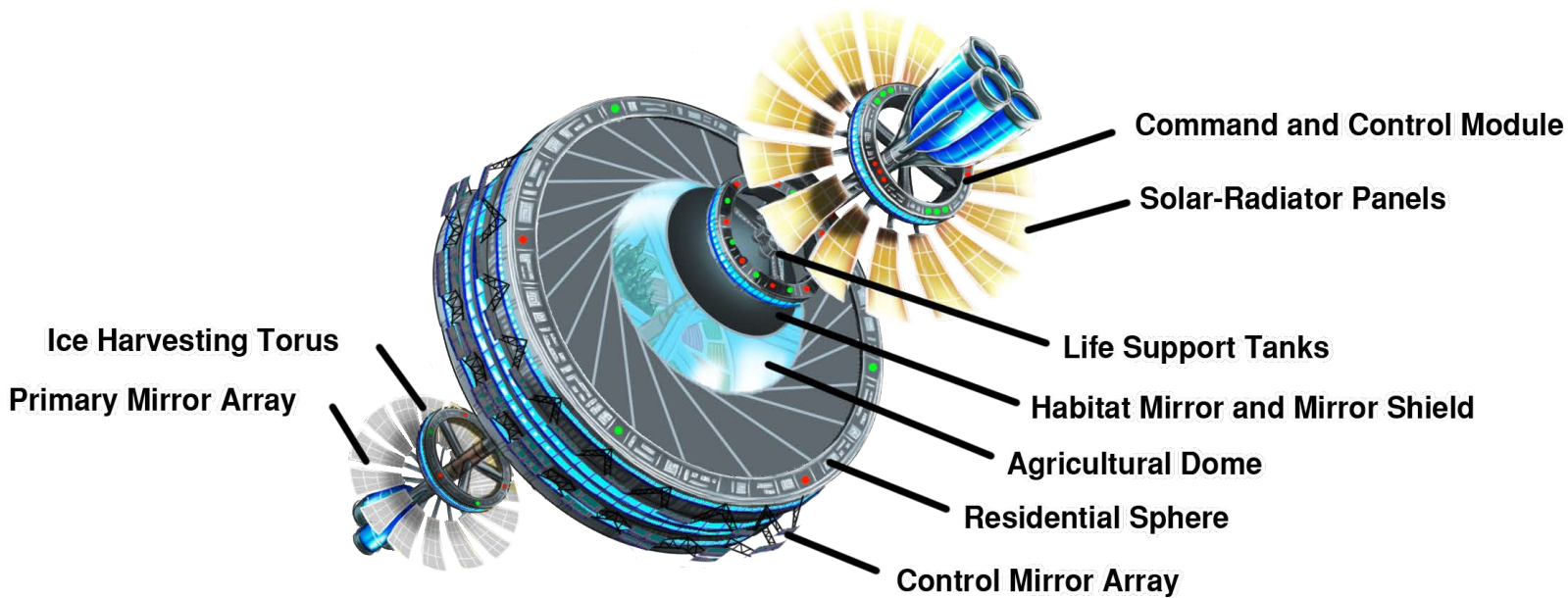
The PCs are free to roam the station. They can buy gear, rest, investigate the accident, and so on.

Every time the PCs move from one major area to another, roll 1d6. On a roll of 6, a random encounter occurs. See the table below.

2D6 ENCOUNTER

- | | | | |
|----------|--|-----------|--|
| 2 | A glitch in one of the station's systems has potentially deadly consequences (e.g. an airlock sealing and a vacuum countdown beginning, or an accident on the tram causing something to fall from the zero-G axis of the residential sphere). Examining the scene of the accident reveals an unusual amount of water vapor and clear slime covering pipes from the hybrid protean-human . | 7 | Interpersonal conflict between one or more of the groups or NPCs on the station (e.g. Kavan arguing ethics with another scientist, CoreSec cops arguing jurisdiction with Star Marines, or Ice Miners Unions reps arguing case settlement with Chenzua lawyers). |
| 3 | A high-ranking Chenzua Corporation functionary protected by two sentry droids attempting to sway public opinion, buy votes, and blackmail rivals. | 8 | A group of 2d6 ice miners hauling a load, sharing a smoke or drink between shifts, plotting against their corporate masters, or trading mining stories of "ghosts" on Titan. |
| 4 | A troop of 1d6+1 marines overseeing a transfer of security codes, contributing to welding or other heavy labor, or drinking, gambling, and roughhousing. | 9 | 1d6+1 medics moving workers in hover-gurnies, injured in a recent bombing or construction accident, or ice miners suffering "illness" (due to the alien DNA experiment). |
| 5 | 1d6+1 cops working for CoreSec shaking down informants, taking bribes, or searching for signs of the saboteur . | 10 | A civilian condemning Chenzua Corporation and riling the station workers . The situation could become explosive if the observing cops are provoked, leading to a fist fight with workers and cops alike. |
| 6 | 2d6 workers repairing a failing system or retiring an old system while taking poor safety precautions. | 11 | A group of 1d6+2 thugs working for Dagon Timba hustling credits in a protection racket, trading stims, attempting to strip a malfunctioning industrial robot, or smuggling the corpse of a mutated ice miner . |
| | | 12 | 1d6+1 mutated ice miners following an agenda similar to the hybrid protean-human . |





COMMAND & CONTROL MODULE

Positioned near the “tip” of the station, the C&C module is a rotating torus and offers multiple viewports out into space. The primary docking ports are located here, segregated from the station by vacuum-sealed airlocks; up to four ships can dock simultaneously, and besides the *Ma Xian* the characters arrived on, the Star Marine ship *FSS Intrepid* is docked here as well. Computer systems governing most of the station’s sub-systems and sensors gathering data on Titan, radiation monitors and static shield generators, as well as communications are managed by 15 **workers** overseen by Janeth Noels, a savvy **scientist** in charge of mission operations not yet jaded by deteriorating conditions on the station. Janeth often handles comms with incoming vessels. 2 **marines** have been stationed here on Lieutenant Yates’ orders.

Crisis. Cade Moua, the saboteur, locks out controls of the station. The command codes required to access the C&C computers are known only to three individuals — Janeth Noels, Alto Bái, and Lieutenant Yates — and all of them swear they’ve told no one else. However, searching Mr. Bái’s office discovers a

bugging device; if questioned about the bugging device, Mr. Bái will reluctantly admit his relationship with the escort Layla Fields who lives in an apartment overlooking the hanging gardens.

SOLAR-RADIATOR PANELS

Massive photovoltaic systems of multiple panels linked in series are arrayed at either end of the station like four-pronged propellers. Their operational status can be monitored from the C&C module or from wall access panels in the zero-gravity tube leading to the agricultural dome, though repairs require undertaking a space walk.

Crisis. At the onset of the crisis, the bomb destroys the solar-radiator panels at the ice harvesting torus tip of the station. The panels at the C&C tip are rigged with a powerful bomb with multiple redundant triggers and a remote detonator; constructing a Faraday Cage around the bomb will block the signal to the detonator, and it may be possible to cut off the section of the frame the bomb is attached to using one of the power ice-mining lasers.

LIFE SUPPORT TANKS & STATIC SHIELD GENERATOR

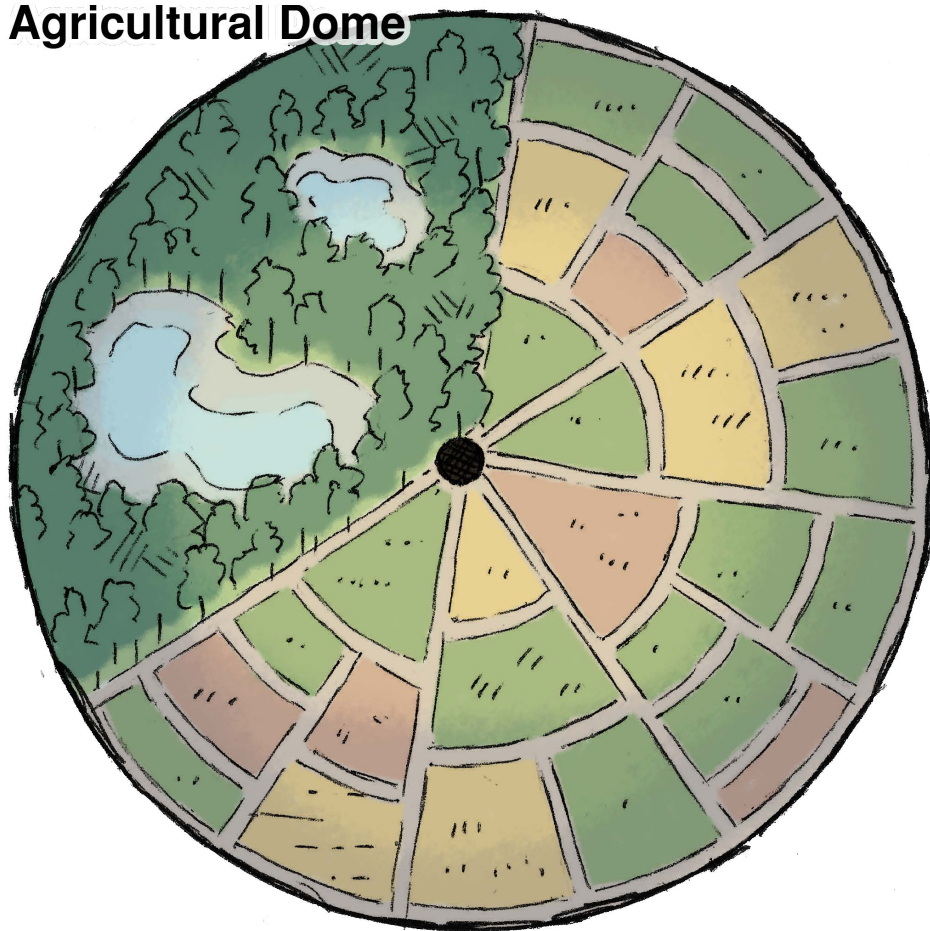
Eight massive tanks arrayed at the apex of the agricultural dome handle all life support elements aboard the station, including water reclamation and scrubbing of atmospheric gases. Because it spins along with the agricultural torus, it is low-gravity. In the past month, tank #8 has been experiencing reductions in operational efficiency but none of the work crews have been able to diagnose the problem. What none of them realize is that a **gibbermouth** has lodged itself in the intake valves connecting the Waste Management to tank #8. This loathsome creature (considered an alien instead of a fey) is the byproduct of Kavan Cheung's experiment at triggering the alien DNA to self-replicate in a human body; however, the experiment killed its host and Dagon Timba stole the corpses in his quest to harvest alien DNA to implant in himself. The gibbermouth grew from this corpse after one of Dagon's thugs tried to hide it in the blackwater processing center.

Crisis. Additionally, the static shield generator is located between these tanks, and the **saboteur** Cade Moua uses it as his base of operations during the bomb threat, relying on the ambient static energy to mask the source of his transmissions.

AGRICULTURAL DOME

A low-gravity zone, the agricultural dome is composed of a variety of intensive food growing projects ranging from bio-intensive gardens teaming with legumes, grains, and fruit trees, hydroponic vegetable vats, and green walls of edible algae. The lower gravity increases the soil's water holding capacity, supporting an increase in various soil microbes emitting Nitrogen gases; thus, the station's crops require only a fraction of the irrigation and fertilizer required on Earth. Chickens and eggs are cultivated here along with goats and several species of lizard. Fish tanks double as ecology for growing a variety of micronutrient-

Agricultural Dome



dense water plants. A tightly monitored population of bees is controlled with sound waves to move them to different sections of the torus to pollinate flowers when it is needed. Food processing is also handled in this torus as well. At any given time, over 500 **workers** tend the fields or processing plants.

Luke and Connie Farrago (**scientists**) are the station's chief agricultural officers working to maximize food production against the pressures of an overcrowded station. However, their hands are not entirely clean; in exchange for covering up seditious crimes committed by their son Ethan against Chenzua Corporation, Dagon Timba leveraged the scientist couple into cultivating a variety of drugs ranging from cannabis to betel nut.

HABITAT MIRROR & MIRROR SHIELD

Two massive concave mirror arrays at either end of the residential sphere reflect the sun's light through smart windows. The mirrors adjoining the Heibing District are constantly fogging over due to a condenser design flaw and off-gassing of methane from harvested methane ice. Since the connection between the residential sphere and the tori is the weakest part of the station, a shield structure serves to protect the mirrors and shelter the residential sphere from all but the most catastrophic damage occurring in the tori.

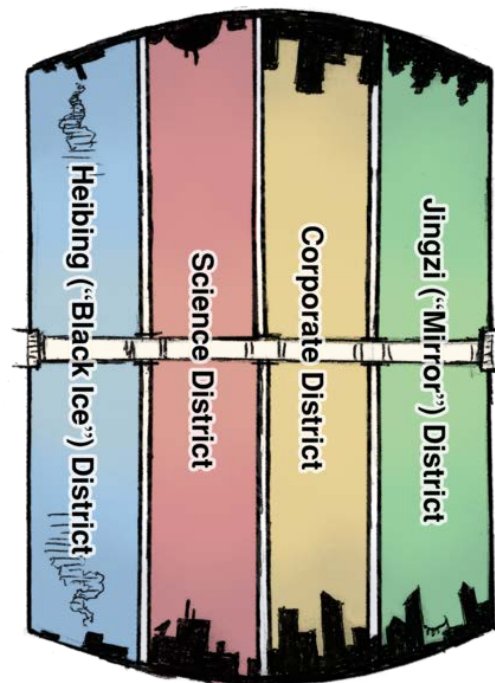
CONTROL MIRROR ARRAY

An array of 40 large mirrors organized around the exterior of the residential sphere, connected via an elaborate strut architecture, direct sunlight to the habitat mirror. The control mirror array is especially critical when Titan's orbit (and thus the orbiting space station) places Saturn between it and the sun, for without it very little sunlight would reach the mirror and the station would be plunged into darkness. Computer controls adjust the angle of the control mirrors to adjust how much light reaches the residential sphere, simulating a 24 hour day and night cycle. A 10 foot (3 m) thick armored ring on the outside of the array protects the mirrors from space debris. Space conditions (zero-g, vacuum) prevail within the array.

RESIDENTIAL SPHERE

The heart of Ascalaon station is an MK1 Class Bernal Sphere, which most inhabitants simply call "The Sphere" but is in actuality a cylinder. It is organized into two levels — ground and upper deck — and four districts cutting through the sphere like slices: the Jingzi ("Mirror") District, the Corporate District, the Science District, and the Heibing ("Black Ice") District. While much of the sphere has Earth- normal gravity, the rim sections of the Jingzi and Heibing Districts are low-g, as is the upper deck which houses industrial facilities where reduced gravity leads to increased energy efficiency.

Spanning the length of the zero-g center axis is a high-speed magnetically propelled tram moving at 100 mph (160 kph). It runs inside a guideway tube with stops at elevators providing a safe transition from the zero-g stationary central axis to the sphere's rim (or "ground level") spinning at high-speed. Due to the low air pressure at the sphere's central axis, the tram is pressurized via cryogenic tanks in much the same way that airplane cabins are pressurized; sudden exposure to the low air pressure of the central axis would cause decompression sickness without this pressurization.



The districts are described below, along with some notable locations within each district. Note that this is, functionally, a city, and there are hundreds of other locations, shops, homes, workplaces, offices, factories, bars, and clubs for the PCs to visit.

Each district is also accompanied by a map. Because the space station is a rotating cylinder, the habitable area is on the inside of the outer wall; gravity is therefore created via centripetal acceleration. The maps wrap around the inside of the cylinder; each is, in effect, a loop, and leaving one end of the map brings the PCs round to the other end.

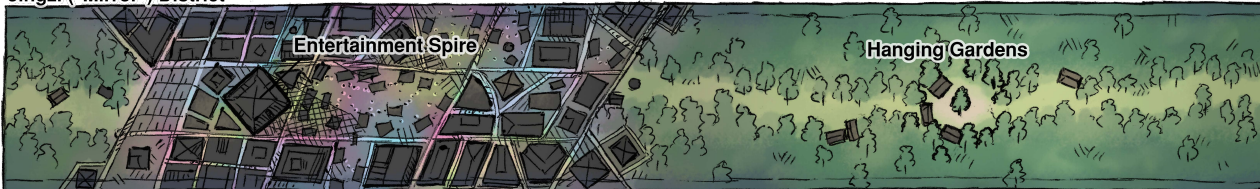
The circumference of the cylinder (and therefore the length of each of the maps below) is just under 1.5 miles.

JINGZI ("MIRROR") DISTRICT

So named for its proximity to the pristinely clear habitat mirror which provides a dramatic reflection of the sphere's interior, the Jingzi District houses the entertainment spire, gardens, low-g recreation centers, and physical fitness and rehabilitation offices. More greenery can be found here than anywhere else in the station, and a variety of station personnel can be found in the district.

Entertainment Spire. The tallest building in the district, the entertainment spire operates both services for station employees as well as providing education opportunities. It houses a radio station operated by young cadets, virtual

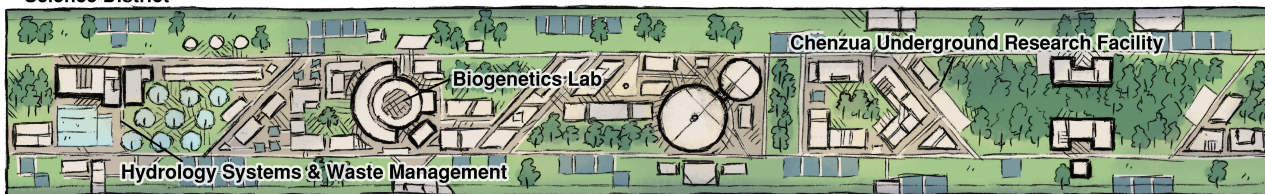
Jingzi ("Mirror") District



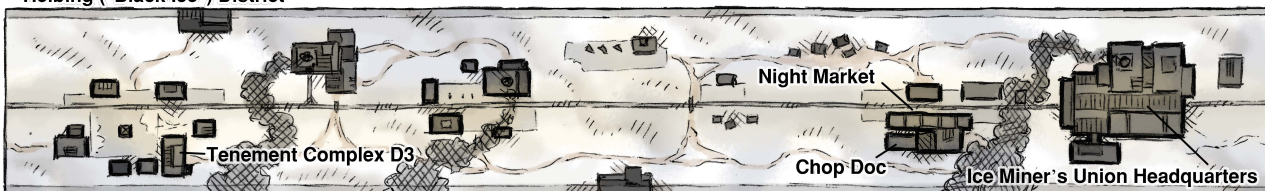
Corporate District



Science District



Heibing ("Black Ice") District



reality simulators, theaters, a music hall, a dining experience unlike any other at The Pinnacle officer's lounge, and a low-g spire used for communications training technicians. Multiple stories team with stalls of vendors speaking in an eclectic mix of Mandarin, Cantonese, Hmong, and English; they offer vat-grown squid, spices imported from earth, holovids, and the occasional illegal drug.

Nasco Keeneh, a **thug** working for Dagon Timba, can be found peddling stims to the station's youth; however, after seeing that Dagon has been harvesting corpses and sensing that the climate on the station is deteriorating, he began skimming off the top with plans to buy his way onto a ship and leave the station behind.

Hanging Gardens. Mr. Bái's favored spot for reflection, the hanging gardens overlook the small low-g band of the district nearest the mirror. A meditative blend of self-repairing concrete filled with super-absorbent polymers and green walls planted with succulents, ferns, and ivy, the gardens are organized as a labyrinth with numerous alcoves for quiet conversation. Clandestine meetings between the station's power players take place amidst the green concrete walls that swallow sound. The hybrid protean-human favors the lower reaches of the gardens where the pumps and irrigation systems are located as one of its hiding places.

Crisis. Layla Fields, the escort in a relationship with Mr. Bái, operates from an apartment overlooking the gardens where she lives the good life. However, she used to be one of Dagon Timba's girls, only earning her freedom by blackmailing Dagon with documents proving his plan to spark conflict between the Star Marines and the station personnel. When Cade Moua discovered this, he stole the documents and threatened to turn them over to Dagon — a death sentence for Layla — unless she bugged Mr. Bái's office for him. Through the bug and extensive decryption, Cade was able to learn the station's command codes.

CORPORATE DISTRICT

Chenzua Corporation, its subsidiaries, and contractors are based in the wealthy and well-regulated Corporate District. Gleaming sleek architectonic structures reach up to the industrial upper level. **Functionaries** are commonly assisted by mechanoids, servobots, and drones in this district, and street-level crime is virtually unheard of.

Chenzua Corporate HQ. The most secure building in the entire station, the corporate headquarters for Chenzua is constructed of reinforced glass and steel that twists midway in a show of architectural egotism. While Mr. Bái is the ultimate authority, he does answer to a board of directors who communicate from across the solar system via a regular feed on dedicated monitors in the board room. **Sentry droids** patrol the compound, and state-of-the-art voice recognition is required to gain entry through most doors, while retinal scans are required for the top secret upper levels where Mr. Bái's office and the board of directors resides.

Hacking the corporate headquarter's intranet (or blackmailing Mr. Bái) provides access to personnel records showing several dozen dead employees still on Chenzua's payroll, as well as a mysterious project code-named Proteus with a fabricated tax ID code and a budget in the millions of credits. If this information is turned over to Launa, she will be forced to take Mr. Bái into custody. If it is turned over to the media or Ice Miner's Union, public sentiment on the station turns against Chenzua Corporation, providing the leverage the ice miners need to get better wages, insurance, and working conditions from Chenzua.

CoreSec Station Security. CoreSec, private security contractors responsible for the station's internal security, operate as a blend of police force, prison facility, and intelligence agency. While Chenzua controls most of the cops through bribery and indoctrination, Launa Cheung remains skeptical, torn between seeking justice and obeying her corporate supervisors.

Below ground level is a prison complex housing between approximately 100 criminals working toward payroll by doing supervised hard labor in the industrial upper levels. However, criminals with ties to Dagon Timba or Chenzua never stay in holding more than 24 hours.

Crisis. Security feed from cameras throughout Ascalaon station is processed by CoreSec. However, in the wake of the explosion, several files are mysteriously corrupted, thanks to the handiwork of Chenzua's corporate agents. If those files are restored, they reveal the **ice miner** Vincent Hayes having sex with the prostitute Ginger when he began to transform into the protean-human hybrid; the horrified prostitute fled, and Hayes staggered backwards as his fingers elongated and bent, then an electrical blue flash flooded the room and the video feed goes to static.

Council Hall. While politics in the station are manipulated behind the scenes by Chenzua Corporation, the barest shreds of democracy are given lip service at the council hall. Judicial and executive government is based here, relying on juries and an elected House of Speakers with 12 members elected by vote and one member - Chairman Derald Simmard (**functionary**) - placed by Chenzua Corporation's board of directors. While the Chairman is more of a figurehead without a vote in most discussions, he does have the deciding vote in the event of a tie.

Currently, First Lieutenant Yates is butting heads with the House of Speakers over the presence of the marines on the station.



SCIENCE DISTRICT

The Science District would seem sterile were it not for major environmental subsystems being integrated into the buildings and streets, with numerous sky-bridges and mag-elevators linking everything together. It also houses the primary medical bay which sees a steady stream of injured and ill miners, and in the event of disaster would become the triage center.

Bio-genetics Lab. Originally designed for ongoing research into the long-term effects of living in space across multiple generations, particularly for the changes it exerts in utero, the bio-genetic lab is managed by a subsidiary of Chenzua Corporation called Alliant Genomics. Kavan Cheung works from this lab, when he isn't at the underground research facility, developing genetically-individualized medicine and nutritional therapies for the station's personnel. One of the **scientists**, Lisa Carmichael, witnessed troupes of agents wearing black moving bodies of ice miners from cryo-freeze during the night cycle; Kavan assured her it was standard protocol, but she suspects something is going on.

Chenzua Underground Research Facility. Below the street level, there is a hologram of a dead end alley, underneath that hologram is a mag-locked door, and behind that door is Kavan's illegal research facility. Herein are two dozen restrained "patients" — mutated **ice miners** — in various stages of illness as their bodies react to the introduction of protean DNA. The **medics** and **scientists** operating here hide behind turquoise suits and white masks, compensated generously for their discretion by Chenzua Corporation.

Crisis. Two sentry droids provide security, and in the event of a raid Kavan and the staff will attempt to initiate "the final protocol"; if a retinal scan is passed and a button pressed, the research facility begins filling with poisonous liquid nitrogen gas while the staff destroy records and attempt to flee through a secret magnetic door leading into the Heibing District. Extensive

medical records document the nature of the experiments in detail, including the so-called “patient zero”, one Vincent Hayes who went missing two months ago shortly after falling into a comatose state.

Hydrology Systems & Waste Management.

Water reclamation and filtration relies on a series of massive hygroscopic water pipes that keep the station’s humidity constant. A sophisticated “living machine” designed as a greenway strip through the Science District, converts blackwater into potable water and other human wastes into compost for transport to the agricultural dome. The **hybrid protean-human** uses the hygroscopic water pipes as one of its means for moving about the station unseen.

HEIBING (“BLACK ICE”) DISTRICT

Grimy and overcrowded, the Heibing District is so named due to the traces of residue from industrial cooling systems that cause the mirrors to grow cloudy with a thin layer of filth. Thus, most of the time the district isn’t quite as bright as others, and malfunctioning cryogenic systems often live a chill in the air or a thin layer of fog on the ground in back alleys. Officially, the name is the Worker Housing District, but only the Chenzua executives in their ivory towers bother with that name anymore. The Heibing was dangerous enough thanks to criminal gangs doing Dagon Timba’s bidding, but the new rash of mutated **ice miners** and mysterious killings have led many occupants to believe it is deliberately being target by Mr. Bái as some twisted experiment.

Chop Doc. Bingwen Gao, an agoraphobic disgraced **medic**, operates a clinic located in the twisted allies behind the night market where he performs illegal cybernetic procedures and provides vat-grown organs at exorbitant prices. He is served by a glitchy **blaster drone** called Servo-7 that is constantly playing Daft Punk on Gao’s sound system and an android **worker**

named VG who has a morbid fascination with the corpses of mutated ice miners that Gao keeps in cold storage. Working for Dagon Timba, Gao dissects the corpses with the hopes of unlocking the secrets of the protean DNA. Thus far, the closest he came to success was with **ice miner** Vincent Hayes, who Gao considered “patient zero” of the mutations afflicting the station; however, Vincent vanished from the lab 60 days ago, leaving behind a broken cryogenic chamber. Reviewing Gao’s spotty medical records reveals that Vincent Hayes medical tests showed elevating levels of nitrogen in his blood that should have killed him and that the mutations to his DNA were insertions of an unknown base pairs that seemed to be replicating exponentially. Indeed, Vincent Hayes became the **hybrid protean-human**.

Crisis. Unbeknownst to Gao, the humble android VG succeeded where he failed, devising a method by which a sample of the protean DNA can be extracted from the cerebrospinal fluid via a special syringe. Fascinated by the proteans, once VG realizes that the **hybrid protean-human** is loose on the station, VG plans to aid the hybrid in returning to Titan, showing up at an inopportune moment for the characters.

Ice Miner’s Union Headquarters. Headed by Corbin Mandhukai, the IMU headquarters include offices where records of all ice miners are kept, a bar for ice miners to relax, meeting rooms for handling negotiations with Chenzua Corporation as well as internal conflicts, welfare offices, and job training centers.

Crisis. Mr. Bái puts pressure on Launa Cheung to lead a strike force of **cops** to bring Corbin Mandhukai in for questioning in relation to the act of terrorism. However, the **miners** refuse to turn him over to the authorities, believing it all to be a corporate scheme to dismantle the IMU. Corbin will be willing to meet with a small unarmed group inside the headquarters however to discuss what he knows about the bomber.

Night Market. The “night” market was given its name from similar grey markets back on Earth teeming with Asian foods, illicit drugs, weapons, holovids, recycled comms and datapads, and bits scavenged from droids across the station. Several of Dagon Timba’s **thugs** routinely patrol the night market, shaking down merchants for protection credits.

Crisis. Miter Deneh, a dealer in second-hand and “questionably legal” electronics and droid parts, acquired several of the components Cade needed to construct his ion bomb, operating under the threat of Cade blackmailing him with information about Miter colluding with the Star Marines to testify against several well-known space pirates. If Miter sees signs of the authorities, he flees into the market using all the gadgets he has at his disposal. Should Lieutenant Yates become aware of the situation, he’ll dispatch a squad of **marines** to bring Miter into his protective custody.

Tenement Complex D3. A concrete-polymer tenement complex that was added to the station as a temporary measure to manage overcrowding, D3 sports its fair share of garish neon lights that intermittently flicker. **Workers** are crammed into claustrophobic apartments, watching strangers with suspicious sunken eyes.

Crisis. Unit #117 belongs to Cade Moua, the **saboteur**. Technical manuals for ion and pipe bomb-making are intermixed with blueprints for the station, an early draft of a manifesto ranting against corporate control, and dismantled bits from servobots. A smashed comm unit can be restored to reveal several calls to a Miter Deneh (a merchant in the night market). A broken datapad can be restored to reveal notes on three of the station’s weak points: the connection points for the solar-radiation panels, the logic chips of the industrial robots manning the ice harvesting torus, and a flaw in the servos governing the control mirror array.

ICE HARVESTING TORUS

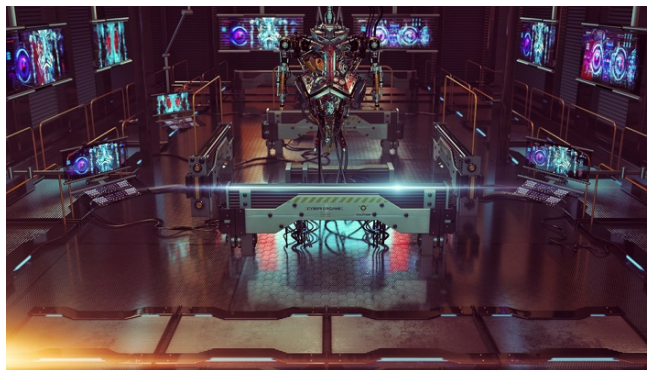
Chunks of methane ice large enough to fill to a shipping container are off-loaded from shuttlecraft flying between the Cassini mining outpost and Ascalaon station by **industrial robots** operating in the low-gravity ice harvesting torus. Due to the extreme chill necessary to keep the methane ice from melting, **ice miners** who operate here wear environmental suits. A high-powered ventilation system gathers any off-gassing methane and utilizes it for cooking fuel in the kitchens of the stations’ inhabitants. A fleet of six shuttlecraft and one freighter are docked in the docking bay of the torus.

Crisis. At 8:00 hours, the **saboteur** takes control of the **industrial robots**, using them to attack anyone trying to oppose his plan.

PRIMARY MIRROR ARRAY

A curved 3 km circumference slightly concave fixed mirror redirects light to the habitat mirror (Area 5) and control mirror array (Area 6), operating on similar principles to a telescope.

Crisis. All maintenance to the primary mirror ring must be done via a spacewalk, with special anchor points along the tensile rods connecting the ring to the station allow for a character to clip on and rely on an electromagnetic device to quickly drag them to the mirror ring. From there, additional clips allow one to traverse the massive mirror itself.



STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The PCs are a multi-disciplinary task force put together to investigate the accident on Ascalaon Station. In this short prologue encounter, the PCs wake a week early from their cryogenic pods. A quick inspection reveals that the other crew members also on the ship are no longer in their pods.

The other crewmembers are **thugs** led by a **saboteur** employed by Chenzua Corporation. Their task is to prevent the task force from reaching Ascalaon Station, but to make it look like an accident. To that end, they can't simply kill the PC in their cryogenic pods; they also need to crash the ship into Titan to hide the evidence. Their plan is as follows:

- ❖ Awake a week early in their cryogenic pods, kill the PCs and the pilot, and sabotage the autopilot.
- ❖ Escape via an emergency shuttle in the cargo bay as the *Mai Xian* crashes into Titan and send a distress signal for rescue.

Unfortunately, their plan has gone slightly awry. When they emerged from their cryogenic pods, and attempted to kill the pilot and two marines assigned to the PCs, the PCs' pods also started to open. They quickly fled the chamber, sealing the bulkhead behind them and hastened to disable the autopilot. They did this by accessing the computer system's core matrix and destroying it. They then hurried to the cargo bay to make their escape.

CRYOGENICS CHAMBER

When the PCs awaken, they find themselves in the darkened cryogenics chamber. It is immediately apparent that they have woken early, and a glance through a porthole shows Saturn still the size of a penny. A *Routine* [10] LOG check quickly reveals that that means it's still about a week away.

Computer terminal. A low warning sound is coming from a flashing red light on one wall, and a terminal next to it can reveal that the computer is in shutdown mode. The PCs have a short time to query the computer via the terminal; the voice controls are already shut down, so they are reduced to using an archaic keyboard. They can ask three short questions, and get answers on a *Routine* [10] LOG check for each before the system completely deactivates. The system can answer on any subject and can reveal the location of the saboteurs.

Dying pilot. The cryogenic chamber has pods for the PCs, two marines, and the other crewmembers – one villain for each PC, plus a couple of spare pods. The marines are already dead, and the pilot is dying. The saboteurs opened his pod and stabbed him before they fled. He can gasp out a short conversation before he expires, and can reveal that the crew attempted to kill him, and were going to kill the PCs, before the alert systems went off and the PCs' pods started to open, at which point they took off; one of them shouted “*Get to the cargo bay!*” The pilot dies after a couple of minutes.

Sealed door. Once the PCs have gathered themselves, they will need to escape the chamber. The sealed door will require a *Challenging* [16] LOG or AGI check to open. Once it opens, the PCs will see that the lights are off everywhere in the ship, except for some flashing red alert lights.

SABOTEURS IN THE CARGO BAY

If the PCs go to the cargo bay, the villains will be there – one **saboteur** (a woman named Zeryl Berlanti) and a number of **thugs** making up the total to equal the number of PCs. There is a shuttlepod also in the bay, which they intend to use to escape; one of them is accessing the shuttle door, another is accessing the cargo bay door controls, while the others are positioned on guard. The cargo bay has plenty of crates,

balconies, even a basketball hoop, providing plenty of cover and positional options.

Bodies. Once the thugs are killed, investigating their bodies reveals little, but one thug has a small patch sewn inside his jacket. It is the Chenzua Corporation logo.

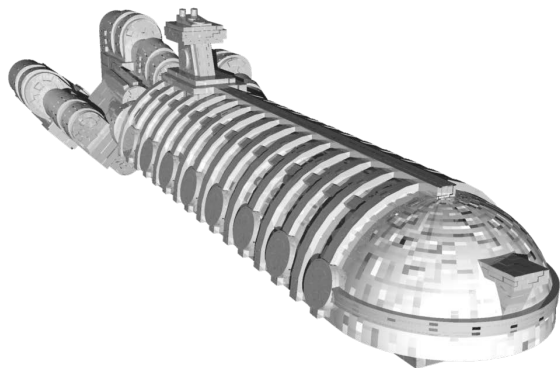
Experience. Award the PCs for a medium encounter (equal to their grade).

PILOTING THE SHIP

The pilot is dead, and the ship is a week away from Saturn on a crash course for Titan. The PCs will need to get the computer back online and then pilot the ship in to dock at Ascalaon Station.

Repairing the computer. This is a minor extended task (one hour intervals). Three *Difficult* [16] LOG checks are required. There is no penalty for failed checks, and the PCs have plenty of time. This is just an opportunity to introduce the players to a straightforward engineering task.

Docking the ship. Once the computer is repaired, it is possible to pilot the ship. Like the repair, this is an extended task requiring three *Difficult* [16] AGI checks. The first is to navigate to the station; the second is to align with the docking port, and the last is to actually dock the ship. If the third check is failed, the ship takes 1d6 damage (it has 15 superstructure points); the check can be repeated, but after 15 damage, the vessel is disabled and the PCs will be forced to call for an embarrassing rescue by the *FSS Intrepid*, currently docked at Ascalaon. Once docked, award the PCs for a medium encounter.



The *Mai Xian* is an Aphid Class III Transport.

Saturn's rings loom in the black expanse as the *Mai Xian* receives clearance from the space station authority to dock. A few more rotations and Saturn's turquoise moon Titan comes into view with its cloudy ice storms below the cylindrical station, the reflection from the station's solar mirrors momentarily blinding you. Guiding red lights flash in void of space as the ship slides into the docking clamps, sending a tremor through the hull. You've mostly recovered from the cryogenically-induced hibernation for the voyage, having spent the last week rehabilitating your bodies and prepping for the mission ahead.

The mandate laid out before you is clear: to conduct an investigation into allegations of corporate corruption and misconduct on the part of Chenzua Corporation, focusing on the tragic accident which killed several ice miners. Some 20,000 souls on the overcrowded station from the last report. All with something to hide.

Once docked, read the following.

A crisp female voice, military in precision, comes over the comms, "Welcome to Ascalaon, crew and passengers of the *Mai Xian*. How did cryo treat you? You will find First Lieutenant Sameer Yates of the Star Marines and Officer Launa Cheung of CoreSec waiting to greet you through the airlock."

As promised, the PCs are greeted by Launa Cheung and Sameer Yates. The characters are briefed on the current political and operational status of the station, the strange "illness" afflicting ice miners, and phases of the decommissioning process. Officially, they are promised access to any data files they need to investigate Chenzua Corporation, but Launa tells them straight up that Mr. Alto Bái won't be forthcoming.

THE INVESTIGATION

The allegations leveled against Chenzua Corporation include misappropriation of government grant funds, mistreatment of their workforce, and failure to maintain environmental and safety standards of the station as a working environment. The characters can unearth the following pieces of evidence:

- ❖ Corbin Mandukhai has collected dozens of technical reports of faulty machinery injuring miners. In particular, he can point the PCs to unit IB-460, a malfunctioning industrial robot in the ice harvesting torus that was taken offline after breaking a miner's legs. A *Challenging [13]* LOG check reveals the robot's serial number has been altered from an older number that should have been recycled 20 years ago. In fact, all of the industrial robots are similarly operating past their "expiration date."
- ❖ Miter Deneh was injured by the faulty induction coil but never came forward because he wanted to keep his shady dealings out of the spotlight, and he even acquired parts of the coil after it was decommissioned post-accident. However, if Miter sees signs of the authorities, he flees into the market using all the gadgets he has at his disposal; catching him requires an opposed extended task (first to three wins) against his dice pool of **5d6**.
- ❖ Dagon Timba collected many hours of Mr. Bái's private correspondence with the Chenzua board of directors, thanks to a bug planted by Mr. Bái's lover Layla. In these recordings Mr. Bái explicitly discusses obscuring exactly how government funding is being spent on a medical project codenamed Proteus. Convincing Dagon to share his ace card, however, will require negotiation.
- ❖ Hacking the corporate headquarter's intranet with a *Difficult [16]* LOG check or blackmailing Mr. Bái provides access to personnel records showing several dozen dead employees still on Chenzua's payroll, as well as a mysterious medical project code-named Proteus with a fabricated tax ID code and a budget in the millions of credits.
- ❖ Cade Moua, the **saboteur**, has a mining helmet feed video from years ago of his escape along with Mr. Bái from a collapsing icy fissure where Mr. Bái is shown cutting a tether to save himself at the expense of the team and ordering Cade to abandon infected miners. However, convincing Cade that a character is on his side will require a *Difficult [16]* CHA check.
- ❖ Lisa Carmichael at the bio-genetics lab can reveal she saw miners whose bodies were in cry-freeze being moved out toward an underground research facility , which houses evidence of the true nature of project Proteus: injecting alien DNA into humans. However, convincing Lisa to be forthcoming about her boss Kavan's illicit actions requires a *Difficult [16]* CHA check.

THE CRISIS

The core of *Death on Ascalaon* is The Crisis, an event which takes place shortly after the characters arrive on the station. The GM will need to track time, as the events unfold at set times.

During The Crisis, locations change as noted in their area descriptions.

Time is measured in hours since The Crisis began. Therefore, the bomb which initiates it goes off at **0:00 hours**. The entire event lasts 24 hours. Prior to the initial explosion, the characters have 48 hours to move about Ascalaon Station, probe into the accident they were sent to investigate, meet NPCs, shop for gear, and so on.

Remember that it takes 15 minutes to move from one major area to another, and that any given encounter typically takes 15 minutes.

48 hours after the characters' arrival on Ascalaon station, the **saboteur** Cade Moua detonates an ion bomb that destroys the Solar-Radiator Panels. The force of the explosion shakes the whole station and scatters hazardous debris around the Ice Harvesting Torus, making it dangerous for shuttles to enter or leave the secondary dock there. No deaths are reported, but there are multiple injuries. Cade Moua then contacts CoreSec and the media outlet at the Entertainment Spire, with the following demands.

THE CHARACTERS' ROLE

The characters may become involved in the hunt for Cade (and mitigating the effects of his sabotage on the station) if they've made the connection between Cade and Mr. Bái during their investigation. Otherwise, First Lieutenant Yates and Officer Launa Cheung, finding themselves at loggerheads regarding who has primary authority to go after, may ask the characters to act as go-betweens; this could cast them in the role of negotiators, investigators, or a strike force depending on the group's approach. The characters may interact with the following timeline as they see fit, or develop their own plan to deal with the saboteur.

If the characters manage to find Cade before **8:00 hours**, then no second bomb is triggered (though the station is still going to fall apart from residual damage and the hybrid protean-human, it will just take a bit longer). Cade will be taken to a holding cell at CoreSec Station Security where Launa will attempt to assert her right to question him, while Yates will demand to interrogate the man. The characters may be allowed to assist in the interrogation.

"If command and control codes of Ascalaon station are not transferred to Corbin Mandukhai within the next 12 hours, the corporate big cats and marine lapdogs ceding absolute authority to him, I will detonate another bomb on the remaining solar panel array and then it will only be a matter of time before your cold hearts freeze."

CADE MOUA

Voice recognition identifies Cade Moua's voice; Cade was a reclusive ice mining engineer who was trapped on Titan during an accident and was commanded by Mr. Bái directly to leave behind a dozen injured ice miners who, unbeknownst to Cade, had been infected by contact with a protean device. The traumatic event caused Cade to be ostracized by ice miners who were his social support network before, and to grow embittered against Chenzua Corporation. He misguidedly believes that he and Corbin Mandukhai share common values, whereas Corbin has no desire to govern the station and considers Cade dangerous. Records have apartment #117 in Tenement Complex D3 registered under Cade's name.

Cade operates out of the static shield generator where he has hacked the C&C computers.

CRISIS TIMELINE

2:00 hours. A team of **cops** are sent to Cade's apartment while another team led by Launa Cheung go to bring Corbin Mandukhai in for questioning.

4:00 hours. Mr. Bái makes a public emergency broadcast that power rationing measures are now in effect, and in the background of the message is a strange sound that further investigation could detect as an alien language communicating in sub-bass frequencies. The message states: *"We return...it is the will of the Proteans...a return to where we came..."*

5:00 HOURS. The injustice of making the miners and lower class shoulder more than their fair share of the power rationing causes a public outcry and resulting riots in the Heibing District lead to a **cop** being beaten to death and four **workers** being gunned down and dozens more detained.

6:00 HOURS. First Lieutenant Yates announces that the Star Marines are taking full control over the station until the crisis is resolved. **Marines** are posted at major egress points, the guard in the C&C module is doubled, and they initiate random search and seizures of station inhabitant's belongings.

7:00 HOURS. Cade overrides the logic processors of the **industrial robots** in the ice-harvesting torus and uses them to oppose anyone working against his plan.

8:00 HOURS. Secondary explosions triggered by damage caused by the ion bomb wrack the ice-harvesting torus and electrical junctions within the station. Electrical systems throughout the station behave erratically or fail entirely, with doors jammed halfway, sirens blaring for no reason, low sibilant alien voices echo over the station comms, etc.

10:00 HOURS. Methane begins out-gassing into the residential sphere, creating poisonous pockets throughout the station. The **hybrid protean-human**, now more comfortable in the atmosphere, begins its own killing spree as it moves to sabotage the station (see New Monsters for its methods). It begins by jettisoning all the escape pods towards Titan.

12:00 HOURS. First Lieutenant Yates locates Cade Moua operating from within the active shielding generator and plans a breaching action with **marines**. As a defense, Cade Moua tries to cause blinding light to flood the agricultural torus and station using his control over the control mirror array; however, the **hybrid protean-human** takes control of the control mirror array instead, and shrouds the station in darkness. The hybrid protean-human and mutated ice miners attack Yates and his team of marines, forcing them to fall back and cancel the breaching action without the characters' intervention.

14:00 HOURS. Cade Moua detonates the second bomb without the characters' intervention, leading to catastrophic damage to the station and triggering a countdown till the station explodes (see below).

24:00 HOURS. Even if Cade Moua is stopped, the damage done to the station by the ion bomb is so severe that systems begin to fail everywhere, triggering countdown till the station explodes (see below).

THE COUNTDOWN

Eventually, the ion bomb's damage, exacerbated by the hybrid protean-human's extensive tampering with the graphene transistor chips that the station runs on, becomes catastrophic and the station starts falling apart.

This is a 4d6 slow countdown. The average length will be 12 rolls before it expires, and the station explodes. The characters need 6 successful *Challenging* [13] AGI or INT checks to reach the *Mai Xian*, *FSS Intrepid*, or one of the ice freighters at the ice harvesting torus dock.

The players should nominate which character is making the check at each stage of the countdown; they must all take turns to do so.

At each stage of the countdown, the GM should roll on the table on the next page to determine what challenge the characters face.

1D6 ENCOUNTER

- 1** One of the mirrors or solar arrays has suffered a serious bending in its frame caused by flying shrapnel from the explosion. In addition, many of the capacitors storing solar energy have blown and power to any systems except those on fusion power (life support, electro-magnetic active shielding, and command and control) is suspended. If the frame isn't repaired by someone performing a spacewalk and a *Challenging* [13] STR check then even basic tasks like disengaging the magnetic clamps on the escape pods will be near impossible.
- 2** Cooling tubes have ruptured, pouring liquid nitrogen into hallways, venting methane, and dangerously intermixing gases. The passage the characters need to get through requires a *Difficult* [16] END check or a character will fall unconscious to the gases and begin dying. Alternately, an airlock may be blown with an explosive or lighting the gases, to shoot characters through the void of space for 6 seconds before they reach another airlock on the other side of the gas. This causes 1d6 cold damage to those not wearing protective gear.
- 3** An entire level of the station's industrial infrastructure collapses just as any artificial rotational gravity in the characters' current area is interrupted (normal gravity becoming low-g, or low-g becoming zero gravity). Characters must make a *Challenging* [13] AGI check or be crushed for 3d6 blunt damage by industrial debris. The character is also pinned unless a *Routine* [10] STR check frees them.
- 4** A hatch the characters need to bypass suddenly seals as 2d6 malfunctioning hostile android **workers**, led by VG (see Chop Doc in the Ice District) if he is still functioning, come toward them down the hall. A *Challenging* [13] LOG check is necessary to disengage the mag-locks on the hatch.
- 5** Wending through claustrophobic industrial tunnels, emptied water pipes, or back alleys of the Heibing District, the characters find that the collapsed infrastructure has turned the station into a maze. Finding a safe way through through the rubble requires a *Difficult* [16] INT check. A failed check indicates that the characters either take a wrong-turn leading to a dead end that costs time, forcing another roll of the countdown.
- 6** Panicked station **workers** are running for what they think will be their means of escape — the tram, a ship, or escape pods, depending on the characters' location in the station. However, the characters notice the "escape" is dangerously unstable and could explode if its engines are engaged. Convincing the workers to see reason requires a *Challenging* [13] CHA check, otherwise the escape route is destroyed in an explosion dealing 3d6 heat damage to all creatures within 30 feet and potentially destroying other escape pods or creating other complications.

NEW MONSTERS

Most NPCs and creatures throughout this adventure are referred to in **bold**. When this happens, you can find the creature's statistics in the *Future Bestiary* or online for free in the WOIN Rules Reference Document (WRRD). One new creature is introduced in this adventure - the hybrid protean-human.

HYBRID PROTEAN HUMAN

Proteans were a fullerene-based techno-race that existed when the Solar System formed, wiping out their civilization. However, the Proteans had the ability to merge with crystalline computer chips in water molecules that survived on remote ice bodies like Titan millions of years after their extinction. Thus, while their species went extinct, the DNA code remained like a ghostly echo through time and space.

The **hybrid protean-human** is “patient zero” of Kavan Cheung’s illegal experiments; it was originally the ice miner Vincent Hayes. It is consumed by the need to return to Titan and unearth more crystalline chips buried in the ice. The mutation process stripped the hybrid of most of its human emotion, though its nature is conflicted.

Once the hybrid protean-human feels more confident with the offgassing methane throughout various sections of the station, it enacts its plans to return to Titan along with the rest of the station. To this end it first attempts to jettison escape pods toward Titan and disable ships, killing or infecting anyone trying to flee the station or obstruct its goals. However, if the characters continue to attempt to escape the station, it will even attempt to access the C&C computer and crash the station into the moon. When necessary, the hybrid moves through the station’s water reclamation pipes to travel about unseen. It can draw on its former memories as ice miner Vincent Hayes to access great knowledge of the station which it uses to its advantage. Mutated ice miners, which have mostly been in

the background throughout the adventure, flock to the hybrid’s telepathic call, making an attack en masse on the station’s marines at the worst moment possible, as they prepare to take down the saboteur Cade Moua.

ALTERING THE ENVIRONMENT

The hybrid is able to interact with electrical systems within 30'. This allows it to change the environment. Some GM discretion is required, but it can create environmental types including cold, dark, lo/zero-grav, windy, or vacuum. It is able to operate normally in all of these environments.

This is the hybrid's most powerful ability, if used well by the GM. The hybrid is cunning and fairly intelligent.

ICE MINERS

Ice miners use **miner** statistics. See the online WRRD or the *Future Bestiary*. Some ice miners have contracted the sickness (see below).

MUTATED ICE MINERS

While confined to roughly 200 cases, the alien DNA - publicly dubbed “the sickness” - afflicting ice miners induces debilitating fatigue and disorientation at the first stage of its pathology. At the second stage the miners develop a freakish pale appearance with loss of hair, an elongated occiput, cloudy eyes, and shriveled ears. Their motives become increasingly less human, driven by instinct to heed the hybrid protean-human’s telepathic call. They gain the following mutations:

Resistance. The mutated miners gain SOAK 5 (cold, poison).

Light Sensitivity. The mutated miners suffer -1d6 all all checks when in bright light.

Limited Telepathy. The mutated miners have a limited telepathic link with the hybrid.

HYBRID PROTEAN-HUMAN

Large sentient unique humanoid (7d6)

STR 15 (5d6) **AGI** 15 (5d6) **END** 15 (5d6)
INT 8 (3d6) **LOG** 6 (3d6) **WIL** 4 (2d6) **CHA** 3 (2d6)
LUC 0 (0d6) **REP** 0 (0d6)

HEALTH 40

MELEE DEFENSE 21; **RANGED DEFENSE** 14;
MENTAL DEFENSE 11
SOAK 10 (toughened skin); **VULN** -; **IMMUNE**
cold, poison

INITIATIVE 6d6

PERCEPTION 6d6; *superior darkvision*
SPEED 11; **CLIMB** 6; **ZERO-G** 11; **JUMP** 30' / 15'
CARRY 450lb (max lift 1125lb)

ACTIONS 2

NATURAL DAMAGE 2d6+5
Desiccating touch 7d6 (2d6+5 desiccation damage)

Skills *stealth* 10 (4d6), *mining* 6 (3d6), *zero-g* 6 (3d6), *computers* 6 (3d6), *perception* 6 (3d6), *hardy* 6 (3d6), *reactions* 6 (3d6), *brawling* 3 (2d6)

Gear -

Desiccating touch. The hybrid's natural attack enables it to desiccate a victim by touch. Armor SOAK protects against this, but natural SOAK does not.

Hold breath. The hybrid can hold its breath for up to five minutes, enabling it to operate normally in water and vacuum. After five minutes, it must form a suffocation countdown pool as normal.

System interface (0). As a free action, the hybrid can directly interface with minor electronic systems - door controls, light controls, public service comms, etc. - within 30'. This allows it to control these systems directly.

Magnetic burst (2). The hybrid can manipulate magnetic fields in order to produce a weak EMP. to everything within 30'. This takes two actions, and does 3d6 ion damage. The hybrid can only perform this feat once per hour.



Standing 8-feet (2.4 m) tall, the hybrid protean-human appears as a gaunt pale-skinned humanoid creature with spindly elongated limbs, an emaciated body, misshapen mutated fingers optimized for climbing and slicing into electrical systems, and a face straight out of humanity's nightmares of alien abductors. It adapts equally well to low, high, and zero gravity, moving with feline agility and speed, and it can see in infrared and ultraviolet spectrums as well as "see" water crystals. The hybrid derives sustenance from mass quantities of water.

However, its most terrifying ability is the power to directly interface with the graphene-transistor computer chips used throughout Ascalaon station, allowing it to suborn certain systems and alter the environment.

LOCATION LIST

Command & Control Module
Mai Xian
FSS Intrepid
Solar-Radiator Panels
Life Support Tanks & Static Shield Generator Agricultural Dome
Habitat Mirror & Mirror Shield
Control Mirror Array
Agricultural Dome
Residential Sphere
Jingzi ("Mirror") District
Entertainment Spire
Hanging Gardens
Corporate District
Chenzua Corporate HQ
CoreSec Station Security
Council Hall
Science District
Bio-genetics Lab
Chenzua Underground Research Facility
Hydrology Systems & Waste Management
Heibing ("Black Ice") District
Chop Doc
Ice Miner's Union Headquarters
Night Market
Tenement Complex D3
Ice Harvesting Torus
Primary Mirror Array

NPC LIST

NPC	Role	Stat Block	Location
Alto Bái	Chenzua Executive	Functionary	C&C Module, Chenzua Corporate HQ
Lisa Carmichael	Bio-geneticist	Scientist	Bio-genetics Lab
Kavan Cheung	Chief Science Officer	Scientist	Bio-genetics Lab, Underground Research Facility
Launa Cheung	CoreSec Commissioner	Cop	CoreSec Station Security
Miter Deneh	Electronics Dealer	Civilian	Night Market
Connie Farrago	Agricultural Officer	Scientist	Agricultural Dome
Luke Farrago	Agricultural Officer	Scientist	Agricultural Dome
Layla Fields	Escort	Civilian	Hanging Gardens
Bingwen Gao	Chop Doc	Medic	Chop Doc
Vincent Hayes	Patient Zero	Hybrid	-
Nasco Keeneh	Stims Peddler	Thug	Entertainment Spire
Corbin Mandukhai	Ice Miner's Union Leader	Pugilist	Ice Miner's Union Headquarters
Cade Moua	Saboteur	Saboteur	-
Janeth Noels	C&C Manager	Scientist	Command & Control Module
Derald Simmard	Council Member	Functionary	Council Hall
Dagon Timba	Station Criminal Kingpin	Kingpin	Night Market
Sameer Yates	Star Marines First Lt.	Marine	C&C Module, Council Hall
Servo-7	Glitchy Blaster Drone	Blaster Drone	Chop Doc
VG	Android Assistant	Worker	Chop Doc
Zeryl Berlanti	Mai Xian Saboteur	Saboteur	Mai Xian

CASSINI MINING OUTPOST

A small mining outpost, named after the Cassini orbiter, lies on Titan's surface near the ice moon's equator. About 60 ice miners occupy the outpost on a rotational basis, supervised by Huynh Clark, an experienced overseer who runs a very tight shift. Huynh Clark led the team of miners who accidentally unearthed the alien computer chip from the ice 15 years ago, though he's been threatened by Chenzua Corporation agents to keep quiet about what he saw. They use high-powered laser torches to cut blocks of methane ice which are then transported via shuttlecraft to Ascalaon station. Conditions on Titan are hostile — extremely low-gravity (about 0.14 G or 1.35 m/s²), temperatures are ultra-freezing (-290° F or -179° C), and a poisonous atmosphere made of nitrogen and methane exerts pressure equivalent to being at the bottom of a pool.