

SHIPMATES



2019 Björn Wärmedal

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Version	Changelog
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1.0	First version. Welcome to Shipmates!
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THE GAME AND SETTING

This is a classic tabletop role-playing game, played in a traditional manner with one game master and one or more players. The players portray a group of freelancing nobody's, doing their best to keep their ship flying and get out of trouble.

Treat this book as a living document. The margins are large to accommodate your notes and house rules.

TECHNOLOGY

Forget smartphones and replicators. The world of Shipmates is filled with clunky computers and durable equipment. It's science fiction aesthetics similar to Star Wars, Bladerunner, Battlestar Galactica, and Firefly.

PEOPLE

As far as game mechanics go all the playable sentient species are equivalent. They differ cosmetically and culturally only. Decide for yourself what type of culture, species, and planet you're from.

CHARTED SPACE

Mankind lives on thousands of planets, intermixed with other sentient, spacefaring lifeforms. Some worlds are civilised and cultured, others are hives of villainy and despair.

The totalitarian Victrix Kingdom claims more and more worlds, having successfully infiltrated and shattered the Free Alliance. The Kingdom's shadow is long and foreboding. Different rebel factions have yet to band together. Independent worlds and smaller alliances are caught in between, as pawns and bounty in a complex war.

This may prove to be the least of your worries as you hop from planet to planet, station to station, trying to stay ahead of your debt payments, keep your ship in shape, and not piss off the wrong people.

UNCHARTED SPACE

At the edge of space, there is yet more space. Beyond the known worlds, more worlds can be found. Travelling through these sectors is hard – there's nowhere to refuel, nobody to talk to and definitely no-one to pay you for your efforts.

There are worlds out there with life on them. Harsh weather, dangerous wildlife and criminal factions

that want to remain hidden are to be found on them. Go far enough and the latter may be missing, while the former two are more pronounced and sentient alien tribes wage guerilla warfare on any strangers from the sky.



YOUR CHARACTER

A number of *Abilities* define your character's skill sets and talents.

- **Strength**
The character's ability to exert physical force on her environment.
- **Dexterity**
A measure of nimbleness and motor skills.
- **Endurance**
The ability to withstand physical and mental pressure and exertion, as well as staying focused.
- **Combat**
Theoretical and practical training in the art of war.
- **Insight**
Wit, analytical skill and perception.
- **Sciences**
Your character's general academic skills.
- **Status**
The social standing of your character in her home society. This is often transferable to other cultures to some extent. Can be more generally applied to social interactions.

- Engineering
How well she handles a wrench, computer or machinery.
- Aether
Her philosophical, theoretical and practical grasp of the all-encompassing Aether.
- Law
Understanding of the rules, institutions and procedures governing civilised conflict resolution, as well as investigatory skills.
- Medicine
Medical knowledge, from first aid to surgery.
- Piloting
How to control a vehicle, whether it's a tug, battleship, barge, hover car, or trader.

Your character also has *Health Points*, divided into *Target Areas*: 2 for each arm, 3 for each leg, 2 for the head and 4 for the torso. These keep track of how much damage she's taken.

If your character is a user of aether – the magical force of the galaxy that few can feel – she also has *Corruption*. This starts at 0, but is likely to rise during gameplay.

CREATING YOUR CHARACTER

We will follow your character through her career, until she decides to leave it and become a freelancer in the vast galaxy. You can go on through this life path for as long as you want, though your group may agree on a maximum number of cycles. A good rule of thumb is 5 cycles.

1. Start by giving her 1d3 points in each of the Abilities. She is 18 years old at this point.
2. Choose a career path from the table below.
3. Increment her age by 2 years.
4. Add 2 points to each of the abilities listed for that career.
5. Roll for success:
 1. Roll 2d6. If it's lower than or equal to the sum of the two abilities (a success), you get 1 point to spend on another ability.
 2. Add 1d6 more to the roll. If it's still a success you get a promotion, should you choose the same career again.
6. Perform steps 2-5 until your character is ready to go freelancing.

7. Give your character an item from the Equipment table *or* the Weapon table *or* the Armour table.
8. Give your character a name.
9. Decide how she fits in with the rest of the group.

CAREERS

Career Entrance Promotion 1 Promotion 2	Abilities
Pilot Apprentice Commercial Pilot Pilot Captain	Piloting, Dexterity Piloting, Endurance Piloting, Status
Military Private Lieutenant Commander	Combat, Endurance Combat, Insight Combat, Status
Mechanic Apprentice Mechanic Mech Shop Manager	Engineering, Dexterity Engineering, Strength Engineering, Insight
Peddler Merchant Trader	Status, Insight Status, Law Status, <Other>*
Undergraduate Student Graduate Student Scientist	Sciences, Insight Sciences, Endurance Sciences, Status

Scavenger	Dexterity, Insight
Solo	Endurance, Combat
Pirate	Piloting, Combat
Police Officer	Law, Combat
Detective	Law, Insight
Special Agent	Law, Status
Aether Apprentice	Aether, Dexterity
Aether Disciple	Aether, Combat
Aether Master	Aether, Insight <i>or</i> Status
Nurse	Medicine, Endurance
Doctor	Medicine, Insight
Surgeon	Medicine, Status

* Choose one depending on what you've specialised in selling.

Apart from the starting equipment you've chosen, your character also has: basic hygiene products, a few changes of clothes, a short distance radio, and a handful of personal items (good luck charms, simple jewellery, books, or cheap ornamental items).

The player party also has a ship when the game starts. See the Ships chapter for more information.

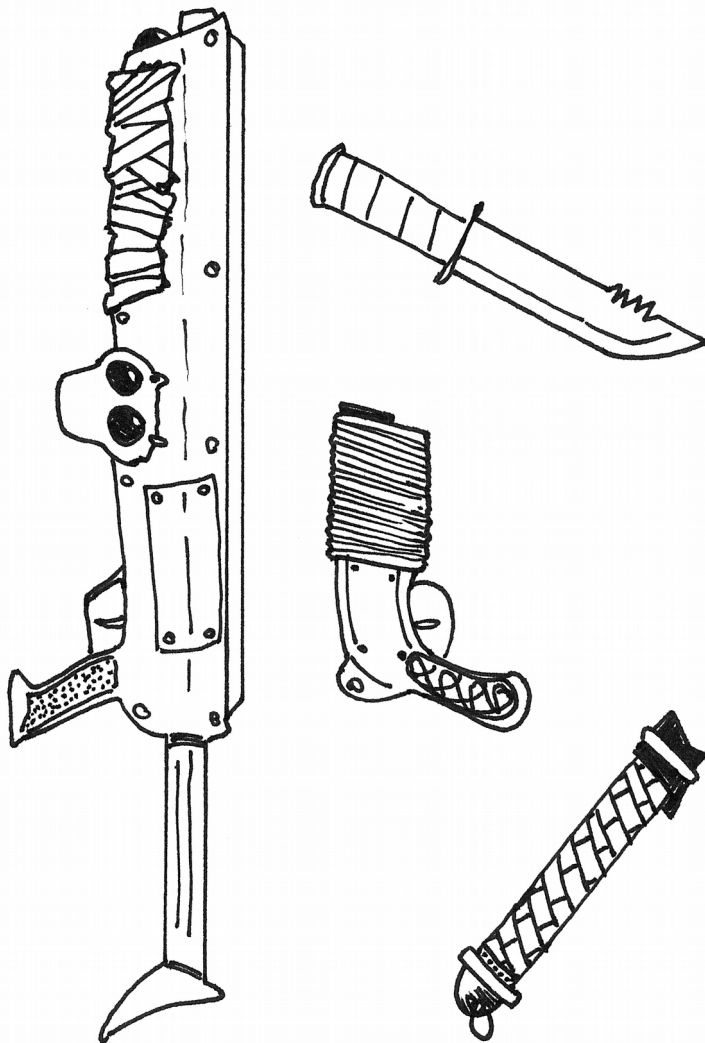
EQUIPMENT

Equipment	Usage
Tool kit	Reduces difficulty of basic mechanical repair by 2d6.
Medical kit	Reduces difficulty of first aid by 2d6.
Small hover car	Is faster than walking.
Hover bike	Is a lot faster than walking.
Personal computer (size of a briefcase)	Reduces difficulty of hacking by 2d6.
Laboratory equipment	Makes chemical analysis possible.
Investigation kit	Reduces difficulty of crime scene (or similar) investigation by 2d6.

Weapon	Damage
Bat, Baton, Knife	1d4
Buster Gun	1d6
Buster Rifle	1d8
Heavy Buster	1d12
Plasma Sword*	2d10

* Plasma Swords are rare, and often only available to certain factions in your setting. Discuss with your game master.

Armour	Protection
Light	1d3
Medium	1d4
Heavy	1d6
Power Armour	2d4



IMPROVING YOUR CHARACTER

Decide with the rest of the group what rate of improvement you'd like to see, and what should be rewarded. Here are some suggestions:

- Get points to spend on raising abilities every session.
- Get points to spend when a mission is completed.
- Get points to spend when performing specific feats or fulfilling goals.

SHIPS

The ship is almost a character in its own right. It has abilities and can take damage. It's your home, your workplace and your trustworthy companion.

SHIP STATISTICS

- Health Points
The amount of beating your ship can take, essentially.
- Thrust
How well the ship handles, as well as non-jump top speed.

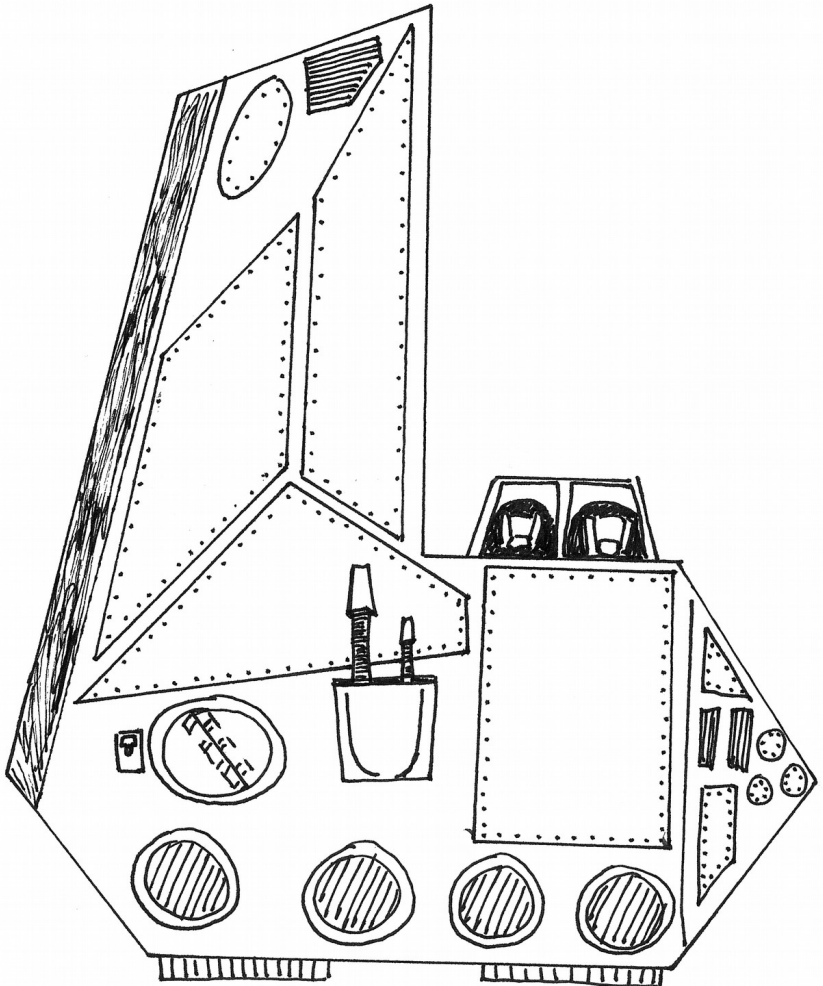
- **Jump Prepare Time**
How long it takes for the jump generator to calculate a jump and generate the singularity field, i.e. initiate the jump.
- **Maximum Jump Length**
The number of sectors your ship can traverse in a single jump.
- **Outfit Modules**
Weapons, Shields, Cargo Hold, Crew Quarters and other choices all fall into this category, making your ship unique.

CREATING A SHIP

1. Pick a size class for your ship. The ship's size class determines the number of points available to spend outfitting it. The ship's Health Points is equal to the number of Outfit Points.
2. Outfit your ship as you please.
3. Your ship's Jump Prepare Time is equal to the number of outfit points in minutes divided by the number of Jump Generators.
4. Your ship's Maximum Jump Length is 1 sector for each Jump Generator.

5. Your ship's Thrust is $1 +$ the number of Thruster Packs.

You may of course outfit any size of ship in detail if you wish, but the following table is mostly meant to give you a sense of the scale and size differences of the ship classes. Just remember that large ships are mostly equipped to fight other large ships, and small ships can't really take a lot of beating.



Ship Size Class (Example Ships)	Outfit Points
Unmanned Super Tiny (Drone)	15
Tiny (Tug, Shuttle, Fighter)	30
Light (Freelancer, Miner, Trader)	100
Medium Light (Reconnaissance Ship, Cargo Ship)	300
Medium (Hunter, Bomber, Explorer)	600
Heavy (Destroyer, Mining Barge, Colony Ship)	1500
Super Heavy (Battleship, Drone Carrier, Heavy Barge)	4000
Capital (Carrier, Dreadnought)	8000
Super Capital (Super Carrier, Leviathan)	15000

OUTFIT MODULES

The following table lists the available modules and their cost in Outfit Points.

Outfit Module	Outfit Point Cost
Cargo Hold (per 10 cubic metres)	10
Small Plasma Gun	10

Medium Plasma Gun	20
Heavy Plasma Gun	50
Torpedo Bay	80
Heavy Torpedo Bay	100
Ballistic Artillery Battery	150
Shield Battery	50
Jump Generator	10%*
Pow Gas Tank (per 3 sectors range)	5%*
Thruster Pack	10%*
Drone Hangar (per Drone)	50
Fighter Hangar (per Fighter)	80
Small Crew Quarters (per person)	2
Crew Quarters (per person)	5
Lavish Crew Quarters (per person)	10
Mining Arm	20
Industrial Bay	25
Stealth Module**	75
Advanced Sensor Array	100
Medical Bay (per bed)	20

* Percentage of total Outfit Points.

** Can not be fitted on ships larger than Medium

Cargo Hold is empty space, available by loading bay. It's equipped to keep all manner of cargo secured, whether solid, liquid or otherwise.

Small Plasma Gun is what it sounds like. It deals little damage and has a short range, good tracking speed. Takes one person to operate.

Medium Plasma Gun is larger. It deals more damage, has a longer range but a lower tracking speed. Takes two people to operate.

Heavy Plasma Gun is of course really big. It's slower at tracking targets, but has a long range and deals out a hefty amount of damage. Takes a team of five people to operate.

Torpedo Bay is the weapon of choice if you need good range and damage. Takes a crew of seven people to operate.

Heavy Torpedo Bay gives you even more damage and range, but is more costly to maintain. Takes a crew of ten people to operate.

Ballistic Artillery Battery is really only useful against very slow or stationary targets. It has superior range and doles out more damage than almost any structure can take before caving in. Takes a crew of twenty people to operate.

Shield Battery protects your ship. A shield blocks 2d20 points of damage per attack, and for every 30 points blocked one Shield Battery is depleted. Charging it takes 1 hour per point, but all shield batteries can charge parallelly.

Jump Generator is the machine that makes your ship able to instantly travel far far away. Even the smallest model is rather big, and can not be fitted on a ship with less than 100 outfit points.

Pow Gas Tank holds the fuel for your jump generator. It costs as much to refill as it costs to install to begin with.

Thruster Pack improves the manoeuvrability and speed of your ship.

Drone Hangar is a space for a drone ship, containing everything needed to maintain it. The hangar has a dedicated entrance/exit for each drone.

Fighter Hangar is the same as a drone hangar, except it's for Fighter ships. Obviously.

Small Crew Quarters is a tiny space for crew, complete with cooking and social area. Very basic, and hardly has room for anything. Conscripts and other lowly crewmembers live this tight.

Crew Quarters is the same, but a bit more spacious. This is by most considered to be minimum standard.

Lavish Crew Quarters is how the higher ups spend their time on a ship.

Mining Arm is a mechanical arm for the purpose of mining or other extravehicular activities when the crew prefers to stay inside. Can be used to tug, fix, or break things.

Industrial Bay is a larger workshop, complete with heavy industrial gear and materials. Large ships on long hauls tend to need one to have a better chance at fixing things during trips.

Stealth Module can generate a distortion field around your ship. To be active it requires the ship to be at relative rest (no acceleration/deceleration) and all active scanners and broadcasting turned off, but it renders the ship completely undetectable.

Advanced Sensor Array allows you to scan an entire sector in detail, as opposed to basic sensors, which will only scan things near enough to be visible to the naked eye. It takes a day to scan a full sector, and any ship within it will detect the direction from which your array points.

Medical Bay is a fully equipped medical facility of modern standard.

YOUR STARTING SHIP

Don't get your hopes up. Your ship is no space Cadillac. It's not a capital ship or even a heavy barge. Nope.

You get a dingy Freelancer. An old and worn but versatile vessel outfitted to your wishes.

RESOLVING ACTIONS

Most actions your character performs needs no stochastic input, they simply succeed. If there is a dramatic consequence to failing, however, it should be arbitrated by die roll. The common action resolution in this game uses a number of d6. When performing an action you take the following steps:

1. The player declares the method and intention of said action.
2. The game master decides which 2 abilities come into play, depending on the described method. In rare circumstances only one ability comes into play (typical examples are Dexterity for a high jump/climbing, Strength for a heavy lift, Aether for telekin-esis, or Endurance for a long run). In those few cases the ability chosen is counted twice.

3. The game master decides on a difficulty, rated in a number of d6 depending on circumstances. The most common difficulty will be 3d6, which is considered the norm.
4. The player rolls the dice and compares the sum of the roll with the sum of the abilities used. If the dice sum is less than or equal to the sum of the abilities, the action succeeds. Otherwise the situation somehow changes for the worse, whereupon – depending on the circumstances – a new (often more difficult) attempt may be performed.

Which abilities to combine in any given situation is a gut call. It depends on the method, style or tools through which the character attempts to reach her objective. The following table shows a few examples.

Action	Abilities
Crime scene investigation	Sciences + Law
Diplomacy	Status + Law
Firing a buster	Endurance + Combat
First aid	Insight + Medicine
Hacking	Insight + Engineering
Heavy vehicle driving	Endurance + Piloting

Heavy weapon use	Strength + Combat
Light vehicle driving	Dexterity + Piloting
Martial arts	Dexterity + Combat
Mechanical repair	Strength + Engineering <i>or</i> Dexterity + Engineering
Navigation	Insight + Sciences
Outdoor survival	Endurance + Insight <i>or</i> Endurance + Sciences
Persuasion	Insight + Status
Piloting	Dexterity + Piloting <i>or</i> Engineering + Piloting
Spaceship combat	Combat + Piloting
Stealthy movement	Dexterity + Insight
Surgery (Major)	Endurance + Medicine
Surgery (Minor)	Sciences + Medicine
Tactical leadership	Combat + Status

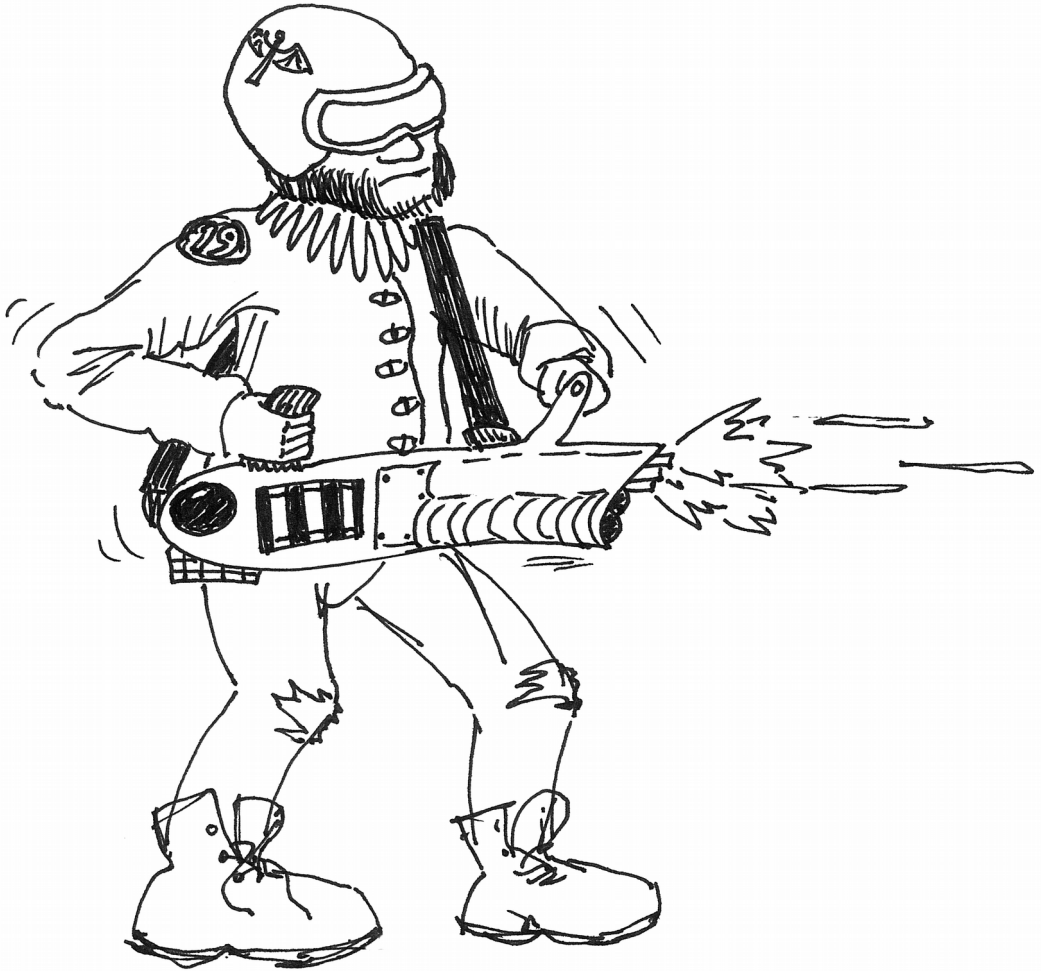
CRITS AND FUMBLES

A critical hit is when all dice turn up 1 and the roll is otherwise successful. A fumble occurs when 3 or more dice turn up 6 and the roll is otherwise a failure.

COMBAT

When a situation devolves into violence time is counted in rounds. A round is a few seconds in game time.

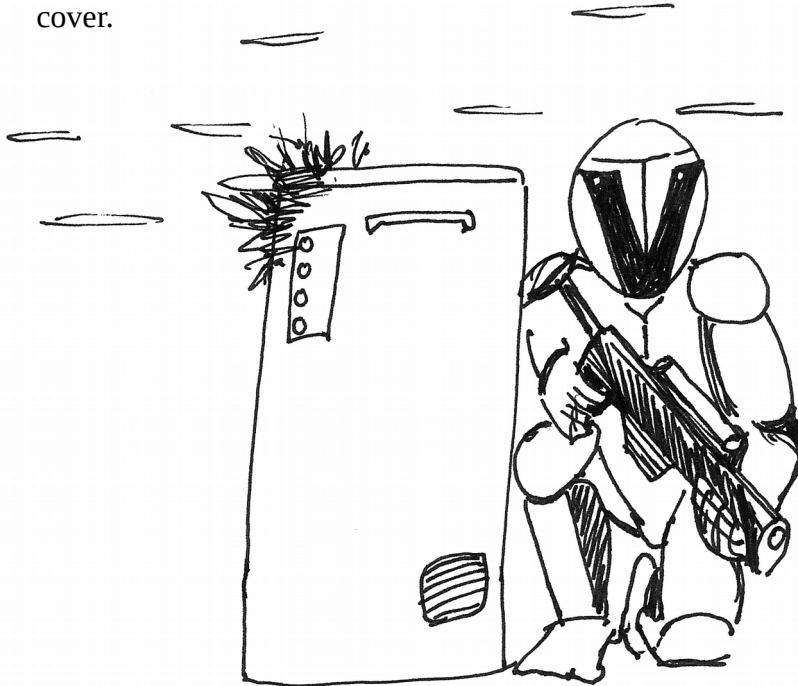
Unless ambushed or otherwise taken by surprise, the player party has initiative and will act first in



whatever order the players agree on. When all player characters have acted the opposing party has its turn, then back again until the fight is over.

On your turn you may choose to Attack, Move or perform any Other Action of similar time expenditure.

An **attack** is performed with the Combat ability, paired with another ability suitable for the type of attack. The difficulty is $2d6 +$ difficulty modifiers as the game master sees fit. The most common difficulty modifier is $+1d6$ because the target is actively trying to avoid being hit, meaning the most common difficulty is actually $3d6$. Another common addition is one or two dice for a target in cover.



If the attack succeeds, randomly select where it hits from the available options (a target kneeling behind cover may not have legs or torso exposed, for example). If the target is wearing armour over the affected target area they can roll its protection to see how much it absorbs.

To **move** means, simply put, to change your physical position. You can move a few metres within a round, and you need not roll for it unless something hinders you.

Any **other action** is up to the game master to determine time consumption and difficulty of.

INJURIES AND HEALING

If a target area is reduced to 0 health points it's unusable until restored. The torso or head being rendered unusable means the character is unconscious.

If a target area is reduced to negative 5 it is beyond repair. A limb can usually be replaced with cybernetic equivalents, but an injury like that in the head or torso means death.

Natural healing occurs at a rate described in the following table.

Circumstances	Healing Rate Per Target Area
Treatment by medical professional, additional to other circumstances	1 Health Point per day per target area successfully treated*
Full medical facilities and rest (Medical Bay, someone caring for you)	1 Health Point per day
Basic medical care and rest (clean wounds, bandages)	1 Health Point per two days
First aid, not resting	1 Health Point per three days
No rest, no care	No healing

* The medical professional will have to succeed with a roll, difficulty determined by the severity of the injuries.

SPACE BATTLE

When ships fight each other we treat it as ordinary combat, the difference being that every weapon that is manned or pilot seat that is occupied counts as an actor (as opposed to every ship getting one action per round).

Assume the base difficulty to be 3d6, and stray from it in either direction as you see fit.

A perfect hit means the attack ignores any Shield and deals damage directly to the ship.

Movement in space battles is measured in clicks. A click is an abstract distance, useful only for the purpose of relative ship positioning. If you have access to a hex or grid map, feel free to use them as help.

A ship can move as many clicks in a round as its Thrust. The difficulty for steering it right is as many dice as you are currently trying to move (1d6 if you're moving 1 click, 2d6 for 2 clicks, etc.).

An **attack** in space battle is similar to ordinary combat. You roll for Combat combined with an ability fitting for the type of weapon or situation. The base difficulty of the roll is 3d6. Any deviation in distance from the weapon's optimum adds another 1d6 per click, and if the target is moving faster than the tracking speed of the weapon that adds another 1d6 per point of difference. For weapons manned by more than one person, the one with the lowest scores in the abilities involved makes the roll.

Other actions are resolved as usual.

Weapon types, the typical ability to pair with Combat, their optimum distance, tracking speed, and damage are listed in the following table.

Weapon	Ability Distance	Damage Tracking Speed
Small Plasma Gun	Dexterity 1 click	2d20 5
Medium Plasma Gun	Endurance 2 clicks	3d20 4
Heavy Plasma Gun	Insight 3 clicks	4d20 3
Torpedo Bay	Engineering 5 clicks	6d20 2
Heavy Tor- pedo Bay	Engineering 8 clicks	10d20 1
Ballistic Artillery Battery	Strength 15 clicks	10d20 + 100 0

SHIP DAMAGE AND REPAIRS

A ship that has been reduced to 0 Health Points is completely non-functional and adrift. If it reaches negative 10% Health Points (i.e. -10 for a Freelancer, -150 for a Destroyer) it goes up in flames.

For every 10 Health Points a ship loses it takes an extra damage, as per the following table.

1d100	Extra Ship Damage
1-2	Life support systems shut down. If not fixed within 50 hours all aboard will die.
3-4	Thrusters break down. The ship can only Jump until fixed.
5-6	Navigation console fried. You have no idea where you are until fixed.
7-8	Communications array fried.
9-10	Basic sensor array fried. You have to rely on visuals now.
11-70	A random Outfit Module breaks. It will cost half of its purchase cost to fix.*
71-100	A random Outfit Module is completely destroyed.*

* If all Outfit Modules are already destroyed, the ship explodes instead.

Repairing a damaged Outfit Module can not be done without getting parts, and preferably being in dock. Any other extra damage can be fixed temporarily after the battle is over by a normal skill check – if you’re trying to fix it while in combat it will be more difficult and not last as long.

Getting Health Points back for your ship requires a bit of time (one man-day per 10 points) and money (1000 credits per point). You’ll want to be in dock

for this, unless you have an Industrial Bay. An Industrial Bay can work on one Outfit Module at a time.

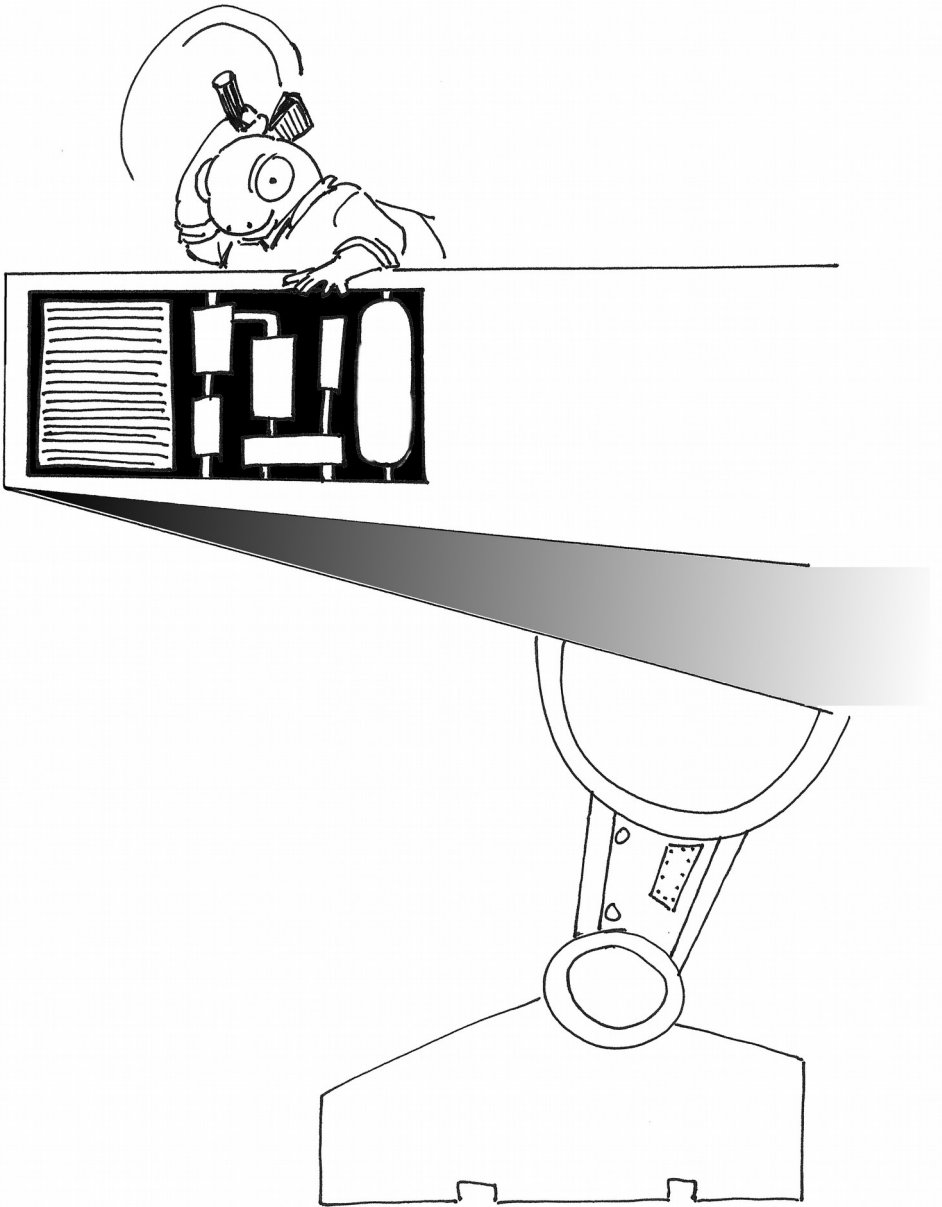
SHIP VS PEOPLE

Ship Damage is **not** the same as People Damage. When a ship shoots at a person, the person is no more. When a person shoots at a ship only the heaviest of weapons designed for the purpose will do more than cosmetic damage.

SPACE TRAVEL

We've mentioned the term "sector" a few times by now. A sector in space is a very large volume, usually (but not always) containing a solar system or other geographical landmark.

Non-jump space travel is virtually free in terms of fuel costs. It takes a very long time, on the other hand. Travelling in this manner within a sector can take days or even weeks from one planet to another. Slow travelling between sectors takes decades or centuries. As planets, moons, stations, and asteroids move around the distance between them shifts. Shipping lanes, satellites, spatial phenomena and other things can also affect the travelling distance. When you don't have a precedent to extrapolate from, assume that the travelling time between two



points within a sector is 2d20 days, divided by the Thrust of the ship.

A jump is instantaneous. It takes time for the Jump Generator to build up a singularity field large enough and stable enough to envelop the ship and fold it through space when unleashed, but the jump itself is over in mere milliseconds.

In terms of fuel economy a jump within a sector counts as a one-sector jump.

SHIP MAINTENANCE

You can calculate the cost of wear, tear and expended ammunition with as much detail as you want, but in general you can assume that the ship will wear down about 1d10 Health Points for every week of normal use.

The cost of torpedoes, plasma rounds, industrial machinery, and other specific parts of Outfit Modules is hardly interesting at the scale of small ship operations.

Getting the ship outfitted during the campaign costs 1000 credits per Outfit Point for a module, and time spent as explained in the “Ship Damage & Repair” chapter.

AETHER AND CORRUPTION

The galaxy is permeated by a magical force that only very few can sense or learn to control. Using it means balancing on a knife's edge. The very act of bending it to your will causes the cosmos to tear into your soul.

A user of aether can leverage this force in three different ways: *Aetherial Boost*, *Aetherial Force*, and *Aetherial Fire*. When using Aether your character's Corruption increases with as many points as the highest die in the pool.

AETHERIAL BOOST

Letting the aether guide her actions, while shaping it towards her intended outcome, allows your character to add her points in Aether to any skill check involving Strength, Dexterity or Insight.

A skill check boosted in this manner may only fumble if at least five dice turn up 6.

AETHERIAL FORCE

Channelling pure aether allows your character to exert physical and mental force on her environment, i.e. telepathy and telekinesis. Either of these requires a skill check against Aether only.

When using telekinesis she can move as many kilograms as her Endurance, and her reach is equal to her Endurance in metres, for every 1d6 difficulty.

Telepathy may be used in line of sight. A difficulty of 1d6 allows your character to send a short sentence of messaging. 3d6 allows two-way communication. You may roll 4d6 to establish a telepathic anchor to a specific individual in her physical proximity, after which she would be able to find (the direction of) and communicate with this person over impossibly vast distances. This communication is two-way and comes freely, but she may only have one individual anchored to her at any given time.

AETHERIAL FIRE

Your character may channel aether for the purpose of mindless pyrokinetic violence. A firestorm erupts from her, with a radius of difficulty times Corruption metres (i.e. 1d6 difficulty would be 1 x Corruption, 2d6 is 2 x Corruption, etc). Anyone caught in it takes 1d6 damage in every target area. No armour protects from this, but a user of Aether may choose to take Corruption instead of physical damage.

CORRUPTION

As the name of this statistic suggests, it will ruin your character. The higher her skill in Aether, the more she can take. See the following table for thresholds and what passing them means.

Level of Corruption	Effect
Aether	She becomes irritable. When others disagree with her, roll 1d6 against Insight and Status to not become violent.
Aether x 2*	She becomes selfish, and ever more annoyed by others. When someone disturbs or disagrees with her, roll 2d6 against Insight and Status to not become violent.
Aether x 3*	She becomes arrogant. The needs and wants of others mean nothing to her. Social interactions are purely transactional. When others speak to her without being spoken to or disagree with her, roll 3d6 against Insight and Status to not become violent.

Aether x 4* Others annoy her to no end. She feels that they are whimsical and stupid, and should know that what she wants is most important. At this point she needs to force herself not to kill someone when they're not obedient towards her. Roll 4d6 against Insight and Strength whenever this happens.

Aether x 5* Why are all these imbeciles stirring up trouble all the time? Shouldn't their lack of brains render them apathetic? That would certainly be better. She demands constant displays of loyalty and praise from people around her and will lash out violently and unexpectedly when not appeased.

* apart from the effects listed in the table, she always recognises someone with a higher Corruption as being a clear-minded natural leader – maybe the only person around worth listening to.

REDUCING CORRUPTION

Corruption is naturally shed by a rate of 1 point for every day your character actively chooses not to use aether.

To reduce her Corruption faster several things will have to be done. For every day she does them all, you get to reduce her Corruption by another 1d4 points.

- Meditate for one hour.
- Help someone with something that doesn't benefit herself.
- Don't hurt anyone.
- Mindfully reduce the number of her material possessions, divorcing herself from the artificial needs of sentient cultures. If she no longer has material possessions apart from one set of ascetic clothing this step may be skipped.