

Sign in Stranger

a game by Emily Care Boss



making contact

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Emily Care Boss



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Contents

Chapter 1: Farewell to Earth.....	5
Chapter 2: Overview of the Game.....	7
Chapter 3: Three Ways to Play.....	14
Chapter 4: Setting up for Play.....	20
Chapter 5: Creating Colonists.....	25
Chapter 6: Planetfall.....	43
Chapter 7: Exploring the World.....	46
Chapter 8: Structure of Play.....	50
Chapter 9: Investigations.....	52
Chapter 10: Taking Action.....	66
Chapter 11: Flashbacks.....	70
Chapter 12: Group and Mission Scenes.....	73
Chapter 13: Troubles and Goals.....	75
Chapter 14: Assimilation and Changes.....	78
Chapter 15: Other Characters.....	80
Chapter 16: Resources, Connections, Belongings.....	90
Chapter 17: About Playing.....	92
Appendix A: Uniform Survey for Study.....	101
Appendix B: Standard Colony Supplies.....	103
Appendix C: Story Seeds.....	104
Record and Reference Sheets:.....	105-112
Colony Map	
World Creation	
Categories	
Colony Record	
Plot and Supporting Characters	
Colonist	
Personal Log	
World Elements	

Chapter 1:

Farewell to Earth

BACKGROUND

On January 27th, some years from now, a large meteorite strikes southeastern Canada. A plague spreads outward from the crash site, killing all life--plant, animal, human--that comes into contact. Quarantine is imposed, but as neighboring people scramble to escape and the world governments struggle to make sense of the scale of the impending disaster, a new threat looms.

Fire rains from the sky, scorching the earth beneath it. For three days light blazes down on what was once Montreal, destroying all in its path. Vast shapes appear in the sky, beaming messages in strange ululating tongues, uttered by nightmarish tentacled creatures. All over the world, military forces are rallied, and employed against these alien forces.

The human forces are utterly defeated. The human nations await their fate at the mercy of their new alien overlords. A calm settles over the Earth as its citizens await a message from their masters.

After three months, the message comes, from the same strange hissing tongues, now wrapping themselves around human words.

"We came to save you..."

Over time, the whole story is told. The Galaxy is seething with life. Interstellar travel has been happening for untold millennia and sapient species have come into contact with other sapient species time and time again.

With contact has come trade: economic, cultural--and biological. Diseases have ravaged through world after world, the microbial inhabitants of one

world finding weaknesses in the genetic defenses of those from another. Worlds have been emptied, opening the way for continuing devastation from domination through warfare.

Until the Cure was found.

The Cure changes life. It creates a common bond between new life that it finds, and those it has come from. A universal inoculation that introduces isolated life to the viral cultures of the intermingled worlds.

Without the Cure, all life is threatened. But with the Cure... change happens. Slowly, sometimes imperceptibly, but over time the life one has known becomes something else. Something other than what was and has been known.

Since interstellar space travel is needed to contact others, the interstellar community leaves newly developing worlds in ignorance of their existence until the fledgling world acquires the ability on its own.

Humanity was in quarantine, violated by the alien ship that crash landed on Earth. The crash endangered all life on Earth. The Xsian <zis-see'-un> crew signaled their people, allowing the Xsian fleet to quickly come forward to destroy the exposed population of Earth. Given this untimely catapulting of humanity into the galactic community, the Xsians took it upon themselves to sponsor humanity. To offer them the Cure and help them connect with the interstellar species.

However, Earth turned them down.

The many nations of the Earth warred and squabbled over the best course of action. Consensus could not be formed. Some people of the world rejected the Cure, desiring to continue the quarantine to preserve the Earth as it was and had been. Others sought to embrace this new change, wanting to join the universal community, to learn about new worlds, new technologies and societies. Or to leave Earth behind for their own reasons.

So a compromise was developed. Earth would not take the Cure. Those who wished to remain on the planet would do so. No traffic from off world would be allowed. Humanity could stay in its cocoon a while longer.

But those who wished to leave, could do so. Never to return.

A Xsian base was built on the moon. Co-operated by the Xsians and the newly formed international Terran Authority, the Lunar site is a joint human/Xsian community. It is a gateway for those humans who wish to travel into the universe. Their goal is to establish human colonies on different worlds. They will learn about what the galaxy holds for humanity. These Colonists will step into the unknown.

Chapter 2:

Overview of the Game

THE COLONISTS IN THE NEW WORLD

In *Sign in Stranger*, a group of humans leaves Earth to form a Colony on another planet. This will be their new home, for the Cure that allows them to leave, means they cannot return to Earth.

The new world is inhabited by aliens and other creatures, among which the humans must find their place. The Colonists received special training on the Lunar base before leaving Earth, to prepare them for their life in the Colony. Their mission is to research and gather information about the new world and the beings that inhabit it, to send back to the Earth they have left behind. The Colonists begin with some facts known about the world and their Alien hosts, and an assigned job they will learn to perform. They use their Training and knowledge brought from their life on Earth to help them settle in and begin the long task of Assimilating into the new world.

However, all they encounter on the new world is alien and unfathomable to the humans: how things operate is unclear, the forms of life they contact are different than anything they have seen before, and the Cure can cause them to be Changed by this world.

The Colonists help each other to Investigate the world. This helps them answer Investigation Questions assigned to them by their Earth Contact, the Terran Authority Liason, who is empowered to send messages and supplies with the completion of three Investigation Questions. Their first contact on the new planet is the Xsian Ambassador, who is charged to keep track of the Humans' progress, both for Earth and for Xsia, who have taken the role of sponsor and patron, bringing humanity into the Galaxy-wide community. They soon meet other aliens, begin to learn about their job, and begin to take Actions in the world: trying to accomplish their own goals, and also to participate in the world they have joined.

THE PLAYERS CRAFT THE WORLD TOGETHER

As the Colonists explore, the players create a world that slowly unveils itself. At first full of strange, sometimes dangerous beings and environments, the meaning of the world becomes revealed to the players and characters alike.

During the first session of play, the players make up different worlds that the Colonists may choose to live on. Not all will be used, but species from different worlds will be found on other planets.

Throughout play, the players use Random Words to inspire Descriptions of what is seen, heard, felt, smelled and tasted by the Colonists on the world. This creates a crazy quilt of a truly alien world that will then have meaning ascribed to it through successful Investigations that the characters attempt.

The characters interact with different aspects of the world—plants, animals, objects, aliens—and have successes and failures associated with these interactions. Failures give the players the opportunity to learn more about the characters' pasts and to forge deeper bonds of friendship. At times, the consequences of failure are the creation of rich sources of adversity.

The players create complication for the characters to deal with and untangle and choose questions for the characters to investigate. Over time, the players develop an elaborate set of physical, biological and social systems through the vehicle of their characters exploring the world around them.

In addition to playing a human Colonist, each person also plays aliens and other beings encountered on the planet. They will also play people from the Colonists' pasts in Flashbacks that occur during play.

The game varies depending on how long it will be played for. In longer games, more of the players will do these things and more will be learned about the world.

WHO ARE THE COLONISTS AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

The players of *Sign in Stranger* take the role of the group of human Colonists. They are from all parts of the globe. And each has chosen to leave Earth for their own reason, inspired by a Story Seed chosen by the player during character creation.

Each Colonist is trained in a science or discipline useful to the Colony. Given this Training on the Moon, it is called their Lunar Training. Some are trained in the Natural Sciences, some have learned about Technology, others about Social and Cultural aspects of the world. There is always a Doctor in the crew. The Colonists also benefit from the skills they gained

through training or work they did on Earth, which sometimes can apply to tasks they need to accomplish in their new home. When a player chooses a Lunar Training, they are deciding what area of the world they want to spend the most time learning about as they play.

The Colonists also have Goals. These are tasks they want to accomplish or dreams they have for their now life on the planet. The Colonists learn about the world through Investigating, which helps them and the others take Action to accomplish their Goals. Goals may be as simple as wanting to grow tomatoes on the new world, to as broad-reaching as wanting to become the Human ambassador to the new world. Players can choose several Goals for their character; they are used as a tool for the players to help communicate with themselves and others about what the character wants to accomplish, and where the player would like the story to head.

HOW ALIEN IS THE WORLD?

The game uses random and hidden elements throughout play to create surprising descriptions that are more than simple recastings of our human, social world where we live. When traveling in a foreign country, simple things like recognizing what the bathroom looks like can baffle a traveller. Multiply that by the huge chasm of understanding caused by development in a different environment, and part of a wholly separated chain of adaptation. Imagine traveling to a foreign country with a radically different culture, one where you do not speak the language, and no one speaks yours. Then imagine that the foreign country is at the bottom of the ocean, and your hosts are relatives of tube worms, that have built a civilization out of accretions. Or dolphins, whose accomplishments of culture and technology are based on music, dance and sonic shaping of organic matter. This is a long way from Kansas, Dorothy.

HOW DO YOU CREATE THE WORLD?

Throughout the game, the players use Random Words: Nouns, Verbs and Adjectives, as creative springboards for describing the Elements of the world. An Element is some aspect of the world: a creature, or type of creature, features of the landscape or technology, aspects of the aliens' physiology, forms of art or communication and so on. At any time a player may ask someone else to Describe something in the environment.

Descriptions are limited to what can be seen, heard, felt, smelled and tasted. They cannot explain how something works, tell you whether something is dangerous or edible, or any other functions or aspects of an Element that are more complex than what can be experienced by the senses. To determine that you must accomplish Investigations. However, although you are saying what can be seen etc. you are not dictating what

they Colonists experience, and cannot say what someone else's Colonist does or feels in reaction to what you describe. Descriptions should be brief and concrete. They are from the player's perspective, rather than the characters'. There is more about Descriptions is in Chapter 7, (p.46).

WHAT ARE INVESTIGATIONS?

Colonists choose Investigation Questions based on their Lunar Training. Those with a Training in an area that relates to an Investigation will be more likely to succeed in it. On character is the Lead Investigator for a given Question. They write it down on their character sheet, and keep track of Progress on the Question. Other players may also choose to Investigate a Question, and contribute to the Progress if they Succeed. The Lead Investigator may also get help from another Colonist or an Alien, though just as the Lead may be hurt, so too there can be negative consequences for the helpers.

There is a list of Investigation Questions given by Earth to the Colonists, in Appendix A. Some good early ones are: "What can humans eat here?" and "How do our Alien hosts communicate?" During each attempt at uncovering clues toward answering these Questions, other players Describe Elements of the world which the Colonists hopes may be related to that Investigation. The players use the Random Words to inspire their Descriptions of a rich, fascinating yet enigmatic world.

Through successful Investigations players find Explanations for how and why the elements of the world function the way have been seen to. Each success builds toward a full answer to the Questions, and with several successes the players can create Resources related to the Investigation for the Colony.

For example, a Colonist trained in Botany trying to find food for the Colony could discover that the sticky, stringy blue moss growing on top of the Colony's shelter is in fact the staple crop of the area aliens. After three Successful Investigations, he is able to gather a small supply to bring do tests on, after five Successes learns how to make the moss produce edible spores. If that player continues, they may have the Colonist create a Connection between the Colony and an alien or group on the planet.

Investigations can also turn ideas of what is true on their head. The first time anything is Investigated a Wild Card category is added to the Investigation. The Wild Card can make the Explanations found mean that the Element is something completely other than what the Colonists originally thought.

Some Investigations prove dangerous and disturbing. A Colonists may be injured while Investigating, or Panic from the sheer otherness of the world when they. Investigations are described in detail in Chapter 9, p. 52.

HOW BAD ARE PANIC AND INJURY?

Injuries heal over time, and recovery can be healed by the Doctor. After Panic, a Flashback scene helps everyone understand what past trauma may have been triggered by the alien world. And in some versions of the game, a moment of encouragement from another Colonist can do the trick as well. A Colonist's ability to Investigate or take Actions are hampered by Injuries and being Panicked.

WHAT ARE ACTIONS?

Colonists take Actions in the world when they try to accomplish things and act in or upon the world. From something as simple as trying to cross a travel path, to fulfilling the tasks of their job as a Stellar Accountant, when the Colonist uses the Elements around them, or tries to participate in society, they approach it as an Action. They may do so to attempt to move toward Goals they've developed, or to be able to follow up better on Investigations.

Actions are limited by the Colonist's understanding of the world. The more Explanations they find for Elements of the world they interact with, the easier it is to accomplish what they desire. Further discussion of Actions is in Chapter 10, p. 66

WHAT ARE FLASHBACKS?

At certain times, scenes from the Colonists' past are played out. When a Colonist Panics, before they can regain their composure, the player must frame a scene, similar in some way to what happened when the character Panicked, but showing a painful or traumatic moment from the Colonist's past.

Flashbacks can also be used before an Action or Investigation to help gain an additional die to help in the roll. These scenes are ones in which the character showed strength in an activity like what they are doing on the planet, or was helped to do well by someone else in their life.

Flashbacks may be framed in order to shed more light on a character's present actions, or to set up for a Trouble. Each player can ask for one Flashback per session above and beyond any Flashbacks they may be required to play out due to Panic. The player of a Plot Character who appears in a session may also call for an additional Flashback for someone else's character. Supporting Cast do not get any Flashbacks, though people from flashbacks may be created as Supporting Cast.

PLOT CHARACTERS AND SUPPORTING CAST

As the Colonists encounter aliens and other beings on the new world, the players take on some of these characters to play as well. Some are new friends and allies met along the way who aid the Colonists and help them forge connections with the new world. These Supporting Cast cannot speak any human tongue to begin with, but the humans can teach them, or attempt to learn their languages. Supporting Cast help the Colonist, and create relationships with them. People can play multiple Supporting Cast. They will likely recur occasionally.

Other important characters are the Plot Characters. These are characters with power over the Colonists and the Colony. Each player has just one Plot Character at any given time. The Plot Characters can help the Colonists by allowing them to accomplish an Action in the world, free and clear. The Colonists can call on one Plot Character a session for help in this way. Or they may assist in an Investigation.

It is through the Plot Characters that Troubles are explored and affect the Colony. This occurs in two ways: each time a Plot Character appears, either because they are called by the Colonists, or because the players decide that this would be a good session for that Plot Character to enter, the person playing that Character is responsible for adding an Explanation to some Element of the World that makes things more complicated or difficult for the Colony. Also, for each Trouble that gets created out of unsuccessful rolls, a player with a Plot Character earns that Trouble as part of their resources. The Player then gets to describe how that Trouble manifests when it comes up during Investigations or Actions, and can incorporate it into their Plot Character's Agenda.

The Plot Character it should go to is one that can take advantage of that Trouble, or whose group affiliation or role relates to the Trouble. If none seems right, a player without a Plot Character can create one, and gain that Trouble right away.

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO PLAY?

Sign in Stranger is intended for long term, in-depth, collaborative play. The pace of the game is set for thorough and leisurely investigation and elaboration of character and world over many sessions of play. Players are encouraged to engage in sustained in-character interactions, as well as to give full and detailed descriptions of the game world. Players actively collaborate to create in-world events and elements and to create meaningful opposition and adversity—as well as support and allegiances—for the characters in play.

Players are asked to invest special attention to the issues facing their own and certain other characters, as well as contribute in a supporting fashion to the stories of other players for whom they have lesser responsibility. The game empowers all the players, and asks for commitment to working with—and against—one another to craft the world and the story that the characters weave within it. It's a story of discovery, and overcoming tremendous odds.

WHAT IS THE STORY OF THE COLONISTS?

Initially, the humans experience intense culture shock. They are unknown here, newcomers to the vast interstellar community, and must find ways to adapt. As though members of a tribe from a remote Amazonian valley who had never interacted with the developed world, were suddenly dropped into New York City or Beijing and told to make their way.

The Colonists must rely on one another for help in dealing with the stresses of their new home, though these pressures may push them apart. They Assimilate over time, through some physical, some cultural changes that bring them closer to the world they inhabit and farther from the home they left behind. This can draw them into deeper connection with the beings around them, and sometimes put them at odds with their fellow Colonists, or people back on Earth. The Colony gets to make their own choices about what path their lives will take.

Over time, the humans gain insight into their new world and may become key players in struggles playing out on the planet and, perhaps, throughout the galaxy. This group of strangers, wayward and homeless, change the world even as they themselves are changed by it.

Chapter 3:

Three Ways to Play

GAME LENGTH AND SCOPE

When you play Sign in Stranger, you can choose from three ways to play:

ONE SESSION—*at a convention, a party, one time session at a game store or someone's home*

SHORT CAMPAIGN—*Two to six sessions, a month or two of weekly gaming, multiple sessions over a weekend.*

LONG TERM CAMPAIGN—*Open-ended exploration. Ongoing commitment with a group of players. Group may shift from week to week.*

Choose based on the level of time and commitment your group can put into the game.

Playing a one-shot game at a convention will have a different feel than settling in to play a long-running campaign with friends. The tone and the pace of the game would likely change. There are rules for each type of play, and the players may make different choices about how they play depending on what the length of the game will be. We'll discuss these three different options and outline different ways to play, and give suggestions for how the players may have a united approach to the game.

1) ONE SESSION

Playing a One Shot is suited to Convention play, or for times when you'd like to have some silly fun creating an alien world. This style of play is quick and streamlined. You create and choose from just three worlds. Then play out the arrival of Colonists on an alien planet and the strange things they encounter there.

TONE

The odd juxtapositions that happen in Sign in Stranger, during world creation, or in the normal course of exploring the alien world can be funny. In a short term game, you may want to encourage this, and flow with the craziness of the world. The characters played may be over the top and larger than life. You may go for a Through the Looking Glass, fantastic feel for the alien world.

Remember though, that in this game especially, the unexpected is to be expected, so creepiness may break out at odd moments.

RULES AND PRACTICE

FACILITATOR

One person takes the role of Facilitator. Their responsibility is to help the other learn how to play, spread spotlight out amongst the characters, and help the group go from task to task. They play the first Plot Character, the Terran Authority Liason, and assign the Colonists three Investigation Questions to look into and express their Agenda in their directions.

WORLD CREATION

When you are making up the world, create just three worlds to choose among. If the group is looking for a light game, choose silly things for the Alluring and Repellent traits, and the employment offered. The aliens may dress like clowns or juggle children. They may fly like bumblebees or pee champagne. The jobs chosen for the humans may also have a light tone: chauffeur to the Stars, or kitten herder. Or perhaps go for the ridiculous: Presidential bubblegum chewer or alligator chiropractor.

But, no matter what you do, it will be ridiculous. So don't worry too much on that account.

COLONISTS

For this game, pick some broad characteristic that defines your Colonist. The Story Seeds may inform this for you: the greedy corporate hack can latch onto every opportunity for gain, the altruistic explorer may offer their hand to anyone they meet. Your character will just have one session

to shine. Pick a strong characteristic and run with it.

OMIT FLASHBACKS

To increase the pace of the game, you may skip playing out Flashbacks. If your character Panics, have them cause chaos or confusion for the others. Destroy a personal or group Belonging. Follow all the usual rules for being Panicked, but can be refreshed by taking a break and spending time talking with another colonist.

INVESTIGATION QUESTIONS AND GOALS

Choose three Questions for the whole group, and omit Goals. Choose Colonists that will be lead Investigators for the Questions, and team them up with others who can help. None of the Questions will be resolved. But be sure to have an equal number of scenes devoted to each. Goals are needed for longer-term stories.

PLOT AND SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

Have one to three Plot Characters. The Terran Authority is required as part of the start of the game. Other likely ones to appear are the Xsian Ambassador and the Colonists' Alien Employer. Players may take the role of one or two Supporting Characters, but skip their ability to add Explanations to the world. They may help in an Investigation or Action, however.

PERSONAL LOG

If there is time, end the session by having everyone write an entry in their personal log. Then, read them out when all are completed as an epilogue to play.

2) SHORT CAMPAIGN

In a short campaign more of the world will be explored, and the characters will have more chance to develop. The scope of Investigation is still limited, however, with three Questions being followed up by the whole group. The goal is to bring to a close these three Investigations, which should take from three to six sessions.

TONE

The tone of a short campaign may fluctuate between whimsy and sobriety. The strangeness of the random words and what is described will likely inject humor, but also the difficulties arising from the Colonist's position on the new planet can bring the tone a more serious flavor.

RULES AND PRACTICE

FACILITATOR

As in a One Session game, one person takes the role of Facilitator. Their responsibilities are the same, but this will likely be a recurring character.

INVESTIGATION QUESTIONS AND GOALS

Choose three Questions for the whole group, and one Goal for each Colonist. Direction for play follows the course of bringing each of the Questions to resolution, and attempting to attain their Goal. While Investigating the Questions, the Colonists create Resources for the individuals and the Colony as a whole along the way. The Goals are things that are important to the Colonists. Working on them gives a personal dimension to play, and depth to the characters.

When each Question is answered, do not choose another to Investigate. Three fulfilled Questions allows for a report to Earth and re-supply. End the campaign with this report.

FLASHBACKS

Include Flashbacks. Play out Flashbacks to relieve Panic, but others may be narrated in summary.

PLAY GROUP CHANGES

Continuity of players enhances short-term play, so that all players have experienced the same events, and can build off what the others have done. Splitting into smaller groups is suited to the kind of intra-party conflict that may be encouraged to arise over a long-term campaign, but may be disruptive in a shorter campaign.

PLANNING SESSION

Planning sessions may be helpful to see what direction the group would like the session to go in. These may be brief, since likely all the Investigation Questions will be dealt with each session, and the characters will only progress a small amount in their integration into the new world.

3) LONG-TERM CAMPAIGN

When you play for the long haul, take out all of the stops. The main rules of this game text are intended for this style of play. The game has the potential to range far and long: taking place over many months or years in the establishment of the Colony, and in the players' lives. The scale of the Exploration can increase from local and personal, to global and society-wide. More records are kept, to help keep track of the planet and its denizens, and alien civilizations and environments can be mapped out in full.

The players also actively share the task of putting pressure on the Colony, as well as playing out the interactions between the Colonists and the beings they meet, and grow to love and hate. New developments can happen on Earth, and relations between the Colony's new home and the Colonist's home planet may change in ways that affect their lives. New Colonists may join them. They may travel to different worlds. They may interweave themselves into this new society. They also may cause fissures and cracks in the foundations of the social world around them. Or get washed away in the surrounding hustle and bustle, or become pariah, marginalized or enslaved.

TONE

In a longer term game, the more real issues of the Colonists' situation have time to arise and be dealt with meaningfully. The feelings of isolation and lack of understanding are then tempered by the humor sometimes, allowing the players to address difficult situations by bringing lightness back from time to time. Flashbacks can become crucial, to break up the alien-ness of the new world, and to show connections among the characters and their past.

RULES

INVESTIGATION QUESTIONS AND GOALS

Have every player choose an Investigation Question for their Character, along with a Goal. When one is resolved, choose another to be Investigated or sought after. These form overlapping story threads followed by the players. The Goals can increase in time, moving from small personal goals to wide-reaching ambitions for the Colony or the place of the humans on the planet. The Colony may grow. The humans may become embroiled in the politics of the place. In the long term game, changes can be sought for the status of Terra, or the Colony can transplant itself to another home. The nature of the game is flexible and can be determined by the desires of the play group itself.

FLASHBACKS

Flashbacks are central to the long-term game. They allow the players to re-contextualize things that have happened, shed light on relationships, and plant seeds for larger changes they will attempt to bring about in the world. They can also simply be areas for greater exploration of the characters. Characters played in the Flashbacks can become Supporting Cast. Additional Plot Characters may be created there as well. The past forms a parallel storyline to the founding of the Colony that can be used to enrich the tale.

RESOURCES

Creating and threatening Resources allows the players to continue to bring variety and change to the plot during a long-term game. Resources are used to overcome problems, but then may bring their own new forms of complications and complexity to the lives of the Colonists. Resources created can expand in scope such as connections with worldwide organizations, ability for the Colonists to travel long distances or affect the larger culture. They may also continue to be more restrained, depending on the aesthetics of the group. Different styles of play will be supported by different scales of development.

PLAY GROUP CHANGES

The long-term game is suited to having changes in the play group occur. The larger group may split up into smaller groups as Away Teams, and then come back together to share about their experiences. Or different players may play on the nights a game is in session. Personal Logs, Colony and World Descriptions, Explanations and Question or Goal Progress will all allow the other players to get caught up on what has occurred while they were not present. The character may be understood to have been on a side exploration of their own, or not involved directly in the action taking place if the player misses a session. Players who were not present at an earlier session should be given priority for choosing to play out scenes, and have Focus moments at the start of an evening's game, to allow some catch up and to incorporate their ideas into the coming events.

CHARACTER DEATH

A player may choose for a character to die due to injuries. This may have a deep impact on the other Colonists. That player may then choose to phase out of the game, or bring in a new Colonist. If a new character is introduced, choose one with a new Lunar Training. The new character enters at the next session. They begin fresh, shaved and clad in jumpsuit, with an Assimilation of 1.

Any time a character dies, have the characters begin the next session with a funeral or memorial to the lost character. The new character may be present.

Chapter 4:

Setting up for Play

SETTING UP FOR THE GAME

In *Sign in Stranger*, all of the players all work together to create the world and play the characters. In many other games, there is a GM or Game Master, who is responsible for creating and presenting descriptions of the world in which the game takes place, for playing minor characters and villains, for keeping everyone on task with respect to the rules and to maintain dynamic pacing of the plot and character development. In *Sign in Stranger*, the responsibility for all these jobs is shared equally among all the players. However, especially during the first session, it can be helpful to have one person Facilitate. This person would read the rules thoroughly beforehand and guide the others in what is needed during this session. However, the main role of the Faciliator is to help everyone learn how to work together to run the game so that that role can pass away.

During the very first session of the game, the players make up a group of planets and the aliens that inhabit them. Each player has a character that they play throughout the game: their Colonist, newly expatriated from Earth, and given a unique training to help the colony establish itself on the new planet. But they will also play aliens and other humans at various other times. Those additional characters: Plot Characters and Supporting Cast, are discussed in the Other Characters section, Chapter 15, p. 80.

At the start of each session, the players add to a pool of words that are used to randomly generate descriptions for aspects of the world that the Colonists choose to colonize. The words take three forms: Nouns, Verbs and Adjectives, and they can be whatever comes to mind—they help create the disconcertingly alien environment that the Colonists will come to call their new home.

Once these the characters and their choice of a new world have been

created, the players then choose a planet by playing, in character, the Colonists looking over their choices and deciding on a new world. End the first session with a glimpse of the new world by having each player describe one thing the Colonists see near their new colony.

RANDOM WORDS

Random words will be used as creative springboards for the players to describe the world. These are chosen at the start of play, written down and replenished between sessions when they run out.

Each player writes down 15 words on small pieces of paper (say one or two inch square sheets torn or cut from notebook paper, or whatever is at hand). The words fall into three categories: write 5 nouns, 5 verbs, and 5 adjectives.

Put all of the words of each type together. For example, put all the nouns together with one another in a pile separate from the verbs. Shuffle each set so that the words by different people are mixed up amongst one another. Place each group of words into a separate bag or cup. Then, set them aside to be used later in the game.

The words will be used to inspire descriptions of things that the Colonists encounter on the alien planet. These things are known collectively as elements of the world.

Before each play session, add more new words to the ones left over. Add 2-5 per player depending on how many are used in each session. If all words ever get used up in the middle of a session, have everyone create a new set of 5 each at that time.

For a single session game, have each player write just three words of each type, making a set of nine words per player.

NOUNS

Nouns can be objects, things, places, types of things. Concrete nouns work better than abstract.

Nouns are used the first time an Element is encountered.

Do not use Names.

VERBS

Verbs can be actions, motions, emotions, and manners of doing things.

Verbs are used to inspire Descriptions of what beings are doing.

Do not use state-of-being verbs (e.g. was, is).

ADJECTIVES

Adjectives are new details about what a World Element looks, sounds, smells, tastes or feels like.

Adjectives give more information about an existing Element.

Do not use Colors.

WORLD/SPECIES CREATION

Each player creates a world and an alien species by filling out a World & Species sheet. Players fill their sheets out separately from one another, initially without discussion. When the item "Other Species" is reached, the players then share the names of the aliens that they have created. Players then choose from among the species created by other players to fill out this item.

Descriptions of each item on the sheet follow.

WORLD NAME: Create the name of a world inhabited by an alien species, on a distant solar system, light-years from Earth.

PRIMARY SPECIES: There may be several sentient species that live on this planet. One is the primary species. This may be because it is the most populous, or because it is the species indigenous to the planet. Or it may be because it is the species that dominates the planet for reasons cultural, military or economic. Circle "yes" by Home Planet if the species originated here. Do not choose the Xsians. They hold a special place in the human universe and information relating to them is included in the game. After all players have created a new species, write all the names on a separate piece of paper and set aside.

SIZE: Choose the size and type of the planet. This will influence how many other species may be present in sizeable numbers. The range of choices is: satellite, small planet, large planet, giant. Giant refers to a gas giant, such as Jupiter or Saturn. Fill in the number of Other Species in the box below.

Refer to the chart below for the number of Other Species:

PLANET SIZE	# OTHER SPECIES
satellite	one
small planet	two
large planet	three
gas giant	random*

*For gas giants, roll a four sided-die. Add that number of species to the list.

ENVIRONMENT TYPE: This describes the area that is inhabited by the primary species where the Colonists will settle. This choice will influence much about the descriptions of the world, the species present and what the humans will have to do to adapt to living on the world. The choices are land surface, subterranean, aqueous, gaseous, and space. Space may mean it is an artificial colony, or that the species are vacuumorphs, etc.

OTHER SPECIES: The names of some number of other sentient alien species found in sizeable numbers on the planet. Choose from the species created by the other players. Go around the table and have each player share just the name of their species. Take a piece of paper and have each player write down the name of their species as they announce it to the group. The players then use this list to choose an applicable number of species for their planet. The number of other species depends on the size of the planet.

ALLURING TRAIT: An aspect of the primary species. Something that humans find attractive or pleasant.

REPELLENT: Another aspect of the primary species. One that humans find disgusting or disquieting.

JOB LISTING: Interstellar classifieds. This is the occupation available to the human colonists. Give its name in the language of the Primary Species. Example: "Prelling" the "friginhain". Nearest Earth Equivalent is an approximation of what the job entails. Example: "Herding deer."

ONCE THESE HAVE BEEN COMPLETED, SET THESE SHEETS ASIDE.

DO NOT READ OVER OR SHARE THE INFORMATION AT THIS TIME. IT WILL BE NEEDED LATER IN THE SESSION.

PLANNING SESSIONS

After the first session, the group will never do quite so much preparation, but taking some time at the start of each game to coordinate with each other helps the game stay on course. Since there is not one person in main charge of how the game flows, it is necessary for the players to work together to communicate about what is needed and what will happen next. A Planning Session can help with this.

In the Planning Session, several things can happen:

- 1) Replenish the supply of Random Words, have the players create new sets of Nouns, Verbs and Adjectives
- 2) Read the Personal Log Entries from last time, and recap the events so that all remember what occurred.
- 3) Talk about what Investigation Questions and character Goals need some spotlight time this week.

Chapter 5:

Creating Colonists

THE MAIN CAST: COLONISTS

Each player creates one human Colonist character. This character helps found a colony on one of the worlds already created. The Colonist is each player's main character. These characters will be played the most, and will be the avenue through which the players will uncover the truth about the world around them. More is learned about the Colonists over time, they are developed through Flashbacks, through their actions and through the goals they strive to achieve in the present.

Create a character by filling out a character pages as follows:

- 1) HOME:** Choose a geographical location on Earth where your character comes from.
- 2) NAME:** Choose a name for your character.
- 3) STORY SEED:** Each character has some reason why they decided to leave the known comforts of Earth to join an unknown group of people to leave Earth forever for a strange world they've never seen. The Story Seed is a broad reason or motivation for making this change. Nine Story Seeds are Included in the Setup Materials. Cut them into small pieces of paper, fold and shuffle them, then choose randomly among them. Or have each player write one down and choose among those generated by the group.

EXAMPLE STORY SEEDS: *Revenge, Heartbreak, Ambition, Escape, Adventure, Spy, Greed, Mission.* Others might be *Curiosity, Patriotism, Sacrifice, Quest, Love.*

Story Seeds are general categories, not specific situations. The specifics are left up to the individual player to determine.

- 4) DESCRIPTION:** Write a brief description of the character. A word or

two about their age, their physical appearance, or personality will do. Examples would be: “retiring young Latina mother”, “tall, engaging black man”, “willowy white teen”.

5) AGE: Write the character’s age.

6) EARTH PROFESSION: what this character did for work, or an activity such as music or sports which was their calling, on their home planet. This was a major activity which they were involved in immediately before leaving Earth. The Colonists can call up on their experiences in their Profession to better accomplish tasks on the new planet.

EXAMPLES:

Teacher, fisher, shaman, nun, accountant, runner, violinist, Marine, activist, shepherd, biologist, student, full-time parent, grocery clerk, astronaut.

7) BELONGINGS: Trans-system travel is difficult and expensive. All is accounted for, Colonists travel shaved bald. Each is provided with clothes and supplies to provide for their minimal needs (Standard Supplies listed in Appendix B, p. 103), and is only allowed to bring personal effects of the amount that would fit in a standard shoe box. List here three objects of personal or sentimental value that your character brought from Earth. Return to this field later to list up to three pieces of equipment that are used for the colonists’ Lunar training speciality.

8) STRESS RESPONSE: Activity or type of response this character has under extreme stress. The stresses of living on an alien planet can be great, and these characters will be tested as they never have been before. Examples are: sleeps too much, gets angry, goes on a bender, works harder, wants to be alone.

9) ASSIMILATION LEVEL: The degree to which this character has adapted to their new environment. Assimilation may represent cultural changes such as dress, language and comfort with new things. It may also represent physical or physiological changes. The Cure can make the characters undergo genetic changes that help them better survive in their new home. But these changes may cause stress and alienation from other humans who have not undergone them.

Each level of Assimilation has a description which goes along with it. All characters begin with an Assimilation level of 1, taking the Cure, which means they cannot return to Earth.

Assimilation level can increase in one of two ways: through physical changes brought on as a side effect of injuries, and through cultural adaptations chosen and effectively attained by the Colonists. How these occur is discussed in chapter 14, page 78.

10) LUNAR TRAINING: While transitioning from their old life to their new, the characters spent between six-months and a year on Luna, undergoing intensive waking and hypnogogic training for a new set of skills that will be needed on the new colony. These Lunar Trainings provide them with knowledge to be able to divine information about the new world.

Each Colonist has a different Training than the others. There must be one Doctor in each Colony. The Trainings chosen may overlap or be different from the Colonist's Profession. If they overlap, that character will be stronger in the given area. If they are different, the character will have more flexibility.

The Trainings are divided into three Spheres: Natural World, Technological and Social. Players should discuss which trainings are chosen. The team of colonists chooses a balance of complimentary skills. Choose at least one from each Sphere to get a good cross-section of the disciplines. The skills given by the Trainings may place the Colonist into a role as part of the Colony Crew. Choose from the suggested Roles along with the Training.

Choose a Training from the following list.

TRAININGS:

Natural Sphere

*Medical Officer/
Psychologist

Planetologist

Xenozoologist

Xenobotanist

Technological Sphere

Mechanical Engineer

Structural Engineer

Biotech Engineer

Military/Security

Technology Specialist

Social Sphere

Economics/Trade Specialist

Politics/Legal Specialist

Cultural Officer

(art, religion, society)

Communication/Linguistics Specialist

***NOTE: THERE MUST ALWAYS BE ONE COLONIST WITH MEDICAL TRAINING.**

Full descriptions of the Trainings are found on pages 31-42.

11) RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER CHARACTERS: On each character sheet, there is space to write in the names of all the other Colonists. There is room for a short description of the character, as well as the player's name. After this, there is a plus sign (+) and a minus sign (-). Over time, based on character interactions, choose whether your Colonist has a Supportive (+) or Stressful (-) relationship with the other. Circle the appropriate symbol to create the relationship. This represents a meaningful way the Colonist experiences the other character in their life. If neither is chosen, they do not have a relationship.

If the plus sign is circled, the Colonist enjoys the other's company or has reason to feel that they could rely on the other. If the minus sign is circled, that means they have a Stressful relationship. Perhaps they are irritated by the other character, or they have not always seen eye to eye. Reflect the nature of the relationship in the description of the other character.

EXAMPLE RELATIONSHIPS:

Supportive relationship (+)

Johann -- devoted lover

Stressful relationship (-)

Wulin -- hates him for his cowardice

Relationships may also be created with aliens as the outcome of Colonist Actions. If the outcome of an action is to create an Ally, a supportive friend is found. If "gain an enemy" is the outcome, one of the aliens creates a stressful relationship with one of the Colonists. Circle the appropriate symbol ("+" or "-") and write a description. This character becomes a Supporting character. Alternatively, a Plot Character can be created when either outcome appears. For more information about Plot and Supporting Characters, see Chapter 15, page 80.

Relationships allow players to give increased help to another player's character for an Investigation or an Action. When helping a character that has a relationship to you, say how your character interacts to help, and take into account the nature of the relationship. Characters with a Stressful relationship still help, but do so in a way that puts pressure on the Colonist.

When a character in relationship with yours helps in an Investigation or Action, a higher die (d8) is rolled by the helping character's player, and may be assigned to any category by the acting player. (See chapter 9 about Investigations and Chapter 10 about Actions).

Relationships are not necessarily reciprocal. The other player may choose either or neither type of relationship in return. However, two players with characters in Stressful relationships with one another, may choose to make the relationship Antagonistic. This gives each player more power over the other's character. When the die is rolled, the player of the helping character instead chooses which category it applies to, though it must be used to improve the outcome in a category. The player being helped may decline the help prior to the roll, but then they may not be helped by anyone else. Antagonistic relationships may be terminated through actions in the plot that make this plausible. And once terminated, the two characters no longer have any relationship.

12) COLONIST GOALS: In addition to the formal investigations that the Colonists will pursue, each of them also has personal Goals that they want to accomplish. These are completely free form, and should be inspired by what is important to the character, and what happens as they explore the planet. Sometimes Goals can be inspired by Belongings brought from earth: a former gardener brings a box of seeds and the goal becomes to grow vegetables on a patch of land. Or they can be inspired by the Story Seeds: a Colonist has the Story Seed “greedy”, and one of the things they learn early about the planet is that the subterranean world is carved into stone with a huge vein of precious metals that the aliens take for granted: gold, platinum, silver. The player creates a Goal: “to make a killing off this planet”. The players pursue the Goal for the Character by taking Actions, which are made easier by the Investigations that everyone completes. Players can build off of the efforts made by one another as they learn about the world.

13) PERSONAL LOG: Journal entries for the character. Colonists keep records of their personal experiences. Players add to the log at the end of or during each session. All players read the latest entry out loud at the start of each session.

Use these entries to comment on the adventures of the Colonists, to express secret agendas and wishes of the characters, and also to reflect and support the play of the other players. Mention each other character at least once in each entry. They can incorporate them into their description of their characters.

Throughout the game, Flashbacks of the colonists’ time on Earth will also be played out and recorded. These memories help the colonists deal with issues that arise with settling on the new planet.

Personal Logs can be labeled by Session Number. Another important role of these entries is to help the players keep track of what has occurred throughout the game.

LUNAR TRAININGS

While stationed on Luna, the Colonists are gain skills that suit them to roles in the Colony, and that promise great things that they may send back to Earth.

<i>NATURAL SPHERE:</i>	<i>CREW POSITIONS</i>	<i>OFFER EARTH</i>
MEDICAL OFFICER/ PSYCHOLOGIST	DOCTOR, THERAPIST	Medical Technology, drugs, alien strengths/weaknesses
PLANETOLOGIST	NAVIGATOR, CARTOGRAPHER	Star and planet charts, gems, material chemistry
XENOZOOLOGIST	SHEPHERD, ANIMAL TRAINER	Animal threats and resources, cloning
XENOBOTANIST	FOOD PRODUCTION, COOK	Plant resources, compounds, chemicals, drugs, agricultural techniques
<i>TECHNOLOGICAL SPHERE:</i>		
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER	BUILDER, SEXTON	Architecture and design principles, new alloys
MECHANICAL ENGINEER	MECHANIC, PILOT	Energy sources, transportation technologies
BIOTECHNOLOGY ENGINEER	GENETICIST, CYBERNETICS	Biotech devices, genetic modifications, nanotech
MILITARY AND SECURITY TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST	DEFENSES TRAINER, SECURITY	Weapons design, martial disciplines, security information
<i>CULTURAL SPHERE:</i>		
ECONOMICS/TRADE SPECIALIST	TREASURER, TRADER	Funds, industries, forms of trade, value of resources found on Earth
CULTURAL OFFICER (ART, RELIGION, SOCIETY)	MORALE OFFICER, HISTORIAN	Religious beliefs, artistic forms and media, history
POLITICAL/LEGAL SPECIALIST	LEGAL ADVISOR, ADVOCATE	Legal codes and practices, identity of major leaders
COMMUNICATION/LANGUAGE SPECIALIST	TRANSLATOR, ALIEN LIASON	Languages, narrative/ symbolic canons

Medical Officer/Psychologist (Doctor)

The Medical Officer is an important part of the team. Highly trained in all arts of healing known on Earth, the Doctor has tools and supplies that will be able to cure anticipated illnesses

and injuries of the body and mind. In charge of making sure that the Colony practices proper preventative safety (watching out for poisoning, allergies, and incipient diseases), the Doctor is the Colony's first line of defense against the many potential threats which may take the Colonists unawares.

The Medical Officer is also trained in anatomy and observational pathology. Their training is oriented toward preparing them for making detailed observations about the sentient species found on the planet, how their bodies function, and the applications of their medical technologies for the alien hosts as well as humans. Xenophysiology is a likely further course of study for the Doctor. The Doctor is in the difficult situation of being responsible for the wellbeing of the Colonists, but also are to be envied by all their colleagues at home for the incredible discoveries waiting to be made. Who knows what human diseases may be overcome through different applications of the Cure, alien medicines or health technologies?

The Medical Officer will also be on the watch for mental issues that the human Colonists experience. Stress and fatigue caused by transplanting to the new world can put great pressure on them.

Sample Investigation Questions: (from Uniform Survey)

- What sentient species are present on this planet and what are their characteristics?
- What foods are edible for humans on the planet, where can they be acquired?
- What are life cycle and stages of development of species here?
- What medical technologies are applied?

Collaborations: The Medical Officer may need to work with the Botanist or Zoologist to determine what inanimate and animate matter on the planet holds chemicals and substances needed to produce medicines for new diseases and maladies that attack the Colonists. The Biotech and Mechanical Engineer can assist in identifying proper machines or technologies that can be used to treat the humans, and the Cultural Officer can help the Doctor navigate social stigmas or taboos associated with acquiring materials or information needed to keep the Colonists healthy and safe.

Each Colony is required have one personnel member train as the Medical Officer, to safeguard the health of the crew.

Special Attribute: Roll Free d8 when Acting to Heal a Colonist.

Xenozoologist

Trained in the functioning and characteristics of countless species on Earth, as well as the care and feeding of livestock and domestic animals, the Zoologist will soon become a leading

This Colonist studies animate, non-sapient life on the planet. Studies their anatomy and characteristics. Also domestication, husbandry and relations with sapient species.

Special Attribute: Choose one: Bonus Free 2d6 to Investigate tame or wild life.

Xenozoologist, with new insights and information about the non-sapient species on the Colony's planet.

What kinds of creatures have evolved in this strange environment? How do they survive? What are their life-cycles and mating rituals? What talents and incredible abilities do they have? What is their relationship with the sentient species on the planet? Are they harvested, tolerated, feared? What are the impacts they have on the world that are unknown and unsuspected by the alien hosts?

The Colony may live or die on the relationships they create with creatures on the planet. From appreciating the simple charm of a pet, to utilizing trained hunting animals to catch food, to taking part in symbiotic connections in order to live, breathe or eat on the new planet, the animate life on this planet play a major role in the Colony's success.

Sample Investigation Questions: (from Uniform Survey)

What foods are edible for humans on the planet, where can they be acquired?
What notable inanimate and sentient species of life are present in the local environment and larger world? What are their characteristics and uses?
What are life cycle and stages of development of species here?
What forms of reproduction are present in non-sapient species?

Collaborations: The Xenozoologist will likely work closely with the Xenobotanist to learn about the many interwoven relationships between animate and inanimate life on the new planet. The Planetologist will be a great resource for learning about the conditions in which these animals have evolved, survive and thrive. The Cultural Officer can help the Xenozoologist make sense of the relationships and uses which the animals are involved on the planet, and the Linguist can help establish communication between the guardians of the animate life, as well as with the beings themselves where possible.

Planetologist

The Planetologist training on Luna covered the many types of knowledge one can have about land and the seas. The formation of continents, mountains, rivers, lakes and oceans. The development of

In charge of charting the surrounding area and land-, liqui- or aerospace. Studies geologic materials, seismic activity, weather and astronomy.

Special Attribute: PlaceWorld Elements on maps as they are Described. All add d6 to Navigate back to a place on map.

environments and ecosystems. The cycles of the weather, and the flows of water from the air, across the land into the sea. The Planetologist has been trained in knowledge of the most extreme areas of the Earth: from hissing volcano flows to the sifting dunes of deserts, to the frigid blue expanses of the Antarctic regions. And trained to observe the movements of the Earth, mantle and crust shifting, causing tremors along fault lines. Also, they have been trained in the sciences of astronomy and astrophysics, learning as much as Earth could teach about the secrets of the universe. They will now have an opportunity to learn about unknown environments. Do the alien hosts live in subterranean caverns? What unknown metals and crystals line the walls of their civilization? Do they tap the heat of their planet for its energy? If the Colony is on a gas giant, what are the striations of the atmosphere like? What are the flow and weather patterns? How do they affect the aliens? How have they adapted to them? The Planetologist records and maps the surroundings. What is the topography of the area they inhabit? What are the eco-regions around? What other types of environments are inhabited on this world?

Sample Investigation Questions: (from Uniform Survey)

What is the weather on this world? The length of the day?

What is the environment surrounding the Colony like?

What other environments are on the planet, and what are they inhabited by?

What are the monuments and major landmarks of the world?

Collaborations: The Planetologist will benefit greatly from working with the Xenobotanist and Xenozoologist to learn about the animate and inanimate life on the planet that populate the landscapes of the world. The Mechanical Engineer can help transport the Planetologist to different regions of the planet for study of differing zones, and the Political Officer may be needed to acquire permits to move freely. The Linguist may be needed to help translate with the inhabitants of different areas, to be able to travel their lands as well as to gain more information about the patterns of change in the weather, the seasons, and the geologic passages of time.

Xenobotanist

The Botanist is in charge of investigating plantlike life on this planet. The line between plant and animal may be hard to define at first, but they have been trained in observing the

This Colonist studies non-animate, non-sapient life on the planet. Studies their anatomy and characteristics. Also their propagation, chemical properties, and potential uses for fabrication.

Special Attribute: Take Free d8 to analyze plant compounds.

functioning and determining the nature of still growing things like plants, algae, fungus and other non-animate forms of life. The Xenobotanist has studied the life cycles of trees, the blossoming of flowers, the unfolding of the genetic structure of edible grains as they developed over millennia by selection and cross-breeding by humanity on Earth. The slow, silent expanding network of fungi mycelia, the calm, floating presence of seaweeds, swept hundreds of miles by a tropical storm. Knowing these patterns helps make sense of new mosaics of life found on the strange planet that can then be shared with others on Earth.

A first major area of responsibility is determining what types of plant life their alien neighbors and hosts gather and cultivate to support their nutritional needs. How do they partake of the energy harvested by plants? And, what can humans eat?

Sample Investigation Questions: (from Uniform Survey)

What foods are edible for humans on the planet, where can they be acquired?

What notable inanimate and sentient species of life are present in the local environment and larger world? What are their characteristics and uses?

What forms of reproduction are present in non-sapient species? How is food produced and stored?

Collaborations: The Xenobotanist will benefit from working with the Doctor to help learn about the qualities of the inanimate life, as well as the ways that it forms itself and functions. The Xenozoologist will be invaluable to help determine the interdependencies between animals and plant-like life on the planet. In study of agriculture the Xenozoologist will be a ready partner as well, looking at possible similar circular relations between domesticated life-forms. The Political Officer can assist the Xenobotanist in determining reasons for taboos on various plants, and the Cultural Officer can help determine if use is related to cultural, religious or other institutions. The Economic Specialist can help determine relative value of the life-forms and their component materials.

Mechanical Engineer

The Mechanical Engineer is in charge of learning about the engines and moving elements to machines on this world. Having learned about the history or locomotion, combustion engines

Expert on the functioning and creation of mechanical devices, vehicles, robotics, engines and sources of energy production.

Special Attribute: Transportation resources created through Investigation give free movement Action.

and newer types of work related robotics, this specialist brings to bear the knowledge of human history to learn about what different types of helping machines the aliens on this world have crafted.

Transportation is a major area of study for the Mechanical Engineer. What devices do the aliens use to travel great distances? What environmental factors are they adapted to: is their primary avenue of travel the slipstreams formed by the layers of a gas giant's atmosphere, or are there different vehicles and pods used to traverse the outer and inner layers of an aqueous terrain with increased shielding from the pressures found closer to the planet's core? Are wheels important or part of their design? What form of propulsion is used? What materials compose the machines? Who can wield and direct them?

Energy sources that power these machines are also part of the Mechanical Engineer's investigations. Do the aliens harness the motion of wind and water to power their transports? Perhaps powered with living batteries or controlled by a physiological joining with pilots and passengers?

Sample Investigation Questions: (from Uniform Survey)

What sources of energy are used?

What forms of technologies are present?

What are the modes of transportation?

What machines or other technologies are used in industry?

Collaborations: The Mechanical Engineer may need to collaborate with other Colonists trained in the technological sciences. The Structural Engineer may help with construction of vehicles or work machines. Biotech Engineers can assist investigations of biological elements to machines, such as wetware ports, animate guidance symbiotes or biological energy sources. In the Social sphere, the Economic officer can give insight about the function of these machines in trade and industry, and the Legal personnel can look into social agreements about who has the right to pilot transports and help avoid violations of civil or other codes while attempting to learn about these machines.

Structural Engineer

Trained in the arts of building and design, the Structural Engineer will help the group discern the underlying logic of the structures around them. Bringing to bear knowledge of human

Knowledgeable about construction of buildings and infrastructure, such as roads. Design and production of furnishings, tools and fabrics.

Special Attribute: Use Resources and Belongings to make different things. May duplicate building or device Resources.

craftsmanship spanning the millennia, they are versed in the construction of the Pyramids as well as the tension and load limitations of the Empire State Building's massive frame. These insights may allow the Colony to expand their dwellings in ways that protect and comfort the human body more aptly than your alien host can provide given vast differences in anatomy, psychology and environmental needs.

Along with buildings and shelter, the Structural Engineer is trained in the construction of all manner of objects and tools. A regular MacGuyver, your training has included being able to craft needed items out of whatever is at hand: lights, ladders, electronic equipment. Simple things taken for granted on Earth: paper to write on, a pen with which to write. The essential tools of living and working will have to be found, made or adapted on the Colonists' new world.

Sample Investigation Questions: (from Uniform Survey)

What kinds of shelter do the local beings utilize?

What forms of clothing do beings wear on this world, what is appropriate for humans?

What forms of technologies are present?

What metals and natural materials are used in construction and production? How are they produced?

Collaborations: The Structural Engineer will work closely with the other Technology Specialist: with the Mechanical and Biotech Engineers will have knowledge of energy sources and organic technologies that will allow you to unlock the secrets of this new world. The Natural Science Officers will also be needed allies. The Planetologist can search for needed metals and materials to craft alloys and compounds for construction. The Xeno-zoologist and Xenobotanist will uncover new organic (or other forms of life) based materials, and help the Structural Engineer take advantage of ways that the alien hosts may have harnessed living energies and bodies in ways unknown to the human imagination. The Social Scientists will offer their own insights into the legal, economic and cultural ramifications of the works of the Structural Engineer.

Biotech Engineer

The Biotech Engineer has been trained in all of the newly forming sciences of biotechnology that had been discovered. A relatively new discipline, Biotechnology takes from many different

branches of science: biology, genetics, robotics, informational systems and logic. Branching out into new areas, the Biotech has been given exploratory background into fields still developing: artificial intelligence, cloning and nano-technologies.

Experienced with biologically based technologies including genetics, cybernetics, and organic technologies.

Special Attribute: Natural bond with biotech machines. Omit Panic.

The Biotechnical engineer will observe how engineered technologies have been used by their alien hosts to create and enhance biological processes of plants, animals, sapient beings and other forms of life. They will also look for organic processes that are used to produce inorganic materials or technologies, such as bacteria that can extract precious metals from industrial waste, or organic molecules that can be trained to create crystalline microchip colonies. Biotechnology may include organic interfaces, or wetware, connecting living tissue and consciousnesses and machines or organic systems. Cybernetics, a fledgling field on Earth, may be a commonplace part of the alien cultures around the Colony.

Sample Investigation Questions: (from Uniform Survey)

What energy sources are used?

What forms of technologies are present?

What forms of industry and manufacture are there?

What medical technologies are applied?

Collaborations: The Biotechnology specialist in the Colony will work together with the other Engineers to learn about crossovers between biologically based technologies and their structural uses on the planet, such as living buildings and sentient transports. The Mechanical Engineer and the Biotech uncover the mysteries of nanotechnology and, with help from the Doctor, could learn how they can be adapted to human physiology. The Zoologist and Botanist will look to the Biotech Engineer for help on discerning how plants and animals or other life on this planet may be controlled or shaped by technology. The Cultural Officer can help piece together how these technologies are used for recreational purposes, or how they have shaped the development of society. And Biotech may allow greater information exchange with aliens, which can help the Communications Officer's efforts.

Military and Security Technology Specialist

The Weapons and Military Specialist will study ways that the aliens use force to control or constrain that actions of others. Both on an internal basis,

An expert on weapon construction and use, military science and security procedures.

Special Attribute: Weapons created give d6 to combat or defense Actions.

looking at the analog for police or security control, and on an external or inter-group basis, for military groups, raiding parties or defensive forces. The society may be at war, or in revolution. These things may involve the humans in their conflicts. This Colonist can identify possible threats, and help the Colonists learn to defend themselves in what may be a hostile world. The Military Specialist can investigate the forms of technology used for weaponry and defensive security devices.

The Military Specialist will endeavor to learn about Security issues and the ways that the aliens also contain outlaws or criminals, and help the humans avoid that fate. If containment facilities, such as prisons or work camps, exist on this world, reporting on these may be very helpful for the Colony and future Colonists, though care should be taken not to pry too deeply into issues which may be sensitive to the alien hosts. Learning about the various institutions devoted to forces of arms and peacekeeping would be another list of tasks. Are there orders of beings devoted to working with the regular populace to mediate their disputes? Are there disciplines of movement or force that are practiced by the world's inhabitants that are martial in nature?

Sample Investigation Questions: (from Uniform Survey)

What forms of technologies are present?

What forms of weapons are used by these species?

What forms of laws are operating where the colony exists? What are crimes?

Where is there warfare going on? Who is involved? What are the issues at stake?

Collaborations: The Structural Engineer can help shed light on defensive bulwarks, as well as containment buildings or areas. The Mechanical Engineer will help discover how weapons and other such devices function, are operated and may be manufactured. The Political Specialist can form an Investigative detail with the Military Engineer to delve into criminal activities or functioning of security forces. The Cultural Specialist will help shed light on potential spiritual dimensions to personal or social defensive or offensive practices. If investigating areas where military action has taken place, or seeking to take part in training, the Planetologist and Botanist may be essential in learning enough about surviving in natural areas to be effective for military endeavors.

Economics/Trade Specialist

The Economics Specialist in the Colony will help the humans understand how the aliens around them trade, exchange and produce goods and services. As the humans

Knowledgeable about currency, trade, barter and negotiation. Studies industry, employment and finances.

Special Attribute: Establish income and exchange rates through Investigation-- purchase more resources once currencies are known.

learn about their employment, the Economics Specialist will help them learn about the various forms of Industry the civilization they are now a part of uses. The Economic Specialist will learn about forms of currency and rates of exchange between them. They will help the Colony learn how values are set and help negotiate reasonable costs for the humans. The Economic Specialist may begin by identifying what the aliens use for currency, barter or exchange, and help the humans simple things like how to make change, or what is used to gain resources: be it coins, shared activities, other living beings and so on.

Finances can affect the livelihood of the colony by subjecting them to difficulties that their neighboring aliens suffer. Scarcity of resources caused by food production failure or warfare, or economic disruptions like strikes or depressions can hit the human colony harder than the aliens. During better times, humans may still be seen as a threat. The Economic Specialist may have to work hard to ferret out information about how the Colony can continue to sustain itself in the face of these pressures.

Sample Investigation Questions: (from Uniform Survey)

What forms of employment are open to humans, what are these activities like?

What forms of currency or trade are used or practiced?

What forms of industry and manufacture are there?

What are the social stratifications present (eg race, class, etc.)?

Collaborations: The Economic Specialist can rely on the Communications Officer to help translate the meaning of characters and text associated with currency, as well as to be able to talk with aliens in order to learn about how trade is effected. The Legal Specialist can help determine what forms of trade are outlawed, to help the Colonists avoid breaking laws, or know when and how they safely can if needed. The Technology Engineers will look to the Economics Officer to help them acquire needed parts for fabrication of buildings and vehicles, and likely help in Investigations of large scale manufacturing. And the Xenozoologist and Botanist will be helpful collaborators when learning how to barter for food or supplying the needs of the Colony.

Cultural Officer

The Cultural Specialist of the Colony has a wide-ranging responsibility to make sense of the many ways that the aliens around them represent

Studies art, religion, social norms, society structure and history. Entertainment, music and popular culture.

Special Attribute: Choose: create art, religion or social Resources that aliens respond to (thru Investigations).

and construct their experiences as a group. Do they have music? Dance? Other arts? And how do you tell an art museum from a billboard?

The Cultural Officer will puzzle out transcendent beliefs held by their host communities. Do they worship aspects of the natural world? Personify abstract concepts whether ones we share like Love and Honor, or other ideas unfathomable to humans? What are the many ways that both artistic movements and spiritual expressions manifest in the society? Are there gatherings devoted to them? Structures or spaces? In the home and in the public sphere? How do the Aliens participate in them.

The Cultural Officer will also study the history of the various aliens and how they represent the events their societies have experienced. How have the different aliens interacted? What are the major events in the past that are celebrated, or resonate for the aliens? What significance do they hold? How are the remembrances honored? With peaceful ceremonies, or bloodthirsty rages? How do the humans fit in? What are the expectations on the humans to participate or stay apart?

Sample Investigation Questions: (from Uniform Survey)

What forms of clothing do beings wear on this world, what is appropriate for humans?

What cultural norms and practices are present?

What forms of religion, philosophy or spirituality are practiced?

. What are the major institutions such as marriage, family, church, government, education?

Collaborations: The Cultural Specialist will work closely with the Legal and Economic Specialist to determine how the aliens' art and religion are intertwined with trade and employment agreements, as well as the laws protecting and defining them. The Botanist, Xenozoologist and Planetologist will help the Cultural Officer learn what aspects of the real world have held meaning for the aliens. The Medical Officer can help determine how their practices affect the aliens, and help find safe ways for the humans to participate in rites that may involve ingesting strange substances or withstanding the elements. The Technology Engineers can help the Cultural Officer travel through the world to study, and learn the various virtues and purposes of devices and structures used.

Politics/Legal Specialist

The Politics and Legal Specialist for the Colony will help the humans learn to navigate invisible social lines that they will be subject to in their new

Legal and Political expert. Studies civil and criminal law. Legal precedent, rules and judicial proceedings. Political structures.

Special Attribute: Choose: get Free 2d6 either with criminals or legal officials

home. Beginning with the status of the humans as immigrants and a new species unknown to the rest of the intergalactic communities, the Political Specialist will help the Colony identify rules and laws, and investigate how they affect the humans. They will distinguish criminal activity against the Colony, and the resource the humans can call up on in the aliens' society, from sanctioned discrimination.

This Colonist will also research the ways the alien societies are organized. Trained in historical configurations of human cultures, from ordering of resource allocation and activity by members of the society by elected representatives in Republics, to individual responsibility for making large scale decisions as found in Democracies, to the centralized enforcement of tax taking and individual responsibilities for supporting the society through food production and military service in Monarchies and Autocracies. The interactions between different strata of the aliens and between different species, both sentient and sapient, will have different ramifications based on their needs and how their access to power and decision making has been structured.

Sample Investigation Questions: (from Uniform Survey)

What forms of governance do the beings on this planet utilize?

What political entity is the colony located within?

What forms of laws are operating where the colony exists? What are crimes?

What are the social ills on this planet? How are they addressed?

Collaborations: The Political Specialist will rely on the other Cultural Officers for necessary information that will help them understand how the laws and society organization function. Learning to communicate with the aliens will be key, made possibly by the Communications Specialist. Trade patterns will dictate and affect all of the levels of the aliens' societies, and will confront the Political Specialist with puzzles and obstacles until they are understood. And spiritual and cultural meaning may be infused into the practices used by the aliens. Use of transportation and construction of buildings could be governed by law, as well as religious or cultural understandings of what is appropriate for the humans.

Communication/Linguistics Specialist

The Investigations of the Communications Specialist will be critical to the humans being able to integrate fully into their new world.

Studies language, communication among the aliens, and literary works. Knowledgeable about communication media and communication theory.

Special Attribute: Free d8 to learn alien languages. Create as Resources for group.

Trained in the various means of communications open to humans, the Communications Specialist can use this assortment of knowledge as a basis to decode the communication going on around the humans. Their training includes an understanding of a broad set of human languages including gestural languages like sign and semaphore, as well as written scripts, ciphers, body language memes and language dysfunctions.

Additionally, the Communications Specialist is trained to observe and utilize forms of technology used to communicate for example to communicate over long distance. The aliens might employ biological-based telecommunication such as broadcast thoughts, or luminous algae to indicate high status. The Linguist will be on the look out for forms of symbolic communication that may represent bodies of fictional or educational social involvement. What forms may their literature take? From the drama of the ancient Greeks to chatting meta-fiction, human societies have had diverse forms. Alien cultural repositories of past events, metaphorical myths and meaningful tropes could come in any form.

Sample Investigation Questions: (from Uniform Survey)

What forms of communication and media are used?

What forms of entertainment and art are practiced by the inhabitants of this world? What are the great works?

What major ideologies and theories have been formulated?

What is the relationship of these species with others on this planet? On others?

Collaborations: The Colony will rely on the Communications Specialist to help them engage with their alien hosts effectively. The search for shared language may be a high priority for the group. The Medical Officer will be a resource in turn, to help with understanding the internal mental or emotional underpinnings of communicating with alien beings. They may work closely with the Cultural Specialist to decode the levels of meaning in representations and narrative forms based on the society's history, artistic traditions and religious beliefs. The other Social Experts, Economic and Political will help the Linguist decode meanings having to do with these disciplines. And the Engineers will be able to offer insight and assistance on the use and function of media technologies for various applications.

Chapter 6:

Planetfall

Emerging from the lander, she stepped for the first time onto alien soil.

The ground was a rich red beneath her feet. Wavering motes churned up by her passage clung to her pressure suit boots. The deep lavender clouds they had seen from orbit surrounded her and moved silently past. She felt as though she moved through a silent violet ocean.

Reaching up to her helmet, she closed her eyes for a moment, praying, then released the seal. No matter how many times they'd been assured Quiglon Prime was habitable by humans, she wouldn't be able to believe it until she saw and felt it for herself.

The air stung her lungs as she opened her helmet and took her first breath of this new air. In the distance she saw lights approach them flickering through layers of the shifting fog.

THE FIRST SESSION

- 1) Introductions to the Characters
- 2) Flashback to Earth on the Timeline
- 3) Read about the Worlds
- 4) Choose a world for the Colony

MEETING ON LUNA: FLASHBACKS TO THE TIMELINE

Once the worlds and Colonists have been created, the players begin to play their characters. The characters have been chosen to be a group that will work together. The group plays out their first time meeting one another on the Earth's moon, as a proto-colony.

First, taking turns, go around the circle and have the characters introduce themselves to the each other. Some may know each other already from their time on Luna or on Earth. Describe the physical appearance of the colonist and have each character tell the others their name, where they were from on Earth, and then describe something that happened to them during one of the points on the timeline.

The story about their experience during the dramatic events is a first, brief Flashback. This places the characters in the events on Earth and makes concrete how they affected the characters.

Do not play out a scene from that time. Simply have each player narrate the character describing where they were and what they experienced at that time. The player may reveal that the world events affected them with tragedy, or changed their life, or was ignored. The main point is to get a small taste of the character's life. Bringing into play some aspect of the Story Seed can help introduce that element of the character from the start.

CHOOSING A WORLD

Once the Colonists have been introduced, the players play out the rest of the meeting. The Colonists have completed their respective trainings on Luna and have chosen (or been placed with) this group of future émigrés. They meet in a room in the Lunar base and are given descriptions of prospective worlds. These are, of course, the World/Alien Species sheets created earlier by the players. One player may take the whole stack and read them to the others.

The players debate, in character, the relative charms and draw-backs of the planets. The Alien Species traits, as well as the description of work, are all key points to discuss. The environment the humans will be asked to live in may be a sticking point as well. There is no further information available about this world. The Colonists' Xsian hosts have done their best to provide the pertinent data that will help the humans choose their new home—but there is still a lot that the Xsians have to learn about humans.

There is no right way to choose a world, and no set procedure to use. Will the group vote democratically? Choose a leader? Require full consensus? If your group falls into a deadlock, remember that there is no returning home. Earth is a closed chapter, at least until the whole planet chooses to partake of the Cure. Make compromises. Find a solution.

After all, if your group can't even choose a planet together, how can they hope to survive on one?

However, conflicts between characters are a fine, even, a good thing.

Alliances and connections may also be made. See who is on your side in this discussion, and who is against you. Relationships between the Colonists will be valuable on the new world.

ASSIGNING QUESTIONS: MISSION FROM TERRA

Before the humans leave the Moon, the first Plot Character makes an appearance. Their Terran Authority Liason has a final meeting with the group and assigns them their three first Questions to Investigate. One player takes the Terran Authority Liason, creates the Character and plays them in the scene. The choice of Questions to Investigate should be informed by the Agenda chosen for the Character. It is that player's responsibility to put some conflict or tension into the Colonists' lives. Perhaps the Colony is being asked to bring back military information, perhaps one of the Colonists is asked to spy on the others and bring back information about any one who looks likely to betray Earth's secrets, perhaps they are asked to research whether the world would be suitable for an extremely large scale colony to be planned there. Look for issues that will intersect with the Colonist's backgrounds, and push their buttons. Whatever is chosen will be backdrop in many ways, Earth has no immediate power over the Colonists once they are on the new Planet, but this is the way Earth can try to retain control, and while we are at it, some direction is given to the players, to react to as they will.

If there is a Facilitator in this game, they should play the Terran Authority.

LANDING ON THE PLANET

Your characters have their first sight of the new world they will inhabit together. Have each player create a World Element (see chapter 7) by asking another player a question about the world that relates to their Lunar Training. For example, the Geologist might ask "What formations of land do I see?" The person asked the question chooses one Noun from among the Random Words and describes what can be seen, heard, smelled, touched or tasted. Any explanations that may come up are purely hypothetical at this time. As part of this description, say a color present. Add this to the color table list. Write down these observations on the World Element Sheets.

Complete the session by having each player make an entry in their character's Personal Log recording their impressions of the new world and of the other Colonists.

Chapter 7:

Exploring the World

WORLD ELEMENT DESCRIPTION

When exploring the world around the characters, use the Nouns, Verbs and Adjectives for inspiration about what they see. To do so, a player asks another player for a Description of some Element of the world. The descriptions are about what the Colonists can possibly see, feel, hear, touch or smell. The other player then pulls a random Noun, Verb or Adjective and bases their Description of the world on the word drawn.

Record the Description on scrap paper. When it has been Explained after a successful Investigation, then it can be recorded in the World Log book.

GUIDANCE FOR YOUR DESCRIPTIONS:

- 1) What the Colonists experience is alien and different from anything they have observed on Earth. Any explanations about what the things observed mean or how they function are purely theoretical. No definite meaning can be ascribed until a successful Investigation roll is made.
- 2) When describing what is observed, DO NOT use the word itself. Instead describe around the word, using it as an inspiration and creative springboard for what the Colonists see.
- 3) Be brief.
- 4) Roll on the Color Table (see below) the first time an element is encountered. Feel free to roll for a color or colors at any other time to use in the descriptions of the world.

A Description may have to do with a the topic of a particular Investigation Question. For example, if the Colonists are Investigating what they can

eat on the new planet, a player may ask someone to Describe something that seems like a plant near the Colony. They may also ask for a general description about some aspect of the landscape or world, such as “what does the landscape look like?” or “what are the aliens doing near the Colony?”.

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION QUESTIONS:

What does the landscape look like? Describe our shelter... What are the aliens doing near us? What do they look like? What looks plant-like near us? How do beings seem to be traveling around?

In response, the other player chooses a Random Word and uses it as a basis for their description of what the Colonist can see, hear, touch, taste or smell. Choose a noun, verb or adjective based on the following:

- NOUN: Pick a noun if this is the first time you have seen this element.
- VERB: Pick a verb to see how a being or something in the environment is behaving or moving
- ADJECTIVE: Pick an adjective to better describe an element that has already been Investigated.

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION:

In response to the Planetologist’s question: What does the landscape look like?

The Noun “spaghetti” is drawn and kept hidden.

The Description: “You see in front of you many sloping lines across the land.

Sloping up and down, they sometimes curve around one another, sometimes disappear beneath others.”

DESCRIPTIONS VS. EXPLANATIONS

The Description questions asked are to help the players get a sense of what can be observed in the world around them. These are different from the Investigation Questions, which are long-term inquiries that the Colonist makes in order to answer and come to understand the functioning of the world.

Description questions **CANNOT** be about how things are done, what causes something, what the mechanism or social meaning of something is, or how it fits into the larger world and connects with other Elements. All of these issues will be Explained through Investigations.

After a world Element has been Described, then the Colonist can Investigate it to gain an Explanation of what it is and how it fits into the world. See Chapter 9 (p.52) for more information on how this is done.

COLOR TABLES

The alien world will have a palette of colors unique to itself, and to the environment that the humans inhabit. Colors are chosen randomly when World Elements are first Described. They become themes linking disparate items and beings. They also provide a surprising visual detail that helps make the world come alive to the inner eye.

Create a Color Table after the players have chosen which world the Colonists will settle on. This will determine what their new home environment is, which influences greatly the choice of colors made.

Choose 10 colors for each Color Table. Each color has a number associated with it, from 1 to 10. Have each player choose one, and then have some or all choose a second to round out the complement. Pick specific colors (eg "sky blue" as opposed to "blue") for many of the colors to give a more detailed and subtle range of hues.

When first describing an Element, roll a d10 and incorporate the color rolled into the description based on a Noun. The juxtaposition of word and color helps bring the imagination further away from the Random Word's original meaning.

Example Color table for an Aquaeous Environment: (on a d10)

*1: teal 2: aquamarine 3: midnight blue 4: mud brown 5: coral red
6: phosphorescent yellow 7: neon pink 8: black 9: white 10: silver*

Populate the color table by having the players choose 10 colors that match what they think the environment would be like. Be sure to have all players contribute at least one color.

Use this in addition to Adjectives or with Nouns. Over time, you may create custom color palettes for the various types of environments found on the planet as they are experienced (e.g. ice, desert, temperate forest, etc.). Begin with just one Color Table, for the environment that the Colonists initially inhabit.

≡ *Three Color Tables are found on the following page. Each was created for a world as part of the game. In the first list, for a Subterranean world, Infrared was chosen--a color humans cannot see! It became a quest for the players to find something that was Infrared, but red-black came up often instead.*

≡ *Eventually, a player suggested that when the humans saw a blank black area--it might well be Infrared, but the Colonists could not see the hue like the aliens there did. We began hoping for a Change that would let us see...*

Sample Color Tables

Environment:

Subterranean

1: Orange

2: Pale yellow

3: White

4: Red-orange

5: Frosty white

*6: Red/black
magma colored*

*7: Glowing
orange*

*8: Purple
plum-red*

9: Slime green

10: Infrared

Environment:

Land Surface

1: Gun metal grey

2: Brown

3: Dark green

4: Silver

5: Bluish grey

*6: Reddish
brown*

7: Ivory

8: Cerulean blue

9: Moss green

10: Burgundy

Environment:

Artificial

Satellite

1: Mother of Pearl

2: Silver

3: Gold

4: Bronze

5: Copper

*6: Oxidized
copper-green*

7: Fuchsia

*8: Poison dart
frog green*

9: Hazard orange

10: Neon yellow

Chapter 8:

Structure of Play

PLANNING SESSION AND PERSONAL LOGS

PLANNING SESSIONS (p. 24) are time for the play group to think about what they want to play out during this session of play. May use Scene Types (below) to plan.

PERSONAL LOGS Begin each session by reading out loud the entry from the Colonists' Personal Logs from last time. This will help to refresh in everyone's mind what happened last time, as well as to give greater insight into the disparate views that the Colonists hold of the world and each other. Information from the entries can be used for additional cards in Investigations and Conflicts, if desired. Further discussion of the Personal Log's uses can be found on page 98, in Chapter 17: About Playing.

See Scene Types below for what occurs during play.

End each session by having the players write in their Colonist's Personal Log, reflecting on the session's events.

SCENE TYPES

It is a strange, new world the humans come to. What it will be is yours to create. As the Colonists explore the world, the players play out different types of scenes and sequences.

There are five types of scenes that happen during play:

GROUP

INVESTIGATION

ACTION

FLASHBACK

MISSION

Use these types of scenes as a general guide for play. They may arise organically, or someone may call for a specific thing. You may decide when

a roll arises whether it is an Action or Investigation Roll. Flashbacks have many times when they may be called for. These terms are tools to help you navigate through the story, and as ideas for balancing spotlight.

GROUP scenes focus on the personal interactions between the Colonists, their discussions about the planet and their normal daily actions in the Colony.

MISSION scenes involve the Colonists heading out in small groups to Investigate the world in different areas. The Players break up into small groups as well, play out Investigations, describe the world and then report back to one another.

INVESTIGATION scenes involve the Colonist exploring the world and the culture of its inhabitants.

In ACTION scenes, the Colonists must try to accomplish things in the world, or deal with adversity faced in their environment or with the aliens.

FLASHBACKS show past events of the Colonists' lives on Earth or during their Training on Luna.

Group and Mission scenes are times to check in with the characters and to allow the characters to interact with one another. They are discussed in chapter 12 (p. 73).

Investigation and Action scenes give the players the opportunity to create aspects and find interconnection among elements the world around the Colonists, allowing what was once hideously strange and enigmatic to gain context and meaning for the human settlers. They may result in injuries or emotionally overwhelm the characters, especially when they are new to the planet. Or, they might create problems and complications in the Colonists' lives in the colony. Over time they also provide needed resources as well as increased understanding of the world around them. Dice are rolled for Investigations and Actions to determine how things turn out. Investigations are discussed in Chapter 9 (p. 52), and Actions are described in Chapter 10 (p. 66).

Flashback scenes allow the players to learn more about the characters. It is also an opportunity for the characters to bond more deeply with one another, exploring their differences or finding companionship. These scenes also allow the characters to recover from psychological damage their experiences in the alien world have caused. Flashbacks are described in Chapter 11 (p. 70).

Throughout and in between these scenes, the players use the Random Words to describe what the Colonists encounter. Creation of Descriptions using Random Words is outlined on page 7 (p. 46).

Chapter 9:

Investigations

INVESTIGATIONS OVER THE COURSE OF PLAY

As the enigmatic forms of the alien world take shape, the Colonists pursue Investigations to learn and understand what they see around them. These Investigations lead them to find Resources that first they, and then the whole Colony can make use of. As the limited Resources the Colony begins with dwindle, ability to find new food, clothing and other survival needs must be met on the new world. Knowledge of the world also allows the Humans to be re-supplied in some essentials and other less tangible but priceless commodities: messages from home, connection with their loved ones left behind. Investigations can also allow the Colony to gain a steadier foothold on their new home, through establishing stable sources of support and connection that the Humans can rely on.

INVESTIGATION QUESTIONS:

After 3 Successful Scenes: Create Colonist Resource

After 5 Successful Scenes: Create Colony Resource

Investigation is complete, answers can be reported to Earth

These Resources arise through the Colonists' attempts to understand the world as the players make Investigations Rolls. The characters can also choose to try to Assimilate to the new world. In the immediate present, the Investigations allow them to make sense of the Elements of the World that have been Described. With enough successes over time they lead to tangibly positive gains for the Colonists.

The Investigations though, are not always smooth and easy. The Colonists

must take the Questions step by step. Learning in pieces about the overall questions confronting the Colony. There will be mis-steps along the way as well. Injury is possible. And Troubles, or complications, can arise from inquiring into matters of the world.

The Investigation Rolls have Outcomes which can be challenging as well as beneficial. Injuries, social gaffes and befuddlement will sometimes trip the Colonists up. Successful insights into the world, sometimes lead to 90 degree turns in what one expected to be the case. And other times, enemies can be created.

But these difficulties sometimes have benefits. Injuries can begin a process of Change that alters the Colonist and brings them closer to the world around them. This is another path to Assimilation. Troubles must be struggled with on a personal level and for the Colony as a whole, but they offer larger scale creation of solid support for the humans among organizations or groups in the alien world. Successfully resolving a Trouble can result in gaining a particular status for humanity on this world, acceptance and understanding through working with others.

Playing this game begins a long process of seeing the world unfold. If played for a one session or for a short campaign, the players get a taste of the discoveries that could be made. Long term Investigations open the door to both understanding and joining with of the world.

INVESTIGATION QUESTIONS AND TROUBLES

Throughout the game, the players use Random Words to help them describe the world. Their characters then Investigate Questions that will give them more insight into these aspects of the alien planet and its cultures. As they do so, Troubles may arise that involve the Colonists in complicated situations in their new home.

QUESTIONS address things that are unknown to the Colonists, or to the players. They are drawn from a list supplied to the Colonists by the Terran authority, and their answers are reported back to Earth. The Questions may be answered by Investigation or escalate and have Issues added to them. They may deal with aspects of the alien planet around them, such as what to eat, what kinds of religious customs are followed by the aliens, whether they have currency, or how they wage war.

TROUBLES are complications that occur when Investigating a Question or taking an Action in the world. They progress and escalate, and resolve over time. Troubles may relate to such things as conflicts with neighboring aliens, threats from plants or animals, with unfathomable or disturbing aspects of their own dwellings, with questionable directives from Terran Authority, or with regrets what was lost on Earth. See page 75 for more.

INVESTIGATION QUESTIONS

The Colony begins with three questions, which are assigned by the Terran Authority before they leave Luna. What they are depends on the mission given to them by Earth, and the Agenda of the Terran Liaison in charge of the Colony. A standard set could include:

- What can the humans eat?
- How does their shelter function?
- How can they be employed?

Each Question being Investigated has a Lead Investigator. The Lead Investigator writes the Question down on their Character sheet, and records progress for it when they or others find answers to the Question. Players choose Questions on which their character will be Lead. Choose based on Lunar Training and the interest of the player. Other Colonists may help them, or Investigate the Question themselves, but the Lead Investigator keeps track of the question, marks off the progress and likely does the lion's share of the Investigating for it.

The full list of questions is found on the Uniform Survey Questions sheet (Appendix A, page 101). When three of these questions have been successfully answered, the Colony may download this information to Earth and request a re-supply. The first three questions must be those assigned by the Terran Authority. What is sent in the re-supply is up to the Terran Authority player's discretion, based on the character's agenda and what will help them put pressure on, help or perhaps manipulate the Colonists.

How Troubles are resolved is discussed in chapter 13 (p. 75).

HOW TO INVESTIGATE

Begin by finding a World Element to Investigate. It may be something already Described, or may be something new to the Colonists. If it is new, ask a question of someone, have them choose a Noun and Describe as outlined in Chapter 7, page 46. If it has already been Described, or Investigated in the past, have someone choose a Verb or Adjective and give additional information.

Once a world element has been described play out in character what the Colonist does to learn more about this being or thing. How do they approach it? What do they do? This is their Investigation per se.

The Colonist may utilize Resources in the form of equipment brought from Earth or adopted from alien technology. These can help them learn more about the plants, animals and objects found on the planet. Colonists may

simply look at or touch something, or travel to a public place with a guide to learn more about how the sapient aliens interact or conduct transactions. The Investigation can be begun at the initiative of the human or the aliens. For example, the Colonists may be invited to take part in an alien custom. What the Colonist does may expose them to more or less risk; the group of players decides if risk of Injury seems likely in the Investigation.

Other Colonists can take part in the scene, but one is the Focus Character for the Investigation. This Colonist makes the closest contact with the alien world and is taking the most direct action in the current Investigation. This character risks injury or complication.

One other character can assist with the Investigation. A Colonist may help, or an alien Plot or Support Character. Those with relationships with the Focus Character, or related skills can provide better assistance. Aliens also have an advantage in being at home in this place. But these characters risk harm, and the relationship between alien and human can be damaged if things go wrong.

ROLLING FOR AN INVESTIGATION

When the Investigation has been described, roll dice to determine if something is learned, or if there were any unintended unfortunate consequences.

The dice are first assigned to various categories: **INVESTIGATION**, **HARM**, **WILDCARD**, **PANIC**, **ASSIMILATION**. Some categories apply to every Investigation, some may or may not apply. There is also another Category, **ACTION**, which is used when Colonists take Actions in the world.

Each category has various outcomes. Which one occurs depends on what numbers are rolled. The highest die value in each category is used to determine what the outcome for that category is.

Dice are assigned to a category and then rolled within it. Additional dice can be gained for a given category based on help, abilities used and Assimilation level. Occasionally, Free Dice are rolled independently of a category and may be applied to any of them. Helping Dice and Assimilation dice are Free Dice.

Some Outcomes mean that the Colonist learns more about the world (New Fact Explained), that the Colony or Colonist get involved in complications (Group or Individual Troubles), that the Colonist gets confusing information (Baffling Surprise), or that the Colonist or other is hurt during the Investigation (Injury). Objects and Resources may be lost or destroyed. Relationships may be changed. Friends and enemies are gained.

INVESTIGATION ROLL CATEGORIES AND OUTCOMES

Required Categories:

INVESTIGATION

Die Value	1	2-3	4-5	6-7	8+
Outcome	Individual Trouble	Colony Trouble	Baffling Surprise	New Fact Explained	Two New Facts

PANIC

Help and Assimilation Level affect likelihood of Panicking.

Helped by:	No one	Human	Alien
Value needed to NOT Panic	6 minus (-) Assimilation	5 - Assim.	4 - Assim.

Possible Categories:

HARM - IF PLAY GROUP DETERMINES ACTIONS MAY RISK INJURY

Die Value	1	2-3	4	5+
Outcome	Change Injury	Injury	Expend Resource to avoid Injury	Unharmed

WILD CARD - IF NO FACTS ARE KNOWN ABOUT THIS WORLD ELEMENT

Die Value	1-3	4-5	6+
Outcome	Colony Trouble is Created or is Escalated	Baffling Surprise	New Fact in Random Area

ASSIMILATION - COLONIST WORKS TOWARD INTEGRATING WITH NEW WORLD

Outcomes vary depending on current level of Assimilation

Assimilation:	1	2-4	5-6	Outcomes
Die Value	8+	6+	8+	Progress toward Assim.
	5-7	5	7	Friend Helps
	2-4	3-4	5-6	Gaffe
	1	1-2	1-4	Colony Fallout

How Possible Categories are chosen:

Harm – if the group believes that the actions being taken by the character may lead to injury, include this category.

Assimilation – if the Colonist is trying to become part of the world around them and working toward another level of Assimilation, include this category.

Wild Card – if this is the first time a world element is being investigated or interacted with, include this category. If the Colonist has an unstable Change Injury, include this category.

If player is having the Colonist explore the world with no Investigation Question in mind, use Wild Card instead of Investigation category. No Lunar Training Die may be used.

DICE FOR INVESTIGATIONS

- 1) Assign a **BASE DIE** to each category
- 2) Determine what **FREE DICE** will be rolled
- 3) Roll Dice in each category
- 4) Roll Free Dice, if any, independently.
- 5) Assign Free Dice to Categories chosen
- 6) Determine Outcomes

The **BASE DIE** rolled is a standard six-sided die (d6), if a Colonist is in a normal condition. If Panicked, the based die is a four-sided die (d4).

So in the normal course of events, one d6 is assigned to each category which applies to the Investigation. However, if the character is panicked, their base die is instead a four-sided die (d4). This will have grave effects on the possible outcomes of the situation.

If the Focus Character is injured, the highest die roll must be set aside. If they have two injuries, the two highest. If this leaves a category empty, take a 1 in that category. If they have three injuries, the character is incapacitated and is unable to take part in any Investigations or Actions, though they may be involved in general play, may assist others—if that is believable in the fiction—and have flashbacks.

If a character gains a fourth injury, the player may choose to let the character die. If not, their character is unconscious until the Medical officer can heal their character from one Wound level, then heals as is usual.

BONUS DICE

Additional dice to roll may be gained for Investigations.

LUNAR TRAINING BONUS

If the Focus Character's Lunar Training relates to the Investigation Question, add a d10 to the Investigation category.

PROFESSION BONUS

Once an Explanation has been added to a World Element, if the Focus Character's Profession is similar in some way, or has elements of overlap with the Element of the World, then add a d8 to a category of your choice.

HELPING BONUS

Characters can assist one another. Helping means taking part in a meaningful way in the investigation. As the Focus Character's actions are described, the Helping character's player says what their character does to help.

The helping player rolls an additional die for the Investigation. However, if the value of the Helping die turns out to be a 1, the Helping character is injured as part of the outcome. Aliens helpers' relationship turns Stressful.

Depending on who the help is given by, different die sizes are rolled:

Panicked human (none other possible)	d4
Normal human with no relationship	d6
Human with a relationship (+ or -)	d8
Human whose Profession relates	d8
Human whose Lunar Training relates	d10
Alien	d10

Just one die can be rolled, of the highest die type available.

If a character is Panicked, the highest die they can offer is a d4.

If Injured, their die is set aside if it is the highest value of those rolled for the Investigation.

The die rolled is a Free Die. Unless the characters have an Antagonistic Relationship (page 28), the player of the Focus Character assigns the rolled Die to a category. If they have an Antagonistic relationship, the player of the helping character chooses the category.

If the Helping character has a relationship with the Focus character, their player can roll a higher die size even if their Lunar Training or Profession do not apply. Involve the characters' relationship in the narration of what they do. Both positive and negative relationships can be used to help, but if a character has a negative relationship, they should needle and bust the other characters chops, or whatever is appropriate to those characters' relationship. In a Supportive relationship, helping out and being friendly is fine.

If two players have chosen to have their characters be in an Antagonistic relationship, they have committed to putting pressure on each other's character. Putting the choice of where the die goes into the hands of the Helping character's player allows them to make decisions the other might not have.

The group should agree whether the die needs to be put in a category where the Helping die is higher than the others there already, if possible, when Antagonism is present. If not, that is not the case, the Focus character's player has the option to turn down help from that character at the start of the Investigation.

● **SPECIAL NOTE: WILD CARD EXPLORATION**

- *If a character is exploring the world, not trying to achieve an action, but not following up on a specific Investigation Question, the player may roll for a WILD CARD EXPLORATION.*
- *Follow the steps as for an Investigation, but use the Wild Card category instead of Investigation. If an Explanation or Fact is the*
- *Outcome and randomly, the area relating to an open Investigation Question is rolled and the Random Word drawn seems to suggest it,*
- *the players may create an Explanation that allows the Investigation Question to progress. But what is more likely is that something*
- *unrelated will be created.*

OUTCOMES

Investigations are long-term quests to understand aspects of the world. With each successful Investigation, you come that much closer to being able to resolve the questions that the Colonists have about the world. Some of which are pursued out of curiosity and a thirst for knowledge, some for sheer survival. Knowing what is edible for humans will be of desperate importance once the rations run out.

In each category there are a range of possible outcomes. These are described below, organized by category.

INVESTIGATION

NEW FACT EXPLAINED

One aspect of a mysterious part of the new world becomes understood and is Explained. An entry is made for the World Element. An entry is made in the Investigation Question Record, and the Investigation moves one step closer to being complete.

The Investigation bears fruit! The Colonist that was inquiring into the nature of this part of the world is able to learn something about what they are observing.

- 1) Focus character's player Explains one aspect of the World Element
- 2) Create World Element entry in World Record (omit if exists already)
- 3) Record Descriptions, and Add New Fact
- 4) Add information to Investigation Record

The Focus Character's Player gets to create an entry in the World Record book. Find a space in the area set aside for the appropriate discipline: medicine, xenozoology, biotechnology, and etc. Make note of the Descriptions for that World Element and then add one Explanation or New Fact to it.

Then, add a line to the Investigation Record. Create Resources when third and fifth boxes are checked, as described in Chapter 9 (p. 52).

TWO NEW FACTS

Complete the same steps as when New Fact is Explained, but give two Explanations, and add two Facts to the World Element entry.

However, add check on Box of on the Investigation Record. If Resources are created, just one is created.

BAFFLING SURPRISE

Something happens that unexpected and nonsensical. Have another player draw a Random Word, likely a Verb, and describe what is experienced. More Description notes can be written down, but no New Explanation or Fact is created. The Colonists have more experience, but they are still in the dark.

TROUBLES

Troubles (discussed in Chapter 13, p. 75) are problems facing the humans. These arise from the Investigations, or Actions, they undertake. For example, if the Xenobotanist was trying to find a good source to make a flour analog out of for the colony to make bread, he or she might gather some plants to grow near the Colony. If the Investigation ends up creating a Trouble, this effort would go awry. The life might grow too well, climbing up over the colony walls and invading the sleeping chambers. Or a neighbor might notice what has been planted and report the humans to local authorities for transgressing religious, legal or social rules.

To create a Trouble, have someone pull another Random Word, and describe what goes wrong. Add a New Fact to the World Element, but it is something that makes things difficult for the Colonists. This should be something that can be a continuing source of distress: social conflict with aliens, possible harm to the Colonists, isolation, threatening or unreliable environmental conditions like a sandstorm or tidal currents.

If there is a player with a Plot Character that may be involved or connected with the effects of the Trouble, that player writes the Trouble down on their Plot Character sheet, and can introduce its effects in play on sessions when the Plot Character appears. Players of Plot Characters make a Complicating Fact each time the character appears. This can be used to extend and solidify the Trouble.

The Trouble is recorded on the appropriate Record Sheet, depending upon who it affects. There are two types of Troubles possible in Investigations:

- ***Colonist Trouble***

If the outcome is a Colonist Trouble, this issue affects the Focus Character personally. An alien might take a dislike to that Colonist, the local environs might begin to resist or flee when that Colonist is around. Other Colonists are not similarly affected.

Write the Trouble down on the Colonist's character sheet. It can be resolved in time, as is described in the Troubles and Goals chapter, page 75.

- ***Colony Trouble***

A Colony Trouble affects the whole group. All humans may now be subject to the problems arising from it. A Plot Character may be created to personify or bring the pressures of the Trouble to bear.

Write the Trouble down on the Colony sheet. It can be resolved in time, as is described in the Troubles and Goals chapter, page 75.

PANIC

PANICKED

Whatever the player has chosen for their Stress Response is what the character does now. If the Response is something that consumes resources (food, cigarettes etc.) make a note of how much they consume and how much the resources are reduced by. If their Response is an action, have them make it, and see what kinds of effects this has on their relationships with those around them. Do they swing punches at the first thing they see? If so, perhaps they hit an alien or another crew member? Do they get quiet, perhaps they simply fade into the background for a while until someone chats them up.

Until the Panic is cleared away, roll d4s as the base die in all categories for things the Colonist tries to do. Both Investigations and Actions. To relieve one's character of Panic, have a Traumatic Flashback as described in Chapter 11 (p. 70). If playing a One Session game, have a scene with another Colonist where they can be reassured and talked down instead.

NOT PANICKED

The Colonist is unfazed by what they have experienced, and can continue on with peace of mind.

HARM

INJURY

Injuries are physical damage to the Colonist. The Focus Character and any Helping characters may be injured. Make a note of the type of damage on the character's sheet.

When a character is Injured, the highest die result is set aside or thrown out of the results for all rolls (Action, Investigation, Wild Card Exploration). If this leaves no dice in a category, replace the die result with an automatic result of 1.

Additional injuries can be sustained from further Investigations, Actions or Helping another character. One level of injury is healed by the beginning of the next session. A successful healing Action by the Doctor may also heal a single level of injury more immediately.

EXPEND RESOURCE TO AVOID INJURY

The Colonist avoids lasting harm, but something else is used or sacrificed

to make this so. It may be supplies from the medical kit being used to stop up a scrape or counteract infection. Or a scorching flame erupting from some lifeform could burn a jumpsuit beyond repair, but miss damaging the human inside it.

Cross the Resource off of the World or Character sheet where it has been recorded. If a Resource with subdivisions (like food or sets of clothes), mark off one unit as being gone forever.

CHANGE INJURIES

Sometimes when a Colonist is injured, the Cure allows their body to adapt and come to fit better the world it finds itself in. The Colonist takes on a physical change that may resemble something from the world around it, or be simply be strange an unknown to the Colonists.

These Changes develop over time, being at first very unstable and off-putting. In time they stabilize, and become a Resource for the Colonists, and become a tangible mark of their Assimilation into the new world. This is discussed in Chapter 14 (p. 78).

When a Change Injury is rolled, write down the Change the Colonist undergoes on the Character Sheet. The Change is unstable initially. For each roll until it is stabilized, the player must include Wild Card category, which for these purposes now applies to the Colonist's Change. For each 1 in Injury or 1-3 in Wild Card, mark one box and progress Change. On third, gain Individual Resource (physical or social) based on Change. On fifth, Change stabilizes and player no longer needs to include Wild Card in all rolls. Increase Assimilation by one level.

ADDITIONAL INJURIES

If a character is involved in an Investigation or Action Roll while injured, they may sustain another injury if a low result is rolled. Describe the injury and record it on the character's sheet. If the current injury is a Change Injury, advance the Change Injury one box along towards resolution. If the other Injuries are normal, add an additional one.

If Character has one Injury, throw out highest die roll in their Investigations and Actions. If they assist someone, the same holds true: throw out their die if it is the highest result. The Character is hurt, but able to continue participating with a slight reduction in effectiveness.

If a Character has two normal Injuries, throw out the two highest results from dice rolled. They may still participate in Investigations and Actions, and Assist other characters. But they are vulnerable to increased injury.

If a Character has three injuries, they are Incapacitated. They may not be the Focus Character, though they may assist other Colonists with their

Investigations and Actions.

If a Character takes a fourth injury, they are now unconscious and will not heal Injuries levels normally until the Doctor can successfully heal the character through an Action roll. The character's play may choose to retire the Colonist and let them die.

CHARACTER DEATH

If desired, a player may let their Colonist die. That player may then choose to phase out of the game, or bring in a new Colonist. If a new character is introduced, choose one with a new Lunar Training. The new character enters at the next session. They begin fresh, shaved and clad in jumpsuit, with an Assimilation of 1.

Any time a character dies, have the characters begin the next session with a funeral or memorial to the lost character. The new character may be present.

UNHARMED

The character is not injured or harmed during the course of the Investigation.

WILD CARD

COLONY TROUBLE

A new Trouble is created for the Colony, or a current one grows more intense, or gains new complexity. Handle as with Investigation Outcome.

BAFFLING SURPRISE

Something unexpected happens. More observations are gained, but no new insights are gleaned. Handle as with Investigation Outcome.

NEW FACT EXPLAINED

A new understanding of this Element of the World grows. As with Investigation Outcome.

ASSIMILATION

COLONY FALLOUT

The attempts that the Colonist is making to fit in better on the new world backfire. They may have offended someone, or put the Colony in some kind of physical danger, but this action has repercussions for the whole

group of humans.

The issue may be related to a Trouble. If there are any Colony Troubles in play, they may be brought to bear by a player of a related Plot Character. If not, someone else pulls a Random Word and says what happens.

The Fallout happens in the immediate present. No new Troubles can be created, though if appropriate, Resources may be used or destroyed.

GAFFE

The Focus Character goofs up in a social way. They break social norms, or damage someone's property or person. The Colonist may not know what rules they broke, but they know for sure that they did something wrong. An embarrassing moment.

FRIENDLY HELP

Someone steps in to smooth the way for the Colonist to do what they need or want to do. Perhaps an alien provides necessary currency when the humans have lost theirs. Or the Xsian Ambassador finds Colonists who are lost. The helper need not be a known person. It can be a stranger. If an ally is gained later, this character can be re-incorporated and created as a named, regularly played persona.

PROGRESS TOWARD ASSIMILATION

When attempting to gain a level of Assimilation, the player must make five successful attempts to do so. This outcome allows them to gain another step toward their present goal in the longer course of Assimilation. More discussion of gaining Assimilation is in Chapter 14 (p. 78).

PLAYING OUT THE FALLOUT

Once the outcome has been determined, play out how this is handled. What is the injury? How does it manifest? Is it physical or social in nature? Has the Colonist been bitten by a "tree" or have they eaten the offspring of their host?

Flashbacks may be needed. This can be played out immediately, or the action can go to focus on another Colonist and the players can return to the Flashback later. The character remains Panicked until the Flashback is played out.

Once the Outcomes have been decided, and then played out, the Focus can move on to another Colonist. Or the player of a Plot Character can introduce something for the other players to deal with. But be sure to know how the Outcomes affect the Colonists within the story of the game before moving on.

Chapter 10:

Taking Action

ACTIONS IN THE WORLD

When a character wishes to try to do something, rather than to simply learn about the world, roll for an Action. Actions can be things like trying to reach another part of the alien settlement, or trying to buy some supplies, or trying to make clothing out of alien fibres.

When taking an Action, the Colonist is interacting with Elements of the world in a directed fashion, with a desired outcome in mind. The more that is known about the areas of the world they are interacting with, the better their chances of being successful.

ACTION ROLLS

- 1) The player of the Focus Character says what their character is trying to do, and describes their actions
- 2) If needed, another player or other players give descriptions of the World Elements involved
- 3) Determine if anyone is helping:

One time per session, one Plot Character may assist the humans to be able to accomplish an action successfully, for without rolling.

- 3) Assign Dice into categories
- 4) Roll Dice within categories, Roll any Free Dice independently
- 5) Assess high values and assign Free Dice, Determine and play out Outcomes

INVESTIGATION ROLL CATEGORIES AND OUTCOMES

Required Categories:

ACTION - FOR EACH FULLY EXPLAINED WORLD ELEMENT INVOLVED, ADD 1 TO ROLL

Die Value	1	2-5	6+	8+
Outcome	Fail Offensively (Create Enemy)	Fail	Succeed	Gain Ally/Friend (Create Friend)

PANIC

Help and Assimilation Level affect likelihood of Panicking.

Helped by:	No one	Human	Alien
Value needed to NOT Panic	6 minus (-) Assimilation	5 - Assim.	4 - Assim.

Possible Categories:

HARM - IF PLAY GROUP DETERMINES ACTIONS MAY RISK INJURY

Die Value	1	2-3	4	5+
Outcome	Change Injury	Injury	Expend Resource to avoid Injury	Unharmd

WILD CARD - IF NO FACTS ARE KNOWN ABOUT THIS WORLD ELEMENT

Die Value	1-3	4-5	6+
Outcome	Colony Trouble is Created or is Escalated	Baffling Surprise	New Fact in Random Area

ASSIMILATION - COLONIST WORKS TOWARD INTEGRATING WITH NEW WORLD

Outcomes vary depending on current level of Assimilation

Assimilation:	1	2-4	5-6	Outcomes
Die Value	8+	6+	8+	Progress toward Assim.
	5-7	5	7	Friend Helps
	2-4	3-4	5-6	Gaffe
	1	1-2	1-4	Colony Fallout

OUTCOMES

The Outcomes for categories Panic, Harm, Wild Card and Assimilation are all as for Investigation Rolls (Chapter 9, page 52). The outcomes for Actions differ from Investigations and are described below.

ACTIONS

FAIL OFFENSIVELY (CREATE ENEMY)

The Colonist has over-reached their ability to be part of the world around him or her. Not only do they fail at their task, but they actively offend some alien they interact with, and that being takes it personally.

This can play out in one of two ways: the Focus Character can now have a Relationship with the alien, a Stressful one. Someone else takes on that character as a Supporting Cast and fills out a sheet for them in their Supporting Character Sheet.

Or someone can create a Plot Character that will now take an active interest in the Colony as a whole. The character can offer help as all Plot Characters can, but their real purpose is in putting pressure on the Colony, and their negative interaction with the Colonist at this time is the seed for all future difficulties.

FAIL

The Focus character has been unsuccessful in what they hoped to achieve. Have someone draw a Random Word to describe what obstacles or strangeness the humans encounter instead of what was desired.

SUCCEED

The Focus Character is able to accomplish what they aimed to do. They may be working towards an overall goal, or just trying to get somewhere to do more Investigation. Either way, they are able to do so, and can allow the other Colonists to do so as well.

GAIN ALLY (CREATE FRIEND)

Someone on the planet is impressed with the human's efforts, or feels empathy for what they are going through, and decides to befriend them. The alien may assist them in making the Action successful, or join them in what they are doing.

Again, this may be handled in two different ways. Either one of the Colonists can form a relationship with this Alien and so someone can play them as a supportive friend. Or it can become a Plot Character, with the more complex agendas and implications for the Colony that that entails. See the list of sample Plot Characters on page 85 for suggestions.

HELPFUL FLASHBACKS

Flashbacks have a special role for Actions sequences. Just as for Investigations, they are used to refresh the characters if they Panic. And at any time a player may call for a Reflection Flashback to simply show something about the character's past. Discussion of how to do these things is found on page 70, 72, in chapter 11. But for Actions they can be done for different reasons: to gain an additional advantage die for a roll, this is called a Prelude Flashback.

A Flashback may be declared as an prelude to a potentially difficult Action scene in order for the player to gain an additional die to roll. For this Flashback the player of the Focus character declares that they would like to have a Flashback before their Action Roll. They then frame a moment from the character's past where they did something similar to what they will do in the present on the alien planet.

In this moment from their past, they were strong and able, or were helped by someone to do what they did. The Focus character's player may cast other players into roles in the Flashback, or have it be a solo scene, or even simply describe what happened. You can use the list of roles from the Traumatic Flashback scenes to help think of what types of characters might be present and what their relationship would be to the Focus Character. However, there is no minimum number that needs to be represented.

Play or describe the event briefly. Once it is complete, the player gets a Free d6 to roll.

TRAUMATIC FLASHBACKS

If a Colonist fails in the Panic category, the character does its stress response and their base die for all Investigations and Conflicts is a d4 instead of a d6. They are refreshed from this state after they play a Traumatic Flashback.

There is no need to roll dice in a Flashback, but the other players take rolls that helps create tension and resolution within the scene. Injured characters may take part in Flashback sequences.

More information about running Flashback Scenes is found in chapter 11, (p. 70).

ACCOMPLISHING GOALS

The Colonists have Goals they are working towards. They can take actions to reach their objectives. The player may decide at any time that a Goal has been accomplished, or that it is no longer of importance to the character. Goals are meant to be steered toward, but that is more important than whether they are reached. See Chapter 13 (p. 75).

Chapter 11:

Flashbacks

FLASHBACK SCENES

Flashback sequences shed light on events in a Colonist's past. They can be done for different reasons: to end Panic and to gain an additional advantage die for a roll, or to simply show something about the character's past. There are three different types:

- 1) Traumatic Flashback -- relive a stressful moment in the past that was triggered by an encounter with the strange gone awry
- 2) Prelude Flashback -- remember a moment of strength from the character's past that can help them take Action
- 3) Reflection Flashback -- a scene allowing the players to learn more about the Colonist. May be used to set up for Goals, express the Story Seed or to set up for later Actions or Investigations.

If a Colonist fails in the Panic category, the character does its stress response and their base die for all Investigations and Conflicts is a d4 instead of a d6. They are refreshed from this state after they have a Traumatic Flashback..

A Flashback may be declared as a prelude to a potentially harmful or difficult Action scene in order for the player to gain an additional die to roll. It may also be used following a failed Panic Roll to refresh a character from their impairment. Injured characters may take part in Flashback sequences.

There is no need to roll dice in a Flashback, but the other players may take roles that help create satisfying tension within the scene.

FRAMING A TRAUMATIC FLASHBACK SCENE

In a flashback sequence, the Focus Character's player chooses when the scene takes place in the Colonists' life. Pick some element of the Scene from the present to incorporate into the scene. If a Noun was chosen for a Description, use that in an event in the character's past.

Describe when it is, where it is, and what the stressful situation facing the character is. Then cast the other players as characters in the flashback. The characters present have power in relation to the Focus Character.

Choose characters that fulfill at least three of the following roles:

ALLY – a friend or compatriot of the Colonist

AUTHORITY – someone who holds power over the Colonist

DEPENDENT – someone who relies on the Colonist for protection or help

DESIRED – a person who is or who has something that the Colonist needs

RIVAL – someone vying for the same thing that the Colonist wants

SEEKER – a person who wants something from the Colonist

If the shoe fits, cast players in roles that are similar to the role their character played in scenes in the present. The other players are responsible for putting pressure on the Focus Character, to push that character into stress. Superiors ask them to fulfill obligations, dependents rely on the Colonist-to-be, enemies try to intimidate the character. Even friends can dare the Focus Character into dangerous acts, though they also offer friendship and support.

PLAYING OUT THE FLASHBACK:

Bring the scene to a boil, then when it reaches a climax, end it, coming back to the present day at the Colony.

Always follow this procedure for Traumatic Flashbacks. The player may summarize events for a flashback setting them up for an Investigation or Action.

PRELUDE FLASHBACKS

In order to gain additional advantage for an Action, a Flashback may be played out or narrated as a Prelude to the roll. What happens in the Prelude Flashback will have obvious parallels with current action. For example, if the Colonist is attempting to travel through the alien population center by crossing streaming currents that criss-cross the settlement, the player may narrate a memory of the character falling out of a canoe on a white water

rafting trip, floating over the rocks and then striking out to reach the shore when it the moment was right.

Preludes will most often be a brief narration. The Focus Character's Player will relate a memory or experience the Colonist is calling upon in this moment. If acted out, you may use the list of types of character roles from the Traumatic Flashback description as suggestions of the types of characters to include. Roll an additional Free six-sided die (d6) in an Action after a Prelude Flashback.

REFLECTION FLASHBACKS

Over the course of the game, players may suggest playing out a scene from their character's past as a simple exploration of the character. These will be more likely to be played out, with multiple characters in the scene.

Players can and should ask another players to play Reflection Flashbacks for their own Colonist. Players of Plot Characters can use this as a tool to introduce ways to put pressure on the Colonists. Information about a character's past may be revealed allowing the players to look at the character in a new light.

Be brief with these scenes. Use them to punctuate and shed light on the events in the present. Although characters from Earth can be recurring characters, their presence is there to help give more depth to the Colonists as they move forward and struggle with their new home.

MECHANICAL EFFECTS OF FLASHBACKS

Flashbacks responding to a failed Panic roll allow the character to move out of Panic. The player may now roll normal d6s for Actions and Investigations.

Flashbacks to set up for an Investigation or Action give the player an additional d6 to assign to one Category.

Flashbacks for Reflection have no mechanical effect. However, they can establish things about to help the others understand them, or to help set up for Plot Characters to put pressure on the Colony through Troubles.

OMITTING FLASHBACKS IN A ONE SESSION GAME

To increase the pace for a game of short duration, you may skip playing out Flashbacks all together. If your character Panics, have them cause chaos or confusion for the others, and destroy one of the belongings of someone else or that belongs to the Colony. They must roll all 4-sided dice for Actions and Investigations as usual when Panicked, but can be refreshed by taking a break and spending time talking with another colonist.

Chapter 12:

Group and Mission Scenes

GROUP SCENES

At the start of each session, and whenever the players want to take a break from Investigations and Actions, a Group Scene may be called for. These scenes may involve all or some of the Colonists. An example is the initial scene when the Colonists choose a world to form the Colony on.

The group session starting an evening's play should include all Colonists present. This is opportunity for the Colonists to check in with one another, and for the players to spend time in character being on this world. Perhaps setting plans for what will come next, or reacting to what has just happened. Or just enjoying their time in the new world.

Instead of an out of character planning session, the players may use this time as an in-character check in time, and as a moment to indicate in-character what the priorities are for this session of play.

Subsequently, or later in the game, the players may call for other group scenes. These may involve one or a few of the Colonists. They may be supporting one another after difficult times, or plotting against someone else or scheming about doing something in the world. No roll need happen, no Investigation enters in. Flashbacks can be done at will, to give more information on where the Colonist is coming from, or to re-contextualize something that just happened.

MISSION SCENES

If there are six or more players in the group, they may break up into smaller groups to go explore the world. In contrast to Group Scenes, these are specifically about Investigating.

Alternatively, if there is a large group but only some can make it to the game each session, then each session counts as a Mission Scene with some of the Colonists. Though in this case, Flashback scenes should be played out as normal.

In Mission Scenes, a small group chooses their set of Investigation Questions to pursue and heads out into the planet to do so. The players ask each other questions and describe the world as normal, and make Investigation or Action Rolls, as normal. However, Flashback scenes must wait until all players are present again, so characters that Panic during a Mission will operate at a lower level of capability until they get back to the Colony and decompress.

When the players have completed their Mission—or need help, they may return to the Colony and await the return of the others, or they may call for help, for example if an injury occurs or if a heavy situation breaks out. When all groups have returned home, have a Group Scene in which the Colonists debrief each other on the events of the Mission and what was discovered.

Have the groups choose Questions that address different parts of the world in order to minimize the chance of making contradictory discoveries. However, if there are contradictory discoveries, allow them to be part of the strangeness of the world, and resolve them through further Investigations.

RECORD KEEPING

When using Mission Scenes as a structure for the overall session, be sure to take good, legible notes on World Element Sheets and record the incidents in Personal Logs for the players next week to be able to read and understand and incorporate into their understanding of the world. Professional Logs may be necessary or useful for this style of play.

Chapter 13: Troubles and Goals

GIVING DIRECTION TO PLAY

Both Troubles and Goals exist to help the story of the game flow along. Troubles do so by creating lines of pressure that the Colonists must struggle against and try to overcome. Goals do so by providing positive destinations and objectives for the Colonists to move towards. Troubles enter randomly, created during the course of Investigations. Goals are chosen by the player, and can be released or abandoned when they no longer serve a meaningful purpose. Troubles must be struggled with to be overcome, but once they are completed they open up broader areas of Connection and belonging than is available elsewhere.

TROUBLES

Troubles are a possible outcome during an Investigation. When they occur, what they are is determined by someone other than the Focus character's player, who either draws a random word to inspire it, or calls up on an issue close to a Plot Character's heart to rain adversity down on the Colonists' heads.

Troubles may either affect an individual Colonist, or the whole Colony. Troubles that are specific to an individual Colonist are written down on their character sheet. Ones that are in effect Colony-wide are recorded on the Colony Sheet.

Beside each Trouble entry there are a number of boxes. Five boxes for group Troubles or Questions, three boxes for individual ones. Each of

these boxes represents a scene in which something was revealed about this issue, or in which something was established via an Investigation or Action. When this occurs, check off one of the boxes.

When all boxes have been checked off, the Trouble reaches a Crisis Point. During a Crisis Point, the players of the Colonists must face the issue in by taking Actions to resolve it. A successful outcome to the Action is all that is needed. However, if there is a failure, then the Trouble escalates and intensifies. When this happens, erase all checks made, and re-write Trouble in greater magnitude to be dealt with still.

Example Troubles:

<i>Humans declared untouchable</i>	<i>Can't tell where the roads are, and aren't</i>
<i>Humans don't fit into work castes</i>	<i>Unpredictably variable gravity</i>
<i>Allergic to the food</i>	<i>Living in a warzone</i>
<i>Aliens want Colony to join religion</i>	<i>Never dark</i>
<i>Meteor showers pelt the dwelling</i>	<i>Invading animals</i>
<i>Overzealous alien friends</i>	<i>Shared nightmares</i>
<i>Invasive communication</i>	<i>No more salt</i>
<i>Crazy neighbors</i>	

IN CHARGE OF TROUBLES

Once a Trouble is written down, one player gets to take responsibility for bringing it into play. Similar to the role that Game Masters play, each player will eventually be asked to hold a piece of the adversity for the rest of the players. And of course, others can help and make suggestions.

The Trouble may be associated with a Plot Character. That is precisely what the Plot Characters are there to do. They can help the Colony, but they are also personifications of the forces putting pressure on the Colony from various different directions.

Players who are in charge of a given Trouble can introduce it into a session when their Plot Character appears. Or, if there is not Plot Character associated with it (if, for example, it is associated with the natural world, the land or the weather), they get to introduce a complication for the Colony to deal with. Actions and Investigations can be made in order to get through this leg of the effects of the Trouble. Success or Failure are determined by the Investigation or Action roll.

TOO MANY TROUBLES.

It is possible that the Colony could have many, many Troubles open and unresolved. If so, pace their appearance. At the start of each game session decide which Investigations, Goals and Troubles will make an appearance in this night's session. Not everything has to be touched on. Allow the group to tie up some threads before moving on to address the others. Use the lines available on Record sheets as a top capacity for them. If Troubles get rolled again, let the current ones intensify instead.

GOALS

The character's Goals are personal and idiosyncratic. They can have to do with whatever is of importance to the Character and to the player. Large or small, the Colonist can have several in play at once. Goals are tools to help the players have ideas about what to do in a given session, and to help one another see what is going on for the other Colonists, so they can build on it by helping or countering what the others want to do.

Intrigue among the Colonists is a fine thing. Conflicts between them are resolved by taking parallel Actions against one another. Both could succeed or fail. The main emphasis is not on this area in the beginning of the game however, the Colonists will likely be pulling together to survive. Later stages of the game could be all about the different plots and parts of the new world that the Colonists have gotten themselves entangled in. Goals at that stage might be warring visions for what the humans or others will do.

Goals can be completed at any time that the player feels they were adequately resolved. They may also be abandoned unfinished if they are no longer pertinent. New Goals can be added at any time.

Example Goals:

Growing a tomatoes

Making a friend

Growing marijuana

Making a musical instrument

Getting to work on time

Making new clothes

Starting a business

Getting to vote

Joining an alien group

Throwing a party for the aliens you know

Meeting the neighbors

Escaping from the compound the placed the Colony in

Chapter 14:

Assimilation and Changes

INTEGRATION INTO THE WORLD

The humans leave earth and cannot return. They must find a way to become comfortable on their new world, and perhaps even make it their home. The characters may strive for integration or shy away from it. It will progress at their initiative, as well as through random acts of fate.

A Colonist's Assimilation level represents how deeply the characters are intertwined with the new world. All Colonists begin with an Assimilation of 1, which is due to the fact that they left home to go here, and took the Cure which cuts them off forever from home.

The two ways progress in Assimilation are represented in the game are Assimilation and the Change. One can choose to increase your Assimilation. The players do this by acting in ways in their Actions and Investigations so as to court the approval of aliens, or to learn more deeply their ways and their world. The outcomes for Assimilation are described below:

ASSIMILATION - COLONIST WORKS TOWARD INTEGRATING WITH NEW WORLD

Outcomes vary depending on current level of Assimilation

Assimilation:	1	2-4	5-6	Outcomes
Die Value	8+	6+	8+	Progress toward Assim.
	5-7	5	7	Alien Helps
	2-4	3-4	5-6	Gaffe
	1	1-2	1-4	Colony Fallout

On the Character sheet In the Assimilation section, there are spaces for describing what each level of Assimilation represents. It may be making an alien friend, it may be learning some of their language, it may be taking an alien lover. Write in what you are aiming for, and as you get successful Investigations or Actions, check in the boxes as you move towards this goal. When you've had 5 successes, that level is gained and you get different bonuses. Working toward Assimilation itself changes a lot as you go up in level.

CHANGES

The other way to gain Assimilation is to have a Change Injury. This occurs randomly, though you may choose to use a Free Die in another category, if you'd like to gain an injury that would cause you to start Changing. The Change is much like super-speedy adaptation to the world. It is a side effect of the Cure that was given to you and all the rest of the Colonists to allow them to leave earth.

When you get a Change Injury, write down the form of the injury on your character sheet. The Doctor may take notes and observe your changes as well. Whenever you Investigate or take an Action, always roll the Wild Card category when you have a Change injury. Initially the Change is not stable, and may over-react to things in the environment or what the Colonist does. With each successful roll, check off one of the boxes. At the third box, the Change becomes a resource of some sort to the Colonist, but it is still a wild sort of ability. After 5 successes, the Change calms down, and the Colonist can go on, aided and not confused by their own body any longer.

ONE WAY AT A TIME

You cannot be trying to gain an Assimilation level and dealing with a Change injury at the same time. If you roll a "Change Injury" result while you are trying to integrate through Actions, the Injury is purely a normal one instead.

Chapter 15:

Other Characters

PLAYING AN ALIEN

When you play an alien, choose a word to help you describe what it does or how it responds. You are not responsible for making its responses understandable, instead your job is to simply be inspired by what comes to mind, and to build on what has been established in the past. Until more understanding and communication has been established with aliens and the alien world, your job is to play the aliens in such a way as to befuddle and bemuse the others. Though, when your character supports the Colonists, you are not required to battle them instead. Just allow the character to be truly alien, and somewhat mysterious.

If you are playing an alien as a Plot Character, your job will be to sometimes help the Colonists, but to also push them or put pressure on them. The character will have something they want to accomplish, or an ulterior agenda for or about the Colonists. Each session when you play this character it will be your responsibility to introduce in to the world something that makes things complicated for the colony. These characters help shape play by providing Adversity.

If you are playing an alien as a Supporting Character, your job will be to help the Colonists, and to create links for the humans to the new world. These characters cannot speak any human language unless you've successfully completed an Investigation or Goal to be able to communicate with them using some language, the Colonists will have to make shift as they can, using gestures and actions to represent what they want. While playing these characters, you can provide a help roll once per session, and can give three Explanations for three World Elements that help the Colonists or make things easier for them. These characters help shape play by providing Grounding and Assistance.

LANGUAGE

None of the aliens on the new planet can speak any human language. Humanity is a complete nonentity to this world. Earth is an unknown world, from a backwater sector of the galaxy, with a people that no one knows about or may ever have heard of. It is as if members of an isolated tribe from the Amazon were suddenly re-located to New York City or Chartre. No one would know their language. The only aliens that know a human tongue are the Xsians. There is a Xsian Ambassador who will bring your Colonists to their new home. They communicate through a device that transposes their lilting language into a human language understood by most of the group. Xsians are likely to know a small amount of Mandarin, Hindi, Arabic, Spanish or English. They communicate in stilted English, and are only able to communicate to the humans about concepts they understand. Xsians may help in an investigation roll by giving more some information for the helping roll, but they cannot act as a tour guide to explain all that the Colonists see around them.

NOTES ON XSANS

The Xsian <*zis-see'-un*> species has made a group commitment to shepherding and helping humanity to make up for the grave loss of life and liberty that their ship caused. Xsians specialize in learning human languages and all new human colonies are located within easy proximity of a Xsian embassy on alien planets. Colonies in the game will not be located on Xsian planets to begin, though they may be created later in the game.

Xsians are tall, greenish-translucent skinned beings with many amoeboid tentacles and glossy white-silver hairlike fronds coming from their head-type area. They have eyes and a mouth, but no nose. Many humans are disgusted by their smell, but their language is often thought to be musical and enchanting. They communicate with humans through mechanical translation devices that transmute the sounds they make into a replica of human language. The information they can convey is simple and stilted, and is often enigmatic to the humans.

SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

A supporting character is a friend or acquaintance of one of the Colonists. They may be an alien who may help or aggravate the Colonists. Or it may be someone on Earth who had a relationship with a Colonist, at some point far distant in their past, or in the present, though now at a distance of course. The supporting character is played by another of the players as a secondary character. They give the Colonists other people in the world to interact with. And also, to give the players other characters to play in the world. More discussion of them may be found in the About Playing Chapter on page 94.

Each Supporting Character has a relationship with one of the Colonists

Each Colonist may be helped in an Investigation or Action once per session by a present Supporting Character

The player of each Supporting Character may create three free World Elements or Belongings

Supporting characters can be created whenever a character has been introduced and a player of a Colonist forms a relationship with it, or when the outcome of an Action is Gain an Ally. Someone else must agree to play that character. They may be aliens, or humans from the Colonists' past as seen in flashbacks. Fill out the Name, Species and Description, as well as the name of the Colonist with whom the character has a relationship and that Colonist's Assimilation. Also write the character on the Colonist's sheet, circle positive or negative and describe the nature of the relationship.

The player of each Supporting Character gets to add three things to the world through this character. They may add an Explanation to a World Element, or give a new Belonging to the Colonist they have a relationship with. These are indicated by the boxes at the bottom of the Supporting Character sheets. Check each one off as one has been created.

EXAMPLE SUPPORTING CHARACTERS:

<i>Friend</i>	<i>Coworker</i>	<i>Business owner</i>
<i>Pet</i>	<i>Correspondent</i>	<i>Friendly child</i>
<i>Lover</i>	<i>Guide</i>	<i>Fellow organization/religious member</i>
<i>Neighbor</i>	<i>Host</i>	<i>Service provider (bus driver, laundry, etc.)</i>

Playing aliens at first, will be a bit different from what is usually involved in playing a character. They are baffling and confusing to the humans at first. Their ways are unknown. They may be the avenue for the humans to gain

real understanding in the world. Playing a human from a Colonist's past is also a way to be able to have a character now and then that is simply human and understandable. Over time, the aliens will become more known, but at first the players may experience some of the culture shock and bewilderment of the characters.

Just as when playing a Plot Character, give yourself time to settle in to them. The purpose of a Supporting Character, really is primarily to support (and push) the Colonists, now and in the past. Some who truly do push may develop into a full blown Plot Character over time. They don't need to though, and mostly they will simply be someone they Colonists know. They can, however, become someone that the Colonists come to know more deeply: a lover, a friend, a comrade at work, a religious fellow. Anywhere you and the other player take the relationship is fine. And follow the tone of the group to help you pick the ways it may manifest or be represented. Don't start doing graphic sex scenes around the others if you get stares and rolled eyes. Be serious. But over time, too, the Supporting Character will develop needs and desires. This can only happen, of course, once the players have some kind of handle on what is happening in the world the Colonists are on.

So don't rush it. Let the cycle flow through, and for the first little while, just let yourself be baffling and odd. But consistent. When you choose a random word, let that inspire what you do with the character, and then next time you come back to the character, remember to incorporate something from last time. Make a note on the character sheet to help you remember: "hugs a lot", or "seems to be a little violent". Base these things, as always, on what the Colonists can see and hear. You don't know why the aliens do what they do yet. Playing one means you are helping everyone have a moving canvas to paint their collective ideas onto. Making the world and its inhabitants a living, breathing thing, rather than a flat backdrop that the characters parade in front of.

The point of this game is to give you all a long, sweet chance to see what's really in the inside of a person, peoples and a place. To explore the small things that make it difficult and awesome and rewarding to become part of a new place and culture. To learn to respect some of the obstacles people deal with, though in a fantastic setting with characters that truly are empowered to do what they will—over time, with application and determination.

The creation of this world is a work of the group. It's a constantly unfolding picture that comes clearer and clearer over time, and that becomes more faceted and more deeply aspected. Everyone is the architect of some parts, and the parts are built together until the entirety of the discoveries and creations make a complete whole. Or an ongoingly evolving whole.

The supporting cast are an important way that the Colonists will put a face on the world too. They make the alien personal.

PLOT CHARACTERS

When creating a Plot character fill out the Name, Species, Affiliation and Description of the character. Plot characters have additional aspects that get created over time: an Agenda for the humans, something that they Offer the Colonists, something they Desire and something that they Fear. When creating the Plot Character, choose only the Agenda. As time goes on, fill in the other aspects of the character as things about the world get revealed.

So each plot character will start out with at least a description of how that character has power over the Colonists. You will also determine how that character can help the humans and what they offer, and in time what they fear or need. In each session, the humans may ask for help from one Plot character. The person playing may describe how the alien helps them in an investigation or conflict, and adds a d10 to their roll.

Each Plot Character has an Agenda for the humans

One Plot Character per session can Help a Colonist in an Investigation or give them a free success for an Action

Each Plot Character offers the Colony something it needs

Each Plot Character has a Fear and a Desire which are discovered over time

When you choose a Plot Character to play, you are taking responsibility for a portion of the world and how it affects the Colonists. The Plot Characters all have power over the Colony in some way. The Alien Employer helps them become productive citizens on the planet, the Terran Authority Liason is their connection with Earth, the Xsian Ambassador is their host on the planet.

These characters can and will help the Colonies, but they also are representative of larger forces that are tugging and pulling on the Colonists. By taking this step and coming to the new world, the Colonists are putting themselves in the midst of struggles and needs of nations, worlds and species. By coming to this place, they change the future of humanity, even if only by sending home information about new ways to make ice cream, much less genetic modification or faster than light travel.

Just as choosing a Lunar Training means you are interested in learning and establishing things in the world that fall under that discipline, so too are

you taking on watching out for and developing how a certain aspect of the world affects the Colonists. With the Terran Authority, you are going to be looking for ways Earth, humanity and the people in the Colonist's lives will make things complicated for them.

With the Xsians, you are examining how the presence of the humans in the Interstellar community is unformed and new, and get to establish what the true motives of the Xsians are or may be. They too are alien, was the crash really an accident? Examples follow, of Plot Characters and what complications they could bring into play.

EXAMPLE PLOT CHARACTERS:

TERRAN AUTHORITY LIASON

Possible **Agendas:** Colony should bring back military technology to favor one country over the others, Convert the aliens, Bring back technology for corporation for bonus, Smuggle drug formulas to Earth, Send genetic information for adaptation of human animals/people, Send plans of planet for military purposes, Biotech/cybernetic technology for adaptations for humans, Learn psychological adaptations for conditioning of human population, Propaganda, Heroic stories, Newsworthy tales/scandal etc., Entertainment for humanity: reality tv (invasively so), Art for education of humanity, Technology for trade edge, Scandal for toppling Earth political figure, Militaristic society—learn values and send back impressive data, Skew data to support political agenda.

Offers the Colony: connection with loved ones back on Earth resupply of resources, send special belongings, send bribes, send things they humans can use to trade or make their lives easier on the planet (a la cigarettes to a prisoner), knowledge of what is going on back on Earth, knowledge about the Xsians, new technologies/devices, equipment for investigations, awards from Earth, promotions, communications from lofty officials.

Fears: discovery, enemies on Earth, aliens.

Desires: money, status, human conquest.

XSIAN AMBASSADOR

Possible Agendas: gain status from human performance on the planet, personal gain, thirst for understanding of humanity, want the humans to integrate as soon as possible, contemptuous of humans, stupid, envious of humans, stepping stone to another world, want humans to die, want humans to bribe them.

OFFERS THE COLONY: looking out for humans, their responsibility to see them settled and well, offer knowledge of world and communication, official protection of Xsian society and worlds.

FEARS: other aliens, superiors, human knowledge of their motives, being stuck on this planet.

DESIRES: advancement, knowledge, power, resources.

ALIEN EMPLOYER

POSSIBLE AGENDAS: Exploit the humans for difficult/dangerous/humiliating labor, adopt the humans into their family, attracted to a Colonist, physically violent or emotionally abusive, uncaring or unaware of physical differences for the humans, want them to go home, want them to help with conflict with some other group, curious about their physiology.

OFFER THE COLONY: work, payment and connection to the aliens, a place in society, money or exchange currency, friendship, understanding, compassion.

FEARS: being seen as an alien lover, enemies/rivals, losing status, injury from humans, replacement.

DESIRES: advancement, status, wealth, lovers, family.

RELIGIOUS/CULTURAL LEADER

POSSIBLE AGENDAS: See humans as threat to current order, want to convert humans, turn members of religion against humans, want to know about human spirituality, see human(s) as avatar or figure in their religion, opposed to integration with humans, ideas about how humans should dress/act, see them as second class.

OFFER THE COLONY: belonging in a group, understanding of religious world, protection of community, blessings from supernatural beings.

FEARS: overthrow of their religion or authority, invasion of foreign influences.

DESIRE: to gain more converts, to share their religion, to be seen as beneficent.

POLITICAL/ORGANIZATIONAL OFFICIAL

POSSIBLE AGENDAS: see humans a bargaining chip in ongoing struggle or campaign, want to use humans to campaign or control other through their presence, use humans as mascots, want to redistrict humans out of their area, want humans to fit into order, want humans outside of order, see humans as opportunity for gain.

Offer the Colony: protection and immunity from laws or social reprobation, can connect with proper authorities, give place in the society, introduce to others, create order or organizational principles to take humans into account.

FEAR: losing status, humans being used against them, incident or fiasco, political scandal, unveil illicit practices.

DESIRE: gain power, be seen to help others, salve conscience.

SECURITY/ORDER ENFORCER

POSSIBLE AGENDAS: Wants to keep the humans in check, is suspicious of their motivations, wants to keep them from being involved in criminal activity, is looking for ways to get them in trouble, doesn't like how they smell, is corrupt, is on the take from criminal forces, takes a liking to them which pisses off the neighbors.

OFFERS THE COLONY: protection from harm, information about laws and civic duties, can help them navigate.

FEAR: unrest, disruption, corruption, other security personnel, outlaws.

DESIRE: easy work, power, knowledge of other worlds, safety for their family.

CRIMINAL

POSSIBLE AGENDAS: may offer protection to humans, may threaten if do not comply, can involve humans in illegal activity without their knowledge, can exploit the humans for their own gain, can honestly like them but bring down official approbrium through their patronage.

OFFER THE COLONY: wealth and resources, sexual connections, safe zones, passage through dangerous areas, information about unofficial aspects of society.

FEAR: security forces, discovery, being caught.

DESIRE: resource, power, appearance of benevolence.

TEACHER

POSSIBLE AGENDAS: may want to teach the humans how to integrate, treat humans as objects for study not as people, bring kids to gawk, study for teaching purposes, doesn't want to teach them what they have to, sees them as stupid, little patience, working with humans as shit detail, bad at their job.

OFFERS THE COLONY: one-on-one teaching, connection with other students, insight into how the aliens learn about their world, area knowledge.

FEAR: being caught out ignorant, losing control of students, being caught in scandal.

DESIRE: to teach, to learn, to inspire students, to connect with humans, to invigorate community, to have easy job, to get out early.

NEWS REPORTER

POSSIBLE AGENDAS: seek out humans for news of their activities all the time, want to learn all about Earth even embarrassing information, lots of them, constantly observing, loss of privacy to their scrutiny, invasive technologies for sharing information, wants scandal, wants to use to get dirt on some alien, black mail someone, stickler for detail.

Offer the Colony: attention of community, fame, information about other parts of society

FEAR: error, being scooped, being lied to, being found out to have lied, not bringing back information, boss, public, humans.

DESIRE: fame, notoriety, reputation for skill/hard hitting style, big break.

RESEARCHER

POSSIBLE AGENDAS: wants to learn everything about humans: anatomy, sex, habits all the time, etc., uses invasive means to observe, doing experiments on humans, bringing information back to commercial interests, learning to better enslave/use humans, doing experiments on them to help learn about things for host aliens, learning about culture: what form of research? Biological, social, technology, etc.

OFFERS THE COLONY: knowledge of their world and ways of studying, entrance to libraries and centers/collections of knowledge and other researchers, ability to study on this planet and learn more.

FEAR: being discredited/mislead, becoming emotionally attached,

learning things that change their already approved/chosen views, losing opportunity to study, humans learning too much about them.

DESIRE: learn about humanity, status in their community, resources to study more, fame, achievement.

Other potential Plot or Supporting Characters:

Xenoscientists

Agricultural specialists

Zookeepers

Alien Doctors

Merchants

Neighbors

Media

Criminals

Revolutionaries

Dissidents

Psychologists

Military

Artists

The sky is the limit. Also, all of these categories are human terms, overlaid upon what the aliens see themselves as. Look at these as suggestions, and allow the people of this alien world to arise as they do. It may be that you play a Plot Character that is something wholly other than what you might have considered a relationship with the Colonists could be.

Be open to what happens, that is the key to the game.

Chapter 16:

Resources, Connections, Belongings

MAKING A HOME

Along with discovering a world, the Colonists are creating a home for themselves. They begin with enough supplies to last them a little while, and they can get shipments from Earth. But the shipments are infrequent, and objects lose their power to comfort with thoughts of home on Earth as they become worn and lose their integrity with extended use. Nerves and clothing will fray in time.

So, one of the Colonist's tasks is to find things in the world to make their own. And to find people and groups to grow close to and live among. Resources, Belongings and Connections offer these things to the Colonists. These things are represented in specific mechanics in the game, and are discussed below.

RESOURCES

Resources come in many sized and shapes. They may be a container full of edible squidlike flowers, or clothing made from silk spun by giant sapient insects. A Resource might be knowing where to stand to be early in the line for daily water rations, or finding a window on a well-shielded space station to be able to recharge the solar battery for the computer.

Resources are created as Investigations progress. After three successful Investigation attempts, a player can create a Resource that is limited to the use by one character, or that is of brief, though valued, use. This is recorded on the character sheet and marked off as used, if appropriate.

After five successful Investigation attempts, a related Resource that can

supply the whole Colony is found or created. This Resource is recorded on the Colony Sheet. If it is limited in use, record is made of its use, and it is crossed off once all has been used up.

Resources can be expended to avoid Injury if that outcome occurs up in a roll. If they are not infinite, mark off another unit of them as they are used.

BELONGINGS

Each Colonist brings with them a group of items from Earth. What they are may vary: photos, musical instruments, gold, chocolate. They cannot be replaced when they are lost or destroyed, but new items can become the Colonists' belongings. Alien friends can give them a gift as one of the three things they can add to the world. Or they can get a new belonging as part of the re-supply from Earth. Colonists also have equipment that relates to their Lunar Training and those supplies issued to the Colony as a whole.

If a Colonist is given a gift by an alien, in order to understand it fully, begin an Investigation Question about it to learn what it is and how it functions. Or if it can be eaten, or ridden, etc. Treat as you would any other Investigation, but at the end, the object or being becomes the Resource for all. Or perhaps more are found for the whole colony.

CONNECTIONS

When a Trouble has been resolved, the players can create a Connection for the Colony. This represents some major gain for the colony as a whole. It may be access to resources, or it may be a shift in their identity or belonging to a group. It may be a powerful ally who has come to trust and believe in the humans. Or it may be a pact made with another disenfranchised group.

Whatever it is, it arises from the Troubles the Colony has been experiencing. As the Trouble is resolved, it is transformed into another solid rooting that the Colony now has on the alien world.

EXAMPLE CONNECTIONS:

In a society with strong caste divisions, a new caste is created for humans so they can work and participate and fit into the hierarchy of the world.

The humans gain an ally who is a central speaker in the warrens of Higit. Having this alien know and trust them means that many others will learn of them, and have a positive introduction to them.

Chapter 17:

About Playing

PLAYING COLLABORATIVELY

The goal in *Sign in Stranger* is to create a world collectively. Each person gives input in various ways. First at the point of describing the alien landscape and beings. Then, at the point of ascribing meaning to them. Then, by playing selected aliens and people from Earth, they get to weave a story and fabric of the Colonists' lives, each player taking a lead at varying points, and playing a supporting role at other times. Or acting as a goad to others, to force them to make difficult choices or to present challenge. There are various procedures and roles that allow everyone to have the chance to do these various tasks, and which keep the game rolling along and enjoyable.

The Colonists are the primary characters that the players will operate. They are the person they know the most about, and who they will do them most in depth exploration of, both their actions and their experiences both on Earth and on the Alien planet. The Colonists have a Profession, and a Lunar Training. These abilities allow the characters to draw upon their past knowledge to learn about the new world, and when useful the players then get to use more resources toward deciphering what is going on around the Colonists.

The Training chosen is also a lens through which the player may experience the world. They will be called up on to interact with and create order out of the parts of the world that correlate with the Training. So, although everyone describes all aspects of the world equally, by being asked to take part in *Describing a World Element* (p. XX), the Investigations of a given part of the world or society will likely fall to the person trained in them.

So, the player whose character is a specialist in economics and money will have the most opportunities to say how those functions are represented on this planet, what form currency takes if any, how it affects different aliens, and the humans themselves. The player will also create resources for the Colony over time as the Investigation progresses.

So, following up that example, the player of the Economics/Trade Officer could be the one to create a demand for human hair on the planet. Allowing the humans to trade extra hair as it grows back, for specialty goods or alien currency. However, sometimes the other players may take on an investigation of something in your area, and Wild Cards and Unexpected connections can make it so that someone with another Training determines something. Each player becomes a likely source for this information about the world, but is not the only. And anyone who discovers something about a given aspect of the world records it in the World book under the appropriate section, so that others can learn and build on what has gone before.

Colonists are centers of Protagonism and Explanation of the world for the players who control them.

PLAYING PLOT CHARACTERS – CENTERS OF ADVERSITY AND CONTROL

Over time everyone will take on a Plot Character. These are characters that hold power over the Colonists. They can assist them—making it possible for the Colonists to travel across a busy population center to get to their place of employment, or helping calm a conflict with nearby beings—but the role of the players in playing these characters is to introduce complications into the Colonists' lives.

Each of the Plot Characters wants to help the Colonists, but...at a price. Some innocently, some maliciously, they all have their own ambitions and desires that the human Colonists will help fulfill. The Colonists are in a position wedged between many conflicting interests: the humans back home with their fears and needs, the aliens near the Colony: employers looking to gain, those for whom the humans take on symbolic meaning, religions, cultural or otherwise, political figures who see the appearance of a new intelligent species as an opportunity to push against opponents or manipulate the opinion of the larger group of beings on the planet. Others, with agendas beyond the human's ken.

All of these can help the humans, but also will be pushing for things to go their way. And also, the players introduce elements into the world associated with their Plot Character that challenge and push the humans in directions they might not otherwise have pursued. Over time they

may offer resources and support to the Colony, but as they are played the players have the responsibility for keeping the pressure on the Colony. Which also allows for greater connection with the aliens around them, and increased understanding of what the needs and fears of their new neighbors and old home may be.

PLAYING SUPPORTING CHARACTERS -- CENTERS OF ALLIANCE AND CONNECTION

Each player can also play an alien that forms a friendly relationship with the Colony. These are called Supporting Characters. They may be a benign presence in the lives of the Colony as a whole, or may have a close relationship with one of the Colonists, even to having sex or bonding with a Colonist, or members of the Colony. They may attach themselves to the Colony as a worker, or create connections with the Colony and others in the region for reasons at first inexplicable to the humans. Perhaps the community of aliens requires regular visits from house to house to maintain circulation of waste products to be re-cycled for creation into shared food resources? The strange wiggling figure that enters the Colonist's dwelling every rotation at the same time might strike up a rubbing acquaintanceship with one of the Colonist who can scratch an itch they can't reach, and in consequence, help the Colonists learn more about how to find the food dispenser centers.

When playing a Supporting Character, a player can make three Explanations about the world that contribute to Investigations. One can be added per session. Mark off a box each time one has been made. Once three have been added, the character can still appear, but the player cannot use them to Explain the world any more. They may still assist in one roll (Action or Investigation) per session.

Continuing characters can become a Resource for a Colony. For example, if a Colonist has a relationship with an Alien, and they learn to communicate well with one another, when the Investigation "How can we communicate with the aliens?" provides a Colony Resource, that alien may commit to staying at the Colony as a translator.

INVESTIGATIONS AS PLOT ARCS

When you play Sign in Stranger, the players are collaborating to create an overall story of discovery and complication for each other. From moment to moment, the Colonists will continually discover new beautiful, fascinating and sometimes disturbing aspects of the world around them. It is like taking a fresh look at the world around you. A spider eating a fly is a normal thing, but if the spider was 10 feet high, and the fly looked like a kitten, it would have a different impact on how you interpret the same,

day to day facts.

So, the Colonists will be encountering new things, and trying to make sense of them. Their quests to solve specific riddles are called Investigations. These are assigned by Earth, and also chosen by the Colonists because they apply to their area of special study. Those with trainings in a given area are better equipped to be able to learn about those aspects of the world. Though there is no guarantee that what is found will actually be what the Colonists think at first. These Investigations form ongoing lines of plot for the characters. They also may result in complications for the Colonists or the Colony as a whole. These ongoing events of discovery and mishap create an arc of plot, often centered around one Colonist, but perhaps involving many others as they assist in the Investigation or get tangled up in errors that the Colonists make as they interact with the world.

The Players should look at each Investigation and the Troubles that crop up around them, as the framework of the game. In a more traditionally structured game, there would be one player introducing most of the Adversity, describing the world, and setting goals or benchmarks for the group to accomplish, such as killing a dragon or making a political coup.

All of those things happen, but how they are decided up on is divide up among the players. At a given time, one player may have their character investigate the trade in the region where the Colony is. They may have found out what they think to be the currency, trade for some, and try to bring it somewhere to get food for the others. But if a mishap is rolled, the Colonist may instead have acquired contraband that is not legal currency, but is contraband. Or may be using a form of trade goods that are deemed unclean if touched by a person of the wrong clan, religious group or work class. This may turn into an Incident where the whole colony is shunned by their neighbors, until a way can be found to correct the mistake and come to a better understanding with the neighborhood. Perhaps a new form of currency needs to be found for the humans. Or the humans need to be adopted into a clan.

The lines of culture are all around the Colonists, invisible until crossed. Nature also hides its dangers and virtues until investigated. The players get to use all these possibilities, and what their imagination leads them to create and then explain, in order to weave together, slowly bit by bit, a rich, complex tapestry of a world that is new and unexpected even to those who create it.

STORY ARC TOOLS

There are four parts of the game intended to help the players create long arcs of story:

Investigations – learning about particular aspects of the world and creating resources for the Colony

Goals – The Colonists take Actions to accomplish their personal goals for themselves to accomplish with help from other Colonists, aliens or loved ones back home

Troubles – Created as side effects of Investigations and Actions. Are dangers faced by the Colonists, or conflicts with neighboring beings.

Plot Characters – These characters are a source of external adversity that confronts the Colony. These conflicts may percolate in the background, surfacing now and then, until over time the moment comes for the goal of the Alien or human with something for the Colony to accomplish for them comes to fruition. Each session, these should arise in some small way, like thorns in the side of the Colonists, goading them to accomplish their Investigations and Goals in order to move beyond these issues.

COLONIST GOALS AS CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

The players of the Colonists set goals for their character to accomplish. These arise out of the character's personality and experiences both on Earth and on the new planet. They are an avenue for the Character to create what they want for themselves, to help the Colony and also to allow the character's personality to be highlighted. Taking a moment to pursue a Colonist's goal allows the players to see what is important to them. And to see in a small, moment-to-moment way what it takes for them to become settle and comfortable, or to see what challenges them most.

Their goals may have to do with Changes they are undergoing. Or they may have to do with their desire to Assimilate into the world. They may also be about simple things. Creating a musical instrument. Growing plants from seeds. Learning to dance with the aliens. The Goals help the player keep track of what their character is doing. The character can have multiple goals. It is a good idea to take stock of what people are interested in exploring in a given session. During the pre-game Check-in, if you'd like to finish up a Goal your character is close to, let others know, so that everyone knows what they can look forward to, and set up for in the game. Goals can go awry. Complications can set in, and Troubles crop up, delaying arrival at the objective. But with persistence, any goal can be reached, though help from others is often needed.

The Goals offer many opportunities for the players to develop their characters. Not necessarily in the manner often associated with the term “character development”, you do not add equipment, traits or rise in level due to them. But can forward you character’s position in the world, help others and learn more about who the character is. Goals are about developing your sense of the character, and deepening its connection with other characters, itself and the world.

FLASHBACKS

Flashbacks are opportunities to learn more about who this character was before they came to the new planet. If played out in response to a character that is Panicking, they will be traumatic moments from the character’s life. Moments of tension or conflicts that are not necessarily resolved. If they are Flashbacks to use a Profession for an Investigation or Action, they can be a simple narration or short play of a moment from the characters life when they did something analogous to what is happening in the present. They may also be asked for to help us learn more about the character’s actions in the past. This can be done to help accomplish a goal. For example, if a Colonist has a goal of making a violin, that player could play out a scene in their past when they spent time in their father’s workshop, helping lathe wood to make pegs for a beloved instrument.

When playing out a traumatic flashback, the player whose character has focus chooses other characters to be in the scene with their character and casts other players to play them. These characters will fulfill roles in the scene in relationship to the focus character. There is a list of the roles with explanations on page XX. Authority, ally, rival, dependent, desired. For traumatic scenes at least three of these roles should be represented, each by a separate character. For other scenes, one or two may be represented. Or the character may have a solo Reflection scene that is simply expressing something about their life for the other players to appreciate. Reflections scenes can also be requested by another player. For example, for a Colonist who chose the “spy” Story Seed, the player of the Terran Authority can ask for a Reflection Flashback where the character was indoctrinated into believing in their task.

There is always some crossover—some shared element between the past and the present. One of the Random Words chosen in descriptions if the Flashback is setting up for, or in response to an Investigation. Use the Action desire if it is an Action roll. If it is a Reflection scene it should parallel in some way the experiences the character is having in the present.

PERSONAL LOG

The Personal Log is a place for the player to record a little bit about what their character has experienced during the game. This creates a record for the players to help them keep track of what has happened, and what to do next in the game. This is also an opportunity for players to share information about what their character is planning, and what they would like others to follow up on. Writing down reflections about the other Colonists also helps everyone know how their character is being perceived by the others. In the personal description section on the character sheet, each player can add what others have said about their character, and perhaps change it over time as the perceptions of others change. There is a box for: how others see me in the area for recording Relationships.

Read the last entry of the personal log out loud before each session of the game. This is out of character knowledge. It is there exactly so that everyone can have access to more of the internal aspects of the characters, so they can help each other build on what they are envisioning for their character. Don't worry about crafting a Story per se out of what is said here. Instead, look at them as clues and nuggets of gold that you can follow up on in play. Allow your character to brush up against what has been communicated. Don't act as if they know secret knowledge, but know that those things are part of the fictional space that your characters all inhabit. If someone is falling in love with your character, create opportunities for that to be explored.

Allow the character to learn over time as they will. Put yourself in their shoes for their reactions, but when you decide what scenes you will have, keep that knowledge in the back of your mind, and perhaps put the characters in stressful situations together. For example, if you had an Investigation with two such characters that resulted in a Wild Card success and a Gaffe, let them learn what the strange movable object is, it turns out to be a children's transport unit taking the immature aliens near the Colony somewhere, but let the two get locked in the transport together, heading off alone with 20 cheeping alien young.

TIME BETWEEN SESSIONS

Enough time has passed between each session for one set of the Food Rations and any other Limited Resources to be consumed or used during that time. The group should decide how much time that is, and may say what their character has been doing during that time. This is also enough time for one level of injury to heal between sessions. No new resources or discoveries can be made between sessions, but the characters can have catalogued, or followed up on Investigations from prior sessions.

tone

There are a variety of tones that are likely to occur in playing *Sign in Stranger*. The first and easiest is often wacky humor. The incongruous juxtapositions that occur from creating a planet are often hilarious, and there is no reason to try to pretend otherwise. The real situation of being adrift in an alien world, with limited power to control the environment and the vastness of the differences that the characters encounter counter-balance the wackiness with a creeping unsettled feeling that may verge on horror.

At the same time, the game also brings into play a wide variety of real world, social and political issues. The humans landing planetside are analogs for countless immigrants that have left their home due to choice, chance or coercion to seek a new home, refuge or prosperity. The humans have left their families behind. Lost all connection to Earth. Are venturing into completely unknown territory, having to prove themselves and provide for all their own needs. This is unusual territory for role playing games, as well. There is the possibility for the group to create a heroic arc. To give the Colonists superhuman abilities through the Changes they undergo. But just as likely, depending up on the inspiration and the zeitgeist of the group, the changes could be quotidian, alienating or disabling.

It's your choice where you take it. My advice is not to try to decide ahead of time, but to be aware of how the choices you make as you go affect the players. Allow the needs and the mood of the group to dictate which directions the tone goes. If you are getting together to play for one night, especially if there are a large number of players, there's no need to try to shoot for a tense, realistic examination of immigration and assimilation into a strange culture. Be realistic about your goals, and allow the collaborative and additive nature of the game to create buy-in at each stage as you go.

The game is forgiving. If some players wish to drop out, or change their character, that can be arranged. Also, allow yourselves to open up to new experiences and see where it may take you that you might not have gone before.

SYNERGY

When you play for the *Long Haul*, there are many, many threads of narrative and world created all the time. Flashbacks, Investigations, Descriptions of the world, aliens you meet, greet and eat, and the thoughts and reflections of the players as recorded in their Personal Logs. Each of these things interacts with the others. Each piece introduced can build on any of the others, and these connections create strands of meaning, stories within stories that can be unrolled slowly over time.

In the long game, there is no need to rush to the complications. They are all around you all the time. It's fine, and even needed to linger on the experience of what occurs. To chat in character about what you're experiencing. To make elaborate theories and hypotheses—knowing all the while that any or all of them may be untrue. The game, in essence, asks you to smell the roses, and the daisies, and the garbage, and the laundry, and—so on. The world around needs to be grasped and interacted with in order for the plot to unfold. The stories come from the connections they have with one another, and the meaning they hold for the aliens for whom they are home. And the new meaning that gets ascribed to them by the humans, and how the humans are integrated—or not—into the pre-existing order around them.

So, don't worry about tying up all the loose ends in one roll, or in a given session, or in an arc of a campaign. Leaving some openings allows amazing moments of just-so-ness to arise. Coincidences that explain what has come about in a way more satisfyingly, more rightly than could have been arrived at by direct thought and planning. Allow the wealth of detail to spill out organically, keeping track of what you need and connecting pieces as you go along, in order to savor those moments when some small piece snaps into place, illuminating the whole in a way wholly unexpected and wonderful.

Appendix A:

UNIFORM SURVEY, QUESTIONS FOR STUDY:

1. What sapient species are present on this planet and what are their characteristics?
2. What foods are edible for humans on the planet, where can they be acquired?
3. What kinds of shelter do the local beings utilize?
4. What forms of clothing do beings wear on this world, what is appropriate for humans?
5. What forms of employment are open to humans, what are these activities like?
6. What forms of currency or trade are used or practiced?
7. What cultural norms and practices are present?
8. What is the weather on this world? The length of the day?
9. What is in the environment surround the Colony?
10. What energy sources are used?
11. What forms of technologies are present?
12. What are the modes of transportation?
13. What notable inanimate and sentient species of life are present in the local environment and larger world? What are their characteristics and uses?
14. What are life cycle and stages of development of species here?
15. What forms of reproduction do the sapient species utilize?
16. What forms of reproduction are present in non-sapient species?
17. What forms of governance do the beings on this planet utilize?

18. What forms of religion, philosophy or spirituality are practiced?
19. What are the major institutions such as marriage, family, church, government, education?
20. What forms of industry and manufacture are there?
21. What machines or other technologies are used in industry?
22. How is food produced and stored? How is it distributed?
23. What forms of communication and media are used?
24. What forms of weapons are used by these species?
25. What medical technologies are applied?
26. What metals and natural materials are used in construction and production? How are they produced?
27. What political entity is the colony located within?
28. What forms of laws are operating where the colony exists? What are crimes?
29. What forms of entertainment and art are practiced by the inhabitants of this world? What are the great works?
30. What other environments types are present on the planet? What are they inhabited by?
31. What are the monuments and major landmarks of the world?
32. How are the young of the species present educated?
33. What are the social stratifications present (eg race, class, etc.)?
34. What are the relationships between political or cultural groups?
35. Where is there warfare going on? Who is involved? What are the issues at stake?
36. What are the social ills on this planet? How are they addressed?
37. Who are the major historical and mythological entities here?
38. What major ideologies and theories have been formulated?
39. What is the relationship of these species with others on this planet? On others?
40. What form of relations can be formed between this planet and Earth?

Appendix B:

STANDARD COLONY SUPPLIES:

3 dozen packages of standard coveralls: blue and green (s,m,l)

3 dozen packages of standard underclothing (underwear, socks—s, m, l)

Hygienic supplies: toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, sanitary pads

Field towels (wring and dry)

Single ply blankets

1 extreme weather overcoat per colonist

1 pair of boots per colonist

1 all purpose camp knife per colonist

6 crates of full spectrum E-Z rations (6 months rations)

Local currency adequate to pay for 1 year's worth of shelter

Desalinator/Water decontaminator unit

One hand-held computer with solar power unit complete with solitaire and the King James Bible, Bhagavad Gita, Q'ran and the Tibetan Book of the Dead.

Each person is allotted their shoe-box worth of personal belongings. They are also given two items of specialized equipment that the colonist needs to support inquiry into their area of speciality. Aside from that, they have their trainings and each other.

Supplemental supplies are sent when reports on three Investigation Questions are sent back to Earth.

Appendix C:

STORY SEEDS

Revenge	Heartbreak	Ambition
Escape	Adventure	Spying
Greed	Despair	Love
Mission	Patriotism	Quest

SECTOR

Colony Map

WORLD NAME

PLANET SIZE: (copy number below)

Satellite (1) Small (2)

Large(3) Giant (roll 1d4)

ENVIRONMENT TYPE:

Land Surface Subterranean Space

Gaseous Aquaeus Arboreal

Other: _____

PRIMARY SPECIES: HOMEWORLD? YES NO

(Make list of all species)

ALLURING TRAIT:

REPELLENT TRAIT:

OTHER SAPIENT SPECIES:

#

JOB LISTING: _____

NEAREST EARTH EQUIVALENT:

WORLD NAME

PLANET SIZE: (copy number below)

Satellite (1) Small (2)

Large(3) Giant (roll 1d4)

ENVIRONMENT TYPE:

Land Surface Subterranean Space

Gaseous Aquaeus Arboreal

Other: _____

PRIMARY SPECIES: HOMEWORLD? YES NO

(Make list of all species)

ALLURING TRAIT:

REPELLENT TRAIT:

OTHER SAPIENT SPECIES:

#

JOB LISTING: _____

NEAREST EARTH EQUIVALENT:

Categories

INVESTIGATION

8+ Two new Facts
 6-7 New Fact Explained
 4-5 Baffling Surprise
 2-3 Colony Trouble
 1 Individual Trouble

ACTION

8+ Gain Ally
 6+ Succeed
 2-5 Fail
 1 Fail Offensively —
 Create Enemy

HARM

5+ Unharmed
 4 Expend Resource
 to avoid Injury
 2-3 Injury
 1 Change Injury

PANIC

Helper *Roll Above*
 Alien 4 - Assimilation
 Human 5- Assim.
 No one 6 - Assim.

ASSIMILATION

Assim. 1 2-4 5-6

Roll

8+	6+	8+
5-7	5	7
2-4	3-4	5-6
1	1-2	1-4

Assim.
 Progresses
 Alien Helps
 Gaffe
 Colony
 Fallout

WILD CARD

6+ New Fact in Random Area
 4-5 Bafflement
 1-3 Colony Trouble

Colony:

PLANET: _____
ENVIRONMENT TYPE(S):

PRIMARY SPECIES OF ALIENS:

OTHER SPECIES OF ALIENS:

TERRAN AUTHORITY LIASON:

HUMAN EMPLOYMENT:

COLONISTS:

Name

Training

Player

COLORS:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

TROUBLES:

○○○○○□

○○○○○□

5 _____

6 _____

RESOURCES:

• 6 crates of full spectrum E-Z rations ○○○○○○

• Desalinator/water decontaminator with storage sacks ○○○○

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

PLOT CHARACTER: _____

SPECIES: _____ AFFILIATION: _____

DESCRIPTION: _____

AGENDA: _____

OFFER COLONIST(S): _____

DESIRE: _____ FEAR: _____

TROUBLE: _____ COLONIST: _____

SUPPORTING CHARACTER: _____

SPECIES: _____ COLONIST: _____

DESCRIPTION: _____

FACTS: _____

RELATIONSHIP: _____ + / -

SUPPORTING CHARACTER: _____

SPECIES: _____ COLONIST: _____

DESCRIPTION: _____

FACTS: _____

RELATIONSHIP: _____ + / -

SUPPORTING CHARACTER: _____

SPECIES: _____ COLONIST: _____

DESCRIPTION: _____

FACTS: _____

RELATIONSHIP: _____ + / -

Sign in Stranger

PLAYER NAME:

COLONIST: _____

HOME: _____

DESCRIPTION: _____

PROFESSION: _____

STRESS RESPONSE: _____

BELONGINGS: _____

ASSIMILATION	
1	<u>Taking the Cure</u>
2	_____
3	_____
4	_____
5	_____
6	_____

WOUND	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PANICKED	Y / N			

LUNAR TRAINING: _____

natural
technological
social

STORY SEED: _____

TROUBLE: _____

CHANGE INJURY: _____

GOALS: _____ RESOURCES: _____

_____ RESOURCES: _____

INVESTIGATION QUESTIONS: _____

Name (player)	Species	Notes	Relationship
_____	_____	_____	+ / -
_____	_____	_____	+ / -
_____	_____	_____	+ / -
_____	_____	_____	+ / -
_____	_____	_____	+ / -
_____	_____	_____	+ / -
_____	_____	_____	+ / -
_____	_____	_____	+ / -

PLAYER NAME: _____

Sign in Stranger

World Elements

ELEMENT:

AREAS:

DESCRIPTIONS:

FACTS:

HARMFUL:

ELEMENT:

AREAS:

DESCRIPTIONS:

FACTS:

HARMFUL:

ELEMENT:

AREAS:

DESCRIPTIONS:

FACTS:

HARMFUL:

ELEMENT:

AREAS:

DESCRIPTIONS:

FACTS:

HARMFUL:

Areas of Study

Natural

Medicine

Planetology

Zenozoology

Xenobotany

Technological

Mechanical

Structural

Biotechnology

Military/Security

Social

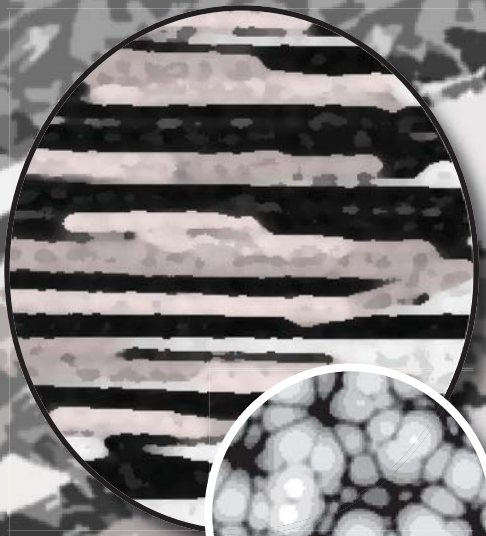
Economics/Trade

Politics/Law

Culture

Communication

- January 27
Asteroid strikes metropolitan Montreal.
- January 28
Plague killing all life spreads from the crash site.
- January 30
Quarantine is imposed worldwide.
- February 1
Montreal is obliterated by lights from the sky.
- February 3
International crisis breaks out. Nations blame one another and pre-emptive strikes occur.
- February 7
Alien craft are sighted in the sky. Images of hideous tentacled creatures are beamed down crooning in a strange ululating tongue.
- February 10
Earth forces are rallied against the aliens. A brief, destructive conflict ensues. All earth forces are defeated.
- February 27
The United Nations issues a statement of surrender on behalf of Earth.
- March 15
The first translated transmissions are received. The Chinese nation reports to the rest of the world the first words of from an alien world: "We've come to save you..."



Two Years Later
The first humans leave
Earth to form a Colony
on an alien planet

You are one of them.

