

## The Premise

For the first time in its history, the Guild, keepers of the Hypergates, have failed to send a ship going through a 'gate to its intended destination. The ship, with the PCs aboard, was headed from the frontier to the center of galactic civilization. Now, they're trapped deep in unexplored space.

## Setup

Take a blind vote on the following before play begins. Everyone should choose two options for each category and list them in order of preference. In the event of a tie, the MC decides which option to take. Announce the results for all but "Why We're Here." While the MC figures out how to incorporate the selected elements, do a scene taking place before the ship goes through the 'gate.

**Why We're Here...** There are a few reasons why the ship might have gotten into its current predicament:

- Sabotage- Someone tampered with the the 'gate! Did the Guild do it? One of the characters?
- Mechanical Failure- Perhaps the problem didn't seem significant at the time or maybe it went unnoticed. But some part of the ship's vital machinery has failed...
- Screw-Up- Somewhere there was a breakdown in the lines of communication. Were the coordinates wrong?
- Attack- Someone decidedly unfriendly damaged your ship...
- Aliens- Beings outside your realm of experience, for who knows what reason (the MC, that's who), have attacked or remotely affected the ship's system.
- Someone's Secret- Someone on board has a secret that has resulted in this situation. Maybe they're totally unqualified for their job. Maybe someone is looking for them...
- In Too Deep- Someone did something that pissed off the Guild. Maybe they've just cracked. Or maybe they have a reason for not wanting the ship to reach its destination yet... or ever.

**Galactic civilization is composed...**

- ... entirely of humans
- ... entirely of non-humans
- ... of a mix of humans and non-humans

**The ship is...**

- ... a large luxury liner
- ... a cramped active duty military ship
- ... a less-than-legitimate "cargo" ship

- ... a shipping vessel with spare space

#### The Guild...

- ... is ancient and quasi-mystical
- ... is mathematically precise in all things to the point of absurdity
- ... is paramilitary and to be feared
- ... is a major political force
- ... is neutral, to such a degree that it condemns no crime and lauds no heroism

#### The Hypergates...

- ... date back farther than any known civilization, extinct or otherwise
- ... are a recent innovation
- ... changed hands some decades back
- ... are hotly contested supply lines in a current conflict

|                                        |                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What do you want the game to be about? | Passengers trapped on a ship in deep space trying to save themselves and not kill each other. |
| Reflexive/Graceful Stat                | Cool                                                                                          |
| Persuasive/Assertive Stat              | Hot                                                                                           |
| Aggressive/Forceful Stat               | Hard                                                                                          |
| Calculating/Methodical Stat            | Sharp                                                                                         |
| Inquisitive/Exploratory Stat           | Wonder                                                                                        |

### Basic Moves

#### Mitigate Social Consequences

After screwing up socially, but not after a manipulate roll, roll +Cool to extricate yourself from the situation.

On 10+: You recover AND choose one benefit.

On 7-9: You recover OR chose one benefit.

- Carry one forward
- Ask the MC one question about the situation
- Gain +1 History on the person you have just resolved a situation with

On 6 or less you fail to recover and the MC makes a hard move.

#### Act Under Pressure

When you want to take action or keep your cool in a frightening or tense situation, roll +Cool. On

a 10+, you are able to act or keep your cool and choose 1:

- carry 1 forward
- ask the MC a question about the situation
- have the MC point out something beneficial

On a 7-9, you are able to act or keep your cool.

### **Get Aggressive**

Roll +Hard.

On a 10+, you choose two:

- They take one harm
- You seize something from them by force
- Carry 1 forward against them
- Take +1 history on them

On a 7-9 you chose one from the 10+ list and choose one::

- They Gain +1 History on you
- They can deal you 1 Harm
- They carry 1 forward against you

### **Avoid Peril**

When you try to avoid physical danger, roll +Hard. On a 10+, you choose two:

- avoid the danger
- ask the MC a question about the situation
- carry 1 forward
- create an opportunity for someone else

On a 7-9 choose one of the options from the 10+ list and choose one from the list below:

- if the danger comes from another character, they gain +1 History on you (this option is invalid if the danger is not due to another character's actions)
- You run into something at least as bad
- You cause a big scene and attract attention
- You leave something significant behind

### **Influence a PC**

When you influence a PC to act intensely, roll +Hot. On a 10+ you gain 1 History on them and they choose one:

- Reveal their current state of mind.
- Act impulsively on their emotions
- Give or promise you something they think you want

On a 7-9 they choose one of the above options.

### **Manipulate an NPC**

When you attempt to manipulate an NPC to do what you want, roll +Hot. On a 10+ they'll do what you want if you give them a reason. On a 7-9, the MC defines what will get the character to do what you want. Do it and they'll follow through.

### ***Additional Rule: Intimacy***

When two characters share a truly intimate moment, physical or emotional, they gain +1 History on each other.

### **Get Your Bearings**

When you get your bearings in a situation, roll +Sharp. If you succeed you can ask the MC either one (on a 7-9) or two (on a 10+). You take +1 forward when acting on the answers.

- Who's in control here?
- What should I be on the lookout for?
- Who is involved here who doesn't seem to be?
- Who here is the biggest threat?

### **Read a Person**

When you read a person, roll +Sharp. If you succeed you can ask the MC either one (on a 7-9) or two (on a 10+). You take +1 forward when acting on the answers.

- Is your character being honest?
- What is your character really feeling about this situation?
- What are your intentions in this situation?
- What do you want from me in this situation?
- What would it take for your character to \_\_\_\_? (PC only)

### **Open Your Mind**

When you open your mind to new possibilities, roll +Wonder. On a 10+, the MC will give you a new piece of information related to the setup options chosen at the start of the game, possibly even the **Why We're Here** option **AND** you may ask the MC a question about a character that isn't present or a situation occurring elsewhere on the ship. On a 7-9 the MC will give you a piece of vague information related to the setup options and relevant to your current situation.

## **Helping, Interfering, and Other Uses for History**

You may spend 1 History you have on a player to:

- offer XP to do what you want
- add 1 to your roll against them
- add 1 to their roll when you are actively helping them
- subtract 1 from their roll when you are actively hindering them
- add 1 to any harm you deal to them
- force them to Act Under Pressure to carry out a certain action

You may spend 1 History you have on an NPC to:

- put them at a Disadvantage
- add 1 to your roll against them
- add 1 to any harm you deal to them
- cause them to falter, freeze, or hesitate momentarily

## **NPC History**

Yes, it is possible for NPCs to have History with the PCs! They may spend their History to:

- act at an Advantage
- offer XP to do what they want
- add 1 to any harm they deal to you
- come out of nowhere with a hard move

## **Advantage and Disadvantage**

An NPC acts at an Advantage when something would grant them +1 to their roll or they spend History on a PC they are currently engaged with, either physically present or otherwise communicating. When at an Advantage, the NPC's actions will result in one of the following:

- gain them new followers or support
- leave them better prepared or protected
- set them up perfectly for a follow-up action

An NPC acts at a Disadvantage something would give them -1 to their roll or when a player spends History on an NPC they are currently interacting with to put them at a Disadvantage. When at a Disadvantage, the NPC's actions will result in one of the following:

- cost them support or followers
- leave them vulnerable in some way

- set the PC(s) up for a follow-up action

The MC will determine which of these effects takes place.

### **Gaining XP and Character Improvement**

You gain XP when you roll with a highlighted stat, once per scene per move associated with that stat. The player of the character with the most History on you and the MC will each choose one of your stats to highlight at the beginning of the first session. Repeat this process each following session, with the MC and the current player with the most History.

### **Advancements:**

- add 1 to Hot
- add 1 to Cool
- add 1 to Sharp
- add 1 to Hard
- add 1 to Wonder
- take another move from your playbook
- take another move from your playbook
- take a move from another playbook
- take a move from another playbook

### **MC Agendas**

- Make the characters' lives interesting
- Discover what happens next
- Test the group dynamics
- Make them feel the ship's walls closing in
- Make space feel alien

### **MC Principles**

- Sprinkle evocative details everywhere.
- Make the world seem real.
- Build a bigger world through play.
- Address yourself to the characters, not the players.
- Make your move, but misdirect.
- Make your move, but never speak its name.
- Look at your NPCs and ideas through crosshairs.
- Name everyone, make everyone human.
- Ask provocative questions and build on the answers.

- Respond with challenging circumstances and occasional rewards.
- Be a fan of the players' characters.
- Think offscreen, too.
- Sometimes, reflect a question back upon the players.
- Incentivize backstory
- Make the the setup relevant

## **Hard Moves**

- Inflict Harm if/when appropriate.
- Separate them.
- Put them together.
- Expose a secret to the wrong person.
- Grant someone Hx.
- Take something away.
- Establish unforeseen consequences.
- Turn their move back on them.
- Remind them of the limits they face
- Escalate a problem
- make them pay a price
- tell them the consequences and ask
- leap to the worst possible conclusion (aside from explosive decompression)

And after every move, ask "What do you do?"

## **Excitement and Experiences** (working with new things, trying a novel approach)

No one realizes how much your wide eyes take in. What you lack in relevant experience you make up for in other ways. like your fresh insights into situations and other people. And who knows? The opportunity for you to prove yourself may be right around the corner

|        |    |
|--------|----|
| Cool   | 0  |
| Hot    | 1  |
| Hard   | -1 |
| Sharp  | 1  |
| Wonder | 2  |

**Origins:** always wanted to see..., living the dream, proving that it's for real, one chance to learn so much, a great opportunity

- **Hidden Savvy:** When you convince someone you are less experienced or otherwise less than you really are, add one to your roll to manipulate them.
- **Beginner's Luck:** On doing something for the first time, take +1.
- **Sharing the Moment:** When you share an important new experience with someone, roll +Wonder. On a 10-up, choose one:
  - carry 1 forward
  - take 1 History on the other person
  - ask the MC a question about the situationOn a 7-9, you may choose the first or third option but lose 1 Hx on that person.
- **Flash of Insight:** Once per session, when you read a person for the first time that session or get your bearings, ask one extra question from the relevant list.

## **History Options**

- Someone has managed to impress or inspire you. Discuss how. Give them +1 History.
- Someone has underestimated you. Take +1 History.

## Fame and Fortune

|        |    |
|--------|----|
| Cool   | 0  |
| Hot    | 1  |
| Hard   | 2  |
| Sharp  | 1  |
| Wonder | -1 |

**Origins:** mercenary, in someone's debt, headed for the big time, got a gig waiting

### Choose a Specialty

#### Moves:

- **Cool Under Fire:** Roll with Hard to keep your cool when under physical pressure.
- **Luggage:** You have a case of useful stuff. Name what you want and roll +cool.
  - 10: exactly what you need
  - 7-9: choose one:
    - It's damaged and will only function once
    - It's similar to what you want, but not identical and you must roll +sharp. On a 7+ it works.
    - You will need someone else's help to make it work.
    - It will take significantly longer than you thought to make it work.
- **Retaliation:** Add 1 to your next roll against any PC who successfully gets aggressive with you or any NPC who acts at an Advantage against you.
- **Situational Awareness:** You may treat a 7-9 roll on Get Your Bearings or Read a Person as a 10+. On a 10+, you also carry 1 forward.

### History Options

- Someone has been getting in your way, intentionally or otherwise. Discuss how. Give them +1 History on you.
- You know someone's hidden vulnerability or ambition. Take +1 History on them.

## Knowledge Seeker

|        |    |
|--------|----|
| Cool   | 1  |
| Hot    | -1 |
| Hard   | 1  |
| Sharp  | 2  |
| Wonder | 0  |

**Origins:** presenting your conclusions to the elite, bringing back data, see how the other side lives, gathering knowledge on behalf of your people

- **Encyclopedia Galactica:** You have a computing device full of useful information. Roll +Sharp.
  - On a 10+, choose a general topic for the MC to provide a relevant detail about.
  - On a 7-9, choose one:
    - the information is vague (MC will give you a vague detail)
    - the information is out of date (MC will tell you something but may change a key aspect of it)
    - the information is incomplete; you must consult another character. Roll +History. On a 7-9 you must spend 1 History on them or give them 1 History on you to get the information. On a 10+ you figure it out together without any change to history.
- **Jonesing For Knowledge:** when doing something risky or dangerous in pursuit of knowledge or information, add 1 to your next 2 relevant rolls
- **Spew Forth Technobabble:** When you are trying to gain a social advantage from your specialized knowledge, add 1 to your roll to Mitigate Social Consequences or Manipulate.
- **Growing Body of Knowledge:** Define a field of expertise, subject to GM approval. When you learn something new related to your field, mark XP.

## History Options

- You think you know something about someone, but are slightly off in your judgement. They take one History on you.
- Someone fits into a group you know well. Take on History on them.

## New Beginning

|        |    |
|--------|----|
| Cool   | 2  |
| Hot    | 1  |
| Hard   | -1 |
| Sharp  | 0  |
| Wonder | 1  |

**Origins:** fleeing the past, atoning for past sins, a new line of work, leaving an important relationship

- **Can't Go Back:** When you take Harm, you may negate that harm. Declare something important to you from your past. Before the end of the session you must either destroy the object or otherwise leave it behind or take the Harm.
- **Emotional Baggage:** You have a stash of items from your past but using them may prick old wounds. Roll +Wonder. On a ten plus, the object is useful, but you must answer a question from the MC, revealing this information to your fellow players. On a 7 to 9, it is useful, but you must choose to either answer two questions from the MC or answer one question and reveal the answer to another PC in character.
- **Specters of the Past:** You know one of the other PCs from before this journey, even if they are not aware of it. Start with +1 Hx with them and carry one forward to Read a Person on them or to Help or Hinder them. If your history reaches -1, you no longer carry 1 forward to Read a Person on them or Help/Hinder until your Hx reaches 2. If you take this move later in the game, work out a previously unknown connection with the other PC's player.
- **The Big Reveal:** When you reveal something important from your past up to a group no larger than the number of PCs, take 1 Hx on those you revealed it to and give 1 Hx to someone present. They carry 1 forward to Help/Hinder and Manipulate you. You carry 2 forward to Help/Hinder and/or Manipulate them, but must apply it as two +1s to two different rolls.

## History Options

- Someone reminds you of your past in a good way. Take +1 History on them.
- You've attracted someone's attention. Give them +1 History with you.

## Returning to the Fold

|        |    |
|--------|----|
| Cool   | 1  |
| Hot    | 2  |
| Hard   | 1  |
| Sharp  | -1 |
| Wonder | 0  |

**Origins:** the prodigal, bringing something back, returning home from a sojourn far away, returning to a former way of life

- **Back in the Day:** When you reveal a piece of backstory related to handling an “act under pressure” situation and a related weakness, add 1 to your roll to act under pressure.
- **Magnetic Personality:** Take 1 forward without spending History when manipulating an NPC on whom you already have 1 or more History.
- **Smooth Move:** You may roll with Hot to Mitigate Social Consequences instead of with Cool.
- **Pushing Buttons:** After Manipulating someone, you get +1 to your next roll to Read them.

## History Options

- Someone has a significant connection to your past, however distant. They take one History on you.
- Your time away from the fold has given you an insight into someone and people like them. Take 1 History on them.

## Development Notes

Motivation playbook ideas:

- **Cool:** A New Beginning (knowing/finding secrets, sensing and using deception)
  - **Origins:** fleeing the past, atoning for past sins, a new line of work, leaving an important relationship
- **Hot:** Returning to the Fold (knowing how to interact with different types of people, having physical resources,
  - **Origins:** the prodigal, bringing something back, returning home from a sojourn far away, returning to a former way of life
- **Hard:** Fame and Fortune (risk taking/go big or go home, my way or the highway interactions,
  - **Origins:** mercenary, in someone's debt, headed for the big time, got a gig waiting
- **Sharp:** Seeker of Knowledge (gathering information, doing research)
  - **Origins:** presenting your findings to the elite, bringing back data, see how the other side lives, gathering knowledge on behalf of your people
- **Wonder:** Excitement and New Experiences (working with new things, trying a novel approach)
  - **Origins:** always wanted to see..., living the dream, proving that it's for real, one chance to learn so much, a great opportunity

| Apocalypse World Move | [this game] Names                | Stat    |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---------|
|                       | Mitigate Social Consequences (?) | Cool    |
| Act Under Fire        | Act Under Pressure               | Cool    |
| Go Aggro              | Get Aggressive                   | Hard    |
| Seize By Force        | Get Aggressive                   | Hard    |
|                       | Avoid Peril                      | Hard    |
| Seduce or Manipulate  | Manipulate                       | Hot     |
| Read a Sitch          | Get Your Bearings                | Sharp   |
| Read a Person         | Read a Person                    | Sharp   |
| Open Your Brain       | Open Your Mind                   | Wonder  |
| Help or Interfere     | Help or Interfere                | History |

## **Playtesters**

David Bloch

Jack Fractal

Kai Meyer

Abby Leib

Player answering questions on a failed roll

Maybe we need a shut down roll after all?

David doesn't like setup, too time consuming. Jack says **skipping it on oneshots** would be good.

David points out that npcs were used more than setup elements

Jack: more involvement, possibly as crew members. AGENCY!

David: Would starting after the crisis be better?

Abby picked a playbook based on origin, not motivation. How do we want to handle this?

Abby: definitely need more than 3 people.

## **NEEDED:**

- Flavor text for each skin, possibly examples from media
- Names of moves should be what you do, not the result
- MC notes section
  - Something about how to do the NPCs
  - GM: If you don't know what to do, look to the stats
  - In a oneshot, don't worry about a blind vote on setup.
  - If people have equal history at the beginning, how should the stat highlighter be chosen (Who do you trust the most/least?)
  - Open Your Mind- prompt memories ("You read/saw/overheard something...") that allows them to put the pieces together to get this information