

Frontiers 1.0 • Sci-Fi

Built for Levels 1–54 Hours4-Player Party Size

Content used

- **The Sci-Fi Starter Set** — Chassis, Backgrounds, Nodes, and gear
- **The d100 Ruleset** — percentile, roll-under, with the Gradient read off the units die
- **Basic Combat** — the optional combat module

The Great Exchange holds cargo nobody has paid dues on yet. Sixty thousand tonnes of other people's property, sitting in bond, waiting on paperwork. A warehouse with a customs office bolted to it, run by twelve hundred people on shift rotation who would rather be somewhere else.

Lot 4-91 has been in the bond core for eleven weeks. In nine days the payments clear and it ships. The buyer wants it before then and has paid half up front. The party are hired to bring it to him, and the other half lands when they do.

This is a **one-shot**, written to run in **4 hours**, and it is recommended to be played at **Levels 1, 3, or 5**, but can run at any level between 1–5. **It assumes a crew of four.**

Expected Readings

This assumes you have at least skimmed the Sci-Fi Starter Set. If you have not, or if something stops making sense mid-session, the Reference at the end of this adventure is the faster of the two places to look.

Part	What happens	Aim for
Prepping	Levels, Lockdown, and how to price what the players invent	* 30 min
1 — The Approach	Working the station from outside. Eight Angles, and choosing a way in	60 min
2 — The Ring	Three gates between them and the core, decided by the route they took	90 min
3 — The Bond	Lot 4-91, the inspector already standing over it, and what is inside	40 min
4 — The Exit	Sealed in, holding ground, waiting on the ship	40 min
5 — After	Payment, fallout, and what each Level leaves behind	10 min

* The time under Prepping is your time in preparing the game.

Read-aloud text

Anything in a **Read aloud** box is written to be spoken to the crew. Everything else is yours. Paraphrase freely. This adventure assumes you set a scene in your own voice, so adapt any of it as you see fit.

Prepping

This is a job, and nobody in it is a hero.

The crew are people with debts, and the lot is how the debts get paid. Getting to it is the complicated part. They are not stupid about it either. The party have time at the start of play to plan their approach, very Ocean's Eleven style.

One habit carries the whole adventure: **say the numbers out loud**. Call the tier before the dice, name the Lockdown every time it moves, and read the countdown in Part 4 every Round. The crew are supposed to be doing arithmetic about this job, and they can only do it with numbers they can hear.

Levels

The adventure is written and benchmarked at **Level 1, Level 3 and Level 5**. Running Level 2 or 4, take an adjacent column and read across. Running one of the three and finding a scene too soft or too sharp, step one column either way, mid-session, without telling anyone.

Three things change meaningfully:

	L1	L3	L5
Lot 4-91 is	a Coffin	a Pricy Dataset	a Person
Karsk is	an Average non-hostile	an Elite Enemy	a Boss, and he knows them
Yarrow arrives as	an Elite, alone	a Boss, with 2 Averages	a Boss, with 2 Elites
Angles they choose	4	3	2
Lockdown at Start	0	1	2

Adversary numbers are in the Reference and do not need reading in advance.

This Starter Set Adventure tunes fights to four characters, so a crew clears opposition about a quarter faster. Where a fight matters, add two Rabble rather than a second Average. Rabble spend ♦AP and force target choices; a second Average only makes the fight longer.

Lockdown

Lockdown is the antagonist, and it is the only number this adventure asks you to track. One track, 0 to 6, running the whole session. It mostly does not come down.

Lockdown	The Exchange
0 - 1	Ordinary shift. Everything priced as written
2 - 3	An extra patrol walks the ring. Response to an alarm arrives in 3 Rounds
4 - 5	Checkpoints are live. -10 to any social angle. Alarm response in 1 Round
6	The Exchange is looking for the crew specifically. The Exit is an Encounter

It **rises by 1** for each of: a failed Angle, a Negative Gradient on any roll the station could notice, forcing a door, a body, an alarm, and **clearing the second gate on their route**, whichever route that is.

It **falls by 1** three ways only: going to ground, a deliberate distraction elsewhere on the station, or the shift change, which happens once.

Pricing What They Come Up With

Most of what happens on the Exchange will be a player describing something this text does not cover. That is the intended experience, and the gates in Part 2 are written as examples rather than menus. Everything below is a way of saying yes at a price.

Modifiers (for rolls)

They run in fives or tens:

- ± 5 for a minor change
- ± 10 for a moderate change
- ± 20 for overwhelming change

...and the total caps at ± 20 no matter how many sources stack.

Note

The rulebook covers the general usecase under Circumstance, and When to Give Favor, and Calling the Tier sets which tier a thing is.

Most of this adventure sits at Challenging. The one habit worth building is using the minus side as readily as the plus: darkness, noise, unfamiliar equipment, a hand full of something else, a checkpoint that has already seen them once. The crew only start checking whether the situation is against them if it sometimes is.

When something should hurt instead of simply failing, a die is cleaner than a penalty. Roughly:

- **1d6** is the ordinary cost of doing something physical badly.
- **1d8** says the thing was built to resist exactly what they tried.

- Anything larger is a fight rather than an obstacle, and should be run as one.
- A Negative Gradient on a physical failure is where a ⓧ Wound belongs.

The other two costs price themselves: **1 ⚡ Energy** is an ordinary spend and **2** is a real bite at Level 1, where the crew hold three between them for the whole job. **Lockdown +1** is noise, and **+2** is noise in front of people whose job is filing reports about it.

For a full worked example with tiers, Favor and the Gradient in play, send yourself to A Fight, Start to Finish before the session.

The Reward

The Sci-Fi set does not price things in currency, so pick what fits your table. Offer at least one immediate reward.

The immediate reward

The buyer pays the other half, which clears every debt on every sheet with something left over.

(or)

The crew take their pick of the bond, one item apiece off the gear list at Demand 3–4, walked out in the same lift as the lot.

(or)

A cell and a clean berth: full ⚡ Energy, a rest that finishes, and passage off the Exchange with nobody's name on it.

1 — The Approach

Starting the Game

The party already know what they are doing. Your job is to find out who these people are, then build the station around them.

Run the first ten minutes in the fiction: a rented room on the dock ring, the monolithic structure surrounding the main vaults of the Exchange, often meant for traders picking up or dropping off goods. A convincing smile and a good story landed them in the temporary habitation suites of the ring.

No characters yet?

The Pregen Chars are six Level 1 characters for this set, one for every Protocol. Lay out all six and let the table take four.

Ask the table two questions, in order:

- **"What are your talents?"** — each player says their Nodes, Background, their two Skills, and the one thing on their sheet they are actually good at. Take note of these as they are shared. They will earn their keep all session.
- **"What is the debt?"** — a few sentences from each player. What is the character doing this for, and why is it worth this much risk?

When both questions are answered, read the following brief:

Read aloud

The room is rented by the hour, and it smells like somebody else's shift. The schematic spread out across the table is four years out of date and was very obviously drawn by a man who had never actually been aboard.

The Great Exchange. Twelve hundred people on it, half of them contract, and not one of them paid enough to look twice at anything. Cargo comes in, sits in bond until the dues clear, and goes back out again. Nobody on the Exchange owns any of it. They are only holding it.

Lot 4-91 has been sat in the bond core for eleven weeks now. In nine days the payments clear and it ships out, and after that it becomes somebody else's problem in somebody else's system.

Your buyer paid half up front, in advance, without needing to be asked twice. He has not said what is in it. You did not ask, because asking is how the price of work goes down.

There are three ways into the Exchange, and as far as anybody can tell, all three of them work.

The Ship

The party arrived on something, and it is the only way off the Exchange. Establish it early and let the table name it.

Small Mercy is the default: a working hauler with a docking computer, no crew aboard, and an emergency recall the party set before they leave her. The recall is one word on a channel. It brings the ship in on automatic, at speed, to whatever hard point she can reach. **She does not arrive instantly and she does not arrive quietly.**

Establish her now and leave her alone. **She only pays out in Part 4**, and how long she takes to arrive is set by Lockdown, not by anything the party decide here.

The Three Ways In

Name all three entrypoints before you say anything else about the station. Inform them of the content under Route and Runs on. The rest is for you to know. Feel free to describe these entrypoints however you deem fit.

The party will choose which entrypoint to use at the **end** of the Approach.

Route	Runs on	Opens onto	Costs
The Dock	Voice. Paper, bribes, walking in as staff	The customs ring, past the checkpoint	Highest Lockdown risk, lowest ⚡ Energy

Route	Runs on	Opens onto	Costs
The Spur	Mind. Maintenance access, overrides, ducts	The service level, below the ring	Highest ⚡ Energy, quietest
The Hull	Body. Suit work outside, cut in cold	The plating, then in below the transfer level	Highest ☹ Fatigue and + HP

The Angles

The party work a fixed number of **Angles**: one off each sheet's Leverage, then four more at Levels 1–2, three at Levels 3–4, two at Level 5. An Angle is one scene, one person or place, one roll. The table can spend the chosen ones however it likes.

Treat these as the **prep for the heist**, the blackboard of weakpoints the party can poke at.

Each resolves the same way:

- **Success** is the payoff in full, exactly as written.
- **Failure** is no payoff and **Lockdown +1**, because somebody noticed somebody asking.
- **Negative Gradient** raises Lockdown whether they hit or missed, since word travels.
- **Positive Gradient** buys one piece of information they did not pay for: a patrol timing, a name, or the fact that somebody else has already been asking about 4-91.

Note

The players know the number of Angles they have, but they do not need to use them all if they don't want to.

Free-Success Angles: Leverage

Before anyone attempts an Angle, go round the table and spend the **Leverage** on every sheet. Each Background's Leverage is worth one Angle, if the player can say how it reaches the Exchange.

One of them is free, and only one. The party pick which before anybody rolls. That scene pays out in full with no roll, and the player is welcome to push it further if they want. Every other sheet's Leverage is played as an ordinary Angle at **Routine** — the same payoff if it lands, the same Lockdown +1 if it does not. None of them count against the Angles the party choose from the eight below. The discretion of the scenes and how they play out are up to you, and anything a player talks their way into beyond the column below gets priced the same way an invented Angle does.

Background	On the Exchange, that is	What it buys
Fleet Veteran	Somebody in the customs office served with you. They hold one door and do not ask. Once	Any one gate on the ring opens free, once, whenever they call it in
Void Salvager	Your buyer already has a berth on the dock ring and a reason to be there	The party come aboard as his handling crew, off the arrivals log, and anything they would rather not carry waits at the berth

Background	On the Exchange, that is	What it buys
Corporate Defector	Your credentials still read as staff. Nobody revoked them because nobody looked	That character clears the Checkpoint with no roll, until Lockdown reaches 4
Dock Rat	You do not appear in the Exchange's logs from the moment you step aboard	No arrivals entry and no face on the log, all session, for that character
Ship's Medic	Somebody on the medical rotation owes you their life and works the shift you care about	A medical hold called on any one room, once, which empties it of everybody not already in trouble
Frontier Wrench	Your workshop's debt is held by somebody who moves cargo through here, and they will trade	Two Slots of gear, chosen now, waiting inside the bond core
Survey Scientist	Your archive holds the Exchange's original build survey, including what was there before the refit	Angle 7's payoff in full, without anybody spending an Angle on it. The two do not stack
Enforcer	Your reputation reaches the dock. It opens one room and closes two others, and you do not choose which	One person on the ring does as they are told, once. Everybody who watches it happen remembers the face, and the patrol has a description from then on
Long Con	One of your three identities has a filed reason to be aboard this week	A meeting with anybody aboard, and they turn up to it

The Eight Angles

After the Leverage Angles are used, work through the eight below however suits the table: pick for the players, lay all eight out and let them choose, or roll 1d8. Run them as written or loosely, whichever the scene wants.

1. Ossary, Dock Officer

Read aloud

He takes the meeting in the back of a noodle place two levels down from his post, and orders before you sit. Fifty-some, uniform jacket over the back of the chair so nobody has to look at the insignia while this happens.

"I'll tell you what I tell everyone. I'll take your money. I'll also file the report, because the report is what keeps me employed. What you're buying is the four hours in between."

Ossary is not hidden. Any dock worker will give up his name for a drink, and he takes the meeting from anyone who asks him in person. He has done this before, transparently, and does not lie about what he is selling. **What the party are buying is four hours, not silence.**

- **Roll** — Negotiation or Streetwise, **Challenging**. Favor if the party meet his price without haggling.
- **Success** — The Dock entrance opens with no roll. You are on the customs ring before anything starts counting.
- **Failure** — he takes the meeting and files early. **Lockdown +1**, and the Dock entrance now costs a Challenging roll at **-10**.

2. Wen Tallis, Fired Six Weeks Ago

Read aloud

She was maintenance chief on the service level for nine years. Then there was an incident with a pressure door and a supervisor's report, and now she lives in a bunk on the dock ring and does not talk about it.

She talks about it for ninety minutes.

Somewhere in the back half of that she draws you the spur from memory, on the back of a shift roster, in a hand that has clearly done this drawing many times for nobody.

Nobody has had to look for her. She drinks where the fired drink, and the party need only be the first people in six weeks to ask her what happened. She is not being paid and does not want to be — she wants somebody to agree with her. **The floorplan is accurate, current, and includes two access points that are on no schematic.**

- **Roll** — Rapport, Streetwise, or Engineering, **Routine**. She is desperate to be asked.
- **Success** — +10 on every roll against a maintenance-side gate, all adventure. The Spur, the ducts, every service hatch on the ring.
- **Failure** — she works out what you are for and stops talking. **Lockdown +0**. This one costs nothing to fail.

3. Halgrim, Who Sells Paper

Read aloud

The office is real, the sign is real, and the business behind both is a print shop that makes customs manifests for people not entitled to them.

Halgrim looks at whichever of you is going to wear it, for slightly too long.

"I can make you staff. I can't make you look like staff. That part's yours."

The shop is found the way forged paper is always found — by asking a dock worker who has needed some. One set of credentials, one named character, chosen at the table now. **It holds up to an ordinary check and does not hold up to somebody actively looking.**

- **Roll** — Deception or Negotiation, **Challenging**. Disfavor if the party have not decided who is wearing it before walking in.
- **Success** — One named character clears any checkpoint as staff, no roll, until Lockdown reaches 4.
- **Failure** — the paper is bad and nobody says so. **Lockdown +1**, and the first checkpoint that reads it is a problem.

4. The Rosters

Read aloud

The Exchange publishes its shift rotation, and it has to — twelve hundred people need to know when they are expected to turn up, and none of them are going to work that out on their own.

What it does not publish is which of those shifts are actually staffed, as opposed to merely scheduled. That is a different document entirely.

It is, however, on the same system.

No meeting and no name for this one. The rotation comes off a public terminal on the dock ring, or off a clerk who does not care which of the two documents he hands over. The prize is **the shift change**: one window, once, when the ring is thinnest.

- **Roll** — Systems or Security, **Challenging**. Favor with Systems.
- **Success** — You know the patrol rotation and the shift change exactly. From here the GM gives real timings instead of saying "soon." Hitting the shift change drops Lockdown by 1, once.
- **Failure** — the pull is logged. **Lockdown +1**, and you have the public rotation, which is wrong in two places.

This one changes how you speak. Without the rosters, never give a number — "a patrol comes through fairly often." With them, always give one — "nine minutes."

5. Vetch, Who Moves Crates

Read aloud

Vetch runs a handling contract on the dock and owes somebody money, which is the only interesting thing about him. He is nervous in a way that is going to be a problem for one of you and an opportunity for the other three.

"One crate. Sealed. I don't look, I don't sign, and I don't remember."

Vetch gets pointed out rather than sought — he owes money to half the dock, and none of them mind saying so. Genuinely frightened, and he folds to pressure, which costs more later than it saves now.

- **Roll** — Streetwise or Negotiation, **Challenging**. Intimidation works at **Routine**, but he talks afterward: **Lockdown +1 even on a success.**
- **Success** — Two Slots of gear, chosen now, waiting in the bond core. Anything at Demand 4 or less.
- **Failure** — he takes the crate and does not move it. **Lockdown +1**, and the gear sits in a handling bay on the ring.

6. The Cache

Read aloud

Behind the dock ring's water plant there is a maintenance void that has not been opened for inspection in about six years, on the grounds that the inspection would have to be filed by the same office that would then have to go and open it.

Somebody has been using it in the meantime. There is a mat down on the floor, an empty ration case shoved into the corner, and a charging cradle against the wall with two cells still sat in it.

Whoever they are, they are not here now.

The only Angle that is a place instead of a person, and nobody hands it over. It comes off the inspection filings, or off following whoever has been living out of it. The cells are the Exchange's own, charged, and nobody counts them.

- **Roll** — Technomatics or Sleight, **Routine**. Disfavor if the party have made no effort to be unobserved.
- **Success** — 2 ⚡ Energy to one character, once, at any point during the job. The only ⚡ Energy aboard that does not cost a rest.
- **Failure** — the cradle is monitored after all. **Lockdown +1**, no cells.

7. The Hull Survey

Read aloud

The Exchange was three different stations before it was ever this one, and every refit since has gone the same way: new plate welded straight over whatever old plate was already there, with nobody much minding what ended up underneath.

There is a survey somewhere that would tell you exactly where all of that happened. It was filed with a company that stopped existing partway through the second refit.

It is not classified. It is worse than that. It is archived.

This one is archive work rather than legwork — a records request chased through whoever bought the dead company's filings. The bond core's outer face has a section of original plate: thinner, older, and off the current pressure schedule. **The Hull route is open without this and far cheaper with it.**

- **Roll** — Navigation, Science, or Salvage, **Challenging**. Favor for a Survey Scientist.
- **Success** — The Hull entrance opens below the transfer level, skipping the ring and the lock both. Favor on the fork, and the Hull crossing's $\ominus$ Fatigue cost drops from 2 to 1.
- **Failure** — you have the current schematic, which is accurate and useless. **Lockdown +0.**

8. The Ones Who Tried

Read aloud

Somebody went for the bond core about eleven months ago. Nobody aboard will discuss it, which on a station of twelve hundred contract workers means roughly forty people will discuss it at length for the price of a drink.

The versions do not agree with each other on very much at all. Three of them agree on one thing.

No two of them tell it the same, so the Angle is the drink and the patience to sit through all three versions. They got in. They reached the core. **They did not get out, and the reason was the exit.** The party learn that the way out is the hard part without you having to say so.

- **Roll** — Streetwise or Rapport, **Routine**. Favor if the party are buying rather than asking.
- **Success** — Once during the adventure, the party may ask the GM the exact Lockdown cost of an action before committing to it.
- **Failure** — you get the exciting version, which is wrong. **Lockdown +1**, and one piece of confidently stated misinformation of your choosing.

Angles Not On The Board

A player will want something not written here. Say yes, and price it in four seconds:

- **Who has to be involved?** That sets the tier. A bored clerk is Routine, somebody with something to lose is Challenging.
- **What does it change downstream?** That sets the payoff. Pick one: a gate opens free, a family of rolls gets **+10**, one character gets Favor somewhere specific, or a resource waits inside.

Nothing invented should pay more than the eight above. Each is a **value equivalent of about +20**, and on a roll-under Target that is exactly what it sounds like: twenty points of Target is twenty percentage points of success, at whatever tier the roll is called at, anywhere short of a near-

certainty. It is also the modifier cap, so one Angle is the most any single thing in this adventure can be worth.

Closing the Approach

Three things happen at the end, in this order, out loud:

1. **The party name their entrance.** Dock, Spur, or Hull. Write it down. Changing it later is allowed, and expensive.
2. **Lockdown is read out.** The Level's starting value, plus every failure and every Negative Gradient from the Angles.
3. **Loadouts lock.** Every character prepares their abilities now, before they know which gates the job will put in front of them — two at Levels 1-2, three at Levels 3-4, four at Level 5.

Loadout locks here

Preparation only changes at a rest, there is exactly one place aboard to take one, and it costs them. Let the party talk their final loadouts over with each other for as long as they like. They have the time here and they may not get another chance, so tell them so.

2 — The Ring

Three gates stand between the party and Lot 4-91. **Nobody faces more than three**, and the route named at the end of Part 1 decides which three.

How a Gate Works

A gate is never a wall. Everything here is open, and the party will always have more answers than this text lists. What a gate does is cost them, and there are only three things it can cost:

- **Lockdown** — noise, and people who file reports about noise
- **⚡ Energy** — gear, Nodes, and the Chassis
- **Blood** — **+** HP, **⊗** Wounds, and **⊖** Fatigue

Each gate below says what is holding it shut and gives a few examples of what a party is likely to try. **The examples are not a menu and they are not exhaustive.** Feel free to expand upon them as you deem fit.

Note

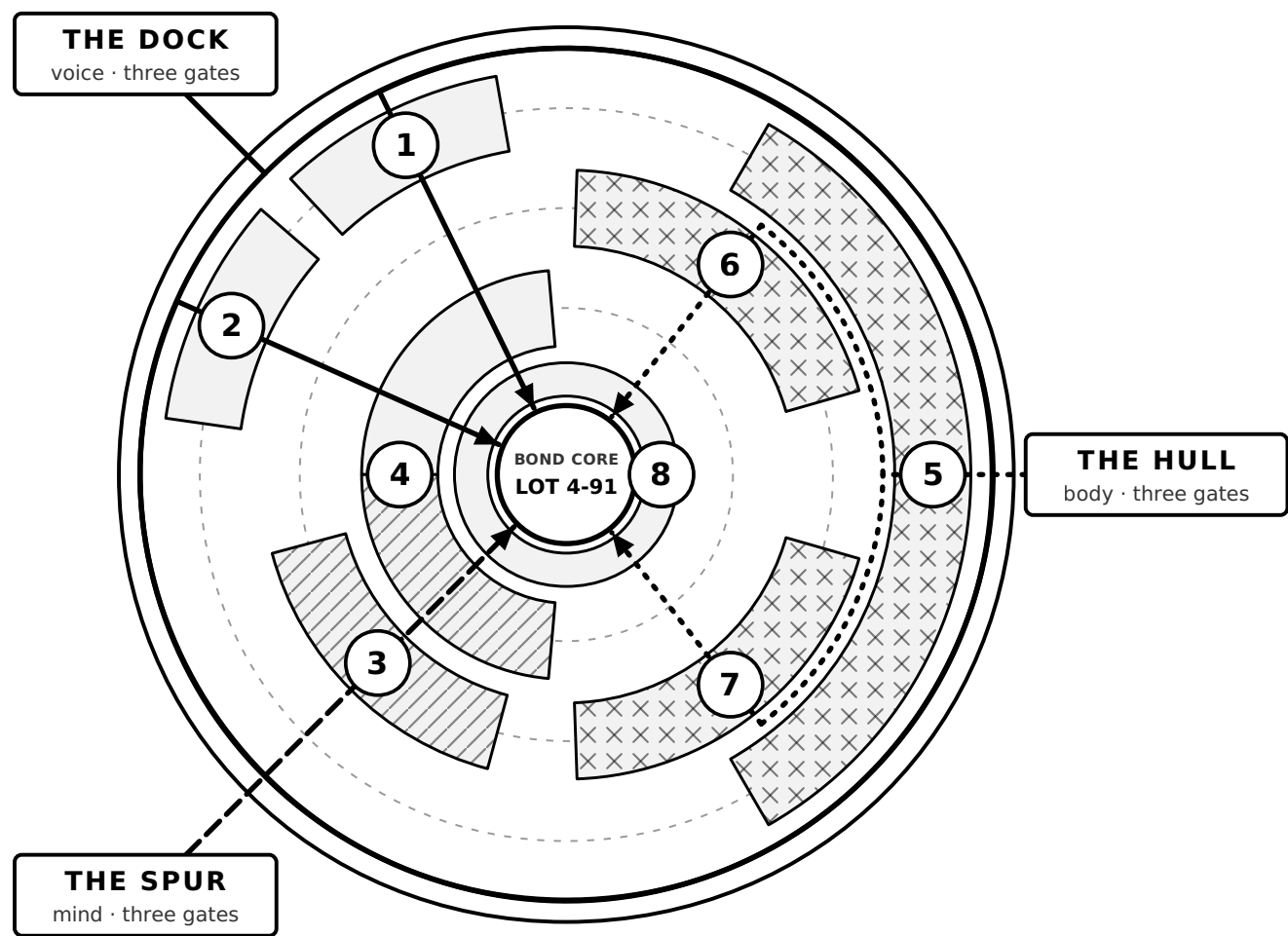
When a player describes something else, price it against Pricing What They Come Up With and say yes.

Two things are true on every route, whichever doors it runs through:

- **Clearing the second gate raises Lockdown by 1.** The party are committed and not yet through, and that is when the station starts to notice.
- **The patrol arrives at that same point.**

Forcing a door is fast and loud. Beating it is slow and costs energy. Talking through it is free until it fails. Let the party hear which is which before they choose.

Which Gates, By Route



Route	On the map	The three gates
The Dock	Plain blocks	1 The Checkpoint (or) 2 The Manifest Office → 4 The Transfer Lock → 8 The Core Door
The Spur	Slashed blocks	3 The Rise → 4 The Transfer Lock → 8 The Core Door
The Hull	Crossed blocks	5 The Sealed Door → 6 The Vent Stack (or) 7 The Cargo Seam → 8 The Core Door

Read from the rim inward — each ring is one layer deeper into the station, and the lot sits at the middle of it. **Every route ends at the Core Door**, and none of them reaches the lot without it.

The Dock

Voice. Paper, bribes, and walking in through the front, which makes this the only route where the party are seen going in on purpose.

Getting aboard

Everybody who steps off onto the dock ring is logged and looked at, and the Dock's problem is arriving without being either. Ossary's four hours (Angle 1) mean neither happens — the party walk on with no roll, on the customs ring before anything starts counting.

(or)

Without him they have to come aboard unremarked, at **−10**. A Challenging ☆ Deft roll gets them in with a shift group and off the arrivals log; a Challenging △ Resolve roll holds a story when somebody asks for a name. **Failing either puts a face on the log**, and raises Lockdown.

Then one of two doors on the ring. The party take one, not both, and both lead to the same place.

1 • The Checkpoint

Read aloud

The arch is the same model they seem to have on every dock ring this side of the system, right down to the handwritten sign somebody has taped up underneath the scanner, reminding you to take your gloves off before you walk through.

There are two Station Security details on it. One of them is running the arch itself, and the other is watching the queue, which is about forty contract workers deep and moving at roughly the speed of a man being paid by the hour.

Nobody here is looking for you, as such. But everybody here is looking at you, mostly because there is not a great deal else on offer to look at.

The queue is the real obstacle — whatever happens here happens in front of forty contract workers who have nothing else to do but watch it happen.

GETTING THROUGH

Some examples of what the party may do include:

- Walking through as staff, which is what Halgrim's paper (Angle 3) is for. It clears one named character with no roll at all. The other three still need an answer, and the cleanest is that character vouching for them.
- Talking past the arch on Resolve, which is ordinary work made harder by the audience. Failing it calls a supervisor rather than an alarm.

- Spoofing the arch itself on Systems, if somebody can get near enough to it without being obvious.
- Forcing it, which works, and is the most expensive single thing they can do on this route. Forty people watch it happen, so it raises Lockdown twice over rather than once.

If they try something else, such as joining the back of a shift group, arriving behind a cargo load, or getting the arch taken down for maintenance, price it against what it spends and say yes.

The Checkpoint is where staff come onto the ring, and the ring treats anybody who walked through it accordingly. **Until Lockdown reaches 4, the patrol does not stop them** — it nods and keeps walking. That is the whole of what this door is worth, and it is worth a great deal.

2 • The Manifest Office

Read aloud

Records sits two doors off the ring, and it has the air of a room that stopped being important to anybody some years ago and has not been told about it yet. Four terminals along the wall. Three of them appear to work.

The clerk is nine hours into a twelve-hour shift. He looks up when you come in, and then keeps glancing back over, because at this point almost anything in the room is more interesting than his terminal.

Eleven weeks of bond filings are sat in here. Sixty thousand tonnes of other people's property, every crate of it with a rack, a tier and an aisle written down somewhere. Most of it behind barred gates, and all of it a few keystrokes from where he is sitting.

The clerk is bored, unsupervised, and on the back half of a long shift.

GETTING THROUGH

Some examples of what the party may do include:

- Asking for it, which is the easiest social roll in the adventure and ought to feel like it. The clerk has no reason to care and is not being paid to.
- Pulling the filing off a terminal on Systems or Security.
- Taking the terminal itself, which is fast and gets reported within the hour.

Records never touches the bond floor, but its terminals reach every crate on it, so what the party walk out with is paper rather than passage. **A lot number becomes a rack, a tier and an aisle**, and the filing they pulled is a movement order with a crate on it — which is reason enough to be walking toward the transfer level without ever having stood in the queue.

What it costs

The clerk is the only person on the Dock who gets a long, unhurried look at four strangers. **He remembers faces**, and at the end of his shift he mentions it to somebody. From here on, **the patrol already has a description** and cannot be talked past at any Lockdown.

Angle 5 · Vetch's crate

Vetch's crate is filed here too, which is how the party find out it actually arrived. On a **Positive Gradient** the filing also shows Lot 4-91 has been inspected twice in eleven weeks, both times by the same officer, and neither inspection logged as routine. Hold what that means, it pays off in Part 3.

So the Dock's two doors are not better and worse, they are knowledge and passage. The Manifest Office tells the party where the lot is and makes the ring hostile. The Checkpoint tells them nothing and makes the ring indifferent. **They cannot have both**, and neither is the safe answer.

Whichever door they took, the Dock runs on down the ring to the Transfer Lock and then the Core Door.

The Spur

Mind. Maintenance access, overrides and ducts, below the ring. One gate, no fork, and no choice about any of it.

Getting aboard

Wen's floorplan (Angle 2) puts the access hatch exactly where she said it would be, worth **+10** to open it.

(or)

Without her, the hatch takes a full-price Override and a long search before that.

3 · The Rise

Read aloud

The hatch creaks open onto a ladder and a noise. The riser behind it carries main power for at least a third of the station, and it is loud enough in there that talking to one another is going to be work.

The ladder runs straight up. Cable runs the whole height of it, slung across the rungs in loops and bundles, close enough together that you climb through it rather than past it.

Halfway up, a single trunk crosses the shaft side to side. It is thicker than a person, bolted hard to the wall at either end, and it blocks the ladder completely.

Above it the ladder carries on to a catwalk, and the catwalk runs to a door.

The Rise has two costs. Everybody pays the first. The second is the one they can be clever about.

THE CLIMB

- **Everyone takes 1 ☹ Fatigue.** No roll, no way out of it.
- **The Cable blocking the path** is a Challenging ♦ Vigor or ☆ Deft roll. Failing it is another ☹ Fatigue, not a fall.
- A **Negative Gradient** means something goes down the shaft. Let them choose, or roll for it: a weapon, the sled, or 1 ⚡ Energy of gear cooked against a live line.
- A character carrying **4 or more Slots stowed cannot fit past the trunk**, and has to drop the pack, come back for it, or hand it up to somebody with room.

THE PANEL

At the top of the Rise, the catwalk leads to a bay door with an access panel.

Some examples of what the party may do include:

- Forcing it, in a shaft that carries sound its whole length. It works, and the transfer level hears it happen.
- Rerouting the lock on Engineering, which costs more energy than an ordinary door because there is a great deal more of it to reroute.
- Pulling the riser's own load and letting the panel fail open, which is clever, costs nothing, and drops the lights on the transfer level for a few minutes — long enough that somebody will come to look at it.

If they try something else, such as bracing off the ladder, cutting in from the cable side, or talking a maintenance channel into cycling the panel for them, price it against what it spends and say yes.

What it costs

Beating the panel costs two of the three ⚡ Energy the party hold for the whole job, at the one door with no social answer. **At Level 1 this gate bites hardest.** Let it bite — the alternative is forcing it, which is exactly the trade this adventure is about.

Angle 2 • Wen's floorplan

Worth **+10** on any answer at the panel, and on any maintenance-side door for the rest of the adventure.

Out of the riser onto the transfer level, filthy, and on to the Transfer Lock and the Core Door.

The Hull

Body. Suit work outside, cut in cold, below the transfer level. The only route that never meets the Transfer Lock, which is the whole of what it buys.

Getting aboard

With the Hull survey (Angle 7), the party cut at the old plate with Favor, and the crossing costs **1 ☹ Fatigue**.

(or)

Without it they cut at current plate for **2 ☹ Fatigue**, and the cut itself runs at **-10**.

5 • The Sealed Door

Read aloud

You strap up into your exterior-space suits and cross out into the Hull's many yards of scrap and derelict ships. Off somewhere nearby you catch the eyes of scavengers, for the brief moment they have to look up from their... scavenging... to pay you any mind. They seem harmless, at least from a distance.

The pathway, when you reach it, is... or was... a maintenance door, or a tunnelway of some kind, before somebody sealed it up with three or four layers of iron plate welded into place. Someone was even kind enough to come by and spray-paint a massive warning across it, telling all scavengers to leave it be.

Glancing around, you see no cameras and no spotlights. Only a few hundred metres of scrap iron, and the sound of two buckets being smashed together somewhere off in the distance. Just your party, and the... well... wall of iron.

Nobody is watching, and nothing that happens out here raises Lockdown at all. However they get through the seal is fair game — let them be creative. The welded plate is the only thing between the party and the inside of the hull.

GETTING THROUGH

The crossing out to the door has no roll. Fatigue is the Hull's entire price, and it is paid before the party meet anything. A party crossing without the survey arrives at **2 ☹ Fatigue**, which is **-10 on every Target for the rest of the session**.

The plate is the gate, and there are two ways past it.

Through it, with tools or with power. Shearing the welds by hand is a Challenging ♦ Vigor or ● Acuity roll. Bringing power to it instead — a cutter, a charge, a suit's own draw — costs **1 ⚡ Energy** and no roll at all.

- **Failing the cut does not drop anyone.** It costs more Fatigue and more time.
- A **Negative Gradient** tears a glove, a tether or a seal: **1 ☹ Wound** and a clock the party can hear for the rest of the crossing.

Around it, with an ability rather than a tool — anything that goes over, under or past the frame instead of through it. Say yes, price it once against what it spends, and let it work.

What it costs

Going to Ground is a bunk in the maintenance spur, behind a gate this route never opens. **Whatever the crossing charges, the Hull carries it to the Exit.**

The passageway behind the seal ends at a fork. Two ways off the plating, and the party take one.

One costs the body, the other costs the noise. A party arriving off the crossing already carrying $\ominus$ Fatigue will feel the pull toward the loud one, which is the point of putting the fork here rather than at the start.

The Hull's second gate is the fork

Coming off either branch is the beat where **Lockdown goes up by 1**. The ring's patrol never reaches the plating, so what arrives out here instead is the Sweep.

6 • The Vent Stack

Read aloud

The stack is the core's own lungs. It has been pushing air through this shaft for about thirty years and looks more or less untouched since the day somebody bolted it together.

Inside, it is quiet. Not quieter... quiet. Whatever you do in here, nobody is going to hear it but you... or whatever else might happen to be in here with you.

Ahead of you the shaft narrows down to a throat. Steam bleeds off the walls of it in slow sheets, and the rungs are warm enough that you can feel them through a glove. It is a tight fit for a person. It is a tighter one for a person wearing a suit.

The stack sits outside the core's sensing and there is nobody in it. **Whatever they do in here, Lockdown does not move.**

GETTING THROUGH

Some examples of what the party may do include:

- Shedding suits and hard gear at the bottom to fit the throat of the stack, which is the fast way up and the one with a bill attached in Part 4.
- Climbing it in suits anyway, at **-10** for the bulk and one character at a time. Slower through the throat, and the only thing in here that will keep a person cool.
- Cutting a bypass into the duct run beside it on Engineering, which costs energy and no roll.
- Asking the suit to cool them rather than only wearing it. Favor to whoever thinks of that before the climb instead of during it, and the heat lands on them half as often.

The suit is the trade. It costs them on the way up and it is the only protection from the heat, so a party who shed at the bottom climb easily and cook, and a party who keep them climb badly and arrive whole.

Two costs land regardless:

- **Everyone takes 1 ☹ Fatigue**, on top of whatever the crossing charged them.
- A **Negative Gradient** is a fall against the ladder or a scald off the stack itself: **1 ☹ Wound**.

What it costs

The throat is hot and it gets worse the longer anybody is in it. Deal a stacking **1d6** damage whenever the climb drags — once when they commit to it, and again every time they stop, argue, double back or wait on somebody. How often is yours to judge. What matters is that it climbs, and that they can hear it climbing.

Suits left at the bottom stay at the bottom. A party who shed them to fit cannot get them back before Part 4, and **the Hull Breach hold point then costs 1 ☹ Fatigue per Round to everyone.** Nobody will connect the two moments unless you let them feel it. Do not warn them.

7 • The Cargo Seam

Read aloud

Down at the seam, two refits met each other during the station's expansion and never quite agreed on where the join ought to sit. One plate laps over the other by about a hand's width, and the weld holding the two of them together is thin, old, and painted over so many times that you get the feeling the paint is doing most of the work these days.

Put a flat hand against it and you can feel the room waiting on the other side. Cold, probably. Big enough to have its own weather in it, and stacked nine bays deep with other people's property.

It will open. That part is not really in question. The trouble is what the room does with the noise of it — and the room is nine bays deep, cold, and full of things worth more than you are.

Nothing about this is physically hard — the plate will open to almost anything, and the Hull survey (Angle 7) gives Favor on the cut. **What it costs is noise, in a room built to carry it.**

GETTING THROUGH

Some examples of what the party may do include:

- Cutting it, which is what a seam is for. Quick, and the core hears it happen.
- Talking the plate's own seal into cycling on Engineering, which is quieter, costs energy, and takes long enough that somebody could walk the aisle while they wait.
- Popping it on the pressure differential, which is free, instant, and the loudest thing available anywhere on this route. It raises Lockdown twice over and deals **1d6** to whoever is closest when it goes.
- Coming in behind a cargo movement, if the party bought the rosters (Angle 4) and know when one is due. Free, quiet, and it costs them the wait.

A **Negative Gradient** opens the seam wider than intended and vents what is behind it: **1 ☹ Wound** to the character on the cut.

What it costs

Noise here is still in the party's account at the next door. Anything loud at the seam means **the Core Door is already on hold** when they reach it, and every answer there is harder. The Cargo Seam is cheap now and expensive in four minutes.

Both branches come off the plating into the core, at the Core Door. **The Hull never meets the Transfer Lock.**

The Last Doors

Where the routes converge. Every party reads the Core Door, the two ground routes read both.

4 • The Transfer Lock

The Dock and the Spur. The Hull never meets it.

Read aloud

The corridor down to the transfer level runs long and low, and it carries every sound you make the whole way along it. Cargo has been through here not long ago, judging by the scuffs where pallets have been dragged round and turned, and the air has that cold smell of metal and lubricant that follows freight everywhere.

At the end of it is the lock. A door built for pallets rather than people, wider than it is tall, set so far into the wall that the frame has become part of the structure. There is a camera above it, a panel beside it, and a green light that has been green for a long while.

It is not a quick door. Whatever it does, it does slowly and out loud, and there is nowhere along this corridor to be while it does it. It does not open on its own, either. Somewhere else on the station, somebody at a desk decides that.

The corridor runs on empty behind you. The panel is waiting, and the light is still green.

The cycle is long and it is loud, and anybody who walks into this corridor while it runs sees the whole thing from start to finish.

GETTING THROUGH

Some examples of what the party may do include:

- Forcing it, which is hard on a door built to take exactly that, and harder on whoever tries it.
- Beating the lock on Systems or Engineering, which costs energy. Wen's floorplan (Angle 2) counts here, since this is maintenance-side.

- Giving the desk a reason to open it from the far side. Halgrim's paper (Angle 3) is the easy version of that. Without it they need something better than confidence, and failing brings the desk down to look at them in person.
- Waiting, since cargo moves through here all shift and the door opens for it without anyone being asked.

If they try something else, such as riding through with a pallet, pulling the monitor feed, or getting the desk called away, price it against what it spends and say yes.

What it costs

This is the second gate for the Dock and the Spur, so both ground routes clear their second door here.

Lockdown goes up by 1, and the patrol walks the ring on the same beat.

Angle 5 · Vetch's crate

Racked ten metres past this door, which gives at least one of them a reason to be standing here that survives being asked about.

8 · The Core Door

All three routes. The last gate.

Read aloud

However you got here, the last stretch is the same for everybody: a short approach onto the core's outer face, colder than anything behind you, with the bond core's air plant humming somewhere through the wall.

The door at the end of it has two locks on it. The upper one is a panel, backlit, with a log light blinking away whether or not anybody is reading it. The lower one is a bar and a keyed throw, forty-odd years older and thick with paint. They were not fitted at the same time, by the same people, or to anything like the same standard.

Past the pair of them is the thing you came for, somewhere inside sixty thousand tonnes of everything else, in a room nobody ever got round to indexing.

Two locks, then. And no particular reason either one should care what you do to the other.

The party have to clear it twice and cannot use the same answer for both, which makes this the only gate in Part 2 that costs two of the three currencies whatever they decide.

GETTING THROUGH

Some examples of what the party may do include:

- Forcing both, which both are rated for. Expensive in blood, louder than anything else on the route, and it leaves them standing inside the bond core with the station already listening.
- Beating the system side on Systems or Security, which costs energy and takes longer here than at an ordinary door.

- Talking it open, which needs Halgrim's paper (Angle 3) or a voice on the far side, and nothing else will do.
- Splitting it, which is the answer most parties arrive at: one lock beaten and one forced, or one talked and one beaten.

Almost everybody opens this door onto sixty thousand tonnes of crates and no index. That bill is charged once, at Finding 4-91, not here.

What it costs

At **Lockdown 4 or higher** the door is already on hold, and every answer is harder.

Angle 4 · The rosters

The shift change, if the party bought the rosters and timed it, removes the Lockdown 4 penalty entirely.

Into the core. Part 3.

The Patrol

One patrol walks the ring, and it is the only thing in Part 2 that moves on its own. **It arrives once**, as the party clear their second gate, which is also when Lockdown ticks.

Whether they see it coming

With the rosters (Angle 4) the party know it is coming and you give them the number.

(or)

Without them it turns up unannounced.

Lockdown	Patrol
0 - 1	One Station Security, walking it bored
2 - 3	Two Station Security
4 - 5	Two Station Security and one Breacher
6	Everything above, and it is looking for them

A patrol that finds the party does not immediately fight, it asks.

- At **Lockdown 0-3**, one Challenging $\triangle$ Resolve gets rid of it.
- At **4 or higher** it already has a description, and the conversation is short.

Two things from the Dock change this outright:

- Through **the Checkpoint**, the patrol nods and walks on until Lockdown 4.
- Through **the Manifest Office**, the clerk has already described them, and it cannot be talked past at any Lockdown.

The Sweep

The Hull never touches the ring, so the patrol never finds it. Something else does.

The Exchange runs an automated inspection unit over the core's outer face, and it has been running the same circuit for years without anybody reading its returns. It arrives at the same beat the patrol would: **as the Hull party clear the fork.**

It is not a fight and it does not raise an alarm. It logs what it sees, and somebody reads the log eventually.

- Getting out of its way is a Challenging ☆ Deft or ● Acuity roll, once, for the party as a whole.
- Failing it is **Lockdown +1**, and the party do not find out why until the Core Door is already on hold.
- Blinding it, spoofing its return, or dropping it off the plating are all fine. Dropping it is **Lockdown +2** when the gap in the log gets noticed.

Going To Ground

There is one bunk in the maintenance spur that nobody has used in months, and it is the only place aboard the party can stop. **They can do it once.**

A rest buys:

- Half maximum + HP restored
- One ⊗ Wound **or** one ⊖ Fatigue removed, not both
- 3 ♣ Energy
- A full Loadout change
- **Lockdown –1**

It costs the shift change. The rest runs long enough that the window the rosters bought passes while the party are asleep, and it does not come round again.

The hinge of the session

A party arriving at the Transfer Lock carrying Fatigue and the wrong abilities prepared has one answer, and it costs them the best thing they bought in Part 1. Lay out both numbers and let them argue.

If It Runs Long

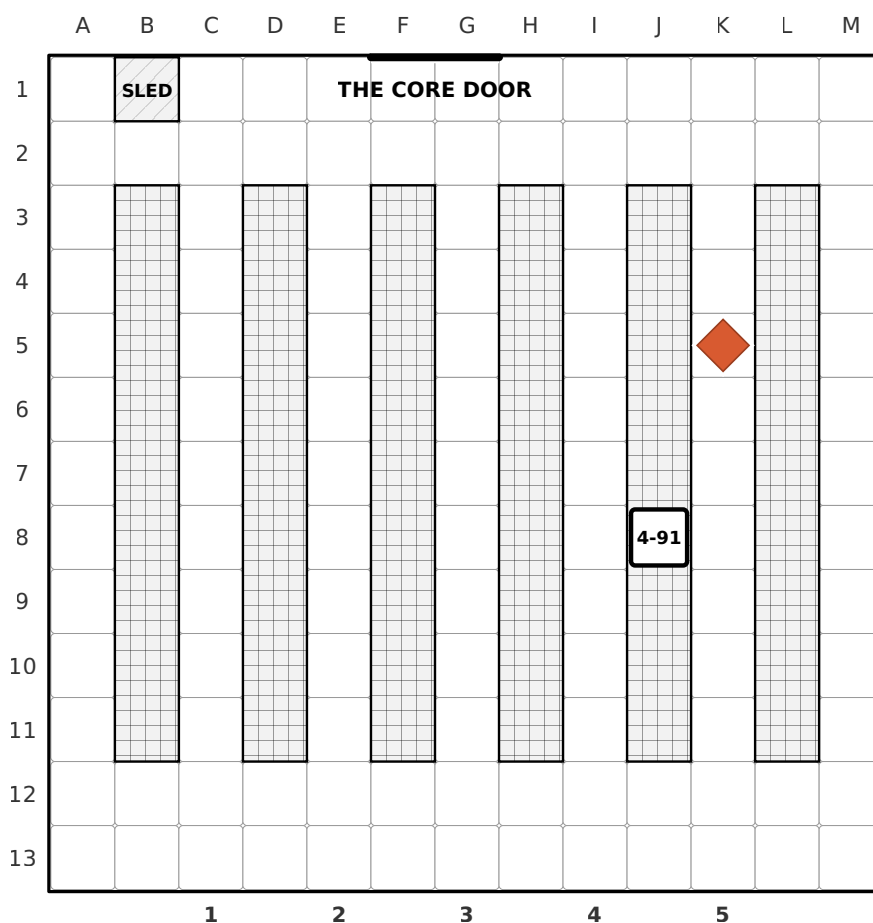
Cut inside gates, not whole ones. Every route is only three gates deep, so there is no spare gate to lose.

- Run a fork as a single door, describing the branch the party did not take rather than playing it.
- (or) Drop the second lock at the Core Door.

- (or) If the table is still deep in the ring, have the patrol find them at a gate they have already cleared, and let the fight be the transition into the core.

3 — The Bond

The bond core is six stacks, nine bays deep and four tiers high, lit on motion, and colder than the ring. Sixty thousand tonnes of other people's property, **none of it labelled with anything but a lot number.**



□ One □ Unit · ▤ Rack stack, full height: no line of sight through it · □ Lot 4-91 · — Door · ◆ Karsk

The bond core. Lot 4-91 is rack six, third tier, aisle four.

The stacks block line of sight completely. Nobody sees down anything but the aisle they are standing in, and anyone shooting past a stack takes **−10**. Five aisles, numbered along the bottom of the map, and the only way in is the Core Door at the top.

Finding 4-91

Most parties arrive here without knowing where the lot is. Only one branch of one route — the Dock, through the Manifest Office — comes holding the filing, so searching is the normal case and should be played as one.

Where the lot is

Searching is a Challenging ● Acuity roll with Salvage or Systems applying, and it raises Lockdown whether or not they find it first time.

(or)

With the Manifest filing, it is rack six, third tier, aisle four, with no roll and no fuss.

Inspector Nel Karsk

Karsk is already in the core when the party arrive, and has been for an hour. He works bond inspection, he has worked it for nineteen years, and he is the officer who logged the two unrecorded inspections of Lot 4-91.

He is not security. He is a functionary whose whole job is opening other people's crates legally, and he is very good at it.

Level	Band	Defense	Attacks at	+ HP
1	Average	□ 6 / □ 6	35	30
3	Elite	□ 12 / □ 12	45	65
5	Boss	□ 18 / □ 18	55	78, ⊗ 2

Equipped — Sidearm, Weave Liner, and a bond inspector's seal that opens any lot in this room.

Nineteen years in this room means he knows the racks:

- He never has Disfavor from cover, darkness or concealment inside the core.
- Any character shooting past a rack at him has **−10**.

On his first Turn he talks instead of acting, always. Whatever the Level, whatever the party have done on the way in, Karsk opens with a question.

What he wants is the Level's motive, and it decides what kind of scene this is:

- **Level 1** — he is protecting it. He came down to check it is still on the rack, and does not become hostile unless the party leave him nothing else.
- **Level 3** — he is selling it. He has copied the lot in pieces for four months, and the party are competition arriving early.
- **Level 5** — he is visiting. He is the only person aboard who knows what is in the crate, and he has been talking to it.

Lot 4-91

Do not describe the contents until the party open it, or until Part 5 if they never do.

At Level 1 — A Coffin

A bonded funerary transport. **One body, sealed, eleven weeks in customs** because the dues owed on a corpse are disputed and nobody at the Exchange wants to be the one who decides. The buyer is the family — they could not pay and could not keep waiting.

It does not resist. Take it and go.

Karsk has been stalling the disposal order for eleven weeks with paperwork, on his own time, for a family he has never met. He will hand it over, and asks one thing: **that somebody tells the family it was looked after.**

If the party have been loud on the way in he is already halfway to the comm when they arrive, and the conversation happens at gunpoint. It still ends the same way if anyone lets him finish a sentence.

Play it flat. No music, no speech. He explains the disputed dues in the voice of a man explaining a filing error.

At Level 3 — A Pricy Dataset

Eleven years of the Exchange's own bond filings. Every lot, every mover, every undeclared tonne, and the names of everyone who signed for them. It is not a drive, it is **a sealed unit still taking a feed**, and it copies in real time.

The pull takes 6 Rounds. Start it, then hold the room.

Karsk has been selling pieces of it for four months and has a buyer waiting this week. He does not want the party dead — he wants the unit intact and the party gone, in that order.

	The fight
Composition	Karsk as Elite, plus one Average per character
Round 3	Two Rabble arrive from the ring, and again on Round 5
The unit	20 + HP, 0. If it drops, the pull is lost and the job with it

Every Round the party spend not defending the unit is a Round somebody shoots at it. **Karsk targets it only if he is losing.**

At Level 5 — A Person

A stasis cradle with somebody alive in it, shipped in bond because a person moved as cargo does not appear on any passenger list. **They wake in about four minutes and they are not grateful.**

They have their own plan, they have had eleven weeks to think about it, and it does not involve the party. They will not go to the buyer, because they know who the buyer is. They argue, they slow the party down, and they are worth nothing to anybody unconscious.

- Their $\Rightarrow$ Movement is **3** after eleven weeks in a cradle.
- Their $\ominus$ Fatigue starts at **2**, so every Target they roll is at **-10**.
- Carrying them costs the same as carrying the crate.

Karsk has been coming down here to talk to them for weeks and knows their name. He is not going to let four strangers walk them out of this room, and **at Level 5 that is the fight**.

Two ways this ends:

- The party take them out, against Karsk and against their wishes, and hand a person to a buyer.
- (or) Somebody in the party asks what the person wants, and the job changes shape in the last forty minutes of the session.

Both are supported.

Opening the Lot

The party do not have to open the lot, and a party who never do should be allowed to walk out holding a sealed crate they know nothing about.

Opening it is a $\diamond$ Interact and costs nothing. **Karsk's seal does it instantly**, without the seal it is a Challenging $\blacklozenge$ Vigor or $\bullet$ Acuity roll and a few minutes' work. It does not raise Lockdown. What reports is the bond seal holding the lot to its rack, and opening the crate does not touch it.

Getting It Out

The lot is the reason the Exit is hard.

Carried by two characters	Both drop to half $\Rightarrow$ Movement , cannot use two-handed weapons, and each holds 4 fewer Slots
Carried by one on a grav-sled	Full Movement, but the sled is loud: any roll to move unseen while it runs has Disfavor
Left behind	The job failed. The buyer pays nothing and the party still have to leave

A sled is racked at the core entrance and taking it is free.

Say this one out loud
Two of four at half Movement and no two-handed weapons is **the largest single change to the party's numbers in the adventure**, and it lands immediately before the Exit.

Karsk, If It Goes Badly

At every Level, Karsk can be talked to, and he opens with a question on his first Turn regardless of what the party have done.

Angle	Roll	Note
Tell him what the buyer is for	Negotiation or Rapport, Challenging	The honest route, and the cheapest
Nineteen years and nobody ever asked him about this lot	Insight or Rapport, Routine	No mechanical effect. Grants Favor on the next social roll
Offer him a share	Negotiation, Challenging	Works at Level 3. Insulting at Levels 1 and 5
Produce Halgrim's paper	Deception, Challenging at -10	He has read nineteen years of forged manifests
Threaten him	Intimidation, Challenging	Works, and he files everything the moment they leave. Lockdown +2

Two successes and he steps aside, at Levels 1 to 4. He is a functionary, not a martyr.

At Level 5 nothing on this table ends it. He has been coming down to talk to 4-91 by name for weeks and will not watch four strangers carry a person out. The social round still earns its place — it buys information, position, and who moves first — but it does not buy a way past him. Put him down. The adventure still does not require killing him.

4 — The Exit

It is one fight, and it is the fight.

Lifting Lot 4-91 off the rack breaks the bond seal. There is no roll for this and no way around it. The seal reports the moment the lot leaves the rack, and it does two things:

Lockdown goes to 6.

Every gate the party came through seals behind them.

The way in is gone. The party are inside a sealed warehouse holding sixty thousand tonnes of other people's property and one crate of their own, and **the only door left is the one they bring with them.**

The Recall

One word on the channel. The docking computer answers immediately and states a time.

Lockdown immediately before the seal	Rounds to hold
0 - 1	4
2 - 3	5
4 - 5	6
6	8

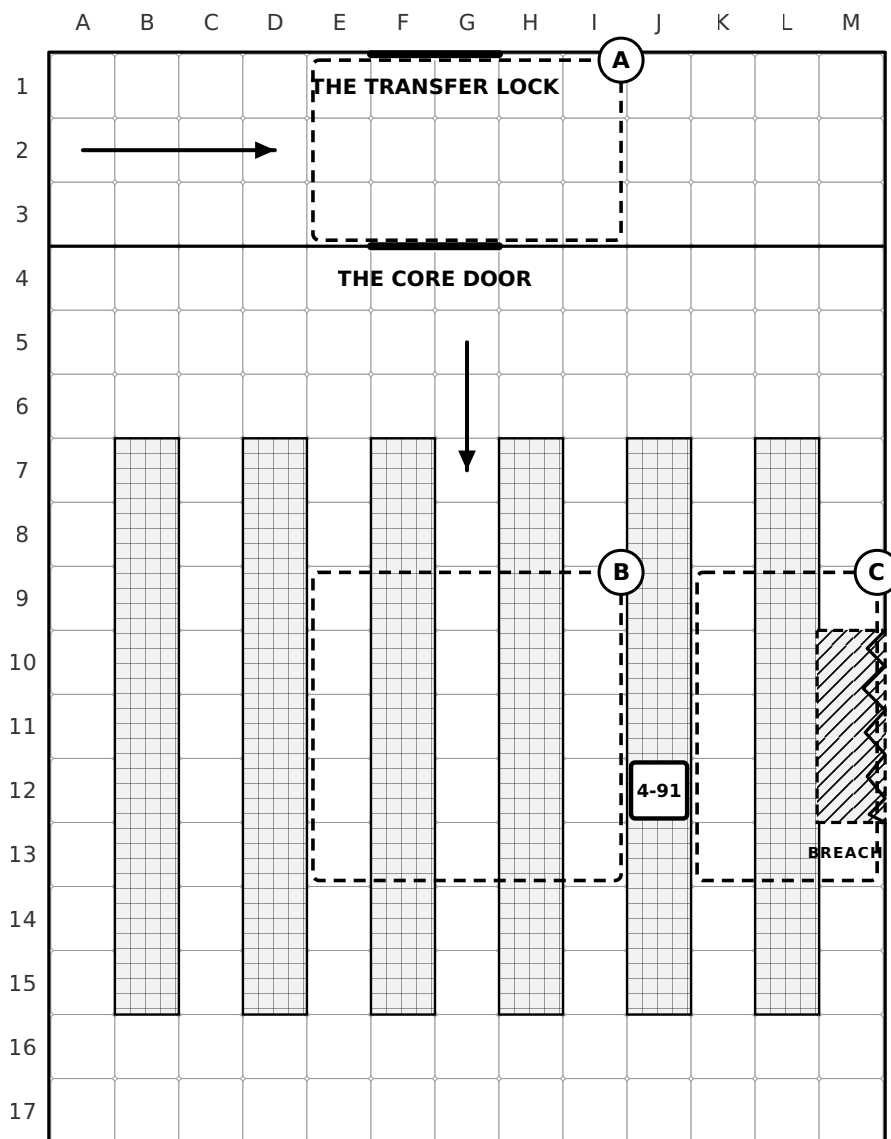
At high Lockdown the Exchange has already closed its approach lanes and clamped what it can, so the ship comes in the long way round. **Everything the party bought in Parts 1 and 2 is now the difference between holding for four Rounds and holding for eight.**

The docking computer counts the Rounds the table gave them down to zero, one at the top of each Round, in the same flat voice, whatever is happening. On a four-Round hold that is "Four minutes." "Three minutes." "Two." On an eight-Round hold it opens at eight, and the party hear every one of them.

Choosing Where To Hold

The party pick their ground before the first wave. Give them all three options and the properties, and let them argue for one Round of real time.

Hold point	Approaches	Cover	The problem
The Transfer Lock	1	Heavy. A cargo-rated door frame	They can cut through the bulkhead in 4 Rounds , and do
The Core Racks	3	Everywhere, for both sides	Nobody has line of sight for long. Disfavor on any attack past 8 □ Units
The Hull Breach	2	Thin	Suits, or 1 ⊖ Fatigue per Round to everyone. Nothing flanks from outside



□ One □ Unit · ▤ Rack stack, full height: no line of sight through it · □ Lot 4-91 · — Door · - - - A hold point · → Where waves come from

The Exit. A is the Transfer Lock, B the Core Racks, C the Hull Breach.

The Hull Breach is already open to a party who came in off the plating, on either branch. The Vent Stack and the Cargo Seam both start from the core's outer face, and the way they came in is a way back out.

Anybody else has to cut one, and it costs them the opening Round of the hold. A Challenging ♦ Vigor or ● Acuity roll while the first wave arrives around them, at **-10** without the Hull survey (Angle 7), which is the only thing aboard that says where the outer plate is still thin. Failing it does not stop them. It costs the second Round as well.

The rack stack between the two aisles runs the full height of this hold point, so **the K side and the M side do not connect inside it**. A party who split across both are two parties. Most tables end up in the M aisle with the breach at their backs, which is what the hold point is for.

The ship comes to them

Whichever they choose, the docking computer takes the hold point as the hard point. Do not make them move mid-fight.

The Lot, While They Hold

Set down, the crate is an objective. It has **20 + HP** and $\square$ **0**, and nothing targets it deliberately except a Scavenger.

A Scavenger arrives with the Round 2 and Round 4 waves and does nothing but Grab and Go: it takes the lot and moves its full $\Rightarrow$ Movement away. Recovering it is a $\diamond$ Interact from anyone adjacent, and the Scavenger has to be dropped first.

At Level 5 the lot is a person who can be told to move, and who will argue about where.

Somebody has to be free to go after the crate, and on the Rounds a Scavenger lands that is one character not shooting.

The Waves

One wave arrives at the end of each Round. Build them off the party's Level and stack as written.

Round	What arrives
1	One Rabble per character, from the nearest approach
2	1 Average, plus a Scavenger
3	2 Averages, from a second approach if the hold point has one
4	1 Average and a Scavenger . At Level 5 the Average is a Breacher — the Scavenger still arrives
5	Yarrow and the Hold Team
6+	1 Average per Round. They are feeding it in now

If the party are holding for only four Rounds, Yarrow arrives on Round 4 instead, alongside that Round's own wave rather than in place of it, and the fight ends on the ship's arrival with her still standing.

The early Rounds should be winnable and loud. Do not open with the Breacher.

The Hold Team

The Exchange keeps a contracted response team on retainer and almost never uses it. They are paid by the callout, they have done this eleven times in six years, and **they are not angry about any of it.**

18Yarrow, Hold Team LeadBoss · Attacks at 55

$\diamond$ 60 · $\star$ 60 · $\bullet$ 70 · $\triangle$ 75 $\square$ 18 · $\square$ 15 · $\Rightarrow$ 7 · $\blacktriangleright$ 12 · $\otimes$ 2

Contracted, paid by the callout, and completely uninterested in who the crew are. She has recovered eleven lots in six years and lost none of them.

Equipped — Service Rifle, Hardsuit, Neural Baffle

♦ Rifle

Roll 55, minus your □ Physical Defense, within 16 □ Units. On a hit, 2d6+4 damage.

♦ Cut Them Off

One allied adversary within 12 □ Units immediately moves its full ⇒ Movement and takes one ♦ Action.

♦♦ The Offer

She stops shooting and speaks. Every hostile on her side holds. See What She Wants.

Two Turns. She acts twice each Round, on her ► Initiative and again at the bottom of the order.

Paid by the callout. She never targets a downed character. There is no bonus for it.

Level	She arrives as
1	Elite. □ 12, attacks at 45, 40 + HP, ⊗ 1, no Two Turns, and she arrives alone
3	Boss. 48 + HP, with 2 Averages
5	Boss. 78 + HP, with 2 Elites

Yarrow opens with The Offer, on her first Turn, at every Level. Everything on her side stops shooting while she says it.

Read aloud

"Put it down and get on your ship. I get paid either way and you're the only ones who don't."

She means it. She is contracted to recover the lot, not to arrest anybody, and the Exchange does not pay her to chase people who are already leaving.

The party	What happens
Hand it over	Everything stops. They board and leave with nothing, and nobody dies
Fight	The fight above, until the ship arrives
Split it	At Level 3, the unit can be handed over once the pull has completed and she cannot tell
Talk	Challenging △ Resolve, Negotiation applying. Two successes and she takes a cut, which costs half the reward and no blood

She is not the villain and should not be played as one. Yarrow has the same problem the party have, from the other side of it, and she says so if anybody asks.

The Ship Arrives

She comes in hard, on automatic, and does not slow down for anything in the way.

- **The dock is violent.** Everything within 3 □ Units of the hard point, on either side, takes 2d6 and is pushed 2 □ Units. Announce it a full Round early.
- **Boarding** is 1 ♦AP from adjacent, or a full Turn from anywhere the party can still reach.
- **The lot** goes aboard or it does not. Anyone carrying it boards at half ⇒ Movement.
- **Nobody gets left behind** unless the table chooses it. A downed character can be dragged aboard for 1 ♦AP by anyone adjacent.

Yarrow does not follow them onto the ship. She is paid by the callout.

5 — After

Summarise the departure. The station is a paragraph.

The buyer is waiting where he said he would be, and he has the other half of the payment on him, **which is the first honest thing about him all session.**

If they never opened it, he opens it in front of them. Let the table watch a stranger open a crate they carried through a firefight, and give them the reveal from Part 3 with no ceremony at all.

- **At Level 1**, the family takes the coffin. They are not rich and they do not make a speech. If somebody in the party passes on what Karsk did, it matters to them for the rest of their lives, and they will say so badly.
- **At Level 3**, the filings surface within a month. Names come out of them, the Exchange has a very bad quarter, and none of it is traced to the party. Karsk is named in it twice.
- **At Level 5**, whether the party handed a person to a buyer is the only question anybody at the table remembers about this session.

Hooks

- Yarrow is contracted, not employed, and she takes work from anyone. She remembers the party's faces and did not report them.
 - Karsk filed something on his way home. He always does.
 - The bond core holds fifty-nine thousand tonnes the party did not take.
-

Reference

Adversaries at a Glance

Every adversary here uses the Starter Set's bands. Read **+** HP from the party's Level.

Band	□ / □	Attacks at	⊗	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Rabble	0	25	1	8	10	12	16	20
Average	6	35	1	30	40	50	65	80
Elite	12	45	1	40	50	65	85	105
Boss	18	55	2	28	38	48	62	78

Read the ⊗ column before the + HP columns. ⊗ here is how many times an adversary has to be put down, not how many wounds it can absorb. **Everything on this table takes one** and is gone at 0 **+** HP. **A Boss takes two**, so a Boss on 28 is not the weaker thing beside an Elite on 40 — it is roughly twice the work.

Used in this adventure: Station Security as Average, Breacher as Elite, Scavenger as Rabble. Karsk and Yarrow are written in Parts 3 and 4.

The Routes at a Glance

Route	Gates	The shape of it
The Dock	1 Checkpoint or 2 Manifest Office → 4 → 8	Chooses immediately, at the door
The Spur	3 The Rise → 4 → 8	No choice at all, one hard climb
The Hull	5 Sealed Door → 6 Vent Stack or 7 Cargo Seam → 8	Walks first, chooses after committing

The Transfer Lock is the Dock's and the Spur's. **The Core Door is everyone's.**

Where The Fights Are

- **The Ring** — the patrol is optional at Lockdown 0–3 and unavoidable at 4 or higher.
- **The Bond** — no fight at Level 1, a held room at Level 3, and the fight at Level 5.
- **The Exit** — always. A hold-out against waves until the ship docks.

Cast

Ossary	Dock officer. Takes the money and files the report
Wen Tallis	Maintenance chief, fired six weeks ago. Draws the spur from memory
Halgrim	Sells paper that holds up to an ordinary check
Vetch	Moves one crate. Nervous, and folds

Inspector Nel Karsk	Nineteen years in bond inspection. Logged 4-91 twice, off the record
Yarrow	Hold Team lead. Contracted, paid by the callout, eleven for eleven
Small Mercy	The party's hauler. A docking computer, a recall word, and a countdown
The buyer	Paid half up front and would not say what it was