

A *REBELLION* CAMPAIGN

The Corsairs of Culverin

Imperial inquisitors seek out individuals with psychic powers or potential for enslavement or destruction by the galactic empire. One inquisitor, charged with a broad, outlying stretch of the galaxy, is convinced that one of the heroes has in their genetic code a permanent connection with legendary beings called the Wills.

Some myths say the Wills are a species that evolved within the spiritual currents of the universe and can make contact with physical creatures. Some say they are the reason that living creatures have the capacity for spiritual power at all.

The inquisitor saw signs in records from the hero's birth that indicate a unique connection to the Wills. She has had agents throughout the galactic underworld seeking the hero, based on genetic projections of what the hero may look like.

When a pirate in the inquisitor's secret service identifies the hero, the inquisitor pursues the hero and the hero's companions. As the pursuit intensifies, the heroes have a chance to expose the inquisitor's ambitions so that the inquisitor must go without aid from the empire, and then defeat the inquisitor and her ragtag forces.

Over the course of the campaign and two other campaigns of a trilogy, the heroes learn that the Wills make contact with not just one hero but with those with whom the hero develops emotional attachments. It's not just that one "chosen" hero but all heroes who have Power stats. The heroes may begin to awaken the Wills in people throughout the galaxy. Through the connections of love and friendship, spiritual connections grow powerful over decades to come. In the conflict between the heroes and their corner of the empire, the Wills shape destiny toward the distant end not only of the empire but of the hate-fueled conflicts in spiritual power that gave rise to the empire, and to similar empires past and future.

Adventure 1: Departure

The heroes live in the asteroid farming colony Nacreont, in a remote corner of the galactic empire. Nacreont is the largest asteroid, the size of a small moon, occupied by countless people in miles-deep corridors and chambers. Vast tunnels spiral smoothly and organically inward, where huge space-slugs devoured certain minerals and excreted others. The space-slugs died thousands of years ago, leaving mineral deposits behind, some valuable in technology and others as nutrients to some species. The minerals in the wide spiraling tunnels glow various colors, some bright and some faint. The miners have carved other great chambers for working and living, and a warren of connecting corridors.

The imperial government rarely makes itself known in this sector. The real power is the pirate planet Culverin and the pirate fleet commanded by Admiral Hootoon. The pirates prey on travelers, extort “taxes” from the miners and other colonies, and bribe the imperial authorities to stay away.

The heroes are have a stable if oppressive life on the asteroid. They may have grown up there or been stuck there when their ship died. They are likely stuck with work that seems meaningless, in a culture that feels alien to them, and have few to no opportunities for anything better.

But leaving would mean letting people down. Each player should name one or two NPCs who depend on their hero. These relationships need not have the power of emotional attachments, but they should establish how they keep the hero on Nacreont.

OPPONENTS AND ALLIES

NPC	Str	Dex	Tech	Know	Wis	Cha	Pow	Melee Injuries	Ranged Injuries
Dockerbots	7	5	7	4	4	3	0	2d4	0
Miners	6	5	6	3	5	4	3	2d4	2d6
Pirates	6	6	5	3	4	3	3	2d4	2d6
Tunnel toads	4	3	0	0	4	0	3	2d4	0

NPC Ship	Piloting	Gunnery	Defenses	Collision Damage	Gunnery Damage
Pirate fighter	6	6	0	2d8	2d4

SCENE 1: THE SPIRAL

Combat and problem-solving. The heroes in everyday life. Working, mining, or taking a brief few minutes of rest at home in a rustic, comfortless hovel.

Each hero describes how their skills let them get by. Each tells to what extent they are convinced there is a better, grander life out there, if only they could get away from their responsibilities. Each names one or two characters who depend on them.

There's a report of a flood risk in plumbing where thermal fields have been malfunctioning. The malfunction is in a huge spiraling tunnel that glows with colorful but worthless minerals. It's connected to a slippery maze of corridors and tunnels, wet with condensation and algae.

Silicon-based parasitical crablike aliens often feed on the machinery, requiring frequent repairs. At the site, the remains of parasites are scattered about. They must have been eaten by tunnel toads, loping monsters that prey on the parasites but are happy to eat humans when they can.

Repairing the malfunction requires **Machinery 5**. More than one can make the attempt, but more must succeed than fail to overcome the challenge. If the heroes fail or are driven off, the plumbing becomes a greater risk later.

An alert sounds. The heroes' foreman calls: **Mellivor**, a hardworking and tough but peaceful miner who looks out for them and their families. He says it's all available hands to the docks. If the repairs aren't done, leave them and do them later. Admiral Hootoon is coming.

The heroes know Hootoon is not a real admiral but the leader of a pirate fleet. He always demands tribute and causes trouble.

SCENE 2: DOCKERS

Negotiation or combat. If separated, the heroes meet each other along the way to the docks. They encounter rivals, a gang of dock robots or dockerbots: heavy, agile brutes with long arms for lifting, repairing, and dismantling. They are led by the bipedal **BX92**, or "**Bix**." Bix has computed that the heroes are behind a statistically outsized portion of its and the colony's problems.

The robot gang demands the heroes turn over whatever credits they have (Value 3) so the robots don't have to give up their own money, or themselves, to the pirates. **Negotiation 4** can barter them down to Value 2. **Coercion 6** can defuse the situation. In either case, only one hero can make the attempt. Otherwise the heroes escape, drive them off in a brawl, or pay up. Tackling the dockerbots requires **Fighting 7** or **Shooting 5**. Escaping them requires **Athletics 7**.

SCENE 3: THE DOCKS

Problem-solving. The docks: a frightening, robotic starport, full of decrepit cranes and robots and machinery that often short-circuit and go dangerously haywire.

Admiral Hootoon arrives with three pirate ships, medium freighters. The ship carrying Hootoon bears an emblem depicting a skull with huge, devouring jaws.

Cameras and sensors on the admiral's ship take in everything. The heroes might discern that the cameras linger on the Will-connected hero for a long time before moving on: **Alertness 5.**

Meanwhile, the dock machinery is going crazy. Before he disembarks, the admiral says someone had better make it safe or else he'll make it safe by blasting the docks.

Bix and his robot crew try to get things under control. They fail. The heroes can step in and try: **Machinery 8.**

If the heroes succeed, or if they try and fail, they gather more ire from their robot rivals and capture the attention of the visitors.

If the heroes fail, or they refuse to get involved, the admiral's shuttle destroys part of the docks, which will make the heroes' escape harder in a later scene.

SCENE 4: THE ADMIRAL

Pursuit or combat. Admiral Hootoon comes out, burly and cruel, wearing a shabby admiral's uniform that he stole years ago. He is guarded by pirates of every strange species, all full of arrogance.

Hootoon says more of his fleet is on the way and he'll tell the miners why: Money, that's why. He says he watches everything carefully in his corner of the galaxy. And he has seen that Nacreont has been more prosperous than the miners admitted. So it's time to pay their fair share of the taxes. Anyone who can't afford to pay enough in cash can pay it in years as a slave.

He adds that he's thinking of reporting their dishonesty to the empire. If they want to pay a little extra still, that might change his mind. Everybody must line up and pay.

Chaos. Shouting. Arguing. Pirates come out of the other ships, laughing, blasters set to stun so they can collect slaves.

A couple of crews from the admiral's own ship have something particular in mind. They are heading straight for the heroes. Choose one hero who has a Power stat as their main target.

The heroes' friend Mellivor warns them to run for it or be rounded up and enslaved.

To outrun the pirates each hero must roll **Athletics 6**, or another skill if the player describes it convincingly.

If the pirates catch the heroes, it's far enough away from the docks that the heroes have a fighting chance. Especially since some of the pirates went another way. They face an even fight. Defeating the pirates requires **Fighting 6** or **Shooting 6**.

SCENE 5: ATMOSPHERE CONTROL

Combat. Escaping the pirates, the heroes find themselves hiding in the same tunnels as the rival dockerbot Bix and his crew.

Bix says he saw the pirates pursuing one of the heroes in particular. He's going to take that hero and turn him over to the pirates as payment. Right now. Combat with the dockerbots requires **Fighting 7** or **Shooting 5**. Escaping them requires **Athletics 7**.

Machinery in this part of the asteroid keeps the atmosphere, gravity, and water in balance. If there is a complication from perseverance, or if a hero uses an Area weapon, pipes shatter and a huge flood rushes in. Thick doors seal the damaged area from safety. The heroes barely have time to drag themselves to the safe side.

SCENE 6: HOMECOMING

Problem-solving. The heroes feel the rumbling of explosions elsewhere. Terminals show damage in the warren of living quarters where the heroes and their loved ones make their homes.

The heroes must navigate the maze of tunnels to get home swiftly. The default is **Survival 6**, but other skills might apply if the players describe them well. The heroes must choose one to follow.

The heroes find their homes in ruins and their loved ones and friends dead or dying.

Their friend Mellivor is there, trying to help. They can try to use skills to save some of the lives. The default is **Medicine 7**, but other skills might apply if the players describe them well. The roll is at disadvantage if the heroes failed to get home swiftly. If they fail, each hero must spend a point of Hope or else gain a point of Hate. The grief counts as a transformative event.

Mellivor is as heartbroken as the heroes. He warns that the pirates are looking for the heroes themselves. They're killing people on the heroes' trail. The heroes have to get out.

Mellivor says if the heroes can steal a pirate ship from the dock, they have a chance of escaping. Otherwise the pirates will keep killing people until they are found. The heroes need to steal a ship and get it to hyperspace.

Mellivor can give them a coordinates card that will take them to the Pretereal system. In the town Mycolean on Pretereal, they can find an old friend of Mellivor's from the war, who goes by the name **Tassinar**. Tassinar doesn't like strangers and she doesn't like trouble, but she owes Mellivor more than one favor.

SCENE 7: BACK TO THE DOCKS

Problem-solving or combat. The heroes have to navigate the confusion and dangers of the tunnels to reach the starport.

Sneaking past pirates requires all heroes to succeed at **Stealth** 4. Outrunning pursuing pirates requires all heroes to roll **Athletics** 6. Failure means attack by pirates. If the pirates win, the heroes must find another way and try again.

Finding little-known tunnels and shortcuts requires one hero to roll **Survival** 6. Failure means the heroes are **attacked by tunnel toads**. Driving off the tunnel toads requires **Fighting** 4 or **Shooting** 3.

At the docks, the heroes must get through the dangerously malfunctioning machinery to reach the nearest pirate ship, which has the symbol worn by the pirates that pursued them. That could be **Robots** 7 or **Machinery** 7 to repurpose robots or machinery, **Athletics** 6 to leap and dodge, **Stealth** 6 to avoid sensors, or **Shooting** 6 to blast through the malfunctioning parts. The difficulty increases by 1 if the heroes had trouble with pirates or tunnel toads earlier in this scene.

Failure means being driven back at first and taking extra time to reach the ship, which gives its crew time to prepare. Failure after perseverance means also suffering a 2d6 injury from being "repaired."

Admiral Hootoon's cameras follow them the whole time but his pirates are too busy searching for them elsewhere to catch them now.

SCENE 8: PIRACY

Combat and problem-solving. To pirate the pirate ship, the heroes have to kill or drive out the ship's skeleton crew and get the ship moving. The pirates aboard outnumber the heroes two to one, gaining a +2 bonus to their combat expertise. They fight with knives and clubs. If the heroes were driven back at first in Scene 7, the pirates have armed themselves with blasters and slugthrowing pistols.

The heroes have little time to learn the ship's idiosyncrocies, requiring **Piloting** 7 or **Machinery** 8. The difficulty increases by 1 if the heroes lost a fight with the pirates earlier in this scene. Multiple heroes can attempt **Machinery**, but more must succeed than fail. If Hootoon damaged the docks in Scene 3, the challenge is at +2 difficulty. If the heroes fail, all **Piloting** tests with the ship are at +1 difficulty until the end of the adventure.

Angry miners mistake the heroes' intentions and try to destroy the ship the heroes want to steal. If the heroes failed in their repairs in Scene 1, or caused severe damage in Scene 5, flooding grows severe elsewhere. The heroes' friend Mellivor helps by opening floodgates. That drives the angry miners away. Or the heroes can turn the ship's turrets on the miners. That requires no roll but a hero must spend a point of Hate to do it. If the miners aren't driven away, they turn the dock's machinery on the ship: flying out safely requires a **Piloting** 7 roll and each failure incurs a 1d4+1 ship damage roll.

SCENE 9: ESCAPE

Combat and pursuit. Other pirate ships are gathering. When the miners fight, the pirates launch torpedoes that destroy many homes, including that of the heroes. The ragtag ships of the astroid mines flee, giving cover for the heroes to get away.

One ship comes into view wearing the same symbol as the heroes' new ship. This one is unimaginably huge, a capital ship for which the heroes' stolen freighter is only a tender. It is *Hungerer*, the flagship of Admiral Hootoon.

The heroes are pursued by *Hungerer's* captain, who knows Hootoon's orders to capture them. He does not call for aid because he does not want to share the reward.

The enormous *Hungerer* turns to pursue them. It sends three pirate fighters after the heroes to disable their ship so it can be boarded. If the heroes can elude and outshoot the fighters, they can go into hyperspace and escape. They must succeed at a combat roll and a piloting roll. If either fails, they must retry both. The fighters have +3 Dexterity expertise due to their numbers, requiring **Piloting** 9 and **Gunnery** 9.

If the heroes' ship sustains damage beyond being battered, then their friend Mellivor drifts out in a slow-moving mining beamer and turns its beam on the pursuers. He sends a message saying enough is enough, and it's time for ordinary folk to stand up and face the costs. He destroys the pursuers until torpedoes from other pirate ships blow him away. That gives the heroes time to go into hyperspace and escape.

If the pirates catch the heroes, they bundle them into a transport shuttle bound for the giant pirate flagship. But the pirates are overconfident. They send only one pirate as pilot and one as guard, and they do not secure the prisoners well. The heroes can attempt to overcome the pirates and fly the shuttle into hyperspace to escape.

If Mellivor and Bix survive, they may turn out to be significant allies in the war to come.

THE HEROES' PIRATED FREIGHTER

Piloting Potential d10, Co-Pilot yes, Crew 2, **Gunnery** Potential d12, **Gunners** 4, **Gunnery Damage** 2d8, **Torpedoes** 6, **Collision Damage** 2d10, **Defenses** 4.