

The Aftermath...

Credits:

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Dedication:

Angela,
You got two for the price of one ☺
Merry Xmas 2011!!
Matthew

Blurb:

It was supposed to be a routine flight out of Bernadette. Just a load of settlers bound for the waterworld Newhall. But then the Reavers struck and the Truthful James became an abattoir. The gorrám safe rooms were easily breached and the settlers and their livestock were slaughtered. But a very few survived and now they are trapped on a drifting ship in the middle of the black. Can they make it back to civilization?

For 6-7 PCs. Set in the 'Verse of Firefly fame and powered by Dread.

Story:

The PCs are all settlers out of Bernadette on their way to a new life on Newhall, a water world, when they are jumped by a Reave vessel. All of the crew and settlers are pushed into Safe Rooms. But for some reason the doors failed and all of the occupants, as well as any livestock, were horribly killed. For various reasons, the PCs chose to not to take refuge in the Safe Rooms, but instead chose to hide somewhere else, which of course why they survive. They will have to overcome the deliberate damage done to the ship, drifting dangerously off course and another survivor who “broke” and has adopted the ways of the Reavers to make it to safety. While not classically horror, this adventure is all about how common people are thrust into a horrible situation and how they survive.

Act 0: Setup

- **Questionnaires** – Allocate about 15 or so minutes for the players to fill out the questions and make sure they understand that the questions are there to help them understand their character. Take notes of their answers to use later during the adventure.
- **Tower Prep** – Starting with the GM, each participant makes a pull. This represents the damage to the ship, the incredible luck of the PCs to have made it this far, the damage to their psyche, etc.
- **Opening Blurb:**

It seems as though it has been days since the Reavers left, but the ship’s time indicates that it has been only 5 or so hours. You barely register your fellow survivors as your mind tries to come to terms with the horrors you have witnessed. As you stumble out of your hiding place, you are snapped back to focus by the blaring emergency klaxons interspersed with annoying alert messages spoken in both English and Mandarin; and the strobing flash of the red and yellow warning lights. You then realize that you are trapped in a giant corpse-filled tomb, uncontrollably drifting through the unforgiving and uncaring Black. What do you do?

Act 1: Immediate Problems

The alerts should encourage the players to attempt to fix the damaged components of the vessel. Encourage the players to be creative and think outside of the box. Also remember that the Reavers are mostly just a mindless force of destruction and not some evil mastermind, so more than likely their damage is simple and mostly for appearance. Regardless, it should take several pulls to accomplish each also allowing a reaction pull to any booby traps that might be encountered.

- Life Support – The Air tanks will be venting into space (contributing to the slightly noticeable uncontrolled spin of the ship). Luckily the ship is huge, so a little EVA and some simple welding should take care of this. In addition one of the main airlocks is disabled (the outer door was ripped off by the Reavers during their violent boarding and the inner door is caught on some bodies/debris). Luckily for the PCs will be notified of this by a helpful computer voice.
- Reactor – The Reavers attempted to sabotage the fusion plant. While they didn't disable it completely, they did rupture some of the coolant lines which will cause the reactor to run very hot and could cause a catastrophic containment breach, flooding the entire engine room with boiling plasma and the entire ship with high energy neutrons. In addition to the obvious danger of overheating, the leaking coolant gasses are being distributed throughout the ship and causing hallucinations (see the **Atmo Scrubbers** below). The PCs will be notified of this by a helpful computer voice.
- Bridge (Booby Trapped) – Lastly and most obviously, the main bridge was trashed. The pilot's controls are smashed, the captain's chair is defiled, communications are shot, and in short the whole place is a mess. The controls can be jury rigged because, luckily, the damage was largely cosmetic. It will take two pulls to make a control active – one to determine if it is salvageable and a second to repair it. And regardless of how many pulls are made, the long range communications suite is damaged beyond all repair. However the bridge was booby trapped. A mine was placed under the ruin that used to be the captain's body (and interestingly enough, the captain is still vaguely alive and will try to warn anyone of the trap) which will go off if his body is moved. The explosion will severely damage the bridge, possibly exposing it to the void of space, and adding a third pull to the repair).
- Fires – And of course a looting cannot be considered complete without a good fire and the Reavers have never been known to throw an incomplete looting. The fire is not huge, but it is dangerous. Once the Bridge is secured, the automated fire suppression system can be activated, until then though they will add extra difficulty to any repairs made. The PCs will be notified of this by a helpful computer voice.

Tower Collapse: Should the tower collapse during Act 1, the obvious outs are succumbing to the madness (perhaps the saboteur in Act 2??) or a victim to any of the above emergencies. Another idea is to have the poor bastard be Dead Man Walking – unable to make any pulls and a burden to the group, possible to die off later in the adventure.

Transition: The line between Act 1 and Act 2 can be blurred depending upon the decisions of the characters, so be flexible. However the introduction of sabotage should firmly ground the action in Act 2.

Act 2: Now What?

Now that the immediate crises have been dealt with the Players can now turn their attention to other issues:

- Atmo Scrubbers – Even more insidious than the holes in the air tanks is the damage done to the air scrubbers, which remove any impurities from the air like particulate matter, CO₂ and other poisonous gases. By itself, this would not be an immediate threat, but due to the reactor damage (see **Reactor**, Act 1) it has become critical. Until it is addressed, the PCs will experience hallucinations (perhaps flashbacks) and eventually their death (look to the questionnaires for inspiration). There will be small notifications in the Bridge and Engineering if someone knows to look for them.
- Cleanup – If or when someone takes the time to address the carnage it will take some time to clean up and lay the bodies (parts) to rest. It will take a pull for each person involved to basically deal with being re-exposed to the horror.
- Water Supplies – Of course the water system has been tainted with some corpses, both human and animal which have fouled up the recycling filters. Allow the players to come up with creative solutions for this one.
- Protein Stores (Booby Trapped) – The Reavers took as much of the protein stores that they could carry and poisoned the rest. They did leave one store room alone as a tempting prize for any looters that should happen along. They of course booby trapped it so that anyone entering the room would detonate an explosive charge that would rip a hole in the hull and vent the room into space.
- Gravity Management Systems – In the process of attempting to break the reactor, the gravity management systems were damaged, but they still work... for now. Any major shock to the ship, like explosive decompression (see **Protein Stores** above), could further damage the systems and cause the gravity to go haywire. This will add an extra pull for all attempted actions as the local gravity fluxes from on to off and inertia is sometimes allowed to play.
- Where to now? – The Players will probably want to find a safe place to land. The nearest safe haven is an automated cortex relay station on a desolate moon, but unfortunately it is several days away. And to make matters worse they are tumbling out of control. It will take several pulls to get under way, use your judgment as to how many – a pull to get a fix on their position, one to plot the course, a pull to calculate the fuel burn, a pull correct the spin and a final pull to initiate the trip, etc.
- Sabotage – There is one additional survivor (look to the questionnaires for inspiration). However they are very “broken” and who, though in perfect physical health, has gone mad from the horrors it’s witnessed and embraced the ways of the Reavers. Initially the madman will be content to sabotage the *Truthful James*. Be creative with the targets. You can use some of the above issues as ideas for sabotage as well as perhaps the Drive Unit (*Grav Boot, Compression Coil, Catalyzer, Compression Block, etc.*), the Internal Communications Interface, the Landing/Docking Systems, Booby Traps, Light/Power Outage or whatever else your fevered imagination can dream up. Regardless, keep the saboteur a secret, a shadow, a phantom, a mystery wrapped in an enigma dunked in riddle sauce. Save the reveal for Act 3.

Tower Collapse: Should the tower collapse during Act 2, the obvious outs are succumbing to the madness (perhaps becoming the saboteur if its identity has not been determined) or a victim to any of the above issues or sabotage. Dead Man Walking is another possibility. Also if the Saboteur is in play, perhaps the poor bastard is killed off camera – they leave to fix something and are never seen again (they are pulled aside and told of their horrible fate).

Transition: When you are ready to start Act 3, have the navigation system sound an alert, announcing that they have arrived at their destination.

Act 3: We Made It?

So the survivors have made it to the moon, or at least as close as they can get on pulse drive, but they are not out of the woods yet. They will still be a few hours out. In their way will be several obstacles to overcome before they are finally safe.

- Asteroids – Unfortunately in orbit around this barely habitable moon is a dense ring of asteroids (remnants of a massive collision thousands of years ago). The auto-pilot will not be able to deal with this, so one of the survivors will have to guide the massive ship through. And of course the field will be Lucasian in nature (think the Asteroid Field in Empire Strikes Back). Have the players make as many pulls as you think is necessary.
- Reavers – For more spice, have a Reaver ship or two show up in chase, either in the asteroids or perhaps as the PCs start to land.
- The Mad Survivor – The majority of this act should be focused on the direct actions of the maddened survivor, who at that juncture has abandoned his sabotage and has started to lash directly out at the Players. This is where the story flips from survival to straight horror as the survivors, one by one, are stalked and horrifically killed. At this time, the identity of the person should be revealed, either as one of the “deceased” PCs or based on the answers from the survivors’ questionnaires. The mad man will attempt to kill all of the Players in gruesome slasher-flick styles. This person is inured to pain and so driven by a maniacal rage that it seems veritably unstoppable. Even the seemingly preternatural visage of the killer is terrifying as it has dramatically disfigured itself. Also if the players do dispatch it, have its death be ambiguous so that you can bring it back for the Landing (below).
- Land Safely? – The last thing that should happen, almost anticlimactically, is to land the ship at the cortex relay station. That is easier said than done of course for those who are not familiar with the piloting of this several kiloton spacecraft. Especially one that might have suffered damage from asteroids and Reaver attacks. For even more fun, have the newly turned Reaver show up for one last attack or two.

Tower Collapse: Should the tower collapse during Act 3, there will be many delicious options for the removal of survivor: death due to lingering sabotage, asteroid collision, Reaver grappling rockets (ala Wash), violent murder from the madman or being driven insane by seeing a known person (perhaps friend) descend into the madness that all Reavers share, perhaps becoming a killer themselves. Use your imagination and don’t hold back. This is the point in the adventure that any removal from play should be dramatic an over the top.

Finale: There are powerful communications gear and enough emergency supplies to last any survivors until rescue can be affected. In a week or so an IAV ship, responding to their broadcasts for help, will take them off this lonely rock back into civilization.

Appendix A – PC Questions:

Habitat Engineer

1. Why did you give up being an accountant for Weyland-Yutani in order to construct new buildings on Newhall?
2. Why would you rather sacrifice yourself then see one of your friends get hurt?
3. What did you witness the Reavers do that scared the shit out of you?
4. What is the first thing you are going to do when you set foot on Newhall?
5. Which of the survivors don't you trust? Why?
6. What is it that you can do with a hammer that makes you smile every time?
7. What do you always carry in your tool belt that has no business being there?
8. What sound or noise causes you to freeze up in shock?
9. What is your name?

AWI* Recycling Technician *Amalgamated Waste Industries

1. Why do you believe that violence solves all problems?
2. Why were you assigned to the sanitation engineering division?
3. What did you do to earn the wrath of the notorious “business man” Badger?
4. What did you sneak past security when you boarded the *Truthful James* and where is it?
5. Despite your better judgment, which of the survivors do you like?
6. Early in the trip, your pet cat died. How did this affect you?
7. Why do you think you were responsible for the failure of the safe rooms?
8. Why did you decide to learn how to sew?
9. What is your name?

Line Cook

1. During the Unification War, why did you desert from the Independent Army after your first battle?
2. What secret do you know about the ship?
3. Where did you hide your special tools and why did you choose that place?
4. How did you get that injury? How does it affect you?
5. One of the other survivors always makes you smile. Who and how?
6. Something happened during the night before the Reaver attack and you can't stop thinking about it. What was it?
7. Why are you secretly happy that your sister didn't survive the Reaver attack?
8. What dish were you planning to prepare at the Pioneer's Cuisine contest?
9. What is your name?

Alliance Colony and Settlement Authority Hydrologist

1. What did you do during your drunken bender a couple nights back to get you confined to your quarters for the duration?
2. Who are you most looking forward to seeing when you arrive on Newhall?
3. What is in your duffle bag?
4. Why did you lie on your recruitment application about your qualifications?
5. Who did you see messing with the doors of Safe Room Delta?
6. When was your last panic attack? What triggers them?
7. Why do you keep drinking when it often lands you in a bad spot?
8. You have a romantic interest in one of the other survivors. Does he/she know?
9. What is your name?

Blue Sun Administrator

1. Why were you chosen to oversee a minor part of one of the hydro-extraction operations on Newhall?
2. Why did you not take shelter with your spouse and children in the safe rooms?
3. Why are you uncomfortable with confrontation?
4. What did you grab when you heard the alarms sound?
5. When did you learn ballet and how has it helped you lately?
6. What safe spot on the *Truthful James* are you still hiding from everyone else?
7. Which one of the survivors rubs you the wrong way and why?
8. The Reaver attack has made you reevaluate your life and consider choosing a new profession. What is it and why?
9. What is your name?

Companion

1. Why did you choose to travel to Newhall on a settlement ship?
2. Why did you become a companion at such a relatively late age?
3. When was the last time you had that reoccurring nightmare? What is it?
4. What made you hide with one of the other survivors outside of the Safe room?
5. What do you enjoy most about being a Companion?
6. If your personal closet had been searched, what would have been confiscated?
7. How will your natural Optimism see you through?
8. You feel a strong urge to protect one of the other survivors. Who and why?
9. What is your name?

Shepherd

1. What happened to cause you to take the Vows and become a Shepherd?
2. What item do you keep despite it being frowned upon by your Order? Why?
3. Which of the other survivors concerns you? Why?
4. What about the Reaver attack affirmed your Faith?
5. Who was it that was going to let you stay with them on Newhall?
6. What makes you think you are destined for something greater?
7. How did you kill your first Reaver?
8. What often keeps you awake at night with cold sweats?
9. What is your name?

Stowaway (Optional)

1. Who are you running away from?
2. What about this ship made you choose it?
3. What did you steal from one of the other settlers?
4. Which of the other survivors scares you? Why?
5. Why were you so cheery during the Reaver attack?
6. What is your plan when you get to Newhall?
7. What makes you think you are destined for something greater?
8. ???Unification war/Verse specific...
9. What is your name?

Appendix B – Notes:

Angela K. A. Robertson to me
Serenity setting "the aftermath"
Dread – Saturday morning

The Aftermath...

It was supposed to be a routine flight out of Bernadette. Just a load of settlers bound for Newhall. But then the Reavers struck and the *Truthful James* became an abattoir. The supposed "safe rooms" were easily breached and the settlers and their livestock were slaughtered. But a very few survived and now they are trapped on a drifting ship in the middle of space. Can they make it back to civilization?

For 5 PCs. Set in the 'Verse of Firefly fame and powered by Dread.

Small cruise ship (crew 30ish; passengers 200ish) recently attacked by Reavers
The PCs are random people that survived; it is "the next morning"
Can they fix the ship, clean-up and get home?
Probably are off-course, low on supplies, and maybe not all Reavers are still dead?

Cheap colony/settler ship from core to remote planet
Modified retired Floating World Class cruise liner.
Passengers hid in "safe rooms" and were killed
PCs did *not* hide in safe rooms and survived
1 PC sabotaged "safe rooms"

Issues

- Broken equipment
 - Some sabotaged
 - Releasing chemicals in air that cause hallucinations/flashbacks? (tie questions too)
- Crisis – Collision or Continued Burn into the Black
- Flipped out Survivor
- Typical survivor things at first -- finding food & water; securing life support systems.
- Then navigating the ship and perhaps landing somewhere safely.
- All while occasional battles with more Reavers.

Character Questions:

Fluff question

Strength

Weakness

Plot tie in

Character tie to another character

Carrying

Looking forward to

Fluff Question

Name

General Laborer

Janitor

Crew Member – Assistant Cook

Hydrologist – who got drunk one night, got into a fight, and found themselves sentenced to a few nights in a cell on the ship.

Administrator – Middle Management

Farmer

Kid??

companion??

Pre Pull 1 or 2 blocks before game starts to represent ship damage/condition post raid

Newhall is a newly-terraformed planet with large oceans. Stands to reason that water is the planet's primary commodity. Newhall's people live on small island chains or on floating stations on the oceans. Newhall's water plants are always in need of workers, hence the Alliance's generous incentives for settlers who move here. Terraforming new worlds requires a lot of fresh water, and Newhall has water to spare. Processing the water and preparing it for shipping isn't an unproblematic job, though. The water needs to be collected, desalinated, purified, packaged, then loaded for transport.

Those of Newhall who don't want to work the water plants can make a good living fishing. And there's always the tourist centers, for those who like to swim and cavort - or those who want to tend to those who do.

A group of Alliance settlers from Bernadette that was bound for Newhall was attacked by Reavers, and never made the scheduled landing.

Newhall orbits the protostar Penglai which is the eleventh body orbiting the star Kalidasa. It was the destination of colonists coming from Bernadette in the episode "Bushwhacked".
