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COVERT OPERATIONS

Adapted from Dishonored RPG (Modiphius 2d20)

THE BETTER PART OF VALOR

Covert action is an unavoidable part of every officer's career. While modern technology like ranged scanners and automated probes have made certain operations safer by allowing personnel to operate from a safe distance, there will always be circumstances that require the immediate presence and independent decision-making ability of an experienced officer. Whether it be an intelligence gathering assignment behind enemy lines, a cultural study of a pre-warp civilization, or a search-and-rescue operation on a planet teeming with dangerous creatures, an officer's ability to remain undetected while carrying out a mission can mean the difference between life and death.

COVERT TASKS

There is more to a covert operation than simply remaining undetected while carrying out a Task – caution must be taken to ensure that no evidence is left behind which can prematurely lift the veil of secrecy and expose the team to danger.

When a character wishes to perform a given Task clandestinely, the Difficulty of the Task is increased by 1, representing the additional steps the character must take to conceal the activity and leave no trace of their presence. The GM may choose to allow the Task to Succeed at a Cost, where the Task is completed successfully but the character failed to remain concealed.

Additional factors may modify the Difficulty or affect the Complication Range. For example, a cultural anthropologist surgically altered to look like a member of the local species might be extremely familiar with their customs and thus face no increased difficulty blending in but might give away their alien physiology if they are accidentally injured and reveal their blood is the wrong color (represented by an increased Complication Range where appropriate).

STEALTH CONTESTS

It is far simpler to avoid detection when there is no one actively looking. A casual passerby might not spare a second thought to an engineer bent over a maintenance panel. In such cases, a simple Task is sufficient to resolve the covert action.

In cases where active scrutiny must be avoided – a dangerous predator stalking the away team, or an active guard patrol on the lookout for intruders – the GM may choose to call for an Opposed Task, typically utilizing the opponent's Security discipline.

Multiple opponents may assist one another on these rolls when appropriate – guards working together to cover multiple areas, or beasts utilizing pack-hunting tactics.

Like any Opposed Task, each side may have different factors affecting the difficulty and complication range of the roll.

THE STEALTH TRACK

For extended covert operations, a Stealth Track can be used to represent the current danger of exposure.

The base length of the track is 12 minus the highest Security discipline of opponents involved. The track may be lengthened or shortened based on environmental factors affecting stealth in the area – primitive security

technology, sensor interference, and availability of hiding places increase the length of the track, while flying patrols, active scanner sweeps, and biometric security measures shorten the track.

The track is filled whenever the risk of exposure increases. This represents predators getting closer, heightened awareness of the characters otherness, or additional security measures being put in place. Whenever a character fails a Task to avoid being noticed, two spaces of the track are filled in. Each time they suffer a complication while in the area, one space is filled in.

When the track is filled, the characters are exposed – the alarm is raised, the characters are revealed as aliens, or pursuing predators have caught up with the away team. The characters must fight, flee the area, or otherwise lose their pursuers anew.

OPTIONAL RULES

Noisy Combat

Prolonged combat is sure to bring additional unwanted scrutiny to the characters. Guards might call for reinforcements if they are unable to quickly subdue intruders, or additional dangerous creatures may be drawn to the area by the noise or even other fleeing creatures. Rapidly neutralizing opponents is the only way to avoid detection.

For every round of combat, one space on the stealth track is filled in.

Weapon Detectors

Highly technological areas or creatures sensitive to specific frequencies may have the ability to detect energy weapon discharges.

Attacking with an energy weapon immediately adds 1 Threat to the pool. Melee attacks, or attacks with non-energy ranged weapons are unaffected.

Alert Levels

A GM wishing to have more reactive opponents may wish to split the track into two regions at the three-quarters mark (rounding down). For a length 12 track, the lower 8 spaces form the low-alert region, while the upper 4 spaces form the high-alert region.

The split track represents a critical threshold at which the opponents become aware of the intrusion but have not yet discovered the characters themselves. For guards this may be the time at which an intruder alert is issued, while for a pre-warp civilization this may be the sudden panic brought about by widespread rumors of disguised demons or alien infiltration.

When all the slots of the low-alert segment are filled in, immediately add 1 point of Threat for each Player Character in the group.