

# Backgrounds

Characters in ***Planetfall*** come from a variety of backgrounds which bestow various Abilities and resources to them. Player Characters may select **1** Background by default and do not need to do so at Character Creation (the exception to this is the [Synthetic](#) background).

Though Backgrounds inherently suggest some parts of your character's backstory that you may wish to incorporate, it is down to you how you choose to do so.

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## Mystic Acolyte

You have been part of one or more of the [Mystic Sects](#) in your life. Perhaps you are still a devout, or perhaps you've moved on and still kept connections in your life. Whatever your connection, you're still able to draw on your past.

### Mystic Contacts (Downtime)

- During Downtime (or before a Mission) you may ask a question of the Mystic Sect you are connected to.
- You will receive an answer, if they know, or a hint as to how you might go about finding out.

### Intervention

- Once per Mission you may instantly generate 5 Energy by loudly proselytising the values of your

Mystic Sect or associated Ship Heart.

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## Federal Officer

At some point, and perhaps still, you had rank within the [Altarian Federation](#) Navy. People would have reported to you and respected you, and some of that respect and power persists with you now.

### Pull Rank (Downtime)

- During Downtime (or before a Mission) you may ply a Federal Organisation to provide you with information.
- If you're sufficiently well regarded you'll receive an answer or a hint as to how you might go about finding out.
- If you are not, you will be given an idea as to who you might need to persuade.

### Summary Punishment

Once per Mission you may call YOU: CRUNCH CHEST against a target that has directly disobeyed your order.

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## Stowaway

You're not *technically* meant to be here. For whatever reason, the ship you find yourself on didn't originally include you on the manifest, and well, now you're here. You'll have spent a lot of time getting used to the internals of your ship and perhaps know how to get places you really shouldn't.

## Vent Crawler (Downtime)

- You may choose to eavesdrop in on the Downtime briefing or question of another character who hasn't taken sufficient precautions against someone listening in.
- They will not know you have done so.

## Make Do and Mend

- Once per Mission you can immediately fix a piece of equipment that has suffered from **CRUNCH**.



## Pilot

You have been trained in how to pilot vehicles - specifically, spacecraft. Perhaps you served time in the Federal Navy, or maybe you were an independent hauler. Did you pilot vast ships through the stars, or a sleek fighter between asteroids? However you learned, these skills have stuck with you and are applicable beyond the cockpit.

### I'll Drive

- You are capable of piloting or driving a functioning transport.
- You can use this in uptime or downtime and means you don't need to find or employ a pilot for a vehicle you may have access to.

### Evasive Manoeuvres

- Once per Encounter you may call **MISSED** to a YOU call targeting you regardless of whether you are in cover.



## Scientist

You are skilled in research and plumbing the depths of reality to make sense of it. Perhaps you were employed by a corporation to come up with new improved mechanisms, perhaps you were funded by a planetary governor as a biologist to examine plants, or maybe you were a contractor for the [Elegy](#) concocting new means to manage targets in High Decay environments. Whatever your training, you have a mind for research and can apply this to uncover secrets of the universe.

### Laboratory Analysis (Downtime)

- During downtime you may procure a laboratory to perform analysis on a sample given to you to answer a question about it.
- If what you are trying to find out is knowable scientifically, you will receive the answer or a hint as to the next step in finding it out.

### Field Analysis

- Once per Mission you may ask the Ref three questions about the capabilities of a creature you are able to study.
- This could be used to glean combat capabilities from afar, or aid investigation into how a creature acted.



## Cybernetics

At some point you gained implants that bestow a minor superhuman ability on you. These don't make you a Synth or a Various (far from it) but give you a small advantage over the unaltered.

With all technology, interaction with the Decay is risky, and those with Cybernetic implants will find these impaired by Decay itself.

Discuss with the GMs an enhancement you wish to have installed. You gain a Minor and a Major effect from this at the penalty of taking a **CRUNCH** on the relevant part of your body whenever you suffer from **ZAP**.

*(OC Note: players with this Background are reminded to conduct themselves with particular sensitivity with regards to real world disabilities and prosthetics)*

### Minor Enhancement

- You may utilise your Minor Enhancement once per Encounter.

Example enhancements:

- Cybernetic Knee Replacements - call PING to STRIKEDOWN.
- Cybernetic Wrist Braces - call PING to CRUNCH by melee on your lower arms.
- Cybernetic Infrared Vision - call SCAN: CREATURES.

### Major Enhancement

- Once per Mission you may utilise your major enhancement.

### Example enhancements:

- Cybernetic Knee Replacements - you launch into the air! Call VWORP as you fly through the air, reposition, and crash land calling MASS STRIKEDOWN.
- Cybernetic Wrist Braces - for the next 30s take any call that hits your lower arms as if it had hit your weapon.
- Cybernetic Infrared Vision - gain 1 Energy per BEEP response when you call SCAN: CREATURES.



## Startouched

“Startouched” is a broad umbrella term that describes those who have a particular affinity with the universe. For some this manifests as a feeling of connection to the world when travelling the stars, others report visions and hearing things they could not possibly know about. As far as can be determined, those with such gifts are selected randomly, and whether those gifts manifest from an early or late age is indiscriminate. You are one such Startouched. When you discovered this and how is entirely up to you, but your gifts will always be a part of you once discovered.

### Hearing Things (Downtime)

- During Downtime (or before a Mission) you may hear things relevant to understanding the world around you.
- You cannot pick or choose what you're hearing about, but should be provided with something relevant to the aftermath of the Mission you have undertaken or may become relevant during the Mission you are about to undertake.

### Impossible Knowledge

- Once per Mission you may call TIME FREEZE and explain that you impossibly received visions of this exact moment and may describe one (plausible) preparation you have made to advantage yourself.
- This may be, for instance, packing an item you would have otherwise left behind that you need right now, or perhaps if you're setting an ambush you knew to leave a trap **just** where an

enemy is now walking.

- In the middle of a combat encounter, this explanation should take at most 30s and result in at most a combat call being made or resisted so as to not overly interrupt the flow of an encounter.
- Outside of combat this may be more elaborate at Ref discretion.



## Spectre

You are a member of the [Elegy](#), the organisation tasked with removing elements from the galaxy that would otherwise cause *considerable* issues for galactic peace. The organisation, which runs on a strict moral code, will expect assignments to be completed and reported back to superiors but has considerable resources at its disposal to assist its members.

## Contract

- At all times you will have a Contract to complete: killing a named target.
  - *OC Note: Elegy Contracts will be NPCs unless explicitly opted into by Player Characters.*
- You are expected to be working toward this goal though it is understood that it may take several missions in order to be performed, and to be performed according to the Elegy's moral code.
- You will always have a Contract as a Spectre and should ask for one if you don't.
- Each completed Contract will grant you a boon to be discussed with the GMs.



- *Warning: If you abandon your commitment to the Elegy, there will be consequences which may include having a Contract out on your own head.*

## Elegy Resources (Downtime)

- During Downtime (or before a Mission) you may request specialist equipment from the Elegy to aid in your Contract.
- This could be a higher power weapon of some description, poison, or documents that could help with pinpointing your target.



## Dynast

You are a high ranking member of the [Altarian Dynasty](#) - someone who can trace their inheritance to the elite of Alta, and thus is in line to the inherited power of the Federal Seat of Alta itself. Your word carries weight, even in the borderlands, and you strictly outrank any other Dynasts of lower order of succession.

*You may choose to play a low ranking Dynast without this background but will of course not reap any of the benefits.*

## Grapevine (Downtime)

- During Downtime (or before a Mission), you may ask to hear what rumours are floating around higher echelons.
- You may ask the Ref a specific question and get an understanding of what those in power feel about a situation, or an idea of why that information isn't being freely discussed.

## Weight of Worlds

- Once per Mission, or during Downtime, you may press your position and power in order to leverage NPCs into listening to you and following the course of action you propose.
  - This will be most effective on Federal NPCs (especially lower order Dynasts) and not so effective on NPCs with no interest in the Altarian Federation's rules.
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## Explorer

Your roots are in exploring the great unknown. Perhaps you're skilled in excursions into unmapped areas of planets, perhaps you're a professional recon scout, or perhaps you're just a really skilled caver. However your interest in exploring, you've gained valuable skills that aid you in the dangerous outdoors.

### Favoured Terrain

- Pick a favoured terrain type (e.g. Forest, Cave, Swampland).
- When you are in your favoured terrain you gain an extra use of MISSED per cover.

## Cartographer (Downtime)

- During Downtime you are able to provide detailed maps of areas you have visited during the Mission that can be handed over to various factions e.g. to aid future Missions.
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## Pirate

In any vast galaxy, there are always going to be those avoiding federal regulations and looking to make a little extra on the side. Like you! Perhaps you were a smuggler, or perhaps you were more of a full time ship-hijacking dignitary-ransoming scourge of the space fare-ways. Whether your piratical days are behind you, or an active part of your motivation today, your underhanded tactics will give you an advantage.

## A Little Something For Me (Downtime)

- During Downtime you are able to push for a little extra from your Mission.
- Perhaps you're able to get a little more of a reward, or perhaps you know where you might be able to sell that strange shell you picked up on the black market.
- Discuss with the Ref if you're not sure on ideas, but you should always be able to either get a little something for yourself, or get an idea of why you're being blocked from doing so.

## Fighting Dirty

- Once per Encounter you may call YOU: CRUNCH LEG at someone suffering from STRIKEDOWN.



## Non-Human

The [Altarian Federation](#) spans multitudes of Star Systems and encompasses all sorts of lifeforms of infinite varieties: each having evolved to match the whole spectrum of environmental conditions. Though human beings certainly are the most populous among spacefarers, non-human sapients who travel the stars often have their own innate advantages that come in very handy when surviving on unknown worlds.

When you select this background, discuss with the GMs what sort of non-humanoid you are and the nature of your species. You gain a Minor and Major Advantage at the penalty of a Drawback.

*OC: You may play a non-human character without this background, but your features will be only superficial rather than providing a mechanical benefit.*

## Minor Advantage

- A Minor Advantage is a passive bonus of the features of your species. It won't confer any calls, but will give you a general advantage of some description.

Example Minor Advantages:

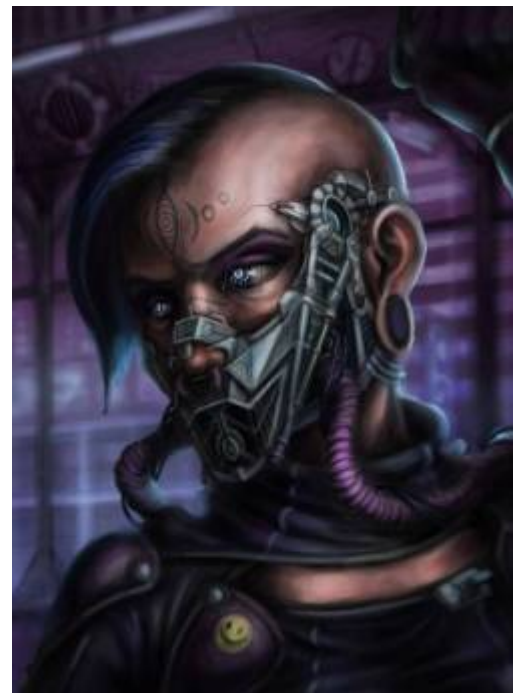
- Retractable Claws - you may wield a dagger in either hand that cannot be disarmed from you. If your claw is subject to **CRUNCH** then take this as a CRUNCH on the relevant arm instead.
- Feline Hearing - you are capable of hearing further and more detailed. You may apply this to eavesdropping skills to enhance what you're hearing.
- Cold Blood - your default death count is increased by 5s. This increase is also multiplied by being Stabilised.

## Major Advantage

- A Major Advantage is a very powerful feature of your species that may be activated once ever and should be roughly the equivalent of an "extra life".

Example Major Advantages:

- Sticky - you may reactively call **PULL** when struck with **PUSH** by melee.
- Thermal Vision - you may spend 1 Energy to call **SCAN: ORGANICS**.
- Binary Vascular System - you may suffer an additional Severe Injury before you die.



## Various

Part machine, part organic, you are one of the respected (or feared) cadre of cyborgs known as the

Various. In exchange for an increased risk to the Decay, you are able to assimilate mechanical and biological components into yourself to unleash their power and evolve your abilities.

## Various Abilities

- You may select Abilities from the Various Ability Tree.

## Assimilation

- You **must** select the [Assimilator Energy Regimen](#).



## Synthetic

*OC: This is the only background that must be taken at Character Creation if you wish to have it.*

Synthetic lifeforms - otherwise known as Advanced Artificial Intelligences - are completely illegal and should never be created. Such systems are sufficiently complex that they pose an immediate threat to life as we know it due to the risk of inviting Decay. Anyone aware of a Synthetic lifeform of some sort should immediately report it for immediate destruction, and should avoid all interaction with it. Obviously, you should not be a Synthetic Lifeform.

With that out of the way, taking the Synthetic Background allows you access to Synthetic Abilities and is the only way to access that.

## Synthetic Abilities

- You may select Abilities from the Synthetic Ability Tree.

## Synthetic Guise

- You are able to appear like a cybernetically enhanced humanoid to disguise your synthetic nature.
- You may choose to reveal your Synthetic nature as you wish, but be aware that doing so may invite immediate destruction.

From:

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Last update: **2022/01/08 15:51**

