

AspExxpo

Initial Brief

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>>> Incoming Transmission
>>> Source Identifier: Aspexx Marketing Corps #Starlight Ebbing
>>> Destination Identifier: TE3-Firebrand#Her Glorious Command#Muse
IX#Endeavour#Unquiet Journey
>>> Subject: Volunteers Sought For Corporate Marketing Opportunity
>>> Message Begins
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Despite the challenging times, we are pleased to confirm that this year's AspExxpo is going ahead! Graciously hosted by Mytene's finest convention space, Aspexx will demonstrate its latest cutting edge technologies to the whole system's enquiring minds.

Due to most of the Aspexx Marketing Corps being centrally galactically located, we are looking for capable volunteers to augment our marketing, customer feedback and resource management activities during the Exxpo. People skills and crowd control skills a plus.

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>>> Message Ends
>>> End Transmission
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Characters

- [Misty Brook](#) - Iain
- [Roaming Vendor](#) - Phil

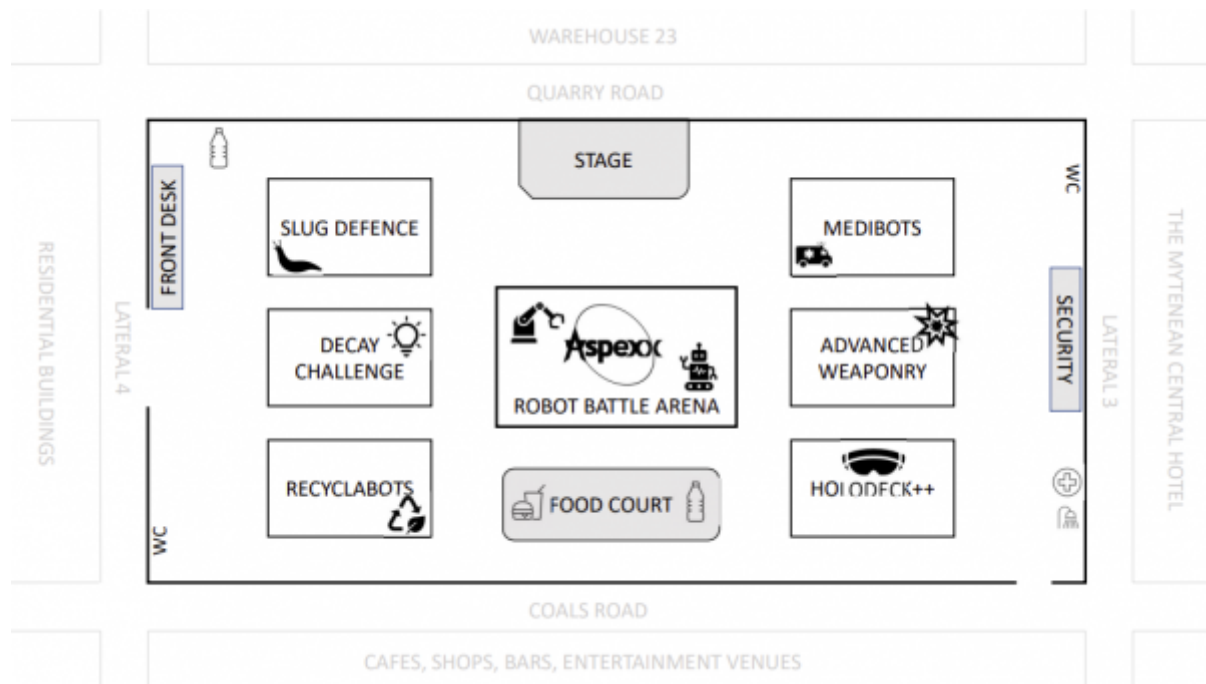
Summary

- Before arriving, Roaming Vendor has a dream of two computer screens with symbols flowing up them. Both computers seem malicious but not coordinated.
- The party are hired by Optimal Positioning, currently the Acting Director of Marketing for Aspexx in the Keter System, to help gauge consumer enthusiasm and feedback for the various Aspexx technologies on display at the Exxpo. They are briefed on the fact that this Exxpo is sadly reduced in scope from what it would normally have been - not held on a bespoke Aspexx ship but instead in an exhibition centre on Mytene, and featuring only projects with active prototypes and development within the system. But it still forms a showcase for some cutting edge technologies, and their job is to get out there and see what the customer base thinks, while assisting with any other issues that may arise during the day.
- There are 6 permanent exhibition stands in the hall, which the player party work their way around:
 - 'Medibots' - Advanced medical robots which can perform minor surgeries and HEAL subjects. Unfortunately, these have been hacked and start attacking bystanders. The party subdue them and find the robots' data ports have had memory chips inserted which have corrupted their programming.

- 'Advanced Weaponry' - inside a holodeck, it is possible to test out prototype weapons on a variety of holodeck-generated enemies from across the Keter system (and from a few videogames). While the holy flail is very effective against Spectres (Fantasy), the mini gun, healing packs and 'Tesla Claw' are the most appealing to the party members. Misty Brook discovers the prototype energy drink 'Boostexx', which grants an EVERYONE SLOW on drinking, followed 30s later by an EFFECT: LETHARGIC for the drinker. She drinks at least five.
- 'Recyclabots' - Little robots designed to efficiently dismantle and recycle all non-organic materials within a defined area, these robots start redefining the area by recycling the boundary ropes while their operator is distracted. The party sacrifices nearby junk, maps, NDAs, and even clothing to distract the robots until they can subdue them. They immediately suspect hacking, but on closer inspection it turns out the robots had instead just accidentally been misprogrammed to recycle what was inside the boundaries *inclusive* of the boundaries.
- 'Decay Challenge' - An area the size of a single stand contains Decay. The operator is elusive as to how this has been achieved. The purpose of the stand is to give people a chance to try their hand at 'being an Aspexx engineer' - some bioluminescent material is provided, along with other simple components, and people must try to make a torch that will not attract the Decay. Misty Brook enters the Decay area and her in-built weaponry soon attracts a DRAIN and breaks her arms.
- 'Holodeck++' - A 'more immersive' holodeck has been developed, which the user can think themselves out of by thinking (and believing) 'I am in a simulation and I wish to leave.' This has the downside that if the user refuses to leave and the operator has to pull them out, they receive a CURSE. The Holodeck is demonstrating its immersiveness by simulating the whole Exxpo and everything in it, in lifelike detail. A previous group has made the stupid decision to use the Holodeck within the simulation, and use the Holodeck within *that* simulation, and so on. The operator cannot pull them out at this point without mentally scarring them for life. The party is sent in to retrieve the idiot party. 5 levels down, they locate them in what is by this point a strange pixelated landscape that no longer even resembles an exhibition hall. After a lot of trying to convince people they are in a simulation and/or the players are actually their subconscious talking to them, they manage to pull the other party out suffering only minor delusions as to what is real and what is not.
- 'Slug Defence' - a new kind of metal salt has been discovered which the Mytenean cave slugs really don't like. It forms an effective boundary around two slugs on display. Unfortunately, one of them is a Hypnosis Cave Slug and it drags bystanders into the display. The party deal with this without murdering any slugs and suggest to the operator that an additional boundary, 10m further out from the edge, would be a wise idea.
- In the middle of the day, proceedings are disrupted when the definitely-going-to-be-uplifting keynote speech given by Melodious Solution, Chief Mobility Mystic, is interrupted by static, flashing lights, upsetting imagery on screen and finally the Card Table hacker collective logo. The party resolves the situation by literally pulling the plug on the broadcast, before saving the Chief Mobility Mystic from an overly-persistent journalist from *Spaceships Monthly* who is convinced that the Chief Mobility Mystic must know what's going on with the Orion Gate (and must tell their readers).
- At the end of the day, the climactic event is the judging of the 'Robot Battle', which participants enter with their handmade robots. The party, now alert to hacking possibilities, try to scan the robots for evidence of hacking but unfortunately break Roaming Vendor's communicator in attempting to do so. Sure enough, the robots are hacked. Or two of them are, anyway - the one belonging to Hand Owning is just outright programmed that way and starts off by ZAPping the other two, which promptly surrender to it before turning on the bystanders. After dealing with

the outbreak of robot violence, the party find small memory chips inserted into the two other robots, similar to what was done with the medibots, but Hand Owning appears to have escaped.

- Roaming Vendor, however, goes to chat to the Security team (taking along a nice bottle of alcohol which just happens to be the security chief's favourite) to ask about possibilities for getting his hands on any of those prototype weapons in the Advanced Weaponry display. He gets an invite to come see the lab where they're being developed - though also a hint that they might not be as problem-free as their holodeck counterparts - but also hears that a lead has been found on the hacking carried out at the Keynote. This hack appears to have come from outside the exhibition centre, and has been traced to a cyber cafe across the road.
- The party proceeds to the cyber cafe, where they find multiple inept hackers who have no idea that any other hackers are here. The party impersonate yet more inept hackers (including getting the Aspexx sign outside the expo to say 'Assexx') and infiltrate successfully enough to work out that a) none of these people were competent enough and b) someone else has been routing traffic through this cafe. They find a staircase at the back and follow it upstairs to the sentry-turret-defended room of the very paranoid Cool Neon - a room very full of scribbled notes about ways to hack the Exppo. The party drag her back to Aspexx Security, having done much more than they were originally hired to do.



Aftermath

- The party fully debrief Optimal Positioning on the events of the day, and Optimal is incredibly grateful for their many and various efforts.
- An internal Aspexx security investigation concludes that Cool Neon and Hand Owning, both members of the Card Table hacker collective, were engaged in a 'friendly' competition to see who could take over the most systems at the Exppo. The intent appeared to be to settle a debate about whether more could be achieved from outside or inside the exhibition centre, while also taking the opportunity to hack / steal from / mess with Aspexx. Optimal forwards these findings to the party to provide them with some closure; other Aspexx employees may also be aware of the investigation's findings but they are otherwise not widely publicised.
- Publicly, Aspexx cast doubt on the Exhibition Centre's security procedures given the city of Mytenean's complex physical network, while eliding any mention of the memory cards so easily

inserted into Aspexx's equipment.

- Misty Brook signs up as a test subject for ongoing trials of Boostexx onboard the *Starlight Ebbing*. Through carefully placed comments and feedback, as well as the unique research opportunity of being the only individual the Boostologists have met who has consumed such a great quantity of Boostexx in such a short period of time, Misty is able to persuade the team to focus their energies on taming the drink's addictiveness while emphasising that delicious Boostexx flavour. She also suggests mixing in some bioluminescent algae for that extra sparkle. The end result is a whole range of formulations of Boostexx with varying flavour profiles and potential side-effects: Boostexx Maxx (the original, addictive version), Boostexx Lite, Boostexx Sport, Boostexx Health, Boostexx Shine, Boostexx Kidz, Boostexx Boost, Boostexx X... The names are still subject to Aspexx Branding Approval, which ones eventually go to market are still subject to Aspexx Marketing Approval, and whether they can be sold at all is still subject to Galactic Cooperation Food and Drugs Board Approval - but the latter is now much more likely to succeed than it was before Misty's intervention (the remaining obstacle is simply that the GCFDB likes to be thorough so the turnaround is a bit slow).
- Roaming Vendor leverages the opportunities they made at the Exxpo to go on a tour of the *Starlight Ebbing's* advanced weapons laboratories. The tour is careful to ensure that any information shared stays within Roaming's security clearance, but through incisive question-asking and making a clear show of being engaged and interested with the work being done, he is able to ingratiate himself with some of the staff there. In the middle of the tour he runs into Misty again, who is hanging out with her dads Shady and Babbling; Misty makes introductions and puts in some good words for Roaming, further cementing the relationship. By the end of the tour it's clear to Roaming that the version of the minigun they tried in the holodeck was certainly 'aspirational' - the current prototypes in the lab suffer from some serious overheating and jamming defects, which alongside the generally unwieldy and questionable-to-carry-in-inhabited-areas nature of the weapon make it not currently practical for actual use. The lab itself is fascinating though, and he leaves with a good rapport established with the staff there.
- TODO: Roaming Vendor's final tinkering.

Consequences

All Characters

- +3 Clout with Aspexx or +1 Clout with someone else.

Misty Brook

- Boostexx is now closer to the mass market, but is not yet widely available pending various approvals. However, you have easy access to it through the connections you have established with the development team. You may use an appropriate flavour of Boostexx (i.e. not Maxx, but perhaps Lite or Sport or Health or something else, your choice how you want to flavour this) in your Tactical Recovery roleplay. (This does not have any mechanical differences.) Any excessive Boostexx cravings from the adventure have now subsided - you are free to establish the nature of Misty's predilection for Boostexx going forwards.

Roaming Vendor

- +1 Clout with the Aspexx Advanced Weapons Laboratory Staff on the *Starlight Ebbing*.
 - N.B. This does not stack with other Aspexx Clout, but is much more specialised.
- TBC: Tinkering / Mark II results.

[mission](#), [misty brook](#), [roaming vendor](#)

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