

Procedure

Initial Brief

First up is *Procedure*, a Medium Threat mission for Gathering Flow and Stellar Glory. Your new boss has a task for you. Report to the Starlight Ebbing for mission briefing.

Characters

- [Gathering Flow](#) - Phil
- [Stellar Glory](#) - Tamsin

Summary

- Gathering Flow and Stellar Glory are set a task by Melodious Solution: to go and convince two of the highest-powered Startouched in the Keter System to join in with the procedure to create an interstellar gate. They are told that this procedure requires a number of Startouched to make it happen - some lower-powered, who Aspexx is confident it can recruit without help, and three high-powered Startouched: Gathering Flow herself (who has implicitly already signed up), plus X. Worshipful Portent, Chief Mystic of *Her Glorious Command*, and Wildcard Gilded, leader of the bandits on Ace's World. Given Aspexx's support of Ace in the recent war between Ace and HGC, Melodious Solution feels the best chance of success with both these potential participants is if they are approached by people with a quasi-independent position, not someone whose life's work is Aspexx.
- The party agree to do this, and are also asked to a) get the participants to sign NDAs as soon as possible - they are explicitly *not* authorised to share details of the procedure with anyone except direct participants - and b) see if they can check whether both participants feel their ship heart might be able to save them if everything went wrong (i.e. do they have the [Reincarnation](#) skill), since this procedure carries some inherent risk.
- Stellar Glory spends a little time tinkering with a kind of black box recorder, hooking it up to herself such that if she meets some terrible fate, the truth of what they know (or might find out) about what Aspexx are doing will be broadcast to the system.
- The party head first to *Her Glorious Command*, finding X. Worshipful Portent in conversation with the ship's captain and the ship heart itself. Worshipful Portent does not oppose the idea of the procedure on principle, but does ask for guarantees regarding no harm coming to her or her ship heart. The ship heart, however, overhearing all of this, has additional demands. Her Glorious Command appears to still be fixated on learning as much about the powers of ship hearts as possible, and upon hearing that the process to create an interstellar gate involves a ship heart, it is very interested to know if ship hearts are capable of things like this, and if so how. It only supports Worshipful Portent leaving (and it's clear that Worshipful Portent will do as it wishes) if it can learn what she learns about all of this.
- The party communicate with Melodious Solution who, after a futile attempt to get Altarians to admit she's higher ranking than any of them, eventually agrees to Her Glorious Command knowing details of the procedure so long as it agrees to be bound by the same NDA as Worshipful Portent.

- Satisfied with this, the party leave Worshipful Portent preparing to go to the *Starlight Ebbing* when called, and head to Ace's World.
- They land safely on Ace's World but en route to the bandit settlement, Gilt, are accosted by goosehawks, a decayed gun battery (surrounded by decayed razormonkeys) and finally some artillery shelling from the walls of the bandit settlement itself (plus some undecayed razormonkeys, and a few pit traps). The party force their way through all of this and insist that the slightly surprised bandits on the walls take them to see Wildcard Gilded.
- When they reach the centre of Gilt, they find Wildcard Gilded talking to the ship heart (also called Gilt) about the fate of an Altarian prisoner under guard near by. The story here appears to be that Her Glorious Command sent a party including a mystic to convince Gilt to come join its glorious investigation into ship heart power. Gilt refused, whereupon HGC ordered its party to kill Wildcard Gilded, removing the dubious human influence. Gilt refused even harder, the Altarians were defeated, and now Wildcard Gilded is back. Which seems to answer the question about Reincarnation.
- Once again, the party explain their errand and try to work out what would convince Wildcard Gilded to help. In many ways, they are a simpler challenge than Worshipful Portent, since what they want is ways to fight Ace. They initially ask for Aspexx to cease supporting Ace's organisation, but Melodious Solution refuses to agree to this. A conversation between the party, Wildcard Gilded and Gilt then yields this second set of demands: two high-tech planet-to-orbit shuttles, one fully-trained Aspexx medic for a year and one fully-trained Aspexx mechanic for a year, to live with the bandits and teach them. Melodious Solution agrees to this.
- The party return to the *Starlight Ebbing* and share the news of their success with Melodious Solution, who is pleased. Apparently a little more relaxed now she has everything she needs to complete the procedure, she lets slip a little more information that the players were previously unaware of - namely, that the procedure is less 'dangerous' to the Startouched involved and more 'normally lethal,' due to complex metaphysical reasons involving energy release and Decay which she waves aside as an inevitable consequence for the sake of creating a gate. The party is a little taken aback by this, and start questioning why it has to be this way, whether there are not other options that would prevent everyone who takes part dying, etc. Melodious Solution says she is not an expert on the underpinning ship heart theory, but she knows that this way works, she believes Aspexx will have found the most efficient way to achieve splitting a ship heart in two to make a gate, and she cannot support experimentation on the basis of theories unless the party happen to have an entire spare unattuned ship heart and three powerful Startouched to spare? Oh, they don't? Well, then she will carry on with the procedure in the form which she knows works.

Aftermath

- Stellar Glory goes straight to all the Startouched already recruited to carry out the procedure (including Wildcard Gilded and Worshipful Portent) and tells them what she has learned, including how they're all probably going to die. Strictly speaking, this does not actually break her Aspexx NDA, since she is allowed to discuss the procedure with those who will take part.
- What she does next, however, absolutely does. Once off the *Starlight Ebbing*, she reaches out to the hacker collective Card Table with the information she has, particularly the parts that will provoke the most outrage, and tells them that this knowledge needs to be shared widely so Aspexx can't suppress it. She provides select parts of the black box recording as evidence, including some of the final conversation with Melodious Solution.
- She also shares the ship heart knowledge she has gained with her friends in the divine sect and asks them to protect her as best they can from Aspexx, before using her Intervention to attempt to hide her actions and location. She also sends Aspexx her resignation letter, in case

they were unsure.

- Gathering Flow attends the later discussion organised by Delicate Harmony (see [aftermath](#)) and discreetly corroborates the information that Stellar Glory sent out. She also reaches out carefully to the leadership of factions she is in contact with - notably Zeitgeist, Firebrand and Botanists - to share the same information with them, as well as a concern that reconnecting a system where Aspexx's IP and reputational risk are now at significant hazard may push Aspexx into doing terrible things to maintain its monopoly.
- She also attempts to find a way to leave Hive IV even more alone than it already is, including contacting Endeavour to request an intervention to move Hive IV further away from the pentagonal gate entrance there. Endeavour is pleased by the consideration shown to Hive IV but says this is not necessary - Hive IV is already well-defended from anything that may come through the gate by all the same protections it has always had (a ring of Decay, plus the ocean, plus its own creatures' ability to fight), and it does not feel the gate itself to be an enemy.

Consequences

- The general outlines of the Aspexx gate-creation procedure - especially all the parts that involve potentially sacrificing people - are now widely accessible to anyone within reach of the hackers' information networks in the Keter System. This is not quite enough information to enable any group of Startouched to do the procedure without any further guidance, but it is enough to show the rough principles of how the procedure works and, more critically, the danger that it poses to those who do it.
- Public debate starts to swirl on the more outward-looking planets and moons about the possibility of a gate being recreated, whether Aspexx have the right to make these sacrifices, and what Aspexx will do to the person who leaked this information...

Gathering Flow

- Has not broken the Aspexx contract or NDA (that Aspexx know), so retains her contractual +3 clout with Aspexx for now and gains an additional permanent +3 from this mission.

Stellar Glory

- Loses the +3 clout with Aspexx from being contracted to work for them, plus any other clout with Aspexx she previously had
- -10 clout with Aspexx
- +3 clout with Card Table hacker collective
- Now has a bulky black box recorder which records the last 2-3 days of audio around Stellar Glory, and which will automatically wide-broadcast these in the event of her death. This still uses a significant amount of strength/carrying ability, but the Mark II one can be left at home if Stellar Glory does not wish to take it on a particular trip.

[mission](#), [gathering flow](#), [stellar glory](#)

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