

Rose "Ace" Dakota

611

Merciless Pilot

"If they're in your sights, you fire!"

Appearance: Rose is trim and athletic, with a sleepy face that belies her killer instinct. When engaged in mercenary work, she wears her old pilot's uniform.

Roleplaying: Constantly gauging the talents and abilities of those around her, Rose pesters people with questions about experience, challenges them to competitions, and otherwise tests their abilities. She is confident, in your face, and ready to prove her mettle at a moment's notice.

Personality: Cold and merciless, Rose does what she's paid to do without question. She lets others worry about ethical implications.

Motivation: Rose works to improve her reputation as a mercenary and to size up potential future employees for when she forms her own mercenary company

Background: A star pupil in all disciplines at the military academy, Rose excelled as a fighter pilot. During training exercises and her initial forays in the field, she set new records that are still on the books today. However, early in her career, Rose noticed that some allied ships were behaving strangely. When she could not confirm they had not been compromised, Rose opened fire and destroyed them. Later, diagnostics of the wreckage confirmed that the pilots had in fact been spies, and their ships had been outfitted with unlicensed weapons. Even so, Rose was politely discharged for destroying apparently friendly ships, during negotiations, on a hunch, with no orders.

Traits: (MN) Adventurer, aggressive, military, pilot

The Muse

612

Seductive Hacker

"Of course I can get the Red Mars Corporate files on Project Haley for you, darling. Shall we sit by the fire and share a drink first?"

Appearance: The Muse is utterly gorgeous, devastatingly fashionable, flirtatious, and promiscuous. She changes her hair, eyes, skin, and even body shape as it suits her, although she prefers unnatural colors such as neon green hair and copper skin. The Muse can accomplish all this because she's just a virtual creation.

Roleplaying: She is always playful and seductive. She always mixes business with pleasure and prefers to negotiate in bed in a secluded mountain cabin, or lying on the beach.

Personality: In real life, the Muse is an average person with a bureaucratic job that grants access to sensitive information. In the virtual world, the Muse is flirty and carefree, although she does have a strong sense of justice.

Motivation: She just wants to enjoy her fantasies (she has many) while aiding others in the real world.

Background: The person behind the Muse is shrouded in mystery; age, gender, and location are all unknown. What is known is that the Muse appeared on the galactic network about four years ago, offering information to adventurers that were seeking justice. She asks for no money in return, only that those she helps indulge in her fantasies with her on occasion. She is a master hacker and can get into almost any system.

Traits: (WC) Beautiful, business, charming, criminal, mysterious

Reverend Zedekiah

613

Post-Apocalyptic Preacher

"Repent, sinners! For I am the Reverend Zedekiah, the Gun Hand of God, and I will wreak his terrible vengeance upon ye!"

Appearance: A lean and haggard older man, he wears a priest's collar under his patchwork armor. Crosses are carved into the handles of his pistols.

Roleplaying: He quotes violent Bible verses that nobody's ever heard before, and has a penchant for hard liquor.

Personality: At least half-crazed, he drifts across the wastelands, looking for sinners to redeem, or at least to send to their final resting place.

Motivation: He lives to give sinners a chance to convert, although sometimes only a brief chance. If they don't, he's more than comfortable sending them to their maker.

Background: Nobody really knows where Zedekiah (Hebrew for "Justice of God") came from. He claims to have once been a sinner, and his excellent combat skills attest to at least one sin he's familiar with. He shows up in a town and starts preaching from his book, claiming that he's sent to give people one last chance to redeem themselves. He's subjective in his judgments: In one town, he'll tear up a bar for gambling, but walk right past the bordello; in the next town, he may reverse that. But he has no problem with alcohol, and regularly takes a pull from his flask. Regardless of what people may think, wherever he goes, he usually uncovers something wicked going on, and puts a stop to it.

Traits: (KS) Adventurer, aggressive, mysterious, outdoorsman, religious, warrior, zealot

Lieutenant Ulit Bayen

614

Poised Sniper

"No, he's not too far away to hit. See that satellite? That's too far. He's practically up my ass, he's so close."

Appearance: All hard edges and taut muscles, Ulit has white-blond hair and pale blue eyes. Her posture is erect and alert, and even when out of uniform, her clothes are practical and military in style.

Roleplaying: Ulit has a foul mouth that seems at odds with her cool, poised demeanor. She speaks only when she must.

Personality: Lt. Bayen doesn't "get" people, so she's made herself into a weapon. She prefers to be alone, scouting kill sites and stalking her targets, but she parties hard after missions. When she lets her hair down, she becomes an entirely different person.

Motivation: Ulit is the best at what she does, and means to stay that way. She wants to be known throughout the galaxy as the ultimate sniper.

Background: Raised as a space marine brat, Lt. Bayen joined the military as soon as she was old enough. Her marksmanship put her at the top of her class, but her personality kept her from starting out as an officer—and as a loner, she doesn't much care about rank. She lives to shoot—for the clean, pure, line that is a solo mission accomplished flawlessly from insertion to extraction. Ulit can bag targets in zero-gravity, while firing from and at moving spaceships, on high and low gravity worlds—anywhere, anytime.

Traits: (MR) Military, stealthy, warrior

Kevin Cooper

615

Deep Space Explorer

"Just go do your damn job, or at least get out of the way so I can do mine."

Appearance: Though he's well into retirement age, Kevin's physique would make a man 40 years his junior jealous. He crops his receding blond hair close to his skull and wears a military uniform in a style last produced 30 years ago.

Roleplaying: Kevin rarely speaks, even when spoken to. If prodded to share his insights, he does so, but his speech is an unfiltered stream of consciousness, rife with unnecessary commentary on surroundings and unrelated tangents on matters that most would consider personal.

Personality: An explorer at heart, Kevin is curious, bold, and fearless. He is precise and careful and tries to quantify things exactly.

Motivation: Kevin wants to prove his worth to military command despite his age and communication handicaps, so that he can reenlist and go on another long-term exploration mission.

Background: Recently returned from one of the first long-term exploration missions with a decade's worth of scientific readings, Kevin is a military hero. Age, outdated skills, and the impact of long-term isolation on his psyche all combined to force Kevin into retirement against his will. He faces a world that he doesn't understand, people with whom he can't communicate, and an aimless future. Desperate to reenlist and return to his mission of exploration, Kevin is trying to prove he still has what it takes.

Traits: (MN) *Adventurer, eccentric, military, pilot, scientist*

Katrina Impulse

616

Aggressive Journalist

"So what you're saying is that this is where you perform unsanctioned experiments on people from 'lost' colony ships? Um, why are you pointing that at me?"

Appearance: Katrina is a young, perky woman who wears trendy clothes that hug her curves and is constantly plugged into devices that stream information to her. She's always moving and appears slightly distracted.

Roleplaying: She gets right into people's faces with the cameras running. She can be quite pleasant, but quickly moves into probing, direct questions if she believes that her interviewee is hiding something. Eventually, she gets red-faced and accusatory if her interviewee doesn't crack first.

Personality: When not investigating, Katrina has a fun, bubbly personality. She holds strong opinions on many topics and loves to share them, but gets adversarial if people don't agree with her.

Motivation: She wants to expose all the ills of the universe, no matter what the cost.

Background: Katrina is a news journalist who specializes in uncovering unethical and illegal acts. Unfortunately, she tends to get too attached to her stories and, when going undercover to expose something, often outs herself due to her righteous hot-headedness. Fortunately, the universe is a big place, and when Katrina inevitably gets fired she can always find another network willing to take a chance on her. She is a font of information for adventurers, who often have to bail her out of trouble.

Traits: (WC) *Aggressive, political, zealot*



Kevin Cooper

Artist: Chris Reach