

XENOMORPH

PHENOMENON 2012



CAI GENTLE

SHUTTLE PILOT
RSV SHACKLETON

BY JOHN & PHILIP HUGHES

Cai Gentle

Shuttle pilot and cargo handler/courier

Life is precious and rare. Space is a vast emptiness, a cold eternal darkness. Humanity is clustered together in tiny groups, connected by thin bright lines across impossible distance.

I make those lines. As a pilot, I join lives together across the empty silence. I unite the asteroid miners, the survey teams, the sun divers with their home on Shackleton.

Everybody knows Cai Gentle. People smile and greet me on every level of Shackleton. I am friendly, a good listener, practical-minded. I can be assertive when I need to be, but I try to deal fairly in every situation. I tend to take the long view. People feel they can trust me.

I am one of the star-born, and have lived all my life in deep space. All that I know is the Company. I was born to it, I live to it, I will die within its sheltering arms. It is my mother and father, my work, my country, my home and my single passion.

The universe is a puzzle, subject to mind and full of joy and beauty and wonder.

I am full of hope.

I don't think much about the past, or dwell on memories of my family. They died when I was young. I have always lived on Company stations or colonies: a few years here, a few years there. I have never been greenside: the very thought terrifies me.

I don't think much about the future. I guess I'm content to be where I am, to be doing what I'm doing. I am blessed by circumstance.

I don't think much about people, or relationships with them. I guess I'm a bit of a loner. People like me; they call me by my first name. I like people, I enjoy company, but I'm not usually preoccupied by sex or romance, not even Immersive.

I share the warmth of lives lived full, but mostly stand apart.

Yet I am driven by my passions, which can come from nowhere to possess me like a demon. I am driven to obsession, to secret, all-consuming romantic affairs. Again and again. They endure for a time, and then they end. People move on. People *disappear*.



Cai: light eclipsed by shadow, innocence betrayed.

Keywords: Innocence, Darkness, Unflappable, Pilot, Paramedic.

Female, Star-born (Corporation citizenship), appears to be in mid twenties. A Company brat, competent, well-liked, but a bit docile.

Strength: Faith in Others, Optimism, Resourceful.

Flaw: Passivity, Obedience, Conformity.

Anger: Selfish or antagonistic behaviour. People who don't follow the rules.

Passion: The Company. Wellbeing of Shackleton crew. The human frontier.

Fear: Loss of structure. Not living up to others expectations.

Phobia: Violence.

Days till end of mission rotation: NA.

Company Voting Shares: Nil (Homestation Residency).

Expected mission bonus: NA.

TWITCH FACTOR: 20%

Lovers. They think they choose me. They approach, and if the fever is upon me, I respond. Always in secret. Outsiders never guess.

Steve Pearson was a recent lover. We worked together for months without a second glance, but then we fell together in passion. Steve had a partner, **Iriaka Conrad**, but they weren't close. Steve was in security; he was always very cautious when we met. And then, six weeks ago, Steve died in an airlock accident. I was sad; everyone was sad. My passion for him passed. I don't think much about the past.

Now I'm spending time with **Uki Pynne**. I can feel the passion growing, but it is not yet an obsession. Pynne is a complex man. He is carrying secret burdens. He wants to share them. He is afraid of something.

Pynne believes that he has chosen me. We meet in secret. I am drawn to him. I smile when he is near.

I hope he does not disappear.

Everybody knows Cai Gentle. People smile when they see me. Yet sometimes I feel that I am going mad. I live on the edge of an unsettling darkness, a devouring emptiness. There is something wrong, inside, in my mind. There are some things I cannot remember, from long ago or from last week. There are some things I cannot speak about. There are some things I cannot even think about.

I try, and I find that the words or thoughts die unvoiced.

I dream such terrible dreams. There are monsters in the darkness.

I lie in stillness, and I am afraid.

... ..

'I'm taking the long view.'

... ..

Cai Gentle is a true innocent. She has a pleasant personality, and is highly ethical. She comes across as warm but distant, even a little docile. People tend to treat her as a younger sister or daughter.

She has a self-assurance that some may see as vanity or pride.

As a secure courier, Cai has ready access to all levels of Shackleton.

Cai has a growing fascination with photos and personal mementos. She wears a fire opal on a chain about her neck—a gift from Steve Pearson, which she is careful to keep concealed. She knows she should discard it, but the opal has become a concrete symbol of things she cannot otherwise grasp, the unthinkable thoughts and elusive memories that she cannot face.

Meta Cai

Cai is as much defined by what she is not as what she is. Her character is overladen with irony. What happens when the innocent are agents of corruption?

Cai is an artificial person, an android, a cyborg, a replicant, a skin-job. She is deployed by the Company on a deep cover intelligence assignment to entrap subversive personnel.

Cai is not herself consciously aware of this, though on a deep level she knows that something is not right. Her programming orientations include highly illegal modifications that suppress mission- and android-related memories, trigger mission-related befriending and seduction behaviours, and channel her emotions along predetermined channels.

Of course, with such a complex personality matrix and neural network, some small leakage is inevitable. These take the form of hallucinatory memory fragments expressed in dreams and nightmares. Cai is conscious of these, but she cannot consciously process their implications.

From a Company perspective, Cai is reaching the limits of her usefulness. Her accumulated life experience is overpowering her inherited programming. She is becoming more eccentric, less dependable. She is ready for retirement.

For an illegal android, retirement doesn't mean a pension and a cottage in the country.

Androids, sorry, 'artificial persons' have strong rights in law as equal citizens. Illegal modifications are equated with slavery, and are viewed with repugnance in most human societies. Cai is a slave to the Company.

Playing Cai

Cai has lived all of her short life among humans - her android nature is virtually undetectable; artificial persons are 'more human than human'. However, as the unity of her psychic programming breaks down, small cracks are appearing. Some suggestions:

Cai moves with grace and poise, but there is something odd—she never touches her face.

She says little in casual conversation, but stays uncomfortably close to her companions, listening.

Perhaps her confused mental processes are reflected in her behaviour—a roll of the head, a blinking of the eyes?

Cai represents the Soul of our story. As her personal journal unfolds, Cai challenges players about what being humanity actually means, and what traits of humanity are valuable.

Metagame

Xenomorph is a character- and emotion-driven game.

Your fellow players are also your audience. Do you want them to love your character, to love-to-hate them, or perhaps to be drawn in and then surprised by a sudden revelation?

Try to reveal more depth about your character as you go along, and try to externalise, to bring into the game through action and dialogue the challenges, dead-ends, decisions and transformations that you face.

One of the wonderful things about the movie **Aliens** is that every combat scene revealed something new about characters and relationships. Spectacle served both character and story. We're trying to do the same — the stress of game action is a mechanism for character and relationship transformation.

Mission Crew

Wayne Gould: Acting head of station security, a drop bear, and commander of this mission. Gould is past his prime, and just seems to be going through the motions.

Iriaka Conrad: Shackleton security officer, a drop bear. She was Pearson's partner, but they fell out years ago. Like you, she once loved him. Since Pearson's death, she has been angry and unstable.

Chul-Moo Crowe: Shackleton security officer, a drop bear. Crowe is loud and vexatious, and often bullies people.

Uki Pynne: A research biologist and systems professional. A small man with a complex personality. Pynne is your current obsession—you are strongly drawn to him. Trust between you is growing. He seems troubled and afraid.

Others

Margaret Baron: A member of the station Executive. Since the death of your parents, Margaret has acted as your guardian and mentor. You are very close.

Steve 'Ripper' Pearson: A station security officer, drop bear, and your former lover. Pearson died six weeks ago in an airlock accident.

MOTHER (MU/TH/UR cb7500): Shackleton Station's artificial intelligence, memory and communications agent.

