

BY JOHN & PHILIPPA HUGHES

LOADING BAY
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LOADING BAY
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XENOMORPH

IRIAKI
CONRAD
STATION SECURITY
RSV SHACKLETON



Security Operative RSV Shackleton

The universe is an ocean, vast and silent and deadly. My Maori ancestors mastered the oceans of Earth in open canoes, navigating by the currents and the stars. They made new homes, new families.

My *Kuia* (grandmother) was a remarkable woman. She led the terraforming and colonization of New Aotearoa, back before the Colonial Marines invaded to 'liberate' those valuable Weyland-Yutani corporate assets. She taught me many things. I can still hear her voice...

'He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata! He tangata! [What is the most important thing in the world? It is people! It is people!]

I need her wisdom so much right now. I need her strength.

Most crew on Shackleton do not know my family background, or what my *tā moko*, my facial tattoo, means. Even fewer care. That doesn't matter.

I know, I care. I carry the ancestors within me, and I am the proud daughter of a noble line.

Kuia died in a Colonial Marines deportation camp, waiting to be exiled from the planet she gave her life to build. Her death was of course, an 'accident'.

Death by 'accident'. Murder concealed. *And now its happening again.* **Steven Pearson** is dead. Probably murdered. For reasons I dare not guess.

The rage and the anger, the grieving, well up inside and drown out everything else. Yet I must be strong, I cannot let it show.

But sometimes it does.

Steve and I were married. We were both Drop Bear EVA specialists, and later station security. For most of our time together though, we shared joint quarters and little else. I'm not romanticising it. We were never a perfect couple. We were seldom even a functioning couple. We worked together, played together, fell in love and out of love just as quickly. But in that short, glorious, time—two, three months?—we signed a marriage contract. It meant bigger quarters, company benefits.



*Conrad: consumed
by a heart-rending
anger*

Female, New Zealander (Maori), mid thirties.
*Vengeful warrior woman? Fuck that - I'm just
angry; angry and scared.*

Keywords: Fearless, Angry, Grieving, Wounded, Cautious.

Strength: Will and determination never to be beaten down.

Flaw: Anger and Rage.

Anger: Everything. Crowe. Gould. The Company. Herself.

Passion: Human Dignity. Truth.

Fear: Acknowledging weakness, Confirming suspicions about death of Pearson (confirming an all-pervasive corruption).

Phobia: Abandonment.

Days till end of mission rotation: 470.

Company Voting Shares: 3.

Expected mission bonus: Eight million New Yen (subject to disciplinary fines of up to 80 per cent).

TWITCH FACTOR: 60%

Man and wife. Shared quarters. *All the better for fighting.* It often turned pretty ugly. We both drank. **Wayne Gould** was our boss; he kept us apart while we were on duty. In the beginning he was even subtle about it.

I think Gould loves me. I may even love him. Best not think about that right now.

Steve and I lost our passion. We were bored, we fought, we fell back into separate loneliness. But despite everything, we always maintained a grudging respect. In our way, we were loyal to each other.

And now he's dead.

Officially, Steve died in an airlock accident. Such bullshit. **Chul-Moo Crowe** was with him when he died, and Crowe is hiding something. The entire fucking Company is hiding something. I can't get to the reports, to the surveillance, to the data files. Everything has been locked down.

Crowe has always been a bit of a tool, but I always thought of him as a friend. He was one of us, a Drop Bear. Now I want to kill the ugly fuck, and he knows it.

Everyone knows it. My bad.

Crowe wasn't even rostered on shift when Steve died. Yet he's the one who called in the 'accident'? Why were they in that airlock? Why was Steve in a vacuum suit three sizes too big for him? Did Crowe kill him? Crowe is a drug dealer, maybe they fought over something? I can't access either the CCTV footage or the autopsy report. The entire station is in lock down. And I'm on charges, with no security access.

After the funeral I lost it. I confronted Crowe, and not for the first time. He lost it too. Totally in my face. He told me to stop prying, for my own good. Told me Steve had a new girlfriend when he died, that I should stop playing the grieving widow. Told me to get a grip, to get a life. Told me that since Gould and I had been stalking each other for years, why not shack up, and move on, just like Steve had?

That's when I decked him. Crowe is a big man, but he went down. *Fast. Hard.* I held nothing back. I had to be dragged off him.

That was the first time I got charged.

Later I wondered exactly what made me snap. Neither of us are talking about it. Not to anyone.

Two days later, I saw Crowe, bandaged and bruised, in the mess line, and I realized we had unfinished business. There in front of a dozen people, I politely informed him I would kill him at the earliest opportunity.

That was the second time I got charged.

On reflection, that was a mistake. *I shouldn't have done it in public.*

Toorak wanted me in the brig; wanted me stood down; wanted a full psych evaluation. Gould protected me, said I had a clean history, said he needed everyone on deck. That's true, the station is in total meltdown, and half of security has gone off on some external boarding

action. We've got agitators and security breaks and god knows what else as a result of the lockdown: paranoia is going through the roof. I'm not the only one ready to blow.

Gould is protecting me, but he can't be entirely innocent either. As section head, he must know more than he's letting on. I don't know who to trust. I can't see how this will end.

I grew up hating Weyland-Yutani, hating the Colonial Marines: I thought **csi-ro-billington** was different, that it offered a better way. *I was wrong.*

Gould taught me long ago that sometimes in security its better not to know, better to look the other way. I can't do that any more. I can't be part of something so destructive, so intolerant of human decency and dignity.

We are but the seeing eyes and speaking mouths of those who have passed on. And those who are yet unborn. Kāua e takahia te mana o te tangata. Do not trample the spirit of the people.

Grandmother, I am so afraid.

Kia tūpato. Be always cautious.

Grandmother, help me to be strong.

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Usually, Conrad is completely professional in her duties: fearless, competent, cautious and restrained. Open and honest, with a gift for improvisation, she has always been an efficient and respected member of Shackleton station security.

Until now. Steve Pearson's death has sent her into a spiral of anger and despair, fuelled by irrational self-blame and guilt. Her armour of outer toughness masks a deep inner pain. She is determined to press on regardless, relying on her store of animal cunning and aggression.

It cannot last.

Metagame

In some ways, Conrad embodies the genre stereotype of the woman warrior, the hard body, hardware, hard-as-nails heroine. The reality, however, is much more complicated.

In her grief, Conrad is deeply wounded. Her belief in human value and dignity has been savagely undercut by what she sees happening all around her.

Unless she finds an external point of trust and stability, she will only spiral further out of control.

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

Chul-Moo Crowe: Shackleton security officer, a Drop Bear and long-time colleague. An aggressive bully and a drug dealer, Crowe may be responsible for Steve Pearson's death. You have severely beaten Crowe after an altercation, and have publicly threatened to kill him.

Cai Gentle: Shackleton shuttle pilot and cargo handler/courier. Well-liked, a competent and reliable pilot, though sometimes socially awkward. Cai has family connections with station Executive.

Wayne Gould: Acting head of Shackleton security, a Drop Bear. A close companion and mentor who has long harboured feelings deeper than mere friendship toward you. Gould seems tired and overburdened. His intervention alone has kept you out of the brig and on active duty.

Uki Pynne: A research biologist and systems guru. Gifted but precious, a small man with a big ego.

Others

Katherine Argent: Usual head of Shackleton security,

off on special projects for the last six months.

Margaret Baron: A member of the station Executive, head of Special Projects and Security.

Steven 'Ripper' Pearson: your recently deceased partner, a fellow security officer and Drop Bear. Officially Pearson died in an airlock accident, but everything points to a cover up.

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

