

RSV Greyling

A one-shot for three to five players, about one session. Any grid-based sci-fi game.

What happened

RSV Greyling is under quarantine, by its own crew, in the end by whoever was left. Something came aboard in a cargo lot and moved through the ship in days. Medbay is sealed. There are marks on the doors, from the inside.

Last log entry: Tech Nakamura. Their trail runs through three rooms, below, and ends in the only account aboard from someone who was there.

Why they go

The shipping company wants the ship's log recovered, whatever the beacon says, and it pays the crew that goes in, not the ones who wait outside.

The twist

Someone has been eating from the galley stores this week. Keep it from the players until they find it. It is the thread into the next session.

Getting aboard

- A. Through the airlock, past WARN OFF painted on the inner door in letters a metre high.
- B. Through the cargo doors, where Lot 14 came aboard. The fastest way in, and the worst one.

How it runs

Arrival: they get aboard and meet the first hazard. The trail: Engineering (2, lower deck), then Medbay (4, upper deck), then Cargo hold (1, lower deck), each one pointing at the next; the dangers and the salvage are on the way. The truth is in Cargo hold (1, lower deck): the last recording, the first handout at the back. Getting out: they leave when they have what they came for, or when the clock on the next page fills, whichever comes first.

The threat

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| It is | Whatever came aboard in Lot 14. It is not a monster: it is in the air, and in the crew who are still moving. |
| It does | Anyone who breathes the air unfiltered, or is touched by one of the calm crew, rolls to resist by your game's rule for disease. A failure makes them calm, helpful and unworried, a little more each hour. The calm crew never attack. They ask the players to stay. |
| Stop it | Sealed suits, fresh filters and fire. If there is a cure aboard, it is not one anyone would take lightly, so mostly the players get out before the clock fills and burn whatever they touched. |

The trail

1. Engineering (2, lower deck): A glove on the deck just inside the door, Nakamura's by the name stitched in the cuff. The other one is in the medbay (4, upper deck).
2. Medbay (4, upper deck): Nakamura's other glove. Scratched into the bulkhead beside it at hand height: "THE CARGO HOLD. DON'T." That is the cargo hold (1, lower deck).
3. Cargo hold (1, lower deck): Tech Nakamura is here, or what is left of them. The recorder on their suit is still running and covers the last day.

Dangers

- Crew quarters (2, upper deck): one bunk is still occupied and the occupant is still warm.
- Life support (6, upper deck): the filters are grey with growth. Air is breathable for now; the gauges do not agree on how long.
- Lab (3, lower deck): broken sample cases. The floor is wet and it is not water.
- Escape pods (4, lower deck): bodies, arranged. Someone took care over this. Disturb them and the air changes.

Salvage

- Medbay (4, upper deck): full trauma kit, sealed, and a case of broad-spectrum antivirals that did not work.
- Cargo hold (1, lower deck): forty crates. Lot 14 is open. The others are worth a fortune to someone who does not ask where they came from.

What goes wrong

Roll a d6 when they make noise, force a door, split up, or every twenty minutes at the table. Each roll ticks the clock.

- 1 A suit seal hisses. One of the players has a slow leak, and nobody noticed when it started.
- 2 A crewmember sits in the dark, calm. They answer every question politely and cannot remember their own name.
- 3 The beacon flips between WARN OFF and MAYDAY, back and forth, as if it cannot decide.
- 4 The filters in the next room are grey. A cloud rises off them when the door opens.
- 5 Scratching from behind a sealed door. Patient, regular, and at hand height.
- 6 One of the players feels fine. Better than fine, calm, really. Tick the clock twice.

The clock



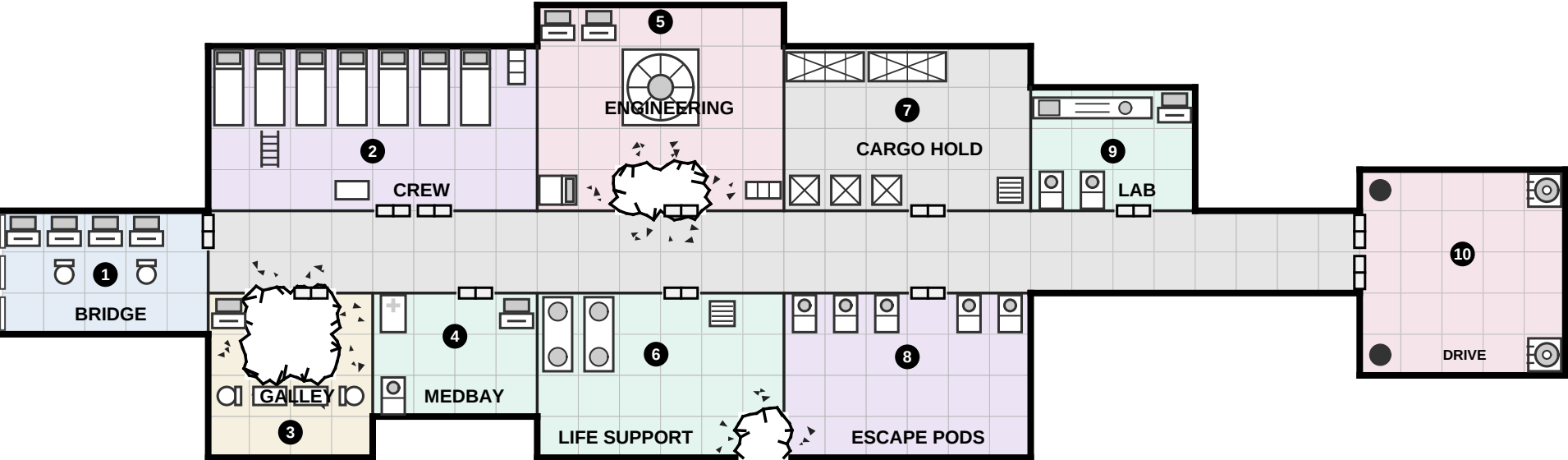
Six ticks and it happens:

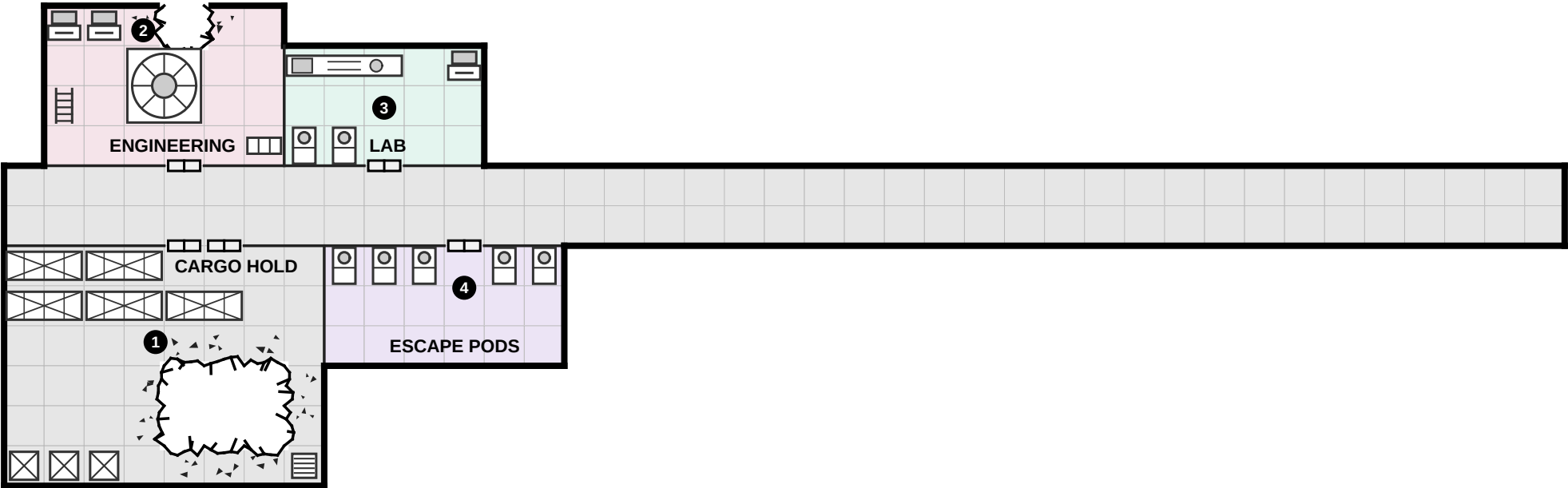
Exposure. Every player who breathed the air aboard without a filter starts running a fever. The calm comes a day later.

How it ends

- A. Burn it. Vent the reactor into the hull and the ship and Lot 14 go together. The buyer for Lot 14 will not thank them for it.
- B. Sell Lot 14. The money is real, and so is the colony the shipper sends the next lot to.
- C. Carry the cure out. It works, and it needs a living carrier. Somebody has to volunteer.

Or they find their own way out. The hook and the salvage are the threads that lead to the next session.





Derelict — RSV Greyling — room key

Upper deck

1. Bridge

Nav plot frozen on the last fix. Somebody wrote the numbers on the glass.

Log fragment (Cpt.): "Set the beacon to WARN OFF. If a ship answers anyway, they were warned."

2. Crew quarters

Bunks stripped. One is made, tight, the way the service teaches it.

Hazard: one bunk is still occupied and the occupant is still warm.

3. Galley

Dark. Emergency lighting only. The coffee machine is still warm. The rations are gone.

Log fragment, scratched into the table: "we kept it out of the galley for nine days"

4. Medbay

Vacuum. Suit up. Battery light blinking. The last treatment is still on the screen.

Salvage: full trauma kit, sealed, and a case of broad-spectrum antivirals that did not work.

Trail 2/3: Nakamura's other glove. Scratched into the bulkhead beside it at hand height: "THE CARGO HOLD. DON'T." That is the cargo hold (1, lower deck).

5. Engineering

Scram lever pulled and wired down so it stays pulled.

6. Life support

Cold. Frost on every surface. Scrubbers dead. The air is whatever is left.

Hazard: the filters are grey with growth. Air is breathable for now; the gauges do not agree on how long.

7. Cargo hold

Manifest on the wall, half the lines crossed out in marker.

Log fragment (Deckhand): "Lot 14 was breathing when we loaded it. Told the XO. XO said crates don't breathe."

8. Escape pods

Every pod still docked. Nobody got out.

9. Lab

Something moved in here — recently. One sample tray labelled and signed. The rest are blank.

10. Drive section

Cold. The torch has not fired in weeks.

Lower deck

1. Cargo hold

Containers cut open, not unlocked.

Salvage: forty crates. Lot 14 is open. The others are worth a fortune to someone who does not ask where they came from.

Trail 3/3: Tech Nakamura is here, or what is left of them. The recorder on their suit is still running and covers the last day.

2. Engineering

Panels off, parts sorted on the deck by someone who ran out of time.

Trail 1/3: A glove on the deck just inside the door, Nakamura's by the name stitched in the cuff. The other one is in the medbay (4, upper deck).

3. Lab

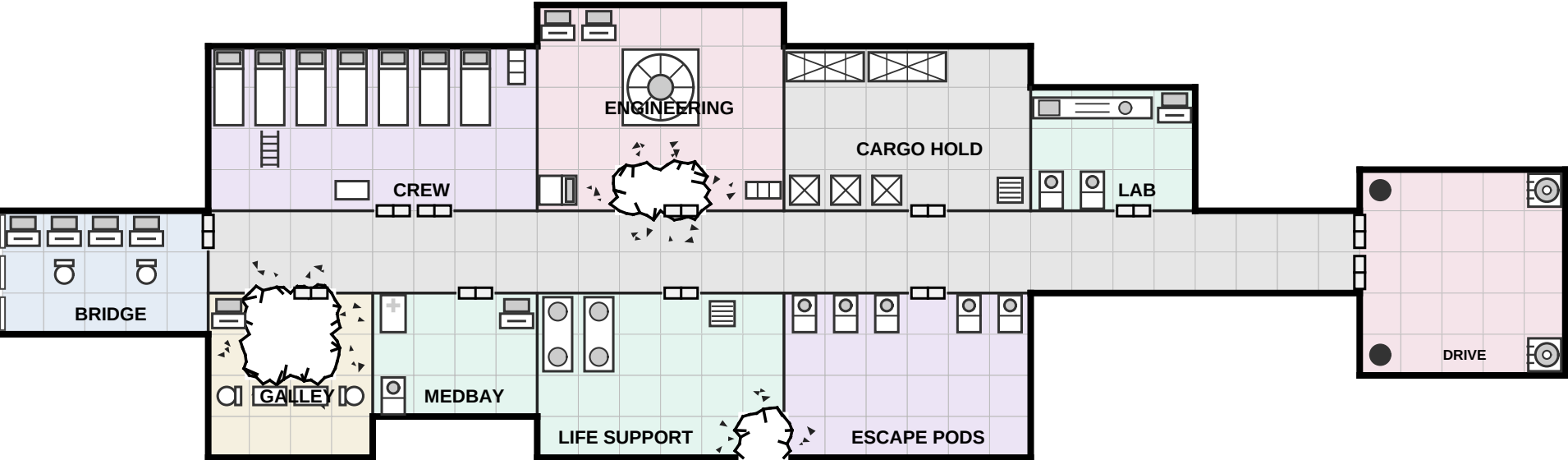
The notes stop mid-word. The pen is on the floor.

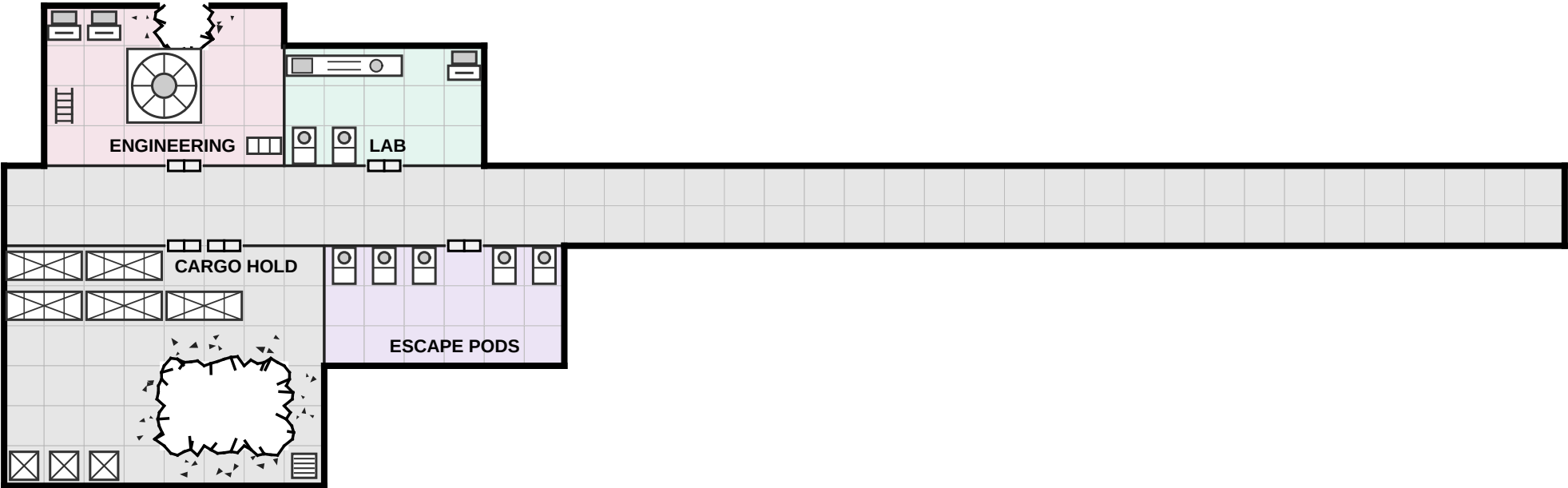
Hazard: broken sample cases. The floor is wet and it is not water.

4. Escape pods

These pods never launched either.

Hazard: bodies, arranged. Someone took care over this. Disturb them and the air changes.





Handouts

Cut along the lines. Hand each one over when the players find it.

THE LAST RECORDING: TECH NAKAMURA

Lot 14 came aboard at the last port and nobody checked it, because nobody checks the lots. It was in the air inside two days. It does not hurt. That is the worst of it. People get calm, then quiet, then they stop being themselves and do not seem to mind. We sealed medbay. We sealed in everyone who went calm, and some of them still scratch the days on the inside of their doors. The beacon is set to warn ships off. If it says anything else when you get here, something aboard changed it, and none of us would have. Keep your helmet on. Do not take Lot 14 anywhere.

found in Cargo hold (1, lower deck)

CPT.

Set the beacon to WARN OFF. If a ship answers anyway, they were warned.

found in Bridge (1, upper deck)

SCRATCHED INTO THE TABLE

We kept it out of the galley for nine days.

found in Galley (3, upper deck)

DECKHAND

Lot 14 was breathing when we loaded it. Told the XO. XO said crates don't breathe.

found in Cargo hold (7, upper deck)