

# Hester Zao

## **Trying to Climb the Corporate Ladder**

You work for **The Gaumata Corporation**, the interplanetary megacorporation and military contractor that owns this research post. You have been working there for a while now, trying to move on up from middle management into the cushy jobs with huge yearly bonuses and all sorts of perks. Climbing that ladder is hard, though, so you haven't yet gotten the job you really want. Right now your job is to be the manager for several research outposts, colonies and space stations. Since these are all so far away, your job is kind of hands-off. It's hard to check up on the scientists if it takes six months to travel between Proxima and the research station. So you send messages back and forth, and visit every couple of years but mostly your attention was on conferences and meetings back on Proxima. Or getting in good with the board members and assistant vice presidents back on Earth. Of course, since Earth is even farther away, you'll need to do something impressive to catch the eye of someone four light years away. Not easy, especially as you have rivals orbiting Sol competing for the same promotions.

Since you were the one supposed to be managing the outpost (impossible though that job may be), the Board of Directors at Gaumata put you in charge of finding out what went wrong at this outpost. You need to be able to give a good report of the events to the guys in charge, especially one that highlights your leadership skills and such. A secondary goal would be to recover the priceless, unique alien artifacts and experimental weaponry that they were studying here: these can't be replaced, so the corporation values them highly. Recovering other resources, particularly human resources, is also advised as much as you can manage.

It's not common knowledge that multiple artifacts were found here. You had received word that there was the initial artifact found, then several crystal shaped items found later on. The first artifact's existence is known to the entire crew, but Gaumata has been keeping the second find under their hat. You should try to recover all the artifacts, but weren't clear on what the secondary artifacts were like. You had been contacting the outpost for more data on them when they stopped responding. All you know is that they are some sort of crystals.

## **Joining you on the mission are:**

**Commander Wheeler-Nicholson**, in charge of the military side of things. She has only one grunt with her: you hope you don't need more.

**Dr. Tenagon**, second best Xenologist in known space. Tenagon is second only to Dr. Koop, who was on the outpost when it stopped

communicating. Tenagon has a couple of folks in lab coats at her disposal.

**Rachel Gaumata** is the one you really want to impress: she's the heiress to the Gaumatafamily fortune. You're not sure exactly why she's here on the mission: you have never heard of her being involved in any business dealings before, especially dangerous ones on such a personal level. Her father runs the entire megacorporation, so if you impress herthen she might put in a good word for you. At the same time, you're kind of terrified of her: she's reputedly a spoiled brat who's never worked a day in her life, and she could have you fired with a single phone call.