

FREE PREVIEW

DEADLIGHT

A Narrative Hall Campaign Codex

SURVIVAL HORROR · SCI-FI · SYSTEM-AGNOSTIC · IN THE DARK
OF A DEAD SHIP

A few opening pages of the campaign. The full campaign, with every scene, NPC, map note, and handout, is the complete download on narrativehall.com.

NARRATIVEHALL.COM

HOW TO USE THIS CODEX

This is not a rulebook. It contains no statistics, no encounter math, and no system mechanics. It is a **story bible**: a complete science-fiction survival-horror world aboard a single dead ship, a season of connected dread, a full cast, mapped places, and a session-by-session shape you can run with any tabletop system you already own.

You only need three things in your head before the first session.

1. **The premise.** A salvage crew boards the *Ourane*, a derelict bulk-hauler gone dark on a long-haul route, to strip it for a payout. The hauler's own crew are gone. They left logs, and warnings, and one terrible thing they pulled from a drifting pod because it looked like salvage. It is awake now. The players came to take a dead ship apart. The dead ship has something that takes people apart, and it is patient, and the only way off is to understand it before it understands them.
2. **The tone.** Cold, airless, claustrophobic survival horror. Not action, not gore-for-gore. The dread is the dark between bulkheads, the drift of dust in a torch beam, the held breath while something vast passes a meter away. The horror is a creature you cannot out-shoot, only out-think, and a company that values it more than you.
3. **The fair-play promise.** This is real survival, run honestly. The organism (the *Ourane's* crew called it the **Mara**) obeys rules, and the rules are findable: the dead crew learned them at terrible cost and wrote them down. The players survive by reading those records, watching the thing, and deducing its biology and its weakness. The Mara never cheats. It simply hunts the way it hunts, and waits for the players to make the mistake everyone before them made.

A note on the horror. The *Ourane* has one supernatural-feeling fact, and it is biological, not magical: **the Mara perceives motion and the stir of the air, not sight or sound as such.** Hold perfectly still in the dark and the drift, make no current, and it cannot find you. Move, run, breathe wrong, stir the dust, and it comes. Keep it grounded, patient, and quiet. The terror is in the stillness, the waiting, and the slow understanding of what the missing crew have actually become. Wherever a moment turns on a roll, you will find a short **Light GM Hook** sidebar on staging it in your system. No stat blocks. The campaign is won by nerve and deduction, not by who shoots first.

CAMPAIGN BACKGROUND

The *Ourane* is a kilometer of automated cargo hull, a bulk-hauler that runs ore and bulk goods on multi-year loops between stations, crewed by a skeleton team who mostly sleep through the long dark while the ship flies itself. Eight months ago it went silent on the deep leg of its route, stopped answering, kept drifting. A silent hauler with a full hold is salvage, and salvage is money, and the players hold the rights.

What happened aboard the *Ourane* is written in its logs, for anyone brave enough to read while the lights are failing. The crew, bored and broke on the long haul, found a derelict of their own: a small, ancient, drifting pod of unknown make, the kind of deep-space flotsam that turns up once in a career. Inside was a single dormant organism, beautiful and strange and worth a fortune to the right buyer. Their xenobiologist said leave it. Their captain saw a bounty. They brought it aboard, sealed it in the medbay, and argued about who would get rich.

It woke on its own schedule. It is not a monster in the sense the crew meant. It is an apex organism, old beyond reckoning, perfectly adapted to hunt in the dark and the drift, and it does not hate anyone any more than the vacuum hates anyone. It perceives the world through motion. It carries what it kills back to a growing nest and makes it part of itself, and what it takes, in some slow and partial way, it keeps.

By the time the players board, the *Ourane*'s crew are gone into the nest, the ship is a cold maze of failing systems, and a company recovery vessel is already inbound, because the moment the salvage beacon fired, the *Ourane* stopped being a dead ship and became an asset, and the asset includes the specimen. The players have a shrinking window to understand the Mara, decide what to do with it, and get out before they too become part of the quiet thing growing in the dark, or before someone carries it home.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Give each player one. Each is a reason to be aboard the *Ourane* and a reason they cannot simply leave.

- **The Salvage Lead.** Your name is on the rights and the loan. This payout clears a debt that will otherwise end you. You cannot walk away empty, even from this.
- **The Engineer.** You came to keep the dying ship breathing long enough to strip it. You are the only one who can run the reactor, the locks, and the one system that might end this.
- **The Medic.** You came to certify the hull crew dead for the insurance. They are not dead. They are not alive. You are the one who will have to understand what they are.
- **The Company Liaison.** You were sent to protect the firm's interest, and the firm's interest, you are about to learn, is the specimen, not the crew. Your orders and your conscience are about to come apart.
- **The Drifter.** You needed off the last station fast and took the only berth going. You have no debt and no orders, only the dawning understanding that the only way you live through this is to be smarter than everyone who died here.

The thread that binds them: within the first session, the ship's lights die, the drift stirs, and one of them learns the first rule the hard way, by watching what happens to someone who moved. From that point the *Ourane* is not a job. It is a closed box with a perfect predator in it, a clock counting down to a recovery ship that must not carry the Mara home, and a single question: who, if anyone, walks out of the dark.

Want the rest?

This is just the opening. **Deadlight: Campaign Codex + GM Kit** is ready to run: a complete, system-agnostic kit you can drop into any tabletop game.

Get the full download at

[NARRATIVEHALL.COM](https://narrativehall.com)