

ESCAPE SEQUENCE: XENO

A Squid Ink Games Publication
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ESCAPE SEQUENCE: XENO
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Typefaces used: ThunderStrike, You Blockhead, Absender, Avenir



WHAT IS THIS BOOK?

Escape Sequence: Xeno is a new gaming experience from Squid Ink Games! We are game and RPG lovers at heart and with this series of Game Books, we have set out to make something that delivers a fun gaming experience along with a touch of the enjoyment derived from browsing through a good RPG manual or book.

At its heart, it is a simple instruction manual for a game, but there are also included prompts for adjusting the game, using the cards and world for TTRPGs or even simple story and map prompts for your own sci-fi adventures.

All of our games are designed with flexibility in mind and you can use the book itself – cutting out pages to assemble the game, buy the deck of cards separately or play with parts from games you probably already own!

Thank you for joining us on Station X3-N0 and we hope you survive the experience!

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

Assembling what you need to play ESCAPE SEQUENCE: XENO is a fairly easy task: most people likely have everything they need available around the house already.

THIS GAME BOOK

If you are reading this, you've likely already accomplished this task.

A DECK OF CARDS

The custom deck designed for the game or any standard poker deck of cards will work. Make sure it has the jokers!

TWO FIGURES

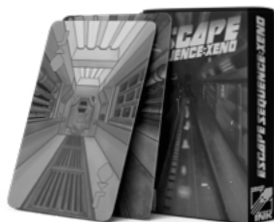
One to act as your scientist and one as the deadly Alien hunting you. Anything will work as long as it's smaller than the cards you are using.

TOKENS

A handful of tokens, coins, moon rocks or other small items. Around 12-14 is plenty.

A FLAT SURFACE

A table or some other broad-topped monolith under standard earth gravity to lay the cards out on.



GAME SETUP

- Begin by creating the Station Deck:
- Include all of the following card suits:
 - Clubs
 - Spades
 - Diamonds
- Include both Jokers
- Include the following cards from the Hearts suit:
 - Ace
 - King
 - Queen
 - Jack
- This will comprise the halls and rooms of Station X3N0.
- Shuffle the cards thoroughly.
- Set the Two of Hearts face-up in the middle of your play surface with your scientist miniature on it.
- The remaining eight Heart suit cards represent the number of Med Packs you can have at any given time during the game.
- You start with four of these Med Packs in your possession.
- Key Cards are represented by tokens.
- Place the remaining Med Packs and Key Cards to the side for use during play.
- The Alien will not come into play until you have revealed the same card suit twice in your exploration of the station.
- Place the Alien figure to the side.

YOU ARE NOW READY TO PLAY ESCAPE SEQUENCE: XENO!

You wake in the Science Lab of Research Station X3 on the ice asteroid N-Zero (called Station XENO by the employees) with a huge headache and no clear idea what is going on. The lab is a disaster and remember that the egg your team found in the ice outside reacted strangely to your tests. Whether it was the egg itself or the third-hand cobbled together equipment the Company provided, you don't know, but something went horribly wrong.

Whatever was in that egg... Hatched? Thawed? Mutated?

Whatever it did, it broke quarantine, escaped into the depths of the station. It is growing fast, seemingly impervious, deadly, and very angry. No one is answering the comms and you fear you may be the last surviving member of Station XENO.

In an event like this, the Escape Sequence has been clearly outlined in the Employee Emergency Handbook:

- Restore power to the Self Destruct system, the Emergency & Comms array, and the Escape Pods
- Find the codes to access the Escape Pods
- Transmit your data and The Warning and activate the Rescue Beacon via the Comms array from a Control Terminal.
- Find enough rations and air to survive in the Escape Pod until the recovery crew arrives.
- Arm the Self Destruct sequence.
- Get to the Escape Pod with the code and supplies before the Self Destruct detonates.
- Spend a few weeks in low orbit over the crater that used to be Station X3N0 wishing you'd grabbed a book.

Unfortunately for you, you have spent the last few months with your eyes glued to laboratory screens and the station layout is a bit fuzzy in your memory, so you may have to explore quite a few dark halls to accomplish all of this.

Oh yeah – you should also evade the Alien creature at all costs. You have limited Med Packs and no offensive weapons.

The alien is relentless and deadly. Between it, power outages, limited knowledge of the base layout, and the ticking clock, the likelihood of survival is... not good. But you've gotta try, right?

You stagger to your feet and survey the wreck of a science lab. You find four Med Kits and your Key Card is still in your pocket. You also find your Tech Pad which will allow you to restore power to rooms as you explore the station.

Time to leave the lab and start the Escape Sequence.

MOVEMENT & EXPLORING THE STATION

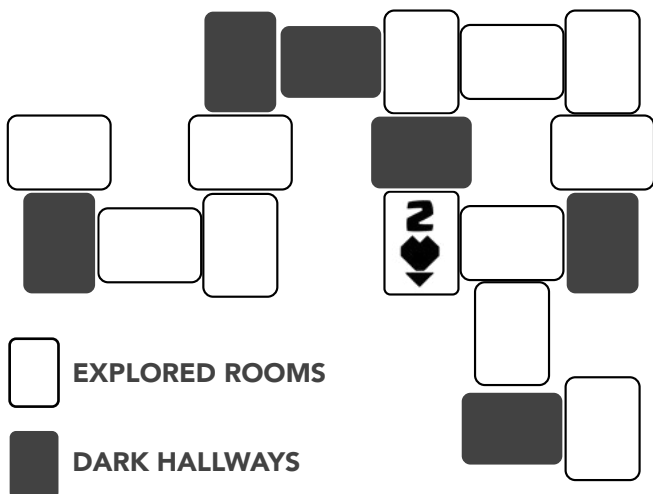
As you play the game you will move around the station, laying and playing cards as you do, to build the map, search for your objectives, and try not to get killed by the alien.

You can move **one or two** spaces on each turn, only turning a card face up and activating it if you end your move on the card.

Any additional spaces moved are placed facedown. Any dark hallways (facedown cards) you pass through during your move remain facedown and unknown. You must continue moving forward on your turn, (you can't move one step forward, then back to the original room) but you can retrace your steps on the next turn.

As you explore the station, place the cards down in an alternating pattern, long side against short side. In the standard game mode, you are allowed to create the station layout as you desire, deciding when a corridor turns a corner, branches into other rooms, or meets with a previous juncture. However, the cards must meet naturally, and not overlap when placed.

EXAMPLE LAYOUT



EXPLORED ROOMS

When you end your turn on a card that has not yet been explored, you turn it face up then place your Scientist on it.

This represents you entering the room in the station and activating the systems in it; turning on the lights, powering up any computers or machinery, etc.

Every suit in the deck has a different effect when activated and face cards have additional effects that trigger when you activate them. Most of these control how the Alien reacts to your movement but some may also have helpful items or pertain to your goals to escape the station.

It would seem logical to want to explore and reveal every room in the station. However, doing so would activate all systems, the computer would sense the dramatic quarantine breach and immediately self-destruct, killing you and ending the game immediately.

You **may** end your turn on previously explored rooms. Unless noted in the description for that specific room, doing so does **not** give you the beneficial discoveries from the initial activation. (Med Packs, Key Cards, Etc.) However, the Alien still reacts to the suit you end your turn on as it normally would.

DARK HALLWAYS

If you pass through a room but do not end your movement on it, that card remains facedown and is not activated.

These represent darkened hallways in the station; dimly lit by emergency lights, flickering in the steam, these unexplored spaces could hide anything...

You cannot end a turn on a card without turning it face up and activating it, but the Alien can use those dark hallways to get up to all sorts of mischief.



MED PACKS

With no offensive weapons, survival hinges on a clever use of your limited supply of Med Packs. You begin with four Med Packs and can have up to eight during the game at any one time. Med Packs are represented by the eight Heart Suit cards that were not included in the Station Deck during setup.

Med Packs can be used in three different ways during the game:

- As a first aid kit to prevent dying as a result of an Alien attack. As a Scientist, you will die if the Alien ever does damage to you and you do not have a Med Pack to use.
- As a stimpack to allow you to move additional spaces during your movement action. Each Med Pack allows you to move one additional card. These extra spaces are considered hallways and not turned face up when passed through. You may use multiple Med Packs in a single turn to move additional spaces.
- When the Self-Destruct sequence is activated, you must move two spaces during each movement action. You can use a Med Pack to ease your panic and move one less space.

KEY CARD TOKENS

Key cards are both efficient and versatile but also frustratingly one-time use. As part of a money saving initiative, the Company charges employees for each Key Card they print. Every system in the Station requires a new Key Card each time you use it. With the central systems down, Key Cards are hard to come by and valuable. Even if it means getting them off of the corpses of your fellow scientists.

Key Cards can:

- Activate and Deactivate the Self Destruct Sequence
- Transmit data and trigger the Rescue Beacon
- Create a Med Pack at any Medical Bay
- Use the Security Rooms to turn on or off lights
- Lock doorways

You can use multiple Key Cards in a single turn if desired. There is no limit to how many you can have at any one time. Key Cards are represented by tokens. You can learn more about where to find them in the Card and Room Activation tables.

THE ALIEN

The Alien doesn't immediately begin the game in the station. It enters play once you have revealed any two cards of the same suit. It appears on the first card revealed, not the card you are currently on. It also ignores the activation effect of that card on the turn when it is brought into play. On the next turn, it begins its natural imperative to kill you with gusto.

You can use the paper miniatures that come with this game, any mini from another game, a small toy, token, or meeple to represent the Alien.

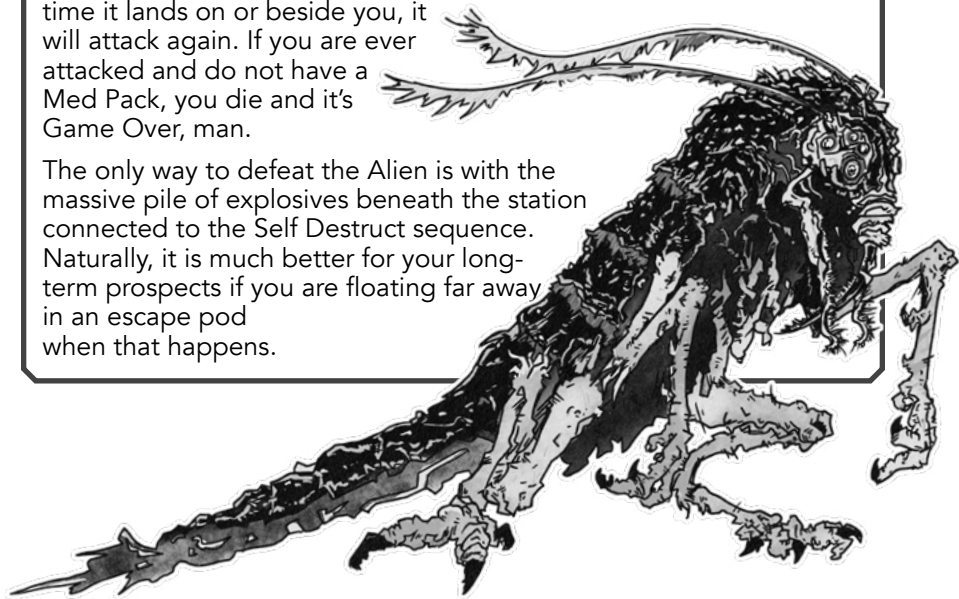
The Alien is relentless and cannot be harmed by the Scientist. It scurries through vents and appears in darkened doorways with little warning.

Any time the Alien is in your current space or ANY adjacent connected card, whether the room is activated or facedown, the Alien damages the Player.

This can occur through a straightforward attack on its part, by appearing in a nearby darkened hallway, or after popping out of the ventilation system. There may also be times you are forced to barrel past the Alien to escape or end your move on an adjacent space. Both of these actions will also damage the Scientist.

One hit from the Alien is enough to kill you. However, you can use a Med Pack to stave off defeat and live to run away again. Any time the Alien would have damaged you, discard a Med Pack to bravely muscle through the damage and continue. You are well-advised to get as far away from the Alien as possible if this happens, as every time it lands on or beside you, it will attack again. If you are ever attacked and do not have a Med Pack, you die and it's Game Over, man.

The only way to defeat the Alien is with the massive pile of explosives beneath the station connected to the Self Destruct sequence. Naturally, it is much better for your long-term prospects if you are floating far away in an escape pod when that happens.



THE TURN SEQUENCE

MOVEMENT:

The Scientist moves through the station, placing cards as they go. They can move one or two spaces, turning the card where they end their turn face up.

There are some game conditions and items that can affect how far the Scientist moves in this action.

Any rooms/cards the Scientist passes through in the course of their movement without stopping are placed facedown and not looked at. They are considered Dark Hallways. You must end your movement on a card to reveal it during this action.

SCIENTIST CARD ACTIVATION:

If the card the player ends their movement on has an activation that pertains to the Scientist, that action is taken now.

ALIEN CARD ACTIVATION:

Then the Alien takes any actions dictated by the card.

RESOLUTION:

The Scientist takes any damage, prevents damage, or dies in this step.

They may use a Key Card during this step if desired as well.

This is also when the Self Destruct is triggered, destroying the station.

If the Alien is in the same space or adjacent to the player in this step, the Player may not use a Key Card at the end of their turn and must move to the next turn to flee.

THEN THE TURN SEQUENCE BEGINS AGAIN.

CARD AND ROOM ACTIVATION TABLES

Escape Sequence: XENO uses a standard poker deck of playing cards, including the two Jokers, laying them out in an alternating horizontal and vertical pattern on the table to build the map of the station. Unless otherwise noted, ending a turn on a previously activated card does NOT give the player an additional Med Pack or Key Card. However, the Alien still reacts to the suit as normal.

The following tables will tell you what kinds of effects each Card Suit activates as well as the special actions of the Face Cards.

CARD SUITS

DIAMONDS

VENTILATION SYSTEM

- The Alien moves to the next numerical Diamond in sequence based on Scientist location card number first, then Alien location card number.
- If the Alien is in play and the Player activates the first Diamond card in play, the Alien does not move.

HEARTS

DEAD SCIENTISTS

- Gain one Key Card by searching the dead Scientist in this room.
- The Alien does NOT move when Heart Suits are activated.

CLUBS

DARK HALLWAYS

- The Alien appears on the nearest Dark Hallway (facedown) card to the Scientist's current location.
- If there are no facedown cards, the Alien does not move.

SPADES

PROXIMITY ALERT

- The Alien approaches the Scientist directly. It moves one space if there are mixed face up/facedown cards in its route, two spaces if the next two cards are both face up or facedown.

FACE CARDS

JACKS

SECURITY ROOMS

Allows you to use a Key Card to do any of the following:

- Reveal a card by turning it face up and NOT activating its action.
- Turn the lights off on a room by turning it facedown. Its action will be activated again if the player lands on that card again.
- Lock a doorway. This passage between cards becomes impassible unless unlocked again. Place a token on this junction to indicate that it is locked.

QUEENS

MEDICAL BAYS

Gain one Med Pack any time you end your movement in a Medical Bay.

Allows you to use a Key Card to do the following:

- Gain one additional Med Pack.

KINGS

CONTROL TERMINALS

Gain one Med Pack the first time this room is activated.

Allows you to use a Key Card to do any of the following:

- Activate or Deactivate the Self-Destruct Sequence.
- Activate the Distress Beacon and send the Warning.

JOKERS

ESCAPE PODS

You must have the Escape Pod codes to enter and use the pods.

Otherwise, they function as a normal hallway.

Alien does NOT move.

Key Cards can be used in a room at any time, including at the beginning of your next turn before leaving the space.

(Exception: If the Alien is in the same space or an adjacent one.)

You may use multiple Key Cards on the same turn in the room as well.

THE ACES

Each Ace contains one of the goals needed to win the game.

ACE OF SPADES SELF DESTRUCT SYSTEM

- The Self Destruct sequence is automatically armed when this card is activated.
- It can only be deactivated with a Key Card at a Control Terminal.
- Place a token on the card to indicate that the sequence is armed.
- When the Self Destruct sequence is armed, both the Player and the Alien **MUST** move 2 spaces on every move.
- The Alien performs the action related to the card twice, moving 2/4 spaces on a Spade or hopping between 2 vents on a Diamond. The Club effect remains the same, as it cannot move to a closer darkened hallway than it is already in. The Alien uses the number of the first vent it moves to to determine the second vent movement.
- The Player can mitigate the 2-move requirement using Med Kits to either move an additional space (3 spaces total) or to calm down and only move one space.

- Turning the room facedown again with the use of a Security Room deactivates the Self Destruct sequence. It must be turned face up and activated again to win the game.
- Once every card in the station has been turned face up, the station's power grid is restored, the computer system senses the quarantine failure and the Self Destruct sequence is complete. The failsafes deep within activate and the station is destroyed. If you are not safely in the escape pod by then, you will also be killed.

ACE OF CLUBS ESCAPE POD CODES

- This room contains a binder with the activation codes and technical manual needed to utilize the escape pods. Place a token on the card to indicate that you have the codes.
- Once this room has been revealed it **CANNOT** be turned facedown.
- The Alien continues to treat this room as a CLUB regarding its movement.

ACE OF DIAMONDS COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

- This room allows you to transmit the information you've discovered about the Alien and activate the distress beacon once it is revealed.
- However, it must be activated at a Control Terminal (KING) location after it is revealed. Once activated, place a token on the card to indicate that the warning and beacon are active.
- Once this room has been revealed it **CANNOT** be turned facedown.
- The Alien continues to treat this room as a **DIAMOND** regarding its movement.
- It only requires a single Key Card at a Control Terminal to activate the Warning and the Distress Beacon.

ACE OF HEARTS THE SUPPLY ROOM

- This room is loaded with all of the essentials you need to survive in the Escape Pod until help arrives. Place a token on the card to indicate that you have the supplies.
- You also receive an additional Med Pack and Key Card.
- Once this room has been revealed it **CANNOT** be turned facedown. The room's effects only occur on the first reveal.

WINNING THE GAME

If you activate all four Aces, trigger the Rescue Beacon and arm the Self Destruct System, all you have to do is make it to the Escape Pod before all of the cards are face up or the Alien kills you. If you can manage this, you escape Station X-3 N-Zero and win the game! Your Escape Pod rockets free just ahead of the massive explosion destroying the station and everything in it. You hope...

ALTERNATE MODES: 2-PLAYER

If you would like to play Escape Sequence: Xeno as a 2-Player co-op game, there are only a few tweaks needed to the gameplay:

- Each of you starts with 3 Med Packs.
- You each start with 1 Key Card.
- You both start in the Science Lab. (2 of Hearts)
- Your maximum amount of Med Packs between the two of you remains 8 total.
- If you need to trade Med Packs or Key Cards, you must both be in the same room.
- You move independently, each exploring the ship and activating rooms.
- The Key Card's ability to control rooms and close corridors becomes more strategic in this mode of play.
- Your goals to win the game remain the same.
- If either of you dies, the game is over.

Alien behavior changes in 2-Player Mode:

- The alien will move directly towards the NEAREST Scientist on a Spade, not necessarily the Scientist who activated it.
- It will, however, continue to move on Clubs and Diamonds based on the active Scientist's location.
- When any rules contradict each other, move the Alien in the most logical/dangerous direction.

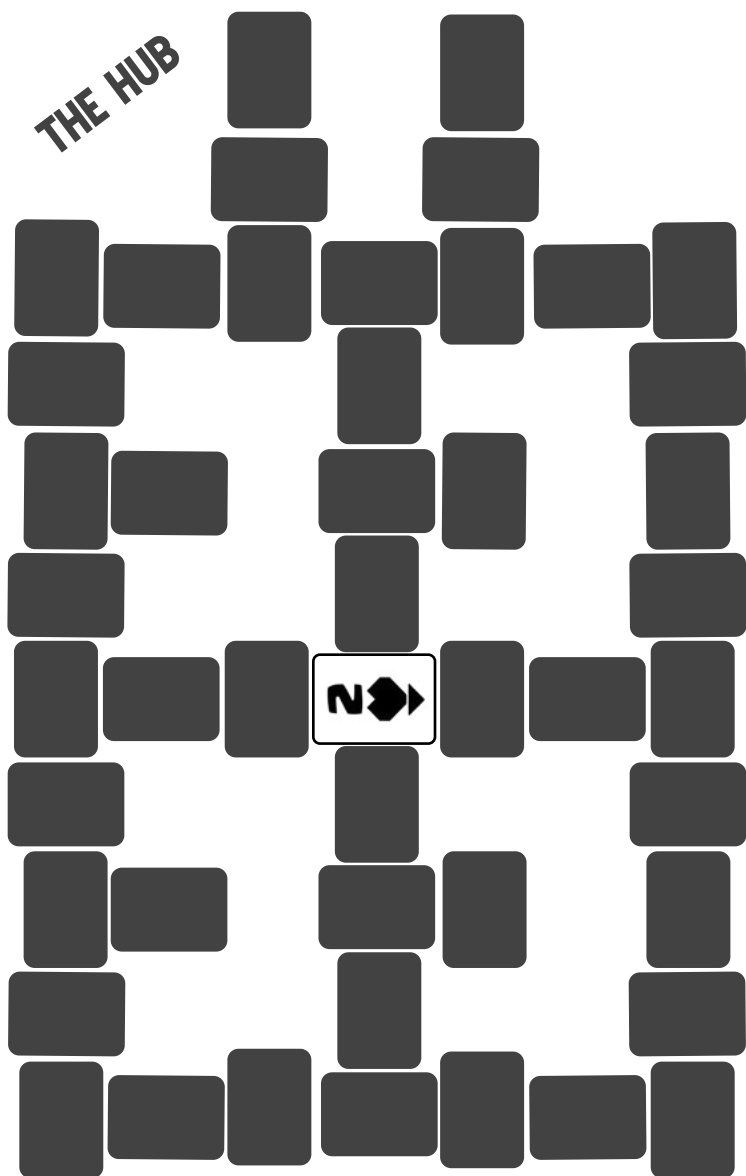
ALTERNATE MODES: PRESET LAYOUTS

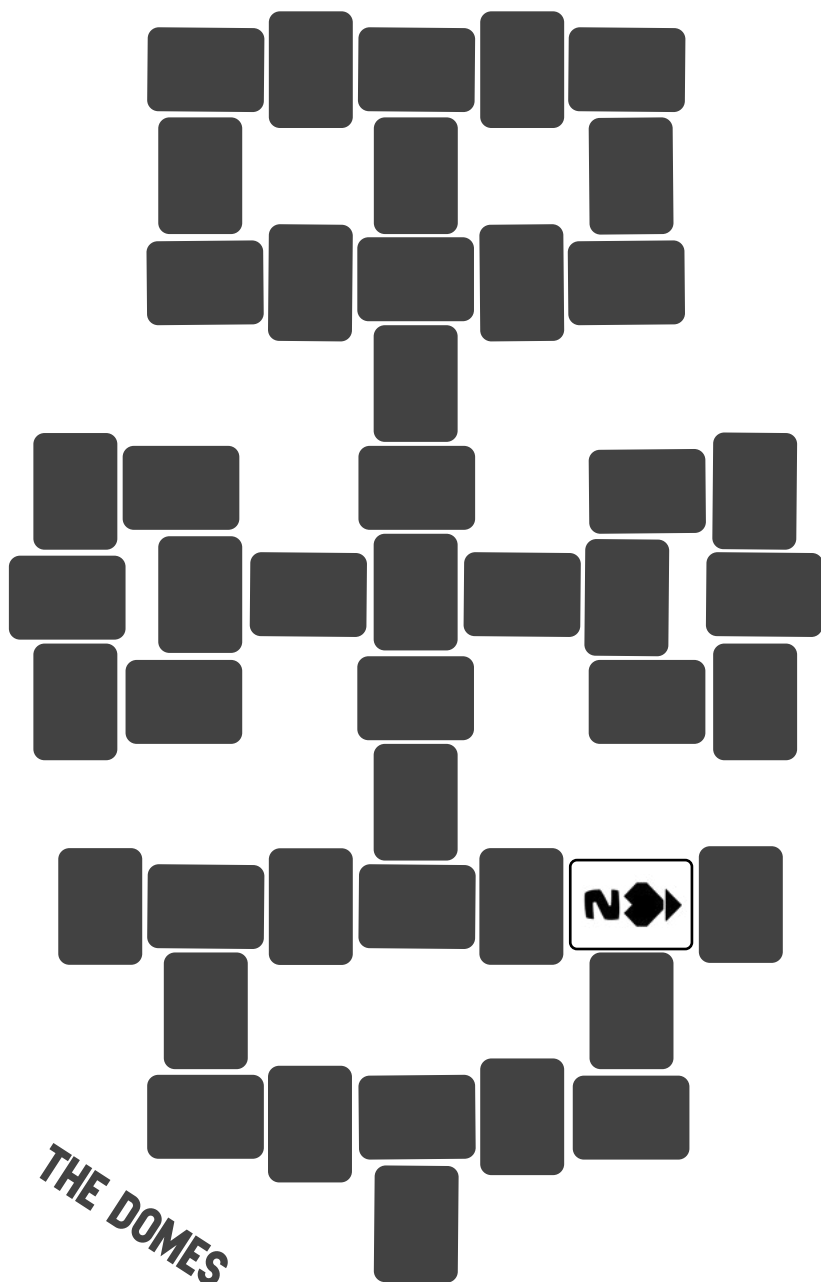
If you would like to vary the play experience you can begin the game by laying out the complete Station on the play area before starting. This method helps with the planning of movement at times but also introduces new challenges, as you cannot adapt your path based on circumstances.

It also results in a slightly longer setup.

To use a preset layout, simply place the 2 of Hearts as usual, then place the remainder of the Station Deck facedown to form the map. You will play and explore the station as usual after that.

You can also vary the play experience by choosing a specific location for the Escape Pods and placing them faceup during setup.

PRESET STATION LAYOUT EXAMPLE



THE DOMES



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(Apart from this text, anyway)**

But while I have you here... You should
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