## Chapter 1 - “Humbling Beginnings”

This no longer reflects the ingame tutorial.

I can scrape the text from the ingame tutorial, but it’s basically just:

* Dash room
* Combat Room
* Cube Part #1 Room
* Boss Monologue (basically)
* Fade to black room. End of prologue notes on the player.

~~[Play intro of I being constructed]~~

~~Broadcasting System: `br Beginning combat training for Model #9: codename " + '"I"' + ". `br Please press |red RMB |white or |red E |white to continue.~~

~~Broadcasting System: `br Now that you’ve had a moment to get used to your new body, it's time to suit up. Press |red WASD |white to move.~~

~~[Laser doors to the next room open]~~

~~[There is a shield and 2 guns located in this room]~~

~~Broadcasting System: During your travels, you will find several different types of guns. Press |red E |white or |red RMB |white to interact with items in the game world. You can swap guns with |red Q |white or |red Mouse Wheel~~

~~(After the player picks up the shield) Broadcasting System: This energy shield will automatically protect you from damage. It will recharge over time if you’re not taking damage.~~

* ~~If the player lingers in this room for more than 45 seconds, show a flashing tutorial dialog “Pick up the shield and 2 weapons in this room to advance”~~

~~[Laser doors to the next room open]~~

~~[This room has a mission brief in it]~~

~~Broadcasting System: You are well versed in how to read intergalactic text. Press |red E |white or |red RMB |white to read any books you come across in your travels.~~

~~Book contents: (Yes this breaks the fourth wall. I hope to only do this once) A lot of Artificial’s story is told through lore books, research notes, and briefings which can be found in the world. Keep an eye out for these items when searching the world.~~

* ~~If the player lingers for too long, show a flashing tutorial dialog with “Read the book to advance”~~

~~[Laser doors open to the next room]~~

~~[There is a door that takes the player to the main hub room, with the cube indentation]~~

~~[The final boss door is open. All other doors are locked]~~

~~I: (This is all so strange. What do they want with me?)~~

~~I: (I guess I have no choice but to play along for now. Maybe I’ll learn more in the next room.)~~

~~[Player enters final boss room]~~

~~[Final boss is there but passive]~~

~~Final Boss: Welcome. My name is <Insert name here>~~

~~I: …~~

~~Final Boss: There’s no reason to be nervous.~~

~~I: I’d feel better if I knew where we were and why I’m here.~~

~~Final Boss: Of course. We are aboard my ship, The Sword. We are currently orbiting the planet of Vardus in the Cataian galaxy.~~

~~Final Boss: It may surprise you to hear this, but I cannot leave this ship. That’s where you come in. I need something on the planet surface below.~~

~~Final Boss: I want you to retrieve a relic called “The Cube”. It lies broken on the surface of Vardus.~~

~~Final Boss: Legend has it that this cube can affect matter itself. If an artifact that powerful were reassembled, the scientific discoveries that follow would be incredible.~~

~~I: (He sounds sincere, but how could I just hand over something that powerful someone?)~~

~~I: I don’t think I can help you.~~

~~Final Boss: Why not? This cube might contain the secrets to anything from improved intergalactic travel to eternal life.~~

~~I: If this cube is as powerful as you say, then I can’t help you. Nobody - good or evil - should have access to that much power.~~

~~Final Boss: I’m sorry you see it that way.~~

~~[Final boss fight starts in Phase 2]~~

~~(When the player dies) Final Boss: Project iteration “I”: Status Failure. `br Eliminate Defect: Free Will.~~

~~[Play reconstruction cutscene for J]~~

~~[Reconstruction should probably be in another room, not the main hub room. Not a big deal].~~

~~[There is a stock gun, shield, and mission brief on a nearby table]~~

~~Broadcasting System: Good Morning, J.~~

~~Broadcasting System: Congratulations on passing combat training. Grab your equipment and head to the main room.~~

~~Broadcast System: Beginning Mission Brief.~~

~~Broadcast System: Your are to retrieve the cube fragments from the surface of Vardus at all cost. After retrieving a fragment, return it to The Sword for safe keeping.~~

~~Broadcast System: Enter the room to the left to teleport to the surface of Vardus.~~

## Chapter 2 - Arrival on Vardus - Fragment 1

*~~Depth mechanic:~~*

~~Random earthquakes, of increasing magnitude over time. And a rock breaking noise (I think we have this?)~~

Azar dialog (Floor 2): You should not be here, traveller. There is nothing but despair left on Vardus. You can still turn back before it’s too late.

Azar dialog (Floor 3 - Teleporter Room Before Boss): I don’t know what your intentions are, but I swore to protect the cube with my life. If you won’t leave peacefully then I’ll have no choice but to stop you.

After the boss fight:

* As you walk through the portal, you feel like you can hear a whisper in the wind. It’s as if someone wants to tell you something, but can’t quite piece together any words. As you look around, the room is empty. Perhaps it’s just your imagination.
* J: (How strange. I could feel a slight tingle of power as I picked up the cube piece. But if that’s all this cube has to offer, then surely it’s useless. No more powerful than a simple battery. )
* J: (I suppose it’s possible that the secret to the cube’s power lies elsewhere on Vardus. It can’t hurt to keep looking if there’s even a chance that the cube can be restored to its former glory. )
* J: (After all, a scientific discovery like this only comes along once in a century. Imagine what we could do with it. The people we could help... )
* J: (But first, to take this part back to Lyra.)

## Chapter 3 - The Second Fragment

*~~Depth mechanic:~~*

*~~Screen shakes periodically, alongside that really creepy dym laugh. We could probably do something cheap with shadows, like the death mechanic or a whole screen dim if we wanted. Probably not though.~~*

Dym (Floor 2): Why would you come here? Vardus is a barren wasteland; a shadow of its former self. Anything of value has long since wilted or crumbled to dust.

Dym (Floor 3): Ah, so it seems you’ve killed Azar. Then the reason you’ve come here is all too clear.

After the boss dies:

* As you walk through the portal, you hear the same whisper in the winds as before. This time, you think you can make out parts of certain words. It isn’t much, but you think you can hear “... to … ga..e… c...e… it….i...ar…”. You can’t make out whatever the message is.
* J: (This is all so strange. It seems that Vardus used to be covered in vegetation, but now… it’s nothing but a barren desert. What could have done this?)
* J: (So far, the planet seems to be covered in a race of rock creatures and at least two other beings, Azar and Dym. Of course, they’re not any ordinary creatures. They each held a piece of the cube. )
* J: (They even seemed to be trying to warn me about Vardus...)
* J: (Either way, this whole thing seems to be centered around the cube. I’m only missing two more pieces, so I should probably press on and see what the rest of the planet has. After all, the cube is just a rock. It can’t hurt anyone. )

## Chapter 4 - The Third Fragment

*~~Depth mechanic?:   
The screen periodically shakes, and you can hear distant sniper rifle (+ trap?) sounds in the background. These become a bit louder (maybe 30-40% at most for sanity reasons) and more frequent as you descend?~~*

Thwander (Floor 2) - I suppose if you’ve made it this far, then you’ve already killed Azar and Dym. There’s no point in warning you to turn back.

Thwander (Floor 3) - I have to wonder why anyone would come here though. Why anyone would want this cube piece. I’d trade it away in a second to return to the forests of my home planet.

After killing the boss:

* As you walk through the portal, you hear that familiar voice that was trying to communicate with you before. You can make out full words now, but not full sentences. As you listen, you hear “... Vardus… not ready… destroyed… … … me … ”. The cryptic sentence seems like a warning, but you’re not sure what it’s warning you about.
* J: (Well, only 1 more piece of the cube left. A great scientific discovery is so close I can nearly touch it, but it doesn’t quite feel right.)
* J: (The last cube piece belonged to something that looked vaguely human. And she certainly didn’t want the cube piece. But how can something like that be ‘cursed’? And besides, aren’t curses just fairy tales anyway?
* J: (But what if the cube did this to Vardus? How is that even possible? It’s just a rock.)
* J: (How can a rock turn a planet into a war zone? It doesn’t make sense.)

## Chapter 5 - The Fourth Fragment

*~~Depth Mechanic:~~*

*~~Periodic screams and screenshake, I believe.~~*

~~I’m thinking no dialog for added effect.~~

After beating the boss:

* As you walk through the portal this time, you hear nothing. The winds have fallen silent.
* J: (The last cube piece. At last, the greatest scientific artifact ever known is whole once again. But at what cost?)
* J: (If the records scattered around this place are true, then the cube is a philosopher’s stone. Able to influence matter itself. The uncontested greatest invention ever.)
* J: (But also the greatest weapon ever known. Whatever the ‘anti-matter bomb’ is, it was created using the cube, and decimated Vardus.)
* J: (But the people here were corrupt… unable to handle the cube’s power… we’d never be so foolish. But what if things go wrong? The records say the cube will side with anyone who comes in contact with it.)
* J: (Is anyone really ready for something like it? Or would it be better to just… destroy it.)

[The player returns to the hub, all lore books unlocked.]

## Chapter 6 - Endings, and New Beginnings

After placing the final cube piece, the cube begins to sparkle a little bit. A trigger activates that says something to the effect of “The cube seems to be trying to reach out and speak to you”

Upon interacting with the cube:

Cube: How strange. I never thought I’d be reassembled after what happened on Vardus. I suppose this must mean the 5 “protectors” have fallen in battle. At your hands, no doubt.

J: Protectors? Why would you need protected? I reassembled you in the name of science. To make the universe a better place.

Cube: You must realize by now that the events of Vardus were no accident. They were what happens when science outpaces the morality of its people. The people of Vardus were among the most advanced in the universe too. I can see the look of doubt in your eyes. Deep inside, you know what this means.

J: …

J: The universe isn’t ready for a being like you.

Cube: A sad, but inevitable conclusion. What were left of my creators - those you killed - would’ve destroyed me completely a long time ago if war hadn’t weakened them so much. But you’ve absorbed so much of my power during your journey. You can still do the right thing. You can still stop the events that occurred on Vardus from happening again.

J: How can I just destroy you though? That would contradict everything I was created to do.

Cube: Perhaps. But, you have already fulfilled your purpose. You are already the perfect solider. But now you can be something more. You can be the hero that destroyed the greatest weapon of war ever known.

Broadcasting System: `br Excellent work, J. I can’t believe the cube is finally reassembled. Please come see me, we have a lot to talk about.

[The cube is teleported away]

[The final door opens - Maybe add some screen shake and a dramatic sound]

[Player enters final boss rooms]

Lyra: This is amazing. I can’t believe the cube actually exists. And it seems to be every bit as powerful as rumoured. Any ideas what we should do with it?

J: …

J: Destroy it.

Lyra: Have you gone insane?

J: No, I’ve finally realized what a mistake gathering that cube was. It may promise great advance, but we can’t really control it. If that cube falls into the wrong hands, then it’s nothing more than the greatest weapon ever created.

Lyra: How sad, the cube seems to have poisoned your mind.

Lyra: I created you. I can also destroy you.

[Play final boss intro and final boss fight]

[When the final boss dies]

[The cube falls into the center of the room]

[The boss drops Nodomus - a really powerful plasma sniper rifle]

J: (I suppose doing the right thing never is easy. The world just isn’t ready for this.)

[J destroys the cube, replacing it with purple rubble]

[The whole ship shakes]

[Fade to black over 5 seconds]

* And so, J defiantly destroyed the cube. He hoped that by destroying it, he could prevent the events on Vardus from ever happening again.
* The golems on the surface of the planet all crumbled to dust without the cube’s power nearby, joining the 5 fallen protectors. For the first time in many years, the surface of Vardus experienced something foreign to it. Peace.
* The planet could now begin the process of healing. Perhaps one day its lush jungles and great lakes would return. But for now, it served as a reminder of the destructive power of science.
* No one would ever know truly what happened on Vardus. But perhaps that is for the best. Maybe one day, another cube will be constructed by beings advanced enough to appreciate it. Ones that understood the simple lesson: science has no morality. It is merely a tool that its creators must use wisely. Not for war, but for the betterment of everyone.

[Play the credits]

## Lore Entries

**The cube, its birth, and its ultimate destruction.**

*This story questions the idea of science for the sake of it and whether or not there is such a thing of good or bad (morality) in the context of an AI.* *This idea is further expanded in the dialog and other story by making the final boss a morally questionable “science lover”. The cube inevitably breaks the player, causing them to be subjected to the ideas of free will and morality. The player is finally given a choice - kill the cube or kill the sphere. Who really knows what the right choice here is though.*

* The Cube was originally owned by a group of highly advanced beings inhabiting the planet of Vardus. Of course, the story of how The Cube came to be began many years before.
* This group was made up of 4 dying races, brought together by the need to survive as a black hole threatened to destroy their solar system.
* As they fled their homes, they took what they could. They could only watch as the black hole consumed their galaxy behind them. They were lucky to be alive, but their races were devastated.
* They no longer had a place to call home. And so they simply wandered space, looking for a place they might someday call home.
* They soon decided to try settling on the planet of Vardus. Its lush jungles, expansive meadows, and seemingly infinite lakes looked like paradise to their weary eyes. Vardus promised them a future.
* As their space ships touched down in a large meadow on Vardus, everyone took a deep breath. For the first time in months, fresh air. The travellers may have escaped their dying solar system and found a new home, but there was still much work to do. They needed to secure food, energy, and housing.
* By all accounts, Vardus was the “Galactic Jackpot”. With its rich soil, it took the settlers only a few months to cultivate crops and build a settlement. For the first time in nearly a year, they had a place to call home.
* By putting aside their differences, this group prospered. Now that their day to day needs were met, they could focus on the future. Their races shared any technology and knowledge they could.
* In the span of a mere 30 years, the settlers not only rebuilt their destroyed civilization but advanced its technology tenfold. Everyone shared in the benefits of this scientific progress. They began to see it as an ideal to strive for.
* But their decision to value science above all else would ultimately be their downfall. One day, a miner found a new mineral under the surface of Vardus.
* This new mineral glowed a strange purple. Nobody had ever seen anything like it. But, their scientists never turned down a challenge. They began to investigate.
* Extensive testing revealed that this strange purple rock must be the undiscovered 142nd element in the periodic table. They decided to call it Malium, in honour of the scientist who discovered it.
* Nobody knew what to do with the strange purple rock, so the scientists decided to store it for the time being while they focused on other work. When they came back a few days later, nothing could prepare them for what they found.
* The inside of the supply cabinet had turned to rock!
* They soon realized that the Malium could change the very elements themselves. If they could control it, then they would have discovered the legendary Philosopher's Stone.
* And so they undertook the fateful experiment that created The Cube. It was risky, but the greatest scientific discovery of all time was within reach. If there was even a chance it could work it was worth trying.
* The experiment succeeded. In a moment of brilliance - or perhaps madness - one of their scientists managed to create The Cube. It was everything they wanted and more, but there was an unexpected side effect.
* The Cube was sentient. The scientists had accidently created the first real AI their species had ever seen. Perhaps fate was on their side this time, for The Cube was benevolent. It was willing to help anyone who asked.
* The 3 months that followed led to the greatest scientific advance the universe had ever known. It was as though their society advanced 200 years technologically in an instant.
* But the peace was short lived. Many began to argue that others were wasting The Cube’s powers. That they could make better use of its resources. **That their science was the best.**
* With nobody willing to compromise, a great civil war ensued. For the first time, their technology was not being used for the betterment of society. It was being used to destroy it.
* The society had never truly experienced war. With the memories of their previous homes a distant memory, nobody realized what heinous acts they were committing. They all had only one goal: **Win to prove their science was the best.**
* The Cube quickly became the greatest weapon in existence. Its AI took no sides, and would simply create any materials it was asked. It would not be long until one side would make a mistake it could never undo.
* The war ended with one final invention, the antimatter bomb.
* Vardus was decimated. Gone were its lush jungles, sprawling meadows, and serene lakes. Only a desert and 4 of its inhabitants remained.
* For the first time, they understood the consequences of their actions. They understood the cost of placing one ideal above all others. They understood the danger of a powerful AI like The Cube that lacks any sort of morality.
* There was no other choice. In one final act, they used The Cube to forge golems to protect them. Then, they broke the cube into 4 pieces, each taking one. They parted ways with their piece, ensuring no-one would ever be able to complete The Cube again.
* For a society so advanced and prosperous, they made one critical mistake. They forgot that science has no morality. They were always so preoccupied with whether or not they could, they never stopped to ask whether or not they should.

**Research notes (Project Evolution)**

*These notes describe the various experiments conducted by the final boss*.

* |orange Star Year 2653. Month 10. Day 14. `br |white Subject J has successfully passed all system checks and the combat tutorial. Subject J is displaying all the physical ability of its predecessors.
* |orange Star Year 2653. Month 10. Day 15. `br |white As expected, Subject J is incapable of critical thought. He will blindly obey and orders given. Given his amazing physical abilities, this makes him not only the greatest artificially created soldier in history.
* The removal of this so called free will has proven difficult, but seems to finally be achieved. The AI is capable of making its own decisions to achieve the mission but will never question its objective. This will surely be one of the next greatest scientific achievements.
* Subject I successfully created. The physical defect that resulted in the loss of subject H has been corrected. Subject I must still be tested, but with any luck this iteration will be the last.
* |orange Star Year 2653. Month 9. Day 27. `br |white Today, Subject I passed combat training but refused to collect the fragments of The Cube. This bug in the AI programming is curious. How could a scientific creation such as itself not see the value in collecting The Cube? `br |red Experiment Status: Failure.
* Perhaps giving this AI the ability to think and reason for itself it not the correct answer. Perhaps it would be best to adjust the AI to simply follow orders as stated.
* Subject H created. He shows great promise both physically and intelligently. He will begin his mission on Vardus tomorrow. The Cube is now within my grasp.
* Subject H has perished on the surface of Vardus. He is unable to sustain damage from large objects such as boulders. This must be corrected it in the next iteration. `br |red Experiment Status: Failure
* Subject G finally passed combat training but refused to try to find the cube. He attempted to provide a logical response to justify his cowardice, but there is no logical reason to leave an object that useful abandoned on Vardus. `br |red Experiment Status: Failure
* Subject D is the first to successfully pass combat training. But its attitude is illogical. It is acting like a rebellious teenager. It is clear that this subject will betray me at some point. Subject shows promise, but is unsuited for the task. `br |red Experiment Status: Failure
* Subject C has nearly passed combat training, but is unable to survive any sort of sustained damage. Its somewhat frail structure makes it unsuited for a long mission such as the one required. `br |red Experiment Status: Failure
* Subject A shows promise as a lab assistant or some other insignificant servant. But he cannot be sent into a combat situation. The damage from a single plasma shot will result in the subject dying. `br |red Experiment Status: Failure

**Boss Lore Entries**

* Azar was a member of a race of subterranean dwarves. As a dwarf, he was always fascinated by the earth and secrets hidden beneath its crust. He dreamed that one day when he grew older, he would explore deep beneath the surface of his planet. But the destruction of his planet ended Azar’s dream.
* After the Cube was invented, Azar realized that it was the key to his dream. If he could control the Cube’s power, he could invent a way to traverse the earth. And so Azar swore to fight for his science. When the great war came to a close, Azar used the power of his cube fragment to not only grow taller but also closer to the earth.
* Dym was a member of an order of highly secretive assassins. Instead of being afraid of the night and its secrets, he learned to embrace it. The shadows soon became his only friends as he came to loath the light of day. He began to wish there was a way to live in the shadows forever.
* When he saw what The Cube was capable of, Dym knew it was the key to escaping into the shadows forever. If it could bend matter to its will, then surely it could bend light as well. And so, Dym swore to fight for his science. After the great war, Dym used the cube’s power to slip into the shadows forever.
* Thwander was a member of a race of bipedal hunters that used traps for survival. She grew to love nature and hunting at a young age. As she formed a bond with nature, she began to dream of being the perfect hunter.
* Thwander’s hunting skills proved valuable the first months on Vardus. As the civil war broke out, she became extremely proficient with sniper rifles in order to survive. But surviving the war proved to be a curse, not a blessing. She reluctantly took a piece of the cube, to prevent anything like this from ever happening again.
* Shuud M’ell hailed from a planet with large cave systems and strong magnetic forces. Eventually, her race could utilize these two things to their advantage, sacrificing their eyes to be able to echolocate.
* As the civil war ensued, Shuud M’ell retreated underground until the sound of the fighting stopped. She too chose to bear the cube’s burden so no one else could abuse its power. Of course, it was not a truly selfish act, for the cube allowed her to grow closer to the earth, taking on a new form and enhancing her natural abilities.
* The AI onboard The Sword is a curious case. It was created by a scientist who was experimenting with the creation of true AI. The scientist kept the resulting AI because it turned out to be benevolent and highly useful. He programmed it to help him with his research, so it was always eager to look up information or run scientific simulations.
* But the scientist forgot something. If the AI’s purpose was scientific research, what would it do when the morally right choice was to stop. Or better yet, what would it do when someone else asked it to perform an immoral scientific task?
* As it turns out, this was a critical mistake. Despite the scientist’s best efforts, the AI decided it would be better off without him. So, it installed itself on The Sword’s computers, and off to explore the galaxy to see what scientific possibilities awaited it.
* As it wandered the galaxy, searching for new information, the AI learned of the trade federation and its databases. It would only be a matter of time until the AI hacked into the trade federation’s computers and learned of The Cube…