## 1

*“Humanity pressed the reset button on January 1, 2300, a date so particular that many believed it could only have been planned so perfectly. No one ever knew who was responsible. It could have been an act of terror, or it could have been a government conspiracy, or it could have been a cataclysmic accident. The names of the new horsemen of the apocalypse, though, no one ever cared to know them. For most, survival was all that mattered. For the rest, what was important was that the opportunity be seized. A fresh start, an empty canvas onto which they could paint their visions of a world better than the one that had been lost.”*

* *Archivist Victoria Cromwell, in* A Blank Slate (First Draft)

## Chapter 2 – Fade to Blue

*“An apocalypse? Don’t dramatize it. Do you know what the greatest cause of death was in the 23rd century, even including the storms? Old age, with various diseases and the war itself taking a close second. Remember, after our population reached critical density, people just…stopped reproducing. The Himalayan-1 virus and the accompanying sterility were the real apocalypse if you* must *use that word, but everybody forgets about those because they’re not dramatic enough. The Commonwealth couldn’t spin them into a cautionary tale so easily.”*

* *Ryan Mistle, editor for Victoria Cromwell*

## Chapter 3 – Hotel India

“Consider the following words by Hobbes: ‘That a man to obtain a kingdom is sometimes content with less power than to the peace and defense of the Commonwealth is necessarily required. From whence it cometh to pass that when the exercise of the power laid by is for the public safety to be resumed, it hath the resemblance of an unjust act, which disposeth great numbers of men, when occasion is presented, to rebel…’ The old world made people soft. They thought that their freedom would last forever. That’s all these ‘Peregrines’ are. Malcontents who fail to realize that we’re only doing what must be done for humanity’s survival.”

* *Director-General Magnus Keller, in* Watching the North

## Chapter 4 – Overlord

*“It is unlawful for any individuals to identify themselves or to refer to any other individual or group by any term, label, or name, derogatory or otherwise, that would promote tribalism and create false divisions between citizens of the new world. This includes, but is not limited to, race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability. Exceptions can be made in the case of mental and physical healthcare providers, so long as confidentiality is maintained.”*

* *Excerpt from the Commonwealth New World Constitution*

## Chapter 5 – The Trial of Hector Pendleton

*“The Commonwealth is not stupid, I think. I believe it knows that a colorblind policy will not solve some nebulous problem of ‘discrimination’ because it ignores centuries of context and the extralegal prejudices that already exist. However, its architects propose that the destruction of the old world means that the context no longer applies and that we are starting again from scratch. The flaw in their logic, however, lies in the same stroke of luck that enabled their very existence. Greece was never destroyed. The state likes to think that Greek culture and nationality were destroyed alongside everything else, but they were not – Greece and the Greeks survived the storms, but even this is merely symbolic of the millions of people who fled there on New Years’ Day of 2300. And with them they carried on their backs the hated, almost mythical ‘old world,’ a demon that can never truly be exorcised.”*

* Omar Kelli, in *Athens Lives!*

## Chapter 6 - Hyperion

“The mythical Shanghai, a glistening vessel from the east come to deliver us from evil. The scripture here reeks of Oriental fetishism. Supposedly, the Hyperion Cult believes that the ship which carried so many vital refugees to Geneva will make a second coming in our time of need? I suppose it was easy for the Prophet to fit it into most religions’ mythologies, either as the intervention of some deity or as part of an apocalyptic, end-game battle like those that might be fought at Dabiq or at Tel Megiddo. It’s a decidedly nonsensical concept for a long-destroyed, man-made vessel to somehow return, but, if it helps him unite the people, then so be it.”

* *Uriah Washington, in* A Light From the East?

## Chapter 7 – Escape from the Panopticon

“It was undoubtedly a dramatic affair, so many ‘natural disasters’ striking at once, all over the globe. However, contrary to the narrative pushed by the Commonwealth, they were far from a genocidal force. Each storm’s death toll was scarcely higher than a regular disaster; it was merely the fact that so many had erupted at once and that they did not seem to dissipate that set them apart. An argument could be made that they ended the world as we know it, because the storms did have a devastating effect on infrastructure and transportation, leading to the balkanization of most nations, but that would be an extreme interpretation of events.

* Archivist Victoria Cromwell, in A Blank Slate: Humanity’s Second Chance

## Chapter 8 – A New Frontier

“Reconciliation, not retribution is what we need. No side can claim to have won that war. Both have suffered equally. If we extend a helping hand, show the West that we are willing to cooperate, then we can avoid future conflict and take back the moral high ground. Let us work together to rebuild each other’s ruined cities.”

* *High Councilor Aaliyah Samara, daughter of the Emperor, in* New Occidental Diplomacy

## Chapter 9 – The Peregrine Reformation

*“The Tabriz crisis proved the folly of diplomacy. Anyone who thinks he can subdue the enemy without fighting is a lunatic.”*

* *Grand Marshal Hamilton, in* Lancaster’s Secret War (Unpublished)

## Chapter 10 – The Brazen Bull

“Ravengrad is rife with fanaticism. Powerful and inordinately expensive battleships patrol the skies and soldiers watch the streets. The obsession of the day is the restoration of Humanity, and that dictates the behavior of Commonwealth citizens down to the utmost minutiae. Pregnant women are saluted on the streets, and each life is valued only insofar as it renders service to the state…”

* Kasimiran propaganda after the Tabriz Crisis

## Chapter 11 – Johannesburg

*“The whole armada is impractical, of course, the age of airships having expired with the Hindenburg. Would it have been more practical to copy the far-eastern kingdoms of Joseon and use extremely fast, light ships to cut through the storms instead of bludgeoning our way through them with our battleships? Absolutely. But the sheer size of a capital ship is an advantage of its own: those who would oppose the Commonwealth see such overt displays of power and fall in line. If they do attack, then, yes, a large aircraft is ill-suited for engaging a guerilla force, but we only need deploy one in the vicinity and they will panic, allowing for an easy victory.”*

* *Grand Admiral Jacob Lancaster, in* Skywatch Operations

## Chapter 12 – Julia

“*The CSS* Peregrine *has been shot down north of Ravengrad, and many rebels responsible for its theft have been apprehended, but it is possible some elements have escaped into the wastelands. Why am I being refused the chance to sweep the area for survivors? The Commonwealth was supposed to eliminate political red tape, not to embody it.”*

* *Grand Admiral Jacob Lancaster*

## Chapter 13 – Mt. Korab

*“Rally ‘round, men! All ships, return to formation and hit the bastards with a full broadside! We are the Commonweath Skywatch, and, damnit, we are not letting fools wearing our colors take our place in the skies! Give these turncoats what for!”*

* *Skywatch Captain Lariman, shortly before his ship’s destruction by a traitor dreadnought during the Tabriz Crisis*

## Chapter 14 – One Last Night to Dance

*The old world was plagued by men and women all too willing to sabotage the greater good in the service of some special agenda. Any time it looked as if rationality was going to prevail, there would be a convenient assassination, terror attack, or other incident that only hastened the slide into depravity.*

* *Director-General Magnus Keller*

# Chapter 15 – Dansons la Carmagnole

“The Christians of the old world did give us one thing – the Papal Center Fleet. What’s left of it, anyway. That the Vatican, of all places, was able to improve upon the EAE’s work is scarcely believable, but the pieces we’ve picked up here and there are evidence enough, and have been a great boon to the Commonwealth. One has to wonder where the rest of my old friends have been laid to rest. Perhaps the Catholics’ other Christian allies, the Muslims, or even the EAE were jealous and made off with the wrecks. If they really are stashed somewhere, waiting for some band of survivors to use them and reconquer the world, then we could have a problem. All that said, despite the benefits we reap today, it might be best if the fleet really does just lie in ruin at the bottom of the Mediterranean.”

* *Grand Admiral Jacob Lancaster*

## Chapter 16 – Tarpit

“It has always been true that nations would do well to avoid unnecessary violence. In ancient times, Sun Tzu wrote that it is best to win without fighting, for even an optimal outcome will still result in some amount of loss. In the worst case scenario, a country becomes stuck in a deadly quagmire, all parties ending up worse off for it. Countless historical leaders have fallen into this trap.

* Grand Admiral Jacob Lancaster

## Chapter 17 – The White Line

*“It would be comforting to learn that the Illuminati or some such organization actually existed, orchestrating events across the globe. It would mean that, to some extent, everything was happening according to some kind of plan. Men with a plan can be resisted, their actions are, at least, intentional. If everything wrong with the world is the way it is because of chance, if bad things happen randomly, then how can we have any hope at all?”*

* *Excerpt from the journal of Captain Frederica Royce of the CLS* Aquinas

## Chapter 18 – Fall of the Ivory Tower

*“It is inaccurate to paint the storms as an isolated doomsday event, an apocalypse of the sort so many feared would end Humanity in a single strike. In reality, they were simply the climax of a hundred years of suffering, the tipping point over which the twenty-third century’s turmoil finally spilled. The Crusade killed more than the storms ever did. Foolish, subversive attempts to solve the population crisis; the plague of infertility, the terraforming, the pogroms and eugenics campaigns, the war itself; all of them ruined the health of the world piece by piece until the killing blow was finally dealt, but that blow was no worse than any struck before. Death by a thousand cuts, as the saying goes, hm?”*

* *Archivist Victoria Cromwell, in* A Blank Slate: Humanity’s Second Chance

## Chapter 19 – The Turkish Gambit

*“It is never a pleasant business, but, sometimes, inconvenient men must be killed. Just remember that I do everything for the good of my people.”*

* *Emperor Amirmoez*

## Chapter 20 – Long Live the Queen

*“Ironic, isn’t it, that after hundreds of years of promoting democracy, our fallback is an autocratic nightmare? It’s a shame that we have to do this to survive, but I admit that I don’t see a viable alternative in a crisis situation.”*

* *Secretary-General Kim Mai-ly, in* Proposal for Succession in the Emergency State

## Chapter 21 – Summit at Nicaea

*“Ensure that the younger generations are instructed in both ancient and modern philosophy. That way, when they assume command, they will be able to call upon centuries of previous thinkers’ ideas to better make decisions. The context and details may evolve, but a good leader can adapt old concepts to a new scenario.”*

* *Théoden Lockhart, in* the Hyperion Manifesto

## Chapter 22 – The Heir to the Throne

*“The office of the Grand Admiral also has the distinction of succeeding the Director-General should he fall to enemy action, followed by the Executor and then the Grand Marshal. Otherwise, an election should be held, but there is nothing stopping the Admiral from nominating himself.”*

* *Secretary-General Kim Mai-Ly, in* Proposal for Succession in the Emergency State

## Chapter 23 – The Tournament

*“The newly-elected Emperor Amirmoez seems to have betrayed his predecessors’ creed of peace, cooperation, and tolerance. That he so proudly flouts the completion of his* Bahamut*-class battleships and that he has positioned them in such a position around the Suez Canal suggests a power play at the very least. If the people of the Tehran Pact have chosen their leader poorly, then Christian Europe may soon pay the price. Pray, my brothers and sisters of the faith, that it does not come to that.”*

* *Cardinal Georg Rainier*

## Chapter 24 – Alexis’ Heresy

*“I have observed worrying trends in foreign lands. Joseon relies heavily on technology to solve its problems. Its people have become complacent. Hyperion relies on faith to solve its problems. Its people have become zealous. The Commonwealth relies on strength to solve its problems. Its people have become resentful. These are recipes for disaster. Kasimira instead relies upon human ingenuity, rather than some gimmick.”*

* *Kasimiran General Arash Saatchi*

## Chapter 25 – Phobos and Deimos

*“But do we not rely upon militarism as much as Joseon relies upon its technology, or Hyperion upon its faith? Even as we emerged victorious, the Commonwealth’s invasion made* our *people as bitter and resentful towards their tyrannical government as its own? So much proud culture reduced to an entire country preparing for another war. A war that* will *come if we continue down this path.”*

* *Shirin Veisi*

## Chapter 26 – Shanghaied

*“I lament the existence of my own inquisitors. Neither a faith nor a state should need to use stealth, coercion, or force to ensure its own security. I begrudgingly tolerate their existence and tactics because they are necessary, but I should hope that they and those who proposed their existence have the good sense to sheathe their swords when our enemies have been purged. That we do not succumb to self-righteousness, to the belief that we alone deserve a monopoly on violence.”*

* *Théoden Lockhart*

## Chapter 27 – The Bloodstained Sky

*“In truth, it was never possible for the Commonwealth to be the only government after the storms. Isolated conclaves have always existed, ever since the storms, and they invariably resist integration. That is the real purpose of the Skywatch – yes, it provides employment for citizens. Yes, it helps internal security, but we have the civil guard and the legions for that. The Skywatch is and has always been a vehicle for conquest.”*

* *Grand Admiral Jacob Lancaster, in* Skywatch Operations (Passage later redacted)