**Necessary Detective 1**

**Concept Book**

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# **Macro-lore**

**Origin of Epistimia**

In Bermuda Triangle, situated an island, a size of Kuwait (~18,000 km2). The island was uncharted until a Spanish explorer discovered it in the 16th century and called it *huracán malvado*, which means *Evil Hurricane* in Spanish. Although the island was rich in natural resources, utilizing them is futile due to the region's violent climate. The possession of this island changed hands multiple times, from Portugal to Spain, and lastly to America in 1898, along with many Caribbean countries. Following the United State acquisition of the island, numerous attempts to establish civilian housing and mining facilities failed due to the island's harsh climate.

When World War I ended, there was a surge in technological advancement. At the time, the United States saw an excellent opportunity to use the island as a testing ground. As a result of the meeting for Allies nations, all of them agreed to send personnel — primarily scientists, specialists, and military officers — to conduct experiments, with an emphasis on military development. Later, the island was renamed *Epistimia* after the Greek word *επιστήμη (epistími)*, which means *science*.

The region's frequent hurricanes were still a topic of concern. However, the hurricane is no longer a significant threat, thanks to modern building structures and ample funding for restoration. After two years of construction and laying out foundations (started in 1918, completed in 1920), the island, at the very least, was habitable and sustainable. Many experiments were carried out across the island, resulting in various military and domestic technological advancements. This new scientific golden age was relished by the Allies, but it came and went quickly.

World War II began in 1939 and was the island's first major conflict. Japan and Italy — both former Allies turned Axis — commanded their citizens on the island to return and serve their country. The meeting was held again for the new Allies nations, and this time it lasted several days. Eventually, they decided to deport Axis citizens to their home countries by 1940. However, some citizens did not consent for many reasons, including their dissatisfaction with their leaders' decisions or the fact that they had already established a life on the island. Whatever the reason, the United States decided to assist them by granting them U.S. citizenship. This intervention exacerbated tensions and was one of the factors that led to Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.

The war had become desperate, so the meeting was held again, but this time in secret (and now with China as they joined in 1941). The United State proposed that to gain significant advantages in the war, they needed to conduct anti-organic barrier, augmentation, and neuro-power experiments as soon as possible. However, these experiments had to be carried out on humans and are extremely dangerous and unethical. Allies leaders struggle for a while, but they could not pass up such a great opportunity, so they agreed to support the experiments.

To keep the island's secrets and controversies hidden, the US ordered all personnel to stay and never leave for the rest of their lives. Although not everyone was pleased, the majority agreed to the project because of the unprecedented funding, high quality of life, and concern about losing the war.

While the other projects were still in their experimental stages, the anti-organic barriers finally made it out of the lab and onto the battlefield near the end of 1943. The barrier demonstrates its worth by assisting the Allies in achieving victory on D-Day and beyond.

Following the tragic events of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a riot emerged throughout the territory, led by the Japanese and pacifists. The rioters accused the United States of being too cruel and demanded that they depart the territory immediately. The riot lasted for weeks before being put down by the United States forces, resulting in numerous casualties and injuries.

To deescalate the situation, the United States reached an agreement with Epistimia's representative, Dr. Bentley Parr, on the following:

[Excerpt from “The Epistimia Contract of 1945"]

1. No individual (with exceptions, see number 7) is permitted to leave the island’s designated perimeter.

2. No individual (with exceptions, see number 7) is permitted to disclose information related to the island to anybody who is not authorized (for more details, read the attached document “Management and Authorization of Classified Information" at the end of the contract).

3. The United States and its allies will declare the territory uninhabitable after all personnel has died as a result of a catastrophic nuclear-related failure.

4. An anti-organic barrier will be erected in the shape of a circle, surrounding the island and extending 10 miles out of the shoreline. To prevent unauthorized entry and exit. The project is expected to take ten years to complete. Meanwhile, the US will send troops to patrol the border.

5. This island remains a territory of the United States of America, but it is permitted to adopt and apply its own constitution.

6. The first election must be held within 1946, under the supervision of the United States, to determine the president of Epistimia.

7. An agreement between the presidents of the United States and Epistimia must be reached in order to approve a *State Agent*. State Agents are allowed to travel outside of the territory's borders and disclose classified information under certain conditions (for more details, read the attached document “State Authorization and Clearance Levels” at the end of the contract).

8. As retaliation for restricting its citizens' basic freedoms, the United States and its allies will provide economic assistance to Epistimia. Additionally, up until 1950, the United States and its allies will extract and deliver families, familiars, and personal possessions requested by personnel on the territory to ensure maximum satisfaction.

9. Any technology or innovation developed in Epistimia is the property of the state and citizens of Epistimia.

10. This contract will be in effect until 75 percent of Epistimia citizens, the president of Epistimia, and president of the United States agree to reassess it.

In the eyes of the world, Epistimia is a deadly island with the greatest radiation level on the planet. The reality, on the other hand, is known only to the Epistimia citizen and a few chosen individuals.

**Politics**

**Governing Structure**

Epistimia uses nearly the same governing structure as the United States after the 1945 contract. Both the United States and Epistimia have constitutions with three branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial.

The legislative branch is a body of representatives responsible for enacting laws for a country or region. The United States' legislature is bicameral, with two separate assemblies: The Senate and the House of Representatives. Epistimia, on the other hand, is unicameral (consisting of only representatives) because it is considered to be a more democratic and effective way of legislating. The territorial assembly has a total of 50 members, each of whom represents approximately 80,000 people (from a 4.1 million population). Another unique responsibility of the Epistimia’s legislative branch is to appoint a State Agent to act as a territorial representative outside of Epistimia.

The executive branch is in charge of enforcing and executing laws. It consists primarily of the President, Vice President, and Cabinet. In contrast to the United States, the President is elected directly by citizens, rather than through the Electoral College. The Vice President, as well as the Cabinet are appointed by the President. Both the President and Vice President serve four-year terms, however they can be re-elected indefinitely. The President and Vice President of Epitimia has the highest clearance level, which allows them to travel beyond the border and disclose classified information directly to the President of the United States without restriction or exception. The nomination of a State Agent from the legislative branch can be approved only by both the President of Epistimia and the United States.

The judicial branch is then in charge of interpreting the laws and determining whether they violate the Constitution. There isn't much of a difference between the judicial systems of the United States and Epistimia. Except that the judges are elected by the people rather than appointed by the president. The elected judge will serve a four-year term and will not be able to be re-elected.

**Notable Agencies**

**Institute of Science and Technology (IST)**

The Institute of Science and Technology is one of Epistimia's most essential agencies, owing to its primary source of income from selling technology and innovation to the United States. This agency receives the most state funding to encourage new technological development. Every year, the institute hosts a science and engineering fair called *E-SEF (Epistimia Science and Engineering Fair)*, at which many scientists and engineers display their latest innovations. The institute will support and fund the innovations that have piqued its utmost interest. Dr. Hino Susumu, the institute's current head director, and a Japanese Electrical Engineering Ph.D. refers to E-SEF as “the stage where the impossible becomes possible and the dream becomes a reality”.

**Department of Ethics and Safeties in Experimentation (DESE)**

Immediately following the implementation of the constitution, the Department of Ethics and Safeties in Experimentation was established. The department's principal goal is to ensure that all scientific operations are ethical and safe. To do so, the department will dispatch inspectors to laboratories and testing fields to oversee the entire experimentation procedure. A certificate indicating excellent ethics and safeties will be given if the experiment passes all of the criteria. The issue was that there were not enough inspectors, resulting in a long queue. Because the procedure of obtaining the certificate is inconvenient due to a lack of inspectors, the department decided to seek the assistance of a private company. There are now three private firms in charge of their respective regions: Inspex, Experi, and Revisto. To issue the certificate, they employ the same test standard and method as the department; however, the authenticity of these companies is always in question, as they are frequently suspected of bribery, falsification, and intentional negligence.

**State Agent**

State Agent is a unique position with the highest clearance level after the president and vice president. They are permitted to leave the country to perform a specific duty assigned directly by the president. They are also authorized to discuss classified information, but only when ordered. The generality of a State Agent's responsibilities includes business negotiations, prototype and blueprint deliveries, and internal situation updates to authorized personnel.

Back in the day, information technology was not advanced enough to support handheld wireless communication devices. The State Agent will be personally guided and monitored by U.S. officers until 1984, when Dr. Higashi Susumu, Epistimia's electrical engineer, invented the *Portable Visual and Auditory Transmitter (PVAT)*. State Agents were expected to carry the gadget with them at all times, though they were still be escorted by U.S. officers as a fail-safe measure.

Personal escort is no longer required in today's environment, as the internet and real-time tracking are available. State Agents now have GPS microchips implanted into the inner layer of their skulls, allowing their position to be tracked. They also have to wear glasses with a microphone and camera that they must not remove until they return to Epistimia. The visual and auditory output of the glasses will be sent in real-time to their personal operators, who will monitor all of their activities. The State Agent and the Operator will keep in touch on a regular basis. In a critical situation, the Operator will provide directions as necessary. If anything goes wrong, the Operator can activate a kill-code, causing the microchip to violently explode and killing the State Agent.

**Political Orientations & Parties**

The main discourse of politic is not about social power or economic orientation, but a decision to reassess the 1945 contract. There are three main factions: liberals, conservatives and centrists.

Liberals are individuals who value liberty and freedom. They argue that the contract is inherently unfair because it restricts basic freedoms, and that it is a self-serving tool used by the elites to exploit the people. They propose that the contract be forcefully terminated because the orthodox procedure (agreement number ten in the contract) requires unnecessary and unfair consensus of the president of the United States.

Conservatives are individuals who value tradition and status quo. They argue that the contract fosters social and economic development as a result of substantial funding from the United States and its allies. They claim that because Epistimia is a closed territory, it is free of external conflict and can concentrate on technological and artistic development. Although not all conservatives oppose reassessment, they strongly oppose forced termination, which is why they are willing to collaborate with centrists.

Centrists are either uncertain or neutral. The majority of them acknowledge that the contract is unjust, but they oppose liberal’s idea of forced termination because of the potential for conflict. They tend to vote for moderate parties who favor the orthodox reassessment procedure.

Historically, centrist and conservative parties have always won the majority, and no liberal president has ever been elected. However, the tide looks to be turning against conservatives, since no conservative candidate has defeated a centrist candidate for the past five terms. The liberal movement also has gained traction since the advent of the internet. The liberal rating rises year after year as a result of widespread online activisms. The latest election in 2018 demonstrated that more and more people are siding with the liberals, as the centrist candidate won by only 2%.

**Economy**

Epistimia's economy is comparable to today's British economy in that it is built on free-market capitalism with a focus on social welfare. The free market encourages the creation of new technology, which is the territory's principal export; the government only intervenes in the economy to prevent monopolies and establish a national bank. A strong social welfare system benefits citizens in improving their quality of life. National health care, education, transportation, water, energy, and the internet are all provided by the state.

However, the free market is not without flaws. With a few regulations, some more successful business firms can gain control of the majority of the market share and thus become a monopoly in disguise. For example, Fontaine Autos controls nearly 60% of the automobile industry and remains the only option for the majority of middle-class people. With a monopoly on the market, a company can raise prices arbitrarily and push out low-quality products whenever they want.

It is still debatable whether a free market economy is beneficial to Epistimia. Some believe that the government should regulate the market to keep it fair for consumers and small business owners, while others disagree. Nonetheless, the economy is not a primary concern of the citizen at the moment, as the 1945 contract discourse has completely overshadowed the discussion.

**Geography**

When the island was first habited in 1920, it was divided into three provinces, each of which served a different purpose and were all named after Greek words; ***δ***, ***μ*** and ***α*** provinces. ***δ*** is abbreviated from *δοκιμές (dokimés)*, means testing. ***μ*** from *μεθοδολογία (methodología)*, means methodology. Lastly, ***α*** from *ανάπτυξη (anáptyxi)*, means development. After the constitution was implemented, the full name of each province was changed but the abbreviation was kept to avoid the confusion.

**Dytika (*δ* province)**

Dytika is a province surrounding entire west coast of the island. The name Dytika came from Greek word, *δυτικά (dytiká)*, which means *west*. Historically the province was used to test any kind of experiment developed by ***α*** province. The area was also heavily used to testing many military instruments which coincidentally created one of the town’s landmark, Rock Shard Crater — an explosion crater a diameter of 50 meters and a height of 15 meters.

The province is separated from Mesiao by a small mountain range known as the Uncertain Mountains, which runs from north to south. Because of the high slope terrain surrounding the mountains, settlement is concentrated along the coast, with some inland dispersal. The province is now well-known for its fishing and farming industries. Furthermore, the province still has some of the best barren ground for explosion testing, as most of them are already damaged beyond repair.

**Mesiao (*μ* province)**

Mesiao is a province in the middle of the island, sandwiched between Dytika and Anatoli. The word for *middle* in Greek is *μεσαίο (mesaío)* which is also the name of this province. Historically, this province was well-known for its various designs, planning, and methodology; it was essentially Epistimia's think-tank. After the design is completed, it will be sent to ***α*** province for development and later to ***δ*** province for testing.

Fortunately, because the province is mostly flat, settlement is possible throughout the region. Many government and corporate headquarters are located there, making the province well-known for its thriving commercial and lodging sectors. Even though Epistimia never officially designated a capital city, Mobius — the largest and most prosperous city — is widely regarded as one. The most famous landmark is The Great Museum of Epistimia, a public museum that exhibits the greatest inventions and would take more than a day to fully explore.

**Anatoli (*α* province)**

Anatoli encompasses the east coast of the island. Name of the province, *ανατολή (Anatolí)* means *east* in Greek. Historically, the province had many laboratories and industrial machinery because it was used for technological development from ***μ*** province. Despite the fact that laboratories are now spread across the island, the majority of them remain concentrated in Anatoli due to the high cost of relocation.

Anatoli has a lovely mountain in the center called Gaussian Peak, which has caused settlements to form around it. Nowadays, the province is used for both industrial and domestic product manufacturing, as well as scientific research and development. Ernest, a small city between the mountain peak and the beach, is also notable for its minuscule 13-year criminal record, which resulted in the shutdown of the local police precinct and the formation of the *Incident Inspector*, a group of vigilant volunteers who handle any kind of emergency. Some speculate that the low crime rate is due to the high quality of life, while others argue that it is due to a wise investment in security. Nevertheless, the city's wonder will remain a mystery for a while longer before the *big change* arrives…

**Criminal Organization**

Epistimia, alas, is unable to escape the grasp of the criminal underworld. This is because many of the entrepreneurs who moved to Epistimia were already involved in shady businesses and illegal practices. These individuals were responsible for the emergence of Epistimia's first criminal organization, The Quintus.

**The Quintus**

The Quintus refers to the joint organization of Epistimia's criminal families. The exact year the organization was founded is unknown, but it is thought to be in the 1950s. Despite the organization's name, Quintus, which means "five" in Latin, it is unclear how many families are involved. The number five could refer to the five major crimes they commit: drugs, human trafficking, robbery, sabotage, and assassination; however, this claim has not been verified.

The Quintus has no true leader because it is a joint organization. Essentially, the organization serves as a centerpiece for each family to declare alliances/wars and negotiate territory. Nonetheless, most families have been on good terms for the past decade. Some speculate that they have already settled down and are looking for a way to strengthen and stabilize the criminal underworld for their own family's sake. To prevent the government from interfering, they assisted in preventing the formation of small disorganized street gangs and even gathered valuable intel from corporations to sell to the government. And so, The Quintus has grown in power and influence in many cities as a result of increased collaboration between themselves and the government.

The organization currently has around 20,000 members and is still growing. The government is concerned about the problem, but has yet to come up with a viable solution. Epistimia's police force is insufficient, and the lack of a military presence surely does not help. It might be possible with civilian assistance, but who knows when that will happen.

**Cultures**

Epistimia is surprisingly diverse in ethnicity, this due to the collaboration of the Allies nations, both in World War I & II. Although the majority is European, some citizens historically immigrated (or were enslaved) to the Allies nation, causing a slight variation in ethnic groups. The following is an overview of the ethnicity by continent:

European 48%

Asian 29%

North American 20%

African 1.46%

South American 1.26%

Oceania 0.28%

Epistimia’s citizens always respect each other's cultural heritages; there are holidays for all ethnic groups, and everyone is welcome to celebrate. Racism is also so marginal that it is not a mainstream discourse, possibly because everyone was isolated from their home countries, and thus the sense of nationalism vanished. While the official language is English, other languages are widely used and practiced locally in each ethnic community. Religion is not the primary aspect of Epistimia's population because the majority are irreligious as a result of the education system's de-emphasis on religion; however, religion may be practiced openly without prejudice.

Despite the difference in cultural background, Epistimia appears to be subtly developing its own culture and tradition. Epistimia's citizens greatly value development, progress, and ambition. Despite that they are unable to leave the territory, they believe that by inventing new cutting-edge technology, they can change the world. All of this leads to Epistimia's motto: "Unending ambition and achievement.”

**Notable Technology**

**Anti-organic Barrier**

Dr. Bentley Parr, a British nuclear engineering Ph.D., initially proposed the notion in 1940, when he began experimenting with Gamma radiation. He reviewed the study on the effects of radiation on humans and discovered that a high enough quantity of radiation might kill a human practically instantaneously if not protected (These tests were conducted on unwilling subjects, and they are just one of many unethical Epistimia experiments).

The dosage of radiation is measured in Gray units (Gy). It is defined as one joule of radiation energy absorbed per kilogram of substance. Death is certain within an hour with merely 30 Gy (for comparison, dosages in nuclear bomb centers were 240 - 290 Gy).

Because gamma rays are so small, they are nearly impossible to direct or bend, and they effortlessly pass through most materials. However, Dr. Prokopiy Nikitin — a Russian molecular engineering Ph.D. — developed a lens that can reflect Gamma radiation using a virtual particle (associated with quantum physics) as a prism. Now that the radiation can be directed, all that remains is a proof of concept.

The prototype was in the form of a rectangular box; 3 meters in height, 7 meters in width, and 6 meters in depth. Fundamentally, it is made up of a nuclear reactor, liquid helium cooling, and numerous lenses that direct the radiation upward. The radiation doses measured were 200 Gy, which is more than enough to kill any organic being instantly.

Further designs emphasize size reduction, improved heat ventilation, and proper radiation shielding. The AB160 version is the design that made it out of the lab in 1943. This design has a smaller reactor, but it covers a larger area and a shorter height. Liquid helium and water were used to cool the system, absorbing excess heat and generating electricity. Because Gamma radiation is invisible to the naked eye, a fog machine and a laser were implemented to indicate the device's location.

The barrier's only flaw so far has been neutron radiation, which is also produced by nuclear fission. Neutron radiation penetrates deeper than Gamma radiation and can only be blocked by several inches of certain material, such as concrete. Although neutrons are unlikely to be absorbed by humans because they pass through more effectively, they can still cause soft tissue damage.

Following the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the Anti-organic Barrier was classified as a radioactive weapon and was only used in limited circumstances. Due to safety concerns and high maintenance costs, the anti-organic barrier's popularity has diminished to the point where it has never been used for the rest of the planet except Epistimia.

Epistimia now is surrounded by an anti-organic barrier in the shape of a circle 730 kilometers long and 20 meters deep beneath the sea surface. Fortunately, neutron radiation is absorbed by water (as it imparts energy to the hydrogen nucleus in water molecules), leaving only Gamma radiation. After it was built, the barrier was constantly improved. The barrier is now less expensive to maintain, and it also generates electricity for the United States and Epistimia.

**Augmentation**

Augmentation, along with Anti-organic Barrier, was a technology of interest to the Allies during World War II. The concept of a super-strong soldier was so appealing that funding for this technology skyrocketed, surpassing the Anti-organic Barrier.

However, augmentation lost the race because of its complexity and involvement in many different fields of study such as mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, physiology, neurobiology, etc. Not to mention that the experiment required a large number of test subjects and materials, both of which were in short supply. These drawbacks delayed development for nearly two decades until it was finally released from testing in 1964.

The early designs were arm augmentations, in which one or both organic arms were decapitated and replaced by augmentation. The Retractable Blades, Adaptable Firearm, and Amplified Limb Strength are the main military functions of the augmented arm.

*Retractable Blades (RB)* are installed to the side of the forearm and consist of one sword and one chainsaw. The sword is a one-meter-long rapier. It is capable to stab through softer material with ease, making it an ideal weapon for close combat assault. Then there is the 1.3 meters chainsaw for clearing paths in the forest and cluttered area; however, it is not recommended to use a combat weapon because it is fragile and will break if it comes into contact with a harder object while activating.

*The Adaptable Firearm (AF)* is embedded inside the forearm region of the augmentation, with the barrel opening end on the palm. The firearm is capable of firing any kind of bullet with a rim diameter equal to or less than 0.535 inches or 13.60 millimeters (size of .410 shotgun shell) and overall length equal to or less than 2.260 inches or 57.40 millimeters (size of 5.56×45mm NATO, a sniper rifle cartridge). To fire the bullet, the user must first disable the safety (the barrel opening on the palm will be opened) and insert the desired ammunition into the bullet chamber (the maximum amount varied by the size of the bullet). After the chamber has been closed, the bullet will be loaded into the barrel; it will take 2-3 seconds to adjust its size to fit the bullet's diameter. The user must then turn their palm in the desired direction and strain their wrist to activate the firing mechanism. The only disadvantage of the firearm is the small clip size, which is why, despite the fact that it can fire sniper rifle ammunition, the most commonly used ammunition is a pistol bullet.

*Amplify Limb Strength (ALS)* is embedded in the arm and generally assists the other functions. ALS is an electromagnetic motor that aids in blades deployment and the activation of the bullet primer. When firing powerful ammunition, it also reduces recoil. The strength generated by ALS is sufficient to lift an object three to four times heavier than usual.

Although the augmentation is effective, it has never gained widespread acceptance, possibly due to skepticism, a lack of volunteers, and a high maintenance cost. In any case, the United States purchased the technology and used it in the Vietnam War. The soldier who has been augmented has shown increased combat effectiveness and survivability, which somewhat helps alleviate some of the world's skepticism.

Epistimia, on the other hand, has recently redeveloped this technology to better suit everyday life by focusing on handicapped people. Many technology firms have taken notice and begun developing their own augmentation. Now, various augmentations are available on the market for both handicapped and non-handicapped, but at an expense that will cost a person their arms and legs (metaphorically and literally).

**Neuro-power**

Of all the projects presented at the World War II Allies conference, Neuro-power received the least funding. After all, the idea of controlling someone's mind solely through brainpower seems absurd and impossible at the time. Nonetheless, the project attracted some entrepreneurs who see the technology's commercial potential rather than military; one of them is Edgard Fontaine, founder of *Fontaine Autos* — Epistimia's car manufacturer.

Edgard came to Epistimia in 1920 to start a business because he saw it as a golden opportunity to be the island's first car manufacturer. His decision paid off when he became one of Epistimia's wealthiest men. With his vast fortune, he sought to diversify his business, which led him to the Neuro-power project. He was enthralled by the project, which he saw as a technology of the future. He then persuaded entrepreneurs from all over the island to invest in the project. Unfortunately, most of them dropped out after a few years due to a lack of tangible progress, but Edgard remained steadfast in his vision and continued to be the supporting pillar of project funding. He was so committed that he created *Fontaine Neuro*, a new division dedicated solely to the development of Neuro-power.

Even after his death in 1962, the project remained dormant. Fortunately, his son, Firmin Fontaine, inherited his father's vision and continued to fund the project while also assisting in the recruitment of a large number of neuroscientists. The project finally made a breakthrough in 1979, when the prototype of a microchip was released. Despite being far from the original hypothesis, it is impressive enough to amaze the crowd. The microchip enables a person to connect to and control an electronic device with a receiver within 10 meters, such as TVs, cars, radios, machinery, etc. All they have to do is think about the action they want the device to perform, and with enough commitment, the microchip will send the command to the receiver, where it will be executed. The project was later renamed Neuro-implant to avoid misconceptions about the microchip's capabilities. However, despite how impressive and convenient it is, the cost of implantation surgery and maintenance makes it unaffordable for the general populace. The division was losing money but was able to break even when the Episimia government hired them to create an implant for State Agents.

When it was first introduced, Neuro-implants were not a big success, but after decades of cost-cutting and fine-tuning, they are once again the talk of the town. The cost of surgery has decreased dramatically as a result of advancements in brain surgery; the microchip is also cheaper to produce, making the implant more accessible to a stable middle-class person. After a rise in popularity in the 2000s, Fontaine Neuro is no longer a division under Fontaine Autos but an independent company dedicated to the manufacturing, research, and development of the Neuro-implant. In recent years, the company has stated that within a decade, they will make another world-shattering breakthrough. Nobody knows what they meant by that statement, but it has been reported that they have begun recruiting volunteers from all over the island to test a new type of never-before-seen Neuro-implant.

**No Sail Zone, No Fly Zone & Astral Imagery Manipulation (AIM)**

On the surface, it appears that keeping Epistimia hidden from the rest of the world is simple. Fake news and conspiracies orchestrated by the Allies were likely enough to subdue public interest. The reality, on the other hand, was far more complicated. The declaration of Epistimia as a nuclear hotspot that continuously emits radiation is enough to justify the No Sail Zone, which extends 20 miles from the island's center. Any ship that sails too close will either collide with the Anti-organic Barrier or be shot down by a homing missile stationed on the coast, leaving no witnesses.

However, the problem persists because any commercial airline or private plane flying over the island is critical. It is not scientific to claim that radiation can pass through the thick walls of airplanes. The US eventually came up with the excuse that if an airplane malfunctioned and they had to make an emergency landing within the hot-zone parameter of the island, the effort to rescue would be impossible as the radiation would be too dangerous. The excuse is certainly exaggerated, but it was enforced through legislation, so everyone is obligated to conform. Because the No Fly Zone covers the entire Bermuda Triangle, any airplane flying to Caribbean countries must travel along the United States coasts. Any aerial object that does not comply will be shot down by anti-air missiles launched from the island, just like any stray ship that violates the No Sail Zone.

After the plane, there is the satellite, which is even more complicated. A satellite can scan the area and produce an astral image with enough detail to detect a civilization on the island. Even though the USSR and the United States were rivals in the Space Race, they both kept the same secret. As a result, the first collaboration between the two superpowers occurred not in space; but instead on Epistimia, where the Astral Imagery Manipulation was developed and later implemented in both US and USSR satellites.

*Astral Imagery Manipulation (AIM)* is a hardware and software system that processes and manipulates imagery data received from satellite sensors, specifically the Epistimia territorial data. This system will be used by all Allies nations in every satellite they launch. The complicated part is convincing other countries to apply the same system. The meeting was held for all nations who were involved in the matter, and they eventually came up with the idea of an *International Space Council (ISC)*. The council will be one of the United Nations' primary organizations in charge of all space-related programs around the world for peacekeeping and security. They will inspect and supervise all processes of the space program to ensure that they are up to standard and that the AIM system has been implemented. The latter, of course, will be done in secret since it is the council's true intention. Only the program that has been approved by the council will be allowed to operate and launch its instruments. ISC was finally established in 1960 and continues to protect Epistimia's dark secrets even from out-of-this-world space technology.

**Micro-lore**

**Ernest**

Ernest is Anatoli's second largest city; however, it is small in comparison to the other cities in Epistimia. Despite its size, Ernest is a major manufacturer of plastic, metal, machinery, and laboratory equipment. The city is also well-known for tourism due to its beautiful beaches and mountain trail leading to Gaussian Peak.

For the past decade, 13 years to be precise, Ernest has impressively reduced its crime rate to almost zero. This phenomenon drew plenty of social scientists to the city in search of the mystery's key factor; however, no reliable theory had yet to emerge. When asked, Ernest residents credit Helen Haven, the city mayor, claiming she was responsible for crime-reduction policies. What is strange is that it has been studied and researched numerous times, but researchers have been unable to find any clear correlation between crime rates and her policies, so the mystery still remains unsolved.

**Characters**

**Main Characters**

**Protagonist**

**1. Lucas Argus Ho**

**Overview**

Lucas Argus Ho (aka Lucas A. Ho, L.A.H.) was born an orphan. His birthplace and biological parents are still unknown, as he was administered in the middle of the night at an orphanage in Ernest. Two months later, he was adopted by a Chinese family, Charles Ho and Alissa Ho. His stepparents made up his real name; for his birthday, they use the day he was administered at the orphanage, which is February 4th, 1995. His childhood was relatively simple and straightforward. He did, however, appear to think and analyze information faster than his peers, allowing him to ace most subjects in school.

He showed an interest in photography in middle school and participated in many school activities as a photographer. His abilities in visual deduction allowed him to plan perfect photographic elements and create flawless photographs. His parents and school, seeing his talent, encourage him to compete in a national photography competition. In his high school years, he won three consecutive competitions and became a well-known photographer prodigy. He chose not to attend university and instead pursue a career as a photographer.

He opened *Lucas Photos*, a full-service photography store that offers event photography, printing, framing and camera sales. Unfortunately, his store has been struggling over the last year. He tried everything he could to promote his store, but it was futile. This could be due to the fact that his store is too far from town, as well as his lack of publicity, as he is not an avid social media user. Whatever the reason, he will soon be confronted with an event that will change his life forever...

**Personality**

Many people, including his parents, describe him as simple and straightforward. This isn't because he lacks personality or is boring; it simply means that he hasn't fully discovered himself yet. In a conceptual sense, he is on the fence and can lean to any side he wants as long as there is enough force. In game design, we refer to this type of character as a blank slate; a character on which the player can project their preferred personality with few limitations. It is up to the player to decide how Lucas will act in the world and what kind of person he will be. With no fixed personality, the possibilities for interaction are limitless.

**Appearance**

The player will be able to create and customize Lucas's facial appearance in-game, including skin tone, eyes, nose, mouse, facial hair, and so on. However, there are some fixed properties that the player cannot alter. Lucas is a biological male who also identifies as one, so there are no prominent feminine features available; however, the player can try to create a gender-neutral face if they wish. Lucas' height is 175 centimeters (5'8.9 inches), which is about average in Epistimia. In terms of his physical appearance, he appears to be lean but not noticeably muscular. Overall, Lucas is, as previously stated, average in every way, from his personality to his physical appearance.

His mediocrity can be remedied by dressing him up. Disappointingly, Lucas' wardrobe is quite limited in variety at the start of the game; not to mention that the clothes are pretty bland as well, which pretty much suits his personality. However, as the game progresses, the player will be able to purchase or discover new clothes that will make Lucas more lively and unique. Furthermore, because Lucas is a photographer, he will almost always be carrying his camera with him. The camera model and shoulder strap can be changed by the player. Player can also customize a variety of gadgets such as a smart phone, earphones, weapons, etc.

As explained previously, the choice of Lucas' personality is entirely up to the player. To be more specific, players can customize Lucas' sexuality, demeanor, and political affiliation as they see fit. The decisions made by the players will have an impact on how the rest of the world reacts to Lucas. The difference is most noticeable in non-playable characters such as Lucas' romantic interests, allies, and even his work partners. As a result, it is advised that players carefully consider their options, or they may find themselves unable to deal with and adapt to the upcoming change as a result of their own actions.