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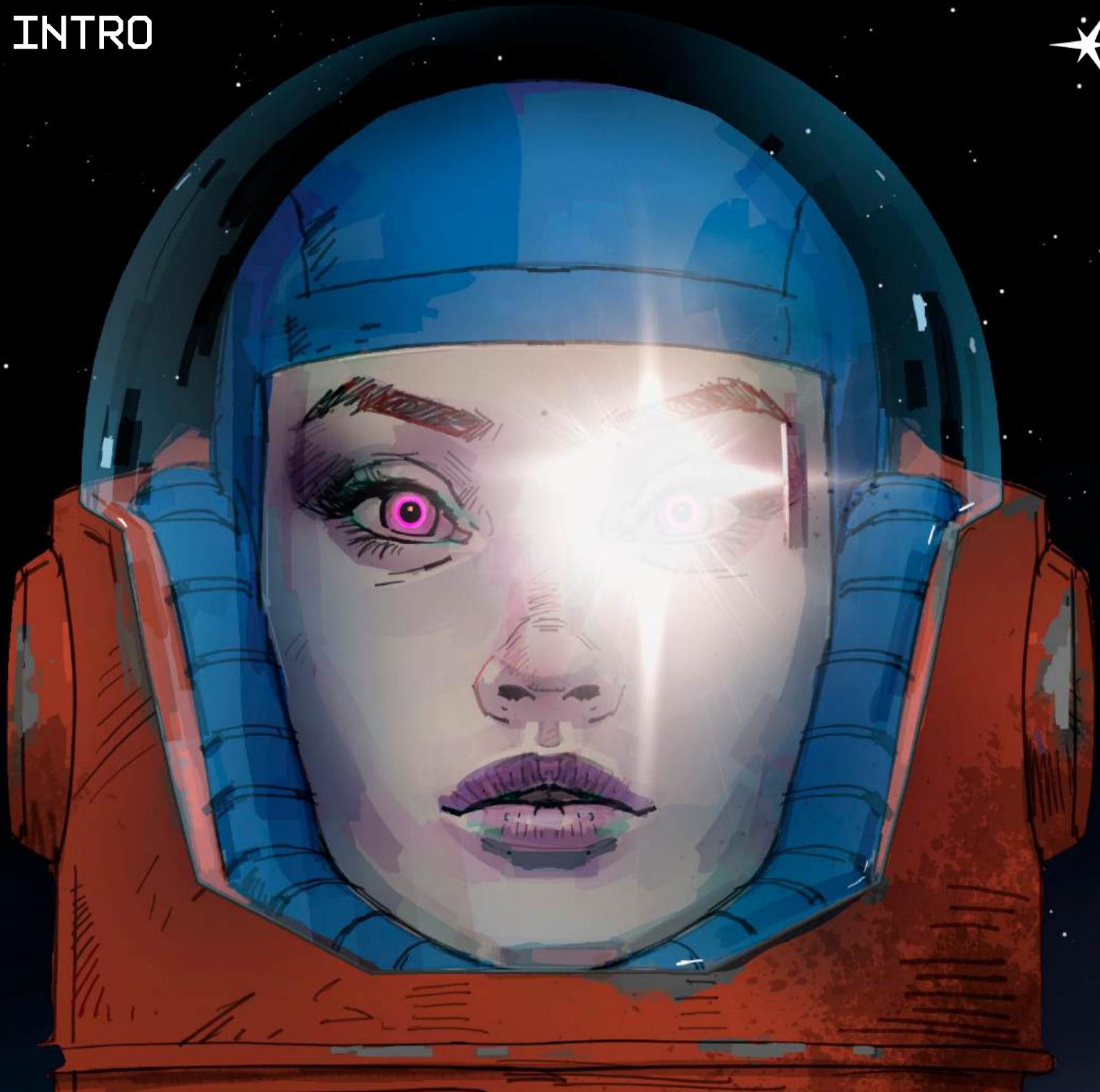


EMERGENCE WORLD BIBLE

SECOND EDITION
by David S. Goyer

 INCEPTION

INTRO



In a distant corner of the universe, civilizations in a young galaxy discover RELICS of immense power – objects so advanced their creators are akin to GODS.

The relics propel species to the stars, unlocking untold power – but these ‘gifts’ also corrupt minds, plunging the galaxy into strife.

Now, only a handful of adventurers remain untouched by corruption. They mourn what has been lost and roam the stars, fighting to restore their HOME...

OUR ENTRY POINT INCIDENT ON LARKHAVEN

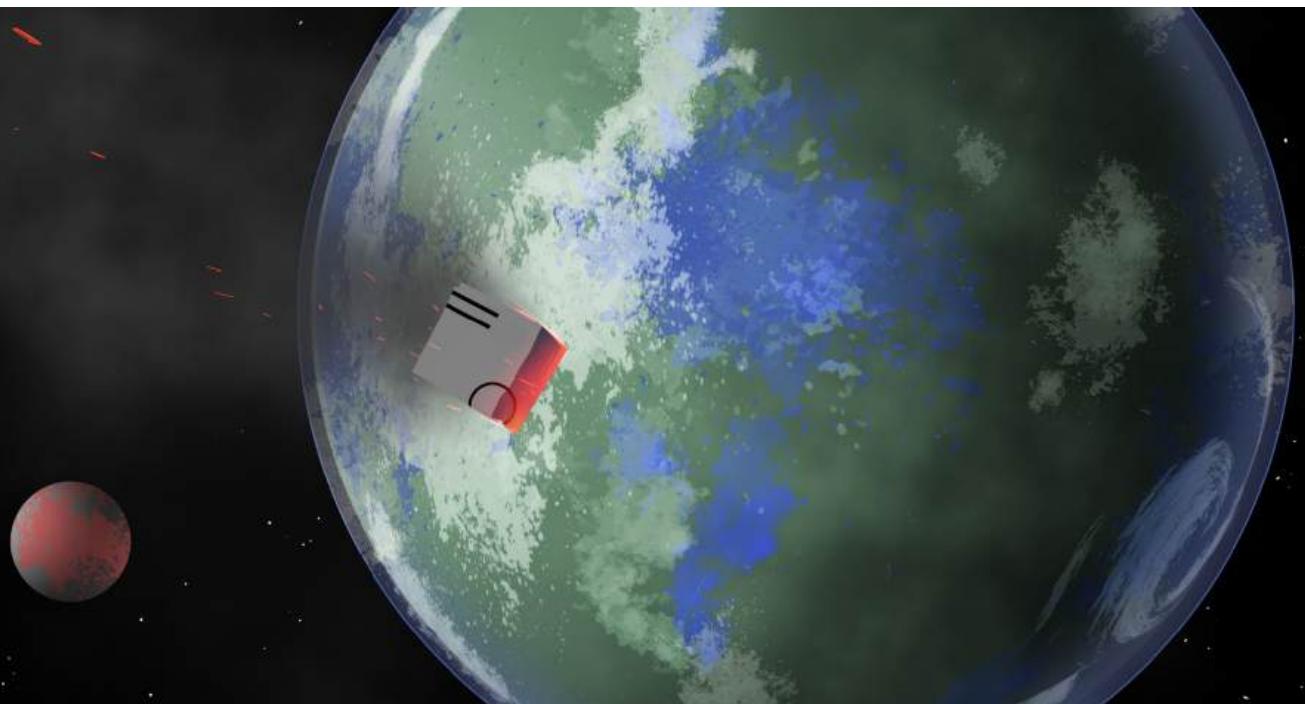


On the night of her 14th birthday, Skadi wished upon a rare magenta shooting star for a life of adventure. But she never expected the shooting star to crash near her camp.

She raced off to find the star and discovered something unlike anything she'd ever seen.

Skadi felt awe and terror at the sight of the large shimmering cube she would later call a RELIC.

Every instinct told her to turn and run, but Skadi felt compelled to claim her 'gift' from the universe. By the time Skadi heard her parents begging her to stop, it was too late.





In a flash of magenta light, the relic crystallized every inch of the planet - everything but Skadi.

Skadi, unchanged except for her crystalline hand, sobbed beside her frozen, dead family.

She could not imagine that this was just the beginning of her story...



THE WHITE FOUNTAIN AND THE RELICS



In the center of this once auspicious galaxy, a rare **WHITE FOUNTAIN** shines – the luminous opposite of a black hole. Whereas black holes consume matter and energy beyond a point of no return, white fountains cast it out. Whereas nothing can escape a black hole, nothing may enter a white fountain.

In recent history, the Fountain has been ejecting alien artifacts – called **RELICS**. The consensus is that relics originated from an earlier or “higher” universe.



These relics don't correspond to anything on the periodic table and seem to defy the known laws of modern physics. While some relics exhibit similar effects, all are inherently unpredictable. Even smaller micro relics, such as the Edgeless Sphere, rank among the galaxy's most powerful and dangerous relics. It remains unclear whether these objects are truly inanimate or if they are somehow alive.



MICRO-RELICS



MACRO-RELICS



MEGA-RELICS

And the relics seem to have been built by intelligent design
- by a godly race dubbed THE MAKERS.



Many encounters with the artifacts end in tragedy. Only select groups can safely handle and study the relics to uncover their revolutionary knowledge. Every bar in the galaxy has stories about the poor fools who died horribly trying to grab a relic on their own.

Despite the high risk involved, those incredible discoveries have enabled the intelligent species that harness the relics to explore, expand, and dominate vast regions of the White Fountain galaxy.



Major relic breakthroughs include:

- . Cheap Faster-Than-Light (FTL) Travel: Achieved by transitioning ships into a subspace dimension colloquially known as Alacrity.
- . Hyper-evolution: Life mutating and evolving at an accelerated pace.
- . Alchemy: Elements changing and recombining, transmuting from one state to another (e.g. when Skadi's home planet was turned to glass).
- . Ultrawave technology: A kind of "space radio" that allows nearly instantaneous communication across vast reaches of space (the exact means by which ultrawave communication is achieved is still unknown).
- . Ghost-speaking: Some relics appear to allow the user to communicate with the past – i.e. speak to people who are long since dead.



While some of the relics' effects may be obvious, in many cases, they are not observable by basic senses or instruments. In other instances, relic effects might not be perceptible for generations (e.g., the slow-motion effects of climate change).

UPLIFTING INTELLIGENT LIFE



Civilizations can be categorized based on their mastery of energy, a framework known as the Kardashev Scale. A Type I civilization has mastered harnessing the energy of its home planet. By this definition, humanity isn't even considered Type I yet!

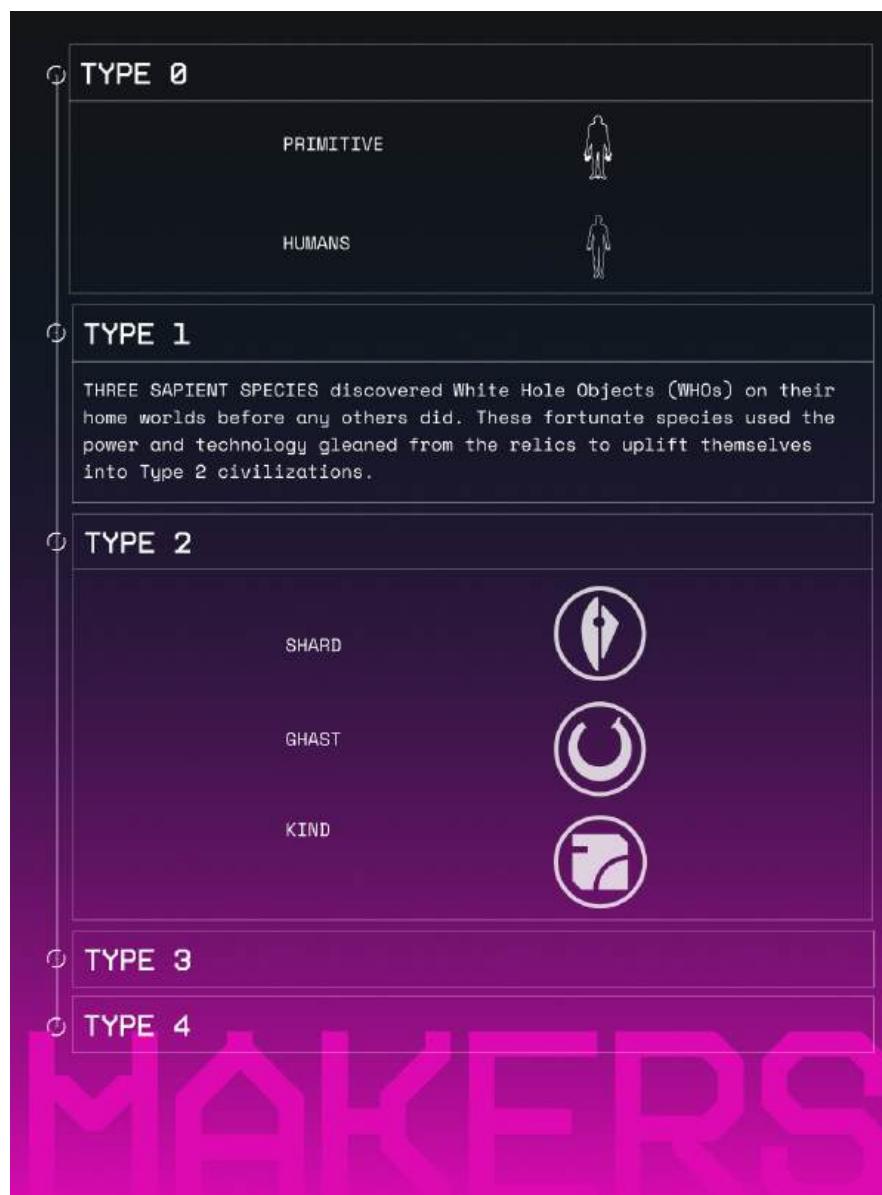
A Type II civilization masters its entire solar system. These advanced species harness the energy of their parent star and become capable of interstellar travel via superluminal technology or other means. With this level of advancement, they can engage in feats like star lifting, using antimatter as an energy source, and even constructing black hole bombs.

Type III civilizations achieve dominion over an entire galaxy. They can create "stellar nurseries" to birth new stars, extend the lifespan of existing ones, or dismantle stars for raw energy and materials. Their technologies allow instantaneous communication across the galaxy through methods such as quantum entanglement. They might even build a "galactic brain" capable of processing and analyzing data at unimaginable scales.

Some speculate that the relics were crafted by a Type IV civilization - beings capable of harnessing the energy of their entire universe. Their capabilities are so advanced that they are nearly incomprehensible to lesser species.

In the White Fountain galaxy, billions of planets harbor a variety of life forms. Of these, millions have developed intelligent life.

However, only three sapient species discovered relics on their homeworlds and unlocked the relics' power. These species uplifted themselves to Type II civilizations and became known as THE ADVANCED THREE.



THE ADVANCED THREE



THE KIND

For all intents and purposes, the Kind are what we would classify as “human”. They developed in a system with a K-type orange dwarf star on a world with an atmospheric composition and mass similar to Earth, as well as a handful of inhabitable moons. The Kind forego surnames in favor of simplified one-word names. They are your classic Manifest Destiny species and believe it is their right to colonize and expand until they master the galaxy. The relics have amplified the Kind’s innate intellectual and technological inclinations.

With the help of the artifacts the Kind have transformed their entire system into a machine – themselves included. They have mastered a certain degree of genetic engineering and created two modified subspecies: WIDES and WISPS.

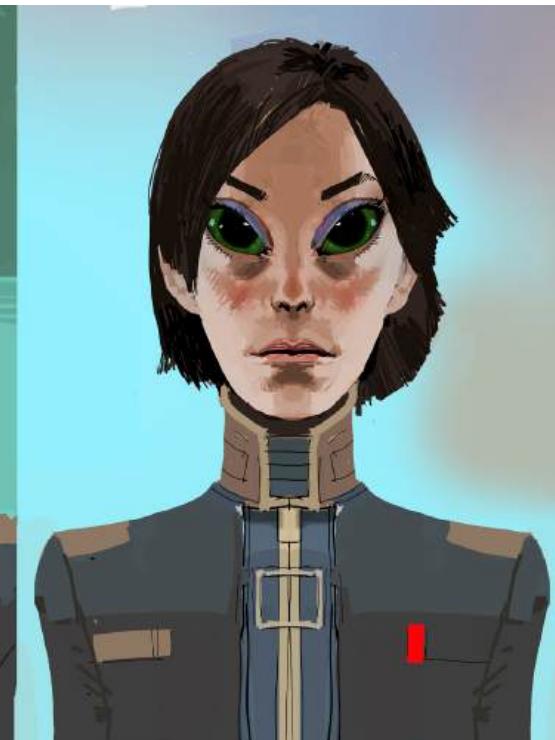
WIDE



NORM



WISP





The WIDES were bred to live on higher-gravity worlds. More squat than the average Kind, wides have more muscle mass and much greater bone density. Wides are unaccustomed to high mountains or structures – they are amazed and initially frightened by geologic formations or buildings of great height.



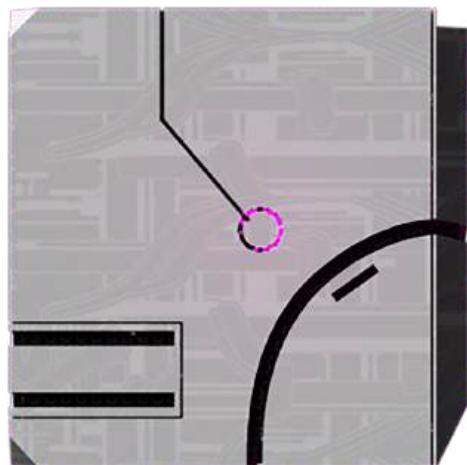
The WISPS, by contrast, were engineered to live on lower-gravity worlds. They are taller than the average Kind, with attenuated limbs and lower bone density. Wisps also have larger lungs. Their worlds have thinner atmospheres, meaning any non-native Kind will have difficulty breathing there. Depending on the gravity of a given world a wisp is visiting, they wear an exoskeleton to help them move around.

The Kind are governed by a centralized mega-corporate entity, with various worlds and utilities run as separate divisions of the primary corporate body – such as the VITAPAX fueling company.

Citizenship is not granted at birth, but is instead purchased via investment as shareholders in the governing corporation. Among the large population of unincorporated Kind, many scavenge on the frontier hoping to buy their way into the governing corporation. But others prefer independence and seek to build a rival corporation.



The Kind are not concerned with why the relics arrived. Instead, they focus on how best to use them. This instilled the Kind's belief that the relics are precious resources and that they must collect and control all relics in the galaxy.





THE SHARD

The Shard are cephalopods with six arms. Capable of employing chromatophores to change colors as a form of expression and communication. Their 'alphabet' is composed of color swatches instead of letters. But unlike cephalopods on Earth, the Shard have developed lungs.

They can breathe air and extract oxygen from water (which is how they eventually mastered the use of fire and the ability to smelt steel). They can employ electroreception to detect objects and navigate through currents.

The Shard developed on the strangest world of all - a rogue or "nomad" planet that no longer orbits a star. But because of the abundance of hydrogen in the atmosphere and radioactive elements beneath the crust, a greenhouse effect kept the ocean planet warm. They are the oldest of the Three Advanced races, but because they developed in the ocean, it took a while for them to adapt to land. The Shard utilize a three-word naming convention but are known to adopt simplified designations when dealing with other species.



The Shard are a religious civilization made of three castes: the six ruling Exarchs, the legion of Crusaders, and the community of monks. Their spirituality has evolved around the species' extraordinary intuition that perceives aspects of the workings and meaning of the universe that escape even the sharp intellect of the Kind.



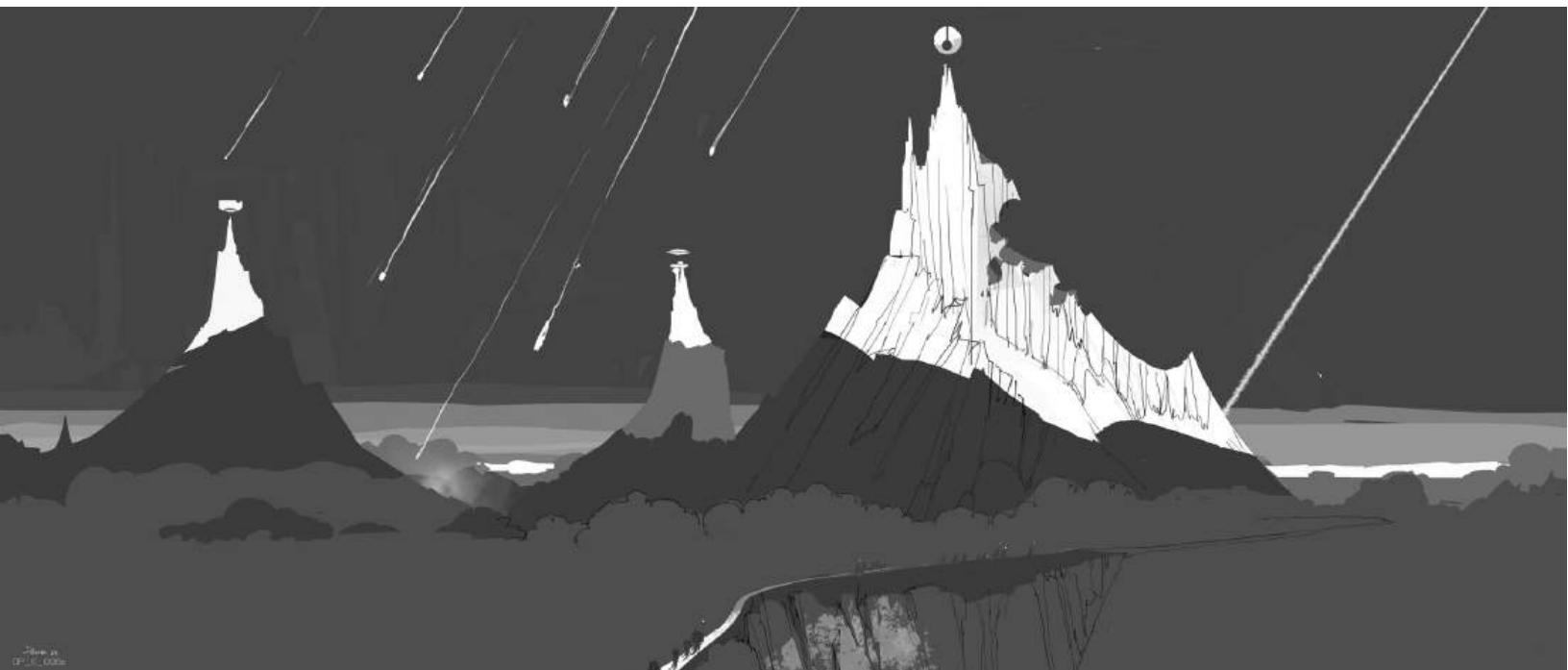
The Shard were the first intelligent species to discover relics on their parent world. The arrival of the alien artifacts shook the old faith to its core and caused a schism. Only one Exarch and a handful of monks upheld the old tradition and fled in exile. The remaining five Exarchs claimed they received divine messages from the creators of the relics, whom they refer to as the Elder Beings. The remaining Exarchs use these divine messages for divination, and say this is a gift for their loyalty to the Elder Beings.



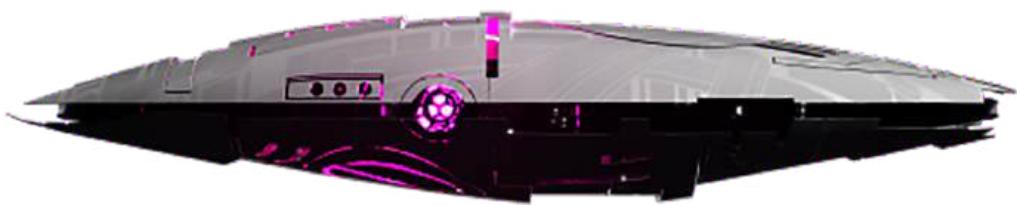


The Shard believe the Elder Beings sent the relics here for a reason – to test the intelligent races. Because of their devotion to the Elder Beings, the Exarchs believe they have the inside track. When a collective grace is finally achieved throughout the galaxy, it will herald the return of the Elder Beings. For the Shard, the collection of more relics is a holy endeavor.

The Shard religion is not exclusive to their species – there are also religious converts from the Kind, Ghast, and other neighboring species.



The Shard's three most important macro relics are located at the summit of three equidistant mountains that function as a kind of "triple Mecca." People make pilgrimages to the three mounts, trekking by tentacle (or foot, for the non-Shard) from one mountain to the next. The journey takes three years and many pilgrims die along the way.





THE GHAST

The Ghast appearance strikes terror – towering, fearsome creatures with faces resembling a combination of a mandrill and a skull. But looks can be deceiving. There are nuances about this species that escape first or even second impressions.

Of the Advanced Three, the Ghast are the most attuned to nature and are guided by ancient instincts. For the longest time, their attachment to ecological tradition caused them to lag behind the Kind and Shard. They have kept their homeworld's location a secret to defend against conquest from a more advanced civilization. Their solar neighborhood is a system with an M-type star and their homeworld is tidally locked – which is to say, one side is permanently facing its parent star and is bathed in perpetual sunshine and boiling temperatures. The other side is frozen, shrouded in perpetual darkness. There are no seasons.

Subsequently, the Ghast evolved in the twilight band in between these two uninhabitable hemispheres.





The Ghast are organized in a matriarchal, militaristic, austere society. They consume the brains of their forebears in a ritualistic ceremony, taking on their ancestors' quest burdens. This allowed the Ghast to carry out generation-spanning goals as they inherited broad emotional memories from their ancestors. It also meant that certain blood feuds have simmered amongst the Ghast for thousands of years.



Female Ghast have an infrasonic war cry that can induce vertigo and paranoia in their enemies. Ghast utilize a two-word naming convention, but warriors do not earn bynames (surnames) until they have accomplished at least ten kills. Once a warrior accomplishes this feat, their byname is selected by their war-mother, based on their deeds or mannerisms. They don't perceive ownership in the same way the Kind and Shard do, and they occasionally take in foundlings from other races and raise them as their own.

By studying the relics, Ghast society was able to radically depart from tradition, embrace technology, and bend nature to their will through the terraformation of their once unforgiving planet. Though they were the last of the Advanced Three to reach the stars, the Ghast quickly expanded into a multi-planetary empire. Their ancient instincts for violence were born out of a need to fight for every inch of habitable ground – but now their empire aims to broaden its reach across the galaxy by whatever means necessary.

The Ghast do not intend to fall behind the Kind or Shard's advanced technology ever again.



THE ULTIMATE GOAL



The Advanced Three are now locked in a deadly race for who will gain dominance over the other two societies, conquer the galaxy, and become a Type III civilization.

Each species knows that control of the relics will be the difference between their society's ascendance or extinction.

They have carved out various spheres of influence. But there are vast stretches of the galaxy that haven't been explored or yet claimed. At times, The Advanced Three have been at war with one another. At other times, uneasy alliances have been forged.



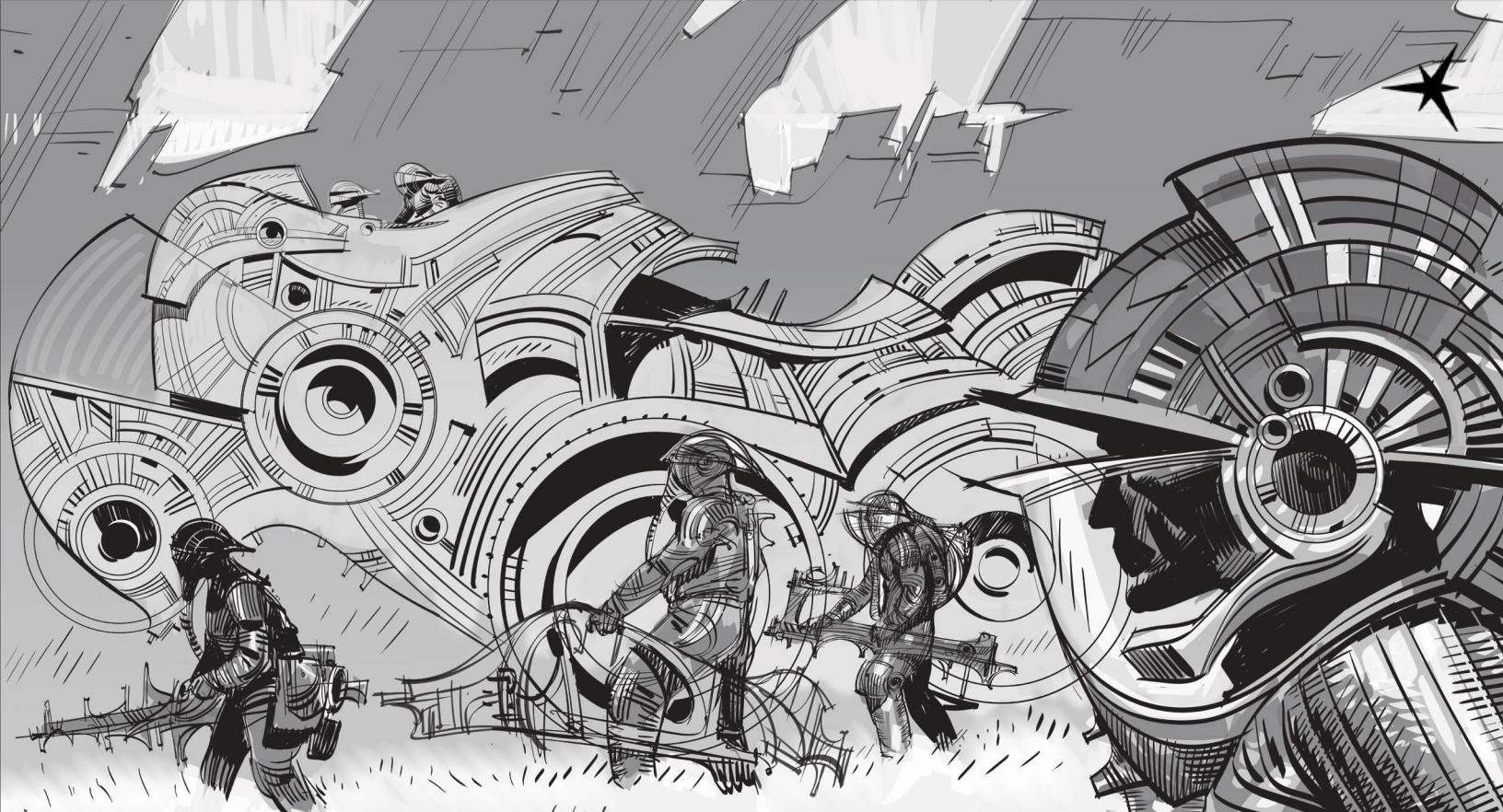
RELIC HUNT AND ARMS RACE



For the Advanced Three, relic hunting has become the coin of the realm. Each of the Three has a stellar navy, with officially sanctioned SURVEY TEAMS scouring their spheres of influence for undiscovered relics. Occasionally, there are skirmishes when a relic is discovered in a contested area. And just like the Golden Age of Exploration on Earth (when the Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch gained early footholds), each of the Three are launching increasingly ambitious missions into the great unknown, colonizing more and more worlds.

Various methods are used to locate the relics – some are scientific, like artificial intelligence sifting, but other methods are more arcane, like relic-sniffing creatures called BLOODHOUNDS. Even though a relic might be located on a given world, it could potentially take months or even years before said needle is actually recovered from a planet-sized haystack. And just like the diamond or gold industry on Earth, relic hunting is rife with malfeasance and corruption.





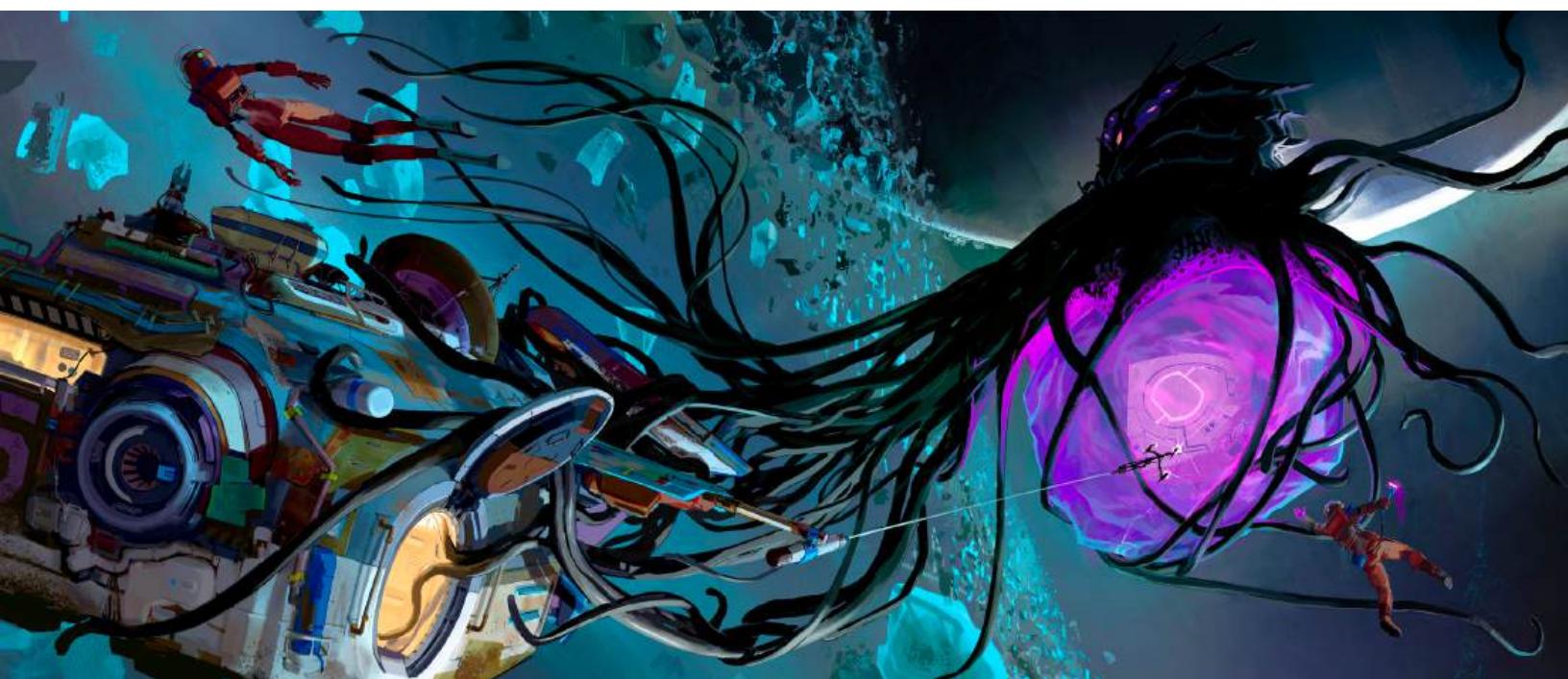
One way that relic hunters (sanctioned survey teams and freebooters alike) locate relics is via the use of an expensive dark energy scanning device that measures scalar fields (yet another piece of tech that was reverse-engineered from one of the discovered relics). Dark energy is a theoretical form of energy (along with so-called dark matter). Imagine these devices as futuristic metal detectors. They can narrow down the location of a relic to a specific star system – but they can't do more than that. So while they are helpful, they are also very expensive and relegated primarily to the legitimate survey teams.

Like any high-risk/high-reward trade, relic-hunting has given birth to a robust ecosystem of charlatans and hooligans. Of course, some people peddle fake relics. There are also people like water dowsers, who claim they are “attuned” to the emanations of various relics and are (purportedly) capable of helping survey teams locate them.

FREEBOOTERS AND WATERING HOLES



Aside from the official survey teams, there are also freelancers and corsairs. Ragtag crews, often operating on the fringes, sell their wares to the highest bidder. Officially, these crews are regarded as pirates. Unofficially, they are tolerated to a certain extent. Many of these crews are captained by former Survey officials who washed out for one reason or another – drugs, alcohol, apostasy, and other crimes.



Freebooters tend to congregate at any of the thousands of Vitapax refueling stations throughout the galaxy, like Skyward Ho near the boundary of the Fountain.

Think of these as fully automated, pay-as-you-go rest stops. Ships in need of refueling can berth here while crews fix wounds, 3D print spare parts, hire new crew members, use the private storage lockers, or even take advantage of the different environmental chambers offered – for a price.



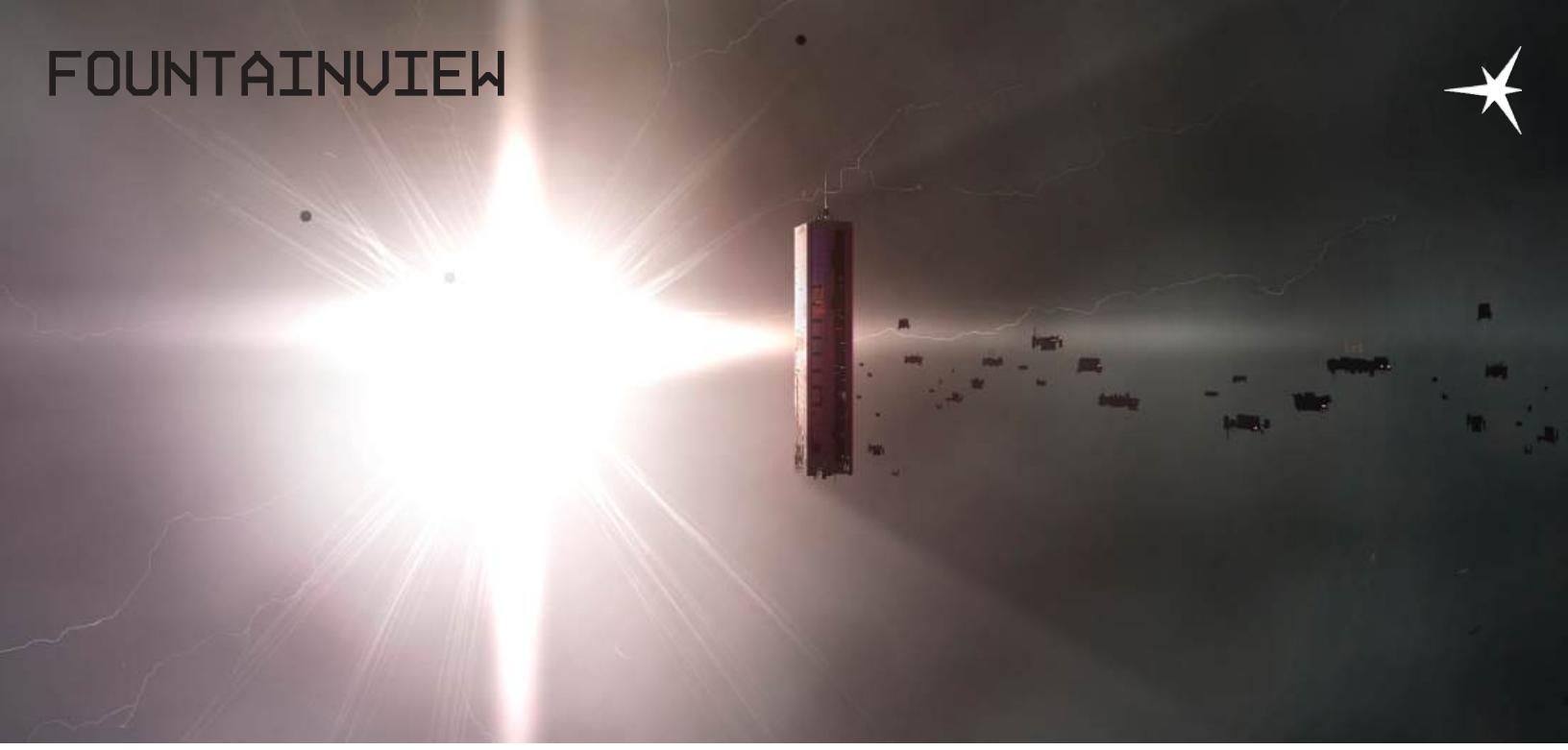
They are also used for lots of illegitimate purposes. These stations are lawless areas governed by corrupt and lazy port authority organizations. Places like Skyward Ho are rife with drugs, prostitution, piracy, and any other crime you can imagine.

Watering Holes function as a much-needed port in the storm. The type of characters who stop at these watering holes tend to be desperate. On the run, out of luck, hoping to make the next big score.



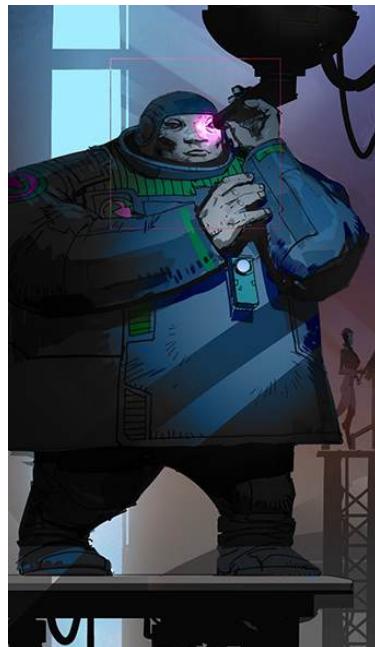
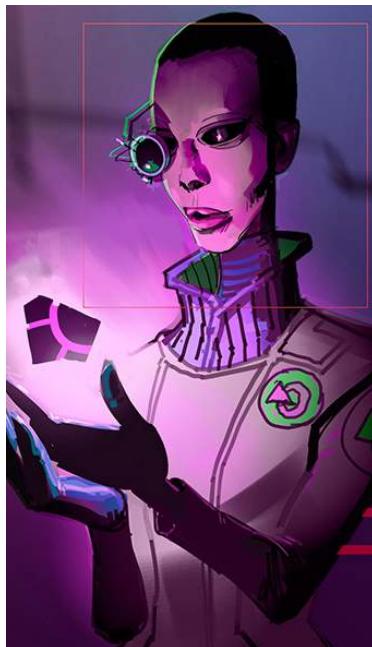


Still, even after they hit that big score, few get to enjoy the spoils. Freebooters that successfully find and live to sell relics typically return to the scavenging lifestyle until it kills them.



Fountainview is a research station orbiting the boundary of the White Fountain. It is a collaborative venture staffed by various Kind, Shard, and Ghast scientists. It was built to study the White Fountain and monitor its energy fluctuations. Leadership rotates between the Three Advanced Races.

But a strange biological process happens near the Fountain's boundary. Normally, all life in the galaxy is built upon left-handed amino acids, meaning their shape is distinguishable from their mirror image (meaning chirality). But within the boundary of the White Fountain, the chirality shifts to right-handed. If a human possessed right-handed chirality, they would look exactly like us – but they wouldn't be able to breathe our oxygen or eat our food. They would be utterly incompatible with us.





Anyone who lives at Fountainview station undergoes this natural – and permanent – transformation of their DNA and it happens alike to the Kind, the Shard, and the Ghast. The Kind refer to these altered individuals as “WARPS” and treat them like a completely different species.

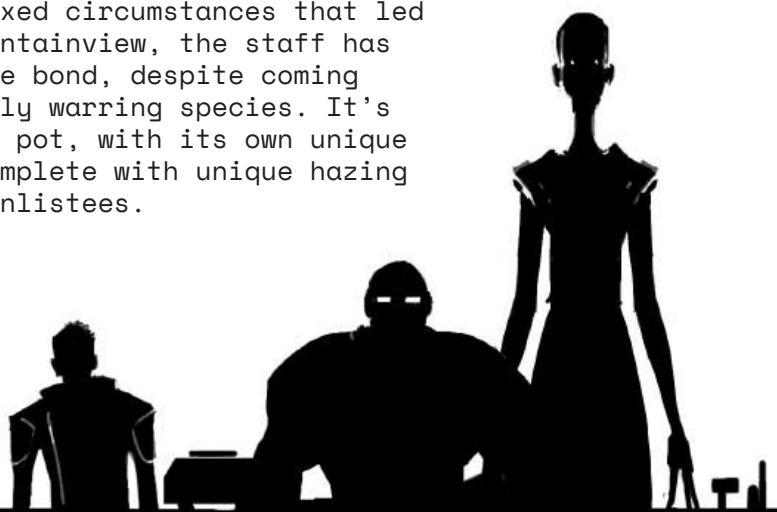
The mirroring process is irreversible. Even a short visit to Fountainview can cause some “fraying” around the genetic edges. A visit longer than a week requires that they remain on Fountainview for life.

While most Fountainview researchers honorably accept their assignment knowing that it is the last job they will ever have, Seren has been known to deceive some brilliant scientists who refuse the offer. This usually comes as the promise of restoring one's chirality when their time at Fountainview is done.

Additionally, many rogue scientists are offered a stark ultimatum when they are arrested: fill out their sentences with forced labor, or work at Fountainview.



Because of the mixed circumstances that led scientists to Fountainview, the staff has developed a unique bond, despite coming from intermittently warring species. It's a strange melting pot, with its own unique mini-society - complete with unique hazing rituals for new enlistees.



Fountainview staffers also have "weird dreams". Sometimes, the dreams are even communal, with multiple staffers appearing in the same dream space.

Many believe this is caused by some kind of "leakage" coming from the Fountain.



Fountainview also has an enforcement arm of “curation officers” – the equivalent of a U.N. peacekeeping force that helps to establish order whenever a relic is found and/or being transported. Occasionally, there are even undercover Fountainview agents, known as sentries, that infiltrate relic hunting or black market rings.

Due to the station’s unique vantage point and separation from galactic events, certain senior Fountainview officials have developed their own agendas for the relics. In some cases, Fountainview senior researchers have withheld certain findings from the Advanced Three, believing that only Fountainview can use their discoveries responsibly. There are even rumors that Fountainview leadership knows far more about the Makers than they have disclosed to the Advanced Three.



THE MEGA RELIC



Energy readings at Fountainview suggest that a NEW RELIC will emerge from the White Fountain soon. Even more pressing, the scope of those readings implies that this relic is considerably larger than any yet discovered. It appears that it may be one of the fabled MEGA-RELICS.



A flotilla of civilian ships has gathered at the outer edge of the Boundary. Curious "lookie-loos" who want to bear witness to this one-in-a-millennia event.

The arrival of a Mega Relic could ignite the galactic conflict further, triggering the most intense arms race over relics yet - just as peacemaking efforts were beginning to gain traction.



For Skadi, however, the coming ejection offers a literal silver lining: she believes that during the brief period of this cosmic event, the immense mass and energy of the Mega will create space-time tears in the Fountain's fabric. With the right crew and resources, it may be possible to pierce the veil and uncover what lies on the other side.



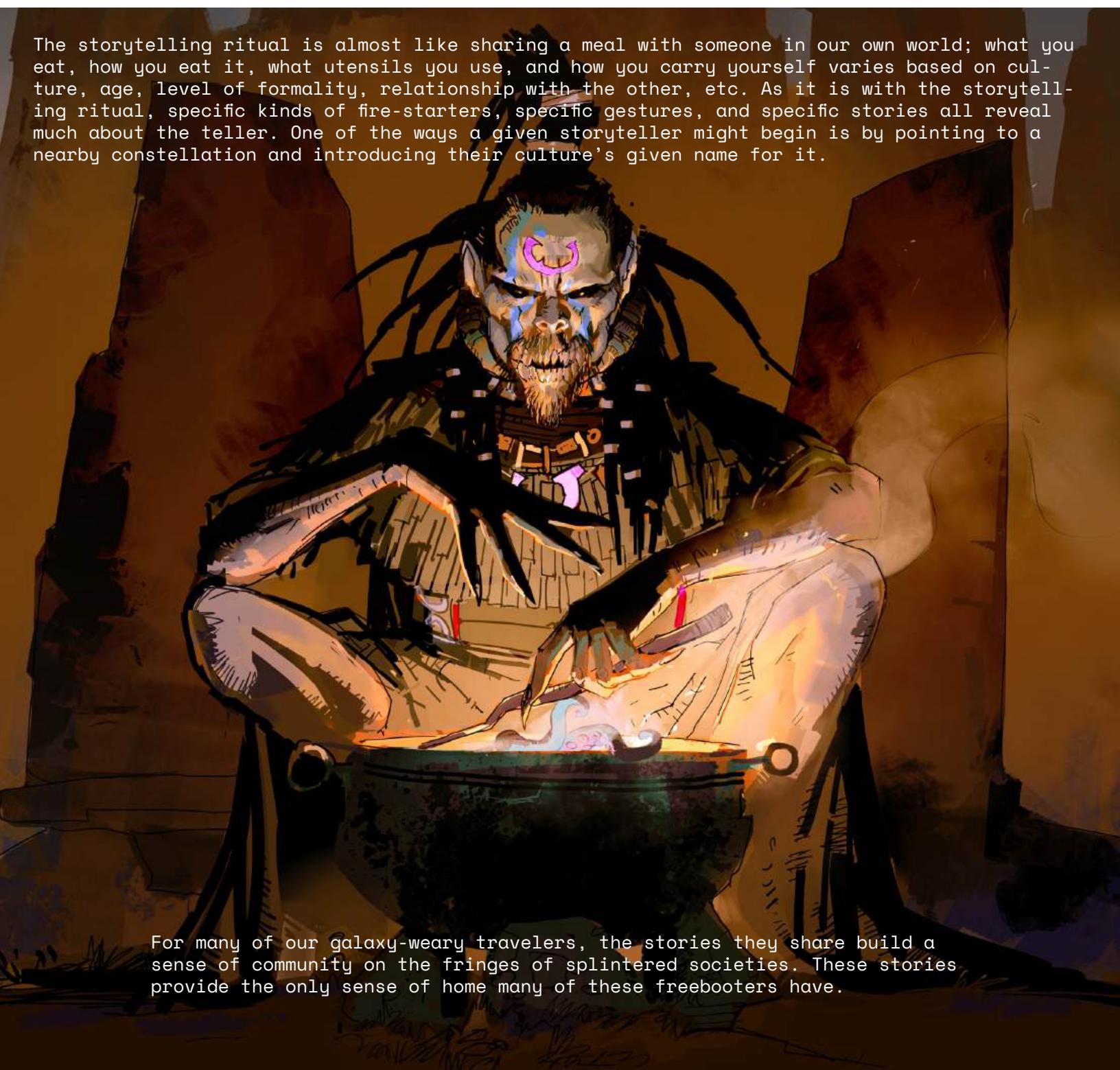
Eventually, we reveal that the mass of the mega relic coming through the White Fountain is quite large – around the size of the asteroid Ceres (about a quarter of Earth's moon). But as the scientists of Fountainview and the flotilla of onlookers unfortunately witness – the mega relic quickly fragments into countless macro and micro relics upon its arrival. The aftermath is carnage. The “mega emergence” quickly becomes a storied disaster within the galaxy.

STORYTELLING AS SURVIVAL



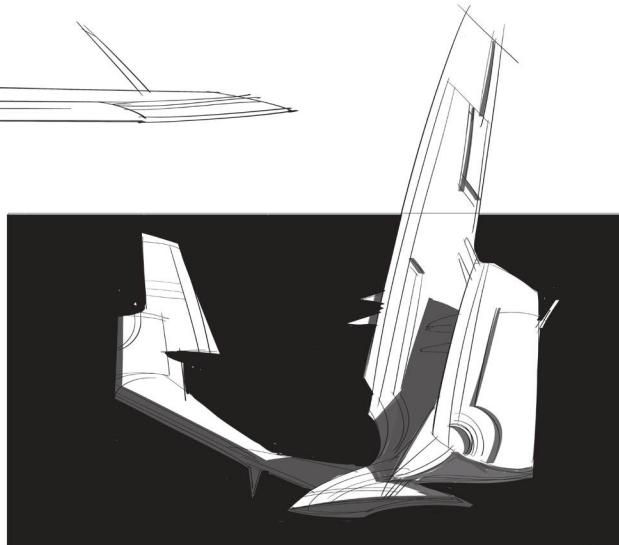
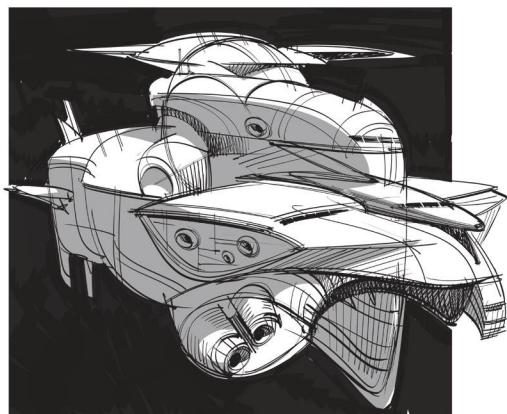
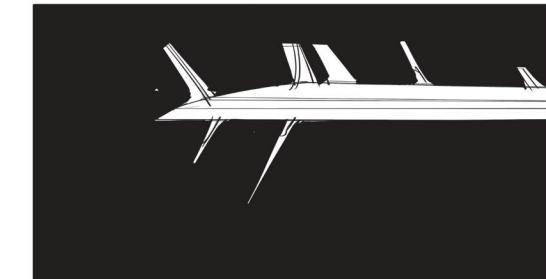
Over the centuries, the custom of storytelling itself has become part of the weft and weave of the galaxy. Whenever strangers meet – whether it be on an asteroid, a spaceship, or at a rest station – they always trade stories. And they do it by firelight, just as the ancients used to. Every star-faring citizen, no matter what race, carries a fire-starting kit. Flames are kindled and tales are told. Storytelling is a hallowed ritual shared by almost every intelligent race in the galaxy.

The storytelling ritual is almost like sharing a meal with someone in our own world; what you eat, how you eat it, what utensils you use, and how you carry yourself varies based on culture, age, level of formality, relationship with the other, etc. As it is with the storytelling ritual, specific kinds of fire-starters, specific gestures, and specific stories all reveal much about the teller. One of the ways a given storyteller might begin is by pointing to a nearby constellation and introducing their culture's given name for it.



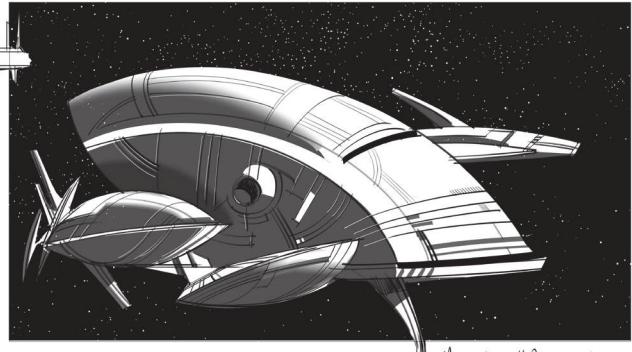
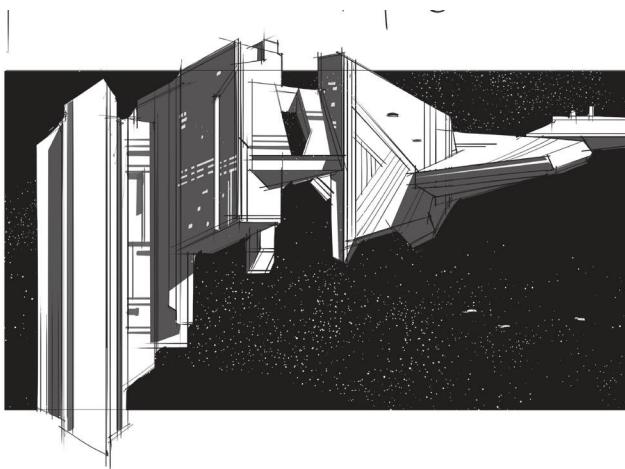
For many of our galaxy-weary travelers, the stories they share build a sense of community on the fringes of splintered societies. These stories provide the only sense of home many of these freebooters have.

SPACESHIPS AND WEAPONS



Marcos Matheu-Nestore. 2023-

There is a wide variety of ships in the galaxy – from the Kind's nimble, pay-as-you-go ketches to massive Shard aquatic nautilus shell ships and even more massive Ghast "world-ships" carved from asteroids. There are also generation ships. Then there are shuttles and drop-bells that transfer from orbit to the surface of a world and vice versa.



Marcos Matheu-Nestore. 2023-



Our characters also employ a variety of weapons - from large-scale rail guns to particle beams to radiological bombs. There are also personal needle guns, plasma guns, nerve stunners, and more exotic handheld devices like the crystallizers employed by the Ghast.



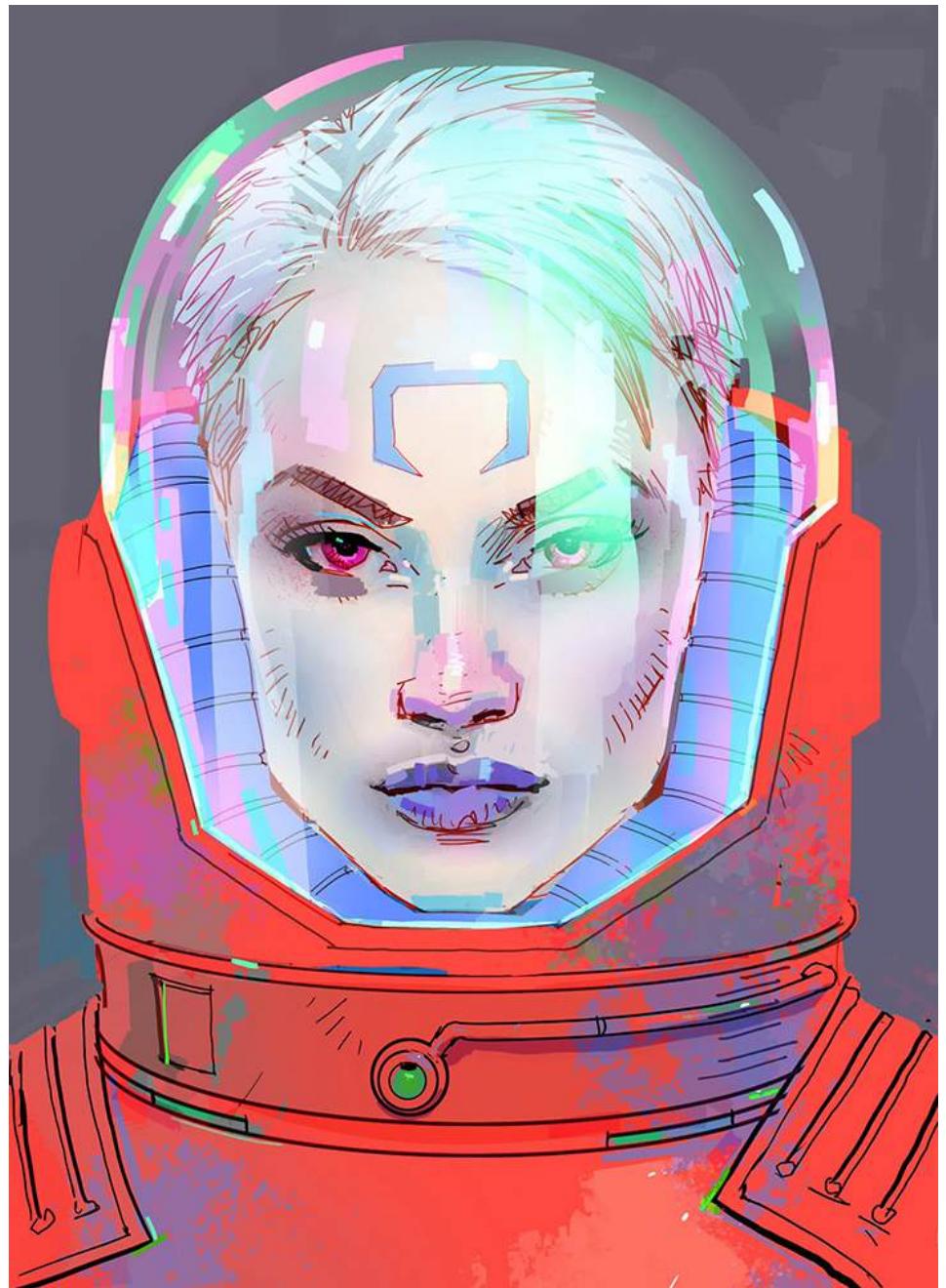
CHARACTERS

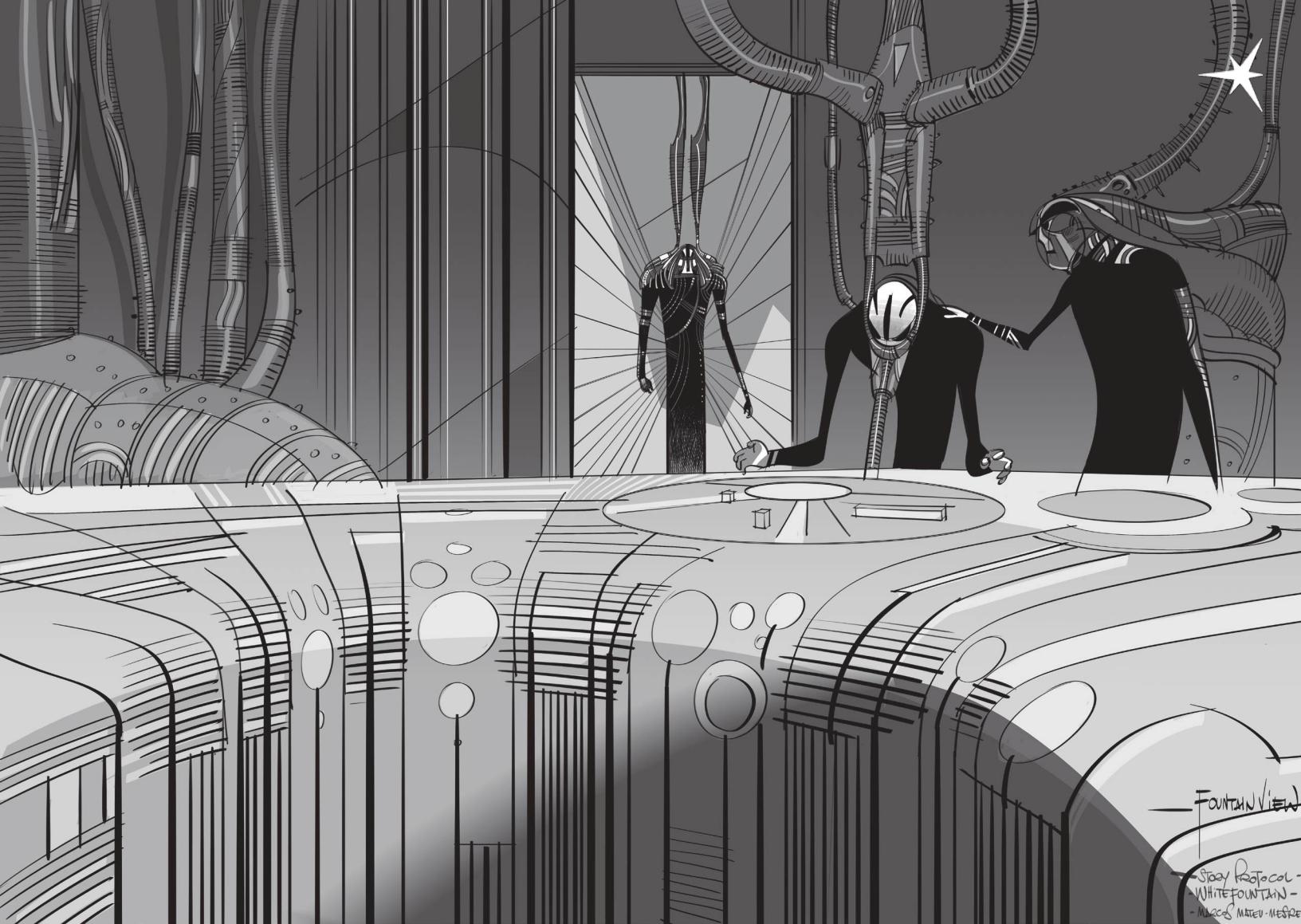


CAPTAIN SKADI

No one knows how Skadi miraculously survived her first contact with a relic.

After the incident on Larkhaven, Skadi was “rescued” by a secretive Kind research group – part of the Fountainview Foundation. The normach, Seren, viewed Skadi as an extension of the relic itself. Given the incredible challenge of studying the early relics, Seren had Skadi placed in cryostasis in between bouts of testing Skadi’s mysterious “glass hand” until new research methodologies were available. To Seren, hundreds of years in stasis was just the cost of progress. To Skadi, it felt like a decade of torture and torment. But once she escaped captivity, Skadi learned the horrifying truth – Seren had kept her locked up for hundreds of years.





Making matters worse, Seren survived through the years by transferring her mind into a series of cloned bodies. Rather than let Skadi go free, Seren put a bounty on her head, refusing to let her prized research project run away. With nowhere else to turn, Skadi fell in with a freebooter crew and went off the grid. She quickly adapted and became a natural relic hunter - thanks in no small part to her glass hand's immunity to all relic effects.

Before long she beat the captain of a rival freebooter gang in a duel and became the new captain of his relic-hunting ship - THE BELLEROPHON, affectionately known as "The Belle." Now, in her 30s, Skadi commands an interspecies crew of seven. Her crew has located more relics than any other group, frustrating every major relic-hunting operation in the galaxy.

Skadi's heartache, and the bounty on her head, make her reluctant to trust anyone. She suffers terrible survivor's guilt and, in her darker moments, believes she is cursed. She dulls her pain with a variety of controlled substances and short romantic flings.





Captain Skadi is unique among relic hunters in that she does not sell her relics and is not interested in fame and fortune – she has her own agenda. During her captive years, Captain Skadi overheard Seren divulge a theory that when a relic is ejected the Fountain briefly becomes permeable.

One day, Captain Skadi hopes to use some powerful relics to take her ship beyond the Fountain's event horizon to pierce through to the other side. Skadi doesn't know what she'll find on the other side of the White Fountain – but whoever or whatever she does find, Skadi will hold them accountable for the death of her family. She knows this is impossible, but her quest fills the void left by the home and family she lost so long ago.

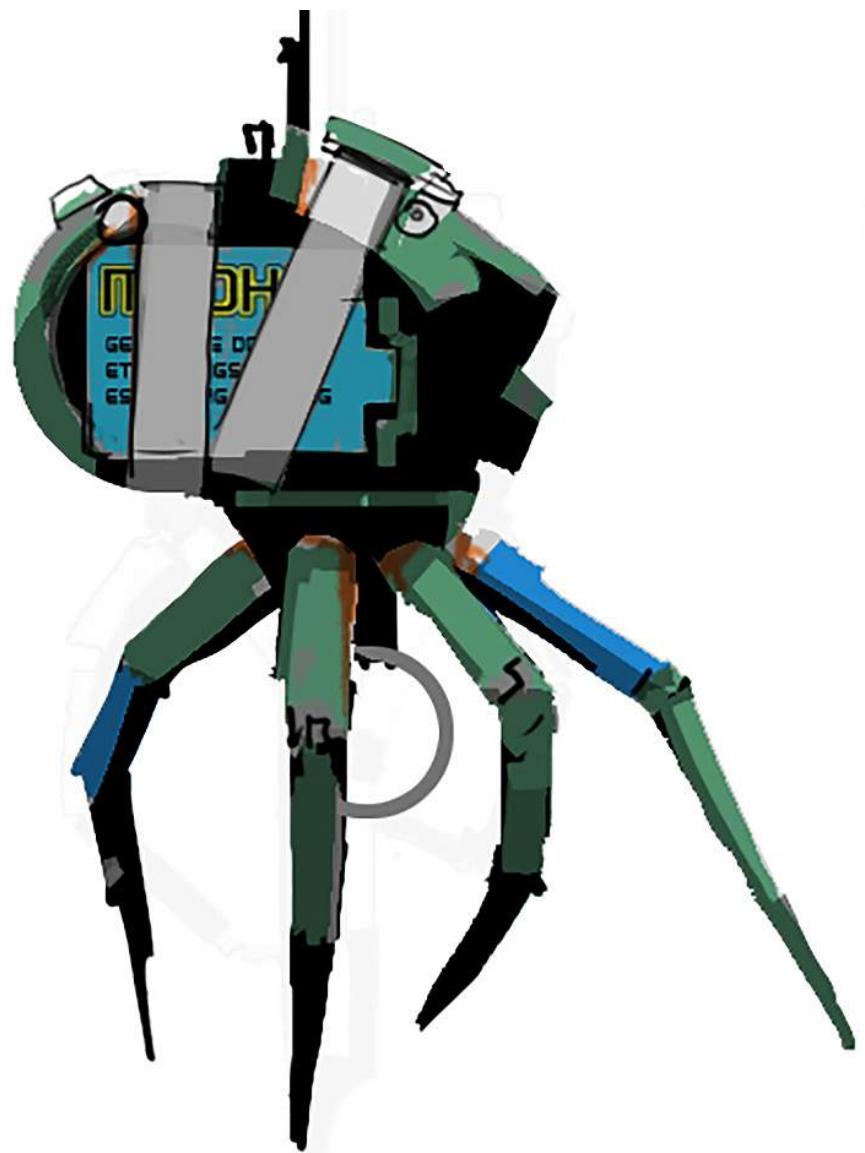


BL1P

Skadi's constant companion is a hovering bot—her last link to her family. BL1P—gifted to her by her parents on the night of the Larkhaven incident—was by Skadi's side the second moment she lost everything, and followed her through all her years of captivity, and every adventure, escape, and quiet moment that followed.

Connected to Skadi via a neural chip wired primarily to her prefrontal cortex, BL1P often serves as the voice of reason to her reckless instincts—the calculated counter-weight to her impulsiveness.

BL1P is capable of assisting with a number of roles on The Belle—navigation, engineering, repairs. But BL1P also serves a more personal role for Skadi—a record of all her private thoughts and lessons learned over her many years.

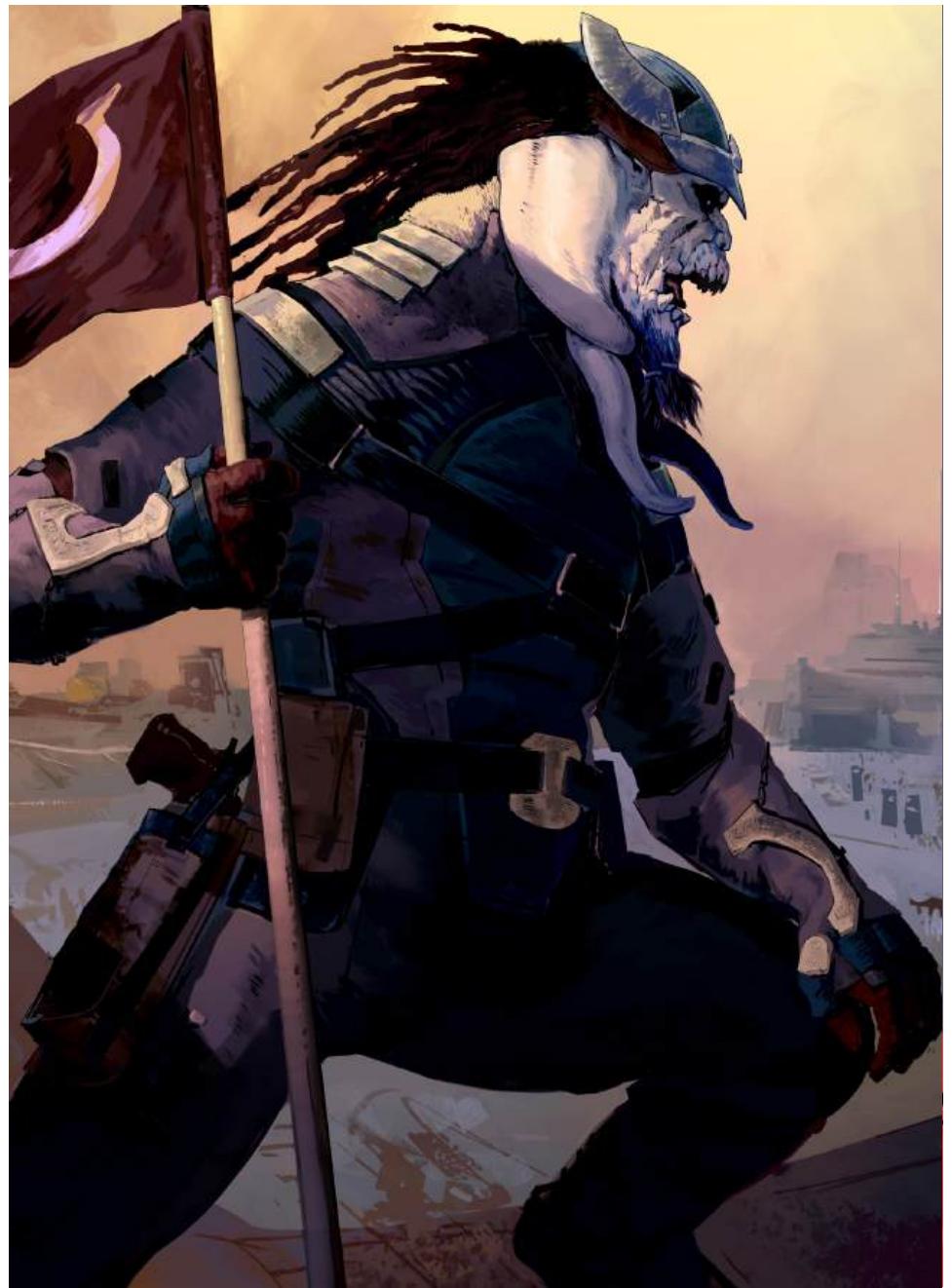




KROKUS THE GLOOM

A legendary Ghast warrior with more kill-notches on his cudgel than any other Ghast in remembered history. Krokus is so feared that even his presence on a battlefield has been known to make entire armies surrender. He also engages in "rhyme wrestles." If you can beat him in a tit-for-tat rhyming challenge, he won't kill you. And if you lose, he'll kill you and be obligated to kill all your blood relatives.

Only a handful of people have ever beaten Krokus in a rhyme wrestle and one of them is Captain Skadi.





Krokus was born in a Ghast prison colony and was forced to fight to survive from a young age. These difficult years made Krokus an unparalleled fighter in all forms of combat long before he was fully grown. Some say he earned his surname before his tenth year.

Because of this upbringing, Krokus is both a savage warrior and someone with an interest in reform. He's seen what happens to people when their culture deprives them of a safe place to call home, and he never wants another Ghast family to suffer as he did. This is also one of his points of conflict with the imperial leadership - he sees relics and Ghast expansion as ways to disseminate their culture and traditions.



SITRA OF THE DRIAD

SITRA (18 in galactic-standard years) is the starry-eyed teenager who discovers a macro relic fragment, which her people refer to as a "starseed." She lives among a group of primitive Kind descendants on Driad - a planet made up of a world-spanning mangrove called the All-Tree, which houses an ancient relic. Sitra's people evolved with photosynthetic bacteria to process sunlight, giving their skin a green hue.





Shortly after the Emergence event, Sitra found a new macro relic and had a unique reaction to the device. When a group of off-worlders (Kind survey teams) arrived hoping to harvest the relic, Sitra decided to hide what she knew from the suspicious visitors - except from one handsome, mysterious researcher.

Sitra's people have only a limited concept of space travel. Eventually, Sitra will be the first of her people to travel to the stars.



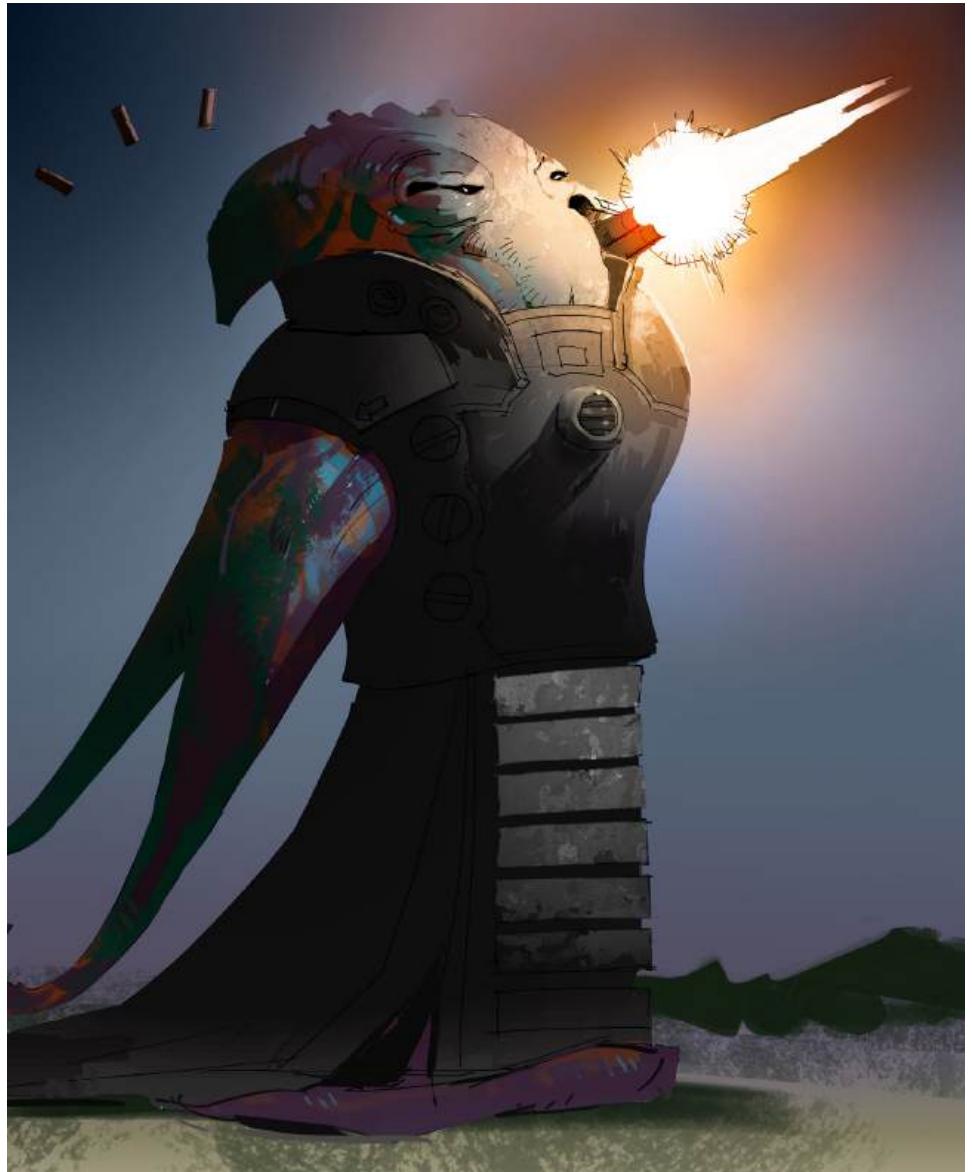


BISHOP OF BLADES

A Shard Crusader and legendary master of swords. The Bishop (whose given name is Ocari zyn Acantho) is the commander of the ship known as the Opalescent Crown. Before the relics, the Bishop found purpose and meaning by spreading the holy word to the darkest corners of Shard space – making every new colony a home for the devout.

Shortly before the Mega Relic event, the Bishop was diagnosed with a degenerative disease – a side effect of prolonged exposure to ambient relic radiation that few relic hunters live long enough to worry about. Realizing the disease will weaken and ultimately kill him over the next few years, the Bishop is driven to embark upon a final crusade to guarantee his name echoes in eternity. But things have changed on the homeworld, and Ocari no longer sees his old faith reflected in the new, radicalized Shard leadership.

The Bishop is forced to confront his own crisis of faith and decide how far he will go for a religion he may no longer believe in.



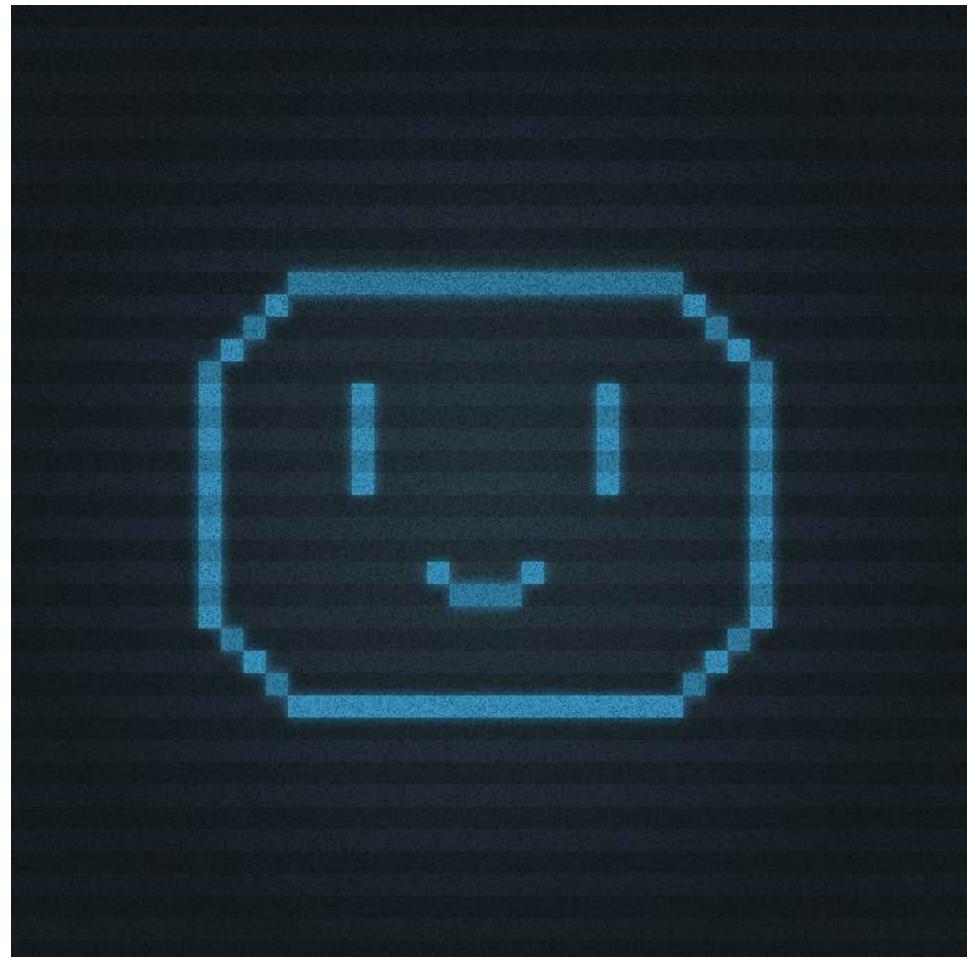


A.T.L.A.S.

The Advanced Technical Learning and Archival System—or ATLAS—is Fountainview’s central computing unit. Like the rest of the space station, ATLAS is a product of multiple layers of old and new technology, built over centuries—first to study the White Fountain, and later, the relics

The graphics of ATLAS, which the Fountainview staff find quaint, have not been updated since the very first version—preserved in honor of its original designer.

A neutral and highly diplomatic artificial intelligence, ATLAS possesses one of the deepest—if not the deepest—understandings of the galaxy’s history. It constantly struggles to appease the ever-conflicting interests of its various masters.





HYRAX

An orphaned Kind foundling who was raised as a Ghast by his secretive adoptive mother, BIG MOM. He often functions as a translator and has not yet acquired a byname. He doesn't possess the natural coloration that the Ghast do, so he wears a mask to mimic their features. After Hyrax's mother died attempting to terraform a barren world with a stolen relic, Big Mom promised that she would hide Hyrax from his dangerous father. But Admiral INNOZOW, the deadliest officer in the Kind stellar navy, will stop at nothing to rescue his long-lost son.

NEES

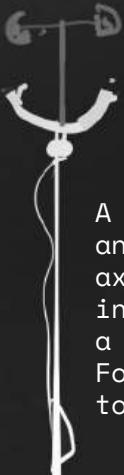
A Kind serviceman for Vitapax. He travels the galaxy, resupplying the various waystations with food, fuel, medicine, and various polymer filaments for 3D printers. As you might imagine, Nees has seen a lot of weird shit in his 30 years on the job.

After years of surviving by keeping his head down and doing his job, Nees is presented with a terrible dilemma. He finds a relic of devastating power and must decide whether he will sell the relic to Vitapax, securing citizenship for his family at the cost of countless lives, or if he will take it upon himself to hide the relic to protect the galaxy.



The origins and purpose of the relics remain a mystery. As the Advanced Three race to claim their power, each new discovery pushes the galaxy closer to collapse. Meanwhile, the relics emerge at an ever higher rate.

Some believe the relics hold the key to enlightenment—a path to godhood for those who dare to master them. Others see them as a slow poison, unraveling the fabric of the



A select few uncover the relics' true nature and stumble upon a shocking truth—this galaxy is not the first to be transformed by their influence. Across the universe, they have left a trail of shattered civilizations. The White Fountain galaxy may be the last and only hope to break the cycle.

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