

FALLEN

THE SCI-FI RPG

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KICK
STARTER

UNIVERSE BETA V.2



THE UNIVERSE OF FAITH

FAITH is a dark and unforgiving universe in which Gods live side by side with technology and biological experimentation. Gods are in continuous conflict with each other, but they can only affect reality through their believers, empowering them with divine powers. In the game, each player can choose in which God his character believes and their faith will be tested as the Gods are demanding beings that will try to lure them into heroic albeit sometimes suicidal missions in exchange for power.

Some of the rational species can travel through space, although it is not an easy task. The Universe is still a thing of wonder; a place of which very little is known and the capacity to move across it is very limited. Only the Corvo and the Iz'kal are capable of opening wormholes by using a huge amount of energy, but they cannot decide where they will take them, the exits of wormholes seem to be completely random.

Both species found the Maze a natural wormhole that had not one exit but hundreds. Both species started to explore it, unaware of the other, conquering and mining dozens of star systems. Then, they coincided in one of the exits and they came face to face with another species as advance and powerful as themselves.

The Corvo, who established a colony in Earth, found humanity in a point of almost extinction. They soon found that humans made good soldiers and while most of the human population still lives in small villages in Earth, there are many who have become reputed bounty hunters around the Universe.

The Corvo and the Iz'kal now coexist in a state of cold war, as direct confrontation is impossible. They compete for resources and try to collapse their opponents' economic system through fierce commerce and fight black op wars in far away planets for resources.

Impossible duels between hackers take place in a daily basis fueled by the information that intelligence and counterintelligence agents give them; missionaries and inquisitors convert their enemies' populations to their own religions and agitators stir into rebellion the native archaic races of the planets under their enemies' domain.

However, each species has its own internal conflicts, as many religions co-exist and their greedy Gods are always hungry for expansion. Prophets, politicians and businessmen all struggle for control.

The whole universe is tense, waiting to see who will fall first and what will be the fate of the known species.

LIFE

In all places where life can exist, it will at some point.

The visited universe counts a few hundred of planets and six species rational enough to develop civilizations have met. Thousands of species with some level of self-consciousness or even metacognition have been found, with a total number of species impossible to be known as species evolve and go extinct constantly.

While about 80% of the discovered species breath oxygen and 99.9% have an organic carbon based chemistry, scientists do not dare set limits to the life forms that could exist. One of the main reasons why not more different life forms have been discovered is that most of the research and exploration is performed in planets in which the known species can exist. But some exploratory missions in deep gas giants have shown virus-like forms that are not composed by carbon.

The newest spaceships and energy needs will make contact with such things more and more common as there are well-founded interests in exploring and harvesting resources from such amazing planets.

The fine line between alive and lifeless is an arbitrary concept. It has been completely redefined with the invention of extremely capable AIs and the discovery of new strange viruses. Every time an exploration team goes through a wormhole they wonder what they will find or who. Everyone knows there are more species out there, what they do not know is if they are friends or foes.

SPACE TRAVEL

Wormholes are gigantic rings of energy that bend the space-time continuum in strange ways that allow matter to go through them and travel instantly to another corner of the universe.

It was believed that they could not be found naturally, but this was wrong. Two species that we know of have developed the technology capable of opening wormholes: the Corvo and the Korian, the latter now extinct and whose technology has fallen in the hands of the Iz'kal.

Creating a wormhole is the summit of the technological advances in space travel engineering. No form of energy has ever been able to push the speed of a spaceship even

close to the speed of light and wormholes are the only way to travel between star systems within the lifespan of any of the sentient species.

The creation of a wormhole is the most complex task known today and can be highly dangerous. It requires the presence of matter with negative mass, which can be either created or found in some regions of space called N-regions in which mass arbitrarily changes from positive to negative. Creating this form of matter is extremely expensive, and thus a relatively close N-region is normally sought when planning the creation of a new wormhole. While rare, most star systems have one of these regions within a week of subluminal travel. N-regions become scarcer the further you are from a star, and the reason for this relation has not been discovered yet.

Many theorize about the relation between wormholes and the Gods. Some say the Gods live inside them; others that Gods are space-time and wormholes are the tool they use to bring their believers together. Nothing is proven and while scientists disregard most theories, no one can explain why even when most of the Universe is empty wormhole ends are mainly in star systems with habitable planets, many times with their own sentient species.

While creating a wormhole is possible, choosing its other end of it is impossible. Theories about how to choose the exit of a wormhole are being developed to try and unravel this most wanted secret in space travel. However, the knowledge about this phenomenon is dim and the only thing theoretical physics are sure about is that the other end of a wormhole is normally the closest similar N-region. The only time this has not happened that way involved an accident with a nuclear reactor producing much more energy than it was needed.

Because there are only a few dozen artificial wormholes experimental data is very inconclusive and creating more purely for investigative interests is just not possible due to the expense it represents.

The discovery of "The Labyrinth" completely changed space exploration and it put on hold wormhole technology in its early days. The Labyrinth is a gigantic web of interconnected wormholes, with more exits that can be counted, and very treacherous to navigate. Some of its tunnels are so thin that only a tiny robot can navigate them without colliding into itself, while others contain entire planets within. Many have been sent to explore its tunnels but very few have come back and communication with them inside the wormhole is extremely complicated, we can only wait.

The Corvo had only created five wormholes when they found the Labyrinth. It allowed them to explore, colonize and mine dozens of new star systems without having to open new wormholes. The growth of the Corvo civilization was exponential from that point until when a exploration team came out of one of the exits and found an Iz'kal colony.

ALIEN CONTACT

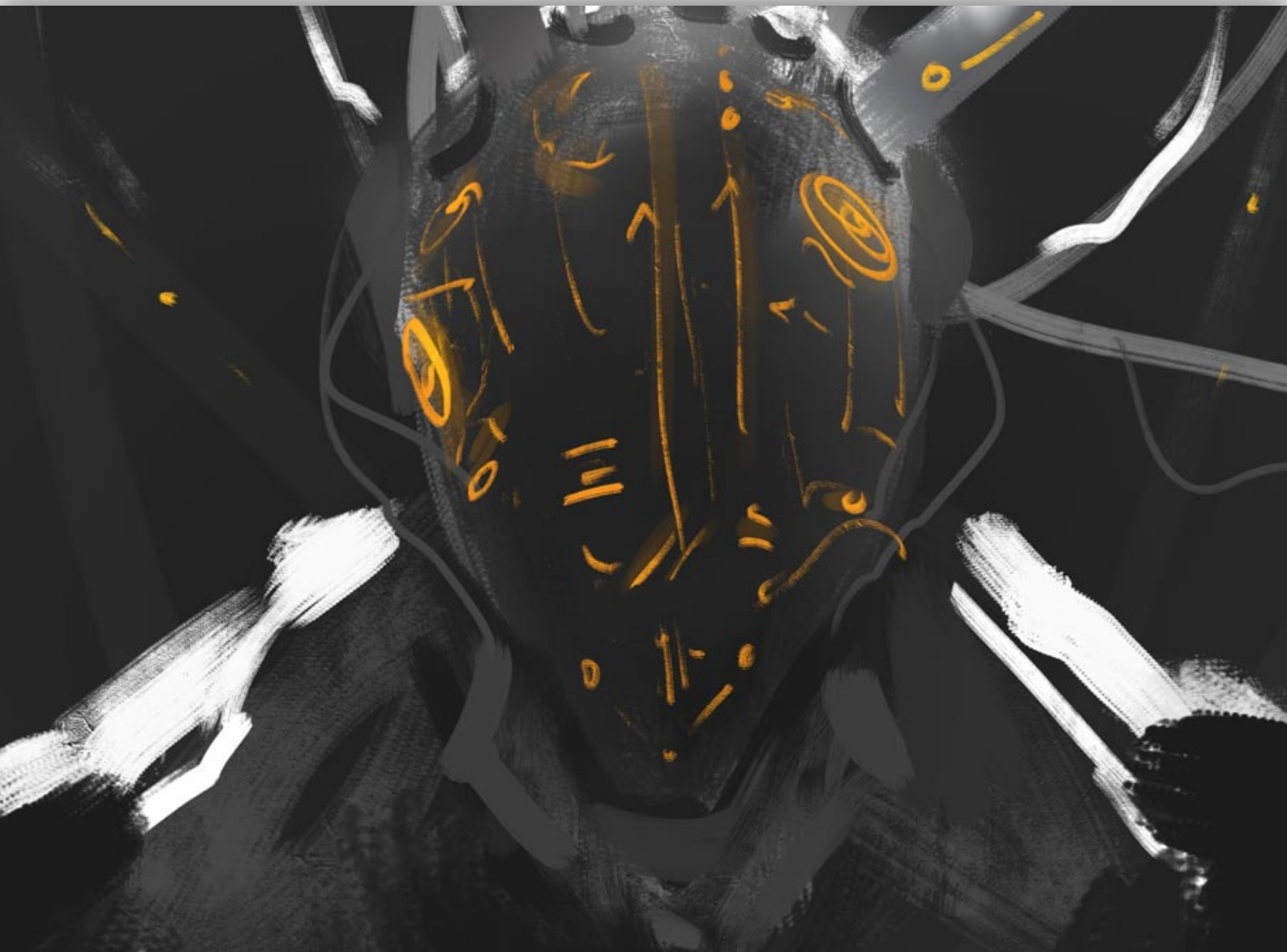
The first contact was tense and while both parties tried to create a diplomatic and friendly relationship it failed. Their civilizations were too different, their moral codes averse. To each other they represented decay and evil. One wanted freedom, the other one community. They tried to stop communications, keep the others away, but both species were too involved with the Labyrinth, they had grown into it, their colonies and their interests lied within it. There are so many exits to the Labyrinth, when one falls in the hands of a species the other one have two choices: start a war or go somewhere else. War was not an option on the table, the destructive power of both civilizations so large that they could annihilate each other and no one would be left to enjoy the spoils.

The Corvo and the Iz'kal relationship had to continue. They meet, they discussed, they fought and they hated. An agreement was created, the rules of intergalactic exploration and conquest. It was very simple: there could be no attacks between the two civilizations and whoever landed first in a planet had all rights over it.

The space race began; each species wants the best planets either to colonize them or mine them. They set up their flag everywhere they go, even in desolated rocks, just in case. And while the space race is fair and the best wins, there is plenty of dirty work behind it.

Missions disappear and soon after it is discovered that the other species has established itself in that same planet. Who can say how did they banish? The war is slow, silent and deadly.

Within a Wormhole the propagation of electromagnetic waves (communication, light, lasers) must follow the curved space. As such, various effects may occur: an observer inside the wormhole may see duplicates of himself in the vicinity of the hole, and any communication signal would also be duplicated in a sort of 'echo' effects. These facts imply that communication between two ends of a wormhole is hard and intermittent at best, the only system that exists for it is sending a spaceship through. This is very taxing and only done when actually necessary. Between two important systems there is a spaceship full of servers that crosses the wormhole daily or weekly bringing all the necessary information to the other net. But in the most remote system like some mining colonies, news can take weeks or even months to arrive until a spaceship brings them new tools or an empty cargo ship comes back.



THE CORVO

The Corvo are independent and capable people. Smaller in size than humans, they have adapted to life in space where they build their cities in space stations. They carry a highly technological lifestyle, in which they spent most of their time connected to the net.

The Corvo are at the same time monogamous and promiscuous. They get married and share their lives with one single partner in a very similar fashion to what humans used to do, but sex is seen like a token of power for both sexes and those Corvo that can score lovers do so and they brag about it with friends, it is not uncommon for the spouses to be aware and to feel proud of the love achievements of their partners.

They reproduce through eggs and while they must sex to fecund them, the female Corvo lays the egg a few days later. There are few physical differences between them but their reproductive organs and that female Corvo are of a lighter colour and slightly smoother forms.

Socially there is no difference whatsoever between the two genders and same sex relationships are common and not treated any differently. To differentiate themselves each sex uses very different clothing, their fashion is reinventing itself continuously and always absorbing the looks of the species they come across as they study their throughout history. They are always interested in showing what makes them special and most Corvo use tattoos and prosthetics to differentiate themselves.

Corvo couples have a lot of children (3,4 is the average), which means that its population almost duplicates every generation. Governments have tried to establish some control over this, but the Corvo do not allow their freedom to be compromised. The Corvo civilization has a huge need for expansion, not only that but those that cannot afford to move to a new colony see themselves impoverished in an endless cycle of generations incapable of moving forward. That is one of the main reasons why the crime rates are so extremely high in the Corvo society.

The Corvo do not show their feelings openly and they show their respect or love for others by making them proud or with presents more than with words or physical affection. In general Corvo have a hard time asking for help as they know they should be able to achieve anything by themselves, but the consumer society to which they belong keeps them desiring new things and most of the middle class are in huge debt.

Corvo consumerism is legendary. They are extremely engaged with new technologies and fashion. Being able to afford luxury goods from remote planets is intrinsically related to popularity and pride. All industries are always coming up with new models of their products with new and fascinating applications and capabilities to keep engaged a public that is never satisfied.

They are the most net connected society of all. Thousands of different virtual worlds are hosted in their networks, to which those Corvo with a cortex connexion can access. Most vacation agencies offer special cortex connected vacations to wonderful virtual worlds, as real traveling is extremely expensive and the Corvo are very dependent of their jobs, they



normally do not like to leave them for more than a week at a time, as they feel they are damaging their possibilities to ascend.

The complete immersion of the net-worlds is delicate as the body functions decrease when the mind becomes absent this way, which is why Corvo normally do not stay connected for more than 5 to 8 hours per day. But there have been cases of people that died when they neglected their physical bodies. The richest people can afford to be installed in high-end machines that keeps their bodies healthy and nurtured while their minds stay for their whole lives in all kinds of net-worlds.

The Corvo are today what humanity would have become if their technology advancements had kept up with its exploitation of resources. While broken in seven different countries, the Corvo species is united under the Economic Equality Pact (EEP) that allows them to conduct commerce and other business freely between countries. It is also a good defense against an economical take over by the Iz'kal.

While government systems, laws and power are not equal between any of the Corvo countries they all share one thing: their love for the free market economy. The seven countries have different levels of minimalistic government but they all share the same culture.

Their civilization is built around freedom of choice and private property. They are very wary of government institutions and other organizations that could hinder the expression of their freedom, they understand that these institutions are forms of social domination and create injustice; and while there is no consensus around the issue of how much power should the government wield - with a minority arguing that none - all countries have found a common ground by limiting the government to the military and the law administration and its enforcement. The most laissez-faire countries allow taxation to be voluntary almost converting it into a form of insurance policy because those that do not pay it are not assisted in police or justice affairs.

Any other service departments are in the hands of the private sector and free from the monopolistic power of the state to interfere between the free transactions among people. The Corvo are very defendant of their freedom and all attempts of creating powerful governments have been stopped by angry mobs of outraged citizens from all social classes.



Taxes are extremely low and only used to pay for the minimal services of the government. They are completely equal among all citizens, but the majority of the lower class is unable and unwilling to pay them and the social unrest that making them pay would cause is not worth the trouble; therefore there are millions of Corvo that do not pay taxes and live in favelas without even the most basic services.

Economical differences are stellar among the Corvo, some live in the most rotten misery in the bottom of retired 0-G space-freighters or lunar cities, while others are richer than the countries they live in. But no one stops poor Corvo from becoming rich if they fight for it. It is not easy, but life is not for the faint of heart and the Corvo understand this fact better than any other species in the universe.

Those that really deserve it and fight for it can become owners of more land than any man can imagine -some own even entire planets-, having riches beyond what they can spend in their life spans -even after being duplicated by the best medical services in existence- as there is no limit to what one can achieve in the Corvo civilization. That's what makes it the mightiest.

CORPORATIONS

Small governments are incapable of achieving great things and therefore the conquest of the stars was left in the hands of private owners. The largest quests required such amounts of wealth and power than the small companies joined in medium companies and those allied into collaborations that created a form of large companies and when those joined to achieve greater things such as opening wormholes or not being left behind by the competence Mega Corporations where born.

The bigger the Mega Corporation the more powerful the owners of all the companies that fell under them were. Mega Corporations are owned by so many businessmen from so many industries that they operate as countries with their own interests.

Competition is relentless and uncanny. While there are millions of businesses and businesses owners they all now form part of one of the three co-existing Mega Corporations, being part of one of them gives them the power to fight back the competition and those that resist are soon bought by bigger fish. Regardless of country a partner company united under the banner of a Megacorp is always behind any business.

While all Megacorps have branches on all forms of business they have specialize in those areas that they cover best.

Corvo companies have devised all kinds of creative methods to attract clients. From old school ads to sensorial feeds in the streets and in the virtual worlds. People that enter certain areas within those feeds start feeling hungry and they can almost taste their favorite dish from the restaurant they are just walking by.



THE IZ'KAL

The Iz'kal are gregarious and proud people. Slightly smaller in size and more slender than humans, they live in large cities in the planets they colonize; native from a planet that was terraformed by the Korian into a desert and salvage planet they are able to live with very little, their needs are more of the soul.

Iz'kal's society is a technocracy, where the most capable and knowledgeable in a given field are granted legislative power over it. Putting the good of the community before the good of the individual, the Iz'kal are a society where everyone fills the role they are best suited for.

The Iz'kal are serene, reflexive and enduring but also resentful and vengeful, so despite being hard to enrage, once their anger awakens it will be hard to quench their thirst for blood.

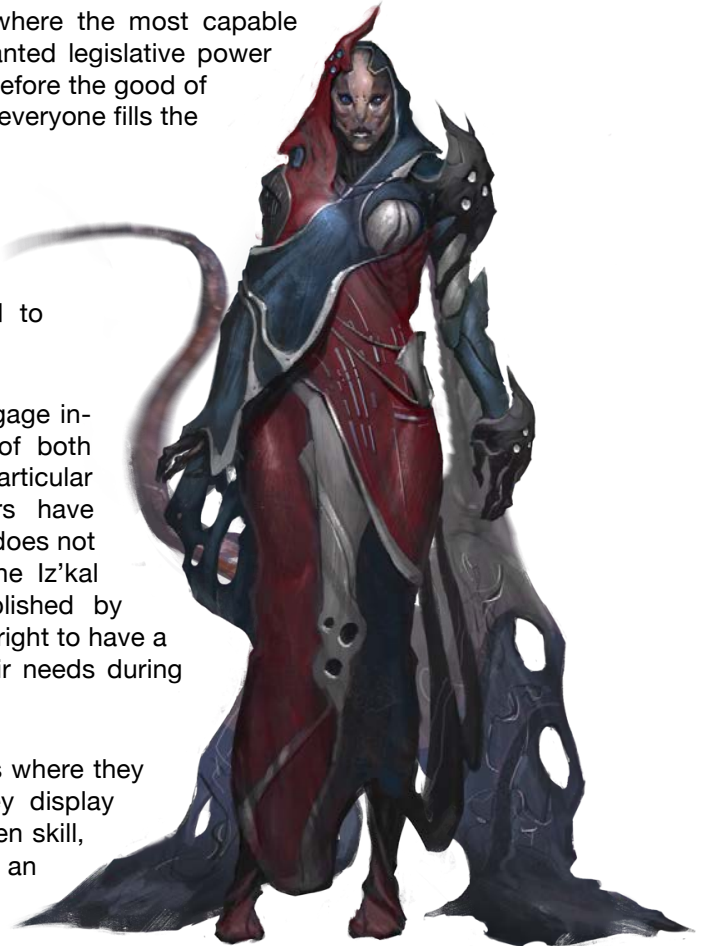
In their personal lives, the Iz'kal engage in-group relationships with many members of both genders, but they stay faithful to that particular group. While female and male members have different physiologies, their social structure does not contemplate differences between them. The Iz'kal are mammals and birth control is established by society. When a female Iz'kal is granted the right to have a child society as a whole takes care of their needs during pregnancy.

Newborn Iz'kal are sent to nurseries where they are taken care of and educated until they display some degree of interest or aptitude in a given skill, at which point they will be sent over to an instructor who will become their protector and train them. There is no parent-child relationship, as newborns belong to the society as a whole.

The Iz'kal can form neural networks called hyperlink with other members of their specie. While connected, individual thoughts merge, creating a large single mind influenced by every individual. Most decisions in the personal life of an Iz'kal are taken this way.

Iz'kal learn to control the emotions they share at an early age, since their emotions can easily influence those around them. Individual sentiments of anger, fear, sadness or hate are usually suppressed, but when they are too intense to keep them inside, the recipient usually exiles himself from the hyperlink to avoid affecting others psyques with his personal problems. The hyperlink exile takes as long as the individual needs to come to terms with whatever affected him; some Iz'kal are so damaged that they never join the hyperlink again and become voidwalkers. They can choose to disconnect at any time but to join another Iz'kal through hyperlink he must be willing to do so. Most Iz'kal have no trouble at all connecting with any other member of society and share their mind and interests.

When an Iz'kal spends a great amount of time disconnected from the hyperlink he becomes anxious and has a feeling of loneliness that can easily turn into a deep depression. Members of the society that break the law are punished to ostracism, rejecting them from



any hyperlink, which for an Iz'kal is a form of jail as their minds cannot reach out to others and are completely isolated.

The hyperlink can only be achieved by reaching out to others that are close to you and as the network increases in size the mind processing capability of the joint mind decreases. A normal hyperlink takes place from two people to a dozen; only in rare cases more Iz'kal join the same hyperlink, but they swap between networks as they get further from the previous one and closer to the next.

Iz'kal people spend their lives working at the job that best suits them, regardless of their personal interest on it. They see themselves as an extension of the society as a whole and are willing to sacrifice personal agendas for the good of all.

The Korian & the Uprising

A thousand years ago, when the Iz'kal were a primitive, lesser species still in the dawn of civilization, they were attacked by the Korian, a powerful and brutal species. They were easily subjugated and enslaved. They became servants and endured every punishment and hardship their masters put them through. They waited and learnt from their new masters while serving them meekly, finding solace in the secret connection they shared with each other, burying their hatred and preparing for the moment when they could retaliate.

When the right moment came, all the anger and hatred that had been suppressed, pulsating like a living being deep within their minds, urging them to fight, finally surfaced, erupting with the scream of millions of souls, a wail that froze the blood of the Korian, the promise of retribution and death. Despite the sudden rebellion that caught the Korian unaware, the Iz'kal paid a high price for their freedom. When the Korian finally surrendered, no mercy was shown to them. The Iz'kal lusted for vengeance, their anger feeding that of those around them, unquenchable and too loud to be ignored. The Korian were brutally massacred down to the very last of them. Those who tried to hide were hunted and those who tried to run were chased down.

The Iz'kal soon became a powerful nation that extended far beyond what the Korian had. Their home planet Al'ameen is covered in endless deserts and huge mountains with intricate caves systems underneath them. Around half their population still lives in that planet, and most of the other half lives in Erthum, the home planet of the Korian. Erthum is a planet very rich in resources that was modeled by the Korian overlords to be practical and sustainably exploitable.

The Iz'kal is the most stable society ever designed and in it all its citizens can enjoy life, the lack of social differences creates an atmosphere in which everyone feels respected and they are in general a much more happy society than the Corvo.



THE HUMANS

Humanity drove itself to a point of almost extinction with the mad exploitation of Earth's resources. Mighty civilizations fell under the weight of their own pride and corruption. The only hope for humanity was to develop their technology way further than it was. They did not.

War was the terrible answer, and soon after that what was left of humanity were those that stood aside and no one cared to kill. With no net, no oil and no social systems, humanity grew in small villages so far from each other that they could have been in different planets. Warlords, tyrants, prophets and all kinds of leaders lead the tribes. Humans became tough and heartless.

Then the Corvo came through a Wormhole, and it was easy for them to take over. There was no resistance worthy of the powerful Corvo's military technology. Earth became a colony of the Corvo Empire, and the Corvo soon saw the potential of humans as soldiers. They recruited them and trained them. Some embraced the occupation and some didn't, but the resistance was futile.

Shortly after the occupation humans started gaining a reputation as very capable mercenaries. They became valuable and wanted, and the Corvo were unable to keep them all on their side. Many humans took the opportunity and changed sides for a better offer, as loyalty was something they did not have for their new masters. The Corvo realized they needed to keep the rest of the humans

under control and sterilized them. The majority of humanity was then put in cryostasis and only reduced groups were kept awoken to serve as mercenaries in exploration and infiltration missions. Still a few groups have escaped and live within the Labyrinth or in some unexplored doors, they are nomads.

It has been 70 years since the arrival of Corvo to Earth and free humans have extended over the known universe as bounty hunters, mercenaries and killers. There are not many of them, making their hiring prices stay high, and their fortunes uncertain.



THE GODS

There is no reason for the existence of life, but life itself does not care. The problem arose when it gained consciousness and came to realise that it was by accident. In its realisation of oneself a voice spoke from within. It told him a truth, the one truth: Life ought to create its own reason to be or be consumed.

Some say there are as many Gods as there are minds, each one matching the being to whom they are connected. However there are only five with many forms. Beings do not choose their God, nor do Gods choose their believers. Who they are determines it, because the Gods of FAITH are not creators or allfathers, but entities that surged from all conscious beings that have a similar reason to be. These Gods came to existence at the very same time as their believers. Now every new being that finds a similar reason to exist finds this God within him.

A God is power, energy with its own consciousness that exists only inside the minds of its believers, somehow existing as one single entity in all of them, regardless of the distance between them or their species. Gods have no body, nor powers to affect anything but their believers, and that only if they agree to it. They have the power of giving them gifts and the abilities to bargain.



Ergonauts have found a very simple truth, happiness must be shared: We are social beings, our lives are intermingled and we have to learn to work together.

They believe that they must put themselves forward and sacrifice for others, sometimes even for those that do not think the same way. True altruism does not expect anything in return but Ergonauts think that through it they can help others find a way to see things in the same manner.

They know that power and economical differences are the root of all evils. Corruption, greed, fear and envy all come from these differences among people, creating equality is the only way to banish these aspects from social alienation.

DIVINE COMMANDMENTS

All are equal

Thou shalt not hinder
thy people

Thou shalt help others
become their best

Thou shalt bend your
will to the will of most



People who believe in Vexal are those that do not like to follow any rules but have a deep respect for others and are always willing to give a helping hand. They do not take orders very well and dislike societies that pretend everyone has to live by the same rules, each person should be treated differently but respectfully.

While they will not sacrifice their own freedom for anyone, they might be willing to sacrifice their own life for a good cause. Being individualist does not mean they cannot work in teams, they do so for as long as there is no hierarchy and the group is willing to hear each voice and take it into consideration.

Vexales are usually adventures, hackers, outlaws and any other kind of free people who are also altruist and kind.

DIVINE COMMANDMENTS

Thou shalt not impose
over others

Thou shalt benefit others

Thou shalt not bear a
master



Hexians want the best for all people, but they understand that most are brainwashed or unfitting to decide by themselves what is best. While this is a sad reality, Hexia believers have come to terms with it and will follow their ideas and try to make them possible to everyone else, even those that do not know yet that those ideas are true and good for them. Hexians know that once their ideas are installed, people will be capable of collaborating and forming a true community.

Hexians are tired of trying to convince people of complex ideas to improve society and being defeated by charmers selling fake happiness or easy ways out.

DIVINE COMMANDMENTS

Honor thy people

Thou shalt not hinder
yourself

Thou shalt show them
the way



Kaliva respects only one thing in mortals and it is the will to improve oneself. Kaliva only accepts in his ranks those that stop before nothing to achieve their goals and are never satisfied with being in second place. For Kaliva there is always a way and those that do not find it are not good enough.

Showing compassion, deviating from your goals for others or being a helper is unforgivable to Kaliva, as what you are doing is maiming those people, who become lethargic and weak, always expecting a shoulder to rest against. Each person must become their own man or woman, competition can only improve them and those that truly deserve it will be at the top of the chain. Everyone has a chance to become their best selves and Kaliva will support those who try.

DIVINE COMMANDMENTS

Thou shalt be above all

Thou shalt not hinder
yourself

Thou shalt not bear a
master

Each to their own

LOSING THE FAVOR OF YOUR GOD

Characters must follow the commandments of their God if they want to be able to use their powers.

If a character does not abide to the commandments but does not actually break them he will not receive the benefits of the passive powers and using the activated ones will cause him twice the neural damage they usually do.

If a character breaks a commandment he will not be able to use the powers for the rest of the session, or for the next one if it happens at some point of the last act. If he breaks a commandment in an extreme way he must choose a power and discard it.

At any point if a character starts to show more connexion to another God, the GM can offer him to change Gods. He will lose all the powers he had with his previous God, but if he changes God in an epic manner (A Kaliva follower stays behind to cover the retreat of his companions and he will surely die), the GM can give him any number of powers of his new God Ergon, up to the same number of powers he had with his previous one. But it is recommended to keep it at one.