



THE ART & STORY OF ANACHRONY

INTRODUCTION



WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF ANACHRONY, LEADER!

This book is your guide to the story and lore behind Anachrony. It will help you immerse in the game's setting, unveil the story of the four Paths and their Leaders and Exosuits, and show you the paintings and illustrations our artists created to breathe life into New Earth.

Exploring the universe of Anachrony is going to be a long and exciting journey, and we really hope you will enjoy it just as much as we enjoyed creating it!

— the MindClash Games team



HISTORY

0 PP

THE DAY OF PURGATION

Memories of the day the Old World met its fate are now mostly lost to the decades, but what we do know is that out of nowhere, a mysterious, cataclysmic explosion shook a desolate part of South America that day. The resulting tectonic fissures, tsunamis and storms wiped out the majority of Earth's population in weeks, and warped most of the planet's surface into an uninhabitable wasteland. The explosion's origin remained unknown to the survivors. A new era has begun.



20 PP

SUN'S BREACH

The dust clouds blocking out the Sun finally begin to settle. Around the world, survivors emerge from underground shelters in search for habitable zones and fresh water.



77 PP

FOUNDATION OF THE CAPITAL

Earth's largest colonist group, now exceeding ten thousand in number, form the Scions' Fellowship. With years of hard work, they establish a foothold along the coastline of the Atlantic Ocean, with a basic water purifying system and a mine to supply them with building materials. The circumstances are finally given for the foundation of New Earth's first city, the one that would eventually become the majestic World Capital.





120 PP

EXPEDITIONS ON NEW EARTH

As the Capital is nearing completion, the Scions' Fellowship organizes into a functioning society. Its governing body, the World Council, declares unifying the people of New Earth as the Fellowship's primary goal. Expeditions are launched to the devastated cities of the Old World in search for usable technology. The Council's goal is to find a way to communicate their presence to humans scattered across the Outback, and rally them at the Capital.



144 PP

DISCOVERY OF WELLSPRING

An expedition unit discovers an area protected by volcanic mountain ranges where the flora and fauna mysteriously survived the Day of Purgation and its consequences. They name the area Wellspring, and bring word of its existence to the Capital. Through hearsay, Wellspring slowly becomes a coveted, mythical paradise among the population. The Harmonists, a separatist group led by the commander of the scouting party, become so obsessed with the ideal of nature that they secretly plan to shake off the Council's authority and migrate to Wellspring.



151 PP

THE CONVOCATION

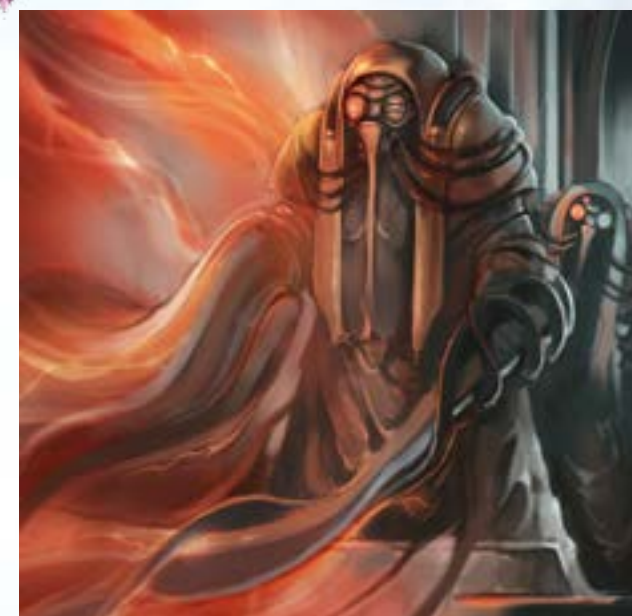
The expeditions gradually unveil the Old World's incredible technological achievements. A functional prototype of an anti-gravity field generator allows the construction of huge floating platforms for the Capital's further expansion, while satellite systems provide a way for the Council to initiate the Convocation project, and broadcast their message to humans around the world.



160 PP

RISE OF THE SAVANTS

The Savants, a small, self-proclaimed group of Scions are becoming obsessed with the Old World's technology, and insist that it should be used for the Fellowship's own progress instead of inviting more survivors to the Capital.



172 PP

THE MIGRATION

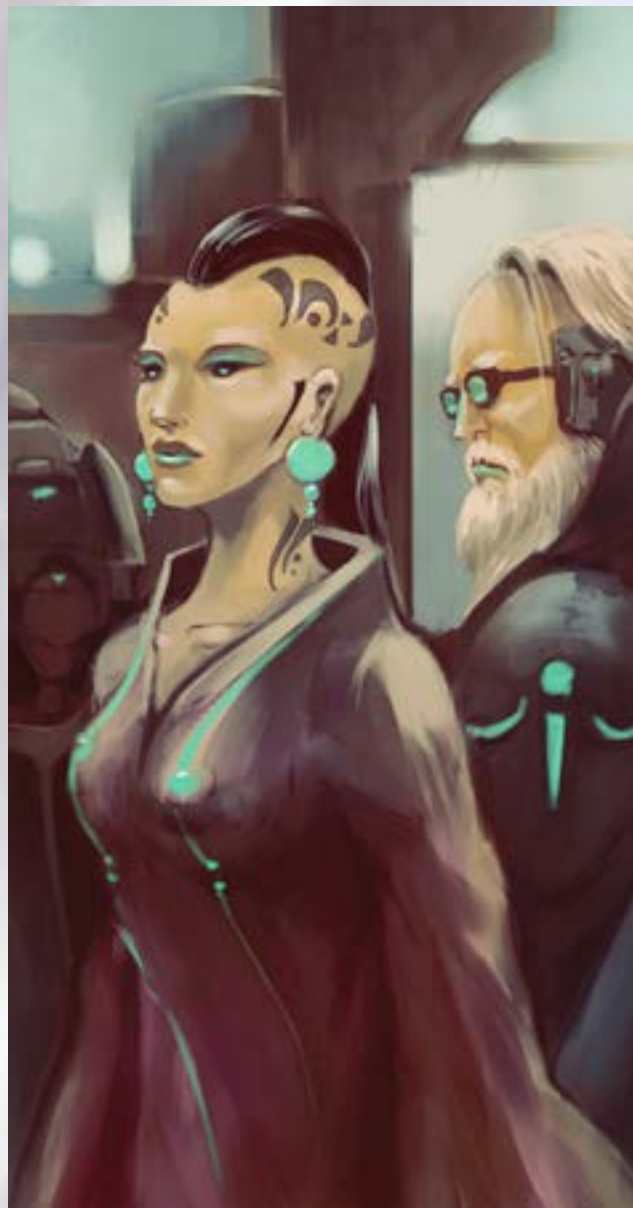
The Convocation attracts people in much greater numbers than the Council anticipated — and not only defenseless nomads looking for shelter. Calling themselves Redeemers, emissaries from a mysterious survivor group that allegedly hasn't left its underground shelter since the Purgation begin spreading their unsettling religious views among the population.



179 PP

THE ATLANTEAN'S ARRIVAL

Another group answers the Convocation, from an unexpected direction: a gigantic ship with a crew of thousands arrives from the Atlantic, and docks near the Capital. It quickly becomes clear that their intentions are hostile, and an armed conflict between the Capital and the Atlantean erupts. As a desperate — and belated — measure, the Council abandons the Convocation project and shuts down the satellite signal. The war finally ends by 181 PP with a stalemate and an uneasy truce, with dozens of Scion hostages on the Atlantean.



185 PP

THE EXODUS

Overpopulation, attrition and internal dissension push the Capital's society to the brink of a civil war. With mankind's future at stake again, the Council organizes a summit with the captain of the Atlantean, and leaders of the Harmonists, Savants and Redeemers. The summit concludes that the only way to solve the crisis is to let all factions walk their own path, outside of the Council's authority. The factions agree to repeat the summit yearly, with each of them having influence in decisions about the Capital's future. Powerless against their demands, the Council agrees.

The Harmonists finally set off to Wellspring, their "promised land", becoming the Path of Harmony.

The Path of Dominance sails off with Atlantean, in search of new settlements to plunder.

The Savants, the Capital's finest scientist and engineers, leave the city on one of its floating platforms, with advanced Old World technology at their disposal. As the Path of Progress, they plan to become the next step in human evolution.

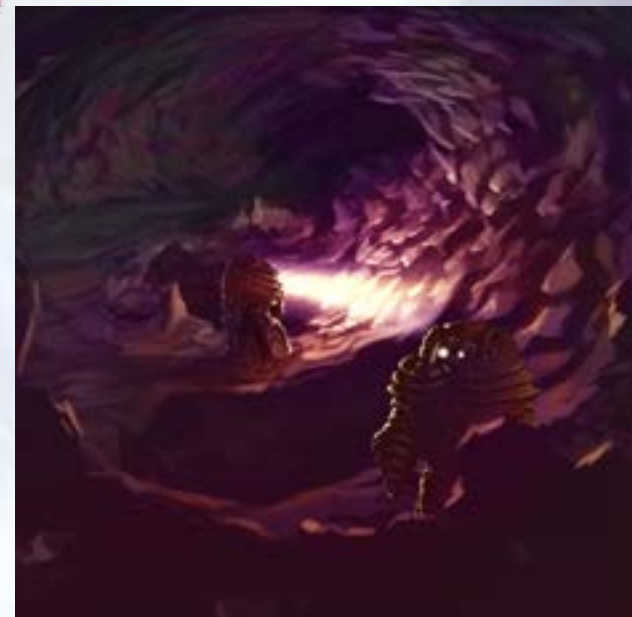
Finally, the masses converted by the Redeemers set off to their underground realm, walking the Path of Salvation.



190-240 PP

THE AGE OF PROSPERITY

Living separately and in a fragile peace, the four Paths all begin to prosper in their own way. The Capital recovers from the crisis, and the Council regains power as a global peacekeeping entity between the four Paths.



246 PP

DISCOVERY OF NEUTRONIUM

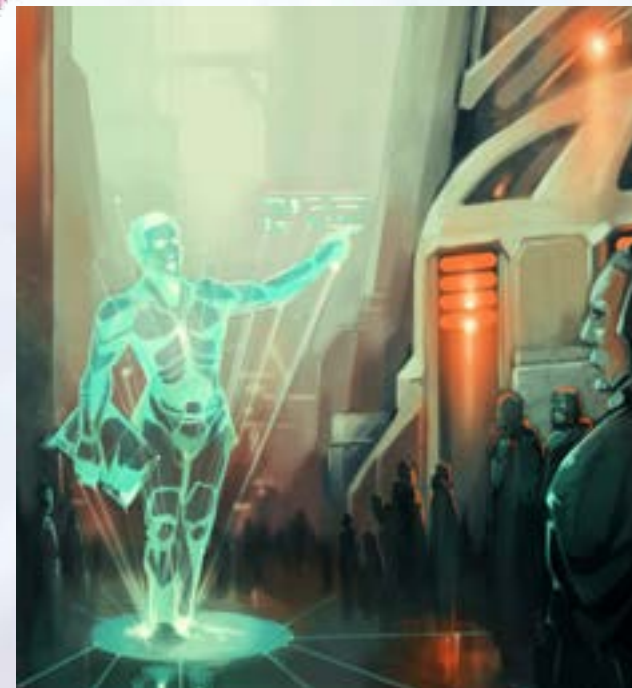
The first expeditions to the desolate Ground Zero of the Day of Purgation reveal a thick layer of unknown material left behind in the wake of the explosion. The material is light, but extremely durable. When exposed to energy such as heat, its atomic structure changes and the material becomes very well-moldable. Neutronium, as the new substance is called, becomes widely used as building material for the most prestigious projects.



293 PP

CONSTRUCTION OF THE MONUMENTS

In accordance with the Paths' representatives, the Council orders the construction of five Monuments to commemorate the coming 300th anniversary of the Day of Purgation — one for each Path, and one for the Capital itself. These monuments, constructed entirely of Neutronium, would represent the Paths' common origins despite of their differences.



300 PP

DAY OF REMINISCENCE

In celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Day of Purgation, delegations of the four Paths gather at the World Capital, but instead of remembrance, they witness humanity's most life-changing event since the Purgation. Time Rifts from the future open on the monuments that day, revealing the true power of the mysterious Neutronium: when exposed to energy, it is capable of opening wormholes through time. A grim message from the future makes the people of New Earth realize that the Purgation was the result of the first of such wormholes; transferring back the energy of the catastrophic future impact of a Neutronium asteroid. This impact can devastate not only our past, but also our future. With such a threat on the horizon, we must do everything to prepare — and survive.



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PATH OF HARMONY

🚩 CAPITAL: **WELLSPRING**

👑 LEADERS: **Matriarch Zaida**
Patriarch Haulani

👤 EXOSUIT MODEL: **SEEDER**

BACKGROUND

THE BEGINNING

Despite of popular belief, not all of Earth's flora and fauna had been wiped out on the Day of Purgation. In an area protected by volcanic mountain ranges, some extremely tough plants survived the cataclysm, and continued to grow in the hostile environment left in the wake of the Purgation. This almost unnatural growth was centered at a mysterious spring, giving life to a wide range of strange new species of plants. By the time the very first human explorers discovered it, the area was already sparsely covered with vegetation, but the explorers were so used to the dry wastelands and ruins of the Old World that they saw a lush oasis, nourished by the very source of life. They saw hope for a new beginning.

The news of a natural paradise left on Earth spread fast in the Capital. The explorer party that had discovered it formed a group called the Harmonists, driven by the idea of restoring nature as it once flourished on the planet. The Harmonists were rapidly growing in numbers, and during the Exodus, they seized the opportunity to leave the Capital and set off to the fabled paradise.

These first inhabitants dreamt of a society where everyone was equal, and humans lived in perfect balance with themselves and the surrounding nature, respecting other life forms just as much as their own. They named their new settlement Wellspring, and soon started to refer to themselves as the Path of Harmony.



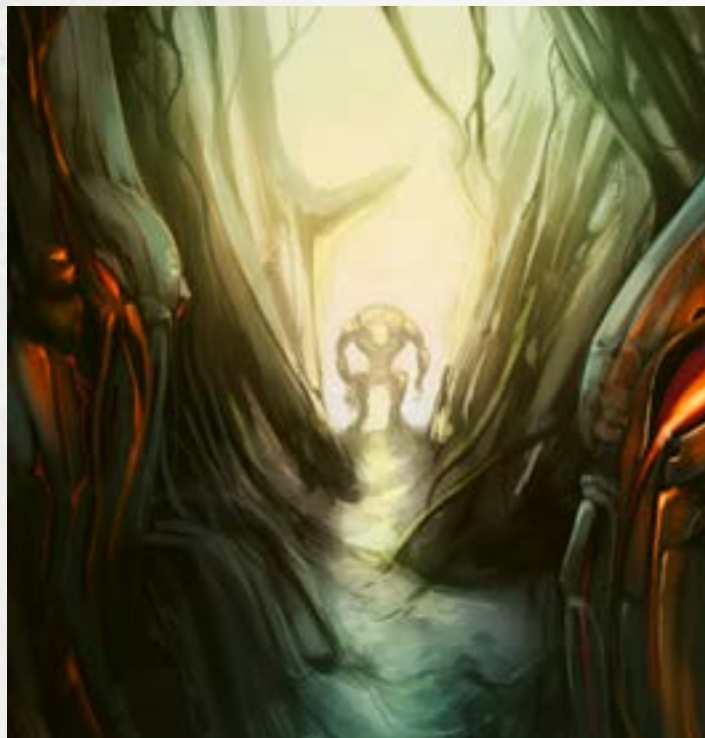
BOTANICS AND BIOENGINEERING

The idea created a nation that lives in harmony with its natural environment — literally in symbiosis with special plants cultivated from the autochthonous flora. As the plant species growing around Wellspring had been completely unknown to the Old World, the Path's biologists started to believe that they indeed are new forms of life. Fascinated by how fast living beings were capable of adapting to the new conditions, the cult of Mother Earth was slowly reborn. The belief only grew stronger as the Path's scientists got to know more and more about the nature of these plants and their potential. It took decades for the settlers of Wellspring to establish a safe haven, but as they kept achieving breakthroughs in the fields of botanics and bioengineering, the speed of progression grew exponentially with the help of the new species they discovered and successfully gene modified for their purposes.



TALMA

Talma, the Path's symbolic, mysterious clambering plant grows upon the gigantic trellis dome raised above the city, creating an effective natural protection against the harsh outside weather conditions and the toxic atmosphere. The original trelliswork can still be seen at some points, but over the decades Talma grew so strong and intelligent that no substantiation or guidance is needed for her any more. In fact, she is constantly expanding along with the living space of the Path of Harmony.



This is very fortunate and desirable, since the population growth of the Path is very intense due to the lack of birth control and the active sexual life they practice. Life always finds a way, they say, and that goes for their own reproduction too. Family is of high importance to them, but as their community lives in a very strong convergence, they handle each and every member of the Path as their own blood.

THE MATRIARCH AND THE PATRIARCH

Despite of the fact that everyone is considered equal in their society, their leaders are held in high regard. The Path is always led by a couple, the proverbial mother and father of the people living in Wellspring. The Matriarch and Patriarch are believed to be chosen by Mother Earth herself, therefore their authority is unquestionable.

The mysterious election ceremony is held in the sanctuary built upon the vastly overgrown spring that once fostered Wellspring. The male and female candidates enter the Hall of Life and Death, a special chamber of the shrine. The exact details of the ceremony are shrouded in mystery, but most of the candidates do not return — some believe they wander off into the wilderness at the heart of Wellspring, others that they are sacrifices presented to Mother Earth in return for her generosity. Still, only two candidates, the Matriarch and Patriarch emerge from the shrine, with symbionts connected to their body.



THE NEYA PLANT

This symbiont, the Neya plant, is the symbol of the Path of Harmony depicted on their flag. It provides incredible strength, vitality and health to its host, and is even capable of functioning as an exterior lung — if the surrounding air is not safe to breathe, the vines can link with the host's lungs, providing oxygen for survival while it is needed.

The blessing of the Neya plant is the privilege of the leader couple and the Cultivators, the Path of Harmony's explorers and emissaries, who earn it through the service of the Path. They are among the most respected members of the society, second only to the leader couple. They are responsible for keeping order in Wellspring (which is rarely required), as well as venturing out to the Outback to gather resources for the city in their Exosuits, the Seeders.

THE SOCIETY

As the population is constantly growing, death is by no means feared by the people of Wellspring. They accept it, and some even welcome it as a chance to truly become one with Nature. They believe that they all originate from the source of life, and by death they simply return to that source.

In Wellspring, there is no market economy. Everyone receives a centrally determined share of goods, but

citizens are free to exchange them among themselves. People of Wellspring only have a few personal belongings, and strive to consume the least energy possible. Their way of life is the complete opposite of Old Earth's consumer society, an idea they deeply despise.

The Path of Harmony is deeply shaken by the news of the asteroid's approach. While they firmly believe that Wellspring has grown powerful enough by now and Talma will protect them from the blast wave, they are concerned for all life on the planet, not just their own — and therefore, they will do everything in their power to minimize the damage and save as many lives as possible.



EXOSUIT MODEL: SEEDER



SYMBIOTIC CONTROL

Temporary connection with Talma allows the control of the vines as though they were part of one's own body

EXTENDABLE ARMS

Talma vines can extend to up to 3 meters, and are able to firmly grasp objects

PLATE ARMOR

Made entirely of polished Titanium pieces

TALMA VINES

The Seeder's chassis is held together and operated by the mysterious Talma vines

SPEED & MANEUVERABILITY

The Seeder's efficiency far exceeds what can be achieved with mechanical servos

SPEED

CONTROL

UTILITY

COMBAT

MATRIARCH ZAIDA

— „Growing a Brighter Future“

Zaida grew up in a seemingly perfect and happy family with loving parents and caring siblings. She was raised the way every child should be, and while she could never have imagined a better life, deep in her heart, she was not content. For as far as she could remember, she had always felt like something was missing from her life.

So she began looking for the source of her unhappiness, which led her to eventually discover the truth about her origin — she was not the sweet child of her parents. Feeling betrayed, she left her home and set out to find answers about her origin. No matter how hard she tried, she never found a trace of her real parents, but her search eventually made her know and accept her true self, that was free and independent from her ancestors. She realized she does not have to fit to the expectations of neither her parents nor the society, and discovered her true strength: inspiring people.

She was ready to forgive her foster parents and return home, when a mysterious encounter finally gave her the answer she had been looking for. As she was passing by the sanctuary built upon the sacred source of Wellspring, she felt a strange attraction to the woods that surrounded the holy place. When she entered the forest, she stumbled upon a huge, pulsating plant that she felt was calling out to her. As she was slowly approaching it, the feeling got stronger, and she somehow started to have thoughts that were not her own, as though the plant was communicating with her. The minute she touched the vines, she understood everything — the very soul of Wellspring reached out to her, and that moment she finally knew what she was destined to: leading the Path of Harmony.

She was determined to fulfill her destiny, but had a long way ahead of her. She worked hard to become a candidate for the next election ceremony with the unshakeable confidence that she was Mother Earth's chosen one.

The ceremony didn't go entirely as she expected. Though she was eventually elected the female leader of the Path of Harmony, her new partner, Patriarch Haulani didn't

seem to be someone she could get along with. She was ambitious, confident and had a natural charisma, while Haulani was more of a dreamer and an adventurer.

As she knew it was her fate, she decided to take leadership into her own hands, by fighting for it if needed. Slowly she realized, however, that there was no need to fight — Haulani was indeed happy with her being in charge of Wellspring's politics. Finally letting the competitive attitude go, over time she became a wise and fair leader of her people, with a natural talent of convincing people to join her cause.

PATRIARCH HAULANI

— „Balance Grows Peace“

Today, Patriarch Haulani's reputation overshadows that of any former male Leader of the Path of Harmony, but it hasn't always been the case. He was chosen by Mother Earth as Patriarch at the incredibly young age of 16, making him the youngest Leader in the Path's history, with the likewise young Matriarch Zaida by his side. As wisdom and life experience are among the most important virtues of the Path's society, he had a long road ahead of him to earn his people's respect.

The first step on that long road, however, was getting along with the partner Mother Nature designated for him. Unlike Haulani, the 20-year old Zaida was full of ambition, with great plans of governing her people, accepting no contradiction.

Young Haulani, on the other hand, had never really planned to become Patriarch. He dreamt of great adventures instead, discovering the Outback, and piloting a Seeder. That dream did not get completely out of reach the day he was chosen a Leader: piloting a Seeder was still an option for him as a Patriarch, though admittedly an unusual one. After having realized that he could not enforce his will against Zaida in politics (not that he really intended to), he began leading the Cultivators on exploration missions.

As the years passed, the tough life on the Outback, sometimes months far away from Wellspring, hardened Haulani's resolve. He showed remarkable courage and prowess on his missions, earning him more and more confidence in himself — and the utmost respect of his fellow Cultivators. Thanks to their tireless work under Haulani's command, Wellspring's lush vegetation started spreading rapidly across the Outback, claiming more and more living space for the Path of Harmony. The stories of Haulani's daring deeds were passed on to Wellspring, where he was regarded more and more as a hero.

The change Haulani went through certainly did not go unnoticed to Matriarch Zaida either, and she slowly realized that she had underestimated the partner that was chosen for her. They started getting closer to each other, and Haulani became less and less willing to risk his life on the Outback.

Today, Haulani's days as a Cultivator are behind him, but he is still willing to take his Seeder for a ride every now and then. Haulani and Zaida are now leading the Path of Harmony in a perfect consensus, and they are just as good partners in leadership as in life — just as it was expected by the elders of Harmony, who knew right from the beginning that Mother Earth cannot be wrong.





PATH OF DOMINANCE

🚩 CAPITAL: **THE ATLANTEAN**

👤 LEADERS: **TREASURE HUNTER SAMIRA**
CAPTAIN WOLFE

🦾 EXOSUIT MODEL: **OCTOPOD**

BACKGROUND

THE ORIGINS

At the time of the original cataclysm 300 years ago, the Atlantean, now home to the Path of Dominance, used to be a state-of-the-art battleship in the world's most powerful military organization. During the cataclysm, military and civilian vessels played a very important role in evacuating the doomed cities and searching for new lands overseas. The Atlantean was the most important ship of this fleet — packed with supplies, food and a prototype water purification system, its mission was to transport the greatest minds of humanity to relative safety.

After losing contact with the rest of the fleet and the command center due to raging sea storms, Captain Ryland Wolfe and the ship's officers quickly realized that the shores were practically uninhabitable. The only way to survive was in the open sea, the last place in reach where the air remained mostly breathable and the incoming sunshine wasn't blocked by dust clouds



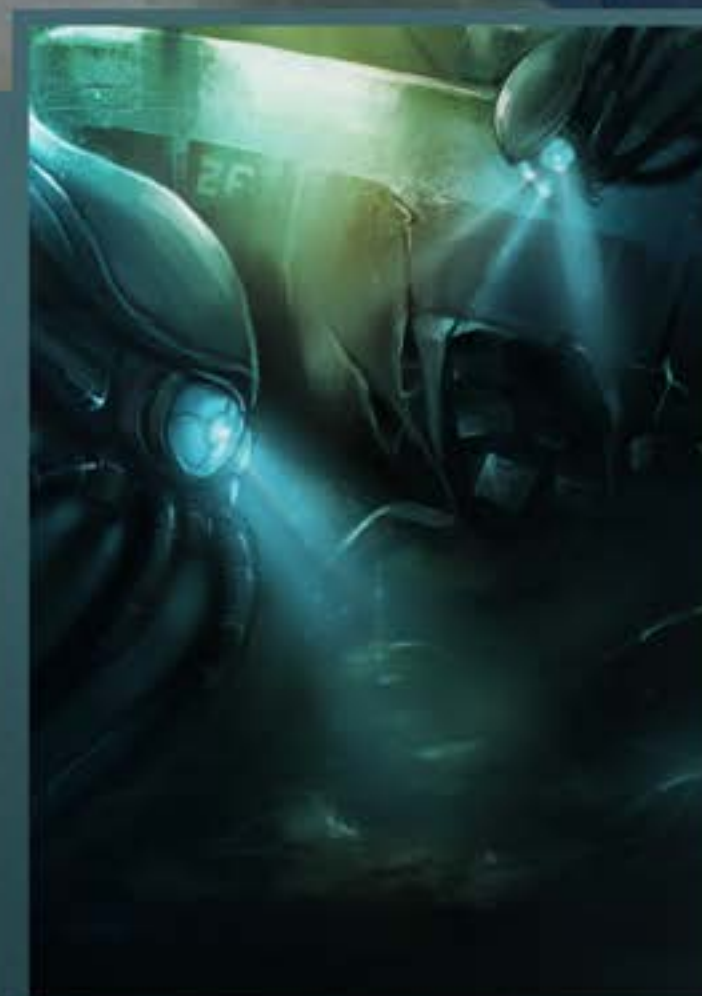
— this was very important because the Atlantean was powered by massive solar panels. Fortunately, the ship was equipped with everything needed to survive almost indefinitely without docking. It carried a large number of crew and civilians, with some of humanity's best doctors, engineers and scientists.

Finally, the working prototype of the water cleansing system provided them an endless supply of poor quality, but drinkable water. So Captain Wolfe decided that the Atlantean would be humanity's new cradle.

THE ATLANTEAN

During the following decades, the Atlantean has grown from a simple battleship to a gargantuan floating city that retained some ship-like features. For this constant expansion, the ship's engineers had to use materials salvaged from ruined coastal cities and naval wreckage, giving it a fairly chaotic overall look.

The main hull hosts many sealable docks for smaller vessels (from swift motorboats to large cruisers) and the



Path's Exosuits, the Octopods. A large part of the ship's deck is covered with solar panels to cater for its massive energy needs, but some of the recently constructed hulls now host nuclear and Neutronium power plants too. The ship is armed with powerful onboard weaponry.

Apart from the hulls hosting the power plants and the crew's habitats, another important part of the Atlantean is the Agricultural Hull, consisting of a gigantic greenhouse where the crew grows various crops, fruit and vegetables, and several huge tanks where various consumable fish are bred.

THE ECHELON

Captain Wolfe was a true soldier, and the principles laid by him form the roots of the Path's culture. One of them is the general hierarchy called the „Echelon“, a system that treats the whole society, even non-military personnel as a military organization, with the current captain of the Wolfe bloodline on top. The ranks in the Echelon (Stratum) and their professions (Ship Engineer, Military Officer, Treasure Hunter, etc.) are passed down



the line of generations, making it very hard to move from classe to class. The payments are independent from the classes, the portions are equally distributed, so the main motivation in one's life is to get promoted in his or her profession. Each promotion is a huge event of great significance, while demotion is a class-wide shame that can never be forgotten. Because of the highly respected ranking system, the law court can bring swift justice using demotion as a form of punishment.

Since the Path of Dominance emerged from a military past, and the Atlantean had originally been a huge floating weapon, every single member of the society is obligated to undergo a military training and the Indoctrination at a very young age. This leads to the fact that the Soldiers' and the Raiders' class are the most respected ones.

RAIDS AND INDOCTRINATION

The seemingly strict and power-oriented Path of Dominance in fact highly cherishes the life of its people. Despite of the continuous development of the Atlantean's built-in water purification system, the ship is still not able to produce fully clean water. This problem results in a slowly decreasing population due to short average lifespan and sterility. To avoid further reduction in their numbers, the Path organizes so called „Raids“ from time to time: with every Raid they hit coastal settlements and tribes of nomads to take supplies and clean water by force, but the main purpose is to take captives. Soldiers never intend to use lethal force during the Raids, they are always equipped with non-lethal weapons. The greatest Raid in the Path's history was that of the Capital itself in 179 PP, and while armed conflict with the Council is a

thing of the past, the event is still recited at times as a tale of heroism and valor.

Hostages captured during the Raids are forced to undergo a process called the Indoctrination and are then placed in the proper class of the Echelon. The Indoctrination is a psychedelic mind-altering session, during which the subjects are injected with the Indoctrination's special serum and exposed to a huge amount of audiovisual impressions — all about accepting the ways of the Path and the meaning of life in the Echelon. The Indoctrination is not only used to integrate the Raids' captives, but also to prevent a potential riot against the strict hierarchy and the class-based system. The ones responsible for the Indoctrination's program are the „Clairvoyants“ — a mysterious class that is not ranked very highly, though many believe that their true power and influence is almost equal to the Officers'.

Another highly regarded class is that of the Treasure Hunters'. With their expert diving skills, physical and mental abilities and the Path's Exosuits, the Octopods at their disposal (designed to travel both on and below surface), the Treasure Hunters' job is to delve into the deep seas and explore the sunken cities and ships — remnants of the Old World — in search for loot, supplies and materials.

Because of their military-based culture and threatening presence, the Path of Dominance is feared by the other three Paths for a reason. Though their actions today are mainly peaceful and they try to keep their distance from the other Paths, every Captain has a secret dream: that one day all of humanity will be part of the perfect system of Echelon.



EXOSUIT MODEL: OCTOPOD



REINFORCED CABIN

Streamlined transporting and piloting cabin for a crew of 4, made of special titanium-steel alloy, designed to withstand extreme water pressure

HYDROSTATIC PROPULSION

Provides the required thrust to travel and maneuver underwater

OXYGEN EXTRACTOR

Produces breathable air in the cabin by extracting oxygen from water

TENTACLE ARMS

Telescoping and prehensile, capable of lifting tons of weight, moving rapidly over any terrain and scaling vertical surfaces

SUPPORTING PLIERS

Extend the efficiency of the Tentacle Arms

SPEED

CONTROL

UTILITY

COMBAT

CAPTAIN WOLFE

— „Discipline, Purpose, Valor“

Since the tragic death of her mother during childbirth, Captain Trenton D. Wolfe was raised by his father. He had never been a particularly strong man, but the loss of his beloved wife devastated him. From that day, his grief made leading the Path a daily struggle for him, and left him caring little about his son, whom he subconsciously blamed for his wife's death. Young Trenton spent most of his time alone on the Atlantean's Bridge, learning the Path's ways from practice.

As Trenton was growing older, he began to realize his father's mistakes and weaknesses in leadership, and, growing up among the battle-hardened crew, he developed an admiration of the Path's noble principles of discipline and valor. Day by day, he became more devoted to fulfilling his destiny — becoming a strong Captain the Atlantean needs, a symbolic leader whom the whole Path obeys without question. A few years later, he took the Captain's oath as a strong, serious man who knew that the only person he could truly rely on is himself.

Captain Wolfe's serious personality, however, is hiding a dark secret. During one of the first week-long Raids he joined in his early years, his team captured a group of nomads, with a beautiful female prisoner among them. As the campaign progressed and the days passed, he began to feel more and more attracted to the prisoner girl, and the feeling was mutual. Away from the eyes of his crewmates, they secretly spent the fifth night together.

According to the standard procedure, the hostages were to be taken to the Atlantean for Indoctrination after the campaign, but during the last night, a drunk Raider decided trying to pay the female hostage an unwanted visit. Infuriated by the act, Wolfe confronted his crew mate, and the argument ended in a knife fight that costed Wolfe an eye — and the Raider his life. There were no witnesses, so he quickly buried the body, then, with a rather irrational split-second decision, he decided to free the girl and escort her to safety.

As the months passed, Wolfe realized that he couldn't help thinking about the girl. He insisted on personally participating in Raids to that area, hoping to find her once again — but when that eventually happened, his

whole world turned upside down. His love was carrying a 2-year old baby girl, and as Wolfe looked at her, there was no question who the father was. The nomad girl despised the thought of living on the Atlantean, but Wolfe couldn't bear the thought of his daughter living in constant danger on the Outback. The decision was very hard, but the couple decided to part ways once and for all, and Wolfe took his daughter to the only place he could safely watch over her — the Atlantean.



TREASURE HUNTER SAMIRA

— „Prepare and Prevail“

Samira came a long way to eventually becoming the leader of the Path of Dominance's Treasure Hunters. She doesn't remember much of her childhood, nor had she known her parents — like most newcomers to the Atlantean at the time, she was supposedly taken to the ship from the mainland during one of the Path of Dominance's raids. Unlike those newcomers, however, she was Indoctrinated as a Treasure Hunter right from the beginning — one of the highest-regarded classes within the Path's all-encompassing social system, the Echelon.

This elite force of amphibious troops is the lifeblood of the Path's military — and economy, for that matter. Not only are they known for their ferocious combat skills, but they are also responsible for conducting the so-called Treasure Hunts during peace time — missions to

derelict pre-Purgation cities, both above and below sea level, in search of Old World resources and technology to support the continuous upgrade of the Atlantean. The Treasure Hunters are the only class trained to pilot the Octopods, the Path's Exosuits, used for both purposes.

Why Samira, an "outsider," had been chosen to be Indoctrinated as a Treasure Hunter remained a mystery for her, but the envy and loathing this invoked in her fellow trainees had only driven her to work twice as hard. Soon, her exceptional agility, endurance and wits became apparent to everyone. Her orientation skills are borderline supernatural: she somehow feels where to look for the next piece of salvageable material, or the shortest route out of a tight situation. Slowly, the envy of the fellow Treasure Hunters turned into admiration, which was solidified by her saving a fellow trainee from a shark attack — her keepsake necklace is a testament to the encounter. It wasn't long until she took over the leadership of the Treasure Hunters' class, at an exceptionally young age.

During her countless Treasure Hunt missions, she developed a passionate interest towards the way of life in the Old Word. On top of the obligatory loot quota the Treasure Hunters contribute to the Atlantean's construction, Samira developed a habit of taking one personal item with her from each mission. Each item tells a tale, as she likes to say, and her cabin is packed to the brim with tales.

As the commander of the Treasure Hunters, Samira reports directly to Captain Wolfe and is widely considered to be second in command on the Atlantean. Though she had never really found out the truth about her parents and her "fortunate" Indoctrination, her first personal meeting with the Captain left her with a haunting suspicion — as his facial features somehow looked very familiar...



PATH OF PROGRESS

🚩 CAPITAL: **THE APEX OF HUMANITY**

👑 LEADERS: **LIBRARIAN CORNELLA**
PATRON VALERIAN

🦾 EXOSUIT MODEL: **GARGOYLE**

BACKGROUND

THE APEX

If the Apex of Humanity, the sprawling, hovering capital of the Path of Progress had to be described with one phrase, it would be „Venice of the Skies“. The city's architects carefully preserved the Byzantine, Baroque, Gothic and Renaissance styles of the original, now submerged Venice. However, at every corner, classic architecture is entwined with state-of-the-art technology, showcasing that the Path of Progress is second to none in scientific advancement.

There are no roads in the Apex — the city's gigantic hovering platforms and buildings are connected by the Cloudways, a high-speed transport network. Sky Gondolas — the most basic form of transportation — are a common sight on the Cloudways, as are citizens with various PTDs (Personal Transportation Devices). Depending on the owner's budget and of course the latest trends within society, PTDs come in all shapes and sizes, from cheap hoverboards to multi-person Cloud Speeders. Much rarer sight are the Gargoyles, the majestic, mighty Exosuits of



the Path of Progress, capable of prolonged periods of flight without Cloudway support.

Thanks to their advanced technology, most manufacturing and agricultural processes in the Apex are fully automatized, and the majority of the citizens serve the Path as intellectuals — either in the vast city administration, or as scientists, artists and free thinkers. The Path of Progress preserved humanity's thirst for culture: the Apex is home of a new renaissance in arts, poetry and film, with many galleries, cafés, museums and theaters to keep the population entertained.

The incredible hovering platforms supporting the city were built as high in the skies as it was humanly possible. The outer layer of the troposphere was far enough from the contamination, but the scarcity of oxygen presented a new problem. The first of many impressive achievements of the Path's engineers was a gigantic protective dome around the platforms, functioning much like a greenhouse and serving an essential part in keeping the temperature, humidity and oxygen on safe levels.



Despite of all this, the Path of Progress's technology is everything but environmentally friendly — to them, Earth is just an uninhabitable, dead world that's beyond salvation, so they treat it accordingly. All the waste and sewage of the Apex is simply released from the platforms, so the surface underneath it is a horrible, contaminated wasteland avoided by all but the most reckless surface-dwellers. From afar, the city is a truly marvelous sight, with beautiful cascades descending from majestic floating platforms — until one realizes that the cascades are actually the city's raw sewage.

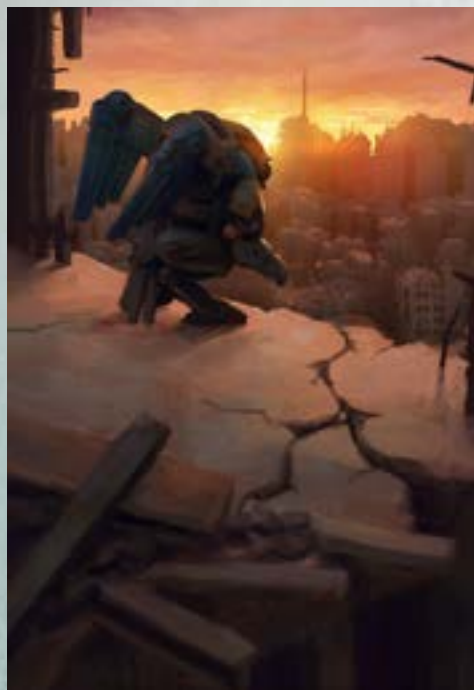
THE SOCIETY

From the inside, however, the Apex looks almost unnaturally clean and organized — the Path of Progress is desperately trying to uphold the looks of a modern, civilized society. The fashion taste of the citizenry is rather sophisticated, even poorer inhabitants dress elegantly and use various perfumes. The fashion style, just like the city itself, is a seamless mix of modern and renaissance, with plenty of room for expressing individual tastes. This is

particularly important, because citizens of the Apex look very much alike — all of them are tall, thin and muscular, with pale, pearly skin.

It had not always been like this. In the early days, the Path of Progress had the fewest followers, and due to their vanity and pride, mixing with other Paths was hardly an option. Inbreeding was a common thing in the old times, resulting in many misshapen and handicapped offspring, which was something the Path of Progress was too vain to accept. In the beginning, cheap plastic surgery was a half-solution, until a monumental breakthrough in genetic engineering. By dabbling into the DNA chain right after inception (a now-obligatory process), a special class of doctors called Shapers were able to “hand-craft” the perfect-looking child. With this technology at their disposal, followers of the Path of Progress have developed a strong sense of superiority — they consider themselves to be the next step in human evolution, and while they are careful to always act polite and tolerant in their diplomatic endeavors, in reality they deeply despise the other, “lesser” Paths. Consequently, reproduction with followers of the other Paths is strictly forbidden — such an act means immediate expulsion from the Path and the Apex.

Sexuality is far from being a taboo topic within the Apex's society. Brothels are a common sight in the city, catering to all sorts of sexual tastes, for both men and women. Courtesans are respected members of the society, and visiting them is widely accepted, even in relationships.



POLITICS OF THE PATH

The Path of Progress has a very strong sense of fellowship. In an alternative economic model, Credits are distributed to each citizen regularly and individually, based on his or her contribution to the Path's progress in the fields of technology, culture and growth.

These individual performances, as well as the amount of Credits awarded, are judged by the Patrons' Court, the political elite of the Path of Progress' society. At the age of 14, each citizen gets a Patron assigned to him or her during a ceremony called the Exaltation — this Patron will be guiding and judging the protégée through his or her entire life. Only the most notable citizens with the purest lineage can become Patrons. During their initiation, Patrons receive a special, mysterious genetic treatment developed by the Shapers that prolong their life to 2-3 times of that the average Apex citizen.

While in theory the richest and most influential members of the Path of Progress' society are those who did the most for the community, in reality true power is held entirely by the Patron's Court. Through patronage, they know everything about the citizens, and while the strong sense of fellowship keeps the Path on the track of progress, the Patrons' Court itself is riddled with corruption and power struggles. There are also many whispered rumors about the Patrons among the society, from sexual depravities to various “side effects” of an unnaturally long life...

In the center of the Apex stands the Library — the city's most notable building, a cornerstone of the Path of Progress. It is a special, state-of-the-art knowledge center, where citizens can study using a groundbreaking meditational technology. With the help of a special substance and machinery, they enter a state of heightened awareness, where they are able to absorb knowledge at an incredible pace. On top of theoretic knowledge, this method is just as useful for simulating practical applications. The study programs are created and maintained by the Librarians, who use them to slowly shape society's way of thinking. Their influence is subtle, but rivals that of even the Patrons'.

Gargoyle pilots appointed by the Patrons are also trained in the Library with a special program. This training can be finished by practically anyone in days, but since Gargoyle pilots are in frequent contact with the outside world, they are under specific surveillance by the Patrons. It's also a dangerous assignment, and few citizens are willing to give up the comfort of Apex to become Gargoyle pilots.

Knowledge and learning is a basic human right of all citizens of the Apex, and they are free to choose their area of specialization as long as it serves the purpose of the Path — but in reality, these choices are very strongly influenced by the Patrons and the Librarians.

EXOSUIT MODEL: GARGOYLE



STEERING WINGS

Designed for additional airborne maneuverability

GILDED COCKPIT

The pilot is protected by the light and durable carbon-fiber torso

TURBOJET ENGINE

Mixes high-density fuel with compressed air to produce kinetic energy

ROBOTIC ARMS

Practical grabbing tool capable of transforming into a customized weapon

LANDING SUPPORT

Mechanical shock dampeners integrated into the legs to stabilize landing and walking on surface

SPEED

CONTROL

UTILITY

COMBAT

LIBRARIAN CORNELLA

— „Supremacy through Intellect“

As a child, Cornella had always been treated by her parents as she was special — better than the others. At first, this seemed to have a very good influence on the little girl's personality, but the older she got, the more of a burden it eventually became. As she desperately tried to fit to the picture her parents had painted of her, she slowly became obsessed with acquiring knowledge — it was the only thing that made her feel satisfied. She spent all her time studying, researching and experimenting, just to live up to the expectations she had for herself. As she never really cared about social life or the pleasures Apex had to offer, she slowly lost the ability to bond with others.

However, this was not something she felt to be a problem, as for her, relationships were only a waste of time. She only respected those who worshipped science and knowledge like herself, especially those who she found more intelligent than her, as she desperately wanted to overcome them.

When she was taken under her Patron's wings, Cornella decided to become a member of the Patron's Court herself. She knew she had the intellect needed to fit the role, but she had to make her way through the right people. She expanded her knowledge in psychology, sociology and human behavior. She understood how feelings work through science, and how to influence anybody by affecting their emotions. Her plan was to approach people of importance in a scientific way, earning their trust through giving them what they want, even if it involves faking romantic feelings.

Each well-calculated step of hers eventually led to her securing a place in the Patron's Court. Once she had the most influential people in her hand, she was appointed Chief Executive Librarian at the Library of Apex. With this, she finally achieved her ultimate goal: obtaining unlimited access to all the knowledge in the Path of Progress' possession.

Today, she's leading all the major projects in research and development, and she is both feared and admired for her stone-cold ambition. She works closely with Patron Valerian, especially on the technological projects, involving the improvements of the Gargoyle type Exosuit Models.

PATRON VALERIAN

— „Inventing Tomorrow“

Valerian became an orphan at a very young age. He never knew his father, and was raised by his mother, who worked as a Librarian and died in a PTD crash caused by a malfunction in her vessel. Before they had the chance to take him to an orphanage, he escaped the authorities and chose to live in the common areas of the Apex, and the endless system of the Cloudways. He made a promise to her mother's memory that one day he would become someone she could be proud of.

With nothing better to do, he spent his days either acquiring as much knowledge as he could in the Library (where he basically grew up, since her mother spent most of her time working) or running from the authorities. This made him memorize the whole transporting system and the setting of Apex, and he developed an athletic physique and a very quick and practical way of thinking.

His ambition to rise to the top of the society rarely let him sleep. By night, he developed a habit of sneaking into the Library's Gargoyle simulation section and hacking into the system. By the time he reached 20, he was one of the best pilots in Apex with an outstanding knowledge of how the Gargoyles work. He used this expertise to develop a special micro-drone that could attach itself to unmanned Gargoyles, and allowed Valerian to remote-control them. This quickly made him a wanted man in the Apex. He was always careful, never leaving a trace behind, but one day he made a mistake and that changed his life forever.

As he was testing his new version of the remote piloting technology, he didn't notice that the Gargoyle he was targeting is just about to be powered up — by none else than Patron Lazaro, whose hobby of Gargoyle piloting was well known. Lazaro managed to override and trace back Valerian's infiltration attempt, but instead of having him taken into custody, he saw the great potential in the cunning and ambitious young boy, and took him under his patronage.

Under Lazaro's guidance, Valerian was trained in the classical programs of the Patrons, and by the age of 40, he became a Patron himself. With the whole array of classical Patron teachings coupled with his cunning and street wisdom, he was the forerunner of a new generation in the Apex's aristocracy. In politics, he was a lot more open towards the Capital and the other Paths than his predecessors, and with a sense of righteousness, he was also more concerned with the Apex's social inequalities. That said, he still fully believes in the superiority of the Path of Progress — and nothing proves this better than the army of remote-controlled Gargoyles under his command.





PATH OF SALVATION

🚩 CAPITAL: **THE PURGATORY**

👑 LEADERS: **HIGH SUNWALKER AMENA**
SHEPHERD CARATACUS

👤 EXOSUIT MODEL: **PILGRIM**

BACKGROUND

THE BEGINNING

Much like the Path of Dominance, the history of the Path of Salvation began long before the Exodus. In fact, the Purgatory, their subterranean home, used to be a massive underground shelter protecting a large group of survivors after the Day of Purgation. These survivors, mostly due to the pressure of Drokhaton, their charismatic self-proclaimed leader, refused to return to the surface, even after Sun's Breach. Drokhaton claimed that the Day of Purgation was in fact God's vengeance upon humanity, and it's only them, the faithful, who were spared. Over the years of living underground, his influence kept growing, and as the people were expanding the shelter using materials salvaged from the surface. Venturing outside was a privilege only to Drokhaton and his inner circle, so the people's idea of the surface world and life slowly faded away, and the admiration of Drokhaton and his religious teaching took its place.

THE PURGATORY

Today, the Purgatory, the breathtaking underground realm of the Path of Salvation, is a vast network of halls, tunnels and caverns, sprawling miles deep beneath the surface. The huge subterranean halls are dimly lit with sunlight, channeled in through grooves hollowed in the rocks. These grooves are filled with diamonds and other kinds of gems — perfect materials for transmitting light, without any financial value in the new world.



The subterranean city gives the mixed impression of a medieval settlement equipped with modern technology. Power and hot water are supplied by geothermal plants deep below the cityscape, circulated through Purgatory in a massive pipeline network.

Living underground for generations had made the denizens of Purgatory adapt to the harsh circumstances — not only mentally, but physically as well. They are pale, short in stature but incredibly strong and tough. Over the decades, their sight gradually weakened in the dimly lit environment, but their hearing and smelling became much better than that of the surface dwellers. Most of their citizens do not have much concern about their looks — they dress in a simple and functional way, much like the monks of the Old World.

THE DROKHATON DYNASTY

The Path of Salvation is an absolute theocracy. Their leader, the Shepherd, is never chosen nor elected as democracy is unknown to them. The next Shepherd is always a descendant of the previous one in the

Drokhaton Dynasty, which not only retained its power through the decades, but also laid the foundations of the Path's religion. Drokhaton's bloodline is believed to have a direct connection with God, who speaks to and guides the people through them. Religion is entwined with every aspect of the people's lives, and the whole society is based on it. The people's faith in their God and their leader is unshakeable, because they do not only believe, they know — they see it with their own eyes...

THE DAY OF MIRACLES

Every half year in the surface world is one cycle underground. At the end of each cycle, people of the Path gather in the Great Hall of Purgatory for the most important religious celebration in their culture: the Day of Miracles. On this day, the Shepherd, dressed up in ceremonial clothing, stands in front of the people — and performs miracle after miracle. Seemingly out of thin air, he conjures water, food and resources for the awestruck crowd, declaring them God's gifts. The Day of Miracles usually ends with a great feast and celebration — and the Shepherd's unquestionable authority as God's chosen for the upcoming cycle.



The truth behind the Day of Miracles is the Drokhaton Dynasty's most carefully preserved secret. In the early days of Purgatory's construction, a strange substance was discovered during an excavation. Drokhaton immediately confiscated the samples, and his inner circle started examining it. That substance is known as Neutronium today, and while its incredible power is a recent revelation for the other three Paths, the leadership of the Path of Salvation has in fact known and used it for decades — to consolidate their power. The Day of Miracles is actually a carefully prepared show-off of Neutronium's capabilities, and "God's Gifts" are in fact the Path's own resources warped in from the future.

THE SOCIETY

Naturally, few among the Path's society are aware of this truth. The average citizens of Purgatory live their lives in a blissful ignorance: they are certain that they are walking God's path, guided by their benevolent Shepherd, and since they never set foot on the surface, the only life they know is that in the Purgatory. They live, dress and eat simply: the food grown in the Path's greenhouse-like facilities has everything to maintain their mental and physical health, but it is nearly tasteless — for the members of the Path, eating is just a mean to fuel their body rather than a source of enjoyment.

Since they deny the existence and the general knowledge of the Old World, they learn only what the Path's Clergy teaches — there are no books, notes or memos from the time before the Purgation. The Clergy is a respected social class, with knowledge unimaginable for the common citizen. Their stories and lectures play a very important role in shaping the society.

Despite of their conviction and peculiar ways, the Path of Salvation cannot live in complete isolation. Connecting with other Paths, and venturing to the Outback is often necessary, and not only for resource gathering and diplomatic reasons. The Path of Salvation firmly believes that the other Paths need to be introduced to God's ways, so converting others to the true faith is also a very important goal of these expeditions.

THE SUNWALKERS

Needless to say, not everyone is allowed to leave to the surface — the expeditions can only be undertaken by the Order of the Sunwalkers, a select group of the most loyal and faithful followers of the Path. Only the Sunwalkers are trained to pilot the Pilgrims, the Path of Salvation's massive Exosuits. The High Sunwalker is also a member of the Drokhaton Dynasty — he or she is chosen from the Shepherd's siblings, and thus holds the second most powerful position in the Path's society.

Those admitted into the Order must take the Oath of Silence, vowing never to speak of what they hear or come across while doing missions in the upper world. The Sunwalkers are specifically trained in conveying their unshakeable faith to the masses — their conversion missions are often successful, and they return to Purgatory with new followers by offering comfort, safety — and salvation. The most successful conversion mission was in fact the Exodus itself, when the Sunwalkers (called Redeemers by outsiders at the time), lured hundreds of insecure Capital citizens to Purgatory, hopeful for a better life.

What the newly converted outsiders don't know is that in order to join the Path of Salvation's society, they have to take part in an initiation process, where they have to drink a potion made of a special kind of fungus growing

in the tunnels. This procedure strips them from their memories of the previous life — only then can they truly begin to walk God's Path.

Thanks to their advanced knowledge of Neutronium and its powers, the Day of Reminiscence, and the message about the coming impact did not come as a surprise for the Path of Salvation. While the other Paths saw the beginning of a new, sinister era, the witnessing Sunwalkers only smiled — they were seeing God's will manifesting.

The Path of Salvation is not afraid of the impact. They know, with an unshakeable certainty, that they will be spared as God's wrath sweeps away the heathens. And when that time comes, they will be ready to start anew, leading all survivors to the one true Path of Salvation.

EXOSUIT MODEL: PILGRIM



INFRARED ORIENTATION DEVICE

The inner holographic operating system is supported by infrared vision and external laser lights

RESPIRATION SYSTEM

Provides breathable fresh air using a high-tech oxygen filter

HARDENED TITANIUM DRILL

The drill-bit was developed to break through every known kind of geological material

DIGGING CLAW

A perfect tool for digging, grabbing and smashing

ADVANCED STABILIZERS

Functionality is focused more on power and stability than on speed and agility

SPEED

CONTROL

UTILITY

COMBAT

HIGH SUNWALKER AMENA

— „Faith Echoes in Eternity“

No one in the Path of Salvation knows the surface world and its inhabitants better than Amena, the cunning, charismatic leader of the Order of the Sunwalkers. As the elder twin sister and right hand of the Path's Shepherd, Caratacus, it is Amena's task to lead the Sunwalkers on expeditions and diplomatic missions to the surface. While the people of the Capital are generally suspicious (and sometimes hostile) to the dwellers of Purgatory, Amena's status is different: she is well-recognized and respected in the city for her refined diplomatic skills.

As a member of the World Council, it is only thanks to her efforts that the Path of Salvation is eligible for the same water quotas as the other Paths, and that their reputation in the Capital is slowly but surely growing since the Exodus.

Converting the "heathens" to the one true Path is one of the main tasks of the Sunwalkers, but Amena no longer takes part in the conversions personally. It's not because of the lack of faith, but rather a more enlightened way of thinking: during her years on the surface, she developed a strange sense of empathy towards its inhabitants, and believes that conversion may not be the only possible way to a common future. Of course, she is wise enough to keep these views to herself within the walls of Purgatory...

Apart from her diplomatic skills, she is one of the Path's most gifted engineers. She constantly (and sometimes recklessly) tinkers with and perfects the Pilgrims, the

Path's Exosuits, even since the malfunction of a prototype Digging Claw cost her an arm. Her mechanical arm replacement is not only a functional tool, but also a powerful symbol of the Drokathon dynasty, similarly to Caratacus' staff.

While Amena's influence and power is not as obvious as that of the Shepherd's, the Path of Salvation may not even know how much it owes to the High Sunwalker and her tireless work.



SHEPHERD CARATACUS

— „Faith is Timeless“

As the current Shepherd of the Path of Salvation, Caratacus Drokathon leads his people with unwavering commitment. Beside preserving the tradition of the Day of Miracles and the Dynasty's strong relation to God, he always acts righteously and justly and constantly teaches his people to do the same. He has a strong sense of responsibility for the well-being and the prosperity of Purgatory and its citizens.

Caratacus thinks of Neutronium as God's greatest gift. According to popular belief, the precious material can only be used to travel back to the past, but Caratacus had plenty of time and willingness to experiment with time travel, and secretly developed a forward-looping technique that can open the Rift to an infinite number of potential futures.

And he did not stop there: he was convinced that for the sake of his people, it is his responsibility to peek into these futures and see what they may hold for the Path of Salvation. While some of these futures are bright and hopeful, others hold unspeakable truths that Caratacus is hesitant to speak of, and his spirit breaks a little every time he comes back. Like his sister, Caratacus also has his own scars, though they are much less apparent. Nonetheless, the responsibility he feels for his people and their future makes him strong enough to keep on going.

Caratacus is the twin brother of Amena, being five minutes younger than her. They had always been close, right from the beginning. Their spiritual bond is so strong that they always sense the other's emotions and feelings, even when they are far away. When Amena lost his right arm, Caratacus was somewhere else in the time stream, but he could still feel the pain and the shock Amena experienced.

Since the accident, every now and then Caratacus' right arm still aches when Amena feels phantom pain. Every time this happens, it hurts him so much that he can't even move his arm. In order to bear through these periods, he redesigned his staff, a symbol of the mighty Drokathon Dynasty, into a working tool that's temporarily capable of replacing the functions of a second arm.

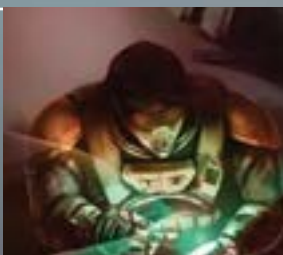
THE CHRONOBOT

„With the ability of travelling through time becoming reality, there can be an infinite number of possible past and future timelines. If a time line is changed at some point, an alternate future sets off, creating a whole new series of events with different outcomes. Our present turned out to be the past of a terrible alternate future, and the entity that calls itself „the Chronobot“ is here to change this point in time once again, bringing a new line of an alternate future to life — without us.

The message coming through the Time Rift was clear: in this alternative future, our society is rushing towards its doom due to the all out war between the Paths. Those few who realized that the situation is hopeless designed and sent back the Chronobot in time — an artificial intellect created with the most advanced technology known. Its mission was to travel back to our time and prevent the war-torn future from happening, by any means necessary.

The people working on the Chronobot had the best intentions, of that I have no doubt. What they never realized is that according to the Chronobot's twisted logic, the root cause of the destruction

*Data Archive No. KA 43.238
Memoirs of Dorian Nyseth,
Lead Scientist of the Capital
Entry #127*



was humanity itself. It doesn't have programmed feelings nor loyalty towards humans — only the task matters, and the method is clear and simple: overcoming the Paths and the Capital itself, and taking over the leadership of humanity — at the cost of as many human lives as needed. This is how we became the targets of its deadly crusade.

As of today, we haven't yet found a way to defeat this malfunctioning machine of death. Each Path has their own group of scientists and engineers who are constantly observing the Chronobot's actions and working on the ultimate solution to stop it, while others are joining forces and fighting it somewhere on the Outback. In the meantime, the Chronobot is constantly growing in size and apparently in intellect and efficiency as well. It treats humans, resources and even buildings as nothing more than fodder to its unnatural growth. But the worst thing is, it can even overtake and control the unmanned Exosuits of any kind — even the mighty Guardians.

If we fail to find a way to stop this terrible menace as soon as possible, the Impact might no longer be our primary concern — as we may very well be dead by that time...”



THE GUARDIANS OF THE CAPITAL

„Our life in the Capital had always been relatively easy and peaceful — until the fateful Day of Reminiscence. The day that changed everything. Life in our magnificent city is different since. We are living on strict rations, working day and night to reinforce the city under the constant surveillance of the Council. Some decide to face the dangers of the Outback and emigrate from the city, trying to escape the impending doom. I cannot blame them, but like most others, I'm staying. This is my home, and I'll do everything in my power to protect it.

Today, at long last, it seems like we received help from where we least expected — our own future. The Time Rift opened up once again, and an army of gigantic, self-propelled Exosuits slowly marched through it. The Guardians, as it turned out, were the parting gift of the dying World Council of an alternative future, where the impact brought fatal catastrophe. They left behind their dying world — to help us save ours.

We don't yet know how they work, but it's already obvious that they are more effective than the Paths' own Exosuits. The future technology that built them is more advanced than ours, and the preset program that controls them has every important detail of the impact and its consequences, which is an unbelievable advantage against the impending disaster. With the Paths' aid, and the Guardians on our side, we might just stand a chance against fate!”

*Data Archive No. KA 32.533
Memoirs of Alden Wyke,
Head Engineer of the Capital
Entry #94*





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