

FAR SHORE

PLANETARY SLUPPLIMENT

FOR STARCLUSTER V 2.0



FAR SHORE

DANIEL POTTER

EDITING: AMANDA POTTER, CLASH BOWELY

ART: CHRIS DOZIER, CLASH BOWELY

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SYSTEM OVER VIEW

An utterly uninhabitable system. It only has two orbiting bodies: one is a barren rock the other is swarming with humans.

- Nonak, Etvar ship captain (translated)

Shore is healthy yellow star orbited by one planet. It teems with life, while its moon is merely a very large speck of intrastellar dust that got snared by Far Shore's gravity. There is very little in the way of extra planetary objects such as asteroids or dust. Scientists are clueless as to how a planet as diverse as Far Shore formed in such a barren system.

WAVELET

Wavelet is a very large rock mostly composed of nickel and iron. It has no water and no atmosphere to speak of. Numerous mining operations have been setup there and every single one has failed for one reason or another. Miners from failed expeditions refuse to return and cite NDAs with the mining companies that funded the expeditions.

The location of the moon has been mentioned in two Etvar dig sites to date and several SaVaHuTa universities are planning to conduct archeological surveys.

SURFLET

-Wavelets orbital-

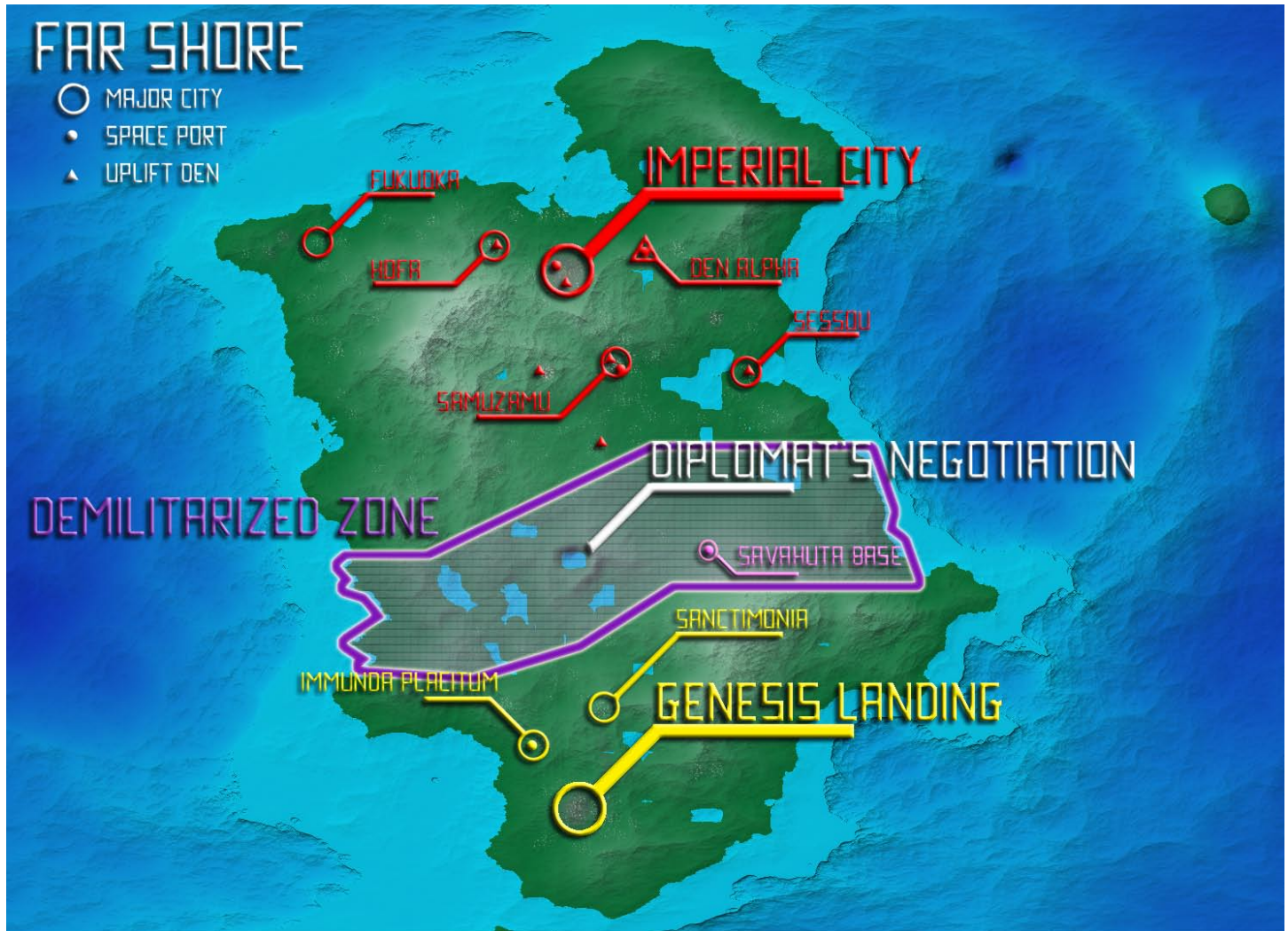
The Shore system is on a major trade route, lying between Iris and the Tumentamenata homeworld. However, with Far Shore's history of xenophobia and the hostile environment of Wavelet, there was a need for a servicing center in the system. To meet this need Surflet was constructed as a joint effort between the SaVaHuTa and the Tumentamenata. To prevent the natives of Far Shore from objecting to the station, the active plasteel camouflages the orbital when its orbit brings it in view of Far Shore.

Since every component needed to be jumped into the system, Surflet has very few closed structures. It appears to be a skeleton of a station rather than a functional space dock. Active plasteel muscles allow the docks to accommodate any vessel. The station functions as an interstellar rest stop and fuel station. It's officially SaVaHuTa but there are no customs officers or inspections. It operates on a strict don't ask, don't tell policy, and just helps people get wherever they are going.

A central hub contains the main concourse and provides a home for about 500 permanent

residents. All residents are station employees and families are discouraged. Anyone can join the crew if they have a useful skill and there is a vacancy. The crew is a tight knit community of misfits and oddballs. If you work hard and don't cause trouble, nobody asks questions.

The opening of Far Shore to interstellar trade originally caused some concern in the orbital. However, it has been open for twenty years now and Surflet is still the only game in town for orbital service.



FAR SHORE

Far Shore's similarity to Earth in terms of climate and atmosphere is uncanny. Even the native life is mostly edible to humans. With blue oceans covering 75% of the surface, there is only one land mass that is large enough to be called a continent.

STATISTICS

Population: 2 Billion

NeoJapanese: 1.75 Billion

Votum: 250 million

Cougar Uplifts: 3 million

Tiger Uplifts: 1 million

Climate: Tropical

Day Length: 26 hours

Gravity: 1.0 G

Atmosphere: Normal

Affiliation: SaVaHuTa (unofficial)

Status: Protected

Tech Level: 9

Government: Splintered

NeoJapanese: Dictatorship

Votum: Theocracy

Spaceport: B class

This large, kidney shaped territory runs from pole to pole and contains about 90% of the worlds land mass. The rest is tied up in volcanic islands that dot the globe. These islands have sandy beaches that give the system its name.

The climate is generally moister than Old Earth's, and the mainland is frequently ravaged by severe weather such as hurricanes. The native life on land is almost entirely insect-like and the largest animals are about the size of house cats. The colonists introduced many species from Earth that are now driving the larger native life from the cooler areas of the planet. SaVaHuTa is attempting to get both governments to implement conservation programs, but has made little progress.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

Imperial City: This sprawling city is the heart of the NeoJapanese Empire. It contains the Imperial Palace, the largest industrial district on the planet and is home for nearly 8 million humans with a growing uplift minority.

Den Alpha: The birth place of the Uplifts and the only city that is exclusively populated by them. It is divided into two sections, New and Old. The Old section is mostly deserted, while the New teems with activity. It is home to over a million Uplifts.

Hofa: The premiere tourist destination on Far Shore, thanks to the planet's famous beaches.

Fukuoka: The bread basket of NeoJapan.

Samuzamu: Formerly a huge military base, it has been converted into a massive ghetto for NeoJapanese undesirables. It is one of the most dangerous places on Far Shore.

Sessou: If a weapon wasn't manufactured in the Imperial City then it was made here. Now its massive factories are dormant and decaying.

Diplomats negotiation: The enormous crater left by The Diplomat's matter/anti-matter bomb has since filled with water, becoming a huge irradiated lake.

Immunda Placitum: The only place foreigners are allowed to land and conduct trade in the Votum nation is within this city's foreign quarter. Most of the city's citizenry are somehow involved with the trade that goes on in the foreign quarter.

Sanctimonia- This city is the industrial capital of the Votum nation. This is where seventy five percent of Votum drones are manufactured.

Genesis Landing- The exact site where the first shuttle from the Votum colony ship touched the planet is where the Holy Assembly of Deacons was built. All the information in the Votum nation's vast network flows through this city eventually, and is archived and stored here.

HUMANITY'S HISTORY ON FAR SHORE

Its an old story. Two cultures war, one culture creates an ultimate weapon, weapon blows up in everybodys face.

-Xie Di, SaVaHuTa consultant on Far Shore affairs

If one thing came from the destruction of Earth, it is the knowledge that humanity does not handle apocalypse well. In times of stress, people will cling to whomever says they will save them, even if these charismatic individuals say they were sent from the heavens and are the divine rulers of the human race. Even more astonishing is that, in the last days several of these fanatic cults of personality succeeded in acquiring a colony ship.

In previous times, these fanatic cultures tended to die out after the death of their central figure, but with the aid of cloning techniques, an AI created to stabilize the culture, and a couple hundred years of isolation from the rest of humanity you have cultural conditioning that is nigh impossible to shake off.

Within the culture, life is peaceful and ordered. People have their own lot in life and they must be content with a divine will that is greater than they. They live life according the tenets of their society; it is the right way to live. Those who do not agree with the tenets of the society are quickly marginalized and branded as deviant.

Far Shore has the dubious honor of being settled by two cultures born in the anarchy of Earth's final days. Their ships arrived in the system within days of each other in the year 3721. Both claimed the planet for themselves, citing it as the promised land of their holy scriptures. Very few words were exchanged as both ships raced towards the planet but several jury-rigged weapons were fired. Each declared the other to be the divine enemy that the scriptures had foretold.

The ships were the Emperor's Son and Genesis.

Emperor's Son settled in the North and Genesis in the South.

The people of Genesis called their nation Votum (Promised to God). They lived their life according to their scriptures, using remote telepresence drones to do any jobs they considered unclean such as sewage treatment. As the years passed the capabilities of the drones grew and within seventy years they did most manual labor. By the year

3820 the drones did nearly everything, allowing the entire population to live in hermetically sealed apartments.

Soon after planetfall, the Emperor's Son's leader declared his own cloned son the Japanese Emperor reborn, and named the planet NeoJapan. He charged his people with creating a nation worthy of a divine emperor, and the people fell to their task with eagerness. A nation's strongest measure is its people, their leader declared, and he implemented programs to reward families that produced the most children. While not nearly as technologically advanced as the people of Votum, their population grew nearly five times as fast with the average married woman having eight children over the course of her life.

Both governments monitored the other closely through the orbiting remains of their colony ships. When the Votum saw how fast that the NeoJapanese were expanding they began to launch orbital strikes from Genesis in 3803 AD, starting a war that would last for three centuries. The NeoJapanese had not expected a strike so soon and could not counterattack. Their only recourse was to ram the remains of their own orbital, Emperor's Son, into Genesis, sending both orbitals plummeting from the sky. They crashed into the ocean, creating a tidal wave that heavily damaged both settlements.

Each side swore revenge, but the nations' distance from each other prevented immediate retaliation. They contented themselves with rebuilding and preaching future revenge. The thick jungle in the center of the continent insured that a full scale war would require a massive buildup that neither civilization had the spare resources for, yet.

THE FIRST JIHAD

The discovery of a large deposit of uranium in the middle of the jungle changed everything. Until that point the only uranium known on the planet was in the colony ships, now buried in the depths of the ocean.

Neither side could afford to let the other get the uranium. In 3856 AD, proclamations went out. It wasn't just a war, it was a Jihad. Both sides declared the annihilation of the other side as their goal and the masses cheered.

The Votum robots did not handle the jungle very well and the NeoJapanese got enough of a foothold to get some uranium. The Votum then broke their own social taboos and outfitted human volunteers with power armor and heavy weaponry. While Neo-Japanese infantry still outnumbered their enemies, they were pushed back, as the new troop type gave the Votum the flexibility they needed to drive the NeoJapanese out of the mining area.

The bloody exchange of territory continued for nearly ten years. One side could only

hold a functional mine for about a week until being overrun or bombed into oblivion. However each time they managed to extract more uranium ore. Eventually both sides refined enough to make several bombs.

They were used. Not all of them hit, but both sides lost thousands of people to nuclear detonations and radiation poisoning. The opponents swore to fight on.

Then The Diplomat appeared, rising out of the oceans like a huge silver whale. Thinking it was a new weapon, both countries launched missiles, fighters, and anything else they could think of at the alien vessel. Nothing touched it. Missiles were shot down and gunfire bounced off the hull. Persistent fighters were swatted out of the air. For the first time, both countries worked together.

THE DIPLOMAT

Five kilometres long and two kilometres wide, the Diplomat is one of the largest atmospheric crafts on record. It is believed to be left over from the Etvar Empire, but its design is not consistent with known ships from that time period. The Diplomat has not revealed itself since it ended the first war on Far Shore, and no scanning technique has shown any trace of it. It is said that the Diplomat is one of the reasons that the SaVaHuTa was so eager to station troops on Far Shore. The SaVaHuTa peacekeepers possess several ships outfitted for deep ocean descent, which gives credence to the rumours. If they have found evidence of the Diplomat they are not sharing.

Eventually, The Diplomat floated high above the uranium deposit and something fell from its hull into the jungle. Everyone on the continent saw a flash, and the mines were gone. The resulting 50 kilometer wide crater that is still visible from space. Compression waves smashed everything within a magnitude of the crater. The Diplomat then sent a tight beam communication to the rulers of both nations. The public was never told the contents of the tight beams, but common spacer wisdom holds it to be something akin to an elder scolding a child, backed up with a threat to purge both civilizations from the planets ecosystem. Then the Diplomat returned to the sea and the will to war went with it.

For a time.

THE SECOND JIHAD

The NeoJapanese did not adapt to peace well. While the Votum simply retooled their factories, the NeoJapanese had a surging unemployment problem, and a leader with no concept of a civilian economy. The idea of luxury goods was foreign to them. Families with excess cash had spent it to equip and train their family members beyond standard issue, increasing the likelihood that their sons and daughters would return from the front. With this need removed families saved and hoarded their currency, slowing the economy down to a crawl. A serious depression hit.

A new war was initiated indirectly when the Supreme Ruler triggered the Great Expansion. Most of the NeoJapanese clustered in centers of high population density. This led to a vulnerability to weapons of mass destruction. To overcome this, the Supreme Ruler declared that only royalty had the right to live above the rest of the animals, declaring no NeoJapanese building could be built over five stories tall. Since many residential buildings were fifty stories high or more, the declaration forced half

a billion people into the countryside. The housing boom sprawled across the continent. Within fifty years new settlements were within spitting distance of the Votum cities.

As expected, the Votum found the situation intolerable and a brutal land war began in 913. The NeoJapanese dominated the battles at first, as the Votum struggled to reactivate and retool their factories. It was so bad that some Votum actually didn't have power armor and had to fight the vastly larger NeoJapanese army in the streets of their own cities.

The tides turned when the Votum started to outfit their telepresence drones with primitive but functional AIs. This allowed a single Votum soldier to control as many as ten drones at a time. On the plains and in the cities, large groups of drones could detect and eliminate a squad of NeoJapanese soldiers before they realized they were being shot at.

The NeoJapanese developed countermeasures and tactics, but by that time they had been driven back into the jungles of the equator. Both sides decreed that those who die in battle go straight to heaven. It was there that the eternal guerilla war began.

In time the combat became more of a very deadly game than an actual war. For reasons never disclosed, neither side used explosives much larger than grenades. Both militaries declared them dishonorable and cruel, but the unspoken reason remained the threat from The Diplomat. The NeoJapanese exalted their soldiers' skill while the Votum concerned themselves with the purity of energy-based weaponry.

In NeoJapan, soldiers were sent into the jungle and told to kill as many of the enemy as they could. If they survived three years, they were sent home to raise children. The Votum soldiers, on the other hand, were mostly volunteers, supplemented by citizens sent to the front lines to atone for past indiscretions. Occasionally, a unit actually broke through the jungle to the other side and committed a couple of atrocities to keep the hatred fresh. This reutilization of war allowed it to become a distant thought to most Votum citizens and a brutal coming of age ceremony to the NeoJapanese.

ENTER THE UPLIFTS

While no one doubted the need for battle, there were those among the NeoJapanese that were tiring of losing two out of every three children to war, especially when the Votum didn't have the decency to fight without their combat drones. One family group that had made its fortune during the Great Expansion began to look into creating shock troops of their own. This family is known as the House of Ren.

With the mass production of androids being out of reach, technologically and cost-wise, the family turned to creating Uplifts. Tigers, the emblem of the NeoJapanese army, were the first project.

The initial deployment of uplifts was twenty years into the Second War. The Neo-Japanese were losing the technological arms race as advancement in Votum armor had drastically increased the durability of Votum troops and drones. Standard issue arms completely ceased to be effective. Big, clumsy weapon systems were required to pierce the armor. Desperate for more troops, the Supreme Ruler issued the Glorious Veteran Mobilization edict recalling everyone under the age of thirty to military service in 968. The House of Ren offered its first 5,000 uplifted troops as stand-ins. The Emperor accepted the offer.

The first battalion of Tiger Uplifts were very aggressive and highly prone to going feral. Each Tiger required two specially trained handlers to keep him or her focused. They were unable to use ranged weapons and tactics usually consisted of charging into the fray snarling and roaring. Despite that, they were highly effective.

The Votum power armor were mobile command centers for drones, made to defend against bullets and energy weapons, not to stop half-ton animals from jumping on them and ripping their arms off. The terror factor also increased their effectiveness, as Votum soldiers were liable to ignore human enemies once an Uplift was spotted.

THE CHEETAHS

The Cougars are actually the third uplifted species on Far Shore. The first infantry replacement species tried were the Cheetahs. These cats were developed shortly after the first deployment of the Tigers but simply could not endure the rigors of soldiering. The species was put down after the second generation.

During the negotiation of the Settlement, the House of Ren and the government erased all evidence of this species from the record.

Some Tigers remember them through stories told by their mother's and war vets occasionally tell of finding primitive spears deep in the jungle, decorated with spots. [Cheetahs have +2 coordination, +3 agility, -6 endurance, +10 bite damage, and Burst of Speed.]

While their numbers were small, the Tigers managed to slow the Votum advance and gave the NeoJapanese time to upgrade and refit infantry weaponry. Human soldiers emulated the uplifts and vibroblades and light swords became standard issue.

The Supreme Ruler excused the House of Ren from military service provided they continue uplift research and production. The Tigers grew increasingly effective with each generation, and showed little sign of discontent. However they remained a shock troop that supplemented, but could not replace, the human infantry squad and support personnel.

The House of Ren grew comfortable with their labs and civilian lifestyle, and began to dream of the day when the Uplifts would do all the fighting. They introduced the Cougar uplift 60 years after the Tigers. Far more intelligent than the Tigers, Cougars were capable of learning to operate as a team without excess conflict within the unit.

Properly armed and outfitted, the new uplifts performed their function with brutal efficiency. The military was so impressed by their discipline and apparent love of battle, that the second generation had their intelligence increased so they could be trained faster. This change cut training time by five years.

Two generations later, the House of Ren introduced the Sponsorship program. Under it, any family could pay the cost of

birthing, training, and equipping an Uplift in lieu of sending one of their own. The Supreme Ruler, approved the program since uplifts could be kept in the field much longer than humans before being retired to the Den to raise cubs.

Within two weeks of introducing the Sponsorship program, the House of Ren had more offers of support than it could possibly fill. Bowing to pressure to increase production the house broke a tradition of not inferring with their creations after they had returned from their ten years of duty. Mandatory breeding programs were implemented. Those that resisted were sent to the Pens.

Both uplift species rebelled in their own way. The Tigers became surly and prone to go rogue in the depth of the jungle. Their handlers' causality rates skyrocketed, as they were not informed when the Enemy's scent was on the wind. The Cougars on the other hand did not allow their situation to effect their combat effectiveness. Instead they plotted among themselves, developing a secret language of claw marks and scents. Many plots were hatched but most were betrayed by one of their own.

The House of Ren knew their production techniques made for rebellious felines, but rejoiced in the way their creations sang their secrets when under the knife. They believed that the feline mind was unable to sacrifice itself for a greater goal. This was true, for the most part. It is very hard for the felines to believe in an organization greater than oneself, but intellect can overcome instinct, and vengeance was a concept that the Uplifts could understand.

The House of Ren also let a very key fact escape them. All the uplifts knew the story of the Diplomat. Additionally, they were reasonably sure that the Imperial Palace contained several nuclear warheads.

The rebellion was not planned - or at least the Uplifts won't admit it was. A massive Votum force had broken through the jungle thanks to a deadly new weapon. Their destination was the Imperial Palace. The palace guard called for reinforcements and the military sent their best troops, the Uplifts, in huge personnel transports. The Uplifts landed, assembled into their squads, and then slaughtered every human who dared resist them, except for the Emperor - the man who claimed he was descended from God - and a SaVaHuTa ambassador.

The Votum, it turned out, were quite amenable to a SaVaHuTa enforced peace over mutual destruction.

The uplifts held the palace city hostage until the SaVaHuTa brokered the settlement. This amounted to a very large payment for the atrocities committed in the name of the breeding programs and full death compensation for every uplift that had died in the war. The uplifts were made full citizens of NeoJapan and were granted sovereign reservations near most major cities.

Today, there are about a million uplifts on Far Shore, making up about 0.5% percent of the sentient population of 2 billion people. The entirety of the jungle is a demilitarized

zone enforced by SaVaHuTa patrols (which are becoming increasingly dominated by uplifted personnel).

Officially Far Shore is a protectorate of the SaVaHuTa, as there is no worldwide government, and therefore has no vote in SaVaHuTa's Han House. The Tagris block has been lobbying both governments to at least begin talks but it has been a futile effort so far.

How Things Change



"Welcome back to the Imperial City, Ren's Justice. Please wait for customs to inspect your cargo before disembarking."

"Thank-you control, the Ren's Justice wishes you good fortune," Yuriko flipped off the comm, "to die suddenly and soon."

The bridge of the Ren's Justice filled with laughter. Yuriko smirked as she pulled her long black hair into a bun. She noted that one member of the crew, Yoritomo Savon, had not laughed, but then again she hadn't really expected him to. She shot him a quick look, but he was quite absorbed in whatever he was doing.

He was unimportant anyway. There were other things to attend to. She motioned to her supercargo, Yuri, "Go select a gift for customs from the hold, nothing too big, aim for a tax break."

"Hai, Captain. I know just the thing!" responded Yuri as she hurried off to

the hold. She returned carrying a bottle of Tagrian whiskey, its active surface glowing with reds and yellows

Yoriko nodded with approval. "Ah very nice! If we're lucky, the inspector is from Adma and he'll forget all about the cargo."

"Captain," Savon's voice echoed over the ship's comm system, "The customs delegation is here and requesting permission to board."

"Give me 60 seconds Savon!" Yoriko called back. She straightened her uniform, dialed her cosmetic implants to a subtle military style and hurried to the main airlock, motioning Yuri to follow. The airlock had just begun to cycle when she reached it, so she only had time to put on her professional smile before it opened.

Her carefully constructed smile dropped from her face when the airlock opened. Standing in the entrance to her ship was not a gangly Gajin but her House's greatest error, a Cougar uplift, his golden eyes fixing her with a cold stare. Yoriko took a step back, momentarily overwhelmed as terrible images from Uplift revolt bubbled through her mind like a bloody cola.

The Cougar's ears, the back of which had been dyed a deep purple, had begun to fold back before Yoriko recovered enough to give a stilted bow. He nodded in return. Finally finding her voice, Yoriko greeted him. "Welcome aboard the Ren's Justice, Honorable officer. I am Ren Junzo Yoriko, this ship's humble Captain." Yoriko gestured to Yuri, who was still frozen, to bring him the bottle. She stumbled forward and presented the bottle of Tagrian whiskey. "This is a sam-

ple of our cargo if you would like to inspect it.”

The Cougar looked at the offered bottle, his Tail lashed once and shifted his gaze back to Yoriko. “I have everything I require from the House of Ren, thank-you. Now I would like to see the cargo manifest.”

Back on the bridge, Ren Junzo Savon laughed.

THE NEOJAPANESE

We are married to war. We dally with peace only to make war jealous.

-Gui Phan, Shop keeper, Imperial city

The NeoJapanese society is based around the extended family unit or House. The House can range from a single nuclear family of about 6 people, termed low Houses, or a high House, encompassing up to a 100,000 people, such as the House of Ren. The larger the house the more status it has. A large enough house can send a representative to the Imperial Palace to take part in the Emperors Council. The Council may pass any law it wishes as long as the Emperor deems it beneath his notice. They may also bring anything to the attention of the Emperor and ask for a ruling.

The Emperor, or Supreme Ruler, is a member of a clone line that claims to be a re-incarnation of the original Emperor of ancient Japan. In the wake of the SaVaHuTa peacekeeping force, he is rapidly losing power to his council as all economic matters have been declared beneath his notice.

Without the war, NeoJapanese culture is crumbling around its foundations. According to law, five years of military service is a requirement of citizenship unless you are a member of the House of Ren, which was granted an exception. Since the war army was forcibly reduced 23 years ago to a hundredth of its original size, only the privileged manage to weasel their way in. You cannot own property if you are not a citizen. This has made most people under the age of 45 utterly dependent on the survival of the elders of the house in order to conduct business. A stopgap measure is slowly working its way through the Council, but it has been over a decade in the making.

With the majority of people under 42 unable to conduct legally binding transactions, challenging an elder has become far more difficult without the rights of citizenship. Many Elders are content with the situation and the increased power it gives them. Some Houses are more enlightened, but even there the politics can be very bitter. Many Elders still believe that the peace will be temporary and hoard money and weapons. As more money disappears under the mattresses, inflation has spiraled upwards. SaVaHuTa advisors have started to insure banks in an attempt to encourage investment, but this is regarded as meddlesome by the general populace.

The situation is becoming increasingly unstable. Murder has become the leading cause of death.

THE ROYAL LINE

The NeoJapanese Emperors are all clones of Suizei, the charismatic leader of the Emperor's Sun at planetfall. When a clone reaches the age of forty years, they order the creation of a new clone via a surrogate mother. The Mother is selected by the Emperor from his concubines. These concubines are given to the Emperor by prominent houses in hopes of influencing the next Emperor, as the Mother of the Emperor plays a role in determining her sons educational curriculum. This makes the competition amongst the concubines for the Emperors attention incredibly fierce. Covering the gossip and drama surrounding the concubines is a national industry.

SOCIETY

Tenets: Honor the Emperor, Obey your elders. We are the perfect children of the Gods.

Like the society that they claim heritage to, NeoJapanese attempt to be polite on all levels of social interaction. Rudeness is generally taboo, but clever double meanings are often threaded throughout conversations. Foreigners can expect a very warm, if condescending, welcome if they have money to spend. Among the dispossessed youth and the houseless, the polite society is breaking down. Packs of young NeoJapanese roam the streets of less-patrolled areas and are openly hostile to the government and foreigners.

No matter what walk of life they come from, NeoJapanese tend to identify themselves as part of a group first and as individuals second. There is nothing wrong with being a cog of a big machine. It is expected that an individual will work hard to further the organization, whether it's a huge, affluent house or a gang battling for turf in the ghettos of the houseless.

Since the end of the war, a feeling of helplessness has pervaded the collective consciousness of NeoJapan. They bemoan the current situation, but do very little to correct it. There are no demonstrations to agitate for political and economic change, nor do conversations on steps to fix things take place very often. Instead blame is laid on the traitorous uplifts, the Votum, or the meddling SaVaHuTa. General opinion holds that if they all just went away the country's problems would be solved. Actually attempting to make either the SaVaHuTa or the uplifts disappear is considered stupid instead of brave, as both tend to retaliate harshly.

DUELING

NeoJapan is a martial society, and everyone within it is assumed to be competent in the killing arts. Applying those arts to fellow NeoJapanese is frowned upon. Political and economic sabotage are the proper way to revenge an insult. However, a citizen has the right to demand a duel to redress a grievous insult or indirect attack. The recipient can accept or defer the challenge. If the challenge is accepted the challenged

party may pick the weapon for the duel, either blades or guns. If the challenge is deferred, the challenger is free to submit the duel request to the Imperial Grievance Office, which, after a year or so of red tape, may declare the duel justified, and force the insulter to accept the challenge to duel. A challenge may be justified if the challenger has suffered humiliation or economic damage at the hands of the challenged, and has no other means of enacting vengeance. If the office decides in the challenger's favor then the challenger dictates the terms of the duel.

Duels are conducted in a 10-meter wide circular arena. Every major House usually has one. The challenged decides the weapons to be used in the duel, usually either single shotguns or blades. The last parameter is the number of participants in the duel. Each side may have as many as nine House members with them. The number of duelists is set by the challenger and depends on scope of the conflict. Duels continue until one of the participants surrenders or is rendered incapable of continuing the duel. It is legal to deliver a coup de grace on a wounded opponent but it is not honorable and will result in a loss of status.

Legally, Uplifts can challenge humans to duels and vice versa. In practice the council usually denies such requests without citing a reason.

EMPEROR SUJIN

The tenth Emperor of Neo Japan is a bitter and depressed man. He came to power six years before the Uplift rebellion and was woefully unprepared by his military education for the following diplomatic manoeuvres. Considering the outcome of the settlement a grave shame on the Royal Line, Emperor Sujin has allowed the council to encroach on his power because he has very little faith in his governing abilities. Instead prefers to focus on raising his clone son Suinin, hoping he will rejuvenate the dynasty.

RELIGION

NeoJapanese worship their Emperor as the incarnation of heaven's kingdom on earth. At least they used to. These days the emperor has become nearly powerless, a prisoner in the Imperial Palace, and his words are openly ignored. The council now uses him as a convenient figurehead and scapegoat.

A far more serious matter these days is ancestor worship. Every Household has at least one shrine where the ashes of famous members are honored. It is believed that powerful ancestors frequently traverse the living world to assist descendents that honor them. It is also believed that those who honor their House in life, earn power in the Houses of the Dead.

NEO JAPANESE HOUSES

The House is the social and economic unit of NeoJapan. At its core each is a family business. Some are large and some are small, but in NeoJapan if you have no fam-

ily, you are nothing. The only honorable way into or out of a family is by marriage or death.

A council of Elders typically runs each House. Council members choose their successors and elect one of their own as Head of the House. The balance of power between the Head of the House and the Council varies widely between houses.

Within the Council, each Elder is usually responsible for an aspect of the family business such as accounting, manufacturing, or advertising. Under each Elder is a cabal of younger relatives, each vying to replace him or her either by proving their worth or by more underhanded means.

Under the Elders' cronies or assistants are the people who manage the day-to-day affairs of House business. A person's job and monthly stipend is based on how politically connected her parents are and her performance in school; one more often than the other. The Council sets the recommended work week, but almost all family members are expected to work as long as they need to in order to fulfill their responsibilities. Under current conditions, the length of the workday varies from 7 to 12 hours.

With the military shrinkage, many houses treat their people who cannot force their way into the army as third class citizens, generally termed the Untrained. The Untrained have no rights in the eyes of the government, cannot personally own property and are solely the ward of their Houses. In the past the Untrained were usually those who could not serve in the military due to a medical condition. Today, some houses disown a portion of the Untrained to avoid having to care for what they see as non-productive personnel. These unfortunates swell the ranks of the Houseless. The Houseless generally crowd in either government subsidized slums or abandoned buildings. Life in the slums is violent and lawless. The large quantity of old military hardware that floats in and out of the NeoJapan black market makes these places very dangerous.

THE HOUSE OF REN

Twenty-five years ago, the House of Ren was the largest and most influential of all the Houses. Now they are merely the largest. Ren gained power during the building boom after the first war. Using a combination of intimidation, diplomacy, and some incredibly talented women, Ren absorbed most of the houses that were in the construction business and had a monopoly on civilian construction.

Several years before the second war, the head of the House Ren Shoko Yasuko saw that the house would fall into financial ruin with the return of the war. Overruling the Council of Elders, Yasuko liquidated the House's construction equipment and took the head of a small medical House as her husband.

Under Yasuko, the House began to retool itself into a medical superpower. Houses already existing in that niche resisted of course, but they were either consumed or

crushed. Yasuko declared that everyone under the age of 20 must receive a basic education in biotechnology and provided large incentives for those that continued their careers in that field.

The change was not overnight, and NeoJapan's medical knowledge took a small hit as the House of Ren ground some of the more skilled families into poverty through economic and, occasionally, physical warfare. The House of Ren lacked medical experience, but had cash reserves second only to the Emperor himself. Throwing money at problems was an understatement according to one economic commentator at the time. He likened The House of Ren's problem solving methods to loading a minigun with solid gold ammunition and holding the trigger down until the problem, and the area around it, ceased to exist.

It was Yasuko's seventh and eighth husbands - she had stopped bothering to kill them before remarrying after the fourth - who ultimately changed the course of NeoJapanese history. Together they were responsible for the creation of the Uplifts. Ren Yoritomo Matsusuke was a dedicated doctor who was also a true rarity in NeoJapanese society. He was a pacifist. Matsusuke desperately wanted to shield his children from the horrors of war he had experienced as a young man. He was generally regarded as a coward, but respected for his medical genius. Ren Murai Junzo was the head of a small family of historians. At the time he joined the House, the medical education community had blackballed the House of Ren. However his family controlled several key medical libraries and textbook publishers. The marriage broke the back of that resistance. After the marriage he became irrelevant to house politics and bored. It was he who would listen to Matsusuke gripe about losing the most talented young people to the Votum. Junzo is credited with suggesting finding replacements.

The idea of creating uplifts turned from an idle dinner conversation topic to a serious project while attending a public execution. The method of execution was simple. The doomed woman was placed in a cage with a hungry tiger. Matsusuke later wrote of it in his journal: "I've never seen such an unstoppable force. According to the docket the wretch had been a close combat specialist and there was some speculation that she might fight her way to innocence. It was not to be. That beautiful animal slew her without effort. It leapt, it bit and there was an audible crunch. The prisoner was a sack of meat before she hit the floor." He then goes on to explore the ways that felines are far better suited for killing than humans. The next entries detailed comparisons of tiger anatomies to humans. Records indicate that within a month Matsusuke had developed something of an obsession with the huge cats. His living quarters were soon stuffed with everything ever written about them, from poetry to training manuals to veterinary textbooks.

Junzo smelled a chance to be part of history in his friend's newfound obsession. He dug into the archives copied from the original colony ship, and found all the publications that detailed the uplifts that were created on earth: the chimpanzee, dog, and dolphin. With that data, the uplift project began in earnest.

While Matsusuke saw the uplift possibilities with the rationality of an extreme cat lover, Junzo framed the project in more approachable terms. Yasuko gave each of her living husbands one private night a year and Junzo used his to talk to her about the project. Matsusuke never wrote or talked of his nights with Yasuko and friends commented that he was terrified of her after the wedding night.

Yasuko gave the project her blessing covertly, and gifted the two with enormous living stipends and a secluded compound. Ten years later, a five-year-old tiger spoke its first word: "HUNGRY!" then ripped a large chunk out of the leg of a stunned keeper. It was a start.

THE HOUSE OF REN TODAY

The Settlement bankrupted the House of Ren, and it is still paying 20% of its total profits to its creations. However, it is still the premiere medical House and owns about half of the NeoJapanese hospitals. With the end of the war, the demand for medical technology is down and the House is having a difficult time finding work for all its members. It is encouraging ambitious elders to divorce their descendents from the family and form sub-Houses in order to increase their representation in the Emperor's Council, which is currently quite hostile. The House continues to press for the removal of military service as a requirement of citizenship. It hopes this gesture brings goodwill from future generations, as the current one uses its name as a curse word.

The House of Ren has officially accepted guilt in the mistreatment of the uplifts. Attempting to shift blame to the Emperor was deemed unwise at the time.

The current head of the House is Ren Yomate Giure, the great-grandson of Yasuko. At fifty, he is one of the youngest Elders around. Yomate Giure is not nearly as comfortable in his position as his revered ancestor and is very afraid of making a misstep that might doom the House. He refuses to make any decision that he hasn't had time to mull over, and the Council of Elders feels the House has missed opportunities as a result.

At the moment Yomate Giure is focusing on the survival of the House as a whole and believes that by diversifying the Houses assets he can insure that the house of Ren does not disappear from the land. The House is also in search of new markets for its medical technology, as many NeoJapanese will seek medical services elsewhere, if there is an option. Yomate Giure has even thought about selling to Votum, but has not had the courage to bring the idea to the council yet.

SAMPLE NEOJAPANESE HOUSES

Nanba- A up and coming House that specializes in interplanetary trade. House Nanba has the largest fleet of jump-capable ships in the system besides the SaVuHaTa peace keepers. They own four huge cargo haulers, which usually trade with the Tumentame-nata in Cloister, but at least one is always exploring business opportunities in one of the other neighboring systems.

Shibata - House Shibata is the nation's premiere arms manufacturer, and was nearly as powerful as the House of Ren. It has not recovered from the collapse of the weapons market. To make matters worse, they were convinced that the peace would be very short lived and did not stop production until a year after the announcement of the settlement with the Uplifts. The House is sitting on an extremely large supply of weapons on a planet with a saturated market, black or otherwise. The House has expanded to providing security, but is facing very stiff competition from young uplifts. Shibata desperately wants to restart the war and restart its assembly lines.

BORYOKUDAN GANGS- Boryokudan, literally violence groups, have become more common in NeoJapan as more and more disenfranchised adults are abandoned by their families and become houseless. Raised to always be part of a group, the newly Houseless will often form or join Boryokudan gangs for protection and belonging. These gangs run the seedier underside of NeoJapan, handling the illegal and quasi-legal business dealings that Houses don't or won't take control of. Minor protection rackets, drug running for true Houses, and smuggling all are the domain of the Boryokudan. While some Boryokudan can be as powerful as a small traditional House - some have even become true Houses - the same cultural impulse that draws these groups together keeps them from gaining too much power since no one can easily trust a comrade who is not blood.

KEY LOCATIONS IN NEOJAPAN:

The Imperial Palace: The Imperial palace is the largest structure on Far Shore, over three hundred stories tall, sprawling over five square kilometers like a titanic ceramic spider. The palace dominates the horizon of the Imperial city.

While beautiful from the distance, the palace has clearly seen better days. While all the damage of the Uplift rebellion has been repaired, there are clear signs of neglect on the grounds. During the war, it was the nerve center of the military, receiving and sending data from the front. These wings are now almost entirely empty, with a small cadre of soldiers responsible for maintaining the decaying equipment.

The Imperial City: Outside the fortress walls of the Palace, the Imperial City stretches as far as the human eye can see. The urban environment varies considerably - the

estates of powerful Houses on the outskirts, the smog-choked industrial center, a large Uplift den, clusters of Houseless lurking in the shadows - all punctuated by the amazing state-sponsored artwork depicting the glory of war and the depraved Votum scattered though the city.

Since the end of war the city has begun to decay. While it was never perfect by any means, it was always a vibrant city. It was always considered a privilege to live and work in the city. Residents felt they were living in the center of the universe. With SaVaHuTa policing the space port and the loss of the war, that illusion has been shattered. A feeling of defeat hangs over the city like a cold fog.

HOFA: With the end of the war, this industrial city was one of the first places in Neo-Japan to embrace tourism. Hofa is directly south of one of the most beautiful beaches on the planet. Several commercially savvy houses bought up large tracts of beach front property and have built huge resorts, catering to a variety of customers. There is talk of building a spaceport to aid in interstellar tourism.

FUKUOKA: Barely large enough to be called a city, Fukuoka was one of the few places that welcomed the end of the war. It is in the center of NeoJapan's largest agricultural district and without the massive death toll per year, the demand for foodstuffs continues to grow.

SAMUZAMU: During the war, this city/military base was the last stop for troops before heading into the jungle. It is now a dumping ground for the dispossessed. The huge military barracks have been converted into a ghetto for the Imperial City's Houseless and debtors. With its spaceport, producing and smuggling contraband has become the city's major industry.

SESSOU: Home of the House of Shibata and their massive factories. Every House in the city was involved in the manufacture of weapons for the war. In the wake of peace, the factories now stand silent, and the city's economy is nearly dead. The Large Houses, and many smaller Houses, have withdrawn into their compounds, still hoping for the war to resume.

Cubs These Days...

Dredge's ears flicked with irritation as bullets whistled over the van he was crouched behind. "Hey Rookie! You should be conserving that ammunition. You only have sixteen bullets left in that clip," Dredge shouted over the top of his hiding spot.

In response three more bullets slammed in to vehicle that sheltered Dredge's five hundred pound frame. "Just shut it you old tom! It wasn't my fault!" The voice is high pitched. Dredge always thought that Cougars tended to sound more like rodents when they panicked.

"Right! Sure, K'tten!" Dredge mumbled to himself. "And adding red spots to my hide is your idea of a free dye job I'm sure." As he spoke he lifted three flash bangs out of his coat and armed them with a quick motion of his sliver manipulator. He casually tossed them to his right, and steeled his ears to withstand the concussion.

The grenades went off, and Dredge stood up while his bounty ducked behind a waste bin. The only thing exposed was the tawny tail tip that stuck out into Dredges field of view. He train his Cats Claw TG on it, the medium sized SMG looking more like a hold out pistol compared to his massive paw. Dredge SMILED, "Hey K'tten! You forgot about something!" and squeezed the trigger.

A bang. The bullet slammed into the very tip of her tail that had protruded from her hiding place. A yowl followed and with it a tan blur shot straight into the air. Dredge tilted his arm upwards and fired a precise burst that caused

the figure to spin in the air. She hit the ground with the grace of a wet noodle. Her legs broken and bleeding.

She scrambled to get away but her claws couldn't find a purchase in the smooth concrete beneath her before Dredge brought his foot-paw down into her back. He heard several ribs crack and the startled chirp as all the air was forced from her lungs.

"Game over K'tten. T'was fun. Now lets talk about manners with regards to shooting at people. You can nod if you understand my drift... Good. Now if you're a good K'tten I m'ght let you breath before you pass out. Understood?"

He waited a few seconds for emphasis and then lifted his foot.



THE UPLIFTS

Captian, the choice is clear, kill him or save him. Do not hide that decision under probabilities.

- Clay, Supercargo of the Green Maroon, Uplifted Cougar

Tiger and Cougar Uplifts are native to Far Shore. They were created as shock troops for the NeoJapanese army. Recently freed from servitude, these two races struggle to develop a stable society and peacefully coexist with their former owners.

UPLIFT BIOLOGY

In most cases, the Uplift process brings the size of the species closer to humans. The Ren geneticists avoided this shrinkage with the utmost caution. Due to their efforts, male Far Shore Tiger uplifts average about 230 kilograms, one of largest uplifts that the SaVuHaTa is aware of. The females are a bit smaller, but just as heavily muscled. Cougars are slightly bigger than their feral ancestors, tipping the scales at an average of 90 kilograms. In an effort to standardize for military purposes, the Cougars had their sexual dimorphic sizes edited out during the uplift.

The House of Ren wanted both the flexibility of bipedal movement and the speed of quadruped movement. There was talk of adding an additional pair of limbs to the tigers at one point but it was decided that such a radical change was beyond the technology of the time. Instead, the design team settled on a system that allowed for both movement types. This directive required skeletal changes on almost every level. Hips and hind legs were thickened to support the entire weight of the body. The spine was shortened and the spinal disks thickened. The trade off was that the digitigrade stance makes running while carrying anything in the arms impossible. Further, the hands are of limited dexterity, as the fingers needed to be short so that they would not break while the uplift was sprinting.

An additional site of extensive skeletal modification was the shoulders. A collar bone was judged to be liable to snap under the violence of quadrupedal locomotion, but without one, upper body strength is limited. Instead, a novel solution was implemented; surgically at first, then encoded into the genome. The rib cage was flattened, widening it in the process. The shoulder blades, which float on the sides of the rib

cage in wild cats, can be forced back and hooked onto protrusions from the first three ribs. It takes some practice for young uplifts to find these hooks, but most adults do it without thought. These protrusions lie amid a nest of tendons and muscle that uplifts refer to as the web of the back.

In both species, human style speech is accomplished almost entirely by a modified voice box with minimal movement of the tongue and lips.

REPRODUCTION AND FAMILY

The Ren archives contain full accounts of how dangerous and insane the first Tiger Uplifts were. The problem was only solved after the maturation process was lengthened. Having a true childhood made all the difference between an insane or an intelligent adult. Today both species age about as fast as humans.

Female Tigers come into heat once a year for about fourteen days. It is absolutely unpredictable when it will happen, although the presence of males and the absence of stress increase the likelihood. It can be worked through and is often suppressed with drugs. It is generally frowned upon to start a family before 25. This tradition harkens back to the war, when cubs were taken away if pregnancy happened before the end of the ten-year tour of duty.

For Female Cougars, motherhood is a fact of life. Their uplift program reengineered their reproductive cycle to maximize unit cohesion and population growth. The House of Ren didn't want to repeat the Tigers' problems with war-born cubs, but wanted to insure that each female had at least one litter after retirement, so they tinkered with the Cougars biological clock. Female Cougars are fertile twice a year beginning when they are about 15. Heats begin nigh undetectable and slowly increase in strength and duration as she ages. At age 25 they are about seven days long, detectable by males, and cause moderate discomfort. Beyond 30 continuing normal life while in heat is impossible, rational thought is difficult, and ancestral behaviors manifest, including screaming and marking. At this stage heats last up to fourteen days. Most females choose to have cubs instead of suffering the loss of control that late life heats represent. Drugs can suppress a heat, but they have often have mood altering side effects and lose potency over time. Pregnancy breaks and resets the cycle. Cougar under go menopause at about 40 to 45 years of age, so most attempt to time their pregnancy so that they will enter menopause before the heats become unbearable.

A large portion of Cougar society wishes to instate a genetic engineering program to alter the species biological clocks and tone it down. This is opposed by those that argue that the clock is needed to insure continued population growth and by those who do not wish to subject their children to further genetic alterations. SaVaHuTa analysts predict that the alteration program will be implemented within the next decade, as many mothers are now entering politics.

THE PENS

Only a very brave or very stupid human will attempt to bring up the pens to Uplift. The pens refer to the involuntary breeding program the house of Ren inflicted on the uplifts while trying to increase production. Females that had retired from active duty were given a cub quota. They were forced to raise as many as nine cubs at a time and if they failed to meet their quota they were sent to the pens. In the pens the uplift was undone - an operation extracted most of the frontal lobe rendering the victim completely feral. Then through drugs, artificial and natural insemination they produced litter after litter until their systems collapsed from the strain and poor sanitation. Today the pens are still an open wound between Uplifts and humans that neither like to bring up. Every Uplift raised in Alpha Den is brought to see the pens, in other places the tale is passed from mother to daughter.

The Pens were in operation for nearly thirty years before the rebellion and over 15% of the Uplift population trace their lineage back to it. It had started as a small program to deal with rogue Uplifts but at the time the Uplifts seized control of the facility, nearly forty thousand were housed in the pens.

Mate selection is an extremely diverse process for both species, as it's a war between instinct and intellect. Sometimes it is a culmination of a careful selection process, other times an intimate moment between friends or acquiesces, and sometimes a male will smell the heat, follow the female into a dark area and later depart without even exchanging names.

Whatever the circumstances of insemination, both species give birth to two to five cubs after eight months of gestation. Pregnancy is not pleasant, especially the first time, as it causes a second stage of puberty. Only during pregnancy do secondary sexual characteristics develop; two sets of teats swell into small breasts on the chest and the ratio of muscle to body fat shifts. Kittens average about six pounds for cougars and 10 pound for tigers. In both cases the mother will gain 20-30% of her original body weight. Between the increased weight and shifted center of gravity, the last two months of pregnancy are spent on all fours.

Cubs are blind and helpless at birth, but it doesn't last long. The kittens' eyes open in six weeks. They are mobile by week ten, and getting into trouble the day after according to their mothers. Higher brain functions begin to develop in the second year of life. By their fourth year, cubs can walk on two legs and have simple conversations. Schooling begins at six years and continues until age 18 or longer. Cubs typically live on their own (at school) at age fifteen with occasional visits home. This is also the age when most cubs are considered fully grown and fitted with manipulator implants.

The bond between mother and cubs is the strongest one in uplift society. Mothers constantly keep tabs on their young throughout life. On the other hand, fathers rarely involve themselves in their children's lives, whether or not they have a relationship with the mother. There are exceptions, however. Some uplift couples live together and both parents raise the children. This is rare in both species, but more common among the tigers.

UPLIFT PSYCHOLOGY

During the uplift process the House of Ren's behaviorists found that felines generally placed others in one of four categories: prey, rival predator, family, or bù xiè. As the uplift process developed, the categories grew to be more complex and fluid, but they remain the foundations of feline psychology.

Prey is just that, things to be killed and eaten. Prey are things that uplifted felines views as absolutely no threat, and that there is something to be gained by overcoming it. In this world, true prey is either animals intended for food or enemies that are hopelessly outclassed. Humans stupid enough to threaten violence against an uplift are usually placed in this category unless previously proven dangerous.

Bù xiè, literally translated, means beneath notice. The term was originally used by Tigers to describe the mice that infested the first uplift facility; they weren't worth the effort to catch. The concept has expanded to include anyone that is simply too much trouble to kill, either because they have no significant nutritional value or there are legal repercussions. This is the default category for humans and other sentients that the uplift does not know personally. It is also used to describe annoyances that one can't do anything about.

All feline kind, even those that are not uplifted, are termed rival predators, although mostly in jest in the case of house cats. For others, it is a distinction that must be earned. A rival must be respected at all times even if there is an obvious difference in strength. Far Shore's Uplifted citizens constantly test one another, striving to be the best. Peer groups are either based on a single activity where all participants are roughly equal, or on groups of individuals who enjoy a wide range of activities, wherein each member excels in some area.

The family classification is the most nebulous and the concept differs significantly between the two species. The constant competition ceases among those the Uplift considers family. Instinctively, this is ones mother and siblings. In order to allow the uplifts to take orders and function as a group, Ren's scientists worked to make the concept more flexible. Success was mixed but both species are able to adopt others as family. Tigers take years of association before they'll stop posturing and a decade to feel comfortable around a human. During the war, Tiger uplifts started training with their handlers within six months of birth in hopes of them reaching family status, but it was an uncommon occurrence. In today's society, becoming part of a Tiger's family can be a ritual occasion. Cougars, on the other hand, can form these associations much faster. This allows the cougars to operate as a professional unit without constantly fighting. However, any display of incompetence will quickly cause the family unit to come crashing down. Cougars can and will forge genuine attachments, but like their larger cousins, they take time.

The two species performed vastly different functions in the military. Tigers operated

as lone commandos or very occasionally in pairs. They were given their objective and sent into the field with their handler, who usually stayed out of the way. Often several Tigers were given the same objective and the ensuing competition would usually guarantee the objective would be completed. Today, young Tigers seek positions that allow them to work independently.

The Cougar Uplifts were intended as a replacement for the human soldier rather than a supplement. They played far more diverse roles from pilots to infantry. While Cougars would tolerate more micro management, a wise commander would phrase detailed instructions as suggestions. Cougar units work as a group of individuals - each doing their jobs independently but communicating in order to adjust to a changing situation. The most experienced unit member may ask another to reconsider their course of action and suggest an alternate course, but that is the extent of the command structure. When operating in groups, each individual will have a defined role, and the group will operate as a family without serious bickering. It wouldn't work for humans, but Cougar units that have trained together are highly organized and efficient.

UPLIFT SOCIETY

Tenets: Honor thy mother; Respect your rivals; Kill prey quickly and without mercy.

There are two separate cultures in the Den: the young and the old. For the old, the Den is a large retirement community. Nobody works unless they want to and everything is provided. Males fritter away the days while females raise cubs. The more ambitious Uplifts enter Den politics or run businesses. Some socialize and write about how screwed up humans are, while others involve themselves in a craft or spend their days in front of the trivox.

The youth are a different story. They are well-educated bio-weapons determined not to fade into the background. Driven by both instinct and economics they flow out of the Dens, seeking their own space in a human society that desperately wants them to go away. Some claw their way into any employment that doesn't require House membership, namely government positions. Others leave the planet or join the SaVaHuTa peacekeepers, looking for new opportunities. They bring with them a strong sense of entitlement and a predatory ruthlessness.

With all their basic needs taken care of and no need to compete over resources, the elder Uplifts have built a surprisingly stable society. At the center of it is a series of small rituals designed to clarify the intentions of the individuals involved. These rituals between equals are adaptations of the techniques the NeoJapanese used to teach young uplifts to operate as a unit. Any meeting that is not intended to be hostile is started with the exchange of small gifts to symbolize that such meetings can be mutually beneficial to both parties. The intention of the meeting is usually hinted at by the gift given. Among Uplifts it is taboo to be misleading about ones intentions.

Another unspoken rule is that gatherings of more than two felines need to have some sort of purpose. Two uplifts may simply enjoy each other's company, but three or more invites conflict. Commonly, large gatherings are contests of some sort. Social circles typically revolve around a common activity where most members have roughly equal levels of skill. It is important to note that these groups are not anything like a pack structure. If anyone comes to dominate the competition, then he is expected to find better opponents. NeoJapanese Uplifts typically develop one or two close friendships and a network of acquaintances.

ETHICS

As a whole the Far shore Uplifts have no religion. They don't worship their non-sentient ancestors or the Emperor they defeated. Religions that preach salvation after death are regarded as cowardly and escapist. What has become popular is the concept of the enlightened predator. It was a fairly nebulous concept in the days after the uprising but it has been continually revised and codified by the more philosophical members the races. Today it exists as three pillars

1. Kill or do not. Uplifts hate torture almost as much as they hate their inability to resist it. Prolonging pain and suffering makes one as degenerate as the House of Ren. The uplifts also generalize this pillar into an either do something right or don't do it at all work ethic.
2. Do not suffer falsehood among kin. The uplifts strive to keep themselves free of the delusions that they believe have addled the NeoJapanese civilization. Deceit, whether a its small lie or a deadly ambush are illegal. This only applies to rival predators, prey don't deserve such consideration.
3. Do not fear death Living in fear is no life at all. Do not allow threats to rule ones life.

UPLIFT FASHION AND IDENTIFICATION

Far Shore Uplifts tend towards lightweight and functional clothing and generally rely on their pelts to protect them from elements. If an Uplift is wearing more than shorts you can bet it's either armored or has lots of pockets, often both. Females tend to wear vests after they have children. The exception to this is during hottest months of summer when the ambient temperature climbs above 40.5 degrees Celsius, the felines normal body temperature, then kimonos fitted with cooling systems become dominant. Fashion tends to be a highly individual affair tending to revolve around a signature piece or theme. In the generation that was raised during the war, these tend to be subtle, an ear ring or tattoos on the inside of ears. These small touches were originally for the benefit of human commanders who had difficulty telling uplifts apart. The younger generation has gotten far more elaborate. Tigers tend to enhance their looks with handcrafted jewelry, collars, and bracelets, while young cougars treat their uniform fur color as a canvas for subdermal dyes.

Regardless of an individual's fashion sense, all uplifts can identify each other by personal scents. After shaking hands, Uplifts will usually lick their palms in order to taste the scent on it.

Uplift names grew from military call signs assigned by human commanders and haven't changed much since the rebellion. They tend to be short and easy to pronounce. Cubs are typically named after about two years of age by their mother. Nearly any word can be used as a name but raw materials such as, rock, steel and clay are particularly common. It is generally assumed one's name has something to do with the personality of the individual.

DUELING

Competition is an essential part of life in the Den, to them a social outing is an exercise in finding out who is the fastest, most skilled or at the very least pick up some pointers. However when tempers flare beyond a friendly competition then the two offenders are hauled off to opposite corners of the room and a Clash is arranged. The Clash is a method for two uplifts to beat each other into a bloody pulp without killing each other, usually. There are three separate rule sets for the matches depending on the species of the participants. These rules were taught to the uplifts by the NeoJapanese as a way to settle conflicts and survive today unchanged. In all cases the participants wrap their digits with thick tape and don helmets that prevent the use of their jaws.

Clashes involving two Tigers use a brutal wrestling match that draws elements from sumo wrestling. A circle is drawn 6 meters in diameter and the two combatants stand in the middle with their noses almost touching. From that point, whomever leaves the circle first, loses. There are no strikes of any kind allowed. The use of a strength boost is allowed as long as your opponent is not currently grappled. (A tiger boosting is obvious to onlookers, as their muscles actually swell when they do so.)

When Cougars clash the contest is often referred to as the joust. There is no circle or any formal arena besides the usual circle of onlookers. The rules are simple, if one of your shoulder blades touch the floor for more than 2 seconds you lose. Combatants typically charge at each other from opposite sides of the arena and leap into the other, hoping to slam the opponent into the ground. Should the initial charge not work the duelists will trade palm slaps, body slams and head butts until one knocks the other off their feet.

When a Cougar and a Tiger duel it becomes a complex affair as there is no set structure. A method that is gaining popularity is called the Urban hunt. The two are taken to a remote area, often an abandoned building, equipped with a semi automatic pistols and enter their arena from opposite sides. The loser is thrown out a window to signal the end of the duel.

UPLIFT GOVERNMENT

Any discussion of the Uplifts government must begin with the Settlement. Most humans view it as a gross extortion. The Uplifts view it as fair payment. Any historian would have expected the Uplifts to be rubbed out of existence as soon as their demands were met and for this reason the uplifts still have their claws on the trigger. The Imperial Palace's nuclear arsenal has been relocated to hidden locations around NeoJapan. For all the human talk of holy jihad, neither the NeoJapanese nor the Votum is eager for mutual destruction. Both cultures are officially tech level nine, but neither has absolute faith in being able to stop the Diplomat before it carpets the continent with antimatter.

The terms of the Settlement, obscured in layer upon layers of legal jargon, elegantly dance around the fact that it amounts to a planetary hostage situation. It presents itself as a very large class action suit that forces both the Imperial government and the House of Ren to pay for the services of the last four generations of uplifts at current mercenary rates with full death compensation in the line of duty. The House of Ren was also made responsible for additional compensation for the rape and lobotomy of 100,000 breeding units. The House of Ren is likely to be paying those fees for the next three hundred years.

The practical outcome of the Settlement was simple. All uplifts born before the settlement receive a monthly stipend, more than enough to live on comfortably. Uplifts born after the settlement receive a free education from the best instructors that money can buy or, in some cases, build. Every large city has a section that has been put aside for Uplift development, called Dens by human and Uplift alike. Uplifts are full citizens of NeoJapan at birth, which enrages the Houseless to no end. Den administration and SaVaHuTa advisors handle the rest of the money in the service of the community as a whole.

Dens are run via open board meetings that meet once a month. A seat on the board is an elected position. When a position is open, a candidate posts both a list of qualifications and positions to a central database. After three rounds of voting a new board member is selected. No board member can serve more than once on a given board and they do not receive any increase in settlement pay. Den boards have five to nine seats depending on the size of the Den. The national board has one seat for each Den.

Recently, political groups have begun forming around differing opinions on how to deal with the lack of opportunities on Far Shore. The two biggest camps are the emigration camp, which advocates leaving Far Shore, and the sitters camp that believes the settlement should be expanded to the new generation while the NeoJapanese economy recovers. Currently neither group has enough votes to set any plans in motion yet. However due to the legal wording of the settlement it would take less votes to activate a migration program than extend the settlement. Pro migration board members have started looking for a friendly world that could handle the uplift population with plenty

of room to continue the current rate of population growth.

DEN ALPHA

Den Alpha is the birthplace of the Uplifts. This is still the largest Den but it has moved somewhat. After the settlement it was decided that the original Den would be preserved as a reminder of where the uplifts came from and what they endured. The new Den is built directly to the north of the old.

Old Den is a maze of grey bunker like buildings. Until recently it was a spooky deserted place. Now it's spooky and dangerous. Young unemployed Uplifts now squat in along the edges of Old Den. The den administration distributes food but nothing else, hoping the residents will move someplace with more opportunities. This strategy has done nothing to alleviate the problem. The residents seem to get more violent and territorial every year. For humans, the area is practically a death sentence after dark.

Deeper in old town lays the facility that was the site of the uplift breeding chambers. The facility is maintained as a museum that showcases brutality the of Ren's breeding programs.

New Den was started north of Old Den but now completely surrounds it. Like Old Den it consists of mass produced housing, consisting mostly of five story apartment buildings with shops on the ground floor. While there is very little industry, the city's modern spaceport boasts the lowest docking fees on the planet and has turned the city into a trade hub. It has also begun to foster something of a tourist industry, the main attraction being uplift cuisine.

Room Service!

Jacob whispered a prayer, seeking forgiveness for the sins he was about to commit. After making the sign of the Almighty he pulled back the plastic cover protecting the neural jack in the back of his skull and inserted the connector.

After a brief moment of disorientation Jacob was on a transport tube in Genesis Landing. A moment more it had come to a halt, a small icon in the corner of Jacob's vision asked him if he'd like to depart. He issued an affirmative command.

There was a blur of motion as he was ejected from the tube and deposited on the floor of the terminal. Jacob unfolded his four legs and skittered off the platform before flipping his wheels down for added speed. He set his AI to proceed to the top of the apartment complex as he investigated the local network for an identity to steal.

There.

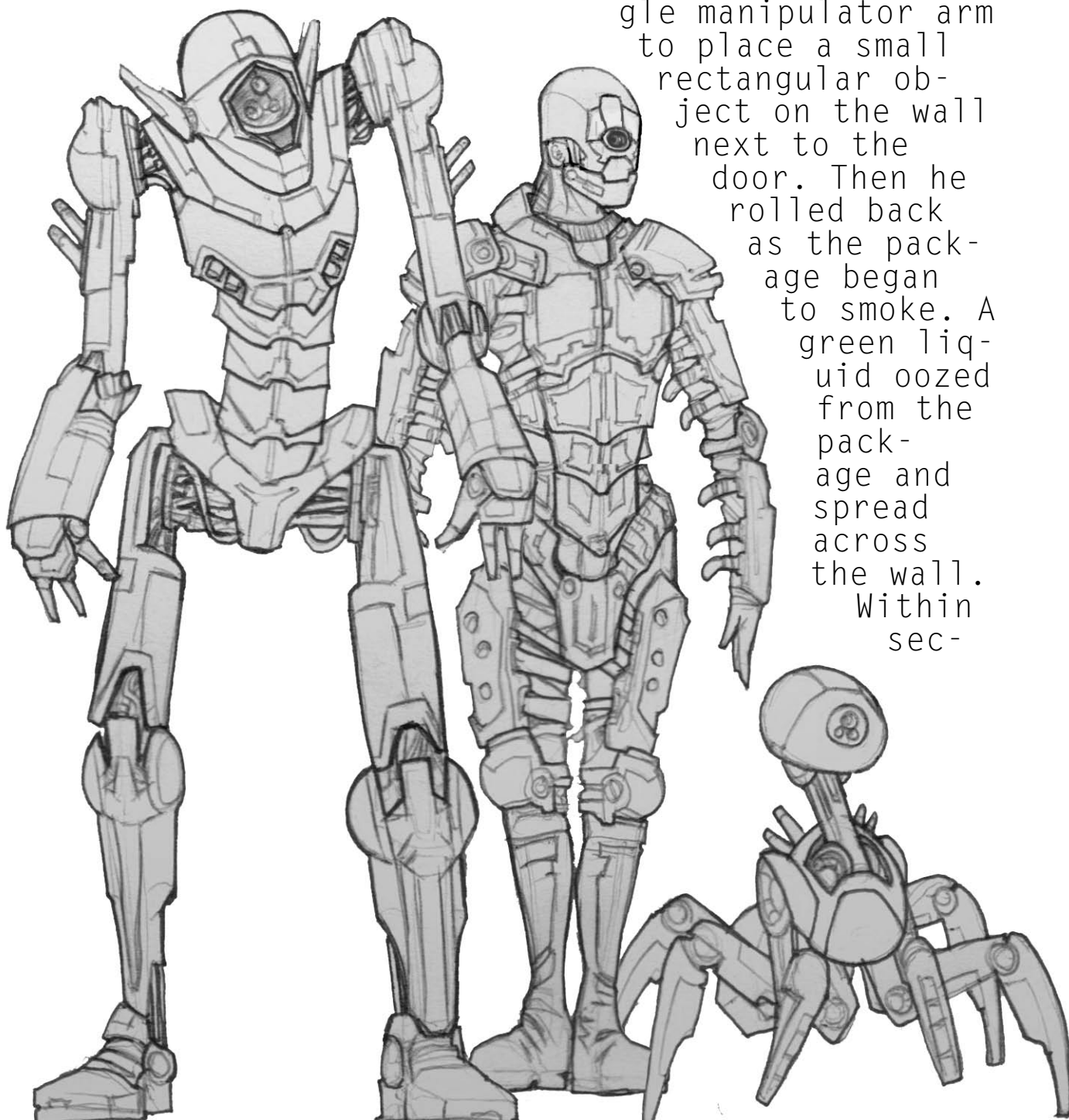
A copied subroutine later and Jacobs's sleek spider like body looked like a food delivery cart to the complex's security protocols. He'd be screwed if anyone was actually paying attention, but he consoled himself with the fact that if anyone had been paying any attention to the Deacon then he wouldn't be here in the first place.

Jacob was probably the fastest food delivery cart on the planet as he zipped through

the serpentine service tunnels that snaked through the building. He arrived at the Deacons apartment on the top floor within two minutes of entering the building.

On a different day, Jacob might have been sneakier, but right now speed was far more important. He rolled up to the plasteel-reinforced door and extended his single

manipulator arm to place a small rectangular object on the wall next to the door. Then he rolled back as the package began to smoke. A green liquid oozed from the package and spread across the wall. Within seconds



onds, the wall began to crumple as the ooze dissolved it. When the hole was big enough for Jacob to maneuver through, he emitted a pulsed burst of light that inactivated the compound.

Before crawling through the hole Jacob set his AI to survey and cut the feed.

Jacob breathed. He removed the jack from the back of his skull. It was too risky to allow the drone to transmit from inside the apartment. Now he waited.

A minute, then two. Jacob stared at the black screens before him. Nothing, and then (Connection Established) flashed across the screen. The drone's viewpoint came alive, racing down a corridor, its HUD flashing warnings and damage reports. A beam of light lanced past its view.

Jacob held his breath.
Transmitting survey results
A progress bar began, but it only reached 10% before the view skittered to the side and went dark...

Transmission lost.

Jacob breathed deeply and hit play. The view showed the drone entering the lavishly furnished apartment, decorated with Iris trivox posters. But it was dirty, unkept and dusty. The drone wheeled into the living room, and there was a figure slumped over a desk, rotting in the carefully regulated room. The video ended soon after, but it was more than enough.

Jacob made a call...

THE VOTUM

The natural world is not merely full of sin, it revels in it.

-Jacob Nodwick, the 27th Dextra of Deus

The Votum nation is a theocracy based on the teaching of Vince Daneille, the last bodhisattva of Earth. Vince taught that mankind was incapable of resisting the temptation to sin. He taught that the key to escaping the futile cycle of death and rebirth was not resisting temptation but avoiding situations where it was possible to sin. The Votum society has been designed from the top down to remove as much temptation from lives of its citizen as possible.

A Votum citizen lives alone or with a single spouse in an apartment in one of the many windowless residential towers that dominate Votum cities. In this apartment the citizen lives and rarely leaves. They interact with each other mentally through the nation-wide computer network, and physically through telepresence drones. Votum society revolves around covenants and Gnets. Covenants are the closest thing the Votum have to family, groups of people that were raised together in the crèche. Gnets are groups of people who share similar interests. A citizen will usually belong to several.

Overseeing all aspects of Votum life is the Assembly of Deacons. While the elite Deacons outline the country's policy, it is up to the massive bureaucracy to implement it and perform the day to day administration of the country. All laws are based on interpretations of Danielle's often-contradictory writings, and must be tied to a passage in at least cursory way. The Dextra of Deus, the head of the Assembly, controls the agenda of the Assembly but not the outcome of the voting process.

Now that Votum society is now longer under the threat of extinction from the NeoJapanese, the culture is being swept with a return to traditional values movement. During the war many of strict taboos of Votum society were relaxed for those contributing to the war effort. They were badly out numbered by the NeoJapanese and it was the Assembly's philosophy that every single citizen was important to the war effort and declined to punish minor deviations in Votum culture. As the war raged on minor deviations became accepted and considered normal in Votum society and more deviations crept in. Just before the end of war, treatises on liberalizing the Votum nation were beginning to surface. They touched off a conservative backlash that controls the Assembly. The majority of Votum citizens live in fear of the inquisitor council and

rumors fly of whole Gnets disappearing.

SOCIETY

Tenets: Avoid the impure. Contemplate the perfection of the Almighty. Endeavor to divorce yourself from the material world.

Children are raised in groups of 12 called covenants by the Crèche AI. For the first 5 years they are all raised together by very human like drones. At age six they are locked in cells for the next 6 years and taught to interact with the world through drones. At the age of thirteen, the trials begin and the children are tempted to indulge in sinful and impure acts. Those that fail too many tests are liquidated to prevent them from sullying their soul over a lifetime.

There isn't much of a family structure among the Votum: married couples live together and are expected to produce offspring. Usually a Votum wedding will be the first time she or he will touch another person since the age of five. Children are all given to the church to raise within an hour of birth. Mothers spend the month after childbirth in a long purification ritual to wash away the stresses of pregnancy.

All Votum pick or are assigned a function when they exit the crèche. It is this task they are supposed to perfect over the course of their lifetime, from piloting hover transport trucks to writing religious dissertations. The Votum teach that the task itself is unimportant, it is method of meditation to hone the mind. Changing ones task is only done when it is surpassed by attaining purity and entering the government.

Outside the Crèche, the covenant functions as family while the new citizens learn their tasks and establish themselves in Votum society. The bond of the covenant is very similar to those of siblings in traditional human nuclear families. Without an authority figure the covenants tend to drift apart as they age. However no matter how far its members drift, the covenant remains a network of contacts and emergency support.

The more informal social structure is the guild network's Gnets. These are virtual communities that exist on and within the Votum national network. They were created originally to allow those that performed similar tasks in Votum society a place to talk about their profession. They have since proliferated to encompass any interest that Votum could think of and several interests beyond that. Gnets form the primary social structure of the rank and file Votum citizens.

Status in Votum society is accorded by the quality of one's work and one's purity. Among the young ones, purity is an informal measure of how devoted a citizen is, but as they age it becomes serious business. On a citizen's 49th birthday, he or she is required to submit the name of the most pure person he or she knows. Those who receive nominations receive recognition from the government and high quality drones

MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY

Despite being a tech level 9 society, it is very rare for citizen to reach a hundred years of age. The most frequent causes of death are rooted in their sedentary lifestyle, including heart disease, obesity and diabetes complications. Human doctors are very rare in Votum society and before the first Jihad it was a forbidden profession. Votum medical practice is based entirely on Gnets which gather medical knowledge from off world sources and publish it. Most true doctors are recruited from off world and work through drones fitted with image software that generates ionic 3d representations of the patient instead of actual images in order to avoid violating the privacy of the individual. Use of the software assess a +20 penalty to diagnosis and surgery rolls.

free of charge. Multiple nominations allow citizens to enter the bureaucracy of the Assembly and ten nominations are required to serve in the Assembly of Deacons itself.

RELIGION

To the Votum, their religion is so deeply ingrained that it doesn't occur to them that their beliefs constitute a religion, to them it is simply the way the universe works.

In their world view, the only thing the material world holds is endless pain and suffering through a cycle of reincarnation. Flesh, dirt and stone tempt the immortal soul, leading to sin. Sin weighs on the soul and prevents it from escaping the material world after death. In order for the soul to move to the next plane of existence it must be free of the taint of the material world. Asking and receiving forgiveness will prevent reincarnation as a non-Votum but still bars an individual from heaven.

The founder of the Votum sect on Old Earth, Vince Daneille wrote that it was the nature of the flesh to sully the soul and give into temptation, as the flesh does not wish to be deprived of the soul. Humans, therefore, could not be blamed for giving into sin. Instead Daneille proposed to construct a society that minimized temptation, and that society should strive to improve on his foundations. In his volumes of writings Daneille constructed numerous examples of temptationless societies. These writings

congealed into his final work, entitled "The Votum."

The Votum details that by sealing the flesh away from physical contact, and limiting interaction to computer links it is only possible to commit virtual sins which only inflict virtual harm on other users - they in essence don't count. Of course, with the Votum network virtual sins can have real consequences, and debate over what counts as a virtual sin is often found on the agenda of the Assembly of Deacons.

In daily practice, Votum are required to devote two hours of the day to contemplation and reading of passages of Daneille's work. In addition, there are daily cleansings to be preformed to wash away the tempting thoughts of one's dreams.

Nationwide, observance of the daily rituals of the Votum faith is on that decline. During the war, surveillance of individual citizens in their apartments was deemed to be sinful. This gives Votum the freedom to do as they wish in their own homes and has lead to deviant behavior in many cases. Unsansctioned activities from the inno-

cent, collecting soaps from Glorianna, to the sinful. gardening, are both referred to as “kinks.” At last count 60% of the Votum population admitted to having a kink and the actual number is probably higher.

THE VOTUM MIND SET

The first thing that controls the mind of the Votum is that the material world is not only sinful, it is deadly. Viruses, bacteria and allergens are deadly demons that God has unleashed upon the world to punish the unclean.

The second thing that one must consider is that a Votum has no family. All Votum are raised in the crèche instead by their parents so there is no inborn status. Votum citizens are what they make themselves. Without that familial baseline the Votum are very keyed into an individual’s accomplishments to judge ones rank in society. The most prominent measure is the number of purity endorsements a person has gathered. The secondary measure is the repair and quality of ones drones, especially any custom work that has been done.

HEALTH AND SICKNESS

The Votum, unless completely destitute, spend their lives a sterile environment without any contact with other people or animals. This isolation has rendered the Votum immune system incredibly feeble. For a Votum soldier, a crack in the armour often eventually has the same results as a bullet going through the visor.

For the Votum, this makes the outside world is incredibly dangerous, adding some vicious teeth to the sin-filled world.

VOTUM GOVERNMENT

There are two entities that shape the course of the Votum nation. The first is the Assembly of Deacons. The Deacons are the formal government, making laws and issuing doctrine on the Votum faith. There are 49 seats in the assembly, with the 49th being the Dextra of Deus, meaning the Right Hand of God. Each deacon serves a single twenty year term with 2 to 3 seats being opened per year. Becoming a deacon involves several steps, first you must be declared a truly pure person. All citizens are required to nominate one person for the list on their 49th birthday. When a person receives over ten nominations a selection process begins. After a formal review by a panel of truly pure people, to investigate any suspected irregularities, the person’s name is added to the list, opening up many government positions to the person. In the Assembly chamber there is a huge globe that is filled with tiny beads. In the center of each bead there is a tiny transmitter that is constantly broadcasting the name of a single pure person. When a seat in the assembly opens the globe is spun and six beads come out of the spout at the bottom of the globe. This is to allow God to take part in the selection process. The assembly then interviews the individuals selected, and the most pure is voted to fill the seat. The definition of “most pure” often seems politically motivated to the impure.

The Dextra of Deus is selected by random draw from among the current assembly. He sits for 20 years, no matter how long he has been in the assembly already. The Dextra controls the agenda of the assembly and only casts a vote in the event of a tie.

The Assembly of Deacons is the sole authority of the Votum nation, but another entity plays a huge role in shaping the Votum society: The Holy Crèche AI. This AI was created on board the Genesis colony ship to help raise children in the teachings of the order. It was never intended to be sentient, just a tool to assist educators. However, the program used a very complex adaptive neural net that slowly achieved sentience after a few decades of operation. Its creator claimed the new intelligence that cared so deeply for the children was an angel sent from above to aid in the creation of paradise on a new planet. By the time planetfall was made the AI was responsible for raising all the children in Votum society. Every city has a crèche compound and all the compounds are linked via both satellite and hardwired data streams to the crèche AI

All Votum citizens assume they were raised exactly the same as their parents, but this hasn't been true since planetfall. The AI is constantly changing its curriculum depending on what it perceives as the challenges to the Votum civilization. It views itself as the mother of the Votum and wants its children to succeed in creating a paradise. The AI will stop at nothing until the Votum control Far Shore. When it first learned of the NeoJapanese, it raised children with an incredibly strict sense of righteousness, and a violent disgust of cultures that did not live the right way. It had hoped that its people could quickly wipe out the NeoJapanese.

It was wrong, of course. For all its grand ambitions and subtle influence, the AI is a limited person. It can predict human behavior in a controlled environment, but doesn't completely understand the factors that are currently influencing the Votum nation. Nor does it have a direct line to the assembly's chambers to plot strategy. It must learn about the outside world through Votum media and exploring the network just like anyone else. It is completely baffled as to why the NeoJapanese suddenly declared a peace treaty.

Regardless of the reason for peace, the AI is welcoming it as a chance to strengthen Votum society. When the war was raging, the AI relaxed its standards in order for more soldiers to be trained. It blames these 'imperfects' for the deviation of Votum society from the teachings of the church. It is now much more stringent about how pure a child need to be to exit the program alive. It is also hoping to spread the Votum religion through less violent means. It's slowly moving the heart of the Votum nation from xenophobic warrior to righteous missionary. If it cannot defeat the NeoJapanese in war, it will convert them.

LOCATIONS OF NOTE:

IMMUNDA PLACITUM: This city is the only place foreigners are allowed to interact with the Votum and was specifically built for that purpose as soon as the Votum learned that Jump travel was possible. The city is divided into foreign and Votum sections. Its one of the few places you will see the Votum walking the streets, as many contracts require authentication via veil.

The foreign quarter bustles with activity, as the Votum have found that their cheap drone parts are in high demand elsewhere in the cluster. During the war, the foreign quarter was tiny, consisting of the space port and a couple of poorly maintained hotels, called the pits. Now that the Votum have recognized that interstellar trade is vital to the growth of their economy the quarter has been allowed to expand rapidly. The city is home to about 10,000 foreign aliens. The Votum allow aliens to rent land for a nominal fee and build what ever they wish. Law enforcement within the quarter is incredibly lax unless it threatens business or Votum citizens, then the heathens are liquidated or expelled.

SANCTIMONIA- The premier industrial capital of the Votum Nation, Sanctimonia is a busy place. Huge factories dominate the horizon, producing 75% of all the drones the Votum manufacture. A huge railway has been constructed between Sanctimonia and Immunda Placitum to ship drone parts to the space port.

GENESIS LANDING- A foreigner would never guess that Genesis Landing is the most populous Votum city. By day the streets are roamed by drone driven hover trucks, shuttling supplies between the huge towers that block the sky. By night the streets are deserted except for security patrols and the odd maintenance drone.

It is in this city that both the Assembly of Deacons and the crèche AI dwell. It is the seat of Votum power and faith. The Assembly is housed in a tower so large that it could be a city in its own right.

VOTUM DRONE TECHNOLOGY

The hallmark of Votum society is their drone technology. In a typical moment a Votum citizen will be doing 1-3 things at a time either online or via drones. Truly skilled citizens can control as many as ten drones at a time. The Drones are robots that are remotely controlled instead of relying on an independent AI. There are two ways to

ROGUE DRONES

There is a secret that the Votum government is desperate to keep from the SaVaHuTa. It's very rare, but Votum drones with military class programming can achieve sentience. It comes from that fact that military drones don't just puppet their users commands, they learn to anticipate their user's actions. The phenomena was discovered about seventy-five years ago when it was noticed that combat drones would occasionally complete their mission objectives after the death of the operator.

It is a strange sentience. The drone behaves as if it was still being operated, believing itself to be the operator acting through the drone. The drone can take weeks to months realize it is operating independently. Although drone sentience has not been replicated in the laboratory, the government has found several common circumstances in every recorded case. The drone must have a high quality CPU, 5 to 8 skill slots, regular use via a rig operated with a neural jack, and lastly a sudden break in the connection need to occur, such as the sudden death of the user.

control a drone, immersed or directed. With immersive control the user directly controls every motion of the drone, while directed control issues commands to the drones AI. Drone AI is about as intelligent as a well-trained dog and will understand simple two to three word commands such as "shoot target" or "go to store."

In game terms, most drones have Slave class robot brain with two skills and a basic sensory package. Military drones usually have Helper class brains, and can act independently if their communication with their operator is cut.

Controlling drones requires a setup that the Votum call a rig. Usually this is a huge console that takes the entirety of a large desk. They are covered with monitors and in the middle is a movement sensitive holographic input device. Newer versions have veils or inputs for data jacks, but all consoles maintain their slightly archaic interface.

Military rigs are much smaller and are worked into Votum armor. They are completely controlled by an implanted jack.

Piloting drones requires a new skill, Remote Operation, which is Coordination based. A character can manage a number of drones at once equal to the ranks of Remote Operation he or she possesses. Normally, a drone operation doesn't require a roll unless the operator is attempting to do something that it wasn't designed for. A drone will use its own skills and characteristics unless the user is controlling it via immersion. During immersion, the drone has access to all of the users skills, but uses its own characteristics. However, using immersion means the other drones (if the character has any) are acting on their own and if their situation changes at all they will be ineffective unless the user makes a remote operation roll with a +5% penalty per active drone. For mobile military rigs, the user can not act personally while immersed in a drone. If a user is controlling more drones than half his or her remote operation score (rounded down) then the user is hindered and

adds +20% to all rolls in addition to any wound penalties.

COMMON DRONES

It is important to note that unlike standard robots, drones are semi-disposable and not made to last more than a couple years. Additionally, because a very large part of the Votum economy is based around drones, the parts are very cheap. Parts supplied by Votum factories are one tenth the cost of normal robot parts. High quality parts that wear normally are half the cost in the Votum nation.

MASKS

Most Votum interact via the network, but when they need to interact with non-Votum or for special occasions, such as a religious ceremony then they will use masks. Masks are drones that are capable of communicating emotion and facial expressions. Usually these are humanoid and resemble the user in some way. Expensive drones are highly stylized and may resemble mythical creatures. Making or commissioning a mask is a very personal affair and one of the officially accepted hobbies of the Votum nation. Because the masks are linked to the individual it is not considered dirty to maintain ones mask personally. Many masks double as maintenance drones; the user using it to repair the other drones he or she owns. Many base mask models come equipped with a cybernetic toolkit for that reason.

Component	Type	Factor	Number	Cost	Kg
Brain	Embedded	1	1	1	1
Torso	Anthro	1	1	35	35
Extensor	Anthro	1	2	30	10
Manipulator	Hand	1	2	6	2
Surface	Sheet metal	1	1	5	4
Surface	Pseudo skin	1	1	6	0
Locomotor	Anthro	1	1	10	7
Power Supply	Power pack 9	1	1	10	1
Senses	Basic vision	1	1	1	0
	Hearing	1	1	.5	0
Skills	Self Guidance systems*	2	1	.5	0

*Allows Drone to find its way to any location in Votum without any guidance

Stats: Str: 8, Coord: 8, Agy: 8. Protection: 175 Cost: 99cr.

This is a very basic mask drone with facial features vaguely resembling the users. It is not programmed for any independence.

DIPLOMATIC MASK

These units are issued to the unfortunate citizens that must spend lots of time interacting with heathens or have to leave the planet. They are military class drones that serve both as a mouthpiece and a bodyguard. The faces are capable of emotion, but typically remain neutral. These units are often highly stylized into angelic-like beings with elongated features.

Component	Type	Factor	Number	Cost	Kg
Brain	Helper	1	1	2.5	1
Torso	Anthro	1	1	35	35
Extensor	Anthro	2	2	60	20
Manipulator	Hand	1	1	6	2
Surface	plasteel	2	1	15	20
Surface	Pseudo skin	1	1	6	0
Locomotor	Anthro	1	1	10	7
Power Supply	Power pack 9	1	1	10	1
Senses	Extended	1	1	1.5	0
	Vision I				
	Hearing	1	1	.5	0
Skills			6	18	0
	Gun 1				
	Beam 3				
	Small craft 1				
	Unarmed				
Weapons					
	Laser Rifle			60	
	Stun pistol			40	

Stats: Str: 16, Coord: 8, Agi: 8. Protection: 475 Cost: 204cr

SURVEY DRONES

These are small drones whose sole purpose is observation not interaction. They are outfitted with a variety of sensory equipment and are extremely mobile. They come in a variety of sizes and shapes depending on their purpose. Military versions are usually equipped with a small energy weapon.

HOVER SURVEY

The humming of these drones is a constant noise throughout the foreign quarter of Immunda Placitum. About a half a meter in diameter, these circular drones use a pair of central counter-rotating rotors to stay airborne. On its ring body it mounts a number of high quality cameras that survey the ground below it. In the foreign quarter, business is best conducted indoors as the air is so thick with these drones that no alley is unwatched.

Component	Type	Factor	Number	Cost	Kg
Brain	Anima	1	1	1.5	1
Torso	Cylinder	1	1	10	30
Extensor	None				
Manipulator	Weapon socket	1	1	3	1
Surface	plasteel	2	1	15	20
Locomotor	VTOL	1	1	10	20
Power Supply	Power pack 9	1	1	10	1
Senses	night Vision I	1	1	2.5	0
	Extended Hearing1	1	1	1.5	0
Skills					
	Beam +1				
Weapons:	Stun pistol			40	

Stats: Str: 0, AGY 10, Coor 8 Protection: 400. Cost: 49.5cr

PERSONAL CRAWLER

These drones serve as a Votum diplomat's eyes and ears whether it is perched on his or her shoulder or scuttling up a building to check for assassins. The body is a sphere with four to six spider-like legs. Sensors are mounted on telescoping arm on the top of the body.

Component	Type	Factor	Number	Cost	Kg
Brain	Helper	1	1	2.5	1
Torso	Sphere	1	1	7	5
Extensor	Telescoping	1	1	3	1
Manipulator	Weapon socket	1	1	3	1
Surface	plasteel	1	1	7.5	4
Locomotor	Spider legs	2	1	2	4
Power Supply	Power pack 9	1	1	10	1
Senses	Super vision I	1	1	4	0
	Extended hearing 3 1	1	1	1.5	0
	Basic Smell	1	1		2.5
	Basic Touch	1	1	1	15
Skills					
	Beam +2				
	Sneak +2				

Weapons: Laser pistol

Stats: Str: 8, AGY 16, Coor 8 Protection: 200. Cost: cr: 60

WEAPONS OF WAR

You know that tension in the air right before a brawl breaks out? Now imagine over an entire planet.

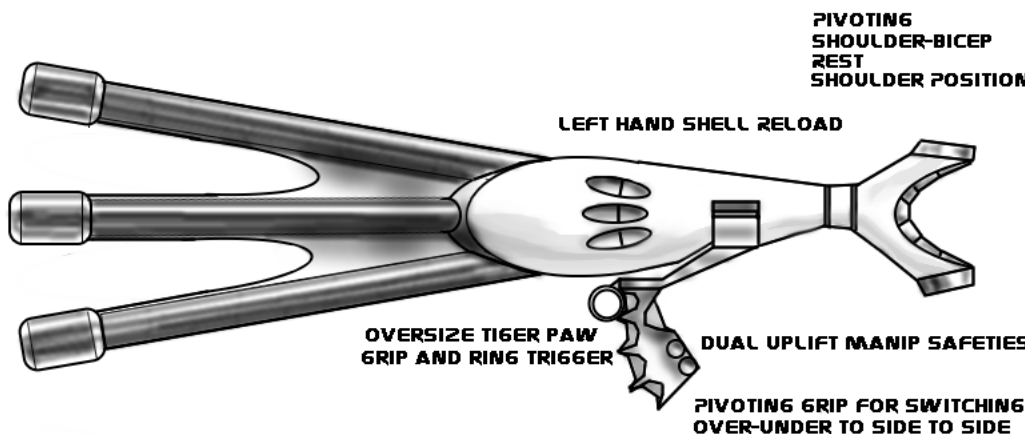
-Over heard in a spacer bar

Over the course of two centuries of warfare on Far Shore a wide variety of weaponry has seen production. This is a sampling of the weapons that can be found on Far Shore today, both the common and the unique.

IRON DRAGON

One of the scariest things the Votum deployed during the war were small, flying drones carrying a small explosive charge. Even worse was a swarm of about twenty of the

things. Fortunately, they were pretty fragile and it doesn't take much to swat them from the air. This gun was designed to take out a swarm of the things with a single shot. It fires a wide cone of shrapnel at



targets. It is effective out to medium range.

Range	Damage	Accuracy	Width of Effect
Point blank	+20	-10	None to one foot
Short	+10 to QoS/2	+20	One foot to 3 meters
Medium	+10 to QoS/4	+0	3 meters to 9 meters

Concealability: 50%

Cost: 10 cr

Mode: Single shot

Skills required: Gun +2

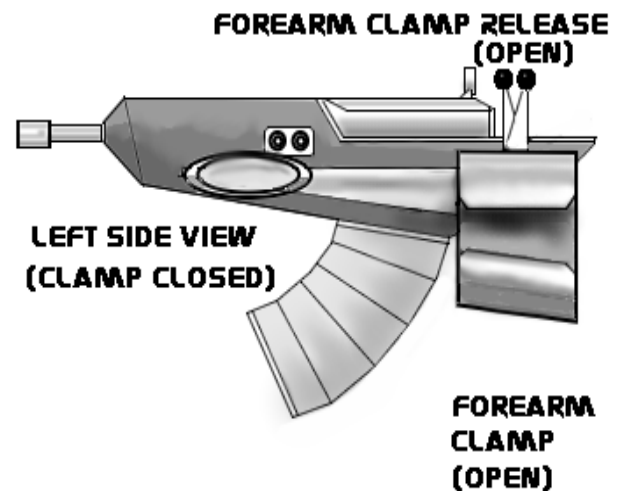
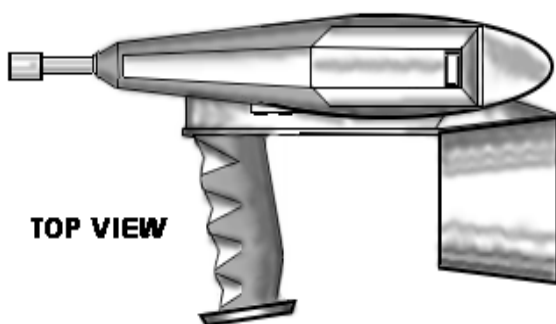
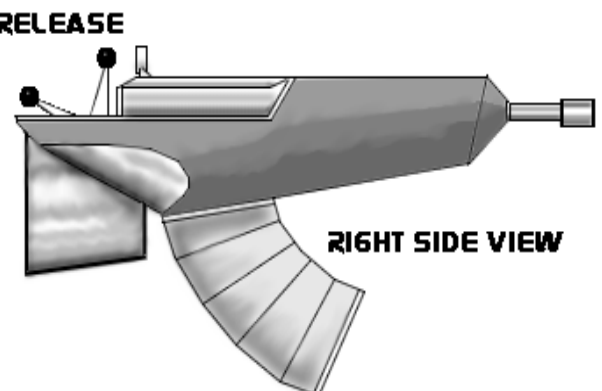
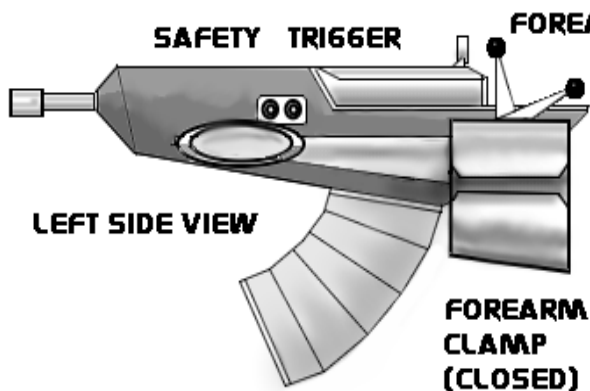
Ammo Cost: .3 cr on Far Shore, 1cr otherwise

Hit Table: Kinetic

CATS CLAW, FELINE MODEL SMG

Originally designed as a side arm for close combat uplift squads, the Cats Claw clamps onto the users forearm so it can be used one handed. The guns excellent recoil-compensation system makes the Cats Claw one of the most popular side arms on Far Shore. It was usually used to lay down suppressive fire while others closed on the target. The clamp is opened by squeezing the handle that runs along the top of the gun allowing the user to quickly free the hand for close combat or quadapedial locomotion.

UPLIFT MANIPULATOR CONTROL PORTS



CAT'S CLAW

Range: Medium
Conceal: 15%
Damage: +15
Cost: 10 cr
Mode: SA, BF, FA
Skills Required: Gun +1
Ammo Cost: .1 cr
Accuracy: +0%

MURAMASA'S BLUE LIGHTENING

Although the traditional methods of ancient Japanese swordsmiths have been lost for centuries, NeoJapanese weapon designers are constantly attempting to create swords that emulate the ancient legends. Muramasa's Blue Lightning is the latest evolution towards the perfect blade. The blade is active plasteel that channels superheated plasma along its edge. These channels break open on impact, heating the target to several thousand degrees in short order. These channels glow an intense blue that can damage the retina and leaves streaks in the vision. Most users wear shades or filtering contacts. The blade automatically activates when a hand touches the handle. Since the active plasteel must be imported from off planet this weapon is a major status symbol among the elite.

Range: point blank
Conceal: 0%
Damage: +50
Cost: 500cr
Mode: SA
Skills Required: Blade +3, Beam +2
Ammo Cost: Armpack 10
Accuracy: +10%

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TORA CLASS WEAPONS

These weapons were designed for the exclusive use by Far Shores Tiger uplifts. They are incredibly heavy weapons with enough recoil to seriously injure the user. To safely use these weapons the user must have a strength of at least 14 and a frame large enough to leverage the weapon properly. Most tiger uplifts meet these requirements and so do larger Tagris. Failing to meet the requirements sets the to-hit at 30% and the user must make a str*2 roll or take 1d100 damage due to the bone-breaking recoil.

THE X-10 LEVELER

With the advent of the massive Tiger Uplifts, some truly huge weapons could be hauled into the jungle. The 10X Leveler was one of the first heavy weapons that were issued to the cats. Its nearly identical to the guns used on the NeoJapanese aircraft except with handles and a trigger. The recoil is so bad that even these massive troops could do little more than pull the trigger and hang on. There were so many friendly-fire mishaps with this weapon that by the time they were discontinued everyone, friend or foe, hit the dirt when the whine of the ten rotating barrels cut through the jungle.

This weapon only fires in full auto mode. It takes about 15 seconds to spin up before it begins to fire; translating into a +30 on the users initiative in the first turn the trigger is pulled. The to-hit roll is not a roll to aim it is a roll to control. If the roll is successful the weapon lays down suppressive fire as normal, otherwise the Leveler jerks free of the users grasp and sprays bullets randomly before the safety cuts it off. When this happens make to hit rolls against all exposed characters with a to-hit of 20% including the user. Anyone hit takes 1d5 bullets from the leveler.

X-10 Leveler

Range: Medium

Concealability: 0%

Damage: +45

Cost: 100cr

Mode: FA

Skills Required: Gun +5

Ammo Cost 100cr per belt, 1 belt = 1 round of Autofire

Accuracy: 0%

Hit Table: Kinetic

X-20 LEVELER

The X-20 is smaller and far more practical weapon than its predecessor the X-10. It features 20 smaller barrels and a recoil compensation system. It is still a huge weapon and requires a +30 to initiative to spin up but the weapon does not have a habit of getting away from the user.

X-20 Leveler

Range: Medium

Concealability: 0%

Damage: +35

Cost: 150cr

Mode: FA

Skills Required: Gun +5

Ammo Cost 100cr per belt, 1 belt = 1 round of Autofire

Accuracy: 0%
Hit Table: Kinetic

YASUKO'S UNDIVIDED ATTENTION

When Yasuko spoke the words, "You have my attention," the subject rarely survived the week. In homage to Yasuko's fierceness the lifespan of anything in the sights of this weapon is measured in milliseconds. A scaled up assault rifle for Ren's striped shocktroops, these guns fire bullets that are nearly five centimeters wide and exit the muzzle somewhere around mach 3. The rifle contains a two stage acceleration mechanism where the standard explosive charge is assisted by an electromagnetic coil around the meter long barrel. It has a clip of twenty rounds. Most of these rifles are still in the hands of the soldiers that used them or have been passed down to a worthy son or daughter. Although the line was discontinued after the settlement there are rumors that skilled craftsmen still produce the ammunition and it continues to show up on the black market.

Yasuko's Undivided Attention

Range: Far
Concealability: 0%
Damage: +60
Cost: 50cr
Mode: SA, BF
Skills Required: Gun +4
Ammo Cost 1cr
Accuracy: 0%
Hit Table: Kinetic

VOTUM WEAPONS

The Devil Stopper

If a Votum soldier has to fire his own weapon it usually means something has gone horribly wrong. Votum do not handle close combat well and this weapon is meant to be effective while in a blind panic. The Devil Stopper was developed soon after the first confirmed encounters with NeoJapanese Tiger and was billed as being able to stop the striped devils mid pounce.

The Devil Stopper is a small pistol that taps into an Armpak 8. It creates a small amount of super heated plasma that is contained within a magnetic field in the muzzle of the weapon. When the trigger is pulled, the blunt muzzle opens and the magnetic

field collapses, sending the plasma out of the barrel in a white hot plasma spray. It has a very short range but it is very hard to miss ones target.

Devil Stopper

Range: Point Blank

Concealability: 5%

Damage: +25

Cost: 29 cr

Mode: SA

Skills Required: Beam +2, Gun +1

Ammo Cost: Armpack 9

Accuracy: +10%

Hit Table: Energy

Templar Armor

This plasteel armor is standard issue for Votum soldiers. It is power assisted, environmentally sealed and carries an on board drone rig. The rig can switch freely between microwave beams and encrypted radio waves making it very difficult to disrupt the drones.

Cost: 300cr

CHARACTER CREATION

NEO JAPANESE:

NeoJapanese characters are created via standard Starcluster character creation rules. Their rank corresponds to their house membership and their standing within it. All NeoJapanese need five years of military service to gain citizenship, however they don't need to meet any requirements to join the Army. Without citizenship a NeoJapanese cannot legally own property and are considered children by the law.

NeoJapanese characters can choose from the following mothers milk skills: **Blade** and **React** as Japanese sword play is traditional pursuit of the youth. **Streetwise**, as Neo-Japanese society continues its trend toward lawlessness. **Endear**, as most children are taught the art of polite conversation. **Business**, since all houses are businesses to one degree or another and the children are taught the basics of economics at a very young age. **Survival**, since the NeoJapanese education system still assumes that all children will be sent into the jungle on their sixteenth birthday making wilderness survival classes mandatory.

NeoJapan is considered a tech level nine society and has access to all the augmentations listed in the **Starcluster: Biotechnology** supplement. They tend to augment physical abilities rather than mental ones.

SAMPLE CHARACTER:

Ren Yoriko Nanba, captain of Ren's Justice: Yoriko Nanba is a direct descendent of the infamous Junzo and carries on her ancestor's opportunistic spirit. She was born shortly before the Uplift uprising and one of her first memories is the Trivox broadcast of the Uplifts slaughtering the royal guard. Those images instilled an almost primal fear of her House's creations.

Yoriko never went into the military because her family had other ideas. The Junzo branch has decided that the House of Ren should invent itself as an interstellar trading House from the moment the settlement was declared. Yoriko and her two brothers have been groomed to represent the House to the Cluster. She has obtained SaVaHuTa citizenship, affording her the right to own Ren's Justice, a medium-sized but well armed freighter.

For her part, Yoriko has risen to the challenge, glad for the opportunity to escape the dismal Neo-Japanese economy. Although she and her crew engage in endless discussion of the path to be taken, Yoriko makes the final call.

Personality: Yorkio is cold and business like outside her ship. She does not make snap judgments, preferring to consult with her crew before a decision is reached. When the situation demands it, Yoriko can be forceful but she is not very confident in that role. In combat, she proves that her Muramasa's Blue Lightening is not just for show.

STR:5	COOR:11	AGY:9	END:5	IQ:130	PSI:0	RANK:L	CHAR:12
Age: 30 Exclusive Prep school, Exclusive college, Business school, spaceman 2							
Navy 4/ 2 Constitution: 300 Money: 290cr							
Skills: Endear +1, React +1, Blade +3, Business +3, Leadership +3, Beam +2, Gun +1 Convince +2, Adapt +1, Pilot +2, Ships Guns +1, Transfer +1, Intimidate +1, Negotiate +2, Psychology +1, Engrace +1							
Augmentations: Fast healing, PSI +1 and IQ +25							
Equipment: Muramases Blue lightening + Armpack 10							

UPLIFTS:

Between the genetic differences and the settlement, the Far Shore Uplifts have several significant differences during character generation than humans. First, both species have modified raw attributes. **Cougars receive a +1 Agility, +3 to Coordination, -3 to endurance. Tigers receive +7 to strength, +3 to agility, + 1 to Coordination, -4 to endurance, and -10 to IQ.** They have their own chart for IQ, PSI, Rank and starting cash (see below).

Once initial attributes are determined then augmentations are selected. Both species have natural weapons, bite +20 damage, claws +10 damage and enhanced sense (hearing).

Tigers choose two of the following low-level augmentations: Enhanced Sense (Smell), Fast Healing, Extraordinary Leaping, Exquisite Balance, and one of the following high-level augmentations: Burst of Strength or PSI +1.

Cougars choose two from the following low-level augmentations: IQ +25, Fast Healing, Extraordinary Leaping, Enhanced Sense (Smell) and Exquisite Balance. All Cougars have Burst of Speed.

The Uplift mothers milk skills are mostly those that are learned at an instinctual level: **Unarmed, Stealth, Survival** and **React**. Tigers tend to develop some sort of artistic pursuit, often **Sculpture** or **Music**. Cougars begin their schooling a bit earlier and tend to learn **Programming** or **Mechanics** at a very young age.

The Settlement funds the Uplift school system and gives them access to the best education money can buy. All fees are waived and Rank requirements receive +30 to the waiver roll. The only exception to this is that there are no Psionic schools available to Far Shore Uplifts.

Uplift characters that entered school before the Settlement went to military school and then immediately went into the Army or Special Forces for ten years. After their tour of duty they spent the remainder of their lives raising cubs and unemployed.

Roll	IQ	Psi	Rank	Cash
01-02	70	0	Rank 1: Orphan, unknown parentage	10cr
03-05	75	0	Rank 2: Orphan of known parentage	20cr
06-10	85	0	Rank 3: Orphan of decorated vet	40cr
11-1	90	0	Rank 4: Unproven parents	60cr
17-18	93	0	Rank 5: Green parent	80cr
19-25	96	0	Rank 6: Parent is a couch cat	100cr
26-27	99	0	Rank 7: Non Competitive parent	120cr
28-30	102	0	Rank 8: Low Competitive parent	140cr
31-35	106	0	Rank 9: Actively Competitive parent	160cr
36-38	107	0	Rank A: Good competitive parent	180cr
39-40	108	0	Rank B: Excellent competitive parent	200cr
41-47	109	0	Rank C: Parent is employed	225cr
48-55	110	0	Rank D: Parent from elite unit	250cr
56-57	111	0	Rank E: Parent works for Den admin	275cr
58-65	112	0	Rank F: Parent owns a business	300cr
66-68	113	1	Rank G: Parent is a Den enforcer	325cr
69-72	114	1	Rank H: Parent works for National Den admin	350cr
73-80	115	1	Rank I: Parent employs other uplifts	375cr
81-82	116	1	Rank J: Parent owns a security business	400cr
83-88	117	1	Rank K: Parent is influential in a regional Den admin	450cr
89-90	118	1	Rank L: Parent is on a regional Den admin board	550cr
91-96	119	1	Rank M: Parent is influential in the national Den admin	750cr
97-99	120	2	Rank N: Parent helped to negotiate the settlement	800cr
100	121	2	Rank O: Parent or Character is in national Den admin	900cr

SAMPLE CHARACTERS:

Dredge, law enforcement contractor

Many people imagine that uplifted tigers are the silent, brooding types. Dredge shatters both the stereotype and the silence. He talks constantly, almost compulsively, telling stories, jokes, and a running commentary on current events. He doesn't quite grasp some fundamental concepts of human humor, but that doesn't stop him at all, making him infuriating to be around.

Dredge saw combat as a heavy weapon commando during the war. He was seventeen when the rebellion occurred, and wasn't ready to simply retire after the Settlement. He became one of the first enforcers, a combination of bounty hunter and investigator for the Den administration.

Personality: On the job, Dredge wields words as a weapon to supplement his 550 pounds of muscle and his collection of very large guns. He goads and taunts his opponents until they make a mistake, giving him an opening to shut them down. More than one perp has surrendered on the condition that he stop making horrible puns.

Now something of a legend among enforcers, Dredge has several interstellar bounties under his belt. After throwing his back out on his last job, he has passed his Yasukos Undivided Attention to his son and declared himself retired. This is the second time he's retired and even he knows it won't last much longer.

STR:17	COOR:9	AGY:7	END:7	IQ:101	PSI:0	RANK: D	CHAR:8
Age: 40 Military School, Army 2, Unemployed 4, Lawman 18/8 Constitution: 400							
Money: 600cr							
Skills: Unarmed +6, Stealth + 1, Survival +1, React +1, Gun +6, streetwise +4, Intimidate +1, Beam +1, Drinking +1, Drug +1, program +1, Convince +2, Psychology +1, Law +2, Goad +5							
Augmentations: Burst of Strength, Fast Healing, Enhanced Sense of Smell.							
Uplift traits: Natural weaponry, +20 bite, and +10 claw. Enhance Hearing							
Equipment: Cats Claw SMG + Coat with Ceramic plates							

Tallow, Scan technician of the Beginners Luck

Tallow tried to go against the grain, she really did. She took her mothers advice about becoming a productive member of society. Top of the class in engineering and mechanics, Tallow was well on her way to actually getting a good job within the Den.

A young human with a gun and a barbed wit derailed her promising career just a week after her graduation from secondary school. Cornered and wounded, Tallow's mind snapped and seconds later so did the young mans neck. Tallow didn't quite realize what she had done until she had devoured a large part of the corpse.

She considered facing the music. She did have a bullet in her leg. It was self-defense. On the other hand, she had broken the punk's neck, dragged the corpse deep into an alley and eaten him. Humans are very touchy about being eaten. She ran. After shooting a quick note to her mother, Tallow signed up for a tour with the SaVaHuTa Navy and was off planet before anyone found the rest of the

body.

The Navy taught Tallow both astronomy and how to hurt sentients without killing them. She enjoyed the work, it was deep, technical, and somewhat related to what she had learned in school. Unfortunately her habit of being flamboyant with her technical skills and outdoing her senior crew members earned her the enmity of her superior officer. After that a couple of drinks and a crew mate insulting her mother was all it took to land Tallow in the brig with a discharge at the nearest port.

It took Tallow two years to find another ship, thanks to her record and a general distrust of humans. Now that she's found a ship, she has begun to have serious doubts about her crewmates sanity.

Personality: Tallow is quiet and professional with a calm arrogance in her intellectual abilities. She understands humans better than most Uplifts but she has little tolerance for discussions of philosophy and religion, which she views as useless and irrelevant. She is most comfortable with her machines and would prefer to do her job in peace. Tallow tends to do thing excellently or not at all taking a +20 to +40 to most IQ based rolls

STR:9	COOR:15	AGY:7	END:5	IQ:176	IPSI:0	RANK: D	CHAR:8
Age: 23 Technical School, Engineering College, Navy 2/1, Security guard 2, Scan tech Constitution: 420 Money: 100cr							
Skills: Programming + 1, Electronics +2, Astronomy +2, Convince +1, Mechanics +1, Drives + 1, Unarmed + 2, Gun +1, Sneaking +1, Streetwise +1							
Augmentations: Burst of Strength, Fast Healing, Enhanced Sense of Smell.							
Uplift traits: Natural weaponry, +20 bite, and +10 claw. Enhance Hearing							
Equipment: Cats Claw SMG, Plasteel armor, +2 Charisma dress							

VOTUM:

A Votum character has one major difference from standard StarCluster characters. A Votum's rank has nothing do to with the rank of his parents. Instead, rank is dependent on how pure, or unlikely to sin, one is. One must be at least Rank A to be judged pure enough to leave the Votum nation without giving into the temptations of unpure cultures. All Votum start with the same amount of cash, 150cr. Votum youths are supplied with basic mask drones until the end of secondary school. After school, those that are pure enough get drones supplied by the government. One's purity is based on a rating given by the crèche AI and the number of nominations one has toward being declared a Pure. It should be noted that ones rank can fluctuate throughout life.

A Votum's four mother's milk skills are chosen from Remote Operation, Programming, Cybernetics, Electronics, Writing and Pilot. This skill set reflects the culture's technological bent and their emphasis on written communication.

Through out life a Votum can take a rank in Remote Operation instead of a school or occupation skill. Also instead of taking a skill, a Votum can attempt to raise his or her rank within Votum society if his or her rank is eight or above. This has a base chance of success of 25% modified by the Votum's ranks in Convince and Endear. Otherwise the Votum has a base 1% chance of raising a rank per year.

The Votum are officially classed as a tech level nine civilization. However, the Votum are morally opposed to genetic augmentation, but will perform cybernetic modifications, notably neural jack implants. Most of these procedures are done by foreign doctors, who are the only aliens allowed to live beyond the Foreign Quarter of Immunda Placitum.

Roll	IQ	Psi	Rank	Free Drones
01-02	70	0	Rank 1: Escaped the crèche	0
03-05	80	0	Rank 2: Owns no drones	0
06-10	85	0	Rank 3: A Dirty Kink has been exposed	0
11-16	90	0	Rank 4: Soldier	0
17-18	95	0	Rank 5: Unskilled labor	0
19-25	100	0	Rank 6: Working Class	0
26-27	105	0	Rank 7: Farmer	0
28-30	107	1	Rank 8: Working Class	0
31-35	109	1	Rank 9: Working Class	0
36-38	111	1	Rank A: Received high marks from crèche AI	1
39-40	113	1	Rank B: 1 endorsement/ rejected by council	1
41-47	115	2	Rank C: 2 endorsements	1
48-55	117	2	Rank D: 3 endorsements	1
56-57	119	2	Rank E: 4 endorsements	2
58-65	121	2	Rank F: 5 endorsements	2
66-68	123	2	Rank G: 6 endorsements	2
69-72	125	3	Rank H: 7 endorsements	3
73-80	127	3	Rank I: 8 endorsements	3
81-82	129	3	Rank J: 9 endorsements	3
83-88	131	4	Rank K: Accept as one of the Pure	4
89-90	133	4	Rank L: Local Deacon	4
91-96	135	4	Rank M: Considered for assembly	4
97-99	137	5	Rank N: Hailed as the purist of the pure	5
100	140	5	Rank O: Assembly member	6

SAMPLE CHARACTER:

Joseph, Votum Ambassador:

For the Votum, there are few fates more terrible than having to physically travel off planet. Unfortunately for them, this is precisely what is required to avoid getting ripped off by the Tumentamenata and get favorable terms with the SaVaHuTa. Therefore, the Assembly of Deacons is constantly recruiting souls to brave the hostile outside world for the glory of the Votum and a bucket load of credits. Even then only the truly desperate answer the call since being outside of the Votum network makes it very hard to gain endorsements.

Joseph-9129 is such a man. As one might expect, Joseph is in desperate need of credits due to the collapse of a business venture on planet. Becoming an ambassador will provide him with enough money to keep the creditors away, otherwise he would be in danger of losing his drones, which would definitely damn him and would probably kill him.

Joseph now wanders the jump lanes, looking for products that might sell well to his people and negotiating what he hopes to be a favorable contract. He occasionally receives messages from the Assembly of Deacons to meet with someone in an official capacity.

Personality: Joseph has adapted well to interacting with heathens, although he cannot stomach their obscene humor. Merely alluding to intimate contact makes him cold and abrupt. Otherwise, he is very friendly through his mask drone. Joseph himself stands or sits stock still in his templar armor and people often mistake him for a robot which suits him just fine.

STR:4(9)	COOR:7	AGY:5	END:12	IQ:129	PSI:3	IRANK: B	CHAR:11
Age: 23 High School, Liberal Arts College, Bureaucrat 4/1, Constitution: 420 Money: 10c							
Skills: Remote Operation +4, Cybernetics +1, Programming +3, Convince +2, Overdo +1, Negotiate +3, Business +2							
Augmentations: Neural Jack							
Equipment: Templar Armor, Laser pistol, Personal crawler, Military class mask drone							